



STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

U3A

(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)

Registered Charity No. 1002987

Newsletter Number 12

March 2006

From the Chairman :-

Dear Friends,

I am sorry that I missed what I am told was a great meeting in January. Something had to be sacrificed when your granddaughter has travelled all the way from Cape Town to see you for just a few days, even a meeting of U3A! From all accounts it was an excellent afternoon and everyone enjoyed themselves. The gallant gentlemen arranging the chairs were worried that it would be "standing room only" if any more folk arrived. It is most encouraging for those who work so hard to organise our afternoon meetings. The ultimate success of course lies with all of you and the enthusiasm that you continue to show.

We still keep on growing with six new members joining us recently. Our reputation is high, keep spreading the news.

The summer trips in June and August of this year are already proving very popular, so

much so that the lists are filling fast. This is in contrast to previous years when it has been a struggle to fill a coach. This is very heartening indeed, especially for Philip who puts so much time and effort into the organisation.

If you remember at the AGM I promised, rather rashly, that I would try and visit each interest group before September when I relinquish my chairmanship. So far I have managed to visit three, the Art Group, the Computer Group and the G&T Group. I was impressed! Hopefully I will manage a few more visits in the coming months, perhaps even the "Keep Fit".

Like me I am sure you are all looking forward to the spring and perhaps a little warmer weather. There is a reminder in my neglected garden that it is not too far away – I have one or two brave daffodils out already.

Kind regards to you all

PAT SMITH

From the Secretary:-

It is very heartening to realise just how much we have progressed in the recent past. Our growing number of members, groups, such as the Art Group and Keep-Fit to name but two. Tony, Sally and Pauline deserve great credit for their success and the enthusiasm that they have created.

Another thing which greatly heartens me, especially, is to see how our newer members have come forth to assist in the running and organisation of this our Stowmarket U3A. It really is wonderful that they believe so strongly that we are worth supporting.

Talking about support, the initial reaction to the proposed outing to Pensthorpe in June and Bletchley Park in August has been superb. It seems that the coach will be full for the first, and there will still be room for more on the second. So please sign up.

Again, if you read further on, these are dealt with in more detail.

Please note in particular the 'Autumn Academy' day being organised by the Suffolk and District Network of the U3A on the 14th of October, a Saturday, and at Coombs School. The variety of things that will be going on will cover a huge range of interests, so it should be very easy for you to select two topics that will appeal to you. At only £ 6 for the day (but do not forget to bring your own lunch) it seems to me to be a bargain.

I am very hopeful that in the next twelve months, or so, we shall see more interest groups forming and perhaps with a bit of luck someone will come forward to arrange for us some shorter excursions to places of more local interest. But then, we must support them, for nothing is so disheartening as lack of response.

Philip Weir

Since the last Newsletter :-

October:-

The talk on 'Humphrey Repton - Landscape Gardener' given by Mr Clive Paine was not only very lively and informative, but given with his usual consummate mastery so that it was a joy to all of us.

November:-

Mr David Parsons in his talk about 'The Prison Service and the Role of the Dog' not only fascinated us but amazed us with the skill shown by his dogs in detecting minute traces of drugs and their total excitement in the hunt whilst under complete control.

December:-

This year for the first time we were able to celebrate our monthly meeting with a festive lunch in our normal meeting place. Ann Watsham was the prime organiser of this event and we owe her our full and great appreciation and many thanks for a very successful occasion.

January:-

P. C. Newble gave us an enjoyable illustrated talk on the life and works of Sir Edward Elgar. It was noticeable, from the many comments being passed after some of the musical excerpts ended that many of our members would have liked to hear more of that selection.

February:-

As the planned speaker was not able to attend due to illness Dr David Dougan, as a short notice stand-in, gave a very graphic talk on the character of Samuel Pepyes as a man and translated his shorthand in rather explicit terms. However he went on to explain in more gentle terms the great man's extraordinary successful career and his importance in British history.

March:-

'Working with the S. O. E. in WWII' is the title of the talk to be given by Mrs Monica Maxwell this month. This secret service must fascinate all of us having lived through that war and to learn about some of those things we

didn't even have an inkling about, but were being done to win the war.

And now for :-

April :-

Mrs Sue Smart, a teacher from the Gresham School, in Holt, North Norfolk will be telling us about 'WW1 and the Boys from the School'

May :-

'From Penicillin to The Pyramids' is the topic for Mr Trevor Anderson's talk this month

June :-

The response to the idea of an outing to Pensthorpe wild Life Park has been huge. And the trip has been booked. Fortunately the cost has been able to be reduced from £16 to £13 per person. Tickets will be on sale in April on a first come first served basis. Weather permitting it should be a wonderful day.

July :-

'Fetch a Pail of Water' is Mr Patrick Denny's title for his talk this month.

August :-

Again the response to this idea has been good for such a way ahead. There have been 38 people expressing interest and we will need 40 to break even. In this case the cost will be £31 each, but that will include lunch and refreshments, and so will be much better value than one might have thought.

Activity groups :-

Archive Film :-

It is hard work, but don't be put off. We have ploughed the fields - sown the seed and got the harvest in.

We are now watching the history of the British Police Force.

We meet on the fourth Monday of the month from 2.30 to 4.30 pm, and there are



refreshments at half-time. If you are interested and prepared to do some more ploughing using very old equipment then ring -
Eric Adamson 01449 676 446

Art Appreciation :-

The idea for a study group looking at artists born in Suffolk was mooted in the Summer of 2005. Initially eight people showed interest and a meeting was held in September to discuss how to proceed. Twelve members attended. An outline programme was agreed upon, starting with sessions on Thomas Gainsborough whose origins were in Sudbury, and John Constable from East Bergholt. A list of artists through the centuries was outlined, including that very prominent local, Maggie Hambling.



U3A's central resources library was contacted to find what materials might be available, but when it was discovered that we needed to book slides or texts a year in advance the idea of using the resource was set aside. It would fix what we did according to an availability timetable too far in advance, and not our own. The group agreed anyway that the sessions shouldn't be stuffy, high-brow lessons in art, but a sort of 'bring and buy sale' of facts, biographical details, stories, historical context, gossip, and looking at pictures – indeed anything that added to our knowledge and understanding of the artists and their art.

The response has been wonderful. Individual members have researched the lives of artists, their works, the social and political history of the period, and much else. We have used video, talks, books, newspaper articles, small discussion groups, and even a quiz, with everyone of the current nineteen members making a contribution. The sessions have been lively, fun and full of learning. We are off to visit Gainsborough's House in Sudbury shortly, and have ideas about visiting the Munning's Museum later this year.

The amount of information and ideas for following up have been enormous. Having been meeting fortnightly from October in a kind of breathless rush, the group is pausing

until April to give members time to get their work on Alfred Munnings and Leonard Squirrel well under way, and to look back at Gainsborough, Constable, and the delightful work of Harold Becker.

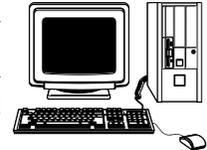
The Suffolk Artists group has amply demonstrated that it can do its own studies, learn lots, and have fun. It has been an exciting venture.

Tony & Sally Taylor

01449 771 168

Computer Group:-

The Computer Group has been functioning in its present form for the last four years and since new members keep joining the format seems to suit. Monthly meetings at the Woodfield Bowls Club, thanks to Harold and Irene, with blackout arranged by Roy and Lilian and a stream of interesting speakers from within and outside the group, seem to satisfy our needs.



In October Roy again delighted us with his beautiful photographs manipulated in Adobe Photoshop and presented in Pictures to Exe. Additionally he has shown his China slides on a separate occasion, which he plans to repeat, with proceeds going to the Mencap Gateway Club.

November meeting saw us in two teams competing in a quiz arranged by Fred and enjoyed by all. We learnt a few things along the way as well. At our Christmas meeting we amazed each other as usual with the splendid display of Christmas artefacts made on our computers, cards, calendars, slideshows, gifts and Valerie's exquisite wineglass lamp shade. This Christmas we lunched together at the recently restored Bildeston Crown, a very enjoyable event.

After the Christmas break we had another enjoyable session with Philip on aspects of scanning and at the February meeting we welcomed Helen and Gordon Thompson who are setting up a wireless broadband network in the rural area north of Stowmarket. If this interests you their website is <http://www.csbb.co.uk/>

They were also able to help us with technical questions, concerning broadband and related matters.

Meanwhile our small groups studying Photoshop continue to flourish thanks to Alan and Roy. The Hadleigh Computer Forums which combine folk from both U3As now number three and serve 24 members. From April Marian will start to teach MS Word again from scratch, this time in Hadleigh, but for our members too. Spaces available.

Finally we have a new presence on the internet, a web log or Blog. It can be found at

<http://www.wendywhitecat.blogspot.com/>

where you will find all that is going on plus hints, tips and news items. Please visit regularly.
Wendy Morgan` 01473 824 237

Country Strolls:-

We continue to enjoy ourselves Plodding on" twice a month on our country strolls. Plenty of muddy foot-paths at this time of year ! We have kept going throughout the winter months and surely must have benefited from being out in the lovely fresh air and looking forward to a well-earned 'cuppa' at the finish.

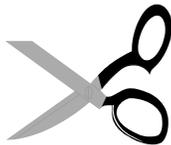
Our dates remain the same i.e. The 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month.

Newcomers are always welcomed.

Joyce Walden 01449 615 591
Joyce Markwell 01449 613 702

Card Craft Group:-

To judge by the new magazines and by the stock held in various shops this is becoming a very popular pastime for a huge number of people. In line with this the range of things that we attempt to make increases, yet keeping to the theme of cards and small table decorations. Likewise the various techniques that we employ grows steadily all the time. Thus the call on our artistic abilities is shown in the things we make. We



can only ever be a small group yet we will welcome new recruits to our circle..

Liz Weir

01449 676 528

Discussion Group:-

How nice it is to be able to say that we seem to be getting re-invigorated. It looked for a short while that our group was shrinking but no, we are having inspiring sessions, discussing a wide range of topical subjects and learning from the others with us to look at things with new eyes and from different angles.



Yes we do have room for new blood and views. You may rest assured of a warm welcome.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Entertainment (Theatrical):-

Are you entertained by strangers sorting out their attics ? Are you entertained by others selling unwanted gifts ? Are you entertained by people walking in mud at Car Boot Sales ? Are you entertained by 'awful' children with their parents who need help to control them ? Are you entertained by the so-called famous, acting out stupid games ? Are you entertained by stand-up comics who use foul words and offensive gags ?



When we meet every second Monday of the month, we have people with real talents. They dance, they sing, and you can hear every word. They make music with melodies that linger on your mind. They speak with lovely voices that make you think, or remember or just enjoy the spoken word. We sometimes travel far or near, places new, and some remembered in passing years.

We end with tea and little cakes, with friendly chat. We entertain each other !

'THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT'

Joan Varley

01449 612 676

Gardens and Things:-

By the time you read this summary of the group we



shall have at least had the Quiz and possibly also have had a talk from the Ipswich Council Gardener. But we still have a full schedule of activities ahead of us for the rest of the year.

APRIL - will see the group at the Broom Power station where they re-cycle chicken waste and so generate electricity for the national Grid. This morning visit followed by lunch at a local hostelry and perhaps on to Blooms of Diss Garden Centre.

MAY - has yet to be finalized but Haughley House and it's garden is the probable venue

JUNE - If, after the Pensthorpe trip and members are keen peter Beales the rose specialist based in Attleborough will be the attraction.

JULY - Angela & Carol will be organising another of their super venues.

AUGUST - as stated else where we are on track for Bletchley Park (of war-time fame) for a joint effort with the rest of our U3A

SEPTEMBER - Mike and Mary are organizing a visit to Cambridge Botanical Gardens, which has a vast array of flora.

OCTOBER - nothing has been arranged yet, but as the weather is beginning to close in for the winter we may think about something to do indoors.

So watch the notice boards for leaving times and confirmation of venues and lets hope we have a very good year.

Whilst I do not wish to discourage new members from joining the group, but as we are getting very popular the numbers are growing (to 40) we may just have to split into two groups in order to make it manageable.. Sometimes numbers are limited at some venues and this makes for difficulties.

However if you would like to join up with us please have a word with me first
Harold Turner 01449 676 882

Genealogy Group:-

A list has been posted last month and again this month to gather names of those who would be interested in forming an active group. After the March meeting I will try to organize a get-together for all



those interested and to see what can be done.

Music Appreciation (1):-

Just some of the music that we have enjoyed at meetings in the past - Iris Williams singing 'Send in the Clowns' - The band of H.M. Royal Marines - The Morriston Orpheus Choir and Music composed by Rossini - Elgar- Chopin - Mozart et al.



We meet on the third Tuesday of most months from 10.00 am to 12 noon with refreshments at half-time. If you think that you would enjoy two hours in very comfortable surroundings with good company, listening to this sort of music then ring -

Eric Adamson

01449 676 446

Myths and Legends:-

Now that we have introduced the art of storytelling into our get-togethers it has injected new life into our small group. In as much as all myths and legends depend on the skill of the story teller, this seem to have given a special boost to our activities, and so we would give a warm welcome to anyone will to share our special interest.



Philip Weir

01449 676 528

Poetry:-

The Clock of Life



The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own
Live, love, toil with a will,
Place no faith in tomorrow,
For the clock may then be still.

For information about this group ring

Sheila Dobey

01449 677 265

Proposed Theatre Group :-

Before Christmas an inaugural meeting was held at our house, in spite of the number interested in a group it was not very well attended. Much discussion took place, the conclusion was that one or two members could arrange a theatre outing at one of the various reasonably local theatres, but it is necessary to have a coordinator.



We agreed to host the meeting but not to run it. It is up to SOMEONE to offer to coordinate this. Have a word with me or one of the committee members.

Ann Watsham 01449 672 706

Town and Village History:-

The Town and Village history group met at the home of Ann and Ray Watsham to plan the programme for 2006, this is now complete and most members of the group have had copies and contact numbers.



Ann Watsham 01449 672 706

U3A Suffolk and District Network:-

The plans for Saturday the 14th of October are progressing nicely. You should find as an insert in this Newsletter full details for the day and what will be going on. Please note that your applications and subscription needs to be with Susanne Gould by the end of June in order to give the organisers time to work out the detailed plans for the day. A good response will be expected from each U3A in our network. It is expected that you will be allocated two out of your four chosen favourite topics from the 19 interactive ones on offer.

We hope that you will benefit from and thoroughly enjoy a very special day !

U3A Central Office News:-

As you will already know, Central Office issues us with the 'U3A News' and you should already have had issue No 73 last month. The latest news is that these three free issues per year is about to be increased to four.

However they also produce three times a year a more technical bulletin called 'Sources'. This is also free but has to be requested. The autumn issue No 26 concentrated on History and the March No 27 concentrates on Religion and Philosophy. The next issue in June and No 28 will be on 'Producing a Newsletter' and 'Information and Communications Technology'. And No 29 in November will be on 'Educational Field Trips'

Obviously these subjects will not be of interest to everyone, but the content is, to my mind at least, very good. Back numbers can be read on www.u3a.org.uk though you will almost certainly need 'Adobe Acrobat Reader' installed, which can be downloaded free from the website. Have you looked at the U3A website at www.u3a.org.uk it has a lot of information on it and about a wide variety of topics ?

Happy reading, I think it is worth the effort.

The Editor

Birds, Bees & Butterflies:-

Janet Sparrow 01359 241 968

Democracy and Election Systems:-

David Chapman 01449 736 223

Grub Club:-

Nobody has yet volunteered to keep this very successful group running. How about you ??



Keep Fit :-

Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954

Music Appreciation (2):-

Connie Ruegg 01449 616 172

Needle Craft Group:-

Alicia Beaton 01449 616 172

Scrabble Group:-

Sheila Dobey 01449 677 265
Maureen Wright 01449 711 455

March

*I shake the cities with my hurricanes;
I flood the rivers and their banks efface,
And drown the farms and hamlets with my rains.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,
In the *Harbour*, 'The Poet's Calendar' (1882).

March Characteristics

March is often regarded as the first month of spring, but astronomically it straddles the seasons, the first 20 days belonging to winter. In some respects it is a month of preparation and anticipation: for farmers it is the sowing season, and in the Christian Church it is largely dominated by the Lenten fast and the approach of Easter. In March the countryside begins its transition from brown to green and the earliest spring flowers, such as the primrose and the crocus, appear in fields and gardens. For many birds and animals March is also the beginning of the breeding season, and the behaviour of one particular animal at this time has given rise to the saying 'mad as a March hare'.

March History

Lide, an early name for March, is derived from the Old English *Hlyda*, which probably referred to the loudness of the wind in this

month. The word survived in a country proverb that recommended the eating of 'leeks in Lide and ramsins [garlic] in May'. The Anglo-Saxons named it *Lenetmonath* (length month), which refers to the lengthening of the days during this month; it is also related to the words *Lenten* and *Lent*.

March Weather

Windy and dry weather in March is generally considered to be a good thing: 'March winds and April showers bring forth *May* flowers', 'A bushel of March dust is worth a king's ransom', and 'A dry and cold March never begs for bread'. However, there is some contradiction in the weather lore: the saying 'March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb' gives the lie to a popular rhyme about the **borrowing days** (either the last three days of March or the first three days of April).

*March borrowed from April
Three days and they were ill'*

*The first was snow and sleet
The next was cold and wet
The third was such a freeze
The bird's nests stuck to the trees* Trad.

'March is the month that God designed to

Some Daft Definitions

A wine shop	A stupor-market
Pop music	Doh-ray-mediocrity
University	Know man's land
Culinary recollections	Noshtalgia
Slimming Award	Girth Certificate
Egyptian Peeping Tom	Mustapha Shufti
An alcoholic's own story	A Blottobiography



*'What do we want?
Why did we come here?
What were we saying?'*

Ages of Man

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The thoughtful 30s
The frantic 40s
The fighting 50s
The sober 60s
The sacred 70s
The aching 80s
The nervous 90s
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“A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials”

“The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken”

“Confidence is the quiet, assured feeling you have, just before you fall flat on your face”

“A child is not a vase to be filled, but a plant to be cultivated”

East Anglia

Open country, smiling, spacious,
Secretive in hidden ways;
History marched, immense, outrageous
And dwindled, down a wordy maze.

“Bridlepath to Wendens Ambo”-
And a road that led to Rome ?
Trackways through the Beaumont stubble-
Did they bring the Norman home ?

Vikings strode about Saxmundham,
Sang thier epics, burned the ricks;
And passed, like conquering Dane or Saxon,
From Weeley, Wivenhoe and Wix.

The wash of place-names stirs and settles,
Unheeded on the sturdy plain
That turns its back on songs and battles
To guard its secret ways again.

Fay Chivers

Edited by Philip Weir

Produced by The Copy Centre,

37 Stowupland Street, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1EG Tel. & Fax 01449 775 166

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MAKING MATERIALS, WE
STOCK INKS, PUNCHES, STAMPS
PEEL OFFS, CARD BLANKS
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.