



**STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT
LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT**

U3A

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No.1002987

Newsletter No 3

March 2003

From the Chairman - Don Marper :-

Whilst only producing our third newsletter, the feedback received is very positive, and indicates a success both currently and for the future. Our thanks to Philip for all his efforts.

I am happy to report that Pat Smith has agreed to join the committee as a co-opted member, and will act as Vice Chairman with immediate effect and until the AGM in September.

Mavis Healey took over as Membership Secretary in January 2002 after the sudden death of our friend and colleague Brian Killett. At a recent meeting of the committee, Mavis formally relinquished this position, whilst still retaining her seat on the committee. I know you will all join me in expressing our thanks for stepping in at such a difficult period, and hope that she will continue to serve on the committee for some considerable time to come.

It is with pleasure I advise that Muriel Killett has kindly agreed to take on this responsibility from Mavis.

Our membership continues to be maintained, with monthly meetings fully attended. I take great pleasure in seeing the social contact over a cup of tea after each meeting has concluded. Long may it continue !

Repeat Warning !! (only for late arrivals to the monthly meeting !!)

Should you be unlucky and find the entrance door closed and locked, then **Please** ring the bell to be found beside the door. We will be only too pleased to let you in, even if late. You see, for security reasons we must fasten that door when we are inside the hall.

From the Secretary :-

Starting my second year as Secretary, I would like to thank all those who have given me such invaluable help over the last twelve months to do the job I was asked to do with what I, at least, see as having been very successful. You are really too many to name individually, but think especially of the new groups that have been formed and that are operating well - 'The Discussion group, Myths and Legends, Wartime Suffolk and Gardens and Other Things'.

Not to mention the revival of 'The Village History Group'. I believe that this is a wonderful effort and am very pleased with this progress.

As some of you may know Liz and I were in Wales during the last week in January staying in Llanwrtyd Wells not so far from Brecon. Whilst there we learnt that the Brecon U3A met each Thursday morning in a large room at the local theatre, so we decided to attend. The membership is about 250 and they have a normal attendance of 100 to 110 each Thursday, but as the lecturer was from the Red Kite Trust the numbers had swollen to 130. He spoke and showed slides for about 90 minutes and was so good it seemed more like 15. To meet the extra cost everyone pays 50p per meeting to pay the rent of the room ! That is over and above the annual subscription. They also run an amazing variety and number of 'outings' such as to Bayeux to see the tapestries or again to Budapest and Prague. Needless to say I was impressed..

Since the last Newsletter :-

November - "The A to Z of Christmas Traditions". This was the title of a talk given by Mrs Helen Scott-Davies, in which she enumerated many of the different customs, associated with the season from early December to late January. These ranged from the well-known to the long forgotten by most if not all of us. We were well entertained and amused, especially by those which showed us their strange origins, both pagan and foreign. I believe that she also talks about Astrology !!

December - After a wonderful 'Suffolk Quiz' presented visually by Wendy Morgan with a little help from the Computer Group, enjoyed by all and with a surprisingly high total of correct answers, we celebrated in our usual Christmas fashion by tucking into a marvelous spread of seasonal nibbles, generously provided by many of the ladies.

January -

Mrs Charmaine Kenton showed us some beautiful photographs of the Israel/Palestinian countryside during her talk on the history and present life of the area, from the point of view of someone who has lived there for quite a few years, and has family living there now. Thus a different perspective from that seen in our daily newspapers.

February -

Mr Tom Tyler gave us a superb talk on the 'History of Jigsaws' telling us that they were invented in 1762 as an educational toy for children, and used by George the 4th as a boy - but by the mid 1800's with the industrial advances they became more adult orientated. Indeed with the start of colour lithography printing giving much improved pictures, then the cutters got to work to make them into real brain beating puzzles to infuriate the addicts. He showed us many examples including a 24 piece one the size of a postage stamp.

And now, for :-

March - Mr Richard Smith's talk on "The Thames Barge in Suffolk" will interest not only us but also those ex-Londoners who now live here in beautiful rural Suffolk. For who fails to enjoy the sight of sailing craft along our shores.

April - Perhaps I am fortunate for I have already heard Mr David Mitchell, the Mid-Suffolk Environment Officer giving his talk on 'Trees and the Law' and I look forward to hearing it again since it was so important and fascinating to learn how and why the regulations affect us all.

May - Mr Clive Payne is a most noteworthy and respected historian, whose lectures always draw huge crowds. On this occasion his subject is 'The Rise and Fall of Felixstowe and Lowestoft as Coastal Resorts'. Best come early to book your seat !!

June - An outing to the Elvedon Estate has been agreed in principle with Viscount Iveagh (Ned Guinness) who has expressed his pleasure in inviting us to see around his estate. Before details are discussed and arranged he has asked whether there are any particular interests we would like covered as he has many knowledgeable staff there to help. So please let me know if there is anything you would like to be shown or explained. In return for this generous offer I trust that there will be great support for the outing when we can get down to the nitty-gritty of actually organising it. More news later.

July - Mrs Linda Scoles, a well known and popular entertainer means to get us all nostalgic with songs and stories from the days of yore, and hopefully get us to remember some happy events from our younger years.

August -

This has yet to be arranged, but we will inform you as soon as possible. There was a thought of visiting Lakenheath, but as you must realise that in today's political climate would be a rather doubtful ambition.

Activity Groups :-

Archive Film :-

A very pleasant way to spend an afternoon from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on the 4th Monday of each month watching films of people and events over the past 100 years. Tea and biscuits are enjoyed in the interval.

Ring Eric Adamson on 01449 676 446 for details.

Birds, Bees and Butterflies :- Unfortunately in abeyance !!

Computer :-

We finished last year with a flourish, presenting our Suffolk Quiz based on digital photographs at the December meeting of the U3A, preceding

the delightful tea party. At the final group meeting we surprised ourselves by the quality of Christmas artifacts produced by members. There were greeting cards of all sorts, a variety of calendars, parcel tags, posters and John Rutter presented a slide show of nativity paintings from the National Gallery accompanied by carols. A certificate was awarded to Jack Stobart for almost perfect attendance throughout the year.

The New Year kicked off with two sessions on Words and Pictures. Marian taught us to use templates and tables, while I encouraged photo manipulation and editing. We now look forward to hearing how members have used their computers in their roles as Secretary and President. We will tackle scanning, desk top publishing and photography in the months ahead.

You are welcome to join us, whether experienced or not. We meet at the Woodfield Bowls Club from 10.00 to 12.00 am on the 2nd Monday in the month and in members' homes on the 4th Monday. We also enjoy a lively lunch session at the Magpie after each meeting.

For more information contact Wendy Morgan on 01473 824 237

Country Strolls :-

In January we held a 'late Christmas' celebration in the form of a very tasty lunch at a local hostelry, having previously enjoyed a medium length stroll, keeping to dry land. Seventeen people sat down to lunch. This number included some of our ex-members, whose legs are not so good these days. (Nothing amiss with their appetites, though !!)



Otherwise, we have continued with our walks as usual, snow, floods and mud permitting. Recently, we tackled a new walk from 'out Tesco way' noting with surprise the new road and landscaping developments taking place in that area. At one point we were diverted from the footpath because we were not wearing safety helmets !!

Spring is coming and we continue to arrange fortnightly walks on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month - starting at 1.30 pm - finishing with a well-earned 'cuppa' at a convenient tea-room or hostelry.

A warm welcome will be extended to anyone (including gentlemen) who would like to join us.

The Craft Group :-

We were the 3D decoupage group, but as we are expanding our interests to cover some other hand-crafts such as glass painting, light pewter or copper work for example, we have decided to change the name to include this wider scope of activity. Indeed we are open to suggestions from those who

may be interested to join our warm friendly get-togethers on the first Tuesday afternoon each month at 2.00pm. We form only a small group, but would welcome any adventurous newcomers to join us.

French Revision :-

Having completed our most enjoyable French detective series, and seen it come to a most satisfactory conclusion - i.e thief caught and the hero and heroine safely married, we are now looking more into French grammar. We have two new members, which helps to fill the gap left by the two who have moved from this area. We welcome them and hope that they will enjoy the group fellowship.

Gardens and Things :-

The new formation of this group has got off to a good start with sub-groups setting up the visit of their choice, and as a result we have a full calendar from April to October this year.

As this is a team effort everyone feels that they have a share in the organisation, and this seems to work very well.

The visits are very varied and so different that the whole group is getting excited and looking forward to the first venture which is to Otley College on the 17th April. We are having a conducted tour of the green houses and demonstrations of transplanting and other techniques of gardening. This, of course, is followed by a 'Pub Lunch', and could be the highlight of the day !

The group has just about reached it's maximum number, which we feel is 20 as transport then becomes more difficult to organise.

For more information contact Harold Turner on 01449 676 882.

Music Appreciation (1) :-

Meeting on the third Monday of each month from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon with coffee and biscuits at 11.00 we continue to explore a wide variety of music.

This was the programme in February :- Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong singing 'Me and brother Bill went hunt'n' - Rossini string sonata No. 5 - a selection of Irish pan pipe music - Mozart horn concerto - Symphony No. 40 in A - Piano concerto in C - Violin concerto in A - Flute concerto in G.

During the coffee break we heard Francisco Yglesia playing his Paraguayan harp.

Ring Eric Adamson on 01449 676 446 for details.

Music Appreciation (2) :-

Our second music group is gradually expanding, and we now have

about seven members attending most of the meetings. We are still a bit lacking in male company, but we still manage to have a very relaxing atmosphere. There is still room for some more, so if you fancy it just come along on the third Thursday of each month.

Further details from Connie Ruegg on 01449

Myths & Legends :-

This is a new group having only started last November. We meet on the first Monday afternoon of each month at 2.30 pm. Although we are as yet but few in number our research and subsequent discussions have been very lively and have stimulated a lot of interest in those tales we have heard about since childhood - trying to discover if we can their meaning and relevance to today. Anyone, who might be interested will be made most welcome, especially as our approach is not too serious, even light hearted.

For further information contact Kate Riddleston on 01449 612 871 or Philip Weir on 01449 676 528.

Poetry :-

We are romping delightfully around lots and lots of poems ; but - yes ! you guessed it - we do have some recurring favourites. Betjamen for one, Lear for another - and yes - Robert Frost and Rudyard Kipling. We branch out to America (Frost for instance) and one or two other countries too. Some of our members even bring along their own compositions ; and all contribute favourite titles, themes or authors. So we are a group ever alert to new ideas around our subject.

Of course we talk and laugh, drink tea and sit around ; we get balance - we think ! And now through the U3A grapevine the leader of a group for visually impaired folk has invited us to provide some entertainment on an afternoon in March - **And that feels good.**

We are 8 in number at present and would welcome for a few more to share the Poetry bug with us at 53 Lavenham Way on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

For more information contact Sheila Dobey on 01449 677 265.

Town & Village History :-

A very successful meeting was held at the home of Ann and Ray Watsham on the 8th January 2003 to re-start this group.

Fourteen members attended (and four apologies !), and it was decided to run the group from March to October (inclusive) on the first Thursday of each month. Meeting at the Solar Car Park 9.30 or 10.00am as stated by the leader for that day.

Each month, two members of the group, and in rotation, will arrange their own venue ; this to include where to have lunch etc., - a 'recci' having been carried out before hand.

The number on each visit will be limited at the discretion of the leader (probably to about sixteen or so). Current members having priority, others welcomed if space allows. See the Notice Board for further and up to date information.

Discussion Group :-

Parents, upbringing, schooling environment, experiences, Faith (or non-Faith) - all contribute to the way we think through the diverse subjects tackled in the group. Should our lively discussions begin to fade, we have a leader who unfailingly prompts further thought. His bell, always to hand, has never yet had to be rung to silence warring factions !

Join us, if you dare, on the second Tuesday morning of each month from 10.00 to 12.00.

For details and venue contact Philip Weir on 01449 676 528.

Suffolk at War :-

Ever thought of getting together on a winter's afternoon for a couple of hours to watch Tele ? Well five of us have done just that over the past few months !

Perhaps it is not the most exciting thing you can think of, but it has provided us with a very pleasant time together. We have been watching videos from the series 'Anglia at War' kindly lent us by Pat Leon. Over tea there has been time for discussion and recollection of our own personal experiences of those years.

The meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.30 pm at 18 Edinburgh Close, Stowmarket. Although there is not room for a crowd, a few more would be made most welcome.

For more information ring Pat Smith on 01449 675 568.

Democracy and Election Systems :-

Hopefully, a new group to discuss the problems of democracy, especially in connection with the electoral system. The idea is to start with a talk and discussion on the present 5 systems being used in the UK (for electing MPs for Westminster, Europe, Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland, and for the Mayor of London and local councilors). Then to go on to discuss the systems used in other countries to see if they work better.

For more information please contact David Chapman on 01449 736 223

I came across this story from Suffolk, originally printed in 'Folktales of England', and I thought it might amuse you

The Farmer and his Ox

There were a zurlly old varmer and 'e 'ad a girt ox. One day 'e said to it, "Thee girt orkurd vule. Stupid vule thou be. I wonder who taught thee to be zo orkurd!"

And the ox 'e turn round to varmer, and 'e say, "Why, it were thee, tha' girt stupid vule!"

The growing trend in Britain to hold 'Botox parties'- Social gatherings where people get injections to smooth away wrinkles - concerns Dr Patrick Bowler, chairman of the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors. People are complaining about getting droopy eyelids or one eyebrow higher than the other. "There's a sense of @Have another drink, darling, and we can just pop this poison into you" he told The Independent on Sunday. "It's very serious and it does need looking at.....Drink increases blood flow to the skin. This could mean that you end up with Botox in a place where you don't want it." !!!!

Does Jot's cartoon remind you of anything political lately ????



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