



Fairford & District Newsletter

Issue 187

September 2012

*“Mr Chairman,
U3A Members, Ladies and
Gentlemen...”*



**An unusual job for a woman
by Marion Canning**

www.fairfordu3a.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1072658

General Meetings

Palmer Hall, 2.30pm

2 October The Elgin Marbles
by Malcolm Delingpole

6 November All about Bagpipes
By Ian Willox

4 December A Christmas
Miscellany by U3A Members

Tea Rota

October 2 : German
November 6 : Keep Fit
December 4 : Committee

New members

We welcome the following new
members:

Pamela Webb
Mike & Yvonne Lloyd

Margaret Thomas

Sadly Margaret died on 19th July. She had joined the U3A in 2008 and very much enjoyed the Poetry Group 2 and the monthly meetings in the Palmer Hall. Our condolences go to her family and friends.

Today, 4 September

This month we shall be entertained by an amusing description of the life of a female Toastmaster.

In October Malcom Delingpole will tell us about the Elgin Marbles which he regards as 'Shoplifting on a grand scale'.

In November our speaker is Ian Willox, an eminent Pipe Major and founder of the Cheltenham Pipe Band. He will give a demonstration and description of Bagpipes, Scottish and others, and will be wearing traditional Highland Dress.

We end 2012 with 'A Christmas Miscellany' by U3A members. Any offers or suggestions for 'turns' will be gratefully received by the

Mary Chick

It is with great sadness we learned of the death of Mary Chick after a short illness. Mary and her late husband Geoff were enthusiastic and active members of U3A. Mary's kindness and concern for others were well known in Fairford, and her friendly welcoming smile at the monthly meetings will be greatly missed. We send our deepest sympathy to her family and many friends.

From the Chairman

Newsletter Editor

After four years as the editor of our magazine Alison Hobson has informed your committee that she will be standing down at the next AGM. On behalf of us all, I should like to thank Alison for the outstanding job she has done, and for giving us eight months' notice to find a replacement. So the search is on. Ideally, we should like two or more members to volunteer to be joint editors so that the role can be shared. If you are interested in this role or would like more details of what is involved, please contact Alison directly or any committee member.

Bletchley Park Trip, Tuesday 25th September

The arrangements for the trip have now been finalised and are as follows: our coach will depart Fairford Market Place at 8.30am and Lechlade (outside the Old Memorial Hall – Jubilee Antiques Centre) at 8.45am to arrive at Bletchley Park around 10am. Will those members who want to be picked up in Lechlade please let me know on 01285 712397 OR reginaldthoburn@hotmail.com. Departure from Bletchley Park will be around 4.30pm to arrive back in Lechlade around 5.45pm and Fairford around 6.00pm. The advice from Bletchley Park is to wear stout footwear as the trip does involve some walking. Final payments are now overdue, so please could members let Jean or me have their payments by the general meeting on 4th September at the latest. At the time of writing we still have four places available to fill a 49-seater coach, so if members have friends or family who would like to attend please let either Jean or me know.

11 December: U3A Christmas Lunch at The Crown of Crucis.

Reg Thoburn 01285 712397

Anyone for (Table) Tennis?

A few members have shown interest in Table Tennis, and enquiries with the Fairford Community Centre have confirmed that they have the full facilities in the Keble Room which are currently available on Monday, Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday afternoon, and 1st, 2nd and 4th Thursdays, at a very reasonable cost. Are any other members interested in an exploratory get-together? If so, please contact Michael Yorke (01367 253286) or Nick Stroude (01285 750646).

U3A August

U3A Members spent a most enjoyable afternoon looking round Fairford in search of answers to a list of intriguing clues. The Quiztrail, set by one of our members, was an ingenious way of combining observation skills and general knowledge.

We started with a map of Fairford and a sheet of 26 short phrases, the clues. The answers were pictures, cleverly displayed in the windows of participating shops and businesses. We had to spot each picture and deduce how it could represent the answer to one of the clues. Some were easy, but others much more subtle, requiring some creative imagination. A few cleverly contrived ones kept us guessing right until the end. We finished with tea and home-made cakes in the Community Centre, much appreciated while we compared notes with friends and awaited our results.

Our thanks go to the Fairford businesses who displayed the pictures for us, and especially to Pam Davey for arranging a most interesting and challenging afternoon and to the Committee for arranging the tea.

The winners were 'The Keble Cookers' (the Crowleys), joint second were 'The Banshees' (the Bennetts), 'A Pair of Jeans' (Freeth and Watkins), 'The Marathons' (The Bishops, Pat Eales and Barbara Cobbett).

U3A Diaries

for 2013 have arrived: cost £2.00. I have a limited number which will be available at September's Tuesday meeting in the Palmer Hall. If you would like to reserve one, please contact me t.basley@btinternet.com

FAIRFORD & DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY – AUTUMN TERM 2012

Fairford & District Choral Society will start to rehearse for their Autumn 2012 concert on **Wednesday 5th September**. Rehearsals run from 7.30 to 9.30pm in Fairford United Church, Milton Street, Fairford, GL7 4BW, with an extra rehearsal in St Mary's Church, Fairford, on Sunday 28th October from 2.00 to 5.30pm. The concert will be on Saturday 10th November at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church (with rehearsal 2.00 to 5.30pm).

We are a thriving non-auditioned choir, and new members would be very warmly welcomed. Please contact John (Conductor) or Jane (Membership Secretary) Read – 01285 713681, or via the Choir's website (www.fairford.org/choralsociety). 4

GROUP EVENTS

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

Birdwatching

Tuesday 18 September

This month we shall visit Slimbridge. Normally this time of year is good for spotting migrants passing through at the start of the Autumn migration, but this year who knows?

Meet at Fairford car park at 9am. As usual we shall have lunch in the restaurant. There is an entrance fee for non WWT members. The suggested passenger contribution is £3.

Richard Morgan

Book Circle 1

Tuesday 11 September

Our next meeting will be held at Pauline's home at 2.30pm. It is so good to have her back with us after her long illness.

We will discuss 'Alone in Berlin' by Hans Fallada. Please let me know if you are unable to come.

If you are interested in joining this group we should be pleased to welcome you.

Denny Rawlinson
01285 711009

Book Circle 2

Tuesday 11 September

We shall meet at Miriam's house at 2.30pm to discuss 'Death comes to Pemberley' by P D James and 'The House of Silk' by Anthony Horowitz.

Please let me or Miriam know if you will not be able to attend.

Kevin Hannigan 01367 250246
hannigan100@hotmail.com
Miriam Scott
01285 713441

Bridge Improvers

The group will meet every Monday afternoon from 3rd September, 2-4 pm in the Heritage room, Fairford Community Centre. This term we shall be revising Acol bidding system. We are a friendly and informal group. All bridge players welcome, so if you play bridge and would like to improve come and join us.

Partners and refreshments provided.

Margaret Bishop
01285 713747
mbishop@talktalk.net

Chess

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

Mike Bennett
01367 252379
mish252379@btinternet.com

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 26 September

Time to meander out to Clanfield and Broadwell once again, via the Wildlife Park. Have not been out that way recently. Meet at Southrop at 10.30am for a gentle glide through the lovely Cotswolds in glorious sunshine.

Paul O'Shaughnessy
01367 850262

Family History 1

Wednesday 19 September

This month we shall meet at my house at 2.30pm and Clive will tell us about some of his discoveries.

Miriam Scott

Family History 2

Wednesday 19 September

We shall meet at Fairford library at 2.30pm and take advantage of using the library computers for free.

Michael Johnson
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk
01285 712637

Five Rhythms Dance

Wednesday 19 September

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

'Feeling light within, I dance'

French Conversation

Intermediate

Salut les amis! We shall continue to try to be flexible in fixing dates for our Monday meetings so that as many of you as possible can attend. Please check your Inbox! A bientot! Anyone interested in joining the group would be very welcome.

Rosemary Westlake
01285 712329
idrwestlake@gmail.com

Advanced

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

Barbara Cartwright
07989 353 726

*'Elle a illuminé la vie des autres.
Elle nous manquera beaucoup.'*

Garden Group

Thursday 20 September

A nice short drive this month as we shall be visiting Old Stile House in Southrop. This is a private visit kindly arranged by Rosemary to the home of Gill and Roger Burton who have lived there for the past nine years. Mrs Burton has kindly offered to give us some tea as well and although there is no set entry fee as such we have agreed on a donation of £5 each to include the garden and some tea. This money will be used towards the funding of the children's playground in Southrop. There may also be some plants for sale.

Could we please meet in the car park at 2.15pm and could you please let me know by Monday 17th September whether you will be coming so I can let Mrs Burton know how many we shall be. Suggested fuel donation £1. I understand that although this is not a particularly large garden it is intensively planted so there should be interest for all - hope to see you there!

Penny Phillips
01285 711360
pennyrphillips@gmail.com

Geology

Wednesday 12 September

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

Please contact me for further details.

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

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

Music Listening

Friday 21 September

Members of the Group will be greatly saddened by the news of Mary's death, but we feel sure that she would want her Group to continue. We are grateful to Margaret Bishop for agreeing to host this month's meeting at 2.30pm. The subject will be 'Music in Mary's memory', giving all members the opportunity to contribute a piece of music that they associate with Mary.

Either at the beginning or end of the meeting, we shall have the opportunity to air our views on the future of the Group...format, venue etc. but from 4th September we begin the search for a new leader for this long established Group.

Michael Yorke
Group Co ordinator
01367 253286
Margaret Bishop
01285 713747

*'You can shed tears that she is
gone,
or you can smile because she has
lived.'*

David Harkins

Model Group

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

Jim Sullivan
01367 252539

Needlework

Congratulations to the Needlework Group for their success at the Fairford Steam Rally Show.

The Needlework group will meet on 12th and 26th September, at the Chapel.

For further details please contact:
Thelma Hardie

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

*'Silence
The way I find peace, the way I
see life with joy'*

From 'Silence' by Brendan M
Rumney

Philosophy

Wednesday 19 September

Our next meeting will be at Susan Greig's house. The subject will be 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'.

Dan Deane
01285 851408

Susan Greig
01285 810274

Poetry Circle 1

The poetry group meets on the first Friday of the month. Our next meeting will be on 7th September.

Barbara Cottam
01285 711054

Poetry Circle 2

Friday 7 September

We have been much saddened by the death of our dear friend and leader Mary Chick. Her cheerful, friendly nature was an inspiration to us all and she will be greatly missed. But we shall carry on and Mary will be with us in our thoughts.

We shall meet at Jen's house at 2.30pm to look at the poetry of W H Auden.

Barbara Cobbett
01285 712692

Postcard Group

Tuesday 18 September

After the August break, we shall meet at my house at 2.30pm.

I shall give a short presentation on postcards of World War I and the theme letter for this month will be 'L'.

John Higgs
01285 712488

Rummikub

Thursday 13 September

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

Recorders

Because so few people will be able to attend on the 14th September, our first meeting after the summer break will be Friday afternoon, the 28th September. We will start, as usual, with the treble class (please come and have a go) 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 will 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 for
further information.

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

*'What I learned was that these
athletes were not disabled, they
were superabled. The Olympics is
where heroes are made. The
Paralympics is where heroes
come.'*

Joey Reiman

Solos

Monday 3 September

The next monthly Solos meeting is at my house at 2.30 pm.

Michael Johnson
01285 712637
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk

Spanish

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

Frank Hall
01285 712583

'It would be fitting that when the Paralympic Movement returns to its spiritual birthplace... it does so in front of packed sold-out venues [the original idea for the Paralympics stems from the 1948 Stoke Mandeville Games held in Britain for World War II veterans with spinal cord injuries].'

Time Magazine August 27 2012

Straddlers

Thursday 20 September

Views, villages and valleys. The route starts from the Seven Springs Hotel (we have permission to use their car park), situated on the A436 near the junction with the A435 Cirencester to Cheltenham road. Map reference SO 967 169.

We shall walk around Leckhampton Hill along the Cotswold Way before joining the Gloucestershire Way near Shab Hill. We continue to the villages of Cowley and Coberley before returning to Seven Springs for optional refreshments at the end of a delightful 8 mile undulating walk.

Plan to leave Fairford at 9.15am or meet at Seven Springs to commence walking at 10am. Please bring the usual refreshments / packed lunch as necessary. For passenger fees the travel distance from Fairford is 20 miles.

For further information please contact:-

Alan Williams
01367 252052

Striders

Tuesday 25 September

Our walk this month begins from the village hall in the village of Apperley which lies on the east bank of the Severn a little south of Tewkesbury. Our journey is five and a half miles and is easy walking through fields and along the bank of the Severn. On the walk there will be opportunity to see what is regarded as the finest surviving Saxon church in England at Deerhurst. It contains some thirty Anglo-Saxon doors and windows as well as a font dating from the 9th century. A short distance from the church is Odda's Chapel, one of only a few surviving places of Saxon worship. It takes its name from Earl Odda, a kinsman of Edward the Confessor. In the 5th and 6th centuries the Saxons were largely a pagan people. This area was in the Saxon kingdom of Hwicce and its people were converted to Christianity by Welsh missionaries.

The best place I could find to eat was The Swan at Coombe Hill on the Tewkesbury road. It is but two or three miles from the beginning of our walk. I suggest we leave the car park at Fairford at 9am sharp for a start at 10am. It is thirty miles to Apperley but well worth the journey for fine views and full of historic interest.

Might I suggest £3.50 for a passenger fee. If you would like a route map either ring or email.

Philip Meaden
01285 713917
philipgmeaden@btinternet.com

Strollers

Friday 28 September

We shall meet at Fairford car park at 9.45am or at the Plough Inn, London Street, Fairford at 10am where we shall order lunch before making our way towards the lake.

The leisurely walk will take us round the lake and back along the river. At Dilly's bridge, depending on how we all feel, we can lengthen the walk or go to the pub.

When I did the walk in July it was raining and very wet under foot so walking boots are essential, but as it will be hot and sunny in September it will be a pleasant walk, a distance of about three and a half miles if we don't take a short cut at Dilly's bridge.

Michael Johnson
01285712637
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk

'When we stage the Olympics it will inspire kids all over the country.'

Daley Thompson

Traditional Jazz

Thursday 6 September

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

This month we shall complete our programme of comparing reedmen throughout jazz, listening to such UK players as Bilk, Christie, Fawkes, Huxley, Maddocks etc.

Ian Bennett
01367 253287

Walking and Pub Lunch

Wednesday 12 September

To get us gently back into walking mode after the August recess, we shall be in West Oxfordshire, doing a gentle walk from Clanfield, centring on the Clanfield Tavern.

The walk is triangular shaped on the map. Leaving the village via Calcroft Lane, we strike out northwards over fields and tracks towards Alvescot, crossing the route of the old Witney to Fairford railway on our way. All flat, no hills and no stiles.

At Alvescot we then turn in a south westerly direction, through the village, out into countryside again over fields and tracks joining Calcroft Lane again for the third

back to Clanfield. (There is an alternative, slightly longer, way back, which I will explain when we get there and take a consensus as to which route we take.)

Total walking time, on basic route, 2 hours and boots strongly recommended, as we encountered several wet patches on the planning walks.

Leave Fairford car park at 9.30am or meet in the car park behind the Clanfield Tavern at 10am, to pre order food and start walking around 10.15am. Suggested passenger fare £1.50.

We look forward to seeing you for what we hope will be an enjoyable Group meeting.

Michael Yorke
01367 253286

Yoga

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

Sylvia Jones
01285 712657

'All I've done is run fast. I don't see why people should make much fuss about that.'

Fanny Blankers-Koen

GROUP REVIEWS

Book Circle 1 - August

One of the books we read this month was 'Snowdrops' by A. D. Miller. This was his first novel and was nominated for the Man Booker prize. It received glowing reports from critics both in this country and the USA. The title of the book is misleading, but I think this is deliberate. Sadly, Snowdrops refers to dead bodies which are revealed once the winter snows in Russia have melted.

The story tells us about Nicholas, a 38 year old ex-pat lawyer working on behalf of foreign banks that lend money to Russian businesses – especially in the oil industry. He is writing to his wife-to-be a sort of confessional letter about an episode in his life while living in Russia.

Nick became involved with two young Russian girls – sisters – he meets on the Underground. (Edna, one of our members, brought us some beautiful photographs she had taken of Moscow underground stations which helped to put us in the mood for the book.) Although Nick had lived in Russia for a number of years and spoke Russian, he was incredibly gullible and easily fooled and became embroiled in the suspicious doings of the Russian girls. He must surely have been aware of the criminal activities taking place in Russia.

At the end of the group's discussion we all agreed that we hoped his wife-to-be said 'NO' to his proposal of marriage.

Pauline Dring

We also discussed 'The Troubled Man' by Henning Mankell, the final book in the Kurt Wallander series. Some of us had watched the excellent Swedish TV adaptations of other of his novels in the series and were familiar with the character of Kurt Wallander.

In fact there were two troubled men in this story. One, Haken von Enke, a retired senior naval commander, obsessed by an incident involving an escaped Russian submarine found in Swedish waters during the cold war. The other is Wallander himself, nearing 60, working, drinking, overweight and overstressed, lying awake at night thinking of death and fearing dementia. The bright spots in his life were his relationships with his daughter Linda and his newly born granddaughter Klara.

Book Circle 1 continued:

At Haken's birthday party he had already intimated to Wallander that he had problems involving his time in the Navy and shortly afterwards Haken goes missing, leaving behind all personal possessions. Then his wife Louise is found dead in suspicious circumstances. Haken is eventually found by Wallander hiding on an isolated island and reveals that he had for a long time suspected his wife of being a KGB agent, over the years stealing highly classified documents from his private safe. This information leads Wallander down a blind alley. We then travel through the bleak Swedish countryside with Wallander as he searches for answers before finally resolving the mystery. Mankell gives us history lessons throughout the book, putting the story into context.

Some of us enjoyed the book, finding it well written, although the general feeling was that it could have been shorter and the emotional, downbeat, and rainy atmosphere perhaps too depressing.

Sheila Morgan

Book Circle 2

We met in July to consider 'Fire Season' by Philip Connors. He started his working life as a non-financial editor on the Wall Street Journal, and left there in 2002 to alternate between being a bartender and spending 4/5 months of every summer as a Fire Lookout in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico, his only companion being his faithful dog! He still lives in New Mexico with the dog and a very understanding wife!

The book is part history of wilderness conservation and changing attitudes to fire; part description of historical fires (which several found to be a bit tedious); and part reflection on the mundane (clearing out mouse/rat droppings from your hut at the start of each season – not for me!) and part, quite poetic in places, about enjoying solitude and the wonder that is nature. In several ways, and entirely by chance, it resonated with 'Wolf Totem', which we had read the previous month, in describing the balance that nature, left alone, will strike between its different elements, and what happens when we humans decide that we know better!

Kevin Hannigan

Book Circle 2 continued:

In July the group met to discuss 'The Return' by Victoria Hislop. This is her second best-selling novel, with a story based in Spain, both in the present time and during the Spanish Civil War. The book has two parts with the first being described as 'chick lit' by the group, describing the failing marriage of the main protagonist, Sonia, and her obsession with dancing. With a friend she goes to Seville and joins a local dance class. By chance Sonia goes to a café and starts talking to the owner who tells her about a family who owned the café during the Spanish Civil War.

The second part of the book is by far the best part and tells the story of the political and moral divisions the war caused to the family. However, the group felt that the author used the four children in the family conveniently with each being attributed with particular issues that were used to tell the story which resulted in a very contrived novel. One son was gay, another a macho matador, while the third was a teacher and also the peacemaker of the family with the only daughter being obsessed by Spanish dancing and the forbidden love of a gypsy dancer. During the course of the story the war was used as a vehicle for each of the brothers to be killed with the daughter to flee the country.

The conclusion of the story was signposted very early in the book and the group felt that Victoria Hislop had spent a lot of time researching the book and was determined to include as many aspects of the war as possible. The majority felt that the historical setting of the book had inspired them to read more about the Spanish Civil War.

Sue Middleton

Family History 1

At our July meeting Sue gave us a very interesting insight into some of the research she had done on 100 wills whilst writing a thesis. She described not only the various wills available but pointed out that as many of the testators were unable to write they needed scribes to do this task. The wills were verbal and required two witnesses, one of which was the scribe. If you are lucky enough to unearth a will whilst researching your family tree, it will often give you a great deal of valuable information, including surnames, areas of abode, occupations, education and any outstanding debts. We then discussed varying websites and other sources for provision of further information on wills.

Many thanks, Sue, for such an informative afternoon, and Miriam for your hospitality once again.

Cycling with a Pub Lunch

May We were up near Filkins Down Farm when the peloton caught up with us. Phil was in the lead tootling along, then me and then Mary. The cry from the back was "Cyclists!" and twelve lycra-clad figures, all with very dark sunglasses, swept past us. We in our baggy shorts (well, me and Phil anyway) and T-shirts thought for twenty seconds whether to join them, but the thought soon passed as we saw them disappear into the distance at some pace. We were down to three, as Alan was going on holiday, Ian had a prior engagement and Dennis is temporarily out of cycling action. We had set out from Lechlade, heading for Langford via a gentle downhill route. An excellent lunch was had at The Bell, where we were joined by Ian B. Home was via Little Faringdon and Southrop. Now where is that cycling catalogue....?

June We came to Quenington from three different directions, Fairford, Lechlade and Eastleach. Mary, Phil and I were joined by another Phil, a guest. It was a delightful cruise to The Hare and Hounds at Fossebridge, and their bubble-and-squeak with crispy bacon was as excellent as ever, as was their liquid refreshment. We were also looked after very well by the staff. We then toddled down to Bibury, up (a very little up !) on to the Cirencester road, and back to the start. A warm, dry day was enjoyed by all, just unfortunate Mary had to cycle all the way home to Lechlade.

July There were not many flag wavers or spectators as Team U3A swept through the villages of Ampney Crucis, Poulton, Meysey Hampton, Kempsford and up the Col du Hannington Wick. Our "Patron" for the day was Phil T, and our Lead Out man with his new bike and shiny shorts was Alan W. Phil B (a guest) and myself were the domestiques. We re-fuelled with protein drinks and energy food at The Red Lion (actually it was ale and ham/eggs/suet pudding, all with chips, but just as nourishing) in glorious sunshine. We all collected maximum points at the finish, as we returned to Fairford together. Total distance around thirty miles. Next time we just might get out our green jerseys.

'Sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.'

Nelson Mandela

Garden Group

July

This month saw us heading out into the countryside down beautiful lanes adorned with a selection of wild flowers, in particular the blue meadow cranesbill which thrives on the roadsides in the Cotswolds, as lovely if not more so, than the cultivars we have growing in our gardens. Our destination was Stone House in Wyck Rissington a beautiful old Cotswold stone built house sitting in its sumptuous gardens, all rather lush after the rain. We had the place to ourselves as the owners were away and took our time strolling on the well kept lawns admiring the planting which included roses, clematis, lilies and much more. This is a garden with much to see most times of the year and worth a repeat visit. We also took advantage of visiting the little church where Gustav Holst was organist for a year in about 1890 - it must have been a very cold job in those days with no heating. It was nice to get back outside into the sun and the warmth! A very pleasant afternoon.

August

Our drive to Malmesbury to the Abbey Gardens seemed to involve dodging all the rain clouds and leaving them behind in Cirencester! We had an extremely pleasant and dry afternoon wandering around - what a wonderful setting next to the Abbey. Once inside the gardens seem to have a bit of a microclimate which is probably due to all the high hedging round the top boundaries within which there is plenty of close cut box hedging enclosing flowerbeds. We managed to visit all parts of the garden from the top, more closely tended areas round the house, to the woodland area which had impressive and very tall pink hydrangeas growing happily. We wandered along the watercourse, a bit muddy in places, then climbed back up the hillside for our cup of tea, enjoyed with a hint of nervousness under the shade of a fruit-shedding apple tree!

Penny Phillips

'The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well.'

Pierre de Coubertin (primarily responsible for the revival of the Olympic Games in 1894)

Pétanque

Trying to fit in Pétanque games whilst dodging the showers has been the aim of our game for the last couple of months. On several Wednesday mornings a few of us did gather at Farmor's, ready to do battle with the black rain clouds. Sometimes they won the morning and sometimes we did. Their presence didn't always deter us, so we managed one or two ends despite the clouds hovering over us! There were a few mornings when the weather was on our side though.

Thankfully, it was fine at the end of June when we were able to run a couple of games with pupils from Farmor's School. By the end of the second day all of them had grasped the basic rules and wanted to continue playing, but the lesson bell won the day. We enjoyed our time with them and hopefully this will be repeated when the new school year begins.

It seems that we are not the only ones who like using our piste. Several times we have found large holes in the ground and have come to the conclusion that they could be made by badgers.

Heather Baber

Philosophy

The subject for discussion in July was Bureaucracy, on the face of it a rather mundane subject. Bureaucracies of all kinds are necessary for the running of any modern enterprise but can become obstacles to the ordinary citizen. Donald gave us a brief review of examples in literature and how 'Kafkaesque' has become a familiar word to describe the individual struggling against a malign organisation. It was agreed that the Bureaucracy always tends to protect itself and if bureaucrats are poorly paid as in a number of states there is a greater inclination to bribery. We need to be able to control bureaucracies, whether State or Corporate, but how to do this was not discussed. Certainly for such a dry subject we had an interesting conversation.

Dan Deane

'The Olympic Games were created for the exhaltation of the individual athlete'.

Pierre de Coubertin

Postcard Group

At our July meeting we welcomed Keith Williams, Lechlade History Society's archivist and historian. Keith is the inspiration and creator of the wonderful illustrated information boards displayed in Lechlade Market Place and at St John's Lock, Buscot Lock and Inglesham. After describing the background to the production of these boards and the problems with siting them, we were able to view the quarter-size original artwork for them and the next half hour was spent with the chatter of a dozen people asking questions, reminiscing and discussing these works of art and the historic pictures which are their basis.

After refreshments, six books of archive photographs of Lechlade were passed round the meeting and we were able to appreciate how important it is to keep safely old photos and postcards. We ended with our normal 'theme card' session, the letter for the month being 'K' – which as usual produced an amazing variety of cards ranging from early 20th century to comparatively modern cards.

John Higgs

Sailing— A life on the ocean wave

Several months ago Ian Westlake came round with an invitation sent to U3A by Bowmoor Sailing Club. They were offering training to those of riper years who fancied trying a new challenge. The club's interest was that it might encourage some to acquire an enthusiasm for the sport and thereby join the sailing club. In the end it was a very small bunch, from Highworth, Fairford and Cirencester, who eventually undertook the course and somewhat fewer who finished it. We paid £15 per three-hour session. The club were most generous with the individual time they devoted to us and commendably patient. We learnt not least how unpredictable winds could be and how you need to be constantly aware of the elements. From time to time we got a bit damp, and boom awareness was a mighty challenge. Indeed, that leads me to the major lesson we could have done with. You need to be agile moving about a small boat and it would be a really good idea before starting to get yourself a bit more mobile. If the club run such a course again, which they are considering, I would strongly recommend it to all, with the proviso: get mobile. Ducking under a swinging boom or scuttling across the boat when you tack need a flexibility that is disappearing from the average U3A member.

Geoff Hawkes

Recorders

I think everyone knows that we have lost our lovely Mary Chick, who died of cancer last month. As a founder member of the recorder group, Mary was the backbone of the treble department, always cheerful and happy to try anything - her infectious enthusiasm and quiet sense of humour a joy to us all. We shall miss her enormously.

Hilary Bradshaw

Solos

June

In June four of us joined with the Circle of Friends, a Cirencester club, on a visit to Avebury. The weather was fine and the house was interesting to visit after the input of the BBC. The National Trust at this property lets you touch items, sit on the beds and sit on the chairs. The Grounds were pleasant to stroll round. Some of us walked round the standing stones and wandered round the village of Avebury.

We all agreed it was a lovely Sunday outing. Thanks to the Circle of Friends for letting us join them.

Michael Johnson

Later in the month five stalwart members met at The Swan Inn at Lechlade and enjoyed a very good and hospitable meal. We even got double helpings of chocolate mints and free coffees.

We then motored down to The Trout Inn for their Friday evening Folk Night. We all had a good night at minimal cost with lots of musical entertainment from various local artists. Those who were there felt that the 'Rolf Harris' lookalike left something to be desired!

At about 11pm we all went our own ways still singing the songs and with smiles on our faces.

John Yorke

July

On 19th July two Solo members joined me and some gardeners for a very pleasant day at Wisley. We were again lucky with the weather and our thanks go to Fairford Gardeners' Club for organising the trip.

Michael Johnson

Solos continued:

August - Oxford Jazz Cruise

Eleven hardy, well clad souls made it to the Oxford Park & Ride (bus passes at the ready) - then on to Folly Bridge, first for a coffee in the pub, then on the boat to have a Jazz Cruise along the Thames to Abingdon. Music all the way!

It was a very enjoyable day. The music and singing made up for the rain and rumbles of thunder with the occasional burst of sunshine which seemed to make the surrounding countryside greener and quite beautiful.

It was a time for new people to experience a group outing and we all agreed later that we would not have done it alone. Most of us took a picnic lunch although we could have bought food and drink on board if ordered beforehand.

Our day finished off on a high, by having an Indian meal in Lechlade. I for one enjoyed my two new and different experiences, both the Jazz Cruise and the Indian cuisine. So thanks to Mike for organising it.

Lucy Worrall

'In the run-up to the Olympics, it was divided between those who were excited and those who couldn't care less, and then the Opening Ceremony happened and everyone got behind it.

In the build-up to Paralympics, everyone seems to be talking about it. They still want more and to be part of it, so we are making sure we continue the same level of activity.'

Brand Republic August 27 2012

Straddlers

In July we saw fields full of poppies, vibrant rolls of lavender, and views that extended into the Black Mountains. We had the odd splash of mud (at this the other walkers would shout - pardon!), but the whole nine miles was in glorious sunshine. Whilst having coffee at the information hut in Lidcombe Wood, we met another group who were doing a similar walk the other way around. We bumped into them again above Laverton, where we had had lunch sitting on a stone monument in the village square. There were a few slight ascents (pardon!), but as usual a lot of downhill. When the seven of us arrived back at Snowhill, the ladies insisted we went into The Arms for a swift half (pardon!). An excellent way to end a very enjoyable Cotswold walk.

Paul O'Shaughnessy

Straddlers—August

Eleven of us set off from Slad on a very pleasant August morning. Our reward for climbing a soggy steep bank into Redding Wood was an almost level walk through a fine stand of Beech, trees then on over a stile and down through a field with fine valley views. A fairly steep climb to the small hamlet of Sydenham and coffee in the sunshine. The walk continued across a ripe cornfield again with some superb views, then down through High Wood to Dillays Brook. This being the lowest point of the walk meant there was a scramble up a grassy bank and a slow climb up to Down Barn Farm. Eight white ducks crossing our path delayed our entry into Down Wood where bizarrely there is a large scrap heap. Emerging from the wood we lunched under leaden skies and when the inevitable downpour arrived sought shelter in a convenient barn. We all agreed it had been a good day out.

Kay and Tony Clarke

Striders

In July we had an excellent walk from Cranham, taking in Saltridge and Workman's Woods. We passed through the village of Sheepscombe, finally returning through Cranham Wood to the Common. It was not an easy walk for the temperature was close to 30 degrees and the sun shone from a cloudless sky. It was fortunate that those who took part (fourteen of us) had a good deal of tree cover. The views of the surrounding countryside were particularly memorable for us who made the journey. We ended our walk with a good meal at The Black Horse Inn at Cranham.

Philip Meaden

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	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

October

issue to Alison Hobson email:
editor@fairfordu3a.org.uk by

Friday September 21st