



# Pen & Palette Club Papers

Spring 2018

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*Edited by The Recorder in Ordinary*

## **Committee**

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## Committee Members

J.P.T.Bell                      J.Millard                      Alan Sidney-Wilmot

***"Let no man take, beyond this threshold hence, words  
uttered here in friendship's confidence."***

**Thursday 11th January 2018**

**Michael Chaplin - My Dad - including a portrait of him as a Young Man**

Welcome to this opening evening of the Spring session. Guests Susan Moor, Judi Postle, Barbara Courtney and Michael Chaplin were greeted. Michael especially as our newest Honorary member and speaker tonight. The President had recently read Michael Chaplin's book 'Tyne View - A Walk Around the Port of Tyne', an exploration of the social history, culture and soul of the river, appeared with contributions from artist Birtley Aris, photographer Charles Bell, and poet Christy Ducker. Well worth a look at! He then went on to list some of Michael's credits which can be read on the 'wikipedia site'!

Almost at once we were contemplating an enormous piece of tasty lamb and then the 2d end provided interludes by first toasting our President and keeping to a literary theme asked 'What were the first books you read and their influence ?

Enid Blyton's famous five followed up by Biggles, Buchan and Rider Haggard's '*She*' as he became more aware of the opposite sex! He thought that Enid Blyton needs to be remembered as the books are pager turners and introduced many young people to reading.

Whilst the delicious meal continued Michael Chaplin was toasted next and asked the same question. He was most fortunate in that his home was full of books and started reading at a young age. 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist' by Robert Tressall came immediately to mind about a group of house painters in Sussex who epitomised life at the bottom of society. Meanwhile his brother became addicted to '*The Ginger Man*' by J.P. Donleavy. His father and mother gave him that urge to read and then write which he took up with gusto!

David Kilner was next who said there was only one book in his life - Richmal Compton's '*Just William*' with his mates Ginger and Joe. This influenced him immensely but not to becoming a writer!

Marion Anderson gave us two books - Mary Plain who could be said to have invented Emojis featuring a bear and an Owl man and books by W. Harrison Ainsworth.

Peter Wallace added to the booklist Percy E Westerman who despite writing the widely travelled sailing books was all the time ensconced on a houseboat moored on the Itchen. Hillaire Belloc and then the Diaries of Alan Bennett.

As a late addition and counter to tradition David Walker who was on the 2d end was toasted as he had taught our Guest speaker English at Heaton Grammar School - '*A Proper Job*' and '*You Couldn't Make it Up*' came appositely to mind as two plays written by Michael Chaplin! He was well remembered by our guest speaker alongside other members of the staff who had nicknames but not David!

The Loyal Toast was sung by John Havis accompanied by Anne. We then came to the main course of the evening and Alan Kerr did the introduction of the speaker Michael Chaplin on 'My Dad'. Sid wrote extensively for TV - '*When the Boat Comes In*' and '*Close the Coal House Door*'. He was very much self taught and in the 1940's wrote as a Pitman and was friends with the Pitman Painters and his 'Marrer' was Norman Cornish. Without more ado he handed over to Michael who laid out various artifacts on the table including a brick to bring the story to life. From a cigarette packet came a miners tally which belonged to Sid in his Pitman days. Next was unveiled his portrait by his mucker Norman Cornish and also a sketch of his head by Kelsey Thornton. Sid was born in 1916 son of Ike and Elsie Chaplin. They were brought up in adjacent streets and knew each other from childhood. Ike's father came from Norfolk and with the agricultural industry in decline he was told to by his father to walk to the North East where there was plenty of work in the Durham coalfields. Elsie's parents came from the Borders and came south as there was work in Durham. So the families gravitated to the area around Ferryhill and the Wear. Ike and Elsie blossomed together and married once she became pregnant with Sid! He was born on 20th Sept 1916. The family lived in numerous places journeying from pit to pit but never far away from the River Wear where all the coal was mined. At that time the NE coalfields produced more coal than the rest of the country put together! He was a child who noticed things and had an ability to tell stories especially at bed time to his brothers and sisters. He was interested in books and aged 9 he procured a copy of '*Mill on the Floss*' and a large tome by Tolstoy - '*Resurrection*' which he avidly read. He wandered around the countryside looking at everything from the wildlife to the drift mines and coke works which spewed out fire from the coke being ejected from their cells. Engines and ropes hauling the coal wagons out for the boys to pick off the stone, brick works and all the accompanying sounds including the Buzzers ending or beginning shifts. Eventually the family moved to Ferryhill which to Sid was like a metropolis with many pits and all the paraphernalia including the main line railway to London. At 14 he started work in a bakery as his parents did not want him to go down the pit. This lasted for about a year when he developed dermatitis and so he gravitated to the pit and the screens picking off the stone and having to learn a sign language as the noise prevented all speech. He hated the work and eventually became apprentice blacksmith for 7 years. Here he was taught the art of the blacksmith and much more of politics and literature by his mentor Alex. It was from this that he started to write short stories and in the 1940's some of these were published. As 2016 was the centenary of his birth Michael wished to mark this in a special way and assembled his stories and

poems with a commentary on Sid's life and this was published in 2017 entitled '*HAME*' (or Yeme).

Sid had his books published in a number of countries including USSR but the Royalties were only payable in Roubles due to the Cold War. Undeterred he arranged for him and his wife to travel to Moscow and then buy tickets there to travel to St Petersburg. So he then went to his local travel agent and asked for two single tickets to Moscow.

The talk drew to a close and to much applause Michael was thanked for providing such an insight into the life of his talented father Sid. Copies of the book were purchased and your Recorder in Ordinary has been spellbound by all Sid's stories because they bring to life his world, surroundings and people. The candles were snuffed and the assembly departed with pictures in the minds of pit life in the 20th century.

Pat Cooper  
Recorder in Ordinary

**Tuesday 13th February 2018**  
**Earl Grey: the Man on the Monument**  
**Professor John Derry.**

Open Toast - Alan Sidney Wilmott

I have often wondered about how some place names came into being and consequently decided to carry out some research. I discovered that the word PEN denotes a Celtic settlement as in Penzance. Any name ending "TON" or "HAM" is probably Anglo Saxon, the former meaning "farm" and the latter "homestead", for example Birmingham was originally the homestead of someone called "BEOMA". When Romans built military camps or "CASTRAS" we got Colchester, Leicester and Doncaster. Vikings used their own word for homestead of "BY" hence Whitby, Derby and Ashby. French supporters of William the Conqueror added their own names to places hence Ashby de-la-Zouche. Usually a word ending in "ley" signifies a meadow or clearing for instance one settlement called Wemba, became Wembley (I wonder how many football supporters know this, but they are correct in chanting 3 syllables).

Travelling south from Scotland, I found near Dumfries, the shortest named place in our British Isles, namely AE- also a place called Dull, which unsurprisingly is twinned with Boring in Ohio, Kirkcudbright, is pronounced "Kirkoobree" and Milne Garvie as every scot knows, is pronounced "Mulgay". In Northumberland, we have "Ogle" and in Durham "Pity Me". Yorkshire has a place named "Fryup" and Wales "Splott". Although in 1860, the Welsh village

with the enormously long unpronounceable name cheated slightly in choosing the name for publicity purposes only. A friend of mine passed through a village near Shrewsbury named "Knockin" and assures me a shop in the village has a large sign reading "KNOCKIN - 'SHOP". In Derbyshire, Tintwhistle, is pronounced "Tinsel". In Saxon times, Nottingham was called Snottingham, when Snot meant wives. Lincolnshire is interesting as there is a place called Wrangle, however, not far away, a signpost for a turning for two tiny villages reads "Two Mavis Enderby" and "Old Bolingbroke" to which someone has added "The gift of a son". In Leicestershire, there is "Barton in the Beans" whilst in Worcestershire is housed "Bricklehampton", which has 14 letters, with none repeated, which is the longest name in England. If you go to Staffordshire, you will be at "Loggerheads" and in Norfolk "Great Snoring". In Essex is "Matching Tye" and "Ugley", originally, you won't be surprised that the women's institute branch changed their name from Ugly Women's Institute, to the Women's Institute of Ugly. In Kent, there is a village called Ham, near to the town of Sandwich, and at one point, there is a signpost pointing to them both reading "Ham and Sandwich" which often gets stolen. Devon has a place named "Westwood Ho" which is the only name with an exclamation mark. Cornwall of course has Mouse Hole pronounced "Mouzel". Other strange place names include Lusty Glaze, Pant Thong, Catbrain, Scratchy Bottom, North Piddle and Tarty.

I invite you to drink a toast to "BRITISH ECCENTRICITIES"

Kelsey Thornton's Report of the talk -

Am I churlish to be just a little less than completely satisfied by this skilful and informative talk, given with such expertise and fluency by John Derry? I learned quite a bit that put Grey in a clearer light than standing so steadfastly at the top of his monument, trying aristocratically to avoid the applause of the inscription on the base, which was added some twenty years after the column was erected in 1838, and after Grey's death in 1845. Conversation after the lecture suggested that his statue lost his head once literally to a lightning strike, presumably in symbolic representation of losing it metaphorically over the Duchess of Devonshire.

I discovered that Grey's dedication for reform was not something that simply erupted in the 1830s but was a long-standing belief of his, dating from the 18th century roots of his parliamentary career. He was already committed to parliamentary reform in 1793 and 1797, but he was too radical for MPs in the time of the Napoleonic wars. And his parliamentary career was not some continuous process, but interrupted by the frustration of long years when he was out of office, and indeed out of Parliament. Perhaps the inheriting of

Hawick in 1808 made him quite willing to live out of London and not undertake the four days' journey to the metropolis too often (our lecturer said six days, but I think that must have been dawdling).

We were reminded of the way in which Irish politics have often proved a disaster for English politicians, as Grey resigned in 1834 because he didn't wish to compromise with O'Connell; but his short-lived premiership was remarkably productive. Apart from the 1832 Act, which was one of redistribution rather than franchise extension (women in general had to wait until the twentieth century), his ministry would abolish slavery in the British Empire in 1833 by the peculiar but practical method of buying all the slaves; and they passed a Factory Act regulating conditions of industrial employment, but more importantly putting in place a system to make sure the rules were observed.

We felt in the presence of someone who understood the ebb and flow of politics, was extremely well-versed in the details, and we couldn't help being impressed by the ease and notelessness of the delivery. So why should I be 'a little less than satisfied'? Well, the lecture began with a small child asking his father 'Who was Earl Grey?' I was reminded of that sonnet of Auden's (not, it should be said, about Grey):

A shilling life will give you all the facts:  
How father beat him, how he ran away,  
What were the struggles of his youth, what acts  
Made him the greatest figure of his day:  
Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,  
Though giddy, climbed new mountains; named a sea:  
Some of the last researchers even write  
Love made him weep his pints like you and me.

With all his honours on, he sighed for one  
Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;  
Did little jobs about the house with skill  
And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still  
Or potter round the garden; answered some  
Of his long marvellous letters, but kept none.

At least, that is a good excuse for looking at a fine poem. We were given much more than the 'shilling life' account, but the poem might suggest my problem: that we found out very effectively what Grey did; but did we ever find out who he was?

Kelsey Thornton - Reporter for the Lunch

**Wednesday 14th March 2018**

**Meeting held on 14 March 2018. Talk given about “the Work of the Tyne and Wear Preservation Trust” by Martin Hulse.**

Tuppenny End

1. Malcolm Yorke.

The Tuppenny End recalled the death that morning of Stephen Hawking, a great scientist and a very brave man. No doubt you have a copy of his best seller, ‘*A Brief History of Time*’, our question to you is - Did you finish it? To which Malcolm replied that he had not got beyond the title page

2. Martin Hulse

The TE chairman recalled as a native of Sunderland in the sixties he watched in horror as the town council demolished the beautiful Victorian town hall in Fawcett Street, an act from which the town is yet to recover in his opinion. Martin said that was before his time but found it interesting that the Civic Centre which was built then is now under consideration for listed building status.

3 Mavis Yorke.

As the first of what we hope will be many more women members on the committee and looking after our catering needs so well we ask, in the light of the proliferation of restaurants from all manner of ethnic groups in the past 50/60 years, what exotic dish would you like to lay before us and hope to get away with, Chef permitting of course. Mavis replied that her favourite dish stemmed from their 3 year stay in Finland many years ago, a dish from Karelia including beef, lamb and pork joints with many spices including juniper cooked in an earthenware dish for 14 hours, with apologies to any veggies among us.

4. Marion Anderson. There was a survey in this city some 10 years ago which sought peoples views on its ugliest building and, as you will remember, Westgate House won hands down and was duly demolished. Is there another building in this city which you would like to see similarly treated? No problem said Marion it is Commercial Union house in Pilgrim street, another of the misguided efforts from the T Dan Smith era.

4. Vivienne Molyneux. Another notable death occurred this week of course, Sir Ken Dodd, who fairly may be considered a National Treasure. In your view is there a woman comedian working today who you would similarly regard as a National Treasure, and indeed, worthy of Damehood?

Vivienne offered two candidates, Penelope Keith and Joanna Lumley, both blessed with exquisite timing.

Peter Wallace

“Stepping up to the plate”, as the Americans put it, Marion Anderson introduced our speaker, a first for a lady member. As a city guide she knew Martin Hulse and his work and praised his contributions to building preservation in the city and surrounding area.

Martin gave an informal and informative account of his activities since becoming Company Manager of the Trust seven years ago. Founded by the local authority in 1979 the Trust became independent in 1986 and is now a Registered Charity which derives much of its income from rent from properties it owns. Martin enjoys “getting his hands dirty” on a variety of regeneration of heritage projects. While able to visualise the end product of restoration, the rate of completion varies in relation to such factors as funding, council policy and evolving legislation. Of late Martin has restored a monastic cell on Coquet Island as accommodation for RSPB wardens where they can comfortably supervise the nationally important breeding colony of roseate terns; old low light navigation lighthouse by the Tyne and the conversion of an engine house into a workshop. Currently he is restoring a lodge in a cemetery, a pit head from a redundant colliery and an architect’s bespoke office on an industrial landscape. His work starts with the identification of potential projects leading on to project development, detailed design and project delivery. Critical to the work is understanding the long term impact on the Trust of taking on a new project and dealing with its legacy.

Major projects in progress were outlined. Of special importance is to save the outstanding All Saints Church in Pilgrim Street (1786-1796) now closed despite the working clock. With funds from the Council it is aimed to re-open the building as a functioning church. The Trust’s office is located in Alderman Fenwick’s House on which it took a 125 year lease in 1982. Its dating to the 1660’s rests on the plaster work. First a residence, it later became the Queens Head Hotel (where Charles Dickens stayed) and then the Liberal Club (where five prime ministers spoke- at different times), The Trust has facilitated a £1,000,000 restoration of the mediaeval House of Tides, now a restaurant. Jesmond Dene Banqueting Hall, initially designed by John Dobson, was gifted to the people of Newcastle by Lord Armstrong. £70,000 has been spent by the Trust on plans to restore the building but progress has been held up in part by changes in responsibility of ownership. Dunstan Staithes, the largest timber structure in Northern Europe, needs further investment and insurance cover. Adjacent to it is a protected area for breeding birds which limits access by the public during the winter months.

Other buildings undergoing restoration include the original Binns of Sunderland, the Bottle Kilns at Corbridge and the Blackfell Hauler House (part of the now closed Bowes railway).

All in all a fascinating and illuminating address to an interested audience which provoked a number of questions.

Alan Kerr - Reporter for the lunch

**Tuesday 10th April 2018**

**Palladio and the British Palladians - Alan Bott OBE**



The Queen's House Greenwich -  
Inigo Jones 1616

This was a lunchtime meeting on a day of slashing rain, but there was a large attendance and a French Onion Soup to warm us up. The President brought us up to date on three members, Mick Mortimer, Ian Lavelle and Norma Hickey, who are currently incapacitated. He then welcomed our speaker, Alan Bott. Alan has had a remarkable career which involved him circling the globe forty-two times. This just might have been facilitated by his position as a Director of P&O Lines. Caroline his wife is a mathematician and has launched a ship into the Tyne. The President had heard Alan lecture the previous evening to the Arts Society on the subject of Ethiopia – a tour de force with no notes and remarkable slides. We were in for a similar performance but this time on Palladio the 16th century architect born in Padua but most active in the Venice region.

The President asked for clarification: was it Pa-lady-o or Pa-laddy-o? It seems you can take your pick, lady or laddy. Jeremy Bell, leader of the Tupenny End, then staggered to his only available foot (the other was thoroughly plastered) to ask our guest for his favourite Palladian building. The chapel of his old Oxford college of Merton he replied. Alan Share shared this view as a contemporary Mertonian. Somehow Palladio never seems to have

tackled railway stations, which is a pity as they seem to be a turn-on for Maggie Crow, especially those at Newcastle and King's Cross. The President observed that Palladian buildings looked their best in the slanting sunlight of the Veneto, rather than today's slanting rain at Seaton Delavel.

Pat Cooper then sang the Loyal Toast, unaccompanied (the pianist having gone AWOL) with scarce a wobble and immediately followed it with an Open Toast on Events Happen. What a trouper is Mr Cooper!

The talk was every bit as informative as we expected, moving us from Greeks to Romans to Renaissance, to Gothic and back again with informative slides that Alan had taken himself. We saw the palazzos and rural villas created for the rich but also how they related to the much humbler form of the farmhouse in their use of inexpensive brick and stucco. Palladio incorporated his designs into '*The Four Books of Architecture*' which spread his ideas across Europe and especially, via the work of Inigo Jones, to Britain. There seems to be scarcely a country house that is not Palladian in spirit or detail. Even in America Jefferson's Monticello and the White House itself owe a debt to Palladio.

We all applauded a very enjoyable display of erudition and wished Alan and Caroline a safe drive back to Godalming in Surrey.

Malcolm Yorke

Open Toast - Events?

Harold McMillan was once asked what most influenced his decisions as Prime Minister and his succinct reply was "Events my boy Events". I have been over the years puzzled as to how I and my family came to live in the North East. As confirmed southerners thinking Birmingham was the far north it came as bit of a shock to find we have been here some 48 years and still enjoying the wild and rugged Northumberland and Durham with its history and incredible coast line. Could be inertia I suppose but thinking back to the three day week and the electricity cuts of the early 70's it was not an auspicious start! On top of that three months after getting here the reason for the move had evaporated with HM Gov cancelling the Sizewell B nuclear Power Station for economic reasons!

Its a funny old world 'cos it was finally built but at a far greater cost in the late 80's/90's. Perhaps I should have read the runes and retreated south to lick the wounds. But no way swapping the commeradie and fun for life we quickly found living in the North East. It had its advantages in being able to quickly get from A to B without car queues for hours which was our experience of the South East. So we became somewhat assimilated into Northern life and its funny quirks - ham stotties and pease pudden for one!

Turning now to the P & P thoughts inevitably for me turn to the meals and forever hoping enough people will come so that we do not embarrass the speaker! It's like waiting for Godot and hoping that members will suddenly email or ring to fill the dining room. Then at the deadline date from the Mansion House Manager a reasonable number is given. But that is never the end as each day passes and more people suddenly realise they should tell me they are coming and presumably there will be a place for them! Yes, is my usual reply for I now know that events take a turn and someone is bound to fall by the wayside (hopefully not terminal) and that gives that bit of leeway to allow two or more attendees! So by events it all seems to work with the minimum of stress and palpitations!

Lets drink a toast then to "Events and their role in life".

Pat Cooper

## **The Viewing of the Pictures**

### **16th May 2018**

The President gave a heartfelt grace and then introduced the guests - Dave Barton Artist in Residence at the People's Theatre, Helen Joseph guest of Tony Walker, Ruth Waterhouse guest of Rachel Cundall.

He then gave his assessment of the pictures on display which we should all admire later. Exhibitions of pictures fall into two categories - those which make you think "I could do better than that or my 5 year old's pictures are far superior" and those who make you exhale with a wow "i wish I could paint like that". I will leave you to do the wowing later on!

The 2d end under the chairmanship of Pat toasted the Chairman asking him to pick one picture or artifact he would take to his downsized flat - a Picasso would be nice but he'd prefer the money! He then remembered that he had met Picasso in his youth in Sheffield on a rainy afternoon after being let out of school. He was standing in the rain and Malcolm was too shy to say anything and just gawked! Picasso was to draw 'Peace Doves' at the International Rally in the City Hall which were to be auctioned. Malcolm asked for £10 but his Dad refused on the grounds that Malcolm could draw better himself. Malcolm still dreams of having one of those scribbles which would be worth millions!

Next up was the Master of the Pictures Paul Hickey who had mastered the art of calligraphy at the workshop the previous Friday and asked when he would be retiring to Lindisfarne to scribe his memoirs? Only if the 2d Chairman

offered his cottage to live in was the short reply. He then recited a poem he had composed giving an account of the trips the artists had made over the past year :-

His McGonnogal tribute :-

The Artists set out once again,  
One lady and five of us men,  
To the mansion we came,  
Through the snow and the rain,  
And dusted off palette and pen.

There were two who arrived far too soon,  
Read their map by the light of the moon!  
The rest of us read  
Our instructions instead  
And arrived, just on time, in the Toon.

Our first task was to do dot to dot,  
Pointillist seem to do it a lot,  
We tapped our points lightly  
And some were quite sprightly  
But our President, he lost the plot.

Scottish Colourists next on our list,  
A session not to be missed,  
Bright colours, don't slack,  
Our backgrounds were black,  
And our fruit had a citrus twist.

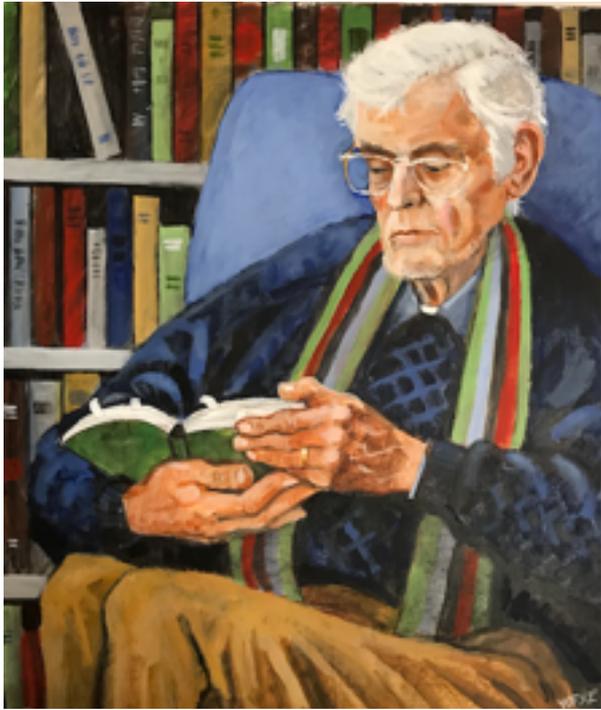
The Master of Pictures' last trick  
Was to give the poor artists a stick  
Dip it in ink,  
And do what you think,  
The results were all strange but quite slick.

Alan Reed was asked in a roundabout way if he was ever a calligrapher - no but he had used 'letter a set' if that was any help. He did admire the scribes who copied the bible texts but God help the monk who did the final verse and got it wrong!

The Loyal toast was sung accompanied by David Kilner on the keys. After coffee we all retired to the small dining room for the viewing :-

The contributors were - Charlie Wesencraft, Norma Hickey, Kelsey Thornton, Vinny Cooper, Paul Hickey, David Robson (who took the pictures), Malcolm Yorke, Tony Walker, Brian Laing, Bob Young, Alan Reed, Rachel Cundall, Dennis Robson and Jeremy Bell with his unique pictures on his casts painted by his daughter!









After a memorable evening the President closed the meeting hoping that everyone would remember to come to the final meeting with the AGM and the Poetry and Prose!

Pat Cooper  
Recorder in Ordinary

## AGM and Poetry & Prose Lunch 12th June 2018

The AGM took place in its usual smooth way and the minutes were taken for disseminating next year for the annual outing which is necessary with all organisations to ensure their smooth running!

The buffet lunch was then served and all agreed that our Master of the Household (- Mavis! )had done a good job especially with the strawberries with chocolate!

It was then on with the Poetry and Prose and this was started off by our Honorary Member Michael Chaplin. His theme was a train journeys. He thought it was a very good way of seeing countries and cities. This time he was going on the Orient Express to Vienna which evokes the Third Man, Orson Wells, Trevor Howard and sewers together with zither music! Of course he was to go on a tour to see all these sites! Another Vienese film was 'Good Night Vienna' made in 1932 and as the producer had worked for the BBC their paths had crossed. Probably as good as a 'Good Night in Lewisham perhaps!

He liked the lyrics of 'These Foolish Things'

A cigarette that bears a lipstick's traces  
An airline ticket to romantic places  
And still my heart has wings  
These foolish things remind me of you

A tinkling piano in the next apartment  
Those stumblin' words that told you what my  
heart meant  
A fairground's painted swings  
These foolish things remind me of you

You came, you saw, you conquered me  
When you did that to me  
I knew somehow this had to be

The winds of March that make my heart a  
dancer  
A telephone that rings but who's to answer?  
Oh, how the ghost of you clings  
These foolish things remind me of you

How strange, how sweet, to find you still  
These things are dear to me  
They seem to bring you near to me

The sigh of midnight trains in empty stations  
Silk stockings thrown aside, dance invitations  
Oh, how the ghost of you clings  
These foolish things remind me of you  
Remind me of you



Michael Chaplin - sketch by  
Kelsey Thornton

Malcolm Yorke

Last year I went on a tour of America's National Parks –Yellowstone, Zion, Bryce, Canyon, Mount Rushmore and so on. This involved travel through Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, Utah and Arizona, in other words the Wild West, Buffalo Bill, cowboy country.

Much of this is prairie which means all you see horizon to horizon in all direction is brown grass. Now and then there is a pronghorn deer and a herd of bison. It is so boring that some of the states have made pot smoking legal to stop people going insane. There are roadside shops advertising grass, weed, marihuana, cannabis, pot or whatever you like to call it. The bison and the grass came together in my poem.

O I'm a bully bull bison  
All my cows call me Tyson  
Tough beefy and hairy  
(I sure am no fairy!)  
I weigh over a ton  
And do nothin' by halves  
I've dozens of wives  
And hundreds of calves  
And I roam this here prairie  
A seekin' out grass  
When I find it I smoke it  
I toke it, no joke it'  
's legal out here in the west.  
O I'm a wally gully basin  
Who's inhaling a spliff  
I'm stoned out of my mind  
And my head's on  
Skew wiff.

This next one is cowboy and Indian country. I saw lots of Navaho selling their crafts and 'dream catchers' but not one cowboy, or even a man on a horse. There are no cowboys because there are no cows. The shops are full of stetsons, boots and chaps but the only place they seem to wear them is in hotel bars. Nevertheless you hear cowboy music all the time and I imagined this '*Ballad of the Halitosis Kid*':

I'm randy and bandy, a son of a gun  
Wrasslin' grizzlies is my idea of fun  
An ornery cowboy of rawhide and gristle  
At home with the cactus, yukka and thistle  
I'm a bad 'un a mad un, I'd shoot my grannie  
Were it not for my love of cute little Annie.  
Hot as a chilli and sweet as molasses  
Tho' she gives me the elbow if I make passes  
She's all I've wanted but for one thing –  
Can't get in her Levis without buying a ring.  
"Marry" she says "and work for my Paw  
Serve at the counter of our family store"  
A shopkeeper! Me? Hell no!  
I'd rather a bullet in my doggon brains

So I bid her good day and lit out for the plains  
Out in the sage bush I lay under the moon  
Fried up my beans and farted a tune  
Dug a latrine and shot me an owl  
(Damned little meat on those scrawny fowl)  
As I drank from the creek, came a flash flood  
Swept off the tent and all of my food  
My hoss did a runner, I twisted my knee  
Now I'm tired of beans and my own company  
I thought of my Annie, skin smelling of soap  
Concluded I'd been a hornswoggle dope.  
Now I load shelves for Walmart the store  
No longin' to poke them cows any more  
For I've found the secret of bliss is  
A take-away pizza, in bed, with my missis.

### **Kelsey Thornton's poems**

Ballade for someone who complained my verse mentioned politics.

I really am in something of a fix:  
I've Pen and Palette poems to compose,  
But find there is a dictum that restricts  
My choice of subject, and instead bestows  
A limit to my muse, demands she goes  
Only to places that some other ticks,  
Ignoring subjects right beneath my nose.  
I haven't got to mention politics.

Just to throw something extra in the mix:  
We don't exempt great poets, I suppose.  
Dryden liked giving statesmen kicks,  
And Byron mocked his parliamentary foes;  
And Shelley can be named as one of those  
Whose poems weren't afraid to throw some bricks.  
I'm to keep shtum and contemplate my toes.  
I haven't got to mention politics.  
At risk of getting rather too prolix  
To grumble on and to bewail my woes,  
I'll get the poets' numbers up to six  
With Swift and Yeats and Marvell, which just shows  
That verse of that sort's not an idle pose.

This is a subject that routinely picks  
Poets to slander statesman so-and-sos.  
I haven't got to mention politics.

#### Envoi

Prince, I can't write sonnets to the rose.  
My muse, I fear, is up to other tricks.  
If statesmen will have foibles to expose,  
I might be forced to mention politics

#### Troilus and Cressida

The Stratford schoolboy, impatient with hard Greek  
Vows that one day he'll tell truth about Troy  
And all those cardboard heroes who annoy  
The lad forced to admire them every week.  
When finally he gets the chance to speak,  
He will contrive to show with wicked joy  
These 'heroes' that torment the growing boy  
Are selfish, petty, lustful, greedy, weak.  
He will invent the lowest gutter mind  
To tell them it's just lechery and war;  
Their heroine a manipulative whore,  
And fabled Helen of the self-same kind,  
Ajax a buffoon, Achilles a cad.  
Schoolboy revenge upon the Iliad.

#### Julius Caesar

Caesar, like Hal, shows what it takes to rule;  
It quiets no country to be just a man  
With all his weaknesses, for he must plan  
The deeds of Empire and be no man's fool.  
He must be Caesar, not the Senate's tool.  
Conspirators will claim that he outran  
The needs of state, which he's not greater than.  
But Revolution is a slippery school.  
Mark Antony learns that he's no triumvir;  
Short-sighted Cassius makes a fatal slip,  
Misreading victory. The state's a ship  
Even well-meaning Brutus cannot steer.  
However noble, and however skilled,

They can't survive without the man they killed.

### Othello, the Moor of Venice

Othello's colour is a simple fact  
But we find out what simple facts can mean  
When hate manipulates the way they're seen,  
And jealousy, determined to detract  
From noble honour, labours to extract  
Foul meanings from fair words, and with obscene  
Skill plots to orchestrate the steps between  
Naïve belief and a destructive act.

Things have no meaning till we think they do.  
It's in the mind Iago takes control,  
Playing the prejudice deep in the soul  
Against black, Christian, Barbarian, Jew.  
Consider if the base of your belief  
Is any stronger than a handkerchief.

### **England's landscape and heritage.**

*'Going, Going'* - a Larkin verse on my computer's desktop

It was our headmaster's mission that we should not go through life without some culture – and what better than if we learnt Blake's Jerusalem by rote and sang it at assembly. The last line 'In England's green and pleasant land' has stayed with me.

But to what extent is 'green and pleasant' still true? – are we still green and pleasant? I am treating this in visual pastoral sense, also including structures of architectural and cultural importance. A vast amount has been lost. Yet clearly there are still many places, small or wide, which do please the eye and lift our emotions.

However, all depends where you live - the pressures of industrialisation, modern life, consumerism etc., have caused great damage. The stresses on our whole environment grow apace and are of grave concern.

In the Guardian of 11 June 2018, Chris Packham warns of an 'ecological apocalypse' 'a green and unpleasant land'. – wildlife is in very serious decline – it is going or has gone.

Perhaps when put alongside Packham's anger, John Betjeman's concerns may seem trivial. In his poem Hertfordshire he complains that the use of inappropriate materials accumulate to bring effects, which he describes as

devastating. Minor changes accumulate to produce the degrading of the landscape, its aesthetic appeal is lost: – ...but now the shire suffers a devastating change. Its gentle landscape strung with wire...and tall concrete standards line the lane...

Philip Larkin is tougher in his disgust and unease about the condition of England; '*Going, Going*' was written in 1972, we should all read it – nine verses of bad news; it starts so-

I thought it would last my time.  
The sense that beyond the town  
There would always be fields and farms  
Where the village louts could climb  
Such trees that were not cut down...

It's all in the poem – bleak high risers, chuck filth in the sea, irresponsible takeover bids, move your works to the unspoilt dales, more parking allowed – and so on. Sympathetic to his disgust, I keep a copy of verse eight on my computer desktop and that will be England gone,

The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,  
the Guildhalls, the carved choirs.  
There'll be books: it will linger on  
In galleries; but all that remains  
For us will be concrete and tyres.

Bob Young

## **ICONIC!**

There is one word which is overused  
It's meaning I'm sure has been abused  
In fact the whole thing is getting chronic  
I'm alluding to the word, 'ICONIC'

The Tyne Bridge and the Albert Hall  
The Gateshead Sage, which I recall  
On radio, press, in terms, laconic  
Are frequently described 'ICONIC'.

But not just structures, others too  
Are included, and they are not a few  
One of these is LiverpoolPhilharmonic  
Regularly referred to as 'ICONIC'.

I hear this word - its quite frustrating  
There is no sign of its abating  
Announced in tones so histrionic  
Out comes that pesky word 'ICONIC'.

I wish I would not get so mad  
When a word becomes a regular fad  
I wonder whether I'm being moronic  
At criticising the word 'ICONIC'.

I read this morning, whilst eating my beans  
That the Tennis Club which is known as Queens  
Has been described as, yes 'ICONIC'  
This is getting quite demonic

I don't mind words like telephonic  
And greatly admire supersonic  
I'm getting used to electronic  
And I never have joined clubs called masonic.

I feel that this is getting me stressed  
It's getting to me, and I'm past my best  
If I never again hear the word 'ICONIC'  
I'll drink to this - a gin and tonic!

David Kilner

Marion Anderson gave us a ditty about Grandma's advice on facing exams, followed by how the Anglican Wedding Service came about and how it stopped all those runaway weddings (apart from crossing the Border to Scotland - Gretna Green).

So the proceedings of the AGM were brought to a close and the candles blown out on this seasons meetings of the P and P!

Pat Cooper  
Recorder in Ordinary







**The Mansion House**