

Number 28 Winter 2012-2013

Happy New Year to all our readers – and if the weather in 2013 is as bad as in 2012 – do what Louise does and count your blessings!!

HAPPINESS IS.....

Happiness is – getting the last space in the car park,
It's buying a pair of pretty shoes that fit my awkward feet,
Happiness is panting for breath on top of a mountain,
It's when I'm tired and cold, a chunk of chocolate to eat.

Happiness is waking to a radiant sky after dismal days of rain,
It's sitting together by the fire when the garden is white with frost,
Happiness is primroses, fritillaries and poppies,
Finding a favourite pair of secateurs I thought I'd lost.

Happiness is newts and tadpoles swimming in my pool,
It's finding Fly Agarics underneath a birch,
Happiness is hedgehogs, puffins and red squirrels;
The robin choosing my spade for a perch.

Happiness is a double rainbow,
It's laughing at something absurd!
Happiness is baking a perfect cake,
For a poem, finding just the right word.

Happiness is being warm in bed in winter with a book,
It's cradling a sleepy grandchild, waiting to be kissed,
It's finishing a cryptic crossword puzzle,
Happiness is – a ticked off list!

These are things which give me a fillip of joy now I'm in my seventies; I wonder what I would have written when I was seventeen?

WOW – Highly Commended!!!

Walkers can be winners.

I was surprised and flattered when our committee through Jenny Williams asked me to enter one of my walks for a competition run by the Royal Geographical Society to find walks under the “Discovering Britain” Banner. U3A members and other groups were asked to enter walks in their areas which met the competition requirements. These were:

- ⑩ UK based between 2-5miles
- ⑩ Insight into an area, to include any geographical and historical points of interest.
- ⑩ Have at least 10 points of interest on the route, linking the theme of the walk
- ⑩ A coherent story running through the walk
- ⑩ Excitement of the exploration on foot

Many of you joined me on the Dudley Tunnel and Canal walk so this was the one I entered. It was billed as a “local heritage” walk showing how in the mid 1800s Lord Dudley needed to move raw materials from one side of Dudley Town to the other using the canal system, giving access to the rest of the Midland canal system. Dudley is on a hill so the engineering choices were locks or tunnels. As the hill was mainly limestone, which was also needed for iron production, the limestone spoil became part of the raw material. Lord Dudley chose the tunnel option in 1830.

The first tunnel, now part of the Black Country Museum, had no tow path. This required men to “leg” the barges through the 2 mile tunnel. At the end of our first walk we came through this tunnel by electric boat but from the far end. Some of us

tried “legging” but were advised not to give up the day job! Our walk took us through the second tunnel known as the Netherton Tunnel (1858). It was a quarter of a mile underground, had two tow paths, was 2 miles long and was very dark and drippy!!

Along with the geographical details I linked the historical facts into my theme and the excitement of walking in the dark for 2 miles.

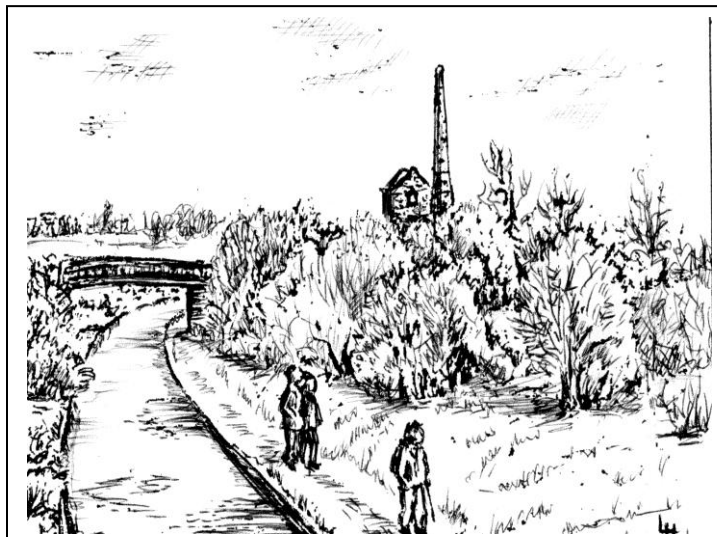
Those who did the walk will remember this hour in the dark, the cast iron listed canal bridges made by the company of the Titanic Anchor/Chains fame, the fossil legacy of the Silurian period, the Cobham pumping engine house, the wildlife of the “Bumble Hole”, plus the experimental introduction of wild moorland ponies onto Netherton Hill. All this within “spitting” distance of the Merryhill shopping centre!

The lunch stop at the Dry Dock pub (now closed) was also a feature of Black Country life.

The outcome of all this was that the walk was one of six to be chosen by the RGA judges to be put into their “Discovering Britain” Book and website. See the latest Winter 2012 Third Age Matters Magazine page 21. My walk was given the “highly commended” certification, along with an invitation to the presentation in London.

Thanks to all who took part and helped with the organisation of the walk and also to Louise Henly for the illustration line drawing.

From a Highly Commended and Dead Chuffed
Chris Collins



Walking Group Autumn Holiday

Mud -definition *n* wet soft earth; a mixture of earthy or clayey particles with water. *Vt* to bury in mud; to clog with mud; to plaster with mud; to make dirty; to make turbid. (Chambers Dictionary)

If the theme of our 2011 holiday was stiles, and we had some of those this year as well, there is no doubt that the dominant feature of 2012 was MUD. If you can imagine packing all the treads on the soles of your boots with mud and then going down a steep muddy slope glistening with surface water – that's what it was like as we descended from Monsal Head into the valley of the River Wye. Well, we all survived even if some of the party ended up with mud all over their backs.



Nevertheless! A great time was had by all. 34 of us went for the second year to the Charles Cotton Hotel in Hartington. We were able to take over the whole hotel, so we could do what we liked, much to the bemusement of some of the staff at times. The food was first class and everyone participated enthusiastically in the evening quizzes, particularly the music quiz where most people sang the answers (loudly).



The long walks were led by John Black and John and Liz Sheard. John and Liz took us on a delightful walk which included the beautiful Lathkill Dale, while John Black experimented

with finding the route through collective decision making, with the help of maps and GPS devices - which proves that a committee can get people home if good food is waiting.

Geoff and Jenny

Singing for Pleasure Group

On a gloomy Monday afternoon in mid November the Singing for Pleasure group gathered at the Cheshire Home on Lloyd Hill to entertain the residents with an hour of singing and readings. We sang songs from the first and second World Wars, all the rousing ones that helped to keep the spirits up, with some of the residents joining in.

This is the third such visit we have made and we always receive a warm welcome from the residents and staff. Some residents appear to be asleep, then you see a hand moving in time to the music – our reward.



Dawn leads us on the keyboard, Ann, Eleanor and Dawn draw up the programme. The rest of us have the easy bit – turn up and sing for pleasure. If any members would like to come along and join our group we would love to make you welcome. We meet on the second Thursday of the month, 10.00 to noon at the Methodist Church on Warstones Road.

Maureen Rowe

Practical Art Group

Our group has been up and running now for almost two years and in that time we have accomplished an extensive portfolio under the excellent teaching and guidance of our tutor Cleo Abbs, a practising artist. The group meets at Tettenhall Institute and accommodates all abilities

from the complete novice to those with many years' experience, and supports everyone to either have a go at something new or bring artwork of their own choice in any medium to work on. We started out during the early sessions with a drawing course, using pencil and charcoal, moving on to different techniques of watercolour, looking at warm and cool colour, background washes, the use of a selection of brushes and various techniques for measuring and gauging proportion. More recently we have looked into negative space and perspective, using trees and autumn leaves for inspiration.

If there are any budding artists out there who would like to find out what to do with unusual items such as credit cards, tissue paper, glue, cling-film, candles and salt to produce a "mini-masterpiece" you know where to come – look us up on the Wolverhampton U3A website!

Di Tordoff (group co-ordinator)

After editing 28 issues of this newsletter over 9 years, Christine has decided to retire and spend more time with her sofa. Margaret Taylor has volunteered to take over so please send your future contributions and suggestions to her at 01902 341528 or email mag@copthorneroad.plus.com

P.S Having worked with Christine on the production of the newsletter over a number of years I can fully appreciate the hard work she has put into its preparation and therefore I would like on your behalf to thank her for her years of dedication.

Peter Wakeman

Editor: Christine Moore
Layout: Peter Wakeman

New Groups

Our new groups are now up and running. Details are on our website, but for those without a computer you may contact :-

Philosophy

Tim McNamara – 01902 686793

Italian conversation

Di Welch - 01902 653774

Meditation

Michael Clements - 01902 426024

Part singing

Pat Coates - 01902 685448

In addition:

Bob Evans is ready to start a new Psychology group – 01902 341539

David Starmer is prepared to run a second course on Memory – 01902 684377 or email davidstarmer@gmail.com

(Please note this is not an interest group but a short course from National Office, run over three sessions).

