
From your Chairman

Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.

If being Chairman of a U3A branch is greatness, then none of the above apply to me. I volunteered for the post and I did so out of a sense of duty. Two years ago, I was made aware that there was nobody out of the 550 members of this branch who was prepared to stand as vice-chair and it seemed to me that I had derived so much pleasure out of being a member that I had a responsibility to put something back into the branch. In particular, I had joined the Opera Appreciation group run by John and Deidre Dobson. I have a certain limited background in music but through them and the rest of the group I broadened my knowledge and developed an interest which has led me to attend both live opera and the transmissions from the New York Metropolitan Opera House. Not only that but I hope I am not going too far in saying that I have formed friendships with the people involved in the group.

I mention these facts because I am quite certain that there are many of you, indeed MOST OF YOU who will have had the same experience of gaining knowledge, getting entertainment and making new friends, which you would not and could not have had from any other source. I know that many of you attend several Interest Groups and that, for you, life has been enriched.

AND YET....you must be aware of the difficulty we have each year in getting a committee together. We are blessed this year by having a wonderful committee – but in another two years they will have to resign. In the interest groups, there are many which are full, and in those where we have tried to start second groups on the same subject, in most cases we cannot get anybody to start a second group.

Perhaps it is time to start thinking about giving something back to U3A. We have one of the most successful branches in the country but, please believe me, if we cannot get a committee together and if we disappoint too many people who want to get into interest groups and cannot, then the branch will close and what a disaster that would be!

Please read the back page concerning membership renewal

John Christie



Peter hands over the keys to John

NOW I have handed over the Chair to John Christie I would like to express my thanks for the help received over the last two years. So many members make our U3A tick that a list of names would take too much space and I fear missing someone out.

Very grateful thanks to our hard working committee, to all our superb convenors, and their many helpers, to our catering team who provide refreshments every month and especially at our October exhibition. To members on the doors at monthly meetings, the chair monitors, our audio visual people, our webmistress, our newsletter editors and anyone who has helped make our Group so successful.

Others stepping down at the AGM, after 3 years on the committee, are Laurie Marshall who kept our finances on track and Barry Wells who has kept tabs on us at meetings and posted our newsletters. Both have given loyal service to Blackbourne U3A, ably supported by their wives Sylvie and Linda. Thank you.

Blackbourne U3A remains as vibrant and popular as ever and long may that continue; every best wish for the future, to John and the new committee.

Peter Heath, Past Chairman

2013-14 COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN

John Christie

01359 240358

VICE-CHAIRMAN AND
LECTURE SECRETARY

Karen Murdoch

01359 270313

TREASURER

John Marshall

01359 230470

GENERAL SECRETARY

Stella Chamberlin

01359 242601

ASSISTANT LECTURE SECRETARY

Christine Glover

01284 788075

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Sue Cattermole

01359 272572

NAMES' REGISTRAR AND
NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Trevor Jones

01359 230276

INTEREST GROUPS'

CO - ORDINATOR

Rosie Ellis

01359 242629

ASSISTANT INTEREST GROUPS'

CO - ORDINATOR

Carole Curtis

01359 244135

There is still room for three co-opted committee members this year, so please give serious consideration to whether you could help us with the continued success of your U3A by volunteering to be co-opted onto the committee. There are lots of tasks to be done over the course of a year to keep our U3A running smoothly, so the more members we have to help, the better it is for everyone – after all, "many hands make light work".

Photographic Group

Ken Weston has stepped down as convenor for personal reasons and Chris Brooks has temporarily taken over.

We wish Ken and Lillian all the best in their new home

AGM report



The view from the podium

AT the March lecture meeting 208 members were present for the AGM.

Peter Heath, the retiring Chairman, thanked all those who, during the last year, had helped to make Blackbourne U3A such a vibrant and popular organisation with 550 members and a waiting list of 81. There are 33 Interest Groups, some of which have waiting lists and he urged members to come forward to convene extra groups.

Mention was made of the shared learning activity with Suffolk Wildlife Trust at Grove Farm and the development of our website which he encouraged members to visit..

Laurie Marshall, the retiring treasurer, presented the accounts which were duly adopted. Some 70% of subscriptions are now paid by standing order and membership cards are to be reintroduced in September. A question from the floor about gift aid was answered.

John Christie was elected chairman and in the absence of a nomination for vice chairman, Karen Murdoch, lecture secretary, offered to stand. Carole Curtis, Trevor Jones and John Marshall were elected as committee members in place of those who had served their term.

Samuel Pepys

IN January Dr David Dougan spoke to a full house of 250 on The diaries of Samuel Pepys, which had formed part of my education in the 1950's, so I listened carefully to the in-depth personal details given and thought on several occasions "I don't remember that". Whilst I am not renowned for my memory I was greatly relieved when, towards the end of his talk, Dr Dougan disclosed that the full "unexpurgated" version of the diaries was not published until 1970.

Pepys was born in London, one of 11, though only 4 reached adulthood, and he seemed to be the only really intelligent surviving child. After attending Cambridge University Edward Montague became his patron. He married Elizabeth de St Michel when he was 22 and she merely a 15 year old. Dr Dougan went on to tell us that in later years Pepys had a relationship with Deborah Willet, his wife's companion and they all lived together in one house!

In retrospect it is undoubtedly advantageous to write a diary during a period of high political and social activity. Pepys managed to pick a really interesting period to cover. His diaries started on 1st January 1650 and continued for nine eventful years until 31st May 1669. In June 1665 London experienced The Plague which caused the death of 25% of the population and in 1666 the Great Fire of London. In June 1667 the Dutch Navy invaded London and in March 1668 Pepys, by now an M.P, carried out an enquiry into the invasion, subsequently delivering a three hour speech to Parliament covering his findings which was greeted with accord.

If you add to the above an ability to be truthful and open about his personal life (Pepys gives full details in his diaries of his relationship with Deborah Willet) you have the makings of good reading and if you then add the enthusiasm for his subject from Dr Dougan you have the makings of an interesting talk enjoyed by his audience.

Laurie Marshall

The History and Conservation of Sudbury Waterways

Speaker Adrian Walters

IN 1260 AD the de Clare family gave grazing rights over land next to the river Stour that flows past Sudbury for the benefit of the Freeman of Sudbury. As these men were primarily business people there was little grazing activity although each Freeman could graze two animals on payment of an annual fee.

The management of the area is the responsibility of the [Sudbury Commons Land Charity](#) set up in 1897. The Charity bought the grazing rights from the Freeman and now sells them on to a long term grazier.

After severe flooding in 1947 the river was widened in the early 1950's and so today it is considerably wider than most local rivers, as shown by Adrian's excellent slides.

The Trust's careful maintenance can be seen by the increase in the scope and numbers of plants in the area, particularly orchids. The willows along the banks are harvested on a 17 year cycle with each tree being replaced. The wood is exported to India and Pakistan for cricket bats thus providing the Trust with an source of income. Probably the bats are returned to the U.K. Other willows are pollarded regularly to provide poles.

Adrian showed a number of plant and wildlife slides and gave interesting anecdotes to support how wildlife survives in very difficult conditions. Last year was very hard for the kingfishers as they lost two sets of fledglings to the rains and although there are no new birds this year to increase the stocks the parents are still there and will no doubt try again .

When the Water Meadows flood during the winter the flood plain acts as a temporary reservoir and the water is collected and stored.

The Trust rangers continue their efforts to improve the area and are delighted that the barn owl has returned..

As Adrian said, Nature takes many years to mature and great patience is needed but I am sure that with the drive and enthusiasm so apparent in his talk the Sudbury Waterways are in safe hands.

Laurie Marshall

Monopoly – more than just a game.

IT must be a credit to Grant Elliott, a member of Blackbourne U3A, that so many attended, given that his talk was preceded by the A.G.M. a function that is compulsory and normally difficult to make anything other than functional.

He started by suggesting that his career as a chartered accountant made it essential for him to be boring and he would not disappoint us.

In 1904 Lizzie Magie designed a game called The Landlord's Game which she marketed herself. In 1929 during the Wall Street crash Charles Darrow started to produce a version of this game which he called Monopoly. Initially the game was hand produced and Darrow made two copies a week which sold for \$4 each. Improvements in manufacture enabled production to increase to two sets a day and then four sets a day. In 1933 he offered his game to Parker Bros. who tried the game but they turned down his offer.

A daughter of the Parker Bros. played the game, found it exciting and told her father who also tried the game and loved it. The firm changed its mind but Darrow then declined to sell the game and demanded a royalty for each game sold. As the life expectancy of the game was likely not to exceed a year, Parker Bros readily agreed, and of course, given the success of the game, Darrow became a very rich man. Monopoly was the must-have toy of Christmas 1935.

In 1937 John Waddington was licensed to produce Monopoly in the U.K. and two members of staff went to London to design a London version. They made serious design errors such as choosing Fenchurch Street, a two platform station, Mayfair, an area not a street, and Vine Street! The game has never been amended and you can still buy a hotel in Mayfair for £240, come third in a beauty competition, and Go to Jail .

Grant, who showed us several of his many versions of Monopoly, gave us every reason to look again at the game. Until the grandchildren ask me to play I'm afraid our game will stay in the box.

Laurie Marshall

Friday walking group

Despite the extreme weather conditions at the beginning of 2013 the group has been able to complete the first three walks of the year.

We had freezing temperatures in January at Brandon Park and waterlogged fields and footpaths around Pakenham in February.

In March we walked around the Thurston area in fog and mud so deep that two members became stuck and needed considerable assistance to be pulled out followed by excavations to retrieve footwear. One boot remains buried in the field to this day!!



In true U3A spirit a great effort was made by everyone to help and support each other through a memorable experience.

Sylvie Marshall

Theatre Visit

A full coach load very much enjoyed a trip to see Bonnie Langford in the musical "Nine to Five" at the Theatre Royal Norwich on Wednesday February 27.

We took advantage of some free time for shopping and lunch beforehand. The performance was wonderful.

Thanks very much Christine – and here's to the next theatre trip.

Rosie Ellis

Educational Visit

ON 11 February members enjoyed a visit to Wymondham Abbey where they were given an informative guided tour and learned that the roof carving is second only to that of Westminster Abbey.

Quilting group

A new Quilting group has been set up which is meeting on the 2nd Friday of the month at Great Barton Village hall. Members aim to help each other with various projects and to have a happy morning quilting and chatting. The group could take one or two new members. Members are of all various abilities and will all be working on their own projects.

The convenor is Jan Murrell on 01284 735546

DATES for your DIARY

LECTURE MEETINGS

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

Monday May 13

The Island Parrot Sanctuary

Professor Christine Rivett

Monday 3 June

Facts, Files and a Pinch of Salt

Doreen Reed

Monday 1 July

Plants with Metal

Professor Alan Baker

EDUCATIONAL VISIT

Monday 22 April

Royal Observatory, Greenwich

Leaving New Green at 8.30 am
Cost £15

There may be vacancies – please
contact John Morris – 01284
723684

SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Friday 7 June

The Apex, Bury St Edmunds

Science unwrapped

A day exploring the latest research in
science

Tickets £10 from the Apex

Full details from

www.u3asuffolknetwork.org.uk

WATCHING BIRDS

IN 2013 the bird group was relaunched as 'Watching Birds' with 12 members, each sharing the monthly task of organising a visit to a recognised birding site.

In March we travelled to Lynford Arboretum, near Mundford, and had good views of nuthatch, marsh tits, redwing, and long tailed tits but search as we may, the site's famous hawfinches and crossbills did not make an appearance.



The treat of the day was by the lake where a pair of great crested grebes put on a magnificent courtship display, diving then surfacing with their beaks full of weed, as they approached each other with necks on the water. They then drew

Your BU3A Membership Renewal

YOUR membership of Blackbourne U3A will expire in August. As always, we are attempting to clear membership renewals early, not just to receive your subscriptions, but to give us time to assess which members are not renewing. In September we will be issuing membership cards/name badges so we need to send details to the printer by the beginning of August.

In view of our ever increasing waiting list to join BU3A (over 80 at the last count) and in an effort to be fair to as many people as possible, the committee asks you to think seriously whether you wish to cancel your membership in July if you have not been able to attend any lecture meetings and/or Interest Groups over the past year.

Should this be the case, i.e. you will not be renewing your membership, please advise our Membership Secretary, Sue Cattermole (01359-272572) as soon as possible. You will also need to contact your own bank to cancel your Standing Order (if this is your method of payment).

However, if you do wish to continue your membership of BU3A, would those members who pay by cash or cheque please let Sue Cattermole have your renewal subscription (£10 per person) by 15 July. Those members who pay by bank Standing Order need not contact Sue as their payment should be automatic on 1 June.

We will not be issuing a further written or telephone reminder concerning your membership. Therefore, if we have not received your remittance by 15th July, it will be assumed that you do not wish to remain a BU3A member, and your membership will be offered to one of the many people on our waiting list.

Sue Cattermole and John Marshall (Treasurer) will at the monthly lecture meetings in May, June and July to take your cash or cheque. Alternatively, your cheque (payable to BU3A) can be sent through the post to the address below, or your remittance can be paid on line from your bank account – please ask our Treasurer (01359-230470) for details of BU3A's Bank Account.

Sue Cattermole,

The Barn, Flatts Lane,

Tostock,

Bury St. Edmunds IP30 9NZ

themselves up to 'dance' on the water, matching each other with head twists and poses designed to impress and confirm their bond for the breeding season. This [magical display](#) is a rare sight, not previously witnessed by anyone in the group. The icing on the cake of a lovely day!

In the past members have asked why we have such a small group. This is because it is important to limit the amount of noise and disturbance when looking for, and just as importantly, listening for birds. This year we have decided to limit the group to just 12 members.

This does not mean that we cannot have another bird group. We just need a member with some knowledge of birds to set it up – we can help to get things started. Let me know if you are interested in setting up another bird group and/or would be willing to lead it.

Peter Heath 01359 232291

Magazines

More than 70 members are now subscribing to *Third Age Matters*, the magazine of the Third Age Trust which is the U3A umbrella organisation. It is not too late to add your name to the list but you will have missed the first of the five editions. If you do wish to subscribe, please let John Christie know. The cost of £2.10 will still apply.

Art Appreciation

A second Art Appreciation group is being formed. Please contact Rosie Ellis if you are interested in this popular subject.