

Hollywood at Home Issue 13

(of 22 March 2021)



The Chairperson's Letter

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the 13th Edition of Hollywood at Home. Another great Magazine to entertain you this month. I never cease to be amazed by the variety of interesting articles, quizzes, stories, poems, gardening tips, birdlife information and jokes that Robin and Rosemary gather in from our members. Thank you and keep them coming!

It's been lovely having messages from our Group Leaders via our Monthly Newsletter especially when it's not possible to meet in person. Thanks also to those Groups who are meeting via Zoom; your activities are so interesting and good fun. Do read about them in the Newsletter and feel welcome to join in. We are always looking for ideas for new groups so if you have an expertise you could share please let us know.

Monthly meetings will continue via Zoom. It's great to hear from those who have said how much they have enjoyed our excellent speakers. Feedback and suggestions are always welcome. While meeting virtually is not as good as face to face, we are lucky to have the option to see friendly faces and hear familiar voices. If you would like to join in a tutorial on the use of Zoom organised for our u3a do let Sharyn know on groups@hollywoodu3a.org.

Keep safe and well.

Best Wishes from,

Liz and all the Committee

The Digital Dunville Project

It is hoped that our Talk at the General meeting on 23 April will be a premiere of the showing of a 45 minute film about Redburn House and the Dunville Family.



Robin Masefield and members of the Holywood u3a History Group have been collecting historic material about the Dunville family for some years. There is no doubt still a book to be written, but they have tracked down some precious film from the 1960s and many old photographs of the big house, the Dunvilles and their staff. The film we hope to show puts together recordings of descendants of staff who worked for the Dunvilles with images illustrating their recollections.

It has been made possible by a community heritage grant awarded to Holywood Shared Town by the National Lottery heritage Fund. It will be uploaded to Youtube, and a link will be provided to our Holywood u3a site.

From the Creative Writing Group

The Creative Writing Group celebrated women in their writing this month, in honour of International Women's Day and Mothering Sunday. Each piece remembers a moment when women came to the fore, with hard work, generosity and a whole lot of Fierce.

On the Farm by Ellie Duly

My mother used to bake an apple tart and a griddle of soda bread every day, at the end of which there was not a morsel of either remaining. After all, these had to feed the hungry mouths of her family of ten children as well as any visitors who might call up to our family farm. I can still remember the taste of the homemade butter, the way it melted into the warm bread, and the addition of our fresh raspberry jam in the summer months. The tarts were a treat all year round because we grew the apples ourselves and carefully stored them for the winter months.

In her busy day she managed to cook a warm midday meal, usually of freshly dug potatoes and vegetables, not only for the family but for the farm labourers employed by my father. This warmth and generosity extended far and wide. The women from the travelling community would call into the farm begging for 'something for the babies' and my mother would fill up their tin cans with milk from our cows. When an itinerant labourer turned up one day looking for work, my parents got one of the outhouses made comfortable for him. He joined us for all our meals and became part of the family. Then one day, several years later, he disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. In those days no one had very much so whenever some of our less well-off neighbours came to her in a crisis, she helped them out with whatever money she could spare.

However, my mother was no wilting violet, nor known for her anger-management skills. We children were suitably terrified of getting caught out for our many misdemeanours and naughtiness. Her wrath even extended to others in our small community and their perceived transgressions. One Christmas Eve a neighbour staggered his way up our long lane after having a drop too many of Christmas cheer. My mother knew, as did everyone else in our small community, that he beat his wife. In those days, everyone knew your business.

On his approach she lifted her sweeping brush, held it high, and told him, 'How dare you beat your wife! And her with all those poor little children. If you don't stop, I'll come and beat you with this brush myself.'

Strangely enough, the gentleman in question sobered up immediately and scuttled off down the lane. It was a novel way of dealing with domestic violence, but my mother had never heard of talking things through nor indeed of the recent TED Talk, Reframing Anger.

Hard work, kindness and the odd flash of anger are not a bad way to live one's life!

Nobody's Fool by Janine Houghton

Sheila sat glaring at her reflection in the mirror. She made her eyes as steely looking as possible. The result was more like a squint. It wouldn't do to look short-sighted. She tried again. This time she lifted her chin slightly. Yes, that was better. Now she felt more powerful. She tweaked the collar of her smartest suit and added a touch of lipstick, an additional layer of amour.

Standing up, she descended the stairs, trailing her hand on the bannister as she mentally surveyed the old Victorian villa the family had just moved into. In the kitchen she was greeted by Rachel, her oldest girl.

'Wow, Mum, you look sharp! You're dressed like the Queen. Are you off to launch a ship at Harland and Wolff?'

'Don't be cheeky. I'm going to see the bank manager. This beautiful old house has a bathroom from the 1870s not the 1970s and as we're not royalty, I'm going to need a loan to sort it out. Your gran coming to live with us has meant a lot of upheaval, I know, but since your grandpa passed last year, I can't leave her to live alone. Now do me a favour and get on with your studies.'

**

Keeping the image of her widowed mother foremost in mind, Sheila engaged her inner Fierce as she was shown into the bank office. Tilting her head, a little to one side, she smiled as she shook hands with a young man of about half her age. He was very handsome with a full head of marvellous curly hair. He would do very well for one of her girls. Rachel was seventeen and could do with taking in hand. Adopting the powerful face, she sat down.

Mr Stevenson was polite. 'The bank would like to see some funds on deposit with us before we advance a loan.'

Sheila was incensed. 'Do I look like a fool? Why would I put funds on deposit with you at a minuscule interest, in order to borrow them back at a higher rate?'

Mr Stevenson looked flustered, but he stood firm. 'The bank would be prepared to advance half the money requested, on the stipulation that it is used to carry out essential repairs to the exterior. The rest of the funds requested would be made available after these works have been completed.'

After dinner Sheila explained the terms of the loan to her husband.

'Well done,' he said. 'I'll start looking for house painters first thing tomorrow.' Sheila stood up, folded her arms and smiled gleefully at him. 'You'll do no such thing!' she declared. 'I called into the bathroom shop on my way home. They will send a designer round on Saturday.'

'Won't there be trouble when we want the rest of the loan, and the repairs aren't done?'

'I think they will find that if they want the repairs completed, they are going to have to produce the rest of the money to pay for them.'

She turned on her heel and, as she crossed the room, threw over her shoulder, 'No young whelp, be he ever so handsome, is going to dictate my life! I'm going to open a bottle of wine.'

Freedom for Freddie by Sandra Griffiths

Felt hatted, the aunties: E, K, L and M
in best summer frocks, stout shoes
and handbags of post-war couture.
Travel companions: Mum, Dad and me.

Chauffeur driven by peaked-capped Mr Major
gently gliding in the stately car,
an eight-seater black taxi,
singing 'Six Miles from Bangor to Donaghadee'.
Too-ra-loo, too-ra-lee.

Deftly Dad changes costume
balancing precariously, swapping legs, removed.
Clad in underwear of grey and white speckled like stones,
he's splashing into the biting cold, crawling out to sea.

Where's he gone? That Freddie!
Fear rises with the tide, voices too angst with care
as he swims to Freedom from Donaghadee.
He could drown, that Freddie!

Peering, scanning, glasses sought
and Mr Major's spectacular binoculars
searching for Dad lost in the horizon
en route to the Copeland Islands.

Bobbing, hairless, a head.
Is it him or a strange, sea creature?
Relief! Returned, our swimming hero,
to joyous smiles, polite hugs from the aunties.

Cross words from Mum for the freedom fighter
who longs for perfect peace
off the coast of Donaghadee
six miles from Bangor.
Too-ra-loo, too-ra-lee.

From the Gardening Group

..... A quick tip recommended by Diarmuid Gavin:

“In spring, photograph the garden when the bulbs are flowering so that you can see exactly where there are big gaps”

..... A little quiz on a variety of subjects (the answers on the last page):

1. Monty Don lost his beloved dog Nigel in 2020. What is the name of his other golden retriever? (a) Bella, (b) Nellie or (c) Natalie?
2. During the first lockdown last Spring, RSPB reported that bird bath sales rose by what percentage? (a) 40%, (b) 240% or (c) 440%
3. Is rhubarb a fruit or a vegetable?
4. True or false: the number of British vegans has quadrupled in the past six years.
5. How many trees are there in London? (a) 1 million (b) 5 million or (c) 8 million
6. After warm weather and heavy rainfall, the RHS warned against the spread of Britain’s most dangerous plant. What is it? (a) Deadly nightshade, (b) Giant hogweed or (c) Foxglove.
7. True or false: it takes six years for a Christmas tree to reach six foot.
8. Which plant family, associated with summer, do apples, peaches and pears all belong to?
9. How long can an asparagus spear grow in one day – 2cm, 5cm or 10cm?
10. How many times per second does a woodpecker peck wood – 10, 20 or 40?

..... and a few photos of flowering shrubs



Azara microphylla (box-leaf azara)

A great all-round plant with glossy small evergreen leaves that shimmer in the light. In late winter it produces masses of small yellow green vanilla-scented flowers in clusters. Great as an evergreen wall shrub. Height up to 10m x spread 4m.



Viburnum x bodnantense 'Charles Lamont' - Clusters of sugary pink & white flowers on bare stems and an upright habit. A sheltered spot protects it from harsh frosts and helps to prolong the blooms. Prune after flowering by taking one in every 4 or 5 stems down to the ground to keep an open shape. Height 3m x spread 2m.

Garrya elliptica 'James Roof' (silk tassel bush) – Long catkins (up to 25cm) Its evergreen matt leaves make a great backdrop to other plants for the rest of the year. Best in sun or partial shade. Height and spread 4m, but can be fanned out as a wall shrub or pruned smaller.



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena' (*witch hazel* *mamelis x intermedia 'Jelena'*) Witch hazels need room to spread horizontally and from late Jan into Mar bear unusual spidery, often spicily scented flowers. 'Jelena' has rich copper-orange flowers and varied autumnal colour. Grow in moisture-retentive yet well-drained neutral to acid soil. Height and spread 4m.

Daphne mezereum

A hardy early daphne. This explodes into colour at start of March with violet-pink flowers, which appear in dense clusters along the bare stems followed by shiny red berries in summer. Strong, sweet fragrance too. 'Bowles Variety' is a fine form with white flowers. It prefers a sheltered spot and deep neutral to acid soil. Height and spread about 1.5m.





Mahonia x media 'Underway' (Oregon grape) - Mahonias will grow almost anywhere and are a stalwart in winter with their spiky architectural foliage and spires of yellow flowers. This one is compact yet upright with scented flowers produced from late autumn into March. Height and spread 3m.

Spring has Sprung by Dot Blakely (dotbirdblakely@gmail.com)

Well we hope so; our poor wee garden birds have been getting blown about, and wet, wet, wet.

Then a wee bit of sun comes out, and Spring has Sprung!

So we are now in March, nesting season has started; from 1st March it is against the law to cut hard into hedgerow. I have been asked at different times to check a hedge for nesting birds, I can usually find one, which does not please me if the hedge is just about to be taken out; in that case I would report it. The birds needed our help in the winter, with feeding etc, now they need nesting sites. Nest boxes are great for the Tit family, I would recommend the good old fashioned nest boxes from the Men's Shed, Redburn, Holywood. The Blue tit is the easiest to get them to rent, the Coal tit will take one, 25mm, while the Great tit needs a bigger entrance hole, 29mm.



Most of the other birds you had in winter will head back to the woodlands to nest. If you can let a part of your garden go wild, hedgerows, bushes, ivy, even nettles, let the insects in. Perhaps if you are lucky, a Dunnock or Blackbird might stay all year.

My booklets can also be bought from Gavin Gould chemist Abbey street Bangor, (not Saturday)

The Swallow - By Numbers



34cm The length of the average barn swallow's wingspan. They weigh between 16g-24g (0.5 to 0.85 ozs) – about half the weight of a packet of crisps.

6,000 The number of miles the birds cover between South Africa and the UK, clocking up about 200 miles a day.

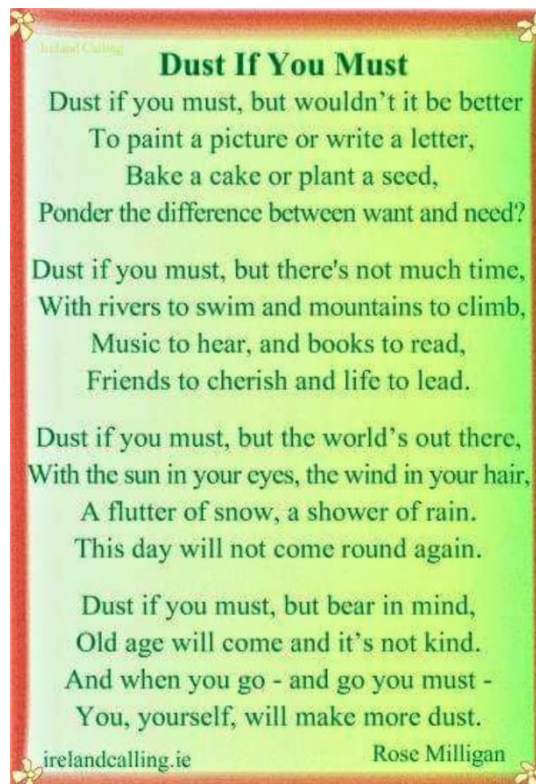
44% The proportion of pairs that go back to the same nest every year, according to a recent study.

10-15 The number of years a well-built nest can last. It takes the 'builders' about 1,300 trips to gather the material.

500 The number of insects a brood of baby swallows needs to eat every hour. They consume 150,000 before fledging up to 23 days after hatching.

2 The average number of years a healthy bird can expect to live.

Interesting fact - Robin's great-grandfather, JRB Masefield, a solicitor and amateur naturalist in Staffordshire, was the first to ring a swallow in Britain in summer, and have it recorded in South Africa. 18 months after he had slipped ring B830 onto its leg on 6 May 1911, in the porch of the family home in Cheadle, he received a letter from a hotel owner in Natal written on 27 December 1912. Prior to that, it was not known where swallows went in winter.



SPRING FLOWERS

C	Y	F	R	E	E	S	I	A	P	E	O	N	Y
P	S	M	O	R	N	I	N	G	G	L	O	R	Y
R	I	R	B	E	L	L	F	L	O	W	E	R	D
I	M	N	B	U	T	T	E	R	C	U	P	I	O
M	I	M	K	G	E	R	A	N	I	U	M	G	G
R	P	L	F	T	L	I	D	O	F	F	A	D	W
O	G	A	T	L	U	R	E	T	T	E	U	O	O
S	I	N	N	H	O	L	M	D	S	R	E	Y	O
E	E	O	O	S	E	E	I	S	E	P	R	L	D
C	P	L	I	C	Y	P	N	P	A	E	B	E	H
M	B	R	P	M	U	I	N	I	H	P	L	E	D
C	H	E	R	R	Y	B	L	O	S	S	O	M	M
H	S	W	E	E	T	P	E	A	A	N	D	N	I
U	I	C	A	M	E	L	L	I	A	R	G	E	L

- SWEET PEA
- DAFFODIL
- PINK TULIP
- BUTTERCUP
- PEONY
- DELPHINIUM
- MORNING GLORY
- CHERRY BLOSSOM
- DOGWOOD
- PANSY
- CAMELLIA
- GERANIUM
- PRIMROSE
- FREESIA
- BELFLOWER

LEAKED! Stormont's clear pathway to exit lockdown





BACK PAGE

QUIZ ANSWERS - 1. Nellie 2. 440% 3. Vegetable 4. True 5. 8 million 6. Giant Hogweed
7. False 8. The rose family 9. 10cms 10. 20 times (*These questions originally appeared in Country Living*)

(Note: Woodpeckers don't get headaches from pecking. They have reinforced skulls structured to spread the impact force. Their brains are highly cushioned and protected from repeated impacts).