



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust
Registered Charity No. 1165448

Newsletter

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From your Chairman

WELCOME to our September newsletter. To those of you who have renewed your membership, and also our new members, I would like to extend a warm welcome. You should all have received the new programme with your membership badge and I hope there will be something there that you think “that sounds really good”. Having said that, sometimes the talks are surprising and not at all what you expect; it has been very seldom that I have not enjoyed a lecture. Then there are the Interest Groups, run by convenors, ordinary members like yourself, who have taken the ethos of the U3A movement to heart, “By the members for the members” – we are so grateful to them. They are one of the strengths of Blackbourne U3A, although we are a victim of our own success as many of the groups are full! However, if you cannot get into a group, perhaps there are others like you and you could have the makings of a new group. Any ideas, or just to express an interest, speak to Stella or Mary and they can talk things over with you. If you’re not sure what you might be interested in then we have the Interest Groups’ Exhibition in October for which tickets are on sale at the September and October lecture meetings. It is a very sociable event with tea and scones (we’ll try not to put jam on the cheese ones this year).

At the AGM in March at least five of the committee will be stepping down, so we will definitely need some more trustees, as they are called now we are a charity. If you are interested, you are welcome to come along to a committee meeting and see what goes on – any committee member will be happy to talk to you about it.

I look forward to seeing you at some of our gatherings.

With best wishes to you all,

Anne Ling

Traversa – A Solo Walk across Africa

EUREKA! Our May speaker, Fran Sandham, demonstrated a sure-fire slimming aid, guaranteed to lose at least four stone. Just walk 3,500 miles across Africa with 70-100lb on your back and a touch of malaria – can’t fail, and only takes a year.

Fran, a former Rough Guide editor, challenged himself to this journey – no backup, no support team or sponsorship – following in the steps of the great explorers. His trek began on Namibia’s skeleton coast, one of the driest places on earth, carrying only limited water, his backpack and a hangover. 40km equalled 1cm on his Michelin map and staggering under his weighty backpack, he soon felt the burden was too much and that he must abandon his quest. A solution might be a donkey – the donkey refused to budge. Plan 2 was mule and cart – the mule was psychotic. So after a 3-month delay, skirting war-torn Angola, he trekked on to Zambia shedding unnecessary items and heeding warnings about bandits, snakes and lions – but found drunken drivers much more dangerous. He nearly trod on an idling puff adder and was aware of jackals’ penchant for a sleeping person’s ears and hands. Zambian game park rangers advised him to stick his elbow into any attacking lion’s jaws, whilst using the other hand to slit its throat – but first find a knife. Fran refused lifts, and he and his blisters met wonderful kindly people. Nothing could prepare Fran for the wonders of Victoria Falls or seeing Lake Malawi, David Livingstone’s ‘Lake of Stars’.

He reached his final destination, Zanzibar, starving hungry, thirsty, coming down with malaria without even the strength to reach the ocean; but what an achievement, the ultimate escapism. His accompanying book *Traversa* is a real ‘Boy’s Own’ adventure.

Carole Curtis

Monthly Meetings

Start promptly at 10.00am
Coffee served until 9.45am

Monday 3 October

Gardening Then and Now

Rodney Tibbs

Monday 17 October

10.30am to noon

Interest Groups’ Exhibition

Entry by ticket only

Monday 7 November

Königgrätz 1866, bigger and more significant than Waterloo

John Drewienkiewicz

Monday 5 December

Napolean Bonaparte. the first European

David Dougan

Lady Liberty



WE all know about Monsieur Eiffel and his tower, even designing the Statue of Liberty – but did he?

Dr. Geoffrey Kay's talk debunked some of the myths surrounding Lady Liberty and introduced us to a self-publicizing, ambitious, artist and architect from Alsace, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi.

His works were monumental and spectacularly demonstrated in his sculpture 'The Lion of Belfort'.

Bartholdi offered to build a gigantic statue – based on the Colossus

of Rhodes – for Ferdinand de Lesseps to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869; the offer was refused. Around 1865 Bartholdi joined Edouard de

Laboulaye and Gustave Eiffel in designing a gift for the United States to celebrate Union success in the American Civil War – namely a statue of 'Liberty Enlightening the World'. A public-funded enterprise, Bartholdi travelled tirelessly in France and the USA, meeting Ulysses Grant and Brigham Young in his fundraising journeys. Lady Liberty was made of thinly beaten copper over an iron frame and assembled piecemeal in France. Bartholdi paraded the head down Wall Street to the first ever tickertape welcome – hopefully a few wallets were also flung. It is amazing that gifts from the public – sometimes only a few dollars or francs – built this great statue and its monumental plinth; the highest structure in New York at that time.

Lady Liberty walking out of her shackles with the Declaration of Independence in her left hand, the torch held high in her right hand with Emma Lazarus's words 'Give me your tired, your poor...'; formed an emotive republican bond between France and the USA. Loved by Hollywood disaster moviemakers, recognized worldwide, her body extensively repaired, her rusting iron interior replaced by steel, Lady Liberty still remains an icon even though her message may not echo in Donald Trump's ears.

Carole Curtis

Portable Antiquities Scheme

THE Portable Antiquities Scheme encourages the voluntary recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public. Our July speaker, Dr. Helen Geake, demonstrated some of the anomalies found in the world of archaeological discovery.

Each year thousands of objects are uncovered by people out walking, gardening and especially by metal-detector users. Mostly, they are not treasure trove as covered by the Treasure Act 1996, but of immense scientific interest when piecing together our past. If reported, the objects are photographed, catalogued and then returned to the finder. A lead seal matrix C12-1300 from Elmswell impressed with the words Matilda, daughter of John; indicated that mediaeval women were not necessarily subservient to their husbands. In fact, of 484 seal matrixes found, one fifth were impressed with women's names. A Roman copper-alloy lantern found in Glemsford had no treasure trove value, but the only other example was in Pompeii. A plough uncovered a whole row of jewellery and buckles from an unknown mediaeval burial ground indicating that though bones melt away, the ladies' bling survived. As Donald Rumsfeld said 'there are things we know

we don't know and also unknown unknowns.' The copper-alloy Crosby-Garrett Roman ceremonial helmet, however beautiful, could tell us nothing of its past. The finder did not disclose where it was found, sold it privately at auction and, therefore, one can only speculate about its place in British history.

There is no cut-off date for research. New areas of interest may include the spread of lead Koshers food seals, workhouse buttons or even Victorian children's toys. As our East Anglian coasts crumble many artefacts are being revealed but if you find a whistle in the sand dunes do not blow it as M.R. James' hero did, but report it to www.finds.org.uk.

Carole Curtis



The Glemsford lantern – before and after restoration

Leeds Castle, Kent



A bright sunny day set the scene for our trip into the Kentish countryside to Leeds Castle which gets its name from the ancient Saxon manor of Esledes recorded on the site in the Domesday Book of 1086. Following the Norman Conquest of 1066 many manors in

Kent were fortified to remind the local population, and any future invaders, of the strength of the nobility.

Construction of the first stone castle began in 1119 by Robert de Crevecoeur, a descendent of one of William II's knights. It was not built primarily for defence although it was twice besieged when its residents offended the King in 1139 and 1321, but apart from that it saw little military action. The area surrounding the castle was carefully designed including raised viewing points so that the building could be seen at its best. Its location between Dover and London with its good hunting lands made it very popular.

Queen Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I, bought the castle in 1278 and the basic shape we see today emerged. The Barbican, a fortified tower, was designed to be the main entrance to the castle and a key defence to protect the water supply to the moat and watermill. It had three entrances each with its own drawbridge, gateway and portcullis.

The castle was built on two islands in the middle of a man-made moat which was created by Edward I in the 13th century by diverting the river Len. The estate was largely self sufficient and food was supplied for the castle's tenants and the royal court when they stayed there. Grapes and hops, for wine and beer, were also grown and the vineyard is noted in the Domesday Book – wine is still produced from the grapes grown on the estate.

The castle remained in Royal hands, owned by six medieval Queens until Tudor times. Henry VIII used it as a residence for his first wife Catherine of Aragon. After this period it was owned by successive related families, the Culpepers in the 17th century, the Fairfaxes in the 18th and the Wykeham Martins in the 19th. In 1926 it was bought by an Anglo-American heiress who later became Lady Baillie. She undertook extensive renovations and used the castle as her country house, entertaining the rich and famous for nearly fifty years. In 1974 she left the castle to the Leeds Castle Foundation which is now responsible for its preservation.

We were able to visit a number of rooms in the castle, including the dining room, banqueting hall and library. The castle has been used for several film locations; *Kind Hearts & Coronets*, *The Moonraker* and *Waltz of the Toreadors*. Small screen productions featuring the grounds and castle include a *Doctor Who* serial and Cliff Richard filmed a live concert in 1978 with the castle as a backdrop.

The grounds and gardens cover some 500 acres with the Lady Baillie Mediterranean and English Culpeper gardens as well as woodland walks. A falconry display and a collection of dog collars, some quite fearsome looking, could also be seen.

The maze and grotto were interesting and although we did not lose anyone some of us needed help in getting to the grotto through the maze, where we found mythical beasts thankfully created from shells, minerals and wood!

Linda Wells

THEATRE VISITS GROUP

ON 18 May we went to London to see *Les Miserables* at the Queen's Theatre. The date was also the day of the official Opening of Parliament and this caused traffic chaos – the coach took an hour to drive the last ¾ mile, arriving just in time for lunch before the performance. It was a wonderful show and the music was outstanding.

In August we enjoyed several hours of sunshine in Southwold before seeing an early evening performance in St Edmunds Hall of Patrick Barlow's rib tickling version of John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.

Our last two trips for 2016 will be to Norwich Theatre Royal in October to see *Pride & Prejudice* and then to Cambridge Arts Theatre in November to see Alan Ayckbourn's *Relatively Speaking*.

In March 2017 it is back to Theatre Royal, Norwich for *Mama Mia*.

Philip Webber



NOW AVAILABLE

U3A 2017 DIARY

£2.00

U3A LANYARD AND BADGE HOLDER

£2.00

email: secretary@blackbourne-

u3a.org.uk

to order a diary

Lanyards and badge holders will be on sale at monthly meetings

Educational Visit July 25



Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to work we go!

OUR day started at Suffolk's [energy-from-waste](#) facility in Great Blakenham. Constructed between January 2012 and December 2014 at a cost of £180 million, it was completed on time and on budget and has an outstanding rating for its environmental features.

Each week the facility processes an average of 5,000 tonnes of Suffolk's domestic black bin waste and other non-recyclable items and employs 47 staff. Suffolk C.C. pays SITA UK to run the site but at the end of the 25 year contract the facility will be owned by the council. During this period it is estimated £350m will be saved, compared to sending waste to landfill.

After an introduction we were split into two groups for a tour of the educational facilities (used mainly for school groups) but still very interesting to us senior students, and a site tour for which we had to don the obligatory safety equipment – hard hats, ear plugs, hi vis jackets, eye

protectors and gloves.

Waste collection vehicles tip their waste into a bunker where it is mixed to ensure an even burn. It is then loaded by grab crane into a hopper and fed into the furnace. Inside the furnace a series of moving grate bars take the waste through the furnace where it is dried and burned at temperatures of around 1,000°C.

The hot flue gas heats water in a boiler which is then turned into steam to drive a turbine generating enough electricity for 30,000 homes. The residual ash is processed on site; the metals are extracted for recycling and the remaining ash is used in construction materials. The flue gas is thoroughly cleaned chemically and then passes through lines of bag filters to catch any remaining particles before it is released through the chimney. The emissions are continuously monitored and regulated by the Environment Agency.



After lunch we visited Whitegate Farm, Creeting St Mary, home of Suffolk Farmhouse Cheeses.

Jason Salisbury, who studied dairy farming at College, and his wife Kate, a vet, established the business in 2004. After extensive renovation of the farm buildings and construction of a new cow shed, milking parlour and cheese dairy, they opened the dairy unit in June 2009.

They have a small herd of 40 Guernsey cows, each one known by name and with their individual personalities. Milking takes place twice daily and the milk produced is luxuriously creamy which is ideal for

making cheese. We were shown the milking parlour and followed the procedure from milking to the cheese making process.

We were able to taste the cheese which has a lovely golden colour and a creamy rich flavour. They produce three types of cheese, Suffolk Gold a creamy semi-hard farmhouse cheese, Suffolk Blue and Suffolk Brie which are available from their own shop and also at farmers' markets, farm shops and specialist delicatessens.

Linda Wells

Interest Groups' Exhibition

This popular event is on Monday 17 October starting at 10.30am

This is an opportunity for members, especially new members, to see what is on offer and speak to group convenors.

Entry is by ticket only

These cost £3 to include refreshments and can be obtained at the monthly lecture meetings or from Stella Chamberlin 01359 242601.

New Convenors wanted

The following group convenors will be retiring in December.

Trav2.

Bob Mountford 01359 235183

Friday Short Walks

Barry Wells 01359 221703

Railway Enthusiasts

Chris Williams 01284 762637

Please consider if you can help in any way so that the groups may continue and contact the appropriate convenor or the Interest Group Coordinators, or speak to them at the Interest Groups' exhibition.

MANY THANKS....

...to **Photography's** Chris Brooks and **Art Exploration's** Sandra Mack and Carole Curtis for running their respective groups so successfully for several years. Unfortunately, these two groups have had to close recently in their present format as no other members were willing to take them forward. However, if YOU would like to re-start either of these groups, please contact Interest Groups Coordinators Stella Chamberlin or Mary Dunbavin.

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