



Blackwater Valley Newsletter

Volume 16 Edition 10

October 2023



Chat from the Chair

We recently took a few days out to the West Country – Blue Anchor Bay which is close to Dunster and Minehead. We stayed in an old pub called *The Smugglers* which is over Four hundred years old and has had an extremely varied history!

Based on the edge of Exmoor, we were able to explore this beautiful well known area and had many sightings of the famous Exmoor ponies.

Now, I want to thank Phil for stepping into the breach at our September meeting. The original speaker was unable to come at the last minute and fortunately Phil was willing to bring his 2024 programme forward – thank you again Phil—a cheque for £50 has been sent to Parkinson's UK following your most interesting talk.

Cathy Airey will shortly be contacting those interested in joining 'The Gardening Group' (now she has moved house). She wishes to meet up, explore and discuss what interests members will be seeking. Cathy was willing and has now been co-opted on to the Committee —many thanks Cathy.

Our guest Speaker for Thursday, 19th October will be Bobbie Darbyshire with her informative talk – WHERE DO NOVELISTS GET THEIR IDEAS FROM? See her short preview in this Newsletter.

I look forward to meeting up with you on the 19th October.

Regards
BARBARA



Forthcoming Meetings

October 19th

Bobbie Darbyshire: *“Where do novelists get their ideas from?”*

Our speaker won the 2008 fiction prize at The National Academy of Writing and The New Delta Review Creative Nonfiction Prize 2010.

She has written a number of novels, her latest being The Posthumous Adventures of Harry Whittaker! Bobbie has been a film extra, cabinet minister’s private secretary, volunteer adult-literacy teacher plus holding a number of other interesting posts.

November 16th

David Allen: *“Merry Christmas Mr Dickens”*

December 21st

The Christmas Party: *“Carols and Entertainment”*

January 18th

Chris Davis: *Ascot Brewery Today*

February 15th

Paul Whittle: *The Venetian Connection*

March 21st

Mel Rees: *[Further thoughts].*

April 18th

Sarah M. Slater: *The Ghosts of Hampton Court*

May 16th

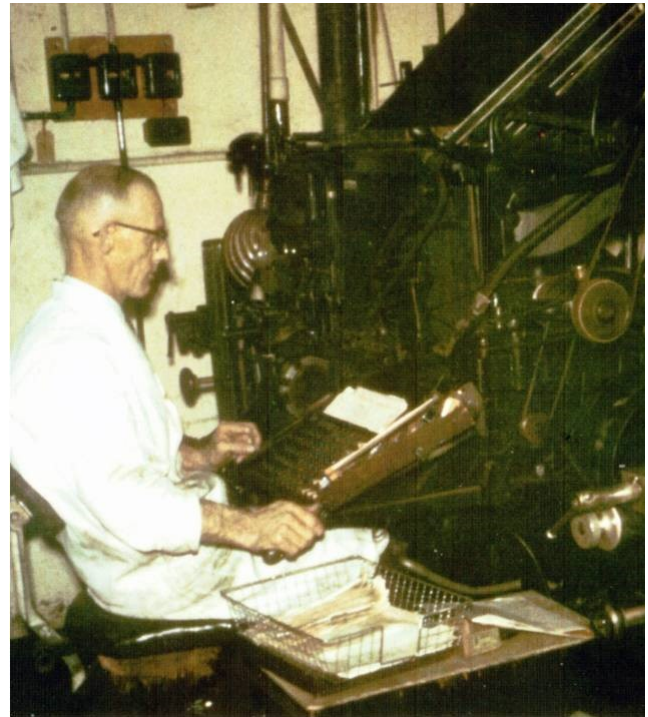
Paul Barwick: *‘White Mouse’ Nancy Wake*

June 20th

Malcolm Wells: *‘So Far So Good [2]*

Our last speaker

There was an air of surprise amongst the u3a audience as Phil Rowling stepped up to the mike to deliver his March talk six months ahead of schedule; with some obviously disappointed members realising that their virtual “walk” through The Savill Garden with its beautiful planting and interesting collections had disappeared like an early frost on a September lawn (when did we last see one of those?).



A late substitution by team manager Barbara, doing her best in trying circumstances following the late withdrawal by the advertised speaker and a glaring hole in the Thursday programme; kept most of her balls in the air whilst Phil padded out the afternoon with some smoke and mirrors and a history lesson starting with Johannes Gutenberg and ending with our Seattle favourites Gates and Allen.

In fifty minutes or so 600 years of history, roughly equivalent to the reign of the Plantagenets to the Windsors, is perhaps a little ambitious even for Phil but he soldiered on bringing in some personal history for light relief, one could almost say comic, if considering his abrupt departure from school in 1956 and it was good to recall the John Bull Printing Outfit (lots of hands went up for ownership) and the *Eagle Comic*.

I'll give him the benefit of the doubt and say that we must all now be familiar with Upper and Lower Case and the differences between Letterpress and Lithography; and that he bears a remarkable likeness to his father pictured above.

EDITOR

Catching up with the Groups

MOTO

A MOTO first! Irene both suggested and hosted a Macmillan coffee morning and Bring & Buy stall, an enjoyable and well attended event which raised £18, everyone was very generous. The remaining items on the Sales Table were taken to the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice shop in Camberley. (This charity had cared for and supported four of our MOTO members in the past). Many thanks to Irene for her brilliant idea and for all her hard work.

In October we will be having Sunday lunch at *The Cricketers* in Yateley.

JUDITH SHAW (Phone: 0118 973 2724 Mobile: 07508 724876
e-mail: jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk)



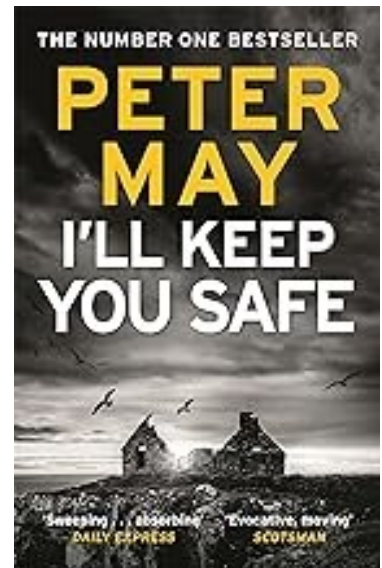
The next meeting will be in the Gallery of the Tythings on Tuesday 24th October starting at **14.30 hrs.**

The subject matter is : Garages

Contact: Philip Rowling 01252 870879
rowlingphilip@gmail.com

The Book Group

Maybe by the time you read this month's review the clocks would have gone back and we will be hurtling towards winter and the winter equinox. Soon I will be re-commencing feeding the birds in the garden. I stop for the summer based on my theory that there is enough free wild food available for them.



But now onto book matters, October's read is *I'll Keep you Safe* by Peter May. Niamh and Ruairidh (translates to Rory, apparently!) own the Hebridean company Ranish Tweed, bit like Harris Tweed but softer and more luxurious. Whilst on a trip to Paris with his wife, Rory and his maybe lover get blown up! Poor Niamh then begins to look back on her life with Rory to try and discover (1) his affair and (2) who held a grudge against her husband. The police rule out terrorism, so is it murder?

Niamh looks back on her life in Scotland with Rory. Meeting him when she was very young and both of them setting up the company Ranish Tweed. If you like a book with plenty of description about life and the countryside on the Outer Hebrides then this is the book for you. The New York Times said "Peter May is a writer I would follow to the ends of the earth" Not certain I would be that enthusiastic, I enjoyed the book immensely. *I'll Keep You Safe* has a very surprising ending and one I was not expecting!

Next meeting is Thursday 26th October at 2pm.

WENDY DAUVEN

On a Musical Note



How time is flying by! We have only two more singing sessions at the Tythings before Christmas.

At the Tythings:

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON 1st NOVEMBER 2pm—3.30pm

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON 29th NOVEMBER 2pm—4.00pm

***** Songsters' Pre-Christmas Soiree!**

Songs, seasonal refreshments, catch up with friends and
mystery lucky dip***

With Alexa at 7 Sandhurst Lane:

WEDNESDAY 6th DECEMBER : (Full details to follow).

I hope to see you there.

We have a Winner!

The winner of last Month's Draw pulled expertly by our speaker Phil Rowling and showing absolutely no favouritism was Jean Huckle now known to be looking forward to giving up her day job at the Palace



The Art Group

The Art Group meets at the Derby Green and Frogmore Social Hall, Mondays at 11am until 1pm. Feel free to come along and join us if you feel creative and to see if it would suit you.

Suggested topics for October are 1) a harbour scene with boats, 2) a supermarket scene, and 3) a jigsaw to be created in sections by the whole group.

Contact; Martin Brooks 01252 871333 or thebrooksies73@gmail.com

Walking Together

Some input from the Walking Together Group

We had a high number of members away and unavailable in September so Romy decided to cancel her walk which she had agreed to lead when no one else volunteered.

The October walk will be led by Min starting at Finchampstead Church and pausing at the California Country Park café for refreshments towards the end.

We'll meet in the Potley Hill School car park at 0930 for 0945 start as usual.

MIN GARDINER

Out and About 1

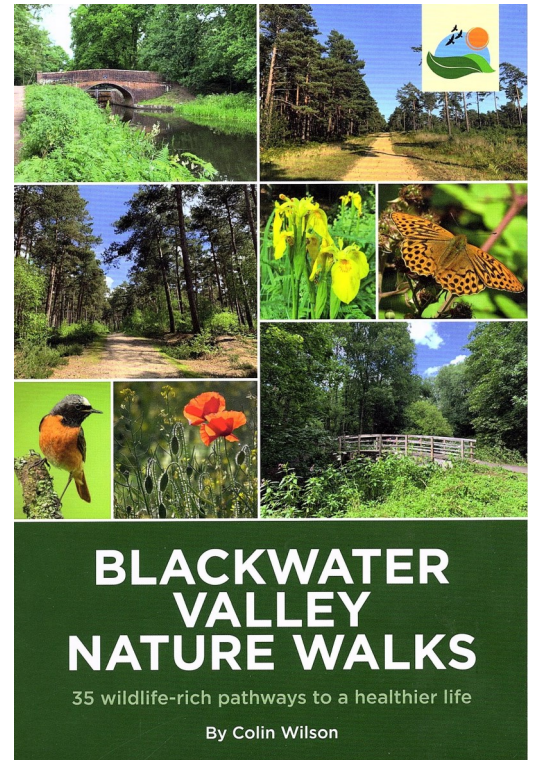
Back in June my youngest daughter bought me Colin Wilson's Blackwater Valley Nature Walks and my Sunday walks changed considerably. Previously we had been playing a simple game with venues such as Wildmoor Nature Reserve and South Hill Park more or less under one hour – 40 minutes to be accurate. Mr Wilson's excellent publication opened our horizons and with our increasing endurance we took on Grades: **1** very easy, **2** Moderate and **3** Harder.

However, as is the nature of the beast we became fixated on Walk No. 33: Darby Green, Yateley Common, Hawley Common and Shepherd Meadows. This involved a start at the Darby Green Centre and walking via the footbridge over the Reading Road to Yateley Common and up to the A30 and beyond. The whole walk as printed is a **3** difficult and the distance is 8 miles.

That was well out of our range at the time so we decided to split the walks into area as we found out early on how ignorant we were of our immediate local area.



Minley Manor Home Farm Foxlease



We have subsequently spent eleven Sunday's walking parts of the walk in detail especially Hawley Common and Minley Woods. We were amazed how frequently we came upon vistas of extraordinary delight.

A few weeks ago we found Foxlease Minley Manor Farm now mouldering beneath a cocoon on brambles and other invasive plants. We have researched the buildings and found an interesting story of deliberate decay and dereliction.

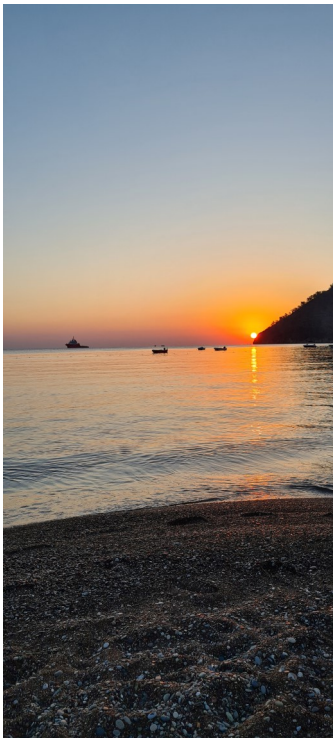
PHIL

Out and About 2

Out and About in Turkey

Two of my favourite things to do in Turkey are a visit to the local market and an early swim as the sun creeps over the horizon. I love to see the huge mounds of fresh, seasonal produce in the market alongside some of the more specialised stalls such as the honey stall with fresh combs, and the young man selling wooden spoons and chopping boards. Their inflation rate is shockingly high but visitors are cushioned from the worst of this as the exchange rate is also high

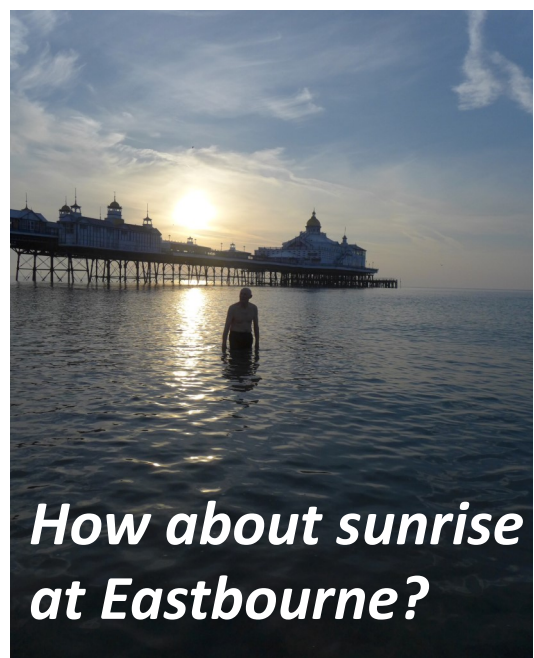
MIN



Out and About 3

One of my favourite things to do in Eastbourne is an early morning swim as the sun creeps over the pier.

PHIL



How about sunrise at Eastbourne?

About time for some laughs

Nominees for the Idiot of the World Award

(Part 2)

Number Three Idiot

Early this year, some Boeing employees on the airfield decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and home. Shortly after they took it for a float on the river, they noticed a Coast Guard helicopter coming toward them. It turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated when the raft was inflated.

They are no longer employed at Boeing.

Number Four Idiot

A motorist was unknowingly caught in an automated speed trap that measured his speed using radar and photographed his car. He later received in the mail a ticket for \$40 and a photo of his car. Instead of payment, he sent the police department a photograph of \$40. Several days later, he received a letter from the police that contained another picture, this time of handcuffs. He immediately mailed in his \$40.

Wise guy ... But you're still nominated.

(Part 3 next month)

Random thoughts

01. If a bottle of poison reaches its expiration date, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous
02. Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C?
03. Do twins ever realize that one of them is unplanned?
04. The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims".
05. Over 100 years ago, everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today, everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.
06. If people evolved from monkeys, why are monkeys still around?
07. Why is there a 'D' in fridge, but not in refrigerator?
08. As I've grown older, I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but pissing everyone off is a piece of cake!
09. I'm responsible for what I say, not for what you understand.
10. Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it the most never use it.
11. It's not my age that bothers me - it's the side effects.
12. As I watch this generation try and rewrite our history, I'm sure of one thing: it will be misspelled and have no punctuation.
13. As I've gotten older, people think I've become lazy. The truth is I'm just being more energy efficient.
14. Turns out that being a "senior" is mostly just Googling how to do stuff.
15. I want to be 18 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas.
16. There is no such thing as a grouchy old person. The truth is that once you get old, you stop being polite and start being honest.

How about a Quiz?

Autumn's here and the days grow short
But our monthly quiz is an indoor sport!

- 1) What is the most common name in the USA?
- 2) Where is the world's largest desert?
- 3) How many teeth does an adult human have?
- 4) What are animals that eat meat and plants called?
- 5) Which country has won the most world cups?
- 6) In what year did the Titanic sink?
- 7) Which real person inspired the creation of a Disney Princess?
- 8) What colour is a hippo's sweat?
- 9) What is a "Bottle-O" in Australia?
- 10) Who was the last Czar of Russia?
- 11) How many minutes in one week?
- 12) Which continent is in all 4 hemispheres?
- 13) What company was originally called Cadabra?
- 14) Which planet has the most gravity?
- 15) What is the state capital of New York?

Answers by Ellie Vait

Answers for September

How did you do?

Oh dear.

Toodle doo.

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1) When was the bicycle invented? | 1817 |
| 2) Which gas forms most of our atmosphere? | Oxygen |
| 3) Which actress was born Julia Wells? | Julie Andrews |
| 4) In which park is Princess Diana buried? | Althorp Park |
| 5) In which American state is Amarillo? | Texas |
| 6) Which river flows through Rome? | Tiber |
| 7) What is the nearest country to the North Pole? | Greenland |
| 8) What is a Moorish idol? | Tropical Fish |
| 9) Can the Australian Dingo bark? | No (it only howls) |
| 10) What is the common name for a Suricate? | Meercat |
| 11) The novel <i>Catch 22</i> was set in which war? | World War II |
| 12) Where did the Romans call Aquae Sulis? | Bath |
| 13) Which country is nearest to the island of Rhodes? | Turkey |
| 14) Eugenics is the study of what? | Selective breeding |
| 15) What is the largest castle in Wales? | Caerphilly |

Answers by Pop Overs

More from Martin

My Club lunch was on last Saturday,
We meet up each year through.
I had to catch the train to Ascot,
And change there for Waterloo.

A lot of people were waiting,
all wearing rugby shirts this year.
Bath was playing Harlequins,
At Twickenham it was clear.

The train was really crowded,
With blokes of every size.
I had to stand till Richmond!
Which wasn't very wise.
I'd put on my posh shoes, you see,
And hadn't broken them in.
By Waterloo I knew it!
I had a long trip home, coming.

I had a lovely time at luncheon,
With my pals from long ago.
With beers and vino sinking
And tales that always flow.
Somehow my feet felt better,
As I wobbled back to the train.
I changed again at Ascot
And got home without more pain.

It proves that sometimes meeting,
Yer old mates, does a world of good,
It can even cure stupidity.
I always knew it would!

Me printers gone up the spout!
 Now what is this all about?
 Yesterday 'twere going good,
 Now it's not working as it should!
 The scanning bit has stopped work!
 Is it just a minor quirk?
 It needs a WIA driver says the screen.
 Whatever's that? What do they mean?
 Technical stuff just aint my forte
 Never was, since I were forty!

OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER!



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Barbara Brooks	01252 871333	thebrooksies73@gmail.com
David Dickinson	01252 879056	daviddickinson9@btinternet.com
Marilynne Gardiner	01252 877510	xansamaz@aol.com
Carol Pascoe	01252 651872	capascoe@ntlworld.com
Sue Puxley	01276 513031	suepuxley@virginmedia.com
Philip Rowling	01252 870879	rowlingphilip@gmail.com
Meg Thomson	01276 33727	megtho@ntlworld.com

Group Meetings

	Venue	Time/date	Contact
Art	Darby Green and Frogmore Social Hall	Mondays 11:00 – 13:00	Martin Brooks thebrooksies73@gmail.com Phone: 01252 871333
Books	Private House	Last Thursday in the month 14:00	Wendy Dauven deedauven@gmail.com Phone: 01276 513984
Bowls (summer)	Hawley Bowls Club, Blackwater & Hawley Leisure Complex	Every Wednesday April to September 10:30 to 12:00	Dave Dickinson daviddickinson9@btinternet.com Phone: 01252 879056
Canasta	Private house	2 nd and 4 th Wednesdays 14:00	Clive Singer clive.singer1@gmail.com Phone: 07901 568126
MOTO, a group for members on their own	Arranged monthly	Various	Judith Shaw jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk Phone: 0118 9732724
Photography	The Tythings, Yateley	4th Tuesday of the month, 14:30	Phil Rowling rowingphilip@gmail.com Phone: 01252 870879
Rummikub	Private House	Tba	Lyn Sado sadlyn@ntlworld.com Phone: 01252 872221
Singing Group	The Tythings, Yateley	The first Wednesday of the month 14.00-15.30.	Barbara Brooks thebrooksies73@gmail.com Phone: 01252 871333
Various Sports Table Tennis, Curling	Frogmore Leisure Centre	Friday 13:00	Val Green greenvalley2043@gmail.com Phone: 07990584571
Walking Together (approx. 5 miles)	Meet in the Car Park at Potley Hill Campus	2nd 2 nd Thursday in every month 09.30 for 09.45 start.	Rosemary White romyandjohn@hotmail.com Phone: 01276 503813 Min Gardiner xansamaz@aol.com Phone: 07450256948