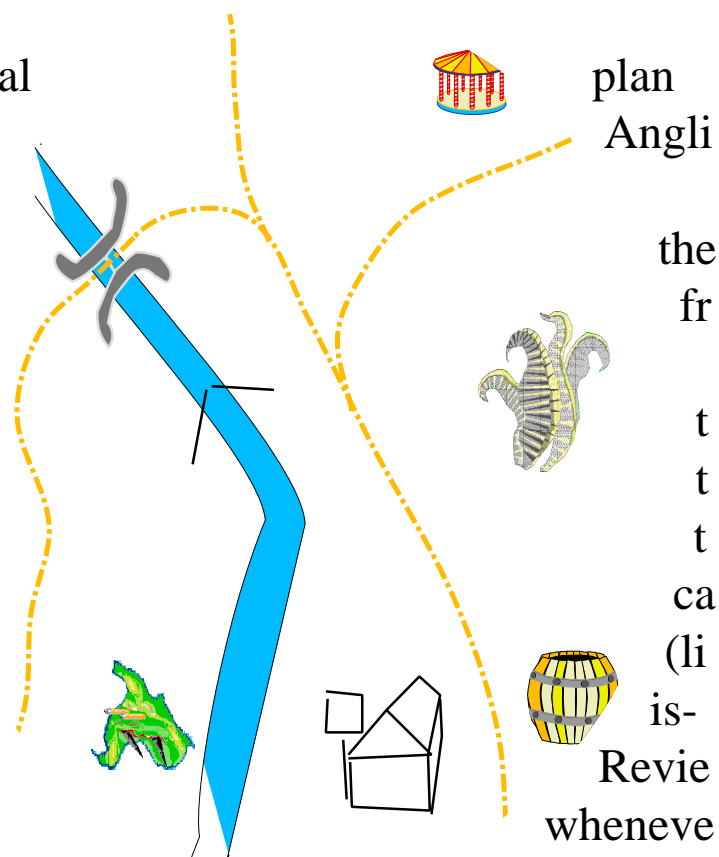


Go to the pub first.

14:30 Enforced reversion to original (because of closing time). (Ie. ng.)

18:30 A bit of a kick-about on meadow with some of the lads on the next village along.

20:30 Get down to the fair with the same Crowd. Best to go to the fair mob-handed, because of the various stoats and other hard cases that hang about the place. Like that weird beer salesman. wots-name .. Hey! creepy! what?). w the talent, and get to the pub r whatever and whoever.



long the canal bank, the sorry bunch of hangover victims that had eventually struggled to Eustace's door were beginning to perk up. Livers and other bits and pieces that most beers don't even bother with were saying well alright! but someday sonny..... The Thrunge and Swingle had Y'see just seen an unprecedented demand for coke, tomato juice and, in one case a couple of pints of water which had left it reeling in both amazement and disgust. The sales of pickled eggs and scratchings had not been too clever either, sort of not reached expectations for a country pub lunch time on the fringes of credit card territory. Need I say more? Got the picture?

Things were beginning to look up a bit now, with a chorus of "Hi Ho, Hi Ho and we're off to find a Mo" and a few dwarf imitations, which saw the party past the lock house and up onto the high level where (it is rumoured that) all the fish are. Have You ever seen anyone catch a fish from a canal? — I haven't, but I've seen a lot of people trying, so I suppose it is possible. So did Eustace and the the lads too, because the were soon set up with those enormously long rods that reach almost to the other side of the cut, catapults for flirting bits of ground bait, tins of

vari-coloured maggots and the whole works. Silence ensued for about half an hour, kind of uneventful, which was what everyone expected, until Eustace's float suddenly disappeared beneath the oily surface of the water, never to re-surface.

At this point, I think we can leave them there for a bit, scratching themselves and saying things like: “musta been a pike” and “snagged the bottom you wally” — as you do! Meanwhile we can go back to the brewery just in time to catch the morning shift (Herbert) leaving, and the afternoon shift (also Herbert) arriving.

H a v e y o u n o t i c e d
 watched
 the top
 burst off
 their
 a n y t h i n g s t r a n g e
 a b o u t t h i s s t u f f ?
 makeshift
 tea-urn
 brewing
 vessel
 for the

Nth time that day

Alphonse replied, why d'ye say that man?

Well, Herbert continued, as the pitch of our voices seems to be shifting upwards by over an octave each time the top bursts of of that thing... Naw ! just getting a bit excited is all interrupted His partner. That'll probably turn out not to be the case was the retort from Herbert, as He drew quickly on the back cover of a sales ledger which Alphonse has left lying on the workbench. Y'see, You've got t' realise that the lower the density of the gas, the faster the sound travels, which means the more waves that we hear arriving at a given place (like, our ear drums) per unit time.

Eh??.... And, what that means, without going into the algebra, is that this gas that we're using must be of a much lower density than air. I think your mates have made a balls-up! Herbert concluded; with just a touch of grim satisfaction. This gas is almost certainly Helium, What with us both smoking around it, I think we'd have already found out the hard way if it had been Hydrogen.

"So?" Alphonse spoke a bit uneasily, "so? why the bull-shit? Why the big panic? it works ok don't it"? Well, two things really Alph, — Herbert was now staring over the top of his glasses in the time honoured

‘it’s obvious dear boy!’ professorial style.

First, We’ll probably get a Nobel prize, because the gas does seem to dissolve in our beer, which is damned unusual, if not downright impossible.

Second, We’re very likely to get locked up for scaring the S..T out of our customers after they get a load of the weird effects that are likely to happen when they’ve drunk our beer. Alphonse pursed his teeth (stoats are short on lips and long on teeth). Yeah! ,Well, I think I can unload this stuff if we bottle it up quick, ‘cos I happen to know just where there’ll be a bunch of ready- made piss-heads who’ll never know the difference. C’mon! let’s get it on, You can start writing yer thesis about it all tomorrow, and I reckon a nobel prize could be real dynamite publicity-wise.

So that’s what they did. A bit unethical, and also a bit tricky, as the Helium Dandiolic acid (or whatever) was about as stable as an elephant balancing on it’s trunk in a force 9 gale.

By about half past three in the afternoon, Alphonse was off up the road, heading for the fairground, and Herbert was settling down to (carefully) conduct a few more tests on the remaining beer.

Meanwhile, we can still find our friends on the canal bank, just in the process of packing up their tackle after an afternoons fishing that could only be described as disturbing.

ou remember how, a few moments ago, Cedric said to Eustace “snagged the bottom wally!” (I didn’t tell you at the time that it was Cedric who said it not wanting to bother you with irrelevant details), but anyhow, it was, so now you know! Well, this wasn’t too far from the truth! Also, I said that the float disappeared, never to return, which wasn’t quite accurate, because it was returned by a Glup that had just had the invigorating experience of a quick bottom snag at about 3:30 in the afternoon.