

## SUMMER REVIEW 2004

10<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY

ISSUE



HAPPY

BIRTHDAY

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### FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This Newsletter celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fleet U3A. As you can see from the articles we have come a long way in this time. For 7 years of this period we have been lucky enough to have Gerard Walton as our Chairman. Gerard has worked with great energy and enthusiasm and he was rewarded with the Hart Council Chairman's Award in March. The Committee has agreed that Gerard will become an Honorary Member of the Fleet U3A. Our other Chairman for 3 years was Janet Pulley who again increased membership and Groups. Janet gave up the role when she moved to Dorset. I am particularly grateful to our Group Leaders who continue to develop new Groups for us all to enjoy.

So it is with mixed feelings that I have agreed to become Chairman of Fleet U3A. I believe in carrying forward the ideals of the U3A and build on the successes of Gerard, Janet and Group Leaders. I expect that we will exceed 1,000 members this year and be among the largest 12 U3As in the UK. As we grow this will provide opportunities and bring issues. I am sure that we will be in for interesting times.

So that Fleet U3A remains viable we need a strong committee and sub committees. Please consider helping us by working on the committees. With 1,000 members there must be many of you who have some life experiences that you can use to help the committee. Also, if you would like to start a Group please let me know and we will help you to get started. Without a committee and Group Leaders we won't have a Fleet U3A!

Come and celebrate our Anniversary with the afternoon events 22 October and 26 November.

**Ian Stephenson**

## THE EARLY DAYS from Gerard Walton

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1994 a meeting of all persons interested in the possibility of joining a new U3A in Fleet was held in The Fleet Leisure Centre This had been arranged by Tony Collyer, then Chairman of Farnham U3A and dedicated to the furtherance of the U3A.

Tony assisted by Jim Sedgwick of Farnborough U3A introduced the concept of the U3A to some fifty attendees. The names and telephone numbers of 49 potential members were taken which included a number of people who were already members of either Farnham or Farnborough U3A's. The following agreed to form a Steering Committee, Betty Fox, Glenys Payman, Janet Pulley, Peter Riding, Pauline Smith, Gerard Walton and Sheila Williams. Later Christine Mallace, a newcomer to the district agreed to join them.

In addition Martin Bennett, Dennis Davis, Philip Gething, Rona Kershaw, Peter Riding and Olivia Thornton agreed to offer their services as Group Leaders.

The Steering Committee agreed to meet in Glenys Payman's house on 14<sup>th</sup> April.

With the help of Tony Collyer, Glenys prepared an agenda. At that meeting it was agreed that Peter Riding would become the interim chairman of the steering committee. However, Peter said he could not take up this post and Gerard Walton was elected. Members were,

Chairman-----	Gerard Walton
Secretary-----	Glenys Payman
Programme Organiser-----	Janet Pulley
Publicity Officer-----	Betty Fox
Accommodation Organiser--	Pauline Smith

In those days everybody was new to the idea and the whole gamut of organisational possibilities was discussed. With perhaps one or two exceptions the committee members had not met one another before so not only had they to identify each others abilities they had to research how to form a viable organisation. One important thing that was agreed at that meeting was the launch date of Fleet U3A,

which was to be 24<sup>th</sup> August 1994.

A second Steering Committee meeting was called for 16<sup>th</sup> May.

A treasurer had not been found but Christine Mallace had agreed to become Speaker Secretary. Things had moved very quickly since the first meeting and Pauline had already produced a list of possible venues and charges. Betty had identified a number of useful sites to launch our publicity programme and Membership forms had been designed. The main thrust of the meeting was to decide the format for The Inaugural Public Meeting, which was agreed and it was decided that potential group leaders would be invited to the next committee meeting so that they could brief the committee on their ideas and the committee could outline what they would be expected to do at the Inaugural Meeting.

During June and July the committee members beavered away. Peter Scott had agreed to become the treasurer.

On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July members of the committee manned a stall in The Hart Centre, as part of the publicity campaign. Twenty people showed interest and registered their names. By August we were ready to go public, membership forms and cards had been designed and produced, accommodation had been reserved and group leaders anxious to start. An initial membership fee of £8 had been agreed.

The Inaugural Meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1994 in the Memorial Hall, Church Crookham. It was opened by Tony Collyer, Chairman of Farnham U3A and was attended by Ann Kern,

Chairman of Hart District Council, Tony Barron Chairman of Hampshire Education Committee and Mina Lewis, Chairman of Farnborough U3A. In addition 180 people attended. Margo Clegg, President of Guildford U3A, which was and remains the largest U3A in the area, gave the address.

Janet introduced the aspirant group leaders each of whom gave a brief resume of their ideas.

Initially there were seven groups proposed;

Art, Creative Writing, Current Affairs, German for Beginners, Photography, Travelog and Walking.

Intending members were asked to complete membership forms and indicate their areas of interest.

In all 84 people signed up but as we ran out of Membership Forms we expected more people to join later. At that stage a programme had not been produced.

The first group to become active was Creative Writing, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1994, led by Philip Gething. The other groups quickly followed this. By the end of September we had the possibility of 19 groups. It was agreed that the cost of each session would be 50p. Most groups were held fortnightly or monthly.

By November 1994 we had become a member of The Third Age Trust and we had 187 members.

The first Monthly General Meeting was held in The Crookham Memorial Hall and thereafter, because of numbers, we moved to The Harlington Centre.

The first Christmas gathering was a jolly affair organised on a social basis with a Jazz Band, quizzes, poetry reading and refreshments.

In April 1996 we adopted a Constitution and in May 1996 we became an independent charity. Dennis Hayhurst, who had become the secretary, was the prime mover in this action

In February Gerard Walton received the Hart District Council "Award of Merit" in recognition of his leadership of the Fleet U3A since it started in 1994.



Ian and Jean Stephenson, Cllr Brian Leversha, Gerard and Josephine Walton

## **FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

At the end of my first full year as Membership Secretary, I am pleased to report that Fleet U3A membership has increased further during this year from the April 2003 figures of 919 to a new high of 970 active members as at 28 March 2004.

618 current members have applied Gift Aid to their subscription, which means that the Treasurer will be able to claim back the tax deemed to have been paid on those subscriptions. Thanks to all members who contribute in this way.

Following the success of the current arrangements for processing membership renewals for this year, **renewal forms for membership in 2003-2004** (printed on pale green paper) **are enclosed with this distribution**. If you do not receive your renewal form in the Newsletter, please telephone the Membership Secretary to ask for one.

A Gift Aid form is included on the renewal form for the use of those members who wish to join the Gift Aid scheme for the first time. However, those members who have completed a "continuous" Gift Aid declaration previously need not complete another form this year. (Gift Aid declarations remain in force until cancelled in writing or unless membership is discontinued.)

If you renew early, your membership card together with the programme for 2004-2005 will be sent to you as soon as the new programmes become available (at the end of June/early July) or on renewal if you renew later. (Wherever possible, these will be hand delivered within a few days of receipt of your postal renewal and subscription but note that I shall be away for a fortnight in July so there may be a slight delay in getting the membership material to you.) The procedure worked very well last year with more than 600 members having renewed by the enrolment day in 2003.

Make your life easier and to save time queuing to renew your membership on enrolment day, Wednesday 25 August at the Harlington Centre, Fleet. Please do not wait until August to renew. Please complete and return your renewal form NOW, together with your annual subscription for 2004-2005 – unchanged at £8.00.

Your cooperation regarding early renewals would be much appreciated. Any queries to me, please.

David Wimpenny,

126c Reading Road South, FLEET, Hampshire, GU52 7TP. Tel: 01252 615286.

E-mail address for membership and general queries is [u3afleet@aol.com](mailto:u3afleet@aol.com)

### **A Letter from Mrs.Peggy Gauchie past leader of the Scrabble Group**

Thank you again for the beautiful flowers you gave me when I gave up the Scrabble Group leadership, which, as it turned out, was very timely as my daughter and son-in-law sold their house a few months later and planned the move to Devon.

I found Fleet U3A a wonderful organisation to be in-so many things to do and so many friendly people to know.

I would like to thank all the committee members, past and present, for all their hard work for an increasingly large organisation. I felt privileged to be a small cog in it as a Group Leader and always enjoyed the Group Leaders meetings. I will remember my time with Fleet U3A with great pleasure and wish you all the best for the future.

Editors note

Peggy started the Scrabble Group and led it for eight years, retiring in her early nineties.

She was our oldest serving group leader and possibly the oldest in the whole U3A organisation.

# ART EXHIBITION

**DRAWINGS PAINTINGS and CALIGRAPHY**  
THURSDAY 24th JUNE 2004 UNITED REFORM  
HALL. KINGS ROAD.

Members may show 4 pieces of their work; framed or not. Remember, if you learn by copying other people's paintings these must be clearly marked COPY and may not be offered for sale. This would break the copyright. Complete a form and four labels showing the title of the picture, your name and the price or NFS (not for sale). Bring these with your pictures between 10.30 and 11.30 on the day. There is nothing to pay. The exhibition opens to the public at 12.30 and closes at 5 p.m. when work is collected. If you have sold a picture you will be paid at this time. Bring everyone you can; friends, neighbours, all are welcome. There will be a demonstration of painting and answers to any questions you may have; details of available courses plus TEA!

## GROUP REPORTS

### ART ACRYLICS

This group meets on a Monday afternoon in the Willis Hall. It started as Art3 but when I took over in September in 2001 half of the group were painting in watercolours and half in acrylics. I found this too difficult to switch between the mediums from one member to another, so the decision was taken to concentrate purely on acrylics. Acrylics is a very versatile medium which is now used by many professional artists, including oil painters, as it dries within minutes enabling all the "under painting" to

be completed within a relatively short time. Under painting is basically putting down on the canvas or board or paper (whichever surface is chosen) the general layout of the picture and tones. It is possible, also, to paint on newspaper, which enables the artist to have something to read whilst painting. During the course, we have covered the versatility of acrylic paint, what colours to use, what type of brush and the various types of ground for painting on. We have also covered basic drawing techniques such as perspective and composition. The group is a very friendly

one and apart from holidays and illness, the attendance remains static at 15, which is the maximum number that we can fit into the hall. The results that we are achieving are very impressive and although I personally think that oil paints are the ultimate medium, acrylics form an easy introduction to oils, and many people cannot tell the difference. I am often told that people do not like acrylics, as the colours are too bright! But I do not think that they realise that there is such a thing as white paint, of which an acrylic artist uses copious amounts.

**Peter Webster**

## **ART 5. TEN YEARS OF ART**

Art 5 is the original Art Group formed at the inception of the Fleet U3A under the excellent guidance of the late Rona Kershaw. The group was then known simply as Art. Several of the original recruits to that class are still with us and most of the present group joined soon afterwards -so many of us have been together for ten years -and no one looks a day older!! (artists always see the best...!) It wasn't very long before more Art Groups were formed to cater for the ever-increasing interest in the subject and 'Art' became 'Art 1'. After Rona moved to Norfolk our group was very ably led by Barry Jamieson until, sadly, he too moved from the district and yours truly was bludgeoned into taking hold of the reins, supported by Gwen Lunn as Secretary and Bill Ralph who is our 'money man'. (He insists he is NOT a



Treasurer) A year or so back Art 1 was renamed Art 5 and in very recent times the group has increased in numbers to the point where we had to move from The Willis Hall to the larger Velmead Hall where we are now happily settled. There is no doubt that all of our group have improved over the years which proves that practice helps to make perfection and our next painting is always going to be the masterpiece. Most members tend to stick to their own favourite subjects -but a recent class challenge to produce their own version of 'modern art' resulted in some very interesting paintings. Tate Modern comes to Fleet. (Don't worry- it is not staying) There have been some very nice paintings done in our group, but probably our best achievement is that we enjoy ourselves.

**Ron Wyatt.**

## **ART, WATERCOLOURS**

Waiting the arrival of Linda Adams, the leader of this art group, is like waiting for the hurricane to hit. And at the appointed time in she sweeps, a five-foot-nothing bundle of energy and enthusiasm that lights up the room with her bubbly personality.

This group, previously under the tutelage of Brian Fox then Desi Mills, is aimed at

people with sufficient previous experience to have reasonably mastered the basic skills of watercolour painting.

For the past year Linda, like and Brian and Desi, has been encouraging us to get away from the detail and loosen up. She puts great emphasis on a preliminary drawing and God help anybody who can't produce one when

Linda demands, "right; where's your tonal sketch?" So, after a certain amount of harassment, the penny finally dropped and

we are now unanimously agreed that an accurate tonal sketch leads to a more, rather than less, successful painting.

Another important and lasting message we've gained from Little Linda relates to shadows. "You won't get good shadows by putting dark paint on" she says with regular monotony, "you must build the dark with glazes of the colour that's already there." For deviants like me who often hear but don't listen, I dread the question "how did you get all that mud? You didn't do your glazes did you?" "No Linda. Sorry Linda." I wouldn't like people to get the idea that Linda is a martinet who wants everything done her way. Not at all. I'd be a rich person if I had a fiver for every time she's said "it's your picture; you must do what you like with it." And I'd be a much poorer person if I, and my group colleagues, didn't have the advice and knowledge Linda freely gives us. In my opinion one of her most generous gestures of encouragement was to bring in for our examination the very first paintings she ever did. They were absolute rubbish and we all got the message. Thanks Linda.

## **Ron Clements**

### **BRIDGE**

As far as I am aware the bridge group has been in existence since the beginning of Fleet U3A and initially had Christine Greenhill as group leader.

We still have a handful of founder members and a total membership of about 50.

The original meetings were held at Christine's home and as the members increased the venues changed. The band of helpers altered over the years, and included John Le Hardy and Gerard Walton to my knowledge.

I became involved in 1998 and took over when Christine sadly died in February '99.

Mike Brown is now helping with the teaching and Mike Dobie runs the duplicate section.

## **Mary O'Connor**

### **CIRCLE DANCING**

Group Leader Janet Davies with help from Dorothy Butler and Secretary Joyce Avey.

A "taster" session of Circle Dancing was arranged way back in June 1995 and it was then quickly established that there was enough interest in a regular folk-dancing group of this nature. Since then the group has met monthly during U3A term-time. The leaders then, and now, were not able to increase the number of sessions due to other commitments, so it was with much pleasure that we welcomed the start of the International Folk Dance Group a few years ago. There is not a great deal of difference between what the two groups offer.

International Folk Dancing in this country has long associations, but the "Circle Dance" movement started about 30 years ago, when a German ballet teacher and choreographer, Bernard Wosein, started researching and collecting Eastern European folk dances. He travelled widely in Greece, Serbia and Croatia, where these "round" dances had been kept alive. He came to Britain in 1976 to the Community in Scotland at Findhorn and the dances quickly spread from there. There are now about 250 groups throughout Britain, with several in Ireland and many overseas. Every month there are workshops, or Dance Events being held at various venues throughout the country, and many week-end or week-long "holiday" sessions are held in Europe, Australasia, America and elsewhere. There is a heartfelt human need to dance!

We try to put the dances we learn into the context of their country of origin and sometimes we have translations of the text of these haunting songs and addictive melodies. Bernard Wosien, being a dance

choreographer himself, introduced his own steps to chosen music and this tradition has persisted in the Circle Dance movement. It has thus spawned a great deal of creativity among musicians and dance teachers and we have new dances to compelling old and new music, with some new musical compositions as well.

We learn that often the names of the dances relate to the name of the town or region of the dance. Hora de la Corbasca (Romanian) is named after the village of Corbasca. Sometimes the name relates to the group of people dancing ie Hassapiko, the Butcher's dance. Or a Syrtos is named after the well-known syrto steps of the dance. It is also interesting to note that in Greece the word "Chorus" means both a chorus and a dance. The dancing place originally was the circular threshing floor. Often only men took part. These Oras, Horas or Kolos (Serbia and Croatia) were danced at weddings, festivals and harvest time. One needs to imagine a violinist, harmonium, or pipe player, starting up a tune, and then gradually everyone starts joining in. Often a flamboyant leader introduces changes to the steps according to the tempo and rhythms.

As an interesting development, some of our dances have been introduced to Fleet Methodist Church members during their family weekends. Last autumn they went to Pilgrims Hall near Uckfield, and circle dancing was offered as one of the Saturday morning activities. Eleven people wanted to dance and were led by a member of our group. One of the dances, "Ahavat Hadassa", a more meditative dance from Israel, was chosen to be part of the service on Sunday morning.

All the steps are taught before we dance them and no experience, or partner is required. Come and join us!

**Janet Davies**

## **COMPUTER WORKSHOPS**

In 1997 I was a School Governor at Calthorpe Park school and had just retired

as an Information Technology in Business Consultant and saw a need to provide basic PC awareness within Fleet U3A.

I negotiated with the Headmaster and we were allocated a room on Wednesday afternoons making use of the school computers. The first workshop was an 'Introduction to Computers', which I ran as Group Leader, supported by my wife Jean and son John. I was helped by Jim Russel and John Davis with Secretary John Roberts. From the start we had a waiting list and this has continued. John Davis took over the Group and I started an Email and Internet Group. Patricia Grey-Wilson started another Beginner Group followed by Lynne Gould who started an Introduction to Windows Group. Lynne and Patricia are still Group Leaders. To-day Colin Philip is the Group Leader for Email and Internet and still has a waiting list!

Lynne wrote some introductory booklets and these are being used in Australia U3A as well as in various U3As in the UK.

Since 1997 there have been more than 350 Fleet U3A member places on the Computer Workshops.

A new Computer Workshop Group will start in September, which reflects the move towards digital photography. The Group will be 'Digital Imaging' and the Group Leader will be Dennis Parkinson.

There is still potential for increasing the use of Information Technology, for example in the areas of discussion groups and electronic bulletins. Examples of these can be found on the U3A website at [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) and [www.worldu3a.org](http://www.worldu3a.org)

**Ian Stephenson**

## **COMPUTER WORKSHOPS – BEGINNERS**

Group Leader Lynne Gould, Secretary Jim Russell

Our group has been running for a couple of years and we have aimed to introduce people to the basic principles of the

Windows based programs installed on most commercially available computers using the IT facilities at Calthorpe Park School.

We take a light-hearted approach and meet each Thursday between September and April. This year, with Jim Russell's help, I hope to change the focus of the group. Until now we have concentrated on passing on general computing rules - in other words if you learn these basics you'll be able to use all the programs loaded on your computer. We still aim to cover this area but, judging from feedback I have received, I believe people would be interested in joining a workshop to learn how to put things right, for example, when the screen view changes or something unexpected happens.

We shall also look at some of the many other functions of this machine which is becoming more and more an essential part of our daily lives as instant world-wide contact and information provider, finance manager, entertainment centre and much much more.

**Lynne Gould**

## **COMPUTER WORKSHOPS - INTERNET.**

As many of us know U3A is quite unlike the other forms of adult education, which invariably charge "realistic" fees and have a relentless pursuit of certificates of attainment. With U3A learning is both a pleasure and at leisure.

No more so is this than with Colin Philip's "Computer Workshop - Internet, Email and the Web". Colin's objective is to show us oldies what can be done with a computer once we have learned how to switch it on and have become acquainted with the electronic keyboard. The course is designed for those of us who have access to a computer at home but are too afraid to use it.

His method of teaching is very simple but very effective. Within the framework of the

list of topics he aims to cover - ranging from choosing a service provider, surfing the web, writing e-mails and virus protection (to name but a few) - he asks each one of us to say what problems or difficulties we have encountered recently. He then slowly and patiently gives to the class an overview of the relevant subject and how a particular problem can be overcome. He is assisted by a willing band of henchmen/women who sit beside us struggling individuals and nurse us through our difficulties. For those who do not need help just at that moment he encourages us to explore the computer and the web by ourselves until we in turn run into difficulties.

The classes are held in a school computer lab' in which there are more computers than there are students so everybody is sitting in front of their own VDU. The degree of informality engenders a relaxed atmosphere of bonhomie and gentle humour. But it is amusing to see on the walls notices addressed to the children threatening them with dire consequences if they do not do as they are bidden by their own teacher.

For us, though, the course is a sheer delight and thoroughly worthwhile.

**Richard Dexter**

## **COMPUTER WORKSHOPS - WORD**

I have been leading this friendly group for over 4 years now and we all enjoy meeting new people and problems. The group meets fortnightly at Calthorpe Park School for 6 sessions in the autumn term and a further 6 sessions in the spring term. Students are welcome to start at any time or level. The Personal Computers (PCs) at Calthorpe Park School that we use are modern with up-to-date software.

Using self contained guidance notes and exercises, complete beginners and more advanced students are encouraged to gain

confidence and try out different things. We never know whether any PC has been 'modified' in some manner by the school students so life is always a challenge and unexpected results can be obtained. Attendees work at their own pace on a PC with help always on hand. Students can continue their practice at home if they have a PC and wish to do so. However, it does not matter if a student does not have his or her own PC. All comers are welcome. If someone has a particular problem they wish to explore we will try to help them. Some students who have studied Word for a while have been trying out Microsoft paint, and we have just started on Excel, this should prove interesting. Anyone interested in joining us as a student or as a helper is welcome.

**Patricia Grey-Wilson**

## **CREATIVE WRITING**

The Creative Writing Group will be ten years old on 20th September 2004. It was the first of the groups to meet, following the formation of the Fleet Branch of the U3A, and has been meeting once a fortnight in term-time ever since.

Six men and eight women met on that Tuesday afternoon, in the upstairs committee room of the Catholic church hall on the corner of Connaught Road. I was a keen new leader determined to cover short stories, articles, drama and poetry, and to work systematically through a list of topics such as description, dialogue, themes and plots. More important duties included collecting the key from under the right flowerpot at the right house beforehand, brewing the tea, and re-visiting the flowerpot at the end of the afternoon.

After that first year the sessions have become more informal, consisting mainly of comments on work written between meetings, but I think the early discussions and little exercises "on the day" helped to

give the original members a useful starting point. We have had a number of outside speakers and have produced three anthologies of our work, which have sold enough copies within the branch to cover the modest costs.

I was succeeded as leader by Brian Fox, then Derek Truman, followed by John Greasley and the long-serving Brian Greener. It's still fun.

**Phillip Gething**

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

The Current Affairs Group was amongst the first Fleet U3A groups formed ten years ago in 1994. The Group Leader in the beginning was Gerard Walton. The Group now meets in the United Reform Church lounge, which has proved to be better accommodation than the previous venue. Attendance at meetings has stabilised at between 15 and 20 and members have enjoyed freedom of expression, sometimes with vigorous exchanges of views on some topics. The format of our meetings consists of a brief summary of the same day's main headlines, followed by discussion of the previous month's main news topics. As might be expected, the situation in Iraq has been discussed regularly, together with other foreign affairs subjects, with national and local issues also covered. To summarise, the Current Affairs Group is a forum for members to exchange views on a broad range of subjects, which include those noted by the Group Leader and those contributed by members.

**Brian Evans**

## **DANCE AND TONE**

The Dance and Tone Group was started by me in January 1999 under the name of Dance Exercise for Fitness. At that time, as

there was a large number of members, we spilt into two mixed ability groups both of which ran weekly. The night before the first session I dreamed that we had a live pianist to play our music instead of having to use tapes and CDs. In the course of my dream I remember saying "Could you play that a little slower please, Mr Gershwin?" One of the pieces of music we would be using in that first session was *I've Got a Crush on You* by George Gershwin, so perhaps that triggered my dream. How wonderful it would have been if we really had been able to have George Gershwin as our pianist. In 2000 instead of two mixed ability groups we formed a Beginners Group and an Intermediate Group. Unfortunately, we had to have a break of two terms in Autumn 2000 and Spring 2001 as I was ill and couldn't find anyone to take over the group. When we recommenced we formed just one mixed ability group, which still has a number of the original members and also welcomes new members every term.

Currently, attendance is 18-22 members each week. We have met in three different halls since we started and in all of these we have on several occasions experienced the problem of finding the hall hasn't been opened for us and we have wondered whether we would have to put on a public performance by dancing in the car park. But after we have made urgent phone calls, someone has always turned up to let us in.

Our sessions are divided into four parts: (1) warm up and stretch; (2) toning exercises using stretch bands and exercises on the floor. (Those who might have difficulty in doing floor exercises may sit on a chair or stand with the support of a chair to do alternative versions of the exercises.); (3) a dance routine, (4) cool down and stretch. We use many different styles of music and so far this year we have used show tunes and classical, Latin, hip hop, Motown, Cajun, Spanish and Greek music. Many members tell me how much they like the music we use and how much better they

feel after our sessions; so if you want that feel good feeling too, why not join us?

**Jill Evans**

## **DIGITAL IMAGE MANIPULATION**

Kodak has recently announced that they will no longer be producing film for the Western World. Kodak's change is due to the large number of people who are now buying digital cameras. Although you can still get your digital images printed in the high street the advent of digital cameras means that those of us who have a computer can now use it to do all those tasks which used to need a Dark room and lots of chemicals. So we can now correct underexposed or over exposed shots-straighten that skyline - or even copy the Kremlin and remove that undesirable intruder from the picture.

If you have access to a scanner you can also renovate scratched or folded old pictures and get nice new clean prints from precious old photos in Albums or backs of drawers.

The Digital Image Manipulation group members improve our skills in manipulating photos. This group should therefore be of interest to people who have recently acquired a digital camera or are thinking of buying one.

This group is meant to be complementary to the photographic group, which is the group you should join if you are interested in how to take good photos. We will specialise in the skills of turning the not so good photo into a better one. We will also want to concentrate on the manipulation of images so a basic level of computer literacy will be expected so that we don't have to spend too much time in learning how to use

a mouse; we would prefer to spend our time trying to repair damage caused by a mouse! By its very nature this needs to be a hands-on group and we intend to use the computers at Calthorpe Park School. This will limit severely the numbers that we can have in the group so we may have to establish a waiting list if the group proves as popular as original interest suggests.

## **Dennis Parkinson**

### **ENGLISH LITERATURE**

In September we returned to 19th century literature and rediscovered "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte. We found a superbly written novel with drama, intrigue, atmosphere and perceptive insights into human relationships. There was also sharp analysis of society, especially the marriage market and the role of religion.

During the second term we read "Wide Sargasso Sea" by Jean Rhys. This book, set in Dominica explores events pre-dating the action of "Jane Eyre". It is the story of the childhood and early marriage of the first Mrs. Rochester, the poor mad woman later brought to England and incarcerated in the attics at Thornfield, Mr. Rochester's home. This is a brilliant novel, rich in colour, atmosphere and descriptions of the natural world and insights into human nature.

These last months have been overshadowed by sadness at the death of Helen Gething, who led our group so ably for several years. We will all remember her with great affection and will always be grateful, for all that she gave to our group. We will miss her very much.

## **Mary Jennings.**

### **EUROPEANS**

The year 2004 marks only the fifth anniversary of the Europeans so we are still

fledglings. We started, at the instigation of Janet Pulley, a former Fleet U3A Chair, hard on the heels of two monthly meetings reflecting different views on the European Union - one addressed by Sir Anthony Meyer and the other by Hans du Moulin.

We may be still young but we have been busy! Over the last five years the group has tackled the history of the EU, its institutions and decision-making procedures, various policy areas and the peculiarities of the UK's position as, at least sometimes, "the awkward partner". We submitted views to the European Commission on future governance and recently have spent much time on enlargement and the draft constitutional Treaty. Throughout we have tried - not without difficulty and some despair at UK media coverage - to disentangle reality from rhetoric and fact from fiction.

Despite the rather serious nature of the Group's programme we always have lively and (nearly always) good-tempered discussions, based on handouts from the leader and/or material introduced by members. High points have been presentations from two of our MEPs - Roy Perry and Chris Huhne and from other outside speakers on a range of subjects.

For most however, "the event" was a two-night trip to Brussels to visit the Parliament and the Commission and (for light relief) the battlefield of Waterloo and, on the way home, Bruges. When the leader and his faithful helpers are fully re-energised we hope to run another - there are now some twenty-four other member states to choose from!

## **Derek Stroud**

### **FOLK DANCING**

The Fleet U3A Folk Dance Group was formed a few years back to complement the activities of the Circle Dance Group, which met only once a month and the members wanted to do some dancing on the "other"

fortnight. We have recently decided that meeting once a month, in term time, is not enough; we need more opportunity both to practise what we have learnt and move on to something new. From September 2004 we shall be meeting every two weeks on Friday mornings in term time, alternating with the Walking Group.

We enjoy folk and national dances from many European countries and some more distant lands. In particular we have in our repertoire many traditional line and circle dances from south-eastern Europe and eastern Mediterranean countries, for which no partners are needed. All dances are taught or talked through. They are great fun and reasonably authentic, having been collected in the countries of origin, or brought here by visiting teams and teachers. The music is often very beautiful melodically, and is sometimes played on unusual instruments not found in the modern orchestra or band! Always the music fits the dance with which it has evolved.

The source of all our material is the Society for International Folk Dancing, which supports many associated dance groups, organises teaching sessions, and distributes music and instructions.

During the past year we have learnt dances from England, Scotland, France, Turkey, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Armenia, Germany, Israel, Romania, Serbia, Greece, Taiwan and Tibet.

Apart from the sheer enjoyment of doing the dances, we are aware, as third-agers, that they also provide some useful exercise and help to maintain and improve our physical coordination.

**Michael Clark.**

## **FRENCH ADVANCED**

At present there are 17 members enrolled in our Group, about half and half (hommes et dames) and on average, about 12 people come to each weekly meeting. Most of our meetings are led by myself assisted by Marion Turner and Rosalind Kemp. Also about once per month for the last 4 years, we have welcomed a French lady from Hartley Wintney who has brought a much

wider perspective to those meetings. Three members of our Group know another French lady who lives in Fleet and also gives French tuition, so we decided to invite her to join us from time to time as well. Having two "professional leaders" is quite a new experience and at the time of writing this article, we have not yet decided how frequently we will invite them along. The good thing about these two ladies is that they have quite different styles of teaching, both of which help us to improve our French as well as being good fun! The Hartley Wintney lady introduces a subject either topical or something to which we can all relate. We then discuss various aspects of the subject, often recounting experiences from our own lives. For a recent meeting which was particularly enjoyable, the subject was photography and she brought along a book of classic "noir sur blanc" pictures. Each person had a copy of one of the photographs and was invited to talk about it -don't ask who had the nude brunette!

The Fleet lady concentrates more on French grammar and the use of different words and expressions. We have looked at how the French use their three versions of the word number and how the verb donner (to give) is used in many French proverbs such as "donner un coup d'epee dans l'eau" which means doing something useless or unnecessary.

At our regular meetings, we make much use of items from the magazine "La Vie Outre-Manche", reading and translating articles and attempting to complete the cross-word and vocabulary tests.

At the meeting on 5th November, in groups of two people, we decided whom we would like to put on top of our bonfire and whom we would like to launch on a rocket to the moon with a one-way ticket. Needless to say, Tony Blair and Saddam Hussein featured high in our poll.

Fourteen members of the Group enjoyed a Christmas lunch together at the O Toulouse restaurant and appreciated talking to the French owner, especially after a few

glasses of wine! Three of us went to Olympia in January for the Vive La France exhibition. It was bigger than ever this year with a new section on painting and other forms of artwork. Many of the tourist stalls were much bigger and all the other favourites were still there such as the wine tasting, fashion show, jazz band and lots of food and drink.

## **Ray Oldham**

### **GARDENING**

From Bert Jennings

The success and continuing growth of the U3A has largely been due to the enthusiasm and application of Group Leaders but are many of us aware of how Leaders were found in the first place to get the show on the road ten years ago? Applicants for Membership of the Fleet U3A were invited to state their hobbies and interests on the form provided. Anyone injudicious enough to state an interest became the target for prospective Leadership. In the case of the Gardening Group, such a person was invited to collect the key to open the Methodist Church Hall to admit Group members and ask them, once comfortably seated inside, to elect their Leader. Right! You've guessed. Anyone capable of collecting a key, getting the members safely inside and finding the correct room was obviously a born Leader and was thus unanimously and swiftly elected. Maybe other Groups had a voluntary Leader. Pam Owen did volunteer to become the first Gardening Group Secretary. The Group has enjoyed four Leaderships to Date -Bert Jennings (3 years), Jean Alexander (1 year), Len Wilson (3 years) with current Leader Pat Constantine, now in her third year.

From Pat Constantine

The group has had four leaders since it started ten years ago with only a few members. Some of these still attend the

group which now has over fifty names on the register.

With no money for speakers to begin with, there was more member participation. Topics ranged from vine weevils, lawn care, irrigation, machinery and general gardening problems. A member who had moved to this area from the north spoke about the very different conditions in the two areas. He brought plans of his intentions for his new garden -there is no record of how he fared! They visited some members' gardens and were eventually able to have a few speakers having raised some funds with raffles.

In more recent times, with many more members we have been able to afford more speakers, but still try to encourage member participation. We have watched several videos, which have given many helpful hints. Over the years the group has visited several local private gardens as well as Wisely and West Green House and will shortly be going to two specialist nurseries in the Lymington area.

Members bring along plants to sell at meetings, which also help to raise funds towards speakers who are very expensive now. We charge an extra pound towards the cost of the speaker when we have one.

It is very gratifying to see that the group has grown so well from small beginnings - the seeds, which were planted originally, are now flourishing!

### **GERMAN BEGINNERS**

This course is suitable for people being introduced to the German Language for the first time as well as for those with some previous knowledge of German, who wish to improve their language skills.

During my period of participation on the course I have witnessed the progress of total beginners attaining a good level of oral and written dexterity in just one academic year. At the same time I have also noted the marked improvement achieved by people with previous

knowledge of German, as confidence and application increases. We learn to expand our vocabulary, together with associated genders, and to gradually absorb the rudiments of grammar and tenses.

Our-Course Leader encourages everyone to participate in the learning process to the extent that the individual is comfortable with, and is capable of achieving. Although course work is based upon "Deutsch Plus", a BBC Programme, including textbook, audios and video, we are given additional variety by studying sections from other textbooks. Occasionally our Course Leader stimulates us with crossword puzzles, specially devised, and often with a seasonal flavour. Special assistance is given to new beginners, and for those wishing to be stretched, extra assignments are set.

We have a friendly group that enjoys good-humoured fun, and we all look forward to meeting up each Monday. I thoroughly recommend this course to anyone who wishes to learn the German language; so why not come and join us, you will be most welcome.

**David Fry**

## **HISTORY, A DECADE OF IT**

The History Class dates back to the start of the Fleet U3A in 1994, and Pauline Smith who was an original committee member, was responsible for its conception. The first class had a signed up membership of about fifteen persons and was held in the small committee room in the Kings Road Catholic Church. At the first meeting Pauline stated that she wanted somebody to take on the job of Group Leader but there were no takers, however Peter Smith agreed to help out as Secretary and to give a number of talks. At the first session Pauline gave an impressive talk on the famous battle of Agincourt having recently visited the site in France. During the course of the first year, class numbers fell to as low as eight attendees, and although at times speakers had to resort to reading

straight out of text books, the class survived.

The class continued to meet at the Catholic Church until April 1996 when it moved to the Methodist Church small room and as membership started to increase it transferred to the minor hall in the following September, when Mike Gregory took over as Group Leader. In September 1997 the history class spawned two other sister classes one specialising in Victorian history run by Mike Gregory and the other on World War II run by Peter Smith.

In 1998 Peter Smith became Group Leader ably assisted by Peter Friggi who presented many papers, and Bryn Brassington took on the job as Secretary. The class continued to expand and in 2001 we had to move into the main hall. In 1999 Peter Friggi emigrated to Leicestershire, and Neil Paxton stepped in and volunteered his services and was duly appointed Deputy Fuhrer. Neil has not only contributed many talks but has introduced a considerable number of outside speakers, and has also been responsible for organising three visits by coach to Fishbourne Roman Palace, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, and a forthcoming trip in May to the Greenwich Maritime Museum.

In February 2003 we moved our venue to the United Reformed Church, because we could not hear ourselves speak due to the patter of tiny feet and vocal noises from the day nursery class. Our current register has 120 members listed and attendances of 70 to 80 are now normal.

Each year we set a different theme, which at present is the first fifty years of the twentieth century, and the subject matter has always covered a wide and varied field to suit all tastes. The continued success of the class has been due to a small dedicated number of members who have consistently prepared very professional talks, titivated with a touch of humour and often a little scandal that was never present in our school days, for history should not only be educational but enjoyable, which no doubt is why the class has such a large number of

dedicated listeners. If we keep expanding as we have in the last ten years it will not be long before we have to move into the Harlington Centre, so let's hope by then that the proprietors have at last got the audio system working.

**Peter Smith**

## **JAZZ – from the beginning**

How did it happen? Well - this group was formed as a result of a conversation between jazz fans whilst out with the U3A walking group, namely Nick Tyson and myself plus a score of comments from other walkers, one comment that stood out was "of course we will join it, jazz was the music of our youth".

What more could we say?

The time was then just prior to Christmas as Nick and I approached a number of members about it, the enthusiasm was great and we recorded many names. We agreed to try our luck. Ian Stephenson was approached reference accommodation, back came the answer, a big "Yes", how about the Methodist Church?" Great we said, assuming he meant the Hall, oh no, he meant the Church proper! We went along there and of course it was entirely suitable (providing we behaved ourselves). We decided that the offer of a fortnightly meeting 10 am to 12 midday was just what we wanted. We discovered that equipment to play CDs and tapes was available and was in use by the classical music group and that we could also use it (Some of their members also joined our new group, which we welcomed).

By now we had collected 38 names with promises of more to come, dates were fixed and after a small change to avoid clashing after Easter, we set the first date at 8th January 2004. We managed a couple of 'dummy runs' to familiarise ourselves with the equipment, happy but apprehensive we cleared the gear away, turned out lights, turned down the heating, did everything

that was required of us and departed to await the day.

On 8th January Nick and I arrived early and set up. Before we could take second breath fans were turning up. Nick became the money-man (and still is). I became the commentator and welcome (somebody called me a disc jockey - oh no! please not that). Everybody was seated and waiting so with trepidation we started - first numbers were from "Jazz Classics - the Music of King Oliver" and "Kid Ory" played by well-known British bands.

This took us up to mid morning short break and when we re-started the jazz was from a CD called "Encyclopaedia of Jazz" and included Big Band and some modern artists. We managed to squeeze in some New Orleans styles as well (Preservation Hall Jazz Band - still playing daily in New Orleans).

As the final notes faded Nick and I sat and waited (our audience by the way had swollen a bit and nobody walked out during the performance). General Opinion - Great Stuff.

Well, the first two sessions went off OK judging by the comments received.

Nick and I visited the Fleet Library for the session on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, they have a large collection of all types of music on CD. Nick found some old favourites there and they were well received.

Shortly we will be showing a Louis Armstrong video showing many facets of "Satch's" lifetime and his rise to fame as a fantastic jazz trumpeter.

We hope also to play more modern jazz in future sessions. Some of our members have promised to run a session or two with their choices – great! And if you want your own CDs/tapes played – fetch them along.

Well, here's to continuing success, thanks all of you, see you soon.

Les Ayrton & Nick Tyson.

## **MUSIC**

The recent nationwide survey carried out by the Standing Committee for Education

showed that the most popular U3A subject is music appreciation. Certainly in Fleet the Music Appreciation group was one of the earliest to be set up. We're not sure exactly when it was established but we believe that it was within about a year of the founding of Fleet U3A itself. Its founder was Janet Pulley, later to become U3A Chair and at first there were just 5 members. We now have an average attendance of 35 to 40 members and over 50 on the books. What is more, John Miles, who was one of the original 5, is still a member. Not only that, he was our Secretary for many years and remains one of our most regular attendees.

Janet herself led the group for about 6 years but in 1999 she persuaded Alec and me to take over from her.

Our own survey of members showed a strong preference for 19th century orchestral music but with interest in a wide range of other music. We try to reflect this range of interests in our programming. For example during the summer term we shall be celebrating Shakespeare's birthday with music from Tchaikovsky to Bernstein to Dankworth. I shall be continuing the story of the symphony, with Chapter 5 bringing us to Gustav Mahler. A bassoon player will be demonstrating his instrument and playing music, which features it. We shall also of course be visited by Eddie Woolway from Farnborough. Eddie was the main speaker at the group for several years and continues to visit us once or twice a term.

We've had a couple of sessions devoted to jazz but we were delighted when the Jazz Appreciation group started earlier this year and we wish them well.

Alec and I have ourselves learned a lot from running the group about the music we love. We hope that we have helped others to learn and enjoy as well. We are always pleased to welcome new members. There's plenty of room!

**Brian Smith**

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Back in 1994 we were very fortunate to have as our first Leader the late Gordon Lodder, who gave our dozen or so members at that time some enjoyable sessions in the Velmead Community Centre. Regrettably, Gordon died suddenly in the middle of his second year with us. We were left with no obvious replacement but were helped out for a few meetings by a couple of Gordon's former colleagues from the Farnborough Camera Club. I took on the leadership for a year on the basis that one did not need to be an expert so long as other members could be organised to contribute but our collective expertise only survived with some very welcome assistance from Peter Martin, the Leader of the Guildford U3A Photography Group. Two more Leaders from outside helped us out and were gratefully appreciated but it was only when Ted Clark took us over that stability was finally established. Ted is now in his fifth year with us and during his leadership we have broadened our horizons with exhibitions in Yateley and this year a competition with Guildford U3A to take place on the 28th April. Throughout this time, Ted has been ably supported by Secretary Michael Jones. Digital photography is gaining strength and even some of our more diehard members are beginning to consider whether a camera that can be carried in the pocket might present welcome relief to ageing limbs from the burden of an SLR with all its sundry attachments. Can one get such good results, though? Time will tell. This summer, we really must do more fieldwork to get material for our exhibitions.

**Bert Jennings.**

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

Fleet U3A was founded in 1994 by a mere handful of dedicated founder - members.

In 1996 it was decided to form our present group. The leader then was John Davis, with Julian Barley acting as the Secretary. The group has maintained continuity with Julian still doing a grand job with myself taking over from John two years ago.

Over the years our average attendance has steadily grown and now runs at 40 per meeting. During a yearly session, we run nine meetings, each taking place on the first Friday of the month in the St. John's Ambulance Hall, in Clarence Road. Our speakers are a mixture of group members and invited guests.

The number of ladies attending the meetings has also increased, and we like to think that the subjects we offer, appeal to both female and male audiences. Our meetings take place in very suitable accommodation and our ambition is to see the attendance rise to 50. Why not come along and absorb some of the expert knowledge, which is imparted to us at every meeting.

**Rod Parker .**

## **TRAVELOG, TEN YEARS AGO**

I retired officially from the company that I worked for in London in August 1993 (not aged 65 I hasten to add). I promptly rejoined the company as a consultant working part time. What was I to do with the rest of my time? It wasn't long before I heard about an idea to start up an activity called U3A in Fleet. I don't remember how I heard about it or who roped me in (may they be forgiven!) but on 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1994 I found myself in a discussion group, meeting in Janet Pullen's house deciding how to set about starting a Fleet U3A. Of the ten or so attending, most were ladies. I clearly recall that Gerard Walton was there but we men were very much in a minority. We talked about what classes we could start – I rashly volunteered to take a Travelog group – and how we could recruit more class leaders, where we could hold

the classes, how and where would we advertise, raise money, hold general meetings, insurance, affiliation to HQ, overall leadership etc. We decided to set up a steering committee and I found myself on that and we elected Gerard as chairman.

We continued to hold meetings at Janet's house and finally decided to announce an inaugural meeting to launch Fleet U3A at which we hoped to recruit more people prepared to lead groups. The inaugural meeting was held on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1994 in the Sandy Lane Memorial Hall, Church Crookham. We printed membership cards and I got member number 6 which I proudly hold to this day. We agreed to start regular group meetings in the autumn. I went off to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji in September/ October and arrived back just in time to lead my first Travelog class on October 24<sup>th</sup> 1994. It was held in the Methodist Church Committee Room, 26 people attending and I talked about the islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino and showed a film that I had made. It soon became clear that the room was too small so we moved to Fleet Baptist Church. Since then we have increased in number up to 75. Every enrolment day over 100 people sign up for Travelog but strangely some never turn up to sample what is on offer. I often wonder why. The majority come each year and remain as enthusiastic and faithful as ever. Things have improved too. Instead of a TV screen we now have a video projector so that the pictures can be easily seen by a large audience. Over the years we have talked about and seen films of over 100 countries and islands and we still haven't been everywhere yet!

We look forward to many more get togethers and as one of the founder members of Fleet U3A it gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to see how we have grown from 10 to nearly 1000 and thrived over the past 10 years and I trust that we will continue to prosper in the next 10.

In the mean time I have to keep travelling in order together more material for the Travelog Group – it's a hard life but somebody has to do it!

## **Martin Bennett**

### **VISITS**

Visits were suggested in 1995. The first concern was to find free parking for members to leave their cars. By sheer coincidence Betty Fox met the chairman of Fleet Football Club who offered the use of their car park. Fleet Coaches (now Truemans) proved very helpful and on March 31st forty members led by Betty went, with great trepidation, to "Finchcock's" a Georgian house which offered a superb collection of old keyboard instruments, a talk and a performance on the instruments by the owner of the house, plus a very nice restaurant! All went well and visits became established. We grew from three visits in 1995 to four in 1996 despite the first visit of the year, promoted to view the million crocuses at Kew, being a little premature - there were only about fifty in bloom! Fortunately an orchid exhibition and very understanding members saved the day. The innovation for 1997 was our first long weekend. This was spent in Norfolk; we were a comparatively small number, twenty-eight in all. Fleet Coaches had advised and an interesting itinerary was compiled. These have gone from strength and this year in addition to our June break in Devon we are spending five days in Prague in October.

Two coaches were needed for a visit to see the rebuilt Windsor Castle and the Millennium did not go unmarked. Over two hundred members went to partake in the Dome Experience. With our ever-increasing membership visits were becoming more popular and we now have Don Watson, Joyce Welsh and Barbara Lyons sharing the load.

We aim to introduce as much diversity into our visits as possible to meet all tastes. With such a large number of art lovers among our members it is no surprise that visits to art galleries are always popular. The visit to a brewery in 2001 was, initially, less so: however this proved to be a most enjoyable day, particularly when "sampling" got underway!

We now have some experience of how cars are assembled, carpets are made, the secret war time goings on at Bletchley Park and an insight into what happens at National Trust properties when they are "put to bed". Where will our wandering spirits and enquiring minds take us next? Keep in touch!

## **Don Watson**



### **WALKING**

Pat Sansom started the Fleet U 3 A Walking programme about 8 years ago. At that time he introduced me to walking for which I shall always be grateful.

My present walking programmes have been running for about 6 years. We are in the middle of No 12, which covers 6 months offering 12 different walks.

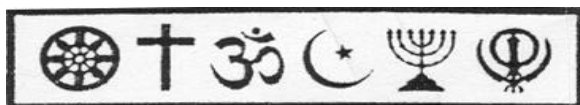
Since each walk averages 5 miles, if a person had been on every walk, by July 4, they would have covered over 720 miles in our lovely local countryside. Most walks are in Hampshire, but we also venture into Surrey & Berks.

Betty Fox, to ring the changes, organises an annual coach outing to include a visit to a special site plus a walk & pub lunch. These have been very welcome.

Success has its penalties. Our numbers on a walk now average between 40/50 persons. Whilst this is gratifying for the organisers, it requires a very competent leader & middle & back markers to ensure no one gets lost and a problem can be quickly dealt with. We also have to consider car parking, which can be a nightmare. Finally my grateful thanks to

- 1) The stalwart band of about 12 leaders who give up their time to provide others with a pleasant and interesting walk at least twice a year. We very badly need more leaders, remember, no leader no walk.
- 2) Malcolm Reeves who quietly but efficiently, makes sure I put the right grid references on the programme, and has introduced many new walks for us & is around when I am not.
- 3) All the cheerful band of walkers who have (nearly) always obeyed the countryside code & supported us in a wonderful manner.

## Bill Ralph



## WORLD FAITHS

Started in January 2002 our introduction was a familiarising with the historical and geographical origins of the six major faiths and recognising some of the common strands within religions. We began our study with the Eastern religions – Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. As part of our learning we visited Southall with its bustling colour and smells of exotic fruits

piled on the pavement, of fabric, spice and jewellery shops.

The morning was spent in Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara where we heard the reading of the Holy Book, Guru Granth Sahib, received Karah Prasad, the sweet meat offered to all who enter the Gurdwara and heard an informative dissertation on the beginnings of Sikhism in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. We ate a Langar meal with the Sikh Community. This simple vegetarian Asian meal is central to Sikh living and is offered free to all who come to the Gurdwara, rich or poor, no matter what race or creed they may be.

In the afternoon we visited the Vishwa Hindu Kendra Mandir, a lively busy temple where we learned about the Hindu Gods and Hindu worship.

In September we began our study of Judaism with a visit from two friends who had been brought up in Jewish London. They shared a number of artefacts with us that they had collected over the years. Our study visit took us to an Orthodox Synagogue at Surbiton and a Reform Synagogue at Weybridge. Both visits were made exciting by the clear explanations of the two rabbis. Rabbi David had just returned to England from Israel and we were the first Gentile students following his appointment as Rabbi of the Surbiton Community. Rabbi Jacqui, the first lady Rabbi in England explained many of the artefacts used in Synagogue worship and the keeping of festivals in the home. Some of us for the first time were able to see the layout of a kosher kitchen.

Our next study will be of Christianity and we look forward to learning together more of our own faith, to visiting an orthodox community and exploring varying approaches to the faith in our modern world.

## Jane A Clark

Editor Brian Greener 01252697250  
briangreener@ntlworld.com