

Northern news

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS
FROM OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
AROUND THE WORLD

June 2017





Editorial Ramblings

Another month of exams and assessments for Grace to get through - all of which she has passed. In addition, she has been nominated for *Student of the Year*. Congratulations, Grace! This is true recognition for all her hard work.

We would like to thank an anonymous person who may be reading this newsletter. There have been times when we have visited the grave of Annelise to find that there have been flowers and plants placed there by a very kind and thoughtful person who has left no card or name to identify them. Your kindness and generosity is very much appreciated and we would love to know who you are so we can thank you in person.

Grace has really suffered from hay fever this month. I don't know how she has coped so well with this, especially when trying to study and deal with her exams. We've just managed to obtain a small amount of local honey which we hope will help her. With bees being in such short supply thanks to the destruction of our hedgerows and the increase in chemicals used to destroy almost all forms of life, the bee-keepers are struggling to produce enough for our needs. The bee-keeper from whom we bought the honey had all the bees from his seven hives wiped out earlier this year and has only managed to get two of them re-stocked with bees and working again. In his case, the loss of his bees was caused by the vagaries of the weather and attacks from wasps rather than the aforementioned problems that are more general throughout the country - which have contributed to his inability to find more bees with which to re-stock his hives.

To say that I am hugely disappointed would be the understatement of the year. As you will remember, I need to replace my very old Canon EOS 5D. The latest iteration of this, the Mk IV version is, in round numbers, something over £3000 and although it can be used for 4K video it leaves a lot to be desired. I've been waiting for the release of the 6D MkII which happened on 29 June. No 4K video! A new model, £2000 camera without 4K video! What are Canon thinking of? Even the HD video it produces is rubbish. The EOS 5D MkIII, still available at about the same price as the 6D MkII is a good camera but it is more than 5 years old and that also has no 4K video, although, in its day, the HD quality was considered to be very good - but that day was a long time ago. The question remains: *What camera do I buy now?* I have no idea - and that in itself is a remarkable thing for me to have to state. I have never been in this predicament before during more than 50 years of serious photography. Canon have let me (and thousands of others) down and shot themselves in the foot in doing so.

Alan



Cover photograph (and above): A 1925 Austin Heavy 20 which originally served as a taxi in Australia before being imported to England. It is powered by a 4 litre, 4 cylinder petrol engine. Photograph taken at the Goosnargh and Whittingham Festival on 3 June 2017.

Next page: Grace's nomination certificate for *Student of the Year*.

Congratulations, Grace!

**PRESTON'S
COLLEGE**



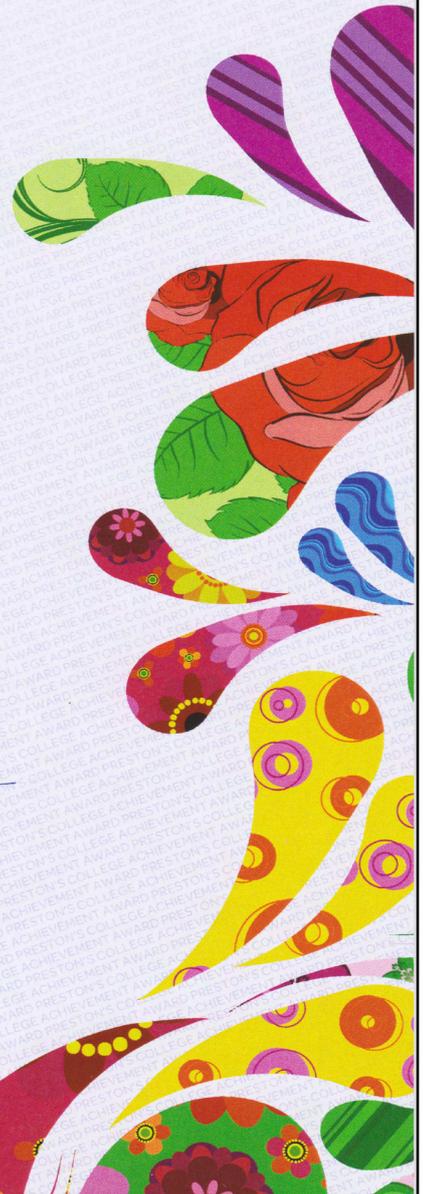
**ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD 2017**

NOMINATED
FOR THE
**STUDENT
OF THE YEAR
AWARD**

Awarded to
Grace Cook

Signed:
Programme Team Leader

Date: 30th June 2017





All photographs in this section taken on 3 June 2017 at this lovely traditional old English festival.









The
summer
of love
1967



[Click HERE to view the video](#)



Downham





[Click HERE to view the video](#)

On 4 June 2017, we went out for a drive in the beautiful Lancashire countryside. As we passed through the tiny village of Downham we noticed this event taking place on the village green. We stopped and found that it was an annual event, every Whitsuntide, of *Hymns on the Green*. We stayed in the village for some time, talking to some of the folks who'd attended the event - followed, of course, by a large cone of the local ice cream.



Scorton Steam Fair 2017





Freckleton Brass Band

Earlier this month we enjoyed a wonderful concert in Freckleton Village Hall given by this amazing sounding band. I've used the photograph (*above*) from their website that you can see at URL: <https://freckletonband.co.uk/>. We bought some of their CDs and hope you will support them too. You can listen to some of their music and visit their website by clicking on the buttons below.



*Happy Birthday, Alan
28 (again)*

Alan, JP, Geoffrey and Linda during my birthday celebration.
Photograph by Grace.



JP about to get stuck in to his starter course during my birthday celebration.
Photograph by Grace.



On Sunday 25 June I reached the ripe old age of 28 (again) and Grace organised dinner for us at the Italian restaurant, *The Orchard* in Broughton. I was very surprised, and delighted, to find that Geoffrey and Linda were also able to share the celebration with us. I'd also like to thank all those who sent me cards, e-mails and text messages wishing me a Happy Birthday. We all had a great time and enjoyed great food too.



Photograph by JP.

Happy Father's Day!
18 June 2017



Photograph by JP.

flash back

Zakynthos
5 to 12 June 2012

We went on holiday to Zakynthos more by accident than design. I was sitting at home one Saturday morning after having booked a caravan site in Northumberland for this holiday week (Whitsuntide). As I watched the streams of rainwater rolling down the window panes I thought to myself, *Do I really want to be stuck in a caravan in middle of a field, in the rain, with JP for a whole week?*

Of course, you know the answer to that! Without saying a word to anyone, I got into my car and drove into town to the travel agent.

Hello; can I help you?

If you can find me a holiday you can. I replied.

When would you like to go?

Tomorrow if you like.

We sat down by her computer screen and I booked a holiday; travelling just a few days from that Saturday. Hence our trip to Zakynthos. Was it better than being stuck in a caravan in the rain with JP? Oh yes - No comparison.

We had a super time and JP went snorkelling in the Mediterranean - the first time he'd snorkelled in the sea - *Wow! Wow!* could be heard coming out of his snorkel as he saw the fish swimming past for the first time. How he enjoyed himself, as we all did, on this holiday. We rented a car and toured the island, the southern-most Ionian island. One of the tastes that we brought home with us was a liking for Greek yoghurt with honey. Another taste that we brought home with us was the only event that soured our holiday, literally, was in buying some wonderful tasting wine which, when we got the unopened bottles home, proved to be more like vinegar than wine - much to our embarrassment, as we'd given away one bottle to our special friends, Keith and Liz who tried their bottle before we'd opened ours - and called us to find out if we were trying to poison them!





Alan's Reflections

Alan's Reflections

One of the sad aspects of growing old, apart from the realisation of one's own mortality, is knowing that so many of the people one has known have already passed away. One of our friends, who is very well connected and knows a huge number of people, always seems to be attending funerals. Thankfully, we don't have that ordeal as we don't have any 'connections' and have very few friends. However, going back to my main point, I often think about some of the many people I've known in the past, usually with considerable fondness for those 'characters' from the days of my youth.

After leaving school in May 1965, I started an apprenticeship (as an electrician) with the local water supply company. Part of my job involved going round the various pumping stations to carry out repairs and installation of electrical equipment. The vast majority of those pumping stations were fully manned on a 24/7 basis, so I got to know a lot of pumping station attendants. Many of these men were not all that far from retirement and they often enjoyed chatting to me about their experiences in life.

Vic, was one of these characters. He had a son some years older than me who was already qualified as an electrician. His son emigrated to Canada during the time I knew Vic and he often showed me the letters and photographs of his son enjoying life in his new home. Vic frequently urged me to go off and start a new life in Canada once I'd completed my apprenticeship and got qualified. I sometimes wonder how life would have turned out had I taken his advice.

Another character was 'Geordie'. I never knew his real name as he was only ever known by his nickname. Geordie had been a paratrooper in World War II and it is my belief that he was still suffering from the mental anguish caused by some of the tasks he'd had to carry out. He told me the story of how he'd been parachuted into Sicily, which was the scene of some bitter fighting. After the fighting had stopped, one of his tasks had been to clear the local wells of the decomposing bodies of people who had been thrown into them by the opposing forces, not only to kill them, but to contaminate the water. He described in graphic detail how body parts would be falling off the corpses as they were pulled out of the well. Geordie nearly brought about my early demise when I was aged about 21 or 22. I visited his pumping station where, as always, he made me a cup of tea. He was always very hospitable. The next day I was at death's door. I remained very

much in a 'touch and go' situation for three weeks, during which time our family doctor would visit me two or three times a day trying to do something to help me. I never ate any food during those three weeks and my mother struggled to get enough liquid inside me to keep me going. During this time, an investigation was taking place and it was found that the mug from which I'd been drinking my tea had a crack full of dirt and bacteria that nearly killed me. I remained off work for a further two weeks whilst I recovered. Since then, I've never knowingly drank from a cracked drinking vessel.

Some of the men attending these pumping stations had served in the Royal Navy and had wonderful stories to tell. Real characters that one rarely comes across these days. One old chap, Bill, worked at Whitegates Pumping Station nestled at the base of the South Downs. He'd served in steam submarines during World War I. Sadly, he suffered a heart attack (although no one seemed to recognise it as such) trying (manually) to get a standby diesel engined pump started at Clayton Pumping Station, just a bit further along Underhill Lane from Whitegates. He didn't live for much longer after that episode. Another ex-RN character I have very fond memories of was Arthur, who often worked with Bill. He'd been a CPO and could tell a tale or two. I could have listened to him for hours. He was a great help to me in my job too. He came from Portsmouth, a city with a great naval base, and was always talking about returning there when he retired. I don't know if he achieved his dream of doing so or not. He had a great love for his Series IV Sunbeam Rapier which he asked me to take some photographs of one day. Even in those days, I was well into my passion for photography. One day, Arthur was telling my boss that he'd negotiated for himself a rise in salary to £1250 per year. My boss, Joe (I don't have fond memories of him!), was not impressed as it meant that Arthur, not a tradesman, was being paid more than he was - and he was a tradesman. Good for Arthur. I was delighted for him.

I frequently wish I could go and visit these men and tell them the story of my life, just as they told me stories from their lives. They were kindly men, some of whom had been through very tough times and I know they would be interested to learn of my adventures during my life's fascinating journey, just as I'd loved hearing their stories. How sad it is that I can't do that. If I meet them in heaven one day what stories we'll have to exchange!

Alan



One of my older photographs. Cologne (Köln) Cathedral (Dom) which I took on 8 June 2013.