

Published August 2022

# **LIFE, LOVE & MEMORIES**



# **MEMORY LANE**

**PUBLISHED BY AGE UK OLDHAM**

Welcome to our August Newsletter and we start with a woman who, co-incidentally, was born in August and wrote hundreds of children's books. Enid Blyton was born in 1897 on the 11th August and her books have been among the world's best-sellers since the 1930's with more than 600 million sold. **Did you grow up reading them?**



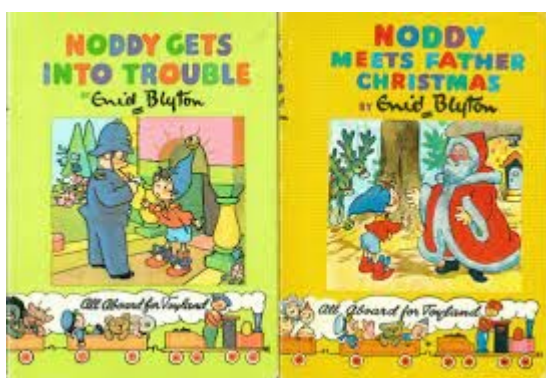
Her first book, *Child Whispers*, a 24-page collection of poems, was published in 1922. Following the commercial success of her early novels, such as *Adventures of the Wishing-Chair* (1937) and *The Enchanted Wood* (1939), Blyton went on to build a literary empire, sometimes producing 50 books a year, in addition to her prolific magazine and newspaper contributions. Her writing was unplanned and sprang largely from her unconscious mind: she typed her stories as events unfolded before her. The sheer volume of her work and the speed with which she produced it led to rumours that Blyton employed an army of ghost writers, a charge she vigorously denied.

Blyton's work became increasingly controversial among literary critics, teachers, and parents beginning in the 1950s, due to the alleged unchallenging nature of her writing and her themes, particularly in the Noddy series. Some libraries and schools banned her works, and from the 1930s until the 1950s the BBC refused to broadcast her stories because of their perceived lack of literary merit. Her books have been criticized as elitist, sexist, racist, xenophobic, and at odds with the more progressive environment that was emerging in post-World War II Britain, but they have continued to be bestsellers since her death in 1968.

She felt she had a responsibility to provide her readers with a strong moral framework, so she encouraged them to support worthy causes. In particular, through the clubs she set up or supported, she encouraged and organised them to raise funds for animal and paediatric charities.

Growing up we had no idea of the controversy surrounding the books that we were reading and sat engrossed in Noddy and as we grew older the Secret Seven and Famous Five together with many other Enid Blyton books.

**DO YOU REMEMBER?:** Secret Seven: Peter (the society's head), Janet (Peter's sister), Pam, Barbara, Jack, Colin and George, (Jack's sister).  
The Famous Five: Julian, Dick, Anne and George and their dog Timothy.



## **Dorothy Shirley-Emerson**

Dorothy Ada Shirley was born on 15th May, 1939 in Failsworth, the daughter of a newsagent. After he sold the business the family moved to Lees.

Dorothy never sat the 11+. She attended New Moston Secondary Modern School where she developed her talents as an athlete.

At the age of 13 years, she took a technical exam which enabled her to attend a commercial school in Manchester. She later gained 5 GCE "O" levels at a Further Education College.



As a child Dorothy used to practise high-jump by jumping over fences and the washing line in the back garden. In her own words, "I would skip along with the papers (she delivered papers for her dad) and jump over all the gates and walls, just for fun and because I could. The highest was 14, Kingston Ave. It had a high wall and a high fence and it was an early ambition to jump that wall".

She first represented her school in the High Jump, then the city of Manchester and then the county of Lancashire. Aged 11 years she was training on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, in addition to Saturday mornings. Dorothy was coached in the Scissor Jump and the Western Roll.

At the age of 19, Dorothy was chosen to represent England at the Empire Games in Cardiff. Just 2 years later, she was one of only 8 British medallists at the 1960s Olympics in Rome, where she gained Silver.



On her way to a Silver Medal in Rome

**At the Rome Olympics, Dorothy defied the critics, who thought that at 5ft 6ins she was too short, by jumping a personal best of 5ft 8.5ins. She was the last Olympic high-jump medallist for Great Britain and Northern Ireland.**

**With the other high-jump medallists in Rome in 1960**



**Dorothy also claimed an Empire Games Silver Medal, a European Bronze Medal, as well as 2 indoor championships, and she was the undefeated Northern champion for 14 years. She missed the 1964 Olympics due to injury and finished 8th in the Mexico Olympics in 1968.**

**At the Women's Amateur Athletic Association Championships in 1968**



**While competing in the Commonwealth Games in Australia, she discovered that a number of open tickets were available for athletes who wanted to stay on. Dorothy got one and spent several happy months as a nanny. She then sailed home, deciding to see something of the world by taking in Bombay, Aden and Gibraltar.**

**Once home she got a job working for the CWS in Manchester, looking after publicity and visitors. She very much enjoyed the work but after 5 years she was made redundant, so she then embarked upon a teacher training course for mature students at Chorley College.**



So it was that she became a PE teacher at Bentham Grammar School near Lancaster. Around this time Dorothy was constantly borrowing her father's car. One day her dad said that he had saved up money for her wedding, and as it wasn't on the horizon, would she like it used to purchase a car instead? Dorothy agreed, and she ended up with a new Fiat 500 which cost £417. The custard coloured car became her constant companion on the journey from North Lancashire to Lees.

She later continued a successful and satisfying teaching career as a primary school teacher at St Michael's Primary School in Alkington, Middleton.

Soon after she started teaching, Dorothy met her husband to be, Jack Emerson. He was a graphic designer and part-time cabaret magician; a member of the Magic Circle. After a courtship of around 4 years they were married for 24 years until Jack's death in 1999, aged 70 after suffering from renal failure for some time. Dorothy retired from teaching a year later, aged 60.



Dorothy and Jack on their wedding day



In addition to her memories, Jack left Dorothy with another skill; that of entertainer. As the cabaret scene changed, so did Jack's act. He became a children's entertainer and Punch and Judy man. Taken ill during a show, Dorothy jumped up to take over despite having no experience other than watching Jack for years.

In June 2005, aged 65 and now living in New Moston, Dorothy was honoured with an invitation to a star-studded evening reception at Buckingham Palace.

She was one of around 500 surviving British Olympic medallists invited to the unique event, to celebrate the centenary of the British Olympic Association of which the Queen is patron. Dame Kelly Holmes and Sir Steve Redgrave were among the guests invited. Dorothy was looking forward to meeting up with people like Mary Peters.



Despite having lots of hobbies, Dorothy felt very lonely after her husband died. For years she had volunteered as a high-jump coach, but as time went on there were fewer volunteering opportunities.

Dorothy at the Oddfellows

Dorothy in 2013 when she won “The Unsung Hero in Sports Award”.

Dorothy decided to join the Oddfellows, the UK’s oldest friendly society, and she never looked back. She met quite a few widows and other people on their own and was made to feel very welcome. In 2019 she became the Deputy District chairman.



Dorothy at 80



Dorothy’s Olympic Silver Medal is the highlight of her athletic career. She says that she is well satisfied with it as it is real silver, whereas the gold medal is only gold-plated and she knows of one woman whose gold all wore off!



## FEEDBACK FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE OF OLDHAM

I hope you enjoyed reading Rosemary's article on the famous High Jumper, Dorothy Emerson and I'm sure some of you will remember her. If you do and have any memories you would like to share with our readers please get in touch.

### **Feedback from last month's article on Bernard Cribbins.**

Doris Slattery phoned to say she had read the article and that Bernard Cribbins was in her husband's class at school and they bumped into him on a bus when they were courting. At the time he was working at the Coliseum.



It's the first time Doris had read the newsletter and was absolutely thrilled with it and is now going to receive future copies.

*Thanks to Doris for sharing this information via Dee Johnson (Visitor Volunteer).*

Sadly, Bernard Cribbins passed away on 27th July. We send our sympathy to his family and friends.

We are always happy to receive feedback on any of the articles in our newsletters and are delighted when we hear that a long lost memory has been brought to the fore, especially if it brings back happy memories.

If you have anything you would like to share with us or would be interested in having your Life Story done, please contact:

Anne or Nicola

Telephone: 0161 633 0213



## THE BUILDINGS OF OLDHAM

### CIVIC CENTRE



Outside the  
Queen Elizabeth  
Hall



Inside the  
Queen Elizabeth  
Hall

The low-level western section of the Civic Centre was originally built as offices for the housing and social services departments as well as the Regional Health Authority and was completed in 1962. The facility was extended to include a 15-storey tower, designed by Cecil Howitt & Partners and built by Henry Boot so enabling the council to move out of the ageing Oldham Town Hall into the enlarged complex. The enlarged complex, which incorporated an event and conference venue known as the "Queen Elizabeth Hall" intended to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother on 1 March 1977. The Mayor's Ball is held in the hall, a yearly event that supports the Mayor's chosen local charities.

The facility had its own cold war nuclear bunker built to protect senior councillors, council officers, police officers, engineers, doctors and communications experts in the event of a nuclear attack. The tower in the facility, which now forms the headquarters of the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham, is 175 feet (53 metres) high. The only other structure of comparable height and scale is Oldham Church.

In January 1982 Steve Davis became the first snooker player to achieve a televised maximum break in a match against John Spencer in the Lada Classic at the Civic Centre.

The Victoria Cross awarded during the First World War to Sergeant John Hogan, who was born in Royton, currently displayed in the Civic Centre, was presented to Oldham Council in October 1983.



*Sue's poem*

## THE TAXMAN

When you start work you will be told lots of different facts  
Someone will explain to you that you have to pay your tax  
If you think you can avoid it your chances are so few  
Just take a look behind you the taxman heads the queue  
If you try evasion without a thought or care  
The taxman will be stalking you because he wants his share  
It doesn't matter to him if you are rich or you are poor  
He's lurking in the background, he's knocking on your door  
So you think your savings will be safe nicely tucked away?  
He's there to tax the interest, oh yes he'll make you pay  
He doesn't give concessions he gets whatever he can  
There's no excuse, he wants his dues, he's not a patient man  
Even when you've left this earth and gone to pastures new  
And St Peter's at the pearly gates waiting to welcome you  
As you approach you see there's someone standing to his right  
The taxman's there before you, he's got you in his sight  
He will not let you rest in peace he'll still be at your back  
Don't blame him, it's not his fault, his job is to attack  
But spare a thought for the poor taxman, he has a job to do  
He may work for HMRC but he pays his taxes too



## REMEMBER WHEN — CALL THE DOCTOR!

When everyone had one doctor and he would do home visits day or night.



We thought it cured everything.

There were no soft play areas and if you had a fall it was a case of rub it or 'kiss it better' and a plaster put on the open wound. If you had a fall in the street to distract you from your injury you would be asked 'Let's look if you've cracked the pavement' and you were off playing again. If you were unfortunate enough to fall in the school yard iodine (*which stung like mad*) would be applied, usually followed by 'the plaster' and you were back outside playing again.



If you were rushed into hospital, no paramedics, no sirens, just two ambulance men with a stretcher and a bell on the ambulance to rush you on your way..



There was no ringing up for Doctors appointments, you went to the surgery and waited your turn. If there was more than one doctor the words 'WHO ARE YOU FOR?' could be heard whilst the queuing was sorted out amongst the patients.



Remember when children weren't told they were going to have a baby brother or sister and another sibling arrived on the scene as if by magic. Some children thought the lady with the black bag had brought it with her (*Midwife*). And as for the new dad he had to wait outside!



And finally we had never heard of 'TRIAGE'



## PEOPLE AT WORK

This month's story is for a Volunteer and a very worthy winner of an award.  
Read Jean's story and see the photos on the next pages...

Congratulations to all three winners of the awards.



# People at Work

Did anyone famous visit your place of work? Did you play a part in the visit?

Did you go to any interesting places relating to your job?

Did you work at a famous place?

Do you remember any funny stories you can remember from your working life?

Do you know any Volunteers that are worthy of a mention?

If you have a short story that you would like to share with us

**CONTACT: 0161 633 0213**



## **AWARD FOR SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY MRS JEAN E MARTIN**

On 7<sup>th</sup> June, ladies of Failsworth Townswomen's Guild celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at the Broadbent Luncheon Club with an afternoon tea party. However, for one member it became a very special occasion. The members used the party to celebrate the forthcoming 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Jean Martin who has been a Townswoman for 60 years and to her surprise and delight she was presented with a certificate and badge to honour her long service, along with two of her Failsworth friends who received certificates and badges for 25 years.

During that time she has held many positions including minutes secretary, guild secretary, guild chairman and from 2008 she was our president. Jean's knowledge of TG procedures was immense and we could always rely on her for help and guidance.



Left to right June Duggan, Jean Martin and Jose Jarvis

Jean has also worked tirelessly for her local community and unbeknown to Jean her name was put forward to TG headquarters for the National ABC Award (Above and Beyond the Call of duty) which is awarded by the TG officers to a Townswoman who has done extraordinary work in the community, and at the Townswomen's AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> June in Scarborough Jean was announced as the national winner 2022.

For over 60 years from 1959 she was an active member of the RVS as local organiser for the Failsworth office and the Oldham office, and regional organiser for the Greater Oldham Area. She was a leader and delivery person for Meals on Wheels and Books on Wheels and also gave lectures to local parental groups on drugs issues as well as co-ordinating the Royal Oldham Hospital tea bar.

*Cont...*

*Cont...*

From 1966 Jean was Project Manager for the Broadbent Luncheon Club on Lord Lane, serving hot meals to people attending the many social groups using the Club. In 2010 the RVS Luncheon Club received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services and Jean was proud to be able to attend the ceremony as their representative.

Over the years she was also greatly involved with Old Peoples Welfare, Failsworth Home Watch, Failsworth Charity Appeals committee and Failsworth Carnival committee.

And as if all that wasn't enough, Jean was a magistrate on the Oldham Bench from 1977.

Imagine Jean's surprise and amazement when the ABC trophy was presented to her at her home recently. Even with a young family to take care of she was always ready and willing wherever and whenever she was needed. Helping your neighbours and your local community is something that comes naturally to Jean and she was overwhelmed to think that her work has been recognised by the TG officers, but her friends at Failsworth TG who nominated her have no doubt that she is a worthy winner.



Jean receiving the ABC award

## TV ADVERT QUIZ

Can you fill in the blanks from the TV adverts, going through the years?:

1. You'll be a little lovelier each day with .....
2. and can I have my own ..... called .....
3. The man from ..... says .....
4. All because the ..... loves .....
5. You do the ..... and .....and put the ..... back.
6. .... as the moment when the ..... went .....
7. The ..... sign means happy .....
8. and then they ..... them into .....ha,ha,ha
9. I'd like to teach the ..... to .....
10. Dad, do you know the ..... on my .....

See next page for answers.....



## TV ADVERT QUIZ — ANSWERS

1. You'll be a little lovelier each day, with fabulous **PINK CAMAY** (Soap)
2. and can I have my own **CHAUFFEUR** called **LES** (Churchill Insurance)
3. The man from **DELMONTE**, He says **YES** (Tinned Fruit)
4. All because the **LADY** loves **MILK TRAY** (Box of Chocolates)
5. You do the **SHAKE** and **VAC** and put the **FRESHNESS** back. (Carpet Cleaner).
6. **SWEET** as the moment when the **POD** went **POP** (Birds Eye Peas)
7. The **ESSO** sign means happy **MOTORING** (Petrol)
8. and then they **SMASH** them into **LITTLE PIECES** ha,ha,ha (Instant Potatoes)
9. I'd like to teach the **WORLD** to **SING** (Coca Cola)
10. Dad, do you know the **PIANO'S** on my **FOOT** (PG Tips Tea).

*Jean's recipes from around the world:*



## **KUWAIT**

### **CHICKEN MAJBOOS**

*(This is the National Dish of KUWAIT)*



Serves 6

Cooking time 1 hour

#### **Ingredients:**

2½ cups Basmati Rice

10 pieces of chicken, legs, thighs, wings

1 cup of chopped onion

5 cloves of garlic

Water to boil chicken

Cup of extra water, if needed

2 lemons/limes

6 bay leaves

6 cloves

5 cardamom pods

½ teasp cumin

¼ teasp cinnamon powder

1 teasp curry

¾ teasp coriander

½ teasp turmeric

Salt and Black Pepper

*Continued on next page...*

*Jean's recipes from around the world continued...*



## **KUWAIT**

### **CHICKEN MAJBOOS** continued:



#### **Method:**

Put the chicken pieces in a pan with water and bring to boil.

Whilst boiling, remove excess fat from chicken...

then add spices, onion, and garlic into boiling pan.

Boil for 45 mins or until chicken is soft and tender.

Remove the onion, garlic and other solid ingredients from chicken stock, for use later.

In the stock put basmati rice (if not enough stock, add reserved water).

Whilst rice is boiling...

Add oil to another pan and fry the chicken until brown and crispy.

When rice is ready, put chicken on top of rice.

Mix well with the rice and serve with parsley.





## OUR HISTORY — THE HORSE AND CYCLE PARADE

The first Horse and Cycle Parade was held in May 1897 initiated by cyclists in the area who set up a committee of representatives from all the local cycling clubs to organise the event. The aim was to raise funds for local charitable causes and the money raised at the first Parade was £205.18s.5d., going to the Oldham Free Breakfast Mission. In later years funds went to such organisations as the Poor Children's Home in Castleshaw, the Poor Children's Association and the League of the Blind.

The Parade proved to be extremely popular with an estimated 100,000 people lining the seven mile route starting at Oldham County Football Ground (*Latics*). The crowds were delighted to see the majority of cyclists in fancy dress including the children. Two fire engines, beautifully cleaned and decorated, the firemen and their horses wearing their finest, caused quite a stir. Local companies including the London and North West Railway, Breweries and the Corporation, all allowed their horses to join the parade along with Morris dancers and Brass and Military Bands.

A grand Fancy Dress Ball was held in the evening of the Parade when the prizes were presented. In 1903, this was held at the Drill Hall with an admission fee of sixpence, free to cyclists wearing fancy dress. Waterhead Brass Band playing all the latest music accompanied the dancing.

The 1925 Parade incorporated the crowning of Oldham's first May Queen, Miss Lilian Greaney, however, the event did not pass smoothly. With the May Queen and her attendants on the platform accompanied by the Mayor in full robes of office, the edifice collapsed in one piece to the ground. Fortunately no one was hurt and the ceremony continued with great success.

The parade proved so popular and profitable in Oldham that some of the neighbouring areas such as Lees began to organise their own version.

Despite its popularity, May 1934, saw the end of the Horse and Cycle Parade as a regular event. There was a brief revival in the 1950s but it never regained its earlier popularity and eventually died out, being replaced by the Oldham Carnival.



## ANIMAL CORNER

### Gertie the Duck

The story of how a duck helped a city recover from war:

In the spring of 1945, as World War II slowly ground toward Allied victory, a duck laid a clutch of nine eggs on a piling near the Wisconsin Avenue bridge. The eggs' precarious perch alarmed watchful bridgetenders and attracted the attention of *Milwaukee Journal* outdoor reporter Gordon MacQuarrie. Over the next two months, his lively series of articles about the duck family's adventures - complemented by reports in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* and local radio - drew flocks of human viewers to the bridge to await the hatching of the ducklings. MacQuarrie dubbed the mother duck "Gertie," although the rival *Sentinel* sometimes called her "Elizabeth." As national media, including *Life* and *Newsweek*, picked up Gertie's story, enthralled Americans sent her cards and telegrams.

Gertie's first duckling, whose misadventures MacQuarrie spun into a tale of the renegade "Black Bill," hatched on May 30. Most of the other eggs soon followed, but a stormy night and the loss of one in the Milwaukee River prompted the removal of the whole family to firmer ground. The family temporarily relocated to the window of the nearby Gimbel's department store before they were paraded east to the Juneau Park lagoon.

The story of Gertie and her five surviving ducklings struck a pleasantly distracting chord among Milwaukeeans exhausted by the war. The *Journal* and the *Sentinel* both repackaged their popular articles as books.



Encyclopedia of Milwaukee  
Amanda I. Seligman

The City Council ordered the top of Gertie's piling to be given to the Milwaukee Public Museum. In following years, writers and artists preserved Gertie's story in Milwaukee's collective memory. In addition to later newspaper articles, writers produced a children's book about her story. In 1997, Gertie and her brood landed on the bridge in the form of a bronze sculpture by artist Gwendolyn Gillen so that new generations of Milwaukeeans can meet the bird who charmed the city.

## SPORTING GREATS - WIMBLEDON

This year is the centenary of the **Centre Court** at Wimbledon so for the Sports Page this month we take a look at how it all began:

In 1868, the All England Club was established on four acres of meadowland outside London. The club was originally founded to promote croquet, another lawn sport, but the growing popularity of tennis led it to incorporate tennis lawns into its facilities. In 1877, the All England Club published an announcement in the weekly sporting magazine *The Field* that read: "The All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club, Wimbledon, propose to hold a lawn tennis meeting open to all amateurs, on Monday, July 9, and following days. Entrance fee, one pound, one shilling.

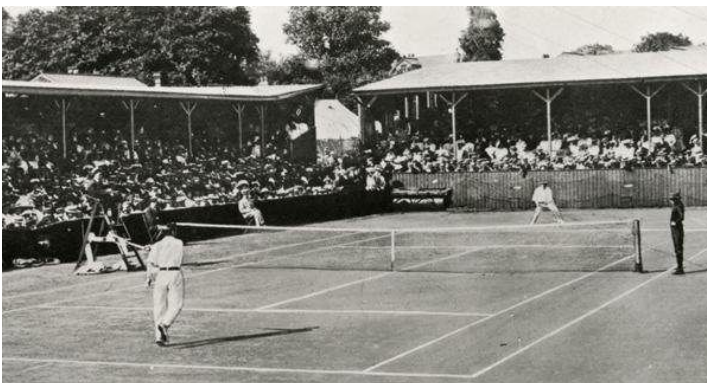
They purchased a 25-guinea trophy and drew up formal rules for tennis. It decided on a rectangular court 78 feet long by 27 feet wide; adapted the real tennis method of scoring based on a clock face - i.e., 15, 30, 40, game; established that the first to win six games wins a set; and allowed the server one fault. These decisions, largely the work of club member Dr. Henry Jones, remain part of the modern rules.

In tennis, **love is a word that represents a score of zero**, and has been used as such since the late 1800s. It's not perfectly clear how this usage of love came to be, but the most accepted theory is that those with zero points were still playing for the "love of the game" despite their losing score.

Spencer Gore, a 27-year-old rackets player from Wandsworth, became the first Wimbledon champion by defeating William Marshall, a 28-year-old real tennis player, in three straight sets in a final that lasted 48 minutes.

In 1884, the Lady's Singles was introduced at Wimbledon, and Maud Watson won the first championship.

1877 First ever Wimbledon Tennis Match



Centre Court 1922



**PUBLISHED BY AGE UK OLDHAM  
LIFE STORY VOLUNTEERS  
EDITOR  
JOAN HOLMES**



# Life Story

Every life has a story...

