



Newsletter

Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

ISSUE 64

WINTER 2010

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

From the Chairman,

Hello everyone. Christmas and New Year are times when we both reflect and look forward and this year the tenth in our new millennium, is no exception. For us in Blackbourne U3A last year brought us many challenges both on a personal level and also as an organisation. It also brought us many experiences and pleasures that will stay with us for a long time. I am thinking here of the excellent speakers that we enjoyed each month, of the Interest Group's Exhibition, of the Christmas mince pies and wine and of the many outings that were enjoyed by so many members, taking us to many places that we possibly would not normally go to.

None of these events of course would happen were it not for the hard work and dedication of the Committee and the respective organisers and for this support please accept my grateful thanks.

Of course I do not have a crystal ball when it comes to 2010 but I am sure that for us at Blackbourne U3A it will be both exciting and challenging. At our AGM in March you will be endorsing the selection of your new Committee and as the year unfolds enjoy the numerous Interest Groups' activities as they occur. Please give your support to the various outings that are arranged through the Travel Groups, the Educational Visits Group and Garden Visits Group and any others that may be created during the year. Look out also for the planned Spring Symposium and the Autumn Academy both organised by the Suffolk and District Network of U3As, details of which will be announced at future meetings.

Finally it only remains for me to thank everyone who made last year at Blackbourne U3A such an enjoyable experience for so many people and of course to wish you all a very happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

Colin Avis

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday 1 February

**The Art of the Cleft Lip and
Palate Surgeon**

Mr Tariq Ahmad

Monday 1 March

AGM followed by

The Role of a Wildlife Crime Officer

Barry Kaufmann-Wright

Monday 12 April

Splendours of Ancient Egypt

Professor Christine Rivett

GARDEN VISITS GROUP

Contact Barbara Milner
01284 761508

Wednesday 27 January

New Green Centre at 2.45pm

Flower arranging Workshop

Wednesday 14 February

Cambridge Botanic Gardens

Leaving New Green at 9.30am

THEATRE VISITS GROUP

Contact Sue Russell
01359 231285

Wednesday 3 February

Swan Lake Ballet at Milton Keynes

Tuesday 30 March

Jersey Boys - London

LECTURE NOTES

Thomas Paine - From Corsets to Democracy - October 5

Brian Way, MA. delivered an informative and amusing talk about Thomas Paine, an almost local boy, being born in 1737 at Thetford. After attending Thetford Grammar School he became an apprentice stay maker in the family business. He moved to London and eventually joined the navy, earning prize money which gave him a small fortune - which did not last him very long as he was eventually declared bankrupt.

He returned to Norfolk and worked with the Inland Revenue but as his accounts did not add up, he was sacked. After two marriages and again being made bankrupt he gained some experience as a trade union leader protesting against poor wages.

In 1770 he emigrated to America where he worked at the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. He became a big political thinker during the fight for independence from Britain. In 1776 he published *Common Sense*, a pamphlet which helped swing popular opinion in America in favour of independence.

After the War he returned to Europe to promote his design for a cast iron bridge. Still interested in politics he published *Rights of Man* which called for a democratic republic. The Government accused him of encouraging rebellion and he fled to France in 1792. There he was welcomed as a hero and served as a Deputy in the National Convention and helped to write the French Constitution (1793). During the Reign of Terror he escaped the guillotine only because of ill health!

Whilst in France he wrote *The Age of Reason* an argument for a secular society and an uncompromising critique of religious dogma.

He returned to America in 1802 where he died some years later aged 72.

After a series of questions, which were fully answered by Brian Way, a most informative lecture came to a close.

STUDY GROUPS EXHIBITION



This popular annual event was held on Monday October 19 with nearly 200 members attending. Most of the Interest Groups were represented and their members had put a great deal of time and effort into their stands. Not only was this an opportunity to see the talents of members outside of your own groups but also another great way to socialise, as was evident from the noise echoing around New Green Centre. Maybe this was partly due to the wine and other refreshments that Shirley Horton and her team had provided.

The prize winners of the photo competition were announced and the winning pictures are reproduced below.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION WINNERS

Mousehole Harbour

Winner of the WATER Category by Alan Simpson

Jo Sweetman, the judge, said that all the entries were of a very high standard and it was very difficult to make the final decision.

All the entries were on display at the Photography group's stand which attracted a lot of interest.



Cobweb and Teasel

Winner of the OPEN Category by Chris Brooks



Misty Village Green

Winner of the MOOD Category by Blanche Wadsworth

EDUCATIONAL VISIT

Encouraged by Barningham Social History Group's visit earlier in the year, the last Educational Visit of the year was, appropriately to England's only whisky distillery, [St George's Distillery](#), near East Harling. Leaving Thurston early in the morning the coach took the long route by way of Norwich where ostensibly there was time to visit the many museums or cathedral although rumour has it that the majority of the party took the opportunity to do some Christmas shopping!

After lunch at last we found our way to the distillery where, after a short video on its history, the head brewer, David Fitt, conducted us round explaining the various processes from both the chemical and practical aspects.

The visit ended with tastings in the shop and a chance to do more shopping from the range of gifts and over 200 single malt whiskies from around the world.

Until now they have only been able to sell their product as *spirit* but from late November, having matured for three years, they are able to market it as *whisky*. Cases of six bottles of the first batch of whisky may be ordered for about £200.

Bryann Ward.

THE BIRDWATCHING GROUP

On Sunday 11 October we had a brilliant outing on the [Thames Sailing Barge](#) Thistle, organised by Essex Wildlife Trust. The iffy weather soon cleared, and although we did not have sunshine until our return to Ipswich dock, the light was reasonable. It was very interesting to see the birds from the middle of the river rather than from on land (although a telescope would have been very useful).

Sadly we didn't make it up the river Stour but there were plenty of birds and views to keep us interested on the way to Felixstowe and Harwich. I did not keep a tally of the little egrets we saw, it must have been a minimum of 30 – I assume the birds we saw on the way back were the ones we saw on the way down!

The brent geese showed up fairly well with binoculars but I personally didn't see any small waders like dunlin or turnstone which we saw when visiting The Strand and other parts of the shore, but we did see the two peregrines on the Orwell Bridge as we returned. It would have been nice to have seen them doing a bit of hunting.

Barry Milner

A YEAR in the Life of TRAV2



With the problems of economy in mind, Trav2 decided early this year to keep our travelling close to home. Our first trip in March, therefore, was a weekend break to Peterborough. This proved to be a city rich in interesting history and architecture, as well as splendid shops for those with empty shopping bags, and well worth a return visit. In May we explored the Peak District by coach, and in June we took a five day boat trip on the Severn.

We all stayed home in July and enjoyed a fun time on a hot sunny day at our barbecue. In September we boarded the coach again bound for the Lake District, and explored the area around Ullswater. The lure of foreign travel proved too strong towards the latter part of the year and a small party made a very enjoyable trip to Sorrento, at the same time as another small party was flying off to Nice for a look at this exciting area of France. At the time of writing, an even smaller group is preparing for a trip to German Christmas markets in Cochem, Koblenz and Rudesheim.

With the increase in size of Trav2 this year –

we are now up to 108 members – it has been good to see group members joining in and organising some of the trips, with the support and help of the convenor. Suggestions for travel destinations are always welcomed from the members and if there is sufficient group interest, then a trip will be organised. Since we are fortunate enough to have imaginative and skilled photographers amongst our members, and the talents of Bill Packham to turn their offerings into presentations of interest, beauty and often humour, our monthly meetings are well attended and very enjoyable occasions. More detailed descriptions and photos of our trips can be seen on our website www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk/Trav2.htm.

Jean White



Outside Wordsworth's cottage

SOURCES

Having recently received the latest issue of *Sources* from the Third Age Trust, I wonder how many of our members know about this publication and, indeed, about the TAT Resource Centre.

Sources is published three times a year, each issue with a theme; October's was Language. 2010 will see issues featuring Family History and Life Stories, Local History, Health and Well-being. Back numbers can be viewed online and printed. Visit the Third Age trust website at www.u3a.org.uk and sign up to receive regular publications.

The Resource Centre will supply lists of recordings on DVD, CD and Video which are available for loan to study groups. Contact Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager on 020 8315 0199 (Tues-Thurs only) or by e-mailing your interest to resource.centre@u3a.org.uk

Deidre Dabson

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Sadly we lost two of our members in 2009 – Richard Horton, always a happy and generous host for our meetings, died suddenly, and Eileen Sulman, whose husband Reg founded the group, is now too frail to attend.

This year has involved more visits to local sites

- April – a slide show about the navigable stretch of the River Lark.
- May – a visit to Woolpit Museum and Church
- June – the group discussed famous Suffolk people.
- July – guided visit to Newmarket led by Jane..
- August – David Gill, Suffolk Archaeologist told us about 'finds' on The Arc site in Bury St Edmunds.
- September – Blue Badge Guide around the Anglo-Saxon town of Sudbury.
- October – discussion of 'Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths'.
- November – lively afternoon of 'Games, Traditions and Pastimes'.

Enid Reid

LECTURE NOTES – Continued

Two Suffolk Artists – Gainsborough and Constable. November 2

This talk was given by the ever popular Mark Mitchels who told us about two local artists – Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable.

Born in Sudbury in 1727, **Thomas Gainsborough** eventually went to London to study but returned to Sudbury where his house is now preserved as an excellent [museum](#). He set up as a portrait painter in Ipswich but when he was only 32 he moved to Bath where his portraits were in demand from members of Society and Royalty. In 1768 he was elected as a founder member of the Royal Academy. He was a family man, painting his two daughters many times. However his real pleasure came from painting landscapes whereas portraits were his profession – his 'pot boilers'. He died in 1788.

John Constable was born in East Bergholt in 1775. He became a great landscape artist because he loved painting his native Suffolk countryside and the working life of the river Stour.

He was a student at the Royal Academy when he was 23, returning to his home to work in the open air. He made full scale oil sketches before finishing the paintings himself in the studio. His great landscapes, the 'six footers', are among the best known images of British art representing the effect of changing light and cloud movement which was an entirely new approach at this time.

Constable was also a reluctant portrait painter, basically only doing these to raise money. After his father died he was able at last, at the age of 40, to marry and live in London. He was voted an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1819. He died suddenly in 1837.

Mark reminded us of how proud we should be of these two great artist, both born in Suffolk.

Elizabeth Sharpe

Christmas Waits – A Merry Seasonal Entertainment

At the December meeting, the final one before Christmas, we were delightfully entertained by Martyn Harrison.

Being encouraged to join in with songs and the occasional carol – many of which were not quite as we knew them – everyone was soon in a festive mood. With little known facts, some pertinent 'cracker' jokes and fascinating stories, his repertoire unfolded much to the enjoyment of all.

Mr. Harrison created a splendid atmosphere that continued afterwards as members ended the lively morning by enjoying wine and mince pies.

Elizabeth Sharpe

STOP PRESS

THEATRE VISITS GROUP

It is with regret that Sue Russell will not be organising any more Theatre Visits other than those already planned. Our appreciation to Sue for all her hard work on our behalf. If anyone else is prepared to take on this role so that these enjoyable outings may continue, please telephone Sue on 01359 231285

WALKS WITH INTEREST

A few vacancies exist in both the Thursday and Friday walking groups. If you fancy a convivial 2 hour – 5 mile – walk once a month please contact Bryann Ward on 01284 787508

FROM THE EDITORS

Please share with us details of any places you have visited or interesting experiences you may have had and help to make the Newsletters more varied.

These experiences need not be limited to those involving the U3A.

Copy Deadline for April edition is 14 March 2010

Produced by Barbara Milner and Bryann Ward and printed by Profile Business Supplies, Bury St Edmunds. © Blackbourne U3A 2008