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# Blackbourne U3A News

A University of the Third Age in Suffolk  
affiliated to the Third Age Trust 



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WINTER 2008

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*From the Chairman .....*

*HERE we are almost at the end of another year of meetings and activities, of learning and enjoyment.*

*One of the things I most enjoy at our monthly lecture meetings is looking around at old and new friends coming together, chatting, moving on to greet other friends and everywhere a sense of happiness and sociability; no wonder Blackbourne U3A has a reputation of being a very friendly group.*

*Thank you all for the part you play, long may it continue.*

## OUR COMMITTEE MATTERS

Next March will see a major change in the membership of our Committee, with my twelve months as Chairman coming to an end and Bob Mountfort (General Secretary) and Sally Rands (Membership Secretary) standing down as they will have completed their maximum three years in office. The result is that overall there will be four vacancies on the Committee (we have operated with 11 rather than 12 members this year).

If the membership at the AGM elects the current Vice Chairman, Colin Avis, as Chairman, there will be five offices to be filled: General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Badge Secretary/Newsletter Distribution and Interest Groups Co-ordinator, as well as Vice Chairman.

Whilst the remaining members of the Committee will be asked if they wish to take up any of these roles, I am keen that we have enough nominations at the AGM on 2 March 2009 to form a full committee on my handing over to the new Chairman.

If you feel that you could make a contribution by joining in the running of Blackbourne U3A and would like to discuss the positions available, please contact me on 01284 761508.

The Committee meets six times a year, usually at the Chairman's house, and meetings last for approximately 2½hrs.

These vacancies are open to all Blackbourne U3A members whether established or new, as well as to past committee members – so please don't hold back in offering to help run our successful and friendly U3A.

Finally may I wish you, your families and friends, a happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year.

*Brian Milner*

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### MONTHLY MONDAY MEETINGS

#### 5 January

Phenology – Is Spring getting earlier?

*Dr Tim Sparks*

#### 2 February

A Journey through the West of France

*Michael Bunn*

#### 2 March

AGM – followed by Arrive Alive

A Safe Driving Presentation

#### 6 April

The Weather Business

*Jim Bacon*

#### 11 May

The Work of St. Nicholas' Hospice

*Ian Norris*

### FURTHER MEETINGS

#### GARDEN VISITS GROUP

**Wednesday 28 January**

Speaker to be finalised

2.45pm Main Hall, New Green Centre

Full details from Barbara Milner on 01284 761508

#### THEATRE VISITS GROUP

**Saturday 12 December 2008**

Christmas Spectacular at Snape Maltings

The Co-op Youngsters, a well-known local group.

**Friday 20 March 2009**

Dirty Dancing at The Aldwych, London

Full details from Sue Russell on 01359 231285

## WINNING PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION ENTRIES

Right: Alan Simpson - Nature Category  
Barbara Milner - People Category  
Below: Ken Weston - Movement Category  
There were 38 entries in all. Thanks to all who entered and to the Judge, Mrs Vicki Hebrian of Bury Camera Club, who commented that the overall standard of images was very high.



The Power of Nature – Poldhu Cove



Wheels in Motion



Trav2 Group on holiday at Lake Garda

## BIRD WATCHING

We started the year with a visit to the Norfolk coast on a very cold January day followed in February by the magical experience of watching a ghost like barn owl hunting over frosty fields by Martham Broad. At lunchtime we even had the local inn open its doors on its "closed day" to offer us food.



A frosty morning

Our trips have taken us over Norfolk, Suffolk and into Essex and seen us wading through a "late" tide to clamber over the gunwhale of the boat which runs to Scolt Head



A sunny Scolt Head

Thanks to our intrepid and knowledgeable expert Barry and all members of the group for their support and enthusiasm.

*Rene Brown*

## WALKS WITH INTEREST

We have had another year of varied walks, each organised by a different member of this popular group. It never seems to rain on the first Thursday of the month so the full programme has been completed. Our rambles have taken us from Wortham and Barham, through Thornham, Onehouse, Haughley, Troston, Rougham and into Bury town with further excursions into Thetford Forest - a total distance of over 55 miles. En route we have visited several interesting churches and graveyards, looked at ancient buildings and generally enjoyed the beautiful Suffolk landscape.



Ready for a walk in Brandon Country Park

Most walkers enjoy a drink and bite at the end of the walk and we have experienced some amusing moments in a variety of hostelrys.

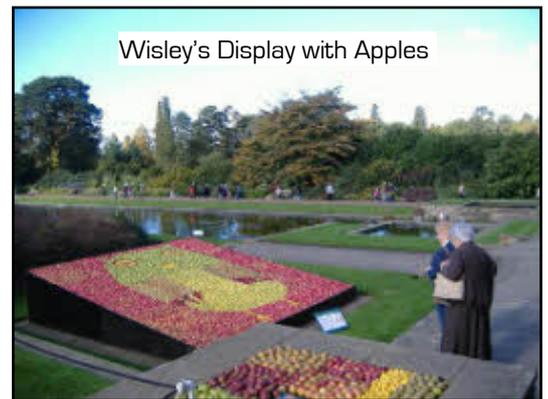
There are 50 members in the group and a waiting list. The maximum turnout for any one walk was 27 with an average of 22 per walk. Twenty plus can become rather unwieldy and I will be happy to help anyone set up another group so that more can enjoy this pleasurable form of gentle exercise.

*Bryann Ward*

## GARDEN VISITS GROUP

On 22 October we had a most delightful visit to the [RHS Gardens at Wisley](#). The weather was absolutely brilliant, albeit a little chilly as the sun went down. It was amazing how much autumnal colour there was and we were surprised to see so many flowers still in bloom. The picture opposite shows a stunning display of varieties of apples laid out in the shape of an owl.

The comparatively new Glasshouse was well worth the visit as we walked through displays in the Dry, Moist and Tropical Temperate Zones, as well as the underground cavern Root Zone.



Wisley's Display with Apples

This was a great end to our 2008 visits. Now we are working on the programme for 2009.

## INTEREST GROUPS' EXHIBITION



Some 200 members attended this popular annual event when most of the groups put on a display of their activities. Their stands showed the wide range of interests and skills Blackbourne U3A members have, from academic studies to practical pursuits.

Shirley Horton and her team laid on a fine spread and New Green Centre was filled with the sound of animated conversation as members mingled, for the first time being able to make use of the bar area in which to sit.

## LECTURE NOTES

### CLOCKS OF WINDSOR CASTLE

OUR October lecture was given by Steven Davidson, son of Joan and John Davidson, Blackbourne U3A members.

Steven is one of the Queen's three clockmakers who look after her 500 royal clocks. There are 400 clocks in [Windsor Castle](#) alone, the others being in Buckingham Palace, Royal Lodge and Frogmore. The oldest clock dates back to 1533.

Steven spends some 10 hours per week winding the clocks and 16/18 hours altering them when the hour changes in Spring and Autumn. He also maintains the sundials, watches and barometers and the clockmakers make all the spare parts themselves.

The Great Clock in the centre of Windsor Castle, which takes 1,000 turns to wind by hand, was originally one-handed but was changed on George V's instructions when alterations were made to the Tower.

We saw slides of clocks including one with 4 different faces, and one with a Negro's head, complete with earrings - pulling one starts the music box at the bottom. This clock is one of only 4 in the world.

Some of the clocks were made by Benjamin Gray, clockmaker to keen horologist George III. Benjamin was joined in business by Justin Vulliamy, a Swiss clockmaker. Justin's son Benjamin also made clocks for Brighton Pavilion. When Queen Victoria sold the Pavilion 26 packing cases were needed to remove the clocks.

There are also long case clocks and barometers made by Tompion and Banger who were major English clockmakers.

*Christine Golding*

### FARMING IN CHANGING TIMES

WHEN we were little, horses pulled ploughs and 'set-aside' was unknown! David Barker MBE brought us right up to date when he spoke about 'Farming in Changing Times'. He is a highly regarded local land-owner, and was awarded his MBE for his keen interest in conservation issues.

Once farmers had to enlarge fields by removing hedges. Now they play an important part in environmental issues and work closely with wild life organisations.

The farm at Westhorpe is a family-run concern and, with his son and nephew being keen environmentalists, our speaker knows that his land is in good hands.

Mr Barker was delighted to tell us about the birds and wild life that can be seen around the farm.

Being a 'green farmer' today brings welcome extra income. However, earnings have fluctuated over the years, from guaranteed prices and subsidies after the war, to the giving of grants to remove hedges! The European Union brought in intervention prices which eventually led to food mountains. World demand and the cost of fertiliser affects the price of wheat. Even the income from oil seed rape varies with the world cost of oil. Costs have changed over the years, from horses, who were fed from the farm, through to tractors, with their attendant upkeep. The use of expensive equipment today led to the question of bio-fuels for which there are arguments both for and against. Over the years the number of working farms has dropped considerably, in particular dairy farms.

Questions concerning world population, pesticides, food miles and Farmers' Markets were asked, confirming that the whole subject was of great interest.

Mr Barker also regaled us with amusing stories of the wonderful local yokel, 'Arnie', showing that, with the complicated life of a farmer today, a sense of humour is essential!

*Elizabeth Sharpe and Vera Hurding*

### MUSIC

#### LISTENING AND LEARNING

This group could take two more members. It normally meets on the third Friday afternoon of the month at 42 Cloverfields, Thurston. Please contact Joy Bolwell - 01359 231301.

Joy would also like to restart the **Poetry Group**. If you are interested please contact Joy as above.

### U3A WEBSITES

Visit the U3A website to find out more about the Third Age Trust, and resources offered for your particular interests:

[www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

Our own website is [www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk](http://www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk)

Please send your contributions, with relevant photos, about your current activities to our new Webmaster, Sue Prigg, at [webmaster@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk)

If you do not have Internet access you can contact Sue 01638 751289

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#### FROM THE EDITORS.....

*We rely on you for the contents to these newsletters.*

*Please send your contributions, either individually or from Interest Groups by email to [publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk](mailto:publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk)*

*or hardcopy to Barbara Milner or Bryann Ward*

**Deadline for contributions for April 2009 issue is 16 March 2009**

Produced by Barbara Milner and Bryann Ward

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