



JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER

INVITATION TO EMS VALLEY@20

On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to invite you to an informal drop in social event to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Ems Valley U3A.

When: Friday 3 July 2026

Time: Between 2pm and 4:30pm

Where: Emsworth Community Garden North Street Next to the doctors' surgery

At about 3pm there will be a short cake-cutting ceremony to mark the anniversary. We will propose, and provide, a toast and offer a slice of cake.

(We cannot guarantee that allergen free or dietary requirements will be met).

You are most welcome to bring your own refreshments, drinks, picnic etc. but please take back any empties or other remains and packaging.

There will be some seating available.

It will be most helpful if you could let me know, via email at chairman@emsvalleyu3a.org, by 10th June if you are likely to attend.

(Please note that this is a member only event)

We look forward to a sunny afternoon where we can all meet, chat and celebrate our anniversary.



Rod Lipscombe

Chairman Ems Valley U3A

June Is Bustin' Out All Over



Title should read "May is about to bust out all over!" but things are a little late this year in my niece's bird box but I kept faith with Rodgers and Hammerstein....

More and more people that I know, have invested in Nest Box Cameras and are now reaping the pictorial benefits. **Sitting** left, **Gone hunting** left centre and **hungry beaks** right centre, and **contented** right! Thank you Amanda!

Local History return to Leigh Park House for the final talk!

OK, it should be entitled "The site of Leigh Park House" because sadly it is no longer! Leigh Park House was a



Victorian Gothic mansion built in the 1860s for MP William Stone.

Requisitioned during WWII and later bought by Portsmouth City Council in 1944, the house fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1959. Its footprint remains today as a feature within the public Staunton Country Park.

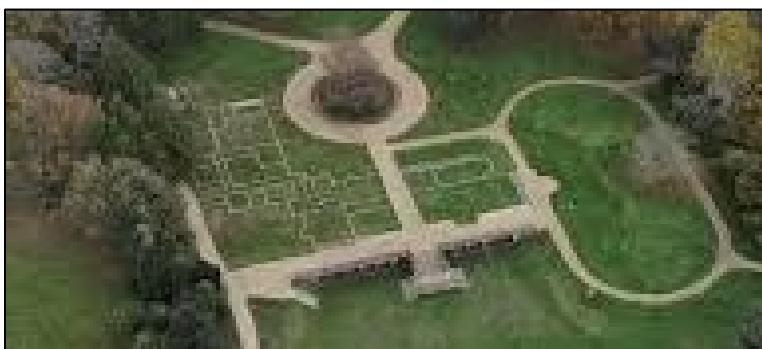
Pic left shows the house in all its splendour at the turn of the century.

Following his 1861 purchase of the estate, William Stone commissioned architect Richard William Drew to build

a new mansion, replacing an older house on the site. Our Local History group had a historical/ architectural tour last year, but we ran out of time, and only covered half of the site. Reg Newnham our leader arranged for Simon, the same archaeologist, to complete this tour- this year - on Friday 1st May.

The new house, costing approximately £20,000, was built using bricks made from local clay in a purpose built brickworks adjacent. Stone was not happy with the siting of the old house which Sir George Staunton had built in the

Below: Today's footprint of the house.



1820s and set about building the second Leigh Park house in 1865. As you can see above, it was Gothic in style with turrets and narrow windows. William Stone was a Liberal MP for Portsmouth, and not only did he build this mansion but he set about radically altering the whole estate that Staunton had created forty years earlier. Let it be said that Stone was a generous benefactor in the Havant area, but why did he sell so soon after

completing the build? Our guide said it may have been because he was a family man with young children and the lawns in front between the house and the magnificent ornamental lake were extremely wet! I personally think it may have something to do with a lost parliamentary election.....

below: The shell house folly



The Fitzwygram Era (1874–1938): The estate was however purchased by Major General Sir Frederick Fitzwygram, and remained with his family until the mid-20th century. During WWII, the house was used by the Ministry of Defence (HMS Vernon).

In 1946, and secret experimentations took place there with a huge staff being employed. Our guide blamed these occupants for a certain amount of damage that took place in this era which, he said, contributed largely to the decision to demolish. The land was purchased by Portsmouth City Council for future development. Demolition of the house took place in 1959. It is quite amazing that this history is all quite recent and yet we were constantly told on our walk, that records are missing and history is unsure. One of our group wondered if the real reason was the loss of many records when Portsmouth Museum was destroyed by bombing in the Second World War.

Pic below shows the pretty tearooms.

We learnt a lot and enjoyed the tour, the talk and the marvellous surroundings of this special place, slap bang on our doorstep. But what about the ridiculous car parking fees however – two hours is £4.00 – go over this by a minute or two and its £8.00! You have to wonder about the logic of the Hampshire County Council who manage this site. Construct a beautiful car park that is large enough for literally hundreds of cars, then charge astronomical fees that mean – on a beautifully sunny May Friday afternoon - I counted just 19 cars in this purpose built car park, large enough for 200-300 cars! Their lovely extensive tearoom, where they could make decent profits, was therefore very sparsely occupied!



Thankyou, Reg for this rewarding afternoon! (in spite of the car park charge!)

Right: Today's view from the terrace gives you a good idea of why William Stone sited his mansion here!



William Saywell's latest!



Once again, our thanks go to **William Saywell** for his latest lovely pics of our British birds taken on a May outing, clockwise, left to right: Whitethroat, Linnet, Male Stonechat, Yellowhammer, Young Robin, Female Stonechat.

How does he get all of these shots in one outing? William heads our Photography group.

Our Theatre group go to CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE to see "MAGIC"!

I wanted to see this production because the story had formed part of a presentation I had made to our Local History group in February! (The Connection? The Architect, the Brewer and the Famous Crime Writer). It is a well known fact that Arthur Conan Doyle was a confirmed Spiritualist. He desperately wanted communication with his son, Kingsley in 1918 (following wounds sustained at the Battle of the Somme). This was a core tenet of his deeply held Spiritualist faith, which, he maintained, was strengthened by the losses of Kingsley and other family members in



World War I. Doyle had studied psychic phenomena for decades prior and made this spiritual communion a vital source of personal solace and a driving force in his public evangelism for Spiritualism, during and after his much more famous writing career.

David Haig thought that this was an interesting, and highly dramatic idea to explore - the friendship and tension between Harry Houdini (Hadley Fraser) and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Haig, himself). Houdini was a highly skilled, world famous illusionist but totally and utterly rational. Conan-Doyle, equally famous because of Sherlock Holmes, was totally and irrationally convinced by spiritualism which surged

exploitatively in the aftermath of the First World War. At Chichester, we flitted between leafy Crowborough in Sussex and the main vaudeville theatres in the USA! This was very well presented, transatlantic liners and American razzamataz!

Initially each of these two celebrities was impressed by the other, but later there were stand-offs because the two men were never going to agree. The whole point is that Houdini understood misdirection and trickery so he could recognise it instantly. And, off-stage he was always committed to scientific truth. Conan Doyle on the other hand refused to believe that Houdini wasn't really walking through walls and escaping from multiply-locked chains. It was conflict between a realist and a fantasist. (Yes, we witnessed that walking through the wall on stage!)

"Magic" presented an interesting exploration of the nature of belief. If someone is determined to believe something supernatural, quasi-religious or conventionally religious, then no scientific argument will ever shake them. And this led to fights and uproar at Chichester! It's strong theatre but, perhaps, not quite in the league of Haig's earlier play, "Pressure" which many of us saw at Chichester and which is due to be released as a film this year. **Alan Borrow**

U3A Garden Group visit to Crookley Pool - 12 May 2026

Last visited in July 2022, our Garden Group returned to Crookley Pool, Blendworth Lane, Horndean (an NGS garden), on Tuesday, 12th May. The 3-acre partly walled garden, built around an old swimming pool, has been in the same family for three generations and features a beautiful, over a 100-years-old wisteria covering the walls and terraces.



We knew we were in for an interesting visit when we were greeted at the entrance by an incredibly vibrant blue/purple Corynabutilon (Abutilon) and a most unusual Clianthus (also known as Lobster Claw). Crookley Pool comprises a series of gardens with borders planted in waves of whites, pinks, blues, and purples—repeat planting being the essential design of the garden.. The gardens are full of unusual plants that even the most garden-savvy among the group struggled to identify, with Google Images frequently consulted! The orchard, left to grow wild, provided a splendid display of beautiful blue irises contrasting with yellow wildflowers. In July 2022, the orchard floor was scattered with Wild Orchids—though we were a little early for them this time. Instead, we enjoyed a treat of many different-coloured

peonies, especially a yellow variety with blooms as large as my hand.

Scrambling around an old fruit tree in the orchard was the prettiest pink Clematis Montana, possibly 'Pink Perfection'. In another garden section, there were beds of very healthy, Bearded Irises, including a particularly lovely one with white frilled petals and purple tips called 'Ravissant'. They were complemented by plenty of magenta pink Gladioli Byzantine scattered throughout the border. Instead of our usual first port of call for cake and coffee, we ended our visit sitting in the garden, enjoying the warm sunshine with coffee and homemade cakes. This is definitely a garden to visit at different times of the year. More pics from the visit below! **Ronnie Tyler**



The Old Assembly Rooms, Emsworth Community Centre.

GREAT NEWS this month, the Old Assembly Rooms are now open and available to us once again following the drastic fire last year. Richard Swaine sends a before and after photo showing, on the left the dramatic shell after the fire, and on the right, the “born again” wonder picture. Praise be to all the Community Centre staff and management for their hard work and endeavour! What a wonderful facility is now available to us! Those old enough to have attended their school lessons in this very room will be especially pleased!



Wine Group 6 Update

There is something quietly magical about gathering with curious people around a table, glass in hand to explore different wines each month. Our monthly wine tasting group is more than an excuse to drink; it's a steady social way to expand your palette, deepen your knowledge and make new friends – all at a relaxed manageable pace.

Over a year you will encounter dozens of bottles you might never have chosen at the shop and will quickly learn which wines delight you and which don't. You will taste more broadly, learn faster, spend smarter and enjoy the company of people who appreciate the same slow rewarding pleasure; good wine shared well.

If this appeals to you then why not join a new wine group? If you would like to join, please contact Jackie and Steve directly at hensax1@gmail.com.



Editors note: Jackie and Steve are fairly new members to our u3a and I am so pleased that they are diving headfirst in to get this sixth wine group off the ground! They have interest from members already but just **need another 4 or 6 members to commence**.

I am already formulating a letter to the "Guinness Book of Records" under the vinous category "Most Wine Appreciation Groups in one u3a"!

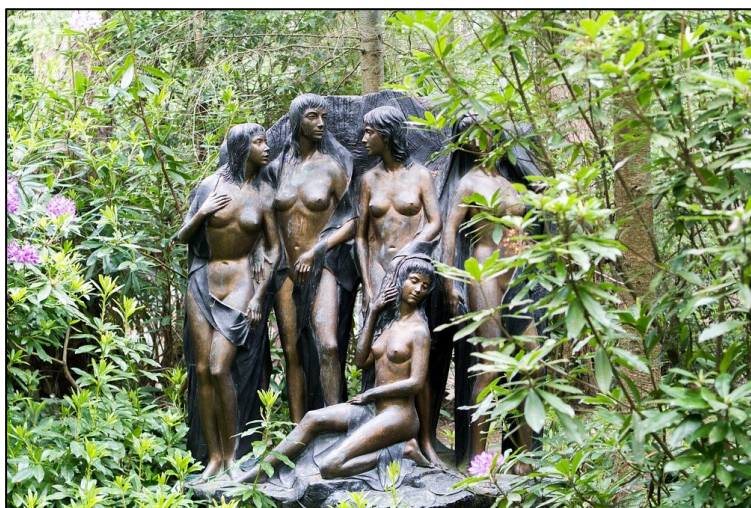
Let's get this new group off the ground! Their first meeting is already planned for **WEDNESDAY 8th July at 16.00**. But, they stress that the date for future meetings could change going forward, depending on the majority wish. I am going to join, even though I already attend Wine One meetings. (after all, David Gillespie is a member of four Book Club groups!)

A real hidden gem -The Sculpture Park at Churt.

Daytrippers are arranging a visit on Wednesday 10th June, to Surrey Sculpture Park in Churt, near Farnham. The Park comprises a 10 acre site with a 2 mile trail through woodland and water gardens. There are over 2000 sculptures on display (which are available to purchase!). Further details are available on their



website. The entrance fee is £10.00 for pensioners and is payable on the day at the entrance. It is proposed that we car share so if you are interested, could you please indicate if you are prepared



to drive and give a lift to others or if you require a lift. Steve and I can then organise the car sharing arrangements. Churt is approximately 30 miles from Emsworth and according to the AA Route Planner the drive time is 42 minutes. **If you are interested in joining us, please contact Steve Gorban or Simon Wimslow via the Ems Valley u3a web site, Daytrippers group SAP!**

The address of the Sculpture Park is Corner of Jumps and Tilford Road, Churt,

Farnham, Surrey, GU10 2LB. It takes between 2 and 2.5 hours to walk the trail, so we are suggesting that we meet up in the Bel and Dragon Hotel which is opposite the entrance to the Park at around 10.15 for coffee and then start our visit to the Park at 10.45. Having completed the trail, we'll be ready for lunch at the Bel and Dragon at about 13.00/13.30. The entrance ticket allows re-entry into the Park after lunch if you want to go back. **The pub has an extensive A La Carte menu with several snack dishes or a fixed price 2 course lunch for £19.50 or 3 courses at £23.50. If there are 10 or more of us having lunch, then the pub will require menu selections 1 week in advance so I may need to get back to you with menu details when I know exact numbers. The pub doesn't require advance payment.**

Craft Group explore “FRACTURED FLOWERS” and “FABRIC BOXES”!



In April, we did a sewing project called Fractured Flowers, whereby we cut up pieces of fabric into squares & rearranged them. No pictures included but the results were most interesting!

In May when we made Fabric Boxes. We all had a great time making these boxes which can be useful for all manner of things & would make lovely gifts too. **Angela Blunden**



STEM May meeting - HACKING continued: Defend Yourself against a Hacker

For our May meeting Graham Taplin very kindly agreed to continue on from our April meeting, where we had learned how vulnerable our systems are to attack. We had a workshop this time, with a bumper attendance of over 40 again, all of us keen to learn what we could do to dramatically reduce our risk of being hacked. Graham explained those risks would soon be much higher as AI systems become ever more sophisticated, enabling the bad guys to get access to our data.



We were shown how to check if our email account had been exposed to data leaks (PWND- mine had, eek!), to see if our email contacts data had been sent to endless sites around the world. Oh dear..... Both Geoff and Graham made things clearer with various on screen presentations – and many attendees brought questions regarding protecting their phones and computers.

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We learned about Password Managers, Passkeys, Anti Virus packages, Two Factor Authorisation – (2FA good, but Passkeys are better. Of course they are!)

Do any of you recall us being told computers would make our lives so much simpler? I'm sure I'm not the only one who came home with a list of things to follow up on – and we're very grateful to Graham for helping us reduce our exposure to being hacked. At the very least we're far more aware we should be more careful. Our next STEM Meeting is June 4th at 2.00pm, usual venue at St James's Hall.

Do come and join us for our next talk on a very different topic:

“New Zealand, a tale of Two Islands – Geological Aspects” All members of Ems Valley U3A are warmly invited. If interested, just let Geoff know, via stem@emsvalleyu3a.org. **Pam Palmer**

OUR MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER

Do you enjoy our Monthly Guest Speaker? Do you know how we find them? Do you know a good Speaker?

Speakers at our monthly meetings are sourced by our Speakers secretary, suggestions from other u3as and our own members. If you have any suggestions for speakers please contact our Speaker Secretary who is also our Vice Chairman. This position will change at the May AGM and, if voting is in favour, the new Vice will be Andrea Brokenshire. You can contact her via the Ems Valley u3a web site, or of course see her at the monthly meeting.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF AVIATION?

Not everyone knows that we have – on our doorstep – the Solent Sky Museum. Ours is probably the most important area in the country, perhaps the world, for aircraft experimental and development work between 1908 and the late 1960s. Twenty six aircraft companies set up shop in our area, and many of the world's greatest aircraft, including the legendary Spitfire, first took to the air in the skies over Southampton. This museum has 18 complete airframes,



including a Supermarine Spitfire and Supermarine S6a (N248), and also 4 cockpit sections. They also have a comprehensive collection of aero-engines. Our mighty Sandringham Flying Boat was originally built as a Short Sunderland in 1943, and converted to a passenger aircraft after the war. Visitors can board the aircraft to sample the luxury of air travel in the romantic era of the great flying boats, and guided tours of the flight deck are also available. Kids, sorry - big kids can also imagine what it would be like to fly a jet fighter, whilst sitting in the cockpits of the Supermarine Swift and Harrier Jump Jet. A Schneider Trophy Exhibition is now open, with its record-breaking centrepiece the S6a. You can

view footage of these legendary races and artefacts from the time illustrate the drama and romance of the fastest



race in history. There is also a Fire and Police display on the upper level which is fascinating. The wartime Blitz display is well laid out, and the cinema and short videos available are great and informative.

Yes, join our Daytrippers group for a visit to The Solent Sky Museum in Southampton on Tuesday 7th July. We will travel by car to arrive at 11.30am and the price is £14.00 per person. Car sharing will be organised by Steve Gorban – please tell him if you are prepared to drive. Metered parking is close to the museum. The price

includes the services of a guide.

Following our tour of the museum we will lunch at the Maritimo Lounge at Ocean Walk a short walk from the museum. <https://thelounges.co.uk/maritimo/>. Closer to the time we will ask for your pre-order for lunch. Sign up deadline is Tuesday 23 June. Payment details Mr S Gorban, Sort Code 40-45-22, account Number 11658476

Simon and Steve

New Faces, New Friends, New Energy - but are we doing our bit.....

One of the great pleasures of u3a is friendship. Over time, familiar faces become good friends, favourite seats become unofficially “reserved”, and conversations simply continue from where they left off last month. That is all part of the warmth and comfort of belonging to a thriving organisation like our Ems Valley u3a.

But every now and then it is worth remembering one very important fact: **we were all newcomers once.**

For many new members, walking into a Monthly General Meeting for the first time can feel rather daunting. Imagine arriving at a hall full of people who all seem to know each other already, while you are still wondering where the tea is served and whether you are sitting in someone else’s seat!

Thankfully, we do have our excellent “Meeters and Greeters” at the door, whose smiles and welcomes are greatly appreciated. But creating a genuinely friendly atmosphere does not stop at the entrance. It belongs to all of us.

It is perfectly natural that little friendship groups and familiar circles form over the years. Human nature being what it is, we tend to gravitate towards the people we already know. There is nothing wrong with that — unless it accidentally leaves newcomers feeling like spectators rather than participants.



A simple “Hello, is this your first meeting?” can make an enormous difference.

So can:

- inviting someone to join your table for tea,
- introducing them to another member,
- explaining how the meeting works,
- or simply including them in the conversation rather than talking across them.

None of this requires a committee, a policy document, or a training course! Just a little awareness and a small effort from each of us.

And there is another important point. Many new members joining u3a today may be younger retirees in their 60s or early 70s. They are the future energy, talent and enthusiasm that will help keep organisations like ours flourishing for years to come. Today’s newcomer may well be tomorrow’s group leader, committee member, speaker organiser — or simply your next good friend. u3a has always been about learning, laughter, companionship and shared interests. The more welcoming we are, the stronger and happier our community becomes.

So at the next Monthly Meeting, perhaps we could all challenge ourselves to do one small thing:

talk to someone we do not already know.

Editor

QUOTATION CORNER – This month’s subject: “COOKING”!

“If you are a chef, no matter how good a chef you are, it’s not good, cooking for yourself; the joy is in cooking for others. It’s the same with music.” ***will.i.am***

“Cooking is not difficult. Everyone has taste, even if they don’t realize it. Even if you’re not a great chef, there’s nothing to stop you understanding the difference between what tastes good and what doesn’t.” –

Gerard Depardieu

Explaining “Toad in the Hole” to her American audience: “It has nothing to do with frogs legs. No amphibian is harmed in the making of this dish!” ***Nigella Lawson***

“The only real stumbling block is fear of failure. In cooking, you’ve got to have a what-the-hell attitude.”

Julia Child

When compelled to cook, I produce a meal that would make a sword swallower gag. ***Russell Baker***

There is no sincerer love than the love of food. ***George Bernard Shaw***

No one is lonely while eating spaghetti. ***Robert Morley***

My wife and I tried to breakfast together, but we had to stop or our marriage would have been wrecked. ***Sir***

Winston Churchill

Weekend à Saint Aubin and an important anniversary visit

At the crack of dawn on the first Friday of May, 33 plucky francophiles (including a significant number of U3A Ems Valley members) checked in at Portsmouth ferry port, ready to sail to Ouistreham for the biennial twinning visit to our twin town of Saint Aubin on the Normandy coast. It was to be a rather special anniversary as it was 40 years ago this year that the twinning of our two towns was set up. Founder members Keith and Nicole Richardson accompanied us on the visit.

As we neared the French coast after a relatively smooth crossing the excitement and anticipation grew, especially amongst those members of the party who had never been before (2 new couples) and those who were being hosted by someone they didn’t really know. Would they get on? Would their French hold up? Would their hosts speak English? What exactly had the French got planned for us over the weekend? As our ferry docked we were all gradually funnelled into the arrivals hall where we were quickly reunited or introduced to our host families who then drove us the short route westwards towards Saint Aubin. Hardly had we time to unpack before we were whisked away to the Salle Aubert for a drinks reception to celebrate our anniversary. Speeches were made in French with interpreters on hand and we were presented with a commemorative medal to mark the occasion.

Our gift to them? A beautiful framed Angela Loader print showing Emsworth harbour. Sparkling cider and wine flowed amid the happy sound of excited conversations and of course there was a delicious array of canapés available.

Saturday dawned fair and dry if not quite gloriously sunny but perfectly warm enough for our lunch and river cruise “tous ensemble” at Carentan les Marais about an hour’s drive west of St Aubin. Unlike previous years there was no coach to transport - all 60 of us instead we were taken by car by host families. Little did we realise until we boarded the small 8, 10 or 12 seater electrically powered boats that we were expected to navigate and steer ourselves around an hour long triangular route. All was going well until the boat in front of us ran aground ...interestingly enough it was the only one with a French man at the helm! Mind you the passengers on that boat DID spot a couple of kingfishers and they were able to row themselves out of trouble with the oars provided.

On our return we were plied with yet more wonderful food but this time en famille. Several small and not so small shared dinner parties took place that evening helping to strengthen our cross channel bonds even further.

Whilst Sunday dawned wet and wild our day “en famille” was still highly enjoyable. Many of our members were taken to see one of the wonderful museums commemorating the D Day landings for which this Normandy coastline is famous for. For yours truly it was a lesson in paleontology as our own hosts run the local museum and have written several books on the many fossils found locally. I was lucky enough to hold a fossilised dinosaur’s tooth and egg. Little had I realised that St Aubin and its neighbouring cliffs constitute France’s very own Jurassic coast. If we had already been thoroughly spoilt, there was then the gala dinner, another five-course affair with copious amounts of food, alcohol followed, eventually, by the customary sing song with Daniel on the guitar and several of our members joining in.

Monday morning was spent shopping before a light lunch (is there such a thing in France?) “tous ensemble” then it was time to head back to Ouistreham to say our goodbyes and catch the ferry home. I don’t think it is an exaggeration to say that this year was probably one of our best ever visits. I have such wonderful memories of seeing happy faces and hearing so much laughter. It’ll be a hard act to follow that’s for sure!

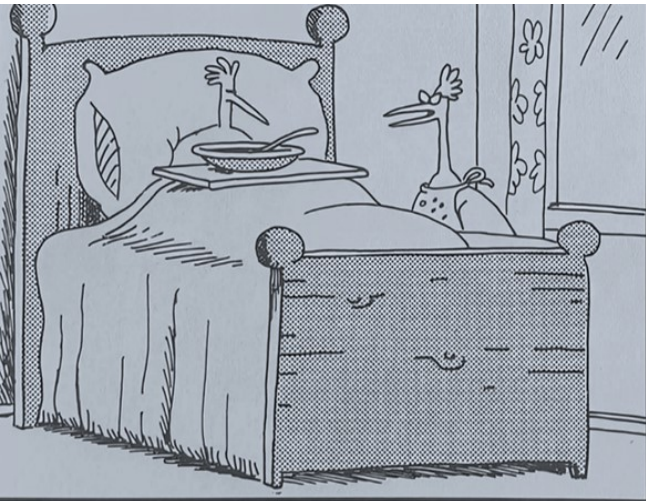
Vive l’entente cordiale! (see the photos below)

Carol Mant

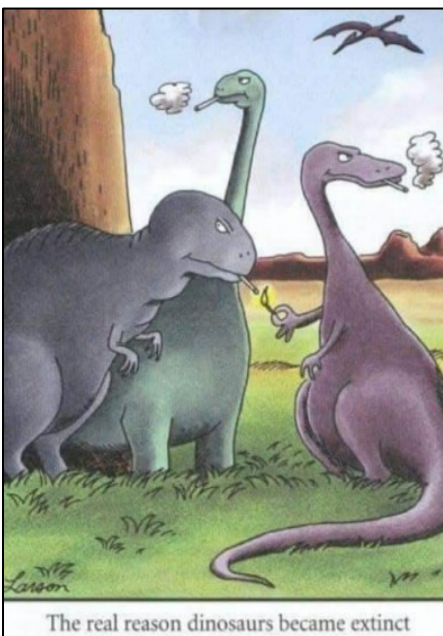




Tell them what happened in the lab, Harry.



“Quit complaining and eat it! ... Number one, chicken soup is good for the flu, and number two, it’s nobody we know.”



Music For Midsummer

Sunday 21st June, 7pm

Classical and folk music from *The Beadling*




Alex Beadle Juliet Beadle Victoria Lena

Old Assembly Rooms,
Emsworth Community Centre.

Tickets: £12 on door, £10 in advance from Emsworth Community Centre and Bookends in Emsworth, cash only.

1st half: C.P.E Bach, Claude Debussy, Van Eyck, Itzhak Perlman, Eugene Bozza, Georg Telemann.
2nd half: The Beadling. Ballads that stretch back to the 17th century celebrating folk in both old and new forms.

I will have tickets with me at the next Monthly meeting which is one week earlier than usual – Thursday 18th June. Alan Borrow

On a very windy day, a vicar was walking along when a strong gust of wind blew his hat off his head. He ran after this hat, but the wind was too strong. It kept blowing it further and further away.

A young man, seeing what had happened, ran after the hat, caught it and gave it back to the vicar, The vicar was so grateful that he gave the young man a twenty pound note and blessed him, noting that it looked as though he could manage a good square meal!

The young man was so excited that he decided to go the races instead and after checking the programme, he placed the entire 20 pounds on a horse. After the races he went home and recounted his very exciting day to his father.

"I arrived at the fifth race and looked at the programme. I saw this horse named 'Top Hat' was running. The odds on this horse were 100 to 1 but since I received the vicars blessing, I bet the entire 20 pounds on 'Top Hat' and guess what? He won!"

"In the next race, there was a horse named 'Bowler' at 30 to 1 so I bet the entire amount of my winnings on him, and guess what ... I won again!"

"So did you bring the money home?" asked his father.

"No," said the son, "I lost it all on the last race. There was a horse named 'Chateau' that was a heavy favourite so I bet everything on him, and since 'Chateau' means 'hat' in French I figured he was a sure thing."

"You fool!" said the father. "Hat in French is 'chapeau' not 'chateau!'" Sighing to himself, the father then asked, "So who did win that race?"

"A real long shot," said the son. "Some Spanish horse named 'Sombrero'.

All contributions for the next newsletter please to:

alanborrow1@gmail.com