



JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER – 1



Birds and Wildlife group

Meeting report of 9th December Ems 2021 at the Oyster Beds, Hayling Island

This was my first outing with the group, and it turned out to be successful and most enjoyable.

We met at the car park and walked up the Billy Trail in the lee of the hedge – there was a chill wind!

Ros spotted some interesting plant species and described how similar varieties could be differentiated from one



another Bristly Oxtongue vs Hawkweed Oxtongue being the most interestingly named! We passed Highland Cattle and saw a hovering Kestrel (see left) close by.

At the mid-point of the morning, we enjoyed a pre-Christmas mince pie, washed down with mulled wine. Thus fortified, we headed back towards the cars via the coast path. The wind had dropped and the sun appeared, and we were rewarded with sightings of a good many littoral birds, the most interesting being a Water Pipit (below left), a winter migrant quite similar to the native Rock Pipit. The RSPB estimate only about 190 Water Pipits overwinter in the UK, compared with the 34,000 breeding pairs of UH Rock Pipits. The kestrel also made a number of further appearances, hovering into the wind, hence its old rural name *Windhover*, keeping its head and eyes perfectly still as it seeks out prey.

The group meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month, the next being 13th January.

William Saywell



Editor: The Brent geese are back in the harbour as you all have probably observed. William sends two pictures showing in-coming flights and landed/feeding. Notice from the left hand pic, Brent Geese do not fly in formation.



WE turn the spotlight on Jeff Thatcher for this edition's Interview. This gives me great pleasure because Jeff has been so supportive of my particular interest groups over the years! (Ed.)

Hello Jeff, do you remember when you first joined Ems Valley u3a?

I was a member of Havant Camera Club and I was approached by Alison Patrick, also a member, who was looking for someone to run a Photography group at this thing called the U3A, about which I knew nothing. Anyway, I decided to give it a go and I remember a rather large meeting, many of whom continued to come to subsequent meetings. Initially I hadn't joined U3A, but soon of course had to sign up, this must have been in 2008.

Has membership of our u3a affected your life?

After I signed up, I found out about all the other groups. I have joined several and they take up a fair bit of my time, very enjoyably I might say.

Pic right: Jeff in his boat 'Westerner'

Can you tell us how you met Gill, about your working career, and of course, children?

Gill and I met at Bosham, in 1956. She lived in SE London and I was in NW London, so normally we wouldn't have met. Our fathers both had boats and in the school summer

holidays I went to the boat and stayed during the week while my parents went home. Gill's Father went home and left my mother-in-law (as she became) with her four children (Gill is the eldest with three brothers) on their boat. The two boats were moored near each other, and Gill's mum offered me a meal as she felt sorry for me being on my own. At the time we met Gill was 16 and I was 17. There followed years of correspondence at a time when an evening letter from NW London was delivered to SE London the following morning. We had meetings in London and stayed at our respective homes and did a lot of train journeys.

After college I joined Mullard Radio Valve Co in Mitcham, we were married in 1961 and we rented a bungalow in Woldingham. I moved to Ferranti Computer Systems in 1963 and we bought a house in Wokingham and moved there with our first son. In 1965 the opportunity came up to spend two years at Woomera in South Australia. We left in early 1966 with our, now, two boys and spent two very memorable years in Australia where our third son was born. We left in 1969 and returned to our house in Wokingham. In the late 80's it was evident that Ferranti was in trouble and so I applied for voluntary redundancy and retired in 1990.



When did you come to Emsworth to live?

Before I retired, we had bought a Deckhouse, sometimes referred to as Portacabins on stilts, at Emsworth Yacht Harbour. One day in 1989 Gill came home from work and said 'I've had an idea, why don't we sell up and go and live in the deckhouse?' The same thought had occurred to me and we decided to do it. The housing market was dead at the time but we thought that we wanted to try, so put our Wokingham house on the market. We were lucky and got a cash buyer who wanted a quick move which left us with the problem of rapidly downsizing before we moved. We managed it and eventually moved to Emsworth with just a hired Luton Transit van.



Picture left shows Jeff photographing the snow covered Mosel vineyards on the wine trip in 2010.

Our two sons helped us move and we were amused to hear that on their way back to Wokingham late that night they were stopped by the police as two suspicious characters with a van. It was compounded by there being in the van a painting by a friend of one of my sons. It was obvious it wasn't an old master however and they were let go.

I commuted daily to Bracknell for a year before I retired in 1990. Eventually, 15 years later, the deck house became too small when computers and grandchildren came along so we moved to Prinsted in 2004.

Was the Photography group your first interest group and how many years did you lead it?

Yes, as explained I was the founder leader of the group with Diana Driver. Diana later went on to start her own group with a different agenda. I led the Photography Group from 2008 until 2020 when Roger Bleasby took over, although I'm still a member and comment on pictures.

What interest groups are you a member of now?

I am also a member of Wine appreciation 1, Family History, Bricks, Travellers Tales and Geology.

Wine Appreciation, I know, is one of your interests, what is your favourite type of wine at the moment? And dare I ask, what was your favourite European Wine Trip with the group?

Wines come and go as far as I'm concerned. If I have a dozen, by the end of the case I've had enough, and want to move on to something else. At the moment I'm drinking a red from Chile, called Diablo, a rich and fruity blend of Shiraz and Malbec and as an alternative I like Jam Shed Shiraz from SE Australia. Both come from Tesco.

We enjoyed all the wine trips enormously, from our first one to the Mosel to the last Italian one, but of them all probably the Languedoc was the most memorable, particularly tasting Picpoul among the vines looking over the Mediterranean.

We, in Wine Appreciation, owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to you for producing those wonderful DVD's of all of the Wine Trips! Any amusing asides following the making of them?

There was always a sense of panic as the date for the dinner approached and on some occasions the software suddenly decided that it's had enough and refuses to let me finish. However, there is always a way around it if I could only find it. On one occasion I forgot to plug the lap top into the mains and the battery gave up half way

through the show and it wouldn't restart from where it ended so I had to hunt frantically for the place by hand, nobody seemed to mind, but we all had had several glasses of wine.

You have served Ems Valley so well and so long in terms of 'technical' manager, be it with laptop, projector, loudspeaker or microphone! Did you suffer with any fears, did anything ever go wrong??

I'm always nervous when trying to find my way around strange electronics so as far as possible I try and use my own kit and bought a Projector and Loudspeaker to go with my Laptop. Occasionally things do go wrong, I recall a Travellers Tales when a memory stick was produced that had no file on it only a short cut to a file on his home computer, the speaker didn't really believe me. On another occasion the video we were watching suddenly disappeared, after a few minutes it came back only to disappear again. It turned out that the projector fan had failed and so the thermal cut out worked, it wasn't my projector I might add.

How do you view this past lockdown year – year and a half, and our efforts to keep going on Zoom?

I think Zoom has been very successful in keeping things going. As people got used to it, it became more interactive, and of course it's very good for speakers. It's not the same as in person but it does save going out on cold dark nights or wet days!

I know that you and Gill are keen caravanners – where is your favourite venue?

When I retired Gill said, 'we were going to buy a Motorhome' and being used to small boats it was small and basic. We had a set of 200 walks all over the country called 'No Through Road' and set out to do them all. We did complete them all eventually. We currently own a comfortable two berth caravan. For local sites we enjoy Round Hill near Brockenhurst in the New Forest. Further afield we like Kimmeridge Dorset, or Dulverton Somerset among many others.

Before we finish, can tell us about that monumental (well, it was to me) trip when you made a circumnavigation of G.B. in your little boat! (see pic below – somewhere in Scotland)



We have had boats all my married life. They have been mostly sailing, but with the children sailing was more difficult, so in 1973 I bought a 26-foot GRP hull and finished it off as a four berth Motor Cruiser. We sold it in 1981 to go back to sail but in 1993 we bought it back again! We resumed cruising, going across the Channel and to the Scillies. Libby Purves wrote a book called 'One Summers Grace' about sailing round Britain, Gill read it and said 'We could do that'. And in 1995 we set out on May 1st and 100 days later returned having covered over 2000 miles and visited over 60

harbours or anchorages. Unlike some summer cruises where we wondered 'Why do we do this'; we thoroughly enjoyed the whole trip. We went right round the top of Scotland and spent a week in Orkney, which was a highlight for us.

We always end the interview with you being cast away to a desert island with the Bible, the complete works of Shakespeare and a great big photo of all your Ems Valley u3a friends! You are allowed to request one other thing, what will that be?

There is only one thing that is a 'must have' on my island and that is Gill, we've been married for 60 years and to do without her would be unthinkable.

DAY TRIPPERS INVITATION!

Steve Gorban sends a welcome to all members and would be members and invites you all to a meeting where they will be planning trips for the rest of the winter (January, February and March).

This meeting will be held at 2:00pm on 12th January at the Waterside United Reformed Church on the corner of the A259 and Bath Road. In the meanwhile, he sends you his best for Christmas and the New Year!

A chance to be there at the planning stage!

Steve Gorban, Simon and Pam



The Long Petal of the Sea by Isabel Allende is The “BOOK OF BOOKS”

Say Bookgroup Two

Bookgroup 2 resumed face to face meetings as soon as we were able to, prior to that we met via Zoom. Post Covid our format has not changed, we meet on the first Tuesday of the month between 2 and 4 pm in member’s homes, which is why we limit our numbers to 8, and we are currently at capacity. Each year we chose a theme, and we take it in turns to choose the book, which can be either fiction or non-fiction. 2021 produced a good variety of international authors, as our theme was Books in Translation. The authors ranged from Japanese to Swedish, but at our annual Christmas lunch the Book of Books was elected, which was *The Long Petal of the Sea*, by Isabel Allende, who was born in Chile. This is the book we elected to be the best out of 12, using the joint criteria of literary merit and being ‘a good read!’.

Our theme for 2022 is Families, and we commence with H.E. Bates *The Darling Buds of May*, recently televised as *The Larkins*.

In normal times we have a summer outing, possibly with a literary theme, for example to the IOW or London, but this hasn’t happened in the last 2 years. However, we did have our Christmas lunch at Fat Olives, which was very good, though I don’t recall a lot of literary conversation taking place!

See below The happy readers at “Fat Olives”



Lesley Harris

Marguerita Taplin reports:

A happy photo of Spanish Beginners (or at least some of them) led by Liz French. They are enjoying a Christmas celebration after one of their sessions in December.



Daedalus regains his “wings”

Richard Swaine, a founder member of Juliet Walker’s Ancient Greece group, introduced a news story to one of their recent meetings. HMS *Daedalus* was a naval air station, also known as RNAS Lee-on-Solent. The base was opened in 1917 and finally closed in 1996. Fareham Borough Council have commissioned a steel sculpture of Daedalus to ensure the origins will never be forgotten. The Statue is twenty-one feet high and weighs three tons. See pic right. So, Richard reminded the Greek lovers that Daedalus and his son Icarus were held prisoner by King Minos who had also imprisoned the Minotaur. Daedalus was held because he knew the secrets of the labyrinth. But he used the



Minotaur's wings so that he and his son could escape. As we all know, it was during this escape that Icarus did not heed his father's warnings and flew too close to the sun which caused the wax to melt plunging him to his death. Richard adds: "In u3a Ancient Greece, we learned that an impressed Goddess Athena gave Daedalus real wings and the ongoing power of flight!"

However, Richard also knows the blacksmith who created this wonderful commemoration, Peter Clutterbuck of Southsea is a highly skilled craftsman. He worked on it over a period of five years, fabricating by hand and eye with no computer or laser to help. It was designed by Nigel Searle and had to be transported right up to Bradford for galvanising, as they have the largest galvanising bath in the U.K.

The pic below shows Peter fashioning Daedalus in his forge:



Editor: I know very little about Greek mythology, but was totally fascinated by Richard's story, and decided to investigate this "Minotaur" and the "King Minos" he refers to (Did he marry Queen Plus, I wondered??)

And this is what I read, **but Juliet Walker and Richard may disagree**, after all there seem to be many different threads where Greek mythology is concerned.

"Daedalus is an Athenian craftsman, famous for his ability to invent and build things. Think Leonardo da Vinci or Isambard Kingdom Brunel, but with many more powers. Unfortunately, he also has a jealous streak. When his nephew (Talos) invents the saw, Daedalus realizes that the boy might be more talented than he is, and in a fit of jealousy, Daedalus throws Talos off the Acropolis, a tall monument in Athens. (thus teaching him not to invent any more carpentry tools!)

Some people say that the goddess Athena saw the boy falling, and transformed him into a partridge. Daedalus leaves Athens and heads to the island of Crete, and befriends King Minos, the island's ruler. (It sometimes pays to have friends in high places.)

Daedalus continues his building streak. First, he builds a cow suit so that Crete's queen (Pasiphae) can get it on with a bull. Yes, honestly - a bull!

Pasiphae's union with the bull results in a horrible half-man, half-beast called the Minotaur. (OK I now know what the Minotaur is.) Next up, King Minos (the half-beast's step-dad) asks Daedalus to design a maze (the Labyrinth) in which to put the terrible Minotaur. The Minotaur demands human sacrifices, and every nine years, King Minos sends seven young men and women into the Labyrinth to meet their doom. (in current times it would have been just two, Boris and Blair)

One of these victims sent to his death is the hero Theseus. This guy is tough and he decides to fight back and try to kill the Minotaur. Then King Minos' daughter, Ariadne, falls madly in love with Theseus. And since Daedalus built the Labyrinth, she asks him to help Theseus safely navigate it. Always the helpful one, Daedalus gives Theseus a ball of yarn and tells the hero to trail it behind him, creating a roadmap for how to get back out. (Ed. This does work, I can vouch, having done something similar on tricky walks!) And sure enough, after Theseus kills the Minotaur, he is able to escape. (He and Ariadne leave Crete together.)

King Minos is not at all happy with Daedalus for helping Theseus, so he locks Daedalus and his son, Icarus, in the Labyrinth. Clearly our genius inventor won't take this sitting down. Knowing that the land and water are guarded by King Minos' army, Daedalus decides to escape by air.

He uses twine, feathers, and wax to build large wings for himself and his son. When the wings are finished. Daedalus tries his set on and—OMG—they totally work. He hangs in the air for a few seconds, flapping these wings. He then puts a set of wings on Icarus, and Daedalus gives his son some warnings: he should follow him closely and fly at a middle height. If he flies too low, the seawater will dampen the wings, and if he flies too high, the sun will melt them. So off they go! Daedalus looks back at his son, cheering him on. A bunch of people on the ground, including a shepherd and a ploughman, stop their work to gaze up at Daedalus and Icarus. They're completely blown away at the sight of two people flying in the air—they figure that Daedalus and Icarus might be gods, since no human has ever achieved flight before. In all the excitement, Icarus forgets his father's warning and starts to fly higher.

Sure enough, he gets too close to the sun: the heat softens the wax, and his wings fall apart.

Icarus plummets into the sea, crying "Father, father!" on his way down. Daedalus tries to save his son, but it's too late—he has drowned. The only thing Daedalus can find are some feathers floating in the water. For the first time ever, Daedalus curses his "art" (i.e., his crafting skills). That's what got him into this mess to begin with! Daedalus then named the part of the ocean where Icarus fell, the "Icarian Sea." And, still mourning, Daedalus flies onward to the Italian island of Sicily. When he gets there, he performs funeral rites for his son (these were very important back then). Oh, and according to Ovid, a partridge watches Daedalus as he does all this. This is no ordinary partridge, but Talos, the nephew that Daedalus once tried to murder. Next, Daedalus constructs a temple to Apollo where he hangs up his wings.

While living in Sicily, Daedalus strikes up a friendship with King Cocalus, the ruler of the island. When King Minos comes searching for Daedalus, Cocalus takes pity and hides the inventor. Oh, and even better, King Cocalus' daughters kill King Minos with scalding water, thus freeing Daedalus from his hunt forever.

Now, was that better than all that Christmas TV stuff????

Wine Appreciation One – against the odds....

52 members had signed up for the Christmas tasting on 21st December and then the Omicron virus hit the headlines! Members, understandably wished to protect their family gatherings in a few days' time! But 27 did brave the day and enjoyed double rations! For the first time we involved outside catering and the fare was excellent! It was Christmas time, so we celebrated with a Chablis Premiere Cru and an Amarone. All of the wines came from Aldi, it



was the first time we had showcased their wines this year. The pictures below taken by Jeff Thatcher show the happy tasters and prove that you need to wear something festive to catch the photographer's eye!

Alan Borrow



Wartime nostalgia

This Luftwaffe Heinkel 111 German bomber was shot down and landed in the fields opposite the Horse & Jockey Pub in my home village, Denmead in 1940. The plane had taken part in a daylight raid on Portsmouth (it was thought to be the first daytime raid). Two Spitfires attacked and brought the bomber down, but the pilot managed a brilliant



landing in fields opposite the pub. **The landlord saw everything from his front window and acted on instinct, collecting a toy revolver from upstairs and then arresting the crew as they managed to leave the plane.** He remained on site until the police and the Army arrived to take the crew away. The picture below shows a re-enactment with his staff later that day! He and his story soon became famous and apparently people flocked to his pub from miles around to see the plane, and the pub nearly sold out of beer.

This was posted on Facebook quite recently and the raid on Portsmouth, which had been carried out by 24 bombers, had sadly resulted in several deaths.



On a slightly more light-hearted note, another contributor to the thread, posted this comment: "My Dad told me that he and one of his brothers went into the Curzon cinema at Waterlooville and having paid and taken their seats, a German plane machine gunned up the London Road, lots of people ran out of the cinema but they stayed put. When the people went to go back in, the cinema charged them all again!"

Another said "My mum lived out Denmead way and she saw a German aircraft go down. She said that the German airmen was more than happy to be captured. It seems they thought it

better to stay here than go back to the fighting!"

Alan Borrow

It is a little known fact...



The first testicular guard (“box”) was used in cricket in 1874



And the first helmet was used in 1974.



So, it took exactly 100 years for men to realise that their brains could also be important....

(first revealed in Ems Valley u3a’s Newsletter)

Warning – if you were born between 1940 and 1970, you need to read and learn from the undermentioned public decree.

We must assume that those born in 1939 and earlier need not worry and that they hit the correct button every time, and are far too computer literate to fall foul of this next virus.

We are still battling Covid 19
and the next thing is here already.

The NILE Virus, type C

Virologists have identified a
new Nile virus - type C

It appears to target those who were
born between 1940 and 1970

Symptoms:

1. Causes you to send the same message twice.
2. Causes you to send a blank message.
3. Causes you to send a message to the wrong person.
4. Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you.
5. Causes you to forget to attach the attachment.
6. Causes you to hit **SEND** before you've finished.
7. Causes you to hit **DELETE** instead of **SEND**
8. Causes you to **SEND** when you should **DELETE**

It is called the C-NILE virus!

And if you can't admit to doing the
above you've obviously caught the
mutated strain, the D-NILE virus.

My Christmas and NEW YEAR greeting this year.

I wanted to make certain that my Christmas card was politically correct this year because I did run into a spot of trouble last season.....

So I checked with my legal adviser and on his advice, my handwritten greeting read as follows:

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, my best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender neutral celebration of the winter solstice holiday, practiced with the most enjoyable traditions of religious persuasion or secular practices of your choice with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all.

I also wish you a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2022, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions to society have helped make our country great (not to imply that Great Britain is necessarily greater than any other country) and without regard to the race, creed, colour, age, physical ability, religious faith or sexual preference of the wishee.

By accepting this greeting, you are accepting these terms:

This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It is freely transferable with no alteration to the original greeting. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others and is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. This wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year or until the issuance of a subsequent holiday greeting, whichever comes first, and warranty is limited to replacement of this wish or issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.

Disclaimer:

No trees (TPO or otherwise) were harmed in the sending of this message.

It took me an age to write/send out my cards 'cos I always hand write them. I know that many of my friends sent their card to their solicitors to receive an opinion/ translation consultation.

EDITOR

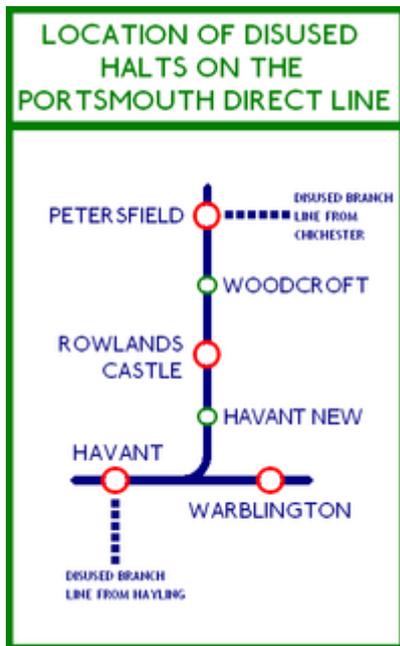
More nostalgia – HAVANT



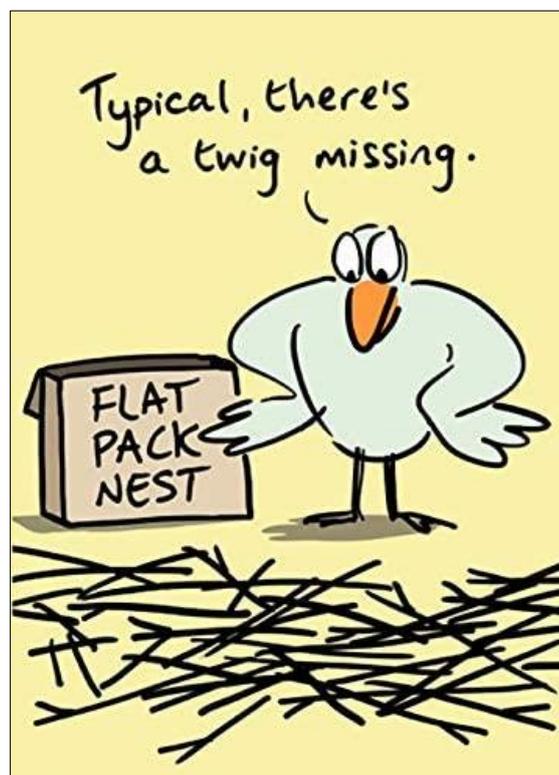
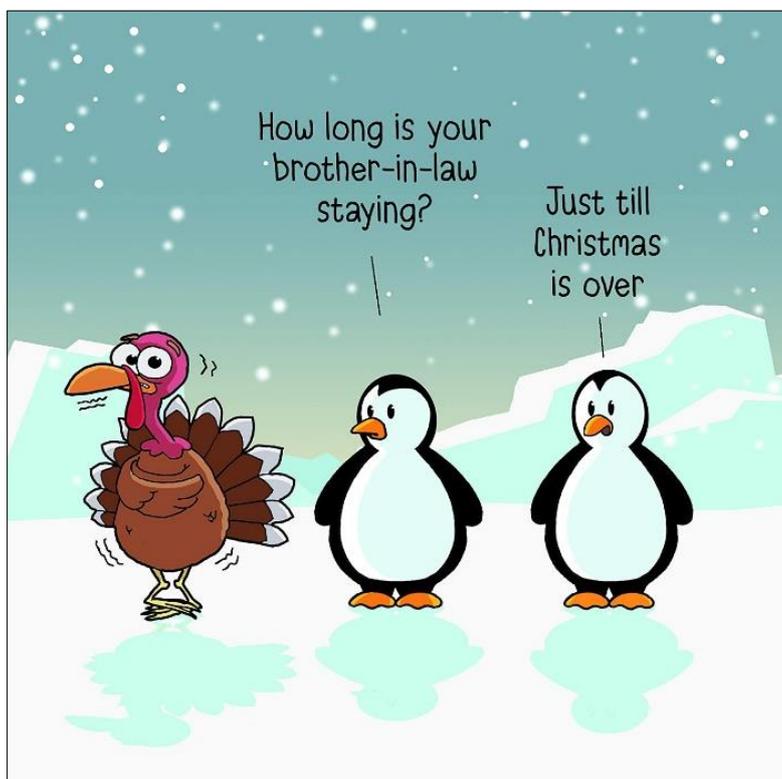
The above photo was taken in 1904 and was sent as a postcard. It looks like good weather and that a trip to the IOW is in the offing. I believe it was the style to hand tint these black and white pics at the time.

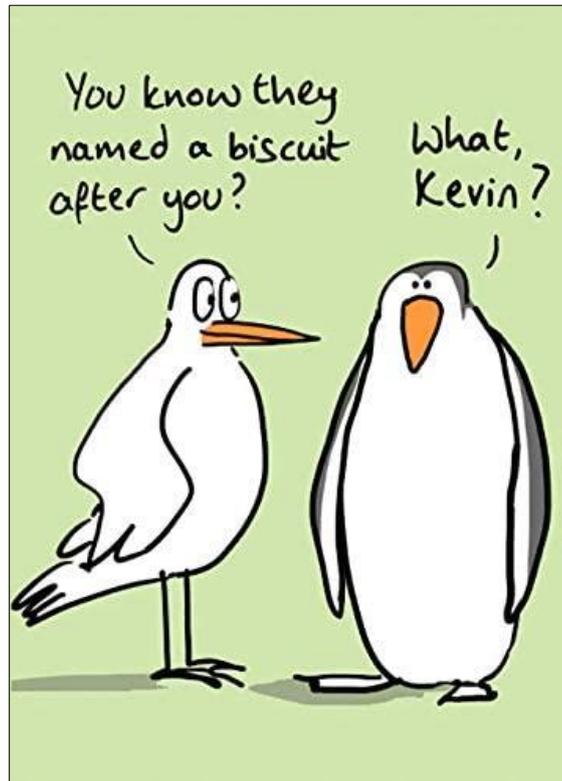
You can see that it is North Street, but are we looking south or north? The consensus suggests that we have our back to the Railway station? Do you agree?

Did you know about the “Battle of Havant”!



In 1858, the two local railway companies started the "Battle of Havant". The London, Brighton and South Coast Railway ran the London to Portsmouth Line via Hove, and refused to allow the London and South Western Railway to use any of that track to reach Portsmouth. The LB&SCR blocked the line just north of the intended junction, prompting the L&SWR to open a temporary station at Havant. That station was opened on 1 January 1859, and looks from the above diagram to be in the New Lane area. Passengers would travel from Havant New in a horse-drawn omnibus to Hilsea, bypassing Havant. The passengers could then carry on into Portsmouth by train. After two years the companies came to an agreement and the L&SWR were allowed access to the disputed line. That station closed on 24 January 1859.





All contributions for the next newsletter please to:
alanborrow@virginmedia.com