



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust
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Newsletter

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May 2018

From your Chairman

FOR those of you who did not attend the AGM I am pleased to tell you that Blackbourne U3A will continue. We were able to form a committee thanks to a number of members being prepared to offer their services as they were not wanting this wonderful U3A to cease.

It would be very remiss of me not to thank the outgoing committee members, many of whom have served this U3A in various capacities over many years and so a very big thank you to all of them.

We have had a varied series of lectures so far this year and long may they continue.

Many of you will have heard in recent months about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and like all organisations that hold personal data we will have to comply with this regulation. With guidance from The Third Age Trust your committee will be considering which of various sample policies to adopt. This comes into effect on the 25 May and we will therefore be sending out more information before that date.

For those of you who would like to read the [Trust's national newsletter](#) it is very easy to sign up to read it on line. The question has been raised about having hard copies of it and this will be discussed at the next committee meeting provided the GDPR does not take up too much time.

Derrick Haley

To the Hammer Born

OUR February speaker, Stephen Poulter, initially ran independent bookshops for ten years at a very difficult time for the industry, with many bookshops closing as a result of the challenges. Accordingly, in a change of direction he commenced buying and selling second hand books that he purchased at auctions, selling some online and retaining the others in his bookshop. Following his relocation to Norfolk he then established an auction business.

He explained that auctioneering originated in Ancient Greece, where young Babylonian damsels were auctioned off to be wives. In Ancient Rome men, women and children were auctioned off as slaves and auctions were also used for selling family estates and spoils of war.

The earliest auctions held in the UK, so called "candle auctions", occurred in the mid seventeenth century, in which the end of the auction was signalled by the expiration of a candle flame. The first auction house in the UK was founded by James Christie, and Christies became the leading auction house by the end of the nineteenth century. In that century auctioneering rapidly expanded to include cattle and houses for example.

By the 1990s technology had started to support auctions, notably with the emergence of eBay and Etsy. The use of the internet also meant that auction bidders were no longer necessarily present in the auction room.

As auctioneering became more sophisticated the business developed its own jargon (e.g. "Antique", "Retro", "Collectable") and auction categories broadened to include, for example, furniture, toys, clocks and militaria. A key element in auctioneering is the existence of collectors, who generate business in such specialist areas as Victoriana, Churchilliana and Philately. A significant caveat for those people inclined to dabble in auctions is to do extensive homework before bidding, in particular checking an item's condition and provenance.

In conclusion our presenter pointed out that "You spend the first part of your life acquiring things and the second half getting rid of them".

Howard Chandler

Your Committee

March 2018 – March 2019

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All Aspects of Bee Keeping

Speaker: Mike Shave



IN introducing his informative lecture on bee keeping our March speaker stressed that he was a “hobby” beekeeper as opposed to a “professional” beekeeper, a significant difference. Additionally, he stated that there is no such thing as an expert on bees because they are wild creatures.

He explained that honeybees are the highest form of insect life, being highly adaptive, working in complete harmony on an individual and collective basis and living in well organised colonies. Furthermore, only the honeybee improves the environment and does not prey on other creatures.

There are three members of the honeybee family, namely the queen, the workers (i.e. daughters) and the drones (i.e. males). The sole purpose of the queen is to lay eggs and if she fails she is expelled from the hive. The daughters have several roles, including cleaning, nursing and feeding the larvae, acting as undertakers and secreting wax to construct the hive. The drones exist to mate with a virgin queen and if unsuccessful in this mission they are expelled from the hive by their sisters.

In a typical colony there will be an average of 50,000 bees in midsummer. By contrast, in winter there needs to be a minimum of 10,000 bees in to enable them to keep warm.

Products of the hive include honey, propolis (used to draughtproof and seal the nest), beeswax (used in various medical applications), Royal Jelly (fed to the larvae) and bee bread (the main source of food for honeybees). The colour of honey depends on the habitat in which the bees have been living, but in all cases it is deemed to contain many things which are good for us, including the brain!

In summary, it can safely be claimed that the honeybee is a significant contributor to our world. This was evidently the view of Albert Einstein, who is credited with saying “If the bee disappeared off the face of the Earth, man would only have four years to live”

Howard Chandler

Interest Groups News

Wednesday Walkers

Ann Ford is moving to Cornwall and is resigning as Convenor of the Wednesday Walkers. I am hoping that someone will come forward to take her place. If you want to know more please contact me.

Our website

Several people have said, “The website is not up to date”. However it may be that you need to refresh your browser by clicking the circular arrow in its title bar.

*Mary Dunbavin,
Interest Groups Co-ordinator*

Thursday Walkers



The group enjoyed a rare sunny day at the beginning of April for a delightful walk from Hartest, with extensive views across the rolling countryside and signs of Spring in the hedgerows.

Confessions of a Factory Inspector

OUR April speaker, Graham Higgins, had a wider experience in the Health and Safety profession than the title of his lecture would suggest. In fact, his first assignment as a newly appointed inspector, equipped only with a small attaché case and a pair of Wellington boots, was in Llandrindod Wells. While climbing the Brecon Beacons to count sheep he was instructed to use a pony because the army was trained to shoot at vehicles.

He was promoted to work in H&S in 1975 at a time when 7,500 people were dying every year as a result of health related workplace diseases, notably mesothelioma, a side effect of asbestos exposure. Artex, used in interior decorating, was another danger because of its asbestos content.

The first H&S adherents were the Babylonians around 1900 B.C., one of whose concerns was the potential danger of accidents from uncovered cesspits. The first H&S legislation in Britain had a different emphasis, being concerned with the protection of child chimney sweeps. Other significant legislation included the 1833 Factories Act, which specified the minimum age for child factory

workers, and in 1952 the first H&S Act relating specifically to agriculture.

Apparently, not all accident outcomes can be accurately predicted. The speaker quoted an incident of an individual at work falling from a height of 67 feet and returning to work the following day, while in a separate incident an individual fell 2 feet and died as a result of several embolisms.

In conclusion we learned of two examples of H&S related “silliness”, the first of which related to churchyard gravestones. Following the death of a child from a falling gravestone, legislation prescribed that gravestones must be able to bear a weight of one quarter of a ton, which thereby resulted in many gravestones being condemned and dismantled. The second example concerned local youths in the Norwich area throwing angle irons at conkers, three of which fell onto passing vehicles. The upshot was described by the speaker as overkill, namely the banning of conkers throughout the district.

Howard Chandler

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Imperial War Museum, Duxford – 29 JANUARY

Built in 1917, Duxford was used as a training station for the Royal Air Force and played an important role in the Battle of Britain. It was also home to the American 78th Fighter Group which provided air cover for the Allied invasion forces on D-Day.

Opened in 1976 the museum is spread over a large area, divided into different buildings covering Historic Duxford, the Battle of Britain, the American Museum, Air & Sea, Land Warfare and also the recreated 1940 Operations Room from where RAF fighter pilots were directed into combat.



In the Airspace hanger we had a talk about the Mosquito, a small aircraft constructed mainly from wood. This was not seen as a viable option at first but improvements led to

it beating a Spitfire for speed and manoeuvrability in trials and it was very successful in many roles during WW2. Also in the hanger is the original test Concorde, complete with the original wiring and equipment. Alongside is a model on loan which shows how it would have been fitted out for passengers.

Airborne Assault, the Museum of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces, tells their story from 1940 to the present day and also explains how today's Airborne Forces are at the heart of 16 Air Assault Brigade, the Army's rapid response force.

Our wider air defence story from the WWI to the Cold War was covered in the Battle of Britain hanger. In the Conservation hanger people were working on several internationally important aircraft to preserve them for future generations.

Displayed in partnership with IWM Duxford is The British Airliner Collection which is owned and maintained by Duxford Aviation Society.

Linda Wells

Roman Colchester and Mersea Island – 26 March

With our Blue Badge Guides we started our visit in Colchester, Britain's first city, at Firstsite, a modern building for arts and education. This houses the Roman Berryfield mosaic which was originally discovered where this building now stands.

We moved on to Colchester Castle which dates from the 1070's and its Norman Keep which is the largest in Europe. This houses the museum with finds spanning 2500 years including a collection of some of Britain's most important Roman artefacts.

We continued with a walk through the Dutch Quarter named after Flemish refugees who began to settle there in the 1560's and revived the local cloth trade for which Colchester became famous.

Nearby are some of the original foundations of the Roman Theatre. The Theatre was the site of many gruesome productions, which, when a person was supposed to be killed, they actually used live members of the prison population.

St Helen, the area's patron Saint, was the daughter of the celebrated 'Old King Coel' of Colchester. Her chapel was built close to the castle and since 2000 has been a Greek Orthodox Parish Church which we were invited to visit. The Victoria Tower contains a bronze statue of St Helena holding the True Cross and facing Jerusalem.

The Red Lion public house was originally built as a townhouse for the Duke of Norfolk in around 1475. It was transformed into an Inn after he was killed at the Battle of Bosworth. There is supposed to be a resident ghost called Alice, who was killed by her married employer to prevent his wife from finding out! He apparently threw her from one of the building's

windows, leaving the country quickly afterwards, and three of the rooms are supposed to be haunted by poor Alice.

Mersea Island was our afternoon port of call. Accessed by crossing the Strood, West Mersea is the most populated area with around 7000 residents, East Mersea being the quieter side.

Inhabited since pre-Roman times it was used as a holiday destination in Roman Britain for the occupants of Colchester. The name of Mersea Island comes from the Old English Word meaning 'Island of the Pool'.



Oysters are the island's most important and famous export and the locals are trying to preserve the original oyster packing hut as new health regulations prevent its use today.

Linda Wells

Snakes Alive!



THE Watching Wildlife Group's April visit caught the first hot weather of 2018.

We went to Barnhamcross Common, just across the border into the Norfolk Brecks, and it turned into reptile watching before we had walked very far. Sharp-eyed Beryl was the first to spot something unusual curled up in a hollow. We all gathered round for a splendid view of snake life basking in the sun as the temperature was rising towards 26c. Sheila Hawthorne took this excellent photo whilst we all tried to decide how many snakes were coiled around one another. The yellow throat marking was clear to see on one, identifying them as grass snakes. They remained motionless until a pointing finger cast a shadow over them, and the writhing began as they untangled gracefully, revealing themselves as just two, the longer measuring about 3 feet. The snakes slid away quietly, well camouflaged against the dried grass and leaves in their basin.

More photos, taken by Sheila and Angela Lee, are available on our pages of the BU3A website.

To finish, it was good to see a buzzard, and butterflies on the wing – plenty of Brimstones and a bevy of Holly Blues.

Rob Parker
Convenor, Watching Wildlife

Annual Subscriptions

Each year, around 50 members have to be contacted individually because their annual subscriptions of £10 have not been paid by the due date. This is very time-consuming and should not be necessary.

As has been the case for some years now and as detailed in our current programme, subscriptions are **DUE BY 1st. JUNE**. If you pay by Standing Order, please check your bank account to ensure that payment has been made.

If you pay by cash or cheque, this may be done at the lecture meetings in May, June or July. Alternatively, a cheque should be sent to me at 8 Netherhall Close, Old Newton, Stowmarket, IP14 4RP by 1st. July.

This timescale is required to give our Membership Secretary adequate time to invite new members from our ever present waiting list, before the start of our new year in September.

If members have not paid their subscriptions by the July lecture meeting, it will be assumed they no longer wish to continue their BU3A membership, and they will be removed from our membership list **WITHOUT ANY FURTHER REMINDERS**. This would mean that their membership of all interest groups would have to cease, and no further lectures could be attended.

Peter Seager, Treasurer

Monthly Lectures

Start promptly at 10.00am
Coffee served until 9.45am

Monday 4 June

Life and Times of an Essex Bad Girl

Tracey Mackness

Monday 2 July

Never a Dull Moment
40 years of business travel

Cliff Kirby-Tibbs

**There is no meeting
in August**

Monday 3 September

Astronomy for Beginners

David Murton

Garden Visits

This popular group is open to all members. Visits are on the 4th Wednesday of the month and this is the programme for the rest of the year. Full details may be found on our website.

May 23.

Ascott House and Gardens,
Leighton Buzzard

June 27

Priors Oak, Aldeburgh

July 25

Otley Hall, Otley, Ipswich

September 26

Houghton Hall, Norfolk

October 24

Capel Manor Gardens, Enfield

November

Date to be confirmed
Evening visit to Anglesey Abbey
to view the lights.

Reservations may be made at the monthly lecture meeting or by contacting the convenor, Margaret Brackenbury on 01284 749430

The full amount, payable by cheque to BU3A Garden Visits, must be made at the time of reservation.

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