



# STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

**U3A**

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No.1002987

**Newsletter No 5**

**November 2003**

## **From the retiring Chairman - Don Marper :-**

My three year term as Chairman of our club commenced in September 2000. My theme was to carry on the good work of my predecessor, and strive towards an active and, above all, a friendly environment for all to enjoy.

My ambition to maintain a membership of between 100 and 125 members has been achieved, and the monthly meetings have proved attractive, from both a lecture and social point of view, and always well attended.

I have also been very fortunate in my two Club Secretaries. The late Brian Killlett who made a tremendous contribution to the club and provided invaluable help to me in my first year of office.

Philip Weir took over as Secretary in early 2002 at a very difficult and sensitive time ; his competence and professionalism has contributed to the continuous improvement of the club.

In wishing my successor a successful period in office, it only remains for me to thank all the members for their continued support, and help; the conveners of the various activity groups for their unstinting contribution on their chosen subjects and all Trustees and Committee Members over the three years for their help, advice, and ability to make that extra effort when required.

## **From the new Chairman - Pat Smith :-**

After lounging comfortably in the back row for the past few years and watching other people do all the hard work with such efficiency I suddenly find myself holding the baton. At the moment I feel somewhat like a startled rabbit wondering which way to run. This startled rabbit is well aware that there is 'no reverse gear'. The only way for us is forward. With the support and co-operation of the hard working committee that I am privileged to have inherited I hope to serve your interests to the best of my ability. Any good ideas, or suggestions for new groups or extensions to our activities will always be welcome.

Remember the Stowmarket U3A belong to us all. We have the reputation of being a friendly and welcoming bunch. Lets keep it that way !

## **The new Committee :-**

As from Setember 2003 :-

Chairman -	Pat Smith
Secretary -	Philip Weir
Treasurer -	Sheila Dobey
Membership Secretary -	Muriel Killlett
Programme Secretary -	Ann Watsham
Members -	Mavis Healey
	Mike Hitchcock
	Ray Watsham
	Loretta Goldman
	Harold Turner

## From the Secretary :-

At the AGM in September we had two resignations, Pat Leon and Don Marper, both of whom have worked very hard for us over many years to make this the success that we have today. In their stead we have gained Pat Smith ( who has been sitting in on our committee meetings as an ex-officio vice-chairman ) as our new Chairman and Loretta Goldman, and we welcome them to their posts knowing that they both will serve us well. The Treasurer, Sheila Dobey, presented the annual financial report, telling us that although there had been a small loss last year, the increase in annual membership fee to £10.00 will put us to rights. Indeed, I have found out that this fee varies considerably over the country, yet the average is about £12.50, so we must be doing well !! 

It is very pleasing to see our membership increase to it's best level of some one hundred and fifteen people, I trust that we all do our best to make this trend to continue.

With regard to our activity groups I am delighted to see that they seem to be thriving, especially the computer group under the leadership of Wendy Morgan has now reached a membership of some thirty people of all stages of proficiency ; not to mention several new groups, also doing well. Those with an interest in entertainment in the theatrical sense, will I hope, be pleased to know that Mrs Joan Varley is very keen and would love to start such a group (there is more information near the back of this newsletter.

After the obvious success of our two summer outings I am now working on next summer, for June and August and naturally I hope that they will be equally successful - more news later, though I trust that the June outing will be on the third Wednesday as usual.

In the meantime I wish us all a successful year ahead.

Philip Weir

## Since the last Newsletter :-

**July** - Mrs Linda Scoles regaled us with her memories of growing up in the north-west of the United States of America, using her wonderful singing voice to remind us of songs sung in our youth and which was for them their main entertainment. She illustrated how she learnt to entertain and amuse her audience both then and in later life, and how she makes a point of teaching her children and grandchildren to enjoy the same happiness of life in this manner.

**August** - For a change we gathered together for an afternoon cruise on the Orwell. Leaving Iliffe Way on time we wondered about 'that football match' that evening, but we need not have worried the roads were clear and we set off on the 'Lady Orwell' as planned in beautiful weather - warm and sunny with little wind. We were well out-numbered by the other passengers, though it made a good crowd, filling the boat completely. The Captain gave us a wonderful running commentary on all

that we could see from Ipswich Dock all the way to Harwich. Amost interesting and enjoyable afternoon was had by all and we arrived back on the dot of six o'clock to everyone's sense of surprise and relief !!

**September** - Following the AGM business, Mr. Stuart Bufton regaled us with his history of 'Walking Sticks'. This centred around his early fascination for and development into a deep love of them. Not only did he show us some of his collection, and described what was good and not so good about them, but also went into some detail as how they were actually made. In all a totally absorbing lecture.

**October** - This time, the retired Headmaster from Ipswich, Dr. John Blatchly, in his talk about 'Norfolk and Suffolk characters in the New Dictionary of National biography' drew on his experience of also working in the Suffolk Record Office and in making contributions to the said dictionary. He produced a wide selection of anecdotes of lesser known Suffolk

characters, showing many different foibles and idiosyncrasies displayed by them. A masterly dissertation.

### And now for :-

**November** - Mr Paul Wright plans to let us into the mysteries of the work of estate agencies, in his talk entitled 'My life and Work as an Estate Agent'. We have all been in their hands at some time or another, so perhaps we will learn some thing new from the other side of the desk.

**December** - This has not been fully planned yet, though the idea is that we will have some entertainment produced by our good selves and this to be followed up with our usual 'Christmas bun-fight' to be enjoyed by all.

We were hoping to organise a trip to see the the 'Elveden Elves' this month because of an interest expressed by some of those who had been on the June outing. Unfortunately, this had to be abandoned due to insufficient support and numbers to warrant the hiring a coach.

**January** - The Citizens Advice Bureau has become a very important adjunct to our modern life and Helen Oldfield, the local manager of the service will give us a talk on it's work. The service more usually referred to as the CAB.

**February** - This month the talk will be given by Raymond Burch and will be based on his life as a pilot.

**March** - The less well known Norfolk astronomer and adventurer William Gooch will be the subject of Mr. And Mrs. Todd's talk this month.

### Activity Groups :-

#### Archive Film :-

The fourth Monday in the month...2.30pm to 4.30 pm with tea & biscuits in the interval.....and



watching archive films of people and events over the past 80 years. A very pleasant way to spend two hours, once a month !! If you would like to join us please ring.

Eric Adamson on 01449 676 446

#### Birds, Bees and Butterflies :-

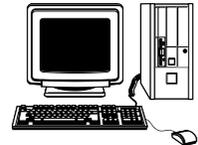


This group has been on hold for some time due to the ill health of the main organiser. However it is hoped that it will get going again in the New Year. Alan Sparrow is hoping to call together those who were and those who would be interested for a meeting to plan a programme for the New Year. This may take place early 2004.

Contact Alan Sparrow on 01359 241 968

#### Computer Group :-

Our membership now stands at a steady thirty and attendance can be as high as ninety per cent. The demand for 'word processing skills' has increased so much that Marian has been persuaded to teach a larger class than is possible around a desktop computer. An additional meeting has been arranged using the notebook computer and projector. We, therefore now run three meetings monthly. On the 'Second Monday' the large group meets usually at the Woodfield Bowls Club. On the third Monday Marian teaches word processing using MS Word at Connie's to a group of fifteen or so. On the third Monday we meet in small groups in members' homes pursuing 'Desktop Publishing, photo manipulation and following up members questions and interests. We are most grateful to Marian and the other leaders for sharing their skills and planning valuable and appropriate sessions. Meetings are from 10.00 - 12.00 and some members adjourn to The Magpie for lunch. New members whether experienced or not are always welcome.



The large group meetings have largely been led by our own members to whom we are most grateful. In July we enjoyed presentations on a mixture of subjects. In August three members

led a session on Adobe Photoshop and in October, Fred showed us how to create a booklet using MS Publisher. Our only visiting speaker was Glen from 'F1 Return' who introduced us to the many and varied courses run at their shop and demonstrated some techniques which could be used in developing a website. Plans are now being made for Christmas and the New Year.

Wendy Morgan 01473 824237

### Country Strolls :-

Twice monthly, this group takes to the lanes and footpaths in order to enjoy this popular activity. Walks are planned to take approximately two hours, covering a distance of about three to four miles (no more !!). We see an immense variety of East Anglian vistas and skies, and we always finish with a well-earned 'cuppa' at a local hostelry.



Newcomers are warmly welcome to join us on the second and fourth Friday afternoons in the month.

Contact :- Joyce Walden 01449 615 591 or  
Joyce Markwell 01449 613 702

### The Craft Group :-

This year as there was so much interest shown by our members it was decided to run two sessions each month. They will be held on the second Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons of the month at 2.00 pm.

Each session lasts for about two hours and includes the usual refreshments, somewhere about mid-way through.

Originally we restricted ourselves to 3D-Decoupage, but now we are venturing into many more aspects of hand crafts, including stamping, glass painting etc..

Liz Weir 01449 676 528

### French Revision :-

For the past few years we have enjoyed our monthly get-together using



plays, videos, the occasional quiz and a sprinkling of humour.

Our numbers have decreased of late and so we have decided to bring the group to a close, at least for now. I am sure all have enjoyed themselves and improved our French at the same time.

Mavis Healey 01449 711 515

### Gardens and Things :-

Since the last newsletter we have continued to explore the gems of Suffolk Gardens. Searching for the knowledge and know-how of our green and pleasant land, mainly in the great Landed Gentry Houses of Euston Hall, Helmingham Hall and Bressingham, all three were different and had their own strong appeal. Euston Hall was of Victorian & Edward VII era, and the gardens could have been viewed at a better time of year. The house was very interesting as it was more in keeping with times that we remember. Helmington Hall was very Henry VIII with a moat that totally surrounded the house and complete with draw-bridges (that still work). I would have liked to see the dungeons. The house gardens were excellent and wonderfully tended, but like always would have looked even more wonderful in the height of the season, especially the 'Goud' walk.



Bressingham was an entirely different experience to the other two in that it was more commercial. The gardens were large and provided a good exercise in landscaping. Even 'Dad's Army' was portrayed, along with miniature trains and roundabouts. The stock section was well laid out with a huge variety of plants and shrubs. Spending our money again !! Still all three day's out were enjoyed by the group, and I believe, gained a lot of knowledge.

The Group will have met on the 23rd October to discuss the the coming season and to plan the 2004 programme. Details of this will be published before the start of next season and we will be inviting new members to join us in our outings.

Harold Turner 01449 676 882

### Luncheon Club :-

As you probably already know, Wendy Morgan is hopeful of starting a regular luncheon outing. The first is in December, and it is hoped to have a meal regularly through 2004. For more information contact :-



Wendy Morgan 01473 824 237

### Music Appreciation (1) :-

Usually on the third Monday of each month.....10.00am to 12 noon. A varied programme starting with the lighter side and progressing on to more serious classical.



A delightful break at half-time with superb refreshments and a quick discussion on how to put the world to rights before we tackle more serious music.

At the moment we have as many as we can manage to fit in, but if you are interested please ring me.

Eric Adamson 01449 676 446

### Music appreciation (2) :-

As we acquire new members, so we seem to lose others, so we still number five or six, but this leaves plenty of room for at least as many again ! I am sure that if you ask those who do come, they will assure you that we have a very pleasant time. Last time we had Rachmaninov's second Piano Concerto played by Askenazy. We are still a little unsure of which is the best day to meet, and we are thinking of finding perhaps a more suitable day in the New Year.

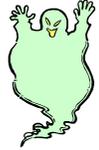


Meantime the dates for the rest of the year will be 12<sup>th</sup> November and 10<sup>th</sup> December. If you think you could be interested, please contact me on 01449 674 673 or indeed just come along unannounced .

Connie Ruegg 01449 674 673

### Myths and Legends :-

This is still a small group, but I am delighted to say that our discussions are very lively and with our new comers we are exploring, discovering many strange and wonderful things about our dim and distant past and the remaining signs to be seen today. Just the way pre-history affects our actions and attitudes without our even realising it. Kate, who hosts our meeting makes sure that all our needs are catered for. Do join us.



For further information contact :-

Kate Riddleston 01449 612 871 or  
Philip Weir 01449 676 528

### Poetry :-

The group is still flourishing; we continue to study a wide variety of poems and poets. For this Newsletter we'd like to share with you this lovely poem by W B Yeats.



#### He wishes for the clothes of Heaven.

Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light

I would spread the cloths under your feet :  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.  
Why not come along and sample our range.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm at 53 Lavenham Way.

Sheila Dobey 01449 677 265

### Town and Village History :-

Since Pat Leon (who ran the group for eight years), and Ray and I gave up after four years the group was in abeyance until this spring. Several members had approached me with a view to restart the group. An informal



meeting was held at our house on January the 8th, which was attended by fourteen members ----- we finally thrashed out a 'D. I. Y.' programme for the months that we normally run (spring to autumn) and I feel that it has worked out very well.

Not only is the 'history' content enjoyed, but the 'pub' lunch has become an integral part and enjoyed just as much !! Among the places that we have visited are Lavenham, Hadleigh, Diss, Thetford, Bildeston, North and South Lophams. Our membership is above twenty, and on average some fourteen to sixteen people turn up.

I propose to hold another meeting in the New Year to discuss a programme for 2004, but due notice will be given at a future main meeting. Ideas for that programme will, as usual, be very welcome, or indeed essential !!

Ann Watsham 01449 672 706

### Discussion Group :-

This group is now bursting at the seams, and so we have had to have a change of location. We now meet at Pat Smith's on the second Tuesday morning of the month. The atmosphere is very lively but totally friendly as we discuss a wide range of subjects ranging from environmental matters to how we have arrived at today's situation.

Whilst we do our best to keep to the subject of the day, naturally we get diverted onto many side issues that are related to the main topic. I am delighted that this group is proving to be so successful.

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

### Suffolk at War :-

This group has completed it's course of study looking at Suffolk during the war. It is hoped to re-group soon to follow up in the sense of Suffolk at Peace (i.e. Post-war).

Those interested in this should speak to Pat Smith to find out more on 01449 675 568



### Democracy and Election Systems :-

A new group to discuss the problems of democracy and the electoral system - the different systems we use in the UK, and the various systems they use in other countries. Which of them work best ?

For more information contact :-  
David Chapman,  
Coles Farm, Buxhall IP14 3EB or  
ring 01449 736 223



### Entertainment (Theatrical) :-

See the Notice Board !  
Mrs Varley is keen to develop a group to study and explore entertainment in all it's forms, so if you might be interested please sign the notice or contact her on 01449 612 767



### U3A Central Office :-

Please note that there is a lot of information and courses to be had from Central office. They have a Web Site open to all at [www. U3a.com](http://www.U3a.com) , but to access more of the site as a member of the U3A you will need a pass word. This can be obtained from me - all you need to do is ask !!

For those with a computer and on the Net, there are quite a number of courses 'on-line' and which are very inexpensive, if not to say very cheap, which would certainly be more accurate. I know of at least one very satisfied customer from our group.

There are a lot of Summer courses to be run at a University each year. The details of next Summer's choice should be with me very soon. Again I know several who have attended these and have been extremely satisfied with the result, that is, with the accommodation, food, and company, not to mention the lectures them selves.

Why not give one a try this coming year ?  
Details will appear on the notice board in due course.

### U3A Suffolk and District Network :-

We had a meeting in Newmarket on the 30th October and I represented us, the Stowmarket group. Going I was concerned that we seemed to be meeting, talking and producing little or nothing that you would be aware of, and so a re-action of why go was to be expected. However, I was delighted to find that at last we were becoming proactive and would have something to pass on to all of you.

This meeting began with a regret that a promised list of speakers and their details had not materialised. Having drawn attention to this I was asked would I produce a full data-base of speakers, who have been active in our groups. This I agreed to do, and have already sent out letters to all of our groups asking for their contributions. This I firmly believe will help us all and make life much easier for Programme Secretarys to fulfil their task of producing an interesting and instructive series of talks.

Having got this over we were given a personal report of the AGM and Conference held in York this Summer. It was stressed that the U3ANews magazine had given a good report of the main issues, but had not dealt with some of the short coming experienced by the delegates. As has been detailed the 2005 session will be shorter, nearer (Leicester) and it is hoped to send an official representative for us. However this has not been settled as to how it is to be organised.

It was a suggestion that a Regional Conference or Study Day, would be very helpful in stimulating interest in the U3A

here in Suffolk. Essex held one last year (?) and it proved to be a great success.

After some discussion, it was felt that Stowmarket being most central ought to be a good site for this, and therefore we are looking into the possible site and organisation for this. All dealings will be through our Regional Contact.

Unfortunately the present holder of this office is retiring and we are looking for someone to take up the reins. So if you know someone or would like to volunteer yourself PLEASE let me know !! In any case when the time comes all help will be gratefully received.

Shirley Thew from Wickford, Essex, a member of Basildon & Billericay U3A, and the N. E. C. Area representative talked to us about the structure and help available from the U3A, both from Central Office and the regions. She stress very strongly that everyone was there to provide help and assistance in support but most certainly **not** to tell us how or what to do, as each group is totally autonomous. She mentioned some research projects that various groups were undertaking, such as working in the local museum researching specific items on display and so producing a report for them to be used for public explanation notices - something those museums are delighted to receive !!

Two of our members are on the Adult Education Liason Group and are endeavouring to make this government body take notice of the U3A in Suffolk and to enable us to work together in providing learning opportunities for us all.

There is also a proposal to start a newsletter for the network so that we all can know what is going on, and to keep us all up to date.

Philip Weir.



This photograph shows members of the 'Garden and Things' doing some potting-up at Otley College in the Spring of this year.

It reminds me of the verse :-

The things I sow  
Somehow don't grow  
I'm sorely disenchanted -  
But, Oh, what luck  
I have with stuff  
I never even planted.

I found these proverbs and thought they might provide a new view of life, as seen from foreign sources :-

- |    |   |            |
|----|---|------------|
| a) | Only fleas are caught quickly !                     | Russian ?  |
| b) | To destroy the cobweb, destroy the spider !         | Maltese ?  |
| c) | The hinge of a door is never crowded with insects ! | Chinese ?  |
| d) | One beetle knows another.                           | Irish ?    |
| e) | If the timid sees a glowworm, he shouts : Fire !!   | Armenian ? |
| f) | Flies do not swarm a new pot.                       | Tamil ?    |
| g) | Into a closed mouth no fly will enter !             | Moroccan ? |
| h) | In every enemy that is an ant, behold an elephant ! | Turkish ?  |
| i) | The moth does most mischief to the finest garment ! | Italian ?  |

All Hallows e'en is not long gone past, and I wondered how you got on ? Yes, my eyes boggled when I read in a newspaper that :-

Sorceresses have recently been banned from advertising on Romanian Television. This was apparently reported by 'La Monde', who added that, nonetheless, witches are frequent guests on Romanian talk shows and have long been political advisers. Rodica, a daughter of Mother Vermin (who was often consulted by Communist tyrant Nicolae Ceaucescu) said : "We have been hunted since the Inquisition. It's because the Popes envy our power."

Have you ever thought who it is that advises our politicians, or indeed, do they need advice ?

On sorting through the piles of stored bits and pieces from long ago, I found a small card written to my grandmother on behalf of a group of her lady friends. The sentiment appealed to me and I thought it worth while to repeat it here :-

'Never live with memories, cherish them and put them tenderly away, and turn again to the sunshine of tomorrow'.



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Edited by Philip Weir

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