BRUM
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UNISON
Birmingham Retired Unison Members
Summer 2020

OUTRAGE .

How Care Homes were abandoned to Covid-19

By **Maureen Wade & Brian Allbutt**

THE true nature of the ongoing crisis within the Adult Care Sector has been exposed sharply by the Covid-19 outbreak.

In May, figures were finally released for the number of deaths in Residential Care and Nursing Homes, which appeared to be running at around 2,000 per week since the outbreak.

Given that the number of residents in such homes represents only 1 % of the population, this is an alarming, but expected, figure, given that early research shows that nearly 80 % of Covid-19 cases are from 'cluster infections' - that is, where people are gathered together.

Given that it is a fragmented, under resourced service with little proper health cover, the death toll is not surprising. The treatment of both residents and staff has been appalling.

Firstly, there was widespread suspicion that 'Do Not Resuscitate' (DNRs) were being enforced onto residents. DNR decisions are made by medical professionals, but there has to be a discussion with the person - if they are incapacitated or not capable of a decision, the doctor should discuss with the immediate family and many families report this did not happen. A pattern was emerging across the country that DNRs were being issued without telling families, with the object of keeping very ill residents from being transferred to hospital for resuss, thus freeing up NHS beds.

Secondly, the government did not revise the admission criteria for Residential Care Homes until **April 15.** The revised 'COVID-19 Action Plan for Adult Social Care' on that day, finally announced that

"... we will move to institute a policy of testing all residents prior to admission to care homes. This will begin with all those being discharged from hospital" (Section 1.30). There was no testing policy for new residents of

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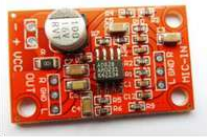

■ **Steve gets us wired for sound**

■ **Quiz time - time to get the grey matter working**

■ **Happier times - thinking of those trips abroad**

■ **Ramble in Prisoner's Wood**

Calls grow for an Inquiry on deaths

BRIAN ALLBUTT recently had a letter published in the *Birmingham Mail,* after it reported local calls for an inquiry into the situation in Care Homes. We reprint the letter below:

WE NEED AN URGENT INQUIRY

In the article by your journalist Jane Haynes (*Birmingham Mail* - 15.5.20), Liam Byrne MP calls for an urgent inquiry to "expose the truth" on Covid-19 deaths.

It is certainly the case that there is clearly some discrepancy between the number of excess deaths recorded and reported by the Office of National Statistics (O.N.S.) and those registered as Covid-19 related deaths.

With over a 1,000 "excess deaths" in Birmingham for the month of April, a third of those who sadly passed away were registered as having no direct link to the covid-19 virus.

Any public inquiry carried out, when this awful Covid-19 pandemic is over, must surely concentrate on this government's handling of the Covid-19 crisis.

One of the main questions any public inquiry needs to address must be "have people died in our care homes unnecessarily".

"A critical lack of PPE and testing has allowed coronavirus to sweep through the care sector" - not my words but those issued in a statement by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care on 16 April.

Sadly, this has been proven with the O.N.S announcing that 8,314 people had died from Covid-19 in English care homes up to 8 May; with many academics now calculating that a true figure may well be double.

The Covid-19 pandemic must surely now leave no one in any doubt of the need for an integrated health and care service that is free at the point of need and funded through general taxation.

We owe it to the 176 front line health and social care workers who have now died of the covid-19 virus for there to be a full transparent and independent inquiry into the governments handling of this pandemic.

Brian Allbutt
Assistant Regional Secretary
West Midland Pensioners Convention

Crisis in the Care Homes *(continued)*

Residential Care Homes **prior to April 15.**

Media reports initially suggested that up to 70 residents of care homes in the West Midlands died from COVID-19, prior to April 15, although in reality the figure is likely to be much, much higher, **(see Brian's letter above)** as the GP signing the Death Certificate would be more likely to put the cause as an age-related illness, as the victim had not been tested for Covid-19.

Care Homes are also still in much need of the much-promised PPE for the 1.5 million staff working in Adult Care.

Even now, according to the *Sunday Times* (May 31), **62 per cent of Care Home staff have still not been tested for Covid-19** despite the Government saying on 15 May that all staff would be by the end of May.

The Government's indifference is reflected in the 'emergency funding' too. The NHS, which employs 1.2 million staff, has received £6.6 billion in emergency funding and has had its debts written off during the pandemic.

The Adult Care sector meanwhile is competing for a share of £2.8 billion in emergency funding for local authorities. This is on top of the impact of austerity since the Conservatives took office – between 2010 – 2018, there has been a 38 % fall in central Government funding towards social care for local authorities (figures: TUC).

The problem is that with a service so fragmented, there is no champion for it. As a privatised sector, there are 20,000 different providers, from small individual enterprises to huge overseas companies.

In the Birmingham local authority area alone, there are 90 residential care homes, 58 nursing homes and 200 Home Care providers.

All are supposedly regulated by the Care Quality Commission, but it has little capacity to do the job properly. Neither is there adequate medical cover. While Nursing Homes will have trained nurses, residential homes are covered by a single GP, who in turn covers more than one home as well as his or hers general practice.

The historic low wages in this sector has meant a continual battle to retain staff, while it has affected the quality of care for residents. As the TUC has pointed out, the nature of the privatised, fragmented service *"… encourages spot contracting rather than a holistic view of what care a person may need"* (TUC: *Three Ways to Solve the Social Care Crisis*).

The problem of staff retention will be exacerbated by Brexit: the 88,000 EU citizens who work in the Adult Care sector are very unlikely to meet the criteria needed to retain citizenship.

Help at hand

HERE'S a round-up of some of the support out there to help us all out:

Real Junk Food

The Real Junk Food Project Birmingham is working seven days a week to collect and redistribute food to people in need.

If you are feeling lonely or just need a chat, or someone to pick up supplies during self-isolation, you can contact the project on: **0121 728 7030.**

Moseley & Kings Heath Shed

Moseley & Kings Heath Shed is a creative project which aims to bring together people of all ages and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They can teach people new skills, but can also help end the social isolation that many in our communities experience. Obviously they are not open currently, but one to look out for when the lock-down ends. Go to: **Moseleyandkingsheath-shed.org.uk**

Women's Aid

Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid has reported a steady increase in calls to their helpline in the last few weeks. At the beginning of the lock-down, they received around 80-90 calls a week – now they are receiving 140 every week. The police have reported an increase in domestic violence levels during this crisis. If you or anyone you know has been affected by domestic violence, the helpline number is: **0808 800 0028**

After a lock-down garage clear out, Birmingham Retired Members Chair Maureen Wade set up a book stall at the end of her drive, offering books for a small donation to Women's Aid. After three days she raised £105.

Birmingham UNISON Welfare

Birmingham UNISON Branch's Welfare Officer Maxine Warrican, has been in touch with your Chair – Maxine is anxious to establish that all our retired members are coping in the lock-down. The Branch has a Welfare Fund and if anyone is struggling financially you can ask for assistance. Contact **0121 200 3331**

Chips for all!

Local farmers have linked up with 'Slow Food Birmingham' to stop their crops going to waste. Pay £10 and you can receive 2kg of potatoes – local organisations providing food for vulnerable people will receive 8kg. Go to: **slowfoodbirmingham.co.uk**

Local Welfare Provision

Citizens in Birmngham who find themselves in a short term crisis and need help to buy food, gas or electricity can apply for short term help by visiting https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/lwp and completing the online application form. Pre-paid cards will then be sent out in the post.

To be eligible citizens must:

- Be resident in the Birmingham City Council area
- Be aged 16 or over
- Not be a person subject to immigration control or have no recourse to public funds
- Be without sufficient resources to meet your/your family's immediate short-term needs

Celebrating Ramadan

RAMADAN is the religious Muslim worship lasting one month (from 23 April - 23 May) during which worshipers fast from dawn to sunset and perform group prayers.

Fasting is a reflection of the feel for other poorer people in society and a means of cleansing the body and soul. Fasting is to refrain from eating, drinking or smoking and also for able people to give to others less privileged. No drinking water is allowed during fasting. Less able people are not required to fast.

Normally the group worship is carried out in mosques, but with this current pandemic and the social restrictions the mosques are closed and the worshipers have to stay at home.

Families and friends would normally join together to break the fast at sunset, however this Ramadan families cannot do that and restrict the gathering to the family household only.

At the end of one month fast, the Eid celebrations take place during which worshipers attend the prayers and have social activities. Certain sweets like baklava and cakes consumed in the celebrations. Food is also distributed within the community for people of need.

By **Said** & **Susan Mouneimne**

Former NUPE members can still get benefit

WERE you formerly in NUPE? If so, you are still eligible for 'death benefit' if you are in those circumstances.

Generally, UNISON only pays out Death Benefit if the death occurs while the member is still in Full Membership, that is before retirement.

However, former members of NUPE (when the union merged with NALGO and COHSE) had this aspect of their terms and conditions protected, as long as they have maintained continuous membership.

The benefit (which increases annually) currently amounts to £554 on the death of the member, or £277 on the death of their spouse.

Claims for this benefit must be made within one year of the deceased passing away

UNISON Birmingham Retired Members Section

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Given the current situation with the COVID-19 virus, all meetings are POSTPONED until further notice.

However, please put these dates in your diary *JUST IN CASE* the current restrictions are lifted, and we can return to our normal programme:

Speakers programme

September 16th
Sally Jenkins
How to Make Money Out of Murder

October 21st
Peter Coxhead
Malaysia : Country, Gardens and Wildlife

November 18th - TBC

December 16th
Gina Maddison
An Old Fashioned Christmas

The proposed day out to Bletchley Park planned for July has also sadly had to be postponed.

Have you got an email address?

ALTHOUGH the UNISON office is closed for meetings, there is an occasional skeleton staff, and many thanks to them for getting this printed version to you.

However, we have been circulating a pdf copy via email, and our aim is to get as many members' email addresses as possible, for times like these.

If you have email, can you send your email address to Maureen Wade at:

wade5ss@btinternet.com

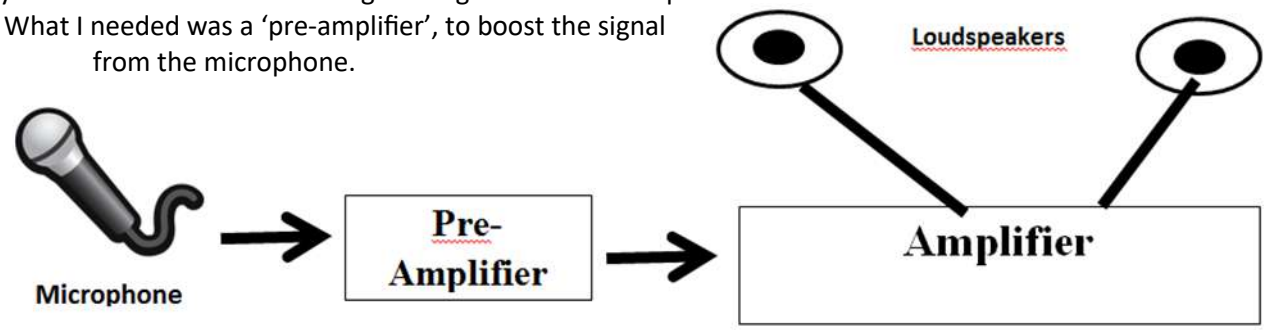
Wired for sound

By **Steve Garnowski**
Technology C'tee Member

A Microphone for our Guest Speakers

1 WE ALL remember the nice chap who came to talk to us about Bletchley Park, but we also remember that we could hardly hear him.

With Committee approval I set about to create us a microphone/amplifier. I used to experiment with electronics as a child and I have dabbled all my life with car and other electric circuits. Fortunately there is sound system in our meeting room but there is no microphone, and just plugging a microphone into the system won't work as the strength of signal from a microphone is very tiny. What I needed was a 'pre-amplifier', to boost the signal from the microphone.

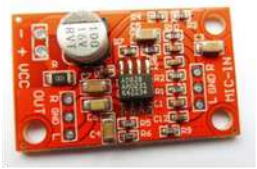


2 TO buy a ready-made pre-amplifier would cost a lot, so I set out to make one. The core of the project was a 'circuit board', off Ebay, from China. Cost: £3-30.

I also needed a 'project box', again from Ebay, £5-60. With the aid of a soldering iron and some wire I assembled the unit.

I needed two sockets to connect the microphone and the wire to the amplifier. These came from Amazon, also probably from China.

This is the box with the wires and fittings. The pre-amplifier needed a power supply which was a 9v battery, so that was wired in too

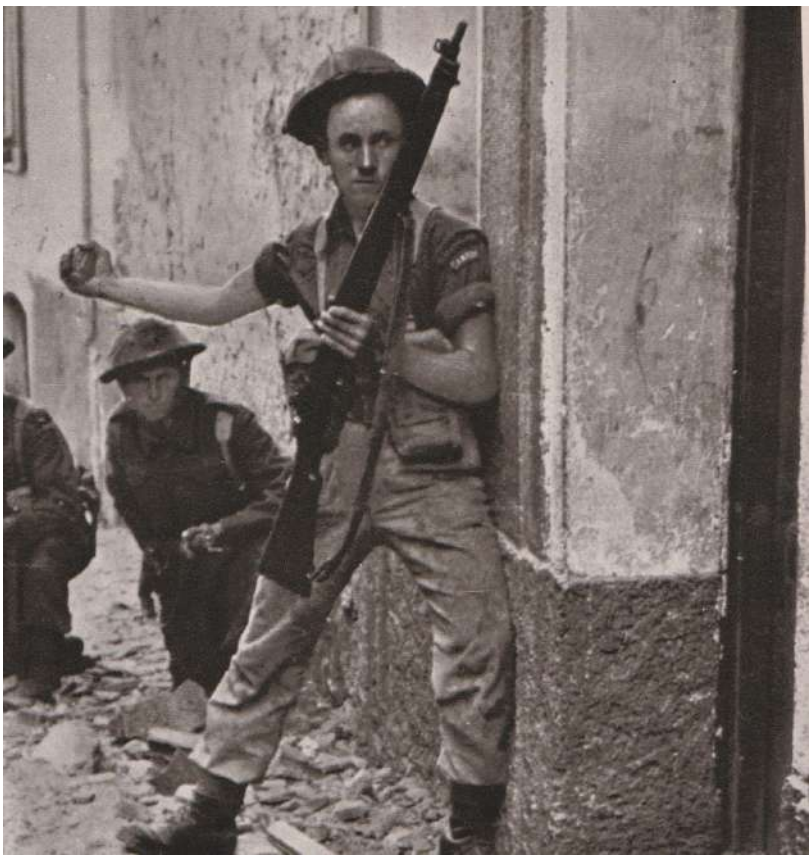


3 I ALSO needed a MICROPHONE. I happened to be talking to my old friend and he has lent me a very expensive microphone, which he used to use when he was a DJ.

The last element was a microphone stand, so back to Ebay, and I got this one for £13. I have tested the system on my amplifier at home, and it works fine, but, sadly, with the Union Office closed, I will have to wait to test it in our meeting room.

‘Lest we forget’

By **Michael Murray**



The 8th Army fought in North African, and then slugged their way up through Italy, with bitter fighting around Monte Cassino and several other fronts - yet they were dubbed ‘D-Day Dodgers’.

THE beginning of June is usually the time we remember D – Day, and the freeing of Europe from Nazi oppression.

In 2006 I was able to visit the Normandy Beaches, and the immaculately tended Commonwealth and American Cemeteries. At the time, it was difficult to imagine that the now peaceful stretches of beaches along the Normandy Coast was once the scene of a fierce battle with its corresponding loss of so many lives on both sides.

While visiting the Commonwealth Cemetery, I saw a number of graves of soldiers from the **Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders**, my father’s regiment, but my father’s grave was not among them. They were members of the 2nd Battalion , while my father was in the 1st Battalion.

After fighting Rommel in North Africa , the Argyll`s crossed over into Italy. The 2nd Battalion returned home to take part in the D-Day landings, while the 1st Battalion remained in Italy, where they were faced with snow-capped mountains , and Kesselring`s German force’s holding defensive positions, called the Gustav, Dora and Gothic Lines.

In early 1944, faced with the German held monastery at Monte Cassino as well as the Liri and Rapido Rivers, the Allies had already failed in three attempts to take the monastery and cross the rivers, in order to break the Gustav Line.

On the 11th May, a fourth attempt was made and as part of the 8th Army`s attack, the 1st Battalion was to cross the Rapido River at its entrance to the Liri Valley, to secure a bridgehead for the Allied tanks to cross.

At 22:30 hrs, boats were carried across the marshy ground , but faced with mortar and heavy machine-gun fire many were holed, whilst shelling reduced visibility. By dawn, those who had reached the far bank were pinned down in shallow irrigation ditches . Casualties were high, my father being one of those killed.

The Cemetery at Monte Cassino today

Eventually, the Punjabis fighting alongside the Scots gained and held a bridgehead, and the Canadians managed to get their tanks across: the surviving Scots were brought back across the River.

The Allies had successfully crossed the river and with the Poles attacking the monastery, the Germans were forced to retreat back from the Gustav Line, to a second line of defence, the Dora Line.

However, this success was not only overshadowed by the events of D-Day, but those Allied Servicemen who fought in Italy were referred to as ‘D-Day Dodgers’, a bitingly sarcastic term supposedly used by Lady Astor (which she denied). There are also several versions of a song called ‘D-Day Dodgers’, set to the tune *Lili Marlene*, a favourite of the 8th Army.

Veterans pointed out that they had been involved in many ‘D-Days’ in Italy before the Normandy landings, and some had served in North Africa before that, my father included.

This was also raised in the television programme entitled *Gary Lineker – My Grandad`s War*, which followed Gary`s grandfather Stanley , a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who followed the route travelled by my father. He landed at Salerno in 1943, where his unit - which had no weapons - suffered 1,839 casualties.

The programme showed Gary meeting veterans of Cassino on the bridge over the Rapido River , where my father died.

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Although referred to as 'D-Day Dodgers' , this derogatory term is now treated by many who served in Italy as a badge of honour.

Although my father has no grave , his name is inscribed on one of the columns within the Cassino War Cemetery, which is 139km south-east of Rome, overlooked by the now rebuilt Abbey of Monte Cassino. The inscription reads:

Private James McKinstry.
3196513 1st. Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who died on Friday 12th. May. 1944. Aged 24.

This information, and my father`s war record, was provided by the **Army Personnel Centre, Historical Disclosures Section,** in Glasgow, and the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**, whilst the battle details were provided by the Argyll`s Regimental Museum at Stirling, Perthshire.

The information was confirmed by a friend , who, holidaying in Italy , visited the Cassino War Cemetery and took photos of the columns where my father`s name is inscribed.

You see, my birth name is not Michael James Murray, but Michael James McKinstry, who is proud to be, and always will be, the son of a 'D-Day Dodger'.

So , when you are celebrating D-Day, spare a thought and a prayer for all those Allied soldiers, of whatever nationality, who were making the ultimate sacrifice to gain the freedom we enjoy today, from many parts of the world, far from home. My father died surrounded by mountains, but not those of his native Scotland.

Left: the column where Pte James McKinstry is remembered

'From all the corners of the earth...'

By the Editor

THE ALLIED units fighting on the 'Cassino Front' during World War II were the most multi-national combat force in military history, and laid the beginning of the idea for a 'United Nations' military role in the future.

Under British command, alongside British soldiers like Michael's father, were regiments from many corners of the Empire, such as the Canadian 1st Division. The second attack on Monte Cassino was led by the Indian Army and the Gurkhas. The third attack was led by the New Zealanders, which included the 28th (Maori) Battalion. The fourth and finally successful attack on the monastery was led by the Polish Brigade.

Most of the air cover was provided by the Royal Australian Air Force, while the African Axillary Pioneer Corps delivered logistics and 'smoke companies' (smoke cover during attacks). Although 10,000 West Indians had already volunteered and were serving as individuals with the British Army throughout all theatres of the war, a separate Caribbean Regiment had been raised, of volunteers mainly from Bermuda, whose main role in Italy was to escort 4,000 German POWs to prison camps in Egypt.

There was a commando unit made up of Free Belgiums, and a Special Forces Section consisting of German and Austrian anti-fascists who proved their worth operating behind enemy lines. Also, following the fall of Mussolini, Italian Army regiments placed themselves under British command.

On the eastern flank of Cassino was the Free French Army, 60 per cent of which were from North Africa, namely the *Goumiers* of two Moroccan Divisions, and the 3rd Algerian Division.

On the western flank was the US Army - although because of the 'Jim Crow' segregation regulations still rife in the US military, most black US soldiers were confined to providing transport and pioneer roles, the black combat 92nd Division later fought in Italy.

Prominent in the US sector was also the 442 'Nisei' Infantry Regiment, made up of US citizens of Japanese descent, mainly from Hawaii, even though many had their families still in internment camps back home – it became the most decorated unit for its size in US military history: although finally totalling only 14,000 soldiers, the regiment was awarded 9,400 Purple Hearts and 4,000 Bronze Stars.

Also under US command was the *Forca Expedicionaria Brasileira* – Brazil was the only country in South America to declare war on Nazi Germany (after many U Boat attacks on its shipping) and its Expeditionary Force of several thousands soldiers fought in Italy under US command.

A Canadian armoured unit attached to the Indian Army at the Liri Valley during the Italian campaign

Touring Andalusia

By Said & Susan Mouneimne

ANDALUSIA in Spain was one of the places we always wanted to visit, having heard so much about the Arab Moors who established an empire in that region back in the 12th century. In April 2014, we flew into **Malaga** from Birmingham and collected the hired car and stayed one night in a villa overlooking the Malaga Fort and marina.

Next day we drove into the city and visited the Fort , and had a stroll around the old town. Then we drove to **Nerja** for lunch. The place was full of Brits.

We then carried on to Granada for two nights stay during which we visited the magnificent **Al-Hambra Palace**. We joined a guided tour who gave us a historical narrative of the place and how it was built by the Moors and then overtaken by the Christians.

Next, we drove to **Cordoba** for a stay of 2 nights, and visited **La Masquita** (the Mosque in Arabic), which was also built by the Moors and then converted later on to become a church. We met a Spanish group who established an organisation for the preservation of the history of the original Masquita, including the Moorish era which was mostly destroyed or covered.

Our next city was **Seville** staying three nights and visiting **Catedral de Sevilla**, the Royal Alakazar Moorish palace and **Plaza de Espana**. We also took a boat trip along the river **Guadaelquivir** ('wadi el qibir' in Arabic), we also watched a flamingo dance. The dance originated from Andalusia with a touch of Arabic tune to it.

Our next destination was the coastal town of **Cadiz** on the Atlantic Ocean. We had a stroll on the promenade then carried on to **Jerez**, the cherry wine making town famous for its wines and sherry. We had a tour of the winery called Tio Pepe and wine tasting - they are the makers of Croft sherry.

After an overnight stay we headed on to the town of **Ronda** famous for its geological formations and gorges, where we stayed one night.

From Ronda, we headed to the town of **Marbella** passing the famous marina and heading to the old town. We found the old town is more interesting than the touristic marina areas. We had a stroll in the old town and a light lunch in a traditional Spanish pizzeria.

■ **Top: Said inside the La Masquita in Cordoba. Above: taking a Quad-cycle tour of the Plaza de Espana in Seville**

Our final destination was the famous Costa del Sol resort of **Torremolinos** which resembles Blackpool with nothing Spanish about it except the beach, which was nearly empty at the time. We opted to stay here for its proximity to Malaga from which we flew back to Birmingham.

The whole circuit took 10 days covering around 1000km at a gentle pace. The tour was arranged by our self in order to have the flexibility.

■ **Left: Ronda, the town built into a gorge**

NO PASARAN! A walk around the 'Fiery Rose'

By Maureen Wade

SOME time ago (it seems like an age now!), myself and husband Bob took a city break in Barcelona. We were surprised to find there were no tours relating to the city's historic role in the Spanish Civil War – there is one by a British historian, but we were out of season. So we did a bit of research and created our own mini-tour, all based around Barcelona's famous tourist trail, **Las Ramblas**.

■ **From the top: Hotel Rivoli, HQ of the POUM: the Communist HQ (now an Apple mega-store!): Hemmingway's haunt, the Hotel Oriente**

Some background – the opening shots of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 were fired in Barcelona when the anarchist trade union, the CNT, rose up and took control of the city.

Throughout the war, Barcelona was known as 'Rosa de Roc': the fiery rose. The CNT were supported politically by the POUM, a split-off from the Spanish Communist Party who were opposed to Stalin.

Infamously, fighting broke out in Barcelona between the CNT/POUM and the Spanish Communist Party – supposedly allies against Franco – during the 'May Events' of 1937.

These are described in George Orwell's book, *Homage to Catalonia,* and also in Ken Loach's 1995 film, *Land and Freedom*, which graphically portrays the confusion in the roof top gun battle, as both sides battle for control of Las Ramblas.

Starting at the top of Las Ramblas, we found the **Hotel Oriente.** This was where US journalist Martha Gellhorn - the future wife of Ernest Hemmingway – stayed, and presumably Hemmingway too as their relationship developed during the war.

We found the **Hotel Continental** where George Orwell was based, but sadly it was covered in scaffolding, so no pictures.

Further down we discovered the **Hotel Rivoli** which had been the headquarters of the POUM, and then facing the main square the building that was the headquarters of the Communist Party (now ironically, the local head office and mega-store for the global giant Apple!).

■ **Above: women fighters from the CNT militia in Barcelona in 1936. Below: the wonderful 'Bar Libertaria', still owned and run by the CNT**

We left the best till last. After a stroll around the back-streets, we finally found the **Bar Libertaria** – a delightful bar and restaurant still owned by the CNT today. Surrounded by posters and memorabilia from the Spanish Civil War, we commemorated Barcelona's stand - with tapas and cerveza. *No Pasaran!*

■ **While we were there, students occupied the streets to protest about tuition fees. The fighting spirit of the 'Fiery Rose' continues!**

A walk in the Prisoner's Wood

By **Steve Garnowski**

VERY NEAR my village of Romsley, in the Clent Hills, there is special wood. Called Ell Wood, it is only 10 minutes' walk from our house.

It is accessed on a 'Permissive' path. These are paths through the countryside that are allowed to exist by the landowners but are not Public Footpaths.

The path goes across a field, with the wood at the bottom of a slope:

Romsley is the highest village in the West Midlands so most routes out of the village are downwards. On the way out of the village you pass one of our two pubs called *The Swallows Nest*. The locals call it *The Fighting Cocks,* its original name.

During one of the many ownership changes the new owners changed the name, which generated a lot of fuss, but the old advertising phrase 'all publicity is good publicity' applied.

We enter Ell Wood here:

The wood has been left in its natural state for many years, which is perfect.

If a tree falls across the path it is left where it lies and a diversion path springs up. If the diversion is not practical, I, or other locals have been known to take a saw down and clear the path. Here (below) is an example of the paths through the wood, with my wife, Alice, leading the way. You can step over this tree.

The wood is a home for many, many bluebells and a little bit later in the spring, the wild garlic. I brought my Mum here more than once and she said it was so beautiful she would like her ashes scattered here.

This (right) is the spot we did that in 2017. There are three big oak trees just here, and there was a big oak in the garden of the house she lived in for 62 years.

The wood originally belonged to the 'Home Office', who, amongst other things, were responsible for the Prison Service.

Near this wood was farm which was an open prison. Prisoners were given the chance to learn skills such as animal husbandry, farming and, in this wood, tree care. There is still an old sign in the wood from that era (top). At some point it has been used for gun target practice.

It also sports two signs saying that you are on a 'permissive path'. It is not clear who owns the wood now.

Did you know...

NICK HULLEY ***has put together some 'quite interesting' facts from history that may surprise you:***

Attacca Inghilterra!

WE ALL know that in 1940 Britain fought and won the Battle of Britain against the mighty German Luftwaffe. Not so well known is the fact that the Italian air force also bombed the UK in the south east of England, mainly coastal areas between 24 October 1940 and 10 January 1941. It was not a great success. It cost Italy 36 planes lost and inflicted minimal damage and casualties.

11 November, 1940

Italian raiders came to stay

ITALIAN PLANES OVER BRITAIN. On Armistice Day Britain received the first large-scale visit from the Italian Air Force. Between fifteen and twenty bombers that appeared over the Thames Estuary, escorted by about sixty fighters, were routed by two "Hurricane" squadrons, who shot down eight bombers and five fighters without loss to themselves. Two of the planes, a Caproni bomber (above) and a Fiat "C.R. 42" fighter (below), both of which crashed in Suffolk, are here shown. The remainder of the Italian formation dropped their bombs in the sea and fled.

■ **This page from Odhams Press's *The War in Pictures,* published in 1941, shows two of the Italian aircraft shot down over Suffolk on 11 November 1940**

Don't call us...

DID YOU know that a historically world-famous inventor had some appalling views on the subject of people who were deaf or had hearing difficulties? This person campaigned to get sign language banned, was against deaf people being allowed to marry, and was in favour of the sterilisation of deaf people. Who was the inventor? Well, it was none other than Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone!

Gunfight at the junction of Third Street

GUN LAWS in the USA are a controversial issue but back in the days of the Wild West, and contrary to the general Hollywood vision, guns were not allowed to be openly carried in most Western towns. Ironically, one of the most famous events in the Wild West - the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone - was fought ostensibly to enforce these laws.

On 26 October 1881, Virgil Earp, the town sheriff and his two brothers, Wyatt and Morgan, and Doc Holliday went to disarm the Clanton brothers. The famous gun battle actually lasted only 30 seconds with three people dead and did not actually happen at the OK Corral but at the junction of 3rd Street and Freeman Street. I guess Hollywood didn't think this had the same ring to it as Gunfight at the OK Corral.

There was a political backdrop too. The Earps were Republicans, the Clantons were Democrat activists. A year before, Wyatt had stood for Sherriff on a Republican ticket, but surprisingly lost by 60 votes in this staunch Republican town. The simmering suspicion was that the Democrats, through the Clanton's connections with the notorious 'Cowboys' gang, had 'stuffed the ballot boxes' and rigged the vote.

■ **Above: the Republican Earps. Left: the Democrat Clanton brothers**

Women's Lib - and nationalise the railways too

WHO WAS the first woman to run for President of the USA with the backing of a political party? Hilary Clinton you may think, but this is not the case.

The honour goes to Victoria Woodhull who, in 1872, stood as the candidate for the Equal Rights Party, who, although her family were successful stockbrokers, stood for the following:-

- Votes and equality for Women
- Regulation of Monopolies
- Nationalisation of the railways
- Repealing the death penalty
- Welfare for the poor

Unsurprisingly, the press did not like Victoria, and she was viciously attacked by them. Sadly, she was arrested on trumped up charges and thrown into jail three days before the election. The charges were dropped after the election.

Victoria later moved to the UK and became one of the first women to own a motor car. She died in 1927, aged 88.

■ **Victoria Woodhull**

Quiz time!

TIME to get those brain-cells working.* SUSAN McNEILL *has put together these teasers for you...

1 Whose video was claimed to have been speeded up to make him look a better dancer?

2 What are the small undeveloped peas that are served in their pods known as?

3 Which of the American states is nicknamed the Grand Canyon state?

4 In and around which city is four fifths of the Basque population concentrated?

5 Who according to popular legend introduced pasta to Italy in the 13th centur

6 Which of the four Balearic Islands is closest to Spain?

7 What are the inhabitants of Gibraltar known as?

8 What is the acronym for the International Criminal Police Organisation?

9 Which fruit was first grown in 1881 by American horticulturist James H Logan?

10 Which county cricket club would you most likely support if you lived in Cheltenham?

11 What is a smooth thick pulp of sieved fruits or vegetables known as?

12 What is Africa's most northerly country?

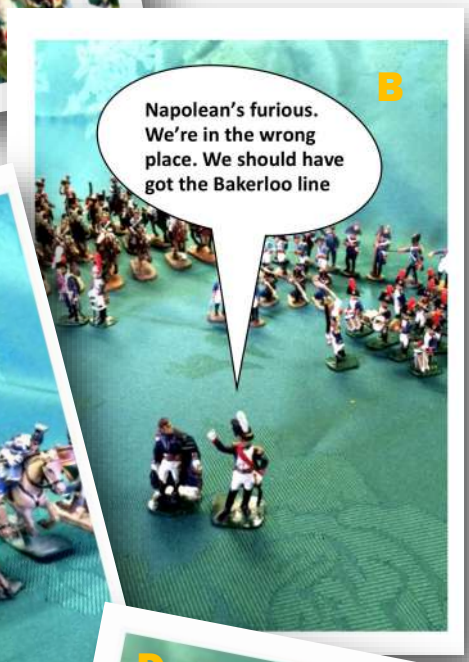
13 Which politician made a movie with a monkey?

14 Which building houses the headquarters of the US Armed Forces?

15 Which of the following fruits contain the most calories - a peach, banana or pear?

...and can you name these military events?

MEANWHILE during lockdown, Maureen Wade's husband Bob has been dusting down his lead soldier collection. Can you guess the famous military events?



All answers overleaf

The Salt Path

JENNI McLAREN reviews the book about a very long ramble, by Rayona Winn:

THIS book is a factual account of a couple in their fifties going on a walking and camping coastal journey.

Their ultimate goal was to cover 630 miles, a journey with adventure, a life changer in so many ways for them both.

They had no false illusions, their property had been repossessed to cover a longstanding debt.

Their family both son and daughter were forging out a career and lifestyle for themselves. Husband Moth meanwhile , had had a previous serious injury which was starting to worsen and was inoperable, and he was unable to work.

Moth's wife, nicknamed Ray, was determined that they would walk 630 miles together, and experience life as they had never experienced before.

Their guide book was their Ordnance Survey map, showing the route of the South West coastal path, from Minehead to Polruan, Devon via Cornwall with all its quirks and pluses, with all its adventures along the way.

Both suitably equipped and working to a tight budget, Moth and Ray began their mammoth Walkathon.

The summer weather, with its blue skies, grassy habitats, pathways and the people they methelped Moth and Ray understand better each others feelings.

The story becomes a Life changer for them both. This is a tale of endurance, tenacity, hope, sadness, suffering, laughter and above all Love.

This book was recommended by my friend Janette, and I encourage Unison members {if they haven't already} to read it .

Read *The Salt Path* and you may find in those pages, something that touches your heart, as it has touched mine.

The book retails at £9.99p, publisher Penguin, on sale at book shops or try your local library.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. **Michael Jackson**
2. **Mange-tout**
3. **Arizona**
4. **Bilbao**
5. **Marco Polo**
6. **Ibiza**
7. **Gibraltarians**
8. **Interpol**
9. **The loganberry**
10. **Gloucestershire**
11. **Puree**
12. **Tunisia**
13. **Ronald Reagan**
14. **The Pentagon**
15. **Pear**

Military events

A. Battle of Marathon
B. Battle of Waterloo
C. Charge of the Light Brigade/ Balaclava
D. Rourke's Drift
E. Relief of Mafeking

Keep smiling through

BETTY PRICE saw this lovely poem on a notice board and thought it should be shared; a good comment on today's strange times:

Smiling is infectious,
You catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner,
And someone saw my grin,
When he smiled, I realised,
I'd passed it onto him.

I thought about that smile,
Then I realised its worth,
A single smile just like mine,
Could travel around the Earth.

So if you feel a smile begin,
Don't leave it undetected,
Lets start an epidemic quick,
And get the world infected.

A lovely lock down surprise

YVONNE HADLEY, the Birmingham Retired Members Secretary had a surprise on her doorstep:

MY LOVELY grandchildren left me a lovely surprise on my doorstep, to brighten up my day. A delicious Afternoon Tea, all packed up in a gift bag. I did have a few tears because I couldn't give them a hug.

They made it all themselves (see below). They are such thoughtful and kind children. I set it all out nice on the table. It was scrumptious. There was so much, I saved some for later.

It is hard for us all not being with our families, but we need to stay safe and hope to see you all as soon as we can.

Come and join us!

ARE you a retired member of UNISON and live in or near Birmingham? If so, come along and meet the Birmingham Retired Members section. We are a busy lot (in normal times!) - and we are always open to suggestions of other things to do.

Interested? Then just get in touch with Yvonne on 07854 155901 to find about membership.

PICTURES: **Members on recent visit to Coventry Cathedral, having fun at the 'Festival of Friendship', and a trip to the National Arboretum**