

**u3a** learn,  
laugh,  
live

**Wadhurst & District**

**NEWS**

**April 2024**

## Wadhurst u3a

*Registered Charity No: 1160124*

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
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| Vice-Chair (vicechair@wadhurstu3a.org.uk)                 | <i>John O'Dwyer</i>          |
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*To contact a member of the Committee, please use the dedicated number  
**01580 200647** or the email addresses listed above.*

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### **TO JOIN Wadhurst & District u3a**

Download a membership application form and a Gift Aid form from the 'How to Join' page on: [www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk](http://www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk)

You can either

print, complete the forms and return them with a cheque for the annual fee of £25 to our membership secretary by post,

or

fill in the forms electronically, email them to our membership secretary, and pay the annual fee of £25 online to Wadhurst & District u3a.

Further details are given on the application form.  
Ring Sheila Jemmett at **01580 200647** if you have any questions.

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### **ONLINE PAYMENTS TO Wadhurst & District u3a**

Lloyds Bank, sort code: 30-98-77, account number: 48499968,  
In name of: *Wadhurst u3a*

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**NEWS Magazine Editor:** Philip Cheung

COPY DEADLINE for the August 2024 issue: 20th July 2024. Please email copy to the editor at: [newsmag@wadhurstu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsmag@wadhurstu3a.org.uk)

# *From the Editor*

Dear Member,

This is the first issue of NEWS to be published on a trimestrial instead of a quarterly basis, as in the past. The main motivation for this change is to save money. To give an idea of how costs have shot up in the past two years, here are figures for printing and dispatching one copy of NEWS, in December 2023, compared to a year earlier:

|  | 2023  | 2022  |
|--|-------|-------|
| Printing                                     | £1.55 | £0.96 |
| Dispatch by Royal Mail in addressed envelope | £1.98 | £0.70 |

If we do nothing, the annual cost of four issues (of 200 mailed copies) will double from about £1400 to £2800, assuming unrealistically that no further increases will occur from December 2023!

Raising our subscription to pay for this increase is not a good solution. We should do our part to keep inflation in check, not to add to it. Additionally, we would like to avoid the absurd situation where nearly half of our income is spent on NEWS. We are not in the business of publishing a magazine, after all.

The trustees have therefore decided to take the following actions:

- 1) Reduce the number of issues per annum from four to three, and
- 2) Deliver the magazine by volunteers whenever possible.

(This means the volunteers will deliver to members living in smallish clusters within our catchment areas. For the twenty odd members with relatively distant or isolated addresses, their copies will continue to be delivered by mail.)

A trial of self-delivery has already taken place last December. We owe a big thank you to the dozen or so volunteer postmen and postwomen who cheerfully went about their rounds. I hope they will

find their tasks more pleasurable with sunnier weather in April and August.

The cost reduction exercise naturally leads to thoughts about why we have a magazine in the first place. NEWS was started in the very first year of this u3a. Our then chairman, Jane Larcombe, thought that it would be a differentiator, something that made us stand out from other u3a's. Almost all u3a's have a bulletin that communicates essential information to members. A magazine would do more. It would contain articles that are pleasurable to read; stir the sense of curiosity or wonder; raise an eyebrow or a smile, or create a reaction in some other way. It would be a forum for members to share their life experiences, or express their creativity, be it in the form of prose, poetry, painting or photography.

I am personally persuaded that NEWS is a good thing and that we should keep it going for as long as we can afford to do so. An electronic version of NEWS would reduce costs to almost zero at a stroke. But a survey last summer showed that members prefer a paper copy by a vast majority. I agree with them.

If NEWS is to be a worthwhile enterprise, we need contributions from our readers. You will see three poems in this issue. We have seen life writing, art work and photography in previous issues. We shall need more of everything in the future. Meanwhile, remember that the Monthly Bulletin sent by email is available for notices. Short and more urgent messages should be posted there.

Lastly, many have suggested a *Letters to the Editor* column. We shall give it a try. To help this take off, I included in this issue a recent newspaper article entitled *Britain's first lab-grown meat: it's for cats*. Do write something about what you think (see page 25). Letters on other topics, including those raised in this editorial, are welcome.

With best wishes,

Philip Cheung

## **Charity Music Quiz 23rd March**

The quiz was a great success. Importantly, we sold all 120 tickets, a record! The final figures have still to come in but they should reveal handsome donations to the Canterbury Oast Trust and our u3a. The COT supports adults with learning disabilities. The u3a, as you know well, are run by the retired or semi-retired to help themselves to learn, live and laugh.

Participants were encouraged to sing along to the short clips of music on which the questions are based. The exception was the round where the next line of the lyrics was the required answer. Over-enthusiastic singing would give it away. The singing certainly added to the jollity that prevailed. The winners and runners-up of the quiz were one point apart, achieving scores of about 90%. My team brought up the rear with 30%. The goats were truly separated from the sheep, as a good quiz should. It was a fun evening.

Our are grateful to Ken Chappell, Debbie Chappell and Jim Graham from Canterbury Oast Trust who ran the quiz, and the members of our social committee for their excellent work in setting up the hall and the bar, and tidying away.

## **For your diaries**

**Wadhurst & District u3a presents**

**“Swing into Summer”**

**with**

**THE KATE DANIELS QUINTET**

**A rip-roaring musical feast from  
Hoagy Carmichael to Peggy Lee -  
Jazz Blues and beyond!**

**Commemoration Hall, Wadhurst,  
Saturday, 22nd June at 8.pm**

# Paul Brown

1942 - 2024



It is with great sadness that we announce that Paul Brown, a much loved member of our u3a, passed away on the 18th March. Our most heartfelt condolences to Jessica and all the family.

Paul was treasurer of Wadhurst u3a from 2015 to 2021. His years at Lloyds Bank and his experience as treasurer of several charitable organisations brought professionalism and soundness to our financial affairs. He was instrumental in helping us to register as a charity, so as to benefit from Gift Aid. His contributions at the committee of trustees were always wise and listened to.

On retirement as treasurer, Paul set out to revitalise the programme of Historic Building Visits that was suffering from the after effects of COVID. Trips enjoyed by many of us to Canterbury Cathedral, the Weald & Downland Living Museum, Arundel Castle, the Tower of London, and cruising down the Thames to Greenwich, were due to his efforts.

Paul led the highly popular French Conversation Group. Although English was his first language, French was his mother tongue: learnt from his Belgian mother. His *joie de vivre* ensured that the conversions were always lively and enjoyable. The group had a long waiting list!

We also remember Paul for his gestures, big and small, that enlivened our festive events. Once, on sorting out his stamp collection, he found a colourful collection of commemorative issues that were surplus to requirement but still 'legal tender'. These went handsomely on the invitations to one of the u3a's parties. He donated wines from his cellar to our raffles.

Jessica and Paul formed a dream team for our u3a. Jessica complemented Paul's French Conversation Group by leading the Life Writing Group. When for three years she edited NEWS, he was her punctilious proof-reader. For several years, they set the questions for *Pop The Question*, and Paul acted as quiz master. In 2016 they generously hosted our Third Birthday Party in their beautiful garden, which many will remember fondly.

In summary,

## **WE SHALL MISS HIM!**

*Paul's funeral will be held at 11am on Friday, 12th April, at St Mary's Church, Lamberhurst.*

## *Selected Group News*

*Wadhurst & District u3a has some 30 Interest Groups to offer. Here are news items from some of them. Do not hesitate to contact the convenor if you are interested in an interest group. Contact information can be found on the centrefold. You can also email the convenor using the 'Blue Bird' on the relevant group page in Wadhurst & District u3a's website:*

[www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk](http://www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk)

### **CROQUET IS RETURNING FOR THE 2024 SEASON**

We are delighted to announce that our  
2024 Croquet Tournament  
will commence in early May on the field behind the  
Wadhurst Commemoration Hall.

We have the loan of another professional croquet set  
which means we can now accommodate more players  
per round,  
so matches could become very competitive!

Further information will follow shortly.  
Check our website ([www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk](http://www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk)) for the  
latest details.

## **BRIDGE**

*Felicity Warran-Smith*

We meet each week on Thursday morning 10-12 at the Sparrows Green Pavilion. We are a friendly group who play standard Acol. Although we play duplicate bridge this is very much social bridge and we are not competitive. Although we do not teach, we are always happy to discuss and help each other as we go along.

We would love to have new members. Do please come along. Do not worry if you have not played recently; you will find a warm welcome.

## **PLAY READING**

*Philip Cheung*

We started the new year with lunch at the Rose and Crown in Mayfield. The six members who came each brought a piece of writing to read to the others. Three brought writings that soothed or inspired them to meet the challenges of daily life. Two brought poems penned by themselves. These can be found on pages 15 and 17. The last brought three parodies of Shakespeare's famous Sonnet 18 ("*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ...*") with a robot as the object of adulation. One was written by a professor of robotics and the others by the now famous/infamous AI program ChatGPT. The play readers had no difficulty telling which one was written by a human: so much for artificial intelligence.

April de Angelis is a living playwright that we have not come across before. We read her 'A Warwickshire Testimony' (1999) in February. The material of the play is drawn from the reminiscences of the inhabitants of a village in the Midlands, accumulated in a study of the changes that overtook them during the twentieth century. The play concerns the loves, traumas and disputes of a family who occupied the village Post Office. The story was not one of idyllic rural life, but of a stifling togetherness that prompted one of the characters to escape from it to the big city beyond. Reading the play from a copy, as opposed to watching it in a theatre, was at times confusing because the characters switched between real characters and those in the imagination of one of the protagonists without warning.

In March, we read Terence Rattigan's "Separate Tables", a clever amalgamation of two one-act plays into one. The two plays, spaced eighteen months apart, have two different leading couples, who share the same set of a Bournemouth hotel with the same supporting cast of retired, permanent residents, and manageress. These were well-constructed plays with their intrigues leading to climactic endings.

*In April we shall read Alan Ayckbourn's "House and Garden". It is yet another two-plays-in-one, with the difference that the plays run simultaneously on the same (partitioned) stage, with the same characters moving between them. Only Ayckbourn, with his gift for hilarious invention, would attempt such a strange setup. It will be a challenge for us to picture the scene in our minds as we sit in our chairs and read from a book!*

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

*Philip Cheung*

We followed up on our November 2023 meeting on the early life of Albert Einstein with a talk on his Theory of Special Relativity (SR) in January. This theory is the subject of the last two of the four ground breaking papers that Einstein wrote in 1905. These papers brought the young Einstein to the attention of the top physicists of his day, thereby ending his early years as an unknown.

SR requires very simple mathematics (O-level?) but the effects of length contraction and time dilation on a body travelling at constant velocity relative to a stationary observer are mind-blowing, going against our ingrained *common-sense* that perceptions of space and time, especially time, cannot possibly depend on the relative speed between observers. SR led to some modifications to Newton's Laws of Motion, resulting in the totally unexpected energy-mass equivalence,  $E = mc^2$ .

Our February meeting was a discussion on the technological breakthrough of 2022-3, *Generative Artificial Intelligence*, in the form of *ChatGPT* and other computer programs. This is such a new subject that we have to rely on videos of lectures rather than books to learn about it. Prof Mike Wooldridge of Oxford University gave

the Royal Institution's Christmas Lectures of 2023 on the subject. His slightly earlier Turing lecture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kSI0xkq2IM>

was just what we needed.

Having watched the video, we had a lively discussion. The main take from the lecture is that generative AI can output fluent and grammatically perfect essays on almost any subject, in reply to a short prompt such as "Write me an account of Winston Churchill's life". The programs have been 'trained' on every printed word in the English language, and are thus capable of making a plausible reply to any similar request. The cost of training powerful computers with gigantic datasets runs into billions of dollars, putting the ownership of these programs out of the reach of every institution except a handful of giant technological companies.

The machine learns very much like a child, by imitation. The upside is innate fluency. The downside is that it can only produce the 'most plausible answer' rather than one that is strictly true. Having been exposed to every printed word, can also lead to replies that are offensive, rude or whatever. Writing a poem "in the style of Shakespeare" may be an acceptable, amusing exercise. But what if a living author is involved. Will his/her livelihood be threatened? Watch the video for more on these and other interesting questions.

In March we looked at the astronomical evidence for dark matter and dark energy. This will be followed up in May with a talk on elementary particles, already known or yet to be discovered, that may be candidates for dark matter. Dark energy, on the other hand, appears to correspond to a term in Einstein's equation of General Relativity. But is there more to it?

*For a relaxed time, our next meeting on 9th April will be on the physics and mathematics of the 12-note western musical scale. Historically, the 12-note scale just developed 'by ear'. Scientists made almost no contribution to the process except to provide an after-the-fact explanation, late in the 19th century, of what in fact happened. On the other hand, several famous mathematicians in the 17th and 18th centuries were involved in 'tempering' with tuning to improve the audio qualities of the scale.*

## WINE APPRECIATION

*Jane Austin*

Our Wine Appreciation Group continues to thrive and after eight years there's still lots to learn. During 2023, we covered a variety of topics, and our members presented evenings on the wines of Italy and Norfolk (a real surprise!), a vertical tasting of Bordeaux vintages, wines from the celebrities (look out for Gary Barlow's wine with a black and white keyboard on the label). We also had expert speakers on wines from Argentina and an introduction to some unusual sweet wines, plus an experimental evening to assess what influences our perception of a good wine.

For something a little different, we were also delighted to welcome local chocolate makers, Paul and Roni Cheeseman, from *GATOS Chocolate* based in Stonegate. The similarities between wine-making and chocolate-making are remarkable - from the variety of cacao bean or 'grape', the terroir (that is, the soil type, altitude, climate where they are grown) to the art, skill and passion of the maker. All of these factors contribute to the aroma, taste and 'feel'



of the final product in the mouth, be it wine or chocolate. Paul and Roni explained the intricacies of chocolate-making. We learnt about the roasting and the grinding process, the balance of cacao butter and sugar, the importance of temperature in chocolate production, and the tempering required to give chocolate its 'snap' and shine. We discovered some new vocabulary too - nibs, melanger, flavanols, silk - to mention just a few!

We sampled a variety of wine and chocolate pairings:

- Riesling, Jurançon and Moscatel Blanco wines with the Gatos classic white and caramel chocolate;
- Pinot Noir, Grenache and Malbec wines with the both the classic milk and dark chocolate;
- Harvest Argentinian Malbec from the world-renowned Susana Balbao, pairing this with the Gatos' new Pedigree range, made with beans from estates in the Philippines, Madagascar and Guatemala.



The different aromas and flavours to emerge from these pairings was amazing - citrus, tropical (banana, coconut & pineapple), cinnamon, clove and nut to name just a few.

For our 2024 season, we have another interesting programme. In February, one of our favourite guest speakers, Geoff Taylor, returned to present some little-known gems from France, and in March one of our members introduced us to some interesting Eastern European wines from Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Georgia.

***Want to participate?*** Although there is a Waiting List for this Group, please do contact Jane Austin (see centrefold) if you are interested in participating. Those on our waiting list will always be invited to attend sessions when space is available.

## Wadhurst u3a Interest Groups

| Interest Group         | Convenor                                     | Day of Month  | Time         | Venue                      |
|------------------------|--|---|--------------|----------------------------|
| Active Plus 1 20-20-20 | Jane Austin                                  | Tuesdays  | 11.10        | Uplands Sports Centre      |
| Active Plus 2 20-20-20 |  | Thursdays   | 10.05        | Uplands Sports Centre      |
| Art at Ticehurst       | Kris Armstrong                               | last Friday   | 14.00        | Ticehurst Village Hall     |
| Art at Wadhurst        | Sheila King                                  | 2nd Tuesday   | 10.00        | Carillon Cottage           |
| Art Appreciation       | Margot Yeo                                   | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Book Group One         | Margaret Jones                               | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Book Group Two         | Janet Pelham                                 | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Book Group Three       | <i>See website</i>                           | 2nd Mondays   | 14.00        | Wadhurst Library           |
| Book Group Four        | <i>See website for latest news</i>           |   |              |                            |
| Bridge                 | Geoff Daddy                                  | Thursdays   | 10.00        | Sparrows Green Pavilion    |
| Chair Yoga             | Jane Austin                                  | Wednesdays  | 12.00        | Uplands Sports Centre      |
| Croquet                | Jane & David Austin                          | <i>Check website for latest information</i>         |              |                            |
| French Conversation    | <i>suspended until new convenor is found</i> |   |              |                            |
| Friendly Computers     | Philip Cheung                                | <i>contact convenor for individual sessions</i>     |              |                            |
| Gardening              | Sheila Jemmett                               | 3rd Tuesday   | 10.00        | Commem Hall                |
| Historic Buildings     | <i>See website for latest news</i>           |   |              |                            |
| Knit & Natter          | Kate Metcalfe                                | 1st Tuesday   | 14.30        | <i>check with convenor</i> |
| Life Writing           | Jessica Brown                                | alternate Tue                                       | 10.00        | <i>check with convenor</i> |
| Mahjong                | Norwill Hazell                               | 2nd & 4th Thu                                       | 14.00        | <i>check with convenor</i> |
| Kindfulness            | Sue Swift                                    | 4th Friday  | 10.30        | <i>check with convenor</i> |
| Modern Architecture    | Jane Austin                                  | <i>See website for latest news</i>                  |              |                            |
| Play Reading           | Philip Cheung                                | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Poetry Reading         | Val Smith                                    | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Poetry Writing         |  | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Science & Technology   | Philip Cheung                                | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Scrabble               | Juliet Conrad                                | <i>Temporarily suspended - awaiting new members</i> |              |                            |
| Singles Sunday Lunches | Mary Brewer & Iris Glover                    | <i>check with convenors</i>                         |              |                            |
| Strictly Fitsteps      | Sara Irwin                                   | 2nd, 3rd & 4th Wednesdays                           | 11.15        | Ticehurst Village Hall     |
| Table Tennis           | Philippa Standley                            | Tuesdays  | 12.30        | Uplands Sports Centre      |
| Ten Pin Bowling        | Lynda Emberson                               | <i>check with convenor</i>                          |              |                            |
| Walking                | Sarah Parry                                  | 2nd Thursday  | 10.00        | <i>check with convenor</i> |
| Wine Appreciation      | Jane Austin & Paddy McFarlan                 | 4th Wednesday                                       | 17.00        | Carillon Cottage           |
| Yoga                   | Sara Irwin                                   | Mondays   | 9.30 / 11.00 | Zoom                       |

**To email convenor:** On the u3a Wadhurst website (see below) select the Group concerned.

Click on the **Bluebird** icon (top right corner) to send an email.

**To leave a message:** ring **01580 200647**. State your name, tel number and the group(s) of interest.

\*\*\* Consult our website: [www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk](http://www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk) for up-to-date information. \*\*\*

# On Reaching the Big Eight O ...

*by Sarah Parry*

The years are passing? Just shrug your shoulders  
Whoever minded getting older?

But

We used to know so many things,  
The dates of all the Stuart kings  
The speed of light, the length of the Nile  
How far to the moon to the nearest half mile.

At ease with simultaneous equations  
(Although trigonometry was just desperation).  
The Beatles split up, that's definitely true  
But whatever happened to that guy from The Who?

There's zillions of paintings just so much art  
All so lovely but where to start?  
Stanley met Livingstone but, oh dear, which was which?  
And who painted that awfully famous Triptych?

How to make fudge or a spicy ragout  
And exactly what's needed for a tiramisu.  
All those philosophers from Plato to Kant  
And what actually happened to Schrödinger's cat...?

Whatever was it that whathisname did  
And what was the fuss about that thingamajig?  
Oh, I know, I know, just hang on a minute!  
Too late, it's gone! Oh well, better just bin it.

But now there's Google, if I could only log on  
But my password's rejected. What has gone wrong?

But hey, mustn't grumble, no need for sadness  
Lots of reasons out there for gladness:

Walking a dog, stopping at every tree,  
A film you've forgotten back on tv  
There's people and sunshine, gardens and food  
And the winning trump can feel pretty good

Luxurious smellies and a really hot shower  
A glimpse of snowdrops coming in flower  
The crossword to do with the perfect flat white  
A no make-up day just look a fright!

A phone call or whatsapp from someone you love,  
Those charity shop jeans that fit like a glove.  
Books , silly jokes, a view through the mist  
But it's always my family top of the list.



# The Wood Burner Tale – A Gothic Fantasy

*by Eileen Ramm*

A rainy day in March,  
No warmth in sight.  
Turn the heating on?  
Well, she thought she might.

BUT the smart meter said  
BUDGET EXCEEDED!  
An alternative, then,  
Was prudently needed.

She spied the wood burner,  
In a corner it stood.  
But she'd run out of coal  
And she'd run out of wood.

What about whisky for warmth?  
She'd heard that helped!  
And found an old bottle  
Sat on the top shelf.

She got it down  
And poured a nip.  
One nip turned to two,  
She felt warm very quick.

Well it did for a bit  
Then she fell asleep.  
Dreamed of sun and sand  
On the isle of Crete.

And woke with her feet  
So rigid with cold,  
She could not feel them,  
Got mad and got bold.

So what do you need  
To start a good fire?  
She wasn't so dim,  
Dry kindling required!

It was raining outside,  
So no dry twigs out there,  
And the temp dropped further,  
She began to despair.

She opened her kitchen drawer,  
A jumble of odd bits.  
Look here for your wood,  
Keep hold of your wits.

Yes! Wooden spoons there were,  
Of all shapes and sizes  
Ladles for soup, some for jam,  
Some for mustard (for the ham).

Then spotted a wooden chair  
She had never really liked.  
Thin spindles, solid legs,  
She could see it in a thrice . . .

She stacked them in the burner,  
Method learned in Girl Guide days.  
Her dream of a warm fire  
Was making her quite crazed.

And so it went on,  
One good fire after another.  
The Welsh dresser was next,  
Like a firework it spluttered . . .

*This all took place  
Quite a while ago.  
Then winter turned to spring  
and she was no longer cold.*

*She became quite sociable  
Now the weather was good,  
And sent invites to friends  
In the neighbourhood.*

*But on arrival they whispered  
Had she gone funny in the head?  
Where were all the antiques,  
The four poster bed?*

*To hide her embarrassment  
She replied with a quip,  
I no longer need them,  
I've gone MINIMALIST!*

## Foreign Travel

*Sheila Minet*

They said “You need a change  
Go somewhere that is totally strange;  
Go abroad, leave home behind  
And take your problems off your mind.”

So I flew away to a foreign clime,  
Far from all the drab routine  
Where people moved to a different time.  
Life was slow; the land still pristine.

The food was spicy, the plants were rare;  
The earth smelt foreign, the sun a glare.  
Colourful birds flew round mango trees,  
And boats sailed by on tropical seas.

No-one was tearful or gloomy or sad,  
Singing and laughter made everyone glad  
No-one had much, yet it all seemed enough;  
The roads had no potholes, and paths never rough.

I hear you ask:” Oh where is this? We want to go!”  
In travel brochures, here it is –  
But it’s just for show.

# Food for Thought

## Britain's first lab-grown meat: it's for cats

Tinned chicken cultivated from cells taken from an egg will be marketed to owners who want to supply a normal diet without the guilt. Its vegan creator explains

[Ben Spencer](#), Science Editor

Sunday March 17 2024, 12.01am, The Sunday Times



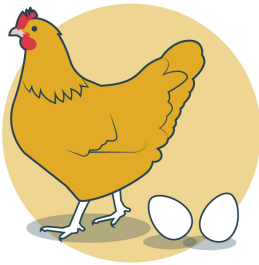
Owen Ensor, the founder of Meatly, has tested its first product on his own cats, Lamu and Zanzi  
HARRIET CONSTABLE

Lab-grown meat will go on sale in Britain for the first time within months, but the first diners to be snapping up the manufactured morsels will be cats rather than humans.

Last week a London-based start-up called Meatly produced its first cans of pet food, making it the first company to cultivate meat for animals.

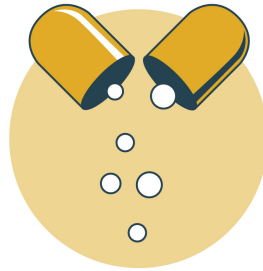
The product is aimed at those who want to feed meat to their pets without the welfare and climate concerns of industrial meat farming. Pets account for 22 per cent of the UK's meat consumption, according to the company's research, eating more meat each year than children do.

## The chicken from the egg



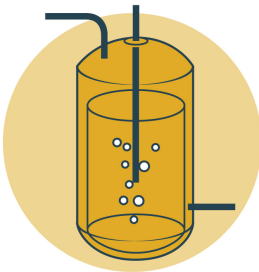
**1**

Chicken cells are extracted from a hen's egg



**2**

Vitamins, minerals and amino acids are added



**3**

The cells are replicated in a bioreactor in a process similar to beer or yoghurt-making



**4**

The resulting chicken "pâté" is added to vegetables and pulses, then canned

Graphic by The Times and Sunday Times. Source: Meatly

The 150g tins — enough for a single meal — will cost roughly £1 and contain a chicken dish created without harming a single animal. Rather than slaughtering chickens, Meatly's scientists extract a

sample of cells from a chicken's egg, which are replicated and grown in vats in a process similar to making beer or yoghurt.

The company is awaiting regulatory sign-off from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which it is expecting within three months. Owen Ensor, the founder and chief executive, said: "I would very much hope that we would have this on sale this year."

His company has teamed up with the pet food company Omni, which sells plant-based dog food. Meatly's lab-grown product is added to Omni's pulses and vegetables to create tins of planet-friendly chicken.

Meatly, which is also planning a product for dogs, hopes to appeal to animal lovers' environmental conscience, with a growing trend for pet owners to feed their animals a vegan diet.



Lewis Hamilton feeds his dog Roscoe plant-based food  
JOE PORTLOCK/GETTY IMAGES

Last year the Formula One driver Sir Lewis Hamilton, a long-term vegan, said he had started a plant-based diet for his bulldog, Roscoe.

Meatly aims to appeal to those who, unlike Hamilton, believe meat is a natural part of their pets' diets but are worried about the environmental impact.

Its success will be closely monitored as a test case for lab-grown meat for human consumption. The global market for cultivated meat will be worth \$25 billion (£19.6 billion) by 2030, according to projections by the consultancy McKinsey, and there are already 300 tech firms around the world working to create everything from cultivated sausages and meatballs to steaks and lobster.

But so far only two companies — Upside Foods in Berkeley, California, and Eat Just in San Francisco — have got to the point of actually [selling lab-grown meat](#). “We will be the third company in the world to do this — the first in Europe, and the first anywhere for pet food,” Ensor said.

His company has raised £3.6 million of investment, including from the retail giant Pets at Home. By comparison, Ivy Farm, an Oxford University spinout which is developing lab-grown meatballs and sausages, and is considered one of the leading cultivated meat companies, has raised more than £30 million. Meatly is likely to beat it to market because the regulatory burden is much lower for pet food.

Ensor, 35, who is vegan, has tasted his firm's product. “It tastes like chicken,” he said. His pet rescue cats, Lamu and Zanzi, have also eaten and enjoyed it, he said. Meatly, which Ensor founded in 2022 with Helder Cruz, 53, a biochemical engineer, employs ten people at its labs in White City, west London.

Companies making lab-grown meat for human consumption are subject to the Food Standards Agency's novel foods regulations, and its board is meeting on Wednesday to consider proposals to streamline the regulatory process.

Rebecca Sudworth, director of policy at the FSA, said it would take at least two years to approve lab-grown meat for human consumption, even if those proposals were accepted. “For something that is new, which nobody has ever eaten before, we have to get the risk assessment right.”

Ensor has another key advantage over companies trying to magic up steaks or pork chops — he does not need to worry about texture, which bothers humans much more than animals. “Pets care what food smells like and they care what it tastes like, and if it has the right nutrients,” he said. “But they don’t particularly care what it looks like or if it has the right kind of texture.”



Owen Ensor says Lamu enjoyed the fruits of his labour  
HARRIET CONSTABLE

This circumnavigates one of the key challenges. Scientists have found it is relatively easy to create the correct flavours and smells in the lab — their products, after all, are made from genuine meat cells, even if they have not been cut out of a dead animal. But replicating the correct texture from a vat of cells is tricky.

Ensor’s company, instead, has created what he calls a chicken pâté, which is combined with Omni’s vegetables before it is sent to the

canners. He said: “This is a natural starting point for cultivated meat because at the moment consumers are more willing to give this to their pets than eat it themselves.”

David Wainwright, commercial director at Pets at Home, which will be the first retailer to sell Meatly’s cat food, said: “We are committed to helping drive change in the industry and finding sustainable alternatives to replace some of the protein used globally in pet food would be a major step forward.”

### **What do you think?**

Do you have views, strong or otherwise, on any of the points raised in the article? Is meat from the laboratory acceptable? Are current farming practices sustainable/acceptable? What are your views on vegetarianism or veganism? And indeed, what should we feed our cats, or dogs?

Please write to the editor at:

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or

West Cottage, Beech Hill, Wadhurst, TN5 6JR.

## **The Backcover**

After trying many different locations for our *Clivia miniata* (Natal Lily), we have found a good spot in the conservatory. The plant produced five stems of flowers this week, for the first time since coming to us as a cutting five years ago. Plants that you nurture from their small beginnings are like pets, or even children: you are proud of what they do, you show them off, blemishes and all, without the need to touch up their photos. *Philip Cheung*

# Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month  
2.30 pm, The Commemoration Hall, Wadhurst

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Apr 18</b>  | <b>MY LIFE IN COMEDY</b><br><i>Colin Bostock-Smith</i>               |
| Colin is a comedy writer who has written for Rowan Atkinson, The Two Ronnies and Clive James.  |  |
| <b>May 16</b>  | <b>THE KNEPP REWILDING PROJECT</b><br><i>Matthew Phelps</i>          |
| The history of the 3,500-acre Knepp Estate in West Sussex, and the theory behind the rewilding project and its success to date.                      |  |
| <b>Jun 20</b>  | <b>FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH</b><br><i>Janie Ramsey</i>                    |
| How do valuers and auctioneers value antiques? Janie Ramsey returns to give us amusing insights from her career as an antique dealer and auctioneer. |  |
| <b>Jul 18</b>  | <b>AIR AMBULANCE</b>   |
| A talk about the Kent, Sussex and Surrey service.  |  |
| <b>Aug 15</b>  | <b>BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE</b><br><i>Dr Helena Griffiths</i> |
| Oil exploration in an easy to understand manner.   |  |
| <b>Sep 19</b>  | <b>BANOFFI PIE &amp; OTHER ADVENTURES</b><br><i>Ian Dowding</i>      |
| Story of the dessert and how the word came about which has become a worldwide phenomenon.  |  |

Monthly speaker meetings, with a cup of tea and biscuits, are free for members of Wadhurst & Distract u3a. Non-members are welcome, with an admission charge of £2.00.

