

My Teenage Years Finally - the facts!

In the Fifties I went to a grammar school some ten miles away from the approved school where my father was an instructor. There was a limited bus service between my village and the town so I only mixed with boys of my own age during term time. It was a boys' school and it was against the rules to speak to girls in the street on pain of detention.

There was no sex education at the school but my father gave me a book to read supplied by the vicar. This was supposed to make things clear but I had no idea what it was about - it seemed to be all about white horses. Without any opportunity to chat to other teenagers, I remained in ignorance.

Aged 19, I gained a place at teachers' training college. Although there were male and



Victor (far left, middle row) with his new college mates

female students, we were housed in single-sex accommodation situated on each side of the main path through the college. The path was christened The Great Divide and the rule was that you had to be on your own side of it between 10pm and mid-day.

From discussions in the all-male common room, I finally caught up with the information that these days is taught to primary school pupils. Of course, The Great Divide was a challenge to all the students and, having had little opportunity to challenge rules when I was younger, I took every chance to break this rule, and prided myself on never being caught!

Victor Flute, Sudbury, Suffolk

Bird of the week



PICTURESTOCK

Cuckoo

Traditionally, summer has begun when you hear the first Cuckoo. They arrive from central and southern Africa in April and leave again in July, so now is the best time to catch a glimpse. The Cuckoo is a brood parasite, which means it doesn't take any part in raising its young, laying its egg in the nest of another species like a Meadow Pipit or Dunnock. In order to fool the host, it changes the colour of its eggs to match the species it has chosen.

From Bird Watching magazine (www.birdwatching.co.uk)



Bright ideas

Cleaning a blender can be quite dangerous, especially getting dirt off the sharp blades. For a safer way half-fill it with warm water and a squeeze of washing up liquid, cover and turn on for a few seconds. Pour out and rinse and your blender should be spotless.



I wish I'd said that

"Wrinkles are hereditary. Parents get them from their children." Doris Day reflects on the joys of being a parent.

Only in Britain



Fun with a sting

Believe or not, us Brits hold the World Stinging Nettle Contest, which takes place in Marshwood, Dorset traditionally on the second Saturday in June. Contestants face one hour of eating this feisty plant. Rules are strict though and competitors are not permitted to bring their own nettles!



Our Tune

Love's Old Sweet Song - James Lyman Malloy and J Clifton Bingham

When we were children my Grandmother lived with us, and she always sang as she went about doing the housework. When she made the beds she sang 'Love's Old Sweet Song'. My sister and I called this 'Nanny's Bed Song'. It brings back happy memories of a lovely lady.

Mrs E Ewing, Liverpool

Photo I can't throw away



As a child my summer holidays were always spent in Cornwall on the North Coast. I got the surfing bug in my teenage years and here I am ready to go surfing, aged 18. I now live in Cornwall and, at the age of 66, still love to go surfing all year round. Last year I entered the World Belly Boarding Championships for the first time, and to my amazement I won the over-60s competition.

Christine Davies,
Wadebridge,
Cornwall

Recipe of the week



Melting Mushrooms with Eggs and Ham

Serves 2

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 8-10 minutes

- ◆ 4 large flat mushrooms, peeled
- ◆ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ◆ 4 medium eggs
- ◆ 2 slices thick-cut ham
- ◆ 50g (2 oz) double Gloucester cheese, grated

1 Preheat the grill to a medium heat and place the mushrooms on a baking tray. Drizzle with the oil and season well. Grill for 5 minutes, or until the mushrooms have softened slightly, turning once half way through cooking.

2 Meanwhile, poach the eggs in a saucepan of boiling water for 2-3 minutes, or until just set.

3 Place the mushrooms stalk side up on the baking tray, top with the ham, then the poached egg. Sprinkle over the cheese and grill for a further 2 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbling and golden. Serve immediately alongside a toasted whole grain muffin and baked beans. © Wholegrain Goodness, www.wholegraingoodness.com