



BLISS: Happiness is a salon back basin. Or a trip to Wales where hairdressers reopened yesterday

Pining for a visit to the last chance salon

I'M currently fantasising about how I could justify a legitimate trip to Wales, where the hairdressing salons opened yesterday. I can't stand my hair another minute. It has morphed during lockdown from rats' tails to an explosion in a glass factory and finally, a faded cloud of candyfloss. I have no hands for hair.

Mind you, Wales wouldn't be my destination of choice. Once we took a driving holiday through it, north to south, in the most appalling weather for years. Incessant rain showed off the glorious iridescent purples and blues of the slate quarries, but it had little else to recommend it. We stopped in booked-ahead B&Bs, one of which turned out to be a Welsh version of Bates Motel.

Our toddler Daughter Dear howled unceasingly throughout the whole journey and there was a bank strike. We made it back to the Norn Iron ferry with a single fiver and two teaspoonsful of petrol. But registering 10/10 on the Richter scale of crowning disaster was the hairdo I got in Harlech.

The Loving Spouse looked at the result and remarked, "Did they charge you for that?"

But I digress. Having starved since student days in order to get my hair done regularly, I have no hair management skills, few products and little equipment. ("How hard can it be?" I hear sceptics mutter.) The knack of washing one's hair in the shower eludes me. Blinded by shampoo, I can't find my way out, the floor is swimming. Happiness is a salon back basin.

"Dry shampoo", seen as saviour, is the equivalent of sticking your head in the dustbag of a Hoover plus the social embarrassment of constant scratching.

Anita ROBINSON



In desperation I hoked in the roofspace for help, finding a half-perished plastic bag of yellowed foam rollers. A clue to their age – also in the bag, a pair of 1980s shoulder-pads and an elderly hairdryer forgotten by Daughter Dear 20 years ago.

What a siege! My arms ached wrestling with recalcitrant clumps of hair and submitting myself to a blast of a dryer with two settings – too hot and too cold. The result was, shall we say, a bit 'Mrs Brown'. This farce has been re-enacted as infrequently as is hygienically feasible.

My hair and I have a long inglorious history. As a child, I wanted plaits. My mother insisted on the Saturday night ordeal of ringlets. As a

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student in the Sixties, I had every look there was, whether I suited it or not. In the early days of romance, the Loving Spouse (then merely 'the boyfriend') said, "I wish you'd grow your hair." This being before Women's Lib, I did. What is it about men and long hair? It was hot and heavy and I had to wear it up in case I got nits from my mixed infant pupils.

One day my hairdresser suggested a new style. I came back lightheaded with a very Seventies short shaggy cut called the 'coupe sauvage' and a great swathe of long auburn hair in my hand. The boyfriend walked out and didn't come back for three days. "Promise you'll grow it out again?" he asked. "I promise," was my ardent response. Did I? Did I heck! I found a photograph recently with the offending hairstyle and noticed I was wearing my engagement ring – so no lasting damage.

I've had my hair done in nearly every major city in the British Isles and quite a few in Europe and South Africa. In New York, the Fifth Avenue 'do' I paid an arm and a leg for, lasted as far as Tiffany's before collapsing like a pancake.

I know I speak for many female readers who believe that if your hair's right, the rest will pass muster. In my salon, the client is masked and gowned, the staff aproned, masked and visored; social distancing and turnover of customers scrupulously observed and well-nigh hospital standards of hygiene prevail. It's hair, not heart surgery they're doing. I'm tearing my own out with frustration and rapidly turning into a little old silver-haired lady nobody will recognise.

C'mon Stormont! Both Arlene's and Michelle's roots are in dire need of attention.

ON THIS DAY

MARCH 16 1921

Battle of Clonmult

THE courtmartial of seven men who are charged with levying war against his Majesty at Clonmult, County Cork in February last was resumed in Cork.

A soldier swore that on 20th February he was one of the party who went to Clonmult. He was detailed to fire at a window in the back of the house. He remained firing at the window at intervals until he heard shouting. He went around and saw prisoners lined up against the barn with their hands above their heads.

Cross-examined by Mr Comyn for the defence, witness said that from the time the shooting began until he saw the dead bodies lying in the yard and the men lined up was about five minutes. He did not see any firearms in the hands of the men. He saw the roof of the house being set on fire [by an officer]. When the soldiers went to meet the first group of men leaving the house, fire was opened on them. Witness saw two men trying to escape, one armed with a rifle and bayonet and the other with a revolver. They were killed. Four armed men, with RIC carbines, tried to escape and they were shot.

The President said the suggestion was that when the men came out of the house and surrendered they were shot.

RIC Resignations

SIR Hamar Greenwood was given the following figures on resignations from the RIC in Ireland during the previous twelve months. These show that 2,193 members of the RIC resigned during that period while 226 had been dismissed. The establishment strength of the RIC is 9,500.

Tension in Newry

CONSIDERABLE tension prevails in Newry since the shooting incidents a few nights ago when three men were wounded by a volley fired by the police at a crowd of civilians who ran away when challenged.

On Friday morning a notice was posted up threatening the Specials and RIC. On the following morning a 'warning' was found posted up: 'On the night of 10th March 1921 notices were posted in Newry threatening the safety of the Crown forces. Take notice that attempts to carry out this threat...will result in drastic and extreme measures. That the citizens of Newry are held responsible for the presence of persons of evil intent in this town to be notified to the authorities.'

THE 'Battle of Clonmult', when Crown forces surrounded IRA men in a farmhouse, features in Seamus Heaney's reference to "stocking corpse laid out in farmyards". The deployment of the Specials in Newry saw a rise in tension in the nationalist town.

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