



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



**From the Chairman :-**

Now we have completed another year and after an enjoyable summer here we are ready to make progress through another academic year. As in all things in this life our plans do not always run true to our ideas and wishes; so further on in this newsletter you will find details of our changed plans for our Christmas Luncheon and also our return visit to the Olympic scene, which has been organised at very short notice due to a special request from some of our members, and we are delighted to oblige in this way.

At the AGM I made special comment as to the amount of work and time given by Peter to our U3A and really we would be lost without his generous efforts on our behalf. During the past year it has been wonderful to find and to appreciate the new role taken up by Tony as Group Coordinator. It is a job that has been needed for a long time and it is nice to see that already we are having several new groups interested in decidedly new areas of study. It is my hope and ambition that these advances shall continue throughout the year.

For our July copy of the newsletter I was, unfortunately, rather disappointed in the response and help coming from number of contributions offered then and sadly this time it is not a lot better. I am convince that this newsletter is an important item for us all and I sincerely hope that the next one will attract much more from you.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

**From the Secretary :-**

Unfortunately, Haughley Park Barn was again not available to us for our August Garden Party so we moved this year to Stowmarket Rugby Club. With an excellent buffet laid out and close on 70 members attending, about half chose to sit inside to chat and eat whilst the remainder moved outside. Whilst the weather was not exactly wonderful (it did not rain!) we all enjoyed Philip's quizzes and the available garden games.

We held our AGM in September. The Chairman opened the meeting and this was followed by the Secretary's report. Jenny Lawler presented the financial accounts showing a healthy situation at the Y/E 31/07/2011. The notice of the AGM (with nomination slips) was posted at the July meeting, the August Garden party and on the web. As there were no nominations received the Committee was re-elected unopposed. Helen Freeman completed her term as programme Secretary and Dee Payne was elected to take over the role. It was announced that it is likely that the AGM will take a different format next year and this will be discussed further at the next Committee Meeting in November.

Due to popular demand and at very short notice we have organised another trip to the Olympic sites. See the full information elsewhere in the Newsletter.

We had arranged to hold our Christmas lunch at the Stowmarket Rugby Club this year but, due to unforeseen circumstances we have had to revert to the URC Hall, which fortunately was still available.

Our membership numbers have increased significantly this year. From a low of 143 at the end of July 2010 it had increased to 168, some 17.5% by 31st July 2011. These figures mask the even more impressive facts that we lost only 16 due to non renewal and other reasons, but gained 41 new members (and at the AGM welcomed a further six new members) – I haven't checked back, but I'd guess that this is a record in 1 year. Once again we have been able to hold membership subscription at £10.00 pp so can I remind you that, if you have not already done so, it is time to renew for 2011/2012.

Please keep watching our web site and don't forget to let me know if you change your email address. You can now access the site by using our own web address, [www.u3astowmarket.org.uk](http://www.u3astowmarket.org.uk)

Peter Dakeyne

[peter@dakeyne.com](mailto:peter@dakeyne.com)

01449 781 562

Since the last Newsletter :-

July :-

Mr Brian Heard returned to give us more of the 'Search for the Smoking Gun'. This time we learnt a lot about life living in Hong Kong and a somewhat different view of native crime (so different from our general appreciation). A well received and humorous presentation.

August :-

Almost 70 of our members attended this years 'Garden Party' at a new location - the Stowmarket Rugby Club'. Since the weather, whilst dry was not the best this venue proved to be an excellent choice and one we will most likely repeat. Being strictly a social occasion the quizzes, games and food provided seemed to be enjoyed by all.

September :-

As normal, we held our AGM this month and this was followed by a talk by Bronwyn Leon on 'Christmas in the Heat'.

October :-

We will most likely be puzzled by the 'Codes, Ciphers and Enigmas' in the memory of Mrs Joyce Kimber.

November :-

Again memories feature in Mr Mike Robinson's talk on 'Life in a Country Cottage before Electricity and running Water'. Many of us will have experienced that.

December :-

In a change of plan, our Christmas Luncheon will be held once again at the URC Hall - we hope that even more of you will attend this get-together this year to make it a record breaking event.

And now for :-

#### GROUPS COORDINATOR'S COMMENT

A number of ideas were shared around about a range of new groups that might possibly start in the Stowmarket U3A. Quite a lot of effort was put into trying to initiate these but, alas, without much in terms of results. As I meet people around town and at meetings I am often asked what is happening. The answer, baldly, is that at the moment, very little. We have the lists of people with various interests. Now we need people to come forward and say: "This is what we will do to start them."

:Tony Taylor

01449 258192

#### Art Appreciation :-

The group started the Autumn meetings in September with a session on Irish Art, ably led by Jenifer Adams. There is never quite enough time to explore all the riches of a nation's art in a single session, but the group learned a great deal and were able to see some images of exquisite artworks, including a real and very beautiful oil-painting. It is always good to see the real thing.



Other topics for the Autumn include: 'Artists in the Time of the Great War'; The effects of 'Light in Art'; 'Georgia O'Keefe' and 'Photography and Art'. The group still retains its full membership as it enters its sixth year.

Though ours is not a practical art group one of our members, Nicky Heming, has an exhibition of her own work currently running at the Frame Gallery in Ipswich.

Tony Taylor :-

01449 258192

#### Computer group :-

Due to changes in the pupil time table at Stowupland High School, we have had to alter our meeting day and time; now 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 1.30pm for drinks and initial discussions before moving to the ICT suite, 2.00pm until 4.00pm. We looked at other possible venues but there was overwhelming support to remain at Stowupland.



Since the last Newsletter we have had a very varied series of discussions and presentations. In July, I gave an introduction to Windows Movie Maker; in August the meeting was held at the Bowls Club when Philip gave us some hints and tips on 'Windows' and 'Word' and in September we had an interesting and informative look at 'Online Banking' in a talk given by two of the team from NatWest Bank in Stowmarket. Most recently, at our October meeting, Roy Fidler showed us how to design a Christmas card using Photoshop Elements 8. In November we will be looking at 'Windows 7' and December will see us 'Designing a Poster'.

All meetings start with 'Agony Corner' when members can raise any computer related issues or problems for discussion. There's usually somebody around the table who's had the same problem and solved it or, if not, some research is done later and the answers passed to everyone. If you go onto the Computer Group page on the website (please log on to [www.u3astowmarket.org.uk](http://www.u3astowmarket.org.uk), then click 'Groups' then 'Computer') you will find links to notes for all meetings back to November last year.

As always, we want to encourage beginners and the more experienced alike and although we are already a fairly large group (currently numbering about 40), there is still room for new members. Average attendance at each meeting is 17-20.

Finally, I've recently analysed the activity statistics on our Stowmarket web site. Over the last year (to 12/10/11) the total number of 'hits' was 7,903. This is not as good as it looks, however. The top page was 'Scrabble Playing Group' with 2,274 hits (28.8%) with the next highest groups being 'Country Strolls' with 216 (2.7%) and 'Stowmarket U3A Computer Group' with only 199 (2.5% of the total) hits. This means that the highest proportion of visitors to our web site is by those who are just searching for 'Scrabble' on Google and the like, not for 'Stowmarket U3A'. Food for thought?

Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562

### **Country Strolls :-**

#### **Longer :-**

Our group continued to meet throughout the summer, although numbers were down on some days because of holidays, which was to be expected.



Our thanks go to John and Julia for a lovely walk around Earl Stonham and to Peter and Zena for a great walk around Redgrave and Lopham Fen (despite the midges!). In August Brian and Hazel led a walk around Trimley St Martin which was enjoyed by those who went and Helen W took us to Newbourne which also went down to the riverside which is always enjoyable. September has taken us to Lavenham and Brent Eleigh, new territory for some of us, led by Phil and Anne and 11 of us managed quite an interesting walk from Stowmarket - where we looked at the carvings on the sides of the new bridges - to Creting St Peter and back along the river.

Lunches at the pubs have always been a great way to socialise and relax afterwards.

Andrea Burton 01449 774 869

#### **Shorter :-**

First of all I would like to thank Judy, who has led some walks for us. Unfortunately she now has other commitments on Fridays - so we wish her well.

Marion led a lovely rural walk around Wyverstone in July, and which finished with our usual 'tea & cake'.

This year the weather was kind for us on our 'Day Walk' in July, which was at Nettleshall Heath. This was led by Angela and eleven of us enjoyed strolling through the woods, stopping there for our picnic lunch. This was followed by a gentle half-hour stroll by the river.

Lets hope that we have a lovely autumn, so that we can enjoy the beautiful autumnal colours on our walks.

Helen Mead 01449 673 660

### **Discussion Group :-**

Whilst we are not a very large group our topics cover a very wide range of interests and provoke a wonderfully wide and stimulating view of various aspects of our understanding of the world about us.



Indeed we welcome any similarly minded members to join us to discuss the subject of the day.

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

### **Gardens and Things :-**

**April** The feeling of spring was in the air and the thoughts of new stock for the garden lead us to thinking of stocking up with plants for the new season, so Angela arranged a visit to "Highways" A mini bus was hired and off we went to "Highways" just outside of Norwich, where a full day was spent on browsing though this very large centre with every thing you can think of appertaining to the outdoor living. Needless to say the coach luggage area became rather full with quite a selection of greenery, but a good time was had by all, and most of us had enough plants to keep us busy till our next venture out.



**May** Mike elected to take the group to Jimmy's farm (as seen on TV) the farm is situated just off the A14 near the Nacton turn off and we all congregated at the Solar car park at 9.45 am for the journey arriving at about 10.15 just in time for a coffee, After this interlude we then commenced to tour the grounds which have a wide variety of lovely animals which are quite approachable and friendly, the one place that captured every one admiration was the butterfly house which had a surprising number of different species. When you first walk in they are so well camouflaged that there seems to be nothing about, but when you start looking they are everywhere. So after a good look round we all retired for lunch and quite a few went on to the Suffolk food hall which is not far away

**June** The group joined in with the club outing which I am sure will be commented on elsewhere in the news letter

**July** Harold and Irene visited the Stockyard centre, which the group had seen on TV with Monty Don, and we were given coffee and a talk from the start of the enterprise up to its present day form - the trials and tribulation were astounding and many obstacles have had to be overcome. We then put our Wellingtons on and toured the centre; then on to the Finningham White Horse for our lunch and were suitably entertained to

a very good meal. For the afternoon, we carried on to the Chili farm on the A140 and were given a guided tour of the chillis. We were all surprised by the number of varieties that exist and finished up with afternoon tea and chilli flavoured scones and chilli chocolate brownies, to conclude a good day out .

Harold Turner 01449 676 882

#### **Book Club :-**

Mary Bradley 01449 775 628

#### **Memoirs Group :-**

Pat Smith 01449 675 568

#### **Myths & Legends :-**

This sounds a strange subject to be interested in, but we find that our monthly topics gives rise to many unexpected views and thoughts, some of which surprisingly can be very pertinent in today's setting.

Although we are few in number we would love to have you come and join us in our deliberations

Philip Weir 01449 676 528



#### **Play Reading Group**

Helen Freeman 01449 613 060

#### **Poetry Group :-**

Helen Freeman 01449 613 060

#### **Town and Village History :-**

We have had an excellent year with many varied and interesting visits.

These ranged from the school at Burston which experienced the longest recorded strike lasting over 20 years to a visit to the refurbished Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds where we learned of not only the history of the building but also that of theatre in general. In June we delved into the history and development of the ancient barns at Coggleshall and the temple at Cressing and a month later we were able to see the advances made in the restoration of the Mid Suffolk Light Railway at Wetheringsett which apparently ran " from nowhere to the middle of a field"! For the next two visits we were able to share in the history of two Suffolk villages firstly at Rattlesden and then, in September, Kersey and district.

By the time you read this our final visit for 2011 will have been held in Felixstowe.

We are now having our Winter rest and I look forward to another fulfilling year in 2012.

Terry Potter 01449 770 256



#### **Wine Appreciation Group :-**

Zoe Bystricky: Sorry, this group has now closed

#### **Entertainment (Theatrical) Group**

Joan Varley 01449 612 767

#### **Luncheon Club :-**

Angela Bentley 01449 780 274 or

Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954

#### **Keep Fit :-**

Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954

#### **Music Appreciation :-**

Connie Ruegg: Sorry, this group has now closed

#### **Scrabble Groups :-**

Sheila Dobey 01449 677 265

#### **Suffolk & District Network of U3As :-**

Sally Taylor 01449 771 168 or

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

#### **U3A Central Office :-**

In 2010, the Third Age Trust carried out a survey about 'All things U3A' amongst members. Here are some edited highlights from the Chairman's, Ian Searle, report published in the summer.



"The U3As appear to value what we (The Third Age Trust) do and seek little by way of innovation.

The statistics confirmed that almost all U3As were still growing, some steadily, some rapidly. A few were largely unchanged. The mix of members was much as before with a slightly higher proportion of men than in previous surveys. There is still little ethnic diversity.

As far as services offered, almost all of them were deemed desirable. Advice on legal and financial matters, the provision of indemnity and other insurances, and help with start-ups were all considered essential. Highly desirable or valuable were such things as, the monthly mailings from the National Office, U3A News, all forms of national publicity, the website and interactions with other organisations.

The open-ended questions confirmed the constraints on growth were largely the lack of suitable venues for meetings and some difficulties in recruiting group leaders and committee members. There were a number of mentions of the high standard of service provided by the National Office.

Finally, the role of the Trust itself was seen as particularly important for smaller, rural U3As, but it should guard against being too 'highbrow', by which

was often meant too concerned with matters more closely associated with formal educational institutions. One correspondent simply said the Trust should not try too hard, another that the Trust should not take itself too seriously – ‘Our working days are over!’ Others emphasised that the social nature of the U3A should never be ignored. Many reminded us of the need to remember a sense of fun.

With so many respondents it was to be expected that there would be contradictory comments: ‘Although this questionnaire has resulted in a lot of criticism, we feel that the Third Age Trust is doing a very good job of holding the organisation together and we are happy to be part of that organisation,’ said one. Another demanded, ‘No rules or anything from above’. Another, ‘The educational idea, although kept up by the Third Age Trust, is not what most U3As are interested in’. The one remark which made me smile related to the composition of the membership of one U3A; ‘We are mostly respectable ladies of a certain age’.

You can read the full version and learn more about The Third Age Trust (the Central Office of the U3A) by logging on to [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk). Make sure to register as a member so you can access all the documents and other information available.

Peter Dakeyne [peter@dakeyne.com](mailto:peter@dakeyne.com) 01449 781 562

### **Suffolk and District Network of U3As**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October, Autumn Academy 6 was held at Combs Middle School. Numbers were down this year, but nevertheless 120 U3A members from all over Suffolk (including 15 from Stowmarket) enjoyed a most informative and entertaining series of talks and presentations by other U3A members. There was some last minute reorganisation necessary when two of the presenters had to cancel but other members were able to stand in take the same subjects so nobody was disappointed (a great example of U3A members getting together and helping each other).

Frances Lewis, the S&D Network Chairman reports that at the closing session the overwhelming consensus was that this event, or something very similar, should be repeated next year. There will then, be an AA7 and its format and location will be discussed over the coming months by the Network representatives and the AA working party. Many thanks once again to said working party that put in so much effort behind the scenes.

Following the very successful Spring Symposium held in May this year it has been decided to hold a similar event in 2012. Entitled ‘Celebrating the Arts in Suffolk Today’ the Spring Symposium 2012 will again be held in the drama studio at Stowupland High School on 19<sup>th</sup> May. In the morning

Professor Christopher Green OBE, music critic and Conductor of the Triannon choir in Ipswich for fifty years, will look at the vibrant musical scene in the county and Alan Wilkinson, Past President of the Suffolk Architectural Association, will describe the latest additions to the built environment in the county, both private and public. Then, in the afternoon, Sarah Bower, novelist and creative-writing tutor, will look at the county’s many literary activities, from well-known authors to newcomers, and from literary festivals to writers’ circles. Finally, Barbara Dougan MA, artist, curator and consultant, will provide an over-view of the many aspects of the visual arts in Suffolk.

Full details and application forms will be available at the October meeting and can be accessed from the S&D web site, below, or our own Stowmarket web site. Last year was a sell out, so please make sure you book early to reserve your place!

The next S&D Network meeting will be hosted by Stowmarket U3A on 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Rookery Bowls Club. A new treasurer needs to be elected as the current incumbent steps down. If you feel that you could take on this role, please let me know so that you can be nominated as soon as possible. The minutes of the last meeting and much more information can be viewed on the web site, [www.u3asuffolknetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3asuffolknetwork.org.uk).

Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562  
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### **You know when you are growing old.....**

Your back hurts; you eat food past its sell-by date; your carpet is patterned; you go supermarket shopping in the evening to pick up marked-down bargains; you can spell; you hang your clothes on padded coat hangers; you save the hearing aid flyer that falls out of the colour supplement; you try to get electrical gadgets repaired when they go wrong; you save the free little packets of sugar from cafés; you have worn a knitted swimsuit; when you watch black and white films you spend the whole time pointing at the screen going, ‘He’s dead... She’s dead...’; your car stereo is tuned to Radio 2.

Colin Slater

You know you’re knocking on when you get to the top of the stairs and can’t remember what you went up for. So you go back downstairs to help you remember what you went upstairs for. You finally remember what you went upstairs for, so up you go again but when you find it you have forgotten why you wanted it.

Millicent Kemp

... you go on holiday and always pack a sweater.

Denis Norton

# Stowmarket U3A Christmas Lunch 2011

Date: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December  
Venue: URC Hall, 12.00pm for 12.30pm

***Please note change from previously published venue. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the lunch will not now be held at the Stowmarket Rugby Club.***

Ticket Price: **£17.00** per person (first increase in 5 years!!)  
On sale now and at the November Meeting

## Menu

Prawn Cocktail

or

Cream of Tomato & Basil soup

or

Warm Goats cheese & caramelised red onion tart  
served with salad garnish

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Traditional Roast Turkey

Chipolata sausage

Stuffing

Cranberry sauce

or

Chestnut & sweet potato nut roast

Both the above served with roast potatoes & a selection of vegetables

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Homemade Christmas pudding with Brandy butter & cream

or

Trio of mini desserts

or

Cheese selection & biscuits

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Coffee & Mints

Homemade Mince pies

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Fruit Juice will be available

**Early reservation is advised!**

# **Olympic Sites Outing, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

This is a 'Blue Badge' Guided Tour by Galloway Coaches

**Cost £18.00 pp**

(Please note that this covers the cost of travel and the Blue Badge tour but does not include any meals or other refreshments)

Due to popular demand, a booking has been made to repeat last year's 'Olympic Sites' trip. Sorry for the short notice.

If you have already reserved a place, tickets will be available for sale at the 19<sup>th</sup> October meeting.

There are still a few places available. If you would like to join the trip and can't get to the meeting, please contact Peter Dakeyne or Philip Weir as soon as possible.

The itinerary *has not yet been finalised* but will be *similar* to that given below:-

## **Itinerary**

- 8.25 Pick-up pedestrians at Stowmarket Station
- 8.30 Pick-up drivers at Meadlands Recreational Centre car park (free).
- 10.30 Arrive – Docklands for Coffee stop
- 11.15 Depart Docklands through old Docks towards Stratford for Loop of Stratford and Olympic Park site development
- 11.45 Leave coach to walk to view point overlooking Olympic Park site
- 12.30 Rejoin coach and depart for Greenwich (lunch stop)
- 2.30 Depart Greenwich for loop to Woolwich
- 3.00 Arrive café at Firepower Museum at Woolwich for cup of tea, etc. (If members wish to visit the Firepower Museum, then they will have to pay an entry fee. Coffee shop is free entrance)
- 4.00 Depart Woolwich Firepower Museum for return home.
- 6.00 (Approx) Arrive Stowmarket.

## EXERCISE FOR PEOPLE OVER 50

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags.

Then try 50-lb potato bags and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. **(I'm at this level.)**

**After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.**

## Pause for Thought

Are you an active member,  
The kind that would be missed ?  
Or are you just contented  
That your name is on the list ?

Do you attend the meetings,  
And mingle with the flock ?  
Or do you merely stay at home  
To criticize and mock ?

Do you take an active part  
To help the work along,  
Or are you merely satisfied  
To only just belong ?

Do you ever go to see  
A member who is sick,  
Or leave the work to just a few  
And talk about the clique ?

Think it out, Dear Member,  
You know right from wrong.  
Are you an active member  
Or do you just belong ?



Above at the Garden Party in August and below some of the strollers.



**Deadline for the next issue :-**

**28th February for the March copy.**

Edited by Philip Weir  
Suffolk IP14 1EG

Produced by  
Tel. & Fax 01449 775 166

The Copy Centre, 37 Stowupland Street, Stowmarket,  
[www.u3astowmarket.org.uk](http://www.u3astowmarket.org.uk)