



# Blackwater Valley Newsletter

Volume 17 Edition 3

March 2024



## Venetian Connection

*Story page 4*

# Chat from the Chair

**I** do hope you enjoyed our 'February' trip to Venice as much as I did with our guest Paul Whittle.

Following Paul's most interesting and colourful presentation, I've been asked can he come again – Yes! Paul's booked for 2025.



Don't forget MEL REES will be with us on THURSDAY AFTER-NOON 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH. I look forward to seeing you there for another of Mel's lively talks!

You can catch up with all group activities as detailed in your Newsletter – there maybe a new interest waiting for you!

Regards BARBARA

## BOOK TABLE

**We've had another supply of interesting books and jigsaws donated to the Book Table, which appears to becoming a popular addition to our monthly meetings. All donations to the pot are going to club funds.**

# Forthcoming Meetings

**March 21st**

**Mel Rees:** *Further Thoughts*

*The ever popular Mel is back with more of his always humorous takes on life*

**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]"*.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR**

Annual subscriptions for 2024-25 are now due and should be paid by the end of this month.

**Club subscription remains: £12.**

**Monthly Draw: £10.**

Please pay by bank transfer if possible. Remember to notify Sue Puxley if you wish to participate in the monthly draw. Meg Thomson can supply bank details for payment. Contact details can be found on page 17 of this newsletter.

# Our last speaker

**O**n February 15<sup>th</sup> it was a welcome back to Paul Whittle with another of his fascinating illustrated talks: *The Venetian Connection*.

The title says it all and it was a history of Venice and more particularly the history of The Republic of Venice from 810 – 1797 roughly from a Byzantine start to the conquest by Napoleon.

Acquiring the “stolen” relics of St, Marks in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the city became a major sea power and trading city with a ship building industry supplying ships for the 1<sup>st</sup> Crusade [1096].

By the time of its most famous son Marco Polo, and his travels along the Silk Road to China in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the city was the major centre in the world for banking and trade.

During the renaissance period the city grew, becoming the printing capital of the world. After suffering some severe plagues and, with the rise of the European nations’ sea power, the city state was ripe for conquest when Napoleon appeared on the scene in 1797.

Today historic Venice and its canals are an UNESCO world heritage site, threatened by global warming, subsidence, pollution and its own popularity as a must-see destination for visitors in cruise ships.



# Catching up with the Groups

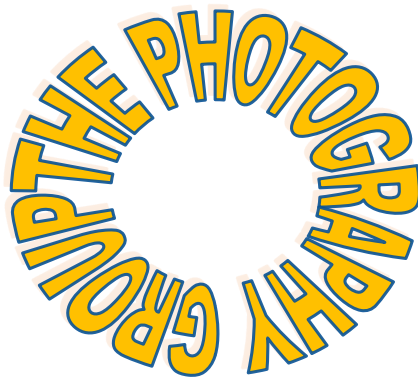
## MOTO

We enjoyed a very sociable Sunday lunch at “*The Cricketers*”, Yateley in February.

Next month we are visiting “*The Board Games Café*” in Yateley for a fun afternoon with coffee and cake.

Our next business meeting and lunch will take place in April at “*The White Lion*”, Yateley.

JUDITH SHAW (0118 973 2724, 07508 724876,  
email [jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk))



The next meeting of the Photography Group will be in the Gallery of the Tythings on Tuesday March 26th starting at 14.30 hrs.

The subject matter is: BRIGHT LIGHTS.

Contact: Philip Rowling 01252 870879  
[rowlingphilip@g.mail.com](mailto:rowlingphilip@g.mail.com)

# Short Walk Together

WITH CAROLE FOWLER AND DAVE TURNER

Following the washout of the walk earlier in the month, hopes were not high for the Short Walk on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

However, in a lull between rain showers, eleven member braved the weather and completed a circuit of Sandhurst's Snaprails Park just as the heavens opened.

Snaprails was once part of a Victorian estate, complete with orchard, tennis courts, and specimen trees. During the Second World War, local children went for boat rides after tea parties at the Working Men's Club in Wellington Road. Although the Victorian house no longer stands, remnants of its historic landscape remain, including specimen trees and the lodge at the end of the main drive.

Next month's Short Walk on 28th March starts at 10.00 am from the Allotments' car park in Swan Lane.



*Picture: Pat Dickinson*

# Walking Together

MIN GARDINER

Sadly the February walk was cancelled, walking for two hours in some torrential rain didn't seem like a fun prospect!

The walk on 14th March will see us visiting Old Basing for a walk of approximately five miles which takes us along stretches of the River Loddon and passes some of the remnants of the Civil War.

No big hills, no stiles and a lovely pub at the end. We will meet as usual in the Potley Hill school car park at 0930 for departure at 0945 .

## MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

Winner of last month's Prize Draw was Liz Chapleo who returned like a migrant bird ready for an English summer. We miss her during her winter absences and are always pleased when she comes home safely.

Most likely her money will be spent stocking up on sunblock or sessions at a tanning parlour,

You too could be in line for a chance to win this monthly life-changer but first you must contact our Sue Puxley to confirm joining.

Contact details on page 17 of this newsletter.



# On a Musical Note



Wednesday 2pm – 3.30pm 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 7 Willowford\*

Wednesday 2pm – 3.30pm 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 The Tythings

As previously mentioned, we are not a choir, we just sing for fun and health.

The next songsters' session will be at Phil Rowling's on 20<sup>th</sup> March as my location is unavailable due to extensive electrical work. I look forward to seeing you at Phil's, if it is possible for me to get away.

If you are free on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, it would be good to see you.

BARBARA

\*Note Phil's address: 7 Willowford, Yateley GU46 6HQ

[01252 870879]

## On a Musical Note 2

Our resident DJ Graham Sargent was missing from his rightful place leading our enthusiastic Singing Group at their monthly session of songs at the Tythings on 6<sup>th</sup> March on the Green.

His place was taken by Phil Rowling who luckily had a list of songs and music on a USB stick that Graham had prepared earlier.



*Pictures: David Sparkes*

# The Art Group

**T**he Art Group meets at the Frogmore and Darby Green Social Hall on Monday mornings between 11am and 1pm. All members are invited to come and join us if you fancy creating a bit of artwork.

Suggested subjects for this month are 'Spaghetti on a spoon', an 'abstract piece', 'daffodils' and sitting and standing figures.

Contact: Martin Brooks 01252 871333 or  
[thebrookies73@gmail.com](mailto:thebrookies73@gmail.com)

# Friday Sports

Contact Val Green: 07990 584571



*Picture: Pat Dickinson*

# The Book Group

**S**o here we are, apparently about to begin the meteorological Springtime. Well, I think the blossom and the bulbs know this. But us mere humans are wondering: “What is going on with our weather?”

Unlike last month’s complicated book, this month’s offering is the complete opposite.

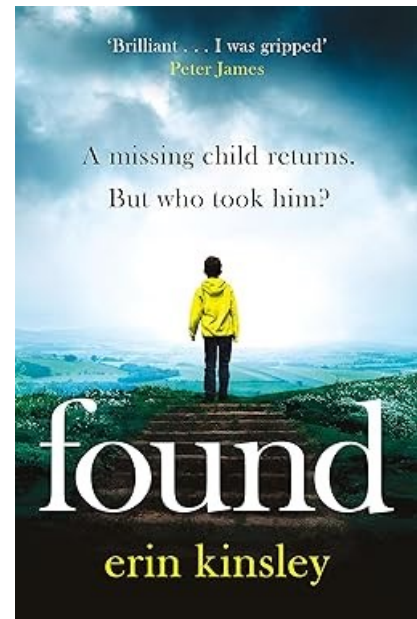
*Found* by Erin Kinsley is a very straight forward story line. A child goes missing, a few months later he is found. But where has he been, and who took him?

Sometimes it’s good to read a very simple, but compelling book. Ewan the child returns but is silent and traumatised. The investigating officers know that they must resolve this case before another child is taken.

Although what happens to Ewan during his kidnapping is clear, it is not described in any depth in the story. Which quite frankly in this day and age, makes quite a change.

It is not a comfortable read, especially from the parents’ point of view, as most of us can imagine. But definitely a very worthwhile and thoroughly good read. It’s a gold star from me.

Our next meeting is Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March when I know the sun will be shining.



Wendy Dauven  
Chris Bowen

# Canasta

**C**anasta is a game of cards for generally 4 to 6 players. Object of the game is to make a Canasta (7 cards of the same number). There are several variations of the game and can take up to 2 hours or more depending on the version played.

I have been approached by someone who would like to learn and ideally another couple of people would help establish a further group.

This is played in members' own houses on a rotating basis.

I'm willing to teach people with my partner's help.

If you're interested in learning Canasta please contact me

Clive Singer email: [clive.singer@gmail.com](mailto:clive.singer@gmail.com) Tel: 07901 568126.

# The Gardening Group

**F**or anyone interested in joining this potential group, we are meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of April. If you might be interested, please e-mail me at the address below to let me know and to give me which of the two dates suits you better.

This will hopefully be the start up of another enjoyable group. Please contact me if you have any queries.

CATHARINE AIREY

[catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk)

07518745736

# How about a Quiz?

## February - it's short, I thought!

- 1) Who was elected British Prime Minister in 1979?
- 2) Which king gave the navy Royal Status?
- 3) Which airport has the baggage code AKL?
- 4) The Olympic motto "Citius Altus Fortius" means what?
- 5) Which year was prohibition abolished in the USA?
- 6) What is ikebana in Japan?
- 7) What is a "funambulist"?
- 8) Is a slow worm a worm, snake, or lizard?
- 9) What is the maximum lifespan recorded for a canary?
- 10) The written text of an opera is called what?
- 11) Who originally sang the song "Yakety Yak"?
- 12) Canine = Dog, what does Vulpine = ?
- 13) What is Britain's largest wild bird?
- 14) Which shipping line owned the TITANIC?
- 15) Which Geordie sang about "Crocodile Shoes"?

Answers by Ben Dover

## February has marched away. Here we are - another day!

- |                                                           |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Who played the role of "Dirty Harry Calligan?"         | Clint Eastwood    |
| 2) Teeth that are primarily used to tear food apart?      | Canine            |
| 3) Which words are used to start a darts match?           | "Game on"         |
| 4) Which US state is known as the "Sunshine State"?       | Florida           |
| 5) Who is Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta?             | Lady Gaga         |
| 6) Name Prince William and Kate's second child?           | Charlotte         |
| 7) In music what is the opposite of "sharp"?              | Flat              |
| 8) What name is given to trailing or climbing plants?     | Vine              |
| 9) Who wrote "Beauty is truth, truth is Beauty"?          | John Keats        |
| 10) Who was the last Queen of France?                     | Marie Antoinette  |
| 11) Who was the ancient Greek goddess of love?            | Aphrodite         |
| 12) Which choc bar used the slogan, "It's not for girls"? | Yorkie            |
| 13) "Haute Couture" means what?                           | High Fashion      |
| 14) Ralph, Piggy, and Jack are featured in what book?     | Lord of the Flies |
| 15) Year Prince Harry was engaged to Megan Markle?        | 2017              |

Answers by Ben Dee

# More from Martin

**W**e're looking for a weekend away,  
Maybe with a 'Murder Mystery night' to play?  
A night of killing, intrigues, and clues –  
Must find the killer, mustn't lose!

Or another trip to Somerset may be on the cards  
There's many a place there that we regard  
From moors and country views, oh so fine,  
Towns and villages, plus a great coastline.

Maybe head up. North Yorkshire we hear  
Is a good place to visit (and they do a good beer).  
Or on to the Lakes, let's visit Ullswater.  
That is an area that perhaps we oughta!

In September we are booked in for Wales  
Going with friends who tell good tales.  
Lots of sheep there so they say  
How many? "Don't know". They didn't stay.

**W**e have friends who have taken up  
bowls,

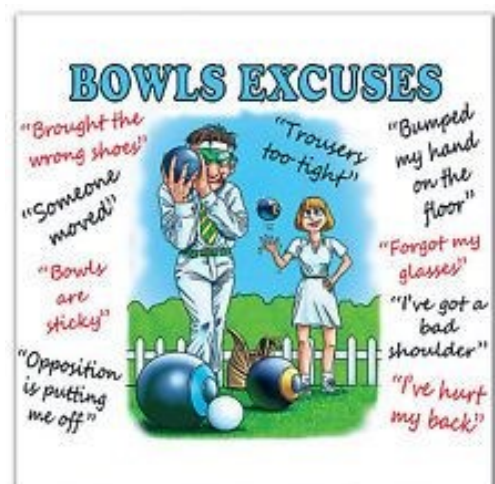
But only the small ones (those without  
holes).

Do the big ones weigh too much?

Are they too heavy for them to clutch?

Or is it that in summertime

They can play outdoors in real sun-  
shine?



# About time for some laughs

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY "THOMAS COOK VACATIONS" FROM DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS

### Dumb & Dumber Travellers

1. "They should not allow topless sunbathing on the beach. It was very distracting for my husband who just wanted to relax."
2. "On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food."
3. "We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish."
4. "We booked an excursion to a water park but no-one told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price."
5. "The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room."
6. "We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as white but it was more yellow."
7. "It's lazy of the local shopkeepers in Puerto Vallarta to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time — this should be banned."
8. "No-one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared."
9. "Although the brochure said that there was a fully equipped kitchen, there was no egg-slicer in the drawers."
10. "I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local convenience store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."

11. "The roads were uneven and bumpy, so we could not read the local guide book during the bus ride to the resort. Because of this, we were unaware of many things that would have made our holiday more fun."

12. "It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England. It took the Americans only 3 hours to get home. This seems unfair."

13. "I compared the size of our one-bedroom suite to our friends' three-bedroom and ours was significantly smaller."

14. "The brochure stated: 'No hairdressers at the resort'. We're trainee hairdressers and we think they knew and made us wait longer for service."

15. "When we were in Spain, there were too many Spanish people there. The receptionist spoke Spanish, the food was Spanish. No one told us that there would be so many foreigners."

16. "We had to line up outside to catch the boat and there was no air-conditioning."

17. "It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel."

18. "I was bitten by a mosquito. The brochure did not mention mosquitoes."

19. "My fiancée and I requested twin-beds when we booked, but instead we were placed in a room with a king-size bed. We now hold you responsible and want to be reimbursed for the fact that I became pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked."

20. "We bought 'Ray-Ban' sunglasses for five euros from a street trader, only to find out they were fake."

## **Did I read that right?**

**TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW.**

*In a Laundromat:*

**AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT.**

*In a London department store:*

**BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS...**

*In an office:*

**WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN.**

*In an office:*

**AFTER TEA BREAK, STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD.**

*Outside a second-hand shop:*

**WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC. WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG AND GET A WONDERFUL BARGAIN?**

*Notice in health food shop window:*

**CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS...**

*Spotted in a safari park:*

**ELEPHANTS, PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR.  
(I sure hope so.)**

*Seen during a conference:*

**FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR.**

## *Did I read that right?—a little bit more!*

*Notice in a farmer's field:*

**THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE, BUT THE BULL CHARGES.**

*Message on a leaflet:*

**IF YOU CANNOT READ, THIS LEAFLET WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET LESSONS.**

*On a repair shop door:*

**WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING. (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR — THE BELL DOESN'T WORK.)**

## *Proof reading is a dying art—wouldn't you say?*

**\***     Peeling potatoes, don't you know  
Can be a satisfying way to go.  
Vacuuming, washing, wiping down too  
May bring joy and calm along to you.  
But only if you enjoy domestic chores  
And spending all your time indoors.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

|                    |              |                                                                                    |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Catharine Airy     | 07518745736  | <a href="mailto:catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk">catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk</a>     |
| Barbara Brooks     | 01252 871333 | <a href="mailto:Thebrookies73@gmail.com">Thebrookies73@gmail.com</a>               |
| David Dickinson    | 01252 879056 | <a href="mailto:Daviddickinson9@btinternet.com">Daviddickinson9@btinternet.com</a> |
| Marilynne Gardiner | 01252 877510 | <a href="mailto:xansamaz@aol.com">xansamaz@aol.com</a>                             |
| Carol Pascoe       | 01252 651872 | <a href="mailto:capascoe@ntlworld.com">capascoe@ntlworld.com</a>                   |
| Sue Puxley         | 01276 513031 | <a href="mailto:suepuxley@virginmedia.com">suepuxley@virginmedia.com</a>           |
| Philip Rowling     | 01252 870879 | <a href="mailto:rowingphilip@gmail.com">rowingphilip@gmail.com</a>                 |
| Meg Thomson        | 01276 33727  | <a href="mailto:megtho@ntlworld.com">megtho@ntlworld.com</a>                       |

# Group Meetings

## **Art**

**Meetings:** Darby Green and Frogmore Social Hall  
**11:00 – 13:00 on Mondays**  
**Group Leader:** Martin Brooks 01252 871333  
[thebrooksies73@gmail.com](mailto:thebrooksies73@gmail.com)

## **Books**

**Meetings:** Private House at 14.00 on the last Thursday of the Month  
**Group Leader:** Wendy Dauven 01276 513984  
[wendyandpaul53@gmail.com](mailto:wendyandpaul53@gmail.com)

## **Bowls (Summer)**

**Meeting:** Hawley Bowls Club, Blackwater & Hawley Leisure Complex  
**10:30 to 12:00 every Wednesday between April and September**  
**Group Leader:** Dave Dickinson 01252 879056  
[daviddickinson9@btinternet.com](mailto:daviddickinson9@btinternet.com)

## **Canasta**

**Meeting:** Private House  
**14:00 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays**  
**Group Leader:** Clive Singer 07901568126  
[clive.singer1@gmail.com](mailto:clive.singer1@gmail.com)

## **Gardening**

**Meeting:** Private House  
**t.b.a.**  
**Group Leader:** Catharine Airey 07518745736  
[catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk)

## **MOTO A group for 'members on their own'.**

**Meetings:** Arranged monthly times various  
**Group Leader:** Judith Shaw 0118 9732724  
[jmshaw17@hotmail.com](mailto:jmshaw17@hotmail.com)

## **Photography**

**Meetings:** The Tythings, Yateley  
**14:30 on every 4th Tuesday of the month**  
**Group Leader:** Phil Rowling 01252 870879  
[rowingphilip@gmail.com](mailto:rowingphilip@gmail.com)

## **Rummikub**

**Meeting:** Private House  
**To be arranged**  
**Group Leader:** Lyn Sado 01252 872221  
[sadlyn@ntlworld.com](mailto:sadlyn@ntlworld.com)

## **Singing Group**

**Meetings:** The Tythings Yateley  
**14:00 to 15:30 on the first Wednesdays of the month**  
**Group Leader:** Barbara Brooks 01252 871333  
[thebrooksies73@gmail.com](mailto:thebrooksies73@gmail.com)

## **Various Sports**

**Table tennis, indoor curling, etc.**  
**Meetings:** Frogmore Leisure Centre  
**13:00 on Fridays**  
**Group Leader:** Val Green 07990 584571  
[greenvalley2043@gmail.com](mailto:greenvalley2043@gmail.com)

## **Walking Together**

**A guided walk of about 5 miles**  
**09.30 Meeting in the car park of Potley Hill Campus**  
**Mornings Second Thursday of the month**  
**Group Leaders:** Min Gardiner 07450256948 [xansamaz@aol.com](mailto:xansamaz@aol.com)  
Rosemary White 01276 503813 [romyandjohn@hotmail.com](mailto:romyandjohn@hotmail.com)