



February Newsletter 2024

We are sad to report that Val Perry passed away on New Years Eve, in Queen Alexandra Hospital. Val was a founder member of Ems Valley u3a and our third Ems Valley Chairman. Below are some memories from Hazel Willard.

Val Perry - Obituary

Before Val was elected U3a Chairman in 2010 she served as Secretary to the u3a Committee and in turn supported her new Secretary and the u3a Chairmen who came after her. Committee members appreciated her sharp sense of humour and the good-natured way she coped with any problems.

The members of the Wine Tasting Group looked forward to Val and her husband, Tony's regular performances on the last night of the groups' annual wine tasting trip abroad. One of the most memorable was the rendition of 'Three Little Maids' which Val produced, rehearsed and took part in with two other members of the group. They dressed up in silky dressing gowns with balls of wool and knitting needles in their hair and white slipper socks on their feet. This caused great hilarity amongst the audience and the 'three little maids' were so overcome, they forgot the words of the song! (see pic under)

Val was an enthusiastic member of the u3a. She was one of the founder members of the Line Dancing Group and enjoyed dancing to the popular songs of the sixties and seventies – she knew all the words! Val was very knowledgeable about art and was an active member of the Art Appreciation Group and happy to give a presentation on a favourite artist. She was also a member of a u3a Book Group and was an avid reader with strong opinions about which books she enjoyed or disliked. She also belonged to another Book Group with friends from the National Housewives Register, a longstanding group where she was also chairman.

Outside the u3a she belonged to a Keep Fit group which met for many years in St James' Parish Hall



and after that closed, she joined several friends in another keep fit to music group in the ECC. She was an active member of NADFAS – an art group which meet once a month in Chichester Assembly Rooms. She loved her singing, first joining the Portsmouth University choir, then the Portsmouth Choral Union and finally the Cantemus choir. She eventually became the Chairman of this choir, before ill health took its' toll, although she continued to sing in the chorus. More latterly she sang with our u3a "Singing together" group.

She enjoyed her cricket and was a life member of Hampshire Cricket Club.

In 2020 Val suffered a severe stroke but she was determined to work hard at her physiotherapy and

eventually overcame many of the side effects, driving again and participating in as many as possible of the activities she enjoyed. Val was a popular lady, with a wide circle of friends in Emsworth and the Portsmouth area, which reflected her various interests. Her many friends will miss her lively sense of fun, her general enthusiasm for life, her kindness, tolerance and her lovely smile.



Book Group Two



The 2024 theme for Book Group 2 is The Arts and our first book was “Lust For Life” by Irving Stone. This semi-fictionalised account of the life of Vincent Van Gogh was found to be extremely interesting by the group, if rather long at nearly 500 pages. It gave us an insight into Van Gogh’s works and his struggles with mental health.

Our February book is a completed contrast; the crime novel “Picture You Dead,” by Peter James, which delves into the world of art forgery. The next books lined up are “Pictures From An Exhibition” by Patrick Gale and then “The Picture of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde.

The theme for 2023 was books that had had TV or film adaptations. At our Christmas Club (pictured) the result of our votes for favourite book of the year was announced. The winner was “Atonement” by Ian

McEwan. The wooden spoon went to “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” by Douglas Adams. (Not many sci-fi fans in our number).

Sandra McGregor

Do you enjoy the odd glass of Wine?



Wine Appreciation One has been in existence ever since our u3a was formed! We meet once a month to taste six wines, evaluate and swallow. No one ever told us about the “spitting” bit. So you could argue that we are not professional tasters! No, we are here for the fun, fellowship (fellowship is feminine as well) and to keep up to date with current trends in “what is on the shelves”. Yes, wine production is changing all the time. Do you remember years back when you never quite knew when you opened your bottle..... rough or smooth? So the reason for little article – you will not guess – we have vacancies for members to join us!

Our strength is down to 44 and we have welcomed some new members in the past two years, so, if you feel that you would like to be socially minded at 3.15pm on the third Tuesday of the month (and perhaps learn a little more about the thousands of wines on offer to us) go to the Ems Valley u3a website and click ‘groups’ then ‘Wine One’ and send a message by the carrier pigeon!

A view from a member.....

Not sure if it was meant to be anonymous, but thanks Gwen....

I’ve never written anything for the U3A Newsletter before. To be honest since it went over to ‘on line’ from ‘hard copy’ I don’t seem to read it so often. I would place my hard copy on the coffee table and when I stopped for a cuppa! would pick it up and browse through. I’m not too keen on reading from a display screen however, so the eagerness is just not there. It might suit others but each to their own. I never have had anything to write about that I feel others might be remotely interested in. I’ve never been a headmistress to an underprivileged school in the back streets of somewhere or other. I’ve never been a priestess (or should it be priest these day? Well whatever) hearing confessions with an earnest expression. Now that would have been a difficult job, I so like to gossip. I’ve never been another Houdini, though what people saw in him escapes me. I might have been a brain surgeon if only I’d thought about it and I’ve never been a con artist, loan shark or double dealer though I did work for The Prudential Estate

Agency and Mortgage Brokers for a while. Loved that job, very interesting, for me that is though doubt you'd find any ompassion in it. To date I have never seen an advert for 'Part-time Astronaut required' though to be fair by the time I could have given more hours to the job they'd stopped sending men/women into space. Now it looks as if it'll all be starting up again I've simply gone off the boil, don't fancy going. In any case I can get Spaced out in Group 1 of the Wine Appreciation Group..... monthly !

Like a lot of people in this area I have worked for IBM. In the years I was there it was bought out by the management and changed its name to Xyratex . I lost interest at that point but stayed on for another year since the restaurant was subsidised and dished up delicious food. Recently I meet one of the chefs from those days. Well I'm glad I wasn't aware of him then. How can I put

it.....after just a quick glance of his attire and frequent habit which involved his nose I certainly wouldn't have chosen to eat there.

Another of the jobs I found myself doing was becoming a Gatherer of building requirements needed for local building developments who had been given the go ahead in the Southampton/Eastleigh and Portsmouth area. I really can't tell you much about that job as from start to finish I truly didn't know what I was doing. The idea was to go and look at the plans at each Civic Buildings Planning Office and report back to the supply company who were employing me what would be required. This then enabled them to put in their tender. I had to tell them the amounts required, the developer's choice of materials etc. What did I know about building materials? Diddly squat. I kept the job for about 6 months and wonder now how that could have been. I can only assume due to the fact that all my instructions were given to me over the phone by a company up north somewhere that my regular contact didn't know what he was doing either. When I found myself out of pocket over mileage allowance I packed the job in. I'd misread the road signs and found myself on the M3 (this was before Satnav) . I couldn't get off it, drove for miles, got panicky and turned left at the first chance I got. I felt instant relief until I realized I still didn't have a clue where I was. I never did get to Eastleigh, not then or since. Anyway, the company denied my mileage claim for 52 miles only paying out the 6 miles

they say it would have taken me if I hadn't got lost. I was furious but after getting out my Safeways A4 travellers map, I had to agree I did take the long route. In truth I shouldn't have taken the job in the first place but I was a Mum with two children who attended school each week day and had to be collected pronto at end of day. Then there was a dinner to think about, bought and cooked, us Mums had to take what was available.

So now that I've switched my computer on I'd better get started but where to start? At the beginning I guess. Now if you'd like to read about what it's like to swim the English Channel blind folded or how to achieve climbing Mount Everest backwards I'd stop right here if I were you. I haven't done any of those things though I did take up Gliding for a while but as the saying goes...what goes up must come down and I really don't want to go into that. I remind myself KISS (keep it simple stupid) another on-the-job training lesson but that's another story and will have to wait.

Editor: To be continued in the March Edition.....

Day Trippers SCHEDULE FOR February, March and April

New Years Greetings to you all from Steve Gorban.....

**FOR FEBRUARY, on the 13th Feb. at 7:15pm (sorry for the late notice) we meet at The Spring in Havant for a screening of the ballet, Manon, performed very recently by The Royal Ballet from Covent Garden. If you wish to attend please forward payment by Friday 2nd February as under:
Price per person is £15.00. Interested? Contact Steve Gorban, Daytrippers by the web site.**

About the ballet, Manon:

Torn between her desire of a life of splendour and riches and her devotion to her true love Des Grieux, the feckless and capricious Manon pays the ultimate price.

Manon's brother Lescaut is offering her to the highest bidder when she meets Des Grieux and falls in love. They elope to Paris, but when Monsieur G.M. offers Manon a life of luxury as his mistress she can't resist.



With the Lescauts' encouragement, Des Grieux cheats at cards in an attempt to win Monsieur G.M.'s fortune. They are caught. Manon is arrested as a prostitute and deported to New Orleans, followed by Des Grieux. On the run, Manon dies from exhaustion.

The music of Manon

Rather than simply drawing music from operatic tales of Manon, including Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* or Jules Massenet's opera *Manon* (both inspired by Prévost's novel), renowned dance musician Leighton Lucas and his assistant Hilda Gaunt provided a score drawn from across Massenet's collected works. The music of the *Manon* ballet includes his famous yearning *Elégie* as the theme for the lovers. The premiere was given on 7 March 1974, with such acclaimed ballet dancers as Antoninette Sibley, Monica Mason, Anthony Dowell and David Wall taking on the lead roles.

PLEASE SAVE THESE DATES FOR OUR MARCH AND APRIL OUTINGS - WE NEED TO CONFIRM THE DETAILS AND GET THEM TO YOU LATER:

HISTORY TOUR OF KINGS THEATRE SOUTHSEA on 11th MARCH

Step behind the scenes and see this Iconic theatre from a new perspective. The tour will allow you to visit the unseen areas of the Grade II listed Edwardian Playhouse and delve into the secrets and history of the past.



ST MARYS CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, UPPER FROYLE, HAMPSHIRE – 17th APRIL



Join us for an informative talk and tour revealing the very special collection of Vestments held within the Collection of the Church. PUB LUNCH TO FOLLOW!!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I felt I must write further to the letter in the newsletter that you were sent about corsetry, because... my great-grandfather, William Fletcher, owned the third largest corset factory in Portsmouth at the beginning of the 20th century. He was born illegitimately in the village of Isleham in Cambridgeshire in 1856, and spent his early years living with his grandparents, who were pig farmers, and had virtually no schooling. By the age of 11 he had joined his mother and step-father in the East End of London and begun work in a 'stays' factory in Walthamstow, learning how to make corsets. He married just before his 20th birthday and moved, with his young family, to Portsmouth in 1878. My grandfather, also William, was born in the summer of that year.

William senior managed a factory for several years before setting up on his own in Lawrence Road in Portsmouth, having a few machines and employing 'outworkers' who worked from their own homes, collecting and returning their work to the factory. The factory went from strength to strength and in 1885 the foundation stone of a purpose-built factory was laid and, ten years later William bought up neighbouring properties and demolished them in order to extend his factory, finally registering his business as a limited company, with shareholders, in 1898. All was set fair and business prospered.

However, in 1905 he tried to emulate Charles Bayer's tactics of selling direct to retailers, but underestimated the costs involved and went bankrupt. He was bought out by Charles Leetham - another Portsmouth corset

manufacturer. Nothing daunted, by 1911 the factory was open again, trading as 'William Fletcher Jnr Ltd.' While William Jnr, like his father, had a consuming energy he nevertheless lacked the physical reserves, and he died in 1929 at the age of 51. My great-grandfather, also still heavily involved with the factory, died just two years later, following which the factory passed into the hands of my uncle until it was eventually sold in the 1960s.

While I was researching all this some years ago I came across the above attached poster for 'The WF - Corsets and Underclothing' - the advertising poster for my great-grandfather's company, a copy of which is now displayed on my lounge wall. This story will be familiar to a number of members of the Family History group as it forms part of a much longer 'rags to riches' talk about the life of the man himself, including his involvement with the church and his time serving on Havant Council. I hope that might be of interest to you, and that you don't mind receiving another 'Letter to the Editor' about corsets!

Jill Stanley

A Walk in Storm Isha

Your editor needed a sheltered walk last weekend in Storm Isha, and chanced upon a memorable piece of wartime



history. I wonder how many of us knew that Hayling seafront was “dressed up” as a flaming Portsmouth Dockyard to distract German bomb aimers who were trying to target Portsmouth Dockyard. The pictures show a considerable anti-aircraft emplacement at Sinah Warren on the very south-western tip of Hayling Island. This has been preserved for history, lest we forget. It was located on the edge

of a decoy site. Sites were set up around the country, in order to lure the Luftwaffe away from bombing large urban centres such as Portsmouth and the Dockyard. They achieved this by lighting dummy fires and turning on hidden lights. A Langstone Harbour site was particularly successful. After the massive bombing raid on Portsmouth on 10/11 January 1941, the next large raid on Portsmouth was largely foiled by the decoy site, and most of the German bombs fell harmlessly into Langstone Harbour. However, very sadly, some of the anti-aircraft gunners at the Sinah Warren site paid the ultimate price for their closeness to the decoy site. Several bombs fell on the gun emplacement, killing



five men. Another man died of his wounds later. All were serving with 219 Battery, 57 Heavy AA Regiment. The above picture shows the heritage board you can read today, and on the right, a wartime action picture at the same gun emplacement. When Royal Artillery men were need for overseas duties, the gunner's duties were taken over by service women. It is all well depicted on these information boards.

RESIDENT OFFER – Ends 11th Feb 2024

Jane Yoward has brought this offer to the attention of the newsletter.

If you live in a PO or SO postcode, you can take advantage of reduced entry for you and your family at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Local residents get a 30% discount off an Ultimate Explorer ticket.

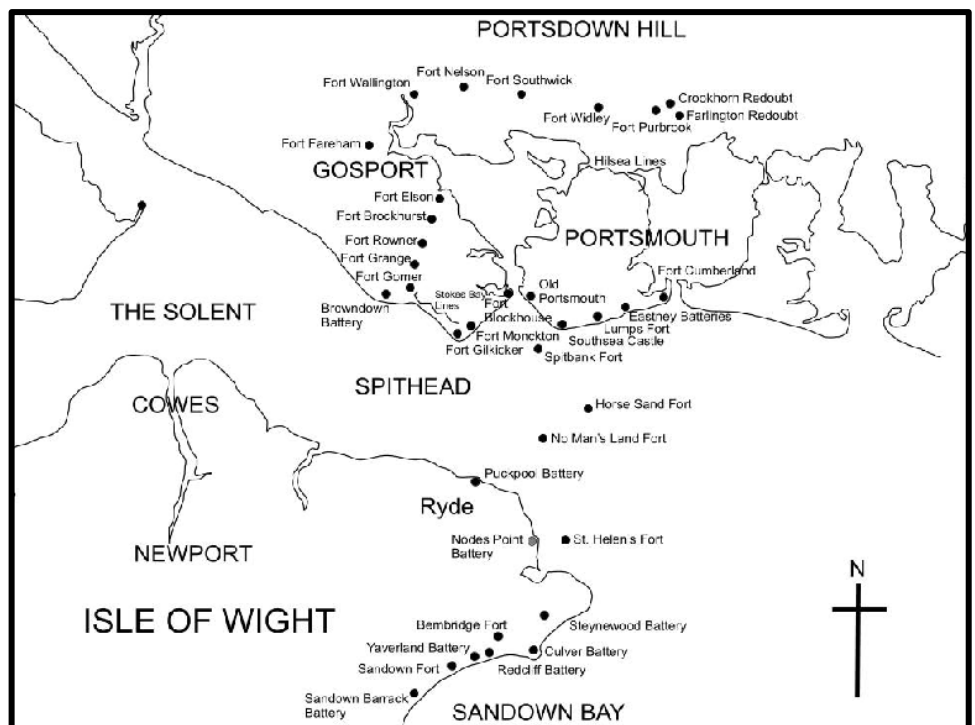
The web site says: “Our Ultimate Explorer tickets are fantastic value for money. You’ll get unlimited visits to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard’s nine historic attractions for a full year. This includes the iconic HMS Warrior, Henry VIII’s favourite ship the Mary Rose and the nation’s flagship, HMS Victory. We’ve recently launched the brand-new and interactive World Beneath the Waves exhibition and the multi-sensory 4D cinema experience: Dive the Mary Rose 4D, so there’s more to do than ever. The Ultimate Explorer ticket also lets you use our waterbus service, making it easy to visit our renowned Gosport museums.”

This is a limited time offer available from 1 November 2023 to 11 February 2024. But your whole year of free entry can be started from the first time you use it!



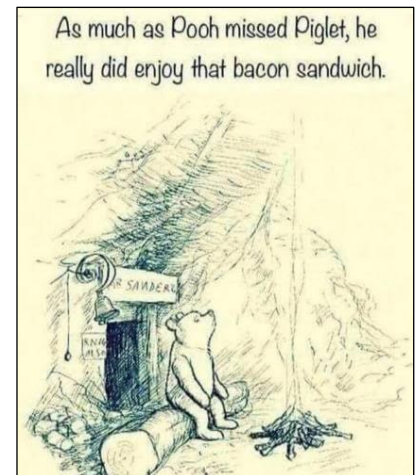
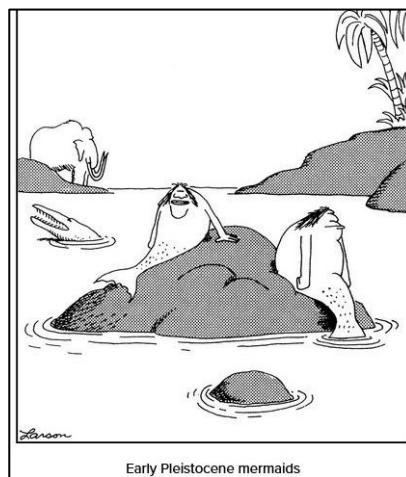
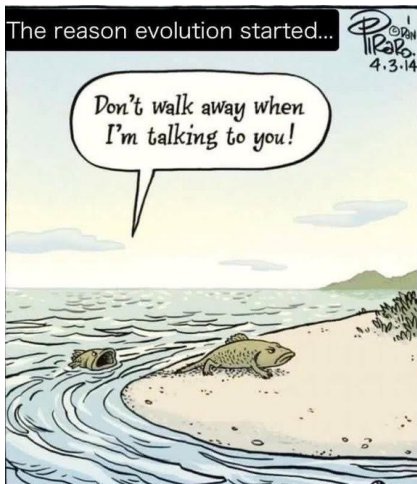
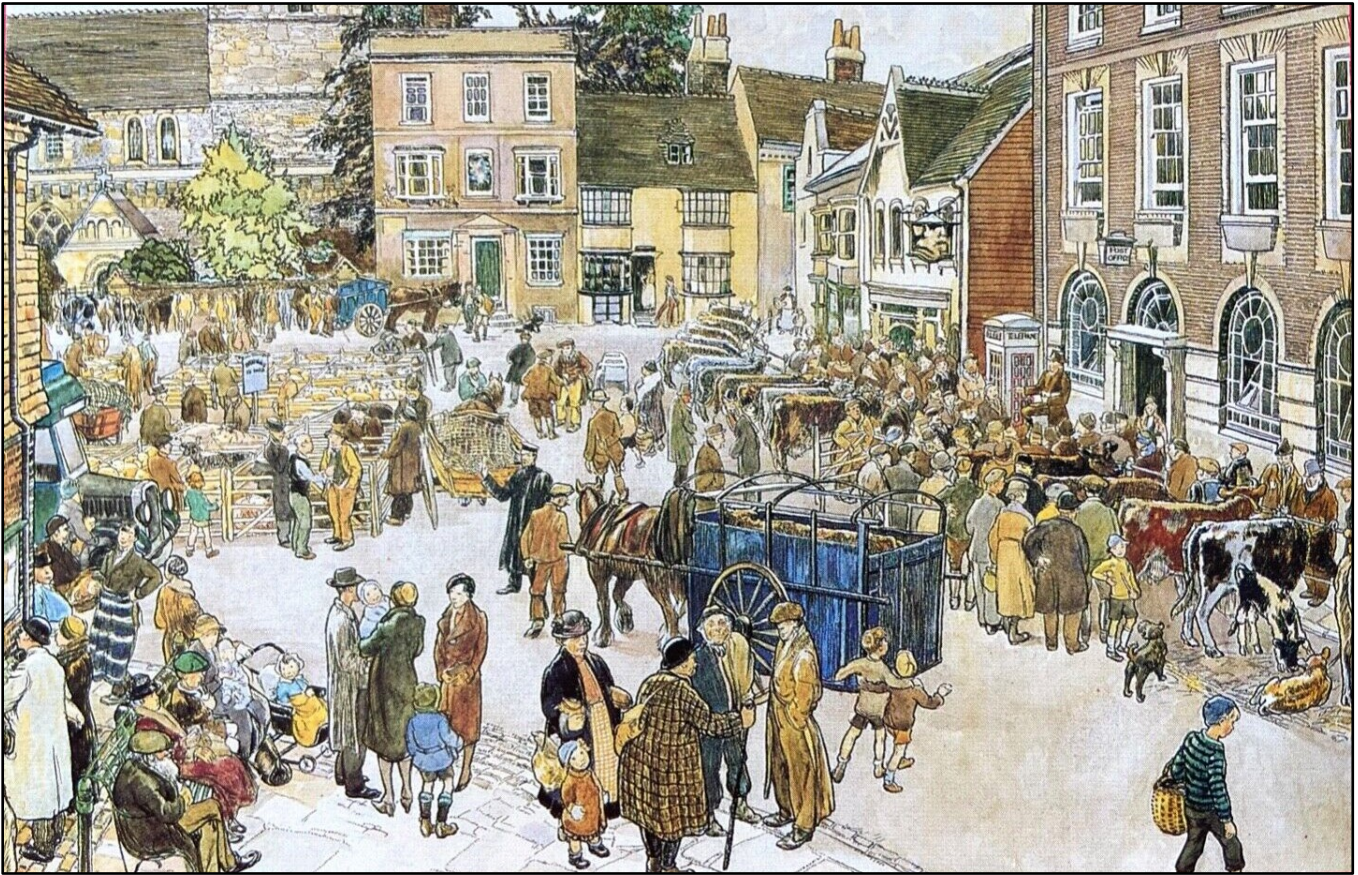
Local History look at the defence of PORTSMOUTH in earlier days.

On Friday 2nd February, 2.00pm in Mountford Three, member John Dudin will be speaking about the defence of Portsmouth in earlier days. This talk will be a continuation of his previous talks on the subject. If you are a member of Local History please come along. If you are just an interested party please contact coordinator Reg Newnham via the web site and ask if there is room for you to attend as a guest. (There probably will be!) As at the last meeting, a tea break for refreshments and a chat is included.



Nostalgia

Yes, it is a sketch of Petersfield on Market day – Look at the dress, the mode of transport, the goods on sale and then tell me your idea of the actual year....



I read that, by law, you have to turn on your headlights when it's raining in Sweden. How the hell am I supposed to know if it's raining in Sweden?



WELL –

Still trying to get my head around the fact that ‘Take Out’ can mean food, dating, or murder.

The older I get, the more I understand why roosters just scream to start their day.

You know you’re over 70 when you have ‘upstairs ibuprofen’ and ‘downstairs ibuprofen’.

How did doctors come to the conclusion that exercise prolongs life, when.....the rabbit is always jumping but only lives for around two years, and ...the turtle that doesn’t exercise at all, lives over 200 years.

If only vegetables smelled as good as bacon.

I woke up this morning determined to drink less, eat right, and exercise. But that was four hours ago when I was younger and full of hope.

The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren’t a robot.

When a kid says “Daddy, I want mommy” that’s the kid version of “I’d like to speak to your supervisor”.

It’s weird being the same age as old people.

Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say CLOSE ENOUGH.

You know you are getting old when friends with benefits means having someone who can drive at night.

Weight loss goal: To be able to clip my toenails and breathe at the same time.

Some of my friends exercise every day. Meanwhile I am watching a show I don’t like because the remote fell on the floor.

For those of you that don’t want Alexa or Siri listening in on your conversation, they are now making a male version....it doesn’t listen to anything.

Someone said, “Nothing rhymes with orange.” I said, “No, it doesn’t.”

The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The realist adjusts his sails.

There’s a fine line between a numerator and a denominator. Only a fraction of people will find this funny.

Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are.

I have many hidden talents. I just wish I could remember where I hid them.

Apparently exercise helps you with decision-making. It’s true. I went for a run this morning and decided I’m never going again.

All contributions for the next newsletter please,

to: alanborrow1@gmail.com

Please note the new email address!