



# STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

**U3A**

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No. 1002987

**Newsletter No 16**

**July 2007**

## **From our Chairman :-**

Do you realize that we are only three months from our next A.G.M. in September, I hope that you will be attending and electing your new committee for the coming twelve months, your committee is here to serve you and carry out your wishes in the activities that you request, and considering the fact that we have grown by at least thirty percent over the past year we must be on the right track.

As this is my first year in office as Chairman, it has also been a learning curve for me, and getting to know you all has been a big task not yet totally achieved, you will have noticed that we have introduced name tags for your activity organizers so that you can recognize and approach them. and find out about their various meetings. We organized a special meeting day for new members which was a great success. If you have any other thoughts on any improvements please let me know, or our secretary and your committee will consider them at our regular meetings throughout the year.

Thank you for your support throughout the year and look forward to a constructive A.G.M on September 19<sup>th</sup>

Harold Turner

## **From the Secretary :-**

In January 2002 I was asked to take on the job of being your Secretary because of the sudden and untimely demise of Brian Killett.. Under the circumstances it was very hard to say no and therefore I, somewhat apprehensively agreed. I was co-opted onto the Committee in February, and then at the AGM in September was officially appointed as your Secretary. Now as you will all know, I am determined to resign from that office this September. May I say that it has been a wonderful fulfilling experience, and a time of learning beyond all expectation. I have become acquainted with very many more of you than I could ever have done otherwise. And that has been a joy. - I thank you all.

During my time in office, I believe that we have made considerable advances, both in numbers and in activities. Your warm response to ideas that I have brought to the fore has been in all cases most heartening and an encouragement to do more. Indeed the more I learn and know about the U3A the more impressed I am and I feel fully committed to spreading the gospel and encouraging all aspects of this wonderful organisation. So - be warned I am not about to disappear !

Fortunately, fairly recently one of our new members has volunteered to take my place as your Secretary. He will be introduced to you at the AGM in September and I am convinced that he will not only be acceptable., but will do an excellent Job for us all. Therefore I most sincerely wish and hope that you will give him your very best welcome and support in and after the AGM in September.

Finally, may I thank you all for your warm support and help over the years, for without that I could not have done the job that was expected of me. **THANK YOU - THANK YOU ALL.**

Philip Weir

## Since the Last Newsletter :-

### February :-

As usual the Revd. Roy Tricker entertained and amused us with his most excellent dissertation on 'Some of Suffolk's Interesting Churches'. Naturally he lived up to his very high standards.

### March :-

Whilst Francesca Gale is more accustomed to addressing school children, her presentation of 'My Role as Education Officer at the Colchester Zoo' was quiet fascinating and enthralled us all. We learnt much about a side of zoo life of which we were really unaware.

### April:-

'The work of the Accident Rescue Service was the theme of the talk by Colin C. French. He has spent much time over the years working with, raising funds for and generally helping to make sure that this service performs to the highest standards. Such enthusiasm and endeavour for this service has to be admired.

### May :-

A talk of a very different flavour given by Robin Close on 'Winston - The Life, Wit and World of Winston Churchill' was filled with a deep love and appreciation for this hero of ours. It was accompanied with a dry and gentle wit enjoyed by us all.

### June :-

With a full coach and beautiful weather our trip to the 'Plantation Garden in Norwich'; lunch at Wroxham and on to the Gardens at East Ruston was much appreciated and enjoyed by the whole company. The pleasure expressed by each and everyone made the whole exercise worth while for the organisers.

## And Now For :-

### July :-

'Otters, Urchins and Orchids - Wild Life in the West Highlands of Scotland' must prove to be a totally fascinating talk by Mrs Margaret Grimwade. We will be looking forward to it.

### August :-

Our second outing this year will be to the Eco-centre at Swaffham for a guided tour and video show, with the opportunity for the more active to climb up to the viewing platform of the wind turbine.

After that we go on to 'Collector's World' at Downham Market, where there is a most remarkable collection of memorabilia. Yes, nostalgia rules.

### September :-

Yes. It is AGM time again - but business has to be done. However the Computer Group are getting together to give us a graphic demonstration of some of the things that they get up to.

### October :-

'From Vicar's Son to BBC Producer' - a talk by Charles Garland. This should provide a new insight to a world we know exists but of which we are generally totally unaware.

## Activity Groups :-

### Archive Film :-

Usually held on the fourth Monday of each month from 2.30 to 4.30, but we have done so much ploughing and harvesting with old equipment lately, that we all need a rest.

The next meeting will be on Monday the third of September. This will be our August meeting as the fourth Monday in August is a Bank Holiday.

For further information please ring  
Eric Adamson 01449 676 446



### Art Appreciation :-

After the July meeting the Art group will pause over the summer period. It is planned to restart in the autumn. Incredibly, the group is now almost two years old. We have come a long way and are still using Suffolk artists and Suffolk-based artists as our theme. It just goes to show how rich the county has been, and still is in artistic talent.

The membership of the group has remained at around 18 people. There have been minor fluctuations in numbers and some changes of personnel, but there seems always to be someone else wanting to join in. The group is quite large for a home-based meeting, but we manage to squeeze in and still have enough biscuits at coffee time.

Members are becoming quite skilled at discussing art and in expressing their opinions about artists and their works. In addition to individual artists we have spent some time looking at how we might look at pictures, learning about abstract art, and trying to understand visual symbols and what they might mean. These activities appear to have helped us. When someone uses a very 'arty' word the rest of the group now chorus: 'Ooooh!! To show that they know it too!'

Recently we have been looking at artists such as Colin Moss, who taught at Ipswich Art School, and we are planning a session on Keith Pilling who did



those simple but evocative sketches of Suffolk scenes for the East Anglian Daily Times. We have made visits as a group to The Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettles Yard and Norwich Castle Museum this year.

All members get involved in the lively discussions and many make individual contributions relating to a particular artist or theme. Consequently, our meetings are very lively and very stimulating. They are great fun to host. Starting and supporting the group has been an enriching experience and can be recommended as an enterprise.

Tony Taylor

01449 771 168

### Computer Group:-

The Computer Group continues to operate centrally at Woodfield Bowls Club covering a wide variety of interests and applications. Additionally four *Photoshop* groups show sustained commitment by leader and members based in Stowmarket, while three discussion groups flourish in Hadleigh drawing in interest from both U3As. The second series of word processing classes is now complete. Members in both U3As are indebted to Marian for providing them with this foundational skill for all computer use.

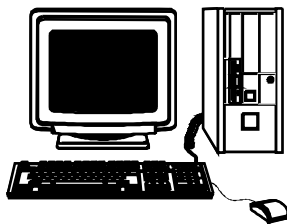
Two new groups are now starting, based in Hadleigh, but for all comers. Members from Blackbourne are also joining. One group is for those interested in developing their digital photographic skills, with only passing reference to computers; while the other helps beginners import their photos onto the computer and then manipulate them with *Photoshop*. Please keep an eye on our blog for information about all these meetings, as well as tips and comments:

<http://wendywhitecat.wordpress.com/>

Our quiz in February proved very popular. Members worked in small groups attempting to answer questions set by "experts" who were distributed among the groups. Members claimed to have learnt a lot and certainly the event was hilarious and must be repeated.

In March Les Selby shared his ideas about cataloguing and accessing a music collection on the computer. His energy in digitising his extensive jazz collection and his means of organising it was inspirational.

Sadly my efforts to provide a visit on an alternative day, when our meeting fell on Easter Monday, did not come to fruition. Our May meeting welcomed Marc Kenton, minister in the United Reformed Church who shared many instances of the use of his computer and projector in his ministry. He demonstrated special software for projection of worship



songs and hymns, internet sites for research, as well as brief introductions to *PowerPoint* and widgets to enhance the desktop.

Our latest meeting, *Merry-Go-Round* employed eight members teaching a variety of skills to a rotating audience, who responded well to new ideas and inspirational presentations.

We always welcome new members to all or any of these groups, beginners or more experienced. We urge you to seek one to one help from others members, so that all can increase their computing interests and skill. We are all learners and teachers in the U3A and you never learn more than when you are teaching!

Wendy Morgan

01473 824 237

[wendy@paddocks9.plus.com](mailto:wendy@paddocks9.plus.com)

### Country Strolls:-

#### Short :-

The Strolls group is still having very good attendance on our fortnightly walks in and around our lovely countryside.



Iris s dog Tessa - who normally behaves impeccably disgraced herself on our Dagworth walk by rolling in a fresh cow-pat! We all gave her a wide berth after that !

Walks continue to take place every 2nd and 4th Friday in the month - distance approximately some 3 miles. We are pleased to hear that the second group has now been formed. This is for our U3A members who are keen to walk further than the 3 miles that we tackle.

Joyce Waldon

01449 615 591

Joyce Markwell

01449 613 702

#### Longer:-

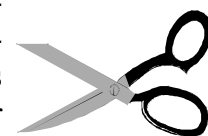
This new group has recently formed as a companion group to the Country Strolls group. We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in the mornings (usually at 10.30 am). We aim to walk for between 4 & 5 miles and then have lunch at a local pub. For more details and/or to join us please ring.

Andrea Burton

01449 774 869

### Card Craft Group:-

We are now having our summer recess, and will resume our activities in September. We meet at 2.00pm on the second afternoon of the month. This year has seen a big increase in our membership which just goes to prove how popular this hobby has become.



If you would like to join us you will be made very welcome by the whole group.

Liz Weir

01449 676 528

### Discussion Group:-

Our programme this year has produced very lively discussion over a very wide range of subjects - even though we do not always keep to the title subject for the day. We do digress onto more topical items of the day. There is plenty of space for you if you would like join in our lively debates where opinions of all shades are expressed.

Philip Weir



01449 676 528

### Gardens and Things:-

**April** - The visit in the later part of the month was arranged by Elizabeth and Irene. In the morning 14 members of our group had a look around the village of Dedham and their gardens. The route eventually lead to the local hostelry - The King s Head for where we had the usual refreshments. In the afternoon we continued on to the local garden centre, which displayed a variety of trees, shrubs and themed gardens. The day culminated in Tea and Cakes on the centre s patio and in the sun. A worthwhile day out in the fresh air.

**May** - This meeting was held at the home of one of our group s members. Everyone was encouraged to bring plants for sale in aid of the 'Teen Cancer Trust'. The event raised £ 35.00 which was well worth while. We had a Plant Quiz , while having our picnic lunch before going on to Abbots Hall for a conducted tour, where we learnt about the history of the house and grounds and also the plans for the future development of the estate - & then a Cream Tea at the Bistro.

**June** - The day was planned by Philip as a joint venture for all the members of our U3A. Thus the G&T group used the day as one of their days out. The coach left Stowmarket at 9.30 for Norwich picking up en-route.. The wonderful 'Plantation Gardens' almost a secret, in an old quarry in the centre of Norwich. This amazing place is being restored and developed by a charitable trust. It is worth a second visit. Leaving the gardens we continued up to East Ruston, whose gardens cover some 35 acres of landscaped scenery and a wonderful variety of plants and their colourful flowers and foliage. We returned by 6.30 having been blessed with warm sunshine all the way through.

Harold Turner

01449 676 882

### Genealogy Group:-

This group is at long last getting off the ground and plans to have it s first meeting at 2.30 pm on



Tuesday 18th of September.. The venue will depend on the numbers wishing to attend. Therefore if you are interested and would like to take part in establishing this fascinating family enterprise **Please** ring - Barbara Robertson 01449 612 638

### Lunch Club :-

Our second lunch club meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> February, at the Fox and Hounds, had to be cancelled due to snow. We had 22 members at The Retreat on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, by the comments that I received it was enjoyed by all. On the 14<sup>th</sup> June we travelled to Stutton and had lunch at the Kings Head, after lunch some members went to Alton Water, to walk their lunch off. On August 9<sup>th</sup> we will be trying the Fox and Hounds again in Thurston, second time lucky hopefully no more snow, earthquake etc., (sorry but this is already full). I m not sure of the venue for the 11<sup>th</sup> October, I have a few places to try with my husband, he has to come to keep me company.

Would anyone would like to start a second lunch club, we could then have a smaller group, and this would enable us to go to public houses that could cater for smaller numbers.

Angela Bentley

01449-780274

### Keep Fit :-

Exercise class still going strong!

Our tutor Madeleine has moved away from the area to be nearer her family she expects that babysitting will keep her just as fit! We all wish her well, and she has promised to keep in touch. Some of our members have been keeping fit with Madeleine for nearly 20 years; we will miss her. Our group will continue with a new tutor, Rosie Macro, so please come and give her your support. Our autumn dates are Sept 26<sup>th</sup>, Oct 24<sup>th</sup> and Nov 28<sup>th</sup>. All 2 3pm at Childer Road Community Centre.

Pauline Taylor

01449 678 954

### Music Appreciation (1):-

Our music meetings usually held on the third Tuesday of each month from 10.00 to 12 noon are in abeyance at the moment due to changes at our venue. All will be well in the end. Watch this space ! If you enjoy music, mainly Classical, please ring me.

Eric Adamson



01449 676 528

### Music Appreciation (2):-

Please contact -  
Connie Ruegg

01449674 673





### Myths and Legends:-

This is a small group and we have included Storytelling into our gambit. We would welcome new members to widen our range of knowledge and opinion. The potential scope for this group is immense, although we have only managed to scratch the surface of this range of interest.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Kate Riddleston

01449 612 871



### Poetry:-

Please contact -

Sheila Dobey 01449 677 265



### Town and Village History:-

#### March/April

We

started the day in an unusual manner and used the public Transport called 'Park and Ride'. Leaving Stowmarket in a group of four cars we joined the bus queue at the Asda store terminal and alighting in Museum Street walked to the Ipswich Museum, which has recently been updated. There we had a conducted tour by one of the guides, which lasted about one and a half hours. On conclusion we all walked to the Christchurch Mansions for a buffet lunch in the Tudor suite (where they hold the wedding ceremonies) where an excellent lunch was provided by the town catering staff. This lasting about an hour and suitably refreshed, we had a guided tour of the building. Our guide was very knowledgeable and gave a marvellous insight into the past families that had lived there over the centuries. Finally, we left the house at 3.15 to catch the bus back to the 'Park and Ride'. The whole day only cost £ 7.50 a head which we all thought very good value.

Harold Turner

01449 676 882

#### May :-

The day started by visiting the Holy Trinity Church Long Melford, where we had the good fortune to be given a very informative impromptu tour by one of the church's wardens.

Continuing after lunch to Melford Hall, where we passed an enjoyable few hours. In addition to the history of the Hall the Beatrix Potter collection was of particular interest.

John Scott

01379 678 790

#### June :-

We were relieved to see the sun come out on the afternoon of Thursday June 7<sup>th</sup> a walk around Stowmarket was ahead of us! After an enjoyable lunch in the Museum Bistro, we consulted the Stowmarket Town Trail (available from the museum shop) supplemented by info extracted mainly from notes researched by our U3A member Pat Leon (available on request from the undersigned). The his-

tory of Abbott's Hall was reviewed and we were pleased to learn that an application for a grant to refurbish the Hall has been submitted, the outcome will be known by December this year. The history of the older buildings in and around the Market Place was a source of interest, noting that many were once Public Houses. In fact there were 40 pubs/inns in Stowmarket in the 1800s! What with a corset factory and iron foundry then learning that there were once two churches (St. Peter's and St. Mary's) where the one church now stands, which retains both names. Then there was the explosion at the Guncotton factory, killing 28 and injuring 77 others. We viewed the Karnser and the cottage which had been moved across the road, the Blue Plaque on the Pickerel pub and heard the facts and figures relating to the Stowmarket to Ipswich canal. The trail was completed passing the Town Council offices, with the connection with John Milton and the mulberry tree, and back to the museum via Marriotts Walk.

Mike Hitchcock

(01449-614933)

### U3A Suffolk and District Network:-

On Saturday the 13th October an Autumn Academy is to be held at Coombs Middle School. The one held last year was so successful that it was decided to repeat the exercise. We hope that many of you will have enrolled to support this endeavour and to make it another successful venture. There will almost certainly be room for a few volunteers to assist with catering etc..

### U3A Central Office News:-

This year marks the twenty fifth anniversary of the start of 'the Third Age Trust' in Britain. Although the idea commenced earlier in France, Britain adopted a more social and less University oriented approach which seems to have been copied across the rest of the world. You will see that there are now some 632 U3As with 184,746 members in this country alone (not to mention those in Spain, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and many other countries). We are part of an amazing organisation run from the bottom up !! That was said to be impossible yet it works.. This anniversary is being celebrated all over the country and our social 'Get-together' on Wednesday the 1st of August is also to mark the occasion.

The U3A covers so many interests that it is indeed difficult to appreciate the full range of opportunities offered. Read the 'U3A News' to learn more and if you are on the net, why not research their web site (see page 14 in the magazine). There is a wealth of information there..



**Democracy and Election Systems:-**

David Chapman 01449 736 223

**Needle Craft Group:-**

Alicia Beaton 01449 616 712

**Entertainment (Theatrical):-**

Joan Varley 01449 612 767

**Scrabble Group:-**

Sheila Dobey U+000901449 677 265

## August

*August comes, and though the harvest fields are nearly ripe and ready for the sickle, cheering the heart of man with the prospect of plenty that surrounds him, yet there are signs on every hand that summer is on the wane, and that the time is fast approaching when she will take her departure. ... But, far as summer has advanced, several of her beautiful flowers and curious plants may still be found in perfection in the water-courses, and beside the streams pleasanter places to ramble along than the dusty and all but flowerless waysides in August.* **Chambers Book of Days (1864).**

**Origins**

August, the eighth month of the year and the sixth month of the Roman calendar, is named after the Roman Emperor Augustus (63 BC AD 14). In 8 BC its Latin name was changed from *Sextilis* (from *sextus*, sixth) to *Augustus*, perhaps because August had been a lucky month for the Emperor, in terms of achievements and victories, or perhaps because it follows the month named after his illustrious predecessor, Julius Caesar

**Characteristics.**

August is a busy time for those who work in agriculture or tourism, being the beginning of the grain harvest and the height of the holiday season. For many others, it is a time of relaxation and recreation, at home or abroad. August is a busy time for those who work in agriculture or tourism, being the beginning of the grain harvest and the height of the holiday season. For many others, it is a time of relaxation and recreation, at home or abroad.

In the mass media, August is also the height of the 'silly season', when the lack of newsworthy stories results in the printing and broadcasting of trivia often items directly or indirectly related to the weather, such as the arrest of a nude hiker or an attempt to fry an egg on the bonnet of a car.

**History**

The Irish-Gaelic and Scottish-Gaelic names for the month, *Lunasa* and *Lunasdal*, refer to the festival of Lughnasadh (in honour of the pagan god Lugh) on 1 August, which became synonymous with Lammas. The Anglo-Saxons called it *Weodmonath* (month of weeds').

**Weather**

The hottest days of the year often fall in the month of August. Such weather is welcomed by farmers: 'Dry August and warm doth harvest no harm.' However, it may augur a hard winter: 'If the first week of August be warm, the winter will be white and long.' An August heat wave is sometimes accompanied by drought, which is less desirable: 'August rain gives honey and wine.'

**The Festival Season**

A number of cultural festivals are held in August, notably the **Edinburgh Festival** in Scotland and the **Royal National Eisteddfod** in Wales. The Edinburgh International Festival, dating from 1947, is primarily a celebration of the performing arts, with live concerts, plays, ballets, operas and other shows. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe offers varied entertainment, and can be an opportunity for new talent, and there are also book, film and jazz festivals in the Scottish capital city during this month. The Eisteddfod is an older tradition, revived in the 19th century. It originated as a medieval gathering of bards and minstrels, attended by people from across Wales, who competed for the prize of a chair at the nobles' table. Held in the first week of August, the venue for the Eisteddfod alternates each year between North and South Wales. Celebrating Welsh arts and culture, the Gorsedd of Bards (an association of distinguished Welsh men and women, headed by an Archdruid) holds three events: a Prose Medal ceremony, a Crowning ceremony for the best free verse poet, and the central event, the Chaining ceremony for the winner of the demanding *cynganedd* form (strict metrical verse).

*This was one of the four great pagan festivals of Britain, the others being on 1st November, 1st February, and 1st May. The festival of the Gule of August, as it was called, probably celebrated the realisation of the first fruits of the earth, and more particularly that of the grain-harvest. When Christianity was introduced, the day continued to be observed as a festival on these grounds, and, from a loaf being the usual offering at church, the service, and consequently the day, came to be called Hlaf-mass, subsequently shortened into Lammas, just as hlaf-dig bread-dispenser), applicable to the mistress of a house, came to be softened into the familiar and extensively used term, lady. This we would*

*call the rational definition of the word Lammas. There is another, but in our opinion utterly inadmissible derivation, pointing to the custom of bringing a lamb on this day, as an offering to the cathedral church of York. Without doubt, this custom, which was purely local, would take its rise with reference to the term Lammas, after the true original signification of that word had been forgotten.*

*Chambers Book of Days (1864).*

**Lammas** was also the time when hay meadows were reopened for common grazing, marked by country fairs (especially sheep fairs) and other festivities. After the 'loss' of eleven days in the calendar reform of 1752, some of these traditional events moved to 12 August, known as Old Lammas Day. One of the customs associated with Lammas fairs was that of 'handfasting', whereby a couple could embark on a trial marriage for a year, at the end of which they were free to choose whether to remain together or apart for the rest of their lives. In the city of Exeter in Devon the old **Lammas Fair** used to begin at noon on 31 July, and last into the first few days of August. Exeter still holds a Lammas Fair, although the date has now been moved to early July to allow the participation of schoolchildren and to link it with the Exeter Festival Craft Fair. The Lord Mayor reads a Lammas Fair Proclamation (based in part on the original Proclamation of Lammas Fair of 1330), and the White Glove (a large stuffed leather glove made of white leather, attached to the end of a pole and festooned with ribbons and flowers) is held aloft. Traditionally, the glove was displayed throughout the fair to signify the royal protection of the peace. The town of Ballycastle in County Antrim in Northern Ireland also holds an **Ould Lammas Fair**, in the last week of August. Held since 1606, the fair involves stalls, music and horse trading, and traditional delicacies include dulse, an edible seaweed, and yellow man, a bright yellow honeycombed toffee.

In Ireland and Scotland, 1 August was **Lughnasadh** (or **Lughnasa**), a festival in honour of Lugh, the pagan god of light and wisdom. Loaves were baked from the first corn of the harvest and either presented as offerings or eaten at the celebratory feast, which also included newly dug potatoes and fresh summer fruits. The day-long festivities featured games and sports, singing, dancing and story-telling, followed by general merrymaking around bonfires in the evening.



These are three photographs taken in the 'Plantation Garden' in Norwich on our June Coach outing. There are six more displayed in colour on the notice boards.

If anyone would like copies on any of these please have a word with the editor

There are more and the ones from the East Ruston Gardens are mainly of either flowers or scenic - with very few if any of our crowd

## ***Close To The Earth***

Come to a quiet place,  
A place so quiet  
That you can hear  
The grass grow.  
Lie on the soft grass,  
Run your fingers  
Through the softness  
Of its petals,  
And listen:  
Listen to the earth.  
The warm earth,  
The life pulse  
Of us all.  
Rest your body  
Against its warmth;  
Feel its greatness,  
The pulse and throb,  
The foundation  
Of the world.  
Look up into the sky,  
The all-embracing sky,  
The canopy of heaven.  
How small  
We really are:  
Specks in the greatness  
But still a part of it all.  
We grow from the earth  
And find  
Our own place.

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A sign outside a furniture shop, USA

**You are invited to  
'A Get-to-Know You  
Social gathering  
To meet Each other  
And to Celebrate  
The First 25 years of  
The U3A in Britain**

**On Wednesday  
The 1st August 2007  
At 2.30pm  
At Abbots Hall  
STOWMARKET**

**Refreshments and some diversion  
will be provided, but this will be  
entirely a SOCIAL occasion.**

**Come, meet one another  
and enjoy the Day**

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