



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

# Newsletter

Issue 79

October 2013

*FROM the Chairman*

*I feel that a word of explanation is required with regard to the badge/membership card. The first batch was handed out at the September meeting and I want to thank Peter Heath our past chairman and his wife Gill who "came out of retirement" to help with the distribution. The second batch will be handed out at the October meeting and thereafter the remaining cards will be sent out by post or delivered by hand.*

*You will remember, if you were a member 2 years ago, that we all had a membership card signed by the membership secretary and we also had a name badge which was handed out and taken in again at the end of every meeting. The re-arrangement of the badges so that they could be easily issued at the next meeting was a major task taking Barry and Linda Wells several hours each month which was felt by them and the committee to be too much. Also, as a means of knowing which members were attending each meeting it was totally inadequate. We could only do that by seeing whose badges were not taken. Last year, we did without both card and badge without any obvious problems arising but there were murmurings amongst those who missed the name badges at the monthly meetings and also those who believe that the membership card is the ultimate proof of membership. This is why we are trying the present compromise. My own view is that I like to see people wearing badges simply because my memory is poor and I hate talking to people without being able to identify them.*

*The fact is that we actually do not **need** either a membership card or a name badge but both have their uses from time to time. For example, convenors of interest groups may need to confirm that a prospective member of their group is also a U3A member. The membership card is one way of checking this and it is important that for proper insurance cover all attenders are members.*

*Those members who receive their cards after the October meeting can pick up a badge holder at any subsequent monthly lecture meeting they attend. My request to all members is – please, keep your badge and wear it to the monthly meetings for the benefit of others – especially your forgetful Chairman!*

*John Christie*

## MONTHLY LECTURES

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

Monday 21 October  
at 11.00am

**Interest Groups' Exhibition**  
With Cheese and wine  
(see back page)

Monday 4 November

**Charles II and Newmarket**  
John Sutton

Monday 2 December

**Joyce Grenfell**  
Gillian Grinham  
Followed by mince pies

Monday 6 January

**The Pre-Raphaelite  
Brotherhood**  
Geoffrey Kay

## Plants with Mettle – July 1

EUREKA! The alchemist's dream – turning plants into gold – well not quite, but nickel is just as lucrative.

Professor Alan Barker, an international authority on the ecological and evolutionary aspects of the impact of heavy metal pollution on plants, gave us a fascinating insight into the technology driving the decontamination and stabilization of metal-polluted soils and effluents from mining exploitation around the world.

Certain plant species have evolved to tolerate the absorption of metals such as nickel, copper and cadmium and are known as metallophytes. Examples can be seen in this country. Inefficient copper and lead mine workings, even from Roman and Bronze Age times, may be indicated by the presence of sea campion and thrift on ore tailings. A tree in New Caledonia which bleeds a bright blue sap from its take-up of nickel and cadmium is an extreme example. Professor Barker explained that Serpentine rocks (ore bearing surface rocks) are distributed around the world. A slide of dense Congo forests with a bright yellow clearing of metallophytes, indicated the presence of metal-bearing ores. Unfortunately, mining companies often ignore the need to conserve these precious plants and therefore many species of metallophytes are under threat of extinction.

Scientists are now finding exciting uses for metallophytes. After years of putting sewerage sludge on fields, crop yields declined through the presence of residue pollutants. But after experimentation, contaminated soil was efficiently cleaned in seven seasons by certain brassicas. Apparently, radishes would take 2000 years to achieve the same result. Amazingly, in South America it is now possible to harvest nickel and chromium from certain metallophytes on a commercial basis. So far, a metallophyte that absorbs gold has not been found but who knows there could be a field of brassicas at the end of the rainbow.

*Carole Curtis*

## The Man who created Roman Britain Alan Sorrell (1904-1974)



Alan Sorrell - self portrait

THE intriguing title of our September talk was explained by Julia Sorrell, flamboyant artist daughter of painter, teacher and historical illustration artist, Alan Sorrell. Through her, we were given an insight into Alan Sorrell's career.

Descended from Huguenots, Tooting-born Alan

Sorrell was a sickly child with a stammer and often confined to a bath chair. After attending board school in Southend, he trained as a commercial designer, where he honed his talent for accuracy and attention to detail. His lifelong passion for ancient monuments began when he won a scholarship to the British School, Rome. Later, Sir Mortimer Wheeler (the famous archaeologist) met Sorrell on a dig at Maiden Castle and recognized his skill at reconstructing ancient sites.

Mortimer used Sorrell's illustrations to animate the bare stones of historical diggings around the UK, peopling scenes realistically to reveal possible windows into the past.

During WWII Sorrell served as a war artist with the RAF where he used aerial photographs to make scale models of potential bombing targets. His work was invaluable in the positioning of Mulberry harbours off Sword beach for the D-Day landings. Later that year Sorrell begged to be excused from duty when the allies were preparing to bomb his beloved Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino, Italy.

In the 1950s, Nubia was flooded to create the Aswan Dam and Sorrell was commissioned to catalogue the drowned valley transforming flat historical detail into realistic tableaux.

Sorrell's early neo-Romantic art was typical of its time with emphasis on threateningly stormy or unstable landscapes and shadowed portraiture. In later life his wild paintings of uprooted trees underlined his battle against wanton destruction of the countryside around his Essex home. It is perhaps fitting there is an exhibition of his works at Sir John Soane's Museum, itself crammed with Roman and Greek artefacts.

*Carole Curtis*

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### Watching Birds

IN July members of the group spent a very informative morning with the [British Trust for Ornithology](#) (BTO) at their headquarters in Thetford. The BTO is an independent charitable research institute established in 1933, which moved their offices to Thetford in 1981 where about 80 staff are based.

Their communications officer, Paul Stancliffe, explained the work and aims of BTO which includes the collation of bird numbers, their distribution and migration and investigations into behaviour changes. In particular we learned about a current study of the migration of cuckoos, using GPS tags, each costing about £3000, fitted to male birds. This scientific information is passed on to interested organisations such as RSBP for which BTO receives a fee or grant to supplement other income sources from the government and members.

Paul took us through their Nunnery Lakes reserve where we heard various warbler song, saw butterflies and dragonflies and the flash of blue of the kingfisher. As well as helping us identify the bird song Paul explained the difference between waterfowl (geese, ducks) and the smaller song birds when they moult. The waterfowl shed all their flight

feathers at once and are unable to fly for about a month whereas songbirds have a gradual moult and thus maintain the ability to fly.

The reserve is open to the public free of charge and has a diverse mix of hedgerow, woodland, lakes, breckland and riverside.

*T. Witcher*



Photo by Tony Sear

## Rodin/Henry Moore Exhibition

THE Art Exploration Group's inaugural June outing was to the Auguste Rodin/Henry Moore Exhibition at Perry Green, home of artist and sculptor Henry Moore. A guided tour around the sculptures situated throughout the gardens, followed by lectures from various experts, was slightly curtailed by stormy weather accompanied by thunder, lightning and torrential rain. Nevertheless, the director of the Henry Moore Foundation pointed out we were seeing the sculptures at their very best, silhouetted against dark skies and dripping with rain. Certainly, Rodin's 'The Burghers of Calais' had a dark brooding sadness.

Rodin's sculptures, such as 'Adam' with his treelike legs and feet, implied an organic affinity with the earth. The same applied to his 'Water Nymph' being fused with the stone from which she rose. Rodin's sculpture 'Cathedral Hands' appeared to be two hands in prayer but on closer inspection was two right hands greeting each other and juxtaposed with a similar Henry Moore carving of an adult hand touching that of a child.

We had an illuminating lecture from the editor of the Catalogue Raisonné who demonstrated through comparison slides, that Rodin and Moore, plus Francis Bacon not only copied from each other but borrowed heavily from antiquity. Hence, the Belvedere Apollo became Francis Bacon's and Henry Moore's truncated forms while Francis

Bacon's twisted Pope Innocent X studies were modelled on the Velasquez portrait of that pope. The editor also showed that the flotsam and jetsam objects collected by these sculptors became an integrated part of their works. Henry Moore had an elephant skull which influenced many of his abstract drawings and Francis Bacon acquired a gorilla skull which may be seen floating in a series of his paintings.

The Group's first foray was memorable, not only for the storms but the magnificence of the Moore/Rodin sculptures.

*Carole Curtis*



### Get online at home – at a cost you can afford

AS we still have 20% of our membership (that's 115 people) who are not on e-mail, I have recently looked into schemes to encourage those folks to take the first steps into using computers. We may all occasionally complain about computers but have to admit that they're probably here to stay, and we all know that the first step in trying anything new is always the most difficult. However, with some initial help, my father taught himself e-mail at the age of 86 and was delighted to realise that he could manage e-mail sufficiently well to communicate with friends and family throughout the world, until he passed away at the age of 92.

It's now easier than ever to start using the internet with your own ready-to-go personal computer at a truly affordable price. The scheme called "Get Online at Home" is backed by Microsoft, and will provide you with a very affordable, internet-ready, well-powered, refurbished computer, plus 90-day warranty and support, for a fraction of the cost of new equipment. So, why not give them a ring on 03719 100100 to find out more, or perhaps ask a friend, relative or your local librarian to look at their website, [www.getonlineathome.org](http://www.getonlineathome.org), on your behalf.

### Barclays Bank with Age UK Scheme

Once you're up and running with your new computer, why not visit Barclays Bank and talk to one of their newly-appointed "Digital Eagles" who have collaborated with the charity, Age UK, to help first-time computer users understand the benefits of using the internet. Recent research shows that those who use the web typically save £61 per month on household bills (that's about £700 per year!), thanks to shopping comparison sites, lower travel costs, and discounts for paying bills online. Age UK has also published a very useful, easy-to-read, free guide called "Making the Most of the Internet", available from their local branches.

And finally, when you are online, please remember to advise me of your new e-mail address so that it can be added to our bulk e-mail system and you can then also access our website, thus keeping up-to-date with ALL Blackbourne U3A activities, even if you can't always attend every monthly lecture.

*Stella Chamberlin, General Secretary 01359 242601*

## Interest Groups Update

The following groups have closed down:

**Parchment Craft**  
**Folk Dancing**  
**My Memoirs**

**Singing for Pleasure** is restarting at 2pm on the fourth Monday of the month in the Woolpit Institute. Cost £2 per session. Contact Anne Hayward on 01359 242342

A member is interested in a **Railway Enthusiasts Group**. Possible activities to include visiting sites of railway interest, walking old railway lines, watching railway DVDs and researching local railway history.

Two other groups suggested are **Poetry** and **Antiques**.

For more details please contact Rosie Ellis or speak to Carole Curtis at the Exhibition

## Interest Groups Exhibition

11am on Monday, 21 October

Please remember that if you missed the September lecture meeting and will also miss October's, to obtain tickets for this popular event you'll need either to give a friend your £4 (cash or cheque payable to "Blackbourne U3A") to collect the ticket from me on 7 October on your behalf, or post your cheque (with an s.a.e. please) to me at 6 Little Green, Elmswell, IP30 9FB.

It is very unlikely that any tickets will still remain unsold on 21 October, so please do not turn up on the day without a pre-purchased ticket.

Stella Chamberlain  
General Sec. 01359 242601

Produced by Bryann Ward

Copy may be sent to  
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DEADLINE FOR JANUARY EDITION  
IS 10 DECEMBER

## Back in our day

AT the supermarket, a young cashier said to an elderly customer, *'You should bring your own bags in future because plastic ones aren't good for the environment.'*

The old lady apologised and said, *'We didn't have this green thing back in our day.'*

*'That's the problem,'* the cashier replied, *'your generation didn't do enough to save the environment.'*

She was right. We returned milk bottles to the milkman, pop bottles to the sweet shop and beer bottles to the off licence. We refilled pens with ink instead of buying new ones and we replaced razor blades instead of throwing away the whole razor. We didn't have the green thing back in our day.

We washed babies' nappies because we didn't have the throwaway kind. We dried clothes on a line using wind and solar power; but that young lady was right. We didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Back then, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we posted a fragile item, we used screwed-up newspaper as packaging, not polystyrene or bubble wrap. We didn't start a petrol engine just to cut the grass. We just ran on human power, but she's right; we didn't have the green thing back in our day.

We drank water from the tap instead of buying bottled water and accepted that a lot of food was seasonal. We didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Back then, people caught a train or bus to work and children walked or rode their bikes to school. We had one electric socket in the room, not a bank of sockets to power half a dozen appliances, nor did we need a computer to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza place.

How wasteful we oldies were. We didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Perhaps you should show this to another selfish old person?

*Courtesy of Mr Bridge*

## Then and Now Group

IN June renowned expert and author Paddy Heazell gave a talk to us entitled "Most Secret - The Story of Orford Ness." We were fascinated to hear what had been going on there, right under our noses and yet completely secret from us during WW2.



Beacon Navigation tower, Orford Ness

We were sorry to read in The East Anglia Daily Times that, on 8 September both Paddy and his wife had been killed in a tragic road accident whilst on holiday in the USA. What a gap their deaths will leave in the Aldeburgh area where they were both such active members of the community.

In July we had an informative afternoon learning about development proposals around Bury St Edmunds and how the Borough decides on street names.

Unfortunately Felixstowe Docks let us down regarding their planned visit in September but Brian Aket very kindly stepped in and saved the day with his fascinating talk about "The Poor Man's Encyclopaedia - The Story of Cigarette Cards"

*Barbara Milner*