

## **Report of June Meeting**

We were delighted to welcome six visitors to our June open meeting, to hear Richard Delderfield speak about 'Walking with Botham'. Ian Botham first encountered leukaemia in 1977, whilst visiting the childrens' ward at Musgrove Park Hospital. Four children sat playing at a table in their everyday clothes, and Ian was shocked to hear that they had leukaemia. In those days the illness was a death sentence, and sadly, the children he had met died shortly after. Ian decided something had to be done, and he and his wife Kath set out on the personal journey which would raise the funds for research, enabling the survival rate to increase from 20% to 90% in 25 years. He set out to walk from John O'Groats to Lands End, a journey which had previously only been attempted by 2 others, Barbara Moore and Jimmy Saville. In 6 weeks, £1million had been raised, and since then 12 other walks have followed.

Richard became involved having lost his own son to the illness, and wanting to feel that his death had not been in vain. Over the years he has taken on more and more responsibility, and is now Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Trust. He described the year's preparatory work necessary for running a successful and efficient walk, and spoke with warmth of the characters and celebrities with whom he has worked. It was an inspiring talk, and one which will not quickly be forgotten.

Appropriately enough, some of our members are looking forward to going to see 'Calendar Girls' shortly, and there was news of the usual wide range of activities organized by the County to tempt us. Christine reported back on the enjoyable day she had had at National Conference in Cardiff (not a hat to be seen!) Jill Alden and Phyllis Bellworthy won Flower of the Month, and Christine East and Karen Wilmott were the prize poets of the competition.

Joan Cudmore