



STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

U3A

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No. 1002987

Newsletter No 7

July 2004

From the Chairman - Pat Smith :-

I hope that the introduction of the new format at our monthly meetings meets with your approval. It has always seemed to me to be very impolite to expect our excellent speakers to 'hang on' leaving them frustrated in the wings whilst we ramble on for 15 minutes or so about matters which are of no interest to them. Starting the afternoon by introducing our speaker and leaving the notices until the conclusion of their talk is much more agreeable. At least the prospect of a cup of tea and a chat will, I hope, help to keep the notices short.

I don't know whether any of you have had time to read the recently revised '**Aims and guiding principles of the U3A movement**' which were included in the Spring 2004 issue of the U3A News. Under the 'Guiding principals' there is an interesting paragraph entitled '**Reaching out**'. Among a long list of what U3As should be thinking about I found the following - '*U3As should endeavour to keep in touch with members and former members who, for a variety of reasons, can no longer take part fully in U3A activities; in order to maintain their interest in learning and to offer friendly support, a fundamental part of U3A life*'. Is there scope for pursuing this within our own branch of the U3A? You tell me.

I am sorry, but I shall not be able to be with you for our AGM in September. Please accept my apologies. Members of our family are coming from South Africa to be with Jean and me at that time to help us celebrate a special family occasion.

For those of you going on holiday, have a wonderful time and for all of you have an enjoyable summer.

From the Secretary :-

Having been doing this Job now for a little while I thought I knew how wide the range of our interests were. Setting up our stall in June for the 'Best of Stowmarket' it was brought home to me just how wide that range of interests and help is. I was really very surprised at the scope of our organisation both locally and with Central Office !! Attendance at the Barn was reasonable in the morning but unfortunately died away in the afternoon - even so we may have attracted six to ten potential new members and if so was well worth while. David Ruffley our MP visited us and said "What a wonderful organisation the U3A was and how full of admiration for our work".

Central Office is preaching the idea of the 'Virtual U3A', and Pat has broached the subject above. This is something I believe we ought to think about in a realistic and pro-active way and your input will be most important.

Again, I believe, that our groups have been doing great work and increasing in number, but there is no reason to stop at our present level - further ideas are wanted and I will help !

PGW

Since the last Newsletter :-

March :-

Mr . And Mrs. Todd gave a well illustrated talk on William Gooch. He was a Norfolk man, who made a name for himself in the field of astronomy. As an important member of Captain Vancouver's expedition to the west coast of the North American continent, it was very unfortunate that he lost his life there, whilst yet a young man.

April :-

Unlike Elizabeth Arnim's 'Enchanted April', Our April talk, given by Mr Rod MacMillan, took us to some remote and rarely visited parts of the world. His colourful slides showed us the beauty and wonder of rivers and waterfalls known to the more intrepid traveller, while his photographic portraits of people from all corners of the earth increased our awareness of the great diversity of humankind, it's physiognomy and cultures.

May :-

Pip Wright gave us his illustrated talk on 'The diary of a Poor Suffolk Woodman'. It is truly fascinating to learn what can be found out from the brief marginal notes written in a family bible. They describe in some detail the every day events of note of ordinary folk, something not recorded by the normal recorders of the past of that time. This talk was both informative and amusing. We were well entertained.

June :-

Our annual outing this year was to Audley End House and gardens. There is a fuller report below.

And now for :-

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 :-

This month, Mike Hitchcock will be running an outing to visit the National Stud at Newmarket and then the Museum in the town itself. This will undoubtedly be a fascinating experience for us, as you will already know that Newmarket is and has been the centre of the racing world for a very long time.

September :-

Yes - it's AGM time again ! I trust you will have some input this year with some nominations to the Secretary for Committee Members or items to be considered by the membership. We hope to keep this bit as brief as possible to give the maximum time to our speaker. Also this is the start of the new year and subscriptions will be due ! Again they are being held at £10 for the year. Is that not a bargain ?

October :-

You will remember I hope a superb talk given some time ago by Tom Tyler on the history of Jigsaw puzzles. Well, here he comes again to tell us 'More about Jigsaw Puzzles'- I can hardly wait !!

Activity groups :-

Archive Film :-

A very pleasant relaxing way to spend a couple of hours, usually on the last Monday of the month 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Shown recently :- 'Farming with Horses' 'John Betjeman in Marlborough' 'A Tribute to Richard Dimpleby' and 'The Way We Were'. Refreshments at half-time (I can recommend the chocolate ones). The next meeting will be after the summer break on the 27th September
Eric Adamson 01449 676 446



Birds, Bees and Butterflies :-

This group has been functioning once again this year and we hope to see it thrive for all it's members.



Computer Group :-

The government-funded courses held at the Stowmarket Learning Centre occupied many of our members during January – March, covering ‘Beginning Computing’, ‘Internet and Digital Cameras’. Intended for beginners they proved to be of considerable value to us all, while everybody agreed that Andrew Stalham was an exceptionally good teacher who provided us with many new insights and understandings.

At our own large meeting in March Geoff shared his enthusiasm for Family History with us, urging us to seek not only names and dates, but to speculate on contexts in terms of local and national history. He demonstrated this through his own research on one branch of his family, moving from London to Lincolnshire and back, through the fishing industry to newspapers. Following the meeting he prepared for us a sixteen-page booklet ‘Finding the Footprints’, a guide to all those starting out on the family history journey. Copies are still available from me, for anyone interested.

Our April meeting enabled Fred to lead us into The Wonderful World of Computers. Broadening our perspective from letter writing and e-mails Fred reminded us of the huge variety of subjects which can be pursued by means of software and the Internet. These ranged from finance to maps, theatre to libraries, design to games clubs and a multitude of other avenues which members no doubt have since been exploring.

In May Roy organised a visit from a representative of ‘OnLinePaper’. Providing much useful background information about the history and techniques of papermaking, he then demonstrated the types of papers available for use with computers and in craftwork. Members left with samples and increased knowledge of types of paper available.

The June meeting was unavoidably cancelled, but Denise Waterbury, truck driver turned sculptor has agreed to demonstrate her unique approach to computing on September 13th. All are welcome to attend.

Meanwhile many small groups and Marian’s Word group continue to meet regular-



ly with increased expertise and enthusiasm the result of the leaders’ hard work. We are most grateful to all hosts and leaders for their input.

Wendy Morgan :- 01473 824 237

Country Strolls :-

Summertime is here and we are enjoying our fortnightly walk.



In March we repeated a favourite venue i.e. Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds, where we walked around the perimeter & through the notable avenue of lime trees, under which were flowering thousands of daffodils. A visual feast! For our annual ‘all day picnic walk’ we drove to Catterwade and then walked by the river Stour pathway to Flatford Mill. We had our picnic on a ground-sheet, and so back to Catterwade.

Newcomers to U3A are especially welcome to join this group on the 2nd & 4th Fridays in the month. Contact -
Joyce Markwell 01449 613 702 or
Joyce Walden 01449 615 591

Craft Group :-

We will be getting going again in September with lots of new ideas and techniques, after our summer break. We will meet as usual on the second Tuesday of the month at 2.00pm. For more information contact
Liz Weir on 01449 676 528



Democracy and Election Systems :-

This Group has had three successful and interesting meetings this year, and has been discussing some new ideas for an electoral system for Iraq. The next meeting is at 2.30 pm on Friday 9th July. New members are very welcome. No expertise on electoral systems is needed.



Write to David Chapman at Coles Farm, Buxhall, Stowmarket, IP14 3EB.

Discussion Group :-

Once again we have had a very successful year with very lively and informative chats.



We will be starting again in September after our summer break, on this occasion at Mike and Mary's where we will be discussing our attitude to waste.

Philip Weir 01449 676 528

Entertainment (Theatrical) :-

We meet every second monday of the month to enjoy travel by music over land & sea.



One afternoon we just enjoyed the spoken word, uttered with a cultured voice with good language. This was followed by a film 'A Talking Head' by Alan Bennet. When we next met we went on two cruises: one a Russian ship, the other the QE2 with their sound entertainment. A lovely June afternoon was spent with 'Under Milkwood' - But what characters!! In July we will visit Spain with the music of James Last. We plan a trip to Italy, mostly in song. The sharing of entertainment from all parts of the world is the most enjoyable part of our get togethers.

Joan Varley 01449 612 767

Gardens and Things (G & T) :-

April The year started with a visit of twenty G&T members to well known local gardens at Shrublands Hall accompanied by one of the staff, who gave us a very detailed account of the history and procedures used at the hall, ending up in the green houses and nursery, with a full explanation of their working practices, and of course loaded down our cars with shrubs and plants.



May Wyken Hall situated near Walsham Le Willows and is an old Hall of the 16 Century with all self supporting food coming from the hall gardens, as most of the big establishments did in those days These gardens were set out in the traditional manner, with the horticultural side now predominant, although we could not explore the inside of the hall as it is still a private residence, the outside presented some wonderful views and made us all wonder what the inside must be like.

June Two visits were planned for the month the first to Alnwick Castle and Gardens, and Audley End (Essex). See reports below.

July Gifford Hall, watch the notice boards at our monthly meetings for more information
Harold Turner 01449 676 882

Genealogy Group :-

Geoff Locke produced for us a wonderful little booklet entitled 'Finding the Footprints'. This with his talk created quite a bit of interest and so it was thought that we may start a new small group for this interest. If you are keen, and for more information please contact Angela Bentley on 01449



Grub Club :-

On Wednesday April 28th, we visited The Queen's Head at Dennington. This provided a pleasant country run in shared cars as well as a very attractive venue right close to one of the county's finest churches. Having been given the menu in advance our orders were processed promptly and a most enjoyable and varied meal was provided. In a private area we were served at one large table accommodating all twenty-one members. This gave the opportunity for much socialising and plenty of good humour. Perhaps you may be tempted to join us next time. The date has not yet been chosen, but it will be a THURSDAY this time.



Wendy Morgan : 01473 824237

Music Appreciation (1) :-

Someone said "Well what sort of music do you play?" Now there is a good question, it could be pretty well anything, but here it is some of the music we have enjoyed recently :-



Haydn Trio No 17
Julian Bream with the Montiverdi Orchestra
Three different Welsh Male Voice Choirs
The Romantic Piano of Peter Katin
Vivaldi Concerto for strings in D
The Band of the Royal Marines.

We usually meet in the morning 10am to noon on the 3rd Monday of the month near the start of Onehouse Road. We can just squeeze one more in at the moment.

Eric Adamson 01449 676 446

Music Appreciation (2) :-

This little group still meets every month on the fourth Wednesday. Though we are very few at the moment those who come seem to enjoy themselves, but there is still room for more. If you enjoy a relaxed couple of hours listening, why not join us?
Connie Ruegg. 01449 674 673.



Myths and Legends :-

Even though we are but a very small group, we have had a very enjoyable years covering a wide and very varied list of subjects. We meet again in September after our summer break at Philip's on this occasion, and when we will consider 'The Harvest and Corn Dollies'. We hope to welcome some new members to our little group.
Philip Weir 01449 676 528



Poetry :-

We meet in the afternoon between 2pm and 4pm on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. It is a small, lively, and often jolly group. Usually there are between 6 and 8 people. The poetry ranges from the light-hearted or humorous, Edward Lear, Hilaire Belloc, Spike Milligan, for example, through to explorations of works by poets such as T.S Elliot, Dylan Thomas, D.H. Lawrence, Emily Dickinson. Classical works and established favourites often feature – we recently rediscovered, and much enjoyed, the rhythmic delights of Longfellow's 'Hiawatha'.



The sessions follows a mutually agreed format. At the start, everyone gets a chance to share a favourite, or recently found poem. This usually involves some explanation by the reader of why that particular piece was chosen. The ensuing discussion often gets very interesting! A period of more intense study follows on a poet new to us, or partly known, or a particular favourite of one of us. The session usually ends with listening to extracts from The Nation's Favourite Poems series of recordings,

which provide a thought provoking or a fun ending to a very enjoyable session.

Sometimes in our studies we get a surprise. Opening what was obviously an old school copy of Palgrave's Golden Treasury (dated 1917) recently, we came upon this 'Latin' inscription.

*Boyebus kissibus
Sweet girrorum.
Girlibus likaebus,
Wanti sumorum.
Fatherbus heardibus
Of the kissorum;
Bootibus boyebus
Out of the doorum.*

It appears, hand-written in ink, on the fly leaf and was evidently added to the collection by the schoolgirl owner of the book. Her name appears in the same handwriting on many various pages, and she was obviously not as concerned with Wordsworth or Browning or Milton as the teacher intended!

The group is very sensitively and ably led – guided really – by Sheila Dobey. Nobody professes to be an expert, or very learned. We simply enjoy poetry and the good opportunities to share it with one another.
Sheila Dobey 01449 677 265

Town and Village History :-

This group is as strong as ever and is enjoying visiting many interesting places. This spring, perhaps a more notable visit was to 'The Theatre Royal and Green King Brewery' in Bury St Edmunds. Seeing this behind the scenes of this ancient theatre before it's planned renovation was a real eye opener, and one could imagine so easily the atmosphere of it's distant days. Just one of our recent visits!
Ann Watsham 01449 672 706



U3A Suffolk and District Network :-

This group is now starting to be proactive and getting into the position of doing things for our district. We are planning a study day next February at half term at the High School on the basis of "The Changing Face of Suffolk", but where any U3A member can

book to come and meet others and socialize. Numbers will be limited to about 150, and there will be a rather nominal charge for the day.

Also, the persons responsible in each of our U3A's for the groups are working together in an effort to better and widen their scope of subjects and interests!

Watch out for more details in the future.

Outings :-

Alnwick visit 6-10-2004

The U3A group called the G&T ventured on a visit to the North on the weekend of the 4,5,6,7th June. Leaving Stowmarket at 9.30 am, and arriving after a leisurely journey to Washington, south of Newcastle, and stayed there for the duration. Saturday, we divided in to two groups, one visiting the open museum of Beamish, the second group travelled on to Craigside house and gardens. Both venues are totally different, but the groups strongly recommended a visit to each. We returned to the hotel in time for a 7.30pm evening meal and the opportunity to rest up ready for the next day

Day two was the main purpose of our visit. This to the famous gardens and castle of Alnwick. To commemorate the millennium the water gardens have been laid out with cascades and fountains, and whilst the project has not yet been completed, two more gardens are to be finished by the end of 2005 that is the "serpent garden" and the "poison garden". It will be a magnificent sight to behold. The flower area was well stocked with beautiful plants; the rose gardens will be at their best by July.

Both days were fully taken up by the visits, but we also enjoyed beautiful runs through the rolling hills of the Northumberland country side. The weather was kind throughout the weekend, (not too hot) which made walking around on both days comfortable.

We set off back on Monday by 10am and arrived in Stowmarket by 4.30 pm.

The weekend was considered a success, and no doubt will be followed up by more weekends outings in the future. In fact the Eden Project has already been suggested for 2005. These ventures are not only for the G&T group but also for anyone in the U3A. Interested? Watch

your notice board at our monthly meetings for further information.

Harold Turner (coordinator)

Audley End House 16th June

What a wonderful warm sunny day we had for this trip. Thanks to the invaluable help and assistance from English Heritage and the Henry Doubleday Research Association we all had a most enjoyable day and learnt so much about the Gardens and house not to mention the former inhabitants. Mike Thurlow, the Head Gardener for the HDRA, who are responsible for the re-establishment of the kitchen gardens to the mid-Victorian scene and the use of the Soil Association standards of cultivation. He most certainly opened our eyes as to the good and amazing practices of the Victorian gardeners and the current demands of modern ethical standards of production - not to mention the associated problems encountered all the time.

We also saw the results of the work done in re-establishing the parterre garden to the back of the house and have been duly very impressed. In all this we must remember the valuable help given by Joy Germany and her staff in making this visit such a success.

Again many thanks to all of you who supported and made this day the success it has been.

PGW



Mike Thurlow, the Head Gardener talking to us at Audley End Vine house in the kitchen gardens, and explaining their work and connection with the 'Soil Association'.

LENS with the W.F.A

I hope the short title will encourage you to read on - you will ask what is W.F.A? This stands for the Western Front Association which is a country wide group with an interest in W.W.1, it's battles, the different regiments that took part and of course the many cemeteries. We were based in LENS, (which is in the Flanders Plain and not too far from Arras,) in a comfortable hotel on an industrial zone. The hotel itself was around lawns with rabbits scampering and birds singing & with a swimming pool, all this more than offset any disadvantages that there might have been.

It was a bad start for Ray and I on the morning of June 9th - the taxi was ordered for 6.15 am to take us to the station to pick up the coach. It finally arrived at 6.25, it was smelling of stale cigarette smoke and the radio was on, I was not at all happy! We were last on the coach and we left immediately en route for Dover.

The ferry crossing was smooth and we arrived in Calais at 1 pm We headed towards Lens making three stops on the way, the first at the Church of Notre Dame de Lorette which was very ornate but beautiful. A stop at the cemetery of La Targette where there are about 40,000 graves to British and Dominion Soldiers all immaculately kept by the War Graves Commission. We finally arrived at at about 5.30 pm

Thursday, Friday and Saturday were spent visiting the battlefields, cemeteries and museums, broken at intervals by information from Professor Peter Simkins (one of our members) and a visitor Peter Last, the chairman of Southend branch, another very knowledgeable person. For me the highlights of those days were a visit to the museum in Loos, which was specially opened for us and to be taken (again specially arranged) to the top of the site of the Loos Crassier now a slag heap from where it is possible to see the surrounding countryside and where our experts were able to pin point the sites of the various battles of 1915, 1916 and 1917.

Sunday morning and time to make the return journey back to Stowmarket. On the way back to Calais we visited Vimy Ridge, which we have heard so much about since joining W.F.A. Ray and I climbed to the "Pinble" and saw the disintegrating monument to the Canadians which stands on Hill 145, the highest point along the nearly nine miles of the ridge. At another point on the ridge is a beautiful monument to all the Canadians who fought and captured the ridge on April 9th 1917. Of the 10,602 casualties 3,598 were Canadians who gave their lives.

We lunched in Boulogne and then one of our members placed a cross on the grave of Siney Steggles in the cemetery in East Boulogne. Sidney was born in Bury Saint Edmunds, and had an elder brother who lived at one time in Mill Lane, Stowupland.

We arrived in Calais early but were unable to board an earlier ferry. It was another smooth crossing, and we finally walked into the house at 10.30 pm, after an interesting but sometimes emotional few days with W.F.A. Ann and Ray Watsham

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ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO
HELP, WE ALSO DO CARD
MAKING WORKSHOPS WITH
A DIFFERENT PROJECT
EACH MONTH.
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DETAILS.

Web Thoughts :-

A letter from one of our members.

The web offers such a vast array of sites that I suspect many like me are spoiled for choice. I thought a little help might come in useful.

One source I find most interesting is the BBC 1 programme at 7.45am on Saturday mornings. This is called ClicOnline. (Yes ! I do get up early !).

ClicOnline covers the latest happenings in the computer world and puts forward interesting sites to visit. For example, did you know that the order in which Google sets up the response to your enquiries depends upon the number of times the site has been visited - the more 'hits', the nearer to the top of the given list. This means, of course, that the big get bigger and the small shrink out of sight. It is causing problems for Google, and so they show the links on the right of the page.

For each new edition I hope to give a few web sites that I have found interesting. Just one this time :- www.the.britishmuseum.ac.uk/visit/onlinetours.
Fred Stilwell

Thanks Fred - I hope more will follow your kind and helpful lead.

These two photographs illustrate, I hope the display that we put on to advertise our Stowmarket branch of the U3A. It advertises all Seventeen of our groups and many of the assets and help available from Central Office.

The Mayor and the MP for us here in Stowmarket visited during the afternoon. They, each and severally stated how impressed they were with the work done by our organisation, and wished us much success for the future.



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