



MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

First major new reservoir to be built in the UK for over thirty years!

You may remember that our January Monthly meeting was cancelled because of the unfortunate sudden closure of the Baptist Church meeting hall. At that meeting, in the second half, we would have had a Civil Engineer coming to tell us about the new reservoir that Portsmouth Water is creating to protect world-renowned chalk streams – the River Test and the River Itchen, and to safeguard water supplies to our area in the years to come. He was Tom Foster of Ward and Burke the contractors, and realising our disappointment at this cancellation, has agreed to talk to our newsletter to tell us about this massive project which is expected to take over four years to complete. The first half of his talk is contained below, the remainder will appear in the April Newsletter and will deal more with the technical methods to be employed.



His story: The reservoir is an environmentally-led project that will help to safeguard internationally-rare rivers in Hampshire by providing an alternative, sustainable source of water. The reservoir will be built on the grassland site next to Havant Thicket, which sits in between Rowlands Castle, Leigh Park and Staunton Country Park in Havant, just two and a half miles due North/West of us at Emsworth, as the crow flies. As well as well as protecting some of the county's rare river habitats, it will also provide a new green, leisure facility for all of your local communities.

It will be the first new reservoir to be built in the South East since the 1970s and is being developed in collaboration with Southern Water who are funding the project. Havant Thicket Reservoir is a major infrastructure project being delivered by Portsmouth Water to help secure a resilient and sustainable water supply for the future. The South East

is one of the most water stressed regions in the country, with growing pressure from climate change, population growth and the need to protect sensitive rivers and groundwater sources. Once complete, this reservoir will be able to store up to 8.7 billion litres of water and provide up to 21 million litres of water per day during prolonged dry weather.

By storing water when it is plentiful and using it when it is most needed, the reservoir will reduce reliance on existing rivers and aquifers, playing a key role in protecting two globally rare chalk streams, the River Test and the River Itchen. Alongside strengthening water resilience, the project is delivering environmental net gain through woodland creation, habitat enhancement and rewilding, and will become a green leisure destination with a visitor centre, wetlands and a network of paths and trails for the local community to enjoy for generations to come.



As part of this project, two new pipelines are being constructed to fill the reservoir and draw it out when needed. Installed by Ward & Burke, my company, on behalf of Portsmouth Water, the pipelines will run underground from Bedhampton Springs to the reservoir site, using specialist construction methods to minimise disruption to local communities, public spaces and the surrounding environment. The two pipelines will be laid side by side and have different roles. One will transfer surplus spring water to the reservoir during the winter months for storage, while the other will allow water to be released from the reservoir to supply customers during periods of drought or in an emergency.

To reduce the need for excavations at the surface, the majority of the route will be installed using micro-tunnelling rather than an open cut approach. This avoids the need for long trenches through roads and public open spaces and significantly reduces disturbance along the pipeline corridor. Using this approach, the new water pipes will be installed inside two adjacent tunnels formed by concrete sections installed at a depth of between 3 and 10 metres underground. This places them well below roads, footpaths, public spaces, utilities such as gas and water pipes and electricity cables, and tree roots. The pipeline route also avoids going directly under houses.

Two sections of the pipelines, through Hooks Lane playing fields in Bedhampton and open space at Staunton Country Park up to the reservoir site, are to be installed using the open cut approach.

Micro-tunnelling – An introduction

Micro-tunnelling (also known as pipejacking) is a technique in which a series of concrete tunnel sections are pushed, using hydraulic jacks, through the ground behind a Micro Tunnel Boring Machine, a compact form of tunnelling

equipment. This method typically includes pipe diameters ranging from around 150mm up to 4 metres, although larger sizes are rare. In Havant, the tunnels and pipes will generally be 1.5 metres in diameter, meaning it would be possible to walk through them with a slight stoop. Unlike larger tunnels where the lining is built in segments, pipe jacking uses complete reinforced concrete cylinders, which provide the strength needed to hydraulically jack each section forward from a launch shaft. More details to follow in your April Newsletter.

GARDEN GROUP MAKE A WINTER VISIT TO WEST DEAN GARDENS

Diana Faithfull writes: We were pleased to have a group of about 34 of our members to come to West Dean Gardens for our first visit of 2026 despite the inclement weather and warnings of very boggy, wet pathways! As it happened

we were fortunate to have an almost dry window of weather for the morning and we enjoyed a lovely walk around the various areas of the fine garden which was beginning to show its spring glory and views of the Downs. We could appreciate the structure of the wonderful trees before the leaves come out with literally carpets of crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils as the photos show. A new play area has been created with 'dens' and 'tunnels' made from willow stems woven to create the shapes. The plan is that these will grow and stabilise giving novel and inspiring play places. There is a base of soft bark chipping to make it appealing to play on. A stag beetle habitat



has been made in the spring garden

to give a habitat and breeding area in the rotting wood for this endangered species.

The River Lavant was flowing fast and the sound of the little waterfall was both exciting and pleasing to hear. It did not deter the ducks from enjoying the river. Of course, the cafe and lovely



shop enhanced our visit to this special place which changes almost weekly and we are so fortunate to have it not too far away.



Six Courses – seven wines – it’s only once a year!

Wine Appreciation Group One held their annual wine tasting dinner at The Emsworth Sailing Club on Monday 9th February. 50 diners sat down to the multi course dinner served with matching wines. This year we were pleased to be joined with representatives from our Wine Two, Three, Four and Five groups. It is about the only time in the whole year when we meet up! At the risk of boring you, (or making you feel a little peckish) we started with a Thai Duck and Mango salad, followed with a sweet potato parsnip and coconut soup, progressed to grilled mackerel on beetroot, fennel and coriander salad, main of Beef Bourguignon, Cheese board and dessert of berry baked Alaska. The courses were served with wines from Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, South Australia, Argentina and Spain.

We sat down at 7.00pm and finished at 10.45! It’s amazing how the time flies when you are tasting wine! Our Chairman Tim attended with his good lady and Anne Powell, our previous Chairman travelled from her new home at Warwick. The attractive photos are attributive to Anne! I think that this is our nineteenth tasting gourmet dinner, the consensus seemed to be “long may they continue!” **Alan Borrow**



The life of a Curate....

My recent talk to local history on “The Connection? The Famous Crime writer, the Brewer and the Architect”, opened by me divulging the Crime writer’s identity, Arthur Conan Doyle. I discovered that in his early days in Southsea, Doyle published a fictionalised account of himself and Southsea life. In this story, his real-life surgery at No. 1 Bush Villas, was renamed “Oakley Villas”, while St Jude’s church, down the road, was newly christened “St. Joseph’s”.

He wasn’t exactly polite in his description of the Curate at St Joseph’s: he writes “At “Elmwood”, a pleasantly commodious Thomas Owen house situated just off Elm Grove between Grove Road South and the Woodpath (on part of the site now occupied by Telephone House), with lawns and hedges on three sides, lived the Reverend Charles Russell Tompkins, a curate at the church. Not content with a wife and seven daughters to minister to his

creature comforts, the Rev. Tompkins also maintained a cook, a housemaid and a nurse". He goes on speaking in the third person: "The curate had been one of the first to call after the new doctor had put up his plate, with high hopes of welcoming him to the flock, and had been considerably taken aback when he was firmly told that the doctor had no intention of becoming a regular attender at his church or any other..."

Conan Doyle was already dabbling in spiritualism at this stage of his life so his reply was not surprising. However I was somewhat surprised to learn that the curate at St Jude's maintained that standard of living. So I consulted "AI" for clarification and the reply I received made me think that Conan Doyle might have been referring to the vicar rather than the curate. Read my AI generated reply:



ST. JUDE'S CHURCH AND VICARAGE, SOUTHSEA.

"In mid-Victorian England—particularly the 1850s—the distinction between a vicar and a curate was not merely a matter of title, but one of income, security, social standing, and daily life. Over time, while the titles remain within the Church of England, their material circumstances and social implications have changed considerably.

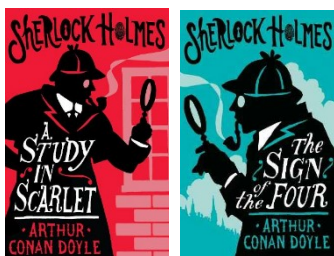
In the 1850s, a vicar was the incumbent priest of a parish within the Church of England. He held the "living" (the benefice), meaning he had legal rights to the parish income and residence. His stipend derived primarily

from tithes (payments traditionally given by parishioners), though by mid-century these were often commuted into fixed rent charges under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. A vicar's income varied enormously depending on the wealth of the parish. In a prosperous rural or urban parish, a vicar might receive £300–£800 per year—a comfortable middle-class income at the time—while poorer parishes might yield less than £150. Importantly, the vicar usually lived in the parish vicarage, a substantial house provided as part of the benefice. Domestic servants were common, and a vicar's household often reflected respectable Victorian middle-class standards, with expectations of hospitality and charitable engagement.

A curate, by contrast, was typically an assistant priest serving under the vicar (or rector). Although historically the term simply meant a cleric with "cure of souls," by the 19th century it usually referred to a paid assistant. Curates did not hold the benefice and therefore had no independent parish income. Instead, they were paid a stipend by the incumbent, often between £50 and £120 per year in the 1850s—sometimes barely sufficient for subsistence. Many curates lodged in modest rooms, sometimes within the vicarage, sometimes elsewhere in the parish. They were usually unmarried due to financial constraints. Victorian literature frequently portrays the "poor curate" as socially awkward and financially strained—a reflection of real economic precarity.

By contrast, in the present day, while the titles remain within the Church of England, the financial disparities are far less extreme. Modern vicars (often formally styled "priests-in-charge" or "incumbents") and curates (typically newly ordained clergy in their initial training posts) are both paid standardized stipends set nationally by the Church rather than dependent on parish wealth. Housing is generally provided by the diocese for both roles, though the vicar usually occupies the official parsonage house. As of recent years, stipends are broadly similar across comparable roles, and while clergy are not highly paid relative to many professions, they receive pension provision, housing, and structured support.

Thus, in the 1850s, the difference between vicar and curate was marked by sharp contrasts in wealth, autonomy, and living standards. Today, although differences in responsibility and seniority remain, the economic gulf has largely disappeared, replaced by a more regulated and equitable system of clerical support." Thanks AI!



Conan Doyle wrote the first two Sherlock Holmes novels, at his Bush Villas home in Elm Grove before moving on in 1890. He struggled to get established as a doctor in Southsea and therefore had time on his hands to write! In those days you could not advertise your services, you had to obtain your patients through word of mouth. He was therefore the first on the scene when there was an accident just outside his home as a hansom cab collided with a pedestrian. When the incident was reported in the press, Conan Doyle ensured that his name and his practice was mentioned! **Ed.**

Traveller's Tales go to central Turkey and on a Pilgrims walk!

Variety is the spice of life they say and we always see plenty of variety at the monthly Traveller's Tales evening. The February meeting commenced with Peter Forster taking us to central Turkey (or Türkiye as we were instructed at the start!). Contrary to popular beliefs, Peter told us that he and Barbara always felt very safe, travelled on well kept non pothole roads and were received in the most friendly manner. They certainly took us through some amazing sites which included the Göreme Open Air museum where we were awed by the intricate construction of the cave rooms and churches etched into the honeycomb landscape. (see photo left below). The museum's highlight is the Dark Church which is decorated with brilliantly coloured frescoes that have been carefully preserved.



At Hierapolis, recurrent earthquakes had brought disaster over the years, and the area was finally abandoned after an AD 1334 tremor. However the Roman Theatre (seen above right) still presents a formidable sight!

Their two week discovery adventure ended with three relaxing days at an idyllic sea resort!

Our leader, John Kieran started the second half with a delightful solo rendering of "To be a Pilgrim" and was indeed "He Who Would Valiant Be"!

John told us why he embarked on this 350 kilometre walk (completed in two weeks) and how he was amazed at the wealth of company he encountered. This pilgrimage started in Le Puy en Velay, progressed through Conques, Figeac to Cahors. He then returned home for a short recuperation and then did the remaining 350k of the route, finally ending in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. There were requests for him to come back with a "Part Two" to complete the walk to Santiago de Compostela! Watch this space!

A new Banksy in the making?



The scene: a wine tasting dinner.

The moment: dessert, a baked Alaska, was served.

The happening: wine glass with Muscat de Alexandria came into contact with said dessert.

Result: Emsworth Banksy was born. No Names – No packdrill – just the picture....

QUOTATION CORNER This month, the subject is "Colour"

Gentlemen never wear brown in London

- Lord Curzon

If I could find anything blacker than black, I'd use it

- J.M.W. Turner

Pink is the navy blue of India

- Diana Vreeland

"Colours, like features, follow the changes of the emotions." – Pablo Picasso

"Colour is my day-long obsession, joy, and torment." – Claude Monet

"The purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love colour the most." – John Ruskin

"Why do two colours, put one next to the other, sing? Can one really explain this?" – **Pablo Picasso**

"I prefer living in colour." – **David Hockney**

The Language of Dreams: "Colour! What a deep and mysterious language, the language of dreams" – **Paul Gauguin**.

Essential for Life: "Man needs colour to live; it's just as necessary an element as fire and water" – **Fernand Léger**.

"I was shown round Tutankhamun's tomb in the 1920s. I saw all this wonderful pink on the walls and the artefacts. I was so impressed that I vowed to wear it for the rest of my life." – **Barbara Cartland**

"I cannot pretend to feel impartial about the colours. I rejoice with the brilliant ones, and am genuinely sorry for the poor browns." – **Winston Churchill**



LOVE IS IN THE AIR.....



Valentine's Day originated from a blend of ancient Roman fertility rituals (Lupercalia) and Christian efforts to honour martyrs named St. Valentine. It was officially established on February 14 by Pope Gelasius in the 5th century. It evolved into a romantic celebration during the Middle Ages, popularized by writers like Chaucer, and shifted from saintly veneration to a day for exchanging tokens of affection.

Valentine's day: Also not forgotten in Ems Valley u3a: Angela Blunden writes that "our Craft group had a wonderful time in our February meeting, we did Valentine

table decorations, our lovely member Jenny was showing us how to make the arrangements look professional. We used flowers & greenery, Jenny kindly gave us some red foam hearts to put on them for the finishing touch. It was great fun, & we were pleased with the results!

The Kingfisher - one flash and its gone !

What a colourful bird the kingfisher is with its electric-blue back streak, blue-green back, orange chest and white patches on its head and throat.

Usually only a blue flash is seen as it streaks along a waterway with a direct flight close to the water, sometimes with a "peep" whistle sound which may be repeated. You are more likely to see a kingfisher in winter months as they migrate to south coasts in winter to avoid icy water, as they eat small fish.



When breeding, kingfishers choose a quiet river bank in which to excavate a burrow ending in a nest hole. Both male and females look alike apart from the male having a black beak whereas the female has an orange lower mandible. Kingfishers can be seen in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and harbours. A good place to see a kingfisher out of the breeding season locally is along the Slipper Mill pond, through the Emsworth Marina and along the water channel



leading to the Little Deeps and the Great Deeps and the west gate to Thorney Island. Here I once had an amazing experience of seeing two kingfishers for over an hour flying, perching on a wire fence and diving into the water. It is an experience that I will never forget. **Ros Norton of Birds and Wildlife.**

(pictures by **Russ Wakefield**, both taken locally)

STEM February meeting – eConsult .

Why it is Important? And How to Use it!

For our February meeting we were pleased to be taught about the Emsworth Surgery's eConsult system by Brian Devlin of the Patient Participant group (PPG) .

Many of us had tried to use the eConsult system and just ended up frustrated, so we all arrived hopeful and keen to learn. In return, Brian was keen to help us make easier and better use of it. We learned Brian had a background in analytics - and we also learned that the use of some form of electronic consulting system is now mandated by the NHS. On hearing Emsworth has circa 16k patients and only 10 doctors (some of whom work only 3 to 4 days a week) it was clear an electronic system is vital to help the medics triage us effectively to ensure patients are dealt with according to the seriousness of any health issue. Next came real time use of the system, with Brian feeding in data so the surgery could help him with a bad back. After several minutes of answering seemingly irrelevant questions, I'm afraid many of us were rolling our eyes. Yes, that's exactly the experience many of us have had. Unsurprisingly, the many charts and spreadsheets Brian produced showed that the age group 60+ had the biggest difficulty using the system. Not surprising as I said – but I'm afraid given the brains in our STEM group (most of us are pretty techie) it says a lot more about the system than our ageing brains.



Brian had done a good job showing why an econsult system was needed – for the medics. But the audience knew of several other eConsult systems being used – and they all seemed more user friendly than Emsworth's. I'm afraid we were not at all persuaded that this was in any way progress for patients. Bring back receptionists who answer the phone please, or devise an effective, user friendly econsult system. To quote my own experience last month, I attempted to request something online for about 15-20 mins, and gave up, having answered dozens of irrelevant questions. I called the surgery and the nice lady on the phone sorted it in 2 minutes. But Brian – thank you for trying to persuade us.....

Post-meeting Note - Emsworth surgery has updated their website to create a direct active link to eConsult on the home page, as a result of feedback Brian sent after our February STEM meeting !

Our next STEM Meeting is March 5th at 2.00pm, usual venue at St James's Hall. Do come and join us for a Workshop on **Heat Pumps and Solar Generation** . All members of Ems Valley U3A are warmly invited. If interested, just let Geoff know, via stem@emsvalleyu3a.org.

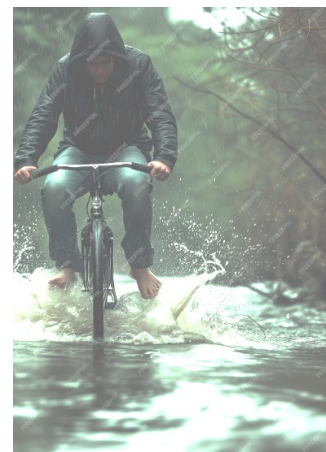
Pam Palmer

Cycling in this weather!!

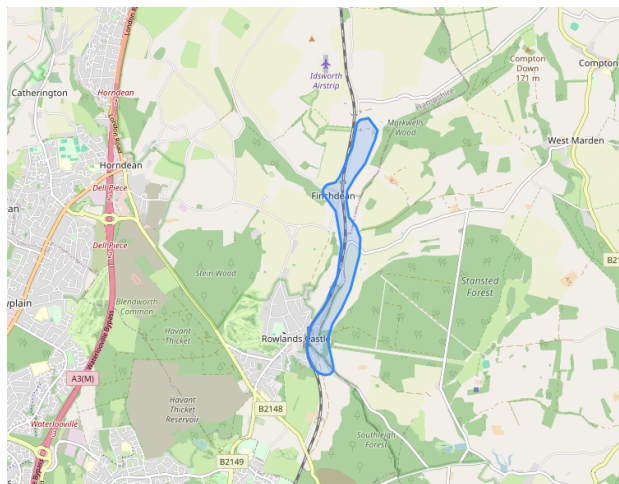
While most sensible cyclist put away their bikes for the winter, your intrepid (crazy) U3A group keeps riding. On some rides, we should have dragged out our canoes rather than bikes.



One dry day a couple of us went out on lovely quiet roads north of Rowlands Castle. Soon found out why they were so quiet. On one stretch over 500 metres long, between Finchdean and Chalton, the road turned in to a river, around four inches deep right across the road and flowing fast. (Sorry to you



and imperial). Yes, for our monthly ride in February, we decided to try out Watery Lane in West Ashling. Soon found out the reason for the name. Should have worn wellingtons. For this ride we had a new member to our group who had a puncture after less than a mile. Two of us stopped behind to resolve the problem. Soon realised how out of practice we were when



dealing with punctures! Two patches later, our budding new member decided to find a professional puncture mender and walked back to Emsworth, while we set out to catch the others. Before the ride we had discussed going to West Dean and, believing that still to be our destination, we set off at a cracking pace, easy for me as I had converted my bike to electricity but Ray was still manual and less impressed with my speed. Close to West Dean we called the others who advised that they were on their way. Ten minutes later they still hadn't arrived and yet another call revealed that they hadn't actually gone to West Dean but West Stoke! Ah well, luckily it was all downhill to our stopping point for lunch, the pub by Chichester station, where we all met up.

Most had obviously had a big lunch and caught the train back to Emsworth while three of us wanted more from our ride and cycled back.

For those considering joining us, our rides are not always this well organized(!), but we do have fun. We have explored the south coast, from Brighton to Bournemouth.

Les Pallett

A Wet Winter.....

Yes, it has been wet! But think back when the Lavant stream flowed openly through the streets of Havant (Before culverts were installed, the Lavant used to run right through Havant town centre, North street and then West street). The photo below shows North Street in the early 1900s

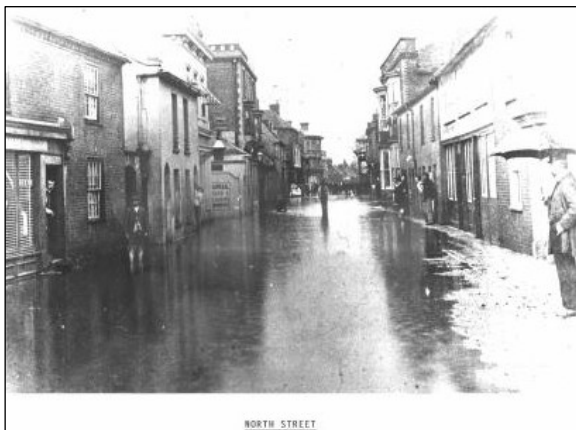
Flooding was quite often experienced in Havant. In February 1809:

Last week the waters came through the town in torrents, so as to overflow two of the streets and prevent foot passengers from passing. On Thursday last (9th), the flood came down with increased violence. It covered the whole of North Street and crossed the centre of the town into South Street; it also overflowed Prince George Street; and West Street, from a current that runs through that part of the town, was so completely inundated that the water ran through many of the houses and the inhabitants there were obliged to live upstairs. The fields above and below the

town were under water. There has not been such a flood in the neighbourhood since the year 1746. The 42nd or Highland Regiment, which passed yesterday, were obliged to wade through the waters.

And in the winter of 1857:

The Lavant Stream of the year 1852 was heavier than for forty years past. For some time the ordinary channels sufficed to carry off the increasing waters, but at last the rush was so great, that the fields to the north of the town presented the appearance of a lake, and the hedges were in many places completely covered. On the 27 November, the flood was at its highest; there was a deep stream from the station to the church corner, and on that and the following day a boat plied in North Street. Carts conveyed passengers over the river which ran across the West Street



at the Star bridge; the cellars were filled to the extent of three or four feet deep, and for some time the greatest possible inconvenience prevailed, from the mass of waters pouring through the town. One account stated: Next day we saw a sight unique in the annals of Havant – a boat being rowed towards the station. True it was a rather hazardous proceeding, as it had a tendency to run aground in the shallow places; but it enabled people to boast afterwards that they had been rowed in a boat to catch a train. I saw one ludicrous incident in this connexion. A well-known inhabitant was being rowed, when he stood up in the boat. At the same time the latter bumped in a shallow and the gentleman went headlong over the side into the water. I had the pleasure of

retrieving his snuff box from our doorstep as it floated past. Near the lake formed in West Street another ancient inhabitant was sailing home (after closing time) with a full cargo. Forgetting the lake in crossing the road he fell headlong into the water. He got up and tried again, with the same result. Then he leant against a wall and

apostrophised himself thus: 'My boy, you have been going home this way for forty years, and you're not going to be beat now. Try again!' He tried again with the same result, but not to be denied, he crawled through the water on his hands and knees, reached the other side, got up, and reeled off home. When daylight came we saw a wide stream which spread



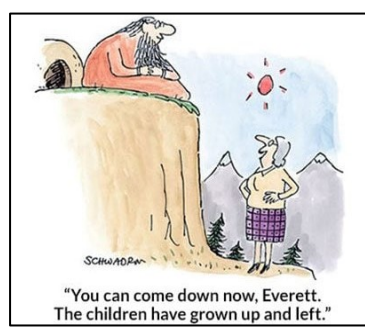
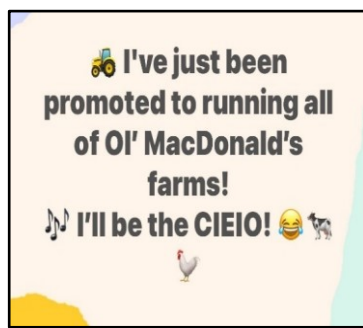
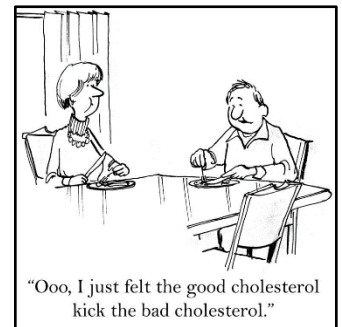
itself out and dispersed in South Street, and as it still rained, the waters increased, reaching maximum height that evening. A temporary footway was improvised along one side of the street with planks carried on boxes and crates placed at intervals along the pavement, thus enabling foot passengers to pass up and down in safety. This state of affairs lasted nearly a fortnight, when the fine weather returned, and the waters disappeared; but dwellers in North Street will not forget the aftermath - ground floors covered with mud and slime, wet floors, and damp walls, which persisted long after the flood had disappeared.

The photo, above right, shows Bridge road, Emsworth, not that long ago!

Do you want an EMSWORTH parish council?

In the second half of the Monthly Meeting in February we were given an address by our member Ellie Turnbull who made a strong case for the formation of an Emsworth Parish Council (later to be called an Emsworth Town Council) to make certain that us residents in Emsworth retain an active voice in the new PORTSMOUTH UNITARY AUTHORITY. Your voice counts! And if you feel strongly about this matter you need to fill out a survey ASAP! You can go to the Emsworth Community Centre or to the Emsworth Library and complete this survey or you can access it on line via www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/emsworthcgr or attend an exhibition at the Baptist Church on March 10th at 3.00pm – 7.00pm. YOU NEED TO DO ONE OF THE ABOVE THREE!

Original Banksy art: L to R,
Show me the Monet, Under the
carpet, Devolved parliament.



They both attended a School reunion.

He was a widower and she a widow. They had known each other for a number of years being school classmates and having attended class reunions in the past without fail.

This 60th anniversary of their class, the widower and the widow made a foursome with two other singles. They had a wonderful evening, their spirits high with the widower throwing admiring glances across the table and the widow smiling coyly back at him.

Finally, he picked up courage and blurted out, "Will you marry me?"

After about six seconds of careful consideration, she answered, "Yes ... yes I will!"

The evening ended on a happy note for the widower. But the next morning he was troubled. Did she say yes? Or did she say no? He couldn't remember. Try as he would, he just could not recall. He went over the conversation of the previous evening, but his mind was blank. He remembered asking the question but for the life of him he could not recall her response. So, with fear and trepidation, he picked up the phone and called her.

First, he explained that he couldn't remember as well as he used to. Then he reviewed the past evening. As he gained a little more courage he then inquired of her, "When I asked if you would marry me, did you say yes or did you say no?"

"Why you silly man, I said Yes. Yes I will! ... And I meant it with all my heart."

The widower was delighted. He felt his heart skip a beat.

Then she continued, "And I am so glad you called because I couldn't remember who asked me!"

[400 passengers were aboard the Qantas flight](#)

but only 200 meals were loaded onto a flight from Sydney to London Heathrow

It was only discovered after takeoff, when the flight attendants started going through their preparations for the meals. So, the airline had messed up and the crew was in a real jam. However, one smart flight attendant had an idea. A couple hours into the flight, she nervously announced:

"Anyone who is kind enough to give up their meal to someone else, will receive unlimited free liquor for the duration of the flight."

Her next announcement came 6 hours later: Ladies and gentlemen, if anyone wants to change their mind, we still have 180 dinners available."

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?"

A businessman boarded an international flight and found a fancy young woman seated next to him wearing a large diamond ring. During the flight, he asked her about the ring.

"It is the Klopman diamond, but it comes with a terrible curse," she said. "What's the curse," he asked.

She replied, "Mr. Klopman."

I must admit.....

I struggled to understand most of Dylan Thomas's verse when our guest speakers let loose at Thursday's monthly meeting this week!

So, when I returned home I looked up some of his other works.

The following is from his - *somewhat taking the mickey*-

"A Letter To My Aunt Discussing The Correct Approach To Modern Poetry" and was more to my liking - and understanding..... Ed

Do not forget that 'limpet' rhymes
With 'strumpet' in these troubled times,
And commas are the worst of crimes;
Few understand the works of Cummings,
And few James Joyce's mental slummings,
And few young Auden's coded chatter;
But then it is the few that matter.
Never be lucid, never state,
If you would be regarded great,
The simplest thought or sentiment,
(For thought, we know, is decadent):
Never omit such vital words
As belly, genitals and - - -,
For these are things that play a part
(And what a part) in all good art.
Remember this: each rose is wormy,
And every lovely woman's gemy;
Remember this: that love depends
On how the Gallic letter bends;
Remember, too, that life is hell
And even heaven has a smell

Of putrefying angels who
Make deadly whoopee in the blue.
These things remembered, what can stop
A poet going to the top?

All contributions for the next newsletter please to:

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