

ISSUE 60 | WINTER 2021

ASSOCIATES NEWS



ASCL
Association
of School and
College Leaders

Ghosts of Christmas past

The festive season in school **p8**

How the light fades

A family's experience of dementia **p14**

Meeting the Duke

An encounter with the late Prince Philip **p19**

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MOVING FORWARD

ASCL is keen to demonstrate what it means to be a 21st century trade union and there are exciting developments ahead in which members can play an active role, says Geoff Barton



I know there are some people who blanch at the phrase 'trade union'. I remember my own childhood in the sometimes grim 1970s when, too often, trade unions were seen as a catalysts for industrial strife, discord and backward-looking attitudes.

It's a narrative that's still too-easily trotted out. But it's also a lazy caricature.

At their best, trade unions have had a proud tradition of supporting their members, giving them a sense of solidarity, providing social and leisure activities and allowing the people working in various sectors to articulate what needs to change to make things better.

Which brings us back to ASCL, here in the 21st century. We want that sense of reform and innovation, of community and support, of shaping an agenda that makes life better for our members but also – driven by a moral purpose – for children and young people.

That's why we aim to keep reinventing the way we do things. Whether it's the format and content of *Associates News* or the way we connect with members now via videos, webinars and podcasts, ASCL has moved on.

Digital version of ASCL

There will soon be a digital version of ASCL that enables you to stay in touch, stay supported and feel part of a network via your laptop, tablet or the phone in your pocket.

But the ASCL 'moving on' agenda isn't just about technical wizardry. In looking to the future, we're also looking to ASCL's past. We've recently moved offices from Regent Road in Leicester to a new modern space opposite the train station. It will change the way we work, giving our team more flexibility.

As part of the process of making that move, we worked through the extraordinary ASCL and SHA (Secondary Heads Association) archive. Indeed, we unearthed documents going back to the founding of various school leadership organisations that pre-dated us way back in 1874.

We've found the speeches of every president, every newsletter and journal, photographs and memorabilia; in unearthing so many documents, we've seen the way school leaders through so many different periods have had to deal with changes and challenges.

There's a record of their responses to the setting up of local authorities. There are insights into how schools were affected by the two world wars. There was the fierce debate about comprehensive education in the 1960s, and the move to local financial management in the 1980s.

Powerful story to tell

All of which means that ASCL has an even more powerful story to tell on behalf of members past and present – who we were, where we've come from, and where we are going.

As we begin to emerge from all the here-and-now logistical obsessions created by the Covid crisis, you'll see us celebrating many leaders from our history alongside those working in schools and colleges now.

And that's where you come in. In the next year or so we are aiming to create a leadership timeline that enables members to look at key moments in school leaders' history, to see where they fit alongside their predecessors. We'd like to include written reflections and video clips from people in different roles in leadership, in different contexts, in different times.

We would like, in other words, to tell your story.

The aim will be to demonstrate that for all the challenges that life throws at us, leadership is leadership – and that throughout history the leaders of our schools and colleges have done extraordinary things.

You are part of that story. Watch this space for how you can take part.

FRUSTRATING TIMES

ASCL has urged the government to do more to help schools recover from the effects of the pandemic. Julie McCulloch, Director of Policy, shares the latest and highlights the other key areas of engagement with policymakers

During the summer and into the start of the autumn term, the pandemic recovery has clearly been a priority. We continue to make clear members' frustration with the lack of clarity and urgency from government around how schools and colleges will be supported.

We encouraged the Department for Education to put together a strong case, ahead of the cross-government spending review, for more funding for education recovery but were sceptical that the evidence the department provided would be sufficiently persuasive to the Treasury.

We worked with other organisations, including EPI, CST, the Association of Colleges and a number of influential trusts, to put together our own, fully costed, proposal for a £5.8bn recovery plan. It is significantly less than the £15bn proposed by former education recovery commissioner Kevan Collins, but we believe it focuses on those areas which will have the biggest impact on education recovery.

Separately, ASCL has worked on an individual submission to the spending review.

Other key areas include:

Exams in 2022

We continue to be in very regular discussions with the DfE, Ofqual and the exam boards about 2022 exams. We broadly supported the proposed changes to general and vocational qualifications next year but were

frustrated that the consultations on these issues took place so late. We are working with other organisations to propose a joint 'Plan B' if exams can't go ahead.

ITT market review

We submitted a holding response to the government's consultation on reforming initial teacher education ahead of being able to engage in detail with Council on the topic. Subsequently, we had meetings with the teaching workforce director at the DfE and the head of education at 10 Downing Street and were partly reassured that they would act on the concerns.

Safety measures

We continue to be involved in many conversations with the DfE about ongoing Covid safety measures. We were pleased that the government finally agreed to relieve schools and colleges of routine responsibility for contact tracing. We continued to push for funding for settings to improve ventilation.

Blueprint for a Fairer Education System

We are delighted to have finally published our Blueprint for a Fairer Education System (www.ascl.org.uk/Blueprint). The focus now shifts to engaging with policymakers and other stakeholders to build a coalition of support around the recommendations in the Blueprint.

Committee news

Ann Mullins rounds up the latest items including election results, updates on events and ASCL's move to new offices

Elections for the Associates Committee attracted a higher than usual number of candidates this year.

Maureen Cruikshank, Tony Richardson, Ann Mullins and Pauline Thomas were successful and the committee was keen to encourage those who were unsuccessful this time to stand again next time as "new blood is appreciated".

The October committee meeting was again virtual – one advantage of Zoom is that Pauline could join from her daughter's home in Naples! – but the next meeting in February 2022 will be held in person, if all goes well.

By then ASCL will be installed in its new Leicester headquarters, opposite the train station, which are in the process of being fitted out. Steve Kind, Director of Finance and Operations, updated the meeting with details of the sale of the former offices in Regent Road. The phone number will not change.

General Secretary Geoff Barton's two online sessions for members have been very well received, it was reported, and members took advantage of the presence of President Pepe Di'lasio at the meeting to ask him do a similar session. A date will be set for November so members should look out for an email with the details and sign up.

Members were also encouraged to go to the ASCL website at www.ascl.org.uk/MyASCL and check the email preferences. GDPR rules mean that only members who have ticked the appropriate box can be sent communications from ASCL.

Pat Sales, who organised two virtual walks during lockdown, had arranged a real-life lunch and walk around Mayfair which took place in October. There will be a report in the spring edition of *Associates News*. (See p12-13 for Pat's report on the virtual tour of Lincolnshire.)

The visit to the Duke of Wellington's house, No. 1 London, which had been scheduled for 2020 will now go ahead in May 2022. Details will be sent out soon.

In other business, members discussed continuing with the virtual 'Meet the Associates' session at the ASCL Annual Conference which was introduced during the lockdown, as well as being represented in person.

A group is also going to work on updating the committee's terms of reference and Tony Richardson reported on the work that the Benevolent Fund continues to do in support of members.

An update on pensions has been pencilled in for the next meeting. It will be the first in-person Associates gathering for two years.

90% of leaders say Covid still hitting attendance

An ASCL survey has highlighted the extent of the problems caused by Covid in schools with more than 90% of headteachers saying teaching and learning was affected by pupil and staff absence during the autumn term and almost a third (31%) describing the impact as 'severe'.

Covid-related pupil absence was currently running at above 10% in 93 schools, and staff absence at above 10% in 63 schools, according to the survey of 567 headteachers and principals of schools and colleges in England.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents also said it was more difficult than normal to hire supply staff to cover for staff absence.

Most of the schools who took part in the survey also reported being targeted by anti-vaccination campaigners. Most of the communications came through emails threatening

legal action but in some cases staff were threatened with physical harm and some schools had had incidents in which protesters gained access to school sites.

Geoff Barton, ASCL General Secretary, said: "Life is most definitely not back to normal in our schools and colleges. The impact of coronavirus is an everyday reality which continues to cause havoc to the education of children and young people and places leaders and their staff under enormous pressure."

The activities of anti-vaccination campaigners were an extra difficulty in an already pressured situation, he added.

"This is at best incredibly unhelpful, and at worst very distressing, and we appeal to those concerned to see sense and stop this nonsense."

Podcast highlights

Dame Rachel De Souza, Children's Commissioner for England, talks about her role and her background as a head to General Secretary Geoff Barton in the latest ASCL Leadership podcast.

Dame Rachel was a teacher for 30 years and became a head in 2006 in Luton before moving to an academy in Norwich and setting up the Inspiration Trust, a chain of schools in East Anglia which grew to 14 schools, primary and secondary.

In the podcast, she describes the Children's Commissioner role, which she took up in April 2021, as promoting and protecting the rights of children, to government and other public sector bodies. Importantly, she says, it includes incorporating the views of children authentically and communicating to them decisions made which will affect their lives.

She also talks about The Big Ask, the survey of children's views on what

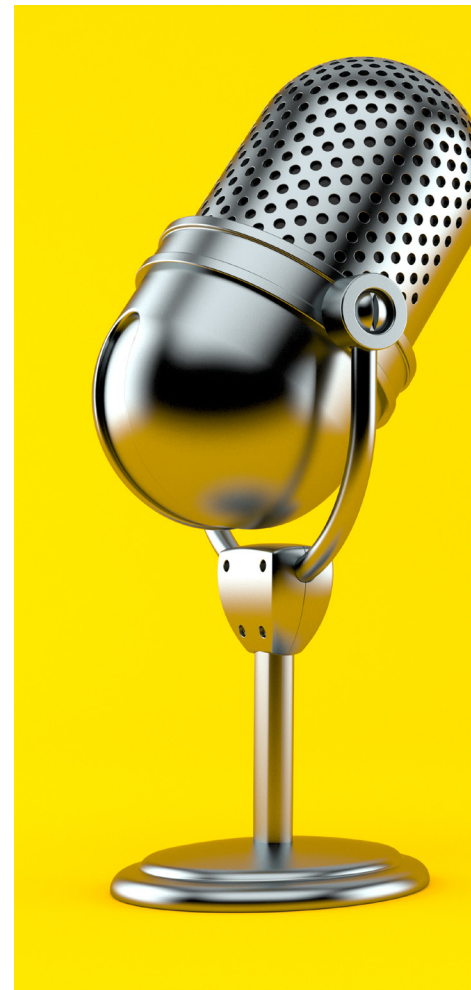
should be the priorities for improving childhood post-Covid, which garnered more than half a million responses.

A major theme from the children who took part was that they did not want to be seen as a 'lost generation'.

"Children have gone through the toughest thing, I'd say, since the evacuation in the Second World War," she says. "It was great to have been heroic in that lockdown period but we shouldn't expect them to be heroic now. Now is the time we need to get behind them and support them and that's what they've asked for."

Dame Rachel also discusses her role in advising government on the forthcoming Online Safety Bill and talking to tech companies about what they should be doing to keep children safer online.

To access all the ASCL podcasts go to www.ascl.org.uk/Podcasts



ASCL on the move

ASCL has moved.

The association has left the Regent Road base in Leicester and taken up residence at new offices down the road in the city opposite Leicester Station.

Offices have been closed since March 2020 due to the pandemic with the team working from home and providing a full service to members.

The new address is: Association of School and College Leaders, 2nd Floor, Peat House, 1 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP.

The phone number has not changed – 0116 299 1122.

Write for Associates News!

Associates News is looking for more contributors.

If you have an experience about retirement life to share, if you're active in an organisation or advisory body, if you're fundraising for a good cause or if you are making a splash in a new career field, we'd like to hear about it.

We're also keen to receive contributions for our Time of My Life slot (see page 19), highlighting memorable career or life moments for members.

Associates News is published three times a year in March, July and November but contributions are welcome at any time.

Send your contributions, with images if available, to associatesnews@ascl.org.uk

(We reserve the right to edit copy for length.)



WINTER WONDERLANDS

Christmas events are back this year and with safety still uppermost in our minds, there's plenty to enjoy outdoors

If you're looking forward to entering the Christmas spirit more heartily than last year's Scrooge-fest allowed – while still endeavouring to feel safe among piles of post-pandemic party-goers – try one of the country's outdoor son-et-lumiere spectaculars.

Held in and around some of our most stately homes and charismatic castles, the 'winter wonderland'-themed events feature illuminated discovery trails, posh food vendors, craft demonstrations, the chance to do some upmarket Christmas shopping and the uniquely overwhelming aroma of cinnamon and frankfurters.

One of the brightest events should be **Christmas at Wollaton Hall** where the formal gardens and deer park on the outskirts of Nottingham will be transformed into different magical lands of fire, light and sound including a fairy-lit woodland winterscape, a festive forest, a light tunnel and ethereal sculptures.

Alternatively, try Percy the Park Keeper's winter wander trail at **Kingston Lacy** in Dorset.

The sojourn includes winter tasks, activities, games and clues to keep everyone active and involved along the way.

The magnificent house itself will feature Christmas trees, garlanded fireplaces and a dining room set for a fabulous feast. For the first time this year, the well-stocked library is opening to the public to provide visitors with an oasis of calm and the chance to dodge more-excitable family members.

You will also be most welcome to show off your new scarf-and-gloves sets at **Belton House** in Lincolnshire where, after a bracing gallop through the parkland, you can visit

the sculptural fire gardens, get creative with a paintbrush in the mansion kitchens or place a commemoration of a missing loved one or happier times on the Memory Tree.

Reckoned to be the biggest all-singing-and-dancing Christmas show in all Europe, the **Thursford Christmas Spectacular** near Fakenham in Norfolk is set among the magical surroundings of mechanical organs and fairground carousels, with a cast of 130 professional singers, dancers and musicians singing traditional festive tunes, both ancient and modern

Alongside all the illuminated walks, bumper hot chocolates and manicured gardens, **Hever Castle** in Kent offers top-notch seasonal dining options in the festively decorated cafés and restaurants along with a selection of extremely posh gift ideas in the castle shop.

In London, **Christmas at Kew Gardens** this year features new routes around the flora and fauna and new installations including laser projections lighting up the Temperate House and Will-o'the Wisp fairy lights in the Treetop Walkway.

If you prefer staying indoors with a real fire to ooh-ing and aah-ing over a digital version in the drizzle, **The Connaught Hotel** in London will feature carols and carriage rides, cocktails in the Art Deco bar, a four-course lunch at the Michelin-starred Hélène Darroze and the chance of a recuperative session in the hotel spa.

Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire has a two Michelin-starred restaurant to ensure your parsnips are perfectly piquant along with its own skating rink – so the chance to pull an important muscle as well as a cracker!

A SANTA HAT IN THE GRAVY

Recycled tinsel, charred chipolatas and over-cooked spuds and sprouts . . . Will Daunt remembers his school's cross-curricular Christmas dinners with all the troublesome trimmings

Each November, the school cook made her annual appointment with me, currying favour, as it were.

A well-rehearsed pantomime ensued: picture Buttons pretending that s/he can't believe that someone's behind them and you'll have a good idea of my culinary colleague's unsuspecting expression, as she prayed I'd chicken out.

But I'd respond, "Christmas Dinner? Great idea! Yes, please!"

My request which – incidentally was made on behalf of the whole school rather than some personal dining club – was met with the same kind of stoicism with which many of us will remember tackling semolina.

While the sprouts and spuds of Lancashire covered in the fields, planning began. This boiled down to an unusual whole school cross-curricular project, which I wish I could say was by (my) design.

'Pizza was off the menu'

First, tutors regaled their forms with the history of the tradition, breaking gently the news that pizza was off the menu for the first time . . . since last Christmas.

Some senior manager cooked up their most creative English in order to advertise the seasonal benefits of undergoing a serving of Christmas, albeit two weeks early.

Maths played its part, as teachers abandoned trying to calculate how many pupils hadn't decided whether or not they could be bothered with the half-baked pre-booking system.

The food technologists had a picnic, finding many more palatable dishes to cook on the same day. Welsh rarebit was common.

Any child with post-dinner PE was warned to avoid all and any of the

trimmings because of an increase in their BMI that would weigh them down for days.

The science department dished out various homeworks on the chemistry of boiling sprouts for 20 minutes, while I'm sure that I once overheard an RE debate on whether turkeys believed in Santa Claus.

Or perhaps that was the geography teacher crying fowl when asked if the Turks always voted for Christmas.

The prospect would have been simmering so long that when The Day actually arrived, its goose had been cooked. Pupils chilling nicely in the Christmas Dinner Line would plead to be able to file in with the pasty queue, while some of the pasties would risk going festive to cries of, "Yule be sorry", "I didn't think you were crackers . . ." etc etc.

Recycled tinsel

In the heat of the moment, some recycled tinsel might appear from behind the hatch – if not in the chipolatas – but never if there was any stiffened stuffing, curdled custard or burnt bacon.

Santa hats had been banned after an incident in 1993 when one fell into a vat of gravy and dissolved (there is a joke about elf and safety here, better avoided). If the proof of the Christmas pudding was in its eating, few victims lived to tell the tale.

Any prediction of uptake was doomed. In some years, Christmas pizzas were resurrected at the death; others left a devastation of half-eaten platters and near-full bain maries.

This was all excellent preparation for the family carve-ups to follow.

And no one made a meal of it.

'Welsh rarebit was common'

A NEW CAREER IN A NEW TOWN

Peter Crowe describes the volunteer work he and others carry out for a charity dedicated to ease Syrian refugee families into British life by enabling social, educational, cultural and healthy activities and supporting them with English language and conversation classes



In the summer of 2017, Robert, an old friend of mine, asked if I would consider helping with a relatively new local charity, Maun Refuge, which aimed to support Syrian refugees who'd been brought to the town of Mansfield, Notts as part of the government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

The charity was recruiting befriending volunteers to help settle and integrate the eight families who settled in the town since 2015.

By chance, both Robert and I had separately visited Syria before the latest conflict started. We had both enjoyed the great sights and sounds of that vibrant, historic country including Damascus, Homs, Hama and the beautiful city of Aleppo, not to mention the stark beauty of Palmyra before Isis visited further destruction on that ancient jewel of the Silk Road.

Most memorable, however, was the warmth and hospitality of the Syrian people who welcomed us with open arms.

It was, therefore, extremely distressing and difficult for us to witness the death and destruction inflicted on this troubled place and its people as the conflict raged night after night across our TV screens.

Initially, I was detailed to support Omar, a bright engaging man in his early thirties from Homs. Very quickly, it became apparent that both he and his wife, Rokaya, were keen to build relationships with new English friends and develop their language skills.

Lottery funding

The charity has been part-funded by the National Lottery through its Reaching Communities grant scheme but, separately and additionally through its own fundraising efforts, applications to trusts and foundations and smaller personal donations allow the charity to ease the lives of the Syrian families.

Since its inception in 2015, the charity has provided ESOL (English speakers of other languages) opportunities for all levels and organised educational presentations on subjects including food hygiene, fraud awareness and protection, first aid, bicycle and car maintenance, accounting and budgeting skills and caring for pets.

Having arrived in the UK with little or no English, many of the adults continue to gain English qualifications with several of them successfully gaining distinctions in the government's official Life in the UK and B1 English tests. Many members of the families now hold level 2 food hygiene certificates and have put them to excellent use.

The volunteers at the core of the charity are unpaid. Through this active network of professionals, many of whom are ex-teachers, Maun Refuge offers a befriending service to every family, support with school and college work, links with local groups and amenities, and guidance on how to access services and events.

Maun Refuge also introduced some Syrians to work and volunteering opportunities with local businesses and other charities. By 2018, our inspirational chair Barbara had succeeded in winning lottery money to engage two extremely talented and hardworking project managers who give real drive, direction and momentum to the core purpose of the charity.

Following the birth of four babies to our various families over the last two years – including two to our own 'adopted' family – Maun Refuge now supports 37 people. In the future, there may well be more refugees coming to join them.

Project managers constantly try to encourage a high level of independence and aim to empower every individual.

For example, one of the women – a former teacher herself – has worked with us to develop an eight-

week, online course and she has been teaching basic Arabic classes for a few months.

International footballer

Our infamous Syrian international footballer, Fahd Saleh, coaches local schoolchildren in primary schools and works for the community department of Mansfield Town Football Club. He hopes to see some of his protégés in an England shirt one day and his various sporting endeavours are supported by Gary Lineker.

We also have a smashing 15-year-old boy whose burning ambition is to become a doctor and our project managers have managed to find a Syrian medical student to act as a mentor. We also encourage him to enhance his personal CV and extra-curricular experiences in preparation for the day when he will face an interview panel for a coveted university place.

Where possible, and when funds allow, the charity helps families to buy second-hand white goods, televisions and garden equipment. As soon as government restrictions are sufficiently relaxed, we hope to resume our coach trips to places of historical and cultural interest such as Rufford Abbey, Hardwick Hall and many other local beauty spots . . . and, of course, Skegness!

One of our men has transformed his small garden from a wasteland into a productive oasis which provides fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers and a constant supply of eggs courtesy of his six chickens. Another has cultivated an impressive array of flowers by using his limited greenhouse facilities at home.

Both of them have talked about finding a larger plot to grow their passion into a sustainable commercial business.

All of the Syrian women are excellent cooks, and their food is both tasty and extremely healthy. In December 2019, Maun Refuge took a stall at Mansfield Christmas Market held at the town's museum. All our families worked together to produce a range of cold dishes – sweet and savoury – to sell to the local community.

Pop-up restaurants

It was also a great opportunity to practise their newly-acquired English language and numeracy skills. Buoyed by the reception and their amazing success, we planned to provide authentic Syrian food at events organised by the district council and in 2020 the PMs secured funding to launch a series of pop-up Syrian restaurants in Mansfield.

We had already sold tickets for the first event when our Syrians, like the rest of the world, were forced into lockdown and uncertainty.

The pandemic severely curtailed the charity's work. Our pop-up restaurants were 'taken off the boil', development of other event-based activities stopped and over the following 16 months the families' confidence took a severe battering.

They had limited chances to use their new language and were concerned that their children would fall behind in their schoolwork with rare chances to socialise with and befriend local children. In addition, various illnesses have all taken their toll and, since so-called 'freedom day' in July 2021, we have been trying to rebuild their confidence, discuss new hopes and aspirations and formulate plans.

The charity's team now hopes to deliver some of the original projects and develop new ones in order to continue to make their transition from war-torn Syria to life in Mansfield and the UK as smooth and successful as possible.

Maun Refuge is especially proud of the warmth and hospitality shown by the people of Mansfield to the refugee community – especially their immediate neighbours!

Kindness and courtesy

As we helped Omar and his family to move into a third-floor flat in 2018 in one of the most notorious areas of the town, we were worried about the reception they might get. In fact, their neighbours have been kindness and courtesy personified.

After their eldest child was born in 2019, people often helped Rokaya lift the pram up and down the three flights of concrete stairs. A second child arrived in late 2020 and the family have recently been rehoused in a nice, spacious council house within walking distance of the centre of town.

It is both heartening and encouraging to think that Mansfield, a post-industrial town with very limited cultural diversity, is playing its part in helping to mitigate the global refugee problem.

All parties involved – from the refugees, volunteers and project managers to neighbours and the wider community - have been enriched by the experience. Personal understanding and horizons have been widened.

The next step for the Syrian families is to seek and secure full citizenship in the UK. It is also important that they acquire sufficient language skills and confidence to get meaningful work and an opportunity to contribute constructively and consistently to the communities they have joined.

If you would like to find out more about Maun Refuge's work you can contact them on contact@maunrefuge.org.uk or have a look on their website www.maunrefuge.org.uk/.

They are always keen for support in the form of volunteers, fundraisers/fundraising events and information about opportunities which might benefit our Syrians.

BOMBING AROUND LINCOLNSHIRE

From the Wolds to the Fens, taking in Roman roads, English wars, Sir Isaac Newton and the Pilgrim Fathers, Pat Sales reports on a whistle-stop virtual visit to England's second largest county.

Our tour began in the city of Lincoln where we were met on Zoom by our guide, Robert Smith.

Despite the county's reputation for being very flat, the cathedral and the castle are located on the top of a steep hill.

Established in Roman times in 60 AD, Lindum Colonia was the area occupied by retired soldiers from the Roman Legionary Fortress who were given land upon which to settle. It marks the crossroads of Ermine Street to York running south to north and the Fosse Way which runs from east to west.

England's oldest canal runs parallel to the A57 while several features in the old town remain from Roman times such as the Newport Arch through which traffic still drives.

Occupied later by the Saxons and Normans, Lincoln was the site of many battles involving King John and later King Stephen and Matilda and even later those during the English Civil War.

The Normans built the original cathedral in the 1080s; the building boasts splendid carvings, stained glass windows, a wonderful library and a statue of Alfred Lord Tennyson by George F. Watts.

Copies of the Magna Carta

Across from the cathedral is the entrance to Lincoln Castle. Visitors can see the various exhibitions inside and walk around the top of the Castle Walls, visit the main Tower, view one of the four remaining copies of the Magna Carta and experience the Victorian Castle Prison.



Walking downhill towards the town's railway station, you pass the Bishop Mitre Pub and many Norman houses. The Jewish community lived in this area in the 1200s and there are still some of their houses remaining and one thought to have been the synagogue, Aaron House.

At the bottom of the hill is the River Witham and a medieval bridge. The enormous engineering works has produced parts for the Titanic and other ships, smaller boats, army tanks and other military equipment for the First World War.

Today, visitors can enjoy short boat trips and refreshments in the canal and riverside cafes.

On the outskirts of Lincoln is Swanpoole Garden Suburb, a purposely-designed village to provide homes for war veterans and their families.

We then moved five miles west from the city centre to Doddington Hall which was built in the Elizabethan E-shaped style and then on to Stow with its huge Saxon church and Viking graffiti.

Next stop was Gainsborough on the River Trent down which the Vikings had sailed. The waterway is still tidal.

Gainsborough's Old Hall was the commercial centre of the wool trade while All Saints' Church followed a Wren-type design which kept the original medieval tower.

Brigg retains the original toll prices at its points of entry and is well-known for its annual Horse Fair. The town's workhouse became famous Percy Grainger recorded inmates' stories and songs which he later adapted and performed at the Royal Albert Hall.

We then moved into the Lincolnshire Wolds to Caister. In its church are special exhibits of a cattle whip and local coins, relics of an unpleasant part of history for the town which had experienced riots.

Passing the ruins of Bardney Abbey, we reached the town of Louth, the scene of the Lincolnshire Rising.

In 1536, the Vicar was arrested at the top of the church tower and taken to Tyburn in London where he was hung, drawn and quartered and his head placed on view at London Bridge along side the heads of other people who were allegedly guilty of treason.

Wars of the Roses

During the Wars of the Roses, this was the seat of Henry of Bolingbroke of the House of Lancaster. Bolingbroke Castle in the original village was also the setting in Shakespeare's play.

St. James' Church in Spilsby has a number of tombs and memorials to the Willoughby family from the medieval period onwards.

It contains a very decorative Willoughby Screen and the Bertie Monument as well as a memorial to Captain Sir John Franklin, Royal Naval Officer and leader of the Arctic Expedition in which all crew members died while seeking to cross the Canadian Arctic North West Passage.

This area of Lincolnshire was the centre of Bomber Command during the war and home to the

Lancasters and the famous 617 Squadron known as the Dambusters based at RAF Scampton.

Moving to the southern area of the county, we entered the Fens.

Firstly to Boston, a port town. Its church, St. Botolph's, has a tower which is visible from well out into the North Sea and is still used as a point for navigational purposes.

It was the transport centre of the wool trade and still retains its Victorian warehouse.

It is also the town where the Pilgrim Fathers were imprisoned; this pioneering group were from Lincolnshire and originally wished to travel to the Netherlands. The authorities deemed them dangerous so they were arrested. As we know now, they eventually were allowed to sail to America.

Onwards to Spalding which is famous for flowers and especially for its bulbs. The town founded the Spalding Gentlemen's Society in a Victorian building which still operates today and provides lectures and a meeting venue for many groups to enhance learning.

Home of Sir Isaac Newton

Then to Grantham and Woolsthorpe Manor, the home of Sir Isaac Newton, whose statue is in the town centre.

He returned home in 1665 to escape the plague in London. In the barn which he used as his laboratory there are his scribbled writings on the walls. In the garden is the tree from which, it is said, a falling apple triggered his developments in the field of gravity.

Belton House is located near to the town and is built in the architectural style of a large French chateau. Many of the scenes of the 1990 film *Pride and Prejudice* were shot here.

Finally, on to Stamford which has many churches and original coaching inns with its Georgian architecture throughout the town.

Everyone thanked Robert for a very interesting and informative hour. He encouraged us to visit Lincoln for at least a couple of days to explore the town's historic sites and if we had the time with transport, to follow his tour around Lincolnshire.

A return to normality!

HOW THE LIGHT FADES

An Associate member describes the impact of dementia on five members of the family and hopes it will inspire others to share their experiences



In July 1974 I received a letter from my Dad. As he was a man of few spoken words and even fewer written ones I treasure it, even though the news it contained was not good. In it he wrote: "The specialist tried some tests on Mum to see if she had a brain tumour but he could not find any. He now says that she could have a stroke at any time. He thinks she may have had one already and may not live more than 18 months. Please come and stay as often as you can."

Mum was subsequently diagnosed with dementia. I believe it was the vascular form, caused by a reduced blood flow to the brain.

Of course, in response to Dad's request we made lots of weekend round trips of more than 200 miles to try to help share his load. I have a clear memory of listening with our three children on the return journey to *Top of the Pops* when *Bohemian Rhapsody* was number 1 week after week . . .

Mum was cared for at home by dedicated district nurses whose visits became daily. Such care would be considered luxurious now when carers, similarly dedicated but not medically qualified, are on minimal wages. Our mother

had a strong personality. This receded gradually. One of the few bonuses was that we were then able to see and appreciate the loving tenderness my father showed to her.

Religious scruples

At Christmas 1976 all family members were gathered together. The GP approached Dad and suggested he could change her drugs to placebos so that she could drift quietly away. But Dad had religious scruples and could not agree so that when she did die, on 4 April 1977, there had to be a post mortem "in case there had been neglect". We were in Italy skiing on a package holiday when the telegram came so we missed her funeral. Nowadays, we would have got an early flight back. What still troubles me is that I do not know when my mother died. The husk of her body was not my mother. I guess I'm in denial.

Her own mother had had dementia and died relatively young. My older sister can remember Grandma bringing her warm milk in the middle of the night, a ghostly figure with a long plait down her back. My own memory is of her sitting quietly by the fire looking a bit lost.

The charity Dementia UK provides care and support for people living with dementia and their families.

"Dementia is a huge and growing health crisis," says Julie Green, deputy clinical lead for Dementia UK's Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline. "The changes in the brain arising from dementia can include memory loss and reduced independence due to a person no longer being able to do routine tasks and this can place pressure on families.

"At Dementia UK our Admiral Nurses provide life-changing care for families affected by all forms

Help in a 'growing crisis'

of dementia. People can contact the charity's Admiral Nurses who have the time to listen and the knowledge to solve problems."

The charity's free Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline can be reached on 0800 888 6678 or helpline@dementiauk.org. The helpline is open 9am-9pm Monday to Friday and 9am-5pm Saturday and Sunday.

You can find out more on their website www.dementiauk.org/

Mum died at 70 so my sisters, brother and I heaved sighs as we passed that milestone thinking we were safe. But it was not to be. Older sister, now 83 was from the beginning very up front about her memory problems and her need to write everything down. She could even make a joke at her own expense. When she went to the GP's memory clinic, as she went in she said, "This used to be my father's cowshed" (true) but she noticed the two staff members registering 'fantasy'. They asked her where she had last been on holiday. "Brazil," she replied (true) and again she saw them disbelievingly sharing another look.

Later, my sister had to be observed cooking a meal (to see if she was still safe to do so). So she cooked salmon, peas and potatoes and passed with flying colours. But now she has stopped cooking and driving. Her disposition is very cheerful and she participates in conversation but then suddenly comes out with a question to her husband, "Do we have any great-grandchildren dear?" They have five, darlings all of them. And she is repetitive.

A different reaction

Younger sister reacted quite differently. Something of a fitness freak riding her bicycle, walking the dogs, daily visits to the gym and in total denial of any problems, she boasted about never going near a doctor and not taking any medication; physically fit as a flea while confusion invaded her mind. Now she has been diagnosed and it has hit her hard. She too now has mobility problems and has stopped driving.

My sister-in-law first mentioned our brother's problems a couple of years ago. They were on a cruise and he could not remember where they were. He is still driving. But when we last met I mentioned our cousin's cancer to him and he denied that our cousin had had cancer. This made me doubt my own memory so I hurried back to check and, yes, I was correct.

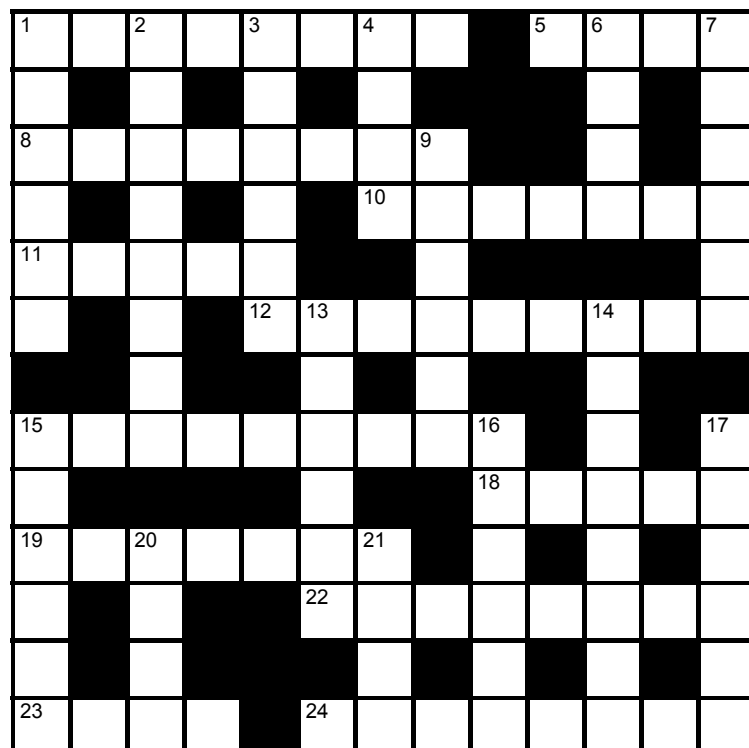
And so we stumble on. I think each dementia sufferer chooses his or her own way to react and one has to respect that choice. Fortunately, childhood memories at present remain clear to me and they are still a joy to share.

Across

- 1 Take away (8)
- 5 Upper limbs (4)
- 8 American car (8)
- 10 Produced a publication (7)
- 11 Run off to marry (5)
- 12 Young bird ready to leave the nest (9)
- 15 Poverty-stricken (9)
- 18 Freshwater fish (5)
- 19 Prepared carefully in advance (7)
- 22 A single, complete turn (8)
- 23 Hoop that covers a wheel (4)
- 24 Unnecessary and unwarranted (8)

Down

- 1 Fired from one's job (6)
- 2 Areas set aside for sleeping (8)
- 3 Alleviation (6)
- 4 Fellow (4)
- 6 Public violence (4)
- 7 Old or experienced sailor (coll) (3,3)
- 9 Recognition (6)
- 13 Component of a word (6)
- 14 Consider as perfect (8)
- 15 Expel from a country (6)
- 16 Mission (6)
- 17 Expresses gratitude (6)
- 20 Slightly open (4)
- 21 Hemispherical roof (4)



- ◇ ADZUKI
- ◇ KALE
- ◇ ASPARAGUS
- ◇ MUSHROOM
- ◇ BAMBOO SHOOTS
- ◇ OKRA
- ◇ BROAD BEAN
- ◇ ONION
- ◇ CAPER
- ◇ PEAS
- ◇ FENNEL
- ◇ PEPPER
- ◇ GHERKIN
- ◇ RADISH
- ◇ GOURD
- ◇ SWEETCORN
- ◇ HORSERADISH
- ◇ YAM



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We have all had to get used to looking for entertainment to watch on TV during the pandemic and many of us will continue to watch plays and films on our favourite platforms as well as returning to the cinema. Pauline Thomas recommends her choice of the best productions for armchair film fans

A number of great finds include the increased content on National Theatre live while Curzon Home Cinema, MUBI and the standard Amazon Prime and Netflix all have some good content.

Many of the titles are available on YouTube; some are not in English but have adequate subtitles and are really worth seeing.

- 1 **Roma** (2018). Fascinating and moving Oscar-winning film which is set in the early 70s and follows the life of a live-in housekeeper of a middle-class family in Mexico City.
- 2 **Nomadland** (2021). The story of a widowed woman who packs everything into a converted van and tours the USA, meeting many others who are doing much the same thing. Winner of this year's Oscars for best film, director and actress.
- 3 **The Life Ahead** (2020). A moving story starring Sophia Loren in old age and directed by her son. A former prostitute and Holocaust survivor who provides a home in her apartment for the children of other "working women" in Bari forms an unlikely friendship with a street kid who robs her.
- 4 **The Vast of Night** (2019). Sci-fi story set in a small New Mexico town in the 1950s in which two friends investigate a strange throbbing sound.
- 5 **In Darkness** (2011). Harrowing Polish drama based on real events about the rescue of Jewish refugees during World War II in the city now known as Lviv.

- 6 **Memories of my Father** (2021). Spanish film based on the true story of Héctor Abad Gómez, the Colombian public-health activist and prominent government critic who in 1987 was shot dead in Medellín by far-right paramilitaries. Adapted from the 2005 memoir of Gómez by his son, the now prominent Colombian author Héctor Abad Faciolince.
- 7 **La Grande Bellezza** (The Great Beauty) (2013). A modern version take on Fellini's La Dolce Vita, this is a fantasy of decadent wealth, luxury and beauty with wonderful music.
- 8 **Rocks** (2019). Bukky Bakray stars as Olushola, nicknamed "Rocks", a black British teenage girl living in Hackney, London, whose single mother abandons her and her young brother. The film was created using material gathered from the young cast.
- 9 **Summerland** (2020). A British film starring Gemma Arterton set in wartime and a charming and unusual romance about a reclusive writer who unexpectedly has to look after a small boy.
- 10 **Spring Blossom** (2020). The romance between a young girl and an older man in Paris, amazingly starring and directed by Suzanne Lindon who is 20 from a script she wrote when she was 15. Manages the line between first love and exploitation sensitively.

Pauline Thomas was head at Abertillery Comprehensive School/Ysgol Gyfun Abertyleri from 2002 until 2010.

OBITUARY – JOHN SENIOR

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the death of John Senior, a long-standing member of ASCL and its forerunner, Secondary Heads Association (SHA), and of Associates.

After his degree at Cambridge, John taught physics at Ashville College, Harrogate, before becoming head of Science at Millom School, Cumbria.

He was appointed deputy head at Barnsley and District Holgate Grammar School, which had been founded in 1546 by Robert Holgate, the Archbishop of York.

From 1973, the school became a comprehensive and John was made the headteacher.

His son, Peter, tells us that education was “a huge passion of his and a major part of his life, even in retirement”.

John Senior passed away peacefully on 17 May 2021, age 85.

Ann Mullins

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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WORDSEARCH

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

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TIME OF MY LIFE

An invitation to serve on the board of a charity led to Marcia Twelftree dining at Windsor . . . and pinching the Duke of Edinburgh’s drink

Shortly after retiring from my final headship, I was asked if I would become a trustee for the Prince Philip Trust Fund – a local charity set up in 1997 to support causes in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

I was happy to help but little did I know how closely I would be working with HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and, latterly, with HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex.

Until he retired from public life, Prince Philip chaired all our meetings. They were small affairs with only eight to ten trustees so there were plenty of opportunities for discussion. He was a great chairman, very sharp and on the ball, challenging any vague statements so you needed to be sure of your facts.

Questions on science and technology

He was very encouraging to me, however, saying how pleased he was to have someone with my extensive experience of the state education sector as a trustee. He would often question me particularly on the science and technology taught in school, areas which particularly interested him.

Most meetings were held at Windsor Castle and we would always be invited to drinks and a meal after the meeting. The Prince was a great host, always laughing and joking.



I once took his G and T by mistake – he never forgot this but always made sure there were subsequently two G and Ts on the tray! Meeting my husband at a social event, he asked him if I was still causing him trouble as I had done in the meetings. All with a smile.

One day, he told me about his sadness at the loss of the Royal Yacht Britannia but how he had kept some of the lovely furniture, glassware

and china off the yacht for use at Frogmore, another royal residence in Windsor Home Park and, perhaps, we could have a meeting there so he could show me.

He promptly announced the next meeting would be at Frogmore. On that evening he showed me all the lovely furniture and we dined at the special table where the Czar of Russia and JFK had sat and used some of Queen Victoria’s delicate wine glasses.

It was a special evening – I had to pinch myself to believe that that little girl who started at Streetly Primary School was sitting next to the husband of the Queen.

Dame Marcia Twelftree (pictured right, above) was head of Charters School, Ascot, from September 1997 to August 2009

<https://theprincephiliptrustfund.org/>

‘Meeting my husband at a social event, the Prince asked if I was still causing trouble’

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