



Deeping St. James

Issue No.268 September 2025

The Deepings u3a **NEWSLETTER**

Website: deepings.u3a.org.uk

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Market Deeping

Welcome

New members: Corinne Sauvage, Market Deeping, Kim Neilson, Deeping St James
Barbara Holmes, Ashton, Mike Donoghue, Market Deeping.

NEXT MEETING: 15 September

Unless otherwise stated, all monthly meetings are at the Methodist Church, Deeping St James. Doors open at 9.30am. Coffee is served until 10.20 and the meetings begin at 10.30.

PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS FOR 2025:

15 September: Mary's Meals

Jane Wright gives a presentation that tells the story of the charity's humble beginnings in a shed in Scotland to being a global charity feeding over 2.4 million children in some of the world's poorest countries.

20 October: Terry Wogan's Hair Weave and other stories.

Graham Keal is an ex showbiz journalist and brings us stories from interviews with Terry Wogan, Ernie Wise and the former stars of Crossroads and Coronation Street.

17 November: What they didn't teach you in the history class at school

Fascinating facts in a talk by Stuart Orme, which is not recommended for those who are easily shocked. A humorous look at some bits of history that the Victorians wouldn't have approved of, as well as posing thought provoking questions about the way we look at history.

MARGARET'S MUSINGS

Dear members

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer, whether you have been on holiday, spent time with family or enjoyed the sunshine, and often welcome shade, in your gardens.

Some of our groups have continued to meet in August whilst others are beginning to pick up activities again now that September is here.

Autumn is also the time for our AGM, at the October monthly Monday General Meeting on 20th October.

Notice of the AGM is given in this Newsletter. Nomination forms for committee members will be available at the September monthly meeting; there will be vacancies for three new members on the committee.

We are also looking for a member to take on the role of Group Coordination. June Wheatcroft has decided to step back from this role and we thank her for her care of all our established groups and encouragement of proposed new groups. June will continue to order the diaries.

Documents relating to the AGM will be sent out in a separate email or mail posting at the end of September. I'll look forward to meeting you all at the monthly meeting.

Best wishes

Margaret

Chair, The Deepings u3a

SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP

The next Sunday Lunch will be on Sunday 28th September 12.30 for 1pm at The Stage in Market Deeping. Please ring either Enid on 01778342936 or Helen on 01778345674 or email helen.perkins500@gmail.com to let them know if you are coming or not.

Group leaders: Enid Withers, Helen Perkins

ACCORDIAN GROUP

On August 4th all six members of the Accordion Group played at Rose Lodge in Market Deeping. We played a variety of sing-along music to a very lively audience, with many of the residents joining in. Our final song was Sweet Caroline to celebrate our Lionesses winning the UEFA Women's European Championship and this was sung very enthusiastically by residents and staff alike.

We were then treated to tea and biscuits. We all had a very enjoyable afternoon and hope to return at some time in the future.

Report by Janice Cosham, Group Leader

CHURCH MICE



The joint Church Mice and Art Appreciation July visit was to Cambridge. The first part of the visit was to Cambridge Central Mosque.

This 21st Century building was a well-planned community structure. The Islamic gardens with fountain led into a large empty atrium. The wooden tree like structures held up the roof and the coloured bricks in the wall showed up quotations from the Quran.

The group visited other rooms including the bathing facilities. The highlight of the building was the prayer hall. With space for a thousand worshippers facing Mecca the hall was simple but beautifully decorated.

The lack of human images and the profusion of geometrical designs clearly indicated the differences between churches and mosques. A very successful visit, followed by a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Report and Group Leader: Henry Roberts

CYCLING GROUP

August report

Again, a depleted three of us set off from the bridge in Market Deeping for our August Ride. The weather was pleasant for cycling and we set off along Church Street, Halfleet and Peterborough Road to the bypass roundabout where we crossed and continued on Peterborough Road to Meadow Road.



Cycling along Meadow Road, we turned right onto Cross Road on which we continued to the bypass. We crossed the bypass and continued on the disused part of Cross Road to Towngate East. We travelled along Towngate East to the Spading Road, crossed this, past Stowgate House and continued to Cranmore Drive. Turning right here, we followed Cranmore Drive to the crossroads with Custom Road and Station Road and crossed over to Stowgate Road. We followed this and turned right onto Back Lane and via Church Gate onto Eastgate into Deeping St James.

Crossing the footbridge into Deeping Gate, we took Fairfax Way onto Peakirk Road and followed this to Mile Drive where we turned right, passing Nine Bridges to Lincoln Road. Here we followed Lincoln Road into Northborough and to The Packhorse for lunch.

A 12-mile ride which was enjoyed by all so a big thank you to Mike for planning the route. Look forward to seeing more of the group on next month's ride.

Report by Jim Torrance
Group Leader: Jim Torrance

CRAFT 2 GROUP



July - Just a small group because it clashed with holidays and sadly with friend's funeral.

Maureen kindly hosted the meeting and Anita prepared some amusing cards which were made. Thank you to them both.

August - We did meet this August, and I understand five members tackled decoupage cards very successfully. Thank you to Pam for hosting the session and we look forward to Heather's project in September on the 17th.

Report Liz Noble
Group leader Pam Ready

FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP

There are one or two spaces for new members in the group.

We meet fortnightly in members' homes on Thursday mornings. For more information, please email Mary Lawrence on mimi_lawrence@hotmail.com or call 07887932114.

Group leader: Mary Lawrence

GOOD FOOD GROUP

August report

On 4th August, we sat down to enjoy a series of Mediterranean dishes at David and Anne's. Shame the weather didn't oblige!

The starter was a creamy onion tart, followed by a selection of main courses: -

- Spanish meatballs and butter bean stew,
- Chorizo and red pepper stew,
- Spinach stuffed chicken,

accompanied by a tomato and cucumber sumac salad. The hosts really ought to have discussed their creations beforehand as they were very similar.

This was followed by caramel oranges and a blue berry, lemon and yogurt cake.

In keeping with the theme, this was washed down with a selection of Italian wines for those of us who were not driving!

Our next gastronomic gathering will be on 8th September, when we will be exploring Dr.Rupy's recipes. Google searches will be required.

Report by Dave Gaskell

September report

With the good weather in early September, we decided to have our lunch outdoors. Our theme this month was the recipes of Dr Rupy, who promotes good health through food on TV's This Morning.

We started with soup, planned in case we needed warming up! It was veggie mulligatawny made with root vegetables and lentils, flavoured with curry.

We then had cauliflower and sweet potato traybake with prawns and spinach, an unusual combination containing both spices and limes.

Our main course was spicy chicken, sweet corn and black-eyed bean casserole accompanied by mushroom, chestnut and squash filo pie.

Our dessert was pear, apple and ginger crumble with yoghurt, both healthy and delicious.

Please get in touch if you want to join us - no culinary skill required! Just find one recipe and follow the instructions!

Report by Sheila McGurk
Group Leaders: Hilary Akam and Sheila McGurk

PACERS WALKING

Due to lots of different problems, only a very small group of Pacers were able to enjoy our August walk around the lovely village of Barnwell. It was a perfect walking day, blue sky and sunshine but not too hot.

We set out from the Montagu Arms, led by Geoff Fitzjohn. Turning left out of the car park, we soon took the footpath across the field heading towards the village of Armston. Here we took in the beautiful views over golden fields and meadows.

After reaching Armston Lodge, we followed the road back towards Barnwell and were lucky enough to see a herd of deer with many babies among them and then a newly cultivated field over which countless red kites were swooping down.



When we reached the village, we got a view of Barnwell Manor and Castle, which in the past was the home of Princess Alice and the Gloucesters.

Crossing over a tiny bridge we headed towards St. Andrew's church and took time to have a look inside. The church is very well kept and has some beautiful stained-glass windows. Facing the church is the Parson Latham's hospital, a group of almshouses. There is a large inscription carved into the wall explaining about these almshouses.

We walked alongside Barnwell brook, completely dried out at the moment, down through the village and passed some very picturesque thatched cottages. Back over another of the bridges, we retraced our steps back to the pub ready for our delicious lunch.

Although we were only a small group, we thoroughly enjoyed our 3¼ mile walk and were delighted to see as much wildlife as we did, even down to the many grasshoppers we saw hopping about in the meadow.

An added bonus were the very sweet blackberries that we could sample along the way!

Report by Julie Fitzjohn
Group Leader: Margaret Beardshaw

MONDAY WALKING GROUP

September Report

Seventeen walkers met at the Griffin Inn, Irnham, led by Geoff and Penny on a fine, sunny day – just right for a walk.



Before we set off, we were told some history of the Griffin Inn.

The Inn's main structure dates from the 17th Century, but it was significantly altered and extended in the early 19th Century, giving it its current form.

Irnham Hall was also mentioned. The Benton Jones family, now in their fifth generation, has continuously owned and cared for the Irnham Hall estate since 1901, preserving its heritage.

The walk started along the road and then entered the footpath in fields. Doing a circular route through the Estate along a mown area, in some places part of the path was overgrown but no machetes were needed. On the return section there was a line of oak trees and, towards the end, an enormous tree which promoted a walkers' tree hugging session, with about 14 forming a ring around the tree. Returning on the road to the pub, where we had a good meal. The Bunch's, formerly of our group, joined us for lunch and it was really nice to see them. A big thanks to Geoff and Penny for the walk. The walk was approximately 6 miles, though as usual there were differing distances!! The next walk is from Greetham Golf Club – details to follow.

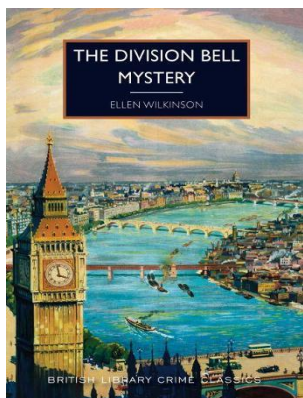


Report by: Steve Hanson
Group Leader: Steve Hanson

BOOKWORMS

August report

'The Division Bell Mystery' by Ellen Wilkinson, first published in 1932. Two stories for the price of one this month! A visiting American financier is dining in The House of Commons with the Home Secretary. The Division Bell rings, summoning all MPs to vote. Concurrently, a shot rings out, killing the American financier.



Who did the murder? How? Why? This is the Golden Age of detective fiction, so we have a locked room mystery; an amateur sleuth; red herrings; a large cast of characters; a Scotland Yard detective who reveals all in the final pages!

Bookworms enjoyed the locked room mystery – most thought it was not a classic example of the genre, but serviceable. However, all agreed that the setting of the novel was the real, second story: the inner workings of Parliament with a glimpse into how MPs conducted state business in the 1930s. Wilkinson was an MP who rose to become Education Secretary in Atlee's Government. Her wry sense of humour shines a spotlight on a cumbersome system, to some even a game, which seems remote and fails to serve an electorate crying out for jobs and action. Bookworms thought little had changed in Parliament since the book was written! Most believed

that the weight of tradition, history and arcane rules hinder even the most well-intentioned MPs today - with several current examples from the group! Bookworms thought that one comment from the novel could be made by an MP today, when a character says: 'We ought to put a tariff on gangsters if the USA starts exporting them'. That was then. Remind you of anyone today?

The Bookworms held a celebration lunch at The Stage in August

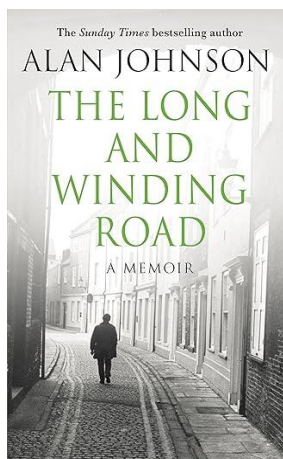


No books! No words – unless reading a menu is included! Bookworms and partners met at The Deeping Stage on Thursday 14th August to celebrate our first eight months as a reading group. We have expanded to eleven members since our inauguration in January 2025 and meet to discuss a different book on the first Monday of each month.

The group hoped to expand their reading experience to include a variety of genres and authors. So, monthly choices include romcoms, historical fiction, locked room mysteries, politics, and even an 85yrs lady on a life-changing visit to Antarctica who falls in love with penguins! Members also share books they have enjoyed over the previous month.

So, raise a glass to books, their authors and all who enjoy exploring imaginary worlds. Happy reading!

September report



'The Long and Winding Road' by Alan Johnson is the third volume of four multi-award-winning memoirs by postman to politician Alan Johnson. Early pages chart his meteoric rise in the Communications Trade Union to Union Boss, where his charm and negotiating skills defeat attempts to privatize the Post Office; he also improves the working conditions for his many union members. His talents come to the attention of Tony Blair, who invites him to become an MP during the Blair/Brown years.

As MP for Hull and Hessle, he wins long-sought justice for Hull trawlermen. Promotion quickly follows, culminating in Ministerial Office (notably Health and Education) to Home Secretary in 2009.

A very mixed reaction from Bookworms this month. All admired Johnson's rags to high office narrative, where his background informs a profound understanding of the plight of those with no voice. Also enjoyed were his flashes of humour (his dislike of modern technology) and descriptions of aspects of his family life. The group thought Johnson a modest, amiable narrator, scrupulously fair to all and able to understand rival views. But this was the problem! A self-deprecating narrator who respects everyone's viewpoint doesn't necessarily translate into an exciting memoir: there was little conflict, drama, rivalry – elements that can make a text exciting. So, several Bookworms thought Johnson's description of his political victories a very long and winding road indeed, with not all completing the journey!

Reports and Group Leader: Tom Baldwin

STROLLERS GROUP

July Stroll



The Strollers' walk at the end of July was just under three miles and was the same route as the Pacers' walk, as reported last month, but in reverse.

We had three new members, Kim, Barbara and Anita, making their first walks with the group and all seemed to enjoy the morning stroll and the company of the group.

This time the sun did shine. We met in the Burghley Golf Club House to choose and order lunch. We then made our way down the hill towards Stamford and continued our circular walk around Tolthorpe along footpaths, bridleways and across fields taking time to enjoy some lovely views of Stamford.

The photo taken, en-route, of the ruins of Wothorpe Towers makes a fine backdrop for a superimposing group photo!

Report by Anne Burton

August Stroll

It was our first visit to Irnham, which nestles in a valley close to Corby Glen. There were 12 of us to set off in what would be ideal conditions for this summer, with a soothing cloud cover and a gentle breeze.

We started from the Griffin Inn heading out of the village, in a southerly direction, up a gentle incline, before turning off along field tracks, towards the road which leads to Bulby.

Our attention was drawn to a field of cows, possibly Guernseys, but their docile demeanour suggested that we did not pose a threat to them.

After reaching the road, which would be our half-way mark, we made tracks for base, with a steady downhill stroll.

It was a good walk to introduce Eddie, our latest recruit to the group and a welcome return for another, David, after a lengthy break.

All in all, a successful walk, finishing off with the customary lunch at the Griffin Inn. Our next walk will be on 26 September. Details will be issued in due course.

**Report by Bob Deller
Group Leader: Bob Deller**

JAZZ, SWING AND BIG BAND APPRECIATION GROUP

Our usual way of operating is for a member of the group to prepare a set list of performers and to present that list. In addition to the music, it's customary (but not compulsory!) to provide a little bit of biographical detail and possibly information relating to the performance.

It's not unusual for any of our members to have some story about the various performers which adds to the listening pleasure. Such anecdotes can be anything from humble origins to the (in some cases numerous) marriages but also include the usually incredible list of influences any performer might have had. And much of these elements of our meetings happens before we hear what each performer does.

Colin Wall's programme for July, without sounding too drastic, turned our usual format on its head, as we came to each artist "blind" so that as each made an appearance with no introduction, we were left guessing as to who we were hearing.

Colin's choice of artist was such that most of us would have been sure to know which singer or band leader was performing. However, as familiar as some of the names were in the end, some of the guesses were surprisingly wide of the mark until the reveal after each performance. And some lively discussion ensued. Thanks to Colin for a compiling and presenting a compelling and fun programme.

We're taking a break in August, so the next programme, on 24 September 2025, is at the home of Phil Jones, by Phil Jones. Usual time. If you are interested in good music, classic and contemporary, there's room for you so please contact Phil for details – address in the last of groups in this newsletter.

**Report by Phil Jones
Group Leaders: Phil Jones, Anne Jones**

POETS AND THEIR POETRY



In August we had our summer outing at Waterside Garden Centre, the picture shows us enjoying the wonderful afternoon tea.

In September, we met on a rainy afternoon with "Humour" as our theme. Brian Bilston featured in several poems, of our favourite poets. First, *Remembrance of Things Pasta*. Next, *Messy Room* by Shel Silverstein, followed by *Snap, Crackle, Pop* by Catherine Pulsifer.

Wedding Night, by Philip D. Rye was next. Brian Bilston *On Searching for a Book of Stamps*, lots of us could identify with this one. Alfred Noyes *Daddy Fell Into the Pond* was next. *Vanity* by Brian Patten, just before several short poems by Harry Graham.

Another set of short poems by Roger McGough, Lewis Carroll, Pam Ayres and our old friend Brian Bilston. Lastly an unusual poem called *What the Chairman Told Tom* by Basil Bunting. A most enjoyable afternoon kindly hosted by Angie.

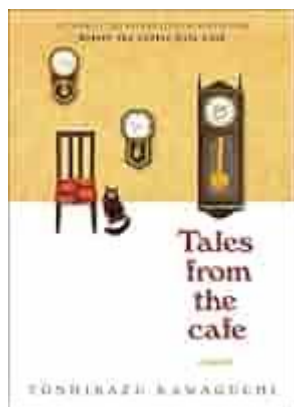
Weary of its buzzing,
He smashed up his alarm,
With his cherished bedside copy
Of The Little Book of Calm.

Brian Bilston

Report and Group Leader: Susanne Hoadley

MONDAY READERS

August report



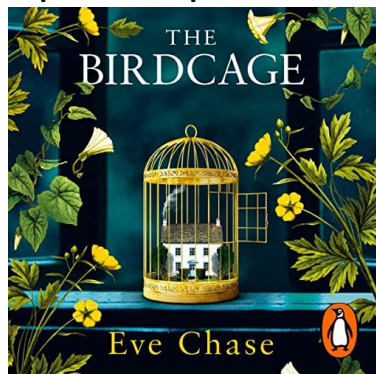
Our book this month was *Before the Coffee Gets Cold; Tales from the Café* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. It's a follow on from the first book, *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, but it stands alone perfectly well.

The book tells of a café in Japan which has a secret; by sitting in a particular chair at a particular time a person can travel forward or back in time to resolve an issue that is preventing them from moving on in their present-day life. There are rules, however. One's time in the past or future only lasts as long as a cup of coffee, served just at the point of departure, stays warm enough to be drinkable. If the traveller overstays, they remain stuck and become a ghost unable to return. Also, nothing one can do whilst in another time can affect the present. The book has four stories of different people, their wish to time travel and the issues to be solved, and each recounts what happens and the effect on the people involved.

Very gently written and quite slow in pace, this is an unusual book, which most of us enjoyed. For one or two, it was very intriguing, but perhaps less engaging. (All did agree, however, that the fact that many of the characters had Japanese names beginning with K made for some confusion!)

Recommended as a very different and gentle book with intriguing stories that made the reader think about some of the issues involved.

September report



For the first time in a very long time every member of our group was able to be present at our meeting this month. As a result, we filled the Library lounge space and had to draft in extra chairs! This made for a lively and busy get together, particularly as our book had been an interesting and intriguing one. We had read *The Birdcage*, by Eve Chase, which concerns the daughters of a famous painter, Charlie Finch, who all had different mothers and now have widely separated lifestyles, who are summoned back to the old Cornish coastal Victorian house in which they spent their childhoods. Back for the first time in many years, memories come to haunt them, including one very dark secret, which gradually becomes clear as the plot unwinds.

With one exception, everyone enjoyed the book. We thought it very cleverly plotted, with two timelines and many characters interwoven. The characters are intriguing and well-drawn (especially the women – the men, with the exception of larger-than-life Charlie Finch, are less so) and the final reveal ended a really tense dénouement. Our one nay-sayer felt that the two time periods and many characters, all with their own stories to tell, made for confusing and difficult reading, which we could all understand.

Overall, though, this is a very immersive and engaging book for those who like their family dramas with bucketloads of sinister secrets! It's a satisfying tale, meticulously plotted, that reveals truths slowly, one that pulls the reader into the intriguing events of 1999 and the echoes still resonating in the present day. It's vivid, beautiful and absorbing - and we would recommend it.

Reports and Group Leader: Liz Waterland

HISTORY GROUP

July report

THE CARE PATHWAY IN WW1



Two famous faces from a long time ago, Flora Murray and Louise Garret Anderson. Two of the famous names we learned of today, July 16th 2025.

The talk was a fascinating look at the organisation leading up to and during World War 1 and the structure of care given to the soldiers who gave their lives for a free world!

Our speaker was new to us, Dr Eric Somerville who is a retired GP and was also very involved with the Sue Ryder Hospice at Thorpe Hall. It was a fast moving and very informative morning.

We learned about:

- Weaponry
- Personnel
- The Western Front
- Casualties
- Trenches
- Who looked after the sick and dying
- Volunteer organisations

And so much more.

We hope Dr Somerville will return in 2026. He will be most welcome. He also helped Godfrey with the setting up of the equipment.

There isn't a meeting in August as we are going to Ipswich and a trip on the River Deben.

September's meeting is not what Sandra said it was (senior moment!). It is a tribute to Edith Cavell and our speaker is Dr Martyn Thomas.

Thank you to everyone who helped today.

August report

The Visit to Ipswich



On August 20th we set off for the Suffolk Food Hall where we met our blue-badge guide, Ian. The Suffolk Food Hall was very impressive and we enjoyed some refreshments before continuing our trip.

We had a super view of the Orwell Bridge (George Orwell took his pen name from the River Orwell) as we made our way into Ipswich. The dropping-off spot was the Christchurch Mansion which was a museum and park. Some people stayed there and others followed Ian into the centre of Ipswich. He told us a little about some of the

very old buildings which have survived the test of time. However, some of the centre, just as in many other towns, was rather run down.

After this brief stop, we made our way into the village of Waldringfield where we picked up our boat (The Jahan) for the cruise down the River Deben. The sun came out and we had two hours of really leisurely



cruising, the skipper telling us all about the history and bird life. We reached Felixstowe and then reversed and returned to the mooring point. Oz, our coach driver, then returned Ian to his car at the Suffolk Food Hall, and we returned to Deeping in very good time.

A big thank you to Barbara who organised the visit, and to Oz out very capable driver.

Also, a big thank you to everyone who took part in the visit. Oz said you were a lovely set of passengers.

In September (17th) our speaker is Dr Martyn Thomas and his topic is Edith Cavell.

**Reports by Sandra Jones
Group Leader: Sandra Jones**

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

July report



We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Lyndon Visitor Centre on Rutland Water to see the ospreys.

Our visit began with a very interesting and informative talk about these magnificent, fish-eating birds of prey.

We then walked to the hide and saw a family of five ospreys. Some were perched in the trees and others were on a nest, from which a camera provided close-up live video on a screen in the hide. A highlight was seeing one flying with a large fish dangling from its talons.

August report



You may have heard of the Langdyke Countryside Trust. This voluntary organisation has conserved natural areas around Peterborough and Stamford.

We visited one of the areas: Etton-Maxey Pit Nature Reserve, a former gravel pit. As well as seeing wildflowers, water birds and evidence of badgers, it was good to see the reserve being grazed by black sheep and Belted Galloway cattle. We particularly enjoyed sitting in the hide watching and listening to the little grebes.

Report: Beverley Tagala
Group Leader: Beverley Tegala

THURSDAY WALKING GROUP

In August, eleven walkers met at Milton Golf Club for our walk organised and led by Steve Hanson. Another

hot day, but with thankfully intermittent cloud cover and a gentle breeze.

Steve led us northwards besides the immaculate golf greens, through trees and besides a well-constructed old stone wall.

Things soon got a bit haphazard and due to the heat (or some other reason) our leader began to lose his bearings. Eventually we got back on track and arrived at a point known as Salter's Tree. Here, it is said, there used to be a 'great Elm Tree and Gibbet'. Reputedly a man called Salter was hanged here, either for a crime, or hanged himself – we

will never know.

We now headed north-west along an ancient track way known as Salter's Way. After a few yards we were approached by a gentleman in a large black 4x4 truck. He was an official from the Milton Estate and pleasantly reprimanded us all for crossing their estate lands using unofficial paths. We were all willing to give him Steve's details but he said because we were caught on camera, he had to follow up on our trespassing. Wrists slapped, no further issue – thankfully (for Steve) case closed.

The track finished at the road to Marholm. Turning left, along the road, we headed south through the pretty village of Ailsworth. Here we saw a thatched cottage with an elephant finial on the ridge and another cottage embellished with the ridge showing two fighting hares. At the bottom of the road was an ornate brick bus stop, full of books, and a red post box embellished with remembrances to VE Day.



Heading east, then north, we joined Loves Hill and, after crossing over the A47, arrived at our destination. The food provided was excellent and at a very reasonable price. Distance covered 6.2 miles.

Report by Richard Coulson – Walk Leader

ART APPRECIATION GROUP



On July 8TH we joined the Church Mice on a visit to The Central Mosque and Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

The Mosque was stunning and very interesting.

At the Fitzwilliam, we were split into two groups and had a guided tour of the Art Gallery and the Ceramics/Ancient History departments.

The photo shows our group's guide. She is telling us about Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion. He bequeathed his extensive art collection, library and a significant sum of money to the University of Cambridge in 1816. He specified that his collection of paintings, prints, manuscripts and a library should be used to establish a

museum. which was to be used by the public. In 1837 the museum's construction began and it opened to the public later.

This is one of the paintings that caught our attention. It shows a figure being fitted for a white dress. It is the artist when aged around 24.

This was a familiar activity for the artist who liked buying clothes!

It is called *At the Dressmakers* and the artist was painted by Marie-Louise Von Motesiczky. (1906-1996).

The dress is said to resemble a blank canvass connecting the artist and dressmaker.

The visit to Cambridge was excellent and we gave a big thank you to Margaret for organising it.



The meeting in September is on the 16th when the speaker is Hilary and she will be telling us all about women in paintings (not female artists).

Report and Group Leader: Sandra Jones

FAMILY HISTORY REPORT

July report

For our July meeting we were asked to look at the occupations of our ancestors and come up with something obscure or interesting. There was a prize on offer for the best contribution.

Most of us have Agricultural Labourers as distant family members and this can be easily dismissed. The job description covers just about everything connected to the land and these people must have been employed by someone, probably Lords of the Manor. This being the case, comprehensive records were kept dating from the early 20th Century back to the Domesday Book of 1086. These records can be found in various archives around the country.

The Lancashire Cotton Mills had some unusual job descriptions, both Althea and Jean mentioned a Doffer who was someone who removed bobbins from the spindles. There was also a Quiller who operated a machine that wound yarn onto spools. Finally there was a Cotton Flasher, usually young boys or girls who would move underneath the spinning machines to pick up loose cotton or fix broken threads.

Brian mentioned a Fireman Trimmer. Their job involved moving coal from a ship's bunkers to areas accessible to the firemen. They also worked to keep the coal evenly distributed within the bunkers, preventing a ship from becoming unbalanced. He also mentioned a stripper which was really a Tobacco Stripper but it was enough to scoop the prize.

Many other examples included a Rope Maker, Silversmith, Ditch Digger, Piano Key maker, Gang Master, a blind Basket Maker even a TV detection van driver.

A fun afternoon and with occupations another tool in the armoury for family history research.

August report

A change from the past with a meeting in August subject being 'Breaking down Brick Walls'. Nobody came with a specific problem, although Liz did mention a diary and someone who lived in County Antrim. It will be interesting to see how that story evolves. Researching Irish ancestors can cause problems but there are numerous websites available such as *Irish Genealogy* and *Rootes Ireland* the former being free. Headstone inscriptions are often unreadable but Peg had a process to make it easier. For grave locations getting in touch with the relevant cemetery is the best approach and as Brenda pointed out, they will often send a map to help.

Deceased Online was also mentioned. Although not free they have computerised cremation and burial records, digital scans of cremation and burial registers, photographs of graves and memorials and information of other occupants in the same grave.

Much time was spent on the *Ancestry* website as there is so much more on offer than just a general search. There are a huge number of records in the card catalogue and more are added on a regular basis.

Not so long ago, DNA became a useful addition to the many sources available to Family Historians, now we have the emergence of AI. We discussed its possible use in helping to read documents in Old English or Secretary Hand or even official documents which were in Latin before 1733.

A good idea to have an August meeting and a general discussion always throws up useful information.

Report: David Larkin

Group Leader: Peg Torrance

THURSDAY GARDENING GROUP

August report



We met in August, at the Scott's house and enjoyed a pleasant sunny morning in the garden which was a riot of colour and some oddities too, such as tomato plants dripping with fruit self-set in pots now planted with flowers!

It was great to see such a variety of plants as Margaret's green fingers worked their magic, ably supported with David's renowned strong pruning techniques!

A few drops of rain didn't deter the coffee and biscuits outside before the return of the sun while we were discussing our various garden quirks arising from our dramatic climate changes.

Thank you to them both for their hospitality and we look forward

to a talk at Swines Meadow in September.

September report



We managed to dodge the showers and enjoyed a very informative talk from Colin at Swines Meadow Nursery this month and were shown some delightful unusual plants - one of his specialities is evergreen reasonable sized shrubs (the sort that don't take over the garden) and he had many examples to show us.

We were also treated to a showing of a special plant he had bought after 20 years of searching for it! It also happened to be an eye-watering price! Colin's knowledge of all the plant Latin names and the many more common names was stunning and after all that

Karan's coffee and cake was delicious too! A thoroughly enjoyable morning.



Report Liz Noble Photo Alistair Smith
Joint leaders Kay Parker and Ann Pettitt

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