

# INTOUCH

Newsletter of the Shaftesbury and Gillingham U3A

Dear All,

Well, March has certainly given us a variety of weather! However, I think that in this part of the country we have got away comparatively lightly! With the clocks going forward, and Easter on the very close horizon, we have much to look forward to. Hopefully in terms of better weather for starters.

I do hope you enjoy this edition of "In Touch", and don't forget that contributions are welcome!

Yours

*Liz Greenway.*

Chairman.

## Looking at Lichens and Ferns

The Natural History Group met indoors for a chance to look at some identification keys for some common species of lichens and



ferns. These are not easy groups to recognise and we are not experts. However, lichens are indicator species for air quality so it is useful to recognise a few very sensitive species that tell us the air is clean. Some local woodlands have a few lichens like this which show the air is clean. However, some of us have visited Atlantic rainforests in Cornwall or Scotland where some rare and amazing species can be found.

Fern fronds come in a range of dividedness from plain to lacy. We tried to count how many times the frond is divided and then what overall shape it fitted - narrow, broad, triangular.

Our key showed a number of common species and we tried to match our samples to the illustrations.

We have also been discussing how England can meet its biodiversity targets set at COP15. The aim is for 30% of the land and sea to be protected from harm and that management will lead to recovering nature by 2030. In short we all know this will be a big challenge.

**Marion Hammond**

## NOTE

Marion is stepping down as leader of the Natural History group at the end of June, and we are looking for a new leader for this popular group. If you have a passion for natural history, especially if you have enjoyed the many events that Marion has organised over the past ten years, please consider taking on the role. It might suit joint-leadership if you aren't able to commit to running things by yourself.

You can contact Marion via the website to learn more about what is involved.

Group	Meeting	Leader
Art Appreciation	2nd Monday Afternoon	Barbara Hurst
Art Workshop	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday Afternoon	Joan Stewart
Canasta	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday Afternoon	Hazel Baker
Digital Photography	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday Morning	Andy Newton
Embroidery	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Afternoon	Lesley Frost
French for Fun I	Tuesday alt. weeks Morning	Ron Beard
French for Fun II	Wednesday alt. weeks Afternoon	Chris Stotesbury Elizabeth Lewer
Garden Interest	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday Morning	Barbara Hurst
Genealogy	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday Afternoon	Liz Greenway
German Conversation	Wednesday alt. weeks Afternoon	Robert Light
International History	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Morning	Richard Sims
Literature	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday Morning	Peter Rolfe
Lunch Club	Last Friday	Ros Ham
Mah Jong	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Friday Afternoon	Marion Pace
Music for Pleasure	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday Afternoon	Eileen Haddleton
Natural History	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Morning	Marion Hammond
Philosophy	Arranged by Agreement	Chris Spencer
Poetry and Play Reading	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday Afternoon	Audrey Cross Janet Botterill
Reading Group	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday Morning	Barbara Hurst
Rummicub	Weekly Tuesday Afternoon	Avril Fletcher
Scrabble	Weekly Friday Morning	Yvonne Hill
Spite & Malice	3rd Thursday Afternoon	Sue Walker
Table Tennis	Weekly Thursday Afternoon	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury
Walking	1st Tuesday Morning	Barbara Robson

**All leaders can be contacted via the website**

## Philosophy and Discussion Group

Having investigated the rise of Fascism, we are now turning our minds towards another topical subject:

**ARE WE MORE OR LESS ISOLATED THAN WE WERE BEFORE?**

This subject can encompass a wide spectrum of different examples. Isolation can be at the individual level, political level and at the level of the Nation State. Countries try to avoid isolation by agreeing pacts with each other eg NATO or the EU, and thereby increase their level of negative power, and hence security.

Some jobs demand isolation in order that they are carried out efficiently and effectively. One example of this is the loneliness of command. A naval captain has his own cabin to isolate him from the crew and other officers. He is not allowed to enter the Ward Room, where the other officers live, except when invited.

Other sailors might crave isolation as can be seen with the examples of Sir Frances Chichester and his single-handed circumnavigation of the World, and Sir Robin Knox Johnson who did it without stopping. However, others, such as Donald Crowhurst have suffered mentally by attempting such isolation, eventually committing suicide.

Other people choose to live in the jungle on a remote island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Perhaps they are preparing for climate heating.

Governments might increase isolation of their citizens deliberately or accidentally. Certainly the recent pursuit of austerity, based on low taxes, led to reducing public spending on health, libraries, social clubs, sports facilities. This can have a devastating impact especially on old people who live alone, by isolating them from social intercourse. The outcome can be the increase in mental illness across society, which hits the less well off hardest.

What about coercive control of women, or indeed populations, where isolation is fundamental?

So are we more isolated today than we used to be?

Our members have a wide spectrum of opinions, so it will be interesting to see where our discussion leads!

**Chris Spencer - Group Leader**

## Garden Interest

The inconvenience of the road closure in Queen Street, Gillingham, could not deter our intrepid members from reaching the Vicarage Schoolroom for a thoroughly enjoyable March meeting. Our members can always be relied on for a lively time and to welcome newcomers. And I really enjoyed giving my presentation on *Gardens in Art*, including John Singer Sargent's *Carnation, Lily, Lily Rose*, below. My thanks to all those who helped with set-up and clearing away, and especially to Hilary for her sterling work in the kitchen and Sylvia, who was on the door.



Our next meeting will be our annual plant swap, hosted by Sheila Osborne at her home in West Knoyle. This will take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, a week earlier than scheduled to avoid

Easter Monday. I will be sending details to group members shortly, along with the schedule for the rest of the year.

On 15<sup>th</sup> May we will visit The Old Rectory in Manston, Sturminster Newton, a beautifully restored five-acre garden, featuring a knot garden, wildflower meadow and Victorian kitchen garden. The cost is £7 plus £5 for refreshments. Please, let me know if you would like to join us.

**Barbara Hurst**

01747 825646 or [barbara@pbhurst.com](mailto:barbara@pbhurst.com)

## Autumn Holiday to Norfolk 4th to 8th September

Steve Hale tells me there are still a few vacancies for this trip. Please contact Steve on 01747 834466 or email

[halerysm@gmail.com](mailto:halerysm@gmail.com)

Full details were contained in last month's In Touch.



## Art Appreciation



Our next two meetings will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> May, both Thursdays, to avoid bank holidays. We are staying in Italy for the next few sessions with an exploration of the High Renaissance (1500-1520) which includes Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian and Mannerism (1520-1600) which includes Parmigianino and Pontormo. While I encourage members to do some research and share their discoveries, I'm happy for art lovers to join us just to enjoy the art and learn about it.

Afterwards, we will move onto the Renaissance in Northern Europe. Great riches to be found there, too.

**Barbara Hurst**

01747 825646 or [barbara@pbhurst.com](mailto:barbara@pbhurst.com)

## Spite & Malice

The Spite and Malice group meets once a month on the third Thursday afternoon, and offers a monthly chance to vent your spleen in a happy, cake fuelled atmosphere.

We are still accepting new members, who will be very welcome to join us.

**Sue Walker—Group Leader**

## Speakers for April & May

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Brian Margetson - "The Search for the North West Passage"**

This is the story of the exploration of the North West Passage. The booming trade with the far-east spurred on by the Industrial Revolution had the one major pitfall. To break out of the Atlantic Ocean and reach the far-east (before the Suez or Panama Canals existed) required a hazardous voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. Discover how a succession of brave explorers attempted to discover a shorter sea route around the top of North America. The final link of the "North West Passage" remained elusive. Hear how two competing expeditions, a state sponsored mission led by Sir John Franklin and a more modest affair led by John Rae, a privateer, attempted to discover this missing link. There could not have been a greater difference in their respective outcomes.

After spending a career designing buildings and other structures Brian has now semi-retired allowing him time to focus on his other interest, public speaking. He has a great deal of experience in presenting and has previously been President of Bristol Speakers Club. He has given talks to audiences as diverse as The NHBC, Civic Societies, Women's Institutes and Retirement Homes. His passion is to make his presentations entertaining and lively. He strongly believes any topic can be interesting if well presented.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**Susan Vincent - "The Life of Lawrence of Arabia"**

This talk is about T. E. Lawrence before and after Arabia when he was living in Dorset. T. E. Lawrence, known as Ned to his family, became well known as Lawrence of Arabia when leading the revolt of the Bedouin tribes against the Ottoman Empire. On return to the UK he changed his surname to Ross and then Shaw. Why? Why did he enlist in the RAF and Army Tank Corps in Bovington as a Private when he had been Colonel Lawrence in WW1?

2023 sees the anniversary of the first meeting between Thomas Hardy and T. E. Lawrence. What was the mutual interest for them both and how was their time together spent?

Susan Vincent lives in Dorset and is a member of the T. E. Lawrence Society and on the National Committee. Susan is currently completing her MA in Classical Studies with the Open University. Her career has involved stints in the world of advertising and for the last twenty years she has been an Executive Search Consultant - that is a headhunter.

## **Art Workshop**

The Art Workshop started up on the first Monday in March and we are housed very comfortably in the Committee Room at Charlton Village Hall where the parking outside is a real bonus. We splashed paint around - some more than others - very happily and would be delighted to welcome more members on the first and third Mondays in the month from 2.00 - 4.00. The next meeting is April 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you think you would like to join us just bring along your project, art materials of choice and prepare for a relaxing afternoon with like-minded people.

**Joan Stewart**

### **An interesting tale from John Roberts a member of Genies Group**

#### **You Couldn't Make It Up - A True Story**

I have been researching my Family History for many years and had reached the conclusion that I was descended from a very boring family. I have not found any rapists, murderers or even war heroes. However early in December 2021 I found that my Great, Great, Great Grandfather, who was born in January 1775, was sentenced to death at Oxford Lent Assizes in 1809 for passing forged one pound notes. His wife, Mary, was also tried on the same charge, but her case was dismissed.

Henry was sent to Oxford Castle gaol to await his execution, but at some stage before the sentence was carried out it was commuted to life imprisonment and later to transportation to Australia for life.

An undated petition was sent to the Prince Regent pleading for clemency on the grounds that Henry was illiterate and had been duped by another man.

Despite this seemingly reasonable request, the plea was rejected. Henry was then transferred to a hulk in the Thames, named Retribution, where he stayed for something like two years, between 1812 and 1814 awaiting transportation.

Henry arrived in Sydney on the "Somersetshire" on the sixteenth of October 1814 and was assigned to the Reverend Samuel Marsden of Pennant Hills and he stayed with Marsden for 2½ years. A small paragraph in the history of Australia, The sad tale of Henry, was brought to light by Samuel Marsden who recommended him for a pardon. It reads "This petitioner was recommended to me by the Proctor of the University of Oxford. His crime was of passing a forged one pound note. Mr Pearson informs me that Russell did not know the note was forged and was detained in Oxford castle in the hope of procuring his pardon.

The Bank of England interfered and prevented this from being done. Note Henry could not read or write and on many documents he signed with a cross. Henry's description on his conditional pardon dated May 1826, (which had been preceded by a ticket of leave in 1818) gave his height 5 feet 6 inches, complexion sallow, hair white and eyes grey. His occupation was shoe maker but in Australia he became a successful farmer as he had rented a farm from Samuel Marsden at the Field of Mars on which he had 20 head of horned cattle three horses and a flock of sheep. After 50 acres was granted to his wife Mary in 1818, as a Free Settler, he increased it to 150 acres by 1828 of which 30 were cultivated, crops being potatoes, barley, maize, oats, wheat and the beginnings of an orchard. He is also listed with five horses and 40 horned cattle.

In 1831 he is listed as a timber merchant because of the act of clearing the land and selling the timber. It was taken down to the Ermington Wharf in Wharf Road and thence by barge into Sydney town. Henry is buried in Saint John's Cemetery at Parramatta where his headstone still stands. He died aged sixty six years because of a tragic accident. A coroner's inquest was held at Parramatta which reads "An inquest was held on Wednesday last on the body of Mr Henry Russell, a retired timber merchant who was returning home along the Pennant Hills Road in a light cart when owing to the darkness of the night, he drove against some obstruction in the road. The shock was so violent that he was thrown out and fell on the ground and the wheels passed over his head. He was shortly afterwards found lying in the road, quite dead, his skull being fractured". The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

A remarkable story, but why do I say "You Couldn't Make it Up? When I related this story to my nephew, he reminded me that my cousin's daughter had emigrated to Australia some years ago. I emailed her with the information that I then had and when she replied it was clear that she lives within a couple of kilometres of where Henry's farm was located and she regularly travels along the Pennant Hills Road, the one on which Henry was killed. Australia is a big place.

As I said "you couldn't make it up".

**John Roberts**

Isabelle van Millingen, a member of Winterborne Valley Croquet Club would like to invite you to their open day.

**WINTERBORNE VALLEY CROQUET CLUB**

in collaboration with

**WINTERBORNE STICKLAND SPORTS AND COMMUNITY CLUB**

INVITE YOU TO THEIR OPEN DAY ON **15<sup>th</sup> APRIL** (From 10.00 onwards)

Come and join us for a taster session of this fun and engaging game.



**Knit and Natter Group**

I've had an enquiry about setting up a Knit and Natter Group, something that is very popular in other U3As. It needn't be confined to just knitting, but to crafts generally. If you would be interested in such a group, please let me know.

**Barbara Hurst**

01747 825646 or [barbara@pbhurst.com](mailto:barbara@pbhurst.com)

**The Art of Seeing:**

**An exhibition of photographs by  
Dorchester Camera Club**

**Sat 18 February to Thurs 22 June 2023**

**Location — Alice Ellen Cooper Dean  
Community Space, Dorset Museum**

The Club is delighted to have the opportunity to exhibit some of their members' prints in the Dorset Museum together with an audio-visual presentation.

Founded in 1936 by a small group of local photography enthusiasts, Dorchester Camera Club has now become one of the most successful photography clubs in the southwest and the UK. The Club and individual members have achieved notable success and awards in regional, national, and international photography competitions.

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