



Newsletter October 2008

Editor: Philip Talmage, 33 Wickham Avenue, Croydon CR0 8TZ tel: 020 8656 1886 email: philip_talmage@bigfoot.com

Secretary's Notes

Maggie Mahoney

First of all I would like to welcome any new members to the Croydon area Fellowship group and apologise to any who have not received any communication from us.

It has recently come to my attention that our database records may not be as complete and up to date as they should be. Some information does filter through from the membership but in the main we are reliant on the Company for information. They advise us by post of new members joining our area of the Fellowship, details of members who have moved into or out of our area and of course of members who have sadly passed away.

One problem we all know about is that the post does not always arrive. There is also the chain of events effect whereby the member notifies Pensions Dept. of any changes, Pensions Dept. in turn notify HO Fellowship and they pass the information by snail mail to the relevant area committee. If one link in the chain fails the information does not reach our database.

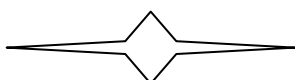
I have obtained a list of the 743 members HO have in our area and Alan and I are comparing it with the 761 members on our database. We both wish it was as easy as finding 18 members who have moved out of our area but alas it is not.

Please bear with us; we will get there in the end!

We need to update our records, and to this end we enclose a questionnaire which we would like everyone to return. It lists a number of events that are as yet only possibilities. If you think that any of them might be of interest, do put a tick against them.

If you are a member of our group but do not receive any invitations to events do please return the questionnaire, and I will arrange for you to be added to the invitation lists. In addition we have regular informal coffee mornings where you just turn up and receive a warm welcome. Not to forget the Annual General Meeting with a buffet lunch beforehand.

If you know of any Aviva pensioners who would like to join the Fellowship and partake in our activities please let them know all they have to do is contact HO Fellowship in Perth and complete an application form. Unfortunately, the area committees are not able to retain a supply of application forms.



Finding your Missing Links

Chris House

Our Fellowship Committee has been looking for some time for new events to interest our wider membership. We have recently, for example, held a Fish & Chip Supper which was successfully 'trialled' for 'working age' local members as an evening event.

We have now received an offer of an illustrated talk on genealogy.

Those 'maturer' members, who find time to watch daytime TV, may have seen 'Heir Hunters' where the nearest relatives of former much wealthier ones are traced often for their financial benefit.

Sadly we cannot offer a similar financial benefit, apart from refreshments, but we believe a significant number may be interested in learning how to trace the missing links in their own family history. In essence the illustrated talk will cover how to start, the wide range of information sources and tips on how to construct your family tree. Experienced genealogy members will also have an opportunity to learn of possible new sources and share experiences about their own researches. We estimate the talk will last in the region of 45 minutes plus questions followed by refreshments.

Luckily with modern technology (and possibly the use of your grandchildren's computer) information can now be obtained from the armchair instead of trekking to the local and often isolated Parish records as in the past.

The illustrated talk will be given by Ray Bishop who is a qualified researcher with 25 years experience. We do not propose to charge. However so we can take up this generous offer we need to know NOW.

If interested in coming to the talk, just put a tick in the enclosed questionnaire against **Lecture on how to trace your ancestry**, and return it to Maggie.

Did you know...

Over 79s can get free passports

If you're British and born on or before 2 September 1929 you can apply for a free standard 32-page ten-year passport. If you have applied for a passport since 19 May 2004 and you're eligible for a free passport, you can apply for a refund of the standard fee.

The Identity and Passport Service can provide information about your free passport or applying for a refund on the Passport Adviceline 0870 521 0410, 24 hours a day.

Teaching them a lesson

Gordon Morse

I blame Marden Lodge School. To be more precise, I blame the newly arrived Head Teacher of Marden Lodge School in Caterham, who saw the staff at the business next door as a potential pool of talent to help develop the literacy skills of the children under his charge. Unfortunately, he obviously didn't get much response from the Ann Summers head office, so he cast his net a little wider and contacted the CU IT department, a bit further down the road in Whyteleafe.

Six of us answered his call, and I must confess I expected I would be the only man amongst the six. On the contrary, there was only one woman initially, although more joined us later, and in September 2000, just over a year before the Whyteleafe site closed for good, we started going to the school one lunchtime a week to listen to some of the less able children read. They obviously benefited from our help and we certainly enjoyed it as we got to know the children and their ways.

For most of the CU staff this came to an end when the Whyteleafe site closed but a couple of us carried on, the other one becoming a Teaching Assistant at the school before getting a similar position at a school nearer to his home. I carried on working voluntarily (in fact, I don't think of it as work as I derive so much pleasure from it!) and expanded my time at the school to two mornings a week listening to children reading – all the class now, not just the ones who are struggling – plus one afternoon a week in the computer suite.

The time in the computer suite is spent with Year 1 and Year 2 children, and as they are used to having female teachers, a number of them call me "Miss" before dragging me across the room to help solve their problem. At least, I think that's the reason!

So what do I blame the school for? Well, I think working with the children awakened a dormant love for learning and the English language, and this led me to volunteering to work, as a 'learning assistant', in literacy classes for adults run by the local education authority.

Following on from this, I did a couple of courses with the Open University, one of which, an English language course, really whetted my appetite further, and I then applied to become a literacy tutor. I was accepted, and what do you know? I love it!

I had never seen myself in this sort of job. I once attended a course at CU where the comment was made that most people, given the choice between public speaking and dying, would prefer death, and I was definitely in sympathy with this view. No one could ever accuse me of being an extrovert, so wasn't the prospect of standing in front of a group of people a daunting one?

Well, yes it was, but the truth is that most of a teacher's role is not about standing up and talking to the class. It may have been in our days at school, where I can remember some of the teachers, effectively, lecturing for lesson after lesson, but that doesn't happen nowadays – at least not in my classes! A lot of time is spent monitoring the work of individuals and encouraging the class to work in pairs or groups, and lessons develop from what the class want to learn as much as what the teacher wants to teach them.

It is also surprising what you can use in literacy lessons. Amongst other things, I have got students to read poems by

Pam Ayres (and by some chap called Shakespeare) but my favourite lesson, so far, is the one when I got the class to analyse how English is used by reading crisp packets!

Of course, teaching is hard work, but more than anything I find teaching adults is fun. It is rewarding when the light suddenly goes on in a student's head and they grasp a point that had previously made no sense to them, and when they pass their exams.

I have also learned quite a lot about the English language in the course of my teaching – as someone who has, intuitively, always been pretty good at spelling I was surprised to learn that there are rules to be followed; I thought spelling in English was simply arbitrary. My students come from various backgrounds and I have learned a great deal from them as well.

Did you know, for example, that the Polish language does not contain 'articles' ('a', 'an', and 'the')? You may not find that fact fascinating, but I do, and it became quite a challenge trying to explain the concept of articles, and when to use them, to one of my students from Poland. The same is true of at least some of the languages from the Indian sub-continent.

Although I enjoy teaching, and there are obviously not the same discipline problems with adults as with teenagers, teaching is not all sweetness and light. My very first class was cancelled after just three weeks because only two students ever turned up – in reality, the class should never have started as there were just four students enrolled to begin with – and it can be disheartening when students drop out without giving any reason. This is doubly frustrating when, as has happened on more than one occasion, they drop out just after I have spent quite a lot of time preparing individual work for them.

It can also be discouraging when students don't remember something that was taught, and they apparently understood, in a previous lesson. Perhaps the most nerve-wracking experience as a teacher, however, is being observed.

This can happen as a routine, annual, thing or it can be part of a formal inspection, the adult education equivalent of the OFSTED inspections that schools undergo. I have also been observed as part of teacher training courses I have taken, and at one point I was observed four times in just nine lessons! It can be a bit of an ordeal being observed, but you get used to it, and as a part-time teacher who does it largely for enjoyment, I don't feel my career is on the line as much as I would if I were doing it for a living.

The pluses of teaching adults far outweigh the minuses, however. The financial rewards are not huge, and lesson preparation and marking can be very time-consuming, but if you have some sort of skill – art, playing a musical instrument, a foreign language, numeracy, or even literacy – why not contact your local authority and explore the possibility of teaching adults? I can (almost) guarantee that you will enjoy it!

To come full circle, I still volunteer at Marden Lodge on top of my teaching duties. Retired people often say they wonder how they ever found the time to work full-time, and that is certainly so in my case!



House for rental in the beautiful Dordogne valley

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The house overlooks a picturesque 18 hole golf course, in a secluded woodland setting yet only minutes from the market town of Souillac and the famous medieval villages of Sarlat and Rocamadour. More details and pictures are on the Fellowship website, or see www.lesorchidees.co.uk.

Special rental rates for Aviva pensioners range from £350 per week (low season) for up to six people. To book at these rates, or for further information, please contact

Mike Ridding:
Tel. 020 8977 1053
fax 020 8943 2365
mikeridding@blueyonder.co.uk

WANTED LARGE GARAGE TO RENT



**I am looking for a
garage to rent for my
Bentley Mulsanne.**

**She is 17½ft long and 6½ft
wide, so she needs a larger
than standard sized garage.**

**She will spend most of her
time in the garage but I
would require access 7 days
per week.**

**If you have a garage to
rent, please phone me on:
020 8688 5575**

Good rent paid

Committee

Chairman: John Ward (will retire at AGM)

12 Shaw Crescent, Sanderstead,
Surrey CR2 9JA. Tel 020 8657 3642
johnward512@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Chris House

141 Valley Road, Kenley, Surrey
CR8 5BZ. Tel 020 8763 0890
housec@avivafellowship.force9.co.uk

Secretary: Maggie Mahoney

49 Elm Park Gardens, South
Croydon CR2 8RW.
Tel 020 8651 5024
mahoney@avivafellowship.force9.co.uk

Mrs Judy Dumbrill

7 Macaulay Rd, Caterham Surrey,
CR3 5HR. Tel 01883 344659
dj.dumbrill@ntlworld.com

Miss Patricia Pegg

57 Thornton Crescent, Old
Coulsdon, CR5 1LG. Tel
01737 552234

Miss Joan Price

58 Limpsfield Road, Sanderstead,
Surrey CR2 9EB. Tel 020 8651 0517

Philip Talmage (will resign at AGM)

33 Wickham Avenue, Shirley,
Croydon
CR0 8TZ. Tel 020 8656 1886
philip_talmage@bigfoot.com

Web correspondent

Alan Emmins

122 Norfolk Avenue, Sanderstead
CR2 8BS
Tel 020 8651 4079
aemmins@f2s.com

Event organisers

David Broom

12 Loxford Way, Caterham
CR3 6BX.
Tel 01883 345231
david_broom@hotmail.com

Dave and Ann Newland

93 Marlpit Lane, Coulsdon CR5
2HH. Tel 01737551048
dave.and.ann@classicfm.net

Roger Smith

58 Havelock Road, Croydon
CR0 6QP.
Tel 020 8656 2951

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My name is Vivienne:

020 8651 0467

references available



Tax returns

Still having to complete tax returns? Retired early and still have a beneficial loan or started a small business? Have rental income? We can help remove the worry of tax returns. We provide tax return completion and accounts where necessary at a cost effective price so you do not have the worry in your retirement. We visit you when convenient.

A number of you may remember me from your CU, CGU, Aviva days where I was Head of Tax (Employee Taxes). I also produced the annual pensioners guide to tax which stopped with Aviva. I understand Aviva pensioners being one myself, having retired early. Please contact:

Chris Garrett, CG Associates
Tel: 01737 213497

chrisgarrett@cg-a.co.uk
Fax: 0870 127 6535

Month	Date	Organiser	Event	Venue	Time
Oct	Tue 7	MM	Coffee morning † <i>brought forward 1 week</i>	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Oct	Mon 13	JD PP	Easy 3-mile walk † Lunch (<i>booking required</i>)	Barley Mow, Tandridge	11:00 13:00
Oct	Tue 21	MM	Fish 'n Chip Supper	McDermott's, Forestdale Centre, off Featherbed Lane, Addington, CR0 9AS	19:00 for 19:30
Nov	Tue 11	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Nov	Thu 20	PT	West Wickham Operatic Society <i>Me and My Girl</i>	Churchill Theatre, Bromley	14:30
Nov	Wed 26	MM	Coffee morning †	Knights Garden Centre, Woldingham	10:30
Nov	Thu 27	PT	Croydon Stagers <i>Anything Goes</i>	Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon	15:00
Dec	Wed 3	PP	Christmas luncheon	Aerodrome Hotel, Purley Way	12:00 for 13:00
Dec	Tue 9	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
2009					
Jan	Tue 13	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Feb	Wed 4	PP	Lunch	Good Companions, Hamsey Green	12:15 for 12:45
Feb	Tue 10	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Feb	Thu 26	MM	Buffet lunch (<i>booking required</i>) AGM †	Fairfield Room, Fairfield Halls, Croydon	13:00 14:00
Feb	Wed 25	MM	Coffee morning †	Knights Garden Centre, Woldingham	10:30
Mar	Tue 10	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Apr	TBA	JD	* guided London walk	TBA - possibly Kensington	TBA
Apr	Tue 14	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
May	TBA	??	* visit to Wetland Centre	Barnes	TBA
May	Tue 12	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
May	Thu 21	PT	West Wickham Operatic Society <i>The Producers</i>	Churchill Theatre, Bromley	14:30
May	Wed 27	MM	Coffee morning †	Knights Garden Centre, Woldingham	10:30
Jun	TBA	JP	* Visit to gardens	Cherkley Court, near Leatherhead	TBA
Jun	Tue 9	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Jul	TBA	Dave & Ann	* Country walk	TBA - maybe Hogsmill Valley, near Ewell	TBA
Jul	Tue 14	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Jul	Thu 30	MM	Coffee morning †	Chartwell	10:30
Aug	TBA	??	* Visit to house & gardens	Losely Park, Guildford	TBA
Aug	Tue 11	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Aug	Wed 26	MM	Coffee morning †	Knights Garden Centre, Woldingham	10:30
Sep	Tue 8	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Oct	Tue 13	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Nov	Tue 10	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30
Nov	Wed 25	MM	Coffee morning †	Knights Garden Centre, Woldingham	10:30
Dec	Tue 8	MM	Coffee morning †	White Hart, Brasted	10:30

NOTES:

For organisers' contact details, see list of committee members and other event organisers

† No booking is required for events with the † symbol

* Dates and /or times of starred events are liable to alteration /cancellation