

Springtime

and LOVE is in the AIR

U3A News

Review
Spring 2009





East Berwickshire Branch
Spring Newsletter 2009

FROM THE CHAIR

In the last two years, John and I have managed to produce the newsletter/magazine in time to go out with the calling notice of the AGM but this year we have not managed to do so. You should by now have had the draft minutes of last year's AGM and the agenda with the attached nomination slip and we hope that some of you will be volunteering to serve on the committee. Although standing down from being chairman, I shall continue to help John to produce our thrice-yearly magazines (as we have now agreed to call the publication) assuming that you, the membership, wish us to continue doing so. My thanks to John for his artistry, to all who have contributed, and to Fantasy Prints.

As I have remarked before, we are lucky to have as many interesting groups as we do but, if you think of some new ones we could add or (even better) something you would be prepared to take on yourself, please contact a member of the committee. In order to give Val Clarke a well-earned sabbatical, the Theatre Group will perhaps need to share out the organisation of the Group in the coming session. There

are undoubtedly other group leaders who would welcome the offer of helping hands. The Lunch group, should the numbers stay as large as they have become or grow any larger, may be split into two groups so that smaller venues can be visited. As a member myself, I can say it's always been good fun but I remember one venue in particular where a shoehorn would have helped 'mine host.' to fit in the thirty plus members out for lunch that day.

Ian is still fighting the battle to have the continuing use of the High School Sports Hall for next session for badminton. One of the unintended consequences of PFI and our AMEY-owned new High School is that day-time use of the building is regarded by them as for pupils only and they appear, so far, to be unwilling to let the Head Teacher continue previous arrangements. Community Schools seem to be a thing of the past in the Scottish Borders Region although in other Regions they are continuing to work well.

We have been approached by a firm based in the North of England, Collette Travel, which organises escorted tours worldwide for groups of ten or more (including some U3As). Unfortunately our programme of Open Meetings had already been made up before the request to arrange for a representative to speak to us was made. If anyone is interested to find out more, please contact a member of the committee.

I really have enjoyed the last three years which have

passed far too quickly. Best wishes to you all and to next year's committee. [Louise Goldsack](#)

ICELAND IN SEPTEMBER

On the way to Iceland by ship last summer we stopped off for a short visit to the Faroe Islands. By the way, the locals call themselves Far – oh – ese, not Fair-oh-ese as we had been calling them. It is a tiny place and obviously very parochial. This did not stop our hosts telling us about their neighbours in Iceland. “We are all afraid they have bitten off more than they can chew” was the comment.

At this point I knew next to nothing about Iceland and what was happening there. The next day, however, we landed in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, and took a day's tour. It is a stunning place, light, clean and very modern. Our guide on this occasion was a pretty young woman who told us she had just returned to Iceland with her husband and children having spent many years in the US. Obviously full of pride for her country, she told us that life was very very good. “There is next to no pollution and we have almost free energy by harnessing the power of the many geysers that shoot up from underground volcanoes”.

The reason for the “good life” they were enjoying was, she told us, all due to the three giant banks – each housed in an entirely inappropriate skyscraper – that had brought huge

prosperity to the island.

When we returned home I asked an accountant friend about these three banks. “They give ten percent interest”, he told me. “I wouldn't touch them with a bargepole.....”

We all know what happened in October. Collapse of banks. Collapse of Iceland. But what really makes me angry is to learn that in March 2009, six months prior to our visit, the Prime Minister of Iceland had apparently visited Gordon Brown to tell him that the banks were in trouble.

We dread to think what life is like in Iceland now, and our hearts bleed for those brave young people who had given up their good jobs in America to make a new life in their native country. And what about Scottish Borders Council who put ten million pounds into an account a qualified accountant “wouldn't touch with a bargepole”?

[Anon](#)

ALLOTMENTS

Rachel Hammond, who came to Eyemouth a year ago, is keen to have an allotment. She has been in touch with Councillor Michael Cook and found out that land could be made available if a community group could be formed. Any one interested in having an allotment and becoming part of such a group is asked to get in touch with Rachel on telephone number 018907 51083.



WINNING A TRIP TO THE BEIJING OLYMPIC GAMES & THE LAND OF SMILES

One Monday morning in June, I visited my friend Alison Smith in Galashiels for lunch. I sensed an air of excitement as we chatted and caught up with each other's news. I was right. "Now", she said, "I have had a strange phone call from the Visa people to say I have won a holiday worth £8000 to the Olympics and I can take a friend". So I was to be the friend. In the beginning, we thought it was a scam, but Alison had used her Nationwide Debit card in Australia, hence winning a worldwide computer competition.

Wheels were set in motion and arrangements went ahead, during the next six weeks. A Chinese visa was obtained in Edinburgh but had to be collected in person. We were to visit the Olympics, The Great Wall and The Terracotta Army in Xian and finish in Shanghai. We were to stay in five star hotels with all meals, tips, flights and entertainment and the services

of a guide included.

Our eight day trip started from Edinburgh on 13th Aug, quite strange travelling without a ticket, but we are in the 21st century so E-ticket is the way. I was not impressed by terminal 5 but luck was on our side and our luggage did arrive at Beijing via Hong

Kong, so now our Visa experience began.

There were winners from all over the world and we were welcomed by Visa employees who escorted us to our hotel in Beijing's financial district. Visa had been designated a portion of the hotel for us and another 16 lucky winners from the UK. We were all entertained; there was food at all times, we had meetings with Olympic competitors and evening entertainment. Nothing had been overlooked. Our room was sumptuous. The bathroom was marble and mirror from floor to ceiling, which at times did not always work in our favour!

At 8 30am the coach transported us to the Olympic Village. Traffic lanes were specially marked to ensure a quick transit, security was very tight and university students were now the guides ensuring everyone was in the correct block and seat in the Birds Nest stadium,. Most impressive! Everything worked with wonderful precision. On the first day we

saw the earlier heats of the athletics and on the second day we were lucky enough to see Hussein Bolt, the fastest man on earth (complete with gold running shoes) win his gold medal. Delicious meals were taken in the hospitality tent in the village which was full of atmosphere and excitement.

We ventured forth ourselves to see the pearl market with beautiful things made with the pearls, even a pagoda. From here we passed the Temple of Heaven then the City Gates arriving at Tiananmen Square just at the moment the illuminations were switched on making an unforgettable sight.

Another early morning, and we were off by coach to The Great Wall. We had perfect weather. Thank goodness the smog had cleared for us. I was interested to hear that to help with the pollution problem, cars with odd and even numbers had to stay out of the city on alternate days. We ascended the wall by cable car and walked a fair distance. In places it is quite rough and steep, with vendors along the way selling drinks and fruit etc. Just for fun we descended on a bobsleigh which we had to control with a joy stick acting as the brake. I can say I was thankful to reach the bottom but it was yet another experience. It is quite hard to describe the scale of the Great Wall, it has to be seen to be believed.

Our time in Xian was to be less than 24 hours so it was a 5.30am departure. On arrival our guide met us with a full programme, the highlight being, the site of the Terracotta

Army. Again, this really has to be seen to understand the size of the pits. The soldiers and horses are life size with different facial expressions. They have had to be repaired and reinstated in their positions, which has been painstaking work, and it is an ongoing project for future generations. Since last there in 1996, the whole site had been enlarged and we were transported in buggies within the complex. Xian of course has become a rich city as a result of the humble farmer's discovery. From here we were taken to a newly reconstructed park, which has been modelled on the old traditional style with restaurants, theatre and lakes creating an idyllic scene. Here we enjoyed a beautiful show depicting life in China through the centuries, with wonderful costumes, sound and lighting. To complete our day, we were served a Chinese banquet of many courses, some familiar but some unusual tastes. Needless to say our hotel was very welcoming at the end of a memorable day.

After a cancelled flight, we arrived at Shanghai a little late. Our guide here was young, vibrant and very proud to be a citizen of Shanghai, China's most cosmopolitan city. One can see immediately the influence of old colonial times with the Bund taking up most of the waterfront. This looks across to the financial district with some of the tallest buildings in the world. Until last year our hotel, the Grand Hyatt, was in the

tallest building, but no more as the surrounding buildings have overtaken it. However, for me a hotel room on the 83rd floor was quite high enough. Also, the bar named the “Clouds” was on the 97th floor, so we really were on a high!

Our time here was equally busy and after lunch at a very modern restaurant, a city tour followed. Our guide showed us the French quarter, museums, Nanjing Rd, and many historical buildings. It certainly is an exciting city. It was now time to return to our hotel. We had to use three lifts to arrive at our room, from where the view was spectacular, but not for the faint-hearted. Only time for a quick change before dinner. This restaurant was an old typical Chinese restaurant, and was like stepping back in time as there was a main restaurant off which was a series of small rooms popular with private parties. The food was delicious but I wasn't so sure about a whole fish that kept looking at me; it had the biggest mouth I had ever seen. I left it for my companions!

Next day we were taken to Suzhou (known as the Venice of the east and very popular with artists). A series of gardens now make up a World Heritage Site. We were lucky enough to visit



the Humble Administrator's Garden which is a most tranquil place with lotus-filled lakes and lovely architecture. Lunch followed at the Sheraton. No visit to Suzhou is complete without visiting a silk

factory, for which this city is famous. This of course suited the ladies as we were ushered into the shop for a little retail therapy! Our tour concluded with a sail on the canals, showing us how the city has changed in recent years, Suzhou is now one of China's most prosperous cities.

It was now time to return to Shanghai for dinner at a most unusual restaurant. We were led through a courtyard and upstairs to a small room where there was a black transparent curtain behind which a band of typical Chinese musicians entertained us. The food was special and cooked to perfection. Even the washbasin in the ladies' loo was shaped like a pink china lotus flower! We did not investigate the gents'! I did say Shanghai is cosmopolitan.

Our last day here was possibly the highlight. Firstly we ascended the TV tower giving us spectacular views of the city. After that, we had tea in a tea house on the Bund, before moving on to YuYuan garden and lunch at the same restaurant where the Queen dined on her visit here. After a little shopping, a few of us



with energy left finished the afternoon at a museum. The top floor housed a scale model of the city as it will be for the next EXPO. Fantastic!

Our holiday ended with a party and meal at M on the Bund giving us super views of the city at night. Visa had done us proud. Thank goodness it happened before the Credit Crunch!

[Helen Hardwick](#)

THE LUNCH CLUB

As you might guess, our February meeting was cancelled because of an unusually heavy fall of snow. This also spoiled plans for arranging a meeting in March and perhaps, because these things go in threes, for the first time ever we have had to change our venue for the April meeting to The Collingwood Hotel, Cornhill. There will be a meeting in May to be held at the Ship Inn and that will be the last official meeting until next session. There is nothing to stop some of the group making their own arrangements during the holiday period, perhaps by agreeing to meet up on the second Thursday of the month at Eyemouth Golf club, or wherever.

We have become a victim of our own success as our numbers now exceed the twenty-two which can be accommodated in most venues. That implies that we shall need more than one group and extra volunteers to organise things. Anyone willing to come forward is asked to get in touch with

a member of the present committee or myself ASAP so that we can have things in place by the enrolment date on 9th September 2009.

[Helen Grahame](#)

U3A IN SCOTLAND

Our Education and Development Contact Officer, Robina Hutton, has been very busy. New U3As have been set up this session in East Kilbride, East Renfrewshire, Oban, Pitlochry, Wigtown, Uists/Benbecula, Coll, Cupar (Fife) and Penicuik. This is what our contributions to the Third Age Trust and to U3A in Scotland help to finance.

Our AGM will take place on Saturday 6th June at 10.30 am in St Peter's Church Hall, Luton Place, Edinburgh. Please get in touch with me if you would like to attend so that we can arrange to share transport.

In September the Third Age Trust is holding its AGM at Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh, from 3rd - 5th September 2009. Members are entitled to enrol for the event as residents or to attend on a daily basis which, of course, would reduce their costs. Volunteers are also being sought to act as ushers and for other as yet unspecified activities. Anyone who is interested should let me have their names ASAP. Please phone 01890781703.

[Ian Goldsack](#)

Would you buy a second-hand car from this woman?



WE ARE ALL PREDICTABLY IRRATIONAL

“ Reality is a persistent illusion”

Albert Einstein

I think there is only one way to be rational and millions of different ways not to be...at this stage of our evolution as human beings we should be able to detect certain traps built by ourselves to confuse us. Take for example free gifts, free CD's inserted in newspapers, “Buy one and get one free” offers, and so on. Shouldn't we stop and think what are we doing? And why are we doing it? Are we doing this because of our instinct for an opportunity? Is instinct related to intuition? Is intuition irrational? Well, apparently the latest studies effected in the Max Plank Institute in Berlin say that intuition is not irrational.

Now we know that it is much better to make a decision based on only one reason than base our choice on more than one reasonable reason but we make decisions all the time!

Not so long ago, science would tell us to make logical and reasonable decisions based on the comparative terms and the cost benefits of each choice. Are you prepared to know what the German scientists are saying now? Well, they say that “the best decisions are completely instinctive, almost visceral decisions” coming straight from our guts. Why is that? Well, because we are the lucky mammals with big brains that work faster than a cutting edge computer.

So what seems at first sight “irrational” is extremely rational because the brain compares in nanoseconds all the information we have stored concerning the subject/matter/issue/person we have to decide about.

In a world with vast amounts of information, ie the world in which we live today, where the same information can be distorted by media, governments or marketing companies...in other words, in a world where the information is unstable we have to follow our own INTUITION. Follow our instinct. This sounds primeval, but it is not. The brain has been shaped through the millennia for this purpose and this is scientifically studied by Heuristics and by Cognitive Psychology. Heuristics is the study of the use of experience and

practical efforts to find answers to questions or to improve performance.

But what is INTUITION? It is “the power to know how something happens, or will happen, without reasoning”, according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Therefore, when we follow our intuition, we are following the rules, paths and forms created and fed into our brain over millions of years.

The most important decisions are made purely based on our instincts. For example, when we fall in love we should make a list of all the possibilities, all the people available, all the characteristics we want in that person, and even read statistics about being successful or not in that specific matter...nevertheless, we fall in love based on our intuitions and non-conscious thinking based on basic features such as symmetrical/asymmetrical face, body, shape in general. We learn from childhood based on intuitions, words then structures, then phrases.

In one field however our intuition can be foolish; that is regarding publicity and marketing. This is because we follow paths that are falsely inserted in our brain as intuitions purely because they are interminably reiterated in the media. Let's go back to the example of free gifts. We know now that something gratis gives us an irrational satisfaction linked to the fear of losing. My instinct says “there is nothing to lose” therefore

I can get it with no risk. Our brain is working all the time and calculating all the time without us even noticing. We measure and think how far, how high, how low, how close is everything when we walk. We try to figure out if something is concave or convex; when we grab an object as we think at the same time how much it weighs. There is a decision behind every action. Isn't it interesting? - Till next time.

You can go to a link and watch a lecture about this subject by Prof. Dan Ariely, a Conduct Economist from MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

[Maria Chester](#)

Maria leads the Philosophical Coffee every first Thursday of the month at the Fishermen's Mission in Eyemouth.

FISHING ON THE WHITEADDER LAST SUMMER

Fishing on the Whiteadder last summer was a first for me. Being a relatively new flyfisher I was delighted to catch three brown trout. Using skills passed on to me by Ted Wise from Whinney Lodge above Coldingham, I cast the fly in the right way and, lo and behold, they fell for it! These little browns are for sport rather than for the table and I took great care in releasing them off the hook whilst they were still in the water. The rules of the river are to be respected.

One beautiful morning I was relaxing beside the river at Ninewells and my gaze suddenly alighted on an iridescent

object moving at top speed up the river towards me. For a split second I couldn't make it out but as it approached I realised it was a kingfisher. I sighed with pleasure and actually succumbed to emotion. In moments like these one is reminded of the days when a sight of such magnificence was often witnessed along the rivers of our youth. Now, however, they are seldom seen, or maybe not so often.

I decided one autumn afternoon, when the day was slowly coming to a close, to try my luck on the Tweed near Norham Bridge. The river life was settling down for the night. Pheasants creaked and rustled in the bracken. I could hear the dry sticks cracking as the roe deer moved through the undergrowth near the bank. The river was in full flood and the paths were wet and slippery after the rain. I carry my rod ready for casting and this enables me to move along the river casting whenever I feel the need. Experienced fishermen tell me to move along the river at intervals spending around twenty minutes in each spot. Once the river has been disturbed it is unlikely to yield any fish. As I cast from my first position, I watched the fly drifting with the current into the bank. My gaze followed the line of the bank and there a foot in front of me was a salmon, its silver body weaving in the rushes. I had such a fright and didn't know what to do. I wasn't out to catch such a big fish (it must have been at least three pounds 'honestly'). I looked at it for a while and then it

turned and looked me straight in the eye and slowly swam to the middle of the river. What a fantastic sight that was.

It would be good to share experiences like this with others interested in the sport. I shall be fishing on the Whiteadder this season and hope some of you will join me. Maybe some of you have little or no experience; maybe there are others among us who have a vast amount of knowledge to share. If you are interested, please contact me on 018907 81622 and we'll see if we can catch a brownie or two. Tight line !

[Maureen McLinden](#)

GOING TO THE LOO JAPANESE STYLE

Many are designed so that the lid lifts as one opens the door and closes as one leaves. Fragrant air fresheners are switched on likewise, and the room is, of course, air conditioned.

In winter the loo seat is covered in a modern fur fabric and can be heated by pressing a button giving just the amount of warmth one requires. On completion, one presses another button for a spray of warm water, followed by a jet of warm air. Loo paper is not required.

Finally, one washes one's hands in a small basin at the side, and the used water then flushes the toilet. No water is wasted!

In case one wishes to tarry a while, a radio is provided. Some of these turn on automatically as one enters the room.

All in all, an interesting experience!

Anon

More tell-tail stories about foreign inconveniencs to me please ! Ed

THE NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

The National Blood Transfusion Service is a vital part of the National Health Service which has saved many lives over the years. This service depends on volunteer donors. Last year Scotland had 30,000 fewer blood donors than 10 years ago. This represents a drop of 14% - from 208,000 in 1998 to just 179,000 donors in 2008. The reasons for this reduction in numbers are many and varied – and may include factors such as an ageing population, drug addiction (picking up hepatitis from dirty needles), sex tourism, foreign travel (where people may come in contact with diseases of warm climates such as malaria, etc).

As from the 1st January 2009, donors over 70 years old can now donate blood if they have given it within the previous two years. New measures have also been put in place to allow certain donors on medication for high blood pressure and diabetes to give blood also. The records of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service show that up to 5,000 extra donors may now be able to give blood again as a result of these changes.

Half a litre (500 ml) of blood is given in every donation. A premature baby may need up to 50 donations of 3 teaspoonfuls (15 ml) in order to survive. Major operations such as heart surgery may require many litres of blood. The death rate of our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan would be much higher but for blood donors.

A 35-year old man from Edinburgh has suffered from severe anaemia from childhood. He requires blood transfusions every 3 weeks or so, and owes his life to 1500 donors so far. Forty-six donors helped to save the life of one man who was seriously injured in a road accident. He has now recovered and is now serving with the British Army in Afghanistan. Many leukaemia sufferers have had their lives prolonged by transfusions of blood.

Giving blood not only benefits the recipient; it also benefits the donor in various ways such as health checks which may give warning of illness. One can meet interesting people, such as harbourmasters, fishermen or students when having a coffee afterwards. In my experience, I frequently feel physically well after giving blood.

Small communities such as Eyemouth or Duns give the National Blood Transfusion service a great deal of support. Business, industry and the military also play their part in providing willing volunteers. The present recession may cause a reduction in donors, wherever firms downsize. The churches

and organisations such as The University of the Third Age also give good support through publicity and encouragement. It would be easy for us in this area to take a fatalistic attitude and not bother giving blood or encourage others, as we have an ageing population, but the new measures taken to increase the number of blood donors may allow some more of us to help save lives.

(Adapted from an article which first appeared in the St Ebba's Church magazine).

TEACHING GRANDMOTHER HOW TO PEEL EGGS

Frustrated by trying to peel boiled eggs, I had recourse to the internet and discovered what everyone (except me) knows about how to do this little job efficiently and effectively. The web site is <http://www.wikihow.com/Peel-an-Egg> and it gives a practical demonstration of how to tap the ends of the egg and remove a small portion of shell from each end, then, gripping the egg tightly in one hand, blow vigorously into one end and the egg will emerge shell-less and skin-less from the other. Best to cool the egg quickly under the cold tap first. It took me less than 15 seconds to do one egg by this method and so if you have to peel a lot of hard boiled eggs in a hurry, I commend this method - 240 in an hour - not bad

going! But of course you knew about this all the time!

Fenton Robb

PS Can anyone please advise how to open a shrink-wrapped pack of cheese without using a sharp weapon or breaking a tooth or a fingernail ?

A boiled egg is HARD to BEAT - Boom-boom !

HEEL FOR HEEL AND TOE FOR TOE

'Hello, Greetings, Guid tae ken ye': these are my words and thoughts to you all for 2009 even if a little belated. These are also the names of some of the dances we have enjoyed at the ceilidh classes. We all have our own favourites but whatever the dances, we have not only enjoyed the 'leapin and loupin ' but also one another's company. Despite the colds and 'flu going round, the attendance has been very good which proves my point. The same can be said for the Scottish Country Dancing class where we have been able to make up at least two sets every week. With a little perseverance and a great deal of hilarity, we have managed to accomplish each of the dances we have tackled, even 'though some have been quite complicated. Responding to the Comic Relief TV advert calling on us 'to do something funny for money' we were able to contribute £67.00 to the cause.

My thanks to all who helped through the session with chairs, music, the register etc.. Enjoy your break until we meet again at the enrolment on 9th September 2009.

Margaret McGovern

FUTURE GLORIES ?

In mid-March, a few of us were having a bite to eat in the Fisherman's Mission after one of Maria's Pre-Columbian History talks. Thanks to her wonderful slides, we had been wandering round Machu Picchu and learning how the town was divided into different sections and how people had lived there. Our talk turned to other impressive places much nearer home. It seemed that Maria had not visited Culross or Falkland in Fife, both well worth visiting and revisiting as those of you who know them will agree. Stella Quarry suggested that we should make day visits in May or June, those going sharing cars or hiring a mini-bus and taking picnics or lunching out if preferred. The further suggestion was made that this could develop into monthly gallery or museum visiting in the winter months. At that point the 'meeting' adjourned. And here we have the beginning of a new group.

Have any more of our newer members any suggestions for new activities ?

LSG

PAST GLORIES

Many years ago when I was teaching in Mexico, one of my students told me he was a Maya. He had won a scholarship to study engineering in Mexico City, the only Maya to have done so for years. In his town in southern Mexico, his family lived in the poorest part and was looked down on by the rich descendants of the Spanish Conquistadores as a "native". He was astonished, therefore, when he reached the capital to find that, when he said he was a Maya, he was treated with real respect as a member of a once great civilization like ancient Egypt.

I was reminded of our meeting by a recent article by Jared Diamond "Collapse: How Societies Chose to Fail or Succeed". He wrote particularly of the Mayan civilization which disappeared only a hundred and fifty years or so after its greatest period. It was not conquered by a greater power – there was none. Diamond writes that this very clever and advanced society was undone by its own success. Its political elites failed to resolve its economic problems and its whole civilization collapsed. Today its great temples, palaces, pyramids and plazas are still there but silent and abandoned, given up to the jungle.

David Webster in his "Fall of the Ancient Maya" wrote "people are always surprised when things collapse just when they seem most successful". Like the Maya, we believe

in magic: that money can get us out of our troubles. Traders and their mumbo-jumbo about derivatives resemble Mayan priests chanting in their temples. It didn't do them any good. Are we to follow the Maya?

(Dedicated to Maria Chester though she is not a Maya)

Tom Conway

THEATRE VISITS GROUP

I am needing a year off from being Group Leader next session. We have a large group of approximately forty members and, unless they all want to be mothballed for the session, we need volunteers to take over the running of the group for the coming year. Perhaps two or three members would be prepared to form a sub committee for theatre visits or members could team up in twos to arrange different events throughout the session for 2009-10. Volunteers please get in touch now with any member of the present U3A committee.

Back to the present: West Side Story has been booked for May and the Tattoo for August.

Val Clarke

BIRDWATCHING

Seven of us went to Burnmouth for our December bird-watching trip. We saw a sparrowhawk perched on a lamp post above the A1. Later on, it was mobbed by crows as it was flying about, but it was able to outmanoeuvre them. Along the shore, on the seaweed covered rocks, there were many

redshanks, oystercatchers, turnstones and curlews, and the usual gulls (herring, great black-backed and black-headed). A feral goose has taken up residence on the shore. Cormorants and eiders were further out, and meadow-pipits were foraging in the seaweed on the beach. There were dunnocks, black-birds, robins and blue tits in the shrubbery. It was a successful morning, enhanced by tea and mince pies at Jean Armstrong's. Our January trip to Berwick-upon-Tweed took place on a cold, still and sunny morning when even the beach was frozen. There were hundreds of waders feeding in the seaweed along the water-line as the tide was coming in. These included oyster-catchers, redshank, turnstones, sanderling, dunlins and curlews. Cormorants were on the offshore rocks and carrion crows, pied wagtails and several pairs of stone-chats were feeding in the seaweed. Along the Tweed itself, we saw mute swans and tufted ducks.

Our February trip to Bluestaneford was cancelled, due to snow but nine of us went there on Fri 13th March. The weather was fine and sunny and we saw several great spotted woodpeckers, four buzzards, a grey wagtail, goldcrest, grey partridges, pheasants, chaffinches, wrens and great tits and blue tits. The buzzards were circling on the thermals above the fields and woods. There were four adult swans with two cygnets and some mallard on the Whiteadder Water.

In April we hope to look at the birds of Eyemouth

Harbour and Netherbyres (weather permitting). This trip is to be on Fri 17th April instead of Good Friday.

Our birdwatching trips will continue until June. We will re-commence in October.

Ernie Cox

MOTHER GOOSE

Through high seas and rough winds the intrepid rag ruggers gathered in the depths of winter. Some had travelled from as far away as Nepal and Moscow. Others had tiptoed from as close as Coldingham! Nevertheless, soon hooks and prodders flashed and dived into Louis Vuiton shirts that had been slashed mercilessly into shreds to be elevated into the realms of draught excluders. Hikers passing the schoolgirl innocence of the Lower Burnmouth establishment could not guess that within the deep recesses creations beyond imagination were being laboriously woven for the pleasure of the populace. The gloriously designed **MOTHER GOOSE** (On the back page. Ed) held pride of place.

Maureen McLinden

Colin Westland-Garnett

We have just had the sad news that Colin died on April 1st. Colin and Phyl were members of our U3A from the early days and involved in many group activities. Colin will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with Phyl.

FRONT COVER

While Anne Richardson was on holiday in Madeira, a charming Portuguese gentleman presented her with a spray of orchids from his garden. And all because she had stopped to admire the size of his marrows. Don't they look well together !

BACK COVER

- 1 Eileen Anderson, holidaying in South Africa.
- 2 A splendid rag-rug goose.
- 3 Maria Chester with "Bobito".
- 4 Helen Grahame, Anne Richardson and Val Clarke in Madeira

COPY FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

Copy to me by the last week in July 2009 to be certain it is included in the Summer edition.
email - jabobo@btinternet.com or 018907 52573

My thanks to all who contributed to this edition.
John Armstrong - ED.

Our thanks to **FANTASY PRINTS** for
printing this News Letter

