



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

**Fairford & District
Newsletter**

**Issue 231
September
2016**



From Routine to Abnormal

by

Cyril Mannion

**www.fairfordu3a.org.uk
Registered Charity No 1072658**

❖ Read the Newsletter online at www.fairfordu3a.org.uk ❖

MAIN MEETING 6 September

From Routine to Abnormal: Cyril Mannion
Our ex airline pilot tells us of hair-raising tales of near disasters in the air.

Forthcoming Meetings

4 October: An Auctioneer's Lot

Philip Allwood is our local auctioneer from Cirencester who has had many lively appearances on TV (Bargain Hunt, Cash in the Attic, etc). His 30 year career as an auctioneer spans subject matter as diverse as lingerie to record-breaking silver tankards and the 'Dunmow Flicht' trials.

1 November : 'Ghostly Tales from the Man in Black'

Not for the faint-hearted, Graham Sutherland tells us spooky tales and ghost stories to amuse us during these darker days of winter.

6 December: Ukey D'Ukes

This popular group who have entertained us before are back again for our Christmas revels.

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS

Beryl Burt Joanne and Michael Jones
John Harvey Elizabeth Grey Yvonne Cole

Reminder

Should you change your email address or any other detail will you please let the Membership Secretary know, so that our records can be kept up to date.

Sue Jonson
sue.jonson@hotmail.co.uk

Tea Rota

4 October: Industrial Heritage
1 November: Italian
6 December:
Our Committee

Photo Album

If you have any interesting photographs of U3A activities, please pass them to Ann Wightman (01285 712723) for inclusion in the album.

Editor this month:
Sarah Bottomley

Fairford U3A Meetings

The Fairford U3A meetings in July and August provided time for laughter and merry-making. Mel Rees has authored five books, besides writing and narrating three 'look at life' talking books: herein lies the clue to his presentation. His talk called 'My family and other setbacks' covered the time from when as an anxious teenager he wondered how he might get a girlfriend until the present when he has a wife and adult children. His topics ranged over problems which many in the audience would have grappled with but it needed his turn of phrase to see the funny side. He talked of petty snobbery, like choosing where to live or putting out better quality toilet paper for guests, of children who won't leave home or when they do still cost you money, and of parents who are likely to outlive you. Without exaggerating, he conjured up many scenes which touched raw nerves and produced much laughter (some of it a little nervous) with his 'we have all been there' tales.

In August members met at the Bowmoor Sailing Club for a picnic lunch. The weather was not entirely cooperative but luckily there was room to eat indoors and the rain cleared in time for a walk around the lake. The Ukey D'Ukes provided entertainment and those who attended reported, with bright eyes, 'It was really good.' 'We had a marvellous time.' And again there was lots of laughter.

Sylvia Jones

Geoff Heyworth

We were sorry to hear of the death of Geoff Heyworth, recently moved from Fairford to Cambridgeshire; our sympathies go to Marie and family.

Gill Walker

We were also sorry to hear of the death of Gill Walker; our sympathies go to Nick, Jamie and family.

Solos would like to thank the committee for organising the Picnic held on the 2nd August. Great band, dancing wasn't bad, and plenty to eat, pity about the weather. Michael Johnson

Chairman's Report

Thanks to the Newsletter team Alan, Marilyn and Sarah, for instituting the new format so swiftly and efficiently. This was necessary due to the demise of the folding machine and the prohibitive cost of purchasing a new one. A good job, well executed. Well done.

I would like to welcome Morag Hill to the committee and thank Geoff Dennis for agreeing to take over as trips organiser. If you have any suggestions or ideas for future trips, please contact Geoff.

Please note that the photography group has now closed. I would like to thank Gordon Hart for leading this group in the past and am sorry that no leader could be found for the future.

I hear there are places available in the Mah Jong group, so please contact Alan Eagle if you may be interested.

Thank you, too, to Marilyn Gibbon who organised this year's outdoor meeting held at Bowmoor Sailing Club on 2 August. Although the day was damp and cloudy, about 60 members turned up with picnics to enjoy the wonderful music provided again by the Ukey D'Ukes. Although we had hoped to be outside we were very comfortably ensconced in the clubhouse. Many members danced to the music and the Solos group led the dancing all afternoon. We also enjoyed watching young Bowmoor sailors on the lake along with many swans and other birds and as the weather improved we were able to take the air later in the afternoon. Our thanks also to Ian Westlake who acted as our contact with the club.

Any comments or suggestions, feel free to contact me on 01285 850384.

Jan Mills
01285 850384
jananddavemills@hotmail.com

Changes to the Newsletter

From this month, the Newsletter will look different. We have opted for an A4 sized Newsletter due to the demise of the folding machine. We will staple the Newsletter in future as to replace the folding machine would be very expensive. The changes will also shorten the work of the production team when the Newsletter is printed. An A4 format also has the advantage of enlarging the size of the timetable on the back page!

At the same time, we are revising the distribution costs of the Newsletter. To keep the cost down, members wishing to have their copies posted will have their yearly subscription increased from FEBRUARY 2017 by £7 to help towards the cost of postage. At present, postage represents 66% of their yearly subscription, so I am sure these members will understand the reason for the increase.

From October, there will be no labels on the back of the Newsletter. Instead, unlabelled copies will be available from the desk at the back of the room in the Palmer Hall at the Monthly Meetings.

Members who will not be attending the Main Meeting may ask someone to collect their Newsletter on their behalf. Copies of the Newsletter will also be available at the Community Centre in Fairford and the libraries in Fairford and Lechlade.

Please remember that the Newsletter can also be accessed online at www.fairfordu3a.org.uk/newsletters.

Marilyn Gibbon
Acting Editor in Chief

Congratulations to U3A members

In print at last - We must congratulate four of our members who had poems published in the July edition of Ripples magazine: Ian Westlake, Marilyn Gibbon, Jo Stichbury and Alan Topham.

Also our Petanque group are featured on page 81 of the U3A Third Age Matters magazine.

GROUP MEETINGS

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

Anglo-Saxon Poetry

Thursday 22 September

The next meeting will be at 10.30am at my house. We will be looking again at 'The Wanderer' and 'The Seafarer'.

Miriam Scott
01285 713441

Ballroom Dancing

Tuesdays 6, 20 September, 4 October

Please note new venue and day. We will meet at Fairford Community Centre in Keble room once a fortnight from 7pm - 8pm with instructor Joanne and her partner Mark. Why not join our friendly group? It is a great way to keep fit.

Ann Wightman
01285 712723
wightmanann@gmail.com



Birdwatching

Tuesday 20 September

This month we shall visit Frampton on Severn and see what we can find on and around the old gravel pits and in the surrounding woods and fields. We shall have lunch at a local pub before returning home. Meet at the Fairford car park at 9am as usual. A contribution of £3 from passengers would be appreciated.

Richard Morgan
01285 712085



Book Circle 1

Tuesday 13 September

In September we shall be looking at 'H is for Hawk' by Helen Macdonald. Please let one of us know if you are unable to come.

Sheila Morgan
01285 810471
Barbara Cobbett
01285 712692



Book Circle 2

Tuesday 13 September

We meet this month at Jean's home to discuss 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry'. Our books for October are 'The Talented Mr Ripley' and 'The Witches of Lychford' - arrangements to be finalised at our September meeting

Ian and Rosemary Westlake
01285 712329
idrwestlake@gmail.com

Chess

Do you know how to play chess? If not, have you ever thought about learning? Why not join us and give it a try? We play for fun and don't take it too seriously whether we win or lose, and it is a good way to keep the grey matter ticking over.



We meet once a month, usually on a Wednesday afternoon, start with a chat over tea and biscuits, and play for a maximum of about an hour-and-a-half.

Please contact me if you are interested or would like more information.

Mike Bennett
01367 252379
mish252379@btinternet.com

Bridge Improvers

Mondays

Bridge is a fascinating and absorbing game which offers challenge and excitement and keeps the mind alert and active without being physically demanding. The group is not suitable for beginners, but for anyone with some knowledge of the game who wants to improve.



We usually have a lesson, based on the Standard English (Acol) system, followed by practice play and friendly discussion. We expect to make lots of mistakes but hope to learn from them.

We meet in the Heritage room at Fairford Community Centre, every Monday afternoon from 2 to 4 pm, and the cost is £1 per session which includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

Margaret Bishop
01285 713747
mbishop1@timetalk.co.uk

Computer Group

Tuesdays

We meet every week on Tuesday mornings at my home where I aim to help members in the use of computers, the internet and more. If you are interested in joining, please contact me and you will be welcome. For those just starting, I have a desktop computer that is available for members to use, although it is helpful if you have a laptop to bring along.

If you want to start using email, I can allocate you a personal email address for your sole use.

Nick Humphris
01285 711740



Creative Writing

Fridays

We have an excellent small group who are enjoying the activities but we would welcome any new members.

We meet every Friday morning from 10.30am to 12.30pm recommencing after the summer break on 9 September.

Please contact me for more details:

Jo Stichbury
01285 239152



Cycling with a Pub Lunch

Thursday 22 September

We are going on a bike ride. Hooray!
Do not know how far it is. Boo!
Mainly flat and downhill. Hooray!
I tell fibs as well. Boo!
Never been to Bampton before. Hurray!
Might not find the way. Boo!
We shall have a nice lunch. Hurray!
But only bottled beer. Boo!
Nice warm sunny day. Hurray!
Take your jackets just in case. Boo!

Meet at Fairford at 10.30am or Lechlade Memorial Hall twenty minutes later.

Paul O'Shaughnessy
01367 850262
paulatsscissor@btinternet.com



Dance to Five Rhythms

Wednesday 21 September

We dance regularly at the Palmer Hall on the third Wednesday of the month, at 10.00am.

New members welcome. Come and move to the music.

Joyce Deane
01285 851408



Family History

Wednesday 21 September

This month, we shall meet at my house. Please bring your favourite heirlooms and contact me if you are unable to come.

Miriam Scott
01285 713441

French Conversation

Intermediate

We continue to fix our dates from one meeting to the next. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me. Our sessions are great fun!

Rosemary Westlake
01285 712329



Advanced

Mondays

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

New members are always welcome!

Barbara Cartwright
07989 353726

Garden Group

Thursday 22 September

After the summer break, we open the Autumn schedule with a visit to Hidcote Manor Gardens in Chipping Campden. As this is a longer trip than usual, we will meet at the Car Park at 1.30pm to arrange lifts, and expect to return by about 5.00pm. Please contact us to let us know you are coming.

Beth and Geoff Dennis
01285 712195
bethandgeoff@sky.com



Geology

Wednesday 14 September

For details of this month's meeting please contact:

Clive Watson
01285 713003

Italian for Beginners

Mondays

We meet on Monday afternoons at my home. At present we are focussing on 'Holiday Italian'.

For details contact:

Bea Bostock
01285 750456

Industrial Heritage

For details of this month's activities please contact:

Pete Evans
01285 713069
pete.whooper@hotmail.co.uk

Keep Fit

Tuesdays

We meet in the Palmer Hall on Tuesday each week at 9.15am. At present the group is almost full.

Chris Pooley
01367 250346

Latin

Thursdays 1 September, 6 October

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



Mah Jong

Thursdays 1, 15 September, 6 October

The Mah Jong Group meets in the Barker Room at Fairford Community Centre for two hours from 10.00am on the first and third Thursdays of the month.



This month we say goodbye to two founder members of our group, David and Madeline Phillips. We wish them every success with more Mah Jong in their new Devonshire location.

We would like to invite more members to join us, whether they have ever played before or not. It is an easy and sociable game to learn and enjoy from the outset.

For more information please contact:

Alan & Linda Eagle 01285 712515

alane2004@btinternet.com

Model Group

Thursdays

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

Jim Sullivan

01367 252539.



Music Listening

Friday 16 September

Our thanks go to Joyce and John Dear for leading this group for some time. Gillian Bilbrough will be taking over as group leader from September. We will continue to meet at Rosemary Westlake's house except for September and October when Rosemary will be on holiday, and we will meet at my house for those two months. Our next meeting will be at 2.30pm when the subject will be 'favourite music'.

Gillian Bilbrough

01285 712579

gillianandharry@yahoo.co.uk

Needlework

Wednesdays 7 and 21 September

We meet at the Fairford Community Centre from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. This group brings together many different skills under the heading of 'Needlework'; we are a friendly group and enjoy our sessions.



If you would like to know more, please contact:

Pauline Jones

01285 851212

Pétanque

Tuesdays and Wednesdays

There are now two Pétanque groups running each week. Both are held at the U3A piste at Farmor's School, Leafield Road in Fairford at 9.45am for a 10.00am start. There are vacancies for the Tuesday group but the Wednesday group is full. We welcome any new members and have spare boules for anyone to borrow.



Dave and Heather Baber

01285 711343

Photography

This group is no longer meeting due to the retirement of Gordon Hart as Group Leader. Should anyone in U3A care to take over from him will they please contact:

Marion Lloyd

01285 850280

mlloyd40@btinternet.com

Philosophy

Wednesday 21 September

The subject for discussion will be 'To seek comfort both physical and moral, is a sign of weakness'. We will be meeting at Francis's house.

Dan Deane

01285 851408

Poetry Circle 1

Fridays 2 September, 7 October

The group usually meets on the first Friday of the month at 2.30pm when we read and enjoy poetry and verse of all kinds.

Anyone interested in joining us would be most welcome.

Barbara Cottam
01285 711054

Poetry Circle 2

Fridays 2 September, 7 October

This month we meet at Denny's (01285 711009) to read poetry by William Shakespeare and in October we will meet at Barbara's and return to poetry by Aphra Behn. Please let either Barbara (01285 712692) or Jen (01285 712397) know if you are unable to come.

Jen Thoburn

POSTCARDS

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



Tuesday 27 September

Our next meeting will be held at the usual venue at 2.30pm. Please note that, due to holiday commitments, it will be held a week later in the month than usual.

The anagram challenge will be birds and animals.

John Higgs
01285 712488

Quilting

Wednesday 5 October

This group meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 12.30pm to 2.00pm in the Barker Room of the Community Centre. New members welcome. Please telephone me for more information.

Please note that the quilting group will not meet in September but will resume as usual in October

Jan Mills
01285 850384

Recorders

Fridays 9, 23 September

We start with anyone who would like to play the treble (from 2.00pm to 2.30pm) followed by the main group to finish at 4.30pm with a break for tea.

We will be in the Heritage Room on the ground floor of the Fairford Community Centre and will let you know if we have to use another room. As usual, we will be playing a varied selection of music arranged for Descant, Treble, Tenor and Bass with the addition of Great and Contra basses in the occasional piece.

If there are any more recorder players (no matter how rusty) who would like to join a friendly, non-judgemental group you would be very welcome - please contact:

Hilary Bradshaw	Jay Mathews
01367 860030	01367 860869
hilary@burytown15.co.uk	jaymathews124@mac.com



We have some spare instruments and stands; please ask if you would like to borrow one.

Rummikub

Thursday 8 September

The group meets on the second Thursday of each month at our house from 2.00pm to 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



S₁ C₃ R₁ A₁ B₃ B₃ L₁ E₁

We have finished for the summer and shall not play again until October.

Kathleen Price 01285 712417

Short Tennis

Mondays

This group meets in the Palmer Hall every Monday between 3.00pm and 5.00pm. As we only have one court we often cannot accommodate new players, so if interested please speak to me first.

Margaret Trickett
01285 712421

Solos

Mondays 5 September, 3 October

The next general meetings will be at Val's house.

Michael Johnson
01285 712637
sanaelma@yahoo.co.uk

Striders

Tuesday 27 September

Meet at Fairford car park at 9.15, then drive to the Seven Tuns pub at Chedworth to book lunch. The walk will take in Chedworth wood and Yanworth Mill. Suggested car charge is £1. For further information about this walk please contact:

Bob Nicholls 01285 810289

Spanish

Tuesdays 13 and 27 September

We are a continuation group now, reading selected articles and commenting on what we have read.

Meetings are at my home from 11.00am to 12 noon.

Frank Hall
01285 712583
fkhall@talktalk.net

Straddlers

Thursday 15 September

The Straddlers walk on 15 September starts at Barbury Castle Country Park car park above Wroughton. At just over 8 miles in length, the walk goes downhill past Four Mile Clump, before intercepting an uphill track towards a disused barn eventually picking up the long downhill, ancient track past Drove barn and on to Ogborne Maisey. From there we turn northeast towards Ogbourne St Andrew and pass to the west of Ogbourne St George. From there we will join the Ridgeway and return to the car park along the well-used track above Smeaths Ridge. There are some fantastic views across the Wiltshire Downs from many points along this walk.



Meet at Fairford car park at 9.15am or at the car park at Barbury Hill ready to start at 10.00am. Bring coffee and lunch as normal and, because the route is exposed, appropriate clothing for the conditions.

The start point is just over 20 miles from Fairford, so I suggest £2 per passenger to help defray fuel costs. Please let me know if you intend to join the group.

John Burrows
john@burrows44.plus.com
01367 253056

Strollers

Friday 23 September

Our walk this month (approx 3 miles) begins from the Jolly Tar, Hannington (SN6 7RP), which has a large car park at the rear of the premises and a conservatory restaurant overlooking the sun terrace patio.

Leaving the pub, we head south following footpaths across fields and bridle paths. Reaching a wooded area, there is a steep decline with steps, needing care to negotiate, particularly if wet (a walking stick might be useful), leading down to the rest of our walk, via fields and bridle paths to return back to the pub. Apart from the steps mentioned – this is a gentle stroll with good countryside views. There are no other obstacles or stiles, any incline being hardly noticeable.

Leave Fairford car park 9.45am for a 10.15am gathering at the Jolly Tar where we will pre-order lunch before the start of our walk. Suggested passenger fee is £1.

Bert Sampson 01285 712789



Traditional Jazz

Thursdays 1 September, 6 October

The group meets on the first Thursday each month at our house from 2.00pm to 4.30pm. All U3A members are welcome. The poet Philip Larkin wrote "I can live a week without poetry but not a day without jazz".

We are now going through four CDs of his favourite Jazz.

Ian Bennett
01367 253287

ianbbennett51@gmail.com

Yoga

Mondays

The Yoga Group meets weekly on Mondays at the Community Centre at 10.00am. I am sorry there is still a waiting list.

Sylvia Jones
01285 712657



Table Tennis

Wednesdays and Fridays

Our group has grown to the extent that we have chosen to run an additional session. So you can now come along on Wednesday from 2.30pm and Friday from 10.00am.

Sessions are held in Keble Room in the Fairford Community Centre. Players of all abilities are welcome.

Wednesday Group Leader:
Nick Stroude
01295 521067

Friday Group Leader:
Barry Aylett-Warner
01367 253788

Walking with a Pub Lunch

Wednesday 14 September

This is a varied walk of approx. 4 miles, starting from Fernham, a very pretty village, south of Faringdon, through fields and wooded areas with lovely views of White Horse Hill. Apart from a small incline at the start, this is an easy walk, although there are a number of stiles to be negotiated.

Meet at the Fairford car park in time to leave at 9.30am or at the Woodman Inn car park at Fernham (post code SN7 7NX) at 10.00am. We will select our lunch choices before leaving the Pub.

Suggested passenger donation £1.
Bert Sampson: 01285 712789
d.b.sampson@icloud.com

GROUP REVIEWS

Anglo-Saxon Poetry

In our June and July meetings we read and discussed examples of two longer Anglo-Saxon poems. 'The Battle of Maldon' is an example of a heroic poem and is based on a true battle between Viking raiders and the English in 991 AD at Maldon in Essex. The heroic stand of the fighters facing defeat is summed up in the words of Byrhtwold, an elderly retainer, who rallied the English warriors, saying:

*Mind must be harder, spirit bolder,
Heart must be greater, as our might grows less.*

Our second longer poem 'The Wanderer' describes how, after the death of his lord, he has lost his place in society and as an outcast must search for another lord. 'The Wanderer' is an example of an *Ubi sunt* poem. This Latin expression means *Where are* and *Ubi sunt* poetry deals with the passing of life, youth and beauty. 'The Wanderer' is suffused with a sense of loss, exile and transience:

*Where is the horse now? Where the hero gone?
Where is the bounteous lord, and where the benches
For feasting? Where are all the joys of hall?*

We also read three very short poems with Christian themes: 'Caedmon's Hymn', 'Bede's Death Song' and 'Almsgiving'. As usual we finished by listening to a section from a recording of Seamus Heaney's translation of 'Beowulf'.

Iris Lewis

Birdwatching

In June we went to Greenham Common to search for nightjars and woodcock, both of which can only be found as it gets dark and we chose the longest day to look for them! After a refreshing cup of coffee we walked a short way on a track which ran along an area of low vegetation at the edge of the trees. We soon found a good spot to see our first woodcock flying over.



Although we had regular sightings from then on it was probably one or two birds patrolling their territory at regular intervals. We then heard the unmistakable 'churring' of a nightjar very close but hidden from view. A couple were seen but only fleetingly. A tawny owl called in the distance and a deer walked past but the big excitement of the evening was the spotting of a glow-worm just as we were setting off back to our cars. The glow was so bright that even though it was on the ground at our feet we weren't able to see the beetle itself. Most of us had never seen one before so this was a great treat.

When we planned our July trip in darkest December we hadn't expected it to be on the hottest day of the year! Otmoor nature reserve is very exposed with little shade and we were all exhausted by the time we finished our birding and retired to the pub for lunch. The birds were clearly avoiding the heat as there were far fewer around than the previous week. We were particularly disappointed at not seeing a rare turtle dove, though one was heard faintly, or any hobbies. A distant marsh harrier was seen by some and plenty of red kites. We enjoyed watching swifts flying overhead as we had our lunch overlooking the moor.

Richard Morgan

Book Circle 1

'Daphne du Maurier ' by Margaret Forster

This biography, written over twenty years ago, describes the life of a woman born within the first decade of the 20th century. Daphne's father was a famous actor who frequently appeared on the West End stage. He was often away from his family and seems to have been caught between wanting fame and fortune and delighting in a settled home life. Daphne is described as having a close, almost hero-worship relationship with her father. She had an ambivalent attitude to her mother which she promised herself she would not repeat with her own children. Looking at the letter included in this biography it appears that she was not successful in this aim. A complex personality combined with an artistic temperament led Daphne to find much of her life unsatisfactory. Her marriage was fraught with difficulties and the only solace she could find was in her writing. She produced many novels and several non-fiction books between 1931 and 1987. However, she is most well known as the author of 'Rebecca'.

This book received a mixed reception from the group. All agreed it was well written by Forster but that Daphne was a very unsympathetic character, self-centred and difficult to like. What the book does do well is to give insight into the life and times of a woman who only really felt alive when she was writing.

Helen Evans



Book Circle 2

'A Delicate Truth' by John le Carré.

One or two of us had not read any le Carré and they found the book intriguing. It is set in the Blair years and a counter-terror operation called Wildlife is being set up in Gibraltar to capture a jihadist arms-buyer. It is a delicate operation and a young Foreign Officer Minister and a private defence sub-contractor are involved but hardly know what is going on. Of course, it all goes wrong and innocent people are killed. There is a cover up. It is claimed to be successful and people are promoted. Then a junior secretary investigates and a 'pawn' in the original operation feels that the injustice must be corrected. All hell breaks out and a person is killed, supposedly suicide and the good people run for their lives as the 'cover up operators' become desperate. There are elements in the book which seem to relate to actual historical events but le Carré has been careful. The book was published in 2013 and those who like le Carré will enjoy it.

Ian Westlake

Book Circle 2

Our August meeting was much enhanced by us all being given a glass of fizz in order to celebrate Rosemary and Ian's Golden Wedding anniversary. Even the dullest book would make for lively discussion in these circumstances! 'The Memory Box' by Margaret Forster intrigued some of us but was thought by others to be rather boring. The theme of the book was that a mother who knew that she was dying prepared a box to be given to her newly born baby when the child was older. In fact her daughter was an adult when she opened the box . It contained beautifully wrapped items, numbered but with no messages. There were eleven of them ranging from three feathers, an unfinished painting and an address book (with addresses but no names) to an emerald necklace that she had seen being worn by her mother in photographs. By then there were no adults alive who could provide explanations for these things and so the daughter helped by her cousin travelled about trying to understand their significance.

It became clear during our wide-ranging discussion that Margaret Forster had written a lot of more interesting novels and biographies and it may be that in the future we should return to this prolific author again.

Anthea Wordley

Cycling with a Pub Lunch

Thursday 28 July

The signs said that the road to Cerney Wick was closed. We all stopped and decided in thirty seconds to proceed and see what occurred. There was no problem with the road, so we cruised along in a traffic free manner. There were ten of us and we assembled at Fairford from four different points. On through South Cerney and into Somerford Keynes. All slightly downhill in lovely sunshine. Small hiccup while we refreshed ourselves in The Bakers Arms, as there was a slight shower. Dry when we emerged. Down Quiet Lane and back into Cerney Wick, through Meysey Hampton and we split up near Betty's Grave. (Who was Betty?). Home safely to our various destinations. Smashing ride with excellent company in warm weather.

Paul O'Shaughnessy

Pétanque

The months of July and August were quite busy for the Pétanque group with some lows and a high.

On Thursday, 21 July, a 'drinks and nibbles' evening had been arranged, but although the week had begun with the hottest day of the year our evening was a total washout as the rain started at 6.00pm and didn't stop, so we had to abandon any hope of a social event!

On Saturday, 30 July, five of our players were at Highworth playing in the local U3A league game and we lost, 1 game to 5!

However, our annual Pétanque Melee and picnic was a great success.

On Saturday, 13 August, 30 players from both the Tuesday and Wednesday groups assembled together to play 3 games and then tuck into the fantastic spread of food contributed by all members. A Master Chef contender was discovered judging by the success of his cheesecake, with many quiche, biscuit and cake makers not far behind.

The format of the Melee is that everyone plays 3 games but in a different group each time. The score per game is 13, which gives a maximum of 39 points in total.

In previous years we have had one Lady and one Gent winning all three games so the two trophies have been clearly won.

This year, not only did we have the maximum number of players which our piste could manage, but we also had FIVE players all winning the 39 maximum points. With such a tight result it was a question of looking at the differentials.

Congratulations go to Pete and Jan Martin who were presented with the Gent's and Lady's trophy.

However, with Pat Eales, Reg Thoburn and Ivor Price so very close on the differential points Heather and Dave made an executive decision and ordered three more trophies. Well done everyone.

Phew, what a day!

All credit must also be given to those players in various teams who helped all of them to secure those maximum points, and a big thank you to our guest presenter.

Eighteen months ago, after battling a serious illness one of our players, Todd Hughes, passed away. His widow, Gloria, was delighted to be asked to join us on our special day to present the winning trophies. Perhaps in the near future we can persuade her to become a member herself?

On a final note did any U3A member spot some of our Pétanque players in the photograph which was in the current Third Age Matters magazine? It was taken at Malmesbury in June, when we had an invitation from the National Pétanque organiser, Andrew Lloyd, to join in with a visiting team.

Dave and Heather Baber

Philosophy

The subject of our discussion was 'The Meaning and Purpose of Life'. Francis introduced the subject in a structured manner using the following headings. Is reason a sufficient Guide? Does the study of Philosophy provide an answer? Considerations of the heavens at night make us appear as irrelevant blips in time and space. That the Universe must have had a creator was the argument of William Paley 1745 to 1805. This view was popular in the 19th Century and forms the basis of the 'Creationist Theory', in America. If there is a creator then it follows that there must be reason and purpose. Both Christians and Muslims believe in the 'Oneness' of God and that every person carries the seed of this belief. The key belief in both religions is that only when human beings worship their God by submitting to his religious law can they have peace and harmony in their lives. There are the false Gods of modernity, worship of possessions and money to name just three. Understandably all the major religions warn about these. An alternative view is that we are born and die as the stars are born and die, both individually and collectively. This is our reality. Life is precious to us because it is ephemeral. We are a part of nature and must recognise that.

We discussed some of the points made, but it was not surprising that the philosophical fundamental question was not answered in an afternoon.

Dan Deane

Poetry Circle 1

Our theme for July was 'Aging' and we had time to read more than our usual number of poems. There were warnings about the inevitability of old age and affectionate memories of bygone days. Vernon Scannell's poem about his grandmother brought out much reminiscing. Kay read her own 'Sporting Ditty for the Elderly' to remind us of all the things we can no longer do, a bitter sweet poem of reflection and regret. We all agreed that we had passed the stage of 'gathering rosebuds' but Elaine Feinstein's 'Getting Older' was a comforting reminder that whilst we were here: 'Every day won from such darkness is a celebration'.

Hardy's 'Regret Not Me' went even further: 'And mourn not me, Beneath the yellowing tree; For I shall mind not, slumbering peacefully.'

Growing older cannot be too bad when we can have such a jolly afternoon reading our poems.

Barbara Cottam

Strollers

Friday 24 June

24 furlongs steeplechase. Going good to soft, 16 starters. All finished.

We weren't really lost; honestly. I mean I knew where we were – most of the time – and I knew where we wanted to be – I just wasn't quite sure how to get there.

If it wasn't for the difficult stiles, electric fences, 100 cows marching from one field to the next along our path, the irate farmer who directed us another way and the disappearing footpath signs (including one that spun around on the post!) the walk would have been a doddle. But on the bright side, at least we avoided the rain which fell heavily once we were safely in the Trout.

On a more serious note, when farmers remove signs, obstruct rights of way and tie up gates, it does make life rather difficult for the organiser and a mockery of the previous two very recent reconnaissance trips.

Despite this, however, the walk went well (I wasn't lynched!). Everyone remained cheerful, the scenery and Buscot church were delightful and the meal at the Trout very palatable as usual. It was great fun really!

Alan Topham

Solos

22 June

Solos latest adventure was to Kelmscott Manor for a spot of culture in this lovely old manor house once lived in by William Morris and his wife and daughter and also Dante Gabriel Rossetti. We started off in the restaurant as usual and then explored the house and garden after sorting out problems with parking and finding all our party who tended to disperse in different directions. Many people from Fairford and Lechlade were visiting or acting as stewards in the house who obviously appreciated the old furniture and embroidery designed and worked by Morris and his family. Hopefully we will go again sometime as it warrants many visits.

Pat Eales

29 June :

Nine of us enjoyed a very nice evening meal at the Catherine Wheel. MJ

21 July

Eleven of us set off for an adventures afternoon, visiting Aston Potteries for a very pleasant lunch and enjoying the beautiful Gardens which were pretty much at their best, then it was off to the Crocodile Farm near Brize Norton which made for an interesting afternoon with lots of information about one of the oldest creatures on the planet. It was pleasant to wander around the many species of crocs for a couple of hours before returning home. Michael Johnson

28 July found some of us eating again at the Colosseo, again a very pleasant evening was enjoyed. MJ

7 August

Eight Solos in two cars, set off at 10.30am for the Seacourt Park and Ride in Oxford via Faringdon and the A420, thus avoiding the main routes to Blenheim where most folk would be heading for the festivities being held there. We were joining a boat on the River Thames on which a Jazz Group would be entertaining us while we cruised. The weather was set to be sunny, with a pleasant breeze. Our bus dropped us a short walk from the Head of the River Pub where we had coffee before boarding our vessel to depart at 1 o'clock.

What a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon, cruising gently on the flowing waters of the Thames, passing sweeping willows, swans, cygnets, ducks and numerous geese. Fishermen, walkers and cyclists on the tow paths waved at us as they were attracted by the melodious music as we glided by. We even saw a kingfisher flashing its splendid turquoise plumage as it spotted something nearby. The boat had to go through two locks where folk gathered to watch proceedings. There was plenty of activity on the river with other craft of varying size and skills drifting by, and of course barges and houseboats moored on the banks. Houses with pristine gardens down to the water's edge, made all the more enjoyable to view on account of the very welcome summer's day. The music being played by the very accomplished musicians was reminiscent of that played in the late sixties/seventies, the quartet comprising a pianist, base player, guitarist and a guy who interchanged with saxophone and clarinet. Several enthusiastic passengers instead of jiggling their feet were persuaded to get up and dance as the boat turned around to make its way back to the quayside. We disembarked after a four-hour cruise, and retraced our journey homeward, picking up the cars at the Park and Ride in good time to get us back to Lechlade at six to round off a most enjoyable day at Khushi's.

Eileen Trowbridge

Please send items for the

October issue to

Alan Eagle

editor@fairfordu3a.org.uk

by **17th September**

September		
Thursday	1	Model Making, Traditional Jazz, Latin, Mah Jong
Friday	2	Poetry 1 & 2, Table Tennis 2, Creative Writing
Monday	5	Bridge, French, Italian, Short Tennis, Solos, Yoga
Tuesday	6	MAIN MEETING Computers, Keep Fit, Pétanque, Ballroom Dancing
Wednesday	7	Table Tennis 1, Needlework, Pétanque
Thursday	8	Model Making, Rummikub
Friday	9	Recorders, Table Tennis 2, Creative Writing
Monday	12	Bridge, French, Italian, Short Tennis, Yoga
Tuesday	13	Book Circles, Computers, Pétanque, Spanish
Wednesday	14	Table Tennis 1, Geology, Walking with PL, Pétanque
Thursday	15	Model Making, Mah Jong, Straddlers
Friday	16	Music Listening, Table Tennis 2, Creative Writing
Monday	19	Bridge, French, Italian, Short Tennis, Yoga
Tuesday	20	Birdwatching, Computers, Keep Fit, Pétanque, Ballroom Dancing
Wednesday	21	Pétanque, Table Tennis 1, Five Rhythms, Family History, Needlework, Philosophy
Thursday	22	AS Poetry, Garden, Model Making, Cycling with PL
Friday	23	Recorders, Strollers, Table Tennis 2, Creative Writing
Monday	26	Bridge, French, Italian, Short Tennis, Yoga
Tuesday	27	Computers, Keep Fit, Pétanque, Spanish, Striders, Postcards,
Wednesday	28	Pétanque, Table Tennis 1
Thursday	29	Model Making
Friday	30	Poetry 1 & 2, Table Tennis 2, Creative Writing
October		
Monday	3	Bridge, French, Italian, Short Tennis, Solos, Yoga
Tuesday	4	MAIN MEETING Computers, Keep Fit, Pétanque, Ballroom Dancing
Wednesday	5	Table Tennis 1, Pétanque, Quilting
Thursday	6	Latin, Model Making, Traditional Jazz, Mah Jong
Friday	7	Poetry 1 & 2, Table Tennis 2, Creative Writing