



THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES
Creating global understanding through English

Southwest Virginia . Roanoke Branch

Newsletter - April 2016

Oh, Spring! I want to go out and feel you and get inspiration. My old things seem dead. I want fresh contacts, more vital searching. Emily Carr

By the calendar, spring has arrived! As this is written, the air temperatures would seem to belie the fact that spring has arrived. As mentioned previously, hope can be comforting! Yet we can still prepare for the April meeting (4/20/16) of the Southwest Virginia Branch of the ESU. This will be the meeting of the Evelyn Wrench Speaker Program, and the speaker will be Simon Claxton. Who will present **Meeting William Faulkner: How an English Schoolboy found a Literary Lion**. The speaker is a retired English schoolteacher and former ESU Exchange Student. From the fall of 1961 to spring of 1962, Simon Claxton was a 17-year-old English schoolboy on an English Speaking Union Secondary School Exchange (SSE) Scholarship to The Cate School, a private school in Santa Barbara, California. Having chosen William Faulkner as the subject of his 12th Grade Author Report, Simon tried to arrange a meeting with the great writer. By lucky chance he had one of the last interviews with the reclusive Faulkner before he died in July 1962. This lecture features a dramatized reading of this interview, linked with Simon's impressions of Faulkner's writing before and since, all within the context of his wonderfully memorable year as an ESU exchange student.

Simon Claxton studied English at Queens' College, Cambridge. He taught for ten years at Radley College, an English school that was an early participant in the British-American Summer School exchange program. Following a year's teaching in New Zealand, Mr. Claxton was Head of the English Department at Hazelwood Preparatory School in Surrey and Knight House School in Dorset. He ended his teaching career at a school near Windsor.



PERSIFLAGE

1. A cross-eyed teacher lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils.
2. What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus
3. England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

4. I stayed up all night to see where the sun went; then it dawned on me.
5. I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
6. I didn't like my beard at first, but it grew on me.
7. I took the job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
8. He had a photographic memory that was never developed.
9. A successful diet is the triumph of mind over platter.
10. Sea captains don't like crew cuts.

(alphadictionary.com)

Test yourself with these few lines from Shakespeare

*“Come, let’s away to prison;
We two alone will sing like birds i’ the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I’ll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we’ll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news.”*

—Lear in King Lear (King Lear (V, iii, 6-8))

At the very end of this play, Lear and Cordelia are prisoners in the British camp. Here the insane Lear addresses his daughter, expressing his fantasy of spending the rest of his life in prison with her. He is sane enough to know his own guilt, however: "I'll kneel down and ask of thee forgiveness." Cordelia is subsequently killed, and the mad Lear dies as well. These words reflect Lear's central trait throughout the play: he is in denial of reality at every turn. Even now, in his madness and defeat he cannot face the political inevitability that neither he nor his daughter is likely to be spared. (Source ó e notes)

(Reb ó 3/21/16)