



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

# Newsletter

Issue 73

April 2012

## Chairman's Chatter

*JUST as the clocks spring forward to signal the lighter nights, the recent March AGM has brought significant changes to our Committee. We are grateful for the hard work of retiring Committee Members, Roger Eburne, Joan Smith, Joan Bailey, and Sheila Inman who leave after three years service, and to Edna Lockhart who has reluctantly had to resign after one year. Through their efforts they leave Blackbourne U3A fit and well for 2012 and into 2013.*

*A big thank you and welcome to our six new Committee members, Stella Chamberlin, Sue Cattermole, Karen Murdoch, Rosie Ellis, Christine Glover and Judy Ballam, who will take us through the next three years. The roles of our Committee members are shown elsewhere in this Newsletter; I look forward to working with the new team in my final year as Chairman.*

*Our many Interest Groups continue to thrive thanks to the work of their Convenors. If you have an interest which is not catered for please contact our new Groups Coordinator, Rosie Ellis, with details and we will see what we can do. Two very new Groups have met in the last few weeks. The Memoirs Group, (already full), is busy writing about our schooldays, and Art Appreciation, (could take 3-4 more, contact Sue Copping 01284 700186), is looking at Suffolk Artists.*

*Enjoy the Spring ahead but spare a thought for our farmers and growers who desperately need rain. That reminds me, must research the best deal in water butts. And we all have a jolly good excuse not to wash the car!*

*Peter Heath*

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2012- 2013

Chairman **Peter Heath**  
01359 232291

Vice Chairman **John Christie**  
01359 240358

General Secretary  
**Stella Chamberlin**  
01359 242601

Treasurer **Laurie Marshall**  
01284 828433

Lecture Secretary  
**Karen Murdoch**  
01359 270313

Asst. Lecture Secretary  
**Christine Glover**  
01284 788075

Membership Secretary  
**Sue Cattermole**  
01359 272572

Names Registrar /Newsletter  
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**Barry Wells**  
01359 259112

Interest Groups' Co-ordinator  
**Rosie Ellis**  
01359 242629

Committee Member  
**Judy Ballam**  
01359 270595

## AGM held on Monday 5 March

AT the AGM, held prior to the lecture, 183 members were present.

In his report the chairman, Peter Heath, thanked the many members who had contributed in maintaining Blackbourne U3A as a strong and flourishing group. Roger Eburne, Joan Bailey, Joan Smith and Sheila Inman will be leaving the committee having served their three years and Edna Lockhart has resigned for personal reasons.

The treasurer, Laurie Marshall, presented the accounts which were approved by the meeting and showed total funds of £6037.30 as at 31 December. Only a disappointing 55% of members had opted to pay their subscription by standing order and it was hoped many more would do so this year. As no membership cards are now being issued, a question concerning the issue of receipts for members paying by cash was raised and this will be considered in committee.

Then followed a discussion on the proposed changes to the issue of badges at lecture meetings. The new procedure is explained elsewhere in this newsletter

Peter Heath was re-elected chairman and the existing committee members not standing down were re-elected en bloc. Six new committee members were elected.

Ralph Brighton was re-elected as examiner. There was no other business.

## Improving entry to the Monday Lecture Meetings

IN April 2012 the committee are introducing a new registration system for the Monday monthly lecture meetings which hopefully will speed up access into New Green Centre especially on cold and wet days.

There is need for a system which tells us who is actually in the room on the day, should the emergency services be required and badges do not allow for this.

Therefore names will be ticked on a register when members arrive and the badges, which cause too many problems in the lobby area now that nearly 250 members attend each meeting, will be dispensed with..

Committee Members and Convenors will still wear badges so they can be easily recognised and on New Members' days a "meeter and greeter" will be in the lobby area.

It is hoped that this will be an improvement to our Monday meetings and the committee will continue to monitor the situation and try to ensure you are able to receive your cup of tea or coffee and are comfortably seated in time for the start of the meeting.

*Barry Wells (Attendance Registrar and Newsletter Distribution)*

## Suffolk network Spring Symposium

This is being held on Saturday 19 May at Stowupland High School.

The subject is *Celebrating the Arts in Suffolk Today*.

It may not be too late to register, so for more information and a booking form see

[www.u3asuffolknetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3asuffolknetwork.org.uk)

## SAVING ASIA'S VULTURES FROM EXTINCTION



A white-backed vulture

OUR January speaker was Christ Bowden, BSc. (Hons) in Ecology from Loughborough University.

In 2004 he started his career with the RSPB as International Species Officer based at Sandy, Beds. 10% of the work of the RSPB is done out of the UK covering 26 countries and his role was to visit, support and help address problems encountered by any of these countries.

He showed us a film on the plight of Asia's vultures which have always been a very important part of life in Asia as they are part of the culture and religious fabric and play an important ecological and social role – vital for the health of the people in cleaning the environment of rotting carcasses. Three species of vultures in particular are threatened with extinction over Asia as a whole but in Northern India 99% of the white-backed vultures have gone – losing 40,000,000 birds.

Research has shown the drug *Diclofenac*, given to the cattle herds was the cause. It is toxic to vultures and causes them to die of kidney failure. However *Meloxicam*, which is safe for vultures is more expensive and vets, farmers and the general public need to be educated in the importance of using this new drug. This is part of Chris's role.

In 2009 Germany released the patent of *Meloxicam* thus enabling it to be sold more cheaply. It asked the governments of India, Pakistan and Nepal to prevent the sale of veterinary *Diclofenac* to help save the vultures and also set up six conservation breeding centres across the region for all three threatened vulture species.

This programme is succeeding in that they are saving the species by gathering healthy new chicks and rearing them in a breeding centre in Jarajana, with three more such centres being proposed in India and Pakistan.

The future of the vulture still hangs in the balance but in 2008 the first fledgling was born in captivity. In 2010 all three species bred and 36 fledglings were born.

Chris concluded by saying that fund-raising was vital and ongoing; he had given the audience a most enlightening and interesting talk and his dedication to the project was obvious.

*Joan Smith*

## PAKENHAM WATERMILL

SET in the picturesque countryside of Suffolk stands [Pakenham Watermill](#), the subject of the talk given by David Eddershaw on 5 March.



With the use of slides he told the history of this last working watermill in Suffolk, telling us that for almost 1,000 years millers on this site have been using the simple technology of water to produce stone-ground wholemeal flour from locally grown wheat.

The present building is late 18th century, replacing a smaller building. The reason for this was a change in the approach to milling. Originally, farmers brought their wheat to the mill where it was milled and taken away again. Later the miller purchased the wheat from the farmers, stored it and milled it when market conditions were right to sell it.

David then explained how the water wheel is sited in the building and that in 1813 Charles Lowe leased not just the mill, but the farm as well for £130 a year, agreeing to pay £400 for improvements and in 1814 a new water wheel was installed. Later in 1898 a state-of-the-art water wheel replaced the previous one and, after recent restoration, is still working today.

He said Pakenham is the only village in England to have both working water and wind mills and continued to explain the milling process. Crucial to this is the burr stone, with its hard abrasive surface good for milling, imported in pieces from France and assembled here. Wheat is poured in through the hole in the stone and the end product is wholemeal flour.

Brian Marriage was the last private owner, working the mill from 1930 until his retirement in 1974, when the mill and mill house were sold separately. They were both bought by the Suffolk Building Preservation Trust and a team of 50 dedicated volunteers continue the tradition. Their flour is supplied to shops, farmers' markets and sold in their own shop where you can also browse for gifts and souvenirs.

In concluding a most interesting talk David invited us to enjoy the tea and home-made cakes in the Mill tearoom or relax in the garden and watch the swans on the millpond.

*Joan Smith*

## EDUCATIONAL VISIT The Geffrye Museum

ON Wednesday 19 January 45 members visited the [Geffrye Museum](#) in Shoreditch.

Called the *Museum of the Home* it is contained within a stunningly beautiful Grade 1 listed building originally built as almshouses for the Company of Ironmongers.

It now contains 11 period rooms dating from 1630 to 1998, each showing the main living room of a typical middle class family complete with period wall and floor coverings, furniture, paintings, objet d'art etc.

There are audiotapes to listen to, for example, extracts from the diaries of Samuel Pepys and Mrs Beaton.

You can also visit two of the restored almshouses' rooms and in the summer, the period gardens. There is a restaurant and bookshop, all well worth a visit.

We enjoyed a thoroughly enjoyable day in spite of the cold, drizzly weather.

*Christina Ruddock*



Statue of Sir Robert Geffryes  
above the main entrance

## THURSDAY WALKERS

THE weather has been kind and we have been able to complete the first three months' walks.

In January John Morris led us on a saunter around Thetford Forest starting from Santon Downham, and Thetford was the start of our February trundle organised by Sheila Linke. Beginning at Nuns Bridges we skirted the lakes upstream of the Little Ouse before returning through the town to visit the ruins of the Priory. These are maintained by English Heritage and are more extensive than those of Bury St Edmunds Abbey. We also had a brief encounter with Captain Mainwaring!



It was a warm, sunny day in March, which no doubt encouraged 25 members to follow Peter Cook for a wander around the countryside near Woolpit. With the church spire often in view, many of us took the opportunity to visit it before adjourning to the Bull for lunch.

*Bryann Ward*

## FRIDAY LONGER WALKING GROUP

THIS group has made an enthusiastic start to their 2012 programme.

To date monthly walks, lead by group members, have started, in January, from Santon Downham through Thetford Forest and towards Grimes Graves. The forest is an ideal place to walk in the winter with its free draining sandy soil.

In February, despite the snow, we circumnavigated Bury St Edmunds by way of its fens and water meadows and narrow alleyways whilst the itinerary for March was local countryside around Horringer, taking in the Round House and Fairy Lake on the Ixworth estate.

All walks have been followed by a most welcome pub lunch to enable walkers to recuperate and restore energy levels.

*Sylvie Marshall*

## SOUNDS of SPRING



ONE of the early birds to visit us for the summer is the blackcap with its unmistakable [melodious song](#). If you hear a flute like warbling try and spot this little olive grey, sparrow sized bird on its perch in the trees before the leaves appear and hide it. Once you have located it look for the distinctive

black cap on the male (the female has a brown cap) For a very good reason it is also known as *the nightingale of the north*.

*Avian*

## MONTHLY LECTURES

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

Monday 14 May

***Racing at Le Mans***

*Celia Stevens*

Monday 11 June

**Please note revised date**

***Memories of the Last  
Century***

*Michael Bentinck*

Monday 2 July

***Backstage Tales***

*Carolyn Soutar*

**There is no meeting in  
August.**

Monday 3 September

***Hearing Dogs***

*Louise Brundell*

## EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The next planned visit is to  
Colchester Museum and Layer  
Marney on Wednesday 20 June.

For details contact John Morris  
on 01284 723684

[Our 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

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