

## **The Numbers Game**

APART from making sure that only U3A Blackbourne members are allowed into our monthly meetings, our registrar, Trevor Jones, can also calculate what the total attendance is at each meeting – which must not exceed 250 – and from that can also work out the average attendance. Thus in year 2010–2011 we had average attendance of 212 with a range of 147 to 250 (achieved on only one occasion) with the next highest being 243 and 234. This year up to May we have an average of, again, 212 and a range of 143 to 250 (again on only one occasion) with the next highest being 244 and 239.

So overall, we are averaging just over 210 seats occupied or, put another way, we have an average of nearly 40 empty seats. This needs to be seen against the total membership of 550 and a waiting list of 75 of whom 17 have been waiting for more than a year from before September 2012. At our most recent committee meeting, we decided to increase the membership by 20 to 570. This will achieve two things. First it will cut down the waiting list and, hopefully, mean that by next September no one will have waited by more than 12 months. Secondly, it will reduce the number of empty seats. So far, so good!

However, there is a downside. Currently, only about 40% of our members attend monthly meetings and if that percentage is maintained for the extra 20 members allowed to join this September we would expect to see another 8 attending the meetings. This will mean that instead of one meeting where we have to turn people away from the door, there will be two per year. We think it worth this risk in order to avoid disappointment to prospective members. We only hope that if you are one of those who cannot get in one Monday morning, you will understand why! Of course, if it works out much worse than that prediction, we shall have to correct the system next year by bringing the membership down again.

The committee wish you a pleasant holiday and we look forward to seeing you in September starting our new programme.

*John Christie*

## **MONTHLY LECTURES**

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

There is no meeting in August

Monday 2 September

***The Man who Created Roman Britain***

Julia Sorrell

Monday 7 October

***Why Woodland Matters***

John Minns

Monday 21 October

***Interest Groups' Exhibition***

*From 11.00 am until 12.30 pm*

Monday 4 November

***Charles II and Newmarket***

John Sutton

Monday 2 December

***Joyce Grenfell***

Gillian Grinham

## **Codes, Ciphers and Enigma**

AT the April meeting over 200 members were greatly entertained by Joyce Kimber.

Joyce started by referring to the ancient codes systems used as long ago as 480 BC and covered such wonderful items as the Chinese wax balls where a message was written on a piece of silk and then covered in wax before it was swallowed by the messenger. It was then necessary to wait for nature to take it's time before the wax ball was available for scrutiny. Obviously not a system for urgent messages!

Julius Caesar had a very successful code system known as the Caesar Square and this and other systems were explained in a lucid manner to the point where we had nearly understood the workings of several codes including a highly elaborate system used by Mary Queen of Scots.

In 1914 Winston Churchill founded the Government Code and Cipher School known as Room 40 which was the forerunner of the Bletchley Park complex famous for solving the Enigma Coding System used by the Germans in World War II. Joyce gave us a very clear description of how the Enigma Coding machine worked and explained the great efforts put in by the workers at Bletchley to decipher the code. By the end of the war there were over 12000 cryptanalysts working at Bletchley which clearly shows the importance of the work undertaken there.

After the war ended a number of organisations were based at Bletchley Park but by 1991 most had left and a proposal was in hand to demolish the buildings and build a housing estate. A farewell party was held and attended by over 400 people who had worked there during the war. It was agreed that the buildings must be saved and in due course the Bletchley Trust was set up.

Joyce, as a Friend of Bletchley Trust, encouraged members to visit the site.

*Laurie Marshall*

## **INTEREST GROUPS EXHIBITION**

**with Wine & Cheese  
New Green Centre  
Mon 21st October at 11 am  
£4.00 per person**

Please note that tickets will be £4 this year, and will be on sale at the lecture meetings on 2nd September and 7th October. Please come and find Stella or Rosie in the bar area from 9.15am, or ring Stella (01359 242601) for further details.

Entry by ticket only. Numbers are limited so book early

## **AUTUMN ACADEMY Stowupland High School, Saturday 5th October 10 am – 3.30 pm £8per person**

This offers an excellent opportunity for Blackbourne members to participate in two 90 minute Study Group sessions from an interesting and varied choice of 16 topics.

Details have already been e-mailed to members, but printed details and application forms will be available at July's lecture meeting. They are also appended to this newsletter for those receiving the newsletter by e-mail.

Closing date for receipt of bookings and payment is 30th August.

## **U3A Pocket DIARIES for 2014**

These are still at the very reasonable price of £2 each, and will be available for sale on a first-come, first-served basis at September's lecture meeting onwards (no advance orders will be taken this year).

## **The Island Parrot Sanctuary**

IF ever we needed a reminder of Man's inhumanity to animals either by ignorance or cruelty then Professor Christine Rivett's talk in May on The Island Parrot Sanctuary was a salutary lesson.

Christine was the devoted owner of a parrot named Jake who, aged 16, laid five eggs and had to be renamed Jackie. Unfortunately, Jackie was at stropky teenager stage (parrots living for about 60 years) and decided Christine was an unsuitable mate. Therefore, like all birds seeking a partner, the parrot drove Christine away with beak and claw, often inflicting injuries down to the blood soaked bone. Even for a besotted parrot lover there is a limit, so Christine had to find a suitable sanctuary for her parrot.

She found the Island Parrot Sanctuary in the unlikely setting of the Kerrera Island off the west coast of Scotland. Who would have thought such a cold and challenging environment could provide an enriched haven for neglected and abused parrots not able to be released into the wild? Christine showed us an Amazonian rainforest with parrots of all hues, breeds and degrees of neglect. Imagine supergluing a parrot's feet to a branch to attract other parrots with its distress calls, and then cutting off those feet to release the bird. Luckily it survived to find happiness at the Sanctuary using its beak as a climbing tool. Many distressed parrots pluck out their feathers and the Sanctuary's solution was to give them woollen pompoms and florists' ribbon to shred. One parrot came from a pub and the sensibilities of visitors have to be protected from its language which would make a sailor blush.

Although Christine is an intrepid fundraiser for the Sanctuary, now she only rescues tortoises which are slightly less vicious than parrots!

*Carole Curtis*

## **Facts, Fibs and a Pinch of Salt**

NOT a dry eye at the meeting! Tears of laughter echoed round the hall when Doreen Reed, poet and raconteur, read us tales of her quirky view of everyday events. Doreen's poem on the poor worm in the compost bin whose love life was disrupted by insensitive people stirring the compost denying him ever reaching his lady worm was hilarious; but worse still, having his little worm life ended by a carelessly thrown potato. Doreen told us that people had contacted her to say their scraps were no longer thrown into bins with gay abandon, but gently placed to avoid traumatising the worms.

Doreen told us of her dislike for housework and exercise and, with a twinkle in her eye, decided to combine the two by placing an advertisement for workout regimes at her house and was inundated with eager victims – she even provided free coffee. Not all dust was vanquished as her grandson had been told that the dead turn to dust, and one day sadly informed her there were dead people under her bed!

Doreen had not realised how many fatalities occurred in her talks until a lady in the front row sighed 'aaaah' every time there was a sad ending. But who would not laugh at her story of the budgie whose broken leg was fixed with a live match and went up in flames as he walked across his sanded cage floor? The conventional deteriorated into farce when she read a romantic message penned for a wedding anniversary card. Alas, the husband no longer tooted girls from a little red sports car but from his mobility scooter.

Doreen gave us a sparkling morning and left us puzzling which were fibs or should be taken with a pinch of salt!

*Carole Curtis*

## Ireland, 11-18 May 2013

THE Travel and Tourism group enjoyed a week's holiday in Eire based on Dublin and Cork, despite the fact that it was cold and there was some rain every day of the week. Fortunately we were able to dodge many of the showers by being on the coach or inside the various attractions visited. An early morning flight from Stansted meant we were in Dublin city centre by lunchtime and a guided coach trip round the city allowed us to see various places of interest for further sightseeing the next day. Sunday was spent in Dublin exploring both old and relatively new attractions, from the Book of Kells to the cathedrals and the Guinness visitor centre. On Monday we left Dublin for a coach trip to the beautiful Powerscourt Gardens and the Glendalough ruined monastic site.

The next day we headed for Cork which was a much smaller but interesting city. Wednesday started with a guided tour of Cork with stops at the Butter Exchange, St Finbar's Cathedral and the English Market, after which there was free time to explore. After dinner most of us went back into the centre to hear some live Irish pub music at what was reputed to be the oldest pub in Cork.



Thursday and Friday were full days out with coach trips to view the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula via Killarney. The scenery was lovely and although obscured at times by the clouds we were often able to enjoy blue skies.

Saturday was our last day but as we had a late flight we were able to enjoy a visit to the nearby port of Cobh which was once the main port of embarkation for emigrants to America and was also the last stop for the Titanic. An enjoyable and interesting trip.

*Brenda Last*

## Austria in May

IN May the Trav2 group enjoyed a week's holiday in the beautiful country of Austria, staying in The Bon Alpina hotel at Igls which is twenty minutes south of Innsbruck. After a splendid lunch in the restaurant we were quickly exploring the cafes, shops, tourist centre, parks and footpaths in the countryside surrounding the town.



From Igls there was a tram-car railway which wended its way down the hillside through pasture and forest into Innsbruck where

our guided tour took us around the old town on the south bank telling us the history of the many old buildings.

Coach tours included a morning in Rattenburg and then on to Fugenbahnhof to catch the steam train operated by the Zillertal Railway to Mayrhofen. We enjoyed apple strudel and schnapps during our journeys.

A second tour took in a steam cog railway giving us spectacular views before descending to Seespitz for a sail along the lake to Scholastika. The last full day tour took us through the mountains into Bavaria to visit two famous castles which had been Royal residences.

*This is a summary of the article written by Mary Jo Pinder that appears on Trav 2's page of our website*

## Photo Group

IN April the Photo Group gave a farewell dinner to Ken & Lillian Weston before their move to Kettering. At the dinner Alan Simpson and Jo Sweetman presented Ken and Lillian with gifts of a canvas print of an original painting of a 1950's Woolpit scene and an ornamental shrub for their new garden.



Ken originally formed the Photo Group in 2006 with the meetings in his lounge.

The Photo Group now has a thriving 30 strong membership, from the beginner to experienced photographer, and has a lot to thank Ken for – he will certainly be missed.

*Chris Brooks*

## Art Appreciation

A second Art Appreciation group has been formed which meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm alternating between members homes as well as visiting exhibitions. There is a wide range of interests within the group.

Joint Convenors are:

Sandra Mack, 01359 408130  
and

Carole Curtis, 01359 244135

## Bridge

A new group has been formed catering for players of all levels including beginners.

Meeting on Thursday mornings, anyone interested should contact Karen Murdoch on 01359 270313

## Subscriptions

Just a reminder that your subscription of £10 per person should be paid by 15 July if you wish to continue your membership.

Those members who have set up a standing order should check that a payment was made on or about 1 June.

Otherwise payment may be made by cash or cheque (payable to BU3A) to our membership secretary, Sue Cattermole, at the July meeting or a cheque sent by post to her at The Barn, Flatts Lane, Tostock, IP30 9NZ

## Electric blanket testing

Suffolk's Fire Service is offering testing again this year, by appointment, so ring 01473 260588 as soon as possible if you wish to take advantage of this FREE service as last year's sessions were booked up very quickly.

Two dates and venues are available in this area:

Tuesday 24 September in Bury St Edmunds and

Thursday 26 September in Needham Market

Please be aware that should your electric blanket fail the test, it will not be returned to you, although you will be offered a free replacement.

## Theatre Visits

The following two visits to the Theatre Royal, Norwich are planned.

Please contact Christine Glover on 01284 788075 for more details.

Wednesday 30 October at  
2.30pm

***A Passionate Woman***  
A comedy

Saturday 29 November at  
5.00pm

***Priscilla Queen of the Desert***  
A musical

## STANTA

IN April 49 members of the Then and Now group visited Stanford Battle Training Area in Norfolk.

On arrival Major McMullen and his RSM joined us on the coach and took us first to St Mary's Church at West Tofts; its earliest part dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. After the Reformation and during the Puritan period the church was somewhat neglected. However, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it was restored in the Gothic Revival style by Augustus Pugin. To find such a magnificent example of his work in such a small, isolated village was surprising to say the least.

We continued our coach tour, passing through check points manned by troops from Italy and Tonga – the only soldiers we saw. The other 300 or so were taking a break from their training whilst we visited and apparently were resting in the nearby woodland.



We were taken on foot into a mock Afghan village built of containers sprayed with concrete. We saw the market area, living quarters, cooking facilities and so on, but what brought home the dangers our soldiers experience were the narrow alleyways linking the various areas of the village. The heavily back-packed and armed

trainees have to squeeze their way along them as they twist and turn and interact. It was easy to lose one's sense of direction and become disorientated and isolated from the main group. To do it at night time seemed well-nigh impossible. The RSM who accompanied us told us of some of his experiences during his four tours of Afghanistan.

Next we visited other training sites including one with a helipad and another based on a European village – a residue from Cold War days, which now has been adapted to a Middle Eastern style environment complete with mosque.

Back on the coach once more we passed the village hall where, during World War II, the inhabitants of Tottington, Sturston, West Tofts and Stanford were told they would have to leave their homes. The war was not going well and more training areas for our inexperienced troops were essential. Hard decisions were necessary. There was some clemency as rather than just a week in which to leave their homes, some were allowed almost a month!



Before returning to our starting point we made a final stop on the tour at an isolated part of the Brecks where we moved away from the coach. There was no traffic noise at all, just the bleating of the sheep and their lambs and, in the distance, the calling of roosting rooks which every now and then took to the air, wheeled around and then settled to roost once more.

We had had an eye-opening and really educational trip which had given us a small insight into the training of our young people who are to put their lives at risk in serving our country. As someone on the coach said, it will add some sense of realism to the reports we hear on the radio and see on television.

*Brian Milner*

We encourage members and Interest groups to submit articles and pictures for **your** newsletter. They can be sent to "publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk" or handed to the editors, Barbara Milner or Bryann Ward.

**Deadline for the October issue is 22 September 2013**

## SUFFOLK & DISTRICT NETWORK of U3As AUTUMN ACADEMY 8



An opportunity for you to participate in two Study Group Sessions of your choice

SATURDAY 5<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2013, 10am to 3.30 pm,  
at STOWUPLAND HIGH SCHOOL, IP14 4BQ

**COST: £8.00 per person**, (non-refundable) to include tea/coffee and biscuits during registration and at lunchtime. **Please bring your own packed lunch.**

**LOCATION:** Stowupland High School, Church Road, Stowupland, Stowmarket, IP14 4BQ. Parking space is available.

**STUDY GROUPS:** the Study Groups are led by volunteer members of local U3As and will be held in classrooms at Stowupland High School. Each group will usually have between 5 and 20 members, depending on the type of group and the wishes of the leader. Some groups are in discussion or practical format and some are as teaching or information sessions. All are in line with the U3A ethos of shared information. More information about individual groups is available if needed, and details will be sent out to each member in September.

Each person who would like to come is asked to make a choice of three groups for the morning and three for the afternoon and to list them in order of preference on the application form. Please use a separate form for each person, and include the name of your own U3A

### PROGRAMME :

10.00 10.30: Arrival, Registration and Coffee or Tea  
10.30: Introduction (in the dining room)  
10.45 12.15: 1½ hour Study Session  
12.15 1.30: Lunch: **please bring your own food.**  
Coffee and tea will be provided  
1.30 3.00: 1½ hour Study Session  
3.15: Conclusion (in the dining room)  
3.30: Departure

### BOOKING :

The application form is printed at the end of this document. Please use a separate application form for each person and list your choices of subjects, 3 for the morning and 3 for the afternoon, in order of preference. We shall do our best to allocate everyone to their first choice, but this will depend on the number of applications for each group.

Bookings **must** be received by **30<sup>th</sup> August 2013**. The Study Day is only open to members of affiliated U3As. Please send completed application forms, (N.B. **one form for each person**) to: **Sally Taylor, 30 Danescourt Avenue, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1QE.**

Please enclose a **stamped self-addressed envelope** with your booking form(s), and a **cheque for £8.00** per person, made out to

**INFORMATION :** details of the study groups to which you have been allocated, and a location map for Stowupland High School, will be sent to you in September.

**Enquiry contact: Sally Taylor, e-mail: [saltony@talktalk.net](mailto:saltony@talktalk.net), telephone: (01449) 258192**

*Application form at end of this notice, please print off your copy ( one for each person), and send it by post, together with your cheque and S.A.E. to Sally Taylor, address as above.*

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**SUFFOLK AND DISTRICT NETWORK OF U3As, AUTUMN ACADEMY 8, SATURDAY 5<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

These are the Study Group sessions being offered. Each topic will last for one and a half hours. You will be able to take part in two, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, but please choose three for each time and list them in order of preference on the application form below. We will do our best to arrange for you to take part in the groups of your preferred choices, but this will depend on the number of applications. More details will be sent out in September.

**MORNING 10.45am to 12.15pm**

	Topic	Leader	Description
A	Church Crawling: How to look at a church through a virtual tour round Suffolk churches	Jennifer Jones	Imagine yourself on a church crawl; you will be taken on a virtual tour round some of the mediaeval churches of Suffolk to help you see and understand what to look for when you next visit one
B	Book Reading	Doreen Hawkins	Read any good books lately? Want to start your own reading group? Review Barbara Kingsolver, (2012) an environmental fable and a minute exploration of life in the Tennessee mountains.
C	The Breugel Family Painters	Chris Cushing	A presentation with slides, and audience discussion
D	The life and Times of Samuel Pepys	David Dougan	Samuel Pepys and his diaries
E	A Second Romp through British Poetry	Tony Taylor & Helen Freeman	British poets, some famous, some less famous, up to the present day. We will explore the themes, styles and thoughts of the generation of poets who have provided us with such a rich treasure chest of verse.
F	Musical Influences on John Lennon and Paul McCartney	Jim Lindop	A brief run through of music that inspired The Beatles, from The Blues to George Formby and the Music Hall
G	Architecture	Freddie Davies	An illustrated talk presenting an introduction to the fascinating history of Architecture in Britain from pre-Roman times to the present day.
H	The Road to Mandalay	John Wilkin	A brief account of the history and current condition of Burma, followed by an

**AFTERNOON 1.30pm to 3.00 pm**

	Topic	Leader	Description
K	Current Affairs	Doreen Hawkins	A <u>participative discussion</u> session on local, national and international affairs political, economic and social
L	Michelangelo: the greatest genius	David Dougan	Michelangelo the great works
M	Writing your Memoirs	Ally Riley	Encouragement to start putting memories into stories for the future whether for yourself or family
N	Stories, with particular reference to mythology	Philip Weir	Looking at stories and their heritage from times gone by
P	Future Worlds in Fiction	Margaret Keeling	Exploring dreams, hopes, dystopias, utopias in the novel
Q	Folk Clubs in the 60s	Alan Twelftree	Memories and anecdotes of a club organiser
R	The History of East Anglian Railways	Ian	A study of the railways of East Anglia offers a fascinating insight into the social history of the region. The mostly rural nature meant that they were never likely to be profitable, shown by the many closures over the past 60 years. Some Suffolk railways will be more closely studied using maps and photos
S	Geology for the Curious	Freddie Davies	An elementary illustrated talk giving an introduction to the fascination to be found in looking into the geology of our planet. How and why do continents look the way they do today? What is our planet made of? Why do we get earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and why do they tc, etc.

Suffolk and District Network of U3As, AUTUMN ACADEMY 8  
Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013,

**Booking Form:** Please complete a separate form for each person.

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your U3A \_\_\_\_\_ Cheque £ \_\_\_\_\_ S.A.E. enclosed - yes/no

Please list below your choices of subjects in order of preference,  
3 for the morning and 3 for the afternoon.

order	letter	Subject, for the morning
am 1		
am 2		
am 3		
order	letter	Subject, for the afternoon
pm 1		
pm 2		
pm 3		