



Weekly Bulletin

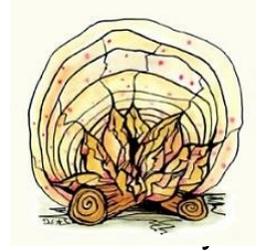
Friday 1 May 2020

CELEBRATING 'MAY DAY'

History and traditions

The Celts of the British Isles believed 1 May to be the most important day of the year, when the festival of Beltane was held.

This May Day festival was thought to divide the year in half, between the light and the dark. Symbolic fire was one of the main rituals of the festival, helping to celebrate the return of life and fertility to the world.



When the Romans took over the British Isles, they brought with them celebration known as Floralia, devoted to the worship of the goddess of flowers, Flora. Taking place between 20 April and 2 May, the rituals of this celebration were eventually combined with Beltane.



The Maypole

In the late Middle Ages people in England began dancing around a Maypole. (Although they did not tie ribbons to the pole, the Victorians invented that).

In 1644 during the Civil War in England the Puritans banned the Maypole as they believed it had pagan origins. However, after the Restoration in 1660 Maypoles became common again. On Mayday people picked wildflowers which they made into garlands of flowers to decorate their homes. Girls would wash their faces in the morning dew as they believed that would make them beautiful!

Because the Puritans of New England considered the celebrations of Mayday to be licentious and pagan, they forbade its observance, and the holiday never became an important part of American culture. But other forms of celebrations did find their way to the New World. During the 19th and 20th centuries, May Basket Day was celebrated and baskets were created with flowers, candies and other treats and hung on the doors of friends, neighbours and loved ones on 1 May.



Labour Day

In 1889, 1 May was made International Labour Day honouring workers and the labour movement. In Britain the first Monday in May was made a bank holiday in 1978. Meanwhile on 1 May 1851 Queen Victoria opened the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace and the Empire State Building was opened on 1 May 1931.

CORONIAL EXERCISE FOR CENTENARIANS

Some folk are motivated
And need no instigation
To do their daily exercise
While we're in isolation.

There's those who've painted houses
And made them nice and neat,
But I'm too old to do this
And so I can't compete.

Others in their gardens
Have dealt with all the weeds,
Lapping up the sunshine
While planting bulbs and seeds.

On cold days when it's raining
They're inside lifting weights,
Or zooming into yoga
To push up their heart rates.

And some have done ten thousand steps
Around their washing line,
It seems ideas of fitness
Are not at all like mine,

But I wish to reassure you,
So I've made a weighty list
Of all the exercises
That I haven't missed.

First thing this very morning
I **jogged** my memory,
No need to go out running
You surely must agree?

And after this exertion
I **squeezed** into my clothes,
When putting on my slippers
I almost **touched my toes**.



The cats checked out my **balance**
As they smooched around my legs'
And my arms received a **workout**
As I scratched their furry heads.

I've **waved** to all the neighbours
For **shoulder exercise**,
And **shrugged** at how this virus
Makes us improvise.

I decided I should check out
My **flexibility**,
With knitting, reading, crosswords
With a cat upon each knee.

And government departments
Have had me **climbing** walls,
Jump online, they tell me,
We're not taking any calls!

I've **run out** of forbearance
I've **run up** huge phone bills,
While others have been planting
Lots of daffodils.

I've tried to **lift** my spirits
With vodka, rum and gin,
Plus **lunges** with my walker
When my head begins to **spin**.

Weight lifting and **weight bearing**
Did I hear you say?
My scales keep on confirming
I'm **bearing** more of me each day!

I cannot start to understand
What on earth can be the cause,
But when we restart those meetings
Open wide those sliding doors!

Anne Sneap
Centenarian Extordinaire!
1 May 2020



SPOTLIGHT ON – MAH-JONG



MAH-JONG is a game that mixes skill and strategy with a bit of luck! Normally it is played Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1.00 pm at Gumnut Cottage.

Sandra Hyde has taught many members since the small group began in 2012 with tuition available on Tuesdays. The Club's game is based on Max Robertson's book 'The Game of Mah-Jong'; small in size, it is available from Dymocks. New members are always welcome to come and learn/play this addictive game!

FLASHBACK FRIDAY

MAH-JONG NEWS

The Mah-jong group meets every Tuesday from 1:30pm to 3:30pm at the Club rooms. Beginners are most welcome. The group started earlier this year with me as teacher. The first meeting turned out to be confusing to most people as it was necessary to learn a whole lot of strange new words like Suites (Bamboo, Circles and Characters), Dragons, Winds, Chow, Pung, Kong, Flowers, Seasons and Loose Tiles. A smaller group, a less confused, turned up for the second meeting when all the strange words started to make sense. Slowly, as people began to find that Mah-jong could be fun, more people attended the meetings. Attendance every week is not essential (we all have commitments which sometimes prevent attendance), but the fun and games continue. We now usually have three tables of players: the more advanced group, those who are just mastering play, and a beginners table. Everyone is still learning as there are a lot of small rules which can come into play. For beginners, some of these rules are not introduced until the players feel happy with simply playing the game.



Mah-Jong - 12 June 2012

As a standard textbook for the rules and special hands, we use 'The Game of Mah-Jong' by Max Robertson. The Club has two copies of the book and other spare copies are usually available to be perused. Having this book is not essential for learning and playing, but it is very useful later on to help learn all the various special hands and how to score once playing has been mastered. The book is available from Dymocks for \$15.

Sandra Hyde

In ACTION Spring 2012 Photo – U.N. Bhati

THE MAH-JONG CHALLENGE



With the suspension of Club activities, I have not been able to collect your answers so the award giving will be when we return.

But in the meantime, I have decided to give you all a clue to help solve part of the first hand described (Question 1).

To determine what the North player's original claim for a score should have been - ask yourself this question. "Who went Mah-Jong?"

In the meantime, have fun!

Sandra Hyde

MAH-JONG – A Brief History

What does 'Mah-Jong' actually mean?

The word 'mah-jong' in Chinese literally means 'sparrow', or 'chattering sparrows'. Possibly it earned this name from the clattering, rattling sound that the tiles make when they're shuffled, with players thinking that it sounded like the clicking of beaks and fluttering of little wings.

The History of Mah-jong

Despite being the most famous Chinese game in the world, the origins of mah-jong are virtually unknown. The oldest sets of mah-jong tiles as we might recognise them today, date back only to 1870 and written records of the game (produced by Western expats living in China in the 19th century) mention the game only as far back as maybe the 1840s and 50s. Prior to this date, its history is almost completely unknown.

Part of the reason had to do with something that happened in the early 1900s. After the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the 20th century, all things Chinese started becoming wildly popular in the West, hitting a peak in the 1920s and 30s. It was into this climate that mah-jong swept the world in the 1910s, 20s and 30s. Already massively popular in China, the game was imported into America and other western nations.

What we do know about Mah-jong's limited history is that it was popular in big cities in China; places like Shanghai, Tientsin, Canton, Nanking, Peking and so-on. It was here that the game thrived, and where it gained its unbreakable link with gambling.



Banning Mah-jong!

Mah-jong spread around the world, carried to far-off shores by migrants and expats, but by the mid-20th century, it was coming under attack in the country of its birth. In the 1960s and 70s, during the Cultural Revolution, the playing of mah-jong was banned by the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

Seen as 'counter-revolutionary' it was an old, wasteful and extravagant habit, which served no purpose other than to fleece players of their time, money and productivity and was therefore outlawed in China.

The ban on mah-jong was lifted at the end of the 1970s, when the Cultural Revolution ended, and the Chinese government pursued a policy of openness, both with the West, and with its own citizenry, in order to better manage the country's affairs.

Mah-jong Around the World!

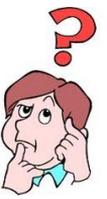
As the 20th century progressed, the game became increasingly popular throughout the world, resulting in several versions of Mah-jong today, each with subtle differences in the rules. While essentially the same game, they have different rules which regulate them, achieving more or less the same end-game through different means.

Playing Mah-jong – why is it so popular?

More than 100 years later, mah-jong sets are still a popular means of entertainment in many cultures. While the game played in the Western World differs greatly from the Chinese game and is generally played for points or using counters to represent money, it provides wonderful opportunities to socialize and friendships can be solidified around the mah-jong table. People often get together every week for a game and the tradition could last for decades!



TRIVIA ABOUT TRIVIA



It's around this time that we would normally hold our "Sunday Fun Trivia" afternoon. The Club holds Sunday Trivia every second month alternating with the Sunday Games activity. I thought it might be interesting to have a look at some trivia about trivia.

The modern dictionary defines trivia as "unimportant facts or details of little value". The word trivia is plural for the Latin *trivium* or *trivialis* meaning that which belongs to crossroads or public streets and hence may be found everywhere and commonplace. The ancient Romans used the word *triviae* to describe where one road split or forked into two roads and literally meant three roads. During medieval times a basic arts education from a university consisted primarily of three lower subjects; grammar, logic and rhetoric and known as a *trivium*.

The term *trivia*'s modern use dates back to the 15th century and referred to insignificant pieces of trite, commonplace information which were only of interest to a few educated people. Trivia was first used in a title by Logan Smith in 1902 in his book *Trivialitise: Bits of Information of Little Consequence*. In the 1960's, nostalgic US college students and others began to informally trade questions and answers about the popular culture of their youth. The first known documented labelling of these casual parlour games as Trivia was in a U.S. Columbia newspaper published in February 1965.

The largest current trivia contest is held at the Wisconsin University where up to 400 teams compete against each other. The two longest continuous trivia contests in the world again are held at U.S. universities which both started trivia competitions in 1966. Today, many hotels and clubs host regular trivia nights in an effort to draw in more patrons, especially during weeknights.

Of course, no history of trivia would be complete without mentioning the game *Trivial Pursuit*. Two Canadians invented the game *Trivial Pursuit* in 1979 over a couple of beers. Over the next couple of years, they refined the game and in 1982 they released it to the public. The game generated over \$800 million in sales in 1984 alone.

Once our Club resumes its activities, our first Sunday Trivia special theme will be "Pastimes". Questions about games, hobbies, toys, crafts, books, TV etc. Something that most of us will no doubt have had a lot of experience in as a result of trying to stay active while being house-bound.

As a warmup, see if you know the answers to the following pastime trivia questions.

1. Dame Judi Dench & Geoffrey Palmer of TV's "As Time Goes By" fame also appeared together in which James Bond movie?
2. What is the alternate name for a castle in chess?
3. Which inventor created the model construction system called Meccano?
4. What would you be making if you were following the bobbin or pillow method?
5. What would your hobby be if you owned a Neon Tetra?
6. How many dice are rolled in a game of Yahtzee?

Answers in next week's Bulletin

