



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

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Chairman's Chatter

WHILST many of us have been basking in the glory of a fantastic summer of sport, topped off by Andy Murray's triumph at the USA Open, Sue Cattermole and Laurie Marshall have been beavering away, logging your renewal payments and signing up 40 new members to our popular U3A. On behalf of our Committee and existing members, we extend a sincere welcome to the new recruits and hope you enjoy being a part of our vibrant group.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find Interest Group News, which this time reflects a dynamic situation of new groups forming and a few older ones closing. Thanks to our Convenors we have a wide range of Interest Groups but are always looking to establish new ones, so if you have an interest which is not catered for please let Committee know.

The next big event on the horizon is the Interest Groups Exhibition on October 15 where new members can see for the first time, the amazing breadth of activities within our Group. At £3, tickets are very good value and include cheese and wine. Stella Chamberlin reports that the 200 tickets are being snapped up, so get in quickly to avoid disappointment. **Please remember to bring your ticket with you for admission**, and to stand a chance of winning the Chairman's raffle prize!

As winter fast approaches and the risk of snow and ice increases, please keep an eye on your e-mail if you have it. Any cancellation due to inclement weather will be notified by e-mail; we are currently exploring the feasibility of having a central telephone number where members without e-mail may access a cancellation message.

And don't forget the seasonal celebration of wine and mince pies after the December meeting. Blackbourne U3A – all human life is there!

Peter Heath

Monthly Lectures

Start promptly at 10.00 am
Coffee and biscuits are served
until 9.45 am

Monday November 5

***My Life and Experiences in the
World of Antiques***

Elizabeth Talbot MRICS

Monday December 3

***The Genius of Charles
Dickens***

Mark Mitchels

2013

Monday January 7

Life in Medieval England

Mike Wabe

THE LIFE OF A DIPLOMAT'S WIFE

THOSE attending the July meeting were entertained by Celia Simms, a replacement speaker found at short notice.

Celia had always wanted to be an actress and her gentle style showed that the Diplomatic Corps gained at the expense of the theatre. Celia's talk was full of light entertainment, some perhaps not intentional, which was well appreciated by her audience.

Having quickly covered her initial journalistic work and her successful courtship with her husband she moved on to her time as a diplomat's wife. She clearly thought that her husband's change of career should not be encouraged as she had no wish to live in South Africa or Australia but she was a good wife and so she eventually arrived in South Africa.

There can be no doubt that the life of a diplomat's wife was far easier than that of a diplomat. Celia appears to have enjoyed rounds of tennis, golf and parties. Although with the South African apartheid system in full swing she needed to be courageous to entertain non white people.

Celia's talk was illustrated with a series of photographs to confirm the social activities. A view from her husband's office was finally confirmed as Australia and not South Africa, much to the amusement of us all.

Her husband took early retirement and returned to this country to set up a vineyard in Hepworth. This was Celia's turn to work as her husband told her that in a few years they would have wine but in the meantime they needed income. Celia took a job at the local mushroom factory but as she said "that's another story". I wonder whether we will hear it?

Laurie Marshall

Don't forget

Interest Groups' Exhibition

11.00 am

Monday October 15

Entry by ticket only

Obtainable in advance from
Stella Chamberlin

Interest Group Snippets

Following members' requests, Interest Group co-ordinator, Rosie Ellis, is trying to set up a **Bridge** group, another **Dining Out** group and a new **Theatre and Cinema** group. If you are interested in any of these, give her a call or speak to her at the monthly meeting or the Interest Groups' exhibition on October 15.

Unfortunately three of the existing groups have ceased to operate – **Discussion** (Deidre Dobson), **Genealogy advice** (Bob Mountfort) and **Bird Watching** (Rene Brown). However members of the Birding group are to discuss their future. Our thanks to the retiring leaders for the many years given to their groups.

Interest groups are the *flesh on the bones* of the U3A movement and with a membership of 550 we should be able to provide a few more. A group consists of members with a common interest coming together to share their knowledge and to learn from each other. So, if there is a particular subject or activity you would like to share, speak to Rosie or any other committee member as help will be readily available.

The Games

I am sure most of us became caught up in the excitement and spirit of the Olympics and Paralympics and Team GB's performance. Some of you were lucky enough to obtain tickets and experience, first hand, the atmosphere of the Olympic Park.

One of those lucky ones was Interest Groups' co-ordinator, Rosie Ellis, whose son, Matthew, was a member of the paralympic 7-a-side football team. The team finished seventh.

Rosie says: *We had experiences we would never have had if he had not played and met the most amazing people, eg Ellie Simonds, and David Weir in the special Nearest and Dearest Athletes lounge. Mat played twice in the five games; it was fantastic to be there supporting him.*

HEARING DOGS

THE new year for Blackbourne U3A started on September 3 with a talk by Lou Blundell. It was perhaps appropriate that half way through the Paralympics we should have a talk about the huge benefit of independence given to deaf people by the superbly trained Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Lou Blundell, herself profoundly deaf, told us of the founding of the movement in the United States. Tony Blunt, a British police dog handler, heard of this movement and went to the USA to see whether the training system could be introduced to the United Kingdom. In 1982 [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](#) was registered as a charity.

Originally 75% of the dogs that were trained were rescue dogs but this proved unsuccessful for many reasons. Now only between 7% and 15% of the dogs are rescue dogs and the Trust has its own breeding scheme.

The breeds used are labradors, King Charles spaniels, poodles and the toy breeds. The ideal dog needs to be curious but calm and also confident.

Apart from the need to be profoundly deaf, applicants need to have a suitable house with a secure garden and they also need to have a feeling for dogs. The choice of the right dog for the right client is the result of very careful matching.

Before training, the young dogs are fostered out to homes where, for six months, they are given intensive experience of socialising in all sorts of locations and situations. Then follow 4 to 5 months of training after which they are given a test, with a pass mark of 75%, covering reaction to sound, sociability and handling.

By this time the dog has naturally formed a loving bond with its trainer and the new owner spends a week in a flat at the training centre to allow for the transference of love from the trainer to the owner. The dogs continue to be monitored on a regular basis.

Training is an expensive exercise and Lou had a number of items for sale and members generously contributed to the charity by purchases and donations.

Laurie Marshall

TRAVELLERS' TALES

Travel and Tourism Group

THE group broke with tradition this year and enjoyed a summer party instead of a barbecue. This proved to be very popular especially with those who looked after the barbecue! The committee produced a fantastic array of food including fresh salmon and prawns as well as coronation chicken and lots of lovely salads. Neither did we stint ourselves on delicious desserts. A fun competition and a raffle were held and, without trying, we made a profit which will help to subsidise the Christmas event.



Believe it or not we do not just enjoy these social gatherings. This year, thanks to our members, we have also been able to improve our knowledge about such places as the Arabian Peninsular, St Petersburg and Moscow, Australia and other places. By the end of this year many of us will have been away with the group to Bristol and Bath, to the Rhone for a cruise between Lyons and the Camargue and to Derbyshire to see Chatsworth in its Christmas glory. At the moment planning is in progress for a two centre stay in Dublin and Cork in May.

We continue to be a happy, active group and are always pleased to welcome prospective new members to come along to one of our meetings to see if they would like to join us.

Tony Sear

MORE TRAVELLERS' TALES



ON May 11 thirty six members travelled to the Bristol City Centre Marriott hotel for a four night stay, breaking our journey at Croome House.

We had tickets for the Bristol City Sightseeing bus and were able to decide when we used them and where we visited.

We were spoilt for choice with some of us visiting museums (ten drawings by Leonardo were at the Bristol Museum), the cathedral and churches. The historical area and markets were most interesting. Some graffiti by Banksy were to be found in unexpected places which added to the interest.

On Sunday we boarded the Flower of Bristol for a docks and river cruise. There was a very informative commentary on board. We stopped at the riverside for a pub lunch. The weather was kind to us and the service ship shape and Bristol fashion!

On Monday morning some of the group had a guided walk with an appropriately dressed Pirate Pete around the historical parts and harbour of Bristol. Our guide was full of colourful stories of pirates and their links to the slave trade in Bristol. We then joined other members of our group at the SS Great Britain and had a very interesting two hour guided tour. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the ship travelled one million miles, including 32 round trips to Australia. Interactive displays in the Dockyard Museum brought to life the story of this Victorian ship and her passengers. Visitors can descend below the glass supported "sea" to the ship's hull and propeller.

In the afternoon we visited the Bristol Blue Glass factory and showroom. This is owned by the brother of one of our members and we were warmly received. There was a fascinating demonstration of glass blowing and we were able to look around at the display of historical glass. Many of us purchased the products – not all were blue.

We left Bristol on Tuesday morning feeling that there were still areas to



explore. On our way home we had planned to have a guided tour of the gardens at Cliveden but it was too cold so we arrived back in Bury a little earlier after another successful Trav2 trip.

Yvonne Heftman

Summer Barbecue

OVER 70 members of Trav2 enjoyed this annual event, although it has to be said that this year the `summer` part was missing! Nevertheless a splendid team effort by the Group ensured that we all enjoyed this great social occasion, with Sue and Phil doing a grand job with the cooking in not too much of a drizzle, Barry and Janette keeping the drinks flowing, and everyone else chipping in to lend a hand with setting up and clearing away.

As usual the buffet table was groaning with tasty contributions from members – enough to put Delia and Jamie in the shade! –and the desserts, well, truly scrumptious would not be an exaggeration. It was just great to hear the buzz of laughter and conversation as members took the opportunity to catch up with news, some of whom perhaps not having had the chance to meet since last enjoying one of our trips. Well done TRAV2 and thank you.

Jean White

Some 47 members of Trav 2 are off to Tuscany on 22 October.

Keep Connected Keep Informed

AS our membership is now 550, we are trying very hard to keep as many of you as possible informed of what's happening at your U3A, in the most efficient and cost-effective way. Fortunately, many of you have given us your e-mail addresses, with which we can reach almost 77% of our membership.

We now have a new bulk e-mail system (thanks to the efforts of our former Secretary, Bob Mountfort), an American system called MailChimp. This system is free of charge for us to use, and is very secure in that your e-mail addresses cannot be "stolen".

We have started using this system, and would ask that you **check your e-mails regularly** – ideally once a day just as you would check your front door-mat for post but, if that's not possible, maybe twice a week should be the minimum.

Such messages from us will come into your e-mail inbox showing it to be from "Secretary Blackbourne U3A" and will have our blue and yellow logo as a heading. Some of you may find that your computer may treat these messages as "spam" because they are generated by a bulk e-mail company, so it may also be worth checking your spam/rubbish/trash box or telling your e-mail provider that these are not spam.

Last, but not least, please advise us if your e-mail address changes and/or if you are newly on e-mail, so that we can keep our records up-to-date.

Should you have any queries on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact our General Secretary, Stella Chamberlin, on 01359-242601.

Art appreciation Group

THE Art Appreciation Group recently enjoyed a visit to The Alfred Munnings Collection in Dedham. Like many people I associated Munnings with fine equine paintings but was astonished to discover his work encompassed a wide variety of subjects. His early water colours are a delight, the subjects covering rural farming scenes to period family groups enjoying a visit to the fair.

For those familiar with Caley's chocolates some of his paintings for the decoration of chocolate boxes can be seen.

He loved painting gypsies and their ponies and often went on the road for months to capture the movement, colour and essence of the traveller group.

He was a war artist for the Canadian Cavalry Brigade during the Great War and would work on his canvas within sight of German lines.

His attention to detail for both the colour and form of his horse paintings has to be seen to be appreciated.

Considering Munnings lost the sight of one eye early in his career his work seems all the more remarkable.

I particularly liked his impressionistic work, which to my untrained eye is just as pleasing as the well known impressionists work. When the group meets again in September we will be discussing our favourite painting from the collection and sharing our thoughts on the visit.

Gill Heath

EDUCATIONAL VISIT TO [HOLKHAM HALL](#) – July 30

FROM the moment the wrought iron gates opened and we began to ascend the 3 mile long drive we suspected we were visiting somewhere special. So it proved to be; the entrance hall is truly awe-inspiring, soaring it seems to the heavens with pink alabaster columns, marble stairway and gold-domed coffered vaulted roof.

There followed a series of rooms with names like the Saloon, the Parrott Bedroom (in the Strangers' Wing), the Libraries (Family Wing), the North State Dining Room. All had fabulous furniture, porcelain, furnishing and artworks by Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Claude and Zacchia to name but a few. The State Gallery is devoted to all things Roman – Emperors, Gods and Goddesses etc.

The grounds are vast, with a temple, triumphal arch and columns, and enormous lake and walled kitchen garden. The Bygones Exhibition is not to be missed and if you visit this year you will find the answers to many questions regarding the Olympics over the years.

Christina Ruddock

THEN AND NOW GROUP

A VISIT TO HILL FARM AND ITS MUSEUM, GESTINGTHORPE

OUR visit to Ashley Cooper's farm at Gestingthorpe was the follow-up to the excellent talk he gave to the group in November last. We were shown into the museum, so local to the many exhibits that it is in a room in the farmhouse which stands on the land of the Romano-British settlement which in 1935 was unearthed by his father when he first used a tractor for deep ploughing of the site.

Ashley then introduced us to his father, a 94 year-old, tall, and sprightly gentleman who who gave us a fascinating introduction to many of the finds which surrounded us. These included a signet ring with its tiny picture of a lion killing a deer, a bronze steelyard about 15 cms long, beautifully made and still able to be used to weigh small items, a lovely glass and bronze millefiori brooch, keys, necklaces, coins, ubiquitous Samian ware and an ancient thimble of a design exactly like those used today.



Ashley then took us out to the field where remains of the Romano-British settlement had been found. Mr Cooper senior had spent almost 70 years excavating the site – after he had taken guidance from archaeologists and attended relevant courses. Archaeologists were not readily available after WWII.

His careful excavations yielded the site of a large dwelling, the house of

a working family – so no chance of hidden gold coins or jewellery. Like many homes of today, when the opportunity arose and finances allowed an extension had been built. A hypocaust was installed to heat the building – imagine the upheaval of setting the pipes below the existing floor, on the other hand their winters would have been more comfortable. One of the pipes had a sign of early Christianity on it – the outline of a fish. Were these farmers pioneer Christians who had to hide signs of their new beliefs?

Ashley illustrated various aspects of the site with explicit paintings which really brought the place to life. Cleverly he had left scarcely hidden fragments of tile and pottery which some of us took great joy in finding – until we realised what an excellent ploy this is for the many school groups which visit the site.

Then back to the working farm and a big old barn full of interesting items including a sledge and skis used in a television programme about local boy Captain Oates who died on Scott's Antarctic Expedition.

After a welcome cup of tea and biscuits and a last brief look at the museum we ended what had been a truly outstanding visit.

Brian Milner

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