



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

Issue 82

July 2014

From the Chairman

AT the end of Radio 4's recent Ramblings programme with a group of U3A walkers, Clare Balding said "I now just can't wait to retire so that I can start joining your groups because I think they are great". Well, we can all endorse that, as verified by our 38 interest groups. There are vacancies on many of these, but we do urge members to start a second group if the original one is full. Singing for Pleasure is still anxiously seeking a piano accompanist and I feel there must be a proficient player within our membership who could share the duties of the present accompanist and save the group from folding. They meet at 2pm on the fourth Monday of the month at the Woolpit Institute. If you can help, please phone Anne Hayward on 01359 242342.

You may notice that this Newsletter has extra pages. Our editor, Bryann Ward, had such difficulty in fitting in your interesting articles and illustrations that he and his co-editor, Barbara Milner, enlarged this edition. Many thanks to them for producing the excellent four editions each year to enhance the knowledge of our group.

There are two changes to our monthly Monday lectures, as follows:-

1. If you have a flyer for a forthcoming non-BU3A local event, a notice board will now be on the front table for this purpose.
2. Tea and coffee will now be served from the earlier time of 9am; please return your cups to the kitchen in good time for our volunteer members to clear away before 9.55am, so that they too can enjoy our lectures.

I would like to remind you of the excellent facility the Third Age Trust's Resource Centre provides in lending materials such as DVDs, CDs, videos, slides etc., covering many subjects, free of charge, to members. If you would like to register, click on Resource Centre on the [U3A website](#) and discover what they can offer.

I hope you have enjoyed this year's lectures. We now break for a month and meet again on 1 September when Dr Pat Murrell relates the history of Cupola House in late Stuart and Georgian Bury St Edmunds. I wish you all a wonderful summer and safe journeys wherever you venture.

Karen Murdoch

Medieval World

FOR the April lecture Mike Wabe, formally known as Brother Michael, took us back to "his time" of 1175 A.D. and treated us to a very interesting, humorous and educational talk.

Brother Michael was a Sergeant Templar, a title not familiar to most of the audience which is surprising as there were about 50 Sergeant Templars for every one better known Knight Templar.

Having started his career as a Lay Servant, working long hours to cultivate the land in exchange for food and keep, Brother Michael subsequently became a Sergeant Templar. In order to gain promotion to Sergeant Templar he needed to be both free of debt and healthy. These men were rich as they were the first international bankers, looking after the cash for the pilgrims making their way to the Holy Land. The pilgrims gave their money to one Sergeant Templar, received a receipt and later obtained repayment from another Templar, less of course the expected commission. This saved the very high risk of being robbed in transit.

At this time England was ruled by King Henry II who was crowned following a civil war between his cousin Stephen and his mother Matilda. Henry was a foul tempered man but he did introduce Crown Courts where cases were tried by judges. He was also responsible for the first written book on Common Law and trial by jury.

Having spoken about "his time", Brother Michael took us back to 1065 when Edward the Confessor ruled the country. When Edward died his brother-in-law Harold Godwinson inherited the throne. Harold's brother Tostig Godwinson had toured Europe trying to gain support for an invasion of England. This support came from Harald of Norway and they invaded England and took York. King Harold marched his army 97 miles in four days to defend the country and Harald was defeated. As Harold was returning South he heard of the invasion by the Normans under the control of William the Conqueror. Feeling confident following his success at York, Harold ignored all advice and was defeated on 14 October 1066. William took the throne of England.

Brother Michael spent the remainder of his lecture time showing examples of the intricate armour worn by the soldiers at that time and gave a detailed description of peasant life. A lecture greatly enjoyed by those attending.

Laurie Marshall

Monthly Meetings

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

Monday 1 September

**Cupola - Late Stuart &
Georgian Bury St Edmunds**

Dr Pat Murrell

Monday 6 October

The Bayeux Tapestry

Mark Mitchels

Monday 20 October

At 10.30 am

Interest Groups' Exhibition

Entrance by ticket only

Monday 3 November

**New Scotland Yard, the Krays,
IRA and other terrorists**

Brian Heard

INTEREST GROUPS' EXHIBITION

with Wine & Cheese
Monday 20th October, 10.30am
New Green Centre

Tickets priced at £4 per person (although one free to each Group's Convenor) will be available at lecture meetings on 1 September and 6 October. As this is a **ticket only** event which is usually quickly sold out, it is very unlikely that there will be any tickets available on the door that morning. If you cannot get to either September or October's lecture meetings and would like your ticket posted to you, please contact Interest Groups Co-Ordinator, Carol Drury, on 07508 601976.

THEN AND NOW GROUP

Barbara and Brian Milner have co-ordinated this popular group of about 60 people for 6 years but now wish to relinquish the leadership due to pressure of other interests and activities.

An individual or small group of people is needed to ensure the group continues – it would be a pity to see it fold. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2.00pm at Great Barton Village Hall. The programme is planned to the end of this year and the present convenors will do all they can to achieve a smooth handover.

If you are interested please contact Barbara or Brian Milner.

barbara@btopenworld.com

NEW QUIZ GROUP

Our first fun filled quizzing session under quizmaster Jim McMillan was held on Wednesday, June 4 at New Green Centre and was attended by over 20 members. The next session will be at **2.00pm on July 2**. It is only £2 to join plus £1.50 per session. If you require further information please check the website or contact Jim McMillan on 01359 245219.

Through Peru to Machu Picchu

THE next best thing to visiting Peru was John Wilkin's exciting South American talk in May.

Peru has three distinct regions running vertically down the country like stripes on a zebra. The Eastern seaboard is desert, the central backbone is the Andes reaching over 22,000 feet and the Western side falls into the tropical Amazonian basin. Peru, with only 50 people per square mile, is a country of empty spaces and mystery. For thousands of years it was inhabited by the Amerindians, and later the Incas, before the Spanish arrived in the 1500s.

Unfortunately, history is told by the victors and as the Amerindians had no written culture, their sophisticated civilization challenged anthropologists. Think only of the Nazca lines in Southern Peru with gigantic stylized hummingbirds, monkeys and lizards, invisible in their entirety, except from the air. Also, necklets of knotted string, called 'talking knots' were used to record data and often carried by runners over vast distances between cities, there being no horses in South America.

John started his journey in Lima, a city shrouded in mists caused by cold Antarctic waters meeting the warmer Pacific Ocean and flew to Arequipa with its Spanish baroque architecture. He avoided the debilitating altitude sickness by drinking coca leaf tea. Next he journeyed to the sacred Lake Titicaca with its colourful hamlets perched on floating reed islands. These survive around 10 years before sinking. Kontiki-style rafts ferried tourists to the Inca Isla del Sol. After which Cusco beckoned, where John took the highest train in the world and had a hair-raising coach trip which snaked up mountains to the Inca temple ruins, Machu Picchu. Discovered in 1911, the temples dedicated to the sun, were presumed to be a place of retreat for Inca chiefs and a fitting end to John's journey.

Carole Curtis

Population matters

THE June lecture was given by Roger Martin a former diplomat and now active environmentalist. His talk was entitled "Population Matters" which is also the name of a group that he actively supports. During the course of the talk Roger said several times that he felt he was stating the obvious and this is very true.

There is no doubt that if the world population continues to grow at the present rate there will be severe difficulties for the support of the people. Today we spend a great amount of time persuading the countries of the world to take action to reduce the carbon footprint of the people but there is no benefit in reducing the carbon footprint if you keep increasing the number of feet.

At the present time the population of the world increases by 10,000 every hour and is projected to total 9.6 billion by 2050, an increase of 2.6 billion from today's figure. Between 1800 and today the population of the world grew from 1 billion to 7 billion. The additional population is being supported by depleting the natural resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, soil fertility, forests and fisheries.

As people live longer it is suggested that we need more children to provide support for the elderly both by contribution to the country's income and as carers for the elderly. If there was a falling population then there would be more opportunities for the people – more jobs, less unemployment and a more secure financial state as incomes would rise with fewer people seeking work.

If the world is to thrive it is essential to reduce the total population and in conclusion Roger suggested that reducing the number of births by careful education in birth control is the easiest option.

Roger may have been stating the obvious but he held the attention of his audience with a carefully given educational talk. Further information on the subject is available at www.populationmatters.org

Laurie Marshall

Convenors' Lunch – Friday 30 May 2014

Last year there was a regional Workshop for Group Leaders and Coordinators in Bury St. Edmunds and one of the points raised was that other U3A groups found it helpful to organize an annual lunch for Group Convenors, both as a thank you for their hard work during the year and also to enquire whether any convenors had found any problems during their tenure which might be analysed over lunch. Stella Chamberlin posed a number of hypothetical problems that convenors might encounter and these were discussed over a delicious buffet lunch and it was found that, generally, our groups ran fairly smoothly. All convenors said that this get-together had been worthwhile and they hoped it might become a yearly event



Friday Short walks group



OUR last walk was somewhat different and certainly a highlight of our year so far. With wonderful weather 23 members were treated to a guided tour of Thelnetham Fen by a Trustee / Volunteer of [The Little Ouse Headwaters Project](#), by kind arrangement of Mary Yuill.

We walked for about three miles, our usual distance, alongside the river Little Ouse, and saw marsh orchids, ragged robin, marsh lousewort, and

numerous reeds and grasses. Flying above us was a little egret and we saw a pair of reed warblers and heard our first cuckoo of the season. Parking by the Thelnetham Windmill and amongst the sheep, it really was a great way to spend a morning on the Suffolk, Norfolk border.

Barry Wells

"The U3A Story"

by Francis Beckett

FIRST published in November 2009, this revised and up-dated edition (May 2014) is a 52 page small glossy paperback booklet with numerous photos, written by author & journalist Francis Beckett, who had been part-time editor of U3A's national magazine during the mid 1990s. It gives a chronological and interesting account of all aspects of U3A's foundation and management from 1981 until now.

As we understand it today, the U3A started in July 1981 when a short item was aired on the BBC's Radio 4 programme "You and Yours", featuring an interview with Eric Midwinter, director of The Centre for Policy on Ageing, which brought an avalanche of 400 letters to him. This was probably the first most people outside academia had heard of the U3A, and it was suddenly obvious that this was "an idea whose time had come".

The booklet goes on to explain the four main reasons for this, how things developed using (but differing from) the French model, charting some fascinating details of the ups and downs along the way, and concluding with its "expansion in a time of austerity" to the present-day, with 322 U3As in the UK and over 926,000 members, and counting.

As a fairly new U3A member, I found this booklet most interesting and enlightening and, for the princely sum of £1, would think it a recommended "good read" to both new and long standing members alike.

If any Blackbourne U3A member would like to buy a copy, please let me know and I can order some from the National Office, to be sold at future lecture meetings.

Stella Chamberlin, 01359 242601

Educational visit – Wednesday 7 May 2014

THE newly reformed Educational Visits Group visited London starting at the [Royal College of Surgeons' Hunterian Museum](#) at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

John Hunter, its founder, was born in 1728 in East Kilbride and 20 years later moved to London to join his elder brother William at his anatomy school in Covent Garden. Working there for twelve years he built up his extensive knowledge of anatomy and in 1761 enrolled as an army surgeon, serving in France and Portugal, developing new ideas on the treatment of gunshot wounds and venereal disease. He also collected much material which later became one of the largest museums of comparative anatomy and pathology in the world with eight galleries relating to human and animal anatomy and pathology.

Besides interesting collections of surgical instruments there is also a large collection of skeletal exhibits which clearly show the effects of disease on the human body, animal specimens, and not forgetting Winston Churchill's false teeth!



The afternoon was spent in [London's Transport Museum](#). We were transported back to the 1800's in the days of horse drawn transport and sedan chairs. We progressed to the steam engine era and the lives of those who dug the underground railway tunnels, including the fact that they did, at one time, run steam trains underground. The modern tube and overground rail systems are based on the hard work and inventions of the previous eras.

There is also a large collection of our beloved red buses which are a tourist attraction in the city and several of the old style Routemaster buses now seen taking visitors around the sights of

London. The range of buses now in use have similar features of the old design including the stairs to the upper deck at the rear. Our coach driver commented that ladies wearing short skirts should be very careful when climbing these stairs!

The highlight of our day, when, held in traffic by the police on the Embankment, we saw the Queen and Duke on their way to an event at Stationer's Hall in the city.

Many thanks to those who supported Maureen and I on our first Educational Visit.

Linda Wells- Joint Co-ordinator Educational Visits Group.



Thursday walkers amongst the bluebells during their walk around Stanton in May

Future Educational Visits

Monday 28 July

Kelvedon Hatch secret

Nuclear bunker

£16

Monday 29 September

Framlingham Castle

£18

In the afternoon, for an additional £10, there is an optional visit to Shawsgate Vineyard for a tour and wine tasting.

For reservations contact
Linda Wells 01359 259112

Blackbourne U3A Photo Group

WE are currently enjoying our Summer with monthly group visits to local "Tourist Hotspots". These were chosen to give us opportunities to increase our photographic experience or just plain enjoy ourselves!

Our first visit was to Ickworth House, where Jo Sweetman organised a wonderful day – including the weather. Jo supplied maps and a list of suitable photographic subjects around Ickworth House and Gardens which made a superb day for us all. We will certainly go again!

Our second visit was to Lackford Lakes on the 20 May; this again was led by Jo who organised another brilliant day. Jo set us some photographic challenges which included finding and photographing a resident bug. I was amazed at the standard of our photographers with their macro photographic skills producing some stunning images.(see our interest groups web page for these photographs)



On June 17 we went to the Suffolk owl sanctuary where we were entertained by the excellent Andy Hulme and his young colleague helping us to photograph raptors whilst giving us a brief talk on each bird.

On July 15 we will be going to Pakenham Mill, Barry Service (a Pakenham Mill volunteer) has kindly given up his day and organised this month's event for us. Barry is going to use his knowledge of the Mill to show us around pointing out good photographic opportunities. This should test us all in taking interior photographs, and the more experienced of us will be dusting down our HDR techniques.

Please have a look at our latest photographs on our interest group's web page.

Chris Brooks

Garden Visits Group

SINCE our last Newsletter we have visited the Hindringham Hall Gardens, near Fakenham – a delightful Hall surrounded by well stocked gardens, tended, single handedly by the owner. We all were amazed at the south facing vegetable and fruit garden, which in late April had strawberries ripening. It was a pity we could not look around the interior of the Hall but we were told appointments can be made to do so.



In May we went to Wickham Place Farm Garden and were impressed by a 252 foot long Wisteria "sinensis", one of the longest in England – unfortunately as it has been an early flowering year it was passed its best.

On 25 June we went to Kathy Brown's garden at The Manor House, Stevington, near Bedford and many of us

thought it was the best garden we have ever visited – not a bad accolade seeing that we have had ten garden visits a year since 2006.

In July we are visiting Knebworth House near Stevenage.

Barbara Milner

The Magna Carta

Saturday 20 September
The Apex, Bury St Edmunds

EIGHT hundred years ago this autumn, a group of nobles met in the great Abbey in Bury St Edmunds to continue their campaign against King John's rule.

A plaque on the Abbey ruins confirms this event as does the town's motto 'Sacrarium Regis, Canubula Legis' – Shrine of a King, Cradle of the Law. But is there any firm evidence that this event ever took place?



For the past four years, some senior academics have been examining the evidence for this alleged event and also re-interpreting the importance of Magna Carta. The five university professors involved in this research, together with Dame Fiona Reynolds, will be speaking about their findings at the Apex on Saturday 20th September. Presented and organised by Bury St Edmunds' U3A, this will be one of the most prestigious events held in the town.

Priced at £15 for the whole day of six speakers, tickets are now available from the Box Office at the Apex - Tel: 01284-758000, or E.mail: boxoffice@theapex.co.uk

This event is open to the general public, so tickets will no doubt be in great demand.

Watching Wildlife at Grove Farm – a milestone.

The June meeting of the Wildlife Watching Group marked a milestone in our Grove Farm project. We assembled in the village Hall at Norton for our annual get together with our three mentors for a review of progress followed by a field meeting to direct our monitoring for the rest of 2014. Juliet Hawkins, representing the Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) started with this summary:



In early 2012, SWT received a small bursary of £835 to train, equip and organise a monitoring project with the help of 20+ University of the Third Age volunteers on the 62 hectare Grove Farm nature reserve near Norton. The project aimed to contribute records of arable flora and the colonisation of 20 restored and newly created ponds, especially priority species. Two years on, over 900 plant records have been submitted, including pockets of remnant declining arable flora. Nearly 400 pond records have been collated, including 17 Nationally Notable and Local

aquatic invertebrates and other groups have been recorded too. U3A volunteers have found the project enjoyable and rewarding and opted to continue to monitor the reserve. In June 2014, the Freshwater Habitats Trust selected Grove Farm as a Flagship Pond Site.

The detailed briefings that followed noted success at harnessing the enthusiasm of U3A volunteers with specific aims:

1. To study how quickly rare arable flora returns to arable fields following a changes in management.
2. To study how quickly Biodiversity Action Plan species (great crested newt, toad, grass snake, tassel stonewort) and aquatic invertebrates colonise nine new, and several restored, ponds.
3. To increase local/interested naturalists' understanding of pond ecology, amphibian and aquatic invertebrates through training workshops.
4. To contribute records which help the understanding of colonisation of newly created ponds.
5. To establish whether it is possible to use non-specialist volunteers to help flag up sites of high conservation value which can then be studied further by specialists.

These lofty aims are all being met, and 2014 marks the third year of endeavour by the Grove Farm team, a U3A group extended by the participation of local naturalists. If we laid down our tools now, we could be proud of what we have achieved, but Nature's hand is still revealing new developments, and the project is so rewarding that the core members of the team plan to continue, albeit at a more relaxed pace. In the afternoon, our mentors took us around ponds and field margins to extend our knowledge of what to look for in future.

Anyone interested in joining the team (it is never too late!) should contact Wildlife Watching convener Rob Parker.
(robparker@waitrose.com)

Have YOU renewed your BU3A Membership Subscription yet?

If not, please contact Membership Secretary, Sue Cattermole, on 01359-272572, as soon as possible (should have been done by 30th June!), before she offers "your" place to the next person on our waiting list. If you intend to cancel your membership, please also advise Sue.

Thank you for all your contributions – keep them coming!
These can be e-mailed to publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk
Deadline for next issue is November 14 2014