



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

Issue 84

February 2015

From your Chairman

AS the AGM is drawing closer, I feel this is a good opportunity to recognise everyone who has done their bit to make this past year so successful. Firstly thanks to the convenors of the groups who enable so many members to pursue their various interests, outings and holidays. Secondly thanks to those who arrive at 8.30 on the first Monday of the month and transform the huge empty space into a meeting room for 250, with welcoming refreshments. Thirdly, thanks to our newsletter editors who do a grand job keeping us informed and Sue Prigg our webmistress for running our website most efficiently. Lastly thanks to the committee who have worked hard and well together, making our meetings so enjoyable and productive.

Having served 3 years, a number of our committee have to stand down in March and we must have replacements if our group is to continue. I have served 3 years on the committee and feel it is time for someone to step into the role of chairman; hopefully with a vice-chair to share the duties. Playing an active role in BU3A is a worthwhile, sociable and rewarding experience, with just 6 meetings a year and I do urge those of you who haven't already played your part to offer your assistance.

It just remains for me to wish you a happy and healthy 2015 with fingers crossed that we continue to escape any extreme winter conditions - so far so good.....

Karen Murdoch

Monthly Meetings

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

Monday 2 March

AGM

Followed by *Tales from
the Bench*

Graham Higgins

Monday 13 April

Church Curiosities

Chloe Cockerill

Monday 11 May

*An English Woman's Life
in Rural Turkey*

Jenny Gibbs

Monday 1 June

*Round the World on a
Container Ship*

Peter Hesketh

New Scotland Yard, the Krays, IRA and other Terrorists

OUR November talk, both gruesome and hilarious, was from Britain's top forensic scientist, Brian Heard. His career, without the benefit of computerized technology, began in 1964 at New Scotland Yard. Alas, analysis of clothes so stiff with dirt they stood by themselves was not for the fainthearted. Brian progressed to the 'P' rooms - a joy for the olfactory senses. No modern finger pricks for drunks, just half pints of urine. There was a collective shudder when Brian mentioned that pipettes were manually sucked up (with occasional accidents).

Brian researched footprint striations using manufacturers' shoe samples, from which he acquired some handsome Churchill brogues. Struggling to insert his foot he found a mummified foot already in residence, presumably from an earlier investigation. Various dealings with the Krays involved searching for human teeth on pig farms and abseiling down Chiswick Bridge looking for cemented remains of gang member Ginger Marks. Test firing a steel crossbow bolt and later a 12-bore shotgun loaded with fireworks, destroyed the Commissioner's car not once, but twice. Specialising in gunshot residues, Brian attended a war veteran's suicide. Closely examining the unusual elliptical gunshot spray around the ear, he was shocked when the old man sat up complaining of a headache. Apparently the bullet hit the skull, circled under the scalp and exited by the other ear leaving a neat bald halo where the bullet had sliced through hair follicles. If a body is already buried, how do you dispose of an arm used in toxicology tests? Brian put it down the sink waste disposal. As the arm rotated waving farewell, a visiting government minister entered the laboratory and promptly fainted.

You need a strong stomach and gallows humour to survive in forensic science; luckily Brian seemed blessed with an abundance of both!

Carole Curtis

“THIRD AGE MATTERS” and “SOURCES” Magazine Subscriptions

Please note that, as only 8% of our members now subscribe to these national magazines, the committee has decided that we can no longer organise these subscriptions via our group. Therefore, February 2015's issue will be the last magazine received by current subscribers.

After that date, if they so wish, individual members can still receive the magazines by setting up their own subscription through the national website, www.u3a.org.uk.

Stella Chamberlin

Can you help with Railways research?

We have been asked by Dr. Geraint Coles of Ipswich's University Campus Suffolk (UCS) to assist in his research project entitled "*Back on Track: the Heritage of Railways in East Anglia*" which hopes to record and interpret the network of railways and their related infrastructure across the eastern counties.

We would be delighted to hear from you if you have any old cine film, videos, photos or memories of you or family members in, near, or on railways in East Anglia of any era. Many thanks.

Chris Williams, Railway
Enthusiasts Group Convenor
Tel: 01284 762637

(I can provide my e-mail address on request.)

2015 U3A Pocket Diaries

There are still a few diaries remaining at the bargain price of only £1 each.

Please see Angela Lee at lecture meetings (in rear bar area) or contact her on 07539 075346 to purchase a copy.

Artists in Paradise

Mt. Athos to Bhutan – Dzongs, Monasteries and Mosques

INSPIRED by Russian artist, Vasileios Gregorovic Borsky and cartographer Samuel Davis, our December speaker, artist and architect, Doug Patterson, gave a fascinating talk describing his travels to Greek and Bhutanese monasteries, comparing their present-day status with 18th century drawings of Borsky and Davis.

Mount Athos is not just a mountain but the entire peninsula of Halkidiki, Greece, a world heritage site consisting of 20 Christian Orthodox monasteries. The easiest access is by ferry which visits each fortress monastery – built to be safe from former centuries' marauding pirates. Women are forbidden to visit the peninsula, but conversely, monks are not allowed to leave. It must be hard – even in paradise – as monk's lives are dictated by Byzantine time; their day starting at sunset, which often means prayers at 3.00am. Monks are drawn from around the world, including a croupier from Las Vegas, known as Father John Wayne. Doug visited Mount Athos 12 times over 5 years and spent 6 months visiting all 20 monasteries. His portfolio consists of over 200 sketches, oils and watercolours.



In 2005-7 Doug visited another 20 monasteries in Bhutan, known as dzongs. His inspiration was Samuel Davis, artist and director of the East India Company who charted these dzongs in 1783. Doug also recorded the indigenous people, including a vibrant watercolour of orange-robed novice monks sitting around playing poker. Nothing if not intrepid, Doug set out for a remote dzong reached via a 5000 metre mountain pass with 4 ponies and a local cook as his guide. After struggling across rickety mountain bridges in deep snow they found the dzong was closed for the winter!

Doug's portfolios represent 'spots in time' showing the shifting fortunes of these holy places and forming a fitting 21st century tribute to both Valileios Barsky and Samuel Davis.

Sets of prints of Doug Patterson's paintings were sold at the meeting at a special price of £20.00 instead of the usual £22.00 but unfortunately he ran out of prints. Members can contact him directly by e-mail to make arrangements to buy sets.

His e-mail is dougpattersonartist@googlemail.com and his web site is www.dougpattersonartist.com.

Carole Curtis

Remembrance & The Great War A Very British View

OUR January lecture was by military historian, Taff Gillingham, an expert on British Military History 1899-1960 and owner of reconstructions of WW1 trenches near Ipswich. Taff felt that the World War 1 centenary warranted a review of both perspective and context dispelling many myths and inaccuracies.

Taff stated that the French and Belgians were closer to the Germans through marriages and business dealings and they disliked the British. Taff also rubbished present-day thoughts that the British Army was seen as "lions led by donkeys". On the day war was declared army reservists were mobilised, kitted out and within a short time six divisions of the expeditionary force were in France – all volunteers. They were battle-ready and their equipment demonstrated this. Neither French red jackets nor spiked German helmets for the British, but a uniform that reflected the complexities of a modern battlefield. Jim Cotton gallantly allowed Taff to kit him out in a tin helmet, khaki serge coat, and state-of-the-art webbing holding rations, water flasks, mill bombs, spades, spare ammunition, a gas mask plus 2 bandoliers – total weight 80 lbs. Remember, the kit was worn by fit young men and never taken off whilst in the trenches. The men at the Front were usually on a nine day rotation which helped maintain a high morale. For men often from impoverished rural backgrounds the war was a source of adventure, good food, adequate clothing and foreign travel.

And why were generals garrisoned in chateaux 20 miles behind the lines? Not cowardice but common sense. Taff explained that if your nose is against a brick wall you see only the bricks ahead but stand back and the whole wall is visible. So by being behind the lines the generals were able to see the whole battlefield and plan accordingly.

Taff concluded with the view that the last 100 days of WW1 were among the most successful in British military history.

Carole Curtis

Watching Birds

THE Watching Birds group's first visit of the year was to Lynford Arboretum, near Mundford. A damp start necessitated a coffee stop and an early lunch during which the skies cleared and our wait was rewarded with fine views of several species, although we failed to spot the hawfinch that was about. Tony Sear's photo shows a robin, blue tit and marsh tit sharing the spoils.



Changes to 2014-2015 BU3A Programme

Please note the following changes to our printed programme

Monthly Lectures

The speaker for 1 June 2015 is Peter Hesketh

Committee

Christine Glover is no longer Assistant Lecture Secretary, as she has moved from the area.

Interest Groups

CRAFTY QUILTERS
this group has now closed.

MAH JONG
Convenor now Sara Wright,
01359 271989.

SOCIAL HISTORY
Convenor now Laurie Marshall,
01284 828433

THEATRE VISITS
Convenor now Philip Webber,
01359 270499

THEN and NOW
Convenor now Doug Cox,
01359 240186

FRIDAY WALKS
Convenor now Maureen Worsley,
01284 747210

Quiz Group

If the recent Festive Season has left your mind a little dull and numbed, why not join our friendly Quiz Group for some fun sharpening-up and maybe even a "light-bulb" moment or two?!

Answers to recent questions were "Sex on the Beach" – Food & Drink Round, name of a cocktail (since you ask); and "Money" – Family Fortunes Round, what a husband would most likely borrow from his wife (not, Gill Heath, "tights for his cycling"!).

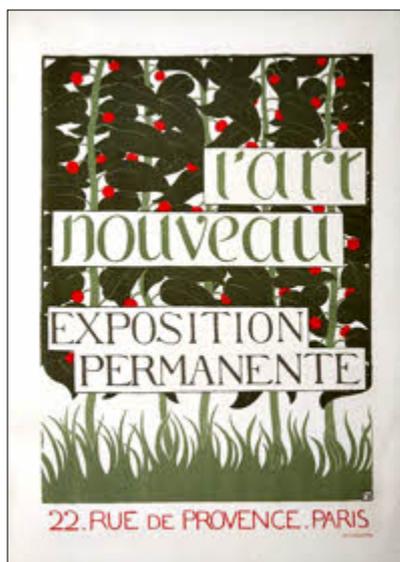
Join us for some jolly quizzing on the **first Wednesday** of each month, **2pm at the New Green Centre** – next few are February, 4, March 4, April 1 (should be interesting!), and May 6 – see you then.

Quizmaster – Jim McMillan,
01359 245219

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Sense and Sensuality

THE educational visit on 19 November was to the Art Nouveau exhibition at The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts on the campus of the University of East Anglia in Norwich.



The Art Nouveau period (1890-1914), known as the *fin de siècle*, has often been depicted as representing the end of many things but also an age of beginnings. It was a turbulent and rapidly changing period in which values of the past clashed with ideas about the future. It was in this atmosphere that Art Nouveau was born, with Paris its capital.

With 70 works on display, mostly from the collection of Victor and Gretha Arwas, the exhibition featured a wide range of objects from sculpture, graphics and books, to ceramics, glass and furniture. The items in the collection had been well selected and displayed in cabinets, mostly at eye level with text below, so that one was drawn to the object first. There was also a case from the Anderson Collection dedicated to glassware of the period with vases from Germany, Austria, France and one from the USA.

The exhibition reflected the sensuality of Art Nouveau which is at times risqué and some of the art work had quite dark subjects, such as the Morphine Addict and The Death lithographs. Two of the sculptures, Butterfly Woman and Ariadne's Thread, both French bronzes, were quite revealing but in keeping with the Art Nouveau style. Included was the well known bronze by Edward Degas of the Little Dancer Aged Fourteen. There were beautiful brooches, hair ornaments and a buckle in gold, semi precious stones, enamel and opal with Rene Lalique pieces including buckle and hair ornaments.

The exhibition illustrated how Art Nouveau was a radical development in both art and design demonstrating the changing attitudes to life at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Our Educational visit on Wednesday 18 March is to the Wisbech and Fenland Museum and Peckover House, Wisbech, the birthplace of Octavia Hill.

Linda Wells

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10am, Monday 2 March 2015

Those members with e-mail should have received the agenda for the AGM, nomination form, and previous minutes with Bulletin 53; these are also shown on our [website](#). For members without e-mail, you should find those documents with your copy of this newsletter. However, if you have not received these documents, please advise the Secretary, Stella Chamberlin - 01359 242601 or e-mail her at secretary@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk

OPEN MEETING

11.30am, Monday 2 February

Please join us for a short **Open Meeting** on **Monday 2 February**, immediately after the lecture, when we can discuss with you how you can help. It is possible for members to share tasks so that it is not too onerous on any one individual. We particularly want to encourage recent members to get involved.

Whilst it is appreciated that your spare time is a precious resource, by helping to run our thriving U3A, you can do your bit to change perceptions, encourage new thinking, as well as bring new ideas and approaches to how things happen at Blackbourne U3A. Volunteering is fundamentally at the heart of everything to do with the U3A movement, but as people live longer, healthier lives it is clearly understood that they have all sorts of claims on their time, even after formal retirement. However, if your recent retirement has left you "at a loose end" or you have enjoyed participating in any aspect of the U3A experience, please consider seriously whether **YOU** could help **YOUR** U3A go from strength to strength.

We look forward to seeing you on Monday 2 February. If you are unable to attend but feel you would like to help please contact me by phone or e-mail.

Stella Chamberlin, General Secretary

Garden visits group

Roger Harvey (of Harvey's Garden Plants) is coming to talk to the group about preparing for and exhibiting at horticultural shows.

This is on Wednesday 25 Feb at 2pm in the main hall at New Green

The cost is £3.00 to include refreshments

If you intend coming please contact Barbara Milner on 01284 761508 or barbara.milner@btopenworld.com.