



APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Sad Day for the Community Centre!

And a very sad day for us in u3a, because we are big users of this great Emsworth facility. On Tuesday afternoon 18th



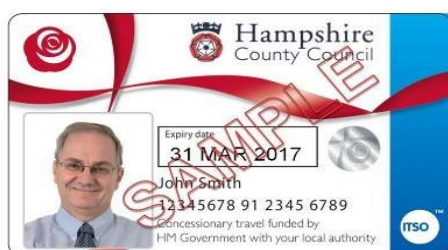
March I was halfway through my Wine appreciation session for Wine One in the adjacent Church Hall, when we smelt arid smoke and investigated outside. We were appalled to see that the old Assembly rooms of the Community Centre were on fire and we were advised to finish immediately and vacate the Church Hall. (The strong prevailing wind was in our direction!). The fact that we were interrupted half way through our session was a minor inconvenience compared with the dreadful confusion that the Community Centre now face to return to normal.

Editor

Stop Press: Good news! All of the rooms that we use – except the old Assembly Rooms - are now open as usual, but parking is restricted.

Proposed 'BUS EXPLORERS' Group

Several of our local u3as have "Use Your Bus Pass" Groups, but (so far) Ems Valley hasn't gone down this route (Ho! Ho!).



With an excellent service – mostly every 20 minutes – east or west from Emsworth roundabout/the square, it is possible to explore eastwards towards, in, around and beyond Chichester, and westwards towards Havant then on to Hayling Island, Petersfield, Portsmouth, etc.

What could be better than sharing a view of the world from the top deck while chatting with friends, heading towards a tourist attraction, garden, museum, art gallery, lunch – or even just a stroll in lovely countryside or a picnic on the beach?

The world could be your oyster!

To register your interest please e-mail groups@emsvalleyu3a.org

If we have a viable number we will organise a get-together to work out the details.

Happy Exploring!

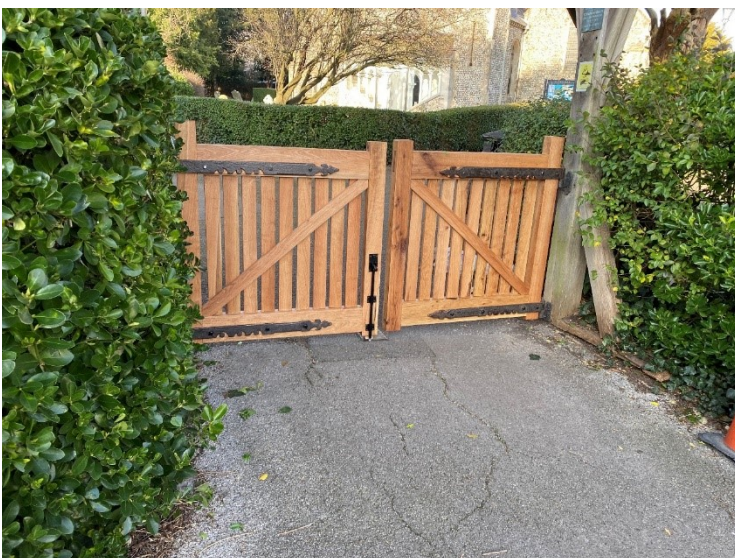
Ann Sims, Groups Co-ordinator



Some of the vistas you can enjoy on your bus day out.....



MENS SHED RISE TO THE OCCASION!



Richard Swaine reports that the Emsworth Mens Shed led by master craftsman Nick Hedges have just completed one of their most prestigious commissions yet! New, or rather 'old' seasoned Oak gates for the St. James Church entrance from Church Path are photographed below. I have been to see them and they are quite spectacular! Ed.

STEM March meeting - The Discovery that Fed the World – but Fuelled the Rise of Hitler

For our March meeting we were given a fascinating talk Graham Timms. The discovery, as mentioned in the heading, was Potassium Nitrate – or Saltpetre as it is sometimes known. This was one of the chemicals that was most in demand in recent human history. It is an ingredient in black gunpowder, put to heavy use by the Germans in WW1 and WW2 - but it also has the wonderful effect of massively increasing crop yields. As populations grew faster than the effect of crop rotation could keep up with feeding people, something was needed – and fortunately the Chinese discovered the magic effect of Potassium Nitrate. It was also found in a natural source, dung, in the Ganges, making India a target for us Brits to colonise it, and import / sell the nitrates. Worldwide demand for it was huge! By 1914 in Peru there were over 100 refineries extracting the nitrates for military and agricultural use – it was 30 times more effective than barnyard manure.



Germany imported it in vast quantities, but as the availability of the guano reduced, starvation threatened as populations increased. The urgency for a synthetic version was clear – and German scientists Haber and Bosch rose to the challenge. By 1913 they were producing synthetic nitrates – wonderful that they could feed far more people with the same crops, but unfortunately it enabled the increase of explosives. Germany continued to build up supplies, fuelling the rise of Hitler and his military. Those same chemists were also able to create the dreadful gasses, such as mustard gas,

that could get through gas masks. And the gases Haber and Bosch created were used to kill the Jews in the concentration camps. But after the war they were both awarded the Nobel prize.....

Today, half of the world's population is fed because of synthetic nitrate plants produced world wide using Haber Bosch methods. Without it, it is calculated 40% of the world's population would starve.

But of course, we know it also produces other problems – the run off feeds algae, killing essential wildlife and creating “dead zones”. Scientists are now working on tweaking wheat types to reduce the natural waste of nitrogen into the soil.

A very enlightening talk – which was so interesting it made this author go home and order two books on the topic! For anyone else gripped by this amazing subject try *The Alchemy of Air* by Hager.

STEM April Meeting: Our next meeting is April 3rd at 2.00pm, usual venue, on what promises to be an enlightening talk telling us about a project, staffed by volunteers, to introduce thousands of oysters into Emsworth Yacht Basin to help clean our harbour water. The talk will be by a main leader of the project, a local young lady, Lottie Johns, who is passionate about ecosystems. Do come and join us to hear how she is helping tackle this significant problem. All members of Ems Valley U3A are invited to join us if interested. Just let Geoff know, via stem@emsvalleyu3a.org.

Pam Palmer

And Geoff Whalley adds:

Just to let you know that I have added an item to our next meeting on Thursday 3rd April at our usual venue, St James Parish Hall at 2.00 pm.

We will start the meeting with a short talk by visiting speaker, Karen Fry, who is an expert on Scottish wildlife. This talk is highly recommended and takes a look at the natural history of a lesser known species found abundantly in the Scottish Highlands and mentioned in the writings of the poet Robbie Burns.....

As Pam Palmer mentions above, this will be followed by the talk from Charlotte Johns on introducing a large number of Oysters into Emsworth Yacht Basin, to help clean the water in Chichester Harbour. “Lottie”, to her friends, is one of the main leaders for this voluntary project, and she spoke about it recently on “BBC South Today”. A quote from Lottie: -

“As a lifelong inhabitant and lover of Chichester Harbour, our waters and the ecosystems they support have always been a passion of mine, and so the opportunity to tackle such significant problem with such an effective nature-based solution feels like a no brainer to me!”

All members of Ems Valley U3A are invited to come to this talk if interested. Just let me know, so we have an idea of numbers. *(The pic above left will be explained at the meeting – it is indeed a rare breed....)*



WINE ONE LEARN ABOUT PX SHERRY!

This article was written before the calamitous fire mentioned above. The headline ought to read - “Wine One should have learnt about PX Sherry”!

Yes, the meeting was interrupted by the fire and the expectant tasters never managed to raise the PX nectar to their lips! There must be something of a jinx to this particular tasting. Originally, this sherry was destined for the



Christmas tasting. (where it would have been most appropriate as a Christmas celebratory tippie.) So what went wrong on that occasion – the ancient leader of the group (me!) totally forgot to bring these bottles and add them to those comprising the Christmas fare! The March tasting was then earmarked for the unveiling and to make up for his mistake, that same ancient leader invested in extra special chocolate cakes to compliment this unctuous sherry. Sadly, the fire stopped all of that!

But let’s tell you about this special sherry, and just hope that Wine One eventually get to taste it!

Nearly everybody has encountered Sherry in their lives but how many of you are familiar with PX? (or Pedro Ximénez to quote its proper name!) Some long-aged Pedro Ximénez wines have no equal in Spain. They reveal themselves immediately when your lips touch the liquid and the signature scent of raisins and the deep mahogany colour will betray the wine’s provenance. If you are tempted to try it for a little celebration perhaps, you can experience the raisins, dried figs, and dates, and enjoy the extraordinarily rich and concentrated, palate with caramel, coffee, and vanilla flavours.

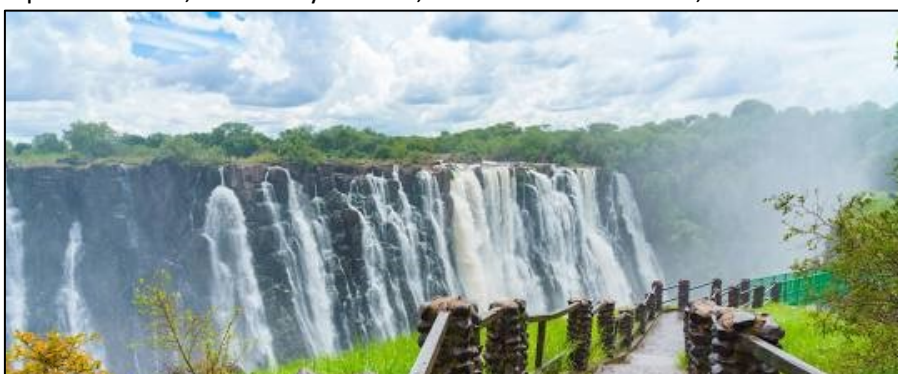
Pedro Ximénez takes few prisoners, and I make no apologies for saying that! (pour a little over a dessert of vanilla ice cream!) Whether you are in a wine group or not, try a bottle next time you plan a “sweet” celebration!

Alan Borrow

Traveller's tales

The February meeting showed presentations by Vince Lavender on his QM2 crossing, followed by Peter Forster talking about Orkney. Both were most interesting talks and well-received with plenty of questions after.

In March, Adrian Fox showed his film of a 1500 mile train trip from Cape Town to Victoria Falls. Victoria Falls is classified as the largest, based on its combined width of 1,708 metres and height of 108 metres. **This results in the world's largest sheet of falling water!** The photo above gives you some idea of its enormity. A new member to our group, Yvonne Watkins, then spoke about her recent trip to Sierra Leone, and I include a separate article, written by Yvonne, later in the newsletter, as her talk was so inspirational!



Next month, the meeting has been altered to Monday 14th April. (please note – the second Monday in the month!) Because of the uncertainty of the ECA, we will meet at the International rooms at the Methodist Church in the Square at 7.30pm. They already have a booking until 7.15pm so our booking will start at 7.30, and we will delay the beginning of the

meeting until 7.45, ending at 9.30pm. (International Rooms, The Square 7.45pm Monday 14th April)

Presentations in April will include Malta and Morocco, both destinations can be reached in just three hours from Gatwick or Heathrow!

Attendances are averaging approx 20 – 25 but there are some 120 members registered on this interest group. John Kieran has put together the most varied array of destinations this season, and the April meeting will be the last before the summer recess. **The whole group are indebted to him.**

EDITOR

REAL ALE APPRECIATION GROUP

STEVE JOY and LES BROCKENSHIRE will jointly lead this new group and an initial meeting at The Crown Inn, Emsworth was held on Tuesday 25th March 2025. This Real Ale appreciation group chose Emsworth's oldest pub for their very first meeting and they already have 12 members.

It is a very sociable group who will be exploring the delights of accessible real and craft beer establishments in our local area. Their next meeting will be in Chichester on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 2pm. If you would like to learn more about their trips, email realale@emsvalleyu3a.

You can also e-mail

Steve-Joy@hotmail.co.uk and

les.brockenshire@talktalk.net to access the real ale email box.



SIERRA LEONE – Yvonne Watkins writes:

My first teaching post was in 1984-86 in Sierra Leone in West Africa, where I taught English and French, in an all-girls Catholic school in a small market town, 100 miles from the capital. In the 1980's, I had had a memorable time, working with wonderful people, enjoying their culture, languages and their hospitality, all of which changed the course of my life. It was here I met my first husband and the whole experience influenced my career choices.

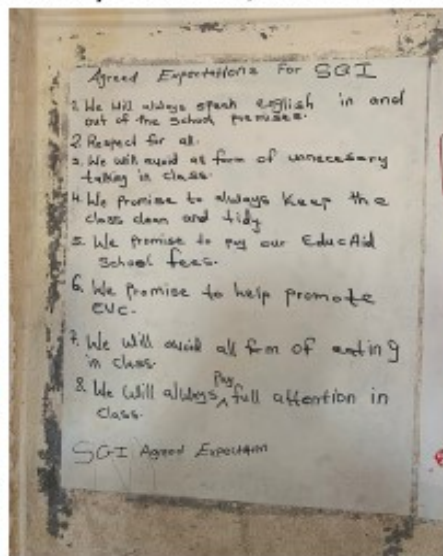
As you may know, a devastating Civil War took place in the 1990's which severely destroyed the fabric of the country and still impacts life for so many today. Over the years, I have returned several times, keeping in touch with ex students and staff, delivering in-service teacher training with the British Council and supporting friends who have remained there through the War and then the Ebola outbreak in 2014.

Sierra Leone was, and still is, one of the poorest countries of the world, but despite all the horrors it has faced over the last 40 years, it is an inspirational country which my husband Dave and I saw when we took a trip there this February. (and was the subject of my presentation to Traveller's Tales in March.)

After my career in education, culminating in the Headship of a local Secondary school, I wanted to continue to do something worthwhile and for Sierra Leone. So when a position came up for a Trustee position with EducAid, a UK based Educational charity supporting children in schools and projects there, I was keen to be part of this great organisation. EducAid works to transform lives through Education and I was delighted to join their Board of Trustees and return to the country to see their work in action with Dave.

EducAid has three model schools which we visited – one primary and two secondary -and runs projects to support girls who, like many young girls around the world, are at risk of sexual exploitation and missing out on education. The standard of education in all these schools is very high and they have much to offer other partner schools. They do this through their teacher training workshops to support staff around the northern district of Sierra Leone, focusing on literacy, numeracy and leadership skills and through their degree courses. We were fortunate to visit all these projects and schools on our trip and were inspired by the motivation and determination of all those we met, despite the fact that life is so tough.

Lumley Secondary School, Freetown



In next months newsletter, our editor has asked me to write further about Sierra Leone and **Educaid**, and I shall be pleased to do so.

Yvonne Watkins

JOSEPHINE DURANT - in fine fettle!



Those members who know Jo Durant will be pleased to hear that she is in “fine fettle” in the Willow Lodge Care Home in Southbourne. Keith Davies and yours truly visit fortnightly, and judging her to be VERY MUCH of sound mind and wicked humour, we decided to take the “escape plan” one stage further on Sunday 16th March. This discussion started some time ago – presumably because of Keith’s Play reading activities, my doubtful reputation for ‘Allo Allo scripts, and both of our desire to give Jo something to think about until our next visit comes round! We asked her first if she had started the examination of the sub soil. The last thing we wanted was to run into the problems of running sand that a famous wartime escape had encountered. Joining in with our zany humour, she said that she thought that the soil issue would be OK, but it soon became evident that no thought had been given to the disposal of the mined clay, it would not gently trickle out of the bottom on a trouser leg for instance. She suggested mixing it with water first, as she had remembered that Brickmakers (her other pet subject – yes, she was a loyal supporter of my

Brick Business interest group!) did this to create a more pliable mix. We hasten to add here that her main interest – RED WINE – was on hold because there was no one to share a bottle with and she said this took away one of the main joys of vinous activity. Right – back to the escape plan. Did she have an escape committee organised? Just then Brad knocks and enters her room, a young, sensible looking lad who looked as though he could keep a secret as well as having excellent cover by being employed in the kitchens as a trainee cake baker. We immediately decided to take him into our confidence and gave him the code name, COBRA. It is worth mentioning here that as I passed the kitchens some half hour earlier, I noticed a large birthday cake on the slab adorned with candles. We knew that it was not destined for Jo because her birthday is in early April, but Brad did volunteer that his forte is to construct hollow cakes so that implements or maps can be hidden. Immediately we could see that we had recruited an important and useful member.

We were discussing the whereabouts of a suitable place to break out, when in comes Karrin, a lady dressed in black, but definitely not sinisterly so, who told us that she was the deputy assistant housekeeper, and seemed obsessed with the empty coat hangers in Jo’s wardrobe. This looked very suspicious to Keith and me so we asked to see her Deputy badge. (we had never ever met a deputy before who was not wearing a badge). Then Matron knocked and entered so we immediately changed the subject to the weather, and asked if she had been away on holiday this year!

In conclusion, Jo is exactly the same Jo as we all knew and loved in Wine Appreciation One, and on the Wine holidays, and she would love to see and chat with any of you who know and remember her. **Editor**

Nostalgia



It is 5th March, 1936, and on this day, the Spitfire prototype K5054 embarked upon its maiden flight at Southampton Municipal Airport AKA Eastleigh Aerodrome.

(see pic left)

Designed and built in Southampton by R. J. Mitchell and his team at Supermarine in Woolston, the aircraft would go on to become an iconic symbol of the Second World War. Now read the story under:

Last surviving pilot from the Battle of Britain, John Hemingway, dies at age 105

John Hemingway has died aged 105. At 21, he was a fighter pilot in the three month period of the Battle of Britain. Gp Capt Hemingway was shot down four times during the war. Two of those occasions happened in the space of eight days - during the Battle of Britain.

He recorded in his logbook that on 18 August 1940 he bailed out of his Hurricane near the Thames Estuary after it was hit by a German aircraft. "If you didn't bail out you knew you would be dead," he said. The Hurricane wreckage was found decades later. He parachuted into the North Sea and was eventually rescued by a lifeboat.

He was back in a plane two days later. On 26 August he was shot down in combat off the coast of Kent and landed in Pitsea Marshes. John spent most of the war with 85 Squadron. John's Squadron leader was Peter Townsend, later the fiancé of Princess Margaret. "He was a very nice person and a very good leader," said John. "He always went in first." Peter Townsend is standing with John and eight other men in uniform in front of a Hurricane in one of John's photographs. **See photo below, 10 pilots posing next to a Hurricane plane.** ,

Gp Capt Hemingway, second from left in this photograph, served alongside Peter Townsend (centre, holding a cane)

John was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and mentioned in dispatches at 1941.

In all, he was shot down four times during the war. The last incident was in 1945 when he was flying a Spitfire behind enemy lines in Italy.



On that occasion, local people helped to put him in the hands of the Italian resistance and he was taken back to Allied troops.

At one point a young girl, who he thinks was only about seven years old, led him by the hand past scores of German soldiers. "I was shot down many

times but I'm still here" he said. "So many others were shot down first time and that was the end of them. I was lucky."

Day Trippers visit to Watts Gallery

On Tuesday 18th March, 12 members of the Day Trippers Group visited the Watts Gallery - Artists' Village which is in the village of Compton, just south of Guildford, a comfortable 45 minute drive up the A3. The Gallery was founded by artists George and Mary Watts in the 1890s.

Steve Gorban arranged for a guide to take the group round the Watts Mortuary Chapel and Cloister after meeting up in the coffee shop. The guide gave the group a fascinating insight into how the Chapel was designed and built by Mary, after the site was acquired by the Parish Council for use as a burial ground. The cemetery attached to the local parish church had run out of space.

The interior of the Chapel was decorated under Mary's influence and contains stunning artwork and paintings. The design is a unique fusion of art nouveau, Celtic, Romanesque and Egyptian influence with Mary's own original style. Whatever you think about it, it is impossible not to admire the work and inspiration behind this beautiful building.



After the tour, the group enjoyed a sandwich lunch in a private room after which the group went their separate ways to visit the rest of the attractions. These include Limnerslease where the Watts lived and had their own studios together with the main Gallery. This houses George's large paintings as well as a separate gallery displaying the De Morgan ceramics and tiles. The group all enjoyed this visit and learnt a great deal about the work of this unique husband and wife team. A special vote of thanks to Steve Gorban who arranged this visit and for laying on our guide. **Simon Winslow**

Editor: I know that the Art Appreciation Group have visited the above site – it is a truly amazing architectural site. The Grade I-listed terracotta building is, as mentioned above, the work of artist and designer Mary Watts. Over 70 people from the local community helped her create it between 1895 and 1904. It opened in 1898 and remains a working chapel to



this day. Clay tiles decorate the outside. Inside the Chapel you can find one of the most important and experimental wall paintings in England. The cemetery is more than 120 years old. It was laid out by Mary Watts between 1895 and 1898, with the help of Compton Parish Council.

Photos above from Sally Adcock, showing the Daytrippers guided tour.

Brick Business leads to unusual places.

Thirty three attended the March meeting for "BRICKS" and learnt about Sir Hubert Miller who was the Lord of the Manor in the picturesque Hampshire village of Froyle, near Alton in the late 1890s. The Miller family had been a prominent presence in the community for over a century, funding church repairs and the construction of a village school. Sir Hubert was a man of deep faith and often travelled in the winter to his villa in Venice, Italy. During these travels, he acquired an impressive collection of religious icons and saintly statues, which he brought back to Froyle and installed in the village's church. Over time, his collection grew larger, and the vicar began to drop hints about the space that they were occupying. So Sir Hubert began to place these beautiful sculptures around the village too, adorning Upper Froyle with 19 unique and highly detailed figures.

Thanks to Miller's passion for this collecting, Froyle was christened "The Village of Saints." To this day, the thatched cottages and redbrick houses of Upper Froyle continue to display these fantastic figures. One of the most charming homes in Froyle is Post Office Cottage, which features a statue of Saint Hubert, the patron saint of hunting, for whom Sir Hubert is the namesake. **See photo below left.**



Monthly meeting 27th March

This month's meeting was a bit different. Instead of a main speaker we had two presenters, Brian and Jacqueline Sutton, giving us "Johnny Remember Me". This was a lively presentation of music, pictures and talk covering the birth of British pop music narrated through the life and work of producer and songwriter Joe Meek (1929-1967) who is considered to be one of the most influential sound engineers of all time. He is probably best remembered as the writer and producer of The Tornados big hit, Telstar, but we heard how his influence went far greater than that. He wrote, produced or engineered hits from a range of stars such as Humphrey Lyttleton, John Leyton, Billy Fury, Marty Wilde, Lonnie Donegan, (**shown on the right**), Screaming Lord Such and The Honeycombs.

We heard recordings of all these and many others, getting some of the audience singing along with much foot tapping. We heard some amusing stories of Meek's innovative recording techniques, such as shaking stones in a tin to simulate marching feet on Anne Shelton's "Lay Down Your Arms" and The Honeycombs stamping their feet on stairs to enhance the drum sounds on "Have I The Right". It was a fun and informative session.



At our last meeting in February we had a presentation from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. I have just received a thank you email from them. You generously donated the sum of £232.73.

Rod Lipscombe

Quotation Corner: This month's subject – "ART"

It's amazing what you can do with an 'E' in A level art, twisted imagination and a chainsaw. **Damien Hirst**

If a scientist were to cut off his ear, no one would take it as evidence of a heightened sensibility. **Peter Medawar**

I don't know what art is, but I do know what it isn't. And it isn't someone walking around with a salmon over his

shoulder, or embroidering the name of everyone they have slept with on the inside of a tent! **Brian Sewell**

Painters are so bitchy. Magritte told Miro that Kandinsky had the feet of Klee. **Dick Vosburgh**

Replying to the question: "For two days labour, you ask two hundred guineas?" No, I ask it for the knowledge of a lifetime. **Janes McNeill Whistler**

I always ask the sitter if they want the truth or flattery. They always ask for the truth, and I always give them flattery.

Ruskin Spear

We're not Old, We're Just not That Young

- "Getting old ain't for sissies." Bette Davies.
- "Don't let ageing get you down. It's too hard to get back up." John Wagner.
- "We are happier in many ways when we are old than when we are young. Anon
- The young sow wild oats. The old grow sage." Winston Churchill.
- "And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years." Abraham Lincoln.
- "When they tell me I'm too old to do something, I attempt it immediately." Pablo Picasso.
- "It is necessary to relax your muscles when you can. Relaxing your brain is fatal." Stirling Moss.
- "The Golden Age is before us, not behind us." William Shakespeare.
- "You can't turn back the clock. But you can wind it up again." Bonnie Prudden.
- "Old age is always 15 years older than I am." Oliver Wendell Holmes Snr.
- "If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun." Katherine Hepburn.
- "Between two evils, I always pick the one I never tried before." Mae West.
- "The more sand has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it." Niccolo Machiavelli.
- "A good head and a good heart are a formidable combination." Nelson Mandela.
- "Anything worth doing, is worth doing well." Anonymous.
- "Anything worth doing, is worth doing badly." G K Chesterton.
- "Anything worth doing, is worth doing slowly." Mae West.

Chinese lesson below – Do not dwell if you are of sensitive disposition...

Learn Chinese in 5 Minutes
(Must Read Out Loud)

1. That's not right	Sum Ting Wong
2. Are you harbouring a fugitive	Hu Yu Hai Ding
3. See me ASAP	Kum Hia
4. Stupid Man	Dum Fuk
5. Small Horse	Tai Ni Po Ni
6. Did you go to the beach	Wai Yu So Tan
7. I bumped the coffee table	Ai Bang Mai Fa Kin Ni
8. I think you need a face lift	Chin Tu Fat
9. It's very dark in here	Wai So Dim
10. I thought you were on a diet	Wai Yu Kum Ching
11. This is a tow away zone	No Pah King
12. Our meeting is scheduled for next week	Wai Yu Kum Nao
13. Staying out of sight	Lei Ying Lo
14. He's cleaning his automobile	Wa Shing Ka
15. Your body odor is offensive	Yu Stin Ki Pu
16. Great	Fa Kin Su Pah

And just to finish:

An older man, living alone, decided he wanted to add a pet companion to his life. After thinking long and hard about the decision, he buys a parrot and brings it home. However, the parrot almost immediately starts insulting the older man and gets really rude. In a moment of frustration, the man picks up the parrot and tosses it into the freezer to teach it a lesson. But when the bird stops squawking, the man panics and opens the freezer. The parrot walks out, looks up at the man, and says, "I apologize for offending you, and I humbly ask your forgiveness." The man replies, "Well, thank you. I forgive you, and I'm sorry too." The parrot then says, "If you don't mind my asking... what'd the chicken do?"

What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?
They have the same middle name.

A woman told her friend, "I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising."

She said, "So, I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But by the time I got my leotards on, the class was already over."

A retired man now volunteers to entertain residents and patients in assisted living care homes and hospitals. He visited one hospital in Chichester and took along his portable keyboard.

After telling jokes and singing songs at patients' bedsides, he said farewell and, "I hope you all get better soon." One elderly gentleman replied, "I hope you get better, too."

**I saw a guy at Starbucks today.
He had no smartphone, tablet,
or laptop. He just sat there
drinking his coffee. Like a
psychopath.**

All contributions for the next newsletter please to:

alanborrow1@gmail.com