

Winter 2014 Magazine

The Winter 2014 magazine includes events between January 1st and March 31st 2014. It will be available to view on our website, as it builds up, as and when reports start to arrive with the editor. A printed version will be on show at the March, April and May Meetings.

- Walking Group - March outing.
- Talk about HS2 High Speed Rail Project

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Clopton Bridge
Stratford-upon-Avon
Built about 1480 from
local stone.

Walking Group January Outing

We walked around Stratford, starting at the Gower Memorial on The Bancroft. Val and Fred had been keeping a close eye on the weather forecasts and flooding status. The Recreation Ground had been flooded the previous day.

On the day, Wednesday 8th January, the weather was dry and not too cold. We had to modify the route slightly due to uncertainty about the state of the path under the road bridge at Seven Meadows Road and access on both sides to Lucy's Mill Bridge. We actually walked on the theatre side of the river down past the churches to access the route past the entrance to the Greenway and along the route of the disused railway in front of the cemetery. The brook in front of Anne Hathaway's Cottage was at a normal level, so we were able to walk that way and then circle round past another small brook to return to Church Lane and then to Alcester Road. The group, quite a large group considering the time of year and weather during the days before the walk, stopped in front of the allotments for a break; most of us had brought coffee or other refreshments.

We continued on over the Alcester Road, electing to walk alongside Sidelands Road, rather than follow the footpath alongside the brook, which might have been decidedly wet. The route continued over Drayton Avenue to walk along Masons Road as far as Timothy's Bridge Road, where we could gain access to the canal towpath. The section of towpath from the bridge down towards Birmingham Road has recently been resur-

faced and is a joy to walk along. Sadly, not all the towpath down into Stratford Basin is quite as good, but we arrived in good spirits.

Thanks to Val and Fred for their work in organising and guiding the walk.



Annual Lunch - Saturday 18th January 2014

About 100 members met at Bistrot Pierre for our annual luncheon bash, organised by Athena Roderick and David and Sandra Sladden.



There were several new members of Heart of England U3A and we were all welcomed by our Chairman, Geoff Bridgewater before the three course lunch was served.



There was much merriment and conversation before and during the meal as we all caught up with news of Christmas and New Year activities.

During the interval between the main course and dessert Athena introduced a quiz of 20 questions on a variety of subjects. Nobody managed to score a full 20 right answers, although the chairman's table working together managed 19. Two individuals

scored 18 correct answers and they received prizes of £10 M & S vouchers - Rosemary Isaacson and Valerie Rooke.

After dessert a draw was held of those attending and two prizes (provided by Bistrot Pierre) awarded to the happy recipients. Vivian Hagarty received a prize of a meal for two at Bistrot Pierre and Linda Swaby received a bottle of sparkling Chardonnay wine.

Below are photographs of each of the 10 tables.



Photographs are continued on the next page.

Annual Lunch - Saturday 18th January 2014 (page 2)



February Main Meeting

For the February meeting we were in the 'New Room' - newly erected building where the old Annexe was located. The New Room is spacious and warm. It will just hold about 100 chairs, although we were somewhat 'co-sy'. We had to forgo the hot drinks after the meeting as the kitchen is small and space is altogether limited. We hope to be back in the newly refurnished Main Hall in April or May.



Two views of the New Room, kitchen end and entrance end.

Jennifer Stone, a re-enactor at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, gave us a talk entitled "Women on the Stage".

The picture below shows Jennifer being introduced to the meeting by our Speakers Secretary Athena.

Jennifer gave a very interesting talk ranging from Tudor times when women weren't allowed on the stage and their parts were played by teenage boys through their entry onto the stage during the reign of Charles II (Nell Gwyn, etc) and onto the 19th and 20th centuries with very powerful actresses such as Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry.



Games Group - Monday 3rd March 2014

Games Group meet every 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month. Currently, we meet at Sue Tringham's cottage in the Guild Cottages where we use the community room. Sue has enlisted the help of another resident of the cottages, Peter, who is very knowledgeable about the various games, such as Whist, Dominoes and Chess.

At our latest meeting we had 3 tables of 4 players and a further table of 2 or 3 players. One table was concerned with Scrabble where two games were played, plus a game of dominoes afterwards. Other tables had games of Whist and Dominoes going. Everyone enjoyed a couple of hours of conversation and games whilst the rain outside was torrential at times. Luckily, the rain had ceased when it was time to go home.



A game of dominoes in progress.



A view of the community room with games in progress.

A game of Scrabble in progress. Below is the finished board at the end of the game. About 500 points were scored by the 4 players.



March Meeting - Update on Ifakara Bakery Project from Eugene Schellenberg

On Thursday 6th March Eugene and Margaret Schellenberg returned to talk about the Ifakara Bakery Project and give us an update on the progress since they gave us the original talk two years ago.

The project is now a registered charity in the UK and provides funds to the bakery project in the town of Ifakara in Tanzania. They had originally helped to set up a bakery in 2001 when they visited the town where their son and his wife were doing medical research aimed at treating and eradicating malaria.

Whilst the local people were mainly self-supporting by growing maize and some vegetables, bad weather could mean starvation if the crop failed, which it did occasionally. The Sisters of St Francis gave local support to the population and they asked Eugene and Margaret if they could help them set up a bakery - Eugene had worked in the bakery field prior to his retirement and he had many contacts. He checked that they would be able to provide a building, provide electricity, water and other necessary services and then agreed. They returned home and set about raising funds - other charities would not help so they set up their own. The investment required was about £30,000 which was raised; they sourced the equipment and materials and shipped them to Tanzania. They went out to supervise the setting up of the baker and trained the Sisters and other volunteers and started baking. The first bake was 100 loaves and was successful.

The bakery was to be self supporting but not necessarily profit making. Twelve years on, the bakery is operating successfully, produces about 400 loaves per week and more in times of harvest failure (the harvest has failed at least twice since 2001). The loaves are sold to the local population, with some going to local schools and hospitals through Free Bread Fund.

The project continues to grow. The population is continually increasing. Primary Schools (7 - 14 years) are now free in Tanzania so more children go to school. The school children were one of the first beneficiaries of the Free Bread Fund and all children in the local school have a breakfast of bread and sweet tea. There are several fields of rice being grown - sponsored by the Sisters of St Francis.

Wheat for the bread cannot be grown near Ifakara as the climate is too hot and humid. Much is grown in the north of Tanzania around the slopes of Mt Kilimajaro and the Tanzanian government is trying to encourage more production so that the country can be a net exporter of wheat instead of importing it.

With the infant mortality rate declining dramatically due to better nutrition and better health-care, families are beginning to use family planning clinics to avoid producing large families which are expensive to feed.

£30,000 is required for 2014 simply to maintain the Free Bread Funds which has had such a beneficial effect on peoples lives in Ifakara.



Walking Group Walk around Alcester - Wednesday 12th March 2014

Fred and Val had arranged this walk with the past weather in mind so had ensured we were walking on hard surfaces most of the way. There is still a lot of mud and puddles around following the winter wet weather.



We walked around Alcester, mostly on metalled footpaths. Due to the fact we were walking in an urban landscape views were limited. We stopped in a park for a drinks break and the photographs were taken then.



Country Dancing - Shotton, Tuesday 18th March 2014

Several members of Heart of England U3A join with Shotton U3A for Country Dancing at St Andrew's Church Hall, Shotton on the third Tuesday of each month at 2.30. We have a professional caller to keep us in step and to instruct us. We do a mixture of English and American Country Dancing.

Right is Line formation.

Below is a Star formation.



We are a friendly bunch and everybody is welcome, whether experienced or beginners. No special clothing or shoes are necessary - just come as you are.



Above is a circle formation

Tea break (right) was time for a chat.



Science & Nature Group - Talk on High Speed Railway Project HS2



On Friday 14th March we listened to a talk about the High Speed Railway Project HS2. Our speaker was Colin Stewart who is Global Rail Director for ARUP, the main consultant during the design stage. Colin has much experience of high speed rail as he was Technical Director for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (HS1) from London to the English Channel.

Colin took us through the reasons for choosing to build a complete new route for high speed rail instead of merely upgrading existing routes.

1. The recent upgrade to the West Coast main line cost about £10 billion, lasted several years causing delays and frustration and has not resulted in significant speed or volume increases.
2. High Speed Rail routes in continental Europe use the same standard rail gauge but a much larger loading gauge (allowing wider, higher and longer carriages) than UK standards so allowing much increased traffic volume increases for the line without increasing the number of trains run.
3. Signalling has to be completely different from trackside signalled used now. All signalling has to be in the cab and much more use is made of automatic safety systems.
4. The experience in Europe is that, with proper planning and follow-up, there is great economic benefit to the new high speed routes, with increasing commercial activity around the infrastructure, particularly around stations. New commercial activity is already happening along the HS1 route, with Kings Cross station being redeveloped with new businesses around the

station area. More is planned for Ebbsfleet in Kent.

The route chosen, after several modifications, runs along several existing but unused rail corridors and with a much greater use of tunnels to protect sensitive areas or to minimise visual and noise impact in congested areas. Thus the impact on the environment will be minimised. Also, the arrangements for compensation to those affected by the route are significantly better than previous construction projects.



Page 11 shows route from London to near Bicester

Page 12 shows the route from near Bicester to Birmingham

Both show routes presented in Hybrid Bill in January 2014 and appear in the website www.hs2.org.uk. They may not be definitive of the final route.



