

From the Chairman,

BY the time you read this I hope we have had some prolonged and steady rain to relieve the Spring drought, which has made things so difficult for farmers and gardeners alike. Our south-facing lawn is a desert and would be best revamped as such with drought tolerant plants. Any advice welcomed!

Thanks to the hundreds of you who have renewed your membership for 2011-12. This prompt action will enable Joan Smith, our hard working membership secretary, to determine how many vacancies we can offer to those on the waiting list, so that new members can join us from September. Joan has closed the current waiting list and has started one for the 2012-13 intake.

***If you have not already done so, please renew your membership now.** The annual subscription is just £10 and must be the best value around!*

It's not too late to sign up for the U3A Autumn Academy on Saturday 8 October at Combs Middle School, Stowmarket. Bookings must be received by 22 July. I have details of the programme and application forms for this interesting day out, or visit our website, www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk, for information and a booking form.

Tickets for our Interest Groups' Exhibition on 17 October will be available in September.

I hope you stay fit and well enough to enjoy the longer summer days. If you are going on holiday, please bring me back a stick of rock!

Peter Heath

MONTHLY LECTURES

Start promptly at 10.00 am
Coffee and biscuits are served
between 9.30 and 9.45 am

Monday 5 September

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Sandra Waspe

Monday 3 October

Life in Antarctica

Dr Peter Clarkson MBE

Monday 17 October

Interest Groups' Exhibition

With cheese and wine

11.00 am start

Monday 7 November

Gerald Durrell and the Jersey Zoo

Barry Kauffman-Wright

PROGRAMME AMENDMENT

JUNE 2012 Monthly meeting

The published date of 4 June is unusually, a public holiday, so please amend your programmes to 11 June

MONTHLY LECTURE NOTES

The Life of a Travelling Punch and Judy Man

ON 9 May Peter Batey kindly stepped in at the last minute to provide a most entertaining and informative talk about his passion, Punch and Judy.

The day before, Peter, along with other showmen, had been at Covent Garden celebrating the anniversary of Mr Punch's birth in May 1662.

The Punch and Judy Fellowship has had many famous showmen as patron and the current holder of the post is Ken Dodd. Originally Punch and Judy was not for entertaining children but, in the absence of other forms of mass communication, acted as a travelling newspaper.

Peter set about building the booth, without the curtain, so we could see exactly what the booth was like inside and explaining as he went what the various pieces were for. The puppets are cleverly carved from wood by Peter himself who also repairs and makes puppets for other entertainers.

To conclude he put on a Punch and Judy show with the audience taking part and providing much hilarity especially when we were reminded we were talking to a piece of wood.

Joan Smith



DIARY DATE

EDUCATIONAL VISIT

Monday 25 July

02 Arena.

[The Titanic Artefact Exhibition](#)

On 15 April 1912, Titanic, the world's largest ship, sank after colliding with an iceberg, claiming more than 1,500 lives and shaking the world's confidence in the infallibility of modern technology. Almost 100 years later this exhibition showcases more than 300 artefacts retrieved from Titanic's debris field.

Contact John Morris on 01284 723684 for details.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Unfortunately, those who bank with HSBC have run into problems with the non-compatibility of the Santander system with HSBC and for this year will have to write a cheque. We hope this will be ironed out in future. Payment by cheque is still acceptable but the long term aim is to eventually have all renewals made by Standing Order. Our subscription remains at £10,

For those members intending to complete the Standing Order but have not yet done so, it is not too late. When submitting your Standing Order please ask your bank to make the first payment as soon as possible. From 2012, payment should then be made on 1 June.

The Virtual U3A, (vU3a)

This is an online-only U3A affiliated to the Third Age Trust. One of its principal aims is to provide the U3A experience for those who are rendered isolated in some way, by circumstances or geography, and unable to play a full part in a terrestrial U3A.

More information is available on the website www.vu3a.org where one can also apply for membership. Why not pay it a visit? And if you know of anyone who might benefit, please pass on the information.

LECTURE NOTES – continued

Reminiscences of a Foreign Correspondent – 4 April

DAVID McNEIL our speaker, came to England from New Zealand when he was 21 and soon managed to get a job with the BBC. It was not long before he was given a post as a Foreign Correspondent which he held for 21 years. When he then returned to the UK, he became an announcer for Radio Three – a post he held until his retirement.

As a correspondent he was never bored, learning something new every day. He had to take calculated risks without putting his life in jeopardy. The closest he came to this was during the war in Rhodesia when his mother in law was paying them a visit. She decided she would like to see the Victoria Falls and the plan was that he would fly with her and then continue on to Salisbury alone. At the last minute he decided to stay overnight and fly on the next day. How fortunate that was, as the plane he would have been on was blown out of the sky!

David then spoke about his political, social and personal life and the differences between reporting for radio and TV. His broadcasts about living with his family in Manhattan received more mail than anything else he had written.

He told us that when interviewing, he always asked questions on behalf of the public, and told of the time he interviewed Prince Charles and Diana. He was given five questions he could ask, plus one of his choice. Making a mental note that he could no longer be sent to the Tower, he asked if they were concerned about their age difference. Two weeks later the BBC received a letter from Buckingham Palace requesting his removal as Court Correspondent!

Joan Smith

Suffolk Accident Rescue Service – 6 June

COLIN FRENCH, the speaker, is the administrator for the Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS) which is based in Ipswich and covers the whole of Suffolk. He joined in 1970 holding a St. John's Ambulance certificate and a driving licence and was the first paramedic in Suffolk. He has now been officially "retired from active service" for some 12 years although he is still playing a very active part in the service..

In 1967 Dr. Kenneth Eaton set up the New York Traffic Accident After Care scheme and 1971 Dr. Graham Bracewell organised a meeting in Ipswich to establish a similar scheme here and on 1 May 1972 SARS was formed. There are 14 participating doctors and 12 critical care paramedics. The UK now has 85 such schemes, which are registered charities.

The cost of training, equipment, communications, insurance and admin. expenses last year was £37,648 against an income of £21,880.

SARS works alongside the East Anglian Air Ambulance, the East Anglian Ambulance service, NHS Trust, and the police and fire services. Last year they were involved in 1142 emergency 999 calls, attending 419 with 147 stand-downs and 576 standbys. They were first on the scene in 34% of the calls and 65% of calls were for traffic accidents. They had also attended the train accident at Sudbury.

Colin then showed a video of a real life accident explaining the pros and cons of the situation

Although a serious subject, Colin made it light hearted where appropriate and we all learnt much from his talk. He concluded by saying he found the work interesting and very rewarding.

Afterwards an impromptu collection was made and £350 was very generously donated by the audience.

Joan Smith

EDUCATIONAL VISIT TO [TOWER BRIDGE](#) – 28 March



A full coach of members visited this iconic London building to learn more of its history and working.

Displayed along one of the upper walkways are details of its construction, and on the other, pictures of famous bridges from around the world. At the end of this self guided tour one can visit the engine room to see some of the original steam equipment used to hydraulically lift the carriageway to

allow taller ships to enter the pool of London. Nowadays, of course, the hydraulics are operated by electric motors.

London Bridge was originally the only crossing for the Thames. As London grew, more bridges were added, although these were all built to the west of London Bridge, as the area to the east had become a busy port. In the 19th century, the East End of London became so densely populated that there was a need for a new bridge to the east of London Bridge, as journeys for pedestrians and vehicles were being held up for hours. In 1876, the City of London Corporation decided the problem could be delayed no longer and formed a committee to seek designs of which over 50 were submitted.

It was not until 1884 that the final one was chosen with work beginning in 1886, taking over eight years to complete. Two massive piers were sunk into the river bed to support the construction and over 11,000 tons of steel provided the framework for the towers and walkways. The framework was clad in Cornish granite and Portland stone to protect the underlying steelwork and give the Bridge a more pleasing appearance. It was officially opened in June 1896 by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII).

There is much more to see and do in the immediate area. HMS Belfast, several museums, the new HQ of London Borough Council, the former Hays Wharf or just stroll along the refurbished southern embankment.

Bryann Ward



NORTHUMBERLAND MAGIC 11-15 May

FORTY SEVEN of us travelled to the Gosforth Marriott Hotel, Newcastle, breaking our journey at Hardwick Hall (NT).

On the first morning we visited the Roman Fort at [Vindolanda](#), where the famous letter tablets were found. Justin Blake, an archaeologist who has worked on the site since he was 16 gave us an introductory talk and made the long distant past come to life. The museum has recently been renovated and now has some of the writing tablets on display plus the most amazing display wall of shoes that have been found there – some look high fashion for today! We then went on to Chesters by the river Tyne with fascinating Roman remains, finishing the day with a visit to Hexham and its Abbey.

The next day we boarded our boat at Seahouses for a trip round the Farne Islands to see the seabirds and seals. We were so lucky that the sea was smooth and the sun shone as our boat went within a few feet of the islands' cliffs to see the seals and vast numbers of birds nesting there, especially the puffins. Photos cannot convey the noise and smell! After lunch, on to Lindisfarne (Holy Island) to explore the harbour, the castle and the Priory. A magical day!

On our last full day we visited Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens and later had a coach and walking tour of Newcastle led by Blue Badge Guides. The centre of Newcastle is very compact and the quayside with the Millennium Bridge and Sage Centre is spectacular.

On our way home we stopped for a very wet visit to Fountains Abbey

Sue Prigg

GARDEN VISITS GROUP

This "open" group continues to be very popular – with 53 - seater coaches being filled very quickly.

In April we visited Springfields Show Gardens in Spalding – the home of the Spring Bulb industry. As they are based within a Shopping Retail Outlet we enjoyed the retail therapy too.

In May we visited Stodys Lodge Gardens near Holt and, although some of their spectacular rhododendrons and azaleas were passed their best, we enjoyed the beautiful colours of those which we did see and could appreciate how wonderful the display would have been in all its glory.

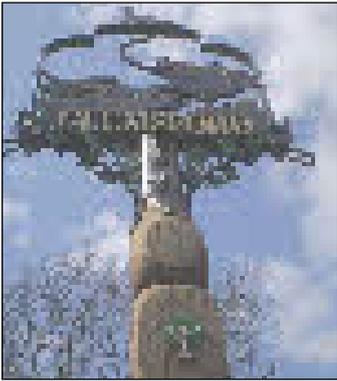


Our June visit took us down to the Mill Race Garden Centre at Aldham, just outside Colchester and on to the beautiful 7-acre gardens of Byndes "Cottage". These gardens, completely managed by the owners Mr and Mrs MacLennan, also house one of the four National Snowdrop collections providing Anglessey Abbey with theirs. Although all we saw of these were masses of labels, Mrs MacLennan explained the intricate procedures necessary to propagate these very expensive bulbs. Our hosts also provided us with cups of tea, cakes, scones and home made jam too.

As we have two excellent photographers in our group, in November we are being treated to an afternoon show of photographs of our past visits set to music. All are welcome.

Barbara Milner

INDUSTRY in GLEMSFORD



THE Glemsford Local History Society recently played host to BU3A social history enthusiasts. The village has a long history of textile industries, including silk throwing, horse hair weaving and, in the 19th century ten factories wove coconut fibres into matting. In 1906, the factories produced what was claimed to be the largest carpet in the world to cover the floor of Olympia in London – some 63,000 sq ft.

We were welcomed in the church of St Mary, plied with hot drinks and biscuits, and given an introductory talk about the history of Glemsford. The horse hair factory closed not long ago and we

were fortunate in hearing first hand experiences from a lady who had worked there. Horse hair, imported from as far away as Russia, came in four colours and varying lengths. The nasty part of the operation was the cleaning, but once processed the hair was sent off to be made into judges' wigs, regimental cockades, military sporrans, and for use in violin bow making.

The silk mill, which closed a couple of years back, stood on the site of a water mill recorded in the Domesday Book. A Glemsford resident took us to see the factory and explained the processes involved in the production of the silk thread. This was clearly an important industry producing top class thread which was used in the making of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation dress, the Prince of Wales's investiture robes, and the wedding dresses of princesses Royal and Diana.

During our guided tour round the village, we were shown the horse hair factory (now converted into residences), the cottages in Brook Street built in the 1850s for the silk workers, cottages in Egremont Street built in 1875 for a rapidly-expanding population, and many delightful timbered buildings.

The Glemsford Local History Society has an excellent archive and arranged an exhibition of documents, photographs and artefacts of particular interest to us.

This Suffolk village has a fascinating history and is well worth a visit. Long Melford and Cavendish are close by and hostels are in abundance. In 1962, the Rev Kenneth W. Glass wrote a short history of Glemsford which can be found on the website of [The Foxearth and District Local History Society](http://www.foxearthanddistrictlocalhistorysociety.co.uk).

Deidre Dobson

WALKING the WIGHT

FOR a fifth year 16 members of the Walking with Interest groups spent four days discovering more delightful walks on the Isle of Wight.



Starting with a fairly gentle ramble on the north of the island, Newtown creek and shores of the Solent were explored. Day two was more strenuous with a steep climb to Lord Tennyson's monument on the down named after him. Our efforts were rewarded with fine views in all directions as we made our way

along the ridge of High Down towards the Needles. After stopping for a while at the Old and New Batteries, steeped in ancient and modern history, we quickly passed through the busy visitor centre at Alum Bay, renowned for its coloured sands, regaining height and peace on Headon Hill with its ancient barrow.

The next day some of us visited Osborne House, Queen Victoria's 'holiday home' leaving a smaller group to follow a circuit around Carisbrooke Castle and along the top of Bowcombe Down.

On the final day, for those who did not catch an early ferry, there was a shorter walk starting from Gatcombe where the 13th Century church of St Olave has altar windows designed by William Morris and his pre-Raphaelite group as well as stained glass reputedly the oldest on the Island. This was followed by the now obligatory lunch stop at the Folly Inn prior to embarkation.

FOLK DANCING

This new group, formed by Joan Stebbens, (01284 769867), is proving popular but there is room for more to join in the two hours of fun. They meet in Wetherden Village Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Monday each month. Next meeting – 11 July. No meeting in August. The cost is £2.50, which pays for the excellent Caller and the room hire.

SOCIAL HISTORY (Thurston)

The History of Glassmaking

FRANCIS Burroughs, brother of one of our members, and a nationwide expert on glass, gave us a most interesting and amusing talk about the history of glass making, telling us Obsidian natural glass had been found in the earth over 70 million years ago and that the Egyptians first man-made glass over 3000 years ago. Around 100 BC a Roman invented blowing glass with a tube and Roman villas had glazed windows. We heard how Viking glass long beakers with claws had been found in East Anglia and how Persian glass was brought to England in the 8th century. The Crusaders brought back bottles and reliquaries in the 11th and 12th centuries.

Glass making began in Bristol in 1650. In 1675 Mr Ravenscroft made clear, lead glass and the first cut glass was made in 1736. William Cookworthy first imported cobalt to make the famous Bristol blue glass.

Francis told us that he owns one of the eight decanters made by the firm of Lazarus and Isaac Jacobs for King George III. He also owns, and showed us, some Egyptian glass beads, a 4th century glass perfume bottle and many elegant examples of Bristol blue ware and lead cut crystal.

Christina Ruddock