



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

Issue 81

April 2014

From your Chairman

FOR those not present at the AGM in March, let me introduce myself. My name is Karen Murdoch and I have been elected to be your chairman for the forthcoming year. I have been on the BU3A Committee for 2 years, finding time for this whilst running antiques markets and shops in London – it is very difficult to retire from a family business! The monthly speakers until July 2015 are my choices which I hope you will approve of. I have been appreciative of all the recommendations you have passed on – please keep them coming for the next lecture secretary.

I am most grateful to my predecessor, John Christie, who put us on a correct course to conform with our status as a charity (which we are mandated to be), with additional requirements now that our income exceeds £5,000. This has certainly made my and the committee's tasks clearer and easier to follow.

Our U3A has gone from strength to strength and we now have 571 members. Sadly, due to fire regulations, we can only accommodate 250 at our monthly meetings. This is usually adequate, but, we are always on the lookout for a convenient alternative venue. Due to the extensive expertise of our members, we now have 37 varied interest groups - if you can't find something to suit, perhaps you will have an idea for the 37th?

At present, I only know a small proportion of our membership but I look forward to remedying that during the forthcoming year.

Karen Murdoch

Monthly Meetings

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

Monday 12 May

**Through Peru to
Lake Machu Picchu**

John Wilkin

Monday 2 June

Population Matters

Roger Martin

Monday 7 July

The Enjoyment of Music

Christopher Moore

There is no meeting in August

AGM Report

The AGM which preceded the March talk on Suffolk and the Brecks was attended by 235 members .

Apologies were received from eight members and the minutes of last year's AGM, having already been circulated, were taken as read.

In his report the chairman, John Christie, said that the increase in membership to a maximum of 571 had not so far created a problem for the monthly lecture meetings and had reduced the waiting list considerably. He thanked committee members for their support and initiative and also the group convenors, the coffee ladies and those who arrived early to set up the hall for the lectures. Twelve new interest groups had been started and the total number is now 37.

Treasurer John Marshall presented the accounts and after answering questions about the benefits secured for the affiliation fee and the value of the equipment we owned, the accounts were duly adopted.

The chairman explained the reasons behind the proposed changes to the constitution.

Ralph Brighton put forward a motion that these changes should be deferred until a rationale for them had been presented to members for discussion at a later general meeting. Thereafter a Special General Meeting should be called to ratify any changes. A discussion then took place on this motion and it was put to the vote but it did not reach the required majority and the proposed amendments were voted through.

Karen Murdoch was elected chairman and the existing committee was elected en bloc plus four new members.

The new committee is listed on the back page.

Membership Renewal

**Please read the back page
regarding your
membership renewal later
this year**

Educational Visits

A meeting, attended by 25 members, was held on 17 March to resurrect this popular activity which is open to all members.

Maureen Morris and Linda Wells had volunteered to act as joint co-ordinators and propose to run the visits on similar lines as before.

Maureen and Linda will have a notice board at the April lecture meeting with details of their first Educational Visit which will be on Wednesday 7 May to the [Hunterian Museum](#) (Royal College of Surgeons) and, after a lunch break, the [London Transport Museum](#). The cost will be £22.50 per person to include coach travel and entrance fees. The coach will leave New Green at 8.15am. and London at 4.30pm. for the return.

Payment must be made by cheque at the time of booking - cash will not be accepted.

The next visit is being planned to Kelvedon Hatch and Tiptree Jam museum for 28 July.

Ideas for future visits would be welcomed.

Maureen Morris 01284 767240

Linda Wells 01359 259112

Thursday Walkers

WE have so far completed three walks, all within easy reach of Thurston. January's walk started from the Norton Dog and took in the area to the north east of the village. It was rather muddy underfoot but there was only a short stretch where our boots became clogged.

In February we took to the sandier soil of West Stow Heath and the adjoining country park where we followed the course of the *Coal river* (the Lark), so named when it was a busy waterway for bringing coal from Kings Lynn right into Bury St Edmunds.

An urban stroll around the alleys and paths that link different parts of Bury St Edmunds was the choice for March.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

THE sub-title of Dr. Geoffrey Kay's talk was 'Death, Sex and Drugs', which makes attending meetings a somewhat risqué business. Blushes spared, sensibilities restored, Geoffrey showed us the original members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood 'PRB' – William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. These angry young men railed against the Art Establishment, especially Sir Joshua Reynolds, first President of the Royal Academy, referring to him as 'Sir Slosua', a sly criticism of the indeterminate muddy backgrounds in Sir Joshua's portraits. These bohemian friends, supported by John Ruskin, good taste arbiter and renowned art critic, were determined to return painting to a purer mediaeval age, denying the trickery of Raphael and Michelangelo's foreshortening of limbs and exaggerated perspectives. It is said that every plant in Millais's 'Ophelia' is botanically correct and his model, Lizzie Siddel, lay in an ice-cold bath for many hours to achieve that reality. No wonder she looked half-dead.

The industrial revolution was in full swing, religious disputes such as the Catholic Oxford Movement and Creationism versus Darwinism, were all reflected in PRB paintings. Holman Hunt's innocent painting 'The Hireling Shepherd' portrays an amorous shepherd and sweetheart against a background of scattered sheep and is, surprisingly, a rebuke on the Anglican Church for its complacency – symbolism easily understood by a Victorian audience. The PRB exotic lifestyles may have contributed to their muse, Lizzie Siddel, dying of tuberculosis and addiction to laudanum. At her burial in Highgate Cemetery, Rossetti dramatically threw an original poetry manuscript into the grave. A couple of years later, however, her grave was exhumed and Rossetti's poetry retrieved – and they say romance is dead! The final irony may be Millais's painting 'Bubbles' with its cute child, muddy background and used as an advertisement for soap. Sir Joshua must be smiling!

Carole Curtis

Cambridge Colleges and their Gardens

OUR February meeting went on a magical mystery tour with retired journalist, Rodney Tibbs, through Cambridge's secret gardens; all within 10 minutes' walk of the Market Place. In Spring – soon upon us – one may walk along The Backs surrounded by trillions of Spring bulbs and even ponder over a misshapen white stone in their midst, dedicated to the Chinese Romantic poet, Xu Zhimo.

Emmanuel College has one of the largest gardens, partly designed by Capability Brown. Being Capability Brown, the design was pastoral – hence white cows – which are prevented from invading Emmanuel's immaculate lawns by a ha-ha and the River Cam flowing through. Christ's College has enviable blue wisteria draped over the Master's Lodge, and in the Fellows' Garden stands a large hillock with a mulberry tree poking from the top. Apparently this is John Milton's mulberry tree, blown down 160 years ago and preserved under a mound of earth until it sprouted shoots again.

Who would have thought that behind the hustle and bustle of Cambridge Bus Station may be found the tranquil Clare College Fellows' gardens? They are a haven of beauty and repose despite their noisy position. One may meander across formal lawns, encounter an Elizabethan-style sunken garden, before dipping under rose-garlanded archways into a tropical forest. Apart from passing police cars and buses, this is a mystical garden wonderland. One cannot leave without viewing Henry VIII standing in his niche over the gateway to Trinity. Is he brandishing his sceptre or, on closer viewing, could it be a chair leg or even a bicycle pump? Oh those students – what larks!

How lovely that most college gardens, where only the hallowed feet of Fellows sprint across the lawns, may be visited – sometimes for a small fee. Cambridge Tourist Office has all the details.

Carole Curtis

Suffolk and the Brecks

ALWAYS synonymous with wild, mist-enshrouded heathlands and the drifting sand dunes of M.R. James's ghost stories, the history of The Brecks is writ large on its landscape. Lecturer and birder, Alex Bass, demonstrated how man's influence has shaped one of the driest parts of Britain and maintained The Brecks unique biodiversity. Neolithic man created a winning business venture when he began flint mining, carving out over 700 pits at the misnamed Grimes Graves. We still have a surfeit of flint, but flint knappers are in short supply. Even more lucrative on the sandy soil, the rabbit, introduced by the Normans in the 12th century and eagerly exploited by various abbots and landowners. Medieval warreners' lodges are dotted around the Thetford area and warreners were paid handsomely for their skill in controlling and harvesting rabbits, usually sleeping above their charges in the lodges with rotting rabbit carcasses below. Another success story! The Brecks encompasses forests, farmlands and the beautiful fens and nothing is wasted – even the windbreak poplars provided matchsticks for industry.

The Brecks are the 'must-go-to' destination for migrating birds, and when a birder says 'the Russians are coming', then look to the sky for great eruptions of birds, such as fieldfare, waxwing and redwing from Siberia, Iceland and Scandinavia heading for our marshes and heathlands. Santon Downham is the finch capital of The Brecks playing host to many overwintering finches including siskins and the colourful Crossbill. Thompson Common, Norfolk, famous for its Ice Age shallow 'pingo' ponds provides an ideal habitat for lizards, snakes and butterflies including the small copper and purple hairstreak butterflies. As Alex's bird cries echoed round the hall he suggested that supermarket car parks provided fuel for body and spirit when watching waxwings rising from their cotoneasters!

Carole Curtis

Friday Walking Group

DESPITE the poor weather conditions at the beginning of this year, we have had a good attendance and have completed two of the three walks on our programme. John and Carol Light led us around Knettishall Heath in January but due to torrential rain, the walk in February was unfortunately cancelled.

On our March walk around the Needham Market area, organised by Martin and Ann Jones, we saw signs that Spring is almost upon us.

If there are any current members of the group who have decided that they are unable to continue to walk with us please will they let me know as I have a waiting list.

Sylvie Marshall 01284 828433

Birds and Botany

ON 13 March the new Birds and Botany group had their first meeting and visited Wicken Fen – a fascinating remnant of the original Cambridgeshire wetlands which holds many unusual species of both flora and fauna.

We met at The Maid's Head pub at 12.00 noon where we were able to have a preliminary chat, a drink and a snack before we set off to see what was on the Fen.

We had a most enjoyable afternoon spotting redpoll, greenfinch, goldfinch, chaffinch, long-tailed tit, reed bunting and dunnoek, to name just a few.

It was decided that 12.00 noon is probably not an ideal meeting time and it was felt that it would be better for us to meet at 10.00am so that we could have a walk and for those who might wish to, a drink and a snack afterwards. Our next walk will be to The Deben when we will again meet at 12.00 noon, but our subsequent programme will be arranged differently. We will be meeting on the FIRST THURSDAY of each month instead of the SECOND THURSDAY, as we are at present. This will mean that future meetings will be on 1 May, 5 June, and 3 July etc.



We hope to visit Knettishall Heath, Redgrave Fen, (both Suffolk Wildlife Trust) Lakenheath Fen (R.S.P.B.), Shotley and The Stour and Chelmondiston with Pin Mill.

We do have a few places available so if you are interested in joining us please contact Roger Collins on 01359 241652 or Angela Lee on 01842 815205

Your BU3A Membership Renewal - 2014

YOUR membership of Blackbourne U3A will expire at the end of July. 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 membership cards/name badges will again be issued, so we need to send details to the printer by the beginning of August.

In view of the waiting list to join BU3A (over 60 at the last count), the committee asks you to think seriously whether you wish to cancel your membership in June if you have not been able to attend any lecture meetings and/or Interest Groups over the past year.

Should you 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 30 June. Automatic payment in June will be received from those members who pay by bank Standing Order.

We will not be issuing a further written or telephone reminder concerning your membership. Therefore, if we have not received your remittance by 30 June, it will be assumed that you do not wish to remain a BU3A member, and your membership will be offered to one of the people on our waiting list.

Sue Cattermole and John Marshall (Treasurer) will at the monthly lecture meetings in May, June and July to receive money, set up standing orders for next year and deal with renewal queries. 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, IP30 9NZ

Will I wear Purple Perspectives on the Third Age

THIS is the title of the Suffolk and District network of U3A's Spring Composium which is to be held on Saturday 17 May at the Kesgrave Community Centre, Ipswich.

Five speakers will introduce topics that are of particular interest to those in retirement. Tickets for the event cost £8.

Full details and an application form can be found on www.u3aeastsuffolk.org.uk, or by phoning Yvonne Chittock on 01473 623460

K9 Walkers



THIS new group enjoyed their first walk, around Thurston, on 25 February. Although we all got soaked at the end, it did not dampen enthusiasm and we walked again in March around Beyton.

On 29 April at 10.30am we will meet at Thurston Church for our next walk – please let me know if you would like to join us.

Anne Ling 01359 231881

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2014-15

CHAIRMAN

Karen Murdoch 01359 270313

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Anne Ling 01359 231881

TREASURER

John Marshall 01359 230470

GENERAL SECRETARY

Stella Chamberlin 01359 242601

LECTURE SECRETARY

Adrian Bond

ASSISTANT LECTURE SECRETARY

Christine Glover 01284 788075

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Sue Cattermole 01359 272572

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Carole Curtis 01359 244135

ASSISTANT INTEREST GROUPS

CO-ORDINATOR

Angela Lee

NAMES REGISTRAR & NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Trevor Jones 01359 230276

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Carol Drury 07508 601976

Revised Constitution

As agreed at the AGM on March 3, a number of changes have been made to the Constitution, a copy of which is now on our website – both on the Committee and Interest Groups pages.

A printed copy of this Constitution can be posted to any member on request. Please telephone our General Secretary, Stella Chamberlin, on 01359 242601.

Thank you to all our contributors to this issue.

Copy and pictures are always welcome and should be sent to publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk when the editors will do their best to include them

**Deadline for the July issue is
24 June**