

Cheadle Hulme



NEWSLETTER

June 2011

Editor: George Rogers

From the Chairman

After a long cold winter, it is lovely to see this beautiful spring weather, and I hope you are all enjoying the sun and your gardens. We have seen a number of new activities in the past few months. The combined trip with Bramhall to Martin Mere was a great success and many people enjoyed the York walking holiday. We have some new groups under way. Philosophy is a complex and stimulating afternoon each month with Robert's kindly guidance. Tai Chi has challenged a few of us to say the least, and a short history course started with Dr. Hoffman in May. We have two more walking trips to look forward to and a possible trip to Holland next spring. We also have a local theatre group starting in September, and a creative writing group being planned. My thanks to those who have undertaken these new offerings.

I think we can be very proud of all the effort being put into making our new members welcome. We had a great morning with them in April where their enthusiasm sparked some new ideas for the future. To all those involved, you made them feel very welcome, and showed them that they were joining a caring and interesting U3A. Five new members joined the Tuesday Dining group this month, and we enjoyed a meal and good conversation at the Bay Tree in Cheadle.

A reminder, we will be having our Anniversary celebration in December. Details about arrangements for your attendance will be given out at our meeting this month.

I wish you a healthy and enjoyable summer,

Bernadette

CHU3A Monthly General Meetings

at 2pm in the Methodist Church Hall
on Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, on the first Thursday of each month.

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
2 nd June	A Pocket Full of Posies	Ann Metcalfe
7 th July	Stockport Workhouses	Stockport Heritage
4 th August	Walking solo across Africa	Fran Sandman
1 st September	Last Orders	Patricia Byron

VISITORS are allowed one visit without joining, and need to pay **£2** on that occasion. **Visitors from other U3As may come a maximum of three times a year and need to pay £2 each time towards Cheadle Hulme U3A's costs.**

This rule also applies to attendance at groups of Cheadle Hulme U3A but the charge may vary with each group.
(CHU3A members pay £1 each month)

CHU3A EVENTS – Pat Vermes and Marilyn Johnson

For all events, please make cheques payable to “Cheadle Hulme U3A Events” and send to: Marilyn Johnson, at the address listed in the printed edition of this Newsletter. (Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your tickets)

The Lowry
Wonderful Town Thursday, 5th April 2012 Coach leaves St Michael's, Bramhall, 6.15pm – return about 10.30 pm Payment required by 18 th August, 2011 Cost £39 covering seats in stalls, coach and driver's tip.
Buxton Festival
Gilbert and Sullivan Wednesday 17th August Matinee performance of H.M.S. Pinafore. More details later. Coach transport a possibility with enough interest.
Knutsford Heritage Centre
A summer visit to the home of the famous “ Millennium Tapestry ” – date to be arranged. For this event, we need a minimum of 10 and a 25% deposit is required. More details at the next monthly meeting.
Roy McCarthy Coaches
Saturday 2nd July Historic Houses - The Cavendish Collection £16.50 A stop for coffee at Chatsworth Garden Centre before continuing on to spectacular Hardwick Hall where we have lunch before exploring the finest collection of 16 th and 17 th century embroideries and tapestries. Outside there are tranquil walled gardens, fragrant herb gardens, orchards and lawns. National Trust members free at Hardwick Hall - non-members approx. £9.50 7 seats left Pick up Fiveways, Hazel Grove
Sunday, 16th October. A Taste Of The Peaks and the Great Peak District Fair A day out to Buxton Pavilion Gardens, calling at Foolow for morning coffee before continuing onto Buxton Pavilion Gardens where you will find an abundance of activities including crafts, handmade jewellery, music and entertainment throughout the day. Cost £14 Pick up Fiveways, Hazel Grove
Sunday 27th November St Nicholas Fayre, York The St Nicholas Fayre is a traditional Fayre and market, held in the cobbled streets as a Christmas celebration. It will include Morris dancers, Carols, buskers, street theatre and a craft fair. A lovely day out. Cost £19 Pick up Fiveways, Hazel Grove

NB - Wherever possible, details of all events will be published in the Cheadle Hulme U3A Newsletter. However, as this is produced quarterly, there will be occasions when we only have short notice of a particular event and it will be too late for the Newsletter. When this occurs, the event details will be posted on the CHU3A website under the Events section so “watch this space”!

Guidelines are available from the events organisers for those wishing to organise a U3A event.

Thursday Early Evening Diners

The group was founded about 9 years ago by Christine Read. It has evolved so that members volunteer to organise an early evening meal on the 3rd Thursday of each month. We have eaten at Chinese, Indian, Italian, Japanese, French, Thai, Turkish and English eating establishments as well as B.B.Qs in a member's garden. We have 37 members at present and are "full" for the time being.

What do we learn? - The organisers must:

- 1) Find a suitable venue.
- 2) Negotiate a good deal.
- 3) Ensure collection of money and settle the bill.
- 4) Ensure adequate parking is available.

The system has elements of the "Apprentice", nobody has been "shouted at" or "fired". We just enjoy good food and good company.

Walter FitzPatrick, Co-ordinator

ITEMS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER !

If you would like items published in the Newsletter, please hand them to the Newsletter Editor at one of the Members' Meetings, or (preferably) email to chu3a@talktalk.net or post to:

George Rogers

at the address listed in the printed edition of this Newsletter

**Closing date for contributions to the September 2011 Newsletter
is the Members' Meeting in August 2011**

Website: www.chu3a.org.uk

Computer Club at caféunity - 228 Finney Lane, Heald Green, Cheadle, SK8 3QA

The monthly Computer Club meetings are on the 4th Tuesday of the month 10am -12noon at a cost of £3 per session. **2011 dates for your diaries are: 28th June, 26th July, 23rd August, 27th September, 25th October and 22nd November (no meeting in December).**

New members are welcome and no one is excluded. The group is **not** solely for experienced computer users, although a certain basic understanding of computing is expected. We discuss common problems and interests in computing and an occasional topic will be presented by a more experienced computer user from within the group .

Please contact George Rogers if you would like to come. Email: chu3a@talktalk.net

Martin Mere Wetland Trust



Feeding of the Whooper Swans before they migrate back to Iceland

On the 4th March, 41 people travelled to Martin Mere Burscough, near Ormskirk, Merseyside. The day started well with the sun trying to come out. This seemed to be the pattern for the day, bright periods with cloud and sometimes a cool breeze. On arrival we went to the Mereside Café for refreshments. The cafe is part of the visitors' centre which itself is

part of unique log cabin complex of Scandinavian design overlooking Swan Lake (no ballet dancers here just the feathered kind of birds).



A volunteer guide explaining the range of wildlife available at the centre

The wildfowl and wetland trust (WWT) was founded in 1946 by the late Sir Peter Scott and has several well known sites in the U.K. most famous of these being Slimbridge. Martin Mere was opened in 1975.

After being suitably refreshed we were split into two groups for a guided tour of the waterfowl gardens, one group going clockwise the other anti-clockwise.

The total tour of some 2 miles, including the three loops takes between 1 and 1½ hours depending on how many questions you asked the very knowledgeable guide.

The waterfowl gardens are divided between birds from many countries and areas,

including Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Australasia. They also have an otter enclosure where at feeding times the guide gives a short talk.



Peter Rhodes paying homage to Sir Peter Scott



Otters at feeding time

At the next enclosure the beavers have their lodge and room for dam building. As beavers are nocturnal most activity is obviously at night, but one of our group did actually see one, but for those interested there are webcams on site and they can be viewed at anytime via Martin Mere website just follow the links to Beavers. The best time is after 9 pm. The guide giving this talk showed us a beaver pelt and a large claw, and also a recorded video of the night time activities !!

There are too many birds on the tour to mention them all, but here are a few. On Swan Lake there are a collection of ducks, geese and yes swans mainly Bewick's.

In the South American section the Chilean flamingos are amongst the most spectacular, a food containing carotene retains their bright pink colour. Worth a mention is the Hawaiian goose or nene. They were reduced to around 50 birds in 1940 on Hawaii due to the introduction of cats, dogs and rats. The WWT saved and bred the nenes so successfully that 200 have been returned to the islands.

We also saw Black Swans from Australasia and the largest of all

swans, the Trumpeter, from North America.

Another spectacular bird from Africa is the Crowned Crane which has a loud bugling call. Unusually it is the female in this case that does the displaying leaping high into the air during its



Pink Chilean flamingos

display, much to our delight on the day. But Juliet's partner Romeo stayed well in the background (some of the staff have also christened them Posh and Beck's).

Another bird from Africa is the white faced Whistling Duck, which as the name suggests has a clear three note whistling call.

On the way back we passed a round-house village and an endangered waterfowl area and yet another flamingo area but this time it was the Greater Flamingo from Southern Europe, white and pink mainly on the wings. We eventually arrived back at the Visitors Centre where we split up to do as we pleased. We went to the Ron Barker hide overlooking the Vinson's and Sunley's duck marshes to see a variety of ducks and geese but mainly to see the Avocets which are increasing in number at Martin Mere every year.

The main event of the day was to be the feeding of the Whooper Swans at Swanlink hide on the side of the Mere. It was spectacular, hundreds of swans waiting to migrate back to Iceland along with many migratory geese and ducks and when the feed did arrive all bedlam broke out.

After the show, back to the coach for our homeward journey after Bernadette thanked Peter Rhodes for an excellent day out and for arranging the trip and all the hard work involved. A good day was had by all Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall members.

Peter Baldock

Art Appreciation Programme September 2011 to March 2012

Date	Subject	Presenter
2011		
16 th June	Summer Visit to Saltaire Village	
15 th September 2011	A History of Impressionism:	Bernadette Murray-Robb
20 th October	Visit to Whitworth Art Gallery	
17 th November	Renaissance Paintings	Judith Durrant
22 nd December	No meeting	
2012		
19 th January	The Art of 'Art Deco'	Clyde Raines
16 th February	Winston S Churchill – the Artist	Derek Moffitt
15 th March	William Hogarth – Father of Modern English Painting	Carol Massey

The meetings will be held in the Village Hall, Heald Green, Outwood Road, commencing at 2.00 pm.

Art Appreciation Group - The Impressionists...

Earlier this season we had presentations on French Impressionism and the history behind the setting up of the first 'Salon des Refuses' in 1874 which was an alternative exhibition to those held by the official Salons of the 'Establishment' and classical idealism. There is a large diversity of different styles of Impressionism although the artists of the time shared the same aims and principles which included the study of light and colour and how the eye perceived the image. They wanted to free art from 'the rigid discipline of academicism'.

Our visit to the Manchester Art Gallery on Thursday, 17 February was an opportunity to see some examples of Impressionist paintings. Most French Impressionist paintings are held in the Louvre in Paris but nevertheless the Manchester gallery has a small collection of various artists and different styles of Impressionism, which was well worth seeing.

We were taken on a guided tour by one of the volunteers, Roger Parker, starting at the Impressionist gallery. Most of the works seen on our visit were painted after 1874 although in fact Impressionist techniques were used by some earlier painters, such as Turner. The style is still immensely popular to this day.

By the 1860's a new fashion had emerged in French painting for expressing nature. This led to the development of Impressionism where Boudin was an important figure. It was fortuitous therefore that the first painting we saw was 'Etaples', by Bourdin, 1889, and is a good example of his work.



It was particularly pleasing to see a work by Sisley in the gallery. His family originally came from Manchester but they settled in France where Sisley was born.

We saw his work entitled 'Normandy Farm', painted in 1874, which is characteristic of the high Impressionist period.

One English Impressionist painter active at the time was Philip Wilson Steer. The gallery has one of his most important works on display entitled 'Summer at Cowes', dated 1888. The painting shows broken brushstrokes and slanting dabs of colour, which is particularly reminiscent of Monet. Steer was a founder member of the New English Art Club founded in London in 1886 as a progressive alternative to the Royal Academy. There could be echoes here of the Impressionist's dissatisfaction with the Establishment in Paris which resulted in the Salon des Refusee exhibition of 1874.



After the Impressionist gallery our guide took us to another gallery where we saw the work of two very different painters. The first of these was Valette, a Frenchman who worked in Manchester for a while. Perhaps his most ambitious work is entitled 'Albert Square' dated 1910. Valette modified his techniques to suit English tastes for muted light and colours. He adopted Impressionism late in life in the early part of last century and his style is quite different to that of the earlier Impressionists from the nineteenth century.



The final painting which we saw was by Camille Pissarro and entitled 'Old Bridge at Bruges', dated 1903. This is particularly interesting because the information card at the side of the painting states that it blends 'Impressionist and Pointillist techniques' which would seem to imply that these are different and separate techniques.

Members of the Art Appreciation group may remember that at one of our early presentations I showed the famous painting by Seurat entitled 'Sunday afternoon on the Ile de la Grand Jatte'.



Seurat has been described as belonging to the second generation of Impressionists where he used the pointillist or divisionist technique just as Pissarro did in 'Old Bridge at Bruges' albeit to a far lesser effect. This is where small areas of pure hues are gradually built up to create an effect known as optical mixing, where the dots of colour appear to merge into secondary hues and tones. Pissarro was an important Impressionist painter who encouraged his pupils, such as Seurat, to experiment using different Impressionist techniques of which Pointillism is one example. However I did not think that the example we saw demonstrated the optical mixing technique to any marked degree.

Before leaving the gallery I went upstairs to see a superb modern abstract picture, which in fact we saw on our visit to the gallery last February and which is entitled 'Zephyr' by Brigitte Riley. This picture appears to have a yellow cast but on closer inspection it is revealed that the colour yellow has not been used. It only gives an impression of yellow. The artist has used a technique which may be described as linear Pointillism or Divisionism and which very clearly demonstrates optical mixing.

Our new season begins at the Village Hall, Outwood Road, Heald Green on Thursday 15 September 2011. The programme includes presentations on William Hogarth, described as the Father of Modern English painting, Renaissance paintings, Winston S Churchill – the Artist, and what I know to be a superb talk on Art Deco given by a chartered architect. Our summer outing this year is to Saltaire Village, scheduled for Thursday, 16 June. If you would like to join the Art Appreciation group or perhaps just come to Saltaire then please let me know or just come to any of our meetings which are held on the third Thursday of each month at 2.00 pm at the Village Hall, Heald Green.

Derek Moffitt

York Spring Break 14th - 18th March 2011



For some of us this break was a little different – we went by train; a very comfortable and easy journey. This was a well-chosen area for a short break with plenty to offer for the visitor.

The walks, organised for each day, here later described by Margaret and Walter, went well.

The weather could have been more cheerful but at least it was dry. Here are a few other things we enjoyed - a visit to a National Trust

Property, an open-top bus city tour and a walk around walls and 'snickelways'.

The Art Gallery had a David Hockney Exhibition called "Bigger Trees Near Warter".

For myself the Evensong in the Minster was a memorable experience. Sixteen very young and small girls raising the roof – lovely.

My thanks to everyone who contributed to our enjoyable stay in York.

Anne Webster

ED: Thanks especially to Joan & Ken for organising such a successful event and to Anne Webster for twisting everyone's arm to get newsletter contributions.

Visit to the Jorvik Centre

I marvelled at the thought that on Coppergate is the actual site of the 1,000 year old Viking city of Jorvik. Some of the old timbers can still be seen of what were houses, workshops and backyards. In the wonderfully recreated city seen as you travel through it in the "state of the art time capsules" you encounter the Vikings busy in their every day life blacksmiths, carpenters as

well as domestic scenes.

There is even a man on a public lavatory ---- thankfully the re - created smells do not include that one!

The figures of Vikings moving and speaking (in Norse, of course) are a miracle of mechanical engineering. At least one face is the result of facial reconstruction from an actual Viking skull.

There are now new visual

and audio displays, which give information gathered from site excavations to show where the Vikings came from and why and details of their lives. It is history come to life.

The carpenter likes to give the children the shavings to play with. A woman tells how she had a rather wild party last night. The Vikings loved to party. Not so different from us then !

Jean Cox

The Walks

Thirty five of us set off for the “The Newington Hotel” in York on Monday 14th March, making our own travel arrangements, most were in cars and a few by train. After arriving at the hotel, by the racecourse, we were met by our walk leaders, Gail and Peter. Gail, a member of Stockport Field Club, had kindly taken over from Ken and Joan Clifford and was ably supported by Peter (usually as back marker). Our first walk was on Monday afternoon, when we walked round the racecourse. The going was ‘firm-to-good’, there were no fallers and a stewards’ inquiry was narrowly averted.

Tuesday - Twenty five set off on the bus to Haxby. Fortunately, we were all able to get on the same bus. At Haxby we were allowed 10 minutes to go into the sandwich or Charity Shop, then we started the first section of the walk at the end of which some chose to return to York, others ate their sandwiches in the churchyard and the rest went into the pub. We met up again to walk along “Foss Way”. Both walks finished in the early afternoon so there was an opportunity to explore York as well.

Wednesday - Twenty caught a bus into York, then a bus to Deighton for an easy flat walk to the South of York, visiting four villages using the “Trans Pennine Trail”, and the “River Ouse Path”. Once again we filled the buses; crews and locals were very friendly, especially considering that most of us came from ‘t’other side o’th’Pennines’ and ‘paid nowt’ ! Today Gail brought a carrot for a donkey she and Peter met on their pioneer walk the week before. Those doing the short walk (almost four miles) mostly lunched in the village ‘local’ and many spent the afternoon in York. Some visited the railway museum, others walked the walls and some did retail therapy. In the evening ten of the party took part in a ‘murder mystery’ play, some acted as audience and others took stage fright or found other things to do.

Thursday - The walks were based on the village of Cawood, between York and Selby. We were blessed with fine clear weather and enjoyed a picturesque walk along paths trodden by Cardinal Wolsey, before he came to grief. The walk also took us along the river and those doing the extended six mile walk saw the confluence of the Warfe and the Ouse. Only ten walked but they enjoyed arguably the most interesting of the walks. Cawood is steeped in history. King Athelstan (Saxon), grandson of Alfred the Great, won a major battle hereabouts, Richard III (as Duke of York) concluded a peace treaty with the Scots and the village pub seemed little changed since Georgian times (apart from the prices).

Friday - We all met in the lounge after breakfast and George gave a vote of thanks on our behalf to Gail for the hard work she had done to make the walks so interesting and adaptable for different grades of walkers. He presented her with a gift token and a bottle of her favourite wine.

We all thank Ken and Joan Clifford for all their hard work in organising the holiday. The group ‘gelled’ and the social side was a big success as were the walks and sight seeing. Ken and Joan, we trust you had a good cruise, but you missed a very enjoyable five days in Yorkshire

(“I really enjoyed my first U3A holiday as people were so friendly and it’s a great way to get to know names” - Margaret Bayley).

Joint effort by Margaret Bayley and Walter Fitzpatrick

York Sight-Seeing Tour

Barbara and I were determined to see the city as we didn’t know York well. We took an interesting sight-seeing tour with the York Pullman Bus, with fascinating commentary included. From the top deck we had a good view of York Minster, the Shambles, Black Swan Inn, Cliffords Tower and the York Museum gardens.

We returned the next day for a closer look at the magnificent Minster, shopping in the shambles and Barbara climbed all the steps to the top of Cliffords Tower! We also visited the Jorvik Viking Centre – an unbelievably life-like exhibition of old York (definitely not to be missed!)

Sylvia Rhoden

A Foggy Day out with a Sat-Nav

Because of temporary, we hope, mobility problems; we were unable to go out with the walkers, so we decided to visit the National Trust property at Nunnington Hall.

Armed with a Sat Nav, and post code, we ventured out from the hotel.

As we went out of York on the York Scarborough Road, the fog got thicker and thicker and we were soon instructed to “turn left” down a country road. with visibility about 100yds. Eventually a massive obelisk appeared out of the gloom, with no indication of what it was all about, the top being lost in the fog. We drove on and eventually came to an Estate Gate with a sign reading “We hope you have enjoyed your trip to Castle Howard”.

Strange, we thought we were going to Nunnington Hall. We came to a sign for Helmsley so decided to take a look there. Sat Nav didn't like that, so with tom tom voice telling us to “turn around as soon as possible” we had a look round Helmsley.

I spotted a sign for Rievaulx Terrace, and knowing that to

be near our destination I followed signs for that, much to the consternation of tom tom, so we got the “turn around as soon as possible” bit. At Rievaulx terrace we were told that the terrace was shrouded in fog and the Abbey was not visible, so no views there. A helpful instruction sheet from the NT Warden, soon guided us to Nunnington Hall. Our tour round was excellent, with very welcoming and informative room guides.

Our visit culminated in the “Haunted Bedroom” at the top of the house. The room guide was an elderly gentleman, all dressed in grey and black, wearing a grey and black bow tie. Quite honestly, what with a lack of other visitors, and the foggy vista through the windows, by the time he had finished telling us about “ghosts” which appeared from time to time in the room, I wouldn't have been surprised if he had disappeared through the oak panelling himself.

We eventually escaped to the Restaurant, where we had an excellent lunch.

Now for our journey back to York. With tom tom's guidance we set off back to the hotel. On our way through the grounds of Castle Howard we were told to “turn left”

We did so following instructions and after a few more “turn left”s, we arrived at the front entrance of Castle Howard. We certainly should not have been that close, less than 100yds from the front door. A short acceleration and we could have been up the steps and in through the front door. Mindful of the cctv cameras which may have been in place, we did not get out of the car but sat and enjoyed the magnificent Vanbrugh Building.

Off back to York. No hitches, except we came back through the centre of York, in the rush hour and had a good tour of the Minster etc. Eventually we arrived back at the Hotel, in time for an excellent dinner followed by a good “chat” in the lounge. What a Memorable Day Out!

Julienne Taylor

Trip to the Designer Outlet

We, that is, Margaret Bohl and I, had intended that Wednesday would be a ‘girlie’ day out to the ‘York Designer Outlet’. There was a heavy mist that morning and it was damp and overcast so Mike decided not to join the ‘walkers’ but to accompany us instead!

On reaching the centre, our first port of call was the ‘Professional Cookware Shop’. Mike was first in and much to my amazement we were purchasing a set of saucepans (not that he does much in the way of cooking –

but he is a dab hand at washing up)!

Next in line was ‘Austin Reeds’ where he took a fancy to a rather nice Viyella shirt marked down to half price. With his birthday coming up next month I decided to treat him (like most men it is difficult to know what to buy him).

Apart from stopping for lunch at McDonalds of all places! we spent the rest of the day wandering aimlessly around shops that caught our eye and looking at garments which we could not afford,

even at knock down prices. Oh how the other half live – but hey! there is no harm in looking!

Fortunately for Mike there were plenty of bench seats throughout the complex for him to sit and wait whilst we browsed around the ladies fashions. He was extremely patient, whether it was because Margaret was with us, I am not sure! I might add that I bought nothing for myself but Margaret treated herself to a rather nice wristwatch.

Barbara Bowen

The Snickets, Ginnels and Walls of York

The 1½ hour walk that became a 7 hour day out:--

We started our marathon at Micklegate Bar, with a pleasant, easy walk around the Walls, past the Railway Station and on to Lendal Bridge. Our first detour was a stroll along the riverside, crossing the river at the next bridge, and back along the other bank, filling in time. We waited at the boat landing by the bridge, to board "The River Duchess" for a Cruise on the Ouse with an excellent commentary, morning coffee on board, and even a seat "on top" in the sun. Now back to the walk, with the next diversion a visit to the City Art Gallery to view Hockney's "Trees by Watter". On to the Walls again at Botham Bar with views on to the gardens at the back of the Cathedral, and a display of yellow and bright blue spring bulbs on the banks. Another detour, down to a quiet garden with hellebores in full bloom.

This led us to a gallery and tearoom--"de Grays Court", originally the old Treasurers House.

There we had a long, leisurely lunch in the library, before returning to our route on Goodramgate. A quick look at the courtyard of Sir William's College, past the oldest house (1316) and our next detour was to the rear of this house--- Holy Trinity Church,(interesting high- sided box pews). After more narrow winding streets and "snickets and ginnels", we paused at the Shambles for shopping and a chat to others from the holiday group encountered on the way.

Other landmarks were the Roman Bath pub, Betty's Tea Rooms and Guy Fawkes' birthplace. We finally made our way down to a riverside bar for a welcome coffee before crossing Skeldergate Bridge and climbing up steep steps onto the Walls again for the final stretch back round to Micklegate Bar where we had started. A GOOD DAY OUT !

Footnote:- We found everyone in York very pleasant and helpful.

Gillian Rowe

Solomon - Music In York

As soon as I walked in the hotel on Monday my eye was caught by a poster advertising a performance of Handel's Solomon in two days' time at the Minster. I found someone else interested in going and after an early evening meal we set off, with just about enough time to get to the Minster. Luckily for us a bus came along. We bought tickets at the door and found our seats in the unique setting of the Minster.

The singers were the University of York Choir, which is 280 strong, and the orchestra was the Yorkshire Baroque Soloists. The part of Solomon was sung by Robin Blaze, whose beautiful voice I have heard on the radio but never in person. The music was wonderful, the setting sublime and the audience duly appreciative. It was an unexpected extra treat in a good week.

Pamela Ferguson

Early English music concert - 'I Fagiolini'

Nancy Lomax booked 15 places for a special Early English music concert performed by 'I Fagiolini' at The National Centre for Early Music which is based at St. Margaret's Church, York. She organised for us to have an early evening meal so we could be sped into town in two prearranged taxis in time for the performance.

The members of 'I Fagiolini' (founded in 1986 at Oxford University) covered a wide range of

Renaissance and contemporary vocal music with no instrument in sight !

Directed by Robert Hollingworth, who also writes and presents programmes for BBC Radio 3, they gave a spectacular performance in a theatrical and unique style which was a new experience for us all !

George Rogers

Technology Group

All meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at the Heald Green village hall on Outwood Road commencing at 2pm – 4 pm. (£1 per member is charged at each meeting to cover the cost of hall hire and refreshments)

Programme for 2011 – 2012 starts again in October

The talk on 1st March was titled “Precious Metals” which, by dictionary definition, are Gold, Silver and Platinum, all well enough known in the field of jewellery. There are several rarer metals in the same general category and we were given an overview of their industrial significance in a talk presented by Mr Jon Clipsham who spent a lifetime in the metals industry and now runs a consultancy on catalysts – substances which help a chemical action without themselves being changed.

The sourcing of these metals was first for discussion and, after some debate from the floor on world geography, we learned that most gold comes from South Africa, that silver is worldwide and generally associated with fault lines and that the rare metals come from Zimbabwe.

No time scale was stated but it was noted that future supplies are limited. There followed a few words about the mining and processing of the ores to extract relatively small amounts of the high-cost metals.

The precious metals are used in two ways, either included in products (platinum in optical glass) or catalysts in the production process or in the final product (car exhaust catalytic converters).

It would be impossible to reproduce a full listing from the lecture but here are a few examples of the everyday items which are dependent on this limited supply of “endangered elements” as they are now known.

In electronics, they are used in TV flat screens.

In healthcare there are dental uses, an increasing use of gold in pharmaceuticals, use in

optical glass and pacemakers, and in the superconducting magnets used in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) along with catalytic use in the production of hydrogen peroxide which is used against MRSA.

Other important areas were the production of diesel and petrol fuels, of fertilisers, of fibre-optic cables, of silicones, of semiconductors, of fibreglass, of self-cleaning irons and of post-it notes!

This is, of course, just a small indication of the current uses of precious metals and our speaker didn't speculate about the future. He did, however, give a little practical advice – for jewellery used on pierced skin avoid cheap gold-plated stuff. If the gold plate is damaged contact with the base metal can be seriously harmful to health!

Betty Mandl

5th April 2011 - Dr Alan Jacob “Superbugs”

This was the last Technology Group meeting until the Autumn. The details for the next meeting will be announced at the September meeting.

Our chairman, Ian Reid, introduced Dr Alan Jacob who has worked on the study of genetics of bacteria, both in the UK and the USA, and latterly at the University of Manchester working on the mechanisms that cause resistance to antibiotics.

He explained that the DNA in bacteria acquire genes that give them resistance to

certain antibiotics and, indeed, that some of them become resistant to several or many antibiotics, and are therefore called superbugs. Because of this resistance, they are particularly difficult to treat.

He illustrated this with details of the treatment of dysentery in Japan about 1950. This was treated with sulphonamide, with the number of patients declining steeply to begin with, then soon starting to climb again as the strain of bacteria developed resistance. The

resistance developed much more quickly than expected and similar results occurred with other antibiotics. After 4 years, some bacteria were resistant to many antibiotics, and worse, after 15 years nearly all the naturally occurring bacteria in people were resistant to some antibiotics. This was very surprisingly fast.

Dr Jacob and a colleague studied the way that genes transfer from one cell to another. As well as the coiled DNA, the cell may also have a smaller body called a

plasmid containing only one gene. Amazingly, this cell can put out a tube from the plasmid which can attach itself to another cell, pull it closer and copy the plasmid to the second cell. The process copies part of the DNA from the DNA to the plasmid and so transfers a gene from the DNA of one cell to another. The process has developed over very long periods and, since competition from other bacteria is harmful, there have already developed genes which harm other bacteria and also ones which

resist the harm. The process has been slow but they are already there. Their transfer via plasmids is much faster than by cell reproduction and is responsible for the superbugs and the speed with which they get the resistance to new drugs.

Dr Jacob answered questions afterwards. Overuse of antibiotics is the driving force behind this process, especially in animals where the drugs produce faster growth, and also in vegetables.

This produces superbugs and, although they may be

killed off by cooking, they are also spread by deficient hygiene and the bacterial soup that we live in can easily be infected with them and we are in trouble if they get to the parts of us that matter for that particular bug.

The majority of the antibiotics arose in soil-living bacteria. Some of the drugs are now synthesised to try to avoid such bacteria but the resistance to them still arises from the same plasmid process and still fairly quickly. Artificial vaccines may avoid this.

Betty Mandl

Family & Social History Group

The Group has decided on a new approach following the start of the new season and we have changed the name to more correctly reflect the topics we hope to cover in the coming months. Unless otherwise stated, we will continue to meet on the afternoon of the last Friday of each month, at the Cheadle Hulme Quaker Meeting House on Station Road.

The friendly canine neighbour

An older, tired-looking dog wandered into my yard.

I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me, I gave him a few pats on his head. He then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep. An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out.



The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued off and on for several weeks.

Curious I pinned a note to his collar: 'I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap.'

The next day he arrived for his nap, with a different note pinned to his collar:

'He lives in a home with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3 - he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?'

Note: Committee, Group and all other contact details omitted from these pages can be found in the printed edition of this Newsletter