

The Windmill On My Mind

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Younger readers may enjoy watching The Thomas Crown Affair film, first released in 1968/9. There was a remake with Sting in 1999. The song “The Windmills of Your Mind” may be familiar. The French composer Michel Legrand contributed the music to the English stream-of-consciousness lyrics written by the Americans Marilyn and Alan Bergman.

Film buffs will know the French lyrics by Eddy Marney referred to The Windmills of My Heart. I have read that the gliding scene first used the Beatles’ “Strawberry Fields Forever.”

The windmill on my mind is at High Salvington. “The Mill” is the newsletter brilliantly compiled and edited by Lucy Brooks. I am grateful to Captain Paul Minter for sending it to me. There are many points of interest, including the call for engineering skills.

Cooks and bakers will appreciate the section on the Hagberg falling number test, measuring the enzyme activity in flour, together with the plain English recipe for spicy cheese biscuit. Let us pause to reflect on the alternative ways to say scone, while remembering the lines in the Windmill song: Like a tunnel that you follow to a tunnel of its own / Down a hollow to a cavern where the sun has never shone. The English singer wanted a short vowel sound to shone; the lyricists expected a rhyme with own.

The High Salvington Windmill trustees have used the period of closure for essential maintenance works. They report that the COVID-19 business grant from government is helping businesses in the local economy. The sails and the buck have been repainted. The renovation team have extended the tailpole, also installing the talthur lever that raises the steps, allowing the mill to be turned. I have failed to find the etymology of the word talthur; help please

The present chairman Jeff Best explains why they cannot hold events this year. He thanks the prudent management of the mill and the resources by predecessors. The Board seek a new chief engineer to guide future maintenance. I do encourage everyone to consider joining and supporting this effective local charity.

Throughout the constituency I serve and in each of the 649 others in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, people like us take on voluntary responsibilities that match or often exceed those for which we might be paid at work. Let us each encourage all to join in, running established trusts and charities and founding new ones.

Fellow supporters of the Church of England Children’s Society know the history of how the original Waifs and Strays tried to strengthen families’ confidence, competence and resources. Later, children’s homes were closed and family centres established. In each generation we recognise new needs and we try new methods of meeting long-lasting difficulties.

During this week I have observed social distancing in East Preston and Rustington, as well as in parts of Worthing. People impress me. The reopening of the leisure centre’s activities has been achieved with safety measures. I thank everyone involved. We can expect quite several occasions when two steps forward are followed by one back. Was that why children play snakes and ladders – preparation for life?

I shall take some days with family, sailing an old dinghy and paddling a lovely open canoe. Our grandchildren are fine sailors (not taught by me). I took two sets of mature friends for a sail. Later I heard them agree that they had not become nervous before I apparently started humming the hymn For Those in Peril on The Sea. Perhaps I could have taken them to Salvington, whistling the Windmills on my Mind?