



OCTOBER '26 NEWSLETTER

Greetings to all Come Singing friends

Dear fellow singers,

It's goodbye to September already, (the months seem to fly by!) and now it's time to think about October! As summer draws to a close the first hints of autumn begin to appear. The nights draw in and we see the first obvious signs of autumn like cooler weather and leaves changing colour and falling.



The word "fall" is widely used in North America when referring to autumn, but did you know it was originally commonly used in Britain as early as the sixteenth century? "Fall" of course refers to leaves dropping from trees. Over time, "autumn", which derives from the French word "automne", became the standard term in Britain and remains the preferred word today.

The autumn leaves sung by Nat King Cole <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS8x-4sE6dE>

In some parts of northern England and Scotland however autumn is called the "Backend" (of the year!)

Although meteorological autumn began on 23rd September this year, it's usually October when the signs really begin to appear. Meteorological time is based on temperature and divides the year into four equal length, three monthly seasons. By this metric autumn ends on 30th November.

Another way of determining the seasons is astronomically. This calculates autumn using the earth's position as it orbits the sun. This year autumn began on 23rd September by astronomical time too.

Whenever autumn begins for you it's atmosphere is very special and one to be appreciated. There is the famous poem by John Keats which begins "*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,...*".

Perhaps less well known is this poem *Autumn* by John Clare:

*I love the fitful gust that shakes
The casement all the day,
And from the glossy elm tree takes
The faded leaves away,
Twirling them by the window pane
With thousand others down the lane.*

*I love to see the shaking twig
Dance till the shut of eve,
The sparrow on the cottage rig,
Whose chirp would make believe
That Spring was just now flirting by
In Summer's lap with flowers to lie.*

*I love to see the cottage smoke
Curl upwards through the trees,
The pigeons nestled round the cote
On November days like these;
The cock upon the dunghill crowing,
The mill sails on the heath a-going.*

*The feather from the raven's breast
Falls on the stubble lea,
The acorns near the old crow's nest
Drop pattering down the tree;
The grunting pigs, that wait for all,
Scramble and hurry where they fall.*

The 31st of this new month also brings **Halloween** (not to be ignored in the world of commerce!) This dates back centuries to an ancient Celtic festival called *Samhain*, (pronounced sah-win). The Celts were pre-Christian people whose lives were ruled by nature and the production of food. They celebrated *Samhain* as it marked the end of summer and the growing season and the beginning of the long, cold winter when they had to rely on the food they had grown over spring and summer.

The Celts believed in the ghosts of the dead returning at this time and built bonfires to ward off any evil spirits. Over the years traditions changed; and while the Celtic people migrated to parts of Scotland, Wales and Ireland, Christianity gained favour. This introduced All Hallows or All Saints Day, a time to remember their faithful dead. These festivals over time evolved into Halloween (the eve of All Hallows).



Danse Macabre by Saint-Saens <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDWMojz8OYU>

No doubt you have visited London and are familiar with its many famous sights. It has inspired artists like Turner, Constable, Monet, Canaletto and Lowry; poets such as Wordsworth, Blake, Eliot and Chaucer, and even musicians. Haydyn for example wrote twelve London Symphonies. A more up-to-date *London Suite* was written by Eric Coates in the early 1930s.

Eric Coates' *London Suite* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49bgv8XETcU>

How many of these famous places have you visited?

The Tower of London, a Museum, Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, a famous Park, London Zoo, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Trafalgar Square, Tower Bridge, Madam

Tussauds, an art gallery, Kew Gardens, the Crown Jewels, the Albert Hall, Trafalgar Square, Picadilly Circus, the London Eye, Harrods, Selfridges, Fortnum and Masons, St Pauls Cathedral, a famous market, a famous theatre, Covent Garden opera house, or have you been on a Thames cruise?



This Noel Coward song reflects on how we think about London.

London Pride Noel Coward <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzpFM8hGVww>

School trips to London were often part of our education and hold many memories. The coach journey was all important; finding the right seat with your special friend or “bagging” the roomy back seat for your gang; passing sweets around (Spangles, Gob Stoppers, toffees and many more) and singing favourite songs such as *One man went to mow*, *Ten Green Bottles*, *This Old Man* and these:

Old MacDonald had a farm
In the Quarter Master's stores
The drunken sailor?
There are lots more.....!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mLslJMxPvQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xe6Af9dWww>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0JwTG13-NY>

Were you travel sick? To help with this we were told to eat a snack, sip a cold drink, open a window or keep changing places. None of these solutions were popular with fellow travellers though!

The packed lunch was a very important part of the outing too. Did the special sandwiches your mum packed get squashed? Did the orangeade bottle leak? Do you remember sitting on damp grass for the picnic? The memories go on and on!

At the end of the day out we were very tired but full of excitement and all our experiences.



Today London is famous throughout the world for its mixture of ancient history, global culture and innovations. To quote Samuel Johnson *"When a man is tired of London he is tired of life."*

The site of the original city at the head of the Thames estuary was chosen by the Romans in AD 43, it was named *Londinium*. Over the next centuries it expanded and developed into the huge Metropolitan borough of today.

Every day half a million people commute into its heart, the City of London or the Square Mile to work. Surrounding this is Greater London with its 9 million + residents. The Metropolitan area houses 15.4 million people. About 40% of those have been born outside the UK.

Here are some interesting facts about London that you may not know!!

- There are around 19,000 bus stops in London.
- Buses have been coloured red since 1905 to make them easy to spot
- Buckingham Palace has about 775 rooms
- Around 300 languages are spoken in our capital city
- The line on the London Underground with the most stations is the District Line.
- 40% of Greater London is covered in green areas
- The Theatre Royal in Drury Lane first opened in 17th century and it is still going
- The last execution in the Tower of London was in 1941.
- The Gherkin, the Shard, the Cheese Grater and the Scalpel are some of the nicknames of modern buildings in London.
- Fortnum and Mason is said to be the oldest "shop" in the capital. It opened in 1796 and claimed to have invented the Scotch Egg.

Music quiz about London

1. What, in London, *"keeps rolling on down to the mighty sea"*?
2. Homelessness is still a problem in London today. This song was written in the '70s and includes the lyrics *"let me take you by the hand and lead you through the?"*
3. A song about the weather in London when even *"the British Museum had lost its charm"*!
4. This old favourite has to be sung in a cockney accent *"I get a funny feeling inside o' me just walking up and down".....*
5. "Lord Kitchener" sang this calypso – *"It's the place to be!"* - when he arrived on the Windrush from Jamaica in search of work in 1948.
6. A song by the Kinks in 1967 about a sunset somewhere in London.
7. The famous musical *"Me and my Gal"* included this song with the words *"everything's free and easy"....*
8. *"I may be right, I may be wrong"* but which bird features in this old favourite?
9. Where are the guards changing?
10. A haunting classic from the '70s featuring a saxophone, and about a busy shopping street in London's Westend.

Music in London pubs was often a traditional singalong with a piano, which had its origins in the many music halls of old Victorian London.



Perhaps you remember Chas n' Dave? They were a Cockney pop rock duo, formed in London around the 1970s by Chas Hodges and Dave Peacock. The two were most well known as creators and performers of a musical style called "Rockney", a mixture of rock and Cockney. Their music mixes "pub singalong, music-hall humour, boogie-woogie piano and pre-Beatles rock 'n' roll". One played the piano and the other a guitar as they sang.

One of their most popular hits was "*Rabbit*". Cockney rhyming slang for "talk" was "*rabbit and pork*".

Chas n' Dave *Rabbit* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTvxqslI9qE>

London music quiz Answers

1. *Old Father Thames* Peter Dawson 1934
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcmnGHUjS-0>
2. *The Streets of London* Ralph McTell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiWomXklfv8>
3. *A foggy day in London town* Ella Fitzgerald
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfpzUTjBM88>
4. *Maybe its because I'm a Londoner* Davy Jones
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3fmSG-bvYA>
5. *London is the place for me* Lord Kitchener 1948
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGt21q1AjuI>
6. *Waterloo sunset* The Kinks
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFDiyUG3o0>
7. *The Lambeth Walk*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkS0llysiVQ>
8. *A nightingale sang in Berkely Square* Nat King Cole
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyofs0mreCc>
9. *They're changing guards at Buckingham Palace*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fykC1P3J0eg>
10. *Baker Street* Gerry Rafferty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo6aKnRnBxM>

Your contributions to future newsletters, in any form, will be very welcome.

Please send them to: heatheredwards.music@gmail.com