



STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT
LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT
(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)
Registered Charity No. 1002987



Newsletter No 23

November 2009

The Chairman's Message:-

I feel very honoured to have been selected to be your Chairman. Especially to follow in the heels of Harold, who not only has served us so well over the last three years as Chairman, but was also instrumental in getting this (our) U3A off the ground in the first place; and that over twenty years ago ! We all owe him our deepest thanks. Thank you - Harold.

As many of you must be aware I have been very keen on the idea and ambition of the U3A and I do hope to succeed in developing those ideas as best I can in this term of my chairmanship. I look forward to receiving your help in developing our membership and range of interests. There have been a few new ideas brought forward which I hope to have announced very soon. But, please if you have any ideas tell me or one of the committee members and we will see what we can do to help and assist us all. I wish to keep this, my first statement as Chairman brief and to the point, yet may I remind you of four definite occasions already decided for this coming year :- 1) Christmas Luncheon on Monday 21st December 2) The Spring Symposium advertised on the back page of this newsletter. 3) Our June Outing will be to Pensthorpe, where we went a few years ago and where the BBC Spring Watch was this year and next year as well. 4) Our August event will we plan be a repeat of this years as the reaction to this year's was so appreciated.

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

The Secretary's Message:-

At the AGM in September, Harold Turner completed his three year term as Chairman and on behalf of the Committee and wider membership I would like to thank him for his able and committed contribution over this period. I'm very pleased that Harold has agreed to continue as a Committee member. Congratulations to Philip who was elected Chairman and I'm sure you will join with me in wishing him well in his new role. Also at the AGM, Kate Riddlestone was presented with a bouquet in recognition of her distribution of cards, to members in time of hardship, over the last three years. Our newest Committee member, Shirley Bonner, has kindly offered to take over the job so ably done by Kate. After the meeting, Philip gave us a very entertaining and informative talk about flax.

We were lucky to pick what must have been one of the best days of the summer for this year's garden party. This was our first time at Haughley Park Barn and we were not disappointed. More than 70 members enjoyed the ambiance of the venue, two mind bending quizzes, a variety of garden games, the chance to chat and, of course, a wonderful spread of food. Many thanks to Philip for his general organization of the event and quizzes which kept many people occupied all afternoon and to Liz, Molly and others for preparing the food.

Since the last Newsletter there have been some changes amongst our groups. 'Keep Fit' is now up and running again, meeting fortnightly in St Peter's church hall under the guidance of a new trainer. Thanks to Pauline Taylor for her efforts in making this happen. Music Appreciation (1) was suspended for a while but under the leadership of Eric Adamson and the hospitality of Sylvia Webb, is now resurrected. Helen Meade volunteered to take over as leader of the Shorter Walks group and, assisted by Angela Bentley, she's taken the 'strollers' from strength to strength. Similarly, Terry and Mollie have taken over from the very able Ann Watsham to lead the Town & Village History group. We also have to thank Pat Smith for forming a brand new group, 'Writing Your Memoirs'. The members have already had a couple of meetings and we wish them well in their future endeavours.

In order to expand the readership of this Newsletter to those members who may not be able to attend the monthly meeting when it's distributed, group leaders are asked to take a few copies to their next meeting. Also, this issue and back copies (to February 2007, issue 15), are available in pdf format at our website, www.u3astowmarket.wordpress.com.

Finally, and as about half of you are aware, I recently contacted all those members for whom I have an email address concerning interesting additions to our web site. I hope you looked at the links page, particularly the money saving and learning opportunities. I plan to continue this method of communication so please let Terry and myself know whenever you update your email address.

Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562

Since the last Newsletter:-

July:-

Mr Basil Abbott's theatrical exposition of his talk entitled 'I'm a Toastmaster and I'm All Right' had us all captivated and amused, whilst telling us about the job and curious happenings whilst being the Master of Ceremonies at all sorts of public and private occasions.

August:-

This year our annual summer outing took us to Haughley Park. It was one of the best days of the summer and so we had a magnificent afternoon there. With games to play, estate to explore and a truly wonderful spread provided by the ladies everyone seemed totally happy and content.

September:-

After the AGM business was concluded to the satisfaction of all. The new Chairman gave a talk on 'Flax' based on his early introduction to industrial life.

October:-

Mr Ron Godbold talked about 'A walk along the river path'. He has been very involved in the restoration of our local riverside amenities, and a lover of our rivers. His slide show and enthusiasm was infectious and very appreciated.

And now for:-

November:-

As most if not all of us will have bus passes, Mr Pip Wright will explain about 'Exploring Suffolk by bus Pass'

December:-

Our Christmas lunch this year will **NOT** be on a Wednesday as usual but on Monday the 21st .

January :-

Our Secretary Peter Dakeyne intends to tell us 'Everything that You Always Wanted to Know about Yogurt'.

February :_

The 'History of Stowmarket News' is the subject of Mr John Webb's talk this month.

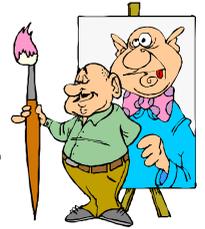
March :-

Mrs Frances Hart hopes to give us a new view of 'Mozart as seen through the eyes of his wife Constanze'.

Activity Groups:-

Art Appreciation :-

The SUFFOLK ARTISTS group has been meeting for four years. As it enters its fifth, it has changed its title. It is now the ART APPRECIATION GROUP. This agreed change reflects the change in the focus of the group. Having explored Suffolk-born artists and artists who have worked in the county, the group has decided to widen its focus. The chosen study topic for the Autumn is: 'WORLD ART AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ART MEDIA'. This seems set to cover every aspect of visual art and should keep the group going for the next four years!



A number of Stowmarket U3A members have asked to join the Art Appreciation Group. Unfortunately, the house isn't big enough to accommodate more members for our regular fortnightly sessions. Should anyone wish to start a second Art Appreciation group, we would happily help in setting it up. We have collected many resources over the years and would be happy to lend them to other enthusiasts for art history.

Sally & Tony Taylor

RONALD BLYTHE AND STOWMARKET U3A

The author Ronald Blythe ('Akenfield', 'First Friend's', 'Word From Wormingford') attended the September 1st meeting of the Art Appreciation Group at the invitation of Nancy Baird and group members. Mr. Blythe talked to the group about the artists Paul, John and Christine Nash, and Dora Carrington. He then shared lunch with us. It was a most entertaining and informative session. Mr. Blythe is charming, immensely knowledgeable and very good company. The occasion was much enjoyed by everyone.

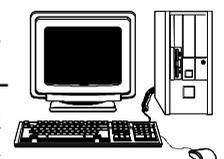
In his later regular column to the *Church-Times* 'WORD FROM WORMINGFORD' Mr. Blythe wrote: "The following day, I went to Stowmarket to talk about John and Paul Nash and Carrington to the best small U3A group ever....Here, about 20 women and two men had met twice a month to study art, supplementing the talks with visits to galleries. It was beautifully manageable, and for the first time I began to recognise the value of this organisation." Mr. Blythe evidently enjoyed the visit as much as we did!

Tony Taylor

01449 771 168

Computer Group:-

We have recruited some new members to make use of our excellent facilities at Stowupland High School. We are so lucky to have the



use of their superb computer suite every second Monday in term time from 10.30 – 12.30.

Although members from other U3As are joining us, there is still room for more of you. It is an ideal opportunity particularly for those less confident computer users to get some instruction and one-to-one mentoring in the same session. This is what U3A learning is all about. We will be doing some more *Googling* and hopefully some basic word processing in the next few meetings.

Remember to assemble at Reception in good time, ready to move off at 10.30 am. A map to show the location of the school can be accessed on our website as well as the group's numerous activities at:

<http://wendywhitecat.wordpress.com>

Wendy Morgan

01473 824 237

Country Strolls:-

Longer:-

The group did very well, taking it in turns to lead the walks throughout the summer. The walk around Holbrook and along the river edge was most enjoyable. On the next walk we got drenched just before reaching the pub for lunch. We had a good laugh changing our trousers and shoes and trying to dry out.



The walk along the river Brome involved crossing the A140 successfully and then finding fields of parsley and other herbs being grown commercially. Our next walk took us around the village of Emswell, where we found a private woodland (fairly new) with a welcome bench for a rest. We next walked from Sproughton into Ipswich along the river. We found this very interesting and returned via two of Ipswich's public parks. All the walks have been well attended and most enjoyable.

Andrea Burton

01449 774 869

Short -

We have been very fortunate with the weather this summer, now into autumn for our walks. When it did rain in July it missed our Friday walks, so how lucky was that. A warm welcome to our new members to the group - we hope they will enjoy our strolls with a 'cuppa' and cake to complete our day.

A big thank you to Angela who led our Summer day walk at West Stow and also organised perfect weather. We all enjoyed our picnic lunch and unfortunately so did the wasps! Thank you Angela and also my husband for leading the walks while I was away on holiday. Very much appreciated! Happy walking.

Helen Mead

01449 673 660

Card Craft Group:-

Whilst we have been a popular and busy group in the past sadly attendance for our first two meetings this season have been rather sparse, admittedly for a wide variety of reasons. Yet we hope to regain numbers for the rest of the season, and to enjoy producing cards for Christmas, the New Year and for whatever occasion is called for as we go along.

If you would like to join us working at this very popular hobby please get in contact with me.

Liz Weir

01449 676 528



Discussion Group:-

Like many other groups, this autumn we have been suffering from reduced numbers taking part in our lively and wide ranging chats. We are confident that there will be a quick return to the levels of attendance that we have become accustomed to. As you can see from our programme we have a very interesting range of subjects for the rest of this season, but if you would like to join us you will, of course, be made very welcome.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528



Gardens and Things:-

July- Hockwold-cum-Wilton, near Thetford was this month's destination. Several car loads of us navigated our way to East Lode House and spent a sunny morning exploring the charming award-winning cottage style garden. The imaginative wavy wall incorporating a seat and bordering a pond was much admired. Winding paths led the visitor via living arches to secret corners, wooded areas, dry garden and even an extensive allotment plot.

Following a delicious lunch in an ancient hostelry in nearby Brandon, while some explored the river path and town, others went to the Thetford Garden Centre. Indeed another enjoyable visit was made.

August - this month the visit was combined with the general visit to Haughley Park.

September - there was no meeting this month due to a lack of a volunteering organiser.

October - Mr David Hughes of the County Landscape and Gardens team came to the Woodfield Bowls Club to give us an illustrated talk on the progress of his team in improving the hedgerows, round-a-bouts etc. In Mid-Suffolk with some stress on the area of Needham Market's lake area. It is surprising how much we miss and take for granted as we travel



around. Now that all this has been pointed out to us surely we must appreciate our local heritage that much more.

November - Possibly our most important meeting of the year when we will be organising the programme for 2010. This will be on the 19th at 10.30am at Woodfield Bowls Club. Please come and make this the wonderful planning day that it needs to be, but only with your help can we succeed.

Harold Turner

01449 676 882

Memoirs Group :-

This is a new group which started in September. The aim is to get members to begin to write down their memories of life in their formative years.



During our first meeting we took time to get to know one another and to reminisce about our childhood days. In October Jennifer Jones, who had lectured at the 2008 Autumn Academy on 'Writing Your Autobiography', gave us an interesting talk on how we should begin. In the coming month, November, we start in earnest. It should be very interesting!

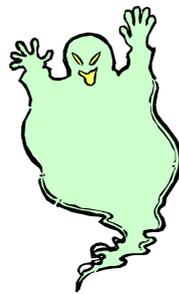
We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Membership, however, is limited. It may be possible, in future, to start a second group if there is sufficient interest forthcoming.

Pat Smith

01449 675 568

Myths & Legends:-

Whilst this is but a very small group we do have very lively and interesting discussions on a huge range of subjects from world wide myths and legends and their contribution to today's inheritance and effect on today's viewpoints.



If you think you would be interested in joining us please contact me.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Poetry Group:-

The poetry group started the autumn term with plans to look at the work of many poets. We started with contemporary poetry and found this to be such a wealth of style and subject matter that our original program was postponed so that we could do justice to these new and exciting poets. No subject is taboo to the poets writing today. We have read poems on relationships, death, murder, depression and even rape as well as poems of great love, descriptive poems of travel and the beauty of nature. We haven't enjoyed



every poem, but have appreciated the realistic approach used by the writers

The group were once again invited to read to the East Suffolk Association for the Blind at its October meeting. Having been asked to have an autumn / farming theme, we found some funny poems which mixed with the more traditional poems gave us hope an enjoyable afternoon.

Helen Freeman

01449 613 060

RISING DAMP by U.A. Fanthorpe (1982)

At our feet they lie low,
The little fervent underground
Rivers of London
*Effra, Graveney, Falcon, Quaggy,
Wandle, Walbrook, Tyburn, Fleet*

Whose names are disfigured,
Frayed, effaced.

These are the Magogs that chewed the clay
To the basin that London nestles in.
These are the currents that chiselled the city,
That washed the clothes and turned the mills,
Where children drank and salmon swam
And wells were holy.

They have gone under.
Boxed, like the magician's assistant.
Buried alive in earth.
Forgotten, like the dead.

They return spectrally after heavy rain,
Confounding suburban gardens. They infiltrate
Chronic bronchitis statistics. A silken
Slur haunts dwellings by shrouded
Watercourses, and is taken
For the footing of the dead.

Being of our world, they will return
(Westbourne, caged at Sloane Square,
Will jack from his box),
Will deluge cellars, detonate manholes,
Plant effluent on our faces,
Sink the city.
*Effra, Graveney, Falcon, Quaggy,
Wandle, Walbrook, Tyburn, Fleet*

It is the other rivers that lie
Lower, that touch us only in dreams
That never surface. We feel their tug
As a dowser's rod bends to the surface below
Phegathon, Acheron, Lethe, Styx.

Town & Village History:-

Our **August** visit was to the small market town of Clare, although there is apparently some disagreement locally as to whether it is a 'small town' or a 'large village!

The tour started at the church of St Peter & St Paul where we were met by the rector Canon Rankin who gave us an interesting and amusing description of its history and its links with the town over the centuries. We then visited the town museum which normally opens only in the afternoon but was opened especially for our group. The curator then led us to our luncheon venue via a number of the town's more historic buildings.

After lunch we went for a stroll around the country park by the river Stour where we could view the ruins of the Augustinian priory and the castle.

In **September** Colin and Barbara Robertson led us on a tour of the lovely village of Polstead which is a place that should be visited by anyone who is convinced that East Anglia is flat and uninteresting. The church featured prominently at the start of our visit and what a wonderful sight it was, sitting atop a high rise and overlooking a valley and the rolling countryside in bright summer sunshine. We then moved onto the village up a very steep hill where those of a more athletic nature strolled up and down viewing some of the interesting old houses. We then retired to a local hostelry for an excellent lunch well satisfied with another successful day out.

October - 14 members were blessed with fine weather for their trip to Woodbridge. Our knowledgeable and entertaining guide showed us around some of the town's hidden treasures and explained how many of the medieval timbered buildings are hidden behind Georgian brick facades. One highlight of our visit was the Church where a large team of enthusiastic flower arrangers were getting ready for harvest festival.

After being fed and watered at the Whistlestop café we spent the afternoon exploring the riverside path, museums or doing a bit of retail therapy.

Terry Potter

01449 770 256

Wine Appreciation Group:-

In July we tried South African wines, August, Provençal French wines and in October we brought our favourite bottles to the table. We watched a DVD on the history of the growing and harvesting of wines from Cotes de Provence then tasted a Bandol red, a Rimauresque rose, a Chateau Pigoulet white, all expensive but smooth, rich and delicious and worth every penny. Our favourites var-



ied from a shiraz, house wines used by local restaurants and an unusual Italian and a passable white from Lidle. Though the sense of taste is such a personal and subjective thing we find by trying varieties from around the world it has given us a greater opportunity to sample wine we knew little about. In December we will try the wines of Italy, in vino veritas [there is truth in wine. that is, the truth comes out]

Zoe Bystricky

01449 676

Other Groups :-

Archive Film:-

Pat Leon

01449 615 409



Democracy & Election Systems:-

David Chapman

01449 736 223



Entertainment (Theatrical) Group:-

Joan Varley

01449 612 767



Luncheon Club:-

Angela Bentley

01449 780 274

Pauline Taylor

01449 678 954



Keep fit :-

Pauline Taylor

01449 678 954



Music Appreciation (1) :-

Eric Adamson

01449 676 446

Music Appreciation (2) :-

Connie Ruegg

01449 674 673



Needle Craft Group :-

Alicia Beaton

01449

Scrabble Groups:-

Sheila Dobey

01449 677 265

Theatre Going Group :-

Jon

U3A Suffolk & District Network :-

As many of you will already know our 'Autumn Academy' held on Saturday 10th of October seems to have been another great success to judge by comments received. We are having a debrief on the 23rd and it is expected that another will be held in October next year, if the reports bear out our present impressions.

On the back page you can see that a 'Spring Symposium' is planned for May. We hope that there will be a good response, especially as last year's effort had to be abandoned due to lack of support. If you have any good ideas as to what else this Network

could usefully run in the future, please tell either of us as soon as possible. The next meeting of the Network will be on the 26th inst. here in Stowmarket, and at which possible future plans will be discussed.

Sally Taylor 01449 771 168 or
Philip Weir
01449 676 528

U3A Central Office News :-

Ian Searle, a 74-year-old former teacher, was elected chairman at the annual general meeting at Heriott Watt University, Edinburgh, on September 4. Mr Searle studied modern languages at Oriel College Oxford and in 1954-6 was one of the national servicemen who were taught Russian and trained to listen to military communications. He has also studied mathematics at the Open University. He spent five years as a district education officer in the Solomon Islands, and has taught languages, science and drama in primary, secondary and preparatory schools, and worked in curriculum development. He lives in Cornwall, where he is a member of the Carrick U3A. He takes over the chairmanship from Jean Goodeve of the Pembrokeshire U3A.

THIRD AGE TRUST



Mr Searle said: "I am delighted to become chairman at this crucial time in the U3A's history. Its success and its contribution are now being nationally recognised, and we are the leading authority on informal adult learning. I am sure we have an even greater contribution to make in the future, both to the quality of life of older people, and to the national education debate."

The AGM heard that the U3A's income has exceeded £1 million for the first time in its 27 year history. Treasurer Terry Hardie said that, defying the recession, the U3A is still growing fast, with 11 per cent more members last year bringing its total membership to over 229,000. There are now 760 local U3As affiliated to the national body, and a new U3A is formed every week.

The AGM was held during the Annual Conference and for more details visit www.u3a.org.uk then look at 'Press Releases' and 'Conference 2009'. Make sure to sign up as a member to ensure 'access to all areas' of the U3A site.

Peter Dakeyne

01449 781 562

Yuletide

The word Yule, now synonymous with Christmas, originally denoted a pagan festival celebrated around the time of the winter solstice. The traditional Yule log, which was once ceremoniously dragged in from the woods on Christmas Eve to provide warmth and light for the festive season, is a relic of the ancient bonfires that characterized this festival. In modern times, the Yule log itself survives only in symbolic form, as a chocolate-covered, log-shaped cake eaten instead of (or as well as) the traditional Christmas fruitcake.

Pantomime

Serious theatregoers must abandon any hope of intellectual stimulation in December: this is pantomime season, when various celebrities take to the stage in comic dramatized versions of children's fairy tales or folk tales. Perennial favourites include Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Jack and the Beanstalk, Dick Whittington and Aladdin. Among the cast are two stock characters — the attractive 'principal boy', played by a girl or woman, and the grotesque 'dame', played by a man — and audience participation is encouraged (Oh no it isn't! 'Oh yes it is!').

The modern pantomime has come a long way from its origin as an entertainment in mime, with elements introduced from the Italian commedia dell'arte in the early 18th century, notably the characters of Harlequin, Columbine and Pantaloon. It was condemned by various actors and writers of the 18th and 19th centuries, but survived and evolved to become one of the most popular and enduring traditions of the British theatre.

The songbirds tethered inside the pie started to sing when the upper crust was removed

LOOKING through the Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes wondering if today's children are as fascinated as we were long ago by these little poems, the first we ever learned. Doubtful somehow.

The line in 'Sing a Song of Sixpence', 'When the pie was opened the birds began to sing' is explained by a recipe in an Italian cookbook of 1549 'for making pyes so that birds may be alive in them and flie out when it is cut up.' The crust was made in the usual way, but filled with fruit or dried beans to weigh the bottom crust down while the pie was being baked. When the pie had cooled, songbirds were tethered inside, the dish was brought to the are to believe the rhyme, the birds started to sing when the upper crust was removed.

*John Nott, author of *The Cook's and Confectioner's Dictionary* (1723), tells us that the fun was greatly increased at the dinner table when the birds were not tethered in the pie, but flew around the room putting out the candles 'and so cause a diverting Hurley-Burley among the guests in the dark'. This pie was called *uzzle-pye* by the old writers. *Uzzle* is a dialectal variant of *ousel* or *ouzel* an old name for the blackbird, *turdus merula*. From Old English *Osle*, which has a cognate in Old High German *amsala* and Modern German *Amsel*; its ulterior etymology is not known.*

WALKING GROUP TRIP TO THE MALVERN HILLS

We did it! Sixteen 'peaks' along the ridge of the Malvern Hills!! It took 3 days but for five ladies from flat Suffolk that was really good going. The Malvern Hills stand up above the Severn Valley, beautiful slopes and 'peaks' of some of the oldest rocks in Britain that contain no fossils because they were formed before life on earth. And they are the source of clear spring water which can be collected at various 'wells' or springs around the edges of the hills.

We rented a house on the side of the Worcestershire Beacon (at 1395 feet this is the highest in the range), in Great Malvern, not too far from St. Anne's Well, with a wonderful view over the town and countryside beyond. We had fantastic sunrises reminding us where home was - due East.

On the first day we climbed the middle section of the hills, starting, appropriately enough, with Perseverance Hill followed by Jubilee Hill and then Pinnacle. We continued to the Herefordshire Beacon, also known as British Camp which has the remains of a large Iron Age Fort on it, with deep ditches all round. We returned to the start of our walk along a path that followed a lower contour through the woods which covered the slopes.

On the second day we tackled what we thought would be the easier lower peaks, but despite being lower they were much steeper and not much frequented by other visitors. Raggedstone Hill will be engraved on our memories as the most challenging ascent made more difficult because of the loose skree underfoot. Coming down was also rather terrifying.

We expected a tougher climb on the third day up to the Worcestershire Beacon but the slope was gentler and the paths more frequented by visitors. The sun came out and we had our picnic looking down on the town and the valley below. After a circumnavigation of North Hill and a stretch to the last hill, End Hill, we returned to St. Anne's Well cafe for tea and a huge slice of cake.

Our last day was spent in Worcester visiting the Cathedral and having a stroll along the banks of the Severn and lunch in the sun at an outdoor restaurant. Our bus passes came in useful as we returned via Upton upon Severn where we managed another stroll and another cup of tea and slice of cake after visiting the Heritage Centre with the history of life on the river before articulated lorries changed transportation.

Plans for next years trip are now in the making. Andrea Burton. Stowmarket U3A.

A SPRINGTIME EVENT FOR U3A MEMBERS

'The Beauty & The Beast' –

A day exploring contrasting themes in art.

To be held at the Kesgrave Centre on:

Saturday, 8th May 2010

Cost: £10 Booking forms available from:

Tony Taylor 01449 771 168

Deadline for next issues: - 27th February 2010 for the March copy
and 30th June for July.

Newsletter edited by Philip Weir

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