



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

# Newsletter

ISSUE 65

SPRING 2010

*From the Chairman,*

*HELLO everyone. By the time that you read this, Spring should finally be upon us and heralding a new beginning. The same can be said of Blackbourne U3A in some ways with the changes to the committee following the recent AGM. Leaving us after serving their three years in office are Ralph Brighton (Treasurer), Vera Hurding (Badge Secretary) and Audrey Barrett (Joint Educational Visits Co-ordinator) and as Chairman I would like to thank all three for their support and input during my first year. Joining the Committee and therefore part of our new beginning are Peter Heath (Vice Chairman), Laurie Marshall (Treasurer), Barry Wells (Badge Secretary) and John Morris who is taking back his previous role of Educational Visits Co-ordinator. To these four members I extend a warm welcome and look forward to working with you and the remaining members of the committee during the coming year.*

*At the AGM I expressed a hope that we may this year increase the number of interest groups currently up and running. I am sure that there are members who have ideas for new groups but are reluctant to come forward for one reason or another, mainly that they are not confident about running the group. This need not be a problem because by posting your interest others may wish to join you and you can run a group between you, or a natural leader may emerge over time. Please give it some thought and contact any Committee member with your idea and we will be only too pleased to help.*

*This year's Autumn Academy is to be held on 9 October at Combs Middle School in Stowmarket and details for this event will be available at the April Lecture Meeting or on line. There are many varied and interesting subjects on the programme again this year and I would urge those of you who are interested in going along to make your booking early.*

*Thank you for endorsing my nomination as Chairman for a second term, I look forward to another interesting and enjoyable year for Blackbourne U3A.*

*Colin Avis.*

## AGM REPORT

THE AGM, held on March 1 prior to the monthly lecture meeting, was attended by 190 members .

The chairman, Colin Avis, said that Blackbourne U3A continues to be a success with a full membership of 500. There is a long waiting list and it may be over a year before many on this list will be able to join. The committee had considered ways of solving this problem including the formation of another U3A but this seems unlikely to happen in the immediate future.

We have 30 interest groups with a wide range of interests which compare favourably with other similar sized U3As and the formation of new groups is always welcome. The Interest Groups' exhibition was well attended and Colin thanked everyone involved in its organisation.

The quarterly newsletter is well received and our monthly lectures cover a variety of interesting subjects. Educational, garden and theatre visits are always fully subscribed and their organisers were thanked for the hard work put in.

In thanking all the committee for their support Colin said that three members had completed their three year tenure but the remaining seven had agreed to continue on the committee.

The retiring treasurer, Ralph Brighton, then presented the accounts showing a balance of £5296 in the main fund. There were no questions and the accounts were duly adopted.

Seven committee members had agreed to continue and four additional members were elected. As there were no nominations for a new chairman, Colin Avis said he would continue for another year. Peter Heath was elected as vice chairman and Ralph Brighton had agreed to take on the role of Examiner.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2010-2011

<b>Colin Avis</b> <i>01359 240431</i>	Chairman
<b>Peter Heath</b> <i>01359 232291</i>	Vice Chairman
<b>Roger Eburne</b> <i>01359 240704</i>	General Secretary
<b>Laurie Marshall</b> <i>01284 828433</i>	Treasurer
<b>Elizabeth Sharpe</b> <i>01359 230045</i>	Lecture Secretary
<b>Christine Glover</b> <i>01284 788075</i>	Asst. Lecture Secretary
<b>Joan Smith</b> <i>01359 233308</i>	Membership Secretary
<b>Barry Wells</b> <i>01359 259112</i>	Badge Secretary & Newsletter Distribution
<b>Joan Bailey</b> <i>01359 232990</i>	Interest Groups
<b>John Morris</b> <i>01284 723684</i>	Educational Visits
<b>Sheila Linke</b> <i>01284 766474</i>	Educational Visits Asst.
<b>Sheila Inman</b> <i>01359 235274</i>	

## The Millennium Tower



THE published talk for the 4 January had to be cancelled but we were fortunate to secure Horry Parsons who gave an interesting and entertaining talk on the construction of the new tower for St Edmundsbury cathedral.

About to retire from contractors Bluestone he was persuaded to stay on and oversee the building of the tower, a millennium project. Bluestone obtained the £8.5m. project in the face of fierce competition thanks partly to their local connections. In fact most of the craftsmen came from towns and villages in this area.

As the tower is built to last a thousand years the materials had to have a similar track record so metal and concrete could not be used in the main structure. Where such materials are used the design is such that they can be replaced without dismantling the main structure should they deteriorate.

The outside is mainly of Barnack stone and the inner walls of Ketton stone. This source of Barnack stone was thought to have been exhausted but the masonry company appointed to the contract were aware of a seam of the stone and were happy to mine it for the new tower.

There were of course many difficulties in maintaining the high quality demanded- liaison with architects, engineers and sub contractors, health and safety, scaffolding and working to very fine tolerances. It is a tribute to everyone involved that a final check by the latest laser devices confirmed that the alignment was within a hair's width of the design.

Horry has a great respect for Prince Charles and his interest in the scheme and entertained us with a very good impression of the Prince to end this illuminating talk.

## LECTURE NOTES

### The Art of the Cleft Lip and Palate Surgeon – 1 February

DESPITE the weather members came to hear plastic and reconstructive surgeon Mr Tariq Ahmad, trained in medicine at Oxford and Cambridge and now working at Addenbrooke's hospital, speak on the art of cleft lip and palate surgery.

It was surprising to hear that plastic surgery has a long history, starting in Egypt and later in India and Europe. In the 14th/15th century surgeon Tagliacozzi performed nose reconstructive surgery using a flap from the forehead, a method still used today. Mr Ahmad told us about Harold Delf Gillies (1882-1960), *the* plastic surgeon of the modern era. Mr Ahmad talked of the value of artistry in his work and how the artist Harold Tonk made drawings of Gillies' work to help with future planning. He also mentioned that he sometimes makes up to 200 drawings of a patient's problems during the course of reconstruction. At Cambridge there is a very successful sculpture course for head and neck surgeons to help them learn how to record their work by making moulds and drawings for future reference.

He spoke of his interest in cosmetic surgery – derived from reconstructive surgery and how it assists in repairing congenital problems, limb deformities and birthmarks. It is also used to treat burns, road traffic injuries and after cancer surgery i.e., re-forming breasts for patients who have undergone mastectomies. He told us about the art of ear reconstruction introduced in Paris which uses implanted bone carved from the patient's ribs.

Lastly he told us how cleft lip and palate can be diagnosed at the antenatal stage, thus giving time for parents (along with the help of a cleft nurse specialist) to adjust and plan the care of their new-born baby. There are about 1,000 such births per year in the UK, most having their first operation at three months and more surgery at sixteen years if needed.

Mr Ahmad, along with another surgeon and specialist team, including speech therapists, counsellors and social workers cover the whole of E. Anglia. There are only eight specialist units in the country and total funding for treating eighty babies a year, so they are forever seeking more money.

Members praised Mr Ahmad for a most interesting and enlightening talk giving us a different aspect on the use of plastic surgery and the amazing results achieved by specialist surgeons in his field.

*Joan Smith*

### The Role of a Police Wildlife Officer – 1 March

FOLLOWING the AGM, Barry Kauffman-Wright gave us an extensive insight into his work as Wildlife Crime Officer with the Essex Police. With his interest in wildlife, the environment and crime, Mr Kauffman-Wright took us into the world of ill treated animals. He illustrated his talk extensively, but kindly omitted many slides that would have been too explicit!

We learnt that bats, which sometimes live in roofs are protected by law; as are badgers, whose setts can be extensive. Foxes have been known to share a sett when they have their cubs, and so are also protected by the law!

If Stanstead Airport is extended, any Great Crested Newts found there will have to be safely moved, which could add extra expense (and time) to the enterprise.

Birds are very vulnerable. We heard about many owls being kept in a budgerigar cage with disastrous results, wild birds being illegally trapped for sale abroad and garden birds being shot on a regular basis – to feed pet pythons. Magpies may be legally trapped, but poisoned eggs left out to kill them unfortunately can be eaten by a family pet.

Taking the eggs of wild birds has been illegal since 1954 and magistrates can impose fines of up to £5000 and a six month prison sentence for wrong possession of just one egg.

Fines and prison can be enforced for many other crimes, including the horrific mistreatment of horses. In spite of an international ban on illegal ivory trade since 1989, elephants are still threatened by poachers. Even the taking of bluebell bulbs can attract a very large fine

*Elizabeth Sharpe*

## INTEREST GROUP NEWS

### THEATRE VISITS

#### SWEET CHARITY

ON Sunday 24 January some of the participants on a London visit, organised by the Trav2 group, went to a matinee performance of Sweet Charity at The Menier Chocolate Factory which was built in 1870 to actually house a chocolate factory. This unique space now provides a 150 seat theatre, which gives a very intimate space for productions.

The show follows the adventures of Charity Hope Valentine, a dancer at the Fandango Ballroom in New York. It has many memorable songs including 'Hey Big Spender!', 'If My Friends Could See Me Now,' 'The Rhythm of Life', 'Sweet Charity' and 'Oh Oscar.....You're gonna be alright'.

The cast gave an amazing performance, and the show is now transferring to the West End at the Haymarket.

#### SWAN LAKE BALLET

ON Wednesday 3 February twenty five went to see Matthew Bourne's production of Swan Lake at Milton Keynes.

This production is entering its 15th year and is as dramatic and inspiring as when it was first presented. How amazing to see the cygnets in feathered trousers with inspiring leaps and great strength? Critics have heaped the production with praise over the years and it is difficult to reach the heights of their adjectives. Suffice to say that it has spoiled most of us for the original version!

*Sue Russell*

### GARDEN VISITS

#### CAMBRIDGE BOTANIC GARDENS



ON 24 February 45 intrepid souls braved the elements and visited Cambridge Botanic Gardens - we were well rewarded as we only had light rain to contend with. The Winter Garden was an inspiration to us all and the jade plant in one of

the hothouses was mind-blowing. After spending the morning walking around it was very enjoyable to visit Scotsdales Garden Centre at Great Shelford to have lunch and some retail therapy.

#### FAIRHAVEN WOODLAND AND WATER GARDEN

On 24 March 44 of us enjoyed a sunny day wandering around admiring the woodland setting for daffodils, skunk cabbages and a few early camelias and primroses. We were pleased that the staff had managed to arrange boat trips for us around their broads and we saw some very expensive waterside houses. We were a month early to see the candelabra primulas but one boatload of us were lucky enough to see a kingfisher perched in all its glory on a branch by the water's edge. Unfortunately none of us had our cameras at the ready!

*Barbara Milner*

### WILDLIFE WATCHING

IN March members of this group visited Brown's Place Farm, Old Newton to undertake an initial survey of the flora with a view to returning in September to complete it.

Due to the lateness of Spring this year there was very little to record although one eagle eyed member spotted a bee orchid pushing its way up and closer inspection revealed more.

Nevertheless our hosts, Frances and Martin explained how they managed the land with conservation very much a priority and introduced us to their Hebridean sheep, one of which was expected to lamb later that day (sadly not whilst we were there).

They also have a couple of hives and explained to us the life cycle of bees and how they make honey. Of particular interest was a Warré hive which differs from the traditional hive in that it resembles more closely the home of a wild bees' colony and allows honey to be collected with less disturbance to the bees.

Our thanks to Frances and Martin for a most interesting morning.

*Bryann Ward*

Do you enjoy listening to jazz and big band music? If so, why not come along to the

#### JAZZ and BIG BAND

group which meets in the morning, usually on the last Friday in the month at Great Barton Village Hall.

Starting at 9.45 the first session comprises a presentation by a member of a band, artist or instrument and this is followed by members playing tracks of their choice.

The next gathering is on Friday 23 April when the music of the late John Dankworth and Cleo Laine will be considered.

For more information contact John Stemp on 01284 702848

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### OPEN MEETINGS

#### MONTHLY MEETINGS

10.00 a.m. prompt start.  
*Coffee & biscuits served between 9.30 and 9.45 a.m.*

Monday 10 May

#### Around the World in 23 years

*Linda Scoles*

Monday 7 June

#### A Journey through the West of France

*Michael Bunn*

Monday 5 July

#### East Anglian Air Ambulance

### EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Monday 24 May

#### The Wallace Collection, Baker Street, London

Contact John Morris  
01284 723684  
or Sheila Linke  
01284 766474

### GARDEN VISITS

[Usually 4th Wednesday of the month]

Wednesday **5 May** - *Note date*

#### Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, near Horsham, Sussex.

Wednesday 26 May

#### Cottesbroke Hall and Gardens, Northamptonshire.

Wednesday 23 June

#### Mannington Hall and Gardens, Mannington, Norfolk.

Contact Barbara Milner  
01284 761508

### 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 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 on 01638 751289

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## INTEREST GROUPS - continued

### THEN and NOW



ON 25 March the Then and Now Group welcomed the Mayor of St Edmundsbury, Mrs Patricia Warby, her Consort and her Officer.

In a brief introduction by Brian Milner we heard that until 1836 Bury St Edmunds' First Citizen was called *the Alderman*. In 1974 Local Government reorganisation saw the demise of the Borough of Bury St Edmunds and the birth of St Edmundsbury.

Madam Mayor told us about her role as Mayor in the 21st century. This includes chairing Council Meetings, leading parades, opening events and buildings, presenting certificates and visiting schools.

Afterwards all our guests answered our many questions and we were able to handle (with gloved hands), the Sword of State, the Mace - and for those with delusions of grandeur - the opportunity to try on the mayoral robes!

### FRIDAY WALKS with INTEREST

UNLIKE the Thursday group, the Friday walkers have had none of their walks cancelled due to the weather.

In January, on rather icy surfaces, we explored Thetford by way of the town trail, learning about its brief spell as a spa town in the early 19th Century, visiting the ruins of the Cluniac Priory, and climbing over the largest medieval earthwork in the country at Castle Hill.

February's walk was curtailed due to rain but we managed a circuit around Sapiston, viewing the now disused church of St Peter and its Norman doorway and discovering a community woodland.

Jennie Daniels and Pat McDonald led the March walk out into the countryside from Lavenham. Walking along the disused railway track we came across workmen clearing the embankment and they encouraged us to return in May when several rare species of flowers would be on display there.

All being well by now we will have walked from Dalham along the Kennet then to Gazeley before returning to the start through wooded areas and a visit to Dalham St Mary's church with fine views towards the west.

*Bryann Ward*

## YOUR SUGGESTIONS ARE WANTED FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Please contact John Morris or Sheila Linke

A most refreshing road sign



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