



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

ISSUE 68

JANUARY 2011

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

From your Chairman

HELLO everyone, It's January once again and as in previous years we look back over the last twelve months and of course forward into 2011.

For me this Newsletter is somewhat poignant because it marks (almost) the end of my two years as Chairman of Blackbourne U3A. The AGM in March will see a new Chairman take over and there will of course be other changes within the Committee as required by our Constitution.

My time as Chairman has seen a number of changes and challenges to our organisation but what has struck me throughout is the continued friendliness that exists within Blackbourne U3A and this is perhaps why so many people want to join us.

Last year was blest with many outings, visits, holidays, events and of course excellent speakers all of which had to be arranged by our dedicated team of convenors and it is to those people that I wish to say a huge THANK YOU as you help to make BU3A what it is.

The year also saw a big push to increase the number of Interest Groups within Blackbourne U3A and I am pleased to report that, following the Interest Groups Exhibition last October, 27 new groups were suggested with, at the time of writing, eight up and running already! This I feel bodes well for the future and helps to allow our new members to find places within Groups or indeed start new ones.

Within any organisation such as ours there are always the support teams, the unsung heroes and I would like to express my deep gratitude to those members who turn out for every lecture meeting to put out chairs, open doors, set up technical equipment, click people in, serve tea and coffee and then turn round at the end of the morning to put New Green back together again. I know that they are reluctant to be mentioned by name so to you all – thank you.

I mentioned earlier the AGM in March. This is the time when a number of Committee members must step down and subsequently new members elected. So if you think you could make a difference please consider putting yourself forward for election by contacting our General Secretary Roger Eburne.

Finally, thank you to you all for your continued support of Blackbourne U3A and may I wish you a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Colin Avis

MONTHLY LECTURES

Start promptly at 10.00 am
Coffee and biscuits are served
between 9.30 and 9.45 am

Monday 7 February

***Eject! Eject! Memoirs of a
Test Pilot***

Stan Hodgkins

Monday 7 March

**AGM followed by
*My Day at The Palace***

Adrian Williams

Monday 4 April

***Reminiscences of a Foreign
Correspondent***

David McNeil

LECTURE REPORTS

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – WITH LOCAL INTEREST
December 6

OUR speaker started his talk by telling a joke, and those who knew Charlie Haylock realised that we were in for an interesting morning.

The talk, or lesson, (for that it is what it was) developed into a fascinating history of how our language evolved through the ages. Because of the influence of our invaders, especially the Angles and Saxons, Suffolk is where the English language began and it has its own unique dialect. The complex mix of the various European people who have settled here, not forgetting the influence of the London overspill, has given Suffolk a changing dialect.

However, there are still people who wish to keep the historic dialect alive and with it the Suffolk humour. Charlie Haylock certainly had people reacting with great hilarity to his Suffolk tales and this created a lovely atmosphere for the Christmas meeting, which concluded as usual with mince pies and wine.

The royalties from the CDs and books sold all went to benefit The Ryes College, a local charity which works with vulnerable children.

Elizabeth Sharpe

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

GARDEN VISITS GROUP

Barbara Milner
01284 761508

26 January 2011 at 2.45p.m
*"Some Late Stuart and Georgian
Suffolk Gardeners"*.

Pat Murrell Cost £2.50

23 February 2011 – leave New
Green Centre at 10.00.a.m. for a
visit to **Walsingham** to see the
snowdrops. Places limited

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

John Morris 01284 723684

A visit is planned for March to
Tower Bridge and HMS Belfast.
Please contact John if you are
interested

THEATRE VISITS

Sue Russell 01359 321385

It is hoped that there will be a
whole day visit to Stratford to see
the newly refurbished Theatre.
More details later.

INTEREST GROUPS' EXHIBITION

THIS popular annual event was
enjoyed by nearly 200 BU3A
members. Most of the Interest
Groups were represented and their
displays attracted a lot of interest,
especially from the many new
members who took this opportunity
to find out what Blackbourne U3A
has to offer.

Lots of ideas were put forward for
new groups and as you will see in
This Newsletter, not only are some
being followed up, but two have
already happened!

Shirley Horton and her team laid on
an appetising buffet which soon
disappeared along with the wine and
soft drinks on offer.

The Chairman thanked all those
who had helped to make the
morning a success, presenting
bouquets to the catering team and
announcing the winners of the
photographic competition. The
winning entries are to be seen on
the back page of this Newsletter.

CRAFT GROUP

AFTER running this group for seven
years, Joyce Kirk has decided to
relinquish her role as convenor. At
present, no-one has offered to take
over although Joan Smith said she
may start up a group of mixed
crafts.

LECTURE REPORTS – continued

ARE WE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE? – 1 November

IN just 50 minutes Dr Frank Flynn succeeded in giving us an insight into the history and development of astronomy. Mankind has always been interested in the origins of the stars and universe, initially believing that the sun revolved around the earth.

We now know that it is the earth and our neighbouring planets that revolve around the sun which is just one of over 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

In 1877 the Italian astronomer Schiaparelli observed a dense network of linear structures on the surface of Mars which he called "canali", meaning "channels" but the term was mistranslated into English as "canals". This gave rise to discussions about the possibility of intelligent life on Mars and indeed on other planets.

The debate about extra terrestrial life was rekindled again with space exploration that has taken place since 1957 and more recent developments in ways to observe the universe. More than 500 planets have been found in our galaxy, some of which could well support life as we know it.

Dr. Flynn posed the question 'What is life?' Is it the ability to reproduce or to communicate? In what language would we communicate? There are so many unanswered questions.

An altogether fascinating and thought provoking subject.

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

NEW – DINING GROUP

THE inaugural meeting of the Blackbourne Dining Group was held at The Flying Fortress, on Saturday November 27, when eight founder members enjoyed a good, reasonably priced lunch. We were treated to a private room, in their comfortable, warm conservatory, which facilitated discussions about the format of the group and future meetings.

As the group quickly gelled together, each member agreed to take on the task of organising one lunchtime gathering to take place on the third Saturday of every month. The programme up to and including May 2011 was soon decided, with the emphasis on the social aspect of lunching together, and thus making new friends.

The next lunch being organised by Betty Brain, will be held at 1.00p.m. on 15 January, 2011 at The Regency Hotel, Looms Lane, Bury St Edmunds.

For more information, or if you are interested in joining this new, friendly group, please contact Carol Henderson on 01284 810785. Membership will be limited to 20 people in the first instance.

TRAVEL and TOURISM GROUP

THERE was a very good turnout for our Christmas celebrations this year and it was pleasing that some of our new members could be with us.

We first met at New Green for some entertainment and games which raised £75 for St Nicholas Hospice in memory of Keith Rands. We then enjoyed an excellent meal in the Orchard Room at Harveys Plants after which Roger Harvey gave a short talk on the advantages of investing in plants rather than stocks and shares.

Our next meeting is on 17 January when we hope to get to know a little better the newcomers to our group.

THEN AND NOW GROUP

ON Thursday 26 November we had a fascinating talk by member Ralph Brighton, retired Bank Manager, (ex-Treasurer, and now Examiner of the BU3A accounts) on the History of 20th century British Banknotes. We learned so much, not only about their history, but also of forgeries and those notes which had slipped through the stringent checks carried out before the notes are put into circulation.

At the end of the tremendously informative illustrated lecture, had you looked into the Meeting Room, you would have seen 38 of us scrutinising our £10 notes with magnifying glasses! It was amazing how much hidden text we discovered in the complicated background of the notes.

INTEREST GROUPS NEWS – continued

THEATRE VISITS GROUP

ON 29 September 35 of us visited Milton Keynes to see “*Hairspray*.” The cast included the duo Brian Conley and Les Dennis as Mrs and Mr Turnblad and provided a wonderful pantomime element.

The story is based in Baltimore, Maryland in 1962 where plump teenager Tracy Turnblad's dream is to dance on The Corny Collins Show, a local TV dance program. When Tracy wins a role on the show, she becomes a celebrity overnight. She then launches a campaign to integrate the “all white” show. “*Hairspray*” is a social commentary on the injustices of parts of American society in the 1960s.

The show has a strong ‘feel good’ factor and the day was enjoyed by everyone.

ON 2 December the intrepid few travelled through the snow to see *Chess* at the Theatre Royal in Norwich. It is the story of a Chess tournament and the surrounding intrigues. The costumes were inspired, the dancing lively and the singing was amazing – particularly the Russian Chess Champion.

This was a sparkling production of the musical by Tim Rice, Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus (from Abba). It was directed and choreographed by Craig Revel Horwood (who is one of the judges in Strictly Come Dancing) and featured a 30-strong cast of West End stars, actors and musicians.

FUTURE THEATRE VISITS

I understand that there is a wish to visit some spoken word productions rather than musicals. Sadly in the past there has been a lack of support and a consequent financial loss.

Now that we have a new influx of enthusiastic members and a desired new direction I am happy that a new convenor operates a separate group. At present I have a list of people who wish to see Warhorse and will pass this to the person who will undertake the role of convenor for this new group. Indeed I would be delighted to join myself.

I will continue to organise one or two productions a year, which is the agreement under which I continued the theatre visits group.

Sue Russell

EDUCATIONAL VISITS GROUP – [THE MUSEUM OF LONDON](#)

NOVEMBER'S Educational Visit enabled our party to explore the development of our capital city from 450,000 BC right up to the present day. The Museum's different galleries explain how the city evolved, displaying artefacts found relative to the period. It was, of course, the Romans who started to develop a civilised society followed by the less civilised medieval period which ended with war, plagues and fire in the 16th/17th centuries

For many, the most interesting galleries were those of the later periods when the city began to expand into the London we know today. There is a recreated Victorian Walk and Pleasure Garden; recorded recollections of the Blitz; and many items we as children can remember. The 1928 art-deco doors to the lifts at Selfridges brought back memories of childhood visits to London for one of our group.

Entry to the museum is free and guided tours of the galleries take place throughout the day. Well worth a visit if you have a couple of hours to spare whilst visiting London.

Bryann Ward

GARDEN VISITS (OPEN) GROUP

WE finished off 2010, not with a visit, but by having a very entertaining talk on “No work – or at least Labour-Saving Gardening” by Bob Flowerdew.

Most of us recognised him, by his ‘pigtail’, having seen him on BBC2 TV programme Gardeners’ World, and his voice from hearing him on Radio 4’s Gardeners’ Question Time panel. We were to learn that he is also President of the Norfolk Group of the Soil Association, an experienced lecturer and writer, and runs his own Landscape Gardening Service.

The afternoon was a great success and, as Bob donated two of his hard-backed books, which we raffled, and the profits from ticket sales, we were able to send cheques for £125 to both the St Nicholas Hospice and to the East Anglian Children’s Hospice.

Barbara Milner

SHORT WALKS GROUP

FOLLOWING the very successful October interest group meeting when 35 members requested to join this popular group, it has been decided that in order not to affect the existing 40 members, we cannot extend this group at the present time.

If any member who expressed an interest would like to convene a second ‘Short Walks Group’ I would be happy to assist them. These walks would be about 3 miles or 1½ hours long around local villages.

There might also be a need for a ‘walking back to health’ group which could be called ‘The Amblers’. I can provide the details of ten persons who would like to walk about 1 mile on firm level ground and finish with a coffee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to start these ideas by phoning Barry Wells on 01359 259112 or e-mail to barrywells@sky.com

TRAV2

IN October 35 of us went down to Newquay in Cornwall where we had five glorious days exploring some famous gardens.

We stayed in a lovely hotel overlooking one of the surfing beaches – the views were great; the food excellent and the organisation, faultless.

Our itinerary covered The Eden Project, The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Trebah Gardens and Trerrryce.

ON 9 December, 45 members spent three days in Kent, using the Thistle Hotel at Brands Hatch as a base. We visited Rochester and its Christmas market, and also spent a really interesting day in Canterbury calling at Blue Water Shopping Centre on the way back.

NEW – FOLK DANCE GROUP

THIS group met for the first time at 2.00pm on Monday 13 December at Wetherden Village Hall.

It is hoped that the group will meet monthly in the New Year. For more information please contact Joan Stebbens on 01284 769867

BLACKBOURNE U3A 2010 PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION WINNERS



Bryann Ward was the winner of the HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE category with a picture he took of Chatham Dockyards whilst on one of our Educational Visits.

The winner of the OPEN category was Dawn Smith whose Early Autumn picture is truly stunning.

Chris Brooks won the the CREATIVE/IMAGINATIVE category with his beautiful picture of the Millennium Bridge at Sunset.



Items for our website – www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk – may be sent to our webmaster, Sue Prigg, at webmaster@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk or on 01638 751289.

Items for the Newsletter should be sent to publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk

Produced by Barbara Milner and
Bryann Ward
Printed by Profile Business
Supplies, Bury St Edmunds
COPY DEADLINE FOR APRIL EDITION IS
15 MARCH 2011