

CHAS'S ROCK'N' ROLL ALLOTMENT

ANY IDEA what sort of fossil that thing in the picture is? I found it on my allotment the other week. I found an ammonite fossil about the size of a golf ball in my garden once; an extinct marine cephalopod mollusc.

There's your proof that Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, where I lived then, was under the sea millions of years ago. Unless someone found it down Southend and brought it home and it got chucked out into the garden.

My tomatoes this year have been the best. Seven plants grown up the wall in the yard in 12in to 14in terracotta pots. Love to eat 'em raw but both me and Joan love 'em fried (nay, semi-burnt) in a pan with a bit of olive oil. Eat 'em with broken dry biscuits if you are watching your weight or bread if you ain't. Either way they are a treat to

'A step forward in battle against wasting food'

behold. It's 2 o'clock in the morning and I could actually eat some now but that would not be fair on Joan. She'd be tempted to get up and join me and she's gotta wake me up for an interview in the morning.

What else growing am I happy with so far? The 40 leek plants are looking nice and healthy. Around 15 I bought from a garden centre and 25 I grew from seed sown in a propagator in February. Planted the whole lot out around June in trenches. They are fattening up now and the biggest are about an inch around the base. I am continuing to earth them up. Funny enough there ain't much in it size-wise between the garden centre ones and the seed sown ones. Been feeding 'em with liquid seaweed.

What ain't I happy with? Had great hopes for the courgette plant and the ridge cucumber. Both started out great but were got by mildew and right now look a bit of a sorry mess, ready for



Picture: LUKE SANTILLI

the bonfire. Particularly sad about the ridge cucumber because I've just finished the last one out the jarful I pickled about a month ago. So, if like me, you are stuck for cucumbers to pickle here's what you do.

When you are in the country or semi-country find out where there is a cucumber nursery. Then go in and ask if they have got any "crooks" you can buy. These are young cucumbers that have gone curly or a bit mishapen so consequently the shops won't sell 'em. But they are much crunchier and tastier than the full-grown shop ones and they pickle well and you'll get 'em for not a lot of money.

I've just heard on the radio (think it was The Food Programme) after I wrote the bit

about "curly cucumbers" that someone is starting, or has started, an "Ugly Fruit" project.

Never heard the whole prog but it sounds like a great idea. They buy from farmers all the misshapen but perfectly edible fruit and veg that usually gets chucked and sell it on cheap.

THIS CAN be a big step forward in the battle against food waste if it catches on and I think it could. Supermarkets can have a special "Ugly Fruit" section. Kids will love it.

Went out with Joan last night for dinner. It was in one of those restaurants that have shelves with old books on. Joan spotted a gardening book. The bloke who wrote the book reckoned that

slugs don't like lager, only real ale. Well I've only got two comments to make. One: He's never tried either and he just made it up 'cos my slugs love lager. Two: He started them off with real ale; they've got fussy. Now didn't I warn against this? Well if he did, he's only got himself to blame.

● *Chas & Dave: All About Us by Chas Hodges is out now (John Blake, £7.99). Forthcoming Chas & Dave gigs: Tonight, at G Live, Guildford; Winter Gardens, Margate, October 3; Pavilion, Bournemouth, October 5. Also, An Audience With Chas Hodges (hosted by Goodmaze and Shed), October 26, Corringham Hall, Corringham, Essex: (0844 561 7107).*



Did you know?

by Mitchell Symons

GRAHAM GREENE, WHO WAS BORN 110 YEARS AGO ON THURSDAY, HAD A SUITE NAMED AFTER HIM (AT THE SOFTEL METROPOLE, HANOI). HERE ARE OTHERS WHO HAD HOTEL SUITES NAMED AFTER THEM...

- Gwyneth Paltrow (Capri Palace Hotel, Italy)
- Sir Elton John (The Ritz, Paris)**
- Rafa Benitez (Premier Inn, Kensington)
- Peter O'Toole (The Chelsea Hotel, New York)**
- W Somerset Maugham (Raffles, Singapore)
- Grace Kelly (Hotel Bel-Air, Los Angeles)**
- Mae West (The Hotel San Carlos, Phoenix, Arizona)
- Coco Chanel (Ritz-Carlton, Pudong, China)**
- Ava Gardner (Hotel Splendido, Portofino, Italy)
- Britney Spears (Onyx Hotel, Boston)**
- John Le Carré (Oriental, Bangkok)
- Richard Harris (The Savoy, London)**
- Sir Roger Moore (Grand Lido Sans Souci Resort, Ocho Rios, Jamaica)
- Liam Neeson (Fitzpatrick Hotel, Chicago)**
- John Lennon (Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal)

THIS WEEK'S PONDERABLES...

- The mail coach, the 18th-century precursor to the Royal Mail, required its guards to travel outside which led to some of them freezing to death.
- **The House Of Lords has a rifle range.**
- Birds that live in cities often line their nests with cigarette butts because nicotine is a powerful insecticide which wards off unwanted mites.
- **The first novel written on a typewriter was Mark Twain's The Adventures Of Tom Sawyer.**
- In ancient Japan, if a man discovered that his wife was left-handed he was entitled to divorce her.
- **The deepest mine in the world is Western Deep Levels near Charletonville, South Africa. It is 2.6 miles deep.**
- The word "voodoo" comes from a West African word meaning "spirit" or "deity". There are no connotations of evil or immorality in the etymology of the word.
- **The first country to ban foie gras on the grounds of cruelty was Nazi Germany.**
- The first radio commercial is thought to date back to Argentina in 1922, for a restaurant called Los Andes.



THIS WEEK'S IMPONDERABLE... Did Brigitte Bardot (who is 80 today) once say something rather rude on Desert Island Discs?

A frequently told tale about Brigitte Bardot goes as follows: When Desert Island Discs host Roy Plomley asked the French actress what she had chosen as her luxury, she replied: "A peeenissss." Plomley, astonished, had enough presence of mind to say: "Most interesting and why precisely, may I ask?" "Well," said Bardot, "it is what the world needs most, isn't it? 'Appiness.'" It is a great story, except that Brigitte Bardot has never been on the programme and so it never happened. In fact, the only time it did happen was in the 1970 Peter Sellers and Goldie Hawn film There's A Girl In My Soup. However, one suspects that it is ascribed to La Bardot as she was the most famous French woman of the 1960s and 1970s and to Desert Island Discs because it illustrates Roy Plomley's unflappability.

WISE WORDS...
The inevitable result of any attempt to prolong youth is a graceless old age. (Clive James)

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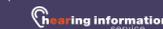
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Rupert

And The Fire Bird
EPISODE 27

Rupert tries to explain to Pong-Ping. "You told me to watch it," he says, "but did you notice how quickly that bird was growing? I followed it up the tree and it breathed fire at me. Then you called. I don't know if it's still up there."

"I can't see it," says Pong-Ping. Suddenly he gives a gasp and points. Some distance away is another tree and as they watch a wisp of smoke rises from the top of it and then a thick cloud.

"Whatever's happening over there?" Rupert exclaims.



Just then, the chums are shocked to find A smoking tree, not far behind.

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