



A Christmas Miscellany by U3A Members

General Meetings
Palmer Hall, 2.30pm
8 January (a week later than usual). Kiss, Chase and Conkers by Caroline Sanderson
5 February Munro Bashing by Stuart and Ellen Thompson
5 March Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens by Anna Fletcher

New members
 We welcome the following new members:
 Kate Davies
 Dr Hugh & Mrs Coleridge

Today, 4 December
 We end 2012 with 'A Christmas Miscellany' by U3A members. Thank you to the organiser, Jean Crowley, the participants and the compère.

Tea Rota
 January 8 : Latin
 February 5 : Model Group
 March 5 : Music Listening

January Newsletter deadline
 The deadline date for the first newsletter of the New Year will be:
Friday December 14th

Season's Greetings to all U3A members and their families from the U3A Committee:-

Reg Thoburn: Chairman
 John Higgs: Vice Chair
 Sarah Basley: Secretary
 Nick Stroude: Treasurer
 Alison Hobson: Newsletter Editor
 Michael Yorke: Group Co-ordinator
 Ivor Price: Membership Secretary
 Jean Crowley: Programme Secretary

Chairman's update

At this time of year, I feel it is an appropriate time to reflect on and thank all the members who volunteer their time and resources helping our U3A to function. I would personally like to thank the committee for all their hard work over the last twelve months, especially the three members who took on the roles of Treasurer, Secretary and Vice Chair, and all those who just quietly operate in the background to ensure things happen. From the activity leaders to the helpers at the monthly general meetings – too many of you all to name individually - without you our U3A would not exist, so thank you all. I hope all members have a wonderful Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Just a reminder: our first general meeting of 2013 will be on Tuesday 8th January.

Newsletter Editor - Transfer Planning Meeting

This meeting has been arranged for Thursday 13th December at 10.30am in the Tame room of the Community Centre for all members who have expressed an interest in being part of the Newsletter editorial team which will take over when Alison Hobson retires in April 2013. If you are interested in joining us, please come along – we should love to see you all.

Reg Thoburn

01285 712397

Striders and Straddlers Annual Planning Meeting

The annual planning meeting will take place in The Bull Hotel on 13th December at 10.30am. All walkers are invited to join us to decide who will lead walks next year – and if you've never led a walk before there will be plenty of advice and encouragement to convince you to give it a try! Please try to join us for what is always a good social gathering, or contact Phil or John before the meeting with the month you would prefer to lead a walk. New and potential walkers are especially welcome.

Striders Phil Trickett 01285 712421

Straddlers John Burrows 01367 253056

U3A November – All about Bagpipes

Iain Willox, Pipe Major of the St Andrew's Pipe Band of Cheltenham, arrived resplendent in kilt and accoutrements to give a talk, 'All about bagpipes'. He used a large display of items to suggest how a simple piece of bamboo pipe with holes pierced in it may have evolved through wooden flutes and the recorder into the chanter which is the 'pipe' part of the mature bagpipes. A set of bagpipes consists of a bag to supply the air, a chanter and at least one, usually two, drones. The chanter has a reed to amplify the sound, although how this came about is not clear. All the parts have been altered over time so that now the reeds and pipes may be made of plastic, while the traditional, airtight sheepskin bag is sometimes cheap plastic or expensive Goretex.

He gave ample demonstrations of the sounds of each of the developments, with all the tunes played from memory. Iain is an experienced teacher and has published a book for his pupils with 150 pieces to be learned by heart, although members of military bands are required to learn 800. The audience was alerted to the wide range of music which is traditionally played on this instrument and encouraged to look more closely at works of art where the use and variety of bagpipes occur more often than one might think.

Sylvia Jones

Photo Album

I am currently in charge of the U3A photo album. Having just looked at the 2012 photos, I have to say that group representation is very limited - Walking groups, Solos, Model group and Pétanque. So, in 2013 I shall be inviting three or four groups each month to let me have photos. Watch this space!

Rosemary Westlake

01285 712329

idrwestlake@gmail.com

Third Age Trust News

The U3A's Inaugural Founders' Lecture Schooldays stories, educational failure and the U3A ideal

Tuesday 9th April, 2pm at Friends' Meeting House, 173 Euston Road,
London NW1 2BJ (opposite Euston Station)

Eric Midwinter, one of the U3A's three founders, will explain how schoolboy books and comics contributed to the creation of a secondary school system that is unfit for purpose.

Apply for tickets to the National Office, 19 East Street, Bromley BR1 1QE.
Admission £5. Please make cheques payable to The Third Age Trust.

Time to learn more: In-Depth Study Groups

There is now a desire to offer, within the U3A framework, an opportunity for the in-depth study of subjects where U3A members wish to devote a significant amount of time to their studies, more than two hours per week.

The Third Age Trust is seeking to run pilot groups that make use of the Internet because face-to-face meetings might be impracticable. Participants must show 'commitment'.

The Third Age Trust would like to hear from U3A members:-

- a) who are interested in becoming a member of an Internet-based in-depth study group, stating their preferred subjects.
- b) who have enthusiasm/expertise to lead an Internet in-depth group.

Please email the National Office at nationaloffice@u3a.org.uk with IDS Groups as the subject and stating their U3A Group. All emails will be acknowledged and the writers kept informed of developments.

Ray Stutz

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Ray Stutz while on holiday in Portugal. Ray joined U3A when he moved to Fairford eight years ago and was an enthusiastic member of the Intermediate French group. We send our deepest sympathy to his daughter Caroline and the rest of his family. RW

GROUP EVENTS

Please contact the group leaders if you are interested in joining any of the groups or visit www.fairfordu3a.org.uk for further information.

Birdwatching

Tuesday 18 December

It is time to plan for 2013 so we shall meet at my house at 2.30pm to discuss our programme, aided by some mulled wine and mince pies. We are always on the lookout for new venues so bring some ideas with you.

If you think you might be interested in joining the group do come along.

Richard Morgan
01285 712085

Book Circle 2

Tuesday 11 December

We shall meet at Jane's house at 2.30pm to plan our reading programme for 2013, having already decided to read a Hemingway book for the meeting on 15th January – please note that this is a week later than usual! Please let Jane or me know if you will not be able to attend.

Jane Pugh 01285 712184
Kevin Hannigan 01367 250246
hannigan100@hotmail.com

Book Circle 1

At our planning meeting on 20th November we welcomed a new member, Helen Evans, to our group. There were twenty two suggestions for our reading in 2013, so we had a lively time pruning them down to our usual ten books.

Sadly one of our members, Phyll Hall, died recently. Because of her illness we had not seen her for some time, but we shall miss her insightful contributions, and send our sympathy to her family.

We shall not meet in December, but I will ensure you have the new list well before Christmas. Best wishes.

Denny Rawlinson
01285 711009

'A lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a thunderstorm, and we all go through it together.'

Garrison Keillor (1942-), American author

Bridge Improvers

The group meets every Monday afternoon from 2 to 4 pm in the Heritage room, Fairford Community Centre, but no bridge Dec 24th or 31st

We are a friendly and informal group, making mistakes and learning together. Come and join us! All bridge players welcome, partners and refreshments provided.

Margaret Bishop
01285 713747
mbishop@talktalk.net

Chess

There will not be a meeting of the Chess Group in December. The January meeting will be on Wednesday 23rd January at 2pm, at Mike's House. Please note the earlier start time.

Mike Bennett
01367 252379
mish252379@btinternet.com

Family History 1

There will be no meeting in December; the next meeting will be on 16th January.

Miriam Scott
01285 713441

Computer Group

We meet every week at my home where I aim to help members in the use of computers, the internet and much more. If you are interested in joining, please contact me and you will be welcome.

For those wanting to start using email, I can allocate you a personal email address based on our website address for your sole use. I now have a desktop computer that is available for members to use.

Please note that, as from January 2013, the group will meet on Tuesday mornings. There will be no meeting on January 1st.

Nick Humphris
01285 711740

Family History 2

There will be no meeting in December; the next meeting will be on 16th January.

Michael Johnson
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk
01285 712637

Five Rhythms Dance

We dance regularly at the Palmer Hall on the third Wednesday of the month, at 10am. New members welcome.

Gillian Bilbrough
01285 712579
Joyce Deane
01285 851408

French Conversation

Intermediate

Salut les amis! We shall meet this month on Monday 3rd December. New members would be most welcome to join this group. We meet at 11am, at my home. Please contact me for more information.
Joyeux Noël à tous!

Rosemary Westlake
01285 712329
idrwestlake@gmail.com

Advanced

We start by reading a couple of pages from a magazine published for groups like ours, and then discuss matters arising from that, and anything else that takes our fancy! This is done in two small groups of generally not more than six people. New members are always welcome!

Barbara Cartwright
07989 353726

Garden Group

There will be no meeting in December. Hopefully, we will have a meeting in January to plan for the year ahead. Unfortunately due to a number of commitments next year I will be unable to run the Garden Group so am hoping that one of the existing members will be happy to take over in order that the Group continues to meet. I am quite happy for the January planning meeting to be held at my house. Anyone interested in taking over please let me know. We also need some new ideas for our meetings so please have a good think over the dormant period. We need new ideas and new members!

Penny Phillips
01285 711360
pennyrphillips@gmail.com

German Circle

Please contact me for further details.

Karin Forman
01367 252675

*'Rudolph, das kleine Rentier,
Jeder bei den Lappen kennt,
Denn seine rote Nase
Weit und breit wie Feuer brennt.'*

From Rudolph the red-nosed
reindeer

Geology

The Geology group meets regularly at the Chapel in Milton Street on the second Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm.

Clive Watson
01285 713003
Brian Routledge
01285 712853

Industrial Heritage

This fledgling group will have a second meeting at 7pm in the Heritage Room of the Community Centre on Thursday 17th January. John Higgs will give a talk, 'Traction Engines large and small', in his own entertaining style. Please come and join us. There will be a small charge to cover the cost of room hire.

The group have started a project to document the building and operation of the Town Gasworks. We would like to hear from anybody who has memories, anecdotes, photos, or archive material of our local industrial heritage.

Pete Martin
01285 713908
petem91@btinternet.com

Keep Fit

The Keep Fit class usually meets at the Palmer Hall weekly on Tuesdays at 9.15am.

Eddie Rosser
01367 252504

Latin

The group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 2.30pm at my house. Please contact me if you are unable to come.

Susan Greig
01285 810274

Model Group

The Model Group meets weekly on Thursday mornings. Please contact:

Jim Sullivan
01367 252539

*'Dans le silence de la nuit,
Un Sauveur pour nous vient de
naître.
Quoique dans un sombre réduit
Vous ne pouvez le méconnaître.'*

From a French Traditional Carol

Music Listening

Friday 21 December

Our last meeting of 2012 will again be in the Tame Room at Fairford Community Centre, at 2.30pm, when the theme for our music selection will be 'Colours'.

We are still looking for someone to take over the administration of the Group; just a matter of booking the hall, deciding on a theme for the next meeting, collecting the money and paying, and producing a bit of copy for the Newsletter.

We are not, purposely, calling it a Group Leader; it is easier than that title suggests, so please, somebody, volunteer for this, so safeguarding the future of this long-established Group.

Michael Yorke
Group Co-ordinator
01367 253286

Needlework

This month the Needlework group will meet on 5th and 19th December.

For further details please contact:

Thelma Hardie
01285 713971

Pétanque

The season has now ended for the Pétanque Group and we would like to take this opportunity of wishing all of our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing everyone at our New Year Lunch in January, 2013 (date and venue yet to be chosen).

David and Heather Baber
01285 711343

*'Veni, veni Emmanuel!
Captivum solve Israel!
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei Filio,
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel.'*

O come, o come Emmanuel

Philosophy

There will be no meeting in December.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday January 16th at Francis's house. The subject will be 'Error has no Rights'

Dan Deane
01285 851408

Poetry Circle 1

The poetry group meets on the first Friday of the month.

Barbara Cottam
01285 711054

Poetry Circle 2

Friday 7 December

The December meeting will be at Maureen's home and we shall be looking at the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Please let Maureen know on 01285 711362 if you are unable to come.

Looking forward to January, we shall meet on the 4th to read some poems by John Donne at Denny's home. Please let her know on 01285 711009 if you cannot attend.

Barbara Cobbett
01285 712692

Postcard Group

There will be no meeting in December. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 15th January.

John Higgs
01285 712488

How did Good King Wenceslas like his pizza ?

Deep Pan, Crisp and even

What did Snow White say when the Chemist lost her photographs ?

Someday my prints will come !

Recorders

Please contact Hilary or Jay for more details:

Hilary Bradshaw
01793 720037:
hilary@burytown15.co.uk
or Jay Mathews
01367 253510:
jaymathews124@mac.com

Rummikub

Thursday 13 December

The group meets on the second Thursday of each month at our house in Lechlade from 2-4.30pm for some friendly games of Rummikub.

For further information or explanation please refer to the Fairford U3A website or telephone me.

Mary Bennett
01367 253287

*How many chimneys does Father
Christmas go down ?*

Stacks !

Scottish Reels

The group meets at Poulton Village Hall from 8-10pm with a short break for refreshments on alternate Wednesday evenings.

There is a charge of £3 per person per session to cover the hire of the hall and the refreshments.

We welcome both beginners and those with experience. You can come alone or with your spouse, partner or friend. You do not need any ballroom dancing skills. Our teaching is very informal. We try to dance 6 to 8 reels in an evening.

We also arrange a party on New Year's Eve with supper and dancing.

Please contact Richard for December dates.

Richard Thompson
01285 712123

Short Tennis

Short Tennis takes place in the Palmer Hall on Mondays, starting at 3.30pm.

If you are interested please contact me or come to a session and find out more.

Margaret Trickett
01285 712421

Solos

Monday 10 December

For the December meeting we shall meet at Valerie's house at 12.30pm for a lunch party.

Michael Johnson
01285 712637
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk

Spanish

This Spanish group is for beginners, but those with some Spanish are welcome! Meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesday mornings, 11-12 noon, at my home.

Frank Hall
01285 712583

*Jesús en pesebre, sin cuna, nació;
Su tierna cabeza en heno durmió.
Los astros, brillando, prestaban su luz
al niño dormido, pequeño Jesús.*

*Los bueyes bramaron y Él despertó,
mas Cristo fue bueno y nunca lloró.
Te amo, oh Cristo, y mírame, sí,
aquí en mi cuna, pensando en ti.*

*Te pido, Jesús, que me guardes a mí,
amándome siempre, como te amo a ti.
A todos los niños da tu bendición,
y haznos más dignos de tu gran mansión.*

Away in a Manger

Striders and Straddlers Annual Planning Meeting

The annual planning meeting will take place in The Bull Hotel on 13th December at 10.30am. See also page 3.

Striders
Phil Trickett
01285 712421
Straddlers
John Burrows
01367 253056

Strollers

There will be no walk in December.
Reg Thoburn
01285 712397

Table Tennis

The group meets weekly on a Wednesday at 2.30pm in the Keble Room, upstairs in the Fairford Community Centre. There is a charge of £1 to cover room hire. It's great fun - come and join us!

Nick Stroude
01285 750646

Traditional Jazz

The group usually meets on the first Thursday of each month at our house in Lechlade from 2-4.30pm BUT our December meeting was brought forward to 29th November so as not to clash with a Theatre Group outing.

Our next meeting will be on 3rd January when we shall again enjoy a variety of jazz with an emphasis on Ragtime.

Ian Bennett
01367 253287
ian@bennettm.gotadsl.co.uk

*A Christmas thought
- Stressed is Desserts
spelled backwards*

Walking and Pub Lunch

Wednesday 12 December

It is time to prepare yourself for the Festive season, and what better way to do it than a gentle stroll through some lovely countryside on a sharp but dry December day. We shall amble up valleys, through woods, along some ancient bridleways, all within a four mile stretch. There are a few gates, very few stiles, but even though the sun will be shining it could be a little wet underfoot so come prepared. We meet at Fairford car park at 9.40am or at The Victoria Inn at Eastleach at 10am to book our meal. The suggested passenger fee is £1.

Paul O'Shaughnessy
01367850262
paulatscissor@btinternet.com

Yoga

The Yoga group meets weekly on Mondays at the Community Centre at 10am.

If you have asked to be on the waiting list please check with Sylvia that your name is recorded.

Sylvia Jones
01285 712657

GROUP REVIEWS

Book Circle 2

Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?

The 'normal and happy' members of Book Circle 2 had a good afternoon discussing Jeanette Winterson's book, whose title is what Winterson's adoptive mother said to her when evicting her from home at the age of 16 for 'taking up' with a girl friend – to be 'happy'. It was at this time that JW discovered her sexual orientation.

JW's adoptive mother was herself anything but normal; she was cruel, mentally deranged and a religious fanatic. Her adoptive father was weak, and supportive of his wife. JW suffered considerably. She was often hungry, was beaten, and locked out of the house. Not surprisingly, she suffered frequent depression.

As a child she was taught to read from the Bible - the only book in the house. If she was found with other books they were burnt and she was punished. She states that her upbringing made her a rebellious and determined character, with a love of words that enabled her to succeed as a writer.

Members who had read 'Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit', her first book, a semi-autobiographical novel published in 1985, found passages and phrases from this used here, as JW presented a fuller picture of her life.

Our group responded to the book in varied ways, causing a lively debate. Opinions ranged from 'We must read another of her books' to 'I found her book depressing'. We all agreed that she is a brilliant writer.

Ian Westlake

PS: I would not have read this book but I found myself leading it.

It is very educational being in a Book Circle!

What did the Eskimos sing when they got their Christmas dinner ?

Whale meat again, don't know where, don't know when !

Family History 1

Last month's meeting was held in Fairford Library. Guided by Miriam we used the computers to explore the Tithe Apportionments and Divorce sites on the National Archives website. Some of the tithe maps and apportionments have been digitised, for example Fairford, but many are still only available at either the local record centres or at the National Archives at Kew. You can, however, order them on line, and we were able to send for an estimate of such an order as they are fairly large and rather detailed and so could be rather expensive.

We found the afternoon sped by – thank you, Miriam, once again for your expert tuition.

Madeline Phillips

PS: Fairford History Society has Fairford Tithe Apportionment. Ed.

Family History 2

'Dear Edith love Babs' was the title of John's illustrative postcard talk. He started by telling us that Deltiology was the study and collecting of postcards and informed us that collectors had a variety of reasons to collect, depending on their interest.

In Britain postcards without images were issued by the Post Office, and were printed with a stamp as part of the design, which was included in the price of purchase.

The earliest known picture postcard was a hand-painted design on card posted in London to the writer, Theodore Hook, in 1840; it bore a printed penny black stamp. He may have created and posted the card to himself as a practical joke on the postal service.

The golden age of postcards began at the time of the first World War. Later, Studio cards became popular and John's collection included cards of the Johnson family at Edmonton Workhouse. C F Reynolds, Lance Corporal, was one of Daisy Johnson's numerous boyfriends, but it was not until 1920 that she married Raymond Smissaert and the Census confirmed Daisy's name as Sarah E F Johnson.

Finally, John showed us cards from his 'Dear Edith love Babs' collection. Edith had emigrated to Christchurch, New Zealand, and Babs wrote regularly to her, longing to be with her in New Zealand or for her to visit in Barrow-in-Furness.

Elizabeth Berry

Philosophy

The subject for discussion was 'The Prince' by Niccolo Machiavelli.

Mike King led the discussion with a very good introduction listing the main points of Machiavelli's thoughts, including his use of metaphor, his view of power and how it should be exercised. Machiavelli was a pragmatist and was interested in the state governance of his time. He drew many of his conclusions from his own experiences and from the history of ancient Rome. Our discussion led on to present day examples of Machiavellian behaviour.

Although his name is now used in a pejorative manner, he did not consider himself evil.

Dan Deane

Solos

On a murky day in the middle of October Sir Mike the knight gathered up his damsels fair and to Slimbridge Wetlands we did caper. Some got lost, but our bold knight espied them and brought them forthwith to gorge on coffee and cake. Though the day was dark and dank, what beauteous sights assailed our eyes: ducks, geese, flamingoes in glorious colour by the hundreds. Wet and soggy ground produced flowers, trees and bush in unimaginable dress - what a wondrous sight!

We applaud you, Sir Mike, for arranging a lovely day out. The mystery tour by sat nav was daunting, but we arrived home. Thanks to both our drivers.

Val Bevington-Wood

*'And who but listened?--till was paid
Respect to every inmate's claim,
The greeting given, the music played
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "Merry Christmas" wished to all.'*

From 'Minstrels', a Christmas poem by William Wordsworth

Strollers

Against all meteorological odds, ten of us had an amazing walk in the Coln St Aldwyns and Quenington area.

In the November Newsletter I am quoted as saying 'fingers crossed for a fine, crisp winter morning', and that is exactly what we got. After days of torrential rain, Friday dawned very cold, with a clear blue sky and mist rising from the fields; picture that together with mounds of fallen golden leaves and the beautiful views from the Conygar fields down to Coln St Aldwyns - couldn't be better.

Warmth soon came to the sun, we felt warmer and the mist slowly burned away. Yes, we had to tread carefully, particularly on the downward slopes, but we were all suitably clad for the terrain. We also had the pleasure of welcoming new members Tom and Linda Aston to their first Strollers walk. We had to do one or two minor mods to the walk because of flooding, but it all worked well on the day.

Lunch at the New Inn was convivial and of good quality, but a little expensive, I thought.

My second meteorologically superb winter walk!

Michael Yorke

Walking and Pub Lunch - November

Fourteen of us gathered at the Freke Arms for our walk to Hannington. The weather was surprisingly kind to us with a mild sunny start. Walking on a carpet of brightly coloured autumn leaves on the wide bridleways through the trees was a pleasing experience. Inevitably, however (bearing in mind our recent weather), there was a patch where we got bogged down (no further comment, except it might be necessary to clean one's boots before one's next outing!). Nevertheless, we did walk a metalled avenue to the local church with widespread views enjoyed by the outlook from Hannington Hall.

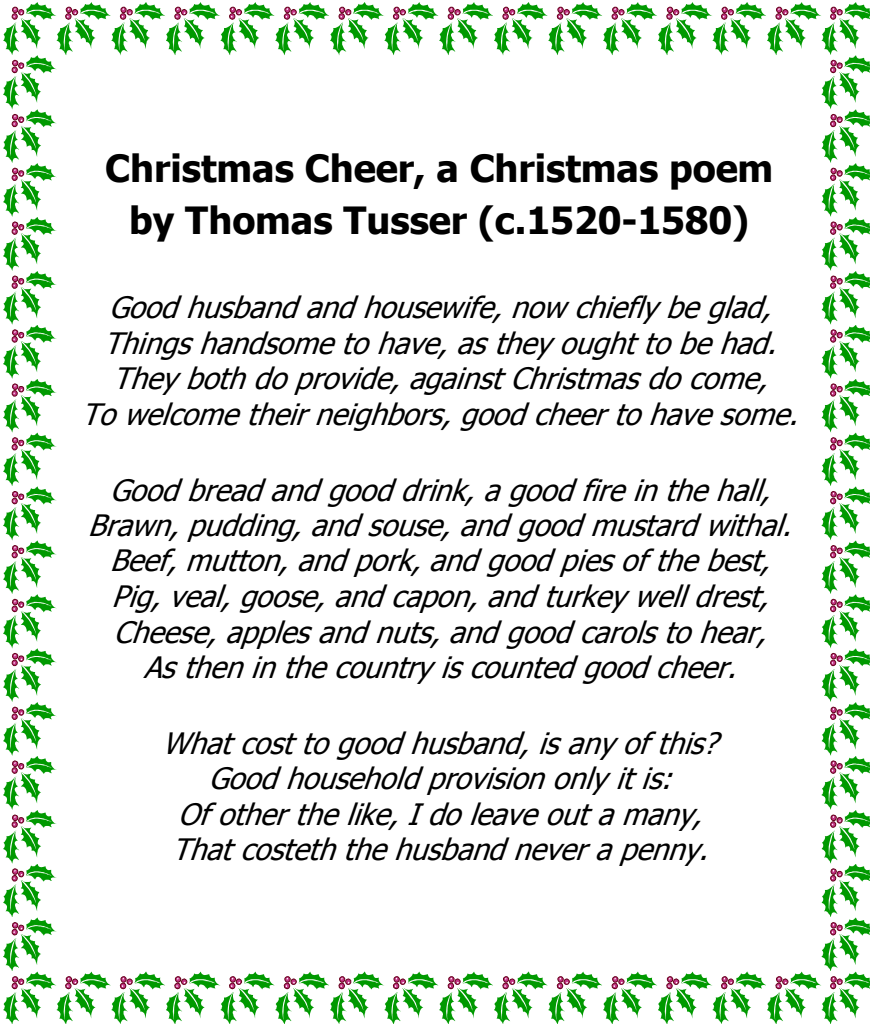
Those who elected to go for the pub's economy soup starter, or spotted dick pudding, were well satisfied!

Bert Sampson

Timetable of Group Activities

Needlework and Recorders meet twice monthly. Pétanque and Cycling April-October only. Scottish Reels on alternate Wednesday evenings. Industrial Heritage monthly.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Monday am	French, Yoga,	French Yoga	French Yoga	French Yoga
pm	Bridge, Solos Short tennis	Bridge Short Tennis	Bridge Short Tennis	Bridge Short Tennis
Tuesday am	Keep Fit Computers	Keep Fit Spanish Computers	Keep Fit Birdwatching Computers	Keep Fit Spanish Striders Computers
pm	Main meeting	Book Circle 1 Book Circle 2 German Beg	Further German Postcards	
Wednesday am	Pétanque	Walking & PL Pétanque	Five Rhythms Pétanque	Cycling & PL Pétanque
pm	Table Tennis	Geology Table Tennis	Family Hist 1 & 2 Philosophy Table Tennis	Chess Table Tennis
Thursday am	Model Boats	Model making	Model Boats Straddlers	Model Boats
pm	Latin Traditional Jazz	Rummikub	Garden	
Friday am				Strollers
pm	Poetry Circle 1 Poetry Circle 2	Recorders	Music	Recorders



Christmas Cheer, a Christmas poem by Thomas Tusser (c.1520-1580)

*Good husband and housewife, now chiefly be glad,
Things handsome to have, as they ought to be had.
They both do provide, against Christmas do come,
To welcome their neighbors, good cheer to have some.*

*Good bread and good drink, a good fire in the hall,
Brawn, pudding, and souse, and good mustard withal.
Beef, mutton, and pork, and good pies of the best,
Pig, veal, goose, and capon, and turkey well drest,
Cheese, apples and nuts, and good carols to hear,
As then in the country is counted good cheer.*

*What cost to good husband, is any of this?
Good household provision only it is:
Of other the like, I do leave out a many,
That costeth the husband never a penny.*

Please send items for the
January
issue to Alison Hobson email:
editor@fairfordu3a.org.uk by
Friday December 14th