

8th December 2021

Password

Dildano: Our rendezvous point will be at 1600 hours.

And our password will be...

“Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch”

Barbarella: You mean, the secret password is

“Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch”?

Dildano: Exactly.

Terry Southern, Roger Vadim, and Claude Brulé, Barbaralle (screenplay)

Touching on the “rebooting” of computers yesterday, my mind turned to passwords. I struggle with passwords: letters and symbols; a limited number of characters; soft/medium/secure strength; advice to change them regularly ... Arrgghh! I use several passwords. I have them written in a book – and, no, I don’t need a password to open it, *and* it’s kept safe.

Most of what we do on-line is password-protected. Sometimes there are “two levels of protection”, with passwords *and* pass-numbers, or codes sent to another device And if we don’t get the password right, we find we’ve been “locked out”. But passwords aren’t new.

From the bible story where “shibboleth” is used to distinguish between Ephraimites and Gileadites, through “Open Sesame” in Antoine Galland’s *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, and up to Tony Orlando’s *Knock three times* from the 1970s pop-charts. They’re tedious but necessary.

I heard a story of a man attending a church in the village where he was on holiday and joining the worshippers for an after-service cup of tea in the hall. There was a spare chair at a table in the corner, at which sat an elderly lady. Asking permission to join her, the man stretched out his hand and said, “Hello. I’m George. I’m visiting today.” “Good morning,” was the reply. “I’m Edith, Miss Edith Cranston. Nice to meet you.” “And are you a visitor too?” “Oh no!” the lady responded. “I’ve been coming here for six months ... but you’re the first person who’s bothered to come to say hello.”

“Locked out” of true fellowship? Was the password “hello”, perhaps? Is *our* fellowship “password protected”? Have we created *Barbarella’s Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch* and we find that it hasn’t been shared with the people who needed it?

A prayer for today

Listening God, thank you for not asking for a password as I contact you. Amen