



Come Singing October 2023 newsletter

Dear Come Singing Friends

Autumn is with us!

Suddenly the days are drawing in, there are leaves on the ground and the cars have their lights on as I walk in to the library in the morning. It's still oddly warm enough not to need a coat (though that may change today!) but there's that familiar sense of wanting to make sure there's hot chocolate in the pantry and remembering to check that the hot water bottles haven't perished over the summer!

Pat wrote last week, describing going to Holkham 'with the hope of seeing more skeins of geese returning. We were rewarded! The sounds of them communicating with each other are so evocative of autumn even though evidence of trees changing colour appears to be scarce as yet.'

It is a wonderful sight - and sound - captured beautifully (though flying in the other direction!) in this poem by Rachel Field.



Something told the wild geese
It was time to go.
Though the fields lay golden
Something whispered,—‘Snow.’
Leaves were green and stirring,
Berries, luster-glossed
But beneath warm feathers
Something cautioned,—‘Frost.’

All the sagging orchards
Steamed with amber spice,
But each wild breast stiffened
At remembered ice.
Something told the wild geese
It was time to fly,—
Summer sun was on their wings,
Winter in their cry.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfNCUmFMiNA>

Autumn colours will surely be with us soon too as photosynthesis shuts down to reveal reds, oranges and yellow in the leaves, hidden under the green of the chlorophyll. In a street nearby there's a row of trees of heaven - sadly invasive but quite amazing when the moment comes....



A friend mentioned in passing the other day that she associates the colours of different musical instruments with colours - the clarinet with rich ruby red, oboe with emerald green, flute with primrose yellow. For some people, linking sound and colour is normal -

chromaesthesia - and not simply because of how a piece makes them feel emotionally.

Arthur Bliss wrote a Colour Symphony, where each movement describes a different colour, and the Russian composer Scriabin invented the *clavier à lumières* (keyboard with lights) for his work, *Prometheus: Poem of Fire*.

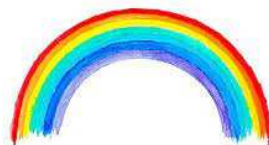
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIH_2kyfyHI

On a more basic level it got me thinking of the wide range of shades songs featured in songs, so here's a quiz with just a few of them! The possibilities are endless...

Answers at the end as usual.

Colour quiz

1. Joni Mitchell sang 'Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?' The song starts with a pink hotel, but what's the title?
2. 'You'll remember me when the west wind moves upon the fields of barley' - and the dreamlike colour?
3. If you can't sleep at night, this certainly won't help!
4. And misery may even change the colour of your eyes...
5. Something sweet for a keepsake book.
6. More wistful - 'Alas my love, you do me wrong...'
7. Not exactly a colour, but Procol Harum's greatest hit
8. A master criminal!
9. The very darkest blue - a jazz classic
10. Bringing the whole spectrum together



Autumn days are very inviting for trips out and Susan has been making the most of them.

A great day out.....

As a recent retiree (and a fairly new fan of Come Singing), I am always keen to get out and about. Today's excursion was a trip to the coast by train. Now, autumn may be approaching soon, but what a glorious Norfolk late September day it was with bright warm sunshine.

Within ten minutes of leaving Norwich station the views from the windows provided sightings of two Muntjac deer, several horses, many cows with their calves, a kestrel swooping down for some prey, and a red kite circling over the marshes. All this within a few miles of the city!

We are so lucky in our lovely county of Norfolk to have all this wildlife and countryside. It makes your heart sing! (as well as your voice of course!)

(See www.greateranglia.co.uk for Wherry Line Ranger or Bittern Line Ranger Tickets)



Idyllic, and reminds me of this child's eye view from a train window...

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

Robert Louis Stevenson

From A Child's Garden of Verses (1885)

October is the month of Hallowe'en, but of some more homely celebrations too, including World Porridge Day (October 10th) and Apple Day (October 21st). Britain has a wealth of apple varieties, many with unusual local or heraldic names and each with unique taste and character. My garden is home to Blenheim Orange, D'Arcy Spice, James Grieve and Ellison's Orange, all as quirky, distinct and lovely as their names. A Norfolk Beefing would have been nice but there's no more space...

There are fewer apple-themed songs than you might imagine, but here are a few you might remember:

Don't sit under the apple tree

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcyiC79I910>

An apple for the teacher

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI84IkcMgr4>

Little green apples

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqCDxExFXLA>

I will give my love an apple

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuwdtLO9Mm0>

Adam lay ybounden

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jRY8O7YX1Q>

And don't forget Trafalgar day on October 21st! We may be less active now as a seafaring nation but our language and sayings are full of echoes of the sea and sailing. Tellingly there's often a strong connection to alcohol! 'Down the hatch!' is obvious, but did you know that 'Bottoms up!' goes back to the time when press gangs would drop a shilling into the pint pot of someone drunk or unsuspecting? When the glass was drained and the coin was found, the press gang could claim that he had taken 'the King's shilling' and enlisted for the navy. Once public houses became aware of this, they began serving beer in tankards with glass bottoms, and reminded their customers to check for hidden coins by shouting 'Bottoms up!'

After the battle of Trafalgar Admiral Nelson's body was taken back to England in a barrel of rum to preserve it...

Sea shanties flourished in the great days of merchant shipping and the Navy as work songs to help coordinate teams of sailors in the hard physical work of hauling ropes and raising sails. 'Short drag', 'long haul', capstan and pumping shanties all had their slightly different metres and rhythms - hard for us to detect now, but crucial to the task in hand.

Drunken Sailor (alcohol again!) is a 'Walk away' shanty to help raise the anchor, first mentioned in 1839.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yk2y_j-XrIM

Fire down below would get a going rhythm going for pumping out the bilges

<https://www.contemplator.com/sea/fire.html>

Although now seen as rather romantic Shenandoah was originally a capstan shanty for long tasks such as raising and lowering heavy sails.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NmKp5A8i3M>

At this point there really should be a delicious recipe of some kind, but (disappointingly?!) my idea of autumn bliss is a morning bowl of porridge, made with oats freshly flaked from the groats, stirred (clockwise of course, to keep away the devil!) with a proper spurtle and topped with apple from the garden. On special occasions I use a beautiful wooden bowl given by a friend, and I always eat my porridge standing up!

This may not be your idea of heaven, but 'halesome parritch' is good for us and a comfort at any time of the day.

This Saturday the annual World Porridge Making Championship will be held in Carrbridge, Inverness-shire, with the title awarded for the best traditional version using only oatmeal, water and salt. Other categories allow more scope for invention and often produce extraordinary confections - previously savoury and sweet porridge noodles, Sachertorte porridge and 2021's speciality winner Arancini! Check the website

<https://www.goldenspurtle.com/> if you need ideas to cheer up your breakfast a little...



It's always lovely to hear from you, so do please keep in touch and keep on sending in your news and pictures. Have a golden October, and perhaps we'll see you at the Millennium or Earlham Library singing!

With love from all at Come Singing

ps Colour quiz answers on next page!

Colour quiz

1. Big yellow taxi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2595abcvh2M>
2. Fields of gold <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UVjicOUJLE>
3. Black Coffee https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVnrEh56f_g
4. Don't it make my brown eyes
blue <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxQrdCIsX-0>
5. Roses are red, violets are
blue <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWKHp9Vw5h0>
6. Greensleeves <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q51kpFAIQkY>
7. Whiter shade of pale <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJxpKITID2Q>
8. Pink Panther <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhHwnrlZRus>
9. Mood indigo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x02IJ023tJ4>
10. I can sing a rainbow https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXds_mkyuXY