



Fairford & District Newsletter

Issue 185

June 2012



D-Day 1944 - Fairford's part in the greatest invasion in modern history

by Chris Hobson



www.fairfordu3a.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1072658

General Meetings

Palmer Hall, 2.30pm

3 July Travels in the South American Rain Forest
by Simon Trapnell

7 August Treasure Hunt in Fairford followed by tea at the Community Centre

4 September An unusual job for a woman
by Marion Canning

Tea Rota

July 3 : Garden Group

September 4 : Geology

October 2 : German

Front cover: Short Stirling taking off towing Horsa glider
In public domain

Today, 6 June

To commemorate the 68th anniversary, Chris Hobson, aviation historian, will talk about RAF Fairford's involvement in the D-Day operations. Chris has stepped in at the last moment as a 'transit of Venus' was too great a temptation for the scheduled speaker, John Fletcher.

Our July speaker has travelled widely following his interest in The Nature of Art Trust. We look at the common ground between art and science and between conservation and the artist.

New members

We welcome the following new member:

Janet Lucas

Cotswold Link Meeting 4 July 2012, 10—4pm at Toddington Village Hall. Cost £12

As the day will also mark the **30th Anniversary of the Founding of U3A** in the United Kingdom, we shall begin the day with a short account of the origins of the organisation by *Terry Hardie*.

This will be followed by **A Quartet of Curiosities** – four talks on lesser-known aspects of our local history: see www.fairfordu3a.org.uk for details.

Please apply with fees in advance to our Treasurer, Sue Arkell (susan@arkellsusan1@wanadoo.co.uk) at 11 Tobysfield Road, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham GL52 8NS by **Wednesday 13th June** at the latest. Cheques should be made out to 'Cotswold Link'.

We look forward to seeing as many U3A members as possible on 4th July.
Nick Mason, Cotswold Link

Chairman's Report—Palmer Hall

At the May U3A committee meeting, one of the items discussed was the seating limit of the Palmer Hall, which for your information is 150, and we are legally bound to enforce. Although to my knowledge we have only reached this limit once, which was at the talk by Richard Skelt on Bletchley Park, your committee feel it is important that all members are informed of the action that we would have to take if and when we hit the limit in the future. Once we have 150 members registered as in attendance all subsequent members will unfortunately be refused entry to the meeting. No member will be allowed to stay if there is no seat available for them. I hope members understand that this situation is beyond our control and we have to accept the 150 seat limit as part of the conditions of booking the hall.

Reg Thoburn
01285 712397

July/August Newsletter—Important

Please note that the next Newsletter is for July and August and copy for both months needs to be submitted. All those who can please send in copy by **20th June**, but this month there is a second deadline of **28th June** and there will be no reminders. As the newsletter will not be printed until 2nd July **no postal copies will be sent out until after the general meeting on Tuesday 3rd July**. Please, collect your copies from the meeting or arrange for them to be collected even if you usually have it posted.

Advance notice— in an endeavour to reduce costs, from the September issue Fairford members' Newsletters will no longer be posted. If not collected (but please arrange collection if you can) they will be delivered some time after the main meeting.

For those who meet monthly just a reminder for the News entries please put the date of the meeting at the top of the entry as it appears in the Newsletter - it's impossible for the editor to remember when all the groups meet! And don't forget name and telephone number.

Thank you all for entries and reports submitted—these help to make the Newsletter interesting.

Alison Hobson
editor@fairfordu3a.org.uk
01285 711768

U3A May

Members of the Fairford and District U3A were treated to an unusual dip into history when Dr George Eccleston came to talk about 'Mary Queen of Scots – the Young Queen'. Following a long-standing interest in Scottish history, the speaker told how Mary was born in difficult times and grew up in a volatile environment.

Mary was born in Linlithgow in 1542 and crowned Queen of Scotland at the age of nine months. She was taken to France when she was five years of age, betrothed to the Dauphin and brought up in France. She was married at 15, crowned Queen of France at 16 and widowed at 17, when her young husband died.

Returning to Scotland as Queen at 18, she fell in love and married Lord Darnley in 1565, but soon after the birth of her son James, the following year, Darnley was murdered in mysterious circumstances.

Mary then married the Earl of Bothwell, who was later suspected of involvement in Darnley's murder. She was taken into captivity in 1567, at the age of 24, and forced to sign away her kingdom to her son, who became James VI of Scotland.

The tale was brought vividly to life by a series of carefully researched slides, illustrating places, objects and documents, many drawn from the speaker's own research and visits to the locations involved.

Jean Crowley

No, you are not really fed up with the Titanic anniversary!

Come and hear Hugh Brewster, author of 'Gilded lives, Fatal voyage', talk about Fairford's special connection with a survivor, the Countess of Rothes and also his work with Robert Ballard.

Hugh has written over 20 books about the Titanic and is lecturing at the Broadway Festival on the artist Francis Millet who drowned on the ship and lived in Broadway. He has come specially to Fairford for this talk for Fairford History Society

Thursday 14th June at 7.30pm in Fairford Community Centre.
Tickets £5, £3 to FHS members. Books available for sale and signing.

Contact Alison Hobson
enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk
01285 711768

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 19 June

This month we shall be visiting sites on the Somerset Levels. This will entail an overnight stay in the area in order to allow a reasonable time for birding. I shall contact interested members of the group individually with details of our meeting place and timings.

Richard Morgan
01285 712085

Book Circle 1

Tuesday 12 June

Our next meeting is at my house at 2.30pm when we shall discuss 'The Help' by Kathryn Stockett.

Please let me know if you are unable to come.

Denny Rawlinson
01285 711009

Chess

The chess group meets monthly on a Wednesday. Contact details below for more information.

Mike Bennett
01367 252379
mish252379@btinternet.com

Book Circle 2

Tuesday 12 June

We shall meet at Sue's house at 2.30pm to discuss 'Wolf Totem' by Jiang Rong.

Please let Sue or me know if you are unable to attend.

Kevin Hannigan
01367 250246
hannigan100@hotmail.com
Sue Middleton

Bridge Improvers

The group will continue to meet every Monday afternoon (except Bank Holidays) from 2 to 4 pm in the Heritage room, Fairford Community Centre, for a lesson and friendly practice play.

If you play bridge and would like to improve come and join us; we are a friendly and informal group. Partners and refreshments provided.

Margaret Bishop
01285 713747
mbishop@talktalk.net

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.

Nick Humphris
01285 711740

Cycling with a Pub Lunch

Wednesday 27 June

It is that time of the year again when we ought to cruise out towards Fossebridge for some excellent bubble and squeak and crispy bacon. We shall get there via the Barnsley road and return through Bibury. A gentle ride in sunny conditions, a few ups and a lot more downs.

Meet at The Green in Quenington at 10.45am.

Paul O'Shaughnessy
01367 850262

'In 1897, Queen Victoria threatened to boycott the celebrations, offended by the hostility towards her young Indian manservant ...'

www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/ 6

Five Rhythms Dance

Wednesday 20 June

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

We are hoping to meet on Mon 11th and/or 25th June at 11am as usual, if, now that the holiday season is under way, enough members are able to come. Please confirm as soon as possible if you will be there – a group of 4 would be fine, more would be wonderful! A bientôt!

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!

Kevin Hannigan
01367 250246

Family History 1

Wednesday 20 June

This month we shall meet at Miriam's house at 2.30pm. We shall look at the thorny topic of divorce. If you have any divorces in your family history, please bring details to the meeting - you may be able to find out more.

Miriam Scott
01285 713441

Garden Group

Thursday 21 June

This month we have a change of venue and instead of Kiftsgate Court, I have arranged to visit TWIGS which was a visit we had to cancel last year due to appalling weather. There is no set entry fee as they are a charity but donations are very welcome. They are situated opposite Manor Farm Garden Centre where we can have tea in the Olive Tree Cafe after our visit and a look at the garden centre. I am hoping that there will be some plants for sale at TWIGS too.

Can we please meet in the car park at 1.30pm and suggest driver donation for fuel £2.

Non-members of the Garden Group are welcome to join us for this unusual visit. Please ring me on the phone number below if you are interested.

Penny Phillips 01285 711360
pennyrphillips@gmail.com

Family History 2

Wednesday 20 June

In researching my family history I found that recent history is probably forgotten, for example, the point Father and Mother had reached in their lives when you were able to remember what they did for a living and what training and experiences had they gone through to get to that point in their lives.

This took me down a fascinating road of a nostalgic journey going back to the 1950s, collecting old photographs, visiting places I had worked in my early life while learning my trade, noting how dramatically everything has changed over the years.

At the June meeting I thought I would tell the group my thoughts and how I put them together, hoping in future meetings my group could talk about their early working and training experiences to pass on to their children and grandchildren.

Michael Johnson
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk
01285 712637

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

German Circle

All meetings will be at my home at 2pm. 'German for Beginners' will be on the 2nd Tuesday and 'Further German' will be on the 3rd Tuesday.

I shall look forward to seeing you – do please let me know if you are unable to come on the relevant meeting date.

Karin Forman
01367 252675

Keep Fit

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

Eddie Rosser
01367 252504

Latin

Thursday 7 June

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

In Fairford the... 'festive morn was heralded in by a merry peal from the parish church, from the tower of which at 8 o'clock floated proudly the St George's Ensign.'

Wilts & Glos Standard, 26th June 1887

Model Group

The Model Group meets weekly on Thursday mornings.

Please contact:

Jim Sullivan
01367 252539

Music Listening

Friday 22 June

Our theme for June is English composers.

Mary Chick
01285 712126

Needlework

The Needlework group will meet on 6th and 20th June, at the Chapel.

For further details please contact:

Thelma Hardie
01285 713971

Pétanque

As we now have our very own permanent piste sited at Farmor's School, we shall be playing there weekly from now on.

David and Heather Baber
01285 711343

Philosophy

Wednesday 20 June

The next meeting will be held at Verna Reay's house in Lechlade.

The subject will be 'The toughest lesson life teaches is the difference between who you wanted to be and who you actually are'. A quote from Richard Holloway.

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

At our meeting on 1st June we shared poems by unknown poets.

On 6th July we shall be looking at the poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins at Denny's home.

Mary Chick
01285 712126

*The National Anthem was sung in
Fairford Market Place three times at
Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in
1897.*

From Fairford Parish News, July 1897

Postcard Group

As a number of members will be away, there will be no June meeting. All being well we shall meet again at my house at 2.30pm on Tuesday, 17th July, when the theme letter for cards will be 'K'.

John Higgs
01285 712488

Recorders

Our next meetings will be Friday afternoons the 8th and 22nd June (with Ann Marshall). As usual, we'll be starting with our treble class (everyone welcome) from 2-2.30pm followed by the main group at 2.30 to finish at 4.30 with a break for tea. We should be in the Farmor room on the ground floor of the Fairford Community Centre and shall let you know if we have to use another room.

If there are any more recorder players who would like to join a friendly, non-judgemental group, please contact:

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

Please ask if you need to borrow an instrument or stand.

Rummikub

Thursday 14 June

The Group usually 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

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

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
fkhall@talktalk.net

Solos

Monday 11 June

The June meeting will be held at John Yorke's house in Lechlade at 2.30pm.

Please note from now on our meetings will start at 2.30pm, usually on the first Monday of the month unless there is a Bank Holiday. If singles can't make the monthly meeting but are interested in joining us in our activities please contact me:

Michael Johnson
01285 712637

Straddlers

Thursday 21 June

This nine mile walk begins in the village of Lower Slaughter and passes through Naunton and Upper Slaughter. Setting out along the Macmillan Way the route joins the Windrush Way which we discovered coincides, on this stretch, with the recently established Gustav Holst Way. From Naunton we pick up the Wardens Way which we follow back to the start. The walk undulates for much of the way but there are no steep ascents or descents. Stops will be made for coffee and packed lunches. As the drought continues there may be muddy sections.

Leave Fairford at 9.15am or meet on the roadside by the river at Lower Slaughter at 10am. (There are a few more roadside parking spaces by the church but the walk will set out by the river.) Lower Slaughter is about 20 miles away so guideline passenger fee will be £3.

Margaret and Phil Trickett
01285 712421

Walking and Pub Lunch

Wednesday 13 June

June's walk starts at the Catherine Wheel pub in Arlington (Bibury). We join the path then track to Coneygar Cottages, then follow field boundaries to Ash Copse and Oxhill Wood. The walk continues along the Coln River valley to the Bibury cricket ground, downhill to the back of Arlington Row before returning to the pub.

Meet at Fairford at 9.30am or at the pub about 9.50 where we'll order lunch before starting the walk at 10am. The walk is 4½ miles long – we should be back to the pub around 12.15. As ever, walking boots are strongly recommended.

John Burrows
01367 253056

King Edward VII, 1902

'On June 26th, instead of hailing our beloved Sovereign with joyful acclamations, we were praying that his life might be spared.'

Fairford Parish News, June 1902

Striders

Tuesday 26 June

We start from the Fox Inn, Great Barrington (OX18 4TB) where we shall order food first. Using the now well established 'walk-speak' it's a serene glide through classic countryside under a glorious sun with some gentle undulations! Total distance is about 6 miles and it took me 2¾ hours.

We head into Little Barrington and then across fields crossing and re-crossing the River Windrush arriving in Sherborne before turning tail back towards Windrush and a mile later the Fox. There is a stretch of about 400 yards near the beginning where we cross wetlands which were.....well.....wet!

There is plenty of parking at the pub, where the food is a bit pricey. It's about 10 miles and so the cost to passengers will be £1.50. Please aim to leave Fairford car park at 9.30am to arrive at the pub by 9.50 to pre-order lunch. I will meet you at the pub.

Kevin Hannigan
hannigan100@hotmail.com
01367 250246

Strollers

This month's walk covers the delights of Blunsdon.

Starting from The Heart in Hand, Blunsdon (SN26 7AG) we walk up past the Church and cemetery then diverting left to Castle Hill with lovely views of Castle Eaton.

We then follow numerous tree lines and paths with no stiles at all until we come out on the main road that runs from Castle Eaton to Blunsdon. The last section of the walk back to the pub is up a slight incline levelling out as we get to the village.

The distance is approx 3½ miles and should take about 1¾ hours. Meet at either Fairford Car Park at 9.45am or at the pub car park at 10.15am.

On arrival select your lunch from either the snack or main course menus.

Suggested passenger fare £1.50 with £1 per person to the walk leader.

Looking forward to seeing you with your walking boots, gaiters and poles.

Any questions or queries contact

John Yorke
01367 253596 or 07546818485

Traditional Jazz

Thursday 7 June

The group usually meets on the first Thursday of each month at our house in Lechlade from 2-4.30pm. The next meeting will be the first of a series on reedmen starting from Achille Baquet (b.1885) of the Original New Orleans Jazz Band which included, in 1918, Jimmy Durante (who remembers him as 'Schnozzle?') and Alphonse Picou (b.1878) responsible for the clarinet solo in 'High Society'.

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

Yoga

The Yoga group meets weekly on Mondays at the Community Centre at 10.15am.

Sylvia Jones
01285 712657

!

'After the children had finished, the old people, of sixty-five years and upwards sat down to tea.'

George V's Coronation
Fairford Parish News, June 1911

GROUP REVIEWS

Pétanque

On 16th May, amidst great camaraderie, we officially opened our piste. The hard work was over and we toasted our achievement with a well earned glass (well, paper cup!) of cava or orange juice.

Ann Stokes, who is the Head Teacher of Farmor's School, cut the red ribbon, and rolled her first boule to declare the piste open.

Dave then thanked all those who had donated either financially, loaning equipment or providing materials.

The photographer and journalist from the Standard had joined us and, as well as taking notes for a report, several photos were taken, the main ones being those of Ann and the 'working party' throwing boules, and one of large cheques being given to both Lechlade and District Lions and the Fairford Town Charity.

Thankfully, it didn't rain on our celebration and the evening ended with members and friends enjoying Pétanque on our very own piste.

At the moment we are having to close membership on a Wednesday morning, but if anyone is interested David and Heather are willing to run a second group on another morning.

Dave and Heather Baber

A big thank you to the sponsors of the piste

Ermin Plant Lakes by Yoo Lechlade & District Lions

Fairford Town Charity Hanson Aggregates

Optic-Kleer Farmor's School

Waitrose Community giving scheme

Paul Timber Engineering Ltd Fairford & District U3A

Book Circle 2

Our book for May was 'Scoop' by Evelyn Waugh. The author has made use of his own experiences as a reporter to satirise the press of his day. The newspaper magnate Lord Copper of the 'Daily Beast' having heard of a promising little war in the African republic of Ismailia decides to send someone to cover it. Unfortunately, in a mix-up of names he chooses the wrong reporter, the naive William Boot, the writer of his nature column, and chaos follows with Boot triumphantly, after many adventures, producing the 'scoop' of the title.

We all agreed that this is a very funny, laugh out loud book, although there were some reservations over the language which we would now consider racist but was the norm when the book was written in 1938. We also agreed that not much has changed in our newspapers which still attempt to bamboozle their readers as they compete to corner the 'scoops' of today.

Barbara Cottam

Recorders

We were a bit thin on the ground for the first of our two visits from Ann Marshall this term and were very pleased to welcome a couple of ladies from Peter Stephenson's Cirencester group who swelled the descant department beautifully. Ann brought an interesting variety of music, mostly arranged or composed by herself including The March of the Men of Harlech to warm us up; Cupid Awaked and As the Tide was Flowing from Volume 1 of 'Ann's Choice'; the Bare Necessities Dance, which has nothing to do with Disney; some beautiful pieces of renaissance music which travelled from Venice to Prague whence it was taken back to Uppsala by Norwegian troops in the 16th century to moulder in the library for many years, until the remnants were discovered and published. We finished by playing a fun arrangement of 'Blue Moon' which introduced us to both swung quavers and triplets. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and greatly appreciated Ann's gentle but firm approach and, especially, the fact that she didn't get over-worried about tuning. Ann has left us the music to work on next time.

Hilary Bradshaw

Poetry Circle 1

The start of May seemed an appropriate time for this month's theme of 'Beginnings'. Seven of us met to share our choices and were pleased at the wide range of aspects we had found. Kay gave us a vivid word picture in 'Dawn' by J.G. Fletcher and Barbara a delightful account in 'Fresh Water' of Andrew Motion's walk to the source of the Thames.

Two of the poems surprised us as atypical of the poet's work. Celia read 'In the Beginning', by Dylan Thomas, which gave a fresh but positive account of the Creation story that none of us recognised as his work, and Ken offered Thomas Hardy's 'A Plaint to Man' in which God complained because man had created Him in man's own image. We were startled at such unorthodox thinking from Hardy.

The other two poems were more serious. Donald had found a 16th century work of Robert Greene, 'Weep not my Wanton', in which a mother mourns that her new-born babe has only in its early years a hope of happiness. John's poem saddened us; it was 'Recruiting' by Lieutenant E.A. Mackintosh who wrote an ironic comment on the First World War poster which stated, 'Lads you are wanted. Come and serve.' His experiences in the trenches made him change that to 'Lads you are wanted. Come and die'. And he did die. In France in 1917, aged 24.

Joyce Deane

Strollers

Eleven of us gathered at The Victoria at Eastleach for the April Strollers walk. The weather was threatening but we decided to "give it a go". Within five minutes the rain came down and we were soon very damp. Our route took us on a grassy track down to the Leach valley to join a minor road at Sheep Bridge. Here we turned right very steeply for about 50 yards before turning back on the old Akeman Street track high above the valley before dropping down on a very muddy path through the woods to open fields on the eastern side of the Leach. The crossing of the river should have been via a clapper bridge/stepping stones but, despite the quantity of water descending on us, the river bed was completely dry; we just strolled across and uphill back to The Victoria where we were joined for lunch by Geoff and Margaret Bishop. Despite being absolutely soaked, everybody agreed they had enjoyed the walk – but it must be said that in the prevailing conditions it was above the usual Strollers grade! This is a really lovely scenic walk – such a pity about the weather.

Val Higgs

Solos

On April 27th two of us visited Down Ampney Village Hall to see 'Raffles of the Eastern Islands', a one-act musical play about the founder of Singapore.

Sir Stanford Raffles, a friend of William Wilberforce, was responsible for the abolition of slavery in the Far East. This was a very interesting play and was followed by food and a glass of wine - a very interesting and pleasant evening.

Our monthly meeting was our usual relaxed occasion when, amongst other things, we discussed and planned forthcoming meetings. After the planning we enjoyed tea and cake while Annie entertained us by singing and playing the guitar which we all really appreciated.

On 8th May, five of us joined Annie at her new flat, each taking a plate of food and of course bottles of wine. Annie was a wonderful host, making us very welcome and making sure we were all fed and watered and playing music from way back - I think the oldest CD was music from 1947. It's so sad we could all sing along! We all found the flat very nice and comfortable and the neighbours were dead quiet. Thanks, Annie, from all of us.

Forthcoming events - 24th June: visit to Avebury Manor; 19th July: some of us will join with Fairford Gardeners' Club to visit Wisley; 5th August: a Jazz cruise from Abingdon; 29th September: again we hope to join Fairford Gardeners' Club to visit the Autumn Show at Malvern.

Michael Johnson

Postcard Group

At our April meeting Colin gave a delightful and interesting presentation on Swiss Railways which was illustrated with postcards he had collected, photographs and brochures – not to mention some lovely model trains. Certainly nostalgia for many of us - we all wanted to visit Switzerland again.

The group will be providing a display board of postcards of royalty and royal occasions for Fairford History Society's Diamond Jubilee exhibition. At our May meeting Val gave a short presentation about the cards, before they were mounted, which included all four coronations in the 20th century.

John Higgs

Book Circle 1

'Death comes to Pemberley'

This is P D James's latest crime novel. When she was approaching the age of 90 James felt she had some important decisions to make, since she was becoming increasingly aware that neither years nor creative energy last forever. She decided that she would be self-indulgent and turn to an idea that had been in her mind for some time, 'to combine two lifelong enthusiasms, namely for writing detective fiction and for the novels of Jane Austen'.

'Death comes to Pemberley' is a sequel to Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice'. It begins in 1803 when Elizabeth and Darcy have been happily married for six years and are preparing for the annual autumn ball. The mystery begins when Darcy looks through the window and sees a chaise being driven at speed down the road from the woodlands. The youngest Bennet daughter, Lydia, tumbles from the chaise screaming hysterically that her husband has been murdered – she is married to the superficially charming Mr Wickham. A death has certainly occurred, but Mr Wickham is very much alive and subsequently stands trial and is found guilty of the murder of his friend Captain Denny. The author's dénouement provides a credible twist in the tale.

James follows the Austen tone and style remarkably well. It is inevitable, though, that a crime novel should contain something of what Austen called 'guilt and misery and such odious subjects', which she preferred to leave to the pens of others.

Some of us enjoyed the book very much; others didn't like it at all. In general, we were not too keen on sequels produced by other writers.

Barbara Cobbett

Writing in The Telegraph about her new book and her love of the novels of Jane Austen, P D James says: "Nearly all my detective stories have had their genesis in a place and setting, which is important to any work of fiction and is particularly so in a crime novel, especially if there is contrast between peace, order and beauty and the contaminating eruption of violent death. This contrast is assured by setting a murder mystery in the grounds of Pemberley, a house that in my book enshrines married happiness, children, a household at peace with each other and a daily life in which duty to the community, learning, tradition and an ordered, civilised lifestyle embody all that is good about the age."

Family History 1

Only five of us met in May at Alison's house. The group took turns using the laptops in researching their family using www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk, while the others discussed their researching problems and looked at a selection of local and family history books.

Alison Hobson

Family History 2

Our family heirlooms and memorabilia meeting consisted of just three people.

Michael showed us a letter written by his 2 x Great Uncle Adams, detailing events arising from his travels to Watertown Jeff Country in New York State, North America.

The journey saw heavy gales with sea rolling and mountains high with the ship tossing fearfully. This was followed by thick fog banks, and later field ice with the ship running against immense icebergs.

Just three weeks following their arrival, the youngest son caught a cold, affecting his lungs, and he died four days later.

The family liked the country and the people and enjoyed better health. There were no police or bailiffs, no rates or taxes to pay. The house and gardens were good, and they paid one dollar per week (4s 2d). Business was also good and most people worked hard. He earned 26s per week, double what he might have earned in England.

Val then told us about the singing medals her mother had received from the Sunday School Union in Derby; this initiated her professional career in singing. We were also shown a Women's Voluntary Service badge obtained due to her salvage collection work during the war. Other badges included the National Savings Collector and the Civil Defence Corps, which was set up to deal with the aftermath of any nuclear attacks.

My contribution was a pendant belonging to my Grandmother, containing a miniature portrait of both my Aunt and my Father. Tiny, often expensive, likenesses—requiring a highly trained artist with good eyesight and a steady hand—were often made as mementos.

Elizabeth Berry

Philosophy

The subject for discussion was 'That all animals are equal', an assertion made by Peter Singer the philosopher and humanist. The subject was introduced by Francis, who went on to elaborate on Singer's ideas. Basically, all animals that are sentient should be treated in an equal moral manner; that is, we as humans should accept that their needs should be our first consideration when we are dealing with them. This view attacks all forms of factory farming as well as blood sports. We then considered biblical attitudes, which indicate that though humans have domination of nature this brings with it the need to act responsibly. It was suggested that there should be a difference of attitude when considering animals in the wild. Peter Singer is the doyen of the animal rights groups, though he doesn't support many of their methods.

Dan Deane

Birdwatching

We always enjoy the Nagshead RSPB reserve in the Forest of Dean at this time of year with the bluebells carpeting the ground and the oak and beech trees resplendent with their fresh leaves. We arrived in the middle of a very heavy downpour, but the rain and hail soon stopped and we set off in warm sunshine. There was birdsong all around during this afternoon visit, but even with just light spring foliage to hide in the songsters were tricky to find. With persistence we enjoyed some good sightings of many of the usual woodland species. One of the most sought after spring birds is the stunning little black-and-white pied flycatcher and we saw two pairs, one very close to us. After a lovely walk another very heavy shower had us rushing for shelter and then to the pub for our evening meal.

Later we went in search of nightjars in another part of the Forest. As dusk approached we had super views of ground mist forming in the valley below us with more rising up the side of the next valley. We then became absorbed in watching woodcocks flying past, clearly showing their long bills and unusual flight. One seemed to pass by every few minutes but we decided it was probably just two or three continually flying round and round their territories. We gave the nightjars a good chance of appearing but the recent cold weather and northerly winds have probably kept them the other side of the Channel. Whilst waiting we heard a cuckoo, a nightingale and a tawny owl. To end a good outing, a family of wild boar crossed the path in front of us as we returned to our cars.

Richard Morgan

Timetable of Group Activities

Monthly: Chess on a Wednesday. Needlework and Recorders meet twice monthly. Pétanque and Cycling April-October only.

	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
Tuesday am	Keep Fit	Keep Fit Spanish	Keep Fit Bird watching	Keep Fit Spanish Striders
	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		Geology	Family Hist 1 & 2 Philosophy
Thursday am	Model Boats Computers	Model making Computers	Model Boats Straddlers Computers	Model Boats Computers
	pm	Latin Traditional Jazz	Rummikub	Garden
Friday am				Strollers
	pm	Poetry Circle 1 Poetry Circle 2	Recorders	Music Recorders

Please send items for the
July/August
 issue to Alison Hobson email:
 editor@fairfordu3a.org.uk
Thursday June 20th (preferably)
or June 28th. See Page 2