

What causes a lot of grief in our lives? Forgetting how to do something we have learnt. We forget because we haven't done enough to commit the solution firmly into our mind. This often arises because we have cracked the problem for now and it is a long time before it recurs – and we can't remember how we did it last time. (And no, we didn't write it down. Or if we did we've lost the piece of paper!)

This point popped up several times during a recent meeting to review the club's year with a view to improving future programmes. The consensus was that it helps to go over things from time to time to refresh our memories.

This fits well with the club's aim of helping newcomers to computers. Explaining the basics to new members serves as a refresher for everybody else. This takes us from September to Christmas and we use the period to July to build upon the basics with talks of general interest to everybody; using an occasional guest speaker.

Question & Answer evenings had been introduced to provide more opportunity to deal with matters of immediate concern to members. These were popular and it was decided that we should have more.

It was noted that some members felt inhibited about asking questions in case they were thought to be too simplistic. The reply to that was that simplicity is a relative quality: ask the question anyway. There are no silly questions.

For that matter, several members were happy just to 'listen in' on the discussions because they found the process informative and interesting. They also realise that it can take a while to get into the swim of things and this is a light-hearted and friendly way of doing so.

We reminded ourselves that in this context an experienced user can feel a beginner in a different area of computing. This applied to the use of eBay and shopping on-line generally. The excellent evening on the topic will be expanded and repeated by request. Other candidates for increased interest were digital photography (how to improve the results) and slide shows (how better to present them – or anything else – in a more interesting way).

There is new software available for handling digital pictures and we thought we would start by looking at Picasa, the free software from Google, and move on from there as necessary.

On-line banking was another topic of interest. There are options for using spreadsheets or for proprietary software to take the effort out of the sums at home and on-line facilities that mean not needing to visit the branch as often.

And we shall keep abreast of the IT developments generally and have speakers to give insights into topics of general interest.

