

Contact

THE NEWSLETTER OF CHINNOR & DISTRICT U3A



Number 40
October 2019

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The Editor reserves the right to edit, shorten or omit any entries submitted. I would like to point out that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the organisation or of the Editor.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
16 April 2020

From the Chair

Here we are into another year of our U3A and into our next twenty years. The new committee, however, will only be here for the next year. The main changes are: **Holiday and Outings Secretary:** Peter Hetherington and his team; **Speaker Secretary:** Gwyneth Gribbin who is taking over from Frances Wells, who is now our **Minutes Secretary** and Anna Wood is now responsible for **Information and Notices** on the board in the foyer of the Village Hall at Monthly Meetings.

If you have an idea about somewhere interesting you'd like to visit or you have heard about an interesting speaker, tell a member of the committee and they'll pass it on so we can all benefit.

They say that the U3A is the best kept secret but it's such a good organisation that others need to be in on its benefits. If you are asked what the U3A stands for, the answer is *Live, Laugh and Learn*. For those who want a more literal answer you could say it stands for the *University of the 3rd Age*. The main idea is that we keep on learning and keep young at heart.

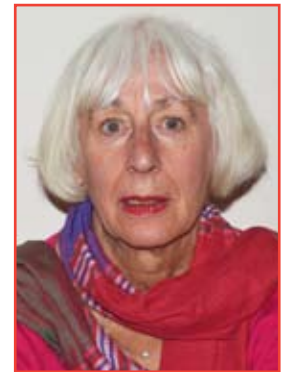
Everybody loves the idea of the interest groups – which are run by its members for its members. Some of our co-ordinators have been organising their particular interest group for a long time so it could be up to you as a member to help carry the group on into the future; it would be such a shame if a group collapsed. Some groups decide on a year's programme and members take it in turns to present or talk about a particular topic within their specific interest. After all, it's the 'yUo3A'. We now have an easy to use 'Visualiser' apparatus which will make your talks even more vibrant. Ask Bryan Roebuck about it!

We still need more volunteers to help at the monthly meetings with the chairs at the beginning of the meeting especially. It's only a question of committing yourself to at least once a year to get to the hall early and help set up. I'm sure we have more than a dozen able bodies who can do that so we can all sit back and enjoy the speaker. The same thing goes for the tea rota. See if you can help!

In your new programme cards you can see that there's another year ahead of interesting speakers, as well as the Annual Lecture. This issue of *Contact* gives you all the holidays and outings for you to enjoy. What a life! When ever did we find time to work?

With very best wishes

Janet Erskine
Chairperson



The 2019-20 Committee



*The photograph shows BACK ROW: Peter Hetherington, Gwyneth Gribbin and Dorothea Dunn;
FRONT ROW: Frances Wells, Janet Erskine, Mike Dix.
Some committee members were unavailable for the October meeting.*

Chairman: Janet Erskine

Before moving to Chinnor in December 2015 I was a member of Melbourn U3A in Cambridgeshire, where I started a French Conversation Group in January 2010.

Before retiring I worked as a teacher of English as a foreign language to adults as well as children and also worked as a Public Services Interpreter on an ad hoc basis.

I'm a keen member of several interest groups: Creative Writing, Art History and a Reading Group, whilst co-ordinating the French Beginners' and French Conversation Groups.

When I can find the time, I like painting and at times help with our daughter's children.

Vice-Chairman: Bryan Roebuck

I have been a member of our U3A since 2001 and joined the committee in 2002. I have held various roles, including Vice-Chair to Rosie, our previous Chair, in 2016. With a group of U3A friends I arrange the packing and distribution of *Contact*. I also, with help from my wife Janet, arrange our annual Christmas Carol Concert.

Treasurer: Dorothea Dunn

I have been a member of U3A since Nov 2017, and am involved in Art History, French and Long Walks Groups. I was elected Treasurer in August 2018.

Business Secretary: Mike Dix

I joined the Chinnor U3A in 2013 and I am a member of the Archaeology and Geology group and the Card group. I also attend as many of the Monthly Meetings as I can.

I also partake in many of the outings and holidays, and enjoyed assisting Sheila Tunstall when she organised the trip to Sorrento in Italy this year. It certainly made me appreciate how much work and responsibility is involved in these trips.

I joined the committee as Business Secretary in 2016 which was jumping in the deep end, but I had excellent support from the previous secretary, Dorothy Rogers. Being Business Secretary enables me to keep up to date with the various activities of our U3A and the regional and national organisations.

If any member has a query about the U3A I am happy to try and help.

Membership Secretary: Christine Barnett

I retired from full-time work as an Occupational Health Manager in 2001 and worked on a part-time consultancy basis until 2006, when I joined Chinnor U3A. I am currently a volunteer walks leader for HF holidays, leading up to four walks a year for the organisation.

I was co-opted on to the committee in February 2018 and took over the role of membership

administrator in January 2019 from Ro Webb, having worked alongside her from July 2018.

I belong to several interest groups which include Long and Medium Walks, Art History, Book group and Archeology and Geology.

Interest Group Secretary: Ann Long

I joined the U3A in 2009 and then came onto the committee in 2012, first as Minutes Secretary for three years then as Interest Group Secretary.

For four years I had the privilege of being Chinnor's representative at the National Conference and at the first one was inspired/encouraged to start the Creative Writing Group.

Holiday and Outings Secretary: Peter Hetherington

I joined U3A in 2010 having worked in the textile industry and retail. This entailed travelling to suppliers all around the world. In U3A I have been Group Co-ordinator for the Medium Walking Group and more recently had a role as Assistant to Sheila Tunstall, helping organising Outings. She trained me well and I am now Outings and Holidays Secretary, very ably assisted by Sheila, who has agreed to continue organising holidays and events.

I have a team of members who you will see leading outings. These are Thelma Jones, Peter and Janet Lambert, Andrea Sommerhalder and Frances Wells.

Speaker Secretary: Gwyneth Gribbin

I have lived in Chinnor for over forty years. I am married to Brian and we have one daughter. After retiring from Hypnos ten years ago I volunteered at the Village Centre to help at the 'Stroke Club'. I joined Chinnor U3A seven or eight years ago and have made many new friends through it. I belong to the Art History and Gardening groups. I have been on many of their holidays and days out, which are informative and good fun. On joining the committee this year I have been made responsible for booking the monthly Speakers, and I look forward to making them as varied as possible!

Minutes Secretary: Frances Wells

I joined Chinnor U3A in 2010 and this is my fourth year on the Committee. Since becoming involved with several group activities, I have made more friends than I could have ever imagined.

Information and Notices: Anna Wood

I was a teacher for forty years, mostly class teaching five to eleven year olds and special needs children. I also spent time supervising students on teaching practice when working at Roehampton University. I have one son and two grandchildren. I moved to Kingston Blount four and a half years ago and joined U3A almost immediately. I have been on the committee for three and a half years as Minutes Secretary and more recently in charge of the notice board and information to members.

Chinnor U3A 20th Birthday Celebration

Those of you who were present will, I'm sure, agree that the tea party celebrating 20 years of Chinnor U3A was a great success.

Chinnor Village Hall was full to bursting, with tables laid out to accommodate over one hundred guests. It was pleasing to discover that four of our current paid up members are founder members. June Wise was our Vice Chairman and Clive Bray our first Treasurer.

The afternoon began with an excellent visual presentation about the groups, prepared by Molly Milner. The tea, prepared by Wendy Davis of Wren Dairies, Prestwood, was plentiful and delicious. We were entertained

at the table by a magician, Colin Flack, and Jane and Pete Honeyball treated us to a really enjoyable musical set – many of us even joined in with some of the songs!

Invitations were sent to past Chairman, and a number of them were able to join the celebration. We were all so pleased to see Alan Dixon, our founding Chairman, attending. He gave a very interesting short talk about the early years of our U3A and was on hand to help our present Chairman, Janet, to cut the birthday cake.

Many thanks to Sheila Tunstall and everyone who contributed to making this milestone birthday celebration so enjoyable.

Krystyna Hewitt



Canasta

The Canasta Group continues to thrive and we are enjoying playing on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. A group of a dozen rusty ex-players have developed and improved their games and are becoming more aware of the subtleties of Canasta. Depending on numbers we play in groups of 3, 4 or 6, the latter two in teams of 2 or 3.

Our player numbers have increased, with others coming along to watch and learn the game, then join in. We continue to play in each other's houses so if you wish to come along, contact me to find out the next available venue.

Everyone agrees it is helping to improve their memory (and mental arithmetic!) and the afternoons we spend playing are most enjoyable.

Jean Wadsworth
Group co-ordinator



The layout on the table of a canasta game in progress.

When I was young...

In my youth, I youth hostelled round Europe on a tandem, staying in hostels in unisex dormitories, hitch-hiked to the South of France, following a night sleeping on London's Victoria Station in my shorts, flew to Spain with no accommodation booked and had no worries or concerns.

Now I am due to fly to Turkey, meeting up with friends with all flights and accommodation booked to the n'th degree, so why am I fearing and dreading leaving home?

I can only assume it is because of that dreaded phrase... advancing years. Watch this space!

Janet Roebuck

Music Group 5



I have been leader of this group since 2000 and have kept a record of most of our themes. To make life easier, for our monthly theme, we often now resort to working through the alphabet – so many titles, artistes, composers etc., so we can easily come up with a varied choice of music – classical, jazz, easy listening and so on. We have had mostly the same group members for some years now so must be doing something right! And we *always* enjoy the tea/coffee and yummy cakes! At times it seems we have never eaten before as the cakes disappear very quickly indeed!



The word '*vultures*' comes to mind!

As we didn't manage to get the whole group together for our Christmas 2018 Lunch (there is always someone on holiday or ill or busy with family problems) this year we are meeting at Sue Wright's house and she has kindly offered to cater lunch for us – we'll all contribute towards the cost. I hope everyone can come this time, but only time will tell. Many thanks Sue – we *do* love eating out!

Janet Williams
Group Co-ordinator



Welfare

Wow, what a mixture of weather we have been having recently! Don't forget to have your 'flu jab to keep you protected before that naughty word 'winter' sets in.

We have delivered thirty cards since the last edition of *Contact*; many recipients have told me how much they appreciate them and especially that they are handmade by fellow members.

Sad to say that June Fox passed away recently. June used to enjoy the Games Group when it was running and, aside from our U3A, she was also a very good short mat bowls player.

Very sadly Norman Oliver passed away very suddenly earlier this month.

I will repeat my request that if you hear that one of our members is unwell or in need of a little tlc please do let me know as I would hate it if anyone was left out. Kindness costs nothing but can have an amazing effect on the recipient.

Diane Carver
Welfare Officer

Churches

It seems such a short time since I wrote our first report; when you belong to the U3A there is always something happening to fill your days. Our year of visits, for example, has so far been lovely; the visits get better and better.

April. We did not have a visit due to Easter Holiday.

May. We visited the beautiful gem of a church at Radnage. Our guide, Robert, was particularly knowledgeable and enthusiastic; there were many fine features including fragments of medieval wall paintings and a Saxon font. It is a very well supported church, so it is well cared for. Robert very kindly provided refreshments for us and insisted that all the cakes be eaten!

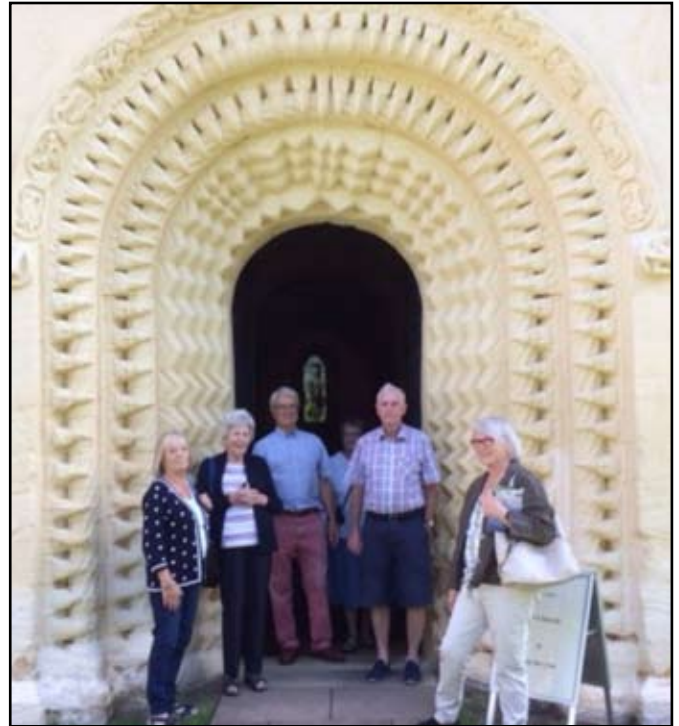
June. Our trip was to St. Margaret, Lewknor, The Reverend Peter Waterston and his lovely wife June made us very welcome and, in spite of there being no facilities in the church, managed to serve us tea and home made cakes! They have only been with the parish three years and, as well as Lewknor, have care of three other churches including Tetsworth. With a congregation of only eight souls the church is in a sad state of repair but Peter is hoping that a Church Heritage grant will save the place. The adjacent primary school use the church as an extension and this helps with its preservation. Two William Morris windows were very fine and also some impressive sculptures but all looks sadly neglected.

July. A joint visit to St. Mary and St Nicholas at Saunderton, and, just down the road, St. Michael and All the Angels at Horsenden. These visits were arranged by Hilary and Steve Goodchild who not only arranged access but did all the relevant research and, in the absence of a local guide, related the histories. Saunderton church was pretty much rebuilt in the 19th century but retains two reset 14th century windows and, among other features, medieval floor tiles in the vestry. Horsenden has had a church since the 12th century but the existing building is mainly C15th, with a nave and tower rebuilt in the late C18th. Again, we saw preserved medieval floor tiles and fine Victorian stained glass. Both churches are not open generally and only have services once a month due to their remote locations and small congregations.

August. St Mary the Virgin, Iffley. When I was trying to arrange this month's visit I had a choice of St Mary the Virgin, St Mary the Virgin or St

Mary the Virgin. We elected to go for St Mary the Virgin. The locations in question are Ewelme, Turville and Iffley. There seems to have been a remarkable devotion to the Virgin Mary in pre-Reformation Oxfordshire/Buckhamshire.

Our terrific guide was Mark Phythian-Adams, Church Warden and historian extraordinaire.



Some of our group at Iffley with our guide Mark

This magnificent Romanesque church is extremely well preserved and is very well funded by several foundations, and the large supportive congregation. The external carvings are surely the finest Norman examples in the country, as are those in the church interior. Just to mention a few outstanding items; the now walled up cell of the C13th anchoress, Annora, a branch of whose family may have built and endowed the church; two wonderful modern stained glass windows, both showing the Tree of Life but in very different styles, one by John Piper and the other by Roger Wagner. The other modern masterpiece was the altar cloth, produced by a local ladies guild, a most extraordinary piece of needle craft.

Our autumn visits are all arranged and I look forward to sharing the experiences with our great group. Thanks especially to Hilary and Steve, Frances and Sian for their help and all those who offered suggestions for interesting visits.

David Fahey
Group Co-ordinator

Strollers

Fresh air – views – companionship – some gentle exercise, usually followed by a coffee and/or a lunch stop. We call ourselves the Strollers. In our younger and more energetic days we would have been among the Long, Medium or Short Walkers. Is that strides or height?! So, complete with our friendly walking sticks we have enjoyed exploring lesser-known parts of Chinnor and surrounding areas.

Our programme runs from April to October on the first Friday of the month, starting at 11.00am. This year we have been to the Nature Reserve beyond Donkey Lane, explored Ewelme, Old Kiln Lakes, Lewknor, Whiteleaf and Dinton. Sadly we had to postpone the June walk due to very bad weather.

The group meets in March at the Village Centre to plan the programme. Each walk is planned and organised by a volunteer walk leader. This year I have acted as a focal point/co-ordinator, answering general queries, though the walk leader can usually deal with most queries. At the next planning meeting, which Elaine Du Lieu or I will book, the group will need a volunteer to be next year's co-ordinator. You will have Elaine's and my support.

So if you have enjoyed your strolls or wish to join us please consider being next year's co-ordinator. Please contact me or Elaine for further information. The date of the planning meeting will be put on the notice board at the monthly meetings once it has been arranged.

Joan Dicker

Group Co-ordinator

Creative Writing

We are a slightly larger group nowadays, but still meet in each other's homes for a chat, coffee and biscuits, before we get down to business.

Our illustrious leader, Ann Long, works hard on our behalf to come up with different subjects to write about. We are constantly amazed at the different styles we all have when we put pen to paper.

Recently we were given a list of fictitious people with their age, first name, surname and ethnicity, and were invited to write about them and their looks, personality etc. We are given carte blanche about how we write and have heard some interesting pieces. Sometimes we look at objects, photographs, paintings etc. and write about those, using our imaginations. On one occasion we wrote about 'Our Mothers' Kitchens', and another time we wrote a fairy story for a child, with a slightly dark theme included.

For our next meeting we are going to a birthday girl's house for coffee, creative writing and lunch – each of us to bring a plate of food – this should be good fun. One member has compiled a crossword, which will keep us out of mischief for a while.

Keep up the good work, Ann. We all enjoy our meetings.

Janet Williams

Creative Writing Group Member

Lunch!

A man was visiting a monastery and came upon one brother frying in the kitchen and asked him "Are you the friar?" "No", he replied, "I'm the chip-monk."

Thank you, Anne Long, for making us smile!

Welcome to our New Members

Mr William (Bill)Atkinson
Mrs Sandra Braund
Mrs Susan Coombs
Dr Annette Dearmun
Mrs Ann Fassom
Mr Ian Fassom
Mrs Marion Johnson

Mrs Andrea de Jongh
Mr Paul de Jongh
Ms Margaret Lambert
Mrs Jill Robertson
Mrs Beth Smith
Mr Arthur Thomas
Mrs Margaret Thomas

Only Time Will Tell

This work of fiction is an example of what we do in our Creative Writing Group

We were all excited at the prospect. We could look back with gratitude – some of us had known family members three generations back, but now we were about to add the first member of a new generation to our family. So we looked forward with joy and anticipation. Not long to wait now – Colin and Debra's baby was due in the next week.

All went well and baby Sienna joined our family, followed in the next few years by Simon, Lynette and eventually Leon. We've had so much joy from them all – and not a few heartaches too, over the years. Right now they are all teenagers and there are a lot of laughs and occasional stormy patches as they each assert their independence.

As I've looked at them, shared all sorts of sorrows and celebrations with them, and constantly prayed for them, I've also been dreaming a little about what their paths in life might hold.

Sienna, just 18, is a leader, bold, confident and sometimes daring. She clearly intends to make her mark in some way, but she doesn't want to do it alone – she's always looking for others to join her and have fun, adventure and excitement with her. She loves going off to camps of various sorts, to do her Duke of Edinburgh's activities, to go rock climbing, or snow-boarding, or water-skiing. When told that there isn't the money for something she wants, she looks for a way of earning it – she's worked on farms - mucking out horses, cows or pigs generally but she's also done dog-walking and cat-sitting for short periods. Her favourite expression is "who wants to have a try at ...". I can imagine her taking on Lord Sugar in due course – and probably not getting fired!

Simon, 16, has been content to follow in Sienna's wake, up to a point. He lets her take the initiative all the time it seems fun to him. But if something appears to be too madcap he finds, conveniently, that he has some other commitment, and wanders off on his own. Sienna's friends are all friends with him too, but are aware that he's his own person and respect his separate existence – after all he is a little younger and may not be quite up to whatever it is that they are up to at the moment. He's very good at maths and physics. I've wondered whether he'd get into something like being the financial brains behind some entrepreneur inventor – the sort of person who invented the DeLorean car, or James Dyson, or Richard Branson. He'd be up for the new thing but would also have sufficient caution to keep the wheels of the enterprise firmly on the ground.

Or possibly he'd invent something really useful himself.

Lynette, 14, is the quietest of the bunch. She talked early, but didn't always want to go adventuring like her older siblings. If she could get an adult to herself – to read to her, play a game with her, but above all, chat with her, she would be as happy as Larry. She'd join in family activities, games, outings, discussions – though she'd usually be listening more than holding the floor. Afterwards we'd often hear her telling her dolls, or an imaginary friend, all about it. From quite an early age she would be content to be on her own for quite long periods. I remember the first time I heard her in the loo chatting away. She must have been only just three. At first I thought there was someone in with her, then I realised she was being two or three different people, and trying out different voices for each. She's got a wide vocabulary, very extensive for her age, and clearly likes words. I'm not sure if she'll be a writer, or whether she'll want to be an actress (I can't understand why these days that's not kosher and we're supposed to call them all actors.) Anyway, she might thrive on the stage.

Leon, 13, as the baby of the family, has always been enjoyed, encouraged and viewed as a source of gentle amusement. Consequently, he sees his job to be the family clown. Early on he played up to this by dressing up – putting on any stray bits of clothing found lying around or his mother's high heels, or he'd be walking backwards into a room and putting on funny voices. It seemed to be that he thought laughter was his way of gaining approval. As he's grown he's taken to rather odd fashions that would cause others to be ridiculed, but are just accepted on him as being "just his way". Lately, I've been wondering what is going on under that rather comic armour. He's clearly as intelligent as any of the others. However, he seeks to hide it from us by his various disguises. I think he may surprise us all one day by coming out from under the camouflage and going into something academic or medical or seriously important and valuable in some other way.

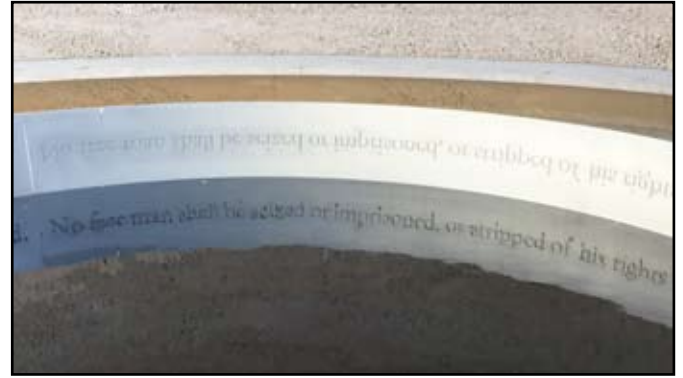
So now we are no longer looking back at what we know previous generations faced, and what they did. Instead, while we go on with living in our own circumstances, we are also looking forward to what that latest generation may get up to. Only time will tell.

Ann Long
Group Co-ordinator

Visit to Runnymede and Windsor

*On the Thames at Runnymede eight hundred
plus years ago
Between the camps of Barons and King where
fighting men can't go,
A meadow place for a stand off, too boggy for a
fight,
The factions met, Barons with no swords, just
parchment as their right.
The fifteenth of June, their rights outlined, they
met their King
Seeking his seal on their charter and the justice
a monarch should bring,
Forced by the deeds of John before, a king, but
foul and bad.
He'd bled the Barons of their wealth; they'd
been had.*

Runnymede and its numerous points of interest took us back to the middle ages and the bad King John that A A Milne tried to make us like. We were reminded of how important the Magna Carta is to us as it preceded Habeas Corpus and led to democracy. Yet we were jolted out of our complacency by the sculpture, *The Jurors* – twelve intricately worked bronze chairs which represented twenty-four instances of worldwide injustice.



Then we were taken by river boat to Windsor and back to our present world of a constitutional monarch. Royalty was not defeated at Runnymede after all, yet our present Queen still needed the people's Guildhall for the second wedding of her eldest son, as a marriage licence for Windsor Chapel would have included the *hoi polloi* for a certain period.

A quick walk around the streets of Windsor revealed the majestic walls of the castle on one side of the road and, on the other, the homeless sleeping on the pavements. Quite a contrast and something we don't see in Chinnor nor experience personally.

In fact, the venues contrasted with each other and were both thought provoking. A well organised outing enhanced by sunshine and a leisurely boat trip on the Thames.

Janet Erskine

*LEFT: This is a photograph of the seventh chair of The Jurors sculpture and shows Nelson Mandela's prison.
ABOVE: The new monument called Writ in Water which shows quotes from the Magna Carta.
BELOW: Windsor Castle.*



Using Less Plastic

Anyone who follows the news must be aware of the massive problems plastic causes for our environment. Many companies have changed their packaging to reduce their use of this indestructible material and I'm sure most of us would like to do what we can too.

Local people have joined together to form the group *Chinnor Action on Plastic*. Sharing ideas, knowledge and enthusiasm in order to inspire others, the group's aim is to support and inform on ways of reducing our reliance on plastic in our daily lives.

We hold regular meetings in the village, to which everyone is welcome. Details can be found in the *Chinnor Pump*, and on the council events dates. If you use Facebook you can join our page *Plastic Free Chinnor*. As well as information about meetings, this is a good place for members to share their tips and ideas with others. The next meeting is on Tuesday 12th November at the Chinnor Village Centre, 7.30pm.

Here are some suggestions of what we can easily do to reduce our use of plastic:

- no more single use cups and plastic cutlery; carry your own water bottle and ask for refills;
- no more plastic straws, (except in medical need);
- remember to take your own shopping bags;
- aim to buy fruit and vegetables loose, or in paper bags.

There are now a number of shops in this area that allow you to take your own containers to be refilled with everything from food items to shampoo and detergents. There is a company, *So Sustainable*, which holds pop-up shops (shops that go to different locations for a day) and they are coming to Chinnor, normally on the first Saturday of the month (2nd Saturday in December), at Chinnor Community Pavilion, 10am-1pm. Watch out for details and start saving your containers, (reusable containers will be available).

Ruth Ruddock

Digital Photography

The Digital Photography group meet the second Thursday of the month and visit various places to practise our camera skills.

In May we visited the Horse Sanctuary at Speen which gave us some interesting challenges. One horse did smile at the camera for one of our members or perhaps it was a 'Go away or I will bite you!' warning?

In June we went back to Richard and Rosemary Webb's garden and the following month we had a very interesting trip to Booker Airfield. We now have a visit to Haddenham to come before our November meeting, when we will review and discuss all our photographs. There is no meeting in December.

From January to March we meet indoors, before starting our outdoor programme again in April.

We welcome new members so if you would like to join us please get in touch. (see page 16 for contact details).

Richard Carver
Group Leader



Photographs taken during our visit to Booker Airfield.



MEMBER MEMORIES

Where it all began

Where did it all begin – my involvement with organising coach outings and holidays?

Well, it was going on a skiing holiday. I went to Austria in the days when there were couchettes on a train. For the long journeys you slept on board whilst travelling through France, Switzerland and Austria to the ski resorts. It was a wonderful holiday but what attracted me was discovering that the travel agent's resident representative was paid to 'ski all day', as well as meeting new passengers from the railway station or an airport and then even had time for an 'apres ski' tea and cake and dancing every evening. 'That's the job for me', I thought!

On my return to England and back to commuting to London every day, working as a secretary, I soon decided that was not what I wanted to do for the foreseeable future. I looked for a job as an au pair in Germany to learn the language. I found what seemed to be a respectable family in Dusseldorf. He was a solicitor and he and his wife had a young daughter and small son. I spent a year with them. To live with a German family was hard work – the wife was a great example of what we

understand as a strict German 'hausfrau'. That's another story...

At the end of my time there I was pretty fluent in High German and was ready to go back to the travel agent, Inghams, to get a job with them in Austria. At first I was in the Innsbruck office acting as a liaison officer between them and the other reps in the Tyrol and London head office. Coaches had to be ordered to meet trains and aeroplanes landing in Innsbruck or Munich and taking all the keen skiers to their ski resorts – with all to be done in reverse, of course, for their homeward journey.

Very soon I was sent to Seefeld to work with another rep, Helga. Our duties were to check hotel bookings in six hotels, and arrange all coach bookings with the village coach company. It was necessary to meet all new arrivals so they could get their skis and boots, to hand out ski lift ticket allowance, tickets for the ski school lessons and ski lift passes. I ran an 'office hour' for any special questions and also to book any coach outings.

It was a long hard day, walking up and down the village visiting our passengers in the six hotels I covered during meal times so that I could be sure

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

I'm a member of a French group because...

"I want to overcome my fear of French at school. In spite of having 'O' level I would like to converse in French."

"My first French teacher was a conservative Catholic nun! She took on a completely different personality when she was in French mode perhaps this was her escape! She convinced me that French was for me. It was my favourite subject in secondary school and I did well getting a higher grade in the Irish GCSE equivalent. Sadly I was then sent to boarding school but, as luck would have it, I had an equally good teacher who insisted I take French to A level. I thoroughly enjoyed it and was successful. While my immediate future thereafter was not in linguistics I did continue with French after school at the Alliance Française in Dublin, where I gained a diploma in French set by the Sorbonne in Paris. That was some years ago now, but I still think you cannot beat a break in *la belle France* and in the interim take a class at your local U3A regardless of what level you are!"

"I'm trying to improve my French because I want to be able to chat to French friends in their language. I enjoy learning with U3A because it's friendly and very relaxed. Hope a few quotes from some of us will give an idea of what we do."

"I've always been interested in languages as I have an aunt who married a Frenchman and two bilingual cousins who often used to spend their summer holidays with me. Also, I've had many holidays in Boulogne-sur-Mer and learning French has helped me understand conversation, although I find that it's a very fast-spoken language and even after years of study I sometimes have difficulty following a conversation if people speak too fast. When I was ten years old and staying with my aunt, the first French phrase that I learnt was "oo là là" My aunt is now 85 and she still lives in Boulogne. Of course her French is excellent. I still visit her and have a chance to speak French to her home help who is very kind."

"I decided to join the U3A French group

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

of making contact. Oh yes, a long busy day, skiing during the day, dancing or drinking wine in the evenings... I managed, but I was lot younger then!

After my first winter season I returned to England for a short time and then went back to Austria again for the summer season.

During the summer season we had about one hundred guests at a time in the village, so you can imagine we had a busy time. Travel arrangements to and from the resort were much the same but the summer was time for coach outings and visiting castles and Baroque churches. I enjoyed walking in the mountains, using the cable cars, and of course I arranged visits to the popular Tyrolean Evenings

Some outings were included in the holiday but coaches had to be ordered and numbers checked. We had two 'two centred' holidays. One was a week in Seefeld with the second week in Kitzbuhl in the Austrian Alps. The second one was a week in Seefeld and the second week in Lido di Jesolo near Venice. I did this transfer every two weeks, travelling over the Brenner Pass into Italy, through the glorious Dolomite Mountains and finally down to the Adriatic for one night. It was a long journey but always breath-taking, as the weather was always changing. Other regular outings went to Oberammergau, Castle Neuschwanstein, the

Zugspitze (Germany's highest mountain) and Innsbruck to see the Olympic Ski Jump and the impressive city. Do you remember the von Trapp Family in *The Sound of Music*? Another Austrian family used to appear at the theatre in Innsbruck with a show very much like the von Trapps and this was very popular.

Going back to the skiing holidays I was moved to a new ski resort called Gargellan. During this time a small group arrived and as the time went by I met a couple of young gentlemen who were regular visitors to this resort. We became good friends and I was escorted to tea dances and evening entertainment with both of them. On returning to England I received an invitation from one of them (John) to a party, which I accepted and one of the other guests was Ian! Ian and I kept in touch and by the next winter season I was posted to Soelden, and Ian booked a holiday there. A few months later we were married.

A very strange coincidence: Helga, who I worked with in Seefeld eventually returned to South Africa. John, who I mentioned earlier, had never met her, but when he was going to visit South Africa I gave him her address. Guess what – they got married!

Sheila Tunstall

because I have a French son-in-law and two young granddaughters who will be brought up bilingual. I hope it will give me more confidence to converse with French relatives. Hopefully my granddaughters will enjoy helping me as I am sure they will speak more simply and slowly at first."

"My last French lessons were nearly thirty years ago so I am very rusty but I was welcomed into the class by Janet and the other members of the group and made to feel very welcome. I was surprised to be promoted to the intermediate group but we all find it a bit hard so we support each other and hopefully gain confidence."

"We are always told that learning a language is good for the brain as we get older so a big thank you to Janet for making the classes lively and fun. I can recommend it."

"My interest in learning French is to improve my listening and memory skills, plus hopefully understand our own language a bit better!"

Members of the French Group

The group is co-ordinated by Janet Erskine. Contact details can be found on page 16.

Bridge

The Bridge Group meets in the Village Centre on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. We had a break over summer, though some members met to improve their skills in various aspects of the bidding. We resumed in September and welcomed some new members.

We play Chicago or a basic duplicate and there will be some prepared hands to illustrate a topic, otherwise it is 'deal and play'. Advice is available.

New members are welcome, all levels of experience; you need to know the basics of bridge and have played before, though help will be on hand if you need it. There will usually be a supported table for novices and other tables for more experienced players. You can come along with or without a partner, or just to watch at first.

Jean Wadsworth
Group co-ordinator

A Holiday to the Sorrento Coast

In April of this year a group of thirty-six U3A members, some from the Archaeology and Geology group made a trip to the Sorrento Coast in Italy.

We flew from London to Naples from where we had a coach to take us to our hotel in Sorrento. It was conveniently located close to the town centre and was only a short walk to the main square or a downhill walk to the harbour. The hotel was well appointed with welcoming and friendly staff.

Mike and Pearl Dix had recently visited the area and had made a note of suitable places for us to visit. Co-ordinating with Sheila Tunstall we were on our way.



A tour along the Amalphi coast involved a sheer drop to one side, the roads winding their way along the coast. This gave lovely views out to sea and of the small coastal villages.

There was a trip to Capri and few people opted to visit Ischia, an island close to Capri. This contained the Giardini La Mortella which were the gardens of William Walton and his wife Susan. The garden has been sculptured out of a ravine and was spectacular, holding many exotic plants.

All too soon the holiday came to end but not before we had sampled the delights of lemoncello in both spirit and liqueur forms.

We had had wonderful weather, wonderful food and drink, wonderful trips out and wonderful company.

Lunga vita U3A trips and holidays!

Bryan Roebuck

TOP: The fisherman's village in Sorrento

LEFT: Amphitheatre at Pompeii

BELOW: The group who visited Herculaneum
Photographs © Diane Carver



A number of optional tours had been planned, giving people the choice of where to visit. Many chose to visit Pompeii, Mount Vesuvius and Herculaneum. There was also an excellent option to visit Paestum, an area originally founded by the Greeks but later occupied by the Romans. There are still two magnificent temples in wonderful condition. They really were a sight to behold.



Pull-out information section

You can remove these four middle pages without damaging the newsletter so that you can easily refer to the information when you need it.

An Archive of The History of Chinnor



A local resident, Fiona Mantle, who some of you may know as our First Responder, is currently researching and compiling a digital archive of historical information about Chinnor which will in future be available via the Parish Council and Library websites to anyone wishing to explore the history of the village.

The information she is searching for can be in many formats, for example written work, photographs, deeds and documents etc. or even recorded verbal accounts which could be transcribed. The problem is getting to know who has this information, (even reminding people that they do have it). There must be a vast amount tucked away in files, boxes, in cupboards and under beds.

This is an appeal to all U3A members who may have useful information or may know of the whereabouts of such information to initially let me know some details and I will pass them on to Fiona.

HOW WOULD IT WORK?

The owner of the information would be asked to lend it to Fiona who has formed a small group of helpers, who will then convert it into a digital format copy which will not physically affect the document. The original document will then be returned to the owner.

The ultimate aim is to produce an accessible user friendly archive of Chinnor's history for posterity, which will be available to all including the schools.

Mike Dix
Business Secretary

Thanks to all contributors to this edition of Contact. It's been quite hard work getting enough material this time, but thanks to some resourceful members, who have helped by offering some really interesting items, I think you will find that there is lots to interest you.

Please remember that this is your newsletter so it can only be produced with your input. As well as reports (they don't have to be written by the group co-ordinator!) I am happy to receive any items which you think may interest other readers: articles, photographs, drawings, cartoons, poems, quizzes – all are welcome, as long as they are original (we cannot re-use material from other publications). If you do not use a computer hand written or typed items are acceptable and I will return any photographs. I look forward to your contributions for the spring 2020 issue.

Krystyna Hewitt, Editor

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

For the monthly meetings in the
Village Hall

Would you be willing to help with any of these tasks? If so please contact the organisers as shown below:

- Welcoming and signing in members as they arrive at the start of the meeting
Pam Buckingham
- Serving tea and coffee when the speaker has finished the talk
Pearl Dix
- Helping put out the chairs and putting them away again
Peter Brook
- Bringing down and then returning the tea urns and the banner to the store cupboard
Peter Hetherington

www.chinnoru3a.org.uk

The website is updated regularly and gives a full two-monthly calendar of all the Interest Groups' meetings, links to other U3A websites and useful tips on a variety of subjects. You can also read *Contact* in colour on the website.

Programme

November 2019 – May 2020

Monthly Talks are held at 2.30pm in the Village Hall
Coffee Mornings are held at 10.30am at the Village Centre

NOVEMBER 2019

8th Coffee Morning
21st **Milton Keynes to Birmingham by Rail**
Roger M Mason

DECEMBER 2019

10th: 10.30am **Christmas Carol Concert**
13th Coffee Morning
19th **The Joy of Singing**
Sarah Westcott

JANUARY 2020

10th Coffee Morning
16th **The Ridgeway**
Anthony Burdall

FEBRUARY 2020

14th Coffee Morning
20th **Miniature Engraver**
Graham Short

27th: 2pm ANNUAL LECTURE

Art & Design in the Chilterns
Graham Twemlow

MARCH 2020

13th Coffee Morning
19th **Artificial Intelligence**
Rebecca Raper

APRIL 2020

No Coffee Morning (Easter)
16th **'Brushstrokes in Time': China under Mao Zedong**
Sylvia Vetta

MAY 2020

21st **'The KGB Remembered': 23 years in the British Diplomatic Service**
Keith Muras
29th Coffee Morning



Holidays, Events and Outings 2020

Thursday 9th January (evening)

A New Year's Night

Wycombe Swan

Wednesday 26th February

Historical Tour of Albert Hall (am)

Choice of Nearby Museums (pm) (free time)

Mon 9th to Fri 13th March

Holiday to Warner's Alvaston Hall, Nantwich, Cheshire

Sunday 19th April (matinee)

Choral Concert at Royal Albert Hall

Sunday 3rd – Friday 8th May

Holiday to Northumberland

Tuesday 23rd June

Shugborough Mansion and Estate (National Trust)

Wednesday 29th July

**Highclere Castle: Guided Tour of
the Egyptian Collection and Gardens**

August *Date to be advised.*

Tea Party

Thursday 3rd September

**Compton Verney House, Stratford on Avon:
Art Collections and Gardens**

Tuesday 13th October

Brooklands, Aviation Museum , Weybridge, Surrey

Thursday 12th November

Bury St. Edmunds: Guided Tours

December *Date to be advised.*

Christmas Lunch

**Outing application forms can be collected at the monthly meetings
approximately three months in advance and can also be found on the website.**

Interest Groups at a Glance

Please contact the Co-ordinator before attending a group for the first time.
Their telephone numbers can be found on your Programme Card.

Group	Co-ordinator/s	Day of Month	Venue	Times
Archeology and Geology	Christine Prior Nick Marriner-Kyle	4th Monday	Various	10.00-12.00
Art History	Sian Stevens Elan Preston-Whyte	3rd Friday	Village Centre <i>Not December</i>	10.30-12.00
Bridge	Jean Wadsworth	2nd & 4th Thursdays <i>Not July, August,</i>	Village Centre	2.00-4.00
Canasta	Jean Wadsworth	2nd & 4th Tuesdays	'Phone	2.00-4.00
Cards	Dorrie Oliver	1st & 3rd Wednesdays	Village Centre	2.00-4.00
Churches	David Fahey	4th Friday	'Phone	am
Computers 2.30-4.00	Robin Preston-Whyte Chas Large	1st Friday <i>Not August</i>	Village Centre	
Creative Writing	Ann Long	2nd Monday	'Phone	10.15-12.00
Digital Photography	Richard Carver	2nd Thursday <i>Not Sept or Dec</i>	'Phone	10-12
Family History	George Hunter	1st Thursday	Village Centre	10.15-11.45
French: Beginners Experienced	Janet Erskine	1st and 3rd Monday 'Phone	'Phone	1.30pm 'Phone
Gardening A & B A (pm) & B (am)	Ann Hine	3rd Wednesday	Various	10.30-12.00 2.00-3.30
Handicrafts Groups 1, 2 & 3	Janet Roebuck	1st, 2nd & 3rd Wednesdays	'Phone	2.00-
Hempton Activities	Diane Carver	2nd Friday Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov	Hempton Fields	2-3.30pm
History	Hilary Goodchild	3rd Friday	Reading Room	2.30-4.00
Holidays & Outings Various	Peter Hetherington		Various	Various
Music Group 1	Bill Parkinson	3rd Friday	'Phone	2.00-4.30
Music Group 3	Jim Trimmer	Last Friday	'Phone	2.00-4.30
Music Group 5	Janet Williams	2nd Thursday	'Phone	2.00-4.00
Music Group 6	Pam Buckingham	2nd Monday	'Phone	2.30-4.30
Poetry	Mavis Rimmer	2nd Monday	'Phone	2.00-4.30
Play Reading	Pam Clark	2nd Friday	Reading Room	2.00-4.00
Reading	Ann Goold	4th Thursday <i>Not December</i>	'Phone	10.30-
Singles/Dining	Valerie Welford	Three weekly	Various	
Swimming	Anne Marie Lord	Monday Thursday Friday	Risborough Springs Pool	2.00-3.00 10.00-11.15 10.00-11.00
Walks: Long Walks	Ray Barnett	1st Tuesday	Various	10.00-1.00

Amendments since the last issue of this list are shown shaded

Art History

A feature of this year's presentations has been that they have been about relatively unknown artists. This has demanded more research than is usually necessary for the presenters because there is less written about them than more famous subjects. However, the group has benefited from being introduced to painters who otherwise might remain in obscurity.

To give readers an idea of the range of subjects covered from March, here is a brief description of each:

John Perkin showed paintings which John Nash had produced locally at Meadle, near Princes Risborough, where he lived for some years in the early twentieth century. These had echoes in their composition of the work of his brother Paul but the pastoral scenes had none of the starkness of Paul's battlegrounds. Samuel Palmer, an artist whom John also featured, was a landscape painter, etcher and printmaker and also a prolific writer. He was a key figure in 19th century Romanticism producing visionary pastoral paintings. He painted a great deal in Shoreham, then rural countryside outside of London, but many of his paintings were destroyed after his death by his son.

In June, Rob Holdaway's tour de force presentation on Australian art endeavoured to demonstrate that *Art Down Under* was not a cultural desert! Rob has written an article for this edition of *Contact* which covers the content of his talk (see page 22).

Ray Barnett chose Robert Bevan (1865-1925) to present in July. This was a little known artist who had exhibited few of his paintings and sold even fewer. As a young man he had studied briefly at the Academie Julian in Paris, where he met up with Paul Sérusier, Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard and Maurice Denis. He then travelled to Tangier – where he spent three years hunting rather than painting – but eventually went back to Pont Aven in France where he was influenced by Gauguin and mentored by Renoir particularly over his drawing of horses.

Ray had looked at several sketch books held at the Ashmolean Museum of mainly pencil drawings done by Bevan. These were possible studies in preparation for paintings but as they were undated it was difficult to trace the development of his art from them. His paintings on the other hand showed the influence that impressionism had made on him in the use of

colour and form but interspersed with these paintings were more literal representations of street scenes in London and Hove.

Andrew Wyeth (1917- 2009), presented by Brenda Goffin, was one of the best-known US artists of the middle 20th century. His ancestors had travelled to America from England in the 17th century, settling in Pennsylvania. He was taught figure study and watercolour by his father, N.C Wyeth, who was a successful illustrator famous for his work portrayed in magazines, posters and advertisements. Later Andrew was to be an expert in the use of tempera as a medium instead of oil. By the age of twenty he had held his first exhibition of watercolours in New York, selling out the whole collection. His most famous painting was of a neighbour, Christina Olsen, who lived in Cushing in Maine, where the Wyeths had a second home. This enigmatic scene was called *Christina's World*. However, his greatest muse was a German woman, Helga Testorf, whom he painted over two hundred times, hiding the portraits until 1986, when he sold the complete collection for an immense amount of money. However, when the collection was sold later it made far less than its original price.

The programme for the rest of the year includes:

- Ireland's Forgotten Impressionist: Roderic O'Connor
- Sorolla: the late 19th century Spanish artist recently the subject on exhibition at the National Gallery in London
- Pierre Bonnard
- Christmas Through the Eyes of Four Famous Artists

There are 25 members in the group at present and, although this is near capacity for the room, we would like to welcome others to join us, whether you are an expert willing to share your knowledge with us or a complete novice who would like to learn more. The meetings are run on a very informal basis (with access to a laptop, projector and visualiser if needed) on the third Friday morning of the month in the Chiltern Room of the Village Centre starting at 10.30am.

Contact details for the joint co-ordinators, Elan Preston-Whyte and Sian Stevens, can be found on the Interest Groups at a Glance table on page 16.

Elan Preston-Whyte

Joint Group Co-ordinator

Short Walks

I think I can truthfully say that each walk this spring and summer has had its own character and excitement – sometimes unexpected. Thanks to our thoughtful walk leaders the walks were interesting and well-attended and the weather generally kind to us.

On a sunny April day we met in Hambleden village and walked to the Lock. Crossing the picturesque long weir we met, by chance, the refreshments organiser (with her dog) of our February Fingest walk. We strolled along a country lane and arrived at *The Flower Pot* public house, to enjoy a rest with tea/coffee and biscuits in their warm pub garden, then slowly walked back upstream along the river back to the weir.

On May Day we had a very local walk around the Kiln Lakes. We had a record turnout of about forty-five people for this local walk on a lovely sunny day. Our little army started from the railway station and ‘marched’ to the last remaining Beehive Kiln, built around 1908 for burning lime. Then on to the lakes. We passed the first lake, used for fishing, and soon reached a beautiful wide panoramic scene – the wooded Chilterns in the background with the varied birdlife on the lakes below. This time, however, there was a large group of (what looked like fighting) dogs and their owners beside the large lake – and a police helicopter hovering overhead; the police were obviously a little concerned. The dogs and owners soon moved away! After that little excitement, some of our group went straight back to the station’s ‘carriage’ café for refreshments whilst the rest of us investigated the entrance to the ‘hidden’ lake, barred to the general public by a large gate. This area was used to test the tunnelling machines for the Channel Tunnel,



as well as for some scenes in *Die Another Day*, It is currently a research facility for geological studies into the exposed chalk layers in the quarry.

Starting at Bradenham village in June, we passed the parish church of St Botolph, continuing on to the wide, gentle slopes to the Park Wood, strolling through the lovely wildflower meadows. Some of the group took the short steep hill through light woodland then eventually joined the rest, who had taken the lower track. We all walked back to the village through the meadows, passing the ancient Puddingstones and Sarsen stones, to the cosy *Red Lion* tea room for refreshments.

We started at the 18th Century Nettlebed Brick Kiln in July, walking past the Sue Ryder house and grounds to St. Bartholomew Church, where we were able to admire the two John Piper designed stained glass windows. We followed the allotment path to Nettlebed Common, which sourced the extensive production of tiles and bricks from the 14th Century onwards (including 35000 tiles for Wallingford Castle). Circumventing Windmill Hill, past a small hamlet of dwellings including a picturesque cottage we returned to our starting point and refreshments at the *Fieldhouse Kitchen*.

Only eleven people attended our August walk at Sutton Courtney. It had poured with rain all morning and most people decided to give the walk a miss – a great shame as it stopped raining about midday! The walk was very interesting and the scenery beautiful. Passing by the 14th to 16th century Abbey, we walked through the village past, Asquith’s (the last Liberal Prime Minister) red bricked house. Being PM when the First World War broke out, he declared war on Germany. Then on to the picturesque Thames, past back waters, weir and a small hydroelectric plant and on to Culham Lock. Crossing the river, we returned to the village churchyard to find the





OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM
LEFT: Refreshments
at the Cambrian Tea
Room, C&PR Railway
in Chinnor.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:
A rest stop on the
Bradenham walk.

LEFT: Asquith's cottage
in Sutton Courteney

BELOW: We're not lost!
Studying the map in
Wendover Woods.

grave of Eric Blair, better known as George Orwell, whose writing was both admired and despised by different classes of society. A much finer grave was that of the Earl of Oxford and Asquith. From there we went next door to the inn for tea and cake.

Our September walk was in Wendover Woods. Much of this walk took us along well made tracks with some smaller paths along the way, and the option of a slightly shorter walk for some. We stopped to say 'Hello' to *The Gruffalo* and enjoyed various views of the nearby countryside. We finished at the newly opened café, sitting outside to enjoy the afternoon sun with lovely views down into a wooded valley. Wendover Woods has had a makeover: the new car park and the new café are much improved and very smart.

The programme of walks for the coming autumn and winter may include: a local walk in the direction of Emmington and Henton, a visit to the Harcourt Arboretum near Nuneham Courtenay, a town walk in Thame, a walk along the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal and a town walk at Watlington. All our walks are worth coming on but if you have a special area that you'd like us to visit, feel free to sort out a walk for us – we'd really appreciate that.

Graham Stone
Group Co-ordinator



Card club

Where we raise the roof with our laughter!

For the first hour we play a regular Backpacker Game called Shed and then play Cribbage.

We used to play a variety of games – we still do if that's what people want – but Crib has proved to be so very popular that's what we play for the second hour.

One hour of Shed – where any number of people can play (we split into groups of up to ten or twelve, or more as necessary) – each person has to have nine cards to play so you will see that with twelve or more people in two groups we use several packs of cards for each game, which have to be shuffled. This is a mammoth task and with so many members and a good cash flow we decided to buy ourselves a Card Shuffler. It has saved us a lot of time and frustration.

There will quite often be five at a table for Crib as some of us (me included) are still learning the finer points of this marvellous game.

A TYPICAL MEETING!

I have never in all my life laughed as much as I did at our meeting today!

The tears were lashing and there were enough wet tissues to fill three waste paper baskets.

We played Shed for the first hour as usual – always great fun – followed by Cribbage which we all played in tables of four.

Poor ol' Mike had three women on his table, as did John, and for some reason Mikes' every remark made us giggle and eventually roar with laughter.

You cannot explain it to people, you really have to be there and experience it.

Do join us next time.

Our sessions are on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 2-4pm in the Games Room at Chinnor Village Centre in the High Street.

Next gatherings are on October 2nd and 16th and in November the 6th and 20th.

All are most welcome.

Dorrie Oliver
Group Co-ordinator of the 'Laughter Club'!

Gardening

It was a foggy morning when we left Chinnor to drive to Beech House in Jordans, near Beaconsfield for our April Visit. When we arrived the sun was shining, and there was no sign of fog. The two acre garden was lovely, with a wild-flower meadow at the back; it had lots of fritillaries on one side and cowslips on the other. A 'statement' flower bed of bright orange tulips provided



Kathy Brown's garden

a focal point in the back garden, and there were plenty of spring flowers and flowering shrubs for seasonal interest. It was very tranquil, and a lovely start to our summer programme.

In May our first coach visit of 2019, was a trip to Kathy Brown's garden, the Manor House, Stevington, near Bedford. Unfortunately the coach was late arriving, but once we were under way it was a comparatively short journey to our first stop – Frosts Garden Centre, Woburn Sands. Here, many people enjoyed lunch in the restaurant, while others enjoyed some retail therapy. One lady even started her Christmas shopping! Climbing back on the coach, someone was heard to announce 'we should have another coach trip and just come here!' Kathy Brown's garden, once we arrived, was absolutely beautiful, and the weather was lovely too, so we had a very leisurely tea and delicious cake on the lawn. A great day out.

June was a very wet month this year, and especially so for our June visit to St. Timothee, near Pinkneys Green. Seeing the weather forecast for thundery rain, the owner of the garden, Sarah, sent a message to say she would prepare the Games Room so that we could all sit down and watch a presentation about the development of the garden rather than walk round in the pouring rain. Our Morning Group were lucky, it stayed dry for them, they could wander round Sarah's lovely garden at leisure. By the afternoon, however, it was raining steadily. We packed into the Games Room, drinking elderflower cordial, and saw Sarah's presentation, showing the garden as it was thirteen years ago – basically just a field,

and photographs and diagrams of the gradual development of the beds and borders. It was fascinating, and having seen the pictures, without further ado we all set off, umbrellas held high, and walked round in the rain. What a treat the garden was, with beautiful roses, grasses, wide herbaceous borders, and a lovely pond, complete with water-lilies. Sarah herself was really

enthusiastic, and clearly delighted to show her garden to an interested audience, and was happy to answer all our questions.

In July we went on a coach trip to the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, near Romsey in Hampshire. This was Rosemary Keavy's idea, and what a tremendous idea it turned out to be. We had a lovely day there, perfect weather, the gardens were stunning, and the Plant Centre was packed with lovely plants reflecting those that we had just seen in full bloom in the garden itself. Needless to say, some of our group just couldn't resist, and many boxes of plants found their way into the boot of the coach and back to Chinnor.

Most notable in the gardens were the hydrangeas, of all colours, shapes and sizes, and also the Centenary Border, originally developed in 1964 by Sir Harold to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the original Winchester Nursery by his father. Work started

St Timothee in the rain





Mill Barn, tea and cakes. All photographs taken by Bob Hine.

in 2010 to completely modernise and revamp it, and it opened in 2013. It is now the longest double mixed border in the country. There were also beautiful ponds, full of fish (roach and rudd), and the stately champion trees, and the colourful selection of acers made us think that we would like to visit this garden again, but at a different time of year, it was such a beautiful place.

Our August visit was to Mill Barn in Chalgrove. We parked on the opposite side of the road, in the field beside The Manor, and the lady at The Manor invited us to tour her garden first. This was an unexpected treat! She had a walled garden in which there were numerous wooden cold-frames, and she was growing all sorts of vegetables there. We were all amazed at the crops of aubergines, courgettes, beans, tomatoes and many others. From there we went into her 'back' garden, a huge area of lawn with fruit trees and herbaceous borders. There was even a well with water in it at the far end of the lawn. We then went across the road to Mill Barn, where Pat and Mike welcomed us, and let us wander round their lovely garden. They were all prepared with coffee, tea, cake and scones. It was a lovely afternoon.

We have just two more visits left to complete our Summer Programme. In September we are visiting Rycote Park Chapel and Gardens. Many of us have lived in this area for many years, and have never had the opportunity to visit Rycote Park, so this is a very popular visit.

In October we are having a coach trip to RHS Wisley – a beautiful garden at any time of year, but particularly so in autumn with all the lovely colours.

November sees the start of our winter Programme of speakers, the talks are in the Scout Hut again this winter. We look forward to welcoming all our members.

Ann Hine
Group co-ordinator

Family History

The natural temptation when learning about our past, is to zoom in on the specific neighbourhoods, streets and houses in which our forebearers once lived – a strategy that's both fascinating and invaluable when you wish to learn more about their lives. However sometimes it really pays to look further and see what else the world has to offer. With the large families of times gone by, and the wide reach of the former British Empire, there's every chance that you have connections in the far flung corners of the earth.

It could be that your ancestor has had some fascinating adventures which may be found in some foreign national collection. Or perhaps you will come across some long lost member of your own family who has letters, photos or more that they are willing to share with you –treasures that you may only find by seeking out these distant relatives. Either way, casting your net wider could very likely bring rich rewards, and hopefully new-found cousins.

By attending our meetings who knows what you may find?

Among our members we have a number of researchers who have many years' experience, and know how to interpret the records here in the UK and abroad and could help you to find your way and perhaps start your own family tree.

If you would like to join us you can find my contact details on page 16.

George Hunter
Group Co-ordinator

Hempton Activities

With a small band of volunteers we travel to Hempton Fields Care Home on the second Friday afternoon of alternate months to enjoy a variety of activities. These have included quizzes, poetry reading, remember when, craft, storytelling. It is always good to help others and the residents look forward to us going. We usually stay afterward for a cup of tea and a chat. Thank you ladies, for volunteering, you are all stars. More volunteers are always welcome – many hands make light work. Call me if you can assist.

Diane Carver
Group Co-ordinator

Down Under: A Cultural Desert?

A presentation by Rob Holdway to the Art History Group

When, in 1788, Admiral Philip and his First Fleet followed in the wake of Captain Cook to Sydney, Australia, to establish a penal colony and new settlement, they literally found nothing there: no recognisable civilisation, no buildings, no obvious artefacts. The unclothed indigenous natives lined the coastline as the fleet passed through the 'Heads' into future Sydney Harbour. Compared to England, where a young JMW Turner was just starting studies at the Royal Academy, this was the equivalent to the Stone Age. True, Phillip did stumble onto some random artistic etchings of men, fish and shields on rocky outcrops but they thought little of it at the time – little did they know the extent, let alone meaning, of these crude art forms which derived from the longest continuous practiced series of artistic traditions in the world, going back more than 40,000 years; but more about that later...

Despite its barrenness, there were still sights foreign, and even exotic, to the English settlers as they established their colony and this influenced the focus of the early art which was to both record and describe the new land to friends and family back home in England: scenes of the new Sydney settlement; wild life never-seen-before; glorious and over-romanticised views of wondrous new surroundings by newly arrived artists.

As the new settlers and 'freemen' (ex-convicts) ventured further afield, they recorded what would become fast disappearing scenes due to land clearance of ancient indigenous activities such as hunting and ceremonial corroborees (where aboriginal artistic body work was first glimpsed).

Louis Buvelot from Switzerland was the first 'immigrant' artist to break away from European tradition. His images with looser brushwork, were more realistic, yet more intimate and less formal; he was the first to start reflecting the essence of the Australian environment with paintings in the 1860's and 70's, such as *Summer Afternoon Templestowe*.

Buvelot's influence on the next wave of painters in the 1880's was real. These first 'original' Australian painters, in the last 20 years of the 19th Century, were either born there or arrived at an early age. The first art schools and galleries had started to be established and as well as approaching the hundred years of settlement, it was also an age of change, optimism and nationalism leading up to the establishment of the Australian Federation as one country in 1901.

The momentum started with a group of artists – Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, and Arthur Streeton – who were known as the Heidelberg School (outside of Melbourne) and established an outdoor painting camp, 'en plain air'.

Roberts, idealistically, wanted to convey 'a life different from any other country in the world' and tended to portray narratives around the action and

lives of the emerging nation, *Shearing The Rams* and the heroic 'dustbowl' stockman of *A Breakaway* being classic examples.

The Artists Camp bears witness to the plein air tradition and in this vein McCubbin, particularly, captured the essence of the struggling pioneer and bushman with classics such as *Down On His Luck*.

Arthur Streeton also broke away from European sensibility, capturing the harsh beauty and startling light of a bush that needed to be dominated in *Fire's On*, but more delicately with *Golden Summer Eglemont* – the first Australian painting to be exhibited in the Royal Academy London.

Equally important as the artistic impact of this group was the work of Hans Heysen. At the end of the period leading up to the first world war, his iconic landscape work was dominated by the symbolic 'gum' and truly reflected, like no work before, the Australian essence and its emerging sense of the Australian 'bush' self-identity – despite the fact that by now Australia was highly urbanised, concentrated on coastal capitals and nearby beach communities.

Meanwhile 1891 saw the discovery of pastoralist Joseph Bradshaw who stumbled across some incredible ancient rock art in the Kimberley (North West Australia) subsequently named the 'Gwion Gwion' paintings; remarkable in that as well as the depiction of animals, there were also human figures in action poses and in various 'costumes'. They have been dated to at least 40,000 years and some say 60,000, when it is thought the first people migrated from the islands above Australia.

The end of the First World War witnessed a change of emphasis after all the violence. The first anti-impressionist 'modernists' painted landscapes in a new fashion, tending to focus on bold colour experimentation and clarity of form (as per the work of Roy de Maistre, the first Australian artist to really develop an abstract approach) and Australian women artists started to come to the fore.

Grace Cossington-Smith's work reflected her contentment with urban world around her; her Sydney Harbour Bridge work portrayed the symbol of post-Depression 'hope' in its construction and the modernity of emerging contemporary Australian life. For her the bridge was not just a feat of engineering but also a spiritual landscape. Clarice Beckett, in contrast, was at the extreme of simplicity with her feeling for the 'essentials' in nature which infused her art – reflected in her 'tonal' work, almost mirage-like and luminous in appearance, as in her Melbourne street and coastal scenes (e.g. *St Kilda Road*).

Compare this with talents and innate affinity with 'art' and nature of the Aboriginal people which was slowly starting to attract more public attention. In the early 1930's a landscape water colourist, Rex Batterbee, visited a Lutheran mission near Alice

Springs, where traditional Aboriginal art forms had been pursued, and shared his own skills.

A number of artists subsequently excelled in water colours, notably Albert Namatijara, whose images of ghost gums, writhing mountains and intricate rock faces seemed to have had an inner life.

Around this time another clue to the inherent 'artistic' interest and talents of the indigenous people emerged with a further major discovery of ancient rock art in the top north Arnhem land, the area now known as Kakadu. Incredible images of spirit figures, such as the Rainbow Serpent, and detailed X-Ray type figures were unveiled at Ubiir – another piece in the jigsaw of 'artistic history and intrinsic tradition' of a still developing country.

Australia approached the Second World War with a 'modernistic', more urbane, identity – reflected typically by the iconic images in both photography and art of beach culture which embodied the pre-war quest for modernity and the promotion of a land of total sunshine, health and prosperity, as depicted in Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* and Charles Meere's *Australian Beach Pattern*.

However a radically different tone was to rear its head from the mid-forties. Disillusionment from the maelstrom of the war (and the shock of the Darwin attacks) led to disputes about art and politics, cultural activism and heralded the avant garde art movement.

Albert Tucker was probably the most shocking with his attempts to shrug off the 'nice' 'Anglophile Modernism' of the 1930's. His own *Sunbathers* reflected his feeling that war-time Melbourne was more violent and evil, as he reduced people in his works to 'primal elements'.

However, Sidney Nolan is probably the most famous, original and inventive of Australian artists in the immediate post-war decades. He was looking for a simple, lucid formal language to project Australian landscape and identity through painting it and his brilliance was in his fusion of legend and landscape.

From 1943 he began to paint 'stories' – his most famous being an interpretation of the feats of the late 19th Century bushranger outlaw Ned Kelly. Using the home-made armour that the gang used against the police, (represented by his modernistic black square, a powerful symbol of resistance) he created dramatic, almost surrealistic, scenes within the Australian landscape and tapped into the Australian empathy for 'chancers' who test authority. *The Trial*, for example, encapsulates Australians' egalitarianism and their healthy disrespect for conventions.

Another artist with new perspectives on his country and its distinctive, worn landscape was Russell Drysdale. Travelling west of the Blue Mountains he found another kind of devastation in old gold towns, severe drought and end-of-war depression. He captured the essence of this Australian environment and its characters and reflected his engagement with the Aboriginal people. *The Drovers Wife* (left to fend for herself) and *Emus In A Landscape*, tell their story about the true harshness of the land and, with the classic *Gatekeepers Wife*, the

iconic Aussie 'battler' – 'it'll come good, mate'

John Brack, in contrast, made the simple but significant observation that the image presented by artists like Nolan and Drysdale did not embody the landscape as most people saw it, since more than 80% lived in coastal cities and towns. So he set out to confront the visual experience of city and suburban living, with paintings like *The Car* (1955) which see suburban visitors in a landscape remote and ancient.

In parallel to this change in emphasis, an even bigger art and cultural development was taking place at the beginning of the 1970s. An art teacher, Geoffrey Bardon, had started to work with a remote central desert, indigenous community at Papunya, and encouraged them to translate their traditional sand and body art onto boards using acrylics. The result was what became to be known as 'dot' paintings which, like most Aboriginal art, was a medium to tell their Dreamtime stories and beliefs of Creation. The style was very simple, direct in format and rich in substance and meaning, much of which was still poorly understood by non-indigenous Australians. This art work started to appeal to a non-indigenous white audience becoming accustomed to the visual language of abstract expressionism described earlier and sensitised to the greater recognition of Aboriginal peoples with their voting and Land Rights reforms of the 60s and 70s.

The Papunya model was replicated in other communities such as Utopia (Northern Territory) where painting was based on body painting and Batik heritage. Artists like Emily Kngwarreye became famous (*Wild Potatoes Dreaming* and *Earth's Creation* which sold for £1,056,000 in 2007).

Since then Aboriginal art continues to develop and enrich the Australian artistic culture, but now, it is very much part of the more recent expressions of non-indigenous Australian art, reflecting the contemporary world and Australians' continuously developing perception of themselves and their culture. Paintings like Bea Maddock's *Terra Spiritus with a darker shade of pale* (1999), depicted Tasmania's entire coastlines viewed from the sea, covering fifty-two sheets over 40 metres, in contrast to slightly more surreal works which pay homage to the colonial past and indigenous heritage, such as *Elysian City* and *Possession Island*, both reflecting concern and guilt with the nations history. Not to mention even more contemporary perspectives on the 'big country' by modern media artists such as Shaun Gladwell with his *Mundi Mundi* series, reminiscent of Nolan's Ned Kelly.

In summary, visual arts is a powerful vehicle that creates and reflects any nation's identity and Australia is no exception. The story of Australia and its identity is inextricably linked to its 'landscape', providing a rich seam of inspiration for Australian artists over the past 250 years. A complex picture of Australian identity still continues to develop and mature as the nation itself matures.

Please contact Rob if you wish to view the paintings referenced in this article. Contact details from the Editor.

A Short Break to Sudbury, Suffolk

From 24th-27th June a group of us enjoyed a short break, organised by Sheila, in Constable Country in Suffolk.

Our first stop was at Bury St. Edmunds, where we had a few hours for lunch and to explore the city. Most visited the Cathedral and the pretty gardens, whilst others enjoyed the shopping area.

We left to go to Lavenham to explore the village and the attractive Guildhall, one of the finest timber-framed buildings in Britain, dating back to about 1510. Over the years this has been a prison, workhouse and meeting hall and now houses some interesting exhibits.

The whole area was once the centre of the wool trade in the 16th Century, the profits being used to finance the building of local churches. In the Guildhall there was a display of the products used for dyeing yarns, including berries, vegetable skins, flowers and leaves gleaned from fields and hedgerows.

On leaving this village we made our way to Long Melford, which has the most impressive single thoroughfare in Suffolk.

We continued on to Sudbury to The Mill Hotel, where we had tea and cakes to welcome our arrival, before we settled in to our



accommodation. This hotel is situated on the outskirts of the town, next to the River Stour and watermeadows beyond.

On the second day Simon, our Blue Badge guide, joined us on the coach to explore Constable Country. This man was a mine of information and so began an interesting day.

We went to East Bergholt, where John Constable was born in 1776. His father was a miller and both parents are buried in the churchyard. The church here was never finished (through lack of funds) so the bells are housed in a





16th Century wooden cage in the churchyard and rung by hand from side to side.

We continued to Flatford Mill, where the views can still be seen of the famous paintings we all recognise, especially that of Willy Lott's Cottage.

Dedham was our next stop, where we had a lunch break and time to walk round the pretty village and admire the shop fronts and roof-lines of the buildings.

Simon told us that most of the villages are mentioned in the Domesday Book. He also said that there used to be four silk factories in the area and there is a factory at Bury where sugar beet is refined into Silver Spoon sugar – the only one in England (the rest being imported sugar).

The next day we went to the coast, to the seaside town of Southwold. Unfortunately it was cold and windy here, but the U3A bunch are a hardy lot and took a brisk walk along the seafront, past the pretty beach huts, below the lighthouse, to the town centre. There was also a pier with attractive shops, some people fishing and we found some of the old-fashioned, mis-shapen mirrors we remembered from our childhood, where we had a good laugh at our reflections.

On our final day we spent the morning in Sudbury. There was a market, very nice shops and an interesting museum.

An enjoyable holiday was had by us all, and we thank Sheila for her good idea and planning of this interesting trip. Our driver, Scott, also deserves a mention for his excellent driving and patience at all our many stopping points.

Patricia Durrant

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: the Wooden bell tower and the 500 years old bells within, set in the grounds of St Mary the Virgin church at East Berholt.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: Will Lot's cottage at Flatford Mill.

ABOVE: The beach huts at Southwold.

All photographs were taken by Richard Webb.

History

Our talks through 2019 have continued to be most varied. Our thanks to Hilary Goodchild for organising such a interesting programme and to those members who gave talks.

In April our meeting of twenty-four members shared their family memories and experiences of the Second World War, including evacuation, air raids, service in the RAF, the Battle of Britain and Atlantic convoy duty, D-Day preparations, doodlebugs and the St Nazaire raid. Experiences were recalled in many theatres of war such as Africa, Burma, Malta and Crete.

The topic of the May meeting was something completely different. Ann Hedges talked about 'Well Dressing' in Derbyshire .

In June a visiting speaker, Hugh Grainger from Haddenham, gave us a fascinating insight into medieval rural life with his talk, 'The Reeves Tale', on the duties and responsibilities of the Reeve in Haddenham in 1450.

We heard about another local institution in July, when Barbara Francis recounted the history and achievements of the Canadian Memorial Red Cross Hospital at Cliveden. We heard how the hospital became a research centre for juvenile arthritis and rheumatism after the Second World War, finally closing in 1985 when it was moved to Wexham Park Hospital in Slough.

In August we tasted some culinary delights when our guest speaker, Moira Byast talked about 'Tasting the Past'. We heard about what we ate and how we cooked in bygone days, and how cooking had changed from Roman times, through the Saxon, Tudor and Stuart eras up to the arrival of Victoria sponge in the 1850's.

At September's meeting several members participated by presenting short talks about a selection of explorers from the fourth century B.C. through to the mid-20th century.

We are looking forward to the rest of our interesting, informative and sometimes amusing talks. We invite new members to join us at our monthly meetings on the third Friday of the month at 2.30pm in the Reading Room. For more information please contact Hilary Goodchild either by 'phone or email (see *Interest Groups at a Glance* on page 16).

Peter Brook
History Group Member

Walking the Camino De Santiago

Six years ago Ann and I spent a holiday with our son, Stephen, and his family in Galicia, near Santiago de Compostela. We attended the Pilgrims Mass one day and witnessed the Botafumeiro, the huge censer which comes down from the ceiling and is manipulated by eight monks; it swings almost at floor level down the central aisle at the Elevation of the Host. Quite spectacular. The cathedral was thronged with pilgrims and I happened to say to my son that I would have dearly loved to walk the Camino when I was younger.

No more was said at the time. This year was a significant birthday for Stephen and he wanted to do something unusual and rewarding. He rang me in November last year and told me that he had booked our flights to A Corunna, and our accommodation along the Camino for a week in April 2019! Imagine my astonishment and panic! He assumed that I could do the pilgrimage as I am a keen walker. He had booked everything for the third week in April, travelling on Saturday evening and returning on the following Sunday, therefore allowing us to walk for six days and rest on Saturday, before coming home. I pointed out that that was Easter week and I thought he would like to be home for Easter weekend. We agreed to do the walk and return on Saturday.

Our pilgrimage was via the Camino Ingles, traditionally the way English pilgrims walked in former times when they came by boat to Ferrol and walked from there. The distance is approx. 120 kilometres and is considered to be one of the shorter routes but, at over 100 k., qualifies for a certificate from the Cathedral.

We looked at the individual stages and although three were in excess of 20k. (the middle day, Wednesday, was 28k.) we felt confident that we could manage.

Between December and April I practised and eventually was walking 18-20k. fairly comfortably. Stephen accompanied me on three walks when time allowed from his busy schedule.

We flew to A Corunna on the afternoon of April 14th. After arriving and settling into our apartment, we had a walk around the city centre, a meal and an early night.

DAY 1. FERROL TO NEDA, 14K.

Next morning we caught the early train to Ferrol, the official starting point. As it was Palm Sunday

some of the streets were closed for religious processions so we had to walk around the city rather than through it. The streets were thronged with worshipers and tourists. We luckily had an excellent view of one spectacular procession. The walkers were barefoot, and dressed in black hooded robes decorated with beautiful needle work.. The leader carried a large crucifix covered in gold, silver, and, what we assumed, were precious stones. The locals all carried palm leaves in the shape of a cross, and many carried branches of bay leaves.

We stopped for coffee and remembered to have our Camino passports stamped with the sellos, the stamps required as proof of passage, which had to be collected at each stage.

We arrived at our first pension, and after a nice meal settled down for the night.

DAY 2. NEDA TO PONTEDEUME, 16K.

A steep climb but lovely views of the estuary and the countryside. Then downhill to the river where we found our pleasant little pension. There is a fine small museum in Pontedeume which we visited before a lovely meal of local food (and wine).

Early to bed, long walk tomorrow.

DAY 3. PONTEDEUME TO BETANZOS, 24K.

A steep, seemingly never-ending climb, until we came to Mino. We had taken the distances between stages into account but had not reckoned on the punishing hills. We stopped for coffee and the sello. The second half of the walk was even harder than the first; we were walking mainly through forest, and, apart from the odd spring-fed fountain, there was nowhere to stop to rest. Breaks in the trees however, gave spectacular views of the countryside. Finally we beat the hills and descended into Betanzos, a very pleasant place to eat and rest.

DAY 4. BETANZOS TO BRUMA, 28K.

All the guide books mentioned this stage as the most arduous; apart from the distance, we were climbing to the highest point on the Camino. We had to stop regularly to rest and drink some water. After several exhausting hours we reached the top and joined other pilgrims for a welcome beer. Stephen chatted to some Spanish students who told him that the Camino Ingles, although shorter



than some other routes, was easily the most demanding. Downhill to our hotel where we went to bed very early, needless to say.

DAY 5. BRUMA TO SIGUEIRO. 21K.

This was supposed to be relatively easy after the travails of the previous day. We started out quite early and at first the going was fairly uneventful. We stopped at a couple of cafes for refreshment but by noon we were in woodland surroundings with nowhere to stop. Although the climbs were short the path seemed endless and the previous four days really began to tell. Eventually we found our pension on the outskirts of Sigueiro; the hosts were very friendly and made us welcome. The town was only 1.5 k. away but we were too tired to walk there, so our hosts made us pizza and beer which we had at the communal table. Early to bed!

DAY 6. 16 K. FINAL LEG TO SANTIAGO.

A matter of one foot in front of the other. Initially we walked through pleasant woodland but the final few kilometres were an anti-climax, through business parks and suburbs. As it was Good Friday there were throngs of people near the city, watching a procession of walkers in penitential black robes, barefoot, carrying a sculpture of the Crucifixion on a bier and one man carrying a full sized cross.

Eventually we arrived at the Praza da Obradoiro and the cathedral. The square was packed with pilgrims and tourists. We were so relieved and proud of each other, queueing for our illuminated

certificates from the cathedral officials.

We found our apartment in a lovely 17th.c. block only a few metres from the city centre and the cathedral. We met up with some walkers we had befriended during our pilgrimage and had a celebratory drink before dinner and our last night in Galicia.

My son took very good care of me throughout; he made sure my phone was charged up each night; if our accommodation was upstairs, without a lift, he hefted my rucksack, as well as his own, up the stairs; he allowed me twenty extra minutes, in bed before calling me and he made sure we rested frequently so that I could catch my breath. His fluent Spanish was a Godsend in rural areas where locals, though bilingual in Gallego and Spanish, did not speak English.

A wonderful experience and one of my most cherished memories.

David Fahey

Singles Dining

This summer we have been to the Crown at Sydenham, where the meals were lovely with very generous portions. The landlady gave us a warm welcome and the food was imaginatively presented, sometimes vertically (ask John Bell).

In August we went further afield to the Coach and Horses at Chislehampton. This was a lovely journey through the country lanes with a tasty meal at the end.

We returned to the Bell at Stoke Mandeville at the end of the month and the meal and the service was the usual very high standard. We sit at small tables, if the pub can arrange this, so that all members can join in the conversations.

In September we are trying a new venue, the 8 Bells in Long Crendon. Their specials' menu changes every week, so we have only a few days to reply with choices and we nearly always have to pre-order now. This usually means we are served quite promptly. Pubs are usually considerate if a member has to cancel at the last minute and do not charge.

Many, many thanks to the members who are happy to give lifts to non-drivers. We could not manage without you.

Val Welford
Group Co-ordinator

Long Walks

The Long Walks Group has now completed the summer programme – six super walks led by members, some from close to home often with ingenious new twists, to trips a little further afield. A huge thank you to all participants and especially the leaders.

We have forty members in the group and averaged between seven to ten (during the summer months, when we all are absent on our holidays) but normally our number is up in the high teens or mid twenties. For real statisticians we average 13.1 walkers per month!

The winter Programme is now well advanced with every month except February spoken for. If you fancy filling the February slot please do give me a call or email me we are always looking for fresh input and ideas. We would love to have more volunteers leading walks, it is what makes the U3A such a great organisation. If you think you might have a go we will help you with planning, doing the recce beforehand, etc. It is great fun and is so appreciated by all who join you on a walk, which after all is what the U3A is all about. New members are very welcome to lead a walk!

It is difficult to choose which was the best walk in the last programme as they have all been so different, the average length is approximately seven to eight miles, give or take a smidgeon, but we have had a couple in the summer programme now of up to nine miles-ish but with a picnic stop in the middle; these have been well received and will be a feature in future for the summer programmes. I would add, as I did in the last *Contact*, that having walked in the local area for almost fifty years we were, yet again, led on some paths I have never walked on before. Fantastic!

Ray Barnett
Group Co-ordinator

Handicrafts

Christmas came early for the Handicraft Group when in June our project was to make a Christmas tree! As this included some sewing which is a bit alien to a few of us, it was a bit lengthy to complete in one afternoon. However, this was not a problem as we didn't meet during July or August so therefore we had an opportunity to complete our handiwork before we met again in September – or at least, that was the theory! Of course, summer months are always busy times; gardens, holidays, grandchildren duties all take up a lot of time – so at the time of going to print, not all trees have been completed but Christmas is still three months away. (Nudge, nudge ladies!!)

If you would like to make a tree you will need fifteen milk bottle tops, a card shape of a tree in a tub about 24cm high (9½ inches), some wadding and fifteen circles of Christmassy fabric, just a little bit bigger in diameter than the milk tops.

Begin by sewing a running stitch about half a centimetre from the edge of each circle, fill one of the bottle tops with wadding and place this, wadded side down onto one of your circles. Draw up the stitching and enclose the bottle top completely. Continue with this process until all fifteen tops are similarly covered then glue them onto your tree shape using the increasing number of tops per row, eg first row = one circle; second row = two circles; third row = three circles, continuing until you have come to the fifth row with five circles. Now you only need to decorate the 'tub' base, glue a piece of ribbon on the back as a hanger and hey presto, you have a tree to hang as one of your decorations!

Thanks to Sheila and Wendy for providing this project for us.

Janet Roebuck
Group co-ordinator

U3A Carol Concert 2019 **Tuesday 10th December 2019; 10.30am** **St. Andrew's Parish Church**

Yes, Christmas draws near and, as in previous years, we are looking for members and especially newer members to participate in this year's Carol Concert.

We are looking for anyone happy to do a solo or duet on an instrument.

Please contact Bryan Roebuck – email: bryanroebuck@waitrose.com.

We are also looking for members to be part of a small choir, traditionally to sing three items. Please contact Janet Roebuck – email: jroebuck@waitrose.com.

Or you can telephone 01844 352489.

Thank you and remember without your participation the concert could not go ahead.

