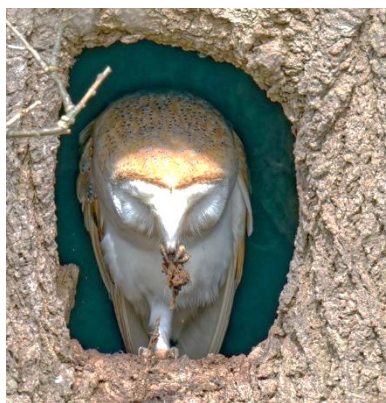


Ems Valley U3A



April 2024 newsletter

Our Birds and Wildlife Group find that Spring has Sprung!



Photos by William Saywell.

Reg Newnham reports that “Birds and Wildlife” took the short walk from The Ship at Langstone to Warblington Church and saw this wealth of birds and wildlife. (See the above photos) It prompted me to headline “Spring” and then I read a doom story of snow approaching next week. They will probably be wrong! But then it is Easter???

Eighteen Ancient Greeks off to the Peloponnese this month!

Juliet Walker, group leader of “Ancient Greece” leads another excursion in April, this time to the Peloponnese, the largest peninsula in Greece which constitutes the southernmost of the Greek mainland. It borders with the Aegean, Ionian Sea, Corinth Gulf, and the Mediterranean Sea. Here, it is said, myth meets history! About 2500 years ago, Ancient Greece was one of the most important places in the ancient world, those Ancient Greeks were great thinkers, warriors, writers, actors, athletes, artists, architects, and politicians. As you all know, the Olympic games started here, and the very first games



were held in the summer of 776 B.C. at Olympia, a site where people went to worship their gods. In fact, the Olympics were created in honour of ancient Greece's most famous god: Zeus, king of the gods. This site forms part of our itinerary, and we will be very conscious of the forthcoming games in Paris, this summer. The 2024 games will mark the centenary of the Paris 1924 games! The above picture shows the site today. Koroibos, a cook from the nearby city of Elis, won the very first 'stadion' race, a foot race 600 feet long. The stadion track at Olympia is shown at the top of the photo. From 776 BC, the Games were held in Olympia every four years for almost 12 centuries. But Juliet has lots of other ancient sites for us to visit on this trip and no doubt we will be reporting on these in a future newsletter. (The editor is included in the party to ensure coverage!)

Garden Group Visit to the Old Vicarage, Washington

On Tuesday March 12 th

On Tuesday 12th March, the Garden Group converged on the fabulous private gardens at the Old Vicarage in Washington, just the other side of the A24 and between Horsham and Worthing. The quality of this garden, developed by the current owner since 1993, is immediately evident from the topiary and crinkle crinkle hedge visible at the entrance gate. On arrival we were treated to huge, fantastic slices of tasty homemade cake with our tea or coffee, in the conservatory. Lady Meryl Waters then gave us a private tour of the garden allowing ample time for us to explore the amazing 3½ acre site.



With a 20-mile uninterrupted view of the South Downs we discovered the tennis court, tastefully surrounded by hedging and shrubs, the recently built hexagonal summer pavilion, a sizeable pond complex with two waterfalls leading into the Japanese Zen Garden. The stumpery within the copse is a match for those in the most prestigious of English Gardens. With unique sculptures dotted around, the garden also features an amazing tree house with secret passages, a trap door, and delightful decorations to intrigue any youngster.

The garden is in the National Garden Scheme and so you can arrange a visit yourselves and contribute further to money raised for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie every year – their record is £19,000 in one year.

Many of the group retired to the Frankland Arms in Washington where half sized portions on the menu proved to be more than adequate.



Many thanks to the U3A organizers, Pam, and Kim, for yet another stunning garden visit.

The Front of the Main House below with Lady Meryl Walters right



Right:
Japanese Zen
Garden with
copse and
stumpery to the
left.



Below: Cloud Tree on the Back Wall of the House with Secret passage in the Tree House on the right.



Trevor Smith

Day Trippers next group planning session will be on 11 April at 2:00 PM at the Waterside United Reformed Church

The Waterside Church is at the Corner of Bath Rd and the A259. Car parking available!! We meet to review and update our plans for this year as follows:

May: Guided walking tour of old Portsmouth with lunch to follow

June: Losley Park House and Garden Tour with included lunch

July: Canal Boat on Loxwood Canal follow by pub lunch at the Onslow Arms

Sept: Tour of the Wimbledon Tennis Facilities and Museum

October: Visit to a Vineyard

November TBD

December TBD

We hope you will join us if you have ideas and/or are interested in these outings.

Simon and Steve

Winter, Summer, Spring or Fall on the 3rd Monday of the month.....

Yes, our cycling Group meet for a 15 - 20 'miler' into the chartered territories of West Sussex or Hampshire. This



month (March) we assembled at 09.30 at Emsworth Railway Station and 30 minutes later we were on the Gosport Ferry into urban areas of that fine town tracking over Haslar bridge to 'The Explosion Museum'. For those with an interest, we are in front of a 3" single barrelled warship main weapon circa 1980's. We believe one of our number used to maintain these! Onward. To our coffee stop at Solent Airport, yes that is its name (ex RNAS Daedalus which closed in 1996 after 79 years of military operations including 179 flights on D Day.)

As our Ancient Greek friends will know, Daedalus, a mythical inventor, created wings made of feathers and

wax to escape from Crete where he and his son, Icarus, were held captive by King Minos. Icarus, however, ignored his father's warnings and flew too close to the sun. His wings melted and he fell into the sea where he met his end.

There is more to this story - The Image on the right of Daedalus was fashioned by a Southsea blacksmith whose brother lives in Emsworth. It was commissioned by Fareham Council and paid for by The National Grid. The Statue is quite easy to spot as it is 21 feet high and is on the north side of the airport site.

All 11 of us then cycled into the airport café which is nicely situated on the airport ring, ideal for a rest and a snack and where all sorts of activities can be enjoyed. Just as we were leaving this Bristow helicopter named



'Electricity' came in to land. It is so called because, its role is to hover above electricity pylons and with its infra-red camera, test to see if pylons any are showing defects.

Continuing towards Lee-on-the Solent shoreline (see below) we noted the roads were especially well maintained and 'pothole' free. So we arrived at a most welcome

restaurant called "On the Water" overlooking the Solent where we all enjoyed our lunchbreak.

The day had been fine but was becoming increasingly overcast as we headed on our return journey to Gosport via Alverstoke, The RN Submarine Museum and finally the ferry, where after a short wait, a train took us home.

We had been 'out' for over 6 hours and all enjoyed another day of U3A friendship in the fresh air. The next ride is on April 15 and promises to be into West Sussex, probably via Horsham to Christs Hospital.



How many of you attend the Monthly Meeting?

Ems Valley have a membership of over 500, and yet only a little over a hundred attend the monthly meeting, held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Baptist Church. The venue can accommodate over three times this number and the seats are comfortable, the hall is airy, the tea and biscuits excellent, the company stimulating, the speaker interesting and the after tea presentation is always a surprise. And yet 400 of you don't attend? What is the reason, the committee would love to see you there, to make contact with you and for you to participate in a monthly social bonding!



TRAVELLERS TALES – AN AMAZING CONTRAST – AGAIN!

A full house met on Monday evening 18th March and were presented with Islands galore. Some in Indonesia, others were off the French coast of the Cherbourg peninsular and Brittany. Some were wild, desolate, unspoilt and beautiful and others were the same but teeming with native life and activity. Adrian Fox presented SULAWESI and Peter Foster presented those numerous tiny French Isles. Adrian told us that The Portuguese arrived about 1512 in pursuit of a spice-trade monopoly, and the Dutch built a settlement at Macassar (Makassar) in 1607. He told how he circumnavigated the tentacle shaped island about twenty years ago with a knowledgeable and enterprising sea captain who had converted his large fishing boat for the sightseeing trade. The Portuguese had arrived there in 1512 in pursuit of a spice-trade monopoly.

Peter Forster sailed his own boat in and out of so many French isles. Neil Cowell's face also appeared on several occasions! Who was steering we wondered? See the contrast below, Indonesia and the left and France on the right. We were treated to a night of amazing variety, but both stories entertained us royally!



Alan Borrow

Annual Group Leaders GET TOGETHER

On Friday 22nd March Group leaders and their Coordinators attended a thank you party hosted by the committee. It was a most enjoyable evening and gave those who spend so much of their time in the interests of us all, the chance to meet their counterparts, over a glass of wine, compare notes, socialise and generally discuss the “art of the lesson”! Chairman Tim thanked those present for their previous twelve months dedication to keeping our u3a alive, active, ambitious and amusing.

We sometimes take our group leaders for granted. They are the very heart of our u3a, and I am sure that you all join Tim and add your grateful thanks!

See pic below



Interesting Talk on Fungi at March STEM Group Meeting.

In March we were given a talk on Fungi, by Graham Timms, an Organic Chemist.

So, what are fungi? We learned they're organisms that include yeasts, moulds and mushrooms. They're not plants (which photosynthesize for food) nor animals (ingesting food like us)- but form their own kingdom of life, searching for sustenance under ground. Fungi actually live inside their food and secrete enzymes to dissolve nutrients they then absorb. Over 120,000 species have been identified with many more to be discovered. They're found everywhere – sea, deserts, our guts.... Today 90% of plants depend on the roots of fungi,



which can even link trees in shared networks. We also heard about the cholesterol-lowering statins in fungi, life-saving antibiotics like penicillin, and the medicines that allow for organ transplants to be successful - and we are now finally accepting and legalizing medicinal compounds made by fungi to treat urgent and life-threatening mental health ailments such as PTSD and depression, by the use of such drugs as LSD.

So, lots of positives – but fungi can also cause diseases (e.g. Dutch Elm) and they are currently a huge threat to banana plantations in some parts of the world. The Ergot fungus (see pic opp.) is the group which infects grain, especially rye. Ingesting the affected grain

causes gangrene, hallucinations and seizures in animals and humans –

records of this have been found from 945 AD! But again, even the Ergot fungus has a positive – it's still used today in childbirth, reducing post partum bleeding.



Our next meeting is the first Thursday in April, a talk on Psychological Bias (presentation and discussion) Planning is still underway for the rest of 2024 programme, including more workshops. All Ems Valley u3a members are welcome to attend our meetings - just let us know by email to: geoff.whalley@gmail.com.

Pam Palmer

William Saywell enquires about members interested in Drones!



In the last newsletter William said “Anyone interested in Drone Photography?” Two members replied – probably not enough to launch a new interest group, but..... Here we show some of his latest drone pics in the hope that we can keep this matter alive? Top left Southbourne Church; top right the railway line through Southbourne.

Computer reproduction does not do then real justice – the originals looked stunning!

Bottom: The Mill at Langstone from two different heights!

Very Bottom: Langstone harbour – just after the Loch Ness monster passed that way.....



Day Trippers need three more people for the beautiful St Mary's Church at Upper Froyle to make it a viable trip – are you interested – must reply by 3rd April

10:30 for an 10:45 start. Tea, coffee and biscuits upon arrival. Cost per person is £7.00. Join us for a day out to Upper Froyle, Hampshire for a visit to the beautiful St Mary's Church. We will carpool to get to the church which is about an hours drive. If you are willing to drive, or would like transport, please let us know. The post code of the Church is GU34 4LB. The outstanding collection of Sacred Vestments is the gem of this beautiful place of worship and not to be missed. We will have a tour of the church and a talk and showing of the Vestments. If you want to see something really special **visit these vestments in Froyle.** A Pub Lunch at the nearby Anchor Inn will follow our visit to the Church. Contact Steve Gorban on email: psasibs@gmail.com **Simon and Steve**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Two letters on the subject of Wine Appreciation.....

Dbee Robinson, our Business Secretary writes to make a suggestion the our wine groups should follow the example of Guernsey u3a..... Dbee found this in the Trust u3a newsletter and wonders if we should do some wine group twinning.



Discovering new wines with Guernsey u3a

Guernsey u3a's Wine Discovery group meet regularly to explore wines from their local supermarket that they may otherwise not have tried.

Group leaders Karen and Mark say, "Our unique feature of tables of eight ensures that the event has a very social aspect. Even if you attend on your own, you will quickly find yourself in a group making new friends."

Dear Alan

With all the enthusiastic wine lovers in the U3A how about a ' wine of the month ' recommendation in the Newsletter? I can offer you two for starters: a very nice Beaujolais from the Cuvee des Vignerons and A New Zealand Sauvignon called 'Cowrie Bay', both from Waitrose at around £9 a bottle (at the last count!). The latter always reminds me of family holidays in Polzeath, Cornwall years ago. There was a small cove nearby called informally 'Cowrie Bay' where my three children would scabble in the pebbles for cowrie shells, - it could become quite competitive. Happy days!

Jim Day

I know that I shouldn't discuss Politics.....

But this did amuse me.....

Headline: Man changes name to Literally Anybody Else and announces US presidential run.

A Texas man says he is unsatisfied with Donald Trump and Joe Biden and has changed his name by deed poll. He has legally changed his name to 'Literally Anybody Else' and announced he is running for US president in the 2024 election. Formerly known as Dustin Ebey, the 35-year-old is a US army veteran and seventh-grade math teacher in the suburbs of Dallas, and now is the holder of a Texas driver's license to prove his name change.

"Three hundred million people can do better," he said in reference to the two frontrunners for the nation's highest office. "There really should be some outlet for people like me who are just so fed up with this constant power grab between the two elderly parties that just have no benefit to the common person". He has applied for and already received his new Driving Licence, surname "ELSE" Christian names "Literally Anybody"

An outing to Champs Hill – open to all members!

Following the kind invitation of The Bowerman Charitable Trust, The Art Appreciation Group has again this year booked a group visit on Thursday 2nd May at 2 p.m. to the Summer 2024 Art Exhibition at Champs Hill, near Pulborough. We are extending the invitation to all members of Ems Valley U3A. (Visits to Champs Hill are by appointment only).

The exhibition is entitled: “Painting the Green: flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees”

and features depictions of flora from their Modern and Contemporary British Collection, and introduces major new acquisitions of works by Winifred Nicholson, Ivon Hitchens, Anne Redpath, Mary Fedden, Elizabeth Blackadder and Olwyn Bowey. Great favourites from recent exhibitions including Andrew Gifford’s celebrated Trees collections, through to works by established artists from Freddie Gore to William Bowyer are on view.

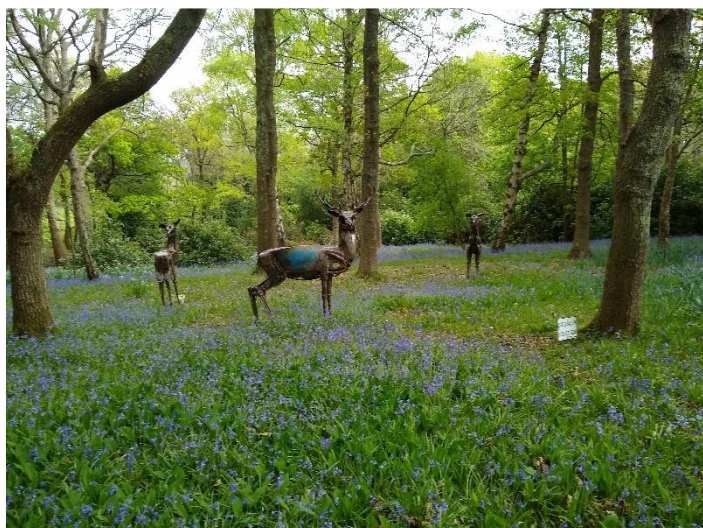
See under Elizabeth Blackadder – Untitled (Pink and Red Amaryllis)



Champs Hill is a delightful venue with extensive grounds (with numerous sculptures) which we may also view during our visit. More details can be seen on the website:

<https://www.thebct.org.uk/3/Champs-Hill>

Entry to the exhibition and the gardens on May 2nd (and tea and biscuits) is £12. Please email Catherine Davis (davisph@gmail.com) to get your name on the list and then deliver or post £12 (preferably by cheque made out to Ems Valley U3A) or cash in a named, sealed envelope to Catherine Davis 12 Beach Road, Emsworth PO10 7JS by Thursday 25th April. Partners and friends are welcome but places will be allocated in order of signup. Transport will be by members’ private cars. Please state whether you can offer a lift to others or whether you need one yourself.



Catherine Davis (davisph@gmail.com)

**You know you've
sunken to new lows
when you refer to a trip
to the supermarket as
'going out'**

When I lost the fingers on my right hand in a freak accident, I asked the doctor if I would still be able to write with it. He said, "Probably, but I wouldn't count on it"

Last night the internet stopped working so I spent a few hours with my family. They seem like good people.



**All contributions for the next newsletter please to:
alanborrow1@gmail.com
(please note new email address)**