



Mary, Queen of Scots

by George Eccleston

General Meetings

Palmer Hall, 2.30pm

6 June (Wednesday)

The Solar System and Beyond
by John Fletcher

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

Tea Rota

June 6 : French (A)

July 3 : Garden Group

September 4 : Geology

New members

We welcome the following new
members:

Iris Lewis

Diana Waldron (Apologies to
Diana for the mis-spelling of her
name last month)

Today, 1 May

Today we shall hear about Mary
Queen of Scots: from childhood in
France to young queen in Scotland;
and her descent towards captivity
and ultimate tragedy.

In June (on the Wednesday) John
Fletcher, an amateur astronomer
who is well known for his Mount
Tuffley Observatory, will talk about
the Solar System and Beyond.

In July our 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.

Royal Bath and West Show

At the Royal Bath and West Show
this year our South West Region
will be promoting the U3A with a
stand. The show runs from 30 May
to 2 June at Shepton Mallet.

Any members attending the show
are requested to support them.

JUNE MEETING

Please note the main U3A June meeting is on **WEDNESDAY 6 June** due
to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Chairman's Report

Committee Members

Your new committee is now in place; positions and names are as follows:-

Chairman: Reg Thoburn

Vice Chairman: John Higgs

Treasurer: Nick Stroude

Secretary: Sarah Basley

Newsletter Editor: Alison Hobson

Group Co-ordinator: Michael Yorke

Programme Secretary: Jean Crowley

Membership Secretary: Ivor Price

Hall Manager/Web Master: Nick Humphris

Full contact details are on our website under "Officers and Committee", To send an email to any committee member select their name.

Bletchley Park

As mentioned at the AGM your committee are organising a day trip to Bletchley Park for Tuesday September 25th. Full details are on the application form which is included with this month's newsletter and is also available via the website. Places are limited to 60 and will be allocated on a strictly first come first served basis upon receipt of the completed form with deposit.

Reg Thoburn
01285 712397

Margery Youngs

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Margery Youngs. Margery was a brave, determined, caring and cheerful person who despite her total blindness and other disabilities kept contact with many organisations. With the help of her much-loved guide dog, Emma, she was able to belong to the WI, Gardening Club and U3A, where she found yoga and poetry reading. She mastered Braille and reading was a great joy for her. She will be greatly missed by her many friends. PH

➡ Visit to the Olympic Sites report - page 13 ➡

U3A April

The April meeting included the AGM which was speedily executed because last year's minutes and the Treasurer's report had been circulated well ahead of time. The Chairman spoke briefly and thanked everyone who had helped (officially or unofficially) during the past year and welcomed those who had volunteered for the vacant committee posts. All were elected unanimously.

A member, John Higgs, then gave a talk whose central theme was the 'Cuffley' airship. Spice was added to the topic because John has made a study of the history of lighter-than-air machines. He explained their design and illustrated the talk with pictures from early photographs and his own postcard collection. A tense tale of men and machines emerged as John detailed the increasing complexity of the construction and propelling mechanisms necessary for the massive military dirigibles deployed in World War I. They were the length of two and a half jumbo jets and 66 feet in diameter. The one that came down at Cuffley was actually built by Luftschiffbau Schütte-Lanz, although for many years it was referred to as a Zeppelin. On 3rd September 1916 Hauptmann Wilhelm Schram was commanding SL11 as part of a fleet bombing St Albans. William Leefe Robinson, a 21 year old Lieutenant, piloting a BE 2C, brought the machine down in flames and gained fame for being the first to destroy one in the UK, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross. The tiny station at Cuffley was inundated with thousands of sightseers the next day and several extra trains had to be scheduled but still scuffles broke out as the crowd clamoured to get home.

Sylvia Jones

Richard Jefferies

Sadly Richard Jefferies died recently of cancer. Many will remember Richard who came with his wife to give a talk to the U3A on Cheese Rolling at Cooper's Hill. He lived at the bottom of the hill and he and Jean ran the international event for many years. Then things became difficult for them because of the event's popularity and the health and safety issues.

I first got to know him as Headmaster of Meysey Hampton School. When he retired the children gave him a radio controlled model yacht kit. He launched it at Horcott lake with the U3A model group. The group will miss his gentle sense of humour and friendship. IW

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 15 May

Something a bit different this month. We shall meet at Fairford car park at 2.30pm and travel to the Forest of Dean. We shall spend a couple of hours at Nagshead RSPB reserve hoping to see pied flycatchers, redstarts etc and then move on to Symonds Yat for the peregrines. Next stop will be for a pub meal and then, as it is getting dark, we shall go in search of nightjars. Insect repellent, torches and a drink are strongly recommended. A donation of £4 by passengers would be suitable.

Richard Morgan
01285 712085

Apologies to the Group for the wrong News last month. Editor

Book Circle 1

Tuesday 8 May

Our next meeting is at Barbara's when we shall discuss 'Death comes to Pemberley' by P D James. Please let Barbara know if you are unable to come - 01285 712692

Denny Rawlinson
01285 711009

Book Circle 2

Tuesday 8 May

We shall meet at Barbara's house at 2.30pm to discuss 'Scoop' by Evelyn Waugh. Please let Barbara or me know if you will be unable to attend.

Kevin Hannigan
01367 250246
hannigan100@hotmail.com

Barbara Cottam
01285 711054

Bridge Improvers

The Bridge group will meet every Monday (except the Bank holiday May 7th), 2 to 4pm in the Heritage Room at Fairford Community Centre. All bridge players welcome, partners and refreshments provided.

Margaret Bishop
01285 713747
mbishop@talktalk.net

*'I thought that spring must last
forevermore;
For I was young and loved, and it
was May.'*

Vera Brittain. May Morning

Chess

Wednesday 23 May

The next chess meeting will be at 3.30pm at Mike's house. Contact details below for more information.

Mike Bennett
01367 252379
mish252379@btinternet.com

Computer Group

We are now meeting every week at my home. If you are interested in joining, please contact me and you will be welcome.

Nick Humphris
01285 711740

Family History 1

Wednesday 16 May

We shall again meet at Alison's house. Please contact Alison on 01285 711768 if you are unable to come.

Miriam Scott
01285 713441

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

Cycling with a pub lunch

Wednesday 23 May

With the weather warming up we shall have a gentle potter out to one of our favourite pubs - The Bell at Langford. Not sure how we shall get there, probably a downhill cruise through Southrop, Holwell, and around the back of the Wildlife Park, then back via Little Faringdon, or we might do it the other way round, all in glorious sunshine. Either way, meet at Fairford at 10.30am, or at The Memorial Hall Lechlade at 10.50 (or thereabouts) for an enjoyable, easy, cycle ride.

Paul O'Shaughnessy
01367 850262

Family History 2

Wednesday 16 May

By popular request we shall all bring family heirlooms or memorabilia to the meeting and talk briefly about the family connections.

Michael Johnson
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk
01285 712637

Five Rhythms Dance

Wednesday 16 May

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 be meeting on Monday 14th May, at 11am at my house as usual. Hope to see you then.

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
hannigan100@hotmail.com

Garden Group

Thursday 17 May

Our April outing to Westonbirt was regrettably cancelled, due to the cold and wet weather.

In May Val Bevington Wood is very kindly hosting our get together at her home. I'm sure we are all looking forward to it already as Val spoils us with wonderful treats to go with our tea. We shall meet there at 2.30pm and hopefully, we shall be able to be in the garden so bring sun cream and sunhats as last year it was incredibly hot! Also if you have any spare seeds or plants please bring them along too.

Please could you let me know whether you are able to attend NO LATER THAN THE MORNING OF MONDAY MAY 14th so I can let Val know the number by the afternoon of that day.

Penny Phillips
01285 711360
pennyrphillips@gmail.com

'If it's drama that you sigh for, plant a garden and you'll get it. You will know the thrill of battle fighting foes that will beset it. If you long for entertainment and for pageantry most glowing, plant a garden and this summer spend your time with green things growing.'

Edward A. Guest. Plant a Garden

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 3 May

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

'Now every field is clothed with grass, and every tree with leaves; now the woods put forth their blossoms, and the year assumes its gay attire.'

Virgil

Model Group

The Model Group have obtained access to the environs of Bowmoor Sailing Club to sail their boats at times when BSC is not using the facilities. It will give the Model Group a chance to increase the number of their summer meetings and provide a variety of venue. I know one or two U3A members who belong to BSC but I would like other U3A members to let me know if they are BSC members so joint meetings might be arranged. Of course, anyone can join the Model Group – which meets weekly on Thursday mornings.

Jim Sullivan
01367 252539
Ian Westlake 01285 712329
idrwestlake@gmail.com

Music Listening

Friday 18 May

Our theme this month is 'Precious Stones'. We shall meet at 2.30pm.

Mary Chick
01285 712126

Needlework

The Needlework group will meet on 9th and 23rd May, at the Chapel.

For further details please contact:

Thelma Hardie
8 01285 713971

Philosophy

Wednesday 16 May

Our next meeting will be held at Susan's house. The subject will be decided shortly and all members will be informed before the next meeting.

Dan Deane
01285 851408

Pétanque

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

David and Heather Baber
01285 711343

Poetry Circle 1

Thursday 4 May

The meeting is at Joyce's house in Poulton and the subject is 'Beginnings'.

Barbara Cottam

'Don't knock the weather: nine-tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while.'

K. Hubbard

Poetry Circle 2

Thursday 4 May

We shall be looking at poetry by Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, meeting at Margaret's home.

Mary Chick
01285 712126

Recorders

Our next meetings will be Friday afternoons the 11th and 25th May (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.

Postcard Group

Tuesday 15 May

The meeting, as usual, will be at my house at 2.30pm. The theme letter will be 'J' (maximum six cards).

John Higgs
01285 712488

Rummikub

There will be NO meeting in May. 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.

The next meeting will be on 14th June.

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

Solo Group

Monday 14 May

The next meeting will be at Valerie Wood's house at 2.30pm. New members will be warmly welcomed.

Michael Johnson
01285 712637
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk

Straddlers

Thursday 17 May

Many U3A members signed up supporting a 'Walkers are Welcome' initiative and our application should be approved in April. John Burrows, our Straddlers Leader, has approved a local celebratory walk.

We meet at 11am by the Football Club, Cinder Lane, Fairford (map ref. 161010). Cinder Lane is a left turn just as you have entered Fairford from Lechlade signed 'Football Club.' We walk eastwards by the lakes to Lechlade. From Lechlade we walk westwards across fields back to Fairford. It is just under 10 miles but is flat and easy going – we hope. Of course, there is the possibility of walkers joining us who only want to walk one way. Just fix up the lift.

The suggested passenger fee is 50p and there will be no Leader's fee. I can email a map of the route to anyone who wants one.

Ian Westlake 01285 712329
idrwestlake@gmail.com

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

Striders

Tuesday 22 May

May's walk starts at The Hollow Bottom pub in Guiting Power (www.hollowbottom.com).

The 6¼ mile walk starts by returning to the village where we join the Warden's Way going northbound towards the rather grand Manor House. We then walk gently uphill along the edge of Guiting Wood, cross into the wood on a good path before going downhill on a narrower path to re-join the Warden's Way. We shall then follow a very quiet, minor road and farm track into Kineton village. Passing Home Farm the track turns south west to Castlett Farm before re-joining the outbound track for the final half mile back to the Hollow Bottom pub.

The smell of leather in the air around this walk has little to do with wildlife and more to do with the size of the local home owner's

11

wallets!

The countryside is a real mix of wide open spaces with fantastic views, and open woodland with a wide range of woodland flowers. Meet at the Fairford car park at 9am or at the pub on the far side of the village at 10am. The pub also does B & B so is open early; we can order food as normal and will be able to use their facilities before we start walking.

The AA distance to Guiting Power is 28 miles - please share the fuel costs with any passengers.

John Burrows
01367 253056

Strollers

Friday 25 May

This is a new 3 mile walk at Sherborne. Meet at the Fairford Car Park at 9.45am or in the National Trust Ewe Pen Car Park (between the A40 and Sherborne village to the SW of Sherborne Park) for start prompt at 10.15am.

The walk will take us around the perimeter of the park via the old ice house and pleasure gardens. No stiles but some gentle ups and downs. After the walk those who want lunch will drive back to Aldsworth to the Sherborne Arms, which is highly recommended.

Geoff Bishop
01285 713747

Traditional Jazz

The group usually meets on the first Thursday of each month at our house in Lechlade from 2-4.30pm. **The group will not meet in May.** The next meeting will be on 7th June for 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

*'Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.'*

Philip Larkin. From 'The Trees'

Walking and Pub Lunch

Wednesday 9 May

Our 4-plus mile walk this month begins at the Freke Arms, Swanborough, SN6 7RN - with ample parking and an optional two course budget menu available for £5.95.

Heading along the Hannington road (please be aware of traffic and keep to grass verges where possible) we shall join Staples Lane which is a gently inclining bridleway leading to Jubilee Copse. There are no stiles but the bridleways can get churned up in places by hooves, so good footwear is essential. Along a footpath towards Hannington Village there are good views of the countryside. In the village, we shall pass Hannington Hall (home of the historic Freke landowning family) to St John's Church (previous buildings c1160). Whilst we shall be unable to go inside, the walk along the metalled track to the isolated Church is worthwhile for its views. Returning to the village we resume bridleways to meet part of our track back to source.

Leave Fairford car park at 9.30am for a 10am start at the Freke Arms. Suggested passenger fee is £1.

Bert Sampson
01285 712789
d.sampson789@btinternet.com

12

Olympic Park Visit on 24th April

After a 3-hour drive we met our guide for the day near the O₂ arena – to be renamed the North Greenwich arena for the duration of the games. After lunch at the nearby Pilot Inn we drove past the 17th century Royal Artillery barracks at Woolwich, where the shooting and archery events will take place in temporary arenas.

We drove around the 250 acre site taking in the Velodrome, nicknamed the Pringle, the Aquatics Centre and the Basketball Arena before parking the bus to allow us to take a short walk to a view point overlooking the Main Olympic Arena and the strange, but modern viewpoint, called the Arcelor Mittel Orbit, donated at a cost of £20M - or is it a helter skelter?

The historically poor Newham and nearby Stratford area have been completely transformed over the last 4 years into bright, fresh and modern areas of high rise buildings and arenas. It seems strangely incongruous to see a mix of older, long established buildings around the modern high-rise apartment blocks.

Finally we drove to the huge Westfield shopping complex – the largest in Europe - to view the Main Olympic Arena, and much of the Olympic Park from the viewpoint in the John Lewis store. Nearby we saw the very high density, high rise Olympic village which will house around 17,000 participants during the games and be converted into 1-4 bed-roomed flats for local people afterwards.

The games budget was £9.3M of which £6M has been spent on buildings and £2M will be spent on security. The remainder is the contingency fund.

Many of the venues will have much of the spectator seating reduced considerably and some arenas will be removed completely after the games. Nevertheless the legacy will mean that this part of London will become a much more desirable place to live, being only 5 miles from Central London and 1¹/₂ miles from Canary Wharf.

Our thanks must go to Jean and Doug Crowley for all their hard work in organising the day, and especially for making our teas and coffees while we just sat and watched the world go by - or just snoozed!

John Burrows

Thanks to John for submitting this report so promptly. Editor

GROUP REVIEWS

Book Circle 2

'Remarkable Creatures' by Tracy Chevalier

The group found it an enjoyable and easy read. It is a novel based on historical research about two women in the early part of the 19th century.

Mary Anning, uneducated, was finding fossils ('curios') and selling them as curiosities to visitors to Lyme Regis. In this way she was able to help support her impoverished family. She soon had international 'collectors' giving her commissions to find larger fossils such as plesiosaurs. She called them 'cros' or monsters.

Elizabeth Philpot was an educated middle-class woman who found herself in Lyme Regis and took up a turbulent friendship with Mary Anning. The two would search for fossils together in all weathers, encountering considerable dangers.

As Barbara Cottam pointed out at the meeting, the book had all the ingredients for a riveting read - good people, bad people, love, conflict and a desire to know what happens in the end. It had the added bonus that the scientists and collectors in the story were based on historical fact.

Our discussions centred on the social issues indicated in the book – the 'pre-Darwin' contradiction of fossils and the literal interpretation of the Bible, and the difficulties experienced by women attempting to break into the academic world.

I think someone described it as a good, light-weight educational book to read on holiday. That is probably about right.

Ian Westlake

'The month of May was come, when every lusty heart beginneth to blossom, and to bring forth fruit; for like as herbs and trees bring forth fruit and flourish in May, in likewise every lusty heart that is in any manner a lover, springeth and flourisheth in lusty deeds. For it giveth unto all lovers courage, that lusty month of May.'

Sir Thomas Malory. Le Morte d'Arthur

Birdwatching

We went to Liddington Hill, which forms part of the Ridgeway just east of Swindon, to search for migrating ring ouzels. It proved a good choice as only a couple of hundred yards down the path we stopped for our first scan of the hillside and there were the ring ouzels, at least four of them, stocking up with food before their onward flight. Very pleasing, particularly for the three of our group who had never seen one before. The ring ouzel is the mountain equivalent of our garden blackbird and looks very similar apart from having a clear white breast. Before that, while we were still putting our boots on, someone spotted some corn buntings just over the hedge. Corn buntings are rapidly declining and are a good find these days. After that our path passed round the hill and passed various bushes and small trees where we saw tits, chaffinches, goldfinches and plenty of yellowhammers – another declining species. Once we reached open grassland higher up the slope, we saw a good number of migrating wheatears and other species before turning back, having reached the Ridgeway track.

Richard Morgan

Philosophy

The Queen will be celebrating her Diamond Jubilee this year. If she wished, she would be able to look back on a sixty-year reign and consider how things have changed. I suggested that we look back over the last sixty years and try to see how changes that we have noticed in our society could be identified as signposts for the future. Perhaps it would be worth considering changes that have occurred to us under the following headings: Social, Material, Financial, and Technical. Our individual views were subjective, but the idea was to try to find some pattern in our experiences. Did any emerging patterns produce conclusions as to the possible drift of our society?

We limited the discussion to Britain, and started with the apparent fragmentation of the working class. This led on to the changes in the State educational system and how it had influenced working class decline and produced the general lack of respect for education amongst many young people. The survival of the class system was also discussed and we regretted that it was still with us after 60 years. It was agreed that we had all benefited from material progress, the emancipation of women and better health care. We were fairly optimistic about the future, but there are many problems ahead. Dan Deane

Family History 1

Six members of the group enjoyed Madeline's discoveries about her family. Madeline had first thought that her family came from the Middlesex side of the Thames but on investigation found that her paternal side had hailed from Wroughton in Wiltshire before heading off to the Surrey side of the Thames. Madeline's relatives' families were very large, so she has many sideways links to follow which takes a great deal of time. The difficulties of tracing ancestors with common names before the census and searching parish records were discussed and the comparative advantages of different websites.

The group then practised reading the 1626 will of Richard Smith of Fairford. One Thomas Cusse had to pay back his debt before other legacies could be paid. Another one of the legacies was to a daughter for her use only and not her husband, and if she should die to her daughter, which left one wondering of which particular vice the husband was guilty.

Alison Hobson

Family History 2

Following our recent trip to the National Archives, we met at the Library to see if we could progress our research. Michael had kindly booked all five computers, and as there were five of us we were able to have a computer each. All of us made some headway into discovering more about our ancestors and the session was deemed a success.

Elizabeth Berry

Walking and Pub Lunch - April

Fourteen walkers met in sunshine at The Radnor Arms, Coleshill to enjoy a five-mile walk over fields, down lanes, through farmyards with short distances on roads, visiting the well known Tithe Barn at Great Coxwell. Glorious Spring hedgerows, with the birds singing and wonderful country views were noted along the way. There were a number of stiles to be negotiated, difficult to avoid when walking in the country, but we were all ably looked after by our leader, Michael Johnson. Lunch, reasonably priced, it is hoped was enjoyed by everyone. Don't you wish you had been with us?

Jenny Kinch

Pétanque

It was in May 2009 that a small group of U3A members met in the football car park in Cinder Lane to form a Pétanque group.

Green milk bottle tops had numbers written on them for random selection of teams and scores were kept on the boards Dave had made from odd bits of wood! Over the years the group has played in various other places, for example the Junior football car park, the Red Lion at Castle Eaton and the car park of St Thomas's Catholic Church.

Fast forward to 2012 and we have now doubled in membership, have had to increase the number of milk bottle tops and now have five home-made score boards! However, a big change has been made in venue as we now have our very own permanent piste sited in the grounds of Farmor's School. We shall begin play there on 25th April.

We don't know of any other man-made facility which can be attributed to Fairford U3A members, so the opening of our piste could be viewed as quite an historic event.

A few members of the Pétanque group gathered at the site on 3rd April and have worked tirelessly on the piste since then. Between them they have shovelled 47 tons of gravel by hand, hoisted 32 heavy logs for edging, as well as many other very laborious muscle-wrenching tasks. A side effect of this is that we probably have some of the fittest Pétanque members in the whole of the Cotswolds! We are indebted to Paul Freke of Ermin Plant who has supplied both machinery and a great deal of his time entirely free of charge.

Thanks must be given to all those who have made financial donations and those who supplied materials free of charge.

Dave and Heather Baber

'It was an ideal spring day, a light blue sky, flecked with little fleecy white clouds drifting across from west to east. The sun was shining very brightly, and yet there was an exhilarating nip in the air, which set an edge to a man's energy.'

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Poetry Circle 1

Avoiding a clash with Good Friday, the group met a week early to reflect on the topic of memories - poetically!

We were treated to memories in abundance from the pens of poets as diverse as Elizabeth Jennings, T S Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Ted Hughes, John Keats and Dick Thomas, all of whom gave cause for thought or delighted the imagination. With a good sprinkling of former teachers in our midst, it was Celia who managed to raise laughter with 'The Last Lesson of the Afternoon' by D H Lawrence. However, it was our own poet, Ian, who brought the house down with his poetic recall of his encounter with a shopkeeper during a holiday in Ireland, as he tried to acquire some tent pegs. Further explanation becomes difficult, but if you cast your mind back to the 'Four Candles' sketch by the Two Ronnies, you will probably catch the drift!

Ken Miles

Recorders

The group was once again led by Peter Stephenson who found the trebles class had progressed very well and enjoyed playing his arrangement of a Colin Hand piece entitled 'A Bourée for Jean-Baptiste Lully' followed by the Allemande from Suite no. 1 by Joseph Bodin de Boismortier - which is not particularly easy, but very pretty and satisfying to play. When the rest of the group had arrived they played a few of Peter's arrangements including 'Highland Cathedral' and Lehar's 'Merry Widow Waltz' which we shall look at again next time.

The first of our April meetings was conducted by Jack Brothwell and, amongst other things, the group played his arrangements of 'Sumer is Icumin in' and 'Month of Maying' as well as a couple of pieces of Gilbert & Sullivan. Again, we'll definitely want to play these again. Very many thanks to both Peter and Jack for two very enjoyable sessions. Don't forget Ann Marshall is coming to us on 25th May and we're hoping for a full house!

Hilary Bradshaw

Solo Group — March and April

Saturday 31st March 2012 saw the group on a trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park on what turned out to be the only bad day of the week. However, an interesting and educational day was enjoyed by all. I saw images of some of my family, I think, and Annie Taylor, one of our members, was on her 43rd visit to the park and was able to give us the benefit of her considerable knowledge.

At the end of the visit some members enjoyed dinner to conclude the day's activities.

On Friday 20th April, six hardy Solo Group members met at The Trout Inn and, after a swift pint and with brollies at the ready, we headed to Buscot Park, the beautiful house and gardens owned by The National Trust but occupied by Lord Faringdon. The gardens were immaculate although due to the season were a little lacking in colour. We then viewed the house, which is a very beautiful place - furniture and effects to die for. As we toured the first floor we had the added pleasure of a visitor playing Claire de Lune on the grand piano. This was followed by a visit to the Tea Shop. A very humorous time over tea and cake ensued, after which we all departed in different directions with happy smiling faces.

John Yorke

Striders

The Fox at Great Barrington does a very appetising game pie. It is a proper pie, with a pastry top, a bottom, and an edge. It is actually a wedge, cut from a whole round, stuffed with meat and slivers of veg. They also do a nice pint of ale. There were sixteen of us, all enjoying a meal sitting outside on long tables in glorious sunshine, as per the trailer. Twenty-two striders had taken part in the walk, but six had lunch elsewhere. A surprising thing about the walk was the fact that we all kept together. Usually we are spread over a quarter of a mile in the first three hundred yards. (Yes I know, but if you are a walker you will know what I mean.) We saw quite a few birdies, deer in the park, and the scenery was quite delightful, nothing strenuous, as it was all downhill. We had told the Landlord we would arrive back at 12.30pm, and all arrived safely at 12.35. Very nice lunch, with few delays considering our number, and the pub was quite busy. Thank you all for coming. PS: I have no connection with The Fox, I just enjoyed my lunch and my game pie.

Paul O'Shaughnessy

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, Solo Group	French Yoga	French Yoga	French Yoga
pm	Bridge Short tennis	Bridge 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	Chess
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
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 issue to Alison Hobson email:
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 no later than
Thursday May 24th