



STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT



(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No. 1002987

Newsletter No 34

March 2014

The Chairman's Report:-

Since the last Newsletter there have been two meetings of the new Committee and I would like to thank *all* the Committee Members for their contributions in looking after the interests of the wider Stowmarket U3A community. We have an excellent cross section of the membership on the (enlarged) Committee which is proving very active in looking at new ways to keep our U3A vibrant, determining exactly what our members want out of it and how we present ourselves to the wider community (more on this in the next Newsletter).

The Committee has also agreed that we will once again hold the June Garden Party at Elm Farm, Stonham Aspal although, for the first time, entrance will be by ticket only at a cost of £5.00pp (see the notice elsewhere in the Newsletter) and for the Summer Outing in August we will be travelling to Sheringham in the morning then, in the afternoon, travel in a reserved carriage on the North Norfolk Railway to Holt.

I would like to welcome all our new members who have joined in the last few months and I've been encouraged how quickly they've joined up and contributed to our extensive range of group activities. The very latest figures show a membership of 231, a net increase 12 compared to this time last year. It's encouraging to note that many of our new members have made their application using the form on the web site.

I should mention here, thanks to Dee, our first two speakers this year have been particularly entertaining. In January, Horry Parsons gave us a most instructive and entertaining talk entitled 'The building of the Millenium Tower' (in Bury St Edmunds). Horry was tempted out of retirement to become closely involved in this project. We were fascinated to learn all about the machinations necessary to bring it to fruition, and particularly impressed by the attention to period detail, not the least being that all the measurements were done in imperial, i.e. yards, feet and inches!

In February, Rachel Sloane, now a freelance broadcaster with Radio Suffolk talked about 'Celebrities and Challenges' she has experienced on her radio shows. We were surprised, however, that she had secret plans to use her visit to Stowmarket U3A as the focus of her programme (standing in for Mark Murphy) the following day, 'How to keep your brains active in retirement'. Consequently, after her talk she came around and did several impromptu interviews around the room which were subsequently broadcast. I suspect that many of those present listened and were impressed by the way everything was edited together. During the show I sent her an email thanking her again for her talk and asked if she would give out our web site address – which she did. As a consequence we had the highest number of hits in one day, 121. Her show certainly was the best free publicity we have ever had!

Finally, can I remind everyone that the success or otherwise of Stowmarket U3A depends on you, the members, your involvement in all our group activities and events, and your views on what other things you would like to happen. These can be expressed in the Newsletter, via the web site or, more immediately, to any of the Committee members.

Peter Dakeyne

peter@dakeyne.com

01449 781 562

GROUPS COORDINATOR'S REPORT:-

As far as the Group Coordinator is concerned the business of Stowmarket U3A interest groups has appeared to carry on successfully as usual. Most of the newer groups have been going from strength to strength & the long-established groups have been continuing merrily. One example of a newer one is the second art appreciation group - 'SEAM'. STOWMARKET EXPLORING ART MEETINGS GROUP, hosted by member Anna Bradshaw. SEAM has, I think, a really exciting programme for the Spring.

Sadly the KNIT & NATTER group didn't develop as hoped & has now been discontinued. The FRENCH for BEGINNERS GROUP evidently didn't get established sufficiently to continue either. It is difficult to discern why some good ideas for activities don't get picked up sufficiently. It might be that the initially planned times of meeting don't fit comfortably with other activities members are engaged in – some days are very full of U3A activities. Sometimes the costs of hiring a venue or a tutor are beyond the small number of members who initially join.

Continued on page 2 :-

Continued from page 1:-

These issues are something the Stowmarket U3A Committee Members might well look into. It seems a pity if positive & enhancing ideas for activities stumble in the early stages. Should we be doing more in support?

I also have concerns that we do not do enough to help new members to our U3A to be fully welcomed & involved & aware of all the opportunities available. If current interest groups are full to capacity, new members can find that they can't join in as they hoped. Again this is something we ought, perhaps, to investigate. Another little idea that won't let the Groups Coordinator rest easy is the concept of short-term group activities. As a perusal of the U3A magazine THIRD AGE MATTERS illustrates, there are many activities developed by U3As across the country that follow a particular theme for a shortish time. For example: film studies, astronomy, philosophy, the European Union, a study of a nature reserve, a museum study. Six weeks on basic astronomy, or six films everyone should see, or six great philosophers, seems to the GC to be the just the ticket. An hour & a half on the European Union - just to say we did it!

Please let me know if you have any ideas that might catch on. A warm welcome to our new members AND would anyone who has thoughts on how we might enhance your new membership please get in contact.

Tony Taylor 01449 258 192

Since the last Newsletter:-

'The Gas Works' will be the subject of John Reed's Talk today.

November:-

David Jessop's talk on his 'African Experiences', whilst a very personal account was nevertheless an extremely interesting account of one tourist trips through Parks and Ind of South Africa.

June:-

Our Annual Garden Party - details to be published later.

December:-

Once again we enjoyed a high quality Christmas luncheon with our highest turnout to date. Congratulations to everyone concerned.

July:-

The popular local speaker Linda Scoles will tell of the development of a farming dynasty in her talk entitled "I was born in 'Them Thar Hills' "

January:-

Horry Parsons, who was totally involved from the very start to completion of the building of the Millennium Tower for Bury St Edmund's Cathedral gave an enthralling account of the whole story and hereby gave hard evidence to the term 'A Cathedral Job'. A really first class lecture.

And now for:-

Activity Groups:-

Art Appreciation :-

The Spring programme has started later than usual, holidays having intervened. Nina Rouse led our first meeting with a splendid presentation on the art forger Tom Keating, the loveable rogue who spent the last years of his career in Dedham in Suffolk.



February:-

Rachel Sloane of Radio Suffolk gave us a very intimate account of many of her experiences in that media and included some interviews which were later broadcast on our local radio station.

Keating's own very capable work was rejected by the art dealers & the cognicenti. In a form of revenge he painted quite brilliant forgeries of 'lost' Renoirs, Van Goghs & Constables. Many fooled the experts & were sold at auction for high prices. Alas for the dealers & experts, when the truth was revealed their reputations were put on the line!

And now for:-

March:-

'Aspects of the British Empire History' is the subject for our speaker Jan Brownfoot.

Keating became very popular with the general public & even made a series of art programmes for Channel 4.

April:-

Frances Hart will be costumed when talks about 'Jane Austen - my sister'.

Our next venture is into the world of the Surrealist Salvador Dali. The programme continues into the Summer with sessions on Textile Art, Cave Paintings, The Camden Town Group, a look at the art

May:-

museums of New York, paintings of Paris, & a return to look where SAAG started some seven years ago, with a look at some more Suffolk artists.

(1) Tony Taylor 01449 258 192
(2) Anna Bradshaw 01449 745 829

Book Club:-

We started in January after a Christmas break. The book chosen was very apt for the time because there was a lot of history and reality of the First World War. It was *Waiting for Sunrise* by William Boyd. For myself, it was an unexpected good read. We had a lot of discussion.



We hope to continue in the same vein for the coming year – enjoying a good read.

Mary Bradley 01449 775 628

Computer Group:-

Just to remind you we meet in the afternoon of the second Wednesday of each month at Stowupland High School. I'm pleased to report that, since the last Newsletter, we have welcomed several new members who have already made significant contributions to the Group. Attendance is good at 15-20 for each session.



In October our topic was 'PDFs - What they are and how you can use them', (a subject last covered in April 2011). **Portable Document Format** documents, PDFs were developed by Adobe in the early '90s as a universal means of transferring documents between different computers, readable by all, irrespective of the original software used to create them. These were, and in big business still are, created in the programme Adobe Acrobat. These days it's very easy for anyone to create PDFs directly from any 'Office' programme, and only the free Adobe Reader is needed to access them.

November brought us to, 'eBay, A New User's Guide', which proved to be a very popular topic. Helped by Zena (an experienced eBay user) I gave a PowerPoint demonstration aimed primarily at those who had not so far ventured into the eBay world. On a show of hands we had just a few who were regular eBay users, some who'd tried it once or twice and several who had either not appreciated its potential to make/save money (selling/buying) or had been afraid to try because it was 'too difficult'. Amongst many other things we went through the ins and outs of buying and selling including the real life progress through of setting items up for sale, the auction process and selling the item (or not as the case may be) from beginning to end.

For the last session of the year, in December, David Potter gave us a very interesting talk and demonstration on 'Computer Hardware', a subject we have not covered before. He has been building and upgrading PC for many years and brought along a PC so we could examine the innards. Amongst other things, he talked about the power supply, what it is and where it goes, the mother board and processors, the cooling fan that attaches to the top of the processor hard drives, and RAM (Random Access Memory). As the talk progressed we digressed onto other relevant topics and the whole session proved to be very useful to all.

Come January we looked at 'Setting up a home network'. In other words, 'how can I access the files on my PC from my laptop or tablet? How to achieve interconnectivity amongst the variety of electronic equipment we have, perhaps all with different operating systems, is a hot topic these days. There's no one 'cap fits all' solution, but it proved well worthwhile to explore this topic together. We went through from the early days (pre XP) all the way through the operating systems to Windows 8.1 even including 'tablets' in the discussion.

I'd been conscious we hadn't necessarily been making full use of the PC facilities at the school. To this end, in February, Marian Brown agreed to revisit a topic she last covered in 2011 & 2012, i.e., 'Photo Manipulation using Photoshop Elements'. 'Elements' is available to us on the school network and Marian demonstrated a few useful and simple techniques for improving pictures whilst the members were able to work though the same at their work station. A very enjoyable session indeed.

Our March topic will be on the pending demise of Windows XP, what to do if you want to keep it and the options/benefits/pitfalls of upgrading to Windows 8.1.

As always, we want to encourage beginners and the more experienced alike and to help this along 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 are a new member of Stowmarket U3A and would like to learn more about computer related topics or indeed have experience or knowledge that you'd like to pass on, please let me know.* If you go onto the Computer Group page on the website (www.u3astowmarket.org.uk) click 'Groups' then 'Computer' and you will find links to notes for all meetings back to November 2010.

Petr Dakeyne peter@dakeyne.com 01449 781 562

Country Strolls:- Short -

Unfortunately it has not been the ideal walking weather, but we had ten on the walk around Mendlesham, all but a little muddy in the Millennium Wood.

An enjoyable dry walk at Cotton in January where seven of us were at Darmsden.

I am sorry to say that I will not be leading any more walks after the 28th of March, as I have now other commitments. I know the group really enjoy their walks, so hopefully, someone will take my place and carry on the good work.

Wishing you all the best.

Helen Mead 01449 673 660

Longer:-

As a group we are used to walking across muddy fields, but these last few weeks have tested us to the limit! A dip in the lane which had become a lake, a path which had become a stream and, of course, cross field paths which have loaded our boots with sticky mud which becomes very heavy! But we persevere and keep healthy and reward ourselves with a delicious pub meal afterwards.

Andrea Burton

01449 774 869

Discussion Group:-

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday morning of the month at 10am.

We are a relatively small group but we do have a very lively discussions at each meeting on a huge variety of topical subjects and everyone, not only has their say, but is always listened to with respect. Newcomers would be greatly welcomed, especially for their different opinions.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

French Conversation:-

Two groups are doing well. We have a variety of ability and much enthusiasm. We are pleased to be led by our teacher, and when she is away, we aid and encourage each other using games and pictures. Who know what heights of achievement we will reach? Maybe a visit to France?

Andrea Burton

01449 774 869

French Conversation (Beginners):-

Connie Harford 01449 774 557

Gardens and Things:-

Harold Turner 01449 676 882



Keep Fit:-

Paulne Taylor 01449678 954



Luncheon Club:-

Angela Bentley 01449 780 274

Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954

Brian O'Shea 01449 614 129



Memoirs Group :-

Pat Smith 01449 675 568



Music - Classical:-

Ian Hooper 01449 770 179



Myths & Legends:-

This small group has recently grown a little and our discussions have also become more widespread in their range of views expressed. We have always been spirited in our views but it has been great to get this extra interest. We meet at 2.30pm on the first Monday afternoon of the month (even if it turns out to be a Bank Holiday)

Philip Weir

01449 676 528



Photography:-

With some 13 in the group this means, unfortunately, that for the moment we can't accept any new members. Please let me know, however, if you wish to join and I'll let you know should a vacancy arise.

Every month we each prepare a set of photographs on a 'topic for the month' given at the previous meeting. Since the last Newsletter.....

In October our topic was 'Summer' (postponed from September), November was 'Water', December 'Autumn', January 'Christmas' and February 'Winter' (inevitably most of these were from our archives as we had not yet had any typical winter weather!).

As usual, all pictures were critically appraised by the whole group and Roy showed how, if necessary, they could be improved by using simple techniques in Photoshop.

Our projects for March is 'Table Top', described by Roy as an indoor topic which could be a small group of related objects set up with a suitable background. Lighting could be flash, an angle poise lamp and card reflectors, or window light again using white card reflectors.

It's hoped that in the near future we will have a selection of our pictures posted on our web site.

Our meetings are at my house in Bacton, 2.00pm the afternoon of the third Tuesday of the month..

Peter Dakeyne peter@dakeyne.com 01449 781 562



Photoshop Workshops:-

Roy Fidler 01449 672 123

Play Reading:-

The Play Reading group meets on the 4th Monday in the month, at 18 Edinburgh Close Stowmarket. New members will be very welcome.



We have recently read *Journeys End*. *Journey's End* is a 1928 drama, the seventh of English playwright R C Serriff. It was first performed in London on 9 December 1928, starring a young Laurence Olivier and soon moved to other West End theatres for a two-year run.

Set in the trenches in 1918 towards the end of the First World War *Journey's End* gives a glimpse into the experiences of the officers of a British Army Infantry Company in World War I. The entire story plays out in the officers' dugout over four days from 18 March 1918 to 21 March 1918.

At our meeting on 24th of March we shall start to read *Cat on a Hot tin roof* by Tennessee Williams
Helen Freeman 01449613 060

Playwright Study:-

This group is studying G. Bernard Shaw at present with a view to seeing a production of *Pygmalion* in Norwich in June.



Helen Barrett 014496 76 491

Poetry Group 1:-

“Poetry is a kind of ingenuous nonsense” in the words of Isaac Newton – words that may resonate with many. So why is it still popular? And why do 13 of us enjoy it so much? Maybe like many others it speaks to our inner questions, thoughts, feelings in a way that only itself Art, Drama and Music can; and has done through the ages.



So what is our Poetry Group up to at present? On our current list are John Milton, Elizabeth Jennings, Welsh Poetry. War – and that old favourite for many of our generation “The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam” often quoted by a Suffolk friend of mine.

“Here with a loaf of Bread beneath the Bough
A Flask of Wine, a book of verse – and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness “

And the following extract from a former member of our Group gives a hint of how Poetry expresses feelings.

“ I hope I never leave life on a day like this

I'll take all it offers till its hours are run,
Free and at peace to wander where I will
One with the wind and earth and sun”

By Megan Samuel

And this month our Group had its thirteenth birthday and maybe that speaks for itself, and for Poetry.

Sheila Dobey

01449 677 265

Second Poetry Group:-

The newly formed second poetry group currently has six members and we would welcome anyone else who would like to join us.



We meet at Steeple View, Reeds Way, Stowupland IP14 4BW on the first Tuesday of the month from 2.00-4.00 pm.

The theme for our next meeting on March 4th will be ‘Poets Laureate’ and the following meeting will be held on April 1st

If you would like to join us or want more details please contact;

Sandie Braidley

01449 676905

Email: tony-sandie@supanet.com

Scrabble Groups:-

Sheila Dobey

01449 677 265



Town & Village History:-

Angela Bentley

01449 780

274



U3A Suffolk & District Network :-

At the November meeting we learnt that the long running successful ‘Autumn Academy’ would no longer be held as the sub-committee thought that it had had its day and they all wished to retire. Naturally it would be very difficult, if not virtually impossible for a new sub-committee to be able to take over in the time available without previous experience of that particular task. However, the SaDN continues and this year’s ‘Spring Symposium’ goes forward and you will all by now have seen the advertisements for it. It deserves your support and should prove to be very enlightening and hopefully entertaining.



Sally Taylor

01449 771 168 or

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

U3A Central Office News :-

Brian O’Shea

01449 614 129

Welney Marshes Proposed visit:-

Unfortunately, due to flooding this visit had to be cancelled. However, the visit is to be re-scheduled in the autumn and it is hoped that there will be an enthusiastic response when the trip is formally announced.

A Satnav

**I have a little Satnav
It sits there in my car
A Satnav is a driver's friend
It tells you where you are**

**I have a little Satnav
I've had it all my life
It does more than the normal one
My Satnav is my wife**

**It gives me full instructions
On exactly how to drive
"It's thirty miles an hour" it says
"And you're doing thirty five"**

**It tells me when to stop and start
And when to use the brake
And tells me when it's never ever
Safe to overtake**

**It tells me when a light is red
And when it goes to green
It seems to know instinctively
Just when to intervene**

**It lists the vehicles just in front
It lists those to the rear
And taking this into account
It specifies my gear**

**I'm sure no other driver
Has so helpful a device
For when we leave and lock the car
It still gives its advice**

**It fills me up with counselling
Each journey's pretty fraught
So why don't I exchange it
And get a quieter sort?**

**Ah well, you see, it cleans the house
Makes sure I'm properly fed
It washes all my shirts and things
And - keeps me warm in bed!**

A Poem That Some Can Relate too :-

**I remember the cheese of my childhood,
And the bread that we cut with a knife,
When the children helped with the housework,
And the men went to work not the wife.**

**The cheese never needed a fridge,
And the bread was so crusty and hot,
The children were seldom unhappy
And the wife was content with her lot.**

**I remember the milk from the bottle,
With the yummy cream on the top,
Our dinner came hot from the oven,
And not from the fridge; in the shop.**

**The kids were a lot more contented,
They didn't need money for kicks,
Just a game with their mates in the road,
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.**

**I remember the shop on the corner,
Where a pen'orth of sweets was sold
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic?
Or is it....I'm just getting old?**

**I remember the 'loo' was the lav,
And the boggy man came in the night,
It wasn't the least bit funny
Going "out back" with no light.**

**The interesting items we perused,
From the newspapers cut into squares,
And hung on a peg in the loo,
It took little to keep us amused.**

**The clothes were boiled in the copper,
With plenty of rich foamy suds
But the ironing seemed never ending
As Mum pressed everyone's 'duds'.**

**I remember the slap on my backside,
And the taste of soap if I swore
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.**

**Do you think that bruised our ego?
Or our initiative was destroyed?
We ate what was put on the table
And I think life was better enjoyed.**

GLORIOUS GARDEN PARTY

at

ELEGANT ELM FARM

WEDNESDAY, 18th JUNE 2.30 - 4.30p.m.

Delicious full afternoon tea on vintage china and linen tablecloths/napkins amidst the wonderful grounds and gardens of this gracious Georgian Farmhouse in Stonham Aspal.

Free parking on the track approach.

LADIES, Afternoon Frocks and Hats as befits the occasion, *GENTLEMEN* your usual stylish sartorial elegance!

£5.00 per head by cheque (made out to 'S.T.A.R.') or £5 note, please to Jean (Treasurer) by the end of APRIL

*Full details from
Dee Payne - PROGRAMME ORGANISER*



Our Christmas Luncheon 2013

2014 Summer Outing, Sheringham – Holt on the NORTH NORFOLK RAILWAY WEDNESDAY, 20th August

Itinerary

- 09.25 Pickup/Depart Meadlands car park
- 09.30 Pickup/Depart Stowmarket Station
- 11.30 (approx.) Arrive Sheringham Station
- 13.30 Depart Sheringham, **North Norfolk Railway** Station in reserved carriage.
- 13.53 Arrive Holt Station, coach pickup into Holt
- 16.30 Depart Holt
- 18.30 (approx.) Arrive Stowmarket, Meadlands car park/Station drop-off.

Free parking at Meadlands Recreational Centre Car Park.

Lunch: The schedule allows for lunch in Sheringham before the train journey or in Holt in the afternoon.

Party limited to 49 so please purchase your tickets **early**:

Deadline for the next issue :-

30th June for the July copy.