



STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

U3A

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No.1002987

Newsletter No 15

February 2007

From Our Chairman:-

,Dear members

May I take this, my first contribution to the newsletter as chairman to thanking you for your support at the Annual General Meeting ,and to uphold the standards of my predecessors.

Since then we have had our first committee meeting and elected a new vice chairman, who will on occasions take my place, the role of the vice chairman is to ensure continuity at all times, until, at the end of my three years in office, he will with your approval fill the vacant post of chairman.

I must stress the urgency to find a new secretary before next September when Philip will be standing down, having served for the last five years.

How gratifying it is to see so many thriving groups, this of course is due to the increase in membership over the past four months which has seen an influx of some thirty new people into the Stowmarket U3A and has every prospect of growing larger, the number of members attending the November meeting was 91. There are only 100 chairs in the hall, so will it be ” standing room only “ ?

We held our second Christmas lunch on the 20th December and had a total of 69, who enjoyed a well prepared seasonal lunch. Thanks to the caterers and the hard work by Liz & Philip and other helpers on the day

We have a well balanced programme for the rest of the year, and I look forward to getting to know you all.

Harold.

From the Secretary:-

As the chairman has noted we are getting a sizeable increase in numbers and this raises several questions. Are we really becoming that popular? Or is it a sign of the post war ‘Baby Boom’? Well, all I can say is many of the other U3As are experiencing the same phenomenon. The immediate thing that you will have noticed will have been seating in the Hall. The Hall is registered for an attendance of 200 people and we have had permission to borrow chairs from the church itself (though they are not as comfortable!).

With the large increase in numbers over the last year or so, your committee has felt a certain lack of communication between us and the new arrivals. We try to ease this with a ‘welcomer’ at the door each month, but this is not really sufficient - THEREFORE :-

The Committee has arranged an extra meeting for Wednesday the 7th of March in this hall, specifically for those who have joined us over the past year or so. This will be an afternoon ‘Getting to know you’ social gathering where the committee and the organisers of groups will be present. Hopefully this will enable us to answer your questions and where you have a relaxed opportunity to tell us what you would like to see or do, here with us. Remember the U3A is a unique organisation - it is organised NOT from the top down like nearly everything else, BUT from the bottom up. So, it is up to you to let us know what is needed, or what could be done, and we DO need help. Your organisational skills could be very helpful to us all.

This year marks the 25th of the U3A in Britain, and there will be celebrations all over the place. The Committee have thought about having some sort of social get-together in the last week of May. This, probably will take the form of an afternoon social gathering, with of course refreshments, somewhere within the town. If we can. It will also provide an extra meeting for those who for one reason or another would not be able to go on the June outing.

I have completed five years in this position - I was new to the task of being a secretary, but I have thoroughly enjoyed it - have got to know many new people and made not a few friends - above all it has been fun and that is the objective of the whole thing.

Philip Weir

Since the Last Newsletter :-

October :-

It was amazing to hear Louise Brundall who was profoundly deaf talk with such clarity and obvious love and enjoyment about 'Dogs for the Deaf'. She showed such rapport for the dogs and their work that had us all wrapped up with such emotional energy that we could not but be totally absorbed in her lecture.

November :-

Mike McKeon gave us a dissertation on the history of transport before launching into the 'Suffolk Mail Coaches', his subject for the day. Quite clearly his knowledge was very extensive and he told his story well. However, it was a pity the his slide equipment was suitable for a much small location and therefore we lost much of the benefit of the slides that were shown.

December :-

We sat down to a lovely lunch in the URC hall and to judge by the reaction expressed by very many of the 69 present the occasion was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone without exception both for the food and also the social atmosphere. Thank you all for the part that you played on this event.

January :-

Dr Michael George told us about Tanzania, his holiday there and the work of 'Water Aid' and the way in which they do their best to involve the native people rather than to let them feel that it is only their government, but they themselves who are responsible for the essential service provided.

And Now for :-

February :-

The wonderfully enthusiastic Revd. Roy Tricker will illustrate his love for churches in his talk on 'Some of Suffolk's Interesting Churches. This will be quite a dramatic and exciting afternoon.

March :-

'My role as Education Officer at the Colchester Zoo' is the subject of Francesca Gale's talk this month. Combined with all the TV programmes this should bring new light to our understanding of the modern function of zoos.

April :-

We read frequently that the Accident Rescue Service have been involved in some calamity or other. So to hear from Mr Colin French from his aspect will be fascinating to say the least.

May:-

Those of us who went to Bletchley Park last August and saw the Museum of Churchillian memorabilia will be interested to hear Robin Cook's account of 'The Life, Wit and World of Winston Churchill'. We all seem to know something and this talk may tie some loose ends together in our minds.

June :-

For the outing this month we are planning to go to the 'Secret Garden' in Norwich in the morning and after lunch somewhere go on to East Ruston Gardens in the afternoon. These gardens cover some 35 acres and are of a very wide range of types. There is there a cafe and horticultural/ agricultural museum, and adjacent an intriguing redundant church which is also open for viewing.

July:-

Mrs Margaret Grimwade's talk will be 'Otters, Urchins and Orchids - Wild Life in the West Highlands of Scotland'. An inspiration to visit there this summer perhaps ?

Activity groups :-

Archive Film :-

This group meets on the fourth Monday of the month from 2.30 to 4.30 in the afternoon. This is a well attended group but has room for a few new members, so if you are interested in this subject, for further information please contact:-
Eric Adamson



01449 676 446

Art Appreciation:-

The group has been meeting on the first and third Tuesdays of each month and is now well into its second year. Because the initial plan was to study artists born in Suffolk, we thought that we might run out of subjects, but we have discovered more artists than we originally knew about! Also, we have extended our studies to artists who have worked in Suffolk, so we are including Charles Rennie Mackintosh, members of the Bloomsbury Group and even Stanley Spencer, amongst many others.



Members share the studies fully, with many making well-prepared inputs into the sessions. Meetings are always interesting and enjoyable and our liveliest moments come when we are debating the subject and/or quality of a particular picture.

We have made trips to museums and galleries and have two more planned for the New Year.

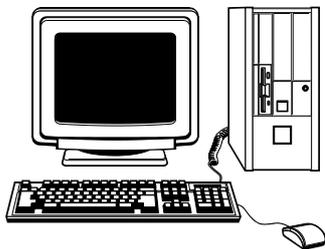
With eighteen members the group is still quite large and the front room of the house gets a bit crowded for a couple of hours. But it is fun, and we feel that we are learning in a very amicable way.

Sally & Tony Taylor

01449771 168

Computer Group:-

The Computer Group continues with its regular monthly meetings for all, groups learning Adobe Photoshop with Roy, MS Word with Marian and discussing a variety of subjects with fellow members from Hadleigh U3A.



At the regional Autumn Academy I made a presentation concerning website design, called *Web Weaving with Wendy*. I repeated this for our group in November. Clive has since provided the content for a website for the local URC Church.

The December meeting as always highlighted the creativity of the group, when cards, calendars, banners, paper hats and decorations as well as a slide-show presentation showed how the computer can be enlisted to enhance our Christmas activities. Janet's unusual paper hat design made an appearance at the U3A Christmas lunch!

The programme for 2007 has been designed to maximise contributions by members.

Unfortunately illness and technical difficulties affected the January meeting, but Jack rose above them to show us his posters and banners and Valerie explained in great detail how her innovative pyramidal Christmas card was designed. I filled in with some background information about simple slide shows accessible by all within Windows.

In February we will hold a quiz, organised in tiny teams, so that all can contribute and none feel disadvantaged. Eight team leaders provide a variety of questions for this meeting. We expect at least three new members and would always welcome more. Beginners are particularly welcome and should seek one-to-one help from *slightly* more experienced members.

Future meetings feature music, commercial publishing, IT in ministry and a variety of teaching projects from a number of our members. The future is bright!

Please keep an eye on our Blog at <http://www.wendywhitecat.blogspot.com/> which will keep you up to date with all our activities as well as provide some useful hints.

Wendy Morgan

wendy@paddocks9.plus.com

01473 824237

Country Strolls:-

This group has been functioning for around 12 years and still we enjoy taking to the lanes and footpaths for our fortnightly jaunt, always being encouraged by the thought of a deserving cuppa at the conclusion, in a suitable hostelry of one kind or another



Our distances have become approximately 3 miles instead of 4. We cannot avoid the advancing years !

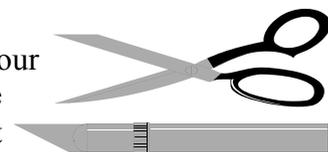
It is possible that among the many new members who have joined our U3A more recently, think that 3 miles is a bit pathetic. If so why not start a new group ? It is not difficult ! And both Joyces could pass on any information etc. as may be needed.

Our annual New Year Luncheon took place in January when good food and animated chatter was enjoyed by all at the Gladstone Arms - a favourite venue of ours.

Walks continue on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at 1.30pm. We always welcome newcomers
Joyce Walden 01449 615 591 and
Joyce Markwell 01449 613 702

Card Craft Group:-

We have moved our gathering from home to the residents lounge here as it gives a lot more room and light to our work. To judge by the quality of the efforts produced for Christmas we are obviously succeeding in promoting this popular pastime. Just now we are working towards Easter and other personal targets. We are looking for and will welcome new members.
Liz Weir 01449 676 528



Discussion Group:-

Whilst this remains a popular and lively group, our January meeting succumbed to some of the winter's ills. Our subjects are wide ranging and provoke much thought with even more good humour. As always we look forward to welcoming new members to our chats and so to a wider cast of opinion.

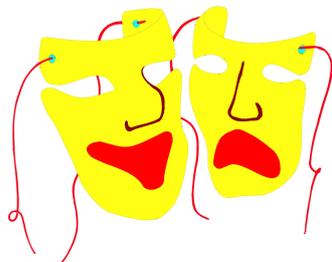


Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Entertainment (Theatrical):-

The performing arts are the most universal of all entertainment. Music takes many forms, from 'pop' to great symphonies. It stimulates the emotions.



In the theatre it gives us opera, musicals, dance and variety. In the modern world Radio and TV is the most popular form of entertainment and transmits all these forms continually.

In the theatre, the stage productions need good scenery, costumes and lighting along with creative artists to provide quality entertainment.

With us you can discuss all these aspects and listen to good music over 'a cup of tea' and in good company.

Joan Varley

01449 612 966

Gardens and Things:-

The new season is now upon us, with a calendar full of new places to visit in 2007

But just to reflect on the year past

June The group went to Peter Beales rose gardens at the height of the rose season and what a wonderful day we have the flowers were in full bloom, and many of the group made some new additions to their garden, which should bring much pleasure this year

July Saw the group visit the small but excellent museum of by-gones across a wide section of Suffolk memorabilia and after morning coffee we visited the local pub in rattlesden for lunch followed afterwards with a walk round the village and the interior of the church

August Was mainly a U3A outing that visited the old war time centre at Bleachley Park, including a visit round the house and the code cracking machine, followed with lunch and then a trip fund the gardens

September Saw a coach full of the G&T members visit the Botanical Gardens at Cambridge, the day was perfect for a full day in the gardens with the Botanical Gardens at Cambridge, the day was perfect for a full day in the gardens with with a weary group traveling back to Stowmarket in time for tea.

October Was a clear month due to holidays and the projected visit not taking place

November Of course was the usual meeting to plan the 2007 season which we did and decided to have a post Christmas/New Year lunch at the Magpie in Combs which was well attended by 23 of the group



February We are planning to show some of our past visits to various locations, on the big screen this will be held at the Woodfield bowls club at 10.00am on Thursday 15th February

March We hope to get a speaker to talk about a suitable topic

Genealogy Group:-

There are many folk very interested in pursuing this hobby and who have expressed their wish to support the group. However it seems that there is some difficulty in agreeing a suitable meeting location and also someone who with the help of another is able and willing to help organise this latent set of enthusiasts. If you can help please contact any member of the committee.



Grub Club:-

The first meeting of the Lunch Club was held at the Shoulder of Mutton Old Newton on the 9th November, it was very well attended, and enjoyed by all. Members were asked to fill in a questionnaire to see what they would like from a Lunch Club.

Here are some of the results, it was decided to meet every 8 weeks which will be on the second Thursday, no more than 20 to 25 members depending on the size of the location. The next meeting will be at the Fox and Hounds, Thurston, on the 8th February with 26 members attending. On the 12th April we will be going to The Retreat, Stowupland this was recommended by some of the Lunch Club members.

As I am now getting a waiting list for members to join us, would anyone like to start a second Lunch club then we could have a smaller group, and this would enable us to go to some public houses that could cater for smaller numbers. Dates for your diary :- 14th June. 9th August. 11th October.

Angela Bentley

01449-780 274

Keep Fit :-

This gentle exercise group meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at the Community Centre, Childer Road. Whilst still a small group of girls, we hope to attract many more and who knows even some boys. We have a good time and enjoy our physical exertions with much bonhomie. Pauline Taylor



01449 678 954

Music Appreciation (1):-

This group keeps strong and healthy, with a full complement of active members enjoying Music from the classical repertoire. From time to time as someone drops out there is room for a new member. So if you would be interested please contact:-

Eric Adamson

01449 676 446



Music Appreciation (2):-

Unfortunately, due to poor health, this group has lapsed into disuse, however as Connie is improving nicely, she hopes to get this going again in March or maybe April,(with a bit of luck). The theme has been very wide ranging covering most if not all music from popular sources - mainly from Connie's huge collection of cds etc.. For further information please contact her late March or after.

Connie Ruegg

01449 674 673

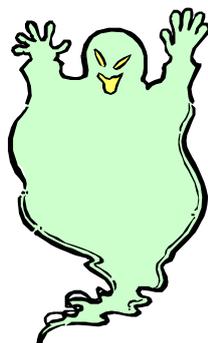


Myths and Legends:-

This small group which has added 'Storytelling' to its routine has had a lively autumn of delving into 'stories' of all sorts. We would love to see more at our gatherings so if you might be interested please speak to

Philip Weir

01449 676 528



Poetry:-

The Poetry Group, which meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month continues strongly. For some months we have working on themes for each session. Recent ones have been *HOME; NATION; CHILDRENS' POETRY; FLOWERS* - and these have led to studies of poems and poets across the centuries and some very up-to-date works. We have already planned a series of topics for early 2007.

Our Thursday afternoon sessions are always interesting and thought-provoking, showing tremendous variety in depth and style of poetry, and in the choices made by members of the group.



TEACHERS SAY

Stop talking
Stop shouting
Stop yelling
Stop crying
Stop stop stop
Stop arguing
Stop swearing
Stop screaming
Stop muttering
Stop stop stop
Stop breathing hard
Stop looking
Stop clicking your fingers
But I have stopped
I'm writing a poem.

William Ibikunle Age 9

01449 771 168

Tony Taylor

Town and Village History:-

Eleven

members came

along on January 11th, and seven sent apologies. We have a proposed programme for 2007 which includes the outing to Norwich and Rushton in June, and a visit to Swaffham eco-centre and Downham Market in August arranged for all U.3.A members by our secretary Philip Weir.

The Town and Village History Group have all had their programmes and list of members.

Ann and Ray Watsham

01449 672 706



U3A Suffolk and District Network:-

At the biannual meeting in November, we had a detailed report and assessment of the Autumn Academy held in October. This proved to be such a resounding success that it was determined to repeat the operation in October 2007, and the subcommittee was instructed to proceed with energy to organise what we have decided to call 'AA2' that is Autumn Academy Two. This will be on Saturday the 13th and at Combs Middle School. Full details of the programme etc. will be published soon and I hope that many of you will take the advantage of supporting the hard work and effort put in by the small organising team I will do my best to keep you informed as things progress.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

U3A Central Office News:-

When you read the 'U3A news' and see about the fire that they suffered, it is hoped that you will start to ap-

THIRD AGE TRUST



preciate the immense amount of work that they do for us. It is uncertain at the moment how much of the vast stock of information and programmes they have been able to save. It will be a great loss if we lose all that material that we were able to borrow at the cost of only the return postage.

Once again they are running Summer Schools at Chester and Cirencester. From personal experience and reports from others, these can be highly recommended.

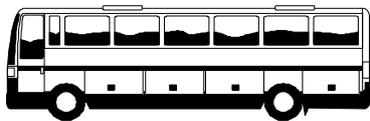
For those on the 'WEB' my I draw your attention to their new website - www.u3a-info.co.uk it does contain a huge amount of information covering a very wide field.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Outings:-

The January monthly meeting gave approval for outings in June and August. These have not yet been fully investigated and booked - however the ideas are:-



June 20th - to Norwich to visit the Plantation Garden in the morning. Then on to Wroxham for some free time and to have your lunch where and as you will. From there to the Gardens at East Ruston for the rest of the afternoon (this does not open until 2.30pm) and leave for home by 5 o'clock or so.

August 15th - Off to the Ecco Centre at Swaffham (if still possible) and on to a fascinating museum in Downham Market.

More details later, as soon as we know exactly what is definite and of course to costs.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Democracy and Election Systems:-

Contact David Chapman on

01449 736 223



Needle Craft Group:-

Contact Alicia Beaton on

01449 616 172

Scrabble Group:-

Contact Sheila Dobey on

01449 677 265

Ain't the Laws we find funny:-

You won't believe the laws they have in North America (and the UK)

These are actual laws or bye laws, which have not been repealed.

For instance, in Canada it is illegal to push a moose out of a moving aircraft. Have you ever tried to push a moose.....

In California it is illegal for a woman to drive in a housecoat..... and Bath houses are illegal

- **Examples of other Dumblaws** (Awaiting repeal)
- **Alabama.** It is illegal for a driver to drive a vehicle blindfolded. You may not have an ice-cream in your back pocket at any time
- **Jasper.** It is illegal for a husband to beat his wife with a stick thicker than his thumb
- **Chico :** Detonating a nuclear device within the city limits will result in a \$500 fine
- **Hollywood.** It is illegal to drive more than 2000 sheep down Hollywood Boulevard at any one time
- **Los Angeles:** Toads may not be licked (except in the case of film producers)
- **San Francisco.** It is illegal to wipe ones car with used underwear and persons classified as 'ugly' may not walk down the street (so much for that most tolerant of cities)
- **Prunedale.** Two bathtubs may not be installed in the same house
- **Denver :** You may not drive a black car on Sundays
- **Sterling:** Cats may not run loose without a tail light
- **Arizona:** Donkeys may not sleep in bathtubs
- **Maricopa County :** Not more than six girls may live in the same house
- **Mohave County.** Anyone stealing soap must wash himself until it is all used up
- **Prescott :** You may not fart in public after 6 pm on Thursdays
- **Connecticut.** It is illegal for unmarried women to parachute on Sunday. Having sexual intercourse with a porcupine is illegal. It is an offence to shower naked. Very prudish out East



March

March is the first month of Spring. It is Nature's Old Forester, going through the woods and dotting the trees with green, to mark out the spots where the future leaves are to be hung. The sun throws a golden glory over the eastern hills, as the village-dock from the ivy-covered tower tolls six, gilding the hands and the figures that were scarcely visible two hours later a few weeks ago. The streams now burry along with a rapid motion, as if they .. were eager to rush along the green meadow-lands, to tell the flowers it is time to awaken. Chambers Book of Days (1864).

Characteristics

March is often regarded as the first month of spring, but astronomically it straddles the seasons, the first 20 days belonging to winter. In some respects it is a month of preparation and anticipation: for farmers it is the sowing season, and in the Christian Church it is largely dominated by the Lenten fast and the approach of Easter. In March the countryside begins its transition from brown to green and the earliest spring flowers, such the primrose and the crocus, appear in fields and gardens. For many birds and animals March is also the beginning of the breeding season, and the behaviour of one particular animal at this time has given rise to the saying 'mad as a March hare'.

History

Lide, an early name for March, is derived from the Old English *Hlyda*, which probably referred to the loudness of the wind in this month. The word survived in a country proverb that recommended the eating of 'leeks in Lide and ramsins [garlic] in May'. The Anglo-Saxons named it *Lenetmonath* (length month'), which refers to the lengthening of the days during this month; it is also related to the words *Lenten* and *Lent*.

Weather

Windy and dry weather in March is generally considered to be a good thing: 'March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers', 'A bushel of March dust is worth a king's ransom', and 'A dry and cold March never begs for bread'. However, there is some contradiction in the weather lore: the saying 'March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb' gives the lie to a popular rhyme about the **borrowing days** (either the last three days of March or the first three days of April).

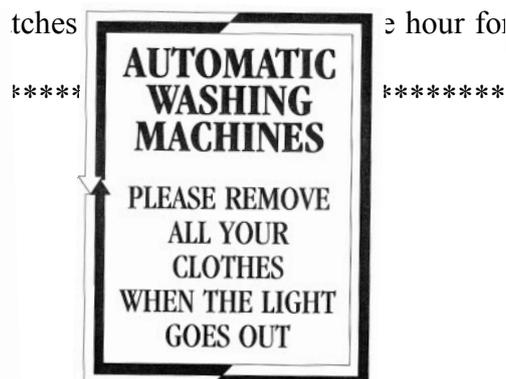
March borrowed from April
Three days and they were ill.
The first was snow and sleet
The next was cold and wet
The third was such a freeze
The bird's nests stuck to the trees

'March is a month that God designed to show those who don't drink what a hangover is like'

Garrison Keiller 1-12-1991



Church jumble sale announcement



Sign in a launderette



Notice inside a church

The wind was rough and cold and blough;
She kept her hands inside her mough,
It chilled her through, her nose turned blough,
But still the squall the faster flough.
And yet, although there was enough,
It made her cough (please do not scough);

*There was a miserable bloke,
He never romped nor played.
He never laughed, he never joked,
Nor kissed a pretty maid.
So when he passed away, they say,
His insurance, it was void –
Because he never really lived
So how could he have died ?*

The daughter-in-law

There is a zummat in her face
As me and Missis can't quite place
Jake courted her a twelvemonth, too,
Or maybe more, afore we knew.

Though why he done it I can't zee;
He had a rare good home with we.
Her's such a one for flare and fuss.
Ah, well, pore maid, her bain't like us.

Her speaks quite pleasant-like to I,
But Missis says she's mortal 'fly'
She has a finnick in her talk,
And can't eat food like other vawk;
And looks as if her thought that we
Weren't half so 'spectable as she.

But, yesterday, as ever were,
Our Jacob had a son and heir.
And I fell laughin' fit to bus' –
The little un be just like us !

DANGER!
PUBLIC MUST NOTE,
TO KILL BABIES,
INSERT THEM
HEAD INTO BAG.
CAREFULLY!
THANK YOU

**If you have joined in the last
12 months or so
You are invited to
'A Get-to-Know You'
Social gathering
To meet the Committee,
Group Leaders and
Each other
On Wednesday
The 7th March 2007
At 2.30pm
In the URC Church Hall**

**Refreshments will be provided
Please come and meet us**

*A good woman inspires a man,
A brilliant woman interests him,
A beautiful woman fascinates him,
And a sympathetic woman gets him.*

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