

Deadlines for H363

External GMs David Watts, John Walker, Jed Stone	1700, Friday 18 th August 2023
All my games	0900, Sunday 20 th August
Publication should be no later than	Saturday 26 th August
Missing items enquiries	Saturday 2 nd September

Dates for H364 look as if they may be 6th, 8th, 14th, 21st October 2023

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Mark Johns' campaign to raise awareness of mens' health continues with an update he sent me in mid-June:

So this week is Men's Health Week, and Prostate Cancer Charity asked me if I would be willing to participate in a radio interview with BBC Radio Wiltshire.

That interview with Sue Kinnear, recorded over the telephone last week, edited & went out this morning Wednesday 14th June. It is the first piece on her mid day morning show, my interview commences about 10.14. 14 minutes into her show.

Today's episode will be available on the iplayer for 28 days.

[Sue Kinner BBC Wiltshire back episodes ~ check out 14.06.23](#)

And then a journalist from BBC West has added it to the BBC Wiltshire news website [Quick update from BBC!](#)

And there's another update from Mark on his amazing rewriting of the record books:

Just a quick note - had another Oncology Consultation last week, which required a PSA blood Test prior to the face2face consultation. We know where I started last September knocking a score of 2020, well the treatment must be doing its job well as last week I delivered an embarrassing score of 1! - WTF! Scientific wonder!

[Alan: Scientific wonder indeed – I recall the oncologist at Stoke Mandeville said he was beginning to get a bit worried when my PSA reached double figures with a score of about 12!]

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I know that since I began using LibreOffice for composing documents there have occasionally been problems in displaying results where tables are used – every now and then someone gets a table which appears blank. I can always help by sending a screenshot image, but I guess it's more satisfying to resolve things yourself. Sometimes telling the table to display everything to the left of cells, or the middle, or the right does the trick.

In Dane Maslen's case he tried something like this without success, and so undid his attempt via CTRL/Z – whereupon the missing data popped up nice and clear. Dane says he did something like:

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Table
Autoformat Styles...
select something other than 'Default Style'
click on OK
CTRL/Z
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Even if only a small portion of the table was highlighted and hence affected by the change of style, the undo caused the text in the whole table to become visible.

Further research needed, I think, so do let me know if it works for you.

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I had some discussion with Mike Pollard about Wordle and the plan was that I'd put some thoughts together for this issue. But time's overtaken me, and more importantly so have events. So, maybe next time. But the specific event is that I have to report that Jill's unbroken streak came to an end thanks a few days ago to KAZOO. A score of 530 means an unblemished record for pretty well a year and a half and I doubt many people are going to beat that, if only because if for any reason you omit a day then your score is reset to zero.

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About three years ago – it was pre-Covid and at a time when she could still get to the shops – Jill decided we needed a new carving knife. As with absolutely anything else, this meant she checked out John Lewis, most conveniently Waitrose in Berkhamsted. We knew John Lewis policy was not to have knives on open display, so we went along to order one but found a whole range of them on display and I was able to buy our new knife without any difficulty.

We raised the matter with the manager. No effect, so we raised it again and indeed again. We raised it with our MP. Hertfordshire Police knife awareness week arrived, so we raised it with them, again with no result. Eventually a deputy under-manager's assistant from Waitrose gave me a call, and that was about it, so we gave up.

Last month Jill thought we needed another new knife, and to no great surprise Waitrose had lots on display. No-one seemed interested as I liberated one from its thief-proof retainer, or when I checked it out, so I went off to Customer Services. The assistant made a feeble and rather half-hearted attempt to point out that I was clearly over 25, so that meant everything was OK – at which Jill said that no doubt the Nottingham knife-murderer the previous week was over 25 as well.

Finally I did get to see someone from management. Guess what – Waitrose are very concerned about knife crime – and why? Because there has been a rash of incidents across the country where their staff have been threatened with knives.

Three weeks later, and maths teachers are being stabbed, in Tewkesbury of all places, but the Waitrose knife display is totally unchanged, and I've given up, again.

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Anyone who became part of Hopscotch in the first year or two did so when Brighton and Hove Albion had a brief flirtation with the First Division. When we had the Ten United Year celebrations in 1991 there was a playoff appearance at Wembley and from there it was all downhill. The Goldstone ground was sold off with not the slightest idea of a replacement and by the end of the 1990s 'home' matches were played 70 miles away at the far side of another county, and only a scrambled goal at Hereford saved them from going out of the league entirely.

From 1999 there were a full dozen years at the inadequate Withdean, though things did pick up on the pitch, and Albion moved to the Amex stadium at Falmer in 2011. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts via the playoffs they made it to the Premier League in 2017; they could – and probably should – have been relegated two or three times.

So last season all seemed a bit of a dream, with praise coming from all directions – about style of play, recruitment, management at every level – ending up with the promise of a campaign in Europe. Did anyone, anywhere, really imagine Brighton would be regularly described as the best-run club in the league, or anywhere else?

You have to wonder how sustainable this is. To finish in the top six – and to do so with one of the lowest wage bills - means finishing above two of the big seven clubs, and a club which has a transfer record of about £20m suddenly seems to be linked with oodles of much more expensive players. You may indeed have the very best data and algorithms at identifying and snapping up talent, but can you really stay in front of every single one of all the others? And in a world where managers last for two or three seasons but players have contracts for five years or more there seems to be a lot of potential for things to go badly wrong – and as the world and his wife have pointed out, it's not long since Brighton were trying to emulate Southampton and Leicester, and both are planning for next season in the Championship.

So will next season be another of success and over-achievement, or a mediocre league season and a flop in Europe? Your guess is as good as mine.

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I always used to keep an eye open for interesting and unusual ideas that might be incorporated into United. Here's a you-really-couldn't-make-it-up-situation I first wrote about in Hopscotch nearly thirty years ago.

For the Caribbean Cup in 1994 somebody had the brilliant wheeze of not only incorporating a golden goal rule for matches which went into extra time - but also ruled that the golden goal would actually count as two goals in making up the final qualification table. What could possibly go wrong?

In the final game of their group Barbados met Grenada in the decider. Barbados needed to win, and to win by at least two goals if they were to win the group and go through. They did indeed go into a two-nil lead but with five minutes to go Grenada had pulled one back. A 2-1 victory for Barbados would not be enough and would allow Grenada to qualify through their superior gold difference.

At this point it occurred to a couple of Barbadians that while they didn't have much chance of getting another goal in the remaining few minutes they have a better chance of scoring a golden – and double - goal if the game went into extra time. This was easy enough to arrange with - despite the amazement of many of their teammates and the spectators - a deliberate and blatant own goal.

So their cunning plan meant that with just two minutes to go scores were level and the match was heading for extra time. Now a couple of Grenadian players realised it was in their interests to return the lead to Barbados by scoring an own goal of their own! The final couple of minutes saw them desperately attacking their own goal with the Barbadians equally desperately defending the Grenadian goal to keep them out.

Despite the chaos there was no further score in normal time with the score 2-2 the game went into extra time. Barbados did indeed score a double golden goal in extra time, and won the group.

For some unaccountable reason the double golden goal rule was discontinued after the tournament.

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This is a bittier version of Hopscotch than usual, but it could have been an awful lot worse. I really hate all the hassle involved in setting up a new computer, and I put it off as long as possible, so I tolerated the increasing crankiness of the old one longer than was sensible. But a couple of weekends ago things reached the stage where even I had to admit something had to be done, and a new [well, refurbished] one arrived on the next Tuesday. The old one grudgingly cooperated enough to transfer a few things over, but the next morning it really got into a mammoth sulk, and the usual half an hour to warm up became two hours, or even six.

But at least I've been through the process often enough that I've a folder with all the documentation safely tucked away. True, there were a couple of bumps in the road. I've transferred Thunderbird and all the stored emails before, but this time it didn't go smoothly, and I lost all the stored email addresses and have had to rebuild the Hopscotch mailing list.

But apart from that most things are installed and working, and I appreciate that people weren't lying when they said computers start up more or less instantly these days. The new machine came with Windows 10 and I'm quite happy with that for the moment, though I can upgrade to W11 if I want to. You don't need to tell me I've been very fortunate and that things could have been much worse.