

If you know of any member who is ill please inform Marion Povall on 0118 9786240 so that she can contact them.

Chairman's Letter

It has been a busy period for us on the committee, so we have been trying to share the load as much as we can. Further we are honoured that our Membership Secretary, Phil Harding has been appointed Mayor of Wokingham for a second time. This has meant he cannot continue as Membership Secretary, but we are fortunate that Gordon Wall, who was seconded to the committee, has consented to take on that role. Again, our very hard-worked Hon Sec. has been overloaded and we are pleased to welcome Christine Holland to the committee to take on the role of Minutes Secretary to lighten Colin's load.

In the last Newsletter, I mentioned we are running a Help Desk at the monthly meetings for the benefit of new members or existing members who wished to join groups. We realise that it can be quite daunting to attend a meeting where you don't know a soul, but with a membership of about 500 it is impossible for you to be recognised as a new member so please when you arrive make it known to the people on the door that you are on your own and they will be only too pleased to make sure that you are introduced around.

Our next function is the summer garden party on 15th July at Whiteknights on Finchampstead Ridges and I look forward to seeing you there.

With good wishes for a happy summer.

Len Smith

Copy date for the next issue is
24th July

**WASTING TIME
CREATIVE WRITING -
MAY 2003**

The best way to waste time, if you are really dedicated to this art form, is to play computer games. Personally I do

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this while listening to music. There are several games I enjoy wasting time to, flight simulator, shooting down monsters, space games, and a variety of card games, based on solitaire.

My personal favourite is Spider Solitaire which I pretend is as intricate as chess, but is not really, although there are several degrees of difficulty. Unless I am actually playing it, I cannot begin to describe it, except that the mouse comes into full play. I particularly enjoy watching the cards jump around the screen unbidden. Of course I tell myself that I am actually perfecting my mouse skills. Ice-cream is sometimes soothing to eat at stressful moments in these games although this does tend to make the mouse sticky to the touch. The ice-cream should preferably be Hagen Das which is sold in a giant old-fashioned cardboard tub and the music is whatever happens to be in the compact disc player at the time, although if the disc has been in for some time it tends to become a little tedious. I cannot pretend to be an intellectual so the discs are usually 'great movie music' or Celtic anthems.

My best effort at time-wasting was to listen to Sting singing Brand New Day while I played Spider Solitaire with one hand and waited for the ice cream, Baileys' flavoured, to melt. Sting had reached a crescendo; the game was not working out and I had to use a knife to persuade the deeply frozen ice-cream from the bottom of the tub. At this point I decided that using both hands was essential. I dropped the mouse, held the tub in the palm of my left hand and drove the knife down, quite forcefully. It was only an ordinary table knife but it did have a serrated edge. If it had been a different type of ice-cream in a plastic container things might have been different. As it was it went straight through the ice-cream and the bottom of the tub and into my hand.

Afterwards I thought that if I had really wanted to waste quite a lot of time I could not have planned it better. I spent the remainder of the evening in the small wounds section of Heatherwood hospital where apparently they have me on their computer. I was examined by a nurse who cleaned up the small deep cut between my index and middle fingers. After discovering that I was allergic to anti-tetanus, she put butterfly strips on to hold the cut together, strapped my hand up in layers of protective gauze and bandages and sent me home. There was some mention that I should keep the bandage on for a week. I wondered fleetingly how long it takes for lock-jaw to set in.

The presence of this bandage meant that I was unable to play computer games, use the remote controls or carry large amounts of shopping, other good ways of wasting time. *Norma Gilchrist, Poetry and Creative Writing Group*

FIFTY YEARS AGO

June 15th. Post-card from Edna(Podge)of Quebec Bridge. She seems to be enjoying life in Canada:says there is a letter in the

mail for us. Wonder what Alf thinks about it. Only four years ago they were married, and now it has come to this. Edna is a very wilful girl and would insist on dragging Alf to the altar.

June 19th. This afternoon went to Edmonds and bought a check skirt, yellow patterned glazed cotton dress, blue dupion dress, and a small brown straw hat.

June 27th. Blazing hot. Arrived at Pembroke Guest House

June 29th. A glorious day. Spent the morning on the front and the afternoon at Seaford. I got an almost hysterical panic about Jim's husky throat, so much so that I couldn't eat any dinner- thought I should have burst into tears in the dining-room. Calmed down after weeping a bit upstairs. Jim says he's quite alright.

June 30th. Beautiful day. Walked over the Downs this morning. With the birds singing- so many larks- and all the wild flowers, it really was lovely. This afternoon went to the race-course and watched the races. Very thrilling.

July 1st. This morning we walked along the front nearly as far as Shoreham Harbour. This afternoon we took the 'bus to Worthing and found it crowded. It has changed a good deal though the Denton Gardens are still there. Khongs, which once I thought the height of splendour, struck me as being dull and old-fashioned when we went there for tea. After dinner tonight we walked to the Coach House on the Downs for coffee.

July 2nd. Not quite so warm after rain last night, but very pleasant. This morning- went by Volks railway to Palace Pier and from there by Southdown excursion to Devil's Dyke, Poynings and Bramber - a most delightful ride- full of memories for us as the last time we went there it was by car with Edna (Podge) and Alfred. Strange and sad to think that Edna is now in Canada, and as far as

we know, Alfred is still here. This afternoon I bought some gifts to take home.

July 4th. Finished packing and felt quite happy to be going home. Unexpectedly we caught the 10.08.train instead of the 11.08.so arrived home just after 12.It*s lovely to be home again.

July 21st. A wonderful day. Tom(her brother-in-law, Frederica's husband. R.) was invested by the Queen with the C.B.E. May (another sister. R.).and I met them outside Buckingham Palace afterwards and joined them for a celebratory lunch.

July 27th. For no tangible reason I felt depressed and irritable today. To Standing Committee at the vicarage tonight. Mrs.Atkinson said that Miss Bryant had been attacked in Parkside Road.To think of these cowardly attacks makes me quite furious. Armistice in Korea.

August 11th. The heat is terrific. Wish I had more summer dresses, and a sun-top.

August 14th. Very hot. Three thick Canadian magazines from Podge this morning.

August 19th. At 2.53.p.m.Compton hit a four which won the Test and the Ashes for England. Great joy!

August 22nd. Letter from Podge. She seems upset by my letter and isn't at all happy. I'm sorry about that.

August 26th. My 59th.birthday. Presents and cards, and my dearest Jimbo gave me £3. If my watch cannot be repaired I'll buy a new one with the money.

August 27th. Bought watch with the money Jim gave me for my birthday. It cost £2-15s-0d (£2-75p.)

Rosemary Goldschmied

GARDENS OF CORNWALL

Henley U3A has organised a coach trip to the Gardens of Cornwall (including the Eden Project) from Sunday 21st September to Thursday 25th September and are pleased to offer places to members of Wokingham U3A. For further details of the itinerary and cost, please contact Irene Sharman-Spiller on 01491 682085

U3A NATIONAL OFFICE

The National Office has now relocated , and its new address is

19 East Street,
Bromley, Kent,
BR1 1QH.

Phone no. is 020 8466 6139

The Resource Centre has moved to the same address - its phone no. is now

020 8315 0199

and its email address

resource.centre@u3a.org.uk

NATIONAL OFFICE MAILINGS

Mailings to U3A branches can now be viewed by Internet users. See 'members only' section of the U3A Web Site (www.u3a.org.uk) and access using password JLE28b.

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

Our group visited this exhibition at the Imperial War Museum on 12th.March.

It was a major exhibition of manuscripts, letters and diaries, photographs and personal mementoes of twelve soldier poets of the First World War.

Touring the exhibition with an Acoustiguide and audio programme we

were able to listen to the poems written by these soldier poets, together with short extracts from their letters and diaries, as we proceeded to the different areas devoted to each poet. The readings were given by Michael Maloney, Juliet Stevenson and Brian Bowles, and were accompanied with related music. After lunch, there was still time to visit some of the other exhibitions housed in this magnificent building before we returned to Wokingham.

Although our outing was interesting and worthwhile, thoughts of that other war looming invested it with a certain poignancy.

Rosemary Goldschmied
Poetry and Creative
Writing Group

COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, the Copy Date for the next issue is earlier than normal, and **really means what it says**. For the first time in five years, Pauline and I are slotting the Newsletter round a holiday, as compared with previous years where we have put the Newsletter first.

I hope this won't cause too much inconvenience, and if Convenors and others want to modify their normal entry to reserve the date for some function without including much detail, I'm sure the members concerned will be able to live with that.

Gordon Riocreux

THE "DARK SUCKER"

For years, it has been believed that electric bulbs emit light, but recent information has proved otherwise. Electric bulbs don't emit light; they suck dark! Thus, we call these bulbs Dark

Suckers.

The Dark Sucker Theory and the existence of dark suckers prove that dark has mass and is heavier than light.

First, the basis of the Dark Sucker Theory is that electric bulbs suck dark. For example, take the Dark Sucker in the room you are in. There is much less dark right next to it than there is elsewhere. The larger the Dark Sucker, the greater its capacity to suck dark. Dark Suckers in the parking lot have a much greater capacity to suck dark than the ones in this room..

As with all things. Dark Suckers don't last forever. Once they are full of dark, they can no longer suck. This is proven by the dark spot on a full Dark Sucker.

A candle is a primitive Dark Sucker. A new candle has a white wick. You can see that after the first use, the wick turns black, representing all the dark that has been picked into it. If you put a pencil next to the wick of an operating candle, it will turn black. This is because it got in the way of the dark flowing into the candle. One of the disadvantages of these primitive Dark Suckers is their limited range.

There are also portable Dark Suckers. In these, the bulbs can't handle all the dark by themselves and must be aided by a Dark Storage Unit. When the Dark Storage Unit is full, it must be either emptied or replaced before the portable Dark Sucker can operate again.

Dark has mass. When dark goes into a Dark Sucker, friction from the mass generates heat. Thus, it is not wise to touch an operating Dark Sucker. Candles present a special problem as the mass must travel into a solid wick instead of through clear glass. This generates a great amount of heat and therefore it's not wise to touch an operating candle.

Also, dark is heavier than light. If you were to swim just below the surface of a lake, you would see a lot of light. If you were to slowly swim deeper and deeper, you would notice it getting darker and darker. When you get really deep, you would be in total darkness. This is because the heavier dark sinks to the bottom of the lake and the lighter light

floats at the top. The is why it is called light.

Finally, we must prove that dark is faster than light. If you were to stand in a lit room in front of a closed, dark closet, and slowly opened the closet door, you would see the light slowly enter the closet. But since dark is so fast, you would not be able to see the dark leave the closet.

Next time you see an electric bulb, remember that it is a Dark Sucker!

FROM BRIAN PETTITT

MONTHLY MEETINGS

It has not yet proved possible to issue the usual card giving details of speakers over the coming session, but we expect to include these with the next issue.

In the meantime members may like to know what has been arranged for the first two meetings

On Sept. 16th, Professor Pockney, (the ex-Professor Emeritus of Russian at Surrey University) is coming back to us to explain the Russian reaction to current world events.

On Oct. 21st, David Vaisey, the Librarian Emeritus of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, is coming to talk about 'Treasures of the Bodleian Library'.

NUTRITION GROUP

A visit has been arranged to Syngenta Agrochemical Research Station at Jealotts Hill on Thursday 3rd July 2003. A maximum of 20 people can attend. (Non-members of the group can ask to be put on the end of the list in case there are some spare spaces !)

As this ia a security controlled site visitors will congregate in the lay-by opposite the gates at 2.20pm for entry as a group at 2.30pm. Some car sharing is being attempted. If your name is not yet recorded by her please telephone Brenda Freeman on 0118 978 4768 (after 20th June) or Betty

Hughes 0118 978 8452.

MODERN GREEK

As members of the Group will probably know, Peter Horth is incapacitated and has had to suspend meetings for approx 3 months. Further information will appear in the Newsletter as soon as possible.

CONVENORS FOR FRENCH AND GERMAN GROUPS

If anyone out there would be interested in sharing convenorship of any of these groups, regularly or just occasionally, I would be very grateful — just pick up the phone 9894502 (Jill Tatham). The job is not the least bit onerous - the group members do all the real work!

Your U3A now has its own Web Site on the Internet — have you
looked at it yet?

Its address is:

www.wokinghamu3a.org.uk

