



## JULY NEWSLETTER

**Our Chairman Tim announces:**

**That Rod Lipscombe has agreed to stand for the vacant Vice-Chairman position!**

**So I thought that an interview was in order!**

Ed:, [Hello Rod, Great news to hear that you are to be our next Vice Chairman, how did Tim persuade you?](#)

Very gently, I couldn't work out if my arm was being twisted or not. Seriously, we had an interesting conversation about the role and I found it something I would like to do.

Ed: [We all really enjoyed your talk at the AGM telling us about your "MASTERMIND" experience! Thank you so much and have you thought of a new speciality subject "Ems Valley u3A – Nought to over 500 members in 17 years"](#)

I think the BBC might deem that too large a subject. But, as I said at the talk, I have no intention of trying again.



*Left: Rod and Sarah relax on the Silversea Silver Moon last September.*

Ed: [You may have forgotten that you \(or Sarah\) were the 500th member of Ems Valley u3a?](#)

No, we haven't forgotten. It was good for us because we were instantly (and briefly) "famous", which was a good ice-breaker as we had not long moved to Emsworth.

Ed: [Without constant plugging, U3A membership has – nationally – been waning because of Covid but we stride on....](#)

We were, and are, very impressed with the number of groups within Ems Valley U3A . Our

limited experience of other U3As was not so positive. We have found Ems Valley U3A to be very friendly as well, which has helped us settle in.

Ed: [I know that you have not had a lot of time to consider the new job, but any plans, any ideals?](#)

Apart from the number of groups, I am impressed at how well Ems Valley is organised and run. I hope that I can help keep up that good work. .

Ed: [Which groups are you currently a member of, I know that I see you at "Ancient Rome"](#) .

Yes, Ancient Rome and also Ancient Greece - is there a theme there? Also, with Sarah, Wine 5. All areas of great interest to me. Perhaps, in time, I might consider other groups as well but I have plenty to keep me occupied at the moment.

Ed: **Tell us what you do nowadays outside of U3A?**

There are a number of things I am involved with and enjoy. Sarah and I have been fortunate to be able to visit many parts of the world and we are still planning to do more. The most important thing I do is my role as a Presiding Justice in the Family Court. I am on the Sussex Bench and sit in Brighton, Worthing and Horsham. The work is interesting and rewarding although it can be distressing at times. Our focus is always on what is in the best interests of the welfare of the children. Previously, I sat in Kent and had to retire at the end of 2021 as I reached 70. Fortunately for me, early in 2022 the retirement age for judges and magistrates was raised to 75 and I was able to "un-retire" and join the Sussex Bench.

Ed: **We all have our own idea of what U3A means to each one of us, how do you see it as an organisation for those "no longer in full time employment"?**

I do not think it will be much of a surprise if I say that the most important aspects are sociability and the opportunity to continue learning.

Ed: **Would Sarah like to give us her take on your "new take"?**

From the beginning, Sarah said I would probably get more involved with the U3A - it looks like she was proved right. She is always supportive of me.

Ed: **You recently moved to Emsworth. Did you know the area beforehand?**

Our daughter and her family moved here a few years ago, so we had some idea. As well as that, for about eight years in the late 1970s and early 1980s I was a teacher at the then Chichester High School for Girls and I lived in North Bersted. I played hockey for Bognor Hockey Club. When we played away games to the west we would often drop in for a post match beer (or two!) at the Sussex Brewery. By a quirk of fate that pub is just a few minutes walk from where we now live.

Ed: **And what treasured article will you be taking with you to that desert island, apart from the Mastermind gong!**

If we follow the rules of the radio programme that would have to be a record or a book. In keeping with the Mastermind theme I would take the complete M Pamplemousse novels - on a desert island I think I would be in need of a good laugh.

## **Tales of Travellers from Ems Valley!**

This interest group has been in existence for nearly thirteen years. In the early days of our u3a we asked members to list their ideas for interest groups. One of the most popular suggestions was "Travellers Tales"! BUT IT NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND! I forget the name of the lady who was the main supporter but I remember that she lived in Nile Street or School Lane and I think that she was on the committee.

The members who had expressed interest numbered more than any other projected group, but for two or three years it did not manage to start. (I think that there were forty plus members who had expressed interest). The idea was two fold. For a member to present his or her vacation trip in slide or powerpoint presentation form so that other members could learn about that country or holiday area. You attend as a "lecturer" or as a "student" - the very ethos of many of our interest groups!

(but everyone has a travellers tale to tell if you really cast your mind!)

But there was to be a constant quality – we would show the warts and all! The accent was always to be on the "Tales" as much as the Travel destination.

The lady I mention above did eventually get the group going but not for long – she moved away! I was busy on committee at that time but thought that it was such a shame that there was so much support for this idea and no leader to get hold of it and give it a good shake! So I volunteered. I thought that we would break new ground and

have an evening meeting, the first time that this had been tried. I even suggested that we bring eats, nibbles and drink to make the whole evening swing! The latter failed miserably!



But members were definitely interested in the idea, and the group met continuously through each winter every subsequent year with meetings in October, November, January, February, March and April.

A meeting consisted of two presentations and the net was spread far and wide, from this country to the Antipodes and from Eastern mysteries to the wild west! We even had countries that we had never heard off featured. It's fair to say that they were all pretty safe though, as members managed to get back to Emsworth in every case.....

A few years ago, Peter Goldfarb took over from me, and the group has continued to flourish. Membership was always healthy and an average meeting would comprise of 25 – 30 attendees. Now Peter wishes to hand over to another and we

have some seventy seven members listed under the Travellers Tales group membership! We need a leader to take this group forward! We have just come through the Covid epidemic period and members are beginning to travel again. Let's get this group back on the road!

**Your editor**

## **STEM TALK METEORITES!**

For our June meeting STEM had a fascinating talk on Meteorites by Andrew Morse, a true specialist in the field. He's collected many specimens to add to those gathered world-wide by others, a record of which is maintained by the Open University. He designed instruments for the Beagle II Mars Lander and also for the more recent Rosetta Probe which landed on a comet.

The talk covered the various types of meteorites that exist and how the study of them contributes to our knowledge of the origin of the Universe and its evolution.

Andrew managed to simplify a very complex subject into information we could understand – mostly! - and we heard that by studying the various findings of rock the scientists can now be sure of the true age of the Solar System and how the planets were formed. According to their composition scientists can tell where the rocks come from – Mars? The Moon?

This skill and knowledge is now also used to identify whether whisky has been made in Scotland or Japan – the Scots are very keen on protecting their brand!

What to do if you find a meteorite in your garden? You can keep it, it's yours. But pray it falls on, and makes a big dent in, your car – then you can sell the car for silly money to scientists mad on meteorites! We heard that's what happens.....



The chances are not quite so remote – in 2023 there were 1,284,700 known meteorites in the asteroid belt, a number which is increasing rapidly as the equipment to track them improves.

Andrew even brought some meteorite specimens (including Mars rock) for our hands-on examination – and they were far heavier than they appeared.



A really interesting talk on something most of us had known nothing about.

**Pam Palmer**

## **Astronaut spotted on church carving 'dating back to 16th century'**

I noticed this headline in a nation daily last week! It is amazing the lengths that the press will go to cobble together a story! It read:

“Social media users have discovered a carving of an astronaut on a Spanish church from the 12th century. The Cathedral of Salamanca is two churches joined together. One dates back to the 12th century and the other is from the 16th century. Over the years, tourists have turned their attention to one unique carving, posing the question of how someone already knew about modern-day astronauts. Some believed it to be evidence that time travel existed, with one writing: Astronaut at Salamanca Cathedral. This statue is affirmed as absolute proof of time travel. Another now-deleted Facebook post read: Experts have been unable to explain this statue, which was found in a church that was built in the 1600s, the statue appears to be showing a man wearing a modern astronaut suit, including air tubes and a helmet.”



I remember very clearly, on the Wine Appreciation tour of Ribera del Duero in June 2014, that we spent a day in the beautiful city of Salamanca, Western Spain. Yes, we did see the said gargoyle of a modern day spaceman around the doorway of the cathedral! It was explained to us by the guide: A Stone mason with a clear sense of humour had carved the modern day gargoyle ( and mounted it in prominent position) to get a reaction. It has only taken that daily paper some 20 years to catch on.....

**Alan Borrow**

## **More early Steamers....**

Following my talk titled “The Ship that would not die – The SS Great Britain” at the monthly meeting, member Jim Day has sent me some memories of his forebears who were in the Ship Building business in Southampton. It makes some fascinating reading Jim – thanks so much! Those early steamers cut quite a dash, and all this happened just down the road!

They read:

“When my great, great grandfather, Charles Day (1772-1849), retired from the East India Company in 1816, aged 44, he settled in the up and coming industrial port of Southampton. He had made his money trading in spices whilst working for the East India Company in Sumatra and had somehow managed to survive the rigours of the Sumatran climate. It was notorious for ill health and early death. Southampton had always been an area of small scale wooden ship and yacht building serving the local community. In the 1830s it began to change from a small seaside town, popular with elegant society, into a thriving industrial and commercial town that strove to become the Liverpool of the south! This was as a result of a series of changes in the ship building industry which saw the introduction of the use of iron and the marine steam engine.

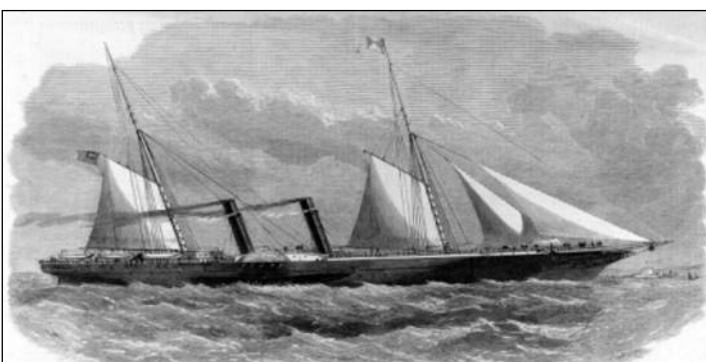
In 1834, William Allcroft Summers, who owned a small engineering business in Southampton involved in marine and locomotive steam engineering, was in need of an injection of capital and the local banking firm of Grant and Maddison introduced him to Charles Day. This was the start of a partnership which was to become the ship building company of Day Summers and Co. and which lasted until 1929.

The main emphasis of the business in the early days was the construction of paddle steamers for the local ferry services. The firm soon moved to a more suitable site on the river Itchen near Northam Bridge. The river Itchen flows into Southampton Water on the east side near the entrance to the Solent. It was here that they were to build larger ships for a period of almost a hundred years, - ranging from tug boats to passenger liners and luxury steam yachts, one for the King of Siam. Throughout the 1840s the business gathered momentum.

On 14 October 1840 the launching of the paddle steamer *The Pride of the Water*, 49.5 tons (later renamed *Ruby*) was announced. She was built for the South-Western and Isle of Wight Steam Navigation Company. Another Day Summers local ferry steamer, about which some details survive, is the *Emerald* (the second local steamer with this name), launched from the yard on 22 July 1857.

She was sent on her way by Miss Elizabeth Lamb, the daughter of Andrew Lamb, the engineer superintendent of the P&O Company in

Southampton. *Emerald* was described as an ‘elegant and clipper looking paddle steamer’ fitted with a single mast, smack-rigged and with a straight stem and an unadorned semi elliptical counter. Day and Summers involvement with the construction of local steamers continued until the eventual closure of the yard in 1929. The last ship constructed by the firm was the *PS Princess Elizabeth* launched in 1927. **Above right: *PS Princess Elizabeth* 1927., pictured at Dunkirk.**



The *PS Princess Elizabeth*, the only ship still existing today built by Day and Summers, is now a ‘hospitality vessel’ at Dunkirk. She took part in the evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk during the war whilst in the service of the Red Funnel line. She evacuated over 1,600 personnel in four trips and survived relatively unscathed.

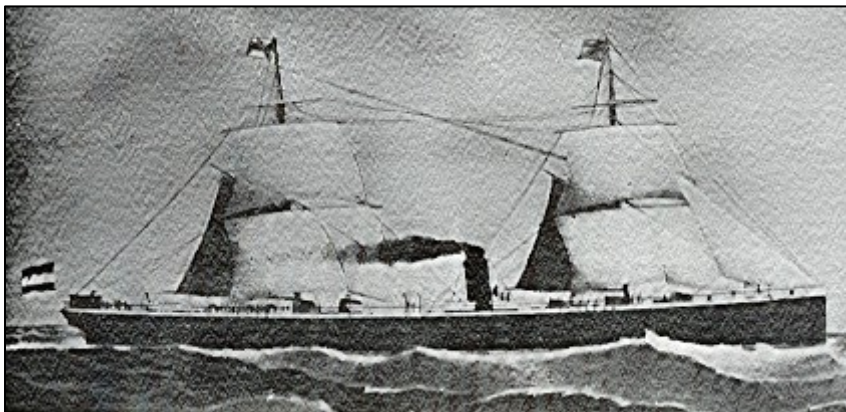
The presence of the P&O Line and the Union Castle line in Southampton was of major importance to the history of the town. Day and Summers lost no time in acquiring orders from the new shipping lines who were using the rapidly expanding port facilities. For P&O, the firm constructed the SS Aden followed by the Northam of 1,330 tons. **The SS Aden in 1856 is pictured above left.** She carried 112 first class, and 22 second class passengers, and in 1869, carried official guests from Marseilles to Port Said for the formal opening of the Suez Canal. Then followed the paddle steamer, Syria in 1863 and the Surat, a screw steamer, of 2,578 tons in 1866 (a half-model of which is in the Science Museum). The year 1869 saw the construction of the Hindostan, the second P&O ship of that name, and at 3,113 tons she was the largest ship yet launched from the Northam yard. **Seen here on the right.**



The Royal Mail Company also chose the port of Southampton as its headquarters for the Mail Service and on 7 September 1869, Day Summers launched the RMS Nile. She was of 3,021 tons and during her trials attained the speed of 15.5 knots. She was the last vessel built with the old type single expansion engine and was acquired by the Union Mail Company in 1890 to be renamed Roman. She lasted only a year in this service and was scrapped in 1891. The Union and Castle Lines have a connection with Southampton that goes back some 120 years. In 1863 Day Summers completed the liner Saxon for the Union Line, the second ship of that name owned by the company. Her

maiden voyage to the Cape set a new record of 31 days which she lowered two years later to the new record of 28 days.

In 1864, the firm constructed the Holstein for the Hamburg America Line, which a year later was followed by an even larger ship, the Allemania of 2,665 gross tons. **SS Allemania is pictured on the left.** She left Southampton on her maiden voyage on 20 September 1865,



reaching New York on 1st October. She left New York again on 14 October, reaching Southampton on 25 October. The transatlantic crossing time was reducing by the year!"

**Ed:** My SS Great Britain talk referred in passing, to Brunel's last great liner, the SS Great Eastern, a goliath of the seas! On her maiden voyage from the Thames, she had a boiler explosion mishap, killing five crew members and causing her to put into Southampton. The Day Summers yard were entrusted with the repairs on that occasion. Some say that the news of this accident led to the stroke from which Brunel died at the early age of 53!

## Classical Music Group

The group meets monthly, current frequency is the 2nd Thursday in the month 10:00 – 12:00, I seek views and opinions on the preferred day / time that the group meet?

The purpose of the group is to share musical passions and knowledge, bringing to the group music in CD / Vinyl / music files on a device, what you want to share or promote to peoples attention.



The focus can be by Composer / Instrument / Type of classical Music / What would you take on desert island discs and Why? / A piece of music e.g. An Opera / A Ballet / A Symphony.

The first meeting will decide the agenda for the next coming months of meetings.

So bring your musical passions and listen and discuss with like minded friends, what could be more enjoyable?

**David Frost**



## **Wine Appreciation Group 4 visit the Ashling Park Vineyard**

On Thursday, 15th June, as a change from meeting in a small hall, the WAS-4 group spread their wings and went to the Ashling Park Vineyard.

We were met by Bernard who welcomed us and explained the history and development of the vineyard in lovely bright sunshine. Needless to say, we were soon sampling their Rosé made from the 'Champagne' grapes, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay. We then had a tour of the vineyard taking in the other various grape varieties.

Back to base we then sampled 3 of their sparkling 'method traditional' wines (Bernard said we must not say C.....e!!) and a sample of their Gin. Beautifully explained and followed by sharing platters of various meats and cheeses – it was a great experience!!



Gail Gardner, **pictured at the bottom of this article**, is the beating heart of the Ashling Park Estate. You can find Gail in almost every corner of this wonderful estate, from picking the grapes to packing orders, leading tours to holding businesses meetings. Gail sowed the seeds for Ashling Park, both figuratively and literally and now she is as much part of the estate as the grapes themselves.

She is managing director of this prestigious wine estate, and Gail's work ethic, we read, is quite amazing. She shuts her laptop in the evenings just before she shut her eyes, and does the



opposite in the morning, but she loves every minute of it. Gail got her start working in the family business, C.I.A. at Waterlooville, Each department had entire teams manning them from purchasing, credit control, sales, HR, I.T and accounts. However, at Ashling Park she quickly found herself taking on all these roles all at once. This gave Gail a full understanding of every element of Ashling Park. The Marketing side was the easiest for Gail, having a Masters in

Marketing and 20 years experience, but the other roles did involve some head scratching. “Now thankfully, I have a great team behind me to help in all those areas, and my good old Dad has been a great sounding board, although we don’t always agree.” The development at Ashling Park estate has been a painstaking experience. Situated in the South Downs National Park, there were many restrictions, surveys and reports and that’s not even accounting for COVID-19 that we managed to weather! Gail is adamant that ‘these things are sent to try us’, and now there are now lodges and tasting rooms, a restaurant, a gin factory and an award winning mature vineyard!

## OUR ARBORETUM IS OPEN

**Members will remember Brendan Gibb-Grey talking to us at our monthly meeting some few months ago about a new Memorial Arboretum.**

So exactly where is Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum on the 42-acre Hampshire Farm Meadows, situated to the north of Emsworth?

Now there can be no mistake. Beautifully crafted signage, designed by local artist Marian Forster and funded by Emsworth Residents Forum, was unveiled by the Mayor of Havant Rosy Raines, on Saturday, June 24.

Among those in attendance were her consort, husband Graham Raines, members of the Forum, Tree Wardens, a working party of Hampshire Farm Meadows volunteers led by chairman Neil Mant and representatives of local government and residents.

The Memorial Arboretum can be found at the start of what, in a few years’ time, will be an avenue of trees sited towards the Long Copse Lane end.

These are still saplings but, in all, the five-year plan is to plant 250-plus trees in memory and celebration of local residents.

The brainchild of Emsworth Tree Wardens, the scheme is being monitored by a group of trustees. An area of just over six acres on the 42 acres of public park and meadow land adjacent to Redlands Grange has been donated by Havant Council. Care and maintenance will be carried out by an army of volunteers led by Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadows.

The first tree was planted there by astronaut Tim Peake, a Westbourne resident, in November.

- Our picture shows the new sign with Mayor of Havant Rosy Raines and committee members of Emsworth Residents’ Forum which paid for the sign. They are, from left, Chris Fuller, Jill Millar, Rosie, Chris Hallam, Brendan Gibb-Gray, chair of the Trustees and Ellie Turnbull, the majority of who are also members of our u3a!

- Photo Credit David Harris



**Eve Fuller**



# Roman roads were straight – Why?

Ex Chairman, Richard Swaine spoke to the Ancient Rome interest group on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June and gave us a comprehensive review of the Roman road system in Britannia, the name they gave us after the conquest. This name referred to all of the island of Great Britain, south of the “fluid” frontier with Caledonia (Scotland). Most of the



Roman network was surveyed and built from scratch, with the aim of connecting key points by the most direct possible route, only sometimes paying lip service to Celtic tracks. The roads were all paved (metalled) to permit heavy horse drawn wagons to be used in all seasons and weather. He told us that a Roman road would always feature ditches or drains either side and a distinct camber to allow water run off, as well as the width being an impressive nine metres wide!

Most of the network was complete by 180 AD. And the main purpose was to allow the rapid movement of troops and military supplies. It was also vital for trade and the transport of goods. Roman roads remained in use as trunk

roads for centuries after the Romans withdrew from Britain in 410 AD. Unfortunately, systematic construction of paved highways did not resume in England until around the 18th century.

So why were they straight? Geoff Wiggins said that he was taught at school that the reason was to enable the Romans to see where they were going! Others say it was so that they could see the enemy ahead and not be ambushed, but Richard pointed out that a straight road was the shortest distance between two points!

Carole Sinden surprised us all by coming complete with her Ivan D. Margery well documented book, “Roman Roads in Britain”! Margery was an acknowledged authority on the subject. I wonder what reason he would have given for the almost total lack of bends?



‘Stane Street’ (coloured purple on the map) runs 57 miles in a straight line from Chichester to London and is still a main route over the South Downs and through many villages that have links to smaller Roman settlements. Some of us had visited a section a few weeks ago, near Slindon.

The A46 from Lincoln to Leicester is a resurfaced Roman road, along with the B4455 across Warwickshire. A large section of the A5 was known as Watling Street (coloured orange), and it still links the port of Dover to London, and from London its path heads towards Wales. The subject matter led to multiple questions afterwards and this in turn led to an interesting discussion time. Richard Galloway, our leader had to work hard in the second half of the meeting to maintain order, such was the interest of all 25 who attended!

**Alan Borrow**

**Thought for the day: The Roman road system served to link their most important military places and their roads allowed troops to move efficiently. But they also enabled officials and messengers to travel swiftly, using the Roman imperial communications system later known as the ‘cursus publicus’. I wonder if we should equally publicise the ‘cursus potholeus and the ‘cursus emworthius roadworkius redlightius’..... Ed.**





The closest I get to a spa day is when steam from the dishwasher smacks me in the face.



A guy sits down at the bar and orders drink after drink. "Is everything okay, pal?" the bartender asks. "My wife and I got into a fight and she said she isn't talking to me for a month!" Trying to put a positive spin on things, the bartender says, "Well, maybe that's kind of a good thing. You know, ..a little peace and quiet?" "Yeah. But today is the last day."

Paddy was walking down a street when he saw his buddy Mick driving a brand new Mercedes. Mick pulled up to him with a wide grin. "Mick, where'd you get that car?" "Sue gave it to me" Mick replied. "She gave it to you? I knew she was kinda sweet on ya lad, but a new Merc?" "Well, Paddy, let me tell you what happened... We were driving out on a country road at 6 in the morning, in the middle of nowhere, Sue pulled off and headed in to the woods, she parked the car, got out, threw off all her clothes and said, "Mick, take whatever you want". So I took the car!" "You're a smart man!" says Paddy. Them clothes would never have fitted you".

Tony Carter sends this amusing piece on Paraprosdokians, you all know what they are:

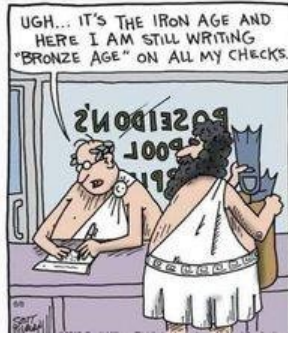
The first time I heard about paraprosdokians, I liked them.

Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous. (Sir Winston Churchill loved them)

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
  2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you ...but it's still on my list.
  3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak
  4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
  5. We never really grow up -- we only learn how to act in public.
  6. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
  7. Knowledge, is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
  8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
  9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
  10. In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of an emergency, notify..." I answered "a doctor.
  11. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
  12. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice
  13. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure
  14. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
  15. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian, any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
  16. You're never too old to learn something stupid
  17. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find someone older than me. Sadly this is true!!!
- Spread the Laughter, Share the Cheer, Let's be Happy while we're here.



Hold on Jack ....the council are on their way .



when i was a kid, my parents would always say "Excuse my French" just after a swear word... I'll never forget my first day at school when my teacher asked if any of us knew any French.

All contributions for the next newsletter please to:  
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