



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

Issue 85

May 2015

From your Chairman

WELL, who'd have thought it – Anne Ling, Chairman of the Blackbourne U3A! I am very new to U3A, this only being my third year of membership. Last year I was invited onto the committee and ended up as vice-chairman. I said at the time "I won't be chairman though". I kept saying this until Stella said, "Well, if we get you a really good vice-chairman to support you, will you do it?" So here I am, with Howard Chandler as my vice-chairman.

I would like to thank those members of the committee who have stepped down, having done their bit and to welcome our new committee members. Goodbye to Karen Murdoch, our chairman, Stella Chamberlin, General Secretary, Sue Cattermole, Membership and Trevor Jones, Names Registrar, and welcome to Howard, vice-chairman, Maxine Wilde, our new secretary, Ann Baker who is our new Groups Co-ordinator, Chris Ives, Names Registrar and Elaine James. Thankfully some of the 'old' committee are still with us – John Marshall, our Treasurer, Carol Drury now Membership Secretary, Adrian Bond remains as Lecture Secretary and Angela Lee as Assistant to the Interest Groups Co-ordinator.

My background is in science. I trained as a science laboratory technician at the London Hospital Medical College (now the Royal London), then came marriage and children. Once the children were at school I returned to part-time work, firstly office work and then getting back into science as a school technician, mainly covering science and ICT, until retirement five years ago. Not what I would have thought was chairman material at all and totally unaccustomed to public speaking.

I hope that I and my committee will serve you well in the coming year.

With best wishes to you all,

Anne Ling

AGM

221 members were present at the AGM and apologies were received from a further eight.

The outgoing chairman, Karen Murdoch, stated our membership was now 575 and there was still a waiting list. She thanked everyone involved in the running of our successful group – the committee, interest group convenors, and everyone involved in organising the monthly lecture meetings.

John Marshall presented the accounts which showed a surplus for the year of £228 and total funds of £7226. His report was duly accepted and Ralph Brighton was re-elected as Examiner.

Four committee members (Karen Murdoch, Stella Chamberlin, Sue Cattermole and Trevor Jones) are stepping down having completed their three years of service.

Anne Ling was elected as chairman, John Marshall as treasurer and Maxine Wild as general secretary. The remaining positions were decided at the subsequent committee meeting and appear alongside this report.

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

Chairman

Anne Ling 01359 231881

Vice chairman

Howard Chandler 01359 230404

General Secretary

Maxine Wilde 01359 230842

Treasurer

John Marshall 01359 230470

Lecture Secretary

Adrian Bond 07815 918556

Membership Secretary

Carol Drury 07508 601976

Names Registrar and Newsletter Distribution

Chris Ives 01359 231746

Interest Groups' Co-ordinators

Inger Petersen Smith 01359 230265

Ann Baker 01359 232161

Assistant Interest Groups' Co-ordinator

Angela Lee 07539 075346

Committee Member

Elaine James

Monthly Meetings

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

Monday 1 June

***Round the World on a
Container Ship***

Peter Hesketh

Monday 6 July

East Anglian Bats

John Pardon

**There is no meeting in
August**

Monday 7 September

***Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of
Claire (1295-1360): Life in a
Noble Household in the 14th
Century***

Jennifer Ward

Membership Renewal

Members paying by Standing Order need to be aware that the annual subscription of £10 per person will be taken from their account on the 1st June 2015.

If, for any reason, you do not wish to renew your membership please cancel your standing order and advise me so that your place may be offered to someone on the waiting list.

For those members who pay by cash or cheque there will be ***no further reminders***, but John Marshall our treasurer and myself will be at the lecture meetings in May and June, to collect renewal payments.

Carol Drury

Two Suffolk Teachers' Ascent of Everest, 2009



IT'S great to have goals in life, but maybe climbing Mount Everest at 8,848m (29,029 ft) is a little extreme. Not though for our February speaker Amanda Richmond who, with her partner Neil, trained for and conquered Mount Everest. They honed their skills by specialising in climbing

gullies, challenging ever higher mountains in Scotland, Mongolia and Bolivia, a vital preparation for the short Everest climbing season.

At a cost of \$35,000 plus equipment their 13 strong group trekked to base camp at 5,364m, passing Buddhist minarets to dead climbers and prayer flags for their safekeeping. Once acclimatized to the thinning air, they trekked, loaded with heavy packs and cumbersome suits, from base camp, climbing up the dangerous Khumbu Icefall using flimsy aluminium ladders to cross bottomless crevasses. The sun was their enemy, melting and moving blocks of ice the size of buses. The group 'yo-yoed' climbing ever higher and then retreating to base camp in order to strengthen and condition their bodies. All necessities were carried on their backs – Amanda's was a barrelful of chocolate bars. Between them and the summit lay over 200 dead climbers.

Finally, they reached the Hilary Steps which signalled the last push to the summit. When Amanda asked their route from the Steps she was told 'just turn left and straight on'. With her Sherpa and in a daze

from oxygen deprivation she plodded in the dark to the summit and for 20 whole minutes witnessed the dawn with the shadow of Mount Everest reflected off the clouds. Thirteen set out but only six completed the climb.

To follow her dream, Amanda risked giant snow plumes, electrical storms, altitude sickness and frostbite, but she only had to turn left to stand on top of the world.



Carole Curtis

Tales from the Bench

OUR March talk was by Magistrate, Graham Higgins, who gave us an insight into both the history of the Magistrates' Court and a peep at the court's present-day workings. He began with William the Conqueror, who first introduced the crime of 'murdrum' as a punishment for killing a Norman – although Anglo-Saxons were fair game!

Over time the development of the Magistrates' Court became more complicated reacting to various events, such as the 1340 plague which wiped out one third of the population. Murder victims, therefore, might wait up to three years for circuit judges to arrive in East Anglia, so the task was delegated to 'crowners' who became modern day 'coroners'. In the 1600s witchcraft trials were popular. The accused might be guilty if, on retrieving a stone from boiling water, his hand blistered. The alternative to hanging would be transportation to the USA. Even now we see an echo of those times, Americans swear with their left hand which used to have a cross on it denoting they had applied for the 'Right of Clergy' as a protection from prosecution. It was surprising to hear that the last whipping occurred as recently as 1962.

Graham invited us to suggest a sentencing policy if we had before us a girl who shoplifted from department stores to fund her drug habit. Hanging was ruled out; but the majority decided on community service. The magistrate actually gave a conditional discharge. His reasoning was that a large store could absorb the losses but a sole trader might be forced to close because of shoplifting debts. A magistrate is bound by the 'Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines' but with a little flexibility. Graham must have been doing something right as he is often greeted with equanimity in Bury by former clients.

Carole Curtis

Church Curiosities

THE May talk was given by the historical lecturer, Chloë Cockerill MBE, MA, who has a lifetime passion for churches and worked for the Churches Conservation Trust.

She started by telling us that there are 16,000 parish churches in the country, the period after the invasion of 1066 by the Normans being the busiest church building time in the country. We were then taken on a church tour of Suffolk and Norfolk which have the highest number (478 are in Suffolk) and occasionally strayed over the borders to Essex and Cambridgeshire.

We gained an insight into these fascinating buildings with their special regional characteristics from the early round towers, built because there was no local stone to hew into the big blocks needed for a square tower, often with thatched roofs and flintwork, to the splendours of Ely Cathedral. Details of their fine roofs, stained glass, screens and wall paintings were explained. Depictions of the important local saints such as Edmund and Etheldreda and the significance of the weird array of animals from cockatrices to sciapods – a desert creature with enormous feet which it used as a sunshade – was given.

Our attention was drawn to the fact that our cathedrals and parish churches are storehouses of curious objects and furnishings. Grotesque faces grin down at us from gargoyles, heraldic beasts prance on the monuments, mermen and wild men appear on fonts. Unusual sexton's wheels and dials indicate the times of mass while wall paintings warn against blasphemy and stained glass illustrates strange stories of the saints.

All in all we learnt that the churches of our region hold a tremendous amount of history as well as myths and beliefs of bygone ages and the culture of the times.

Angela Coster

Theatre Visits Group

IN April a full coach of our group went to the Theatre Royal, Norwich to see the West End production of 'Top Hat'. With a cast of 29, plus 11 musicians and a score written by Irving Berlin, it included many well known songs and was an excellent performance.

Our next visits to see 'Miss Saigon' in London and 'How The Other Half Loves' in Southwold are sold out, but one ticket has become available for our trip to Stratford-on-Avon on 13 August to see 'The Merchant of Venice' at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (cost £56.00). If any member is interested in taking this place, please let me know.

We are also arranging to see J. B. Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' at Cambridge Arts Theatre on Wednesday 7 October (cost £36.00) and Northern Ballet's performance of Tchaikovsky's 'Nutcracker' at the Theatre Royal, Norwich on Thursday 26 November (cost £40.75) after which we have been invited to stay for a 20/30 minute talk with the production team discussing various aspects of the performance.

There are still some tickets available for these two matinees, so if any members are interested, please contact me on 01359 270499

Philip Webber



Garden Visits

THE group started the year in January with a get-together at New Green and enjoyed meeting to hear about the programme of visits planned for the year and ending up with a cup of tea and cake.

In February Roger Harvey of Harvey Plants in Thurston talked to us about the enormous amount of preparation needed when attending National Garden shows and in particular Chelsea where he has won many medals for his display of woodland plants.

Our first visit for 2015, on 25 March, to Blickling Hall was well attended and enjoyed by all. It was a beautiful day – the weather was kind, a perfect day. The gardens were full of Spring flowers, including primroses, daffodils, hellebores and many more. Some members joined a tour of the gardens and many enjoyed the short play enactment about part of the history of the house.



By the time you are reading this newsletter we will have been to Barnards' Farm Gardens in West Hornden, Essex and seen their National Collection of malus trees and their fantastic sculptures, about 70 of them, including works by Anthony Gormley and Elizabeth Frink.

Barbara Milner

New Quilting Group

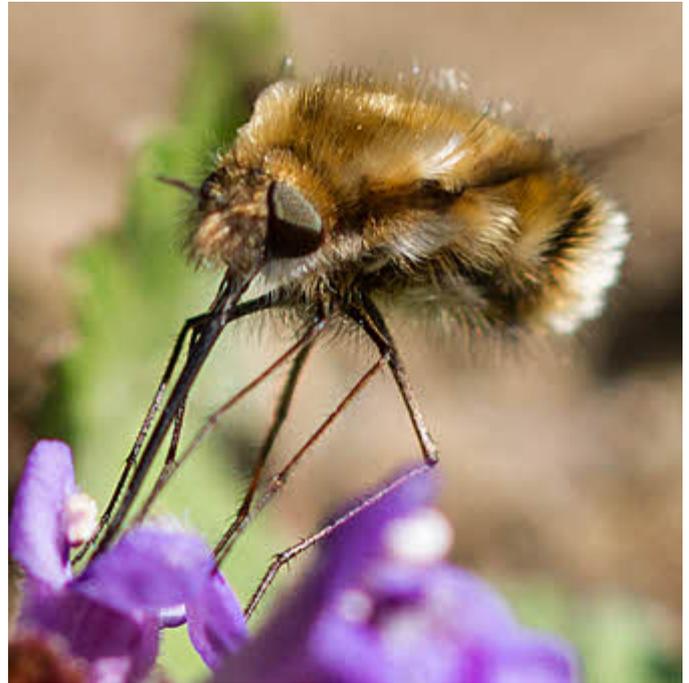
The current group is full but there are several members who would like to form another one.

Anyone who would be interested in joining a second group please contact the Interest Groups' Co-ordinators and hopefully, if we can get enough members, a further Quilting Group can be established.

Photography

FOR their first outing of the year the Photo group visited SWT's Lackford lakes. The weather was perfect and we were welcomed with the call of the cuckoo.

Jo and Chris gave practical advice to those interested in macro photography (close ups)– a fine example of which is Jo's picture of a bumble bee.



The group then proceeded to the wooded area where much time was spent focusing on the tits, blackcap and nuthatch tempted down by carefully scattered food.

On outings like this everyone, from beginners to advanced, benefits from the exchange of advice and tips. Indeed, one member remarked that she had learnt that you have to press the shutter button fully to take a photo!

At a later meeting members' efforts will be viewed and critically appraised and their pictures will be on the group's [website](#).

Bryann Ward

Painting Group

This mixed media group has vacancies and would welcome new participants. Beginners or experienced members welcome. Please contact Jennifer Hurren 01284 728237 for further details.

Produced by Bryann Ward
Printed by Profile Business Supplies, Bury St Edmunds
Contributions please to:
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Copy deadline for September issue is 23 August