



# Fairford & District Newsletter

Issue 182

March 2012



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**Bletchley Park:  
the cracking of the code  
by Robert Skelt**

## General Meetings

Palmer Hall, 2.30pm

### 3 April

AGM followed by The Cuffley Airship  
by John Higgs

### 1 May

Mary, Queen of Scots, the Young  
Queen  
by George Eccleston

### 6 June (Wednesday)

The Solar System and Beyond  
by John Fletcher

## Today, 6 March

Today we shall hear about some of the secret code cracking activities at Bletchley Park, including a demonstration on a virtual Enigma machine and the Morse Code used to send the messages.

In April after the AGM, our own U3A member John Higgs will tell us a story from the First World War - we shall hear about the first shooting down of a German airship raider over British soil.

In May we shall learn about Mary, Queen of Scots who was still an infant when she became Queen and found herself in some difficult situations. We hear how she learned to deal with them - a different view of her history.

## Tea Rota

April 3 : 5 Rhythms Dance

May 1 : French Conversation (I)

June 6 : French Conversation (A)

## New members

We welcome the following new members:

Susie Brown  
Jill and Malcolm Cutler  
Richard Dicker  
Marilyn Gibbon  
Gordon and Myra Hart  
Peter Hewes  
John Hill  
Jean Hunt  
Sheila Jackson  
Lyn Miller

David and Fiona Mirrington  
Paul and Nancy Raymond  
Ted Rowe  
Alastair Somerville  
Annie Taylor  
Stewart Thomson  
Ted Trowbridge  
Malcolm White  
Pam Young

[www.fairfordu3a.org.uk](http://www.fairfordu3a.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1072658

## Excellent news from the Chairman

This month I am very pleased to be able to report that volunteers for the posts of Treasurer and Vice Chairman have come forward. Nick Stroude is willing to be our Treasurer and, if elected at the AGM in April, will take over from Paul O'Shaugnessy. Completing the management team, John Higgs has offered to stand as our new Vice Chairman, a post which has been vacant for some time. This is very good news as it will secure the future of our U3A for the foreseeable period. I am also grateful to John Yorke who has agreed to lead and coordinate the Strollers walking group. However, we still need a leader for the Walking with a Pub Lunch group.

As I informed members last month, the AGM this year will be on **Tuesday 3 April**, and the June meeting will be on **Wednesday 6 June** because of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations..

Reg Thoburn, Chairman  
01285 712397

## Groups Pages on the Website

Further to my recent request to Group Leaders for update instructions for their pages on the website, there are still some for which I have yet to receive instructions, or a 'no change' indicator. If you have not yet replied, please do so as soon as possible so that I can complete the exercise.

Going forward, the Committee feel it is very important for our U3A that these pages are kept up to date. I would therefore ask all Group Leaders to remain 'website aware' and send updates direct to Webmaster Nick Humphris in order that currency can be retained as far as is reasonably possible.

Many thanks for your help, and do let me know if I can help in this endeavour.

Michael Yorke  
Group Co-ordinator  
01367 253286

Cover picture: Enigma wheels within alphabet rings in position in an Enigma scrambler [picture in public domain]; ENIGMA in Morse Code

## U3A February

Ray Sturdy whisked members on a whirlwind photo-tour of China. Starting in Beijing and progressing through Guilin, Xi'an and Shanghai, he was able to chart the changes since he first visited the country, on a trade mission, 25 years ago. He used the currency as a quick example of the history. Portraits of Mao Tse Tung appear on all the paper money, except the lowly 1 yuan notes which show some Tibetans.

The list of the sights we viewed reads like a poem of praise to a country which knits together the old and the new: the Great Wall; Beijing traffic jams; showy restaurants and chopsticks; tanks in Tiananmen Square, and 3,000 terracotta warriors from 2,200 years ago (discovered when a farmer drilling for water during a drought pulled out a piece of one on his augur); vast toll booths on huge highways but designed like 'Gates of Fortune'; palaces covered in brilliant tiles and highly decorated roof tops contrasting with the famous Bird's Nest arena of the Olympics; cities with buildings looking a mile high, and in the countryside enormous limestone cliffs as in Guilin – the kind everyone associates with paintings on scrolls.

All this and more flashed past our eyes in a vibrant, superbly organised show which left many feeling as though they had taken the tour themselves.

Sylvia Jones

### JEWELS FOR A JUBILEE

#### FAIRFORD & DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY – SPRING CONCERT 2012

The Society's next concert will be on Saturday, 31st March, 2012 at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church, Fairford, when it will contribute to Fairford's Jubilee celebrations with a concert including Handel's Coronation Anthems (of which the best known is probably Zadok the Priest) and Mozart's Coronation Mass. We are delighted that our accompanist, Robin Baggs, will contribute a performance of Walton's Crown Imperial as part of the programme. Soloists: return visits by Fiona Dobie (Soprano), Natanya Phillips (Mezzo) and Henry Herford (Bass) and a first appearance with us by Peter Harris (Tenor).

Tickets available from Blenheim Antiques in Fairford's Market Place, Fairford Opticians in the High Street, through the society's website ([www.fairford.org/choralsociety](http://www.fairford.org/choralsociety)) where you can also find general information about the choir and its concerts, or by telephoning 01285 713681.

# GROUP EVENTS

Please contact the group leaders if you are interested in joining any of the groups or visit [www.fairfordu3a.org.uk](http://www.fairfordu3a.org.uk) for further information.

## Birdwatching

*Tuesday 20 March*

This month we shall visit Coombe Hill Meadows in the Severn Valley and have lunch nearby. At this time of year the towpath along the canal is usually uneven and muddy and the meadows can be flooded so boots are strongly recommended. Meet at the Fairford car park at 9am as usual. Coombe Hill is 30 miles from Fairford.

Richard Morgan  
01285 712085

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## Book Circle 1

*Tuesday 13 March*

We next meet at Eileen Harlow's home to discuss 'Sleeping Beauty' by Elizabeth Taylor. Please let Eileen know on 01285 711214 if you are unable to come.

Denny Rawlinson  
01285 711009

*'Every spring is the only spring - a perpetual astonishment.'*

Ellis Peters

## Book Circle 2

*Tuesday 13 March*

We shall meet at Anthea's house at 2.30pm to discuss 'Nothing to envy' by Barbara Demick. Please let Anthea or me know if you will be unable to attend.

Kevin Hannigan  
01367 250246  
hannigan100@hotmail.com  
Anthea Wordley  
01285713545

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## Bridge Improvers

The group meets every Monday afternoon from 2-4pm in the Heritage Room, Fairford Community Centre. If you play bridge and would like to improve, come and join us. We are a friendly and informal group, making mistakes and learning together, partners and refreshments provided.

Margaret Bishop  
01285 713747  
mbishop@talktalk.net

## Chess

*Wednesday 21 March*

The next chess meeting will be at 3.30pm at Ian's house.

Mike Bennett  
01367 252379  
mish252379@btinternet.com

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## Computers

We are now holding meetings most Thursdays of the month at my home from 9.30 - 11am. We are a mixed ability group with some members complete beginners while others have some experience. If you would like to join us, please contact me.

Nick Humphris  
01285 711740

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## Five Rhythms Dance

*Wednesday 21 March*

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

## Family History 1

*Wednesday 21 March*

We shall meet in my house to hear about the visit to TNA at Kew, from those who went. If time, we shall practise reading old handwriting.

Miriam Scott  
01285 713441

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## Family History 2

*Wednesday 21 March*

We shall meet at my house at 2.30pm and discuss the trials and tribulations of our trip to the National Archives at Kew which is on March 8th.

Michael Johnson  
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk  
01285712637

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## French Conversation

### *Intermediate*

We shall meet on Mondays 5th and 19th March at my home, at 11am as usual.

New members are welcome to join us; please contact me for more information.

Rosemary Westlake  
01285 712329  
idrwestlake@gmail.com

## French Conversation

### **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  
hannigan100@hotmail.com

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## 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

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*'It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.'*

Charles Dickens

## Garden Group

*Thursday 15 March*

This month we are off to visit Kingston Bagpuize House near Abingdon for the first of our garden visits for 2012. As it is a reasonable drive could we meet in the car park about 1.50pm in time to leave promptly at 2pm? This would give us time for a nice wander round and a cup of tea and some homemade biscuits. Most of the garden is level with just a few steps here and there - in your **ngs yellow book** it is page 432 no. 41. The website is worth looking at too. If the timing is right the magnolias should be in bloom which would be a treat.

The cost for entry and tea is £7.50 per head and I suggest a donation of £2.50 towards fuel costs.

I do hope that a good number of you will be free to come and I have told her we should be about 12 but it would be nice if we were a few more still! She has asked me to confirm the final number the week before so I should be grateful if you could let me know by **FRIDAY 9 MARCH** either by phone or by e-mail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Penny Phillips  
01285 711360  
pennyrphillips@gmail.com

## German Circle

There will now be two classes, 'German for Beginners' and 'Further German'. I believe that this will form a better basis for the variation in ability among members who have attended meetings to date, and will hopefully cater better for any new members who would like to join a German class.

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.

Learning is quite relaxed, no tests, and you will find that knowledge about Germany and German culture will emerge as part of the learning process.

Karin Forman  
01367 252675

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## Keep Fit

Please note that the Keep Fit class will now meet at the Palmer Hall on Tuesdays at 9.15am and not at the Community Centre.

Eddie Rosser  
01367 252504

## Latin

*Thursday 1 March*

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

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## Model Group

The Model group meets each Thursday morning.

For further details please contact:

Jim Sullivan  
01367 252539

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## Music Listening

*Friday 16 March*

Our theme this month is 'The Weather'. We shall meet at 2.30pm.

Mary Chick  
01285 712126

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## Needlework

The Needlework group will meet on 14th and 28th March, at the Chapel.

For further details please contact:

Thelma Hardie  
01285 713971

## Philosophy

*Wednesday 21 March*

The March subject for discussion is 'Risk and Hazard', and will be held at Francis Anyamene's house.

Dan Deane  
01285 851408

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## Poetry Circle 1

The group meets on the first Friday afternoon of the month. The topic in March was 'Holidays. In April the meeting will be on Friday 13th.

Barbara Cottam  
01285 711054

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## Poetry Circle 2

Our next meeting is taking place on 30th March, and there will be no meeting in April. We are looking forward to the visit of a local poet, Patricia Bishop, who will be bringing alive our theme of Women Poets. The venue is Mary's house.

Mary Chick  
01285 712126

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## Postcards

There will be no meeting in March. The next meeting will be on 17th April and the theme letter will be a challenging 'I'.

John Higgs  
01285 712488

## Recorders

Our next meetings will be Friday afternoons the 9th and 23rd March. As usual, we'll be starting with our treble class (everyone welcome) from 2-2.30 followed by the main group at 2.30 to finish at 4.30 with a break for tea. We shall be in the Farmor room on the ground floor of the Fairford Community Centre.

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 for further information. Please ask if you need to borrow an instrument

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## Rummikub

*Thursday 8 March*

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.

New members will be welcome. 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

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## Solo Group

*Monday 5 March*

The Solo Group will meet on the first Monday of the month. For the next meeting Valerie Wood has kindly offered the use of her home and we shall meet at 10.30am.

Michael Johnson  
01285 712637  
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk

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## Spanish

This Spanish group is for beginners, but those with some Spanish are welcome! Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday mornings, 11-12 noon, at my home.

Frank Hall  
01285 712583  
fkhall@talktalk.net

## Straddlers

*Thursday 15 March*

This is a walk of just over 8 miles with some stiles, initially over fields and then following some pleasant wooded valleys. A few steady climbs, but no steep hills. We start from the car park at the village hall at Brimpsfield - easily accessible from the roundabout at the end of the dual carriageway (before Nettleton Bottom) on the A417 from Cirencester to Gloucester (turn left at the roundabout - this is not on the OS map!). Follow the signs to Brimpsfield and at the junction in the village turn right - 100m to the village hall.

We walk from Brimpsfield to Birdlip over the fields and then past the reservoir to Ivy Lodge Farm. Thence south down the valley through Hazel Hanger wood to the road at Climperwell Farm, turning up the road towards Caudle Green. The footpath turns off the road, past Moor House following the valley to Caudle Green. We go south from Caudle Green into the wood and cross the valley to join the Winstone road (188m), heading north for half a mile on the road before following the valley path past Ostrich Wood. Then past Brimpsfield Park back to the village hall, hopefully avoiding most of the mud, but come prepared.

continued

Straddlers continued

Meet at Fairford car park at 9.15am or at Brimpsfield village hall for a 10am start. Brimpsfield is about 16 miles from Fairford - suggested passenger fee is £1.50. Bring coffee and lunch as usual. Walking boots are essential.

Michael Bottomley  
01285 712074

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## Striders

*Tuesday 27 March*

The days are getting longer and the weather is warming up. What better time to go for a gentle stroll through some smashing Cotswold countryside. This six mile amble starts at The Fox in Great Barrington. A short stroll up a lane, and then a meander up the Windrush Valley, passing the water mill, then on towards the splendid isolated Manor Farm, all in glorious sunshine. There are three stone stiles, a small boggy patch, very few ups, and lots of downs, all with super views. On the return we pass the easily viewed deer park.

Meet at Fairford car park at 9.30am or at The Fox at 10am. We shall order lunch before we set out on this delightful ramble. Suggested travel fee is £1.

Paul O'Shaughnessy  
01367 850262

## Strollers

*Friday 23 March*

Our walk this month will be a repeat of a walk Don and Barbara led in February last year. The walk will commence from the Trout at St Johns Priory on the Faringdon Road out of Lechlade where we shall cross to St John's Lock and walk westwards towards Halfpenny bridge in Lechlade and onwards to the Round House and then Inglesham. There should be time to visit the Church. We shall then walk in a southerly direction along a short distance of the Lechlade to Highworth Road where we shall take the Buscot turning and start heading back towards the pub.

The Trout have agreed to offer us a two-course lunch for £8.95 which is excellent value. The walk is approximately 3 miles in length, no stiles, 10 gates, very flat, some mud so stout shoes/boots and walking poles recommended.

Meet at Fairford car park at 9.45am or The Trout at 10am. Suggested driver donation is £1.

Reg Thoburn  
01285 712397

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*'Inglesham - Inngeneshamme c.950. 'Enclosure or river-meadow of a man called Ingen or Ingīn'.*

Dictionary of British Place Names.  
Mills 2003

## Traditional Jazz

*Thursday 1 March*

The group usually meets on the first Thursday of each month at our house in Lechlade from 2-4.30pm.

Once again we have had our meeting before the General Meeting and on 1st March we listened to the music of some of the bigger bands of 1930s.

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

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## Yoga

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

Sylvia Jones  
01285 712657

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*'I may not have proved a great explorer, but we have done the greatest march ever made and come very near to great success.'*

Robert Falcon Scott

## Walking and Pub Lunch

*Wednesday 14 March*

Starting from The Sherborne Arms, Market Place, Northleach, GL54 3EE we head out of town, cross the A429 via the old prison and go across fields to Hampnett. Visit St George's Church – Norman dating from 1125 with additions in C15 and painting of internal stonework in C19 – photo-op? Across more fields onto Monarch's Way to the reservoir. Cut back across the A429 past Winterwell Barn to Helen's Ditch and back into Northleach. An easy 2 hour, 4 mile stroll across mixed terrain so walking boots strongly advised as it could be quite muddy in places. Largely flat with only one serious uphill section. Excellent pub grub, and sensibly priced, but parking not easy in the Market Place.

Meet in the Fairford car park as usual at 10am – passenger fee £1.50. I'll meet you in Northleach and plan to set off at about 10.30am having ordered lunch first.

Kevin Hannigan  
01367 250246  
hannigan100@hotmail.com

# GROUP REVIEWS

## Book Circle 1

A small group of us met at Edna's home on 14 February to discuss 'Guernica', a work of historical fiction by Dave Boling. Guernica is a small town in the Basque region of Spain where something awful had happened during the Spanish Civil War. Our school history books had told us little of the horror of one day in 1937.

It seemed to Boling that people are more aware of Picasso's famed mural exhibited in Madrid than the atrocity which spawned it. Boling's interest came through his wife's family, Basques who had emigrated to America. Their stories were of the people they had known, loved and lost.

By page 30 we are engaged with and care deeply about Boling's carefully depicted characters. Each scene is gripping, particularly because we know what is coming, so that even the smallest acts in this busy, often humorous, portrayal of life in a small town become memorable and poignant.

The bombing of Guernica, carefully planned by a German Luftwaffe pilot, the Red Baron von Richthofen, on Hitler's orders, was the first instance of the aerial bombardments that would become commonplace in the Second World War and, horrifically, for the Nazis was simply an experiment.

Boling himself has said this novel is not only about tragedy but also human resilience. 'Guernica' does not stop after the bombing. It goes on to show how ordinary people deal with their losses and find ways to survive. It seamlessly interweaves personal stories with historical fact and produces a very powerful book, although the attempt at a happy ending did not work for us.

Denny Rawlinson

*'.. the novel is about loss, but also about loss's counterpoints, love and endurance. The description of the bombing of Guernica is so moving, detailed and sad that it becomes almost unbearable. By this point in the story, we're so familiar with the families of the town that we are pulled to the depths of their tragedy and pain. ... ultimately, this is a universal story. Through art and the historical record, Guernica is emblazoned in memory, enduring as an expression of individual and collective outrage.'*

The Washington Post

## Book Circle 2

This month we read 'The Cellist of Sarajevo' by Steven Galloway. It is a story of the lives of three ordinary people who lived through the siege of Sarajevo during the years 1992-1996. Although a novel this book is based on the stories told to the author after the war.

It brings to life the terrible suffering of the people during those years when so much of the city was destroyed. There was a sporadic electricity supply, not much food, and water had to be collected from a depot and carried home across bridges that were targeted by snipers. Many houses were destroyed and they watched their libraries and universities catch fire and their precious books go up in flames.

The majority of the group enjoyed reading this book, although it was so sad, because it was a bit of history we had not fully understood at the time. The author doesn't take sides in the conflict but shows how awful war is and how unscrupulous people will always make money from others' needs during times of conflict.

Josephine Toomer

## Garden Group

Carol Doherty kindly arranged for us to have a willow weaving afternoon with Norah Kennedy at which we were to make two items for our gardens.

Not many of us had done this before, so it was an unknown challenge for most of us. Surrounded by piles of new and old willow stems, about twelve of us followed her instructions and began creating. We started by making a willow wigwam for our sweet peas, clematis or any other favourite climbers we like to grow. It certainly focused the mind. To start with it was a little complicated, but in a short time we had all got the main idea; by teatime we had just about finished our first garden accessory, which really did look like the real thing! Our second item was a willow fan for putting against a wall, again for training plants up, or just as a piece of garden interest.

It was a fun afternoon that we all enjoyed, and thank you, Carol, for the delicious cakes you made for us.

Penny Phillips

## Family History 2

We had a most interesting afternoon showing and talking about family memorabilia. Ann showed us a book her father's brother received as a prize for school attendance in 1906. It was 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'; she found the pictures in it quite frightening when she was little. Ann's father died when she was young, so it was only in later years she realised the value of the book to family history.

Jo brought a postcard depicting a cruise her family had taken a hundred years or so ago. It seemed they had suffered from sea sickness, although they described the food as very good.

Val brought a clock and a ring. The wooden casing of the clock was interestingly carved and the clock had probably chimed. She remembers it in her grandmother's house when she was a little girl. She also told a fascinating story about the ring: it was given to a servant for loyal service and whom a relative had taught to read and write when she came to work for them as a young girl. She lived to a great age; as the servant had no family of her own she gave it back to the family as she thought that's where ring belonged.

John showed us Christmas cards from his uncle Harry who had served in the Royal Navy between the two World wars. He went on to tell how at the outbreak of WW2 his ship and another were returning to the UK when they collided and the ship his uncle was on sunk with a great loss of life, including his uncle.

I produced a flat iron that I remember my grandmother using, pointing out how things had changed in just two generations. I also showed a large family Bible. I know it goes back to 1820, as information inside the Bible tells us that, but it could well go back further.

Michael Johnson

## Postcards

Once again there was a full house at the postcard group meeting this month. John introduced us to methods of postcard printing and how you could tell whether it was a 'real photograph' or not using a magnifying glass or zoom facility on the computer.

Everyone then produced 'H' themed postcards and we were all able to see them at once using the new 'Visualiser' machine which shows them on the TV. Everyone was as creative as usual with some very tenuous 'H' connections!

Alison Hobson

## Model Group

### News flash – 'Fire on board'

There was an incident near Horcott lake about a week ago when one of our model steam boats caught fire. Not a serious matter, you may think, considering we operate near a lake. Unfortunately, the said boat was on the back seat of somebody's car at the time, on its way home. A car full of smoke at the side of the road looked serious to those who stopped to help.

Did someone forget to turn the gas off to the boat's boiler?

I have not mentioned the person concerned because Denbigh wants to remain anonymous, and besides, he is very busy repairing a very nice steam launch.

### 'From not enough water to too much'

Ian Westlake was sailing his own design open sailing boat in windy conditions. (He never learns.) The boat was overwhelmed by the waves and sank in exactly the same place as last year. Food for thought, Ian!

The wreck was salvaged using the rescue boat and a long piece of string. The episode proved to be good practice for the emergency recovery team. The small people on board are now used to a ducking and the boat's mechanics seem to recover well.

Jim Sullivan and Ian Westlake

## Birdwatching

Winter is always a good time to visit the Cotswold Water Park as large numbers of ducks overwinter there. We parked in the Neigh Bridge car park and took our usual circular route past a variety of habitats, including several lakes. All the usual ducks, including goosanders, red-crested pochard and goldeneye, were there but in smaller numbers than usual. We were not lucky enough to find any smew or pintails but they were there somewhere! What did surprise us was the number of goldcrests in the trees along the paths – we are normally delighted to see one, but there must have been at least a dozen of these fidgety little birds along our route.

Richard Morgan

## Solo Group

The first event of our group took place on the evening of Saturday, 25th February at Johnson Towers (Michael Johnson's house). This was a dinner courtesy of M & S and MJ. (Mostly MJ). There were five lucky people sitting down to dine after we were all welcomed by Micheal who had set a beautiful table with a selection of alcoholic drinks and nibbles. The menu was carrot and coriander soup mixed to Michael's personal recipe followed by beautifully cooked and seasoned chicken breasts with vegetable accompaniment. By the way, the roast potatoes were to die for. There then followed further wine of the white and red variety followed by a selection of hot and cold sweets, and again compliments to the chef as his custard was worthy of a gold medal.

We then retired to the lounge where light hearted conversation flowed easily with background music again supplied by the host.

At about 10pm the party broke up and we all went home (most on foot) after a very enjoyable and sociable evening.

We have lots of other events in the pipeline including folk and jazz nights as well as further lunch and dinner events.

We are not a dating agency; we are group of friends. So come on join in and let's swell our numbers. You don't know if you would like it till you try it. You will be very welcome.

John Yorke

## Family History 1

During our February meeting Kay gave us an interesting insight into her family tree and explained how fortunate she had been to be able to contact members of the older generation for information and help with identifying family photographs. Miriam showed us how to use the National Archives website prior to our visit in March. Use of this will help us to order various original documents prior to our trip, enabling us to make the best use of our time at Kew.

Many thanks once again, Alison, for hosting the afternoon.

Madeline Phillips

## Philosophy

The subject for discussion in February was 'Material Progress'. Francis had prepared some notes about Francis Bacon who foretold some of the problems that come with material progress. The progress trap was also considered, which is that all improvements are double edged, any advance often bringing unanticipated problems. An example would be the introduction of mobile phones, which allow easy communication and social interaction for good but also enable looting to be effectively organised. It was generally agreed that all progress should be under some form of control: how this was to be done was not considered. Technology is neutral. Some mention was made that applied technology was made possible by the factory system and that this exerted pressure on the staff of the factory. Bulah gave the example of how progress achieved by competition tended to reduce goodwill among the participants.

*'All progress is based upon a universal innate desire of every organism to live beyond its means.'*  
Samuel Butler, 1812

Dan Deane

## Poetry Circle 1

Love was in the air; after all, February is the month of St Valentine. Strangely, although much explored by most poets past and present, this topic has had only fleeting attention from our circle. Kay soon squashed any sentimental nonsense with her poem, 'I wouldn't thank you for a Valentine' by Liz Lochhead, and others followed this cynical and very amusing vein. Some poets have attempted to define love. Alison's anonymous poem, 'Love is giving', and Joyce's 'My mother's sister' by C. Day Lewis, stressed devotion. John explored the love of animals with his choice, 'Felicia a donkey'. Ken went back two thousand years to St Paul and the well-known I Corinthians in its superb translation, 'The greatest of these is love'. I suspect we all agree.

Barbara Cottam

*'Of one who made no claims, but simply loved  
Because that was her nature, and loving so  
Asked no more than to be repaid in kind.  
If she was not a saint, I do not know.'*

From My mother's sister by C Day Lewis

## Walking and Pub Lunch - January

To my great pleasure on a sunny winter's morning a total of 20 members met at The Lamb Inn at Crawley. It took some time to get the landlord to open up so that we could order our lunches in advance. We then set off, going towards the Old Mill and then crossing the road and taking very careful and muddy steps until we reached Maggots Grove.

We crossed the Windrush and paused at Minster Lovell House where spring flowers were out and the adjacent churchyard was ablaze with bright flowers. We skidded through a field normally occupied by cows who had left their calling cards until we came out at Minster Lovell village.

Then followed a one-mile walk along marked footpaths with one stile, coming out adjacent to our lunch venue. Some walkers had a lesson in drystone walling on the last leg of the walk.

Lunch was enjoyed by all from a varied menu with one diner being so hungry that he tried to eat his own and Ian Bennett's starter. Lots of positive comments and a good time was had by all.

John Yorke

## Walking and Pub Lunch - February

Despite a spine chilling weather forecast, 25 brave-hearted walkers descended on the peace of Kelmscott village around 10.15am, ordered lunch - while staff and residents were enjoying breakfast - then kitted up and set out. Actually great walking weather, clear sky, no wind, at least for the first half of the walk, and frozen fields and footpaths which dramatically reduced the mud factor.

At Leaze Farm, on the published route, we took the majority verdict and bolted on an extra 15-minute loop to join the Thames Path further west of Buscot Lock. The party then split; some started home along the Thames Path and the remainder paid a very pleasant short visit to the charming Buscot Church, then followed the rest of the group home, into a bit of an easterly breeze, which we had been shielded from on the outward stretch.

A warm (in every respect) welcome awaited us back at The Plough, and a very convivial lunch gathering followed. Staff coped very well considering our group turned out to be double the size of my forecast when I originally booked! Just as well nobody else turned up for lunch!

It was great to see you all and Glen and I enjoyed your company.

Michael Yorke

## 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
<b>Monday</b> am	French, Yoga, Solo Group	French Yoga	French Yoga	French Yoga
pm	Bridge Short tennis	Bridge Short Tennis	Bridge Short Tennis	Bridge Short Tennis
<b>Tuesday</b> 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	
<b>Wednesday</b> am	Pétanque	Walking & PL Pétanque	Five Rhythms Pétanque	Cycling & PL Pétanque
pm		Geology	Family History 1 Family History 2 Philosophy	Chess
<b>Thursday</b> am	Model Boats Computers	Model making Computers	Model Boats Straddlers	Model Boats Computers
pm	Latin Traditional Jazz	Rummikub	Garden	
<b>Friday</b> am				Strollers
pm	Poetry Circle 1 Poetry Circle 2	Recorders	Music	Recorders

Please send items for the  
**April**  
 issue to Alison Hobson email:  
**editor@fairfordu3a.org.uk**  
 01285 711768  
 no later than  
**Thursday March 22nd**