

## SPRING REFLECTIONS.

Words have associations in our heads, sometimes positive, sometimes negative and sometimes neutral. What 'springs to mind' (no pun intended) when we hear the word 'spring'?

My first reaction is that the word is positive. One thinks of the season, when the darkness of winter gives way to the light, growth and hope of spring. Perhaps the most well-known of all poems about spring is Willam Wordsworth's 'I wandered lonely as a cloud.'

Focussing on different meanings, there are mountain springs, which can grow into streams, rivers and even feed oceans. This reminds me of the concept behind the ancient proverb, 'From little acorns mighty oak trees grow'.

Alluding to another meaning of the word 'spring', there are the springs, for example, in our sofas. They help us to sit more comfortably when relaxing. There are springs that can help propel us upwards when we need to achieve a greater height. Springboards are used by divers, such as Tom Daley, who achieve remarkable feats as they leap into the air.

So what are the negative aspects of the word 'spring'? These can be divided into two categories, the first being the uses of the word 'spring' already alluded to, and the second being other meanings.

In the first category we have reference to the word 'spring' as a source of water. Consulate cigarettes, we were told in 1966, were 'as cool as a mountain stream'. The slogan does not use the word 'spring', but the meaning is similar. I can remember our grammar school physics teacher, teaching us with his right hand concealed behind the doorway to the store room of the physics lab, as his hand held a cigarette. The smoke billowed forth, but no-one seemed in the slightest bothered. He even told us, that if we smoked, we should smoke Consulate. Sure enough, the boys collected enough money to buy him 500 Consulate cigarettes for Christmas. I don't think that would happen today!

Athletes have been told that certain shoes may give them an unfair advantage. For instance, trainers made by Nike were questioned by the International Association of Athletics Federations as it was thought that they might give athletes wearing them an unfair advantage over others, because of the spring-like nature of their soles.

'Spring' can be used in the context of 'springing a trap', which implies that a creature or a human has been captured. Someone can be 'sprung' from gaol, which is not a positive outcome, unless someone has been wrongly imprisoned.

You might 'spring a surprise' on someone, which can be a good thing if it is a surprise party. It can also be negative if, in an interview situation, the interviewer 'springs a question' which catches the interviewee by surprise.

It is April now and 'Spring has sprung'. This is happening slightly earlier than in past years, due to global warming. Let us hope that Mother Nature will not spring any surprises on us, humans and animals alike, in the years to come.

**Chris McDermott. 21.04.2024. (500 words).**