



# STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT



(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No. 1002987

Newsletter No. 11

October 2005

## Chairman's Report given at the AGM in September

Dear Friends,

My second year as your Chairman has just flown by. Our monthly meetings, have without exception, been enjoyable and happy occasions. It has given me much pleasure in meeting so many cheerful people with such an interest in life. If you are feeling down in the dumps on the third Wednesday of the month then the U3A meeting in the URC Church Hall is the place to come. There is always someone interesting to listen to and plenty of good company. The dates are written large in my diary – not that there is any fear that I may miss any. During the year it has been good to see a gradual increase in our membership.

Throughout the past 12 months your hard working and diligent committee has ensured that our organisation has run smoothly and has taken care of all those small things that sometimes are apt to get overlooked. My thanks to each one of the members, Philip, Harold, Sheila, Muriel, Ann, Mike, Ray, Loretta and Sally who have given me their wholehearted support. Please give them a round of applause, they deserve it!

It is not good to boast I know, but I am sure you will agree that our Christmas party was a great success. It was relaxing to be able to sit back and be entertained especially by that glamorous lady with the luxurious blond hair and of course to enjoy the delicious food that was provided. The Study Day in February organised by the Suffolk U3A Network, the first venture of its kind for Suffolk, was a welcome chance for us to meet with other U3A members from different parts of the County. It provided an interesting and informative day despite the cold. Perhaps more of us can make the effort to attend similar days in future. Hopefully held when the weather is a little warmer.

May saw some of us visit the Museum and Castle at Norwich where we were able to view the exhibits and the art galleries quietly and without rush. From a personal point of view, I found it good to have the chance to speak to people on a one to one basis, something that I cannot always do at our monthly gatherings. Thank you Philip for your excellent organisation. In June Angela Bentley opened her beautiful garden at Wyverstone for our garden party. The weather wasn't at all kind to us and the numbers were down. I regret I was among those who didn't brave the elements. Thanks to Angela and to all those who went to so much trouble.

All our interest groups continue to flourish and grow. If there are any of you who don't belong to one do have a look at what is on offer. You don't have to be clever or intellectual. I am sure there is one group among them that would interest you. If your knees are a bit stiff why not join the keep-fit group and loosen them up a bit.

Finally my sincere thanks to all group leaders for their continuing enthusiasm and organisation and also to those who play host to the groups by opening their homes each month. My grateful thanks as well to all, who organise the seating in the hall each month, see that the sound system is functioning efficiently and last of all thank you to the ladies who make the tea. Something we all look forward to. All these small things go to help make Stowmarket U3A the undoubted success it is.

I hope I that shall enjoy my final year as your Chairman as much as I have done so far. It is a bold statement to make but in the coming year, if at all possible, I do want to try to make a visit to each group, including Keep-Fit, that is if I can find a leotard to fit me!

PAT SMITH

## **The Secretary's Comment:-**

Much of which I wish to say and advertise is detailed under various headings further down this newsletter. Nevertheless, I want to express my great pleasure in seeing Tony Taylor's ART group getting off to such a fine start and wish him and his supporters much success in their new venture. In saying that, I must not forget Pauline Taylor's success in getting a KEEP-FIT group up and running. Again I do hope that those who expressed an interest in a THEATRE GOING group will get together and make this an equally successful project. It is very heartening to find increasing interest in our U3A and I hope that it will spread and that our existing members will endeavour to encourage more folk to join our happy band in the near future.

## **Since the last Newsletter :-**

### **July:-**

Mr Cliff Bird's talk "All about time" was really fascinating in that he took us from the origins of time notations in both the old and new worlds. This knowledgeable exposition showed us examples of many strange and curious artefacts used to calculate all sorts of events. A splendid and well received talk.

### **August:-**

This meeting was a day outing to Hyde Hall with a Canal trip on the Blackwater included. This was organised by the G & T group to whom we are very grateful, especially as it turned out so well

### **September:-**

The talk entitled "Many Happy Returns" turned out not to be about anniversaries but about the sport of making and throwing boomerangs. We discovered that this is not and never was just about Australian weapons. Throwing sticks as a hunting weapon has always been something totally different. This wonderfully illustrated talk was followed by our AGM.

## **And now for :-**

### **October:-**

"Humphrey Repton - Landscape Gardener", is the title of the talk to be given by Mr Clive Paine that much appreciated and exciting historian, whose talks are always so vibrant and instructive.

### **November:-**

Mr David Parsons plans to tell us about the much more serious subject of "The Prison Service and the Role of the Drugs Dog". It is expected that he intends to bring along his dog and demonstrate its uncanny ability and training in the effort to curb the misuse of drugs, by law-breakers.

### **December:-**

This year we will be celebrating Christmas with a luncheon in the hall, followed by some seasonal entertainment. The plans for this are progressing well, and further details will be announced by the Chairman at the October and November meetings..

### **January:-**

Music becomes the theme for our January meeting, when Mr Peter Newble subject title is "The Life and Work of Sir Edward Elgar".

### **February:-**

We look forward to the return of Mr Tom Tyler for "More about Jigsaw Puzzles". This is to be a follow-up to his talk quite some time ago, when he not only told us about their history, but made us feel nostalgic for those that we strived to complete over the years.

## **Activity groups :-**

### **Archive Film :-**

We meet on the fourth Monday of the month from 2.30 to 4.30 delving into the past on film. Refreshments at half-time. Among those shown last time was the interesting story of the 'Suffolk Punch'.



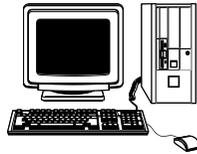
We are full at the moment, but if you are a paid-up member of the U3A and would like to know more please ring me.

Eric Adamson

01449 676 446

### **Computer Group:-**

The Computer Group is flourishing and has recently established two new initiatives.



In July I led a session which I called Wendy's Challenge. Members were asked to assess their computer competence and to suggest what activities would aid their future learning. As a result a whole new year's programme has been planned with some innovative features.

One result of this has been the setting up of not one but two discussion groups to be known as Hadleigh Computer Forums. Held at my home they both combine members from our own and Hadleigh U3A, such combined initiatives have been encouraged nationally. Hadleigh has no computer group but has many interested members.

Another initiative has been the setting up of a web site to present our activities on the World Wide Web. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.paddocks9.plus.com/stowmarketu3acomputergroup/>

Please save the address among your 'favorites' so that you can check for updates.

Our August meeting attracted a full house. Fred talking on 'The Backwaters of Windows XP' proved both popular and very rewarding. We can be sure of education and entertainment when Fred is presenting.

He appeared again in September with colleagues from Alan Dench's Photoshop Group. Operating with all the technological equipment this time Alan restored an old photograph, Harry brought a dull one to life, Clive demonstrated transfer printing onto fabric and Fred showed us how to label our CDs pictorially. It was a very creative and rewarding session. It also set a standard for multiple presentations within a single session.

Now that several members own laptop/notebook computers the potential for sessions using numerous computers with a vari-

ety of presenters and subjects becomes a real possibility.

Marian has completed her teaching sessions on MS Word, based on the European Driving Licence for Computing. This has been a very thorough introduction to word processing and has enabled even experienced users to broaden their knowledge and skill. A huge vote of thanks is due for the dedication and hard work that she has put into this long running course.

Once more our thanks are due to Harold and Irene for hospitality at the Bowls Club and to all hosts and leaders of small group sessions as well as our numerous presenters. New members are joining us from far and wide so we must be doing something right.

Wendy Morgan

01473 824 237

### **Country Strolls:-**

This group has been going now for some ten years or so, and our chosen venues have become quite familiar for the 12 to 14 members who 'step it out' each 2nd and 4th Fridays each month. Of necessity, the distances covered have become three rather than the four miles that we first started with. And if we cannot find a tea-shop or pub at the end of our circular walks, then we don't go!



Joyce Walden

01449 615 591 and

Joyce Markham

01449

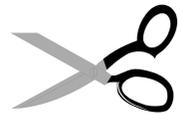
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### **Card Craft Group:-**

We meet on the second Tuesday afternoon of the month, and would welcome new-comers to join us in making cards of all types, using many different skills. Our latest ideas have centred on making small decorated boxes and containers to hold small gifts or even just for decorative purposes.

Liz Weir

01449 676 528



### **Discussion Group:-**

This is not a big group, yet our discussions range over a very wide



field and engenders much lively debate and fresh ideas for us to examine many things from a fresh perspective. We will welcome all those who would like to join a friendly and lively group. We meet at Pat Smith's on the second Tuesday morning each month at 10.00am  
Philip Weir 01449 676 528

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

This year - March to August

We started off in March with a very excellent quiz Compiled by Maureen & Anna which had the group scratching their head, was enjoyed by the 16 members,  
April - Elizabeth and Irene took the group to Coggeshall to Marks Hall where the extensive gardens were viewed, the group with a packed lunch used the surrounding gardens as a backcloth for an alfresco meal, with the weather being kind for the day the group also had a walk in the town area that is also graced with colourful surroundings.

May - was a complete turn round from the original planned programme as we clashed with Chelsea flower show but Harold and Irene came up with a visit to a compost re-cycling farm which was a total departure from our usual gardens, but a very important part of our endeavours in the garden, from there we went and had lunch at the Peak Lodge restaurant at Wherstead then on to East Bergholt Gardens, and a very satisfied group dispersed at about 3.30 with some new plants in the boot.

June - The G&T group extended an invitation to all the U3A members to a small garden party at Angela's home at Wyverstone on the 6<sup>th</sup> June as the normal meeting was closed for the summer, some 25 to 30 members turned up on a rather damp day armed with a plate of food, and a cupper but by 3.30 the sun came out and we could all wander round Angela's beautiful garden, on behalf of all those attending. Thank you Angela for a brilliant time, dare I suggest 2006 for a repeat ?

July - Saw the group visiting Thetford under the guidance of Philip and Liz, they had found the hidden garden in almost the centre of the town, so secluded and peaceful with a wonderful garden which needed little attention and great



for the wild life in the area after our conducted tour by the head gardener we travelled to a delightful restaurant on the Lord Iveagh's estate for a welcome lunch. After our meal we set off for the desert world which covers about a acre and a quarter of cacti, succulents with some 2000 species growing both indoor and out, with many other flowers to compliment the show,

August - The group invited any member of the U3A to join them on a visit to Hyde Hall Near Chelmsford, leaving at nine am sharp, this attracted some 35 members who on an immaculate day with wall to wall sunshine to these splendid RHS gardens we spent about three hour of beautiful plants for all seasons and had lunch on the patio (accompanied by a few wasps). The group then continued the day with a two hour river trip and finally returned to Stowmarket for 6.40 pm somewhat tired but pleased with the experience.

Harold Turner

01449 676 882

### **Grub Club:-**

Unfortunately Wendy is no longer in a position to organise this group, which proved to be very successful. If you were a keen supporter in the past, maybe, you might find it very rewarding to take up the reins and to keep this group alive and on the road. Your help would be invaluable and greatly appreciated by a large number of our members.

If you might possibly be interested have a chat with Wendy or me. We will do what we can to assist you to make this successful.

Wendy Morgan

01473 824 237

Philip Weir

01449 676 528



### **Keep Fit :-**

The U3A exercise class is proving very popular, but we still have room for more. Our next meeting is Wednesday October 26th, 2pm at Childer Road Community Centre, so why not come along and put the fun into fitness?!

Pauline Taylor

01449 678 954



### Music Appreciation (1):-

No, we really do not meet on a Monday any more but on a Tuesday. The third Tuesday in most months from 10.00 to 12 noon with refreshments at half-time. Various types of music, but mostly classical. Room for two more at the moment. So, if you are a paid-up member of the U3A and would like to know more, Please ring me.

Eric Adamson



01449 676 446

### Music Appreciation (2):-

Finally it looks as though we will soon be up and running again. I had hoped it would be October, but circumstances have knocked that one on the head so it will be on Wednesday the 23rd November, at the new address, 38 Semer Close. The system has had an overhaul, including a new cartridge, so we hope for a very special experience. I haven't heard it yet! Looking forward to seeing old friends and perhaps a few new ones too; my new room is quite large so there is room for 7 or 8 of us, perhaps more.

Connie Ruegg



01449 674 673

### Myths and Legends:-

Our title is liable to get too long and misleading as we make a point now, of including storytelling as a major incentive to make our small group more exciting and attractive for others to join-up with us. Usually we meet at Kate's on the first Monday afternoon of the month for 2.30.

Philip Weir



01449 676 528

### Poetry:-

This group meets to enjoy it's activities. I write as one who has joined within the last 12 months, and has actively enjoyed every minute of it. We meet in Sheila's comfortable



home each 2nd and 4th Thursday afternoon from 2.00 to 4.00 to discuss and enjoy poetry.

We do not sit to listen to long academic talks about the poetry of, say, Robert Browning or Geoffrey Chaucer. We bring along our own choice, which we have selected over the last week or two (at least in theory). On occasion someone brings and reads or recites a piece of their own work - not for compliments, but as a means of self-expression. Also we do sit and listen to recordings of poetry, voiced by themselves or trained actors. Then our views, opinions and news are exchanged and compared to those of others. There are no terms of reference; our poems cover everything - from ancient, historical to modern; perhaps from the Great McGonigall to the Song of Solomon, even ballads, folk songs and the occasional Limerick.

At the moment some 6 to 12 folk, mostly ladies, though there are a few men, meet each time, and all of us like and enjoy the poetry each for their own good reasons.

New members will be made very welcome, but please contact Sheila first -

Sheila Dobey

01449677 265

Graham Boatfield

### Theatre Group (proposed)

:-

Thirty members showed an interest in forming a group, and on September 28th six members met at the home of Ann and Ray Watsham. Several points were discussed and it was realised that it will be necessary to find someone to act as leader/co-ordinator. It should be possible for two or three members each arrange an outing.

It was decided that a matinee show would suit the majority of people. There are a quite a number of theatres within travelling distance that it would be possible to visit.

It was felt that as the pantomime season will soon be here, the first theatre visit will probably not take place until mid-February or March. But first the most important thing is to find someone to be a leader/co-ordinator.

Ann Watsham

01449 672 706



It is hoped to try to organise a second-meeting to try and get this venture off the ground - probably early in the new year. Any volunteers to assist in this will be most welcome.  
Philip Weir (Secretary) 01449 676 528

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

Angela

Bentley and Carol Barter arranged the visit to Sweffling



Bygones Museum in July. About 20 members made their way to the village. The museum housed in several buildings and contained every conceivable object that can be imagined. A light lunch was provided by the curators which was enjoyed by all.

Ray and I arranged the August visit to the American Air Force Museum at Parham.. Some 16 members met there, where we were welcomed by John Warwicker, with the ladies providing coffee and biscuits. We were then split into two groups, one visiting a replica bunker as would have been used by the 'Secret Army' had Britain been invaded, whilst the other group were shown over the rest of the museum. Then the groups changed over roles. An excellent lunch followed at the Crown Inn at Great Glenham. A donation was given to the museum funds.

Joyce Markwell, Elizabeth Gray and Muriel Killett arranged the September visit to Stradbroke. The group was met by the local historian, who took them around the village and gave a most interesting and informative tour including a walk around his extensive garden and the church. Again, a donation was given to him for charity. An excellent lunch was had at the local hostelry followed by further exploration of the village. The intention to proceed on to Hoxne was abandoned as it was getting a little late for further exploration.

Ann Watsham 01449 672 706

### **Art Appreciation :-**

This new group meets each 2nd and 4th Tuesday morning at 9.30am at Tony's. New members will be most welcome

Tony Taylor 01449 771 168

### **U3A Suffolk and District Network:-**

Following our very successful study day last February (in spite of the cold weather) we have decided to have another similar sort of day next autumn. This is expected to take place in Coombs Middle School in October and the current idea is to have something like a miniature summer school at which there will be a variety of subjects, being pursued in different class rooms. One will be able to choose within reason and availability which subject are more attractive for you. There is a lot of work yet to be done in organising this, yet a full programme should be published in March 2006.

Naturally it is hoped and expected that this effort will be supported by a large number from our group here in Stowmarket. If you would like to know more now or would like to help please have a word with me or

Sally Taylor. 01449 771 168

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

### **Other Groups :-**

#### **Birds, Bees & Butterflies :-**

Janet Sparrow 01359 241 968

#### **Democracy and Election Systems:-**

David Chapman 01449 736 223

#### **Entertainment (Theatrical):-**

Joan Varley 01449 612 676

#### **Genealogy Group:-**

Angela Bentley 01449 780 274

#### **Needle Craft Group:-**

Alicia Beaton 01449 616 172

#### **Scrabble Group:-**

Sheila Dobey 01449 677 265 or

Maureen Wright 01449 711 455

### **SaD - Suffolk and District U3A network :-**

Following last February's successful study day, plans are in hand to have another. Since this is along way ahead the exact format has not been decided, but it is thought that the idea of a mini- summer school will be held next October, here in mid -Suffolk. A summer-

school format is to provide a limited range of subject as a taster to provide a very brief introduction to a new interest or further ideas for future study. This will also give U3A members from all over Suffolk a chance to meet and to chat, learning about the other U3A's in the County. We will be very interested to have your help and/or suggestions for this project.

Sally Taylor 01449 771 168  
Philip Weir 01449 676 528

### U3A Central Office News:-

Details of the summer schools, which have been advertised on the notice board, should be published in November. Liz and I attended the Chester one last June and were very impressed. Whilst the subject may appear a bit daunting, the attitude is that everyone should enjoy themselves and the subject provided. The scene is very relaxed and not set-up as a serious hard grafting exercise.

I don't know whether or not you may have thought of joining one of their holiday adventures. The reports that I have heard have been very encouraging and complimentary. So, you just might find it useful.

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

How's this for verbal dexterity :-

A footman was asked by the maid, "*What does that D stand for on the dustbin*"?

To which he replied :-

*"Damsel, the D displayed on the dustbin denotes that the despairing domestics of the detached domicile desire that the deserving dustmen during their daily diversion should deem it their delightful duty to dislodge deliberately and deftly the dirt and dust deposited in that disagreeable dustbin".*

*I knew a man and his name was Horner,  
He used to live in Grumble Corner.  
He grumbled at this and grumbled at that,  
He grumbled at the dog and grumbled at the cat.  
He grumbled in the morning and at night,  
Grumbling and growling was his chief delight.*

An 18th century verse tells of pre-Christian water based beliefs, this one based in the county of Yorkshire :-

*Mythologists might, in this cave lay odds,  
That sylvan deities, and water gods,  
As dryads, naides, rural nymphs and fawns,  
Who haunt the fountains, rivers, woods and lawns,  
In darkened days, ere learning did appear,  
Might be supposed to hold their meetings here.  
From whence arose that legendary tale  
Of Mother Shipton dwelling in this vale.  
Tradition tells and far the mouth of fame  
Hath spread the predicts of the Yorkshire Dame;  
The boding Sibyl told what would betide;  
But Britons hath a true and better guide;  
As for her facts we cannot truly tell,  
Therefore adieu unto the Dropping Well.*

Can you tell who this refers to ?

*There's a little short gentleman,  
That wears the yellow trews,  
A dirk below his doublet,  
For sticking in his foes.*

*Yet in a singing posture,  
Where'er you do him see,  
And if you offer violence  
He'll stab his dirk in thee.*

This 18th century rogue is none other than a bee.

### November weather

No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,  
No comfortable feel in any member -  
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,  
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds -  
November !

Thomas Hood, 'No' (1844)

And the poet Ted Hughes (1930-98) described November as 'The month of the drowned dog' in his poem 'November' (1960).

'If the ice in November will bear a duck then all the rest will be slush and muck'

Traditional weather lore..

## More silly signs !

In a maternity ward, Florida    At a cafe/petrol stations USA    Sign outside a dry cleaners, USA



Having seen a read this verse, I wondered -  
Was this the old lady that swallowed a fly ?  
Or just a bit of ancient slander ?

THERE was a fat lady from Eye  
Who felt she was likely to die;  
    But for fear that once dead  
    She would not be well-fed  
She gulped down a pig,  
    a cow,  
        a sheep,  
            twelve buns,  
                a seven-layer cake,  
                    four cups of coffee,  
                        and a green apple pie.

But then Daniel Defoe wrote:-

*"I took notice of a strange decay of the sex here (the Essex marshes) insomuch that it is very frequent to meet with men that had from five or six to fourteen or fifteen wives, nay, and some more....*

*The reason as a merry fellow told me was this: that they, being bred in the marshes themselves and seasoned to the place, did pretty well, but that they always went up into the uplands for a wife. That when they took the young lasses out of the wholesome, fresh air they were healthy, but they presently changed complexion, got an Ague or two, and seldom held it above half a year, or a year at most. 'And then,' said he, 'We go to the uplands again and fetch another,' So that marrying of wives was reckoned a kind of farm to them.*

Edited by Philip Weir

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Instructions on a shampoo bottle :-



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3, OLD FOX YARD  
STOWMARKET  
01449 676765

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AND MUCH MUCH MORE  
COME IN AND HAVE A  
BROWSE. LINDA & GAIL  
ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO  
HELP. WE ALSO DO CARD  
MAKING WORKSHOPS WITH  
A DIFFERENT PROJECT  
EACH MONTH.  
PHONE OR CALL IN FOR  
DETAILS.