

Volume 13, Issue 2 - Autumn 2015

Fetcham In Focus

U3A

**Berlin to Copenhagen
by cruiser & ferry**



Chairman's Column



Welcome to our October issue of the Newsletter and thank you to everyone who has contributed. Without our members forwarding items of interest to the Editors we could not produce an interesting and informative Newsletter.

A lot has happened this Summer and we can report successful holidays and events starting with the holiday to Norfolk and Suffolk in May which started the good weather and carried on for the Cunard's 3 Queens visit followed by the Baltic Isles Cruise in August. Watch out for the Cruise in 2016 which promises to be just as enjoyable. The visit to The Newmarket Stud and Racecourse resulted in an excellent day out and a few winners!! The Hog Roast was the favourite of all.

It will soon be time for our AGM and renewal of membership and the papers for both of these will be emailed or posted (as elected by you), so if you have not received these by the time you have your October Newsletter, please contact our Membership Secretary Tony R by telephone or email.

From Berlin, Poland, The Baltic Sea and Copenhagen (follow the trip on the Newsletter cover)

Following the flight from London, we arrived at our Berlin hotel in time for dinner. Some ventured outside for a walkabout before relaxing over the meal. The city has undergone enormous change in the last decade and has blossomed into a vibrant yet relaxed capital city. After a morning at leisure, we transferred to our ship, Croisi Europe's *ms Victor Hugo*, for a welcome cocktail, an introduction to the crew and dinner.

The next day we had a city tour of Berlin taking in all the main sites, including the large amount of the 'Berlin Wall', left as a reminder. A sobering thought for all of us, I think. The Brandenburg Gate was majestic, as was the Cathedral, German Parliament Building and galleries within the 'City Inner Circle'. Then, back to the boat to begin our cruise.

Passing through the boat lift in Niederfinow, an extraordinary metal construction built between 1927 and 1934, we reached the town of Oderberg, where we had another excursion to the Cistercian Monastery of Chorin, set in a beautiful location. This beautiful building is widely regarded as the most important historic monument of German Gothic style brick architecture. The ship sailed on to Stolpe, the crew having given a box of wine to the lock keeper as an encouragement to open a lock gate en route, through the Oder Valley National Park, eventually mooring at the Polish town of Szczecin, meaning 'listen'.

This is a port city rich in traditions and history and we had a guided tour exploring the fine squares and admiring the wealth

of old buildings. The German's call it Stettin but the Poles insist on using the original name.

We then commenced to cruise to Peenemünde on the Island of Usedom where we saw the factory that built and tested the V-1 and V-2 rockets. In 1936 the Ministry of Aviation of Nazi Germany paid 750,000 reichsmarks to the town of Wolgast for the whole Northern peninsula of this Baltic island in order to use it as a testing site. Behind the beautiful white sandy, but deserted, beach were kilometres of faceless concrete flats, built by Hitler to be used as holiday bases by military personnel but never occupied. One of our members, who shall be nameless, suggested buying them, renovating and selling off as 'buy one, get one free'!

With the memories of what we had seen still in our minds, we had lunch and then joined another excursion to Rügen, Germany's largest island and a stunning combination of coastline and countryside, with national parks and towering chalk cliffs visited by Queen Victoria.

Having berthed overnight in Lauterbach, we set off early the next morning for Greifswald and then Stralsund, an interesting and beautiful place to explore – in its heyday it was a member of the powerful Hanseatic League. A gala night on board, with a superb menu, made us realise that the cruise was nearing its end, although not the entire holiday.

The next day we cruised to Sassnitz, where we said farewell to our hosts and ship and took the ferry to Trelleborg in Sweden and then, crossing the magnificent bridge between Sweden and Denmark, arrived in Copenhagen for an overnight stay. After

dinner some members went to the Tivoli Gardens others just wandered the vibrant capital of Denmark, before retiring to bed. A guided tour of the city next morning highlighted the Christiansborg Palace (the seat of the Danish Parliament), where we saw the changing of the guard and Amalienborg, the official residence of Queen Margrethe, finishing with the obligatory photograph of the mermaid upon the rock. We transferred to Copenhagen Airport in the afternoon for our return flight to Heathrow, with many memories of a very happy, full-on 9-day trip. We sailed a total of 332 kms, through 3 locks and one boat lift.

Winnie

Inland Waterways Group



On Wednesday 19th August the group planned a narrow boat trip on the Kennett and Avon canal from Newbury to the Thatcham Reedbeds, which is the home of water birds and other wildlife.

Eight of us duly set off from Fetcham at 8.15 and by 10.30 the boat had been set up and we were on our way. We were a mixture of experienced and inexperienced boaters so the 2 locks on the way to the reserve were a

bit of a learning curve for some of us and quite exciting. The Kennet and Avon canal can be a bit short of mooring spaces and there were really only 2 where we planned to stop. Unfortunately both were occupied but as luck would have it one Boat in the better spot moved on just as we were considering our (limited) options, so we moored and walked the short distance to the visitor centre where we had our picnic lunch looking over the lake and its water birds. A pair of locals (see photograph), while not objecting to our presence, were not going to be moved by it.



After lunch, it was agreed by all that despite the attractions of the reedbeds it would be more fun to play at boating so we returned to the boat and set off back upstream where everyone was able to improve the skills they had acquired on the outward journey. We passed through Newbury, under the pretty little bridge at the town centre, through the lock and swingbridge to go through the very attractive West Mills area. After short run further upstream we returned through the swingbridge again. By now the threatened rain had really arrived so we moored up opposite the church where we retired inside the boat for tea and biscuits.

The Journey back to Fetcham was made in heavy rain, but despite this it was a most enjoyable and successful outing.

Lewis L

The Speaker Secretary signs off.

It has been my privilege and pleasure over the past few years to have arranged the speakers for our monthly meetings. The role involves planning the programme, booking speakers, negotiating the fee and ensuring that the arrangements for the afternoon for the speaker run well.

Of course 'you can't please all the people all the time' and in spite of a few disappointing speakers most talks have been well received and it has always been good to receive encouraging comments. Speakers often tell me that we are a welcoming and receptive audience.

Mary C will be taking over the role when she retires from being our Chair in November. Please continue to give your support and keep those recommendations coming. I thank you for the support and encouragement that you have given me.

David C

Art Appreciation Group – a visit to the British Museum



A small group of U3A members who have attended the Art Lectures by Leslie Pitcher visited the British Museum where Leslie took us round the Assyrian & Egyptian exhibitions showing us articles which he had told us about in his 2014/15 series of lectures entitled 'Art of the Ancient World'. It is fantastic to see the 1000's of years old articles, in real life and actually touch

them, even if we were not supposed to. In the Assyrian exhibition he showed us and told us all about the sculpted reliefs illustrating the daily life in Assyria especially the war scenes and hunting scenes (nearly 3000 years old). Then he pointed out and told us all about the huge winged bulls with human heads and 5 legs, again nearly 3000 years old. They had 5 legs because they were only supposed to be viewed from head-on or side view when you would only see 4 legs. (Count them! Ed.)

In the Egyptian exhibition Leslie took us to see many of the items from last year's lecture no. 2 including the statue of the 'Squatting Scribe' (again nearly 3000 years old). Maybe we will have to get a visit to the museum in Cairo to see more of the items he talked about in his lectures. Maybe not, too hot.

We are all looking forward to part 2 of the 'Art of the Ancient World' lectures starting in October which will be the final part of over 100 lectures by Leslie running for 11 years.

Bryan D



Local History Group 1

WW1 and Fetcham

Following the fairly extensive research we carried out for the recently published book "Edwardian Bookham" – by Peter Tilley, we decided that we would undertake a project of a similar period but featuring Fetcham and the impact of WW1 on the community.

We started as our base the 1911 census, which lists just over 400 adults living in Fetcham. (We had transcribed this ourselves, and linked it to the preceding censuses going back to 1841, thus giving us an ancestral trail). It gives the occupations of the majority of the villagers as servants, agricultural labourers and gardeners. We identified those men and young boys (by age) who could have served in WW1, having previously researched the history of the men whose names are engraved on the Fetcham War Memorial.

Using websites we were able to search for an individual British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Card and in many cases come up with records for a particular name. References are made to the medals awarded to each serviceman and give a name, regimental name and number and sometimes unfortunately the words "Killed in Action". All World War 1 medals were engraved around the rim with the recipient's name, rank and number, unlike WW2 medals which have no identification details on them.

The next step is to search each of these options – a lengthy process - and hope that a service or pension record may be found. The service records can provide the original enlistment details, name, age, address, height, weight, chest expansion, hair colour and eyes, next of kin,

occupation and postings and can be several pages or more of digital images of the originals and are paramount to substantiating a more definite identification. Unfortunately, much of this original documentation was lost in WW2 in the London bombing raids, so you may not find any reference at all. Some records did survive in part and are referred to as "The Burnt Records", charred remains salvaged and giving small snippets of information.

So far we have found some fascinating and deeply sad things. We also uncovered one service record for a female, who served in the Women's (later Queen Mary's) Army Auxiliary Corps. Her name was Rose and she was born in 1899. We find her in 1911 living in The Street with her parents and mentioned in 1912 and again in 1913 upon passing her Labour Examination, in the Fetcham School Log Books.

We hope that our research when complete will stand alone as a memory of Fetcham at this time and also add to the Surrey Heritage project – "Surrey in The Great War" – a county wide project launched in May this year and due for completion in 2018.

Lyn R Group Leader

Name	Corps	Rank	Enlist. No.
EASDOWN	The Queen's R	Pte	T-4673
George W.			202244
Date of Birth	Date of Enlistment	Date of Discharge	
1/10/92	4/3/92	Do-Do-	
11435-AFCM.NWFF-1919 (ROLL 1042-40)			

An example of a British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Card George W. Easdown, The Queen's Royal Regiment

Bryan's General Knowledge Quiz

- 1 Which two elements make up sand?
- 2 What is the capital of Albania?
- 3 In Judo, what colour belt follows yellow?
- 4 Which 'brass' instrument was previously called a sackbut?
- 5 In the film Educating Rita, who played Rita?
- 6 In 1798 a verse was added to our National Anthem; in honour of whom?
- 7 What is the national flower of Austria?
- 8 Which African country takes its name from the Spanish for Lion Mountain?
- 9 Who was the author of 'For whom the bell tolls'?
(And for whom does it toll? For an extra mark, Ed.)
- 10 What are the only birds to moult their beaks?

Answers page 16

Cookery Group

Come dine with me takes on a whole new meaning when the cookery group, who love to cook and eat, meet up each month.



A topic is chosen and the group produces a 3 course meal between them, normally trying out new recipes which are exchanged. In recent months our lunch menus have celebrated WW1 (no spam) with poppy and WW1 decor, Valentine's day, St. Patrick's Day (Irish stew with accompaniments) served at a splendidly dressed table with all things green and shamrock and Easter – all dishes included eggs, and

chicks and bunnies decorated the table. One month we were given a demo by a member using an electric soup maker, enjoying the end product with delicious home-made bread, cheeses and patés. We recently enjoyed an "away day", a seminar in Leatherhead at "EatWright" on healthy eating – the demons are: salt, sugar and fat! It was a real eye opener to find out that some of the products marketed as healthy or "diet" are a misnomer. It seems that a can of coke containing 6 teaspoons of sugar is better for us than the diet brands due to all the additives used. We enjoyed a lovely lunch served by Leonie Wright, our hostess who also gave us recipes for the dishes and other nutritional information.

Group leaders will know that our group has the pleasure of supplying the desserts for the annual meeting – they seem to be well received!

Jackie S

Hog Roast

We had a fine day at the beginning of July for our Hog Roast and the ancient, rebuilt Barn at Manor Farm was the perfect venue!



Greg Johnson, the Ashted butcher, had set up the roasting frame the night before and by the time we arrived the hog was beautifully roasted and ready to serve. Tony Banks had made a delicious and plentiful selection of salads and desserts which were laid on the huge table in the Barn. The Band from the Pub played just the right type of music to keep us entertained

throughout the afternoon. Some members even got up and danced!

Although there were in excess of 100 members and friends, there was plenty of space to move around on the three lawns outside the Barn. Altogether a lovely afternoon with just the right amount of friendly, relaxed atmosphere for which Fetcham U3A is renowned.

Winnie B

Oil Painting Workshop

Our new venue proved to be a big success and the day was enjoyed by all who attended. This year we painted a snow scene with dramatic sky reflections on the snow and on water.

I have reserved the same venue for next year which will be on Thursday, 11th and Thursday, 18th August, 2016.

Marilyn J



Fashion wear from the Needlework Group

Our own projects keep us busy but we have once again been making dresses for New Hope Orphanage in Kenya, to which last year we sent 60 plus little dresses for the smaller girls. This year we turned our thoughts to the older girls' needs. We made an appeal for material and duvet covers/sheets all of which had to be pretty. As these dresses were for older girls they took more time to make but we are very pleased that we will probably achieve more than thirty, the final figure is not in yet. It is not fair to single out any one person but credit must go to a couple of our ladies who excelled themselves. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed but all in all it was a team effort and much appreciated by me. If you know of a charity that would benefit from our efforts in the sewing room at home or abroad please call me. We would welcome new members joining us.

Jan E



Ummm!

Now that I'm older (but refuse to grow up), here's what I have discovered:

1. I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
2. My wild oats have turned into prunes and All-Bran.
3. I finally got my head together - now my body is falling apart.
4. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.
5. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.
6. It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
7. The only time the world beat a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.
8. If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have put them on my knees.
9. It's not hard to meet expenses. They're everywhere you turn.
10. These days, I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter. I go some where to get something and then wonder what I'm here after.

Walking Group 1

Our walking group continues to thrive despite the fact that we now have to think for ourselves and take turns at leading a walk each month. We have visited many varied areas for our walks and each one has been a pleasant surprise. The weather has been mostly kind to us. The pub lunches, which follow our walks, always make up for any inclement conditions that we have endured.



We have had four new members join our group *and have spaces for a few more*. We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month and further details are on the Website. The picture shows some of us on the top of Reigate Heath earlier in the year.

Heather D

East Anglia Holiday - May 2015

Twenty-six members of Bookham and Fetcham U3As boarded the coach, at a reasonable hour of the morning, to start one of Sheila P's action-packed 6 day holidays, this time to Norfolk and Suffolk. During the time we were away we visited 2 cathedrals, 4 National Trust properties, spent a day in Benjamin Britten land, a half day in Constable country, had lunch by the seaside, went on a paddle boat cruise on the Broads, and Sheila managed to throw in a church or two, or three, along the way.

Ely Cathedral was the focus of our lunch stop on the way to Norfolk, us all being impressed with the sheer scale of the building and the famous lantern window. Our hotel, The George, in Norwich was comfortable, the staff cheerful and attentive, and the dinners throughout were excellent.



A relaxing start to our second day was a 1.5 hour trip on the **River Bure at Horning** on 'Southern Comfort', a Mississippi paddle boat. Very good views of the flat fenland were seen from the top deck of the boat, and interesting buildings lined the route near where we embarked. Then on to the first of our National Trust (NT) properties – the magnificent **Blickling Hall**. Rhododendrons and

azaleas were in full bloom with delicious scents. Blickling Hall is a Jacobean mansion, remodelled in the 18th century so that the front of the house became the back. What used to be a grand drive to the front of the house is now at the back, and a courtyard is at the front!

Benjamin Britten was the theme for the next day. We travelled to **Snape Maltings** for a fascinating 'behind the scenes' tour of the concert hall and a new hall/recording studio. With a bitterly cold wind blowing, our very knowledgeable guide cheerfully told us that there was little between Snape and Siberia – it felt like it! Britten's house is in the outskirts of **Aldeburgh** and we toured the house in small groups and had the opportunity to see a very well put together exhibition about Britten's life and work. Undeterred by the rain that had just started off we went to the Aldeburgh sea front to view the Anthony Gormley installation on top of what looked like a Martello Tower and, further along the beach, a few intrepids left the coach to view more closely a shell sculpture.

Our trip to Constable country, started in **East Bergholt** where Constable was born, with a visit to the church.. On to Dedham Vale and a walk through peaceful countryside to **Flatford Mill** which had been owned by Constable's father and where Constable painted 'The Haywain'. An idyllic spot and worthy of a return visit and greater exploration. To **Lavenham** for lunch and a quick look at their church, then off to our 2nd NT Property, **Melford Hall**. This is Tudor, the exterior of which is said to be very much as it was when Queen Elizabeth I visited in 1578.

Our last full day started with free time in **Norwich** to visit the **Cathedral** and generally sight-see. We travelled late-morning to **Wells- next-the-Sea** for lunch. The sun was shining, a gentle wind blew, the tide was out revealing sand banks and moored boats. We all enjoyed the sea air and a quick stroll before heading to our 3rd NT property, **Felbrigg Hall**. Felbrigg has Jacobean origins and, like Blickling and Melford Halls, had been remodelled internally in the 1700s. In one of the rooms was a very uncomfortable-looking sit-down bath.



Oxburgh Hall was our final NT property which we visited on our way home to Bookham the next day. We

arrived before they opened, and took

advantage of that to visit an old chapel just outside the grounds which, unusually, had tombs made of terracotta. Oxburgh itself was built as a fortified manor in 1482. It was a square building on a square plot of land, with a square-shaped moat all round it, creating an island on which the hall stood, with one entrance/exit and the gardens detached from the Hall itself; the Hall boasts a priest hole which looked fiendishly difficult to get into. A fascinating property with which to end our tour.

All in all, a wonderfully varied insight into Norfolk and Suffolk and a huge thank you to Sheila for organising the tour and popping in those little extras to make it even more interesting. Sheila – we all look forward to your next tour.

Liz C

Photographs by David C

Jazz Appreciation Group

We were formed in January 2008 and meet in my house on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Whilst I try to cover a wide range of types of jazz, I must emphasise that the accent is on good melodic swinging music which would mostly keep your feet tapping. There is a good input from a wide range of singers most of whom are household names.

I'm afraid I cannot take on board a more Avant Garde approach. In some cases it is performed out of tempo and Louis Armstrong's famous 'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing' goes out of the window.

Where possible I will include items from musicians who are visiting local jazz clubs and having over the years played with some of our finest players, I can often relate a a story or two.

I usually play a few solos on my grand piano – will probably have to give it up when the Ibuprofen no longer does the trick – meantime, why not give us a whirl and phone me.

You will be most welcome.

Roy C

Card Group 1

Snowmen in July?

On one of the warmest days in July members of Jan's Card Group attended a Willow Weaving Workshop to make white willow snowmen as Christmas decorations. Nothing like being prepared! Our teacher again was Nicki from Westcott, and she started by explaining how white willow is produced, by soaking the willow and then stripping the outside to reveal the white layer underneath. White willow is expensive due to the processes involved.



Nicki demonstrated how to make a willow frame on to which the body circle would be woven, and off we went. We kept building up until we had a large chunky body and then it was lunch time! We

enjoyed a hot lunch which Jan had prepared for us, and then tackled the head, which had to be more oval. The snowmen sit on a small frame underneath the body to make them stable – well most of them are stable, but one seems to have had a little too much Christmas alcohol and needs a little help.

Glass Blowing

Late one Friday afternoon in August members of Card Group 1, went to a Glass Studio at Horsley, run by Adam Aaronson. We were each to make a glass paperweight, and most of us were feeling quite apprehensive! What had we let ourselves in for? Our Leader, Jan, is always coming up with new experiences for us to try, and this turned out to be a truly amazing experience.

The weather was very hot but inside of the Studio was cooler than we expected. We had been given choices as to what design of paperweight we wanted to make and Adam demonstrated each method to us. He explained that equipment used in glass blowing tends to be for right-handed people, so when we started to take our turns, all the left-handers were left until last so Adam could adjust the equipment. Extracting the glass from the furnace on the rod was extremely hot. Then we rolled and shaped the glass on steel tables, and added colours by dipping our ball of glass into trays of shredded glass. We had to use a pointed instrument to poke into the glass blob, to produce bubbles or stems. Then we dipped our ball of glass into the furnace to gather more glass. We shaped it again, this time in a thick pad of wet newspaper and then in what looked like a giant wooden ladle. We wore protective sleeves and Nicki also held wooden blocks between us and the heat to protect us.



Some of the finished paperweights

Anne W

European Parliament Trip to Strasbourg

Our visit in April was full of interest. Departing for Calais via P&O Ferries we stopped at Arras – in the heart of the Pas-de-Calais region - for lunch and then onwards to Metz for an overnight stop. Metz is an interesting area with a Gothic Cathedral which has the largest expanse of stained glass windows in the world, the Imperial Station which displays the apartment of the German Kaiser and the oldest working Opera House in France. We then



travelled onwards into the northern Vosges region to visit the unique Lalique Museum, located in the village where René Lalique set up his factory after WW1. Reproductions of some of his older works and contemporary designs are still produced in the company's factory. The exhibition was fascinating and very comprehensive, including the huge chandelier which was hidden away in storerooms until its discovery in 2008. It was huge! Other exquisitely crafted items demonstrated what a remarkable jeweller and great master of glass René Lalique was. Then onwards to Rastatt, where we arrived to check in and have dinner.

We visited the European Parliament and met MEP Louise Bours who talked about her work there and then observed MEPs' debates live from the visitors' gallery. Later we were transferred by coach into the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage city where we visited the stunning Cathedral, the Astronomical Clock housed in a 17thC casing and some of us took a boat trip along the canal to see the back of the European Parliament building amongst others.

The next day we went to Obernai, the second most visited town in Alsace after Strasbourg and then on to the Castle of Hauf-Koenigsberg. From the moment you stepped over the threshold of the great door, you found yourself in the Middle Ages. The more energetic of our members climbed the spiral stairways to the Lord's furnished apartments. We then visited Colmar, with preserved Middle Ages streets and alleyways and many edifices, churches, cloisters and ornate wooden sculptures from the Renaissance period all adding up to a very special city.

Heidelberg was our 5th day destination, a world-famous city with a justifiably international reputation as one of Germany's top tourist destinations. A city tour by coach, then entrance to the romantic Heidelberg Castle, perched on the slopes of Mount Königstuhl, lunch and a cruise on the Neckarsonne – a solar powered boat - completed our day and we returned to the hotel for dinner and a discussion on the day's events.

The 6th day saw us leaving for home via Reims, where we stopped for lunch and a visit to the beautiful Cathedral. We arrived home mid evening with so many wonderful memories of what was an interest-packed 6 day trip.

Winnie B

Vegetable Gardening Group 1

By the time you read this, we will have had our Open Day at the allotment to show how it is possible to grow a great variety of vegetables and fruit in a small space. If you missed the Open Day, and fancy having a manageable portion of an allotment, do get in touch because we may expand next year with a second plot.

One of the group's successes – was a Green Magic Calabrese weighing 1.6kg. All down to a good load of horse manure spread last winter.

As I write this, it has been raining continuously for the last three days, so it is difficult to remember the prolonged hot and dry spell we recently had. It accounted for some of our group's less successful crops this year. Several of us found that French Beans and peas were not as good as usual, or failed completely. Butternut squash seems to be behaving a bit oddly this year. Following a visit to a Gardening guru one of us is trying to grow it up the hedge. This is to avoid damage from slugs and snails.

Four of us grew yellow courgettes this year - at least that's what the seed packet said. It was only when discussing successes and failures that we discovered that we had all finished up with green courgettes! The seed company has supplied us with free seed for next year.

Plums, apples, squashes and autumn raspberries have all done well this year.

We have also had several day trips to visit various gardens. Highlight was a visit to Waltham Place Organic Garden and Farm, guided around by the head of the vegetable garden. It is run on Organic and Biodynamic principles, so some things we found just a little difficult to accept, such as allowing Ground Elder a free rein to grow, and planting by the phases of the moon. However there were lots of ideas on companion planting and an excellent vegetarian lunch, prepared from ingredients grown on site. I don't think I have ever had such a filling soup - a meal on its own.

Hugh B



Rummikub



We have 10 members at the moment in our group but we do have room for a couple more if anyone is interested.

After many weeks of searching through our diaries to settle on a fixed date to hold the Rummikub meeting, we eventually agreed upon a date when every member could come regularly.

We hold our Rummikub evening on the 4th Monday of the month (the day before the U3A monthly meeting) starting at 7.30. It is held at my house.

If you are interested, please ring me.

Jenny B

London History Group 1

The Palace of Westminster Clock Tower.

"The Clock Tower" at the north end of the Palace of Westminster in London, now officially known as the Elizabeth Tower holds the largest four-faced chiming clock in the world.

This 315 feet high tower was completed in 1858 and has become one of the most prominent symbols of the United Kingdom and is often in the establishing shot of films set in London. Big Ben is the nickname for the Great Bell of the clock.

The Clock Tower was raised as a part of Charles Barry's design for a new palace, after the old Palace of Westminster was largely destroyed by fire on the night of 16 October 1834. Although Barry was the chief architect of the Palace, he turned to Augustus Pugin for the design of the tower. The design for the tower was Pugin's last design before his final descent into madness and death in his celebrated Gothic Revival style.

The bottom 200 feet of the tower's structure consists of brickwork with sand coloured Anston limestone cladding. The remainder of the tower's height is a framed spire of cast iron. The tower is founded on a 50 feet square raft, made of 10 feet thick concrete, at a depth of 13 feet below ground level. The four clock dials are 180 feet above the ground.

Despite being one of the world's most famous tourist attractions, the interior of the tower is not open to overseas visitors, though United Kingdom residents are able to arrange tours (well in advance) through their Member

of Parliament. However, the tower has no lift, so visitors must climb the 334 limestone stairs to the top.

Due to changes in ground conditions since construction, the tower leans slightly to the north-west, by roughly 9.1 in. This includes a planned maximum of just under 1 inch increased tilt due to tunneling for the Jubilee Line extension. Due to thermal effects it oscillates annually by a few millimetres east and west.

The hour hand on the dial of the Great Clock is 9 feet long and the minute hand is 14 feet long and weighs about 100kg (including counterweights)

Each of the clock dials are set in an iron frame 23 feet in diameter, supporting 312 pieces of opal glass, rather like a stained-glass window. Some of the glass pieces are removable for inspection of the hands. The surround of the dials is gilded. At the base of each clock dial in gilt letters is the Latin inscription:

DOMINE SALVAM FAC REGINAM
NOSTRAM VICTORIAM PRIMAM

Which means 'O Lord, keep safe our Queen Victoria the First'.

The clock's movement is famous for its reliability. The designers were the lawyer and amateur horologist Edmund Beckett Denison, and George Airy, the Astronomer Royal. Construction was entrusted to clockmaker Edward John Dent; after his death in 1853 his stepson Frederick Dent completed the work, in 1854. As the tower was not complete until 1859, Denison had time to experiment: Instead of using the deadbeat escapement and remontoire as



originally designed, Denison invented the double three-legged gravity escapement. The clock's movement is famous for its reliability.

This escapement provides the best separation between pendulum and clock mechanism. The pendulum is installed within an enclosed windproof box beneath the clock room. It is 13 feet long, weighs 660 pounds and beats every 2 seconds. The clockwork mechanism in a room below weighs 5 tons. On top of the pendulum is a small stack of old penny coins; these are to adjust the timing of the clock. Adding a coin has the effect of minutely lifting the position of the pendulum's centre of mass, reducing the effective length of the pendulum rod and hence increasing the rate at which the pendulum swings. Adding or removing a penny will change the clock's speed by 0.4

seconds per day.

On 10 May 1941, a German bombing raid damaged two of the clock's dials and sections of the tower's stepped roof and destroyed the House of Commons chamber. Architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott designed a new five-floor block. Two floors are occupied by the current chamber, which was used for the first time on 26 October 1950. Despite the heavy bombing the clock ran accurately and chimed throughout the Blitz.

The clock tower tilts as a result of the excavations for the Jubilee Line Extension and the construction of Westminster tube station in the late 1990s. The tower's tilt has increased an additional 0.9 mm each year since 2003, and the tilt can now be seen by the naked eye.

Bryan D

Pilates Group



Our U3A Pilates classes are fun, and they're doing us good. Pilates aims to strengthen the body in an even way, with particular emphasis on core strength to improve general fitness and wellbeing.

Our fully trained instructor Sue Buckland has been taking classes for our mixed sex group of members from Fetcham and other U3As. She adapts exercises to suit our age and individual abilities particularly for those with

back or other health problems. Pilates is designed to mobilise and strengthen all the bits that support your back.

Sue brings all equipment, mats etc., to our Thursday lunch-time classes at **Bookham Space, by Chrystie Recreation Ground in Dorking Road, Bookham** by the children's playground. Just come in comfortable, loose clothing. **The classes run from 12.45 to 13.45pm, and the new term starts on Thursday 3 September.**

So why not come along and give it a try. You can have a free trial session to see if it suits you, and the cost is currently £7 a class.

Contact Veronica H - email pilates1@fetchamu3a.org.uk

French connections.

What we have in common is a love of the country, so it always adds interest to our sessions when members have recently returned from France and this year seems to have been a record. If we were to plot on a map where we have all been, we would have covered quite a wide geographical area of France, always engaging with the 'locals' as much as possible.

We have spent time in Brittany, Grasse and the Côte d'Azur, experienced the peaceful countryside of the Languedoc in the south, or the northern Marne and Meuse areas where two of our members were researching villages helped during WW1 through Quaker humanitarian aid. We have explored the rural



areas of central France, so different to the busyness of the Paris area where several members are involved in Leatherhead's twinning with Triel. Our *vin pétillant* was brought back from here, for our annual *14 juillet* celebration.

Recent research tells us that learning a language has a positive effect on maintaining or even developing our 'grey matter', so we persist in the hope that as well as enjoying the company of other Francophiles, 'It's doing us good'! Do enquire if you are interested in joining us.

Anna B

One Hour Walking Group

We haven't had to cancel any of our weekly walks because of rain – or heat. Even on the extremely hot Wednesday 1 July three of the group completed a one hour walk!!

New walks are still being found: new routes have been walked on Box Hill, Bookham



Common, Ashted Common, at West Horsley, in Norbury Park, at Riverside Park at Burpham near Guildford, at Abinger Roughts, and even at Claremont Landscape Garden.

We paid a first time visit to the extraordinary bluebell display at Old Simm's Copse; masses of bluebells were in the woods near Denbies; Hatchlands was marvellous too. Our walk on Ranmore Common at the end of May found

St Barnabas' Church open and selling tea and coffee so we were able to enjoy refreshments and then look round this George Gilbert Scott building.

My grateful thanks go to all those who have led walks over the past months.

Liz C

Reading Group 1

A Novel Idea

Our Book Reading Group comprising eleven members has continued to meet monthly in each other's homes. Group members suggest book titles and our Group Leader Penny D then sources a set of books for us all from Leatherhead Library; a weighty duty in more ways than one!

One member has usually offered to take a turn in preparing background information on the Author and prepared questions about the text to aid further discussion.

The first half of the meeting always generates animated analysis as we informally consider content, writing style, interest level and overall enjoyment of the book. We award a mark out of 5 stars (5 being the best) for each book.

Recently we have read:-

Animal Farm	George Orwell	3 stars
Testament of Youth	Vera Brittain	3 stars
The Sunrise	Victoria Hislop	2 stars
The Goldfinch	Donna Tappt	4 stars
The Paying Guest	Sarah Waters	2 stars
The Illusionists	Rosie Thomas	3 stars
And the Mountains Echoed	Khaled Hosseini	4 stars

Many members have commented that they enjoyed reading a book which they might never have selected for themselves.

After tea and biscuits, we continue discussing more general topics generated from reading the monthly book choice or about current news topics.

Our thanks go to our group leader Penny and Leatherhead Library staff for enabling us to enjoy our lively meetings so much.

Dee F

Bryan's General Knowledge Quiz

Answers

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Oxygen and Silicon | 6. Horatio Nelson |
| 2. Tirana | 7. The Edelweiss |
| 3. Orange | 8. Sierra Leone |
| 4. The Trombone | 9. Ernest Hemingway* |
| 5. Julie Walters | 10. Puffins |

*In John Donne's (1624) Devotions upon Emergent Occasions '...never send for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.'

When you need to renew your European Health Insurance Card – the expiry date is on the card –
if you use <https://www.europeanhealthcard.org.uk/> they will charge a fee.

If you use <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx> it is free.

This newsletter with its many photographs may be viewed in colour on our website **www.fetchamu3a.org**.

Editor this issue:	John C
Cover Design:	John W
Cover photographs:	Graham D
Illustration:	Ella W

Thank you to all contributors for your promptness. As a new editor, I was impressed too by quality of the material. There was a wealth of information that had (somehow) to fit into 16 pages. I have tried to be as sympathetic as possible but I have had to leave out some outstanding photos and text by virtue of the limited space. Where possible I have added them to the file for consideration for the next Newsletter in 2016.

John C

**Articles and items for April 2016 Newsletter should be with Judy O
by the 5th March 2016, please.**



The Newsletter of Fetcham University of the Third Age

