



Dorking & District
University of the Third Age

newsletter



Number 75

September 2013

From the Chair, 1-2 | Membership, 2 | Group News, 3-4 | Meet Three Recent Committee Members, 5-7 | Articles by Science Group members, 7-13 | Poem by Robert Edmondson, 14 | Reports of Monthly Meetings, 13-19 | Reports on Days Out, 19-24 | Holidays, 24-29 | Diversions & Delights, 29-31

Inset: What's On? – Your guide to forthcoming events and activities



The High Street in Arundel and a talk in St Dunstan's Church, Snargate (photos by Laurie von Weber on two of the recent days out)

Cover picture Members on holiday in the French and Italian Rivas in March (photo by Laurie von Weber)

From the Chair

A few days ago, when I was realising that our ever patient Editor was waiting for my contribution to this newsletter, I had a very welcome telephone call. It was from one of our group leaders to ask whether I would have any objection to her submitting an item to the U3A national magazine, *Third Age Matters*.



First of all, I must say that I was delighted that another of our own members was wanting to do this. It is a question that has been raised several times in Committee, and each time we agree that it would be marvellous to see something again from our U3A in the national magazine. Now there has been another spontaneous offer – and that is marvellous. Secondly, permission does not have to be obtained from the Committee, although we can always help in any way required.

And thirdly, wouldn't it be good if this contribution inspires more of our members to submit items! I am sure our own Editor will not mind if I extend this invitation to members who have something to say to try it out in our own newsletter. We would always be able to say that 'we heard it here first'!

We already publish items on our holidays and on days out – and these can also be submitted to *Third Age Matters*. Other U3As do this, often with photographs. More of our many interest groups could report on aspects of the learning they undertake together, or there may be individuals who have experienced a significant event that they could share with the whole membership – the possibilities are endless.

The Editor of *Third Age Matters* recently spoke at a regional meeting about contributions. It might be useful for you all to know that he edits everything that is published to make sure that it fits the style of the journal – so you don't even have to worry about whether it is too long, whether the wording is not quite right, etc. He will deal with that. It is always a good idea to submit a photograph or two with any article – you may have seen pictures sent in from other U3As – and again, the Editor makes decisions about which ones to publish.

The only item that *Third Age Matters* does *not* publish is poetry, even if it is an ode in praise of the U3A!

Finally, we can also send more items to the *Dorking Advertiser*. If you would like to see your account of one of your activities published locally, we can help you to do this.

So, in addition to enjoying the many and varied study and interest groups we have, why not try your hand at writing about them for local or even national publication!

Best wishes,

Doreen

Membership

Welcome!

A warm welcome to each of the new members, listed below, who have joined since the last issue went to press.

Mr Geoffrey Bowley
Mrs I Bowley
Mrs Maureen Burns
Mrs Christina Copp
Ms Janet Dawkins
Dr Anthony Esgate
Mrs Joyce Francis
Mr John Harwood
Mrs Janet Hoad
Mr Raymond Jones
Mrs Gladys Standen

We now have 552 members of whom, by 1 August, 499 had paid subscriptions for 2013/2014. Those who had still not paid by 31 August have been removed from the membership list. The *Newsletter* will be sent only to paid-up members; others are now ex-members.

If you know of anyone who hasn't yet paid but wants to continue membership, please ask them to ring Bob Crooks (01306 740062).

Group News

Art Appreciation

The Group will be changing its meeting place as of September to Canterbury Court, Station Road, Dorking. We will still meet at the same time - the last Wednesday in the month from 2.00-4.00pm. We do have vacancies.

Our Programme will be: *September* Vermeer and Rembrandt; *October* Constable and Turner; *November* Michelangelo; *December* No meeting.

Please ring me if you would like to join us.

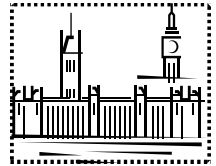
Pat Lucas (01306 711653)



Current Issues

From 18 September, we shall be returning to Canterbury Court for our meetings on the third Wednesday at 10.30am. We have room for a few more members – please ring me if you are interested. The next two topics are Child Poverty in Britain (18 September) and Poverty in Dafur (16 October).

Jim Docking (01737 843260)



Latin for Today

This new, small and friendly group meets on the 3rd Tuesday every month from 10.30am until noon at Lincoln Arms in Dorking. Together, we extend our knowledge and appreciation of Latin language and mores, showing relevance to and influence on modern life, language and culture. We visited the Pompeii exhibition at the British Museum to augment our understanding of life in Roman times and have more Roman-themed visits planned. We pursue a different modern-legacy aspect each session (such as horticulture, mottos, science) related to the text we are following. We have vacancies.

Rosemary Harbridge(01306 881520)



Metaphysical Poetry

I hope this autumn to start a course on Metaphysical Poetry, using the Penguin Classics paperback of that title, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in the month, beginning on 21 October at 2.30pm. As it will be held at my house, I can only accommodate a small number. Please telephone to reserve a place.

Bette Phillips (01306 887112)



Philosophy

We meet in members' homes and would welcome new members. We are currently exploring the concept of Free Will, based on a lively and thought-provoking book by Richard Oerton.

Marjorie Hudson (01306 888281)



Practical Gardening

The Herb Gardening group is now replaced by Practical Gardening, coordinated by Joan Searle. This meets on the 2nd Friday at 10.00am. However, because members comprise those in the former Herb Gardening group who meet in a house, there are no vacancies at the moment. If you would like to be placed on a waiting list, please ring Joan Searle (01737 843676).



Singing for Pleasure

The Singing for Pleasure group is currently preparing for their first entertainment 'gig' at Riddell Hall for the Walton on the Hill Seniors Club on 5 September in the afternoon. Joining them will be a lovely solo soprano singer, Kasumi Brookes, who will be singing some Japanese folk songs and also songs from *The Sound of Music*. Then we will all have afternoon tea!



Sadly Jeanne Teague, our wonderful pianist, is unwell at the moment, and our thoughts and prayers are with her. Gina Eason, an experienced professional musician, has agreed to take over the accompanying during her absence.

We meet on 1st and 3rd Mondays in Buckland Reading Room from 10.00am to noon – with, of course, a break for coffee and biscuits and a chat. We would love to welcome new members of any voice: do come and join us; we are a very friendly crowd. The music is well known, popular and not too challenging; all abilities are most welcome – just ring Carole Brough Fuller (01737 842918) or Mary Hooper (01737 844406).

Primrose Drake (Conductor)

Meet Three Recent Committee Members

Jenny Ford

Can you tell us something of your early life?

I was born during the war in Hove, and when my father returned from the Middle East we moved to Hertfordshire. My father was an antiques dealer which gave me a life-long interest in pictures and furniture. I attended many auctions with him.



I was educated at Berkhamsted School for Girls and then took a secretarial course in typing, shorthand and something called 'business studies'. This involved balancing columns of figures, but my debits and credits seldom matched. Fortunately I subsequently married a chartered accountant, so my mathematical shortcomings were irrelevant. Using my school Latin to cope with the names of drugs and diseases, I worked first for a local hospital; and when I moved to London I worked for two consultants in Harley Street.

I moved to London in 1962 and shared a flat with three other girls for five years, so I was part of the 'Beatles and Biba' generation. Marriage followed, and while my children were growing up I spent 10 years teaching in a nursery school and later worked part-time in a library.

When did you join the U3A, and what has it meant to you?

I knew about the U3A from my library

work and joined some years ago. I did not have much time initially as I worked for the National Trust two days a week until last year, and I continue to choose and deliver books to housebound people. I wanted to meet people in Dorking with similar interests to myself, and the U3A, and also NADFAS, have provided that. I have done Pilates for a long time and I recently joined the new Art Appreciation class.

I have never seen myself as a 'committee' person but was persuaded to stand and find I am enjoying it as the other committee members are all so friendly and supportive. I am sociable, positive and energetic, so hopefully I am making a useful contribution to the running of the U3A.

It would be good to have more people coming forward to join us even if they can only do a small amount such as writing up a monthly talk or day trip or perhaps giving the occasional vote of thanks after a talk. Perhaps we could have a register of such people who we could call on. It would also be nice to have a few more groups.

Outside the U3A, what are your interests?

I am lucky enough to have five grandchildren who keep me up-to-date with youth culture, which is so important as one ages. Because of them, I am particularly interested in education. I am very keen on gardening; and as we did not have a television until I was 14, I developed a passion for reading. We moved to Dorking 12 years ago as Richard and I are great walkers and also enjoy the music at the Dorking Halls.

Julie Mellows

Can you tell us something of your early life?

I was born in Lincoln during the war four months after my father had been killed in an RAF aircraft crash. When I was eight years old, my mother remarried a widower with three children, and the two joined families eventually numbered seven children.

I had a varied career. After leaving Croydon High School, I trained as a secretary, but later decided to become a medical social worker, practising in hospitals for ten years. I then switched professions again, taking a Cordon Bleu Cookery Diploma and doing freelance catering for six years. But for the last 11 years of working life, I was employed as a PA and Travel Administrator at Tearfund, an overseas relief and development charity.

When did you join the U3A, and what has it meant to you?

I joined the U3A in 1997, after taking early retirement, in order to pursue the varied interests on offer and meet new

friends. Dorking U3A has certainly met these expectations, particularly with regard to mental stimulation and meeting people with similar outlook and interests. I particularly enjoy the activities that enable you to keep up past skills, such as French, and to maintain physical fitness, as in the Pilates and Walking groups. I also find the Study Days at the Menuhin Centre very stimulating, as are our day outings. The Committee enables me to use my secretarial/administrative experience, and I am used to participating in group discussions and decision-making. I would like to say that Doreen Raine has done a brilliant job as chair over the last two years.



Outside the U3A, what are your interests?

My main interests are music (I'm a violinist in the Redhill Sinfonia), church membership at St Mary's, Pixham, gardening and travel.

Pam Toler

Can you tell us something of your early life?

I was born in 1929 in Charlton Village not far from Blackheath. My brothers and I spent many happy hours on the Heath, in Greenwich Park and the Observatory. When I was seven, we moved to Bromley and three years later to Wallington soon after war had been declared. Life was often disrupted as we lived close to Croydon Aerodrome; bombing and air raids were part of life.

At 16, I started work in the Post Office

Engineering Department. My father considered the Civil Service a sound job for someone who had never passed any exams. Sadly, I never went to university (I was a bit of a dreamer!), but I read books voraciously.

I married in 1951. Once my two sons had started school, I took on voluntary work for the WRVS. When we moved to Dorking in 1972, I continued my WRVS work, eventually becoming Local, then District, Organiser for Dorking and Leatherhead. I was also a volunteer for Victim Support.

When did you join the U3A, and what has it meant to you?

I joined the U3A in 2008 following the death of my husband: how very wise! So many interesting courses – singing, opera, poetry, mahjong and current issues. I am now on the Committee; although I'm not a great 'committee

person', I wanted to give something back. I feel it's important to publicise the U3A and to get more members involved in its running, and I know Doreen is working on this.

I enjoy each day, try to keep my brain active, and count myself very lucky.

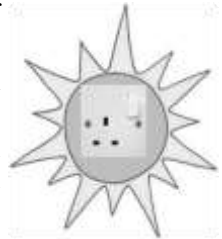
Articles

Sources of Energy

The Science, Technology and Society Group has been looking at new ways of producing energy. The articles below are based on some members' presentations.

Solar Power

Solar power is an increasingly important source of renewable energy. In fact the sun is the ultimate source of most of the energy we use. Fossil fuels such as oil and gas are the remains of plant and animal life that converted energy from the sun millions of years ago; and even though new deposits are still being found, these supplies are finite.



Renewable sources such as wind and hydroelectric power are also dependent on the sun. In the case of wind power it is the heat of the sun that causes temperature and pressure variations across the earth's surface that result in winds. Hydroelectric power depends on the water cycle of evaporation and rainfall to fill lakes and reservoirs that can be used as sources of hydroelectric power. Perhaps only nuclear and tidal power can be considered as truly non-solar energy sources.

The sun is a virtually unlimited source of energy, which it derives from the process of nuclear fusion. This process can be replicated on earth in the form of the hydrogen bomb, but despite the efforts of many scientists over the last 50 years it has not yet been possible to control this process to enable it to be used as a source of useable energy. There is still hope that this can be achieved in the future and that this could become the ultimate solution to our ever-increasing energy requirements.

In the meantime considerable progress has been made on harnessing the solar energy that reaches our planet across the 93 million miles of space between us and the sun. The average rate at which energy from the sun reaches the earth is 174 Petawatts. A Petawatt is 1,000,000,000,000,000 watts! Around half is reflected by clouds, oceans and land and the other half is absorbed. The current average energy use by humans is around 18 Terawatts (1 Petawatt = 1000 Terawatts). In theory then, if we could make use of only about 1/5000th of the solar energy reaching the earth we could meet all our requirements. This is, of course, much easier said than done!

There are a variety of ways in which solar power can be harnessed. We can use the heat and light from the sun directly. These so-called passive solar techniques include orienting a building to the sun, selecting materials with favourable thermal mass or light dispersing properties, and designing spaces that naturally circulate air. Heat from the sun can also be focussed by mirrors and lenses, and this technique can be used in solar cookers. Water treatment plants and desalination plants can also use passive solar heating. These techniques are of course limited by the latitude, the weather and the seasons.

Most use of solar energy focuses on its conversion to electrical energy. There are two distinct ways in which this can be done. The first is to use the heat from the sun, focussed by mirrors, to boil water to produce steam, which can then be used to drive turbines in the same way as if the water was boiled using fossil fuels or nuclear energy. This technique is known as Concentrated Solar Power (CSP). Power plants using CSP to generate up to 350 Megawatts have been built in the USA, Spain and India.

A much more widely-used technique involves solar or photovoltaic cells. These devices convert light into electricity using the photo-electric effect. This was first demonstrated in 1880, but the original devices were very



A huge solar power plant in Nevada



Solar panels are increasingly used to provide heat in houses

inefficient, converting only about 1% of solar energy to electricity. Since then efficiency has increased to between 20% and 40%, and modern manufacturing techniques have made available large solar panels at ever decreasing prices. Much of this development has been driven by the use of solar panels as a source of power in space exploration. Solar panels are now a common sight on rooftops even in temperate countries. This has been encouraged by government schemes which enable users to sell surplus electricity to the electricity supply companies on so-called feed-in tariffs that can enable users to recoup their initial costs in as few as seven years.

One of the most attractive features of photovoltaic cells is that they can be used in a wide range of applications both large-scale and small-scale. For example many pocket calculators use photovoltaic cells, and because calculators only use a very small current they will produce sufficient power even in artificial light. Small scale applications of photovoltaic cells are especially useful where there is no access to mains electricity.

One of the most interesting small scale applications is now being employed in Africa where there is plenty of sunshine and very little mains electricity. In fact 600 million Africans have no access to mains electricity, and many of these rely on toxic kerosene lamps for lighting. These lamps emit noxious black smoke causing disease and atmospheric pollution and burn up to 20% of the household income - locking millions into poverty. By contrast solar lights using batteries, which are charged from solar panels during the day, cost less than £10, pay for themselves after 12 weeks, and last for five years. Having free, clean light and not wasting money on kerosene transforms peoples' chances in life and has significant educational benefits, allowing children to read and study at home in the evenings. Many of these devices can also be used to charge mobile phones, another technology which is helping Africa move into the twenty-first century. A charity called Solar Aid is driving this program with the objective of eliminating all kerosene lamps within ten years. To learn more, visit their website at www.solar-aid.org.

Bob Crooks



A solar lamp with mobile phone charger

Shale Gas and Fracking

The British Government is backing a huge project to boost hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, whereby rocks thousands of meters below ground level are blasted with water, sand and chemicals under high pressure to release methane, or shale gas, as a source of energy for power stations. Surveys have shown that there are unexpectedly huge deposits nationwide, amounting to 13,000 trillion cubic feet of gas, most of all in the areas lying between Chester and Preston, Sheffield and Wakefield, and York and Scarborough.



A Cuadrilla drilling rig near Blackpool

Some politicians seem to envisage a bonanza comparable to one the United States is now enjoying, claiming that fracking could bring about a ready supply of cheap natural gas, energy security (no need any more to rely on imports of gas), lots of employment opportunities, and a thriving economy. Indeed, the Government is so enthusiastic about the prospect of cheap energy that it is offering big-hearted tax breaks to the prospectors ('the most generous for shale in the world', says the Chancellor), less rigorous planning controls and financial rewards to affected communities to encourage companies such as Cuadrilla to just get on with it.

Is all this whooping with joy deserved or misplaced? Well, Cuadrilla itself, along with the energy regulator Ofgem, admits that shale gas will not reduce the energy prices paid by consumers for a very long time. Even Ed Davey, Secretary of state for Energy and Climate Change, warned in December 2011, that 'until we have more certainty about the potential scale and costs of shale gas production in the UK it is unwise to assume it will be some kind of silver bullet'. We must remember that just because the gas is there does not mean it can all be easily exploited on a commercial basis. The characteristics of shale rock formations in this country are more complicated than in the USA (where there are more than 500,000 shale gas wells) – though some experts argue that even if just 10% is extracted, that alone would give Britain over four decades of shale gas.

But whatever the financial implications, there are serious environmental

and safety matters that should cause us concern. Environmentally, there are three main problems. One is that those who live in the prospective drilling areas, much of which is in beautiful rural countryside, are hardly likely to welcome the development of industrial plants polluting their environment, even with the promise of a £100,000 government bounty for the local community. Long legal battles can easily be foreseen, and demonstrations have already started in Balcombe, West Sussex, where exploratory drills for oil could also result in fracking. Secondly, burning shale gas emits carbon dioxide (admittedly less abundantly than coal or oil) and a recent poll showed nearly 8 out of 10 people want to reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Carbon capture must therefore be regarded as essential. Equally worrying, will money for shale gas production come at the expense of the development of renewable sources of energy? Thirdly, the process will entail vast amounts of water having to be transported to the fracking sites at huge cost.

As far as safety is concerned, exploration in the Blackpool area is still in its infancy and has already produced two, admittedly small, earthquakes. We should heed the problems being encountered in the United States, where fracking is thriving. Oklahoma and other states have had hundreds of earthquakes, including one of magnitude 5.7 in 2011, damaging some 200 buildings. More seriously, drilling in the States has led to leakages of methane – the second most polluting gas and at least 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a global warming gas. Research at Cornell University has shown that a leakage of just 4-5% would make methane as dangerous as coal as regards global warming. Vast numbers of boreholes will be made to test which are commercially viable, but all could be subject to leakage. To prevent leakage into the atmosphere, the gas can be burned off, producing flares several feet high.

Also, some of the chemicals (of which there are around 600) that are used in fracking are known to be carcinogenic or otherwise toxic. Contamination of the groundwater around fracking sites has caused concern in America (but the Bush administration ensured that oil and gas industries are exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act!).

We shall await developments with interest. Shale gas could be the solution to our energy problems, but equally it could spell a series of serious irreversible problems. Caution must be the byword.

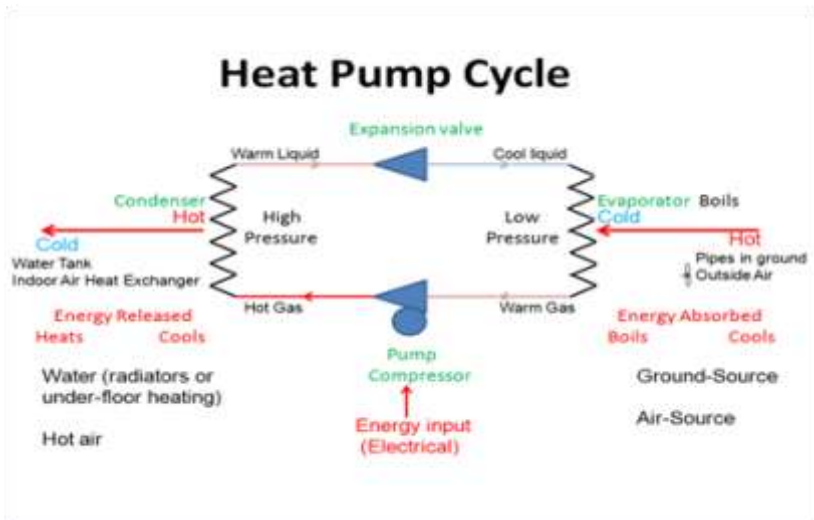
Jim Docking

Heat Pumps

Heat pumps work like refrigerators in reverse. They take heat energy at a relatively low temperature from the ground or from the ambient air and, by means of a clever thermodynamic cycle, deliver it at a much higher temperature, useful to the home.

A closed refrigeration circuit is filled with a fluid which at some points is in a liquid state and at others is vapour. The liquid is turned to vapour by reducing the pressure through an expansion valve and adding heat (absorbed from the ground or outside air) so that the fluid boils in the evaporator. The vapour is turned back to liquid by increasing the pressure through a compressor and extracting heat in the condenser. The heat from the condenser is used to raise the temperature of the domestic hot water and/or to provide central heating for the home.

The principles involved include the natural flow of heat energy from hot to cold, the decrease in boiling temperature of a fluid as pressure is reduced, and the latent heat absorbed in boiling and released on condensing.



The efficiency (Coefficient of Performance) is calculated as the

$$\frac{\text{Energy output (heat extracted from the environment)}}{\text{Energy input (electrical power to the compressor)}}$$

A ratio of 4 to 1 can be achieved making it very energy efficient. However, the cost of electrical power to drive the compressor is typically four times the cost of mains gas which might otherwise be used to heat the home, so it may only be cost neutral. It is most effective working from a ground source rather than an air source since the ground temperature 1.5 metres down is fairly constant throughout the year where the air temperature drops in winter

when you need the heating most.

The system is most efficient delivering to water under-floor heating or blown hot-air heating rather than water radiators, which require a higher delivery



A 20 watt heat pump unit in Essex

Monthly Meetings

A Sentimental Journey – A Life devoted to Music: Roger Hind, 13 February 2013

Our speaker and pianist at the March meeting, Roger Hind, is the stalwart Chairman of Dorking’s own Watermill Jazz Club, providing entertainment each Thursday evening at Friends Provident. Roger, who hails from Southport, is the son of a piano-playing father, and he described his early years and the influences he gleaned from steam radio.

After playing *Sentimental Journey*, he ‘dissected’ for us the song *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, composed in 1930, during the course of which he demonstrated the art of stride piano as played by the master himself, Thomas ‘Fats’ Waller, mentioning others such as Russ Conway and even Mrs Mills. Next on the agenda was ‘comping’, which is short for ‘accompanying’, with *Sunny Side* again getting the treatment.

The first Top Twenty hit parade was

the result of the sales of sheet music, of which Roger has a large collection. We learned that *Here in my Heart* by Al

Martino (of *Godfather* fame) was the first top-selling disc. The Al Jolson big hit of 1921 *Avalon* may have earned him \$25,000, but proved costly when he found himself sued by the original composer, Puccini. Roger then demonstrated how *Fly me to the Moon* started off life from Handel. The final item was *Autumn Leaves* in the style of, I think, Errol Garner.

It was a delightful afternoon, much appreciated by all, with not a little audience participation.

John Brown



A Cautionary Verse

A basic understanding of mathematics is more than the ability to do simple arithmetic. It is our innumeracy that allows politicians, advertisers, tabloid newspapers and other 'persuaders' to mislead us. This aspect of education, always topical, is the subject of this cautionary verse by Robert Edmondson.

Harold Hyde

I'll tell the tale of Harold Hyde, who never knew how to divide
Or multiply, subtract or add (at mathematics he was bad),
Who, years before, when still at school, instead of learning played the fool.
He laughed and chatted with his chums instead of trying to do his sums.

He thought that it was cool and smart to fold an ink-stained paper dart
And throw it at the boy in front – for him a most amusing stunt.
He'd stare out of the window at the antics of a passing cat,
Or, with his penknife on his desk, he'd carve an emblem most grotesque.

His teacher's wisdom he'd ignore – arithmetic was such a bore,
And now he was a dunce unable to say aloud his nine times table.
And someone so innumerate faced problems manifold and great.
He lacked the necessary skills for dealing with his household bills.

He soon became a nervous wreck if he'd account statements to check.
He could not check them to his shame, with no-one but himself to blame.
And even worse than this he'd find that weekly shopping was a bind
With overdrafts and massive debts, perpetually looming threats.

And understanding interest rates was, to his mind, a bolted gate,
A land through which he could not go – a paradise he'd never know.
So managers of local banks for his incompetence gave thanks.
And con men found him easy prey, loan sharks and swindlers all made hay.

Because numerical ignorance showed, he never realised what he owed.
Not adding up expenses meant he never knew just what he'd spent.
So, now grown up, an uncouth yob, he had to find himself a job.
But few employers wished to hire someone whose maths skills were so dire.

He failed the simple tests they set, and then was told, with some regret,
That he was far from up to scratch with standards he would have to match.
His prospects poor, his outlook grim, we should not sympathise with him.

HE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO AND HEARD HIS MATHEMATICS TEACHER'S WORD!

Gardening Without Aches and Pains: Peter Spriggs, 13 March 2013

This was an entertaining and informative talk including lots of useless information, which, as he said, might come in useful. Peter has run his own gardening business for 30 years.

Why are carrots orange? Because they were selectively bred by the Dutch for taste and colour (national colour orange if you remember the Olympics).

So what helps you in the garden?

- Kneeling pads that turn into a seat (so you can have a little rest)
- An easy-start mower
- Tools for the 'disabled' such as a trowel with a telescopic extending handle (which he showed us): try the charity called 'Thrive' at Reading, who can also design tools to order
- Trowel with extended handle and wrist and arm brace, to help weak arms
- Left-handed secateurs (if you are left handed of course)
- Sharp tools (sharpen with a diamond sharpener for preference); sharpen secateurs across the sloping edge
- Use the correct hoe – a Dutch hoe is designed for walking backwards along long rows, so try the 'swoe' (pictured below), which cuts the soil on all three edges. (I have used one of these for ages so know it makes short work of the weeds.)



- To get rid of ants, sprinkle sugar on the nest. The workers feed the sugar to the queen and it poisons her. Or use flour, which gets sticky. Ants are destructive, undermining paving slabs, getting into flower pots, and burying seedlings as they tunnel.
- Slugs and snails are nature's re-cyclers (did you know a slug can be stretched to 11 times its original length?) and the most voracious slugs are the small black ones the size of a fingernail; and the worst snails are the little brown and white striped ones.
- Use the correct cutting tools: secateurs are designed for stems up to 1cm diameter, and larger than that needs a pruning saw. (Replacement springs for secateurs can be bought on-line.) [Battery-operated Bosch secateurs, which cut up to 1.4mm, are a boon if you have arthritic fingers or simply find that squeezing secateurs causes your fingers to ache. – *Ed.*]
- Tools can be multifunctional with different heads fitting onto one handle (he showed Wolf tools).
- Professionals prefer 'Felco' tools which are expensive but long lasting.
- On the vegetable patch, all soil needs aerating. The no-dig method relies on worms to tunnel through the compost layer. Double digging is past history!
- Pests: cats scare them.
- Foxes: deter them, so don't leave food out.
- Deer: fence them out (8 foot high works in my garden).
- Rabbits: bury the fence at least one foot down to stop them tunnelling.
- Moles don't like moss killer as it is

acidic; the worms burrow down to avoid it so the moles go to feed elsewhere.

- Hedgehogs: these are not pests, so encourage them as they eat slugs, they need an untidy garden corner to nest in.
- Roses: ramblers have soft branches which can be bent into a circle; climbers flower at the top.

- Clematis: the later it flowers, the harder you should prune it; spring flowering flowers on old growth, summer flowering on new growth.

Remember you are always right in your own garden, and never listen to an expert!

Ann Watney

The History of Crosswords: Susan Purcell, 10 April 2013

Susan began by telling us that she is responsible for editing words and clues for *Puzzler*, a popular magazine published in Redhill. The first crosswords, she told us, were published 100 years ago in the *New York World* by Arthur Wynne, an immigrant from Liverpool. Typesetters found the printing tricky and had to take pains in getting the white and shaded squares in the right place lest readers complained.

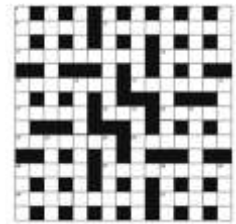
Originally, the puzzles were called ‘words-cross’, but a typesetter once mistakenly printed it with the words reversed, and the new term caught on. For several years, no other newspaper included crosswords, but the craze took off in 1924 when two gentlemen called Simon and Schuster published a book of all the crosswords that had been published and succeeded in selling thousands of copies. The early twenties proved to be the right time for the innovation since people were looking for entertaining pursuits now that the war years were over.

But not everyone welcomed the fun in trying to solve the puzzles. An article in the *New York Times* in 1924 even suggested that problems in solving clues were leading to insanity, and litigants cited crosswords in cases of divorce and

even murder. Employers too were not happy, complaining of time wasted by their workers. In England, an article in *The Times*

maintained that crosswords were killing conversation, while opticians reported an increase in cases of eye strain. Librarians too complained because ‘puzzle fans’ were swarming to use their dictionaries and encyclopaedias, driving away readers and students who needed these books in their daily work.

In 1924, the first crossword in a British newspaper was published in the *Express*, and James Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister, became a fan. Newspapers often offered prizes, and a certain magazine that decided to publish all the answers to currently available crosswords sold as many as 6,000 copies in just one week. To minimise the amount spent on prizes, newspapers used to include a special word where, say, the second, fourth and sixth letters were clearly ‘A’ because of other clues. If most readers had written ‘banana’, the proprietors declared this ‘wrong’, saying the ‘real’ answer was ‘papaya’.



The first cryptic crossword was published in this country in the *Observer* by one Edward Mathers. When he died, his successor called himself ‘Ximenes’, and it is he who is considered the father of crosswords because he laid down rules that are still followed today. But in America, cryptic crosswords are still not popular, readers there preferring puzzles that focus on general knowledge. Many compilers turned out to be prisoners because they had more time to look up facts!

Typically, compilers of cryptic crosswords today are retired teachers or clergyman who are well-educated and now have more time on their hands.

During the Second World War, Bletchley Park liked to recruit people who completed cryptic crosswords in record time on the grounds that they must be super-intelligent.

Compilers invariably start off by filling in the grid before formulating the clues. There are countless ways in which a grid can be filled, so a newspaper can rely on as few as 25 or so and simply rotate them: readers rarely catch on.

Susan Purcell was a most entertaining and informative speaker, relating many amusing anecdotes, and much appreciated by the capacity audience in the Christian Centre.

Jim Docking

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Victorian Photography:

John Hill, 12 June 2013

Supported by a fine display of some of this collection of original Victorian photographs, John Hill informed and entertained a very large audience by projecting and discussing copies of early photographs, using digital equipment.

John started by describing the work of one of the early pioneers of photography, Tom Wedgwood, who in the early 1800s could form images; but because he was unable to stabilise or ‘fix’ them, they soon faded on exposure to light.

Later, working in France, Louis Daguerre produced the Daguerreotype, renowned for its mirror-like quality, sharpness and portrayal of detail. Many examples survive from the 1840s, and for several years this process enjoyed great success, particularly for portraits. However, each Daguerreotype was unique, small, fragile and expensive, to say nothing of the hazard associated with

silver-plating a polished copper plate and treating it with iodine and hot mercury vapour.

John explained that Fox Talbot is known as the father of photography, particularly as his work led to the ability to produce multiple copies of an image. John introduced us to examples of Ambrotypes, a photograph that creates a positive image on a sheet of glass using the wet plate collodion



Fox Talbot, the father of photography. The Fox Talbot museum of photography is at Lacock Abbey, which the U3A is visiting on 19 September

process, which is much cheaper than the Daguerreotype, Tin Types and Cartes de Visite.

Many pictures that John showed us on the screen, such as portraits, family groups and family celebrations, contained insights into social history, and could be studied to obtain details of the design of the clothes worn and the type of textiles used. Several studio photographs used various props to show off their subjects, and a photograph of a cyclist with his latest machine, an ordinary penny farthing, reminded us that a cycling craze

is nothing new.

We were also given tips on what to look for if we wanted to start our own collection of early photographs. The importance of contemporary supporting material was mentioned, such as the letter of approval accompanying a portrait of Queen Victoria that was one of the original photographs on display. Finally a photograph including a triple magic lantern showed that the Victorians could enjoy an illustrated talk just as we do – and did on this occasion.

Peter Shelley

The Good Life At Four Gables: David Gillott, 10 July 2013

This title was chosen purposely by David Gillott, as his business, based in Ashted in Surrey, has a parallel with the TV programme that we all know from yesteryear starring Richard Briars and Felicity Kendal.

David (pictured), apart from being the youngest speaker that I can remember with the U3A, is a chef of wide experience and runs his Food Academy (opened in January 2012) from a smallholding and essentially provides professional tuition for would-be cooks and experienced cooks who want to improve.

The smallholding contains some ducks, some goats, two lambs named Mint & Sauce (but he's never sure which is which) and several beehives. These provide eggs and honey for the kitchen, but in the way David spoke it didn't appear that the goats and lambs would ever appear on the table but be pets. Oh, yes, and some pigs are on order but not arrived yet. Vegetables are also grown at the smallholding for use in his kitchen.

He commenced his talk by explaining how he got



into cooking at the age of 13, partly by watching his mother and partly by being at a talk by Two-Star Michelin chef, Paul Merrett, who asked for questions and David asked how he could get into cooking. The chef gave him permission to occasionally go to his kitchen to see how it is done, and by the age of 16 he knew that was the future for him. He then related his experience in various kitchens, including in a restaurant in the French Alps. This all then led to him setting up the Food Academy in Ashted.

Realistically his talk was to market his Academy; and, by buying vouchers for cookery classes, one can learn to cook. A bonus is that whatever one cooks when there can be taken home and no doubt impress whoever is at home to eat it. He describes it as a 'sociable and fun way to improve your culinary skills – with

impressive results’.

Just to show how easy it is to cook, he cooked some chocolate truffles using a very fast table-top induction cooker.

After his talk he asked for questions. With a largely female audience, the questions came thick and fast on all sorts

of angles including how to sharpen knives for the kitchen. David coped with the questions enthusiastically and I am sure that those present went away with a better view of their cooking and ideas for buying vouchers for birthday and Christmas presents. *Colin Pilbeam*

Days Out

Oxford and the Ashmolean Museum, 19 February 2013

On a really bright and beautiful day in February we set off for our trip to Oxford. On finally arriving there we were conveniently dropped off opposite the Ashmolean Museum and, being ready for mid-morning coffee, most of us rushed to the museum’s café before we did anything else!

This famous museum (pictured), the oldest in the country, was the world’s first university museum. It was built in 1678-1683 to house the cabinet of curiosities that Elias Ashmole gave to Oxford University in 1677. These artefacts and curios were mostly collected by the 17th century naturalist and royal gardener, John Tradescant. The museum was subsequently relocated to its present site in 1845 and has a fantastic collection of archaeological artefacts from ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and the near East, along with a fine collection of European paintings, including those of Constable, Gainsborough, Manet, Rembrandt and Titian. There are always various exhibitions on display, and on this day we wandered to a display of Chinese landscape paintings, including rarely shown works by masters of the 17th



century.

On leaving the Ashmolean, where we could easily have spent the whole day, we wandered around the centre of Oxford enjoying beautiful early spring-like weather. Oxford University does not have just one great campus but different colleges that are very much the heart of the city. There are so many colleges to see – in fact there are 38 in total – and eight are for graduates only; one, All Souls, that is the most exclusive of all, is for Fellows (senior academics) only. Many of these colleges were founded by well-meaning, wealthy benefactors, and today have considerable financial resources. The oldest colleges are

University College, Balliol and Merton. Probably the most visited and well-known is Christ Church, which was founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1524. Magdalen College has the most extensive grounds, with its own river walk, deer park, cloisters and three quadrangles. The 15th century tower is the setting for one of Oxford's celebrated traditions. On May Day at 6.00am the choristers sing from the top of the tower to greet the coming of spring, although on this beautiful day we did for once feel that spring had actually arrived.

We continued to walk around the centre and eventually came to the famous New Bodleian Library, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in the Art Deco style. This three storey building amazingly holds 11 floors of books, mostly underground!

It seemed that everywhere we walked we came across yet another college or museum, but another really interesting sight to see was the Bridge of Sighs, evoking, of course, that famous sight in

Venice. The view from here takes your eye across the Bodleian Library's Old School Quad towards the Sheldonian Theatre, where all students visit at least twice during their time at Oxford, once to matriculate and then to graduate.

The city has also hosted many works of fiction in more recent times, but of course one of the most well-known is Colin Dexter's *Inspector Morse* novels and TV series, together with its sequel *Lewis*. The Oxford Playhouse was the venue for Richard Burton's stage debut, and now includes the Burton and Taylor studio named after these two screen legends.

We could have spent so much more time just wandering around this fascinating city as there were many more places to visit, but the time came when we had to get back on the coach to make our way home. This was really a most interesting outing and certainly whetted the appetite for another trip.

Our thanks must go to Jean Williams and her team for arranging such a great day out.

Deanne Rhodes

Waddesdon Manor, 18 April 2013

[I don't seem to have received a report on this trip, but if someone did write one please let me know and I'll insert it in the next newsletter. Below is a photo by Laurie von Weber of the impressive façade, built in the Neo-Renaissance style of a French château between 1874 and 1889 for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. —Ed]



The Churches of Romney Marsh: 16 May 2013

On what turned out to be a remarkably good weather day (after weeks of cold and wet), another U3A coachful set out for a most enjoyable visit to Romney Marsh and its historic churches. This was the second time such a visit had been arranged, but, as there are 14 mediaeval churches to see with only time to cover four in the day, there is still the possibility of another two visits at least. The enthusiasm shown by those who came would suggest that this might well be worth doing.

Our first welcome stop was at the Rose & Crown pub in Old Romney for coffee. Here our guide joined us and introduced us to something of the history of the Marsh and its churches. The present day Marsh covers a triangular 100-square mile area where reclamation of land from the sea was originally started by the Romans and continued into the twelfth century AD. Low hills in the distance denote the former Saxon shoreline. A leaflet on the area states that 'the mediaeval churches of Romney Marsh were built by the lords of the manors on the Marsh to serve the communities. Although the population of the area was never high, the churches were often built on a large scale to reflect the importance of the parish or the importance of the patron. Today these churches offer a glimpse into the past, their quietness and coolness providing a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the modern world.'

It is worth mentioning at this point that the creation in 1982 of the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust has been a vital source of funding for preserving and maintaining the fabric of the 14 churches. Grants totalling £700,000 have

been awarded since that time, and the Trust has also mounted special appeals for repair of damage such as that caused by the 1987 great storm.

Before lunch we had time to visit Old Romney's St Clement's Church, originally near the sea but now 4 miles inland. Many seaside churches are named after Saint (Pope) Clement who was apparently martyred by being thrown into the sea with an anchor around his neck. In 1140 the port of 'Romney' became 'Old Romney', with New Romney now being closer to the sea and one of the 'Cinque Ports'. We were told that many of the Marsh churches were involved indirectly in smuggling, hiding contraband in their buildings. St Clement's had Saxon origins but there are no remains from this, the present building being Norman with additions in the 1300s and 1500s. Of particular interest was an unusual stone altar which in the Reformation was dismantled (as Popish) and buried outside by the door. Workmen discovered it in the 1920s, and it was reinstated in 1999. The church's box pews were painted in a very pale pink (!) when a Technicolor film, 'Dr Syn', was made by Walt Disney in 1963. Patrick McGooghan played the part of the doctor who was vicar of Dymchurch by day but became a smuggler at night.

An excellent Ploughman's lunch at the Rose & Crown followed this visit before we set off in our coach for the next church, St George Ivychurch (pictured over). This is known as 'The Cathedral of Romney Marsh', its size indicating the wealth of its patron, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Its clerestory windows echo those of Canterbury Cathedral which

were being installed at the same time and possibly by the same masons. The church may have Anglo Saxon origins but was replaced after the Norman Conquest and then considerably enlarged in the fourteenth century. The font and most of the piers are of Kentish ragstone, none of which now remains to be quarried, but one pier is of Caen stone which the Normans preferred and which was also used at Canterbury Cathedral. The nave of the church is clear of pews, which had to be removed due to ingress of rain water, and is now used for concerts and other events such as Harvest Suppers. Our guide informed us that a document from 1716 declared the Marsh to be 'unhealthy' (with malarial mosquitoes) and that the reason so many of its churches retain original features is partly because Victorian restorers wouldn't visit them.

The third church visited was St Dunstan's, Snargate (pictured on the front inside cover). This small settlement on the Marsh was named after the place where canal water was 'snared' by a sluice gate. St Dunstan's was built at the end of the twelfth century with additions and extensions into the 14th and 15th centuries. Points of interest included the font which has the stumps of four legs beneath its bowl, indicating that it was removed in the time of the Lollards who did not believe in baptism by water. Also pointed out to us was a faded wall painting, discovered in 1904, of a ship known as a Caravelle from around 1500. This could have been the backdrop to a guild altar for shipwrights as it was thought that work for the nearby mediaeval dockyard at Smallhythe was undertaken at Snargate. It is also suggested that the presence of a ship in a



church indicated that it was a safe hiding place for smuggled goods. In fact at one stage tobacco and gin were discovered under the vestry floor!

Our last visit was something of a disappointment as St Eanswith, Brenzett, turned out to be locked. Our guide had made an arrangement with a caretaker to open up for us but she had not turned up! He therefore told us something of the church's history as we stood in the graveyard outside. St Eanswith was originally built in the 7th century, dedicated to the granddaughter of King Ethelbert who was king of Kent at the time of St Augustine's arrival in 597. Eanswith founded a nunnery at Folkestone and became the first English royal abbess. As with all the churches, extensions were carried out in later centuries, except that in this case the south aisle was never completed because of the Black Death in 1348. After the worst of this was over a small shingle spire was added.

As our visit drew to a close we were rewarded by a magnificent tea laid on by the local WI in their hall. Two tables laden with delicious homemade cakes were there for us to help ourselves, while ladies came round to our tables to pour the tea. Having already had a more than adequate lunch, we (or at least some of

us) felt somewhat guilty at succumbing to sweet temptation! However, as it was all part of the 'package', who could refuse?!

A trouble-free journey home ended a perfect day.
Julie Mellows

Arundel, 14 June 2013

In quite unexpected sunshine, the previous two days having been wet and cold, we set off for Arundel with high hopes of a good day to come. Many of us had been there, a pretty West Sussex town, on several occasions but with its variety of small shops, Cathedral and magnificent castle, it is always worth another visit.

The first sight of the castle surrounded by fields and water meadows is always breathtaking. Originally built at the end of the 11th century by Sir Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Arundel, it has been the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk for over 850 years. In more modern times, it was one of the first English Country Houses to be fitted with electric light, fire fighting equipment, service lifts and central heating.

Upon arrival in mid-morning, most of us went in immediate search of coffee, whilst some took the coach for the short ride to the Wetlands Bird Sanctuary. Unfortunately, the coach could only drop us off and, due to parking restrictions, was unable to pick us up, which meant some of us who would find the walk back into Arundel too tiring were unable to visit the Sanctuary, where they would have been greeted with the sight of parent ducks, geese and other more unusual birds shepherding their young along the very accessible pedestrian pathways. Some of us took the small electric-driven flat boat around the waterways and were fortunate in seeing not one, not two, but three



Photo by Laurie von Weber

water voles. Those in the previous boat ride had not seen one!

Members who stayed in Arundel took the opportunity to visit, or revisit, the castle, and found it most enjoyable and interesting. It is situated in magnificent grounds overlooking the River Arun. The Roman Catholic Cathedral, another fascinating point of call, was founded by the 15th Duke of Norfolk and was completed in 1873. In 1971, it was rededicated to Sir Philip Howard, one of the 40 Martyrs of England and Wales.

It was time to head for home and whilst waiting for the coach, on every available seat and bench you could see members of Dorking U3A keeping cool in the, by now, very warm sunshine eating ice creams or drinking cold drinks. We boarded our transport, and all agreed it had been a very enjoyable day out.

Jean Williams

The Chilterns, 23 July 2013

This was another successful day out. Although thunderstorms had been forecast, we were lucky to catch just one (on our coffee stop).

We picked up our excellent guide, Wendy, at Tring Station. Because of road diversions, she was unexpectedly able to show us some of the interesting areas around Tring as we made our tortuous way to Aldbury for an excellent sandwich lunch and time to have a look around the village and church.

After re-boarding the coach we were again given an extremely interesting commentary on the local area and the Rothschilds' involvement locally and facts about the many films which have been made in the area. We were also shown where the great train robbery took place!

We arrived at the Great Union Canal in time for a leisurely cruise along the Paddington Arm of the canal, and we



**In the shade at Aldbury village green.
Photo by Laurie von Weber.**

safely navigated three locks, ending at the highest lock, Marsworth, which had played an important part in the Industrial Revolution but today is in a quiet backwater. We were given tea and cake on board and returned in time to get on our coach back to Dorking.

A very enjoyable (if hot) day out.

Judy Peace

Holidays

Holiday News from Angela Cooke

I have been trying to arrange the spring holiday early so that we can have the number of single rooms that we need, However, no travel firm will guarantee either single rooms or reasonable flight times without a deposit. As this newsletter is not being distributed until September, you will realise my difficulties.

Several people have asked to go to Croatia, so I have been investigating Dalmatia. Previously, we have visited Dubrovnik and Rovinj. The holiday that I think you will like is located in Makarska (pictured), which is based on fishing, olive oil and wine-making. There is a daily open-air market. Along the harbour are boat trips to beaches in nearby islands. The 17th century Cathedral of St Mark, the 14th century Franciscan priory (which has a



wonderful shell collection) and the town museum we can do on our own. The guided tour to Split is, I'm told, a 'must'. We pass through ancient Salona before arriving at Trogir, a UNESCO walled city, featuring a 15th century city hall, the palace of Emperor Diocletian, and a Benedictine monastery. Also included in this visit is one to Stella village, where we visit a family-owned producer of traditional Dalmatian delicacies such as arancini (fried rice balls coated with breadcrumbs), and sugar almonds, which you can sample. You will learn about their production, the old way of life, and enjoy a walk through the Aroma Park. Another day, we will take the coach to Omis, where we'll see canyons, mountains and islands, and then have a cruise along the River Cetina to a restaurant for lunch.

I am told that taxis for the day are very cheap if three or four are hired together.

This is a six-day holiday, half-board, from 9-14 May 2014. The temperature around that time averages 21 degrees Celsius. The cost will be approximately £699, with a single room supplement of £49, if we are 25 in number.

Please telephone me as soon as possible on 01306 886211 because of the urgency of securing sensible flight times and single room accommodation.

The French and Italian Rivas, 5-11 March 2013

Members of U3A 'Travellers Club' embarked on their flight to the French and Italian Rivas with smug confidence and light suitcases. They were going to beat the iron-cold English weather. Spring on the Mediterranean would mean light tops and bottoms with, perhaps, a sweater for an evening stroll and, possibly, a light raincoat. But, as the plane began its descent into Nice airport, we looked at one another with concern. The sky was black, palm trees bent low in the violent gusts of wind, while sheets of water covered the runway. 'It's only a glitch,' our guide, Bernadette, confidently told us. 'There'll be sun tomorrow.' Beppe, the coach driver, did not look so sure.

So the trip to Monte Carlo en route to our hotel would have to be cancelled until next day. Relieved, as were very tired, we settled ourselves in the comfortable coach. The journey from Nice was on winding roads through the Mediterranean Alps, and we were aware that many distant peaks were still snow-capped. Suddenly the road vanished into a subterranean tunnel and we found ourselves hurtling through the mountains to the border post where France turned into Italy. Now we were in Liguria and it was not long before we had reached our hotel in Diano Marina, a small coastal resort full of gardens. At least that is what we had read in the brochure but we could see little through the driving rain.

The hotel was warm and welcoming, the rooms comfortable, though it took some of us a while to reach them as the four-storey hotel was served by only one small lift. However, our dinner that night and every night of our stay was delicious,

and the waiters were charming. [All of them? One gave me a right telling off for trying to clear dirty crocks off our table! – *Ed.*] We went to bed well pleased and hopeful of a brighter day tomorrow.

But next morning, and every morning until our very last day, the dawn came up grey, heavy with rain. However, this was Monte Carlo day and not to be missed! Perhaps the sun would relent there. We sat in our coach in expectation and watched the landscape slip by while Bernadette kept up a running commentary of the history and customs of the region.

The small gnarled trees were olives that gave the area its chief source of wealth. However, many of the wooded hills were criss-crossed with what looked like plastic rulers. These were polytunnels where cut flowers were grown, particularly carnations and roses, which were exported all over the world. Small villages dotted the slopes, each with its own church steeple; the houses, all coloured yellow or light brown, were not set in rows but in groups, each housing an extended family who all worked together, earning their living by olives or flowers.

The principality of Monaco or Monte Carlo has the most expensive real estate in the world, where every square inch of space is covered by grand buildings, all painted in ice-cream colours and decorated in the style of la Belle Epoque. Parking there is impossible, but Beppe, with extraordinary dexterity, managed to drop us near our destination.

We stepped out into heavy rain and blustering wind. Some smaller members of our group found it difficult to keep

their balance. Roads sheeted with water were empty except for rows of plastic seats which ran along the pavement in readiness for the spectators at the weekend's Grand Prix.

Florence and I found ourselves by lucky chance near the Cathedral, a tasteful building in gleaming limestone. We went inside and found the interior for a Catholic country remarkably restrained. Behind the high altar lay the flat

white tomb stones of the Grimaldi Princes. And there, set alongside her Prince, is the tomb of Grace Kelly, the exquisitely beautiful, talented American actress who gave it all up to become, as the Monacans say, the saviour of the Principality, putting it on the map. There she lies under the gleaming stone where, on that day, lay a wreath of red roses in the shape of a heart.

Menton came next where, even in the pouring rain, a citrus exhibition was taking place. Happily the tourist office was extremely helpful, and in the dry we climbed stairs to a local handicraft exhibition where we bought gifts made from lavender and lemons, the two great products of the region. We were given a taste of delicious limoncello and promptly bought two bottles. Inspired no doubt by the wine, Florence set out to find the Jean Cocteau Museum while I, still in the rain, wandered around the citrus exhibition marvelling at a globe of the world, a railway engine and a superb



An exhibit from the Menton Lemon Festival (photo by Laurie von Weber). More pictures on front and back cover.

model of our Big Ben, all made of lemons and oranges. Then culture called, and I too went in search of Jean Cocteau whose museum, an extraordinary building of twisted steel girders standing on end and looking as only things like this in France can, extremely elegant, was situated in the middle of a main road. I wished I had more time to stop and stare.

Next day we were to stay in Italy and visit the Arroscia valley, where we were the guests of the Raineri and Ramoino families. First stop was an oil pressing plant where could be seen the instruments used in past years to produce olive oil. Next came the wine and we were given a taste of the golden Pigato, speciality of the House, which was served with different varieties of olives. We assumed this was lunch, but not so. Back on the coach for only a few minutes and then into a trattoria in the mountains, we were treated to a proper lunch: regional Italian dishes, mostly vegetarian with cheese and eggs. There I met a delightful old lady,

the owner, who sold me a jar of the most delicious pesto I have ever tasted.

In the valley of Arroscia there is a village known as Pieve di Teco. To reach it, the coach had to turn abruptly into the narrow alley-way, lined by gigantic walls which looked as though they had been made of dirty clay. We emerged through a large arch into a square, dominated by a huge opulent church which looked modern and out of place in its shabby surroundings. The dirty clay walls continued all round the square, though at intervals there were further arches leading to other narrow alley-ways.

Gingerly, we got out and stood in the rain. The ground was covered with what looked like the dust of centuries, though underneath I could just make out cobbles in unusual patterns. This, Bernadette told us, was a 12th century village and, apart from the church, it had hardly changed. And it was as though it was still in the 12th century and we were intruders from another world, another time. There was not a sound, not a movement. We looked in vain for evidence of people. There were no windows in the massive walls, only holes, which looked as though they had been gouged out of the clay. There were, however, doors. These were huge, and one in turkey red had been scratched and gouged by some enormous weapon wielded by some desperate brigand. And then I was remembering the stories Bernadette had told us of how Liguria had been harassed in bygone days by pirates from Corsica who had come over the sea to steal, not only goods, but women and children they could use as slaves. Was this their work?

The visit to San Remo, the capital town of the Italian Riviera, was disappointing. As we climbed the hill into the town there seemed few people about and little

evidence that this is the town of flowers. However, Winnie had noticed something she felt we should all visit: the Russian church. She had seen its elaborate onion domes from the coach and thought them very beautiful. And indeed it was, The circular church was tiny and spotlessly clean. All the silver and glass objects were sparkling and the icons which hung around the walls glowed with colour, each representing a saint with whom we would probably be familiar. In front of several of these icons were long brown glowing tapers which were most attractive. I was so impressed I found myself fumbling for two euros to buy such a taper to place in front of a splendid St. George.

Our last day dawned and, to our great joy, there was the sun, watery but there! We had several places to visit and we rejoiced that we would not need raincoats or umbrellas.

Our first stop was Grasse in France. I was hoping for rows of lavender bushes, but the Galimard parfumerie was a functional building of shop, laboratories and blending rooms. Our guide was splendid, her English perfect. She made the processes of making perfume quite thrilling showing us how not only the flowers were used but sometimes the leaves and the stems. We particularly enjoyed her description of the work of the NOSE, the he or she who has the unique talent for conceiving a new smell that will please the market.

I visited a small church just as the Mass ended. Sheila, one of our group, thrilled us all, as well as the officiating Priest, by playing the slaves' chorus from *Nabucco* on the small organ.

St Paul de Vence, where many 18th and 19th century artists lived and worked, is a story-book town. All the paths of

sparkling white stones lie between manicured beds of grass, brilliantly green. Flowers tumbled from baskets, urns, doorways, window sills, wheelbarrows, all dead-headed and colour co-ordinated. Every window frame and door had been coated in Farrow and Balls most popular colours. Doors stood open to show delightful curios, antiques, and tiny pictures of local beauty spots. It was perfection; not a scrap of rubbish, a dead leaf or dried grass sullied this delightful spot. A nude statue a la Anthony Gormley stood in one flower bed, completely at home.

This was certainly a show place, a delight. But imagine living there. What do they do with their refuse?

And here I must not forget to thank

Bernadette who, despite weather and our complaints, remained extremely professional, cheerful and kind. And Beppe, whose expressive face spoke volumes and who managed his unwieldy coach with amazing skill, saving our skins on many occasions.

There was no doubt the rain spoiled what should have been a richly varied holiday. But it gave us time to talk and laugh and get to know one another in an atmosphere of warm friendliness, due I believe to the personality of Angela herself. And, surely, that is in itself a holiday.

Shirley Andrews

Diversions & Delights

Strange Anagrams

PRESBYTERIAN:

When you rearrange the letters:
BEST IN PRAYER

ASTRONOMER:

When you rearrange the letters:
MOON STARER

DESPERATION:

When you rearrange the letters:
A ROPE ENDS IT

THE EYES:

When you rearrange the letters:
THEY SEE

GEORGE BUSH:

When you rearrange the letters:
HE BUGS GORE

THE MORSE CODE:

When you rearrange the letters:
HERE COME DOTS

SLOT MACHINES:

When you rearrange the letters:
CASH LOST IN ME

ANIMOSITY:

When you rearrange the letters:
IS NO AMITY

ELECTION RESULTS:

When you rearrange the letters:
LIES - LET'S RECOUNT

A DECIMAL POINT:

When you rearrange the letters:
I'M A DOT IN PLACE

THE EARTHQUAKES:

When you rearrange the letters:
THAT QUEER SHAKE

ELEVEN PLUS TWO:

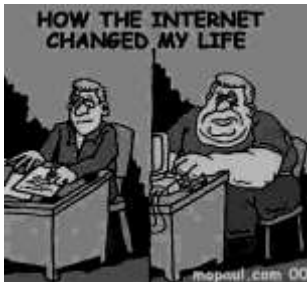
When you rearrange the letters:
TWELVE PLUS ONE

AND FOR THE GRAND FINALE
MOTHER-IN-LAW:

When you rearrange the letters:
WOMAN HITLER

Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, 'Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish Whiskey!' Miraculously, a parking place appeared. Paddy looked up again and said, 'Never mind, I found one.'

Walking into the bar, Mike said to Charlie the barman, 'Pour me a stiff one - just had another fight with the little woman.' 'Oh yeah?' said Charlie, 'And how did this one end?' 'When it was over,' Mike replied, 'She came to me on her hands and knees.' 'Really,' said Charles, 'Now that's a new one! What did she say?' She said, 'Come out from under the bed, you little chicken.'



Some Genuine Guests' Complaints to Thomas Cook Holidays

"I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."

"It's lazy of the local shopkeepers to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time - this should be banned."

"On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food at all."

"The beach was too sandy."

"Topless sunbathing on the beach should be banned. The holiday was ruined as my husband spent all day looking at other women."

"There was no egg slicer in the apartment..."

"We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish."

"It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England, but it only took the Americans three hours to get home."

"I compared the size of our one-bedroom apartment to our friends' three-bedroom apartment and ours was significantly smaller..."

"The brochure stated: 'No hairdressers at the accommodation'. We're trainee hairdressers - will we be OK staying there?"

"There are too many Spanish people. The receptionist speaks Spanish. The food is Spanish. Too many foreigners now live abroad."

"We had to queue outside with no air conditioning."

"It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests ."

"I was bitten by a mosquito, no-one said they could bite."

"My fiancé and I booked a twin-bedded room but we were placed in a double-bedded room. We now hold you responsible for the fact that I find myself pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked."

Newsletter is published three times a year – in March, September and December. *What's On?* is published four times a year – as a supplement to *Newsletter* and also separately in June.

Contributions for the December *Newsletter* and *What's On?* should be sent to the Editor (details below) to arrive not later than **Friday 8 November 2013**.

Apart from reports of U3A activities, contributions of general interest – articles, short stories, poems, puzzles, humorous sketches, book reviews, letters, drawings, photos, etc. – will be most welcome.

Where a contribution is handwritten, please write names of places and people in CAPITAL LETTERS. If possible, please type your contribution.

If you have the facilities, please use email: it makes it much easier for your Editor!

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Scenes from the French and Italian
Rivieras holiday in March

Above **Getting wet – oh, there was**
so much rain! (photo by Laurie von
Weber)



Left A typical scene in the quaint
village of Saint Paul de Vence,
France (photo by Elizabeth
Holmes)

Holiday on the French and Italian Rivieras, March 2013



Above Replica of the Houses of Parliament (photo by Laurie von Weber) *and below left* An elephant (photo by Julie Mellows) at the 80th Menton Lemon Festival. The many sculptures were constructed with 145,000 lemons and oranges as part of **this year's theme Around The World In 80 Days**. *Below right* A sculpture hung between houses in Saint Paul de Vence (photo by Elizabeth Holmes).

