

From the chair

What a month we have had! A wonderful bird themed special meeting, an even more wonderful 'Future of Engineering' day and then the summer party. The Bird talk, organised by Sheena and Ruth, was so interesting. It hadn't occurred to me that global warming could affect the migration of birds; now I know. I also know that I should continue feeding the birds during the summer. The Engineering Day organised by Cotswold Link was fascinating for everyone, whether or not you know anything about engineering. I do and yet it really opened my eyes. We began with a talk about the future of cars and their fuel, up to 2050, and then, perhaps the most interesting, a talk about 3D printing. I knew something about this, but not that you can print a house, or a heart with human tissue or that, if you have a hip operation, they can remove your hip bone, take a photo of the socket, feed it into a cad cam programme, print a hip joint and fit it. The day finished with a talk about the possibilities of living on Mars and how it could be achieved.

The summer tea dance was great fun and very well organised by Di Kyte and her merry band. It was good to see so many of our members dancing and the tea was delicious. There was something for everyone.

A thoughtful email came in from the Third Age Trust about the "It Matters to Natter" day which was part of World Friendship day on 30th July. In an age when our lives are so full of time saving devices, we can sometimes forget the difference a simple conversation can make. It's about trying to alleviate loneliness and raise awareness of the importance of talking to each other. A conversation on the bus with a stranger or a chat with someone standing on their own at an open meeting matters. So let's all take it on board that 'it matters to natter'.

I can also report, thanks to Gerry our Membership Secretary, that Cheltenham U3A is now international! We have a new member who signed up online with an address in Cheltenham, Victoria, Australia. She may find the travelling to our meetings a bit demanding.

Maggie