

# Poynton u3a News

[poyntonu3a.org.uk](http://poyntonu3a.org.uk)

Issue 38-2

20<sup>th</sup> May 2022

## Editorial

Welcome to the thirty third edition of these electronic newsletters.

As always, if you would like to write an article or provide some pictures, send them to [news@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:news@poyntonu3a.org.uk).

## Poynton u3a Update

### History Group 2

What, you may ask, do: The Duke of Edinburgh, Mary Queen of Scots, the exploration of the Antarctic, Quarry Bank Mill and the role of cotton in the history of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell have in common?

Well, other than they are all set in the past of course, they have all been topics a group of u3a historians had researched and discussed over the last few months.

We are a small group meeting monthly on a Wednesday afternoon over a scone and coffee in the restaurant at Brookside Garden Centre. As you can see our remit is quite varied. Basically, we will look at any historical topic any one of us might suggest to be of interest. One or two then go away and do a bit more research to lead the conversation the next month and for the rest of us to join in.

The Mary Queen of Scots interest was sparked when one of the group visited the Old Hall Hotel in Buxton and saw it proudly boasting that “Mary Queen of Scots, aka ‘Bloody Mary’ stayed here”. Imagine the outrage! Poor Mary Queen of Scots maligned as ‘Bloody Mary’. Well, it was fun to find out more about her and her claim to the English throne after the death of her cousin Queen Mary who was ‘aka Bloody Mary’!

Over the months we’ve developed into a nice group of friends ... but are always open to new ideas if you’d like to join us! What bits of history would you like to know more about?

**Geoff Reason**



*Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity  
by Nicholas Hilliard - 1578*

## Local History Group

It has been proposed that we start a (Very) Local History Group. Sue Badger has offered to be the Group Organiser. If you are interested in joining such a group, please email [groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk).

## General Meetings

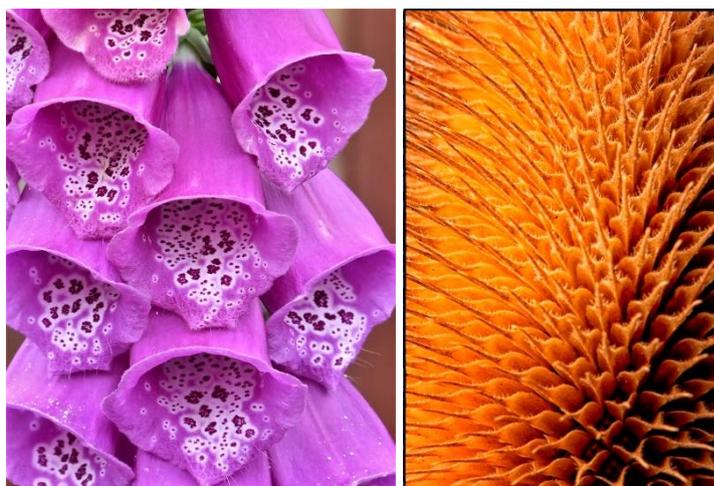
The next meeting is on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June when Tony Bostock will be talking about Medieval Salt Making in Cheshire and then on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July Lynn Moores and a colleague will be describing The Life of a Magistrate.

It is possible there will not be a meeting in August for the reasons described on page 15. Please check the meeting is going ahead nearer the time.

## Photography Group

We started our May meeting by looking at our photos of patterns. These were very varied, ranging from those found in the home, to patterns in nature, for example flowers, and those within and outside public buildings.

Peter then gave a short presentation on the subject of "Narrow". He projected several photos that he'd found on the internet, giving various interpretations of the theme, which gave us all ideas for our potential creations!



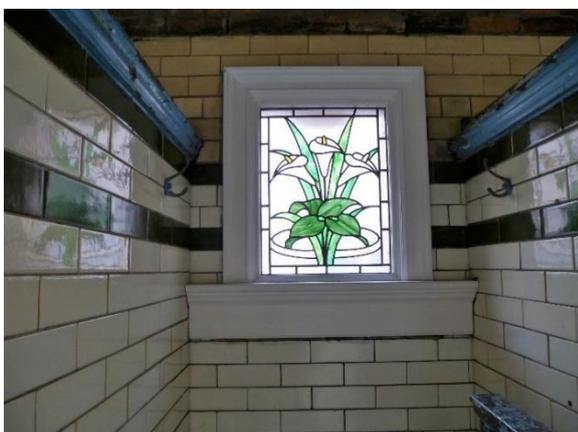
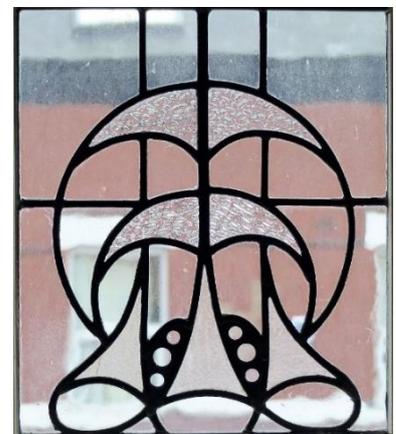
Janet then did the member topic which showed her love of birds and wildlife. She visited Marshside RSPB, on the Lancashire coast, and had taken some amazing photos of the bird-life there.

After the tea-break we had time to review the photos that some of the group had taken at the April outing to Victoria Baths. For those of you who haven't been, Victoria Baths, on Hathersage Road in Manchester, was opened in 1906, and described as "The most splendid municipal bathing institution in the country". No expense was spared, which included beautiful stained-glass windows, mosaic floors, patterned tiles and terracotta. It had several pools and an impressive Turkish Baths suite. Sadly, it closed in 1993 as the council couldn't justify the ongoing costs, and the building rapidly deteriorated over the next few years. However, the Victoria Baths Trust and Friends of Victoria Baths carried out a lot of work making the property safe and raised large amounts of money which was used in the restoration of the building and its interior. At present it is partially restored and the aim is for full restoration. It is open for the public to view every Wednesday from 11am (April to

October) and well worth a visit. As you can see from some of the photos the stained glass and tiles are lovely.

Peter mentioned a photography exhibition which is being held at the Museum of Science and Industry and continues until 14<sup>th</sup> August. It is called Amazonia, by the world-famous photographer Sebastiao Salgado. It shows his vision of the Brazilian rainforest and sounds very interesting. Details can be found on the internet.

Finally, our outing in May will be to Shrewsbury, for those who want to come. Look out for the photos in the next Newsletter!



Sandra Batchelor

## Walking Group

In May, our Poynton u3a walking group met as usual on the 1st Thursday morning of the month. It was a very nice walk, in excellent company. The walk began in Bollington and was about 5 miles long, including about 800 feet of ascent. The weather was very kind to us, and our efforts in ascending during the walk afforded us some lovely views along the way.

A group of fifteen happy walkers thus set off down Church Road and headed towards Ingersley Vale, turning left through the woods, across the River Dane, and round the back of Savio House. Declining the opportunity of a short-cut back along the Gritstone Trail and an early visit to the pub, we instead headed across the fields, and after drawing breath following our steady climb up, we proceeded along Oakenbank Lane in the Rainow direction.

After some time, we took a very pleasant path to our left, giving us lovely views of Big Low and Billinge Hill ahead of us, and Kerridge ridge and White Nancy behind. This path came out at Back-of-the-Crofts on Kiskhill Lane. We turned left up the lane, skirting Big Low, and our steady ascending over this stretch gave us some delightful views right across the Cheshire Plain. The



conversations amongst the group at this point became a little bit quieter as we saved our breath for the rising ground. As we reached the turnoff to Rainowlow, with a good hour of walking under our belts, we decided it was a good time and an excellent place to take a break for coffee and/or a sandwich.

With our batteries recharged, we soldiered on down the lane, and eventually crossed Blaze Hill at Billinge Farm, near the quarries. Opting for the right-hand fork, we followed the path as we did our last piece of ascending, past Winterside Farm, giving us more great views. Branching off to the left, we took the path which dropped down across the field, through a little wood, and across Mellow Brook. Before very long, this path brought us out on to Hedge Row, just where the Cheshire Hunt pub used to be (also known as The Quiet Woman, if you go back further than that).

We walked back along Hedge Row, on to Spuley Lane, and down to Sowcar.

Removing our boots, and stepping into some footwear more suitable for the remainder of the day, most of the group retired to The Vale Inn for a nice lunch, with the warm feeling that we had really earned it!

As always, any members are very welcome to join us on future walks. If you are interested, just send an email to [groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk).



**Nigel Burin and Marilyn Westbrook**

## **Photography and Walking Groups in June**

Both these groups normally meet in the first week of the month. However, in June, because this would clash with the Jubilee celebrations, the meetings have been moved to the second week.

## **Members' Contributions**

### **Norton Priory**

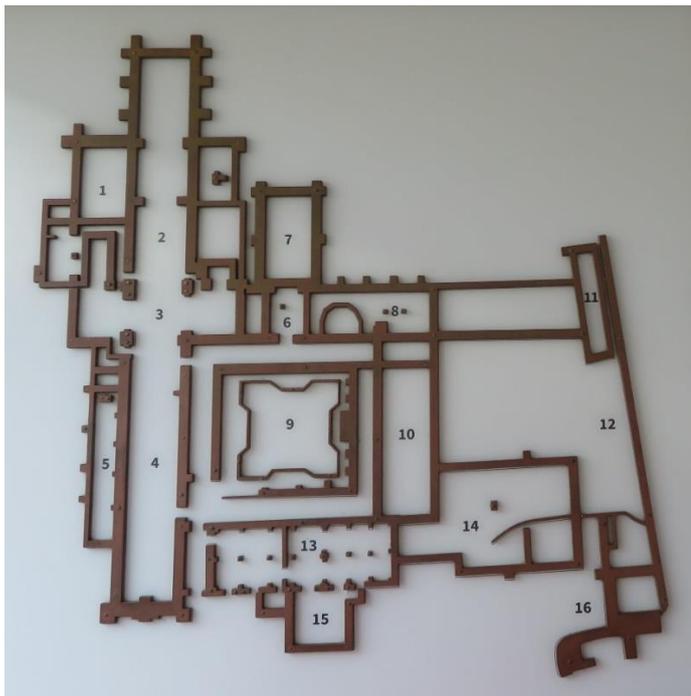
In late April, the Science & Technology group had an interesting day out at Norton Priory. There were a lot of interesting facets to the visit augmented by a guided tour of the archaeology and a talk on Paget's disease. The following provides a flavour of the visit

#### *The History....*

In 1115, a community of Augustinian canons was founded on the south bank of the Mersey where it narrows to form the Runcorn Gap. This was the only practical site where the Mersey could be crossed between Warrington and Birkenhead. In 1134, the priory was moved to a site in Norton, a village 3 miles to the east of Runcorn.

Augustinians are members of Christian religious orders that follow the Rule of St. Augustine, written in about 400AD by Augustine of Hippo. [This was not the St. Augustine who was sent from Rome to England to bring Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons and ultimately become the first Archbishop of Canterbury.] The priory members are canons and not monks. The canons led a semi-monastic life, while remaining committed to pastoral care appropriate to their primary vocation as priests.

In 1391, the priory's status was raised to that of a mitred abbey. A mitred abbey was one in which the abbot was given permission to use pontifical insignia, including the mitre.



Significant areas:

- 1 - North East Chapel, where wealthy benefactors were buried.
- 2 - Chancel, where the high altar was located.
- 3 - Choir, where the canons would sing psalms and pray eight times each day.
- 4 - Nave, the public part of the church.
- 6 - Chapter House, where the canons had a daily meeting.
- 9 - Cloister, an open garden surrounded by covered walkways.
- 10 - Refectory, where canons would eat their meals together in silence.
- 13- Undercroft, the storage area for the monastery.
- 14- Kitchens
- 15 - Abbot's Tower, a private apartment for the abbot.

The abbey was closed in 1536, as part of the dissolution of the monasteries. Nine years later the surviving structures, together with the manor of Norton, were purchased by Sir Richard Brooke, who built a Tudor house on the site, incorporating part of the abbey. This was replaced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by a Georgian house. The Brooke family left the house in 1921, and it was partially demolished in 1928. In 1966, the site was given in trust for the use of the general public and through several phases we arrive at the visitor attraction of today.



*The Tudor house with the Abbot's Tower still present*



*The Georgian House*

## *The Archaeology....*

The site is recognised as Europe's most excavated monastic site. It is not the largest abbey site but has been the subject of extensive studies which continue to this day.



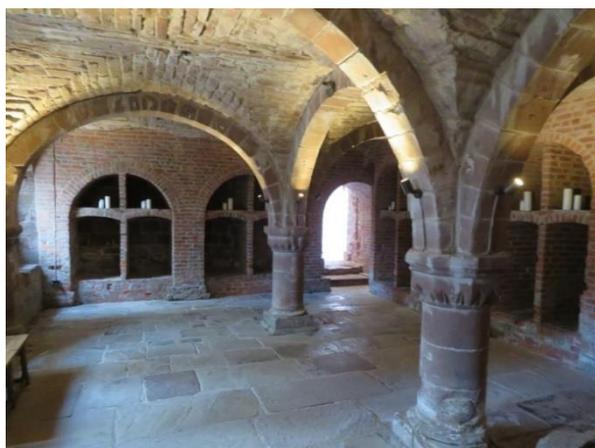
*A view looking down on the main features of the site. The church stretches from the left into the middle distance. To the right are the Cloisters in the foreground with the Chapter House behind.*



The Science & Technology Group being informed about the archaeology and the excavations

## *The Undercroft.....*

The Undercroft was the storage area for the abbey. It is very solidly built with a fine vaulted ceiling which has survived to the present day. It became the entrance hall for the two major houses that were built after rest of the abbey was destroyed.



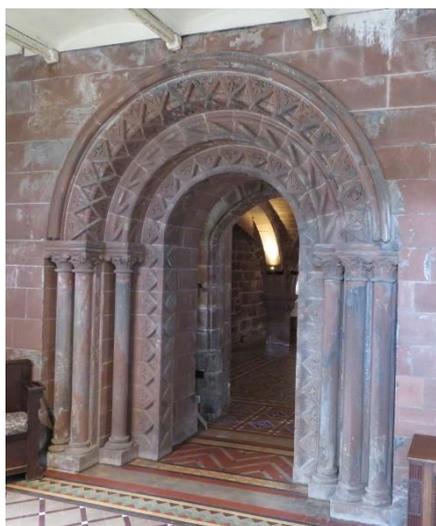
*Views of two separate rooms in the Undercroft*



*Victorian tiles in the floor of the Undercroft. RB = Richard Brooke.*



*An original abbey passageway which runs alongside the Undercroft*



Two doors into the Undercroft which are side-by-side. The one on the right is from the time the Undercroft was built. The one on the left was added later when you obviously need two grand doorways to your manorial entrance hall.

## *The Statue of St. Christopher.....*

One of Norton Priory's greatest treasures is the twice-life size statue of St. Christopher. It is internationally important as an outstanding piece of medieval colossal sculpture



It was carved from local red sandstone from Windmill Hill and can be dated to the period 1375-1400 by the style of the carving. It is likely that it was made when the priory was raised to the status of abbey in 1391. The statue was originally painted in bright colours.

The statue was designed to stand against a wall and was probably displayed inside the abbey church.

After the abbey was closed down, the Brooke family built a house on the site. They kept the statue of St Christopher and it appears in an illustration of the house made in 1727.

Eventually when the Georgian mansion replaced the Tudor house, the statue was moved to the garden as an ornamental feature. It was even painted to make it look like it was made from bronze.

The carving shows the legend of St Christopher carrying a child across a river and feeling him to be extremely heavy. The child turned out to be Christ carrying the weight of the world.



## *The Museum.....*

The museum contains an archaeological collection and information about Paget's disease.

The arches on the right have been reconstructed from the remains of the first cloister which were used as infill when the second cloister was built.



When the skeletons buried in the church were excavated, it was found that a much higher proportion of them than would be expected suffered from Paget's disease which produces malformation of the bones. This led to Norton Priory becoming a centre of excellence for Paget's disease.



### *Replica Medieval Bell.....*

In the grounds of the priory is a bell which is a faithful replica of a medieval bell cast at Norton Priory. During the archaeological excavations of the outer courtyard of the priory in 1976, the remains of a bell foundry were discovered. A bell had been cast in a large pit, in the bottom of which about 200 fragments of the mould lay scattered. It proved possible to re-assemble the mould from the fragments and the complete outer portion, the cope, was reconstructed. The cope provided the outer appearance of the bell with the exception of the canons used for suspension. These have been reconstructed by comparison with medieval bells elsewhere.



A replica of the medieval bell was cast in a special metal, spheroidal graphite iron. (The original bell was cast in a copper-tin alloy.) The bell was rung for the first time in May 1977 at a ceremony dedicating the bell to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the year of her Silver Jubilee.

### *The Walled Garden.....*

The priory has a large walled garden situated about a quarter of a mile from the main site. Apparently, the Brooke family didn't want their visitors to see the gardeners at work.



**Derek Gatenby**

## Poynton Show

In our close domestic life, we rarely come near to animals; maybe there's a squirrel in the garden, hastening headfirst down a tree, or snails intent to feast on my seedling lettuces; sometimes a frog in the pond glares angrily at us.

Of course, there are butterflies reeling drunkenly about on sunny days, and small birds who chirp and chatter, but none are close enough to really examine. Even the fearsome face, there was once, of a sparrowhawk that had just dined.....

Oh, yes, there was the ferret and the rabbit and the cat who gave birth in the garden ....but those are other stories.

No, I mean real animals; huge Shire horses with shining coats and be-ribboned manes and tails; we marvel at their wide feet and polished hooves, at the gleaming brass of their harness.

We love to see the sheep and hear their alarmed cries as they try to huddle closer to each other. Occasionally we have been allowed to gently dig our fingers into their deep fleeces to feel their oily warmth.

And where can we see these, and get so close, smell and sometimes touch them?

Poynton Show, that's when. Oh, we have missed it these last years; the faint sound of lively music that reaches your ears as you walk down the road towards Poynton Park. It's the promise of an enjoyable day. It's the day of the annual show.

We enjoy entering the billowing marquees full of interesting things; poultry in cages...the warm dusty smell of a hen takes me back to childhood days, when the neighbour kept hens, and often forgot to count an egg; warm from the nest, it was secretly handed over "for the children" because that was post-war rationing time. And how we enjoyed the firm white and melting yellow yolk with our bread-and-butter tea!

Some fowls are startlingly ugly to our eyes, but still are prize winners; others, little furry bundles with feathery feet, seem more attractive than a child's bedtime toy. Some murmur quietly as they peck at food, others strut and shriek warnings at unseen adversaries in next door cages.

There are rabbits, large and small, noses and whiskers twitching, with plain short fur, some with long floppy ears, and those with patterns and patches of colour. Sometimes there are small things....mice... scuttering about or hiding in bundles of bedding; but I don't stop at those. Though I know *these* are treasured pets, a long time ago when living in cheap student accommodation, we were infested with the creatures, who got into our scant food store....we obtained a cat, and there were no more scuffling and rustlings in the night, and the place smelled cleaner.

There are horses attempting what seems impossible; to jump over obstacles, their young riders dressed in immaculate jackets.

Cows sit down heavily on straw, mooing and idly munching, while large bulls, wild-eyed, tow their handlers from the field.

And there are other delights; jars of jam in jewel colours loaded onto trestle tables, castles of cakes, heaped scones plate-by-plate, with brightly iced cupcakes. Golden-brown pies and newly-baked loaves stand shoulder to shoulder.

Fine lace, needlepoint and knitting are on display, with photographs and paintings; what a lot of talent we have here in our area!

Children show models made from boxes or construction toys and amuse the public with ingenious animals made with vegetables and fruit. They even present small gardens made in a box or tray; the variety of designs are amazing.

The sound of youngsters screaming means you are approaching the fairground area and it is fun to watch their faces as they are whirled about on the rides.

There are cheeses with strange names like Bishop's Knees or Cornish Blue Trollop; the sausages cooking make your mouth water, unless you prefer the burgers! And for "afters" you could choose brightly-coloured sweets, like the great soft cushiony marshmallows in pink-and-white that tempt me.

Each year there is something different to watch; daredevil motorbike riders, or it might be a real robot or huge trucks with giant wheels.

There are tractors and machines for those who like them; cars of all ages, some so old that people say "my grandad's dad had one of them". Even the Fire service attends!

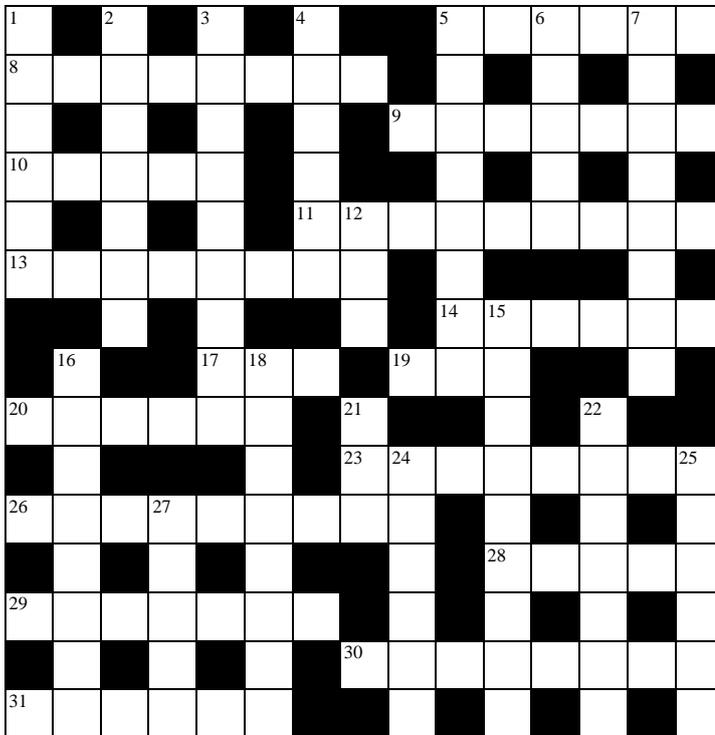
I have forgotten to mention the flowers, fruit and vegetables beautifully arranged; the marquee selling all sorts of goods from books, to hand-crafted jewellery to wooden toys.

It is always a fun day, at Poynton Show, whether you like to hear live music from a brass band or watch the young gymnasts performing their routines. And if you tire of it, you can stroll by the lakeside and watch the swans gliding gracefully along and the ducks dipping and diving for food in the calm water.

**Ruth Howard**

## Things to Do

### Crossword No. 43



Submitted by **Nigel Burin** and **Eileen Shore**. If you are interested in being part of the u3a group that compile crosswords, please contact Nigel via [groups@poyntonu3.org.uk](mailto:groups@poyntonu3.org.uk).

### Solution to Crossword No 42

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

### ACROSS

5. Forces valet to be a comic character (6)
8. Revised memoirs, omitting nothing, editor absorbed (8)
9. Foreign legion's drink (4,3)
10. Recall about learner for old Tayside castle (5)
11. Old man circling church to avoid dog (9)
13. Dry place for driving off altogether (8)
14. Make bubbly that's consumed over a long time (6)
17. I take one for John in Scotland (3)
19. Eccentric Bond villain without role (3)
20. Riviera location here in France, and house in Florence (6)
23. Writer dripping bread in drink (8)
26. Outfit for model with French philosopher (9)
28. East European turns to run off with partner (5)
29. Loving, but admits to being a conservative (7)
30. Putting away the remains in some irritation (8)
31. Article tied patron saint (6)

### DOWN

1. Exotic insect is most pleasant (6)
2. Kiss a quid (7)
3. Therefore, put no male in charge of work study (9)
4. Dave turned up in North American state (6)
5. This produces no capital growth naturally (4,4)
6. Note the false incisors (5)
7. Turn away foreigner at entrance to embassy (8)
12. Church vestment used in several baptisms (3)
15. Ewes slide all over the place for Alpine bloomer (9)
16. He may get into a row, transferring charges between banks (8)
18. A frenzy of war-cries and whirling blades (3-5)
21. Greek letter and French article (3)
22. Composer's waste disposal unit containing old fishing equipment (7)
24. Massage a digit, mostly, in variable rhythm (6)
25. Come out with energy and mingle (6)
27. State rank (5)

## Sudoku No 33

	8		5		2	6		
						7		
		2		6		3		
		3	8		5			
6		1			7			
					1		4	
	2	5		8				
			7	1	4		5	
7		8						

Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

Below is the solution to No 32

6	4	7	9	1	5	2	8	3
5	2	1	8	7	3	9	4	6
3	8	9	6	4	2	7	5	1
8	7	5	4	3	6	1	9	2
2	3	6	1	5	9	4	7	8
1	9	4	2	8	7	3	6	5
4	6	8	7	2	1	5	3	9
7	5	2	3	9	8	6	1	4
9	1	3	5	6	4	8	2	7

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. Which is the only planet in the solar system which spins clockwise on its axis?
2. In which year did the first golf Masters tournament, held in Augusta Georgia, take place?
3. Who or what is Bluemantle Pursuivant?
4. Of which country is the Bay Cat a native?
5. Where is Winchelsea?

Answers to the quiz in the previous edition

1. What was the colour of William Shakespeare's hair?  
*Red*
2. Which Glenn Miller song was the first to be awarded a golden disc for selling over one million copies?  
*Chattanooga Choo Choo*
3. No place in England is farther than 70, 80 or 90 miles from the sea?  
*70*
4. The oldest national flag was introduced in 1219 in which country?  
*Denmark, a white cross on a red ground*
5. Why was Charles II nicknamed Old Rowley?  
*It was the name of his favourite horse.*

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And finally, a couple of items which may be of interest to our members....

## **Poynton Platinum Jubilee Trail - available until 12<sup>th</sup> June**

The trail consists of seven points of interest around Poynton. Each location has a large purple crown which provides information about a decade of the Queen's 70-year reign and what happened in the world and Poynton in that decade, along with interesting information about the location.

Each location also has an internet link to old photographs, memories from Poynton people and relevant newspaper articles. The first step is to obtain the trail map which is available from the Civic Hall or using the following link -

<https://www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Platinum%20Jubilee%20Trail%20map%20for%20web.pdf>

## **Remember - Platinum Jubilee Park Lane Party on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1.00-4.00pm**

## **Civic Hall Refurbishment Project - Phase 2 - Summer 2022**

The Civic Hall was built in the late 1960's and officially opened in 1971. Phase 1 of the refurbishment works were carried out when the library and civic hall merged in 2014-2015, but not all parts of the building were refurbished. Phase 2, after being delayed by Covid, is now due. Surveys have confirmed that some systems have not been updated for more than 50 years and are in need of urgent replacement.

There are issues with: Asbestos - Electrics and electricity supply - Gas installation - Heating & hot water - Health & safety (including fire alarm, emergency lighting) - Roof - Drains.

Further information and survey forms will be available from the Civic Hall and on the Town Council website – [www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk). Click Civic Hall in the menu running along the top of the page and then select Civic Hall Refurbishment. *[If you wish to complete the brief survey, you need to get a move on. The closing date is Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. – Ed]*

If you would like to hear more, you are invited to attend a presentation and question & answer session in the Council Chamber, Civic Hall, Off Park Lane, Poynton on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> May at 10.00am.

**Haf Barlow – Town Clerk**