



January 2025

ART APPRECIATION

The Art Appreciation Group meets to discuss and look at art in various forms. We usually pursue a theme for a few months, with members making short individual presentations. We have decided that our Spring 2025 theme will be “Children In Art” and as an introduction to the theme we had two short presentations during our last meetings in 2024.

The first was entitled “Why are babies in medieval paintings so ugly”. We looked at many examples. The answer lies in the fact that portraits of children were usually requested by the church. Jesus was the most frequently depicted baby. The depiction of Jesus was influenced by the idea of homunculus — the creation of an infant in a fully adult form resulting in “horrifying tiny men”. They indeed look like shrunken adults, often already bald and wise-looking.

See Madonna di Castelfiorentino, 1280s on the right.

The second presentation was centred on “Children’s Games”, a painting by the elder Breughel, see below, where it has been calculated there are almost 100 different games depicted.

This led to our Group scrutinising the painting more closely and reminiscing about games depicted in the painting which we had enjoyed



ourselves when young. Can you spot the leap-froggers, the tree climber, or those putting on a show? Who knows where our “Children In Art” researches may take us?

Our last theme “Sport In Art” led to some fascinating images! If you’d like to know more, do join us – first e-mail Catherine or Susan at:



artappreciation@emsvalleyu3a.org

Ann Sims

Ems Valley u3a Christmas Lunch 2024

This year's Ems Valley U3A lunch, held at the Chichester College Restaurant, did not disappoint. Guests were

greeted with a warm and inviting welcome, while the atmosphere was both cozy and festive. The highlight, of course, was the food— expertly prepared by trainee chefs who deserve high praise for their culinary skills. Equally commendable were the front-of-house students, who displayed such excellence in both service and hospitality. The meal began with starters that were beautifully presented, resembling miniature works of art. The standout was the prawn Scotch egg, which was as delightful to the palate as it



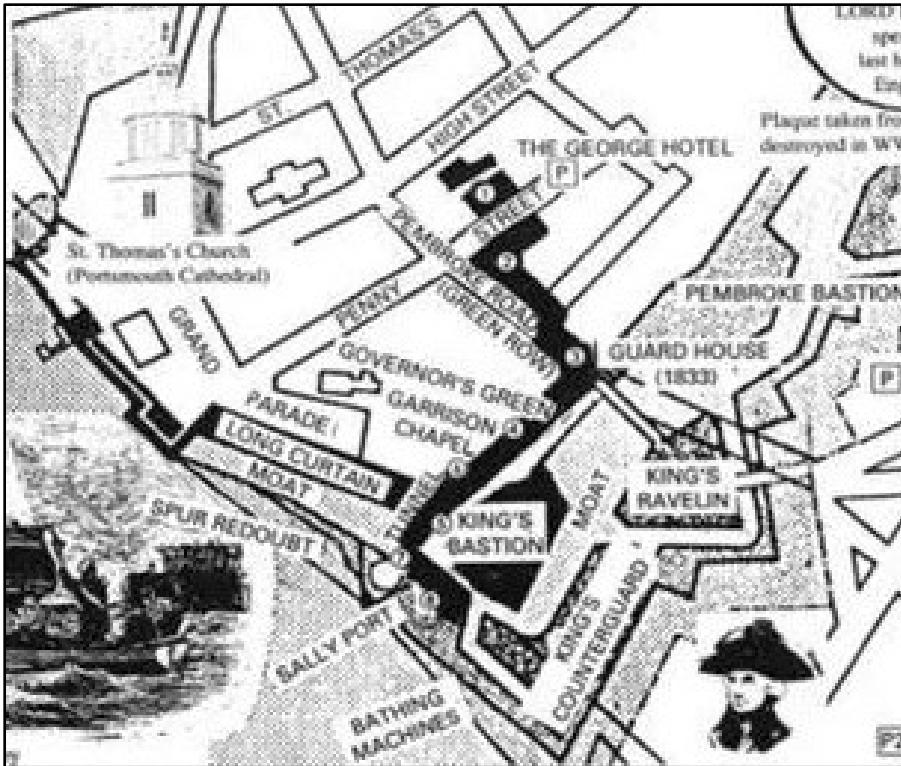
was to the eye. For the main course, diners had a tempting array of options, including a creative vegetarian dish, fish, beef, and the classic turkey—all of which were beautifully plated and delicious. Even the bowl of vegetables looked inviting just as they were. Dessert choices included a pear tartlet, cheese and biscuits, or traditional Christmas pudding, making the decision a challenge for many. Notably, the College's Christmas pudding, a much-loved favourite, is available for purchase for those wishing to enjoy it at home. We finished with beautiful macarons which although neon in their Christmas colouring, were melt in the mouth deliciousness.

With over 80 members in attendance, the event was a resounding success, with everyone enjoying the festive atmosphere and exceptional meal. Special thanks go to our Chairman Tim for his impeccable organisation of this year's gathering. Next year's event is already set for December 4th at the College—mark your calendars for another memorable occasion!

Dbee Robinson

NELSON'S last day in Portsmouth

Local History were given a talk by Nigel Linger, the Chairman of the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust at their December meeting. He painted a dramatic scene: early in the morning of Saturday 14th September, 1805, at about 6.00am, the post chaise [horse-drawn carriage] carrying Vice Admiral Lord Nelson passed through the great Landport Gate of Portsmouth and proceeded until it drew up in front of the bow



windows of The George Hotel and deposited its weary passenger, who had been on the road since 10.30pm the previous evening. After a quick breakfast, Nelson was on the move again: this time to the Dockyard to pay a courtesy call on Commissioner Saxton and then back to The George before noon, where he was joined by two members of the Government who had come to wish him God-speed, George Rose, the President of the Board of Trade and George Canning, the Treasurer of the Navy. But by now, news of his arrival had spread and a large crowd had gathered in the narrow streets outside the hotel, and he was not able to proceed on foot to

the usual point of embarkation for officers which was at the Sally Port, just a few hundred yards away, at the seaward end of the High Street.

So it was decided to take an alternative route, as shown on the map above. Historical painters and writers alike got the topography wrong – they showed him descending the steps at the Sally Port. The Victory anchor, placed by the Victorians on Southsea Esplanade to mark the supposed point of embarkation, is at least 400 yards too far east. And the fine statue of Nelson by Brook Hitch on Southsea Common, which purports to stand on the line of his route, is also many yards from the path he actually trod. **Follow the map to see the true route.** Read Nelson's own words, written in his private diary: "At six o'clock arrived at Portsmouth and having arranged all my business, embarked at the

Bathing Machines with Mr. Rose and Mr. Canning." Where are these Bathing Machines? It is known that they were on Southsea Beach, then just developing as a seaside resort. However, their exact location was uncertain until a watercolour showing a view of the entrance of Portsmouth Harbour from Southsea Beach was discovered in the collections of the Portsmouth City Museum. Although fairly crude and amateurish, it nevertheless shows the machines quite clearly on the beach roughly where the large



funfair now stands. (This is confirmed by a later map, of about 1830, showing the bathing machines in the same position.)

Then Nigel told us about an American tourist Benjamin Silliman who just happened to be in England in the Autumn of 1805. Silliman was amazed to see Nelson twice: first in the Strand [in London] and again in Portsmouth on 14th. September. He wrote:

“... by the time he had arrived on the beach some hundreds of people had collected in his train, pressing all around and pushing to get a little before him to obtain a sight of his face. I stood on one of the batteries near where he passed and had a full view of his person. As the barge in which he embarked pushed away from the shore, the people gave three cheers which his Lordship returned by waving his hat”.

The only “battery” with a view of the stretch of beach where Nelson embarked (ie, where the bathing machines were located) is the King’s Bastion which directly overlooks the drawbridge leading to the Spur Redoubt. It seems very likely, therefore, that this is where Silliman stood – and this in turn confirms that the tunnel through the ramparts and the sally port in the Spur Redoubt are likely to have been the route taken by Nelson!

Now look at the picture depicting Nelson waving to the crowd. The Victory looms adjacent! In truth it was a 45 minute stiff row out into Spithead where today large boats ride at anchor awaiting their berthing times, “Saint Helens Road” Just one of the many facts we gleaned of that last momentous day at Portsmouth.

CRAFT GROUP ENJOY THE CHRISTMAS MEETING!

Their leader Angela Blunden writes: Please find some photos from our lovely December meeting where we had a great Social afternoon, with lots of Christmassy things to eat & drink plus a little craft, so a wonderful time. May we take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy, healthy Christmas & New Year.



STEM December meeting

For our December meeting we were treated to a talk by one of our members, James Mant. James served in the Royal Navy as an engineer, and developed a keen interest in his topic for our talk - “Astral Navigation – An Art or a Science”. He opened with the lovely quote of “There is something magical about using the heavenly bodies to find our way on earth.”

For such a complex subject we could only scratch the surface but we learned how travellers used the Sun and Pole Star to know their latitude, from the time of the Phoenicians making their way across the Mediterranean. But knowing one's longitude was far more difficult, only becoming possible once time itself could be accurately calculated – in the 1760s. James told us of many things we hadn't realised – Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn are at 23.5 degrees, north and south of the equator respectively – and the Earth is tilted at 23.5 degrees! Hence us having Seasons.....as we find ourselves facing the Sun at this angle at the Spring and Winter Equinox.



For those of those wanting more in depth information, James invited us to handle his various Sextants – and pore over his wonderful collection of specialist books.

A fun, but very enlightening, video showed us how all the planets compare in size. To enjoy it yourselves, go on YouTube and feed in Star Size Comparison – and see what a tiny dot we are here on Earth, compared to the other huge planets!

STEM January Meeting:
Please note there will be no January meeting. Our next

meeting is February 6th at 2.00pm, usual venue. Wendy Jones giving us a talk entitled “What Makes Us Tick?”, about the workings of the human heart – biological, not romantic!

All members of Ems Valley U3A are invited to join us if interested. Just let Geoff know, via stem@emsvalleyu3a.org.

Pam Palmer

The early sea route to India and the East Indies

In November we enjoyed a guest speaker at the monthly meeting, Fran Sandham. His talk was titled “The Sea Route to India” and he spoke about the famous Portuguese explorers, Henry the Navigator, Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama, and their various sea explorations to find the East Indies and those magical spice islands. (see report in the December issue).



By coincidence I am reading Bill Bryson's 2010 book “At Home”. He had his own thoughts on Vasco da Gama: ‘A breathtakingly vicious man’ who inflicted extreme violence on innocent people. He then recounts the occasion when he captured a Muslim ship carrying hundreds of men, women and children. He locked all

the passengers and crew in the hold, carried off everything of value and appallingly set the ship ablaze. He continues ‘Almost everywhere he went Gama abused or slaughtered the people he encountered, and so set a tone of distrust and brutish violence that would characterize and diminish the whole of the age of discovery! Further he adds: “ Gama never got to the Spice Islands he sought. Like most others at that time, he thought the East Indies were just a little to the east of India – hence their name – but in fact they proved to **be way beyond** India, so far beyond that Europeans arriving there began to wonder if they had sailed most of the way around the world and were almost back to the Americas!

Ed.

'Wine One' feature wines from ALDI at Christmas.

Fifty four members sat down to taste Aldi wines at the Christmas tasting – Wine Appreciation One! This was the first time that we had tasted Aldi wines for more than a year, so it was very interesting, bearing in mind that many members do their wine shop at this store! We first poured the “Bowler and Brolly” English Sparkling Wine which is made for Aldi by Denbies at Dorking. (We had visited this vineyard some two years ago). It was priced at £14.99 considerably cheaper than Champagne equivalents, but much dearer than many Proseccos and Cavas. The consensus was positive –I think – as it is always difficult to gauge a true reaction from 54 different tasters!

We then tasted three white wines including a wine named The Puzzle! What was “The Puzzle” – it was the grape varieties, Sauvignier Gris and Muscaris. We have never come across these varieties before, they are nothing to do with Sauvignon Blanc! What is more Aldi are very reticent in letting you know where this wine actually comes from. I traced it to the Herault in the French Languedoc. In short it was different but we liked it. The three red wines were also winners with our group. (a Primitivo from Manduria in Puglia, a Douro Reserva Animus and an earthy Ventoux blend from France. In fact it was probably one of the very few tasting occasions where **ALL THE WINES** received universal approval. Was it just that it was Christmas I wondered?? Then I tried my very best to spoil the event by totally forgetting to bring along the special “Pedro Ximenez” Sherry but it will now have to wait for the January tasting! Gwen and Alan Brown – pictured below left – arranged the special Christmas decorations and Christmas was off to a flying start - and Aldi received the many plaudits!

My announcement that I would be needing to take three months sabbatical next year owing to my call up to “Strictly Come Dancing” was met with loud howls. It was not obviously discernible as to whether these were on the plus or the minus side of the clapometer, and many did not believe me. Just wait till next autumn arrives and then they will see what I have learned from Chris McCausland....

Alan Borrow



Wine Appreciation Group 5

At our November tasting we tasted wines from Rioja, Spain. We sampled two whites and four reds from the Rioja region of Spain. The two whites were considered okay but nothing special, perhaps this is not surprising as Rioja is

mainly known for its red wine. The main red grape is Tempranillo, but Graciano and Mazuelo were also blended in small amounts in two of the four wines we sampled. Rioja is one area where what it says on the label means something. If you buy a bottle of wine from most areas of the world if it says Reserva there is no legal meaning to this at all, but in Rioja there are four classes that must be followed.

Generico – no aging requirement

Crianza – aged for two years, at least one in barrel

Reserva – aged for three years, at least one in barrel

Grand reserva – aged for five years, at least two in barrel

Crianza - is the most commonly found, and you can get a fair one for £9/10.

Reserva - should give you a more developed wine but not always and expect to pay £14/20.

Grand Reserva - frankly this well-developed wine will not be to everyone's taste and you will have to pay from £35 to sky's the limit for it.

The clear winner of the night from our tasting was Montecillo Reserva 2017 which is stocked by Waitrose, the full price is £15.99. If you can get it on a 25% off deal then I would recommend you give it a try.

By the way we do have two spaces to fill in our group so if you want to make a New Year's resolution to improve your wine knowledge do contact me.



Wishing you all a Happy New Year from Wine Appreciation Group 5

Mark Parker

Book Group 2

For our December meeting and our Christmas lunch, Book Group 2 went to Fat Olives. We had a delicious lunch but it was a bitter-sweet event, as last year, our then group organiser Lesley Harris was still with us. She died in February so we drank a toast to her memory. At this, our last meeting of the year, we always vote on our favourite of the books we have read during the year. The theme this year was "The Arts" and the book that scored the highest was "Notes from an Exhibition" by Patrick Gale, which scored an average of 8.1 out of 10 (this had been Lesley's choice). Second favourite was "Picture You Dead" by Peter James, with an average score of 7.5. In third place was "Trio" by Sue Gee, with an average score of 7.2. The Wooden Spoon went to "Mouth To Mouth" by Antoine Wilson, with 5.4. Next year our theme is books written in the first person and when we meet in January we shall discuss "My Antonia" by Willa Cather. **Sandra McGregor**



At School, 6-7 year olds were being taught the meaning of the word 'Moral' and the teacher was trying to come up with suitable examples. She asked the children to talk to their Mummies and Daddies over the weekend and see if they could come to school with a story depicting 'moral' or 'morals' .

On Monday, the children came back and one by one recounted their stories. Mainly the usual stuff, pennies saved and spilt milk etc. Only Janie was left, when the teacher asked her "Do you have a story to share?" "Yes", Janie said, "My Daddy told me a story about my Mummy. She was a pilot in Iraq during "Dessert Storm"! She had to bail out over enemy territory and all she had on her person was a flask of Whiskey, her pistol and her survival knife. She had the sense to drink all the whiskey on the way down so that the flask would not break, and then her parachute landed right in the middle of 20 Iraqi troops! She shot 15 of them with her gun, ran out of bullets, killed four more with the knife, till the blade broke and then killed the last Iraqi with her bare hands! "Good heavens" said the teacher, "What an exciting story, what did your Daddy say was the moral to this story?"

"Stay away from Mummy when she's been drinking!"

Two elderly ladies were out for a Sunday drive in a huge car. Neither of them could really see too much over the dashboard. When they came to a junction, the light was red yet they kept on cruising through. The passenger thought to herself, "I feel like I'm losing it, but I swear we just drove through a red light." A few minutes later, they drove through another red light. The passenger was almost certain that the light had been red but was still slightly concerned that she might be going mad, so she decided to give the driver one last chance. As they were approaching the next lights, the passenger paid a great deal of attention. This time they were certainly at red, yet just as before they just sped past. "Susan!" the passenger yelled. "Do you know we just ran 3 red lights in a row? We could have been killed!" "Oh!" Said Susan. "Am I driving?"

A chap goes to the zoo and asks if they've got any jobs.

"Well", says the owner "we're not doing too well and one of the gorillas died the other day. I'll pay you to dress up in a gorilla suit and take his place".

So the guy gets dressed in the gorilla suit and is walking around inside the enclosure when a huge great silver backed male gorilla approaches him. He's absolutely terrified, scared for his life. He runs as fast as he can and jumps right over the enclosure wall.

Only to land in the Lion enclosure!

"Oh my god" he screams, "help me, I'm not a gorilla I'm a human being", as a big lion moves menacingly towards him.

"Quiet – be quiet", says the lion, "or you'll get us all fired"

Two hunters are out in the woods in the wilds of nowhere , when one of them suddenly collapses in a seizure, foaming at the mouth. He shakes for a few moments, then stops and doesn't move.

His friend, understandably freaked out, grabs his cell phone and calls 999. He says to the operator, "Help! I'm out here in the woods with my friend and he just collapsed! He's not breathing - I think maybe he's dead!"

The operator says to the man, "OK sir, now just calm down. The first thing we need to do is to make sure he really is dead."

The hunter says, "OK, hang on a second." He goes away from the phone for a moment and the operator hears a gunshot. Then he comes back on the line and says, "OK, now what do I do?"

A man sitting at a bar after work shares with the bartender why he is looking so stressed, "I'm not sleeping well. I have nightmares about a monster under my bed and I am too embarrassed to seek help." A patron nearby overhears this and introduces himself, "I overheard your story and I am a psychiatrist. Maybe I can help. The first thing is you recognize these are only dreams, and that is obvious so I should be able to help you in a few sessions. Here's my card, give me a call." A few weeks pass and the same two are once again at the bar after work. The psychiatrist says to the other guy, "Hi, how goes the nightmares? I never heard from you so I hope you are doing okay." The other guy says, "things are great now, the bartender helped me." Psychiatrist, "the bartender helped you? You needed a trained professional to help you, what possibly could a bartender do that a psychiatrist couldn't?" The other guy says, "he told me to saw the legs off my bed."

NEW YEAR FUN QUIZ (answers at bottom of Newsletter)

1) What ancient civilization is believed to have been the first to celebrate the New Year?

Romans
Babylonians
Egyptians

2) Which Roman emperor established January 1st as the start of the New Year?

Augustus
Julius Caesar
Nero

3) In which year was the Gregorian calendar introduced, officially making January 1st the New Year?

1492
1582
1700

4) Which country celebrates New Year's first each year due to its time zone?

Fiji
Kiribati
New Zealand

5) What year did the United States first celebrate New Year's Day on January 1?

1752
1776
1863

6) What ancient civilization celebrated the New Year in March during their festival of Akitu?

Egyptians
Babylonians
Romans

7) Who invented "cuneiform writing"?

Babylonians
Sumerians
Akkadians

8) Which movie features a famous New Year's Eve kiss between Harry and Sally?

Love Actually
When Harry Met Sally
Sleepless in Seattle

9) Who sang "1999," a popular song for New Year's Eve celebrations?

Michael Jackson
Prince
Madonna

10) Which movie features a famous New Year's Eve scene at a bar with Forrest and Lieutenant Dan?
The Green Mile
Forrest Gump
Castaway

11) What year did the song "Happy New Year" by ABBA release?
1975
1979
1982

12) In which country is it a tradition to smash plates against friends' and neighbours' doors to symbolize friendship and good fortune for the year ahead.

13) in which country do people wear red underwear on New Year's Eve for good luck and love in the coming year.

14) in which country do they always add a fourteenth question to New Year Quizzes if the actual quiz has only 13 questions

The most amazing two letter word in the English language by Tony Carter

Please remember this one word in the English language that can be a noun, verb, adjective, adverb and a preposition.

"UP"

This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word. It is listed in the dictionary as an [adv.], [prep.], [adj.], [n] or [v].

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP, and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car. At other times, this little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP.

We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP!

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions.

If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out, we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, the earth soaks it UP. When it does not rain for awhile, things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now . . . 'cos my time is UP!

Oh . . . one more thing: What is the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night? Did that one crack you UP?

Don't screw UP. Send this on to everyone you look UP in your address book . . . or not . . . it's UP to you.

Now I'll just shut UP!

Pound shillings and pence

Two farthings would make a ha'penny
two ha'pennies a penny for you
Three pennies would come to threepence
or a threepenny bit as we knew
Six pennies would make up sixpence
two three penny bits did as well
All were known as a tanner
As any old timer would tell
Twelve pennies were worth one shilling
Four threepenny bits two tanners a bob
Four tanners eight threepence two shillings
All would make a florin job
Two and six or a florin and sixpence
Would then become half a crown
Four half crowns made a ten bob note
Two ten bob notes a pound
A pound note and a shilling into a
guinea grew
This is old money pounds shillings and pence
I remember it well do you?

ANSWERS TO NEW YEARS QUIZ:

- 1) Babylonians
- 2) Julius Caesar
- 3) 1582
- 4) Kiribati
- 5) 1752
- 6) Babylonians
- 7) Babylonians
- 8) When Harry Met Sally
- 9) Prince
- 10) Forrest Gump
- 11) 1979
- 12) Denmark
- 13) Italy
- 14) Emsworth

SWIMMERS - DID YOU KNOW?

All you swimmers out there: did you know that this 25 metre pool is available for hire at Petersfield, a mere 21 minute drive from EMSWORTH! I was talking with someone over the Christmas period who works at the pool



and they mentioned that the pool and adjoining Sauna are available for hire. I wondered if there might be interest from our u3a. In the summer it is fully heated, and this year as an experiment it was open to 5th Jan, only heated to 18.5 degrees, for a refreshing dip after the sauna!

Any group activity would need to be discussed here, at our u3a and there, by the pool organisers. If there is any interest amongst our membership, please register this in the first instance by dropping an email to Ann Sims our

Group Coordinator.(via our web site). **Please appreciate that this mention is only to gauge any possible interest.**

Alan Borrow

All contributions for the next newsletter please to:

alanborrow1@gmail.com