



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

Issue 76

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A HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR to YOU ALL

A plea from our Chairman.

IF you missed it, we finished off 2012 with a wonderful talk from Mark Mitchels on The Genius of Charles Dickens, probably the best lecture I've heard in my 5 years in the U3A. The wine and mince pies went down a treat too! Thanks to everyone who helped make this such a success on the day.

As we look forward to a new year the AGM looms large on the horizon in March. Laurie Marshall, (Treasurer), Barry Wells, (Names Registrar/Newsletter Distribution), and I will step down. So we are looking for new members to volunteer their time on our Committee, to ensure the future prosperity of our thriving Group.

*But it **will only thrive** if a few members step up to the plate and say, 'Yes, – I want to invest some of my time to ensure the continued success of our U3A'. Could that be you?*

Joining Blackbourne U3A was one of the best decisions that my wife Gill and I have made for our retirement. The result has been new interests, numerous new friends and acquaintances and a very full calendar! Many members have told me that Blackbourne U3A has been a lifeline, after bereavement, or on retirement, when the world of work came to an abrupt end and a void opened up. Long may that lifeline continue!

After the October Interest Groups meeting, where members listed their interests, we are taking names for several possible new interest groups but these will only get going if those who are interested help to make them a success. U3A is a self-help organisation, so please do help in anyway you can. Please think, 'What can I do for Blackbourne U3A?' and not always 'What can Blackbourne U3A do for me?'

We need you....now. Thank you.

Peter Heath

CHURCHILL – The Art of Leadership

HISTORIAN William Tyler MBE started his fascinating talk by outlining the events that led to Churchill becoming Prime Minister of the War Cabinet on 10 May 1940 – one of the most important dates in our history.

Lord Halifax was the leader preferred by the Conservatives who considered Churchill untrustworthy and an opportunist. However, during a meeting the day before between Chamberlain, Halifax, and Churchill, Halifax said he was reluctant to lead the Nation from the House of Lords and that Churchill would be a better choice.

When the War Cabinet met on 10 May it became obvious few people, and no one in the Labour Party, wished Chamberlain to continue as Prime Minister of a National government. Chamberlain resigned and that evening Churchill went to Buckingham Palace where the King asked, 'I suppose you don't know why I have sent for you?' Churchill replied 'Sir, I simply couldn't imagine why'. Whereupon Churchill was asked to form a government.

Quoting from several books on Churchill's leadership during the War, William demonstrated the qualities of a great leader. Churchill had a strong rapport with all classes of people regardless of their political views and was able to communicate at all levels. For instance, when the fire in the typing room went out he came down and relaid it himself.

Then there are those memorable speeches, made when secretly he felt our chances were very slim. He had a sense of humour and a dogged determination. He was prepared to make unpopular decisions and then move on.

William doubted whether we would be enjoying the life we have today had it not been for Churchill's leadership of, not just the nation, but of civilisation during the 18 months from May 1940 to December 1941. He finished his talk by quoting from a letter Mary Soames had written to her father shortly before his death – 'I owe you what every English man, woman and child does – Liberty itself'.



Bryann Ward

MOVEMBER



WELL done to Bob Mountfort for growing a moustache to raise £775 for this charity.

Like several other members, Bob was diagnosed with prostate cancer but prompt treatment has stopped it in its tracks.

Bob strongly urges male members to **insist on a PSA test** as early treatment may save your life.

During November each year, Movember is responsible for the sprouting of moustaches on thousands of men's faces in the UK and around the world. The aim of this is to raise vital funds and awareness for men's health, specifically prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

The funds raised in the UK are directed to programmes run directly by Movember and our men's health partners, Prostate Cancer UK and the Institute of Cancer Research.

FOR CHILLY MORTALS

FOLLOWING our notification to BU3A members regarding **electric blanket testing**, two of our members managed to get along to September's session held in Bury. Both were very glad they did, as their blankets were found to be faulty, and were consequently replaced free of charge.

Whilst we appreciate that our notification of this very useful service was somewhat late in the day, we understand that this annual scheme is advertised each year in the late summer/early autumn Age UK publications and local press, so do look out for them in 2013.

Meanwhile, we have contacted SCC's Fire Prevention Service who organise this scheme, and they have promised to give the Blackbourne U3A advance notice of this service in 2013, thus giving you more time to arrange your blanket-testing appointment next autumn.

Stella Chamberlin

MY LIFE AND EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD OF ANTIQUES

THE 244 members and one guest attending the November monthly meeting were entertained by Elizabeth Talbot, a partner in T W Gaze, auctioneers of Diss.

Elizabeth gave a detailed explanation of her general interest in auction sales and antiques and covered her career from a three year stint as a pupil in Nottingham where she gained invaluable experience as well as professional training. She traced her career through to her move to Diss in 1995 and promotion to a partnership in 2002.

We were entertained to a series of anecdotes giving explanations of the mysteries of auctioneering. It was reassuring to be told that if you attend an auction it is very unlikely that you will find yourself the purchaser of an item simply because you scratched your nose at the wrong moment.

Elizabeth is attracted by the human side of auctioneering and is always reminding herself that when visiting clients it is their cherished items that will be sold.

Although the majority of items sold at auction are "of an age" there is an increasing interest in more modern furniture and household items and the weekly Gaze sales reflect this interest.

Following a very enlightening talk Elizabeth bravely took questions and the large number of these asked showed the interest of those present. There was a feeling that if the Chairman hadn't called an end to the session we would still be there today asking for advice and information.

Laurie Marshall

THE GENIUS OF CHARLES DICKENS

THOSE attending the December monthly meeting enjoyed an enthralling talk by Mark Mitchels entitled *The Genius of Charles Dickens*.

His love of the macabre was shown from an early age when his favourite bedtime story from his nanny involved "Captain Murderer" who married several times, killed all the wives and subsequently ate them in pies.

His family had no money for education and so he wandered the streets of London gaining a huge memory bank of roads and alleyways that stood him well when writing his books. He was a brilliant shorthand student and gained work as a law reporter and then as a parliamentary reporter.

Dickens' books were nearly all published as monthly instalments, normally over a two year period, and such was his writing ability that he ran two books at the same time, each book requiring 5000 words per month. The skill of the man can be seen in that he was writing *Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist* at the same time. Just in case that was not enough, he managed to write *A Christmas Carol* in less than two months as a "special edition" in addition to his two monthly serials.

His work was loved by all classes, even those who couldn't read, as each edition was read aloud in the ale houses. Whilst he was loved in America the love was not reciprocated as he liked neither the country nor its people.

Most of his characters were based on people he knew, including his own mother (whom he did not love nor respect). Dickens was certainly not a good father to his 12 children of which ten reached adulthood. When he fell in love with his mistress, Ellen Teardown, he demanded a separation from his wife and as part of the agreement she was compelled not to see any of the children again! It is not known for certain whether he died in his own home or in the property that he had purchased for Ellen.

Dickens was a truly brilliant writer but a far from a good person.

The meeting was followed by wine and mince pies to celebrate the start of Christmas in traditional Blackbourne U3A style.

Laurie Marshall

PARCHMENT CRAFT

THIS group meets once a month in Maureen Ridgwell's house to make cards using Parchment Paper and many specialist tools for embossing and pricking the parchment to represent a finish not unlike lace.



The parchment, when finished, is made into cards, bookmarks, pictures and even fans, to name a few of the ways you can use the finished product.

This is a small but very productive group led by Betty Clarke who supplies us with the patterns and is there to

share her expert knowledge and love of this specialist craft. We are a friendly group, chatting as we work, and stopping for a tea break half way through the morning, thanks to the introduction through the U3A.

WALKING GROUPS



Thursday group Christmas lunch

ALL three walking groups have completed a successful year of walks despite the rather damp weather. Thanks to all those who led a walk and arranged for refreshment afterwards.

These provide the opportunity for gentle exercise whilst enjoying the countryside with a sociable group of like minded people.

The walking groups have agreed their programmes for 2013 which will be sent to existing members and loaded onto [our website](#). There are a few vacancies in the Thursday and longer Friday groups and if you would like to join either of these please contact the respective convenor.

The Friday short walks group is full and in urgent need of someone to set up a second group so if you are willing to start a second short walks group Barry Wells will be only too pleased to advise.



Friday group summer picnic at Knettishall

NEW INTEREST GROUPS

SINCE October's Interest Groups Exhibition, there have been many requests for starting new groups, particularly Ballroom Dancing and Computers, Quilting, Scrapbooking, Poetry, and World Culture and Heritage.. It needs to be borne in mind that the ethos of the U3A is to run interest groups using the skills of its own members and, therefore, all convenors and/or group leaders must be members of the Blackbourne U3A.

The first meeting of the second Dining Out Group (*Dining Out 2*) took place at The Three Kings, Fornham on Saturday, 8 December at which there were ten diners, and a good time was had by all. The group will now meet on the first Saturday of each month with the next meeting taking place on 2 February. The Convenor for the first six months is Maureen Sullivan (01284-752683), so give her a ring if you are interested.

I hope to be able to start the Quilting and Scrapbook Groups during January, details of which will be given out at the January and/or February's lecture meetings, and will be on our website. If you would like to join either of these groups but have not yet put your name down for them, please ring me on 01359 242629.

I am also working on the other subjects including starting second groups for those who have waiting lists. However I do need assistance, particularly with the Ballroom Dancing and Computer groups which are proving more difficult to start up because of the specialist skills required. If any members can offer me advice or help, or let me know of any computer groups nearby, it would be appreciated.

If any convenors of current groups feel that it would be valuable to think about starting up a second group in their subject, could they please contact me. Many thanks, and a Happy New Year to you all.

Rosie Ellis – Interest Groups' Coordinator

MONTHLY LECTURES

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

Monday February 4

History and Conservation of the Sudbury Riverside

Adrian C. Walters

Monday March 4

AGM followed by Monopoly – More than just a game

Grant Elliot

Monday April 8

Codes, Ciphers and Enigma

Joyce Kimber

THEATRE and CINEMA VISITS



Wednesday 27 February

The musical "9 to 5"

at the [Theatre Royal, Norwich.](#)

Music and lyrics by Dolly Parton

Tickets £41

There will be free time in Norwich
before the matinee show.

Please contact Christine Glover on
01284 788075 for availability

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Monday 11 February

WYMONDHAM ABBEY

Followed by free time in Norwich

Future proposed visits:

- RAF Museum, Hendon
- Royal Observatory, Greenwich
- Chatham Historical Dockyard

For more details contact John
Morris on 01284 723684

GARDEN VISITS

**This group is not a closed group
and is open to all BU3A
members**

The programme for 2013 is now
finalised and has been e-mailed
to all who are known to be
interested parties. If you wish to
be added to this list please let
Barbara have your e-mail address.
The programme is also on our
website

The first three 2013 meetings are:

WEDNESDAY 23 January
**Slide show of last year's visits
and general get-together**
New Green Centre **2.45 pm**

TUESDAY 26 February
**Ickworth's Italianate Garden
Tour**

Illustrated talk by Sean Reid,
Head Gardener at Ickworth Park
New Green Centre **2.00 pm**

WEDNESDAY 27 March
Visit to Hyde Hall RHS garden
Depart New Green at 10.00 am

For more information please contact
Barbara Milner on 01284 761508, or,
there is always a member of the group
available in the Bar Area at the monthly
Monday lecture meeting

TO BE OR NOT TO BE – A Blackbourne U3A Member

Blackbourne U3A's policy is that you need to be a member of our U3A before you may join an Interest Group, and this has been prominently displayed on our website. However, a recent check on Interest Groups revealed that a few members of other U3As are attending some of our groups without being Blackbourne U3A members.

Because we have now grown to 550 members, with a lengthening Waiting List, your committee has decided that we must enforce our policy more diligently in future. This is in the interests of complete fairness to all concerned, as many of our Interest Groups also have Waiting Lists. There is no national policy on this matter, so other branches may differ as to how they deal with this, taking into account their own local circumstances.

So, although we do not wish to stop those current non-Blackbourne members who already attend any of our Interest Groups, we would now ask them to join our Membership Waiting List in order to become members as soon as possible, albeit this may not be until September 2013 at the earliest.

All convenors of our Interest Groups have been reminded of our policy on this issue, so that no more non-Blackbourne members should be joining any of our Interest Groups from now on. We have written individually to those non-Blackbourne members currently attending a group asking them to comply with our wishes as above.

If any member's friends, or other visitors, would like to sample what the Blackbourne U3A has to offer, they can attend up to three lectures per year at a cost of £3 per person per visit, plus one visit to an Interest Group, to judge if our U3A is for them.

We trust you will all understand our reasons for being more stringent on this policy but, should you have any queries, please feel free to contact any committee member or myself. Many thanks.

Peter Heath

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Bryann Ward

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