



August Newsletter 2026

Ems Valley u3a is 20 years old!

Yes, twenty years old. And it seems like yesterday when Val Swarbrick and Anne Beard stood before a crowd of would be u3a ers in Mountford One and Two Emsworth Community Centre, and asked us if we wanted to join a new u3a in Emsworth! Emsworth and District u3a were already well established – in fact they were full! That historic day in 2006 was to be the start of our humming u3a we all enjoy today. We named it Ems Valley u3a. Why - well it was to be centred on Emsworth and to include the immediate outlying villages. John Gains, a founder committee member said that there was a copy of “The Ems” on the table at the first committee meeting, someone pointed to it and Ems Valley u3a was named! On a day when the weather was so kind, lovely sunshine – not too



hot – not too cold, 75 members gathered at the celebration party in the Friends (Old Hospital) Gardens, and Chairman Rod cut the cake in celebratory fashion! You can just see Tim Mathews, our previous Chairman lurking on the extreme left hand edge of picture ready to step in should the moment prove too great for Rod! Note the care that the Chairman had taken in colour matching his clothes with the delicate but vibrant coloured icing! Note also that Angela Blunden our inventive, creative and forward thinking CRAFTS leader also matched the days colour! (in centre background). Yes, it was that sort of day. The fizz was served in paper cups, but even that seemed totally appropriate. The committee all worked extremely hard to make this day the special day that it clearly was. Four ex

Chairman attended and Rod gave a short address welcoming everybody and stressing the “For the members by the members” ethos of our u3a! A grand day!



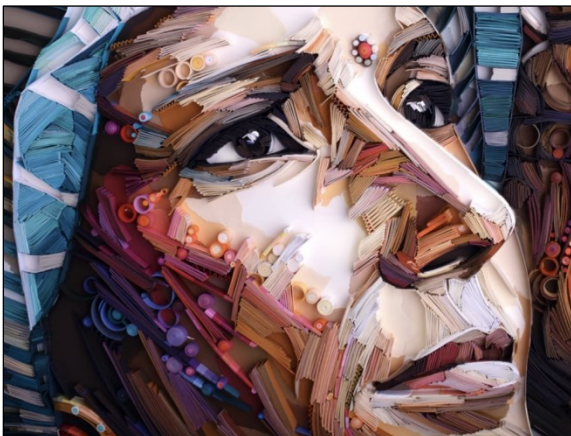


OUR CRAFT GROUP GO 'QUILLING'!

Leader Angela Blunden writes to tell us about their last meeting! "At our July Craft meeting we did 'Quilling' thanks to Katie Buttivant, who provided the equipment & materials for us to use and showed us how to create the different effects. We all managed to finish a card and loved the finished work. Thank you again Katie!



The process of creating quilled art relies on a few fundamental techniques: **Rolling:** Thin paper strips are wrapped tightly around a slotted quilling tool (or a toothpick) to form a coil. **Shaping:** The coil is released slightly to expand, then pinched and manipulated with your fingers to form shapes like teardrops, squares, crescents, or eye shapes. **Gluing:** Once the desired shapes are formed, the ends are secured with glue and pieced together to build larger, complex motifs like flowers, animals, or abstract patterns.



The origins of quilling can be traced back to the Renaissance period. In the 15th and 16th centuries, French and Italian nuns and monks used strips of gilded paper—often salvaged from trimmed religious texts—to roll and shape into decorations that mimicked expensive gold and ironwork. Throughout the 18th

century, it evolved into a popular pastime for wealthy young women in Europe before becoming the accessible, worldwide craft it is today.

Above, you can see Quilling taken to a new level by renowned paper artist Yulia Brodskaya. She pushes the boundaries of this centuries-old craft. We show below her photo, and the poster she did for the Wimbledon 2015 tournament in the shape of a tennis ball. Every piece, every colour is formed with folded paper! It is hard to believe! You may not remember that June 29, 2015, was a highly important date in Wimbledon history because it marked the first time the tournament broke a 115-year tradition by starting a week later than usual. The shift was a major milestone for the tennis calendar and was done to give players a crucial third week of rest and recovery between the French Open and Wimbledon.



DAYTRIPPERS TAKE TO THE SKY!

The DAYTRIPPERS visited the Solent Sky Museum on Tuesday 7th July. Eleven travelled in three cars, and it is situated in a quiet but central part of Southampton with easy road parking. *The photo right shows some of us gathered around the statue of R.J. Mitchell the designer of the iconic Spitfire.* It is a great little museum illustrating the fascinating history of aviation in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The staff there are extreme friendly, approachable and knowledgeable but we were probably not entirely blessed with the most erudite or eloquent guide – a shame, but no matter - **this museum says it all!** The flying boat is amazing and can be toured inside. The history of flying boats and the part Southampton played in the development of international air travel was particularly fascinating. As you are able to climb into the passenger cabins of this magnificent



airliner, you get a brilliant impression of how air travel was in the 1930s and 40s for the few who were privileged to



experience it. There is a super audio commentary covering the development of airline routes into a network which covered the globe. The photo on the left brought back nostalgic memories to Simon Winslow, one of the Daytripper organisers. He flew on a similar flying boat when he returned to this country as a boy, from Kenya – a three day trip that he will never forget!

The museum certainly packs a lot into a small space. I was so impressed by how many aircraft are contained and displayed in a relatively small hangar and the depth of information provided with the displays and the range of exhibits.

One of the themes of the museum is to show the concentration of aircraft manufacturers which came into being in the Solent area from the early days of aviation. Avro, de Havilland

and of course Supermarine all built aircraft within a 20-mile radius. But a number of smaller manufacturers – General Aircraft, Airspeed of Portsmouth, Saro, Cunliffe-Owen, Wight – also built and tested aircraft at sites in the area.



Solent Sky Museum illustrates so well the birth of the Spitfire and it's role in World War Two as well as the devastation caused by Nazi bombing to the production factories, and then the subsequent deployment to all parts to ensure the continued success of this production. I understood that there was even a small factory operating in West Road, off Beach Road Emsworth but could not find any trace in their records – **needs to be adjusted!**

Then there is a section on the importance to the area in the development of the Hovercraft.

A large area is devoted to the Schneider Trophy.

Announced in 1912 by Jacques Schneider, a French financier, balloonist and aircraft enthusiast, the competition offered a prize of approximately £1,000. The race was held twelve times between 1913 and 1931, the year when it was finally won permanently by the British. It was intended to encourage technical advances in civil aviation but became a contest for pure speed with laps over a triangular course. These contests attracted crowds of over 200,000 spectators. Twice during the flight they had to land on or "come in contact" with the water (which allowed contestants to carry out a fast bouncing manoeuvre).



The Schneider Trophy itself is a sculpture of silver and bronze set on a marble base. The model at the museum is a replica! It depicts a zephyr skimming the waves, and a nude winged figure is seen kissing a zephyr recumbent on a breaking wave. The symbolism represents speed conquering the elements of sea and air!

Suspended from the roof was this quadruplane – I never knew there was a plane built with four wings. The museum also has the cockpits of a Harrier and a Swift - two jet aircraft which visitors can sit in by request. I looked and photographed, but quickly realised that a shoehorn assisted entry into the minute space might result in a very long stay, an emergency

call to the fire brigade and the use of many bottles of Vaseline to assist the exit – so I did not try.....

Photo below left: Harrier cockpit.

Below right: John Harris (ex R A F pilot) inspects the Sea Vampire



There is so much to see that a visit of an hour or two is the minimum time. A morning or afternoon is probably needed to take in all the exhibitions. It also houses the Hampshire Police and Fire museum which was very interesting as well. Our thanks to Steve Gorban for all the organisation including the lunch at Maritimo Lounge!

Alan Borrow

ARE YOU THE RHYMING SORT?

Gloria Daykin sent in this rhyme for a reason:

What do you think about a group that Rhymes?
I think it's possible in these times
To meet once a month at my place
To want to Rhyme is no disgrace.
To make up Rhymes just for fun
Will give a laugh to everyone.
So my idea would be
For a total of six, including me
To meet here at my home
And just allow your mind to roam.
Thinking up silly Rhymes sounds good to me
And after one hour we'll have some tea.

Your editor replied to Gloria:

Dear Gloria, your verse has reached our ears,
And banished all our doubts and little fears.
A monthly rhyme with laughter on the way,
Could brighten up an ordinary day.

We could gather where Emsworth meets Southbourne's green,
In garden chairs, if sunshine can be seen.
We'll juggle words and make a verse or two,
With cups of tea to help the muses through

No poet laureates need apply, we're told—
Just willing hearts, both young in mind and old.
So here's our answer, cheerful, short and true:
"Save us a chair—we're coming round to you!"

**Now it's up to you – first five applicants
could start a new group – contact Gloria**
daykingloria@gmail.com



My Fair Lady – yet another unforgettable evening at Chichester!

I well remember Rachel Kavanaugh's "Half a Sixpence" at Chichester some years back (it was actually ten years ago)



Well, she's back – with another FLASH Bang Wallop!
Actually, this wallop exceeds the last one – it is a double Wallop! Unbelievably, it is the first time this musical has ever been staged at Chichester. Yes, we are all aware that it is based on George Bernard Shaw's 1913 play Pygmalion, about the tale of a flower seller who is coached to "improve" her social standing.

The show originally opened on Broadway in 1956 and here we are enjoying it - just as much - seventy years later!

I don't know where to start, following my visit – the casting was brilliant, the choreography amazing and the sets were so clever. Either we were in a busy and intricate Prof Higgins' study or transferred to a minimalist alternative,

brought to life by superb lighting to create Ascot or the Embassy Ball in London's Edwardian high society. The latter, you will remember, was the event where Professor Henry Higgins' linguistic wager is put to the ultimate test! Special mention must go to the hopeless suitor, Freddy Eynsford-Hill. He is a young, upper-class socialite who is infatuated with Eliza Doolittle and courts her despite her background.

His rendering of the famous, brilliant and romantic "On the Street Where You Live" brought much applause (what a voice!) Eliza Doolittle's father, Alfred P. Doolittle, is played by Gary Milner, another brilliant portrayal which Stanley Holloway would have firmly approved! Hadley Fraser brings a striking mix of charisma, edge, and frustrating brilliance to the role of Higgins. In May this year he was Houdini in Chichester's production of MAGIC. Just think, one minute he is recreating one of the escapologist's most famous tricks on stage, the next he is exploring a character's intellectual arrogance while maintaining the musical's charm of 'My Fair Lady', making Higgins both appallingly selfish but undeniably magnetic! Keziah Ibe as Eliza, delivers a standout performance - in this her professional debut - as Eliza Doolittle. She seamlessly transitions from the raw, defiant Cockney flower seller into a poised, articulate high-society lady. She exudes emotional maturity and strong vocal command in the showstopping number "I Could Have Danced All Night". We left for our cars, singing so many different well known songs, bringing back those lovely memories of Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn!



I woz there!

A chance interview with GORDON the Swan Man.

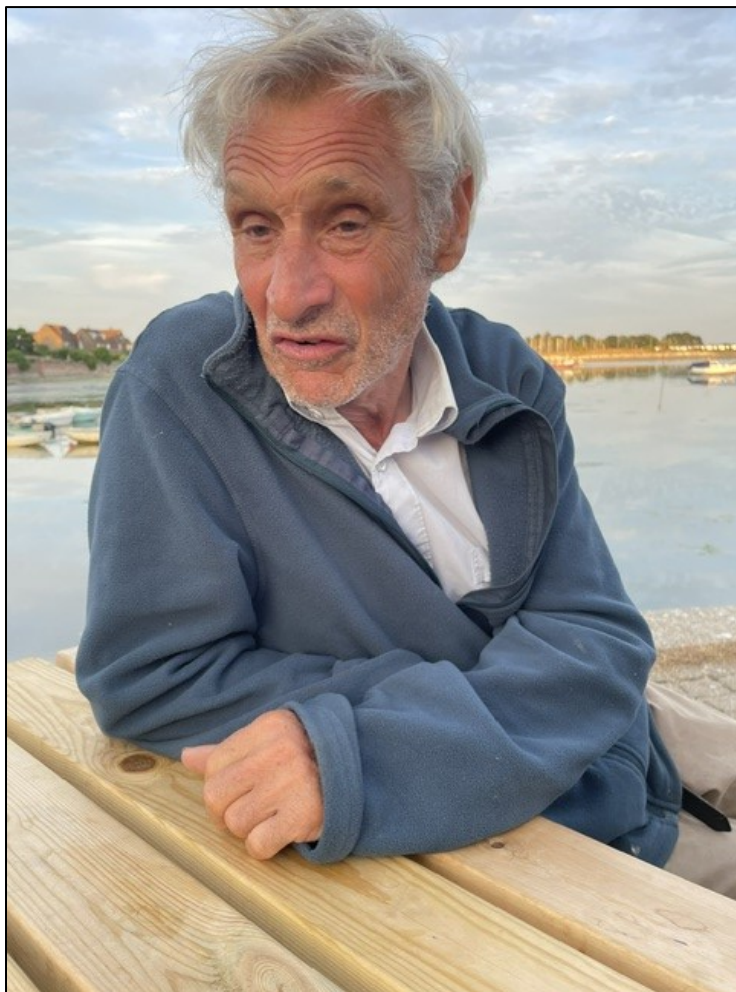
It was nine o'clock on a very balmy evening when I asked to share the picnic table on the quay by the Slipper Sailing club. I quickly realised that one of the two occupants was Gordon, our swan man. I didn't ask for an interview but surreptitiously started asking questions. He quickly realised, and was quite willing to chat, but no surname (except THE SWAN MAN) and no address except "up there"!

His wife died some six years ago and he said that his life felt empty. So he started to visit the swans! At first they did not accept this friendship and he was pecked more than once as he stroked their necks. Gradually he began to win

them over. Now he's down at the millpond twice a day, every day, rain or shine. He feeds the swans, gives them water, checks them over. He knows each one by name. He told me that the most he has ever counted was a staggering sixty. But that was an unusual day – there must have been some relatives visiting!

The swans know him too. They practically run to him when he arrives with his bag of food. He said that he used to spend weekends with his wife watching the swans. Now he takes care of them as a memory to her. Mother Swans now introduce their young to him and that takes a lot of trust. It was getting dusky when I bid him goodnight! A lovely chance meeting.

Your Editor



Wine Appreciation SIX create a record!



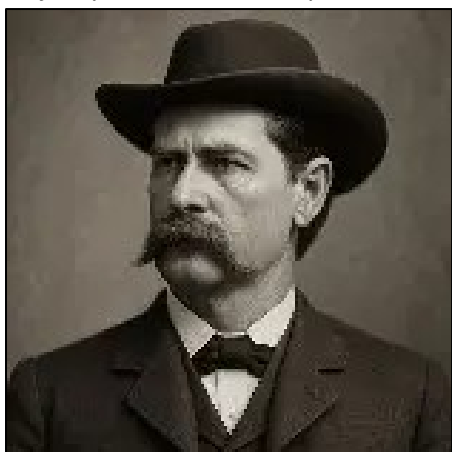
Well actually, five wine groups in one u3a might already have created a record, but now we have six! Wine Six met in July under the leadership and superb stewardship of Steve Andrews and Jackie Treacher. They already have 14 members but probably could accept another two or three if anyone else wishes to join. Email Steve or Jackie via the web site – Wine Appreciation Six!

The first meeting tasted some of Jane MacQuitty's recent recommendations from Asda supermarket. Jane is Britain's longest-serving national newspaper wine critic. She has been the wine correspondent for The Times since the early 1980s. Even though the price of these wines was

very competitive, possibly due to the current 25% off, members thought that they were definitely acceptable. We finished the tasting with two red wines of greater standing from the Wine Society, all in all providing a suitable contrast. The group agreed to meet ten times a year and taste six wines at each tasting. Wine tasting is much more than just evaluating a drink. It is a shared adventure that brings people together, sparks deep conversation, and helps build a very social atmosphere. Wine takes years to make, involving the land, the weather, and human effort. When you taste wine, you are tasting a story. It boosts your senses: This is called social facilitation. When we drink around others, our brains become more engaged. We pay closer attention to flavours and aromas because we are connecting with friends. It gets people talking - Wine naturally opens the door to personal stories. One sip can easily lead to a memory, like a trip you took or a dinner you shared. The group next meet on Wednesday 12th August at Mountford Three, 4.00pm.

AI PRACTICALITIES

Tim Mathew's new Group has rather a daunting title but I joined as a complete novice and found most of the rest of the group similarly lacking in experience. Tim had done lots of homework to set up our first session – though the majority of us needed help even to access a chatbot!



For part of the second session we watched a fascinating video: lots of 19th and early 20th famous photographs – we are all used to seeing such photos tinted, but these had been animated – amazing – as an example, Wyatt Earp took off his Stetson, ran his fingers through his hair, replaced the hat and smiled at the camera! (photo left – pre animation!) We were then brought down to earth as we asked our chatbot for clarification of the first chapter of “On The Origin Of Species”.

At our recent July meeting we asked our AI to suggest an itinerary for a three-day visit to Edinburgh's historical

sites which would avoid hills. **(see right)** It was interesting to get different responses caused by the actual wording of our individual requests – we then went on to add one extra individual request which led to varied outcomes and lots of interesting discussion.

We were given “homework” to use AI in our everyday affairs and report back, so this last meeting was very interactive, wide-ranging and interesting:

One member asked for help with a garden bed she wanted to redesign. The result gave her the colour, structure and interest she was seeking. **(see bottom right)**

Another member was helped with legal paperwork - but top marks



group members in formal evening wear – what an amazing outcome!

Ann Sims

went to an amazing outcome - it came from the member who had a photo of an informal family group at a party in the garden – she had asked AI to clothe the



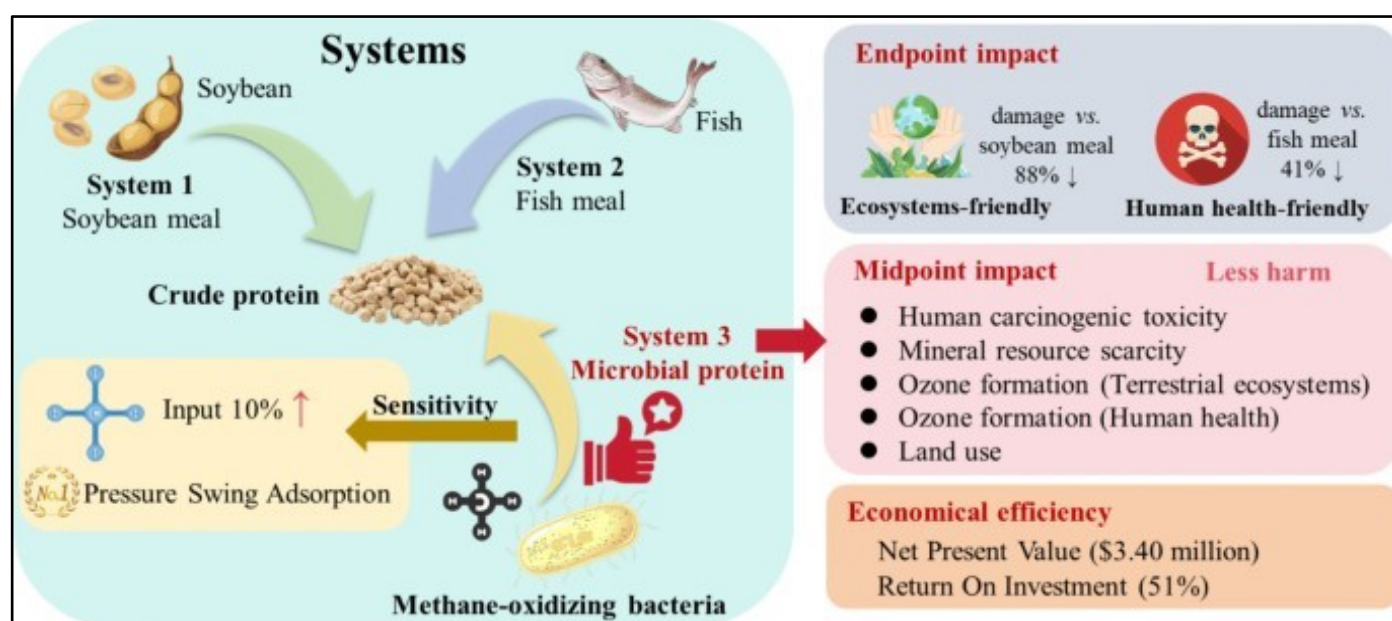
STEM July meeting – Food from Fossil Fuels

For our July meeting we were given a talk by Graham Timms. The basis of the talk was that our ability to produce food needs to increase given the land available for crops and animals doesn't increase – but populations in many parts of the world does!

Scientists say that beyond 2050 the world cannot possibly feed populations using current methods. Many countries are finding wheat production has massive variations in crop size, given weather changes – and it has sadly often become cheaper to import. That assumes there is enough to import – Ukraine was known as the world's bread basket – so the war there has created a huge gap in the wheat market. Plus, wheat has developed resistance to weedkillers – disastrous for production. We need to increase food production by 70% by 2050..... both for us and animal feed. Meat consumption is not falling in developed countries – and as emerging countries become richer their desire for meat also increases.

And so, we heard of scientists working on creating protein food from methane gas (primarily from natural gas) – to feed animals! To give a very simplistic explanation, leaves and dead fish fall to the bottom of lakes, decompose and release methane gas. Bacteria eat the methane, they grow and are rich in protein. This is then eaten by fish – and the fish are eaten by us!

This method is already being created on a huge scale by an industry growing exponentially worldwide. The aim is to create animal feed using tiny amounts of water and minimal land use, with minimal waste products.



THE ILLUSTRATION COMPARES PROTEIN PRODUCTION FROM SOYABEAN, FISH and METHANE- OXIDIZING BACTERIA

Graham showed us slides of huge factory set-ups in Asia, India, USA and Japan. In 10 years time Protelux of Russia will be the world's leader of bioprotein, given their supplies of natural gas. Although interesting to listen to all of this information, I can't be the only one in the room thinking we were hearing what would be happening in the future. But no, these products have been used in Danish pig farming since 2021. A huge plant in Scotland already produces food for local fish breeders.

The conversation was very lively after Graham's talk ended, none of us quite able to believe what we'd heard – but we'd seen the slides! Is it acceptable, we pondered....but the thought was pointless, it's already happening.

Our next STEM Meeting is Sept 3rd at 2.00pm, (NO meeting in August) usual venue at St James's Hall. Do come and join us for our next talk , details of the content will be circulated soon. All members of Ems Valley U3A are warmly invited. If interested, just let Geoff know, via stem@emsvalleuyu3a.org.

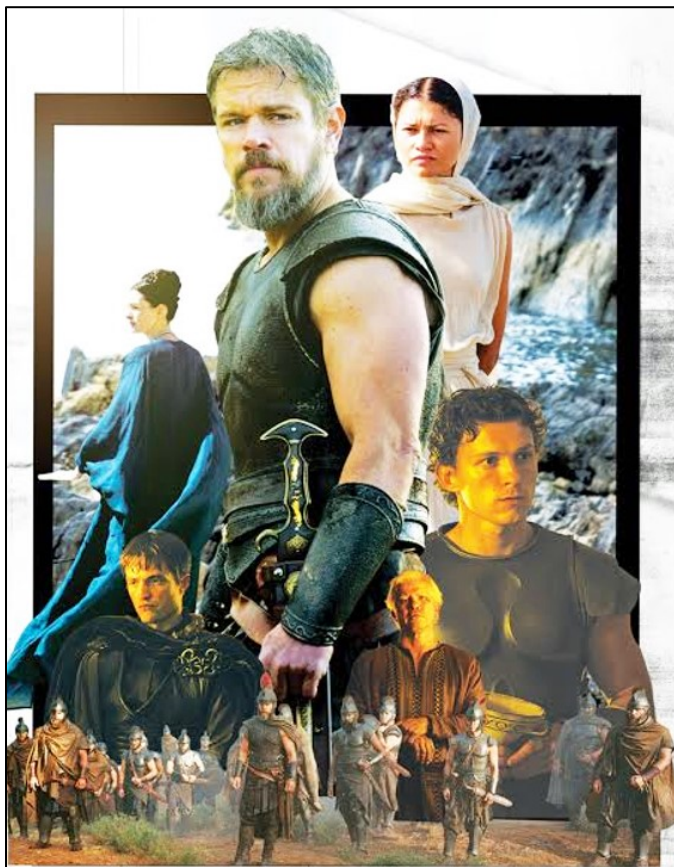
Pam Palmer

The Odyssey – Beyond the Hype

The Ancient Greece Group have had their eyes set on Christopher Nolan's new film for a couple of years or so, way before all the hype gained momentum. The Odyssey has been referenced everywhere recently – even in the BBC trailer for the World Cup Final! – and not every member wanted to see it. I was keen that some of us should go, blockbuster or not, since Homer's epic poems, The Iliad and The Odyssey, are so magnificent and important, forming the foundation of much Western literature.

Some of the group will go independently, but fourteen of us headed to New Park Cinema to watch the film together and most of us met in the café afterwards to have a brief discussion about it. I should add that this was only a few hours ago as I write this, but Alan needs this review tomorrow, so it's going to be very much our instant responses, rather than ones well considered and modified over a few days, but valid all the same, I hope! As I'm sure you all know, The Odyssey covers the ten year journey home that Odysseus makes from Troy to Ithaka, one that should have taken a few weeks, but because of inciting the anger of Poseidon, and a dalliance of seven years on the island of the nymph Calypso, it is vastly extended. To do justice to this prolonged period, Nolan gives us almost three hours of film, but as one of the group said, she was nevertheless "totally drawn into it" for that time, and many of us felt the same.

The film was a masterful piece of storytelling, dealing clearly with the non-linear structure of the original, which has



three main areas of focus: Odysseus' long voyage and varied encounters; life at his palace, where unruly 'suitors' are taking advantage of the hospitality and badgering his wife Penelope to choose one of them as a new husband, and the journey his son Telemachus makes to the Peloponnese to try to get news of his father. There were episodes omitted and some changes made, but in a thoughtful way. One very effective and exciting section was Odysseus' encounter with the Laestrygonians, a kingdom of man-eating giants. These were not generated by CGI, as you might expect now, but acted by extremely tall stuntmen entirely encased in silver armour – faceless and terrifying. They looked even more menacing because Odysseus and his men were, just for this scene, played by stunt doubles, male and female, less than five feet high. There was a lot of violence, which some people found an obstacle, but it is there in the original text. However, Nolan's Odysseus was a more modern creation in that his mental health was emphasised as the narrative developed. He was suffering from PTSD, affected by the senseless loss of life in the destruction of the city of Troy – something he made possible by devising the cunning plan of hiding in the wooden horse.

The film was certainly an assault on the senses, starting with a visually stunning image of the Trojan Horse partly submerged in the sea, and the mesmerising pounding on the ground of a bard's staff. Less appealing, as one of the group said, was the visceral section when Odysseus' crew gorge themselves on the food provided by the sorceress Circe, before, very graphically, turning them into a herd of swine.

Would we recommend it? Well, I'll leave you with a snapshot of our varied opinions, and as a group we will discuss the film further at our August meeting next week:

"For an American production it was very sensitively made."

"Brilliant!"

"I thought the film was just awful. So violent, so noisy, so American ... altogether utter rubbish."

"Well cast and well acted. Totally convincing characters."

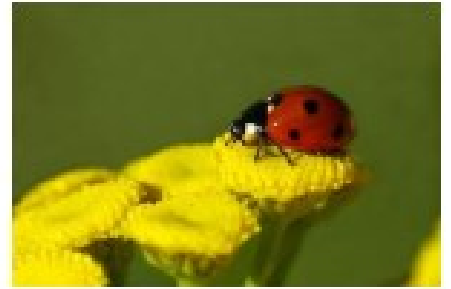
"Dialogue mumbled and too fast."

"I would normally shy away from that sort of film but was impressed."

"Terrific value for a tenner!"

Juliet Walker; Ancient Greece Group

Emsworth garden visit - July 14th



On a very hot summer's day it was a pleasure to welcome thirty seven U3A Garden Group members to our garden in Beacon Square. The garden is a medium sized, sheltered plot close to the sea, with abundant herbaceous borders; dahlias in pots; fruit trees; small, raised fruit and veg beds; a greenhouse full of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, chilli plants, strawberries, nectarines and lemons; a summerhouse - and a small, wildlife pond which provides a habitat for newts, frogs, insects and the occasional swimming hedgehog. There are both sunny and shady seating areas - the latter were particularly welcome on the day (temp.29 degrees). A focus of the garden is on long flowering plants which reach their peak during the summer months and on the day they were performing well, despite the heat wave.

There are also runner beans, raspberries, alpine strawberries, currants and wild rocket in the garden. It was a very relaxing and interesting morning which provided great opportunities for our group to discuss gardening and planting ideas with fellow enthusiasts. Special thanks are due to Pam and June who served the refreshments; June and Diana who provided cakes; Annette (Southwell) who took the entrance money and to Diana (Faithful) for her unstinting help as always with all manner of things!

Annette Wood



A NON POLITICAL LOOK AT THE 34 candidates for the Clacton by election

(following the resignation of Nigel Farage earlier this month.)

The Reform UK Leader and Count Binface are among the 20 independents who will fight for the seat on 13 August. The full list apparently includes:

Joseph 77 (Independent), Adham Alkhatip (The Forward Party), Count Binface (Count Binface Party), Nick The Incredible Flying Brick (The Official Monster Raving Loony Party). Tony Cane (Independent), Woke Trump Carrzee (Independent), William Stuart James Clouston (Social Democratic Party), Rees Cowne (Independent), Glenn Charles Cummings (Independent), Martin Davies (Freedom Alliance – Real People, Real Alternative!), Andy Erlam (Independent), Nigel Farage (Reform UK), Attieh Fard (Independent), Laurence Fox (The Reclaim Party), Tony Francis (Independent), Robin Green (Independent), Abi Hookway (Independent), Howling Laud Hope (The Official Monster Raving Loony Party), Stephen Richard Ingram (Independent), Amy Morris (Independent), Derrick Norbert Morris (Independent), Michael Noel O’Keeffe (Independent), Martyn O’Brien (Independent), Nick Pelas (Independent), Ketankumar Pipaliya (UK VOICE safer and stronger UK). Daniel Pocock (Independent), James Ransley (Consensus Party Candidate), Gerry Smith (Independent), Kai Stephens (British Democrats), John Stevens (Rejoin EU), Baron Von Thunderclap (The Official Monster Raving Loony Party), Pamela Walford (Independent), Marcus White (Everyone is God Party) and Marc Wilkinson (Independent)

The Guardian reports this week that Count Binface, real name, Jon Harvey, has certainly become a media favourite, and is enjoying his moment in the limelight to talk of his policies of nationalising the singer Adele and capping the price of croissants at £1. It is Harvey’s stated aim to have policies that get a giggle but maybe make the voter think. Even the Daily Mail, sympathetic to Farage’s anti-immigration party, could not avoid poking a little fun. “Farage: Binface byelection is deadly serious,” was its splash headline last Thursday. An inside comment piece carried the headline: “Farage is learning that when voters are shouting at you, it’s bad. When they’re laughing at you, it’s over.”

There is international interest too. In France, he has been styled Comte Tête-de-poubelle, while in Spain he is El Conde Cubo de Basura. *The photo above shows my particular favourite candidate, Nick the Incredible Flying Brick, on the left. He has stood for parliament nine times before, and has a forward thinking manifesto (he refers to it as his Manic-festo) that includes scrapping January and February. His logic being that it would help with fuel bills and therefore keep down the cost of living.....*



Wine Appreciation One enjoy the annual Barbecue

Thirty four members enjoyed an outdoors summer evening of wine, convivial chatter and balmy weather with yet another of their annual barbecues in the Friends of the Old Hospital Gardens. (What a lovely venue this is – Emsworth residents are so lucky!). This was the first of these barbecues that was organised by the new leadership, and David Milne rose to the occasion with some amazing food and good wine selection even if some bottles were labelled “NAKED”! His wife Ann, pictured right, ensured that the cooking was correct, and we had ample portions of Lamb, Pork and Chicken, followed by equally delicious desserts, the photo of which was covered in double cream and meringue before it reached the publishers! (But many thanks to all the members who produced these exotic sweets!) The photo caption competition was won by a

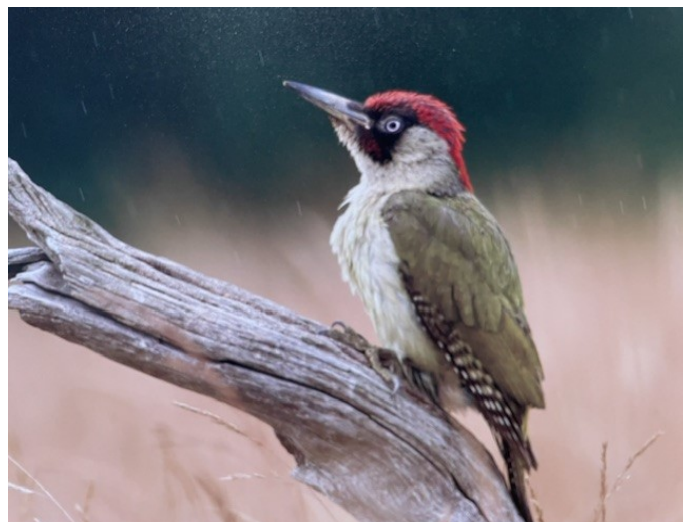


lucky member who simply entered "Don't mess with the Cook!"

The evening was however tinged with a sense of sadness because we have lost our longstanding member Geoff Wiggins. This event was always dominated by his ever ready presence in managing the erection of the long suffering gigantic awning, as well as his familiar stand at the cooking station. We were however rewarded by the company of Katie who was determined to attend in spite of her recent loss. Thank you Katie. Geoff was one of a triumvirate of leaders that recently took over the running of this group from Alan Borrow.

The Garden venue is a lovely traditional, walled and gated green space right in the centre of Emsworth providing opportunities for any community activities and events, and is surrounded by mature and new trees with traditional flower borders. It contains a brick built BBQ and a small pavilion with lots of chairs and tables for community use. We are indeed so lucky to have this facility available to us.

British Wildlife Photography Awards



I found myself in Dulwich last week, and made my way to the Hornimans Museum and Gardens. It has a very small butterfly house, a dinosaur exhibition, a tiny aquarium, a historic musical instruments hall and so much more as well as beautiful grounds, cafe and gift shop. (note: Horniman of Horniman's Tea!). But also featuring was the British Wildlife Photography Awards! And in particular I looked at the amazing young people's entries. Top left was the rare Dartford warbler, photographed by 13 year old Theo Fairbrother. He was at Dunwich Heath in Suffolk when he captured this runner up award shot! He named the photo "Gorsefest"!

Top right was Tyler Hood's runner up entry in the 11 and under section. His Green Woodpecker was taken in rain in Richmond Park. He titled this "Feeling a bit soggy"! Bottom right was Ben Lucas, the winner in the 15-17 age group with this young Mute swan sleeping on the back of his mother! Photo taken in Hornchurch. Bottom left is "Winter

Robin" taken by Anton Poon, also in the 15 – 17 age group. He took this in Stowe, Bucks, and followed the Robin on his way to school on a foggy, frosty day, before the bird settled for his shot. This photo was "Highly Commended"! This year's entries celebrate the wonder, diversity and character of British wildlife in truly exceptional ways. From familiar species to rarely seen moments, the portfolio showcases the skill and passion of the young photographers behind the lens. It was well worth visiting.

Editor

Committee Member email addresses since the AGM in May 2026

Message from Rod Lipscombe:

As you may recall, there were a number of committee member changes at the May 2026 AGM. So that you can ensure that you are contacting the correct committee member / role incumbent, the table below shows the previous and current committee members, together with their email addresses. Please ensure that your contact lists are updated. Thank you.

Should you need help to update your contacts, please ask a committee member. The current roles are on the u3a website <https://emsvalley.u3asite.uk/contact/>.

Committee Role	Committee email address	CURRENT incumbent name	Previous incumbent name
Chair	chairman@emsvalleyu3a.org	Rod Lipscombe	Tim Mathews
Vice Chair	vice-chairman@emsvalleyu3a.org	Andrea Brokenshire	Rod Lipscombe
Business Secretary	secretary@emsvalleyu3a.org	Carolyn Joy	Dbee Robinson
Treasurer	treasurer@emsvalleyu3a.org	Hilary Street	Hilary Street
Membership Secretary	membership@emsvalleyu3a.org	Sue Kent	Sue Kent
Groups Co-ordinator	groups@emsvalleyu3a.org	Les Brokenshire	Les Brokenshire
Beacon Database Administrator	Beaconadmin@emsvalleyu3a.org	Les Brokenshire	Karen Rodger
Minutes Secretary	minutessecretary@emsvalleyu3a.org	Karen Rodger	Liz Rosoman
Website Administrator	webmaster@emsvalleyu3a.org	Tim Mathews	Tim Mathews
Speaker Secretary	speakersecretary@emsvalleyu3a.org	Andrea Brokenshire	Rod Lipscombe
Marketing	marketing@emsvalleyu3a.org	Steve Joy	n/a
Refreshments Co-ordinator	speakersecretary@emsvalleyu3a.org	Andrea Brokenshire	Andrea Brokenhire

Quotation Corner – Subject this Month - CRIME

It is a three pipe problem Watson, and I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes. **Arthur Conan Doyle**

Thieves respect property. They merely wish the property to become their property that they may more perfectly respect it. **G. K. Chesterton**

Office supplies are an important part of your total compensation package. If God didn't want people to steal office supplies, he wouldn't have given us briefcases, purses and pockets. **Scott Adams**

A kleptomaniac is a person who helps himself because he can't help himself. **Henry Morgan (Welsh privateer)**

"Bank robbery is an initiative of amateurs. True professionals establish a bank." **Bertolt Brecht**

"Mafia hitman, on trial in Sicily for a double murder: It was not me who killed those two men because that night I was shooting two other men." **anonymous**

"I came from a real tough neighbourhood. Once a guy pulled a knife on me. I knew he wasn't a professional, the knife had butter on it." **Rodney Dangerfield**

"The state calls its own violence law, but that of the individual, crime." **Max Stirner**

"Organized crime in America takes in over forty billion dollars a year and spends very little on office supplies." **Woody Allen**

I think crime pays. The hours are good, you travel a lot **Woody Allen**

Andy staggered home very late after another evening with his drinking real ale buddies. He carefully took off his shoes to avoid waking up his wife, Kathleen. He tiptoed as quietly as he could toward the stairs leading to their upstairs bedroom, but totally misjudged the bottom step. As he caught himself by grabbing the banister, his body swung around and he landed heavily on his rump. A whiskey bottle in one back pocket and the special vintage ale miniature in the other both broke which made the landing especially painful. Just managing not to yell out, Andy sprung up, pulled down his trousers, and looked in the hall mirror to see that the cheeks of his bottom had suffered rather badly and were cut and bleeding. He managed to very quietly find a full box of Band-Aids and began putting a Band-Aid as best as he could on each place he saw blood. He then hid the now almost empty Band-Aid box and shuffled and stumbled his way to bed. In the morning, he woke up with searing pain in both his head and his bottom, and Kathleen staring at him from across the room. She said, 'You were drunk again last night, weren't you?' Andy said, 'Why would you say such a mean thing about me?' 'Well,' Kathleen said, 'it could be the wide open front door, it could be the broken glass at the bottom of the stairs, it could be the drops of blood trailing throughout the house, it could be your bloodshot eyes, but mostly... it's all those Band-Aids stuck on the hall mirror.'

Twenty-one reasons why English is hard to learn.

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there was no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen on how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.
14. The buck does funny things when does are present.
15. A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer.
16. To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
17. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
18. After a number of injections my jaw got number.
19. Upon seeing the tear in the painting, I shed a tear.
20. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
21. How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

Letters to the Editor

My husband, David belongs to The Family History Group, S.T.E.M and four, yes four book clubs.

For the fourth he has absconded to Havant U3A, the traitor.

Now, whilst I am more than happy that he belongs to all these groups, as he is quite vocal I do have occasion to be believe whilst he is away, that I have gone totally deaf. I spend a lot of my spare time reading, which I absolutely love. However I have no inclination to participate in any book club whatsoever.

I do read a lot of the choices and many I have enjoyed, but I do find some of the picks quite pretentious. This only annoys me because unfortunately it reminds me of my ex husband who was the epitome of a performance reader. So apologies to anyone who has picked such material and I would say to you that old chestnut it is not you, it's me and I seem to remember he said that as well!

David is not of the same opinion and enjoys all the challenges even if some are not to his taste.

My conclusion is that this difference of opinion leads to a very interesting marital relationship. 40 years and still going strong? I love the time he spends at his groups, as while he is gone I can enjoy what I want to read in peace without giving it marks and debating the merits or lack thereof.

From a very happy u3a widow

Editors note: Before the ink had dried on the above letter – another was on my desk. It is self explanatory!

Dear Mr Editor

Everyone needs a Hobby and I am reluctant to admit that in my twilight years I seem to have gravitated not to Bowls or Pilates or any other form of active movement, but to the gentle Art of Reading. I have for the past few years been an active member of three Ems Valley U3A Book clubs, and as a literary masochist I have now joined a fourth. For this last Group I have had to temporarily migrate to the far-off fields of Havant! This is much to the mystery and amazement of my long suffering and very patient wife Jackie..... Although she does cherish the peace and quiet whilst I am out “clubbing”. Both of us are avid readers enjoying many of the same types of novels and each reading between 80 and 100 books per year..... but we differ in that Jackie prefers to enjoy the books privately and without analysis, whilst I on the other hand I enjoy hearing the opinion of others, especially when they are diametrically opposed to my own.

I am very lucky that the Groups comprise such interesting, knowledgeable and diverse individuals who all contribute to active and stimulating discussions.... very often disagreeing on the relative merits of a novel, although one has to admit sometimes that one’s own opinion is in the minority. As well as meeting and discussing with like minded individuals, one of the main attractions of a Book club is that you are “forced” to read items which you would not necessarily chose for yourself. This quite often leads to the discovery of excellent new authors and tales but on the other hand (not very often) can lead to several hour of tortured boredom!

In Book Club 1 last month we had been discussing the relative merits of AI (of which I am a virgin) and later when I mentioned that I had joined a fourth Group when one of the members – Ronnie – inserted into her phone (AI) “write me a ditty about a man called David who is a member of four Book Groups”, To my amazement, in less that one minute, it had produced the following:-



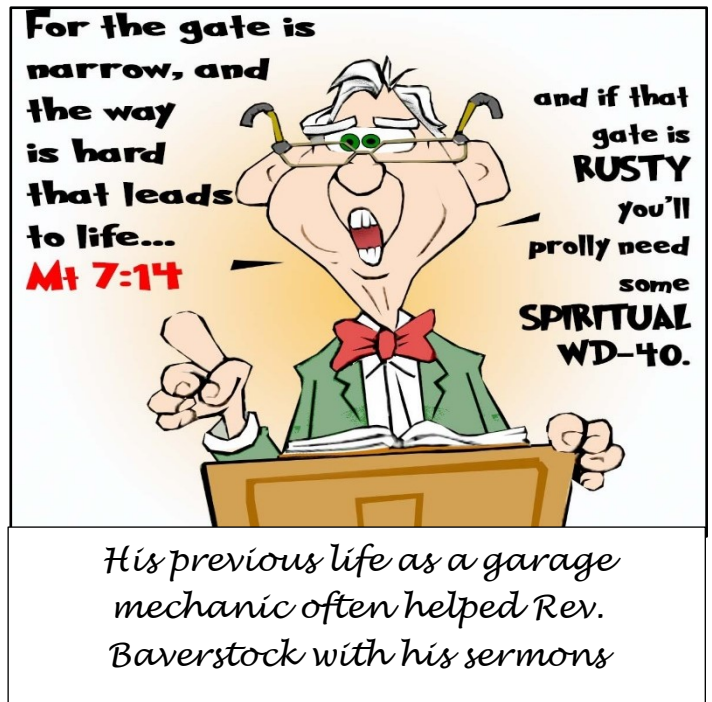
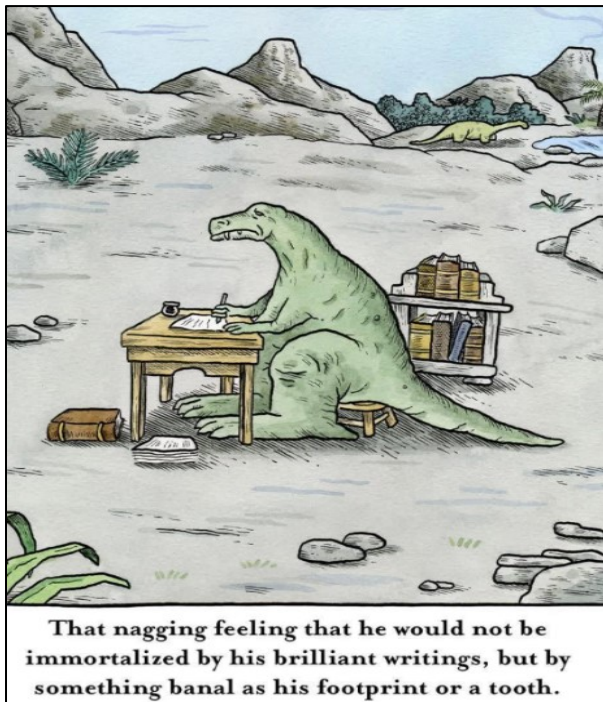
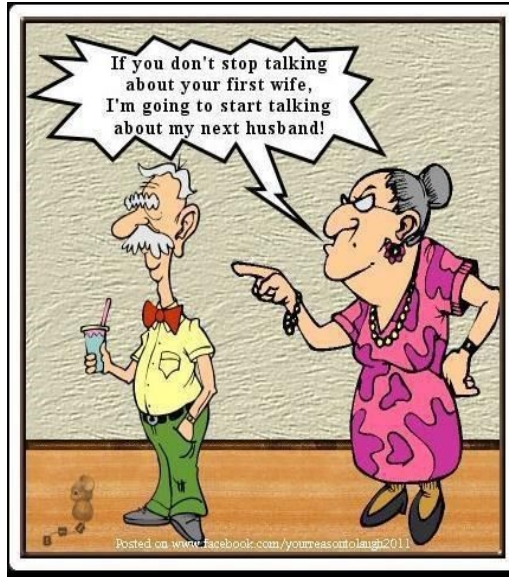
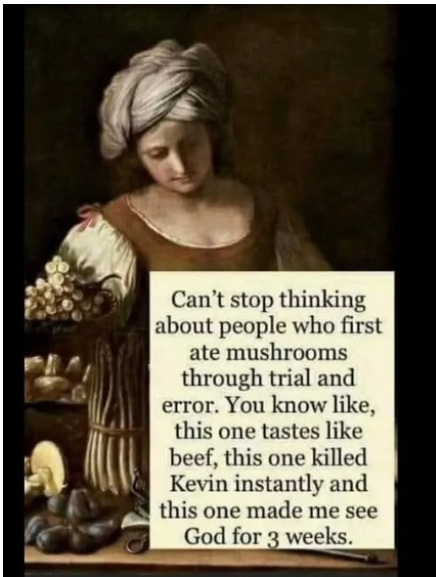
There once was a fellow named David
Whose hunger for reading was Avid
Four Book Groups he joined
For the phrases they coined
Though the schedule was terribly Tax-id

He argued on Monday for Austen
By Wednesday a thriller had bossed him
With four different clubs
And their literary hubs
It's a wonder his wife ain't left him

With his U3A chums he will gather
To talk them into a lather
From Sci-fi to Crime
He is booked all the time
And wouldn't have it any way other!

Whist I would readily concede that this would not be a candidate for an International literary Award .. it is pretty good effort in less than a minute.

David Gillespie



New discipline for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles?



**All contributions for the next newsletter please
to:
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