

GROWING TOGETHER

The Self-Sufficiency Group

February 2023

Newsletter



GROWING TOGETHER Self-Sufficiency group exists to enable and encourage its members to practice self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and maintain a "sustainable life style" in a fast changing worldwide environment

View this newsletter at:-

www.ehss.org.uk

Indoor meetings are held at 19.30 on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the:-

Triangle Centre, Liss. GU33 7DX

Contacts:-

President: Alec Fry

fry.alec@gmail.com

Chairman: Sally Elborough

sallyelborough@gmail.com

Membership: Ann Brockhurst

01428 653355

Treasurer: Andy Tate

treasurer@ehss.org.uk

Secretary: Frances Bassom

secretary@ehss.org.uk

Editor & talks sec: Dru Furneaux

07876731661 01730 814193

druurneaux@btinternet.com

OUR FEBRUARY MEETING WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY THE 8TH at 7.30

It will begin with the AGM (7.30), which I'm sure will be brief like most of our agm's and will be followed by a BRING AND BUY....buy, sell, swap or give away, its up to you.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CASH!!!

I will be bringing all sorts: electric hedge trimmers, a nice warm mans jumper, and maybe lots more... having a clear out of what I don't use now, and books I won't read again. A lot will be free but not all...

Your membership is due for renewal now. You may pay online thru BACS: details on the membership form attached with this newsletter; go to our website www.ehss.org.uk or send a cheque to Ann Brockhurst, 73 Vann Road, Furnhurst GU27 3NP, or you can give cash to Ann or our treasurer Andy Tate at the Feb meeting; please remember you will need to have your membership form with your payment. (Dru/Andy may have a few printed out at the meeting) The fee is still £15 for your entire family! Will it go up next year? Don't know yet...

For new members: the hall is open to us from 7.30pm and the talks start at 8.00pm, with a duration of approximate 1 hour. Members pay £1.50 on the door and visitors pay £3. All are welcome!! Free Tea and Coffee are usually available from 9.00pm.

As I am still the lucky person who arranges the talks, here are some of the talks and visits we may expect.

So it looks like this:

March: Nick Dobbs from the Countryside Restoration Trust.

April: Kate Green who runs the Petworth Community Garden, and a Saturday" Lambing Experience" date tba.

May: tba

June: A lovely rose garden.

The summer outings are awaiting confirmation

October: ecologist at Knepp, Matt Phelps.

Several other talks and visits in the pipeline.

Vacancy: Talks & Visits Organiser

This really will be the **Last Year I want to do this job. Please someone, take it on.** I feel dreadful about leaving you in the lurch, which is why I have gone on doing it so long

...**BUT**....

It has to be **one person**: it's complicated enough for one to try to get all the talks and outings fitted in where they want to be.

Ok, that's it... so what have I been up to?

Well, it took nearly two weeks to recover from the appalling effects the statins had on me. My cholesterol levels were not high but more than 4... and Dr's seem to be encouraged to prescribe statins in that case. After taking them for 10 days I stopped: legs weak, muscle pain, weak pulse, lightheaded. Dr said stop if you get muscle pain.... Informed the GP who rang me and said I seemed to have had a very adverse reaction and shouldn't take them... and anyway my levels weren't very high!!!!

Now back to normal out for walks (from this week onwards going out early... not a masochist so didn't go out early in the bitter cold and dark) and tackling the garden; tidy up so the bulbs can come thru. Got one boarder still to do, and the sun is shining and I'm sitting typing! Really looking forward to the Bring and Buy. Taking books read from the bookshelves, putting ones from the floor into a proper home!

Ordered our third load of logs for the woodburner. We do occasionally light it in the afternoon, but not every day. I do use the central heating for about 1 hour a day, putting it on when I go out for a walk so its warm when I get in and Barry is getting up. He needs to be kept warm!

Out around here this winter its been so quiet: the squawk of a pheasant occasionally and the guns on shooting days....but in this last week the countryside is coming to life again. Birds are singing and marking out their territories nearly all day. Haven't heard a frog croak yet but I hope it won't be long .

I fear that long cold spell in December where our garden didn't get above -5 during the day and down to -10 at night for 11 nights, plus a week in Jan the same means I have lost plants. I had some

geraniums in the summerhouse....and they have gone. It was well below freezing in there. Good thing no one wanted to come and stay! Even my camellias are not looking good...flower buds and leaves falling.

Oh Joy! Its Tuesday... no, that's not what is giving me joy.... and actually, the wind ripping the shed door off while I was out this morning is not either....

Water is a problem here: too little in summer despite 7 water butts, and too much in winter which floods the rear of the house and fills the drains. Its jolly rodding time again! Sink runs away, as does all, but glugglugglug means not for much longer unless I get those rods out again.

Today I am helping a local friend pressure wash her patio ready for the photographer. Her house goes on the market next week. So if you are interested in a house in Trotton, 3 beds and big garden plus conservatory, look on Henry Adams site next week. Been there and done that. And lots of tidying of boarders, just like at home! It's a lovely garden to work in... so its been a good morning. She has given me things to dispose of, including cd's, curtains and books which I will bring to the B&B. she is happy to sell and/ give away. All curtains and fabrics are in good condition. I know she is going to miss the garden, its ideal for sun or shade all day.

I brought back a lot of metal objects, old, broken and rusty which are now in the metal skip in the yard. If its in there, it really is junk!

Interested in Bees?

The West Sussex Beekeepers Association will be holding their annual auction in Pulborough , in April. You can find details on their website.

The Compost Bin

Among the seeds I grow every year are "Moonlight" runner beans and "Cobra" climbing French beans. These are grown on the the opposite sides of a double row of bamboo canes. By 2021 I noticed that I was out of seeds, so I saved my own from that autumn's crop, which of course I grew last year. When these came up, I was puzzled to find that the two rows were contained both types, which was rather puzzling; however the crop was

okay, so I wasn't worried. This year I bought fresh packets from the same supplier, and I noticed that Moonlight is now described on the packet as a "runner bean/French bean cross" – so now it's clear, some of my self-saved seeds were crosses of crosses! Anyway, this year I'll go back to normal with the new packets - and this time I won't be saving any more seeds of my own!

Leather stitching: is there anyone in the group who knows how to hand-stitch leather, as I have some old cases to re-stitch? I have all the right tools and a variety of waxed thread, but I just can't get the technique where the two threads crossover within the thickness of the leather. For the first time I have been unable to learn the correct method up from YouTube, they are all too quick to follow! Can anyone spare a few minutes to explain or demonstrate the correct way to me?

Being dictated to? This time, as usual, I dictate my short piece into the computer from my rough notes accumulated over the past month, as I find that is quicker than my two-finger typing. However, I found that the computer handles the resulting output in a slightly different way that I haven't noticed before: when a word appears on my screen, it very occasionally changes after a second or so according to what follows. It reminds me of that artificial intelligence chat which has intrigued me so much. There's probably no connection, as the program hasn't changed, but it does make me wonder if word processors at some time in the future will automatically take over and correct their output in all sorts of ways. Then we really would be getting into Big Brother territory!

The recent cold snap has made us more aware of frost pockets, where the coldest pockets of air (being heavier) collect in the lowest area. This includes our garden which very gently slopes towards the level of the stream at the bottom, as does the farmer's adjacent field. Even the greenhouse has been down to minus 6 degrees during recent weeks, and even colder outside. There are mixed views on the benefits or otherwise to gardeners of a cold snap; some regard it as a good thing as more pests and diseases will be killed off, others say these usually survive and it's our tender plants which suffer. We shall see. Meanwhile, I'm waiting for the frost to go for a while so I can try out my unopened new bottle of

organic Winter Wash on my apples and plums which had a few problems in last year's drought. Oh for a *normal* year for a change...!

RFI stands for radio frequency interference, and we've been at its mercy recently: the remote locking buttons on the car keys suddenly and stubbornly refused to respond, even after having new batteries fitted. It wasn't just us, neighbours on both sides found the same. It was a very local problem – if we drove just a couple of hundred yards away, everything was normal.

We tend not to think about things we can't see, hear or smell, but of course we're surrounded by radio waves – most of them extremely low power and harmless. Some people claim to be sensitive to that sort of thing, and maybe they're right; there are legal limits to all emissions, but what happens when there's more than one item involved? I worked out that there are 24 devices in our home which are controlled remotely, although most of them are low-powered and only used intermittently – central heating remote thermostat controls, burglar alarm sensors, radio-controlled clock, mobile phones, weather stations and much more. Fortunately, I've never come across anyone who is affected in any way.

Anyway, the car-lock interference lasted about five or six weeks, and then disappeared as suddenly as it arrived. One theory was that the underground work and testing involved in changing our phones and internet from copper cable to full optical fibre had something to do with it – I read about someone else who tracked it down to that.

See you at the AGM, and if you have any ideas for future speakers and visits, we're always pleased to hear them – so please think about it. Also remember that the Bring and Buy needs some tempting items if it is to succeed, so get looking through your cupboard for anything you are unlikely to use again and offer it at a reasonable price to others. Even, maybe, an unwanted present?

Alec.

Tickets For RHS Wisley

We have an RHS card to share which will admit up to 2 of us with a 30% discount.