

## *Wishing all our Readers a Happy and Healthy New Year*

*I hope that you have all had a happy and peaceful festive season without too many excesses and I wish everyone a very happy and prosperous 2014.*

*This will be the last Newsletter before our March AGM and the committee is thinking about the composition of next year's. Mine will be the only retirement this year as the others still have one or two years to run. However Rosie Ellis, who was Interest Group Co-ordinator, has had to resign due to the ill health of her husband. So we need at least two new members and it would be very helpful to have two other members as well. I urge you again to consider standing for the committee – the tasks are evenly divided and to have two people for each post would spread the load. The committee meets six times a year in the Chairman's home.*

*Rosie Ellis's resignation has left Carole Curtis in sole command of co-ordinating the interest groups where she is doing a sterling job. However, it is too much for one person and Carole desperately needs help to continue to the end of the year. If you feel that you would like to put something back into U3A please give Carole or Stella a call to find out what the job entails.*

### **Finances**

*There has been a change to the status of Blackbourne U3A insofar as it is now clear that we must register as a charity for two reasons: by virtue of our association with the umbrella organisation the Third Age Trust, which is a registered charity, and because our annual turnover is now in excess of £5000. Because of this the committee members are now trustees of the charity and thus are responsible for the proper handling of all its funds including all monies handled by groups and social events. This will influence the way in which the groups handle their finances to fit in with the recommendations of the TAT. Only the groups handling large sums will be affected and they have already been contacted.*

*John Christie*

### **Annual General Meeting**

3 March 2014

Please may I have any Agenda items for the AGM by February's lecture meeting on 3 February at the latest. Any such items must be proposed and seconded in writing.

*Stella Chamberlin  
General Secretary*

### **Monthly Meetings**

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

Monday 3 February  
**Cambridge Colleges and their  
Gardens**

Rodney Tibbs

Monday 3 March  
**AGM followed by  
Suffolk and the Brecks**

Alex Moss

Monday 7 April  
**Medieval World**

Mike Wabe

AS you have been aware, during the past year with the help of £40,000 in grants, the New Green Centre has been redecorated and the kitchen and toilets refurbished. Our U3A is one of the principal hirers and our chairman, John Christie, was invited to the official reopening in November by local MP, David Ruffley.



## Six Hospitals and a Chapel

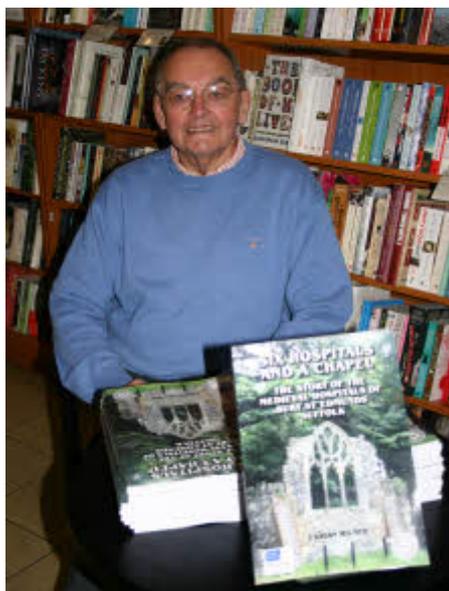
### The Story of the Medieval Hospitals of Bury St Edmunds

THIS is the title of a book recently written and published by Brian Milner, convenor of the Then and Now Interest group.

It took Brian nearly two years to research the development and history of these establishments to which the town owes much of its past.

The book is fascinating to read and is reasonably priced at £10.99. All profits will be donated to St Nicholas Hospice Care.

Copies can be obtained from Brian on 01284 761508



Signing the book at Waterstones

## Samuel Pepys Diaries

MANY will recall the fascinating talk we had at last year's January lecture by David Dougan. Dr. Dougan has recently published a book 'Samuel Pepys – Reading the Diaries'. In it are explained the background and context of many subjects in the diaries. It runs to 150 pages and is priced at £10.

If anyone would like to purchase a copy please contact David on 01284 752588 or email [daviddougan1@msn.com](mailto:daviddougan1@msn.com).

## The Woodland Trust – Keeping Woodland Alive

ONLY 12% of the UK is wooded compared to Europe's 44%, which is a lamentable record. Worse still, as our October speaker, John Minns (a Woodland Trust volunteer) pointed out, Essex has only 5% woodland and Suffolk a mighty 9%. In 1970-80 alone, forty million trees were lost. But before we become a concrete wilderness, the [Woodland Trust](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk), (a conservation charity founded in 1972 by West Country farmer, Kenneth Watkins), is working hard to maintain our woodland heritage by creating and managing new woods, hedges, even forests.

Ancient broadleaf woodlands are defined by a 1600's military map, recording all notable woods and forests. Whereas, dark cash-crop conifer forests are almost dead zones for biodiversity, broadleaf woodlands are precious in conserving rare flora and fauna. Think only of the Shakespeare lines *'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine'*, and you feel a sense of loss. Generous donations enable land purchase which may be planted with native trees such as oak, hazel and rowan. The Trust has schemes to encourage schoolchildren to participate in plantings and the Trust will donate starter packs of trees, hedging materials and expert advice to anyone who has two or more acres to spare. Their five year vision is to create woodland within two miles of any conurbation. John Minns is helping rectify Essex's poor record by planting 60,000 broadleaf trees at Elmstead Market.

The Trust is the UK's 'Johnny Appleseed' scattering woods the length and breadth of Britain, tackling diseases, creating green corridors for migration of endangered mammals, and creating tranquil havens for everyone. Should you venture into the woods and find people circling a tree, it's not 'hug-a-tree' week but the measurement and recording of another surviving ancient tree.

Carole Curtis

## Charles II and Newmarket

WHAT jolly japes occurred in naughty Newmarket. John Sutton, former Senior Lecturer in History and Time Team member, painted a surprising picture of life at Charles II's 'House of Sport and Pleasure' whose entrance was through the Greyhound public house off Newmarket High Street. Charles's palace had two storeys, one end being the public rooms where the king entertained many of his mistresses and at the other extreme was the Queen's (Katherine of Braganza) suite plus the king's inner sanctum – the king's closet. The diarist, John Evelyn was less than impressed by the palace and called it *'a wretched house off a dirty street'*.

Again, we learn from John Evelyn that the palace was full of *'jolly blades, racing, dancing, feasting and reveling; more resembling a luxurious and abandoned rout, than a Christian Court.'* The king's favourite mistresses, Louise de Keroualle (maid of honour to the Duchess of Orleans), the scheming Barbara Villiers, countess of Castlemaine and rather common actress, Nell Gwynne, were ensconced in this riotous court. They sat for provocative portraits painted *dishabillé* by Sir Peter Lely in the public rooms. No-one seemed embarrassed as guests promenaded past these nude courtesans reclining in a state of undress. Charles was definitely not a sober Catholic monarch and loved to gamble at dice (*hazard*) and cards (*basset*) where large fortunes could be won or lost – even on Sundays. The king would walk around town in simple country dress only adorned by the star and garter which must have given him complete anonymity when he visited the cockfighting pits in Shagbag Lane. The infamous 2nd. Earl of Rochester wrote a ditty *"Restless he rolls from whore to whore, A merry monarch, scandalous and poor."* Visiting sedate Newmarket today it is hard to visualize the licentiousness of its former life.

Carole Curtis

## Joyce Grenfell (1910-1979)

MEMORIES of things past were brought vividly to mind when Gillian Grinham gave us a snapshot into the life of the late Joyce Grenfell. Joyce's mother was one of the famous Langhorne sisters who crossed the Atlantic to marry into British aristocracy. Her aunt was Viscountess Astor, and Joyce was brought up on the Clivedon estate where she attended many grand parties. At one such party Joyce was describing a recent WI meeting she had attended with hilarious effect and a BBC producer was so amused that he offered her a radio series.

Joyce was a raconteur with a great gift for mimicry. She observed life and caught the nuances and vulnerability of everyday living during her forays around wartime London. She did not have to resort to swearing or vulgarity to have her audience in stitches. Gillian re-enacted the famous 'old girls' school reunion' sketch where poor *Lumpy Latimer* was cringingly brought to life as they 'foregathered for lunch' and where *Lumpy Latimer* seemed unaware she was being humiliated. As Joyce said 'time is not always a great healer.' Gillian also treated us to the 'Olde Tyme Dancing' sketch where the dearth of gentlemen meant that the ladies had to dance together giving us the imagery of *two stately galleons that sail across the floor* and of course the ladies are *dancing bust to bust*. Behind the laughter there is a certain pathos in her monologues. The phrase from Joyce's nursery school sketch '*George - don't do that*' has become part of modern parlance without perhaps knowing its origins. Modern audiences sometimes only remember her as the gawky games mistress in the St. Trinians films which is sad. She was a statuesque lady from an age of pearls and white gloves who is still a delight to hear.

Carole Curtis

## Educational Visits

THE visit in October to the RAF Museum in Hendon was the last visit to be organised by John Morris. After many years organising these popular outings to museums, stately homes and other interesting places John has decided to step down.

I am sure we would like to thank John for all the research and time he put in to ensure the visits went smoothly.

Educational visits are an important U3A activity, open to all members and it is to be hoped that someone will step into John's shoes. John says he will be happy to help and advise, so if anyone would rise to the challenge please contact any committee member.

## Crafty Quilters

A second quilting group is due to start on Wednesday 15 January at 10am in Kay Stapleton's Woolpit home. Meetings will be on the third Wednesday of each month. This is a small group of beginners who are keen to create some colourful pieces of work.

For full details, contact Kay on 01359 240072 or see our website.

## Theatre Visits

ON Friday, 29 November 42 U3A members travelled to the Theatre Royal Norwich to see Jason Donovan in *Priscilla Queen of The Desert*. There was time for lunch and Christmas shopping before the show.

Our next visit to the Theatre Royal will be to see *The Perfect Murder* on Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 2.30 p.m.

There may be a few spaces left - contact Christine Glover on 01284 788075

## ALL ABOARD!!

THE TRAIN NOW STANDING AT  
PLATFORM 8  
IS THE 2014 TO THURSTON, calling at  
Blackbourne U3A .....

Yes, our new RAILWAY ENTHUSIASTS Interest Group is up and running - first meeting to be held on Monday 27 January, at 2pm in Chris Williams' home, Bury St Edmunds. Ring him on 01284-762637 for full details.

We plan to learn about and explore all aspects of Railways, both full-scale, real and model ones, from early steam to very modern. We hope to visit local railway places of interest (by train, of course!), and then progress to some more further afield as well as watching DVDs and videos of interesting trains and stations and, occasionally, inviting local railway clubs and societies to speak to us.



Do join us, and let the inner Engine Driver in you enjoy the ride!

## Photo Group



Jo Sweetman 1st. prize

Fred Hawthorne 3rd. prize

Bryann Ward 2nd. prize

Tony Sear Fun prize

AT the end of our last season we had our annual photo competition, with our usual huge amount of entries all looking to bag the top spot. Our Judge, Mr Phillip Smith LRPS, commented on how difficult this year was to judge. First prize went to Jo Sweetman, 2nd Bryann Ward, 3rd Fred Hawthorne, and the fun photography category was won by Tony Sear. You can judge for yourself how well all our photographers did as the images are on our web site.

Our new season has now started and after our Interests Group day we have had a superb number of new members, ranging from a lady who just wants to come for a cup of tea, a chat and look at some pictures to experienced photographers wanting to learn new techniques. Our new season's title of **Putting the "WOW" into your Photography** is certainly going to be challenging but I'm sure the lady holding the cup of tea will have a smile on her face throughout the year. We have a great team helping to run our group and we are really looking forward to a successful new season.

Chris Brooks

### Interest Groups' Coordinator

IT has been necessary for Rosie Ellis to stand down from this position due to family commitments. For the time being any queries or suggestions for new groups should be directed to her deputy, Carole Curtis.

There is an **urgent need for a replacement**. Please contact the chairman if you feel you could fill the vacancy.

### Garden Visits

THIS popular group is holding its first meeting of 2014 on Wednesday 22 January at 2.00pm. Bring your photos of last year's visits and discuss the programme for the year.

On Wednesday 26 February at 2.00pm the group will host a talk by author, broadcaster and consultant designer, Caroline Holmes.

This will be in the main hall at New Green. A charge of £5 will be made to include refreshments

### Then and Now Group

DUE to an increase in numbers following the Interest Groups' exhibition in October it has been necessary to change to a larger venue and beginning on Thursday 23 January with *Ferretting about in History* all our meetings will be held at Great Barton Village Hall, IP31 2NR.

The turning to the hall is opposite the filling station on the main A143 road. For those members who live in Thurston it might be an idea to arrange car sharing for those without their own transport. There is plenty of parking at the side of the hall.

### Short Walks

AN inaugural meeting to try and set up a second Short Walks Group is to be held at Woolpit Village Hall in the Cathy Prior Annexe, on Thursday 30 January 2014 at 10.30am.

All those on waiting list have been advised. Please ring Stella Chamberlin on 01359 242601 if you are interested.

### Singing for Pleasure

THIS group is now up and running again at 2pm on the fourth Monday of the month at Woolpit Institute in the village's central square, with our very own Chairman "tickling the ivories". Please come and join us – **all voices, male and female**, will be made most welcome – no auditions to endure, and no need to read music, just singing for your own pleasure and fun in a friendly relaxed atmosphere.

We sing old songs and new – from traditional English folk tunes and ever-popular musical shows from the 1930's onwards, to more modern popular songs.

Contact Anne Hayward on 01359 242342 or see our website for full details.

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