



# STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

**U3A**

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No.1002987

**Newsletter No 6**

**March 2004**

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

I am pleased to say that I have settled into the "chair" without too much trouble. I look forward to our enjoyable monthly meetings as I am sure you all do. After the very hard seats we endured for so long I know we all appreciate the very comfortable chairs that have now been provided. Glancing around the hall as we break for tea I have yet to spot anyone who has fallen asleep. Our speakers are all too interesting for anything like that to happen. Ann has managed the work of programme Secretary brilliantly for several years now and deserves a well earned break. Is there anyone who would be willing to take over from her sometime in the future ? If you would like to accept the challenge please let me know.

Christmas has come and gone and is now just a memory. Unused cards and the address book languish in the back of the drawer along with the wrapping paper and bows. The decorations have been consigned to the loft. I am sure that you all enjoyed our Christmas party as much as I did. It was a great success. What talent we have hidden among us ! Thank you to all who took part and who helped in any way. Oh!! And the cakes were delicious.

Spring seems to have come early this year and as I write the crocuses and daffodils are out in my garden. I am reminded of the many tasks which still need to be done before Spring finally gets on it's way. As usual I seem to leave everything to the last minute. I think I might have to ask the G & T group around for morning coffee.

During February I had three minutes of fame, if you can call it that, as I was interviewed by Radio Suffolk on Thursday the 12th about 2.30pm about the U3A. It was nothing much really, just a chat over the telephone with the presenter Rachel Sloane. I spoke of our activities here in Stowmarket and about all the various groups that we have. At least it gave us a bit of publicity. Who knows someone may have been listening and be encouraged to come along.

Thank you all for your continued interest and support

## **From the Secretary :-**

Those of us who went to Welney on Friday 20th of February will be very appreciative of the success of the trip organised by Ann Watsham. In spite of the fall in the total number of swans, when compared to a few years ago, it was wonderful. Thank you Ann, from all of us.

I am very pleased to see the success of our groups, most of whom are flourishing and their number increases even though as is inevitable, a few reach the end of their life. I have great hopes of the new suggestion of a 'Play Reading Group' getting off the ground and bringing pleasure to more of our members. Our total membership numbers is growing slowly but steadily, so perhaps we are doing something right ! Long may the trends continue. If you do not already belong to at least one group, perhaps reading the reports in this will encourage you to join.

## **From the Programme Secretary :-**

I have nearly completed my programme for 2005, and after three years I feel it is time for someone else to put forward their ideas. As far as I can tell, the programmes have been enjoyed by the majority of members, but obviously with so many members, not every programme is going to suit everyone.

At the beginning of January twenty members of the 'Town and village history group' met at our house to discuss a programme of DIY history walks for 2004. Last year was the first of our DIY efforts and it proved very popular, so we were able to arrange a programme for this year.

On February the 20th I arranged a coach outing to the Welney Wetland Trust to see the floodlit feeding of the swans and ducks. Thirty-five members showed an interest and came along, and as far as I know everyone found it an unforgettable experience. We were lucky to go, as the following week was the last viewing this winter.

Ann Watsham 01449 672 706

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

### **November :-**

Mr Paul Wright, a local estate agent gave us a very interesting insight into the changes already having taken place over the past forty or so years here in Stowmarket, and an idea of the changes being brought forward by the present government, which they hope will ease the selling and buying procedure for us the general public.

### **December :-**

This year we adopted a new approach, which we believe worked very well. This was to provide our own entertainment. This consisted of three monologues given by three of our members, Two humorous songs, rendered in dress by one of our brave ladies, and some carols for the Christmas spirit !

Wendy provided a slide show illustrating the activities of some of our groups over the past year. The Craft and Computer groups also provided an exhibition of some of their recent work All this was of course, followed by the usual 'Bun-fight'. And so a good time was had by all.

### **January :-**

Helen Oldfield from the Citizens Advice bureau gave us a very interesting talk on the work of the bureau. She explained that the service was free to all who asked for advice, and

also that it was totally and utterly confidential, covering all aspects of legal problems and their advice. She also stated that the Bureau was manned by volunteers with only two people at the Stowmarket branch being paid !

Helen, also stated that they were always looking out for new volunteers to be trained, either as advisers or general office help. You can give as much or as little of your time as appropriate on a committed basis.

### **February :-**

Raymond Burch, a local lad made good, in the RAF and then in civil aviation as a pilot gave us a fascinating insight into what happens on our flights to..... (in this case Palma, Mallorca) and up front with the flight crew, both cockpit and cabin. The great difference between military and civil practices was drawn, and the immense efforts made to make civil air travel as safe as humanly possible were accentuated. The passage from the Tiger Moth to to-days 747's etc., was an integral part of his story and told with much modesty and humour.

### **And now for :-**

### **March :-**

Mr and Mrs Todd plan to tell us about William Gooch. He was a Norfolk Astronomer and Adventurer, now unfortunately, largely forgotten by most of us. This should be a rather interesting talk.

### **April :-**

Mr Rod MacMillan hopes he will spell-bind us, when he tells us about 'Those Enchanted Places'. We can only wait to find out about the magic, he has found.

### **May :-**

Mr. Pip Wright, the well-known local historian will enlarge and enlighten us about 'The Diary of a Poor Suffolk Woodman'.

### **June :-**

Our Summer Outing this year has been booked, but all the details have not yet been settled. A coach will take us to Audley End, the English Heritage site, where we hope to see not only the magnificent house, but also the gardens.

The gardens, come as two parts - firstly the re-established formal gardens around the house, but also the former kitchen gardens, now both garden centre but also a leading exponent of the most modern techniques of best garden practice, avoiding the use of harmful chemicals.

### **July :-**

Mr and Mrs Ling will be giving us a talk on 'The History of Snape Maltings'. That is the story of when it was a working enterprise producing malt.

### **August :-**

There will be an outing, and as the arrangements have not been made yet, it is impossible to indicate just what will happen. But rest assured we will give good warning and all the information that we can, just as soon as we can.

### **Activity Groups :-**

#### **Archive Film :-**

We meet on the last Monday of the month from 2.30 to 4.30 pm watching films from the past - People and things .....memories and events. We find it a very pleasant way to spend an afternoon, with tea and biscuits at the



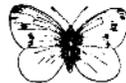
half-way break. If you would like to join us please ring me.

Eric Adamson 01449 676 446

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

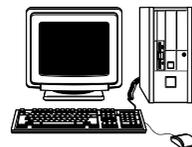
As most of you will know some of us gathered after the February monthly meeting to discuss our future and it was decided to meet on the 24th March to plan a programme of events for 2004. This is under way and anyone interested in supporting this group in any way please contact me for further details.

Janet Sparrow 01359 241 968



#### **Computer Group :-**

Now meeting three times a month the Computer Group goes from strength to strength.



Thanks to Harold and Irene we are accommodated and refreshed at the Woodfield Bowls Club when we meet as a full group on the second Monday in the month. On the third Monday Connie provides room and sustenance for Marian's MS Word group and on the fourth Monday several hosts make room for small groups round their computers. We are grateful to them all for their hospitality.

At November's large group meeting Pat and Frances demonstrated how they had learned to make cards and posters in Fred's MS Publisher group. The meeting in December was a revelation when members displayed cards, calendars, gifts, novelties and a slide show prepared for the festive season. The output surpassed both in quality and quantity the products of the previous Christmas, showing how the whole group has made amazing strides through the year.

In January Marian again reminded us of all the safety routines which we should be observing on our systems; how to keep viruses, Trojans and worms at bay. We are deeply indebted to Marian both for this and her very valuable word processing lessons which are providing a solid grounding for half of all our members. The January meeting ended with a brief introduction to the presentation program

MS PowerPoint.

Interest in digital photography and particularly photo manipulation with Adobe Photoshop has increased considerably in recent months. Three and now four small groups are featuring this program. In February Roy gave us a magnificent demonstration of the power of Photoshop with some of his own exquisite images. He also made use of a new slide show program called Pictures to Exe of which we are likely to see more in the future. Three members are helping the Blackbourne U3A with an introduction to Photoshop, repaying them for assistance which we received from them.

In March we look forward to Geoff's session on Family History. This will be of interest to many within and beyond the Computer Group and is likely to stimulate us to further research and original presentation. Our programme for future meetings is now displayed on the notice board at monthly meetings.

Meanwhile members of the U3A are attending government funded computer courses being held at the Stowmarket Learning Centre. These are for Beginners, Internet and Digital Cameras. Will these result in a boost to our numbers? Will we grow beyond the capacity of the Bowls Club? Can we cope with an influx of new beginners? Only time will tell.

Wendy Morgan : 01473 824 237

### **Country Strolls :-**

Only once during the winter months have we had to abandon our walk due to inclement weather. A little rain or wind does not deter us.

In January this year we held our annual lunch at the Gladstone Arms, where we were pleased to have some previous members to join us. Prior to the lunch, we had enjoyed a shortened walk taking in the river Gipping towpath.

Our numbers remain constant and we are pleased to have Margaret (with Buster), David, Sandy and Joan, who have recently joined us.

For the benefit of newcomers to the U3A our walks are planned, and take about two

hours, covering a distance of three to four miles, keeping to public footpaths, lanes field headlands etc. And finishing with a 'cuppa' at somewhere jolly.

Newcomers are warmly welcomed to join us on the second and fourth Fridays of the month. Please contact either

Joyce Walden 01449 615 591 or  
Joyce Markwell 01449 613 702

### **Craft Group :-**

Our attendance has been very variable, yet we have had much success particularly in producing 3D decoupage cards for Christmas. The techniques used have been increased quite a lot, and have included 'Glitter', pre-cut 'icons' and coloured powder decoration. These have proved to be very decorative and were illustrated in the December meeting show for all to see. We look forward to continue until May and then to have a rest until September, just as we did last year.

Liz Weir 01449 676 528



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

Entertainment is any act or performance given to amuse, and which gives reception or admission to the mind.

What a wide field this gives us words, music and movements. Each of these can be divided in many ways to express a subject, plays, operas, comedy and music in all forms.

These can be presented on stage, by film or by sound. In the old days of 'Variety' all these forms of entertainment could be found in one show.

I hope in our group that we enjoy all these types of entertainment, and that it brings back memories, which we can share and gladly discuss.

Joan Varley 01449 612 767



## Gardens and Things :-

This year's programme is now in place and should prove to be as good as in 2003. The group has now grown in popularity and numbers some twenty members. Whilst this is encouraging for us, we may have to split into two groups if we get many more. Fifteen seems to be an ideal number for movement as a group.

This year's big venture will be our visit to Alnwick Castle and their Millenium Garden. The visit will last the whole weekend and be supported by thirty-one U3A members (still room for some more !!). We leave on Friday the 4th of June and return on Monday the 7th.

For the rest of the year, we will be visiting Shrublands Hall in April, Wyken Hall in May, joining the main outing in June to Audley End, Gifford Hall in July, Boxford Gardens in August and Beth Chatto's garden in September.

We, also intend to hold some winter meetings (ie indoors) in November, December, January and February to provide continuity for our season. Who said that the over 60's are sedentary? This is but one group within the Stowmarket U3A that is physically active. There are many more just as keen and as well supported as we are !  
Harold Turner      01449 676 882

## Grub Club (or The Gourmet Luncheon Group):-

Responding to requests from members, a new group emerged at the end of 2003, with the intention of planning sociable meals at local hostleries for any who would like to take part.

The first venture was a Christmas lunch at The Froise Inn Chillesford attended by forty members filling the dining room which was opened specially for us. The carvery selection was much enjoyed and the variety of hot and cold puddings went down well. It was a very convivial occasion and made a lively start



to the festive season. On this occasion a coach was booked but future venues will probably be reached by means of shared cars.

The next meeting on 16<sup>th</sup>. March will be at the newly renovated Queen's Head at Brandeston, where a roast meal and extensive menu with luscious puddings will be available. Tosca the Persian cat and the black Labradors are looking forward to our visit.

If you would like to be included in future meetings of the Grub Club please sign the lists which will appear on the notice board at the monthly U3A meeting.  
Wendy Morgan : 01473 824237

## Music appreciation (1) :-

We meet on the 3rd Monday morning of the month from 10.00am to 12 noon. We enjoy two hours listening to a wide variety of music, but leaning towards the Classics. From the little known to the much loved - the Paraguan harp to the full orchestra - from the Old Hat Dance Band to Bruch's violin concerto No.1  
Eric Adamson 01449 676 446



## Music Appreciation (2) :-

Our music group is still on the small side, so new members are always welcome. This year we are finishing each meeting with a concerto. Some of the well known ones, but some more esoteric. Along with this we mix many different types of music, from Debussy to a French synthesiser group called Air, which was very well received at the last meeting. Anyone is welcome.  
Connie Ruegg.      01449 674 673



## Myths and Legends :-

We are still a small group with a few new members, nevertheless the discussions arising from the chosen subjects have been not only informative and wide ranging, but also very lively. Our programme runs on to June when we will take a break until September, so that we



can return refreshed to next year's programme of exciting subjects.

Kate Riddleston 01449 612 871

### Poetry Group :-

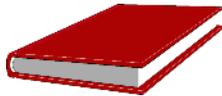
Our Poetry Group of nine members meet fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 2.00 to 4.00pm. We are fairly ambitious in the range of poems we explore ; but we, also, value home-grown talent. One from Megan Samuel is included on page 7.

Sheila Dobey 1449 677 265



### Scrabble Club :-

We started this group just after Christmas and there are seven members as



yet. From these we have made two groups, which, so far have met at separate locations. We feel this is easier to organise, as the groups make their own arrangements, as to frequency and venue for the meetings.

We decided that every few weeks, we would all meet together, so as to give us the opportunity to play members from the other group.

Are there any of you out there who would like to start other small groups, which could meet with the rest of us from time to time. We look forward to hearing from you.

Hilda Williams 01449 711 301 or  
Maureen Wright 01449 711 455

### Town and village History Group :-

As Ann has said in her programme secretary's report, this group has had a very satisfactory year. Having visited many Suffolk villages and looking at their history under a different 'leader' (one of us !!) each month over the spring, summer and early autumn. The idea is being continued this year with we hope, equal success. For more information Please contact :-

Ann Watsham 01449 672 706



### Discussion Group :-

This group seems to just grow and grow !

All our meetings have been very well attended and the discussions have all been very lively and of great interest to us all. Our host, Pat Smith has been very kind in inviting us to his home, and now we are in danger of becoming too big a crowd for he and his wife to accommodate, yet we do not wish to forsake their hospitality. Kate entertained us to a post-Christmas luncheon in January which was enjoyed by all. Our meetings will continue until June, at which time we will take a break until September when we will start our new season.

Philip Weir 01449 676 528



### Suffolk at Peace :-

This group has sadly come to an end. Having covered much of the history on film etc. and not finding 'Suffolk at Peace' sufficiently interesting, this small group decided to call it a day. We hope that they did in fact find the experience worthwhile.

### U3A Central Office News :-

I think one of the most important items to draw attention to about the Central Office is the huge amount of information material held there for our use. It covers a very wide range of subjects and a surprising amount of it comes from old courses used by the Open University and which is free. The only cost is the return postage. Again there are many courses on the net for us only and which cost as little as £5.00 for the majority. There are also the Summer Schools advertised each year, held for us at one of the Universities, again covering a wide range of subjects. I know of some who have been and that they were very pleased. Indeed they intended to go again, so it must have been worthwhile !

By the way, they are on the internet at [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) and their e-mail address is :- [national.office@u3a.org.uk](mailto:national.office@u3a.org.uk)

There is more detailed information if you get and use, their password from Central Office, which is only for members of the U3A to use.

## Medical Advances or .....(not)

We heard that Doctors were asked to advise on the proposed new wing for the hospital :-

The allergists voted to scratch it.

The gastroenterologists had a gut feeling about the situation.

The plastic surgeons tried to put a new face on the matter.

The pathologists said it would be built over their dead bodies.

The surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing.

The psychiatrists thought it was utter madness.

The cardiologists didn't have the heart to object.

The radiologists thought the whole thing should be looked into in depth.

The physiotherapists thought it should be exercised with great care.

The orthodontists decided to chew the matter over.

The obstetricians thought it would give a whole new life to the project.

The anaesthetists decided that it shouldn't hurt at all.

And the hospital porters decided that they would be unable to carry out the work.

## No Milk Today

An imaginary tale by Megan Samuel

"No milk today" - my love has gone away,  
I met him one day on a train, and as I quickly will explain,  
He was gorgeous, five and twenty, and of good looks he had plenty,  
And though I may be forty-nine, we were getting on fine.  
He had such a lovely face, he said he needed lots of space,  
And time to think and find himself. So I gladly shared my wealth,  
My food and drink, my love and bed, because he often said,  
He needed someone quite mature, to make him feel happy and secure.

He said I was just the one. Oh, we did have lots of fun,  
I would go to work quite late, leaving him to meditate  
And deeply think about his soul, or perhaps pop out and draw the dole.  
But lately things began to change, sometimes he would seem quite strange,  
He said he'd found a wonderful scheme, which would fulfil our every dream.  
All he needed was some cash - well, I know you'll say that I was rash,  
But I couldn't bear to see him sad, so I gave him nearly all I had !

Today the house is quiet and dead - my dashing, love has fled !  
And to make me feel more blue, the girl next door is missing too !

So, milkman, this why I say : *"Thank you, but no milk today"*.  
To other bottles I will take, or my heart will surely break.  
Whiskey, Vodka, they'll be fine. All the products of the vine.  
I'll drown my sorrows now he's gone, until I find oblivion !  
So, Ladies, listen to what I say and NEVER be lead astray.

I came across a statement made by a lady that I thought might amuse and even strike a familiar note for those ladies used to catering for their husbands. She labelled food for the freezer as : ‘Anything’, ‘I don’t know’ or ‘Food’. Thus she always had, and was able to provide the proper thing in reply to her question as to what he would like for dinner.

Then there was the local retired arable farmer that folk thought was an ex-tractor fan.



The ‘POOL’ room at Welney, with some of our members that travelled there on the excursion organised by Ann Watsham, enjoying some refreshment before crossing over to the large hide to see the swans fly in and being fed in the flood-light by one of the Trust’s helpers. A trip enjoyed by one and all !!!

And below is what we all went to see - Whooper swans, a few Mute swans and hundreds of Pochard drakes.



**PLEASE remember contributions for the July issue should be with me by the 16th of June at the latest. All contributions welcomed, even more especially from new contributors. (yes, I mean you !!)**

Edited by Philip Weir

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