

# Periscope

## April 24 Vol.2.

*(From 'History Today' Companion to British History)*

D-DAY, 6 June 1944, the Anglo-American cross-channel amphibious landings in occupied Normandy, France, at the start of Operation OVERLORD, the largest and most difficult amphibious operation ever mounted in warfare, and a crucial event of WORLD WAR II. Led by a major night drop by airborne forces on 5 June, 156,000 British, American and Canadian troops under MONTGOMERY, supported by 8,000 ships and craft and 13,000 aircraft, broke through the German defences of the Atlantic Wall, landing over beaches rather than at a major port. The Allies compensated for lack of port provisions by heaving concrete caissons, 'Mulberries', across the channel and assembling them to provide artificial harbours. The Germans, anticipating that the invasion would come in the Pas de Calais where the Channel was at its narrowest, were caught unprepared with uncoordinated resistance to the Allied attack.

US losses were the heaviest at 6,603; overall Allied losses exceeded 10,000. D-Day was a military planning term to indicate the day that any battle started. Only this one has become famous.

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*We probably remember Anthony Wedgwood Benn for his many years as a member of the House of Commons. But in this extract from 'The Benn Diaries' he is being trained as a pilot from December 1943.*

*Tuesday 6 June 1944 — Liberation Day Europe and the World*

I went up for over an hour and a half during which time I finished spins and started on my final and crucial task — finding out whether I will ever be able to land an aircraft. It was not until breakfast time that I heard the great news. The story was consistent and persistent, then during the airmanship period .F/O Freeman told me the real 'gen'. He had heard General Eisenhower's broadcast announcement to the world of an Allied invasion of the French coast, and containing the gist of issued orders to the underground movement. The strain of having old Mike in the front at a time like this must be very great for Ma, for the burden *is* probably more heavy on those near and dear to the fighting men who are left behind than on the men themselves. I am still depressed.



A VOTRE SANTÉ

“Here’s to Interdependence Day!”

There were no weekly copies of Punch issued from May 22<sup>nd</sup>. to July 5<sup>th</sup>. 1944 in my bound edition of the period. This cartoon dates from the issue of July 5



## A Feast for a Queen

By Andrea Gilpin

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As spring unfolds, queen bumblebees awaken from their hibernation, seeking out the delicate pollen and nectar of early-blooming flowers. Distinguished by their larger size and shaggier appearance compared to other bees, bumblebees boast superior adaptation to cold climates, making them the first buzzing heralds of spring. The queen bee will meticulously scout for dry sanctuaries to establish a nest—be it a vole hole, the base of a grass tussock or crevices in a stone chest tomb. Within these dry nooks she creates a thimble-sized waxen pot and fills it with a precious concoction of pollen, nectar, and eggs which initiates the summer cycle.



The old English word for bumblebee is 'dumbledore' and in the United Kingdom, 24 bumblebee species exist, yet only eight are commonly encountered. 18 species of bumblebees species are social species — living in nests of up to 400 individuals. Unlike honeybees they do not swarm, only the queen can sting, and a nest only lasts one season. They can beat their wings up to 200 times per second!

Churchyards, cemeteries and gardens can be sanctuaries for bumblebees, with many dry nesting opportunities and an array of bulbs and blossoms.

Species of bumblebees with long tongues can enjoy deeper flowers like foxglove, while those with shorter tongues need short, open flowers, with nectar within easy reach such as dandelions and crocus. Take a leisurely stroll on a warm day, and behold the bustling activity of these industrious pollinators!



Michelle Perks kindly sent this item after the last issue of 'Periscope'

My Mother volunteered to join the Land Army girls for a six week period. She has happy memories of her time there. Although hard work, it was a lot of fun too. My Mother is the front girl in the photo which appeared in the local Newspaper with the attached short editorial. This photo was published on 28<sup>th</sup>. June 1940 and Michelle reminds us that it is now over 80 years since the Land Army came into being.

### **" BENDING TO IT"**

A few weeks in the Forestry Section of the Women's Land Army and these girls can do the most difficult job. On the field are some of the girls who have given up their holidays to help with the strawberry crop in Cheshire

## BRING IN THE BEES

Bees are not only a delight to see buzzing around the garden but are also important pollinators. Local beekeepers will thank you greatly for planting a bee-friendly garden.

As they visit flowers to delve for sugar-rich nectar, bees also gather the pollen that is an essential food for the hive. In doing so, they unwittingly carry pollen from bloom to bloom, thus ensuring that flowers are fertilized — a requisite for fruit formation in most species. Flowers and their pollinators evolved hand in hand, culminating in such extraordinary flower designs as the bee orchid, which looks like the insect it aims to attract.

Flowers are, remarkably, able to signal to bees that they are rich sources of pollen. Signals visible to us are, for instance, the spots on the lips of foxglove flowers and the yellow markings on the falls of irises. But bees see in the ultraviolet range of the spectrum, and other markings on the petals, which we cannot see, are clearly visible to guide bees to the nectar.

### PLANTING FOR BEES

There is plenty of choice when it comes to

planting flowers that will be attractive to honeybees. A beekeeper would recommend an annual progression beginning with crocuses and snowdrops in early spring, through heathers, hebes, thymes and lavenders to the Michaelmas daisies of autumn. A hedge of flowering privet and ivy on walls will be magnets for bees.

In the vegetable garden, the broad bean has a remarkable association with bees, which use it in various distinct ways. Pollen and nectar are collected as honeybees enter the fronts of the flowers, but short-tongued bumble bees cut holes in the bases of the flowers to extract nectar. Honeybees then use these holes as entry points. In addition, honeybees are attracted to the black spots on the plant stipules. At the bases of these leaf-like structures are extra small pockets of nectar that is especially rich in sugar.

This quote, taken from *“The Gardener’s Wise Words and Country Ways”* by Ruth Binney follows on from the item by Andrea Gilpin about the bumble bee, though obviously the honey bee is more popular and appreciated widely even by those who have no gardens at all.



They've sent for the Dog-Squad!



Sandra Rowlands e-mailed to say that at the Hope Mansell Flower Festival in 2021, her arrangement (above) was based on the poem ‘The Glory of the Garden’ which appeared in the latest issue of Periscope. A great choice and a splendid arrangement! (Ed)

## ST. GEORGE'S DAY, APRIL 23rd.

Historical evidence suggests that St. George was born in Cappadocia (modern day Turkey) in the 3rd century AD and was likely an officer in the Roman Army. St. George is thought to have been executed in the Roman province of Palestine (modern day Turkey), in 303 AD at or near Lydda in Palestine, shortly before the accession of the Emperor Constantine after refusing to make a sacrifice in honour of the Pagan gods.

The legend of St. George and the dragon first appeared 500 years after St. George's death, likely as an emblem of the battle between good and evil. In the legend, St. George slew an evil dragon that was plaguing a local city (believed to be modern day Libya), and thus saving a princess. The story of his rescuing a princess from a dragon seems to have originated in Italy during the late twelfth century. It may indeed, have been derived from the Classical Greek story of the slaying by Perseus of the sea-monster to save Andromeda at Arsuf or Joppa, both of which are cities near Lydda.



George seems to be known in England since at least the eighth century, but his special veneration came during the Crusades when Richard I's soldiers are said to have been inspired by visions of St George. From the fourteenth century 'St George's arms' – the red cross on the white background – became the badge for English fighting men and from the reign of Edward III St George displaced Edward the Confessor as the patron saint of England.



The cyclist who forgot his new wife's birthday until five minutes before the shops closed!

I'm fed up with my dog; he chases anyone on a bicycle. Enough is enough! I'm taking his bike off him!

### TO A BICYCLE BELL

ALAS, how many years have flown  
Since first your silvery note I sounded,  
And on a cycle of my own  
First o'er the bumps in boyhood bounded,  
And felt, like Icarus, the delight  
Of suddenly acquiring flight.

The roads were peaceful then ; no noise  
More strident than your ring intruded,  
And bells of other little boys  
Who also cycled (as a few did),  
And those of elder people who  
Sedately pedalled two-and-two.

But the inventive brain of man,  
As restless as the winds that fan it,  
Is always making some new plan  
To work commotion on our planet;  
Especially it thinks we need  
Devices for increasing speed.

Lorries and motor-buses dash  
Along the road which was my cycle's,  
And charabancs about me crash,  
Sounding a trump as loud as Michael's;  
Amid the din it is absurd  
To try to make your tinkle heard.

The motors came, and all was turned  
From peace to uproar in a twinkle;  
The tempest blew, the waves were churned;  
Your modest and melodious tinkle,  
Where hooters hoot and klaxons squall,  
Can scarcely now be heard at all.



# QUIZ TIME!

1. In which European country will you climb the Dolomites?
2. What sign of the Zodiac is represented by a fish?
3. In the T.V. Series 'Morse' who played the role of the Inspector?
4. If you had tickets for a play at the R.S.C. whose plays would you usually expect to see?
5. Who was the legendary owner of the sword 'Excalibur'?
6. In the sit-com 'Keeping Up Appearances' what was the name of Hyacinth's husband?
7. Which county cricket team plays home matches at Trent Bridge?
8. Traditionally, on which day of the week does the King distribute the Maundy Money?
9. Who was the lead guitarist in the Beatles?
10. If you asked your bank for a thousand Rands, which country would you be visiting?
11. On the standard computer keyboard which letter is furthest to the right?
12. In Greek mythology, what was Pegasus?
13. Who wrote the Inspector Wexford series of detective stories?
14. What precious stone is also the purest form of carbon?
15. How many hurdles must a runner jump in a 400 metres hurdle race?
16. The reality show 'Big Brother' gets its name from which book by George Orwell?
17. On which day is Shakespeare's birthday celebrated and also that of England's Patron Saint?
18. What does the Latin word 'Agenda' mean?
19. What new form of transport was invented by Christopher Cockerell?
20. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean?



## FOR THE D.I.Y. DECORATORS:

When choosing a colour to paint a wall, you will probably want to buy a few tester pots to decide on the final colour. The trouble with applying a patch of test colour directly to the wall will make the rejected test patches difficult to obliterate later.



A good way to discover the colour which will become your preferred choice is to Sellotape the required number of A4 sheets to the wall, covered with the various paint possibilities and allow time to pass before you make your final decision.

## OLIVIA BOON REMEMBERS...

My niece Emily works in a bookshop and reads a lot. I have every reason to trust her judgement so when she nominated *The Tent, the Bucket and Me* as her Number One favourite read of 2023, I bought Emma Kennedy's account of her family's disastrous attempts to go camping in the 1970s. Emily found it warm-hearted and very funny; I found it warm hearted, certainly, but funny? Well, in parts.



Emily, who is quite a bit younger than I am, is great camper too. She and her young family understand the vicissitudes of outdoor holidays but perhaps it is the age difference between us that made her hoot with laughter at the trials and tribulations of Emma and her parents while I gulped at them with fascinated horror. These tales of woe brought back in vivid detail the summer holidays of my childhood in the 1960s, mostly spent at La Toison D'Or, a campsite on the bay of Pampelone (then still unspoilt), a few kilometres from trendy St Tropez.

Our tent sounds exactly like the one the Kennedys bought for their holidays: a sturdy frame over which was secured a heavy canvas cover, heavier still in the rain and reluctant to dry. Inside my parents would hang a 'bedroom' of much lighter fabric which occupied half the space, leaving the rest free for a living-dining room. Bits of the frame still have their uses in our garden to this day.

The doorway, which opened with a zip on either side, could be propped up on poles to make an awning, almost doubling the living space on dry days. However, it depended on the height and angle of the sun whether or not it afforded twice the amount of shade. Usually not. As a fair skinned child, I was acutely aware of this. My mother slathered Nivea cream onto me, which stuck thickly to my skin and had a magnetic attraction to sand. I don't think it gave any sort of sun protection, Factor 50 hadn't been invented, so I grilled in the hot Mediterranean sun and then peeled like the bark of an ash tree.

My older brother had a little orange one-man tent to himself and my sister and I shared a two-girl tent, the only one of the three with an integral ground sheet. So, when one night the Mistral brought us tearing wind and monsoon rain, I slept, oblivious to

the danger to my sister and me of floating down to the beach in our tent on a tide of floodwater. I was woken by cries of alarm and we evacuated. Bleary with sleep, I was dimly aware, of my parents' anxiety as we drove around the streets of St Tropez, looking for a hotel whose doors were still unlocked and which could offer us rooms for the night. The expense of it cast a dampener over the rest of that holiday.

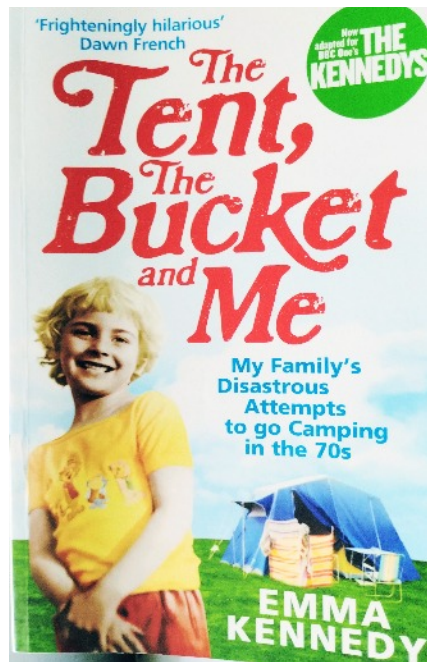
For reasons that become clear early in the book, Emma Kennedy avoided the campsite ablutions. La Toison D'Or offered a concrete block inhabited by clouds of tiny, delta-winged moths, their numbers kept ineffectually in check by their praying mantises. It wasn't so bad when these sinister insects were only eating the moths but now and then we'd witness Mrs Praying Mantis grimly chomping through Mr PM who struggled helplessly in the grip of her pincer front legs.

It is mercifully rare now to encounter the type of French toilet that is merely a drain topped by a ceramic tray with two platforms for your feet on

which you must contrive to balance. The memory of them, their precariousness and stench, still has the power to bring on nausea. This small child looked, as Emma Kennedy did, on the arrangement with terror, imagining

herself slipping (which happened) and being sucked into the grizzly drain hole (which mercifully didn't happen) never to be seen again.

Despite all this, there was much to enjoy not only of our holidays but also of *The Tent, the Bucket and Me*. I won't want to keep this book by my bedside forever but I'm glad I read it. Thanks, Emily.



## GLADYS DUBERLEY' MEMOIRS OF LIFE IN THE FOREST OF DEAN AS A CHILD.

In this extract, her father is coming home on leave in 1915

Winter gave way to Spring and Mam got letters fairly regularly from Dad. Everything seemed to go on quietly and normally. Dad sent us messages and asked, how much had we grown? Were Hetty and Lily doing their lessons well? and helping Mam as much as they could? Then one morning great excitement.

### ***Dad was coming home in May!(1915)***

Great scrubbing and cleaning and extra washing, then one day, there he was. Flat topped soldier's cap, khaki uniform with brass buttons, khaki great coat, puttees round the legs, very clean black boots, a very big kit bag, and what I learned was most important, a badge at the front of his cap saying 13th Gloucester Regiment.

I studied him very closely. After he had grabbed Mam and swung her round, he picked me up and threw me in the air. I wasn't quite sure whether I liked this hard tough person. He was always making jokes; his clothes were rough and hairy and his chin prickly.

When Hetty asked Dad what it was like in France, he said "Muddy, awful muddy country. Forget about it." And when Mam asked him "what would he fancy for his tea", he said, "Anything except bully beef and jam." The house felt so different. Dad made everything into a game.



When it came to bath night, Dad had everything ready in a jiffy. Zinc bath off the hook in the back kitchen in front of the fire. Cold water in bath. Two saucepans of hot water on the hobs. Towels warming. Had me in the bath in no time, water just right. Mam knelt down and washed my hair and while she was drying it, Dad disappeared, came back in in Mam's best flowery apron, a duster round his head, a large scrubbing brush in one hand, and a bar of sunlight soap in the other.

My two older sisters Lily and Hetty fell about laughing, but I didn't think it so funny. I determined I wouldn't be a baby and cry, and when it came to it, Dad was very gentle, dried me, put me in a warm nightie, and sat me on his knee by the fire. Maybe Dad was all right too, but he had to go back to fight the Germans. We were all tearful when leave ended, and I put my arms around his neck and cried into his collar when he lifted me up.



As summer came, we sometimes ventured out for Sunday walks, my sisters and I in our Sunday dresses. Going farther along the hill where the hard road came to an end and disappeared into footpaths going their various ways through the forest, you could turn left and go up an ash path. Here your way was barred by a stile, over which you climbed, and found yourself waist-high in tall grass ready for mowing. Here you could gather moon daisies and quaking grasses. They lasted a long time.

There were also small pieces of herbage which you could eat. Sorrel which had tall red leaves with seeds on top. If you picked the tender leaves at the base and chewed them they were sharp and tasty. We called it 'sour Sally'. Another favourite had tiny white bell flowers and folded heart shaped leaves, very pale green. It was called wood-sorrel with a delicate acid taste. The stems were fragile and palely pink.

**TO BE CONTINUED.**

## QUIZ SOLUTION

1. Italy.
2. Pisces.
3. John Thaw.
4. Shakespeare's plays.
5. King Arthur.
6. Richard.
7. Nottinghamshire.
8. Thursday.
9. George Harrison.
10. South Africa.
11. The letter P.
12. A winged horse.
13. Ruth Rendell.
14. Diamond.
15. Ten.
16. 1984.
17. April 23<sup>rd</sup>.
18. 'Things to be done.'
19. The Hovercraft.
20. Sicily.

## TALLOORN



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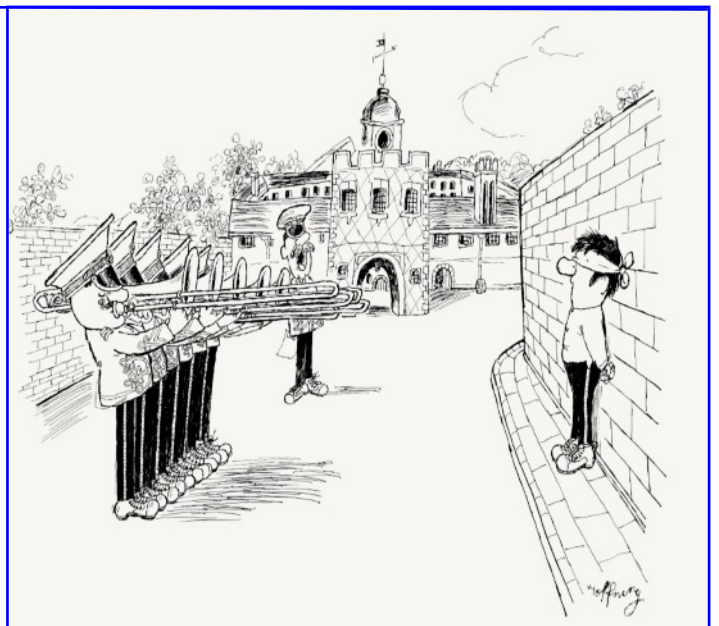
This advert reminds us that the original reason for the A.A. was to act as look-outs spotting police speed traps.

Here the motorist is being made aware of danger lurking just around the corner.

A later and even more sophisticated signal was the expected salute to a member, but it would not be given in the event of a trap in the offing.



Sir, The Chef wishes to return his compliments on your choice of dish also!



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