

# Autumn 2013 Magazine

This is a new on-line publication for Heart of England U3A that we are trying out. It brings together the reports that previously were published on-line as archive reports for individual interest groups. It is intended that the magazine will be published on-line as part of the archive reports and will replace the interest group reports. You may download the file from our website and print a hard copy if you wish; there is no intention to publish printed copies for general distribution. However, there will be one printed copy available at the monthly general meetings in an archive folder for anybody to read.

Publication date will be 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and a printed copy will be on display at the January 2014 and subsequent monthly meetings.

Publication date for the next edition (Winter/Spring) will be 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

Please let me or members of the committee know your thoughts on the publication and what you would like to see in it. I would welcome contributions in the form of reports and photographs for future issues



## **In this issue:**

Report on Annual General Meeting

Science and Nature Group visit to Cotswold Water Park and Chedworth Roman Villa

Outing to Laycock Abbey in Wiltshire. This took place in July but is reported here by Sandy Stewart.

Walking Group reports for September, October, November and December

Skittles Evening.

Choir Concert

Science & Nature Christmas Quiz



## The Annual General Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2013

The AGM was held, as usual, in the Main Hall at the Methodist Church, Old Town. We had a capacity crowd of over 100 members. The Chairman, David Sladden, opened the meeting at 2.00pm and welcomed all those present. His Annual Report was on a printed sheet along with the Agenda and Financial Reports, so he did not read out the report. He did comment on the rise of membership numbers over the last twelve months - now 287 members compared to



Sue Tringham, Treasurer, presented the Financial Reports, just highlighting a few figures from the printed sheet. Sue Ocock, Business Secretary, conducted the installation of the new committee and officers. The new Chairman to be Geoff Bridgewater as David was stepping down. Other officers to continue. Two members of the committee were stepping down, Ann Davies because she was moving to Suffolk, and Sue Scanlon for a rest. Two new members had agreed to serve. Since there were just sufficient for the officers and committee it was not necessary to conduct a ballot.

David presented a bouquet of flowers to Sylvia Crooks in appreciation of all her work in organising the refreshments at the monthly meetings and ensuring the various interest groups on the rota to serve refreshments turned up.



He then handed over to Geoff Bridgewater who conducted the rest of the afternoon's proceedings. Geoff presented David with a bottle of malt whisky in recognition of his service.



After the AGM the afternoon continued with a very amusing and interesting illustrated talk about our favourite garden bird, the Robin.

## Science and Nature Group visit to

### Cotswold Water Park and Chedworth Roman Villa

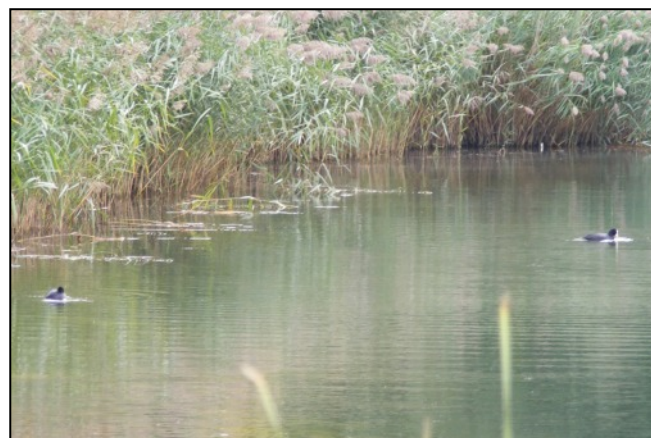
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Ten members went to the Cotswold Water Park hoping to see some exciting bird life, particularly aquatic types. Organised by Bob and Chris Heaps, the whole day passed off without incident and we all enjoyed our visits. Unfortunately, the birds had not been informed that we were coming and had gone off about their own business. We did see a few swan, quite a few coots, and a heron. I heard rumours of a grebe but could not testify myself. A crayfish was spotted in a small river alongside one of the lakes. There are reputed to be carp up to 35lbs in one of the lakes but we did not spot them. We congregated at the Gateway Visitor Centre for coffee and a talk from a member of the Trust that runs the Centre.



After that we went on a circular walk around a few of the 120+ lakes.

Ibis Lake with "New England" style houses around. Large carp are reputed to live in the lake.



Coot on two of the lakes.

## Science and Nature Group visit to Cotswold Water Park and Chedworth Roman Villa

The National Trust run Chedworth Villa site is well worth a visit. In recent years there has been much investment in new buildings. The Visitor Centre has been completely rebuilt with the addition of a much needed cafe. The Western range of villa buildings have been encased in a new building that both conserves and displays the mosaics and other features in a much better fashion. Mosaics are now on display in the main gallery along the eastern side of the buildings range that have never been on display before. There are plans to do more excavation on the southern range of buildings that have never been excavated - if the cash can be raised! Our guide was very helpful and gave very clear explanations of the features we could see. We were joined by our chairman, Geoff Bridgewater, and his wife, Heather, and two of their guests.

Museum and Office building (Victorian period)



U3A group at Chedworth, pictured in front of the remains of a summer dining room.

On the next page are some photographs of the mosaics that form the decorated floors, often heated by wood fired hypocausts under the floors. There are many more mosaics in the villa that are at present covered over with soil and turf to conserve them. In the future, it is hoped to erect protective buildings similar to the new ones covering the West range that we can visit now.



**Science and Nature Group visit to Cotswold Water Park and Chedworth Roman Villa**



Top left - Mosaic floor in the Dining Room (Triclinium)

Top Right - Mosaic floor in main gallery along front of building. Colours are muted due to effluorescence. This will be cleaned during the winter closed period.



Middle left - mosaic floor and exposed hypocaust heating system under.

Bottom left - Hypocaust underfloor heating in bath house - notice the arch from where the hot gases issue from the fire.

Photos by Sandy Stewart & Edwin Lilly

**Science and Nature Group visit to Cotswold Water Park and Chedworth Roman Villa**



View of north range of buildings.

There are mosaic floors under the grass on the right and under the pathway that runs along in front of the buildings. It is hoped to display them in the future when funds can be secured to build protective buildings.

Below - Pool filled by trickle from natural spring in the hill side. The majority of the water is piped around the site to supply the visitor centre and for watering plants, etc.

There would have been a shrine at this point during the Roman period.

The villa had its most productive period from 300 to 360 AD. Some sort of occupation appears to have continued into the 5<sup>th</sup> century.



## Outing to Lacock Abbey Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2013

We boarded a Johnson's Coach in Stratford for our journey to Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire. Due to the Global Gathering at the airfield down the road to Clifford Chambers, the going was slow at first, but we soon recovered and had a good journey to Lacock. The weather was very pleasant.

Lacock village And Abbey have belonged to the National Trust since 1944 and have been used as locations in many films and TV programmes due to its unspoiled appearance.



The Abbey is located at the heart of the village; it has medieval rooms and a cloister court. It was built upon the foundations of a former nunnery founded in 1232. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the sixteenth century the buildings and land were sold to William Sharrington.



William Fox Talbot was a descendant of William Sharrington. He produced the first camera negative - capturing the lattice window at Lacock. The Fox Talbot Museum displays and commemorates his pioneering work.

## WALKING GROUP

### WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013

We met at the Village Hall in Ashorne village, a few miles from Wellesbourne. Twelve members took part in the walk. After a short stretch on quiet roads we took to the cross field foot-paths in a figure of eight, taking in Newbold Pacey in the one direction and Ashorne Hall in the other. The walk was ably led by Tony and Sandra Whiteley. The weather remained dry throughout the walk, even if the sun was a little shy. We explored Newbold Church, which had very early origins and some interesting features. Ashorne village is a very picturesque village, having plenty of half timbered and thatched cottages. Pictures below show a couple of examples.



The photograph above was taken at about half way on the Ashorne and District Cricket Ground - actually just a few yards from the Village Hall



## **WALKING GROUP - WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

Fourteen members gathered by the Maypole in Welford village centre for the monthly walk. We walked via some public footpaths through the centre of Welford and found the path along the river. The ground underfoot was dry and we walked downstream as far as the next lock. Here there was a picnic table and seat so we gathered for our midmorning drink. There was very little wildlife to see although we did see a heron on one of the weirs.

After the break we continued on towards Dorsington where we had to forsake footpaths in favour of walking along the road, fortunately not too busy. We continued back to Welford via road and footpaths. About 5.5 to 6 miles. Weather was dry but dull.



Group photograph when we stopped by the lock for a snack.

## Skittles Evening

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013

Brian and Coral Bradley organised the second of these Skittles Evenings which are proving very popular. The venue was Wel-ford Bowls Club, the attraction being the very comfortable indoor skittle alley and the nicely presented buffet supper.

Thirty members were able to enjoy 3 rounds of skittles and there was some keen rivalry to achieve a good score. Nick ably performed the chore of replacing the pins and returning the balls after each member's go. Nick is back right above.



There were some stylish performers, energetic performers, and not so energetic performers. There were several instances of nil score, but there were only two who achieved all nine pins down in their three balls - both ladies! Elaine Lilly and Athena Roderick.

Overall winner was Linda Plowman with David Sladden second. There had to be a play off for the runner up slot between David, Elaine Lilly and Athena Roderick. There was also a play off for the booby prize between John Shelby and Ann McNeill, with John triumphing for that spot. The Booby Prize

was a large golden foil covered chocolate coin.



John Shelby top, Brian Bradley bottom

**Skittles Evening**

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013**



Table 1 top, Table 2, Table 3 bottom with  
John and Les posing for the photo.



Elaine top.  
Athena middle  
David bottom



## Prize Winners for the Skittles Evening.

Whilst the evening was organised as a fun event with no thought to establish a league or similar, peoples' competitive instincts. Prizes were awarded for best overall score, second best overall score and a booby prize was also awarded. Pictured below are the prizewinners with Geoff Bridgewater, our Chairman.



## Walking Group - November Walk from Whatcote

Our walk on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November was scheduled to be 5 - 5½ miles. The weather was perfect after all the rain during early November. Fourteen met in the tiny village of Whatcote and started off through the village to pick up the footpath to Idlicote, another tiny village. The ground was very wet and very muddy in places. Some of the newly ploughed fields were extremely muddy. We stopped briefly in Idlicote to admire the duck pond. There were some ducks, mallards mostly. We posed for the group photograph and then continued on. Eventually we stopped on top of a reasonable hill with good views for a refreshment break. We returned to Whatcote through more ploughed fields - often we could walk along a grassy headland so avoided more mud. See the photograph of muddy boots! On the way into the village we passed the church - some of it dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the porch having been rebuilt after WW2 when it suffered some bomb damage. We were too muddy to think of popping in for a visit. Thank you Tony and Sandra for organising the walk and laying on such good weather!

The group pictured by the duck pond in Idlicote



## Walking Group - November Walk - Page 2



Muddy boots above - the mud built up and the boots became quite heavy

One of the grand houses seen on the route.



The last stile before re-entering Whatcote village

## Walking Group - December Walk from Ilmington

Twelve members of the Walking Group met in the centre of Ilmington for a walk. The weather forecast was for a sunny day, but the start was very misty and damp. The sun did struggle to pierce the clouds during the morning. We kept to tarmac roads so the going was good. The vil-

lage of Ilmington is a very quiet, spread-out village with 2 pubs but no longer a village shop.



We did a circular walk from Ilmington going south east past Harold's Farm on a minor road. The image below is of the unusually named Compton Scorpion Farm - a very handsome stone house and farm buildings around a spacious yard.

We stopped for coffee on top of a hill opposite Redlands Barn - now converted to a country residence.

The image below shows the party about to set off after a coffee break.

Thanks to Val and Fred for organising



and leading the walk, which we all thought was excellent.



## Science and Nature Group Christmas Meeting and Quiz

Over twenty members of the Group gathered for a Christmas social and quiz, with seasonal refreshments provided by the members and organised and arranged by Sandra and Heather. Our quizmaster was chairman Geoff, although one or two answers were disputed during the marking, notably chemical symbol S is not Tungsten after all. Where have we been going all this time?

Teams of 4 competed for a most amazing prize - demonstrated several times by the quizmaster in order to generate a competitive edge. Top mark and the prize went to the comprising John and Caz, Sarah Gretton, and John Shelby. Pictures below show the contestants, etc. A very enjoyable time was had by all.



## Science & Nature Group Christmas Meeting - page 2



## Science & Nature Group Christmas Meeting - Page 3



## Choir Concert - Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013

We had a full house of 150 members and guests for our Christmas Concert held at the Methodist Church Hall.



The concert was a mixture of carols, Christmas songs, poems, both funny and reflective, and a brilliant monologue by Mary Taylor. Our musical director, Stewart Wallace, not only inspired us to sing in four parts but contributed a piano solo and a song. This was after two duets with Margaret Dews. This clever lady also contributed three different sets of words for us to sing. Believe me, we did enjoy her versions of 'O Christmas Tree', 'Winter Wonderland' and 'Let it Snow'. All in all, we enjoyed performing the material we had learnt and hoped that the audience enjoyed it as much as we did.



We enjoyed it so much that we repeated the concert at Briar Croft Residential Care Apartments on Alcester Road a few days later. We were joined by two of Stewart's children who played bassoon and trumpet with Stewart playing Trombone for the carols where the audience were also encouraged to participate.



Photographs by Richard Peel and Edwin Lilly

**Choir Concert - Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013 Page 2**

