

CHAS'S ROCK 'N' ROLL ALLOTMENT

WRITING this column I often find myself wandering from the plot a bit and that includes my allotment plot, because it evokes such memories: Granddad on his bike, perfect bunches of sweet smelling white carnations he'd grown hung on the handlebars, taking them to sell up the pub on a Sunday dinnertime.

Never had no trouble selling 'em as he was a good gardener and they were the best and, of course, a punter going home with these would be easily excused of being a bit late (because of that extra pint).

So now, Granddad on his bike conjures up another memory: off he went one warm July evening, off to the allotment. Can't remember if he said ta-ta to me Nan. Can't remember if he ever did. Can't remember if they ever

'In pursuit was a bell-clanging police car'

actually spoke to each other at all come to think of it. Just grunts from Granddad as I remember. Anyway, off he went, to come back two hours later to be greeted with: "Guess what you missed!" by the people down the street. What did he miss?

Well Cousin Brian was round. He was eight, I was nine. The year was 1953. We were out the back playing cowboys and indians using the old dug up Anderson shelter as a fort when Brian decides he wants a wee. Great grandfather is in the outside toilet and, as is usual, won't come out for hours. Well, it seems like he didn't.

So, me and Brian (now I want a wee as well) go out on the street and wee in the gutter. There we are, whistles out and tidling. All the ol' gels out jawing on their doorsteps in the warm July evening. No one took no notice of us. Normal for the kids down the street 'cos most had similar granddads who took for ever in the toilets. Then came the



Picture: LUKE SANTILLI

start of a scene straight out of a 1950s black and white Ealing film.

Just as me and Brian were tucking our whistles back in our trouser leg holes there came a-roaring down the street to our left a fast car. And I mean a really fast car. Never seen the like before. Anywhere! Let alone down our street. Cars down that street in those days were only one or two and when them cars were fired up of a Saturday afternoon they generally "putt-putted" more or less up and down the road and, being old bangers, putt-putted more less than more.

But this car was bombing it. Not only that but in red hot pursuit behind it was a bell-clanging, classy Wolseley police car. Me and Brian watched in wonderment as they sped by.

Never ever witnessed such speed in front of our very eyes. Seen the express steam trains down on the old Lea Line but that was from a distance on the embankment. These cars whizzed past, before our very eyes.

AT THE TOP of the road the cars turned right and the chased car began chucking stuff out its windows. We run up to the end of the road to find everywhere strewn with new frocks and dresses. The womens' eyes lit up and began sorting through them, holding them up against themselves and suchlike and disappearing indoors with them.

In among it all Granddad comes a-pedalling back from the allotment on his bike to ask

what's going on? He'd missed it all. Turns out that the women's dress shop on the Empire Hill got robbed and they were spotted. So a chase took place. They got caught but were minus the swag. In the weeks to come down our street, though, some very prettily dressed ladies were to be seen brightening the whole place up...

● *Chas & Dave's autobiography All About Us by Chas Hodges is published by John Blake (£7.99). Chas & Dave gigs: Princess Theatre, Clacton, August 23, (0333 272 4106); Orchard Theatre, Dartford, September 6, (01322 220000). An Audience With Chas Hodges (hosted by Goodmaze and Shed), The Corringham Hall, Corringham, Essex, October 26 (0844 561 7107)*



Did you know?

by Mitchell Symons

ACTOR MATTHEW PERRY, WHO IS 45 ON TUESDAY, LOST HIS MIDDLE FINGER IN A KINDERGARTEN ACCIDENT. THESE PEOPLE ALSO LOST FINGERS OR THUMBS...

Vince Vaughn lost a piece of his thumb in a car accident.

Jerry Garcia; his brother was chopping wood which Garcia was holding for him. The axe slipped and he lost a finger.

Boris Yeltsin lost part of a finger as an adolescent while playing with grenades.

James Doohan (aka Scotty in Star Trek) lost his middle finger to "friendly" fire on D-Day.

Dr Alex Cornfort (author of The Joy Of Sex) lost all the fingers on one hand while experimenting with gunpowder at school.

Daryl Hannah lost part of her left index finger in a childhood accident and wears a prosthetic fingertip.

Dave Allen lost the top of his left forefinger when he caught it in a machine cog.

Rahm Emanuel lost the tip of his middle finger to a meat slicer.

Terry Nutkins's fingertip was bitten off by an otter.

Dustin Hoffman lost the tip of a finger when a seat collapsed while he was filming Neverland.

THIS WEEK'S PONDERABLES...

● Most sharks lay eggs but the hammerhead gives birth to a live shark which is born headfirst, with the tip of its hammerhead folded backward to make it more streamlined for the birth.

● **The French call a walkie-talkie a talkie-walkie.**

● The world's first life insurance company was the Amicable Society For A Perpetual Assurance Office founded in London in 1706.

● **Samantha Cameron is the great-great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Charles II's mistress, Nell Gwyn.**

● There are four US States where the first letter of the capital city is the same letter as the first letter of the state: Dover, Delaware; Honolulu, Hawaii; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

● **The water cricket can travel twice as fast after it has spat on the water.**

● On April 18, 1599, a church steeple in Germany was struck by lightning and destroyed. It was rebuilt but, over the next 200 years, it was hit by lightning three more times, each strike occurring on April 18.

● **The UK's first escalator was installed in Harrods in 1878.**

● Restaurant is the most misspelt word in search engines.

● **It is estimated that, at any given time, 30 per cent of domestic smoke detectors are not functioning; mostly because the batteries are dead or missing.**

THIS WEEK'S IMPONDERABLE...

Why, when we die, do we "kick the bucket"?

When a large animal was being killed at a slaughterhouse, a bucket would be placed under it while it was positioned on a pulley. Sometimes the animal would kick out during the process and so it would kick the bucket before being killed.

WISE WORDS...

Life is like riding a bicycle; you don't fall off unless you stop pedalling. (Claude Pepper)

Don't let making a living prevent you from making a life. (John Wooden)

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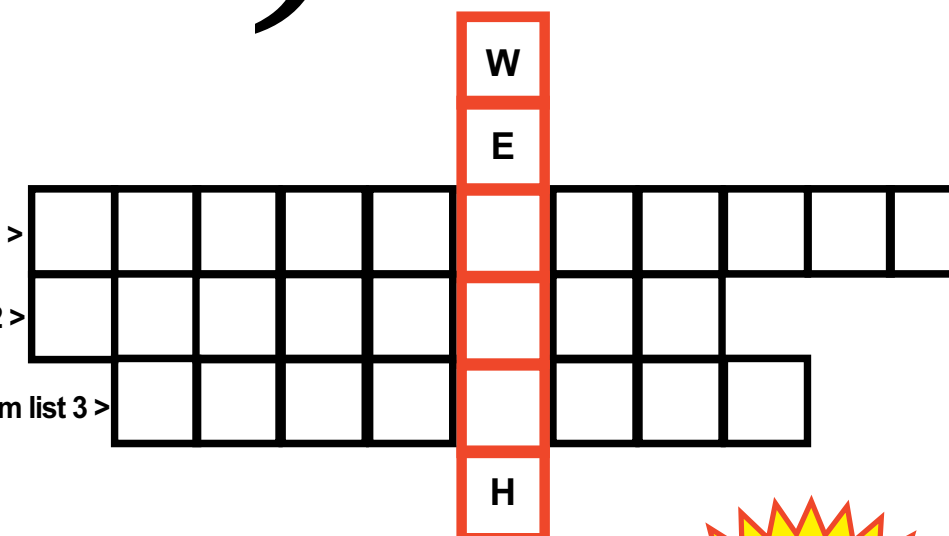
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Identify the 3 missing words from the grid below (one from each word list) and add them to the anagram puzzle opposite to reveal the word reading downwards in the red squares, before **Midnight Tomorrow.**

Insert missing word from list 1 >

Insert missing word from list 2 >

Insert missing word from list 3 >



WORD LIST 1	WORD LIST 2	WORD LIST 3
PHYTHAGORAS	FRANKLIN	CONFUCIUS
NEWTON	AQUINAS	DESCARTES
ARISTOTLE	PLATO	EINSTEIN
HAWKING	TURING	GALILEO
HIPPOCRATES	ROUSSEAU	EPICURUS

"This is the first time I've been paid for doing something I enjoy!"

D. Harrison, Derbyshire; Won £3500

Other Recent Winners

S Palmer, £2,777
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B Eastwood, £1,000
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BONUS CASH PRIZES
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PLUS: This puzzle also contains the £1000 Hidden Mystery Word!

Here's your chance to claim **£17,777 cash!** That's right; we're giving all UK residents who qualify and are over 18 the chance to Win Seventeen Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven Pounds Cash!

All you have to do is find the THREE

MISSING WORDS and add them to the anagram puzzle above to identify the six letter word reading down in the red squares and then activate your entry by telephoning before midnight tomorrow.

You will also be given the opportunity to win an additional £1000 in our hidden mystery word competition!

Simply find the seven letter word that is hidden within the grid but NOT listed in any of the three word lists.

TESTIMONIALS

As with all our cash prize puzzle winners of £1,000 or more, we ask that if you're a winner, you would send us a photograph and letter telling us what it's like to be a winner upon receiving your

prize money. Call now for the chance to Win £17,777 Cash! Hurry the phone line closes at Midnight Tomorrow!

Leave your puzzle answers on: 0906 661 3782*

Call costs £1.53 per min and lasts 3 mins Network extras apply. Max call cost £4.60.



It buries all its roots once more, Then stands quite stiffly as before.

Rupert

And The Little Tree EPISODE 5

While Rupert wonders what to do next the little tree thrusts its roots into the grass of the verge and in an instant is standing stiff and straight.

The policeman walks over with a puzzled frown.

"What a weird place for a tree," he mutters gruffly, "and why have I never noticed it before? I could declare it wasn't here yesterday. Anyway, it must be cut down. It will interfere with traffic if it grows bigger. I'll go and tell the town clerk about it at once."



The man exclaims in great surprise, "That tree must not stay there," he cries.

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