

Northern *news*

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

September to 23 December 2017



Editorial Ramblings



September brought us the sad news that our dear friend and my former colleague, Joseph McClusky, had passed away in his home in Thailand. Joseph was a great character and a very kind and generous man who will be greatly missed by his friends and former colleagues. I worked with Joseph in Doha, Qatar, where he was famous for falling asleep in the interminable meetings that took place in the department where we worked, most of which were a complete waste of time and effort. There were even meetings about meetings! Joseph was very keen on playing golf, even well into his later years, as well as creating paintings. I know he will be well received by all in his next life. You can well rest in peace from this life, Joseph as a 'job well done'. You had many adventures in this life; what more in the next! We hope you'll meet Annelise and give her our love.

The first of my 3-day working week didn't go exactly to plan. On the Thursday evening I received a text message asking me to attend a meeting on Friday morning - this should have been my day off. I turned up for the meeting and 15 minutes after the meeting should have started we received a message saying that the main, key player, was sick and wouldn't be attending. The meeting was cancelled! The second week I racked up almost an extra full day! The third week I was very unwell so didn't work at all. The fourth week, I worked two full days and two half-days. This trend has continued ever since.

After almost eleven years, we recently took delivery of all the items we've been keeping in a storage container in Devon. It was with some trepidation that we took a look at our things after all this time but we were delighted to find that they were all in very good condition despite their years of being in store. As this included what must have been in the region of 400 books that is quite remarkable and is down to the care of the storage company who were entrusted with our precious items; Reddaways Removal and Storage. I cannot compliment the staff of Reddaways highly enough. After all those years, many of the packing cases that contained our things were falling apart and yet Reddaways carefully re-packed them and delivered them safely to us and unloaded their van, placing the boxes of things exactly where we needed them. The staff were unbelievably helpful and friendly. I might also add that the cost of storage and delivery was very reasonable.

On the last Friday of September, we received a telephone call from our friend Shane, inviting us to spend the weekend in a cottage he was renting in the Lake District. Great! Off we went on Saturday morning and we all had a very enjoyable time. A "mini-holiday", as JP put it. This was despite the horrendous weather where there was more water on the roads than was in the lakes! Even the Fire Service was out with their pumps trying to clear the flooded roads. You can see the cottage in the panoramic (and other) photograph below.



Cover photograph: Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire - we visited the magnificent garden here on 2 September.
Above and next page: The Cottage in the Lake District where we had a such a great weekend on 30 September and 1 October.



We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and we hope that 2018 will be a really good year for you and all your family.



On Sunday 17 December, we attended the Candle Light Carol Service at Preston City Mission. I'm sure you will agree with me when I say that the chapel was beautifully lit (*see photograph - top*) The Ladies choir also sang *Silent Night* for us. It was beautiful.

A Christmas Carol for You
click on this button

JP in his Christmas jumper.
Taken on 14 December 2017.

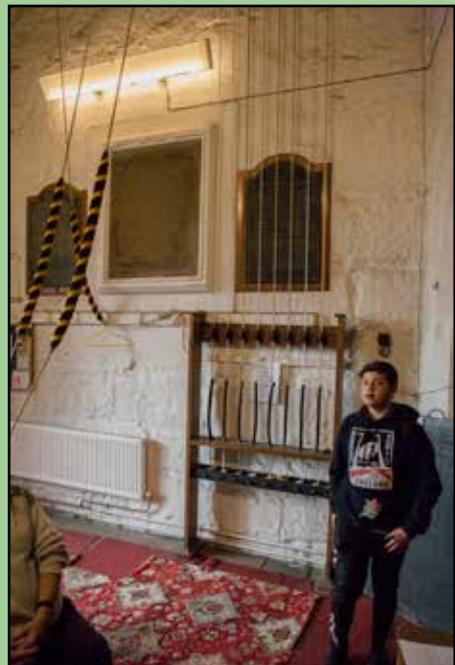




St. Leonard's - Walton le Dale

We are a great family of *Sunday Afternoon Motorists*. Older readers will know exactly what I mean. On 10 September 2017, we set off in one direction and ended up going somewhere entirely different. As we drove through the countryside we happened upon this lovely old church that displayed a notice outside *Open Today*. Who could refuse an invitation like that? In we went to receive a warm welcome from a few of the parishoners. We even climbed to the roof of the tower where the above panorama was taken (*see also next page*). JP rang some of the bells which added greatly to his enjoyment - if not that of the neighbours. The sad fact is that to ring the church bells properly they need a team of at least six bell-ringers - and they can't find them! The approximately 1600 old parish churches are one of this country's greatest treasures. Each one of these churches is unique and each has a different history - and a story to tell. We are so privileged to have such a wonderful treasure trove of history and architecture.









St Leonard's Church is an Anglican church in Walton-le-Dale, Lancashire, England. It is an active parish church in the Diocese of Blackburn and the archdeaconry of Blackburn. In 1950 it was designated as a Grade II listed building. Parts of the church date from the 16th century and the nave and transepts were rebuilt in the early 20th century.

Parts of St Leonard's—the chancel and tower—date from the 16th century. The nave from this period was replaced in 1795–1798 and transepts were added in 1815–1816. Restoration work took place in 1856. In 1864 the chancel was restored by E. G. Paley at the expense of Sir Henry de Hoghton and Richard Assheton; it was re-roofed, re-floored and refitted, and a reredos in Bath stone was added. The nave and transepts were completely rebuilt in 1902–1906 by John Pollard Seddon; St Leonard's was his final project. The new nave and transepts were built on almost the same plan as the previous ones because of the close proximity of graves surrounding the church.

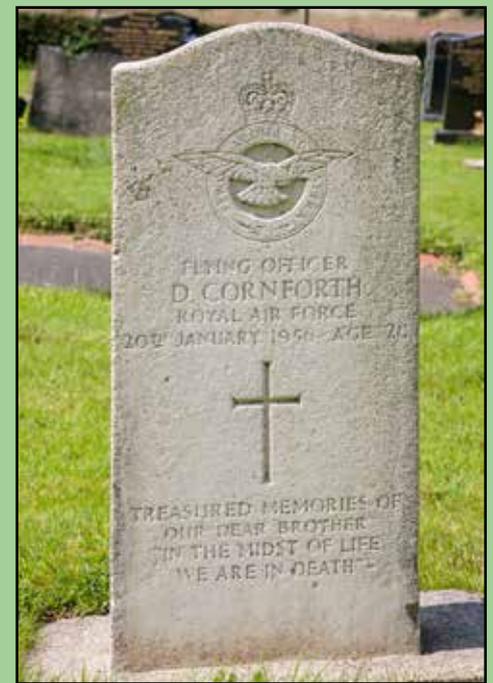
St Leonard's was designated as a Grade II listed building on 24 March 1950. The Grade II designation is the second highest of the three grades. An active parish church in the Church of England, St Leonard's is part of the diocese of Blackburn, which is in the Province of York. It is in the archdeaconry of Blackburn and the Deanery of Leyland. The church is within the benefice of Samlesbury St Leonard the Less with Walton-le-Dale St Leonard.

Internally, the nave is 60 feet (18 m) by 42 feet (13 m). The walls are faced with sandstone from Runcorn. The size of the double transepts gives the impression of the church being longer internally north-south than it is east-west. There is a gallery on the west side, accessed from a stone staircase in the porch.

The roof has an open, hammerbeam structure. The chancel has a tie beam roof with exposed kingpost trusses.

In the chancel, there is a plaster panel from 1634 with the coat of arms of the Assheton family of Cuerdale Hall and a brass memorial from 1770 to the wife of Ralph Assheton. Stained glass in the church includes the east window from 1850 by Birmingham firm Hardman & Co. and later work by Lancaster firm Shrigley and Hunt.

Courtesy of: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Leonard%27s_Church,_Walton-le-Dale



The RAF in St. Michael's, Weeton



You will remember from August's *Northern News* that I visited St. Michael's church in Weeton, where I'd noticed that there are seven RAF personnel interred there. I also mentioned the information I'd discovered about F/O Douglas Carnforth. Since then, I've received a letter from the Air Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence who have provided a little more information about these men. The letter is shown in full on the next page. I sometimes wonder if anyone visits these lonely graves of more than half a century ago. Two of them are each shown as being a young husband and father; one a brother. I wonder if their children or siblings ever visit. I wonder if any of their wives are still alive and visit this sad place. Or have they all been forgotten?



Ministry
of Defence

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Ref. D/AHB(RAF)/8/27

Mr Alan Cook
<alanjohncook@gmail.com>

7 September 2017

Dear Mr Cook

Thank you for your email, received on 05 September 2017, in which you are requesting information on seven RAF officers and airmen interred at St Michael's Churchyard, Weeton. I have completed this research on your behalf and I am pleased to present the following findings.

The individuals interred in the churchyard can be linked in some way to RAF Weeton. This large station housed No. 8 School of Technical Training between 21 May 1940 and 30 September 1965. There was a hospital on this site, which provided services for emergencies, inpatients, and outpatients. There were wards and beds for general surgical, medical, orthopaedic, ophthalmic, infectious disease, and ear, nose and throat cases. The casualties buried in the churchyard either died in the hospital or were based/attached to No. 8 School of Technical Training. The causes of death are as follows:

- Senior Technician D E Johnson – died of illness
- Leading Aircraftman C G Palmer – killed in a road traffic accident
- Aircraftman 2nd Class N.G. Smith – died of surgical complications
- Aircraftman 2nd Class R.J. Greathead – died of natural causes
- Flying Officer D. Cornforth – killed in a flying accident in Cumberland (conveyed to RAF Hospital Weeton)
- Warrant Officer W.G. Dann – died of natural causes
- Senior Aircraftman G.J. Trehane – accidental death

It is likely that St Michael's Churchyard, Weeton was the nearest burial ground.

I hope this is helpful in your research.

Yours sincerely

Lynsey Shaw Cobden

Lynsey Shaw Cobden, D.Phil (Oxon)
Air Historical Branch

“It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old, they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams.”

Gabriel García Márquez

The worst aspect of taking a holiday is having to return to work, school or college. This was certainly the case when JP and I travelled on our bicycle trip along the River Rhine for five weeks in the summer of last year. I had to get him back home so he could start his first year in high school. This was something we could have done without, as it meant we couldn't complete the whole journey on our bicycles as we had to take the train for part of the journey. I was taking JP to school a few days ago when he came out with something very perceptive. "Dad, you're different to other men." This worried me somewhat as I couldn't imagine what was coming next. He went on. "You don't accept that you're old. You fight it. Other men don't, they just accept it". What a marvellous son I have!

I've recently bought a number of books (eight in all), each of which describe 25 tours of up to three days duration, by car, in various parts of Europe. The countries covered include Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy (3 books) and Spain. One cannot but exclaim 'WOW' on leafing through the pages of these wonderfully illustrated volumes of delight. To undertake all of the tours in any particular book would probably take at least an unhurried three months or so to see all the places thoroughly. What a treat that would be. In addition the traveller could add their own routes and see even more wonderful places.

These books were all published by the Automobile Association (AA) some years ago and are now out of print. However, I bought mine from several second-hand book sellers advertising on Amazon. They were all very inexpensive (most of them cost £0.01 + postage) and in very good condition so I'm delighted I bought them – and even more delighted with the contents. If you search under 'AA Best Drives' you'll find them easily. There are also a number of books in this series covering parts of the USA. I've also collected 11 volumes from the 'Drive Around' series of books – also available second-hand. Another wonderfully illustrated set of books I have is a collection from the Dorling Kindersley (DK) Eyewitness Travel series. Even more countries are covered by this incredible range of books.

We were all sitting at the dining table a couple of days ago when I announced that “I was living my dream”. Of course, I had to explain what I meant and so went on to say that I was trying to live my dream through the dozens of travel guides and books that are on the

shelves next to me when I sit in my chair at the table. Of course, I'm not actually living my dream, but I dream my dream every day. My dream is just to hitch up our caravan and go – and not have a deadline to meet for our return. If I want to spend a year touring Italy, for example, driving through all the tours described in the three books listed above, I could do so. I often try to picture us dining *al fresco* in the Italian countryside instead of being huddled up in doors trying to keep warm and out of the misery that is the UK weather. Sadly, Grace doesn't want to share this dream as she doesn't like being away from home for more than a 'holiday' period. On the other hand, JP is only too keen to go and would be instantly ready if I just said the words “We're going now”. Am I destined to live my dream only through my books? How sad that would be.

Having given some thought to these differences, I've come to the conclusion that whilst JP and I have an innate sense of curiosity, this is something that Grace lacks completely. This surely must be a major factor in causing this difference between us. After all, what was it that made the early explorers of our world suffer all sorts of hardship in order to discover some new place or a new route – pioneering at its most extreme in many cases. It can only be that innate sense of curiosity that made them venture into the unknown. Without that sense, nothing (as in so many other fields of human endeavour too, apart from geographically) would have been discovered and progress in the development of mankind would have been extremely slow. I've noticed over many years that very few Filipinos travel outside their own area. Even those who have moved overseas to work travel very little outside the area of what is absolutely necessary for them to live and work. Unlike the British, they are not a nation of explorers. This is borne out by the fact that geography is rarely taught in Filipino schools, unlike in the UK where everyone gets a reasonable education in this subject. When I worked as a Maritime Instructor in the Philippines I used to start the course by placing a map of the World on the board and asking some of my students to find various countries on the map. Very few even knew where their own country was located. None knew where England was located – many thinking it was part of the USA – and few could even find the USA on the map without spending some time looking for it. To me, this also highlights a lack of that innate curiosity that so many native British people are born with. It must be one of the factors that put the 'Great' in Great Britain.



Scout Camp

On the weekend of 14/15 October, JP experienced a very wet and muddy camp with the Scouts near Beacon Fell. Despite the awful weather and mud, he had a great time - and I won a raffle prize!



Lens Sale!

How would you like to buy a £12 000 super-telephoto lens for your camera for only £400?

I kid you not!

Even I don't have a great need for an 800 mm lens – and even less use for a lens with a focal length of close to 1300 mm so I certainly can't justify spending £12K on the Canon EF 800mm f5.6 L IS USM lens – and Canon don't make a 1300 mm lens (although, in years gone by, they did make an EF 1200 mm f5.6 L USM lens which weighed 36.37 lbs / 16.5 kg) and if they did it would be sold for some unimaginable figure.

However, all is not lost.

Many years ago, in the film camera era, I purchased a Mamiya 645J SLR camera with a wide range of lenses. I still have that camera and its range of lenses, from very wide angle 35 mm (equivalent to an approximate angle of view of a 21 mm lens on a 35 mm camera) right through to 300 mm. You have to remember that the 6 cm x 4.5 cm film size is about 2.6 times larger in area than 35 mm film size (36 mm x 24 mm). This is important. The 6 cm x 4.5 cm film format is a true format size, unlike the digital cameras bearing the '645' logo which have sensors way smaller than the measurement implies.

Now we come to the interesting part. If I used my 300 mm Mamiya 645 lens on my full-frame Canon camera it will give me an equivalent focal length close to 500 mm. The magnification factor between the two sizes is approximately 1.6x. This is because the image circle of the Mamiya lens is so much bigger than the full-frame Canon camera and therefore only the centre part of the image circle is used to illuminate the Canon sensor – and this is usually considered to be the part of the lens that produces the best image quality.

With that in mind, I recently bought a (secondhand) Mamiya 500 mm f5.6 lens for the 645 format (which, of course, fits my film camera perfectly) and an adaptor to permit me to fit it to my Canon camera. This gives me an equivalent focal length of 800 mm on my full-frame Canon camera and around 1300 mm on JP's APS-C camera sensor. I paid around £350 for the lens and £50 for the adaptor. £400 for an 800 mm f5.6 lens for my Canon – instead of paying £12 000. That's got to be a good deal. I might add that on the Micro-Four-Thirds sensor size of my video camera it

will be the equivalent to a focal length of 1600 mm. Sturdy tripod needed!

Of course, the cheaper lens set-up has no image stabilisation and no auto-focus – and the aperture has to be set manually – but why would I want to pay an additional £11 600 for those facilities? I have a rock solid tripod and I can easily focus manually and set the aperture – no problem. The weight of the Canon 800 mm lens is 4.5 kg (approx. 10 lbs) which is almost double the weight of my Mamiya lens.

There are some super lenses out there on the secondhand market that cost a fraction of their new price and a fraction of the price you might need to pay for your digital camera lens. Many of these lenses can be adapted to fit your digital camera and, although designed for film, will work more than adequately on your digital camera. They won't give exactly the same results as a lens designed for digital cameras as they are designed with film characteristics in mind. Lenses designed specifically for digital sensors direct the rays of light onto the sensor at as close to 90 degrees to the sensor as possible – i.e. perpendicular to the sensor. Film isn't as fussy as a digital sensor and the rays of light coming through the lens can hit the film from a much wider angle and still produce a good result. However, the difference in real world photography is minimal in practical terms.

Also, the resolution of film isn't as high as modern digital sensors so the lenses may not be as 'tack' sharp. Again, this is unlikely to be noticeable in practical terms, particularly if you buy lenses that were designed for larger format film sizes where you will be using the centre portion of the lens's image circle. Before you rush out and buy a range of lenses, do consider that many of your normal automatic functions won't work, which will slow you down when taking photographs (not necessarily a bad thing!). You have to make sure you can live with your purchase before you rush out and buy.

I bought this 500 mm lens from the London Camera Exchange. They had two of them in stock at the time I bought mine. Don't all rush at once!

The photographs on the next page were taken between rain showers and show a view across the fields to the area where we live. As you will see, there is a new house (several actually) being constructed and the view through the Mamiya lens shows the builders at work from a very long distance away - and even the scaffold poles can be clearly seen.



Approximate view shown
in photographs below.

View taken using my Canon
24 mm - 105 mm zoom lens
set at about 45 mm.
This is very close to what the
eye sees naturally.



View taken with the Mamiya
500 mm lens on my camera -
approximately equivalent to an
800 mm lens.



View taken with the Mamiya
500 mm lens on JP's camera -
approximately equivalent to a
1300 mm lens.

below: The lens in action.



Ribchester - a former Roman town.



The River Ribble flows through Ribchester - one good reason for the Romans to make their town here.

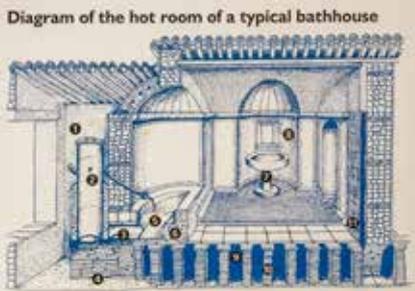
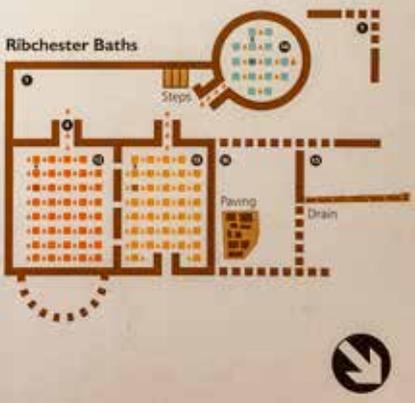


above: The remains of the Roman bath house.

THE BATHS THERMAE

The baths were arranged in a sequence. Firstly bathers would disrobe in the changing room (apodyterium). They would then enter the warm room (tepidarium) to build up a sweat and apply oil to their bodies. After exuding dirt from their pores they would scrape themselves clean using a curved metal implement (strigil) before relaxing in the bath in the hot room (caldarium). Finally bathers took a plunge in the bath in the cold room (frigidarium) before drying off and leaving. It is likely that the frigidarium was much less popular during the winter than it was in the summer! An alternative room to visit was the laconicum, which was an extremely hot dry room akin to a modern sauna.

Firing of the baths took place in the furnace, which demanded constant attention to keep up the required temperature. Above the furnace was a tank that provided the hot bath with very hot water. Heat was drawn from the furnace into the hypocaust and up into the walls of both hot and warm rooms through hollow tiles, before being released into the open air. A separate furnace heated up the laconicum at Ribchester.

1	Praefurnium	FURNACE ROOM
2	Boiler	BOILER
3	Testudo	HEAT EXCHANGER
4	Furnace	FURNACE
5	Alveus	HOT BATH
6	Pulvinus	STEP
7	Labrum	BASIN
8	Schola	APSE
9	Hypocaust	HEATED FLOOR SPACE
10	Pila	PILLAR
11	Tubuli	HOLLOW WALL TILES
12	Caldarium	HOT ROOM
13	Tepidarium	WARM ROOM
14	Laconicum	STEAM ROOM
15	Apodyterium	CHANGING ROOM
16	Frigidarium	COLD ROOM



above left: Tombstone of an Austrian cavalryman.
above right: Replica of the Roman soldier's helmet that was found on this site.



above: View from Beacon Fell - 27 October.

left: Tree stump on Beacon Fell.

below: Our friend Michaela, from Germany, who came to stay with us for a few days. JP and I met Michaela on our bicycle ride in the summer of 2016.



The Magnificent Fountains Abbey





Regular readers will remember that we've visited Fountains Abbey before. Our latest visit was on 30 October 2017.

JP's investiture into the Scouts took place on 14 November 2017.



Remembrance Sunday in Wesham



On the 12 November 2017 the people of Wesham remembered all those who fell in World Wars I and II, as well as more recent conflicts including Korea, the Falklands, Afghanistan and others. Remembrance Sunday is held every year on the nearest Sunday to the 11 November; Armistice Day of WWI and is well supported throughout the country. Even in our small village, a large number of people gathered at the War Memorial for the service - including a large contingent from the local Scout Troops.



In remembrance of our family members who died in World War I



Harry Simmonds was the husband of Lily, one of the sisters of my paternal grandmother, Florence Sarah Cook (nee Muggeridge). I remember Lily very well as she lived with my grandparents in Haywards Heath for many years until she passed away.

In Memory of

Sapper

Harry Simmonds

177226, 92nd Field Coy., Royal Engineers who died on 02 June 1917 Age 33

Husband of Lily Martha Simmonds, of Bingham's Green Ardingly, Sussex.

Remembered with Honour

Rookery British Cemetery, Heniel

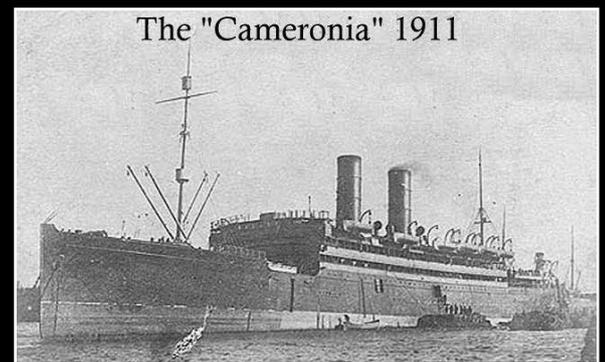
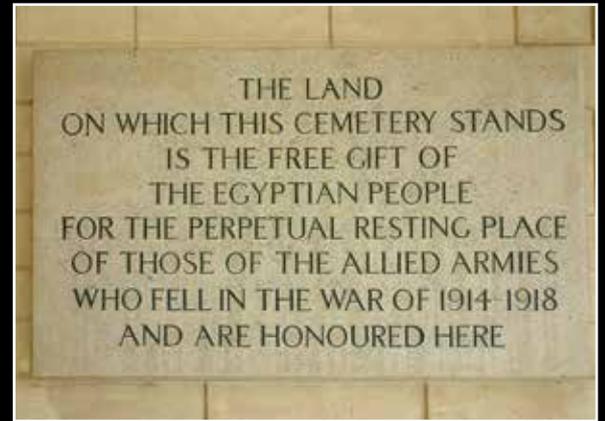


**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**



John Joseph Shanley believed born in Q2 1893 in Burnley, Lancashire, England. His military service number was 5170 and he served as a Private in the 2nd Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment. On 15 April, 1917, the British troopship *SS Cameronia*, en-route from Marseille to Egypt, was torpedoed and sank in 40 minutes by the German submarine U-33, commanded by Gustav Sieß, 150 miles east of Malta. 210 persons were killed, including John Shanley (age 24), whilst on his way to join the 6th Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment, He has no grave although he is remembered on the Chatby Memorial, Alexandria, Egypt. He was the son of Thomas and Mary Ann Shanley, of 44, Mosley St., Burnley. I experienced a very strange feeling when I first saw the photograph of Gustav Sieß, for the first time. If John hadn't been killed I would have had the chance to know him. How sad I never got that opportunity.

John Joseph Shanley was the son of of one of the brothers of my maternal great-grandmother. My uncle, John Joseph Topping - usually known as *Uncle Jack*, also carried his name.



left: Lieutenant Commander Gustav Sieß (1883 - 1970), the man who killed John Joseph Shanley.

far left and above left: The Chatby Memorial in Alexandria, Egypt.

In Memory of

Private

John Joseph Shanley

5170, 6th Bn., East Lancashire Regiment who died on 15 April 1917 Age 24

Son of Thomas and Mary Ann Shanley, of 44, Mosley St., Burnley.

Remembered with Honour

Chatby Memorial



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

Alan's Reflections

ALAN'S REFLECTIONS

Time. We all live lives that are far too busy. Many people are chasing more and more money so they can buy more and more things that they think will make them happy. Another reason why so many married ladies and mothers go out to work. We're all too busy chasing money – and most families need a double income on which to survive. After my last *Alan's Reflections* on this topic, one of our friends e-mailed me to say ***“loved reading your news letter and you are really bang on about society! The more you earn the more you spend! And worry about acquiring more!”***. Of course, I realise there are other practicalities involved too but our lives are far too complicated and busy. That is the point I'm making.

When I lived in the Philippines for some years, one of the folks I knew had the right idea. He was from Norway and was probably aged under 40 years. He'd written a computer program to run an industrial plant and sold it to a large international coffee company. He also received some form of 'royalty' payments for updates and modifications. Instead of banking the money and working on the updates and writing other programmes for other companies, and becoming quite wealthy by doing so, he spent most of this income on hiring someone else (a university professor) to maintain and update the programme(s). The rest of the money he used to support himself and his girlfriend in the Philippines. He used to fly to Europe once a year to talk with his client(s) and the person who did the work for him. The rest of his time was spent doing exactly what he wanted to do – chilling out in the Philippines where he lived a very simple, low cost, stress-free life. I often used to chat with him when we happened to meet in one of the restaurants by the shore of Subic Bay.

Another person I knew in the Philippines was telling me a story about the way that some Filipino's work and he compared their attitude towards life with ours. One of the fisherman he knew caught a massive load of fish one day and sold it for Php 20 000 – a lot of money for a catch of fish (towards the end of 1999). He went on to say that whereas he, as an Englishman, would have been out in his boat the next day to see if he could make another big catch, the local fisherman sat around doing nothing (or, as he put it; drinking beer!) until the money ran out after which he'd go out fishing again. Good for fish conservation maybe but also a massive contrast in attitudes towards work. Maybe they have the right attitude. Live a simple life and spend more

time with family and friends. Who can criticise that? Most of us, by far, are brought up to work, work, work. This gives us no time (and energy) to think about or do other things, which is what our evil leaders want more than anything as we don't have time to consider what is really going on in the world and have no energy to do anything about it anyway. It also means we have no time and energy for spending time and doing things with our families and friends, beyond the odd times when we can take a holiday - during which time we just about recharge our 'batteries' ready to go back to work again. I noticed this in particular this summer. If you remember, during the summer of 2016, JP and I rode our bicycles along the path by the River Rhine for five weeks. It was an amazing experience for both of us. Prior to that I hadn't been working for about 2.5 years, in part because we were caring for Annelise. However, after Annelise had gone to Heaven, I had the time and energy (and motivation) to plan, organise and carry out this wonderful trip. This summer, I managed to take 3.5 weeks holiday and spent the first two weeks recovering from the effort I'd put into my job. I wasn't fit to do anything, let alone undertake a long bicycle trip. After that two week period of resting, where I had no motivation or energy to do anything, I was ready to take on some sort of travelling experience – but there was too little time left to do anything worthwhile. Isn't that sad?

As I mentioned previously, a few weeks ago we were sitting eating dinner one evening when I made an announcement that frightened Grace half to death and gave JP cause to cheer! I announced that as soon as JP was allowed to leave school (at age 16) we were off on our travels. Hitch up our caravan and go! What has really annoyed me is that I have recently found out that the law has changed and JP is not allowed to leave some form of education until he's aged 18 years. That is 6 years away, instead of 4, and I will be aged 74! This is not good news. I don't know how to overcome that at present. Any suggestions? Apart from taking him out of school in the near future and educating him as we go along there doesn't seem to be a practical answer – especially as there is no way that JP would study as we travelled. If it wasn't for his education there is no way I'd tolerate living in England – especially in the winter. At this time of year, Autumn and Winter, we'd be heading for southern Spain for the winter, taking our time and visiting interesting places enroute. After the winter had passed, and spring was forthcoming, we'd be off on our travels, touring Europe, heading north

For those who have been following the long running saga about my thoughts on changing my camera; I have only just done so - it was delivered on 12 December 2017. The following thoughts are very specific to me and my photography and may not suit 99 % of other folks. Firstly, I have come to the conclusion that still and movie photography are separate entities and therefore two cameras are better than one - one for video and the other for still photography. There are a number of reasons for this, one being that a still camera that also shoots video is limited (in Europe) to a maximum clip duration of 29 minutes and 59 seconds. This is because of a ridiculous tax that is charged if clips run for longer than that (under EU regulations!), so making the camera more expensive. Another reason is that of ergonomics. The two formats (still and video) are just so different. Of course, carrying two cameras around instead of one is the downside of this, but I still think the benefits of this outweigh the downside. I also wanted to stick with full-frame (36 mm x 24 mm) sensor size as I use wide angle lenses a great deal and didn't want have to buy the 'EF-S' lenses used for the smaller format. Even though the new Nikon D850 is a far better camera, I decided to stay with Canon as changing lenses is just too expensive as I've got a number of 'L' Series Canon lenses. I also like the rendition of Canon colour too. What did I buy.....? I might add that the prices I'm quoting below are only for the camera bodies (i.e. without a lens).

After having spent months thinking about, and analysing, my requirements, I decided to go crazy!

As I've mentioned before, Canon have really shot themselves in the foot with their new full-frame models which are now lagging a long way behind their competitors specifications. There is nothing in their recent range of cameras that attracted me sufficiently to make me part with thousands of pounds. I therefore started looking at earlier models that might fit the bill. I decided that even the Canon EOS 5D MkIII was too expensive for a design several years old (2012) which, although still being sold (for £2000) has largely been replaced by the MkIV version (£3130).

The older model that particularly attracted me was the Canon EOS 1Ds Mk III. This is a superb camera that cost about £6000 when new in 2007. Secondhand models can now be bought for about £1000 or less, depending on condition. And that is the problem; finding one of these models in really excellent condition is like trying to find an igloo in the Sahara. Most of them were bought by professional or very

demanding amateur photographers, who gave them a real hammering. Most of them have taken hundreds of thousands of photographs and are really battered. It is also a very big, heavy camera to lug around.

The Canon EOS 6D, which came out in 2012, has never really attracted me for some reason, although it would probably fit the bill well enough. A brand new one of these can be picked up for about £1100. The MkII version which came out about 6 months ago costs about £1700 and has less dynamic range than its predecessor. Canon going backwards!

After keeping a close eye on the secondhand market for some months I saw something on 9 December that really caught my eye. This was a Canon EOS 5D MkII which was introduced in 2008 and was the successor to the camera I bought new in 2006 (introduced in 2005) - the original Canon EOS 5D which at that time cost me about £2500 and is the camera I've been using ever since. The MkII version was a little pricier than the MkI when it was introduced, but the camera I spotted was not at all new by the time I saw it advertised (on line) at one of the branches of the London Camera Exchange (the same company where I bought the 500 mm Mamiya lens). I gave them a call and they described it as being in 'exceptionally good condition' even though it had taken 37666 photographs (the shutter is rated to take 150 000 photographs). As it was priced at only £600 I decided to buy it - at about £2000 less than the new price! It is a very significant upgrade to my original camera and isn't all that far behind the current range of Canon cameras so I feel this is a particular bargain.

Now, I do want to emphasise that my requirement was for a good *still* camera, so I'm not particularly interested in its video capabilities, which, in this camera, are somewhat limited. I consider video to be an entirely separate entity, despite the fact the the 'new' camera will enable me to take short, full HD video clips. My target video camera will record in UHD (4K), not HD. Now I just have to decide what video camera to buy!

When I bought my original camera in 2006 there was nothing to touch it at the price and there was nothing like it available at all on the secondhand market. Nowadays, the secondhand market is *the* place to find some really good cameras at extremely reasonable prices. Just make sure you buy from a reputable dealer who provides you with a guarantee.

Alan



The Windmill at Lytham - not far from our home. Taken on 31 October 2017.