

Dear All,

Happy September, and here's the latest Come Singing newsletter! I'm still experimenting with email so do remember to click on the icons at the bottom of this message rather than the blue links - that way you'll go straight to the music without the annoying ads...

Fingers crossed that this arrives with the pictures!



Dear Everyone,

Virginia has just written:

Where has all of August gone?

Long time passing.

Where has all of August gone?

Two days to go.

Where has all of August gone?

Gone with blackberries in my tum 🍓

Oh when will the oak leaves turn?

Oh when will the oak leaves turn.

Apologies to Pete Seeger

My feelings entirely! It's Bank Holiday and for once there's good reason to celebrate traditional British wet weather! The rain's been fantastic: amazingly there's an eye of green now in the grass and the water butts are full again. Keep up the rain dances and singing - we still need more...



Raining in my heart. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILeZof1wGps>

It might as well rain until September. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adD0xbZZni4>

Raindrops keep falling <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sySIY1XKlhM>

Singing in the rain. <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/KcWVM3qofBw>

Bus stop. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lt75wQ0JypA>

Not such good luck though if you have outdoor plans: bank holidays are traditionally a welcome gift of free time for working people, with trade restricted and many businesses and workplaces closed. Good Friday and Christmas Day had been common law holidays for centuries, but the Bank Holidays Act was only introduced in 1871 by the Liberal politician and banker Sir John Lubbock. This decreed that, "no person was compelled to make any payment or to do any act upon a bank holiday which he would not be compelled to do or make on Christmas Day or Good Friday, and the making of a payment or the doing of an act on the following day was equivalent to doing it on the holiday". People were so grateful that some called the first bank holidays *St Lubbock's Days* for a while!

Now we have eight bank holidays a year in England and Wales, plus specials for royal weddings, coronations and jubilees, etc. Since 1965, Summer Bank Holiday has been observed as the last weekend of August "to give a lead in extending British holidays over a longer summer period". This sometimes means that Bank Holiday Monday falls in September - it's a near miss this year!



Perhaps you went away on holiday this summer, but there's a lot to be said too for staycations - sleeping in your own bed and going out for days or exploring close to home. You comfortably skip the traffic jams, queues at airports and ferries, can change plans at short notice to take advantage of the weather and you're always sure of a cup of tea just as you like it! The only downsides are that you might miss out on broadening your mind, you still have to do the washing up and you might feel a secret pang of envy when looking at your friends' pictures of exotic places...

The poet Wendell Berry, a farmer in Kentucky for all his life, wrote about the pleasures of Travelling at Home:

Even in a country that you know by heart  
it's hard to go the same way twice.  
The life of the going changes.  
The chances change and make a new way.  
Any tree or stone or bird  
can be the bud of a new direction. The  
natural correction is to make intent  
of accident. To get back before dark  
is the art of going.

Here's a quiz about walking in many different forms - the joy of the open air, acts of defiance, love, freedom and nostalgia...

1. Imagine the Tyrol, Lederhosen and a rucksack!
2. But don't weigh yourself down - no comb and no toothbrush - only a pocketful of dreams, a heart full of love and they weigh nothin' at all
3. One of Helen Shapiro's most-loved hits!
4. 'Everybody's talking about a new way of walking' - an irresistible invitation from the Rooftop Singers' .
5. The Beatles enjoying the local neighbourhood
6. When you need the wide open spaces - not actually walking, but anything to be *out*...
7. ... or you're just born with wanderlust
8. You might hear birdsong if you're not afraid to walk in the shade, to walk in the valley below.
9. A declaration of love - The Proclaimers will certainly need good sturdy boots!
10. And if you do get weary and accept, don't show off and be the hitchhiker from hell! (Johnny Cash)

When you're idly walking around Norwich you might stop to glance up at the statue of the writer and philanthropist Amelia Opie at the bottom of Opie Street. If you feeling weary and wishing for a lift home, do look out too this plaque a few yards further downhill - what luxury that would be!



Devil's Alley came as a bit of a surprise to me (doesn't seem to fit with Amelia Opie!) and there was an even earlier name for the street which can't be printed here!! Further enquiries about the area led to discovering that Norwich, like many other cities, had a network of underground rivers which are now lost. 'Cockey' is a name for a stream or watercourse, and the one nearest to Opie Street was the Great Cockey. This began at a spring Jack's Pit, near All Saints Green, then made its way down Westlegate to join the Wensum at Blackfriars Bridge in St George's Street. You can see the culvert in the picture below, and there's a plaque in Westlegate commemorating it and the other rivers. I love thinking of the Freshflete, the Dalymond, Muspole and the Great and Little Cockey once having flowed beneath our feet.



If you'd like to know more, these articles are full of interesting information and maps:

<https://www.invisibleworks.co.uk/lost-rivers-of-norwich/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwich\\_cockeys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwich_cockeys)

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20832830.lost-norwich-river-remembered-latest-changes-city-centre-street-completed/>

Camping has traditionally been a good way to spend the Summer Bank Holiday and other time away. Do you have memories of wet tents drying out on the bannisters for days afterwards? The label on our Bukta Cormorant said proudly 'Braves the storms, defies the elements' and it certainly had plenty of opportunities to prove itself - in the Lake District, on the West coast of Scotland and in Wales.



We also had an inflatable igloo tent which on occasion would gently and wetly deflate on our faces during rainy nights! Our family stopped camping only shortly before the introduction of campsite toilets and showers, so one of the first tasks was always digging the hole... Curiously we seemed to take it in our stride and always looked forward to packing the car and then setting up camp when we arrived. I gather things have moved on since then?

We never sang round the campfire, but did, probably tunelessly, on the long car journeys - There was an old woman who swallowed a fly, There were ten in the bed, Ten green bottles, There's a hole in my bucket, The Blaydon races. I wonder how our parents bore it!

My dad liked outdoor cooking - potatoes baked charcoal crisp on the outside and a bit raw inside, and even soups to go with the baked beans - but my favourite was always toasted cheese sandwiches made in the trusty Nutbrown cheese dream maker. I inherited it, with my mum's old Kenwood mixer, and only reluctantly parted with it a few years ago... Why does toasted cheese smell so very delicious, I wonder? There's probably a scientific reason but for me it's one of the most tempting aromas!



This summer's hot weather may have been memorable for all the wrong reasons, but autumn will soon be upon us, and the signal for all sorts of new beginnings. We've settled in to our new space at the Millennium Library - Jim and Anne helped us to turn all the seating round last time and it feels great. There's lots of singing ahead as the days get shorter, and lots of new songs to try out.

We hope you can join us soon: the Millennium Library sessions are on Tuesdays the 8th and 22nd, 10.45 - 11.45 and Earlham Library is Friday 18th, 11.15 - 12.15.

Meanwhile keep well and happy and enjoy the golden days and the rain !

With best wishes and love from all at Come Singing

Walking quiz answers

1. The happy wanderer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPfGL0tDP30>
2. Travelling light. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-yMb5Bo6VU>
3. Walking back to happiness. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuQlpFnIIBE>
4. Walk right in. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQD1Jsj1d3w>
5. Penny Lane. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-rB0pHI9fU>
6. Don't fence me in! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMnLoOnrwbq>
7. I was born under an wandering star. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTymtAbaG08>
8. Sweet nightingale. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9gcwltExBA>
9. I'm gonna be (500 miles) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbNIMtqrYS0>
10. I've been everywhere, man. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAEU1yANRSY>