

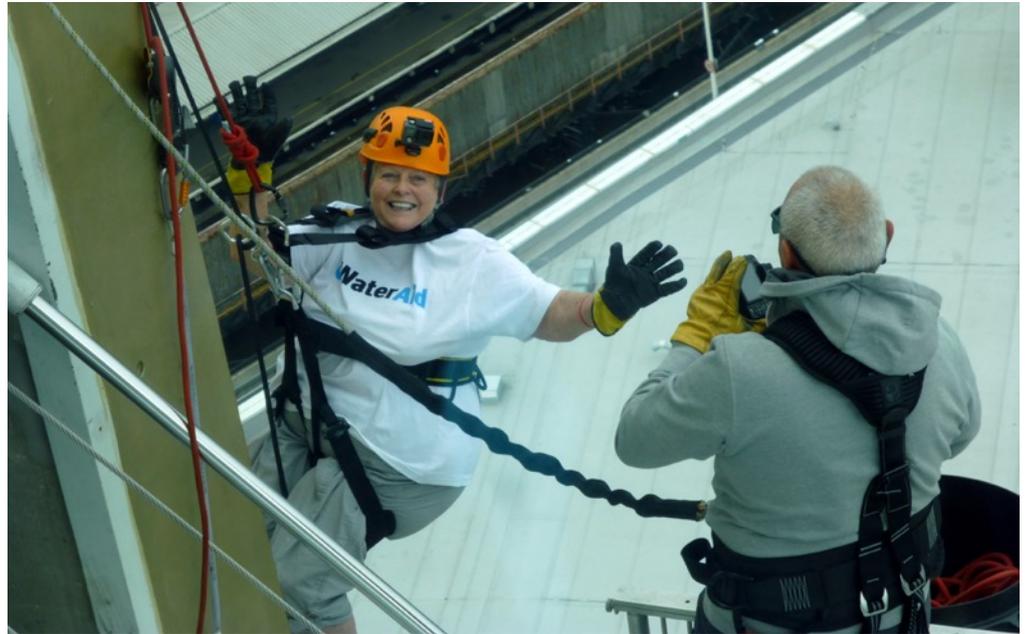
# Thatcham **U3A** Newsletter

July 2016

[www.u3asites.org.uk/thatcham](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/thatcham)

Reg. Charity No. 1112006

Last year I started to think about my 'Bucket List'. I have not done anything exciting and I wanted to challenge myself. I thought about what I could do - skydiving, climbing Mount Everest, trekking in Peru - but rejected them all. I eventually came up with the idea of abseiling the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth. It seemed ideal!



## Abseiling the Spinnaker Tower - Well Done Joy!



I booked my place last September and chose this year as I wanted to do it before my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. I have been collecting sponsors for Water Aid for the last two months and am pleased to say I raised £710. Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> arrived. It was now a reality, but I was excited rather than nervous. Family and friends came to support me, which was a great help. The staff were brilliant, so reassuring, making me feel calm. The narrow ledge I stepped off is scary, but all was well until my trainer started to slip from my foot. I was in good hands though, and I was talked back up on to the platform for my shoes to be tightened. Friends below did not know what was happening, so were concerned. However, at last I was back on the wall ready to descend! With a web cam on my helmet, off I went. The views were wonderful, although my concentration was on holding the rope and letting myself slowly down. It is hard work on arms and shoulders and I was pleased to land safely to waiting arms. I would recommend anyone to try this if you want an adrenalin rush.

Would I do it again? Yes, but not tomorrow!

Thank you to everyone who donated.

# CHAIR'S REPORT AGM 2016

I can hardly believe a year has gone by since I agreed to stand as Chairman. Our Travel group, under Ann's guidance, had a wonderful holiday in Harrogate and the Yorkshire Dales. They were blessed with glorious weather. This was followed by a trip to Wells and the Bishop's Palace.

We have had a trip to the Supreme Court arranged by Marnie Houslip and the Theatre group has been to see Dirty Rotten Scoundrels and Footloose in Oxford.

Our groups continue to thrive and we now have a new group, Canasta. The Kindle book club is now the Book club which has boosted its membership. Individual groups have taken over the responsibility for teas and coffees at our Open meetings and things have run very smoothly.

Bob Wetten who has taken over from Richard Hyland has done a splendid job with arranging speakers for our Open Meetings. We have had talks from a lady cricketer, Claire Taylor, a talented singer/songwriter, Andy Smith, Underwater Photography, Kathy de Lare and Huw Vaughan on the Sandham Memorial Trust. The meetings continue to be popular with our members.

The Christmas meeting and the Festival meetings were both very successful. Entertainment for the Christmas meeting was provided by our members. Both Singing groups combined to lead the Community singing and perform some carols on their own, under Ann's guidance on keyboard. Nigel Smith entertained us with his poems and Lesley McEwen performed a monologue by a Christmas fairy, in full costume.

Jane has continued to run our Summer luncheon and 'Beat the Blues' lunch with her characteristic efficiency. We subsidised the 'Beat the Blues' lunch for the first time from our funds.

Peter has organised three very successful Study days this year. The Historic Buildings of Thatcham, Knight's Hospitallers and the Art study day. Sadly, Peter is relinquishing his role on the Executive Committee and we have yet to replace him. Other Committee members who will be leaving us are Sue Rutter our Treasurer in whose capable hands our funds have remained very healthy. Philip Green, our assistant treasurer will also be leaving the Committee.

Stuart Armstrong will be standing for election to the Committee. He has agreed to take on the role of Treasurer, supported by Roy Lawson as Assistant Treasurer. Julie has agreed to stay on as Vice Chairman for another year. Roy, Ann Allen and Joy will stand for election having been originally co-opted onto the Committee.

I will end this report by saying 'thank-you' to all the people both on and off the Committee who continue to help keep things running smoothly. Please help us to keep our U3A going by volunteering for some of the roles which need to be filled.



*Lynette Harper*



## **Two of our very entertaining, recent Speaker Meetings:**

Dogs for Good (formerly Dogs for the Disabled) by Sandy Matherson

Foray to the Falklands by Rosemary and Tony Hadland

# Beat the Blues Lunch

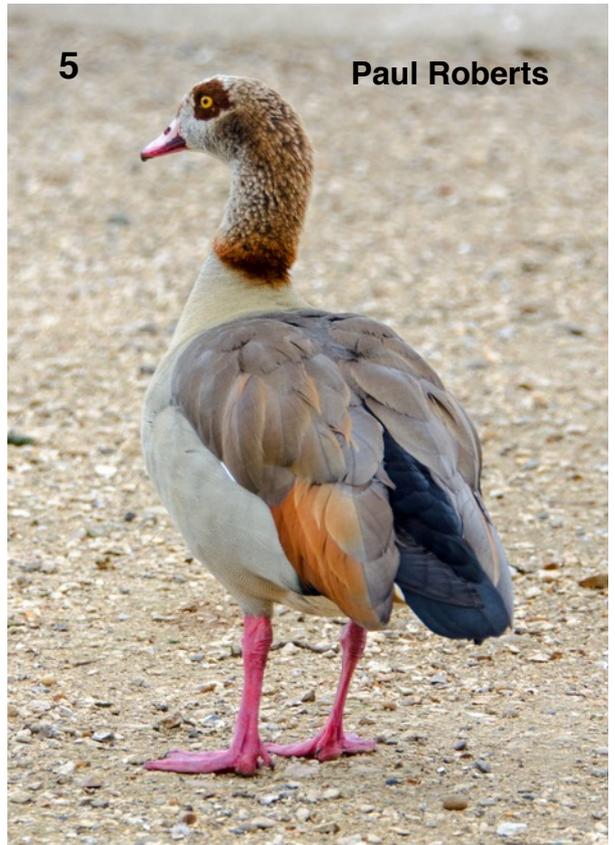
Beat the Blues Lunch 2016 was attended by over 70 members. This year, thanks to a contribution from the Executive Committee, everyone enjoyed a delicious hot meal at a reduced cost. The quizzes kept everyone's minds active and winning teams were presented with silver cups ( very small and made of plastic, but received with delight!!)

Many thanks to my willing band of helpers who came early to set up the room for you all and especially the stalwart ladies who made the tea and coffee, one of whom had helped with this busy task the previous Friday at the open meeting.

The raffle raised £96:20, after the cost of the prizes was deducted £74:20 was raised for the hall hire for our next social event which will be the Summer Luncheon on Friday August 12th. Put this date in your diary.

*Jane Head*

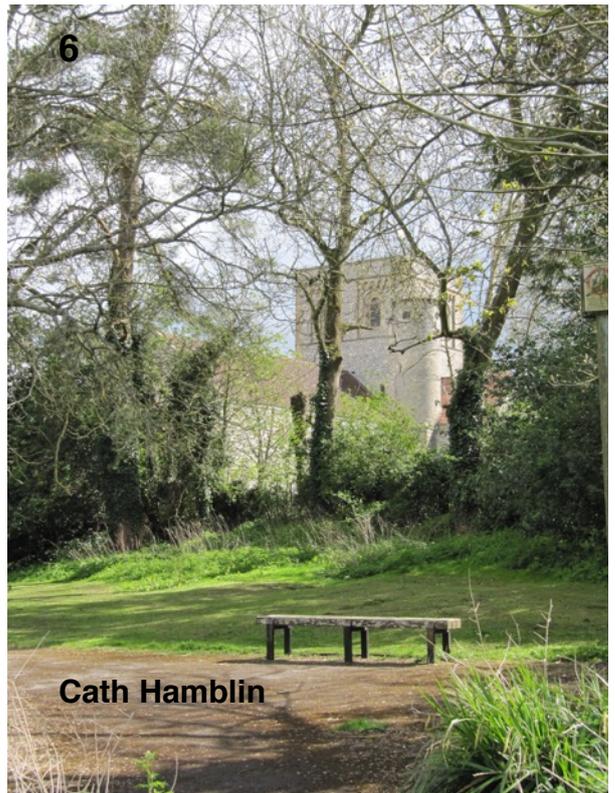




**SNAPS PHOTOGRAPHY**

Discovery Centre: 1 - 5

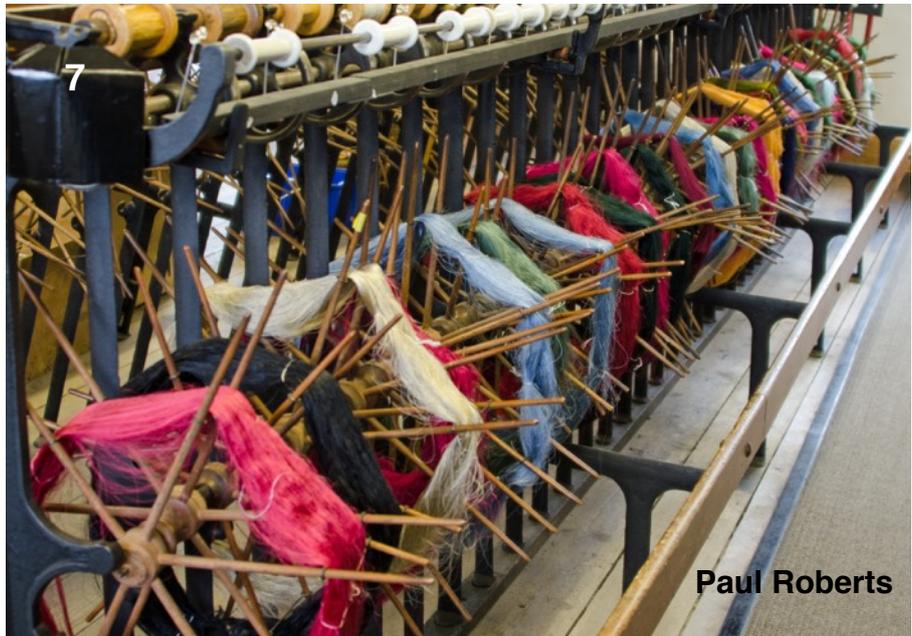
Kingsclere: 6



# SNAPS PHOTOGRAPHY

Whitchurch Silk Mill:  
7 and 9

Discovery Centre: 8



Paul Roberts



Tony Collie



Cath Hamblin

Our two sessions on editing and storing photos have helped with the management of our pictures as well as enhancing them. Further sessions are planned for the autumn and winter. Once again we are very grateful to our members for the knowledge they bring to share with the group.

We enjoyed a very pleasant morning touring the silk mill at Whitchurch and got some unusual shots of unusual objects. The weather was kind to us although cold as we explored Kingsclere, and unfortunately we did not get access to the church, so another visit is called for.

Our latest outing took us to the canal via the Nature discovery centre. This provided a variety of photo opportunities which I hope suited every body

Our programme until October will be circulated soon but we have found it difficult to find venues which offer the challenges we now need and without excessive travel, so suggestions as well as new members are welcome.

*Iain Dunn*

## Art Group 1



We continue to meet on alternate Tuesday afternoons in the old coffee shop at the Baptist Church. At our last meeting we tried our hand at using cling film with our painting. It is surprising the different patterns it makes and then it is using the imagination to make the picture.

For June the topic is Interiors and Fabrics, this will be interesting.

**Contact: Pat Howard**

## Art Group 2



We continue to meet on **alternate Thursdays** at the Baptist Hall. On June 9th we took advantage of perfect weather to paint and sketch outside, going to the Thatcham Discovery Centre to do so. It was a very successful trip for those who could make it.

Now we are working towards the Thatcham Arts Cafe to be held at the Baptist Hall, Wheelers Green Way all day on Saturday 15th October when I hope all our members will display examples of their work suitably mounted. I will be giving a demonstration of oil painting. Such fun!

**Contact: David Nicholls**

## Book Club



The book club continues to flourish with our new members (hopefully) enjoying the experience of sharing their love of reading with others. It has been good to welcome our new

ladies, who have brought fresh ideas and interesting viewpoints to the group.

We're still keen to open up the group to new members, so do come along to any of our meetings - you're welcome to try us out and see if we suit you.

We have a list of new titles that we want to try, as well as taking ideas from members if they've recently enjoyed 'a good read'. We try to keep things as flexible as possible, rather than commit to a planned timetable of books to read, so that we can try something new if the fancy takes us.

If there's a book that you've enjoyed reading lately, come and tell us at the Open Meeting Book Swap, as we're always happy to take recommendations.

Recently, we have read; 'If She Did It' by Jessica Treadway, 'Iris & Lily' by Angela Scipioni, 'The Beekeeper's Daughter' by Santa Montefiore and 'An Officer and A Spy' by Robert Harris. Quite a variety of styles and topics, which has led to some interesting discussions!

**Contacts: Deborah Buckland  
Sue Gammer**

## Canasta



We have continued to have a good standard of play from our group, keeping a fair number each month. We have room for a few new members if anyone would like to come and try it out. Good natured help given - the laughs come free. We meet the 4th Tuesday of each month 2pm start.

**Contacts: Bob & Dot Wetten**

## Computing Skills Group



The Computing Skills Group is in hibernation at the moment.

Contact: Ann Walter

## Craft Group



The Craft Group meet on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Friday** of the month, **2pm** 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Thatcham Baptist Church.

We have continued to explore new crafts, and celebrate the traditional ones. In January Anne Hazelby started our year with an introduction to Scrapbooking, and members were able to turn their photos into a decorative album.

In February Jean Stimpson was able to introduce us to a new Craft, Encaustic Art, a fascinating process using hot wax and iron to produce lovely cards, bookmarks etc.

**Encaustic Art**



Pat Howard has led two meetings this year, one making folded paper cards, and a second doing paper embroidery. Both were highly enjoyable, thank you very much Pat.

Members lead the meetings bringing supplies and equipment where necessary, so other members get an opportunity to try a new craft without great expense, often at no cost at all, or a small donation of 50p or £1 towards materials.

Our philosophy is to share our knowledge and our love for craft of all types. If you would like to join us, please give me a ring.

Contact: **Jen Fielding**

## Quills - Creative Writing



The Spring term has been very productive, with writing of different genres. On top of our usual topics, we challenged ourselves to write a short story in 500 words. Until you try you don't realise just how difficult it is if you are so restricted. We all managed a story though some were a deal longer, so well done everyone.

We continue to be inspired by music (one of our favourite topics), and for fun we were allowed to have a rant on those little/big things that irritate us. This caused much hilarity and discussion.

We always welcome new members, so if you are interested in finding out what we do and would like to join us please contact me on the number below.

Contact: **Catherine Hamblin**

## Discussion Group 1



The last three months have seen vigorous but friendly discussions on topics as diverse as Surveillance; Would you push the Nuclear Button; Benefit Cuts and the Jeremy Corbyn effect. The group felt that on the whole

surveillance was not to be too concerned about but nobody would be willing to press the nuclear red button. Although we have lost one member through non-renewal of membership subscriptions the group still numbers thirteen on a good day and so, sadly, we cannot accept any new members at the present time as we meet in members' homes.

**Contact: Hilary Beckingham**

### **Discussion Group 2**



The group has been meeting as usual on the **first Friday** of the month. Anita has joined us and is making a good contribution to our discussions. I also would like to congratulate Joy who abseiled down the Spinnaker Tower. We try to keep to the subject proposed but without trying we do wander! So far no disagreements though!

**Contact: Joan Prince**

### **Gardening Group**



The Gardening group have now started on their programme of summer garden visits. Our first outing this year, 27th May, was to Spring Pond Garden in Laverstoke.



This was a beautiful garden, wrapped around a farmhouse converted from former derelict farm buildings. The garden included two ponds, and various sculptures. We were very lucky to visit on a beautiful sunny day, and were able to sit in the sunshine enjoying our tea and cakes! Our only regret was that we were a little too early for the roses, but there were plenty of other flowers to enjoy.



In June we will be visiting West Silchester Hall, which is a 2 acre garden boasting spectacular herbaceous borders among its many attractions.

Our July visit will be to Chieveley Manor, and in August we have our annual tea party in a members garden. In September we have a coach outing to RHS Garden Wisley, and in October we will be back in Frank Hutchings Hall with a talk from Joy Craig on Fuchsias. This year we have become an RHS affiliated society, which entitles us to take a group to a RHS garden once a year for free, among other benefits.

The Gardening Group always welcomes new members. If you would like to join us please contact one of the conveners.

**Contacts:**

**Valerie Jackson**

**Celia Roberts**

**Mary Parker**

**Genealogy**



Our family history group continues to be enjoyed. We do have spaces for anyone interested in coming along. There is a lot of Irish history hitting the web at the moment plus the 1939 index which you can view for free with our group. Do come along and enjoy a cup of tea and a biscuit, you never know what you might find out.

**Contact: Isabel Trent**

**Knitting and Cross-stitch**



This group meet every **first Tuesday of the month** in a member's home. We work on our own projects with much laughter and talk whilst helping each other if necessary and passing on tips.

**Contact: Ann Hazelby**

**Latin**



The group is still meeting regularly usually every 3 weeks on a Thursday afternoon in Bucklebury. We are reaching GCSE standard

but are not aiming at an exam. It would be difficult for anyone with no Latin knowledge to join us and I do not have time at present to start a beginners' group. I am happy to help anyone who remembers some Latin and would like to join us.

**Contact: Dorothy Goode**

**Bon Appetit Luncheon Club**



We have been to one new venue and 3 'old' venues since the last newsletter. In February we went to The Swan at Newtown and had a very good meal. Since then we have been back to Cottage Inn (Upper Bucklebury), Ye Olde Red Lion (Chieveley) and Butt Inn (Aldermaston) and were made welcome at all three establishments (not always the case!). I would like to thank Margaret Robinson for doing all the hard work for our meal at the Butt Inn as I was away until a couple of days before; thank you Margaret! We all enjoy each other's company and I thank all my members for their continued support.

**Contact: Elaine Fletcher**

**Second Helpings Luncheon Group**



Thatcham pubs and restaurants continue to offer tasty meals for my diners. Christmas at the Crickets was superb as usual; January we went Italian at Villa Roma; in February at the White Hart where everyone enjoyed the usual large, tasty portions, and the Old Chequers was our venue for March. This pub is under a new manager and although the room was a little 'snug' for us all, the food was tasty and the staff very helpful.

In April we returned to the Aubergine (formerly known as Elderflower, also under news management) where we enjoyed their 'posh' menu which included some interesting alternatives to the usual pub menu. We visited Mandarin Court in April and the Mill (also under new management) in June, another local good value meal. We now look forward to our forays further afield: The Toby and the Berkshire Arms, then it will be back to Thatcham for the Autumn.

**Contact: Jane Head**

### Third Course Luncheon Club



We went to the Chinese Mandarin Court which was an enjoyable meal for everyone, some of my members had never experienced a meal like it. We also had tapas in La Tasca in Newbury before it closed down and is now an Italian. We are planning on going back to Bella Vita as we had such a good time before and I will also try the other Tapas bar soon in Weavers Walk. Some places have been a disappointment even though we had had good meals before.

**Contact: Karen Eggleton**

### The Munchers Luncheon Club



We meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month for lunch and have had some enjoyable gatherings at venues around Thatcham and Newbury areas. There are still some spaces so if you would like to join you will be very welcome.

**Contact : Ann Minks**

### Tuck In Luncheon Club



We are still enjoying our visits to venues old and new. We had a very enjoyable lunch at Newbury College which had been cooked by first year students. We were very impressed with both the service and the cooking. We have now reached our full quota so unfortunately we have no vacancies at the present time.

**Contacts:**

**Sue and John Gammer**

### Mah Jong



The MahJong group meet at Nevil Court on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. Some of our members have played for years, others only a few weeks. We are a friendly, relaxed group and are always willing to teach the game to new members. So if you fancy a challenge and want to exercise your brain cells come and join us.

**Contact: Marilyn Downing**

### Music Appreciation Group



This quarter we've had an interesting variety of music as well as old favourites, starting with a young South African singer, Hope Pumerza Matshikiza singing folk songs accompanied by various African instruments. She has great promise with good projection, depth and range. Another singer we heard was Bernadette

Greesy. We also listened to other vocal pieces by Sibelius and Elgar.

The 100th anniversary of Yehudi Menuhin's birth was recognised with the playing of Bach's double violin concerto. We also listened to music by Finzi, Shostakovich and Grieg.

Recently we have listened to a group of saxophonists and music by our local handbell ringers. We have also heard the unique sound of the London Klezmer Quartet named after the music of the Eastern European Jews.



The afternoons are always enjoyable with friendly company and good refreshments, and the music (contributed by Richard and the members) continues to be interesting and varied. *(Report by Lesley Saward)*

**Contact: Richard Hyland**

### Snaps Photography Group

Report and photos on pages 4 and 5



**Contact: Iain Dunn**

### Play Reading Group



There was an enthusiastic response to the request for new members for the group, following Judy's departure, and we currently have 12 members (the maximum size we can go to) with two people on the waiting list.

In April we read Panic Stations by Derek Benfield and The Odd Couple by Neil Simon - this was the female version of the play: better suited to our membership of ten women and two men!

The next play for June will be Kindly Leave the Stage by John Chapman.

**Contact: Paul Shave**

### Rummikub Group



Rummikub: Nevil Court, The Moors: 2.15 to 4.15 pm: Second Wednesday of the month.

The group is over 3 years old now. There are usually 12 to 16 members at each meeting. We like to think we are a friendly and relaxed group and we welcome new members. If you've not played before we'll teach you. It is not a difficult game being a bit like the card game, Rummy, but using tiles instead of cards. Call me if you need any other information.

**Contact: Wendy Jarvis**

### Scrabble



The Scrabble group meets in a warm and sociable environment in Nevil Court and play lasts for two hours from 2.00pm on the first Thursday of every month. All players are very friendly and newcomers of all levels are most welcome.

**Contact: Sally Crinean**

### Songsters Singing Group



The Songsters continue to meet at 2.30pm on the first and third Mondays of the month at our pianist's house. Unfortunately we do not have room for any new singers. We are currently practising songs to be sung at "The Big Sing" on 24th July in the Wylde Theatre Bracknell.

**Contact: Rita Bottomley**

### Adagio Singing Group



We are currently working on a variety of songs in preparation for 'The Big Sing' at the end of July. U3A singing groups from the surrounding area will get together at South Hill Park to sing a collection of songs. The programme includes well known songs from musicals, folk songs and some patriotic numbers like 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Jerusalem'. .....our very own last night of the proms! We will be joined by some of our other members who are not part of the singing groups. We are looking forward to an uplifting afternoon of music making together. We will be holding sessions throughout the summer and are once again able to welcome new members.

**Contact: Lynette Harper**



### Snooker - 50 Break

We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> **Wednesdays** of each month from **2-4pm** at the Crucible

Snooker Club, off Hambridge Road in Newbury.

The emphasis is on fun and a social gathering 'membership of the snooker club' is necessary following the first visit, equipment is available at the club at no extra charge.

The order of play and tables in play is dependent on the number of players on the day with no sitting out.

New members are always welcome – give me a call or just turn up on the day.

Since the last "Newsletter" we have welcomed two new members, both have commented on the friendly approach to the afternoon and intend to make it a regular event.

**Contact: Roy Lawson**



### Spanish

We welcomed a new member last month to our group. We continue to try to improve our vocabulary and learn a little more each time, once we have caught up with everyone's news over a cuppa and biscuit!!

**Contact: Jane Head**



### Theatre Group

Since the last newsletter the group have been to see Footloose at the New Theatre in Oxford. It was a very energetic show and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We have also been to Bristol to see Chicago, another great show. If anyone is interested in joining the group please contact me.



**Contact: Valerie Jackson**

**Travel Group**



The Travel Group is still keeping busy with trips to the Bishop's Palace in Wells, Stonehenge and Salisbury, and recently Bowood House.



*(See photos from Wells and Stonehenge on back pages)*

Your support is much appreciated. The next day trip is on 14th September to Sherborne Castle in Dorset and details for that will be sent out in the middle of August. I will soon be asking for the balance payments for the

residential trip to South Wales so watch out for my e-mail/letter. Looking ahead to 2017, another residential to Scotland is in the pipeline and this will include a visit to the Falkirk Wheel which should be really interesting.



**Contact: Ann Allen**

**Triominos**



We have been going over two years and continue to enjoy ourselves. We can make room for new players if anyone is interested.

**Contacts:**

**Bob and Dot Wetten**

**Walkers Group**



The Walking group continues to be well supported and over the last 3 months we have had new members coming along. Members of the group still lead some walks, which are approximately 3 miles, and if you would like to walk with us do not hesitate to get in touch.

**Contact: Joan & Mike Collins**

### Vintner's Dozen Wine Appreciation



We have enjoyed another session of very good hospitality from our members and tasted many very interesting wines from a variety of northern and southern hemisphere countries and a number of different varieties.

In August we hope to enjoy our usual summer bbq, and hopefully the weather will be kind, fingers (and toes) crossed! We have acquired two interested new members so most meetings now fill members' homes.

As always we meet every month on the first Monday of the month.

**Contact: Peter Lavarack**

### Cheers Wine Appreciation



We are a group who enjoy an evening of friendly and topical chat together with a taste of the host's three bottle selection of wine. Although we freely make comments on the wine the main objective of the group is to have an evening together.

One common opinion is that the most expensive wine is very seldom the most popular, may be one evening a member may decide to buy 2 bottles of extra cheap wine and splash out on an expensive wine which has been heavily discounted, we shall see.

We have two vacancies at the moment. The group is not for 'wine connoisseurs' but over time this may change.

**Contact: Roy Lawson**

### Whist



We continue to enjoy a game of cards and a cup of tea on the last Wednesday of the month. Meeting at Nevil Court in the dining room, starting about 2.15pm. Last month there was only a few of us but other times we can have three tables, it depends what else is going on. Anyone is welcome

**Contact: Pat Howard**

## Members' Secretary Report

Our U3A is thriving thanks to the support and enthusiasm of everyone. We currently have 330 members.

Ann-marie

## From the Editor

Please could I have contributions for the next Newsletter by Monday 24th Sept.

Thank you,  
Ann



# Wells

## and the Bishop's Palace

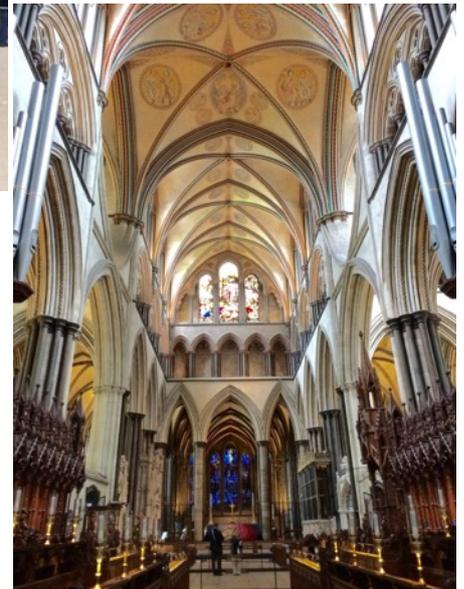




Stonehenge



and  
Salisbury



# SNAPS PHOTOGRAPY

(Photos by Lynette Harper)

