



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust
Registered Charity No. 1165448

Newsletter

Issue 98

September 2018

From your Chairman

On behalf of the committee I would like to extend a very warm welcome to those of you who have renewed your membership, and also to our new members. You should have all received the new 2018/19 programme with your membership badge and I hope there will be something of real interest to you during the coming year. The lectures are sometimes surprising and not what you were expecting, which is what makes our monthly lectures so interesting. We had a few surprises during the last series of lectures so here's hoping for the same during the new series.

Then we have the Interest Groups, run by group leaders, ordinary members like yourself, who have taken the ethos of the U3A to heart, i.e everything we do is run "for and by the members", and we are all very grateful to them.

This is one of the great strengths of Blackbourne U3A. We are very well aware that a number of those interest groups are full, so why not consider starting another new group for the same interest? That is how so many have started in the past and will do so in the future.

There will not be an Interest Group exhibition this year as the group leaders decided it was not worthwhile.

I am sorry to start mentioning it so early at the start of the new programme year but again at the AGM in March we will need some more new committee members. This request will be repeated over the coming months as we do not want problems at the last minute before that AGM. So my plea is give it some thought about becoming a member of the committee – after all it is your U3A and without a committee it will not be here for you.

The current committee members will be on hand at the start of the September and October lecture meetings to "Meet and Greet" our new members and so I invite all new members to stay behind for a few moments at the end of those two lectures to give us the opportunity to welcome you personally to Blackbourne U3A.

My best wishes to you all for the coming year.

Derrick Haley

We'll Meet Again – an Evacuee's Story

FOR his presentation, our May speaker, Bryan Thurlow, assumed the persona of Billy Jackson, a ten-year-old boy growing up in Bethnal Green during World War II. This is Billy Jackson's story in his own words.

"When my eight-year-old sister, Doris, and I were kids my Dad was a milkman and my Mum took in washing for big houses nearby. Our weekly treat was Saturday morning at the cinema, where we sometimes saw newsreels about Hitler and the threat of war. Our parents told us that there would not be a war, but that all changed in September 1939 and my Dad signed up as a soldier.

Doris and I were evacuated to live with my Mum's sister, her husband and our two cousins, Jack and Elsie, on their farm in Suffolk. On our first morning we were woken up in the early hours by the noise of hens, but then came a fantastic breakfast including eggs with fantastic yellow yolks. On the farm I learned that milk came from cows – I'd always thought they came from a machine on my Dad's milk cart.

On 29 December Mum wrote to arrange for us kids to return to London. Fortuitously, my Dad came home on leave for a few days, so our family celebrated Christmas at home a few days late.

Soon after that the air raids started. We sheltered with Mum, firstly in a cupboard under the stairs and later at Bethnal Green tube station. It was while we were there that a bomb demolished the front of our house; once Mum had recovered from the shock we were re-evacuated to Suffolk. We then received the terrible news that our Dad had been declared missing, presumed dead.

Mum joined us in Suffolk for a brief time, but at the end of the War we all moved into a brand new prefab in Bethnal Green. Eventually, my sister married a Suffolk man and moved to live in Suffolk. But guess what – I stayed in London and became a milkman just like my Dad!"

Howard Chandler

Monthly Meetings

Start promptly at 10.00am

Coffee served until 9.45am

Monday 1 October

More Stories from the Tower.
A follow up on the construction of our Cathedral Tower

Horry Parsons

Monday 5 November

History of the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds

Peter Green

Monday 3 December

A Christmas Cracker –
Seasonal legends and stories

Vic Botterill

The Life and Crimes of an Essex Bad Girl



IN the immortal words of Monty Python 'And now for something completely different' our speaker for the June meeting, Tracy Mackness, gave us just that

as she told us of her journey from prisoner to entrepreneur and how she now helps young people to stay on track.

Tracy's early life was a series of disasters – broken home, truancy, shoplifting, failed marriages and eventually a ten year prison sentence for her involvement in the importation of cannabis.

This long spell in prison caused Tracy to re-evaluate her life and she took every educational course that was available and became qualified in aerobics and fitness instruction. However, on discovering that the prison had its own farm Tracy

managed to talk her way into a job there and this changed her life forever, as she fell in love with the pigs and took various courses involving pig husbandry, butchery and sausage making. As her release date approached, Tracy was allowed out to work in a butcher's shop one day a week and on her release this became her full-time job. She also built up the trade in sausages by attending farmers' markets, county shows and the like.

Eventually, Tracy managed to acquire the business and now employs more than 20 people, has 15 vans on the road and attends more than 25 farmers' markets selling her own brand of sausages and other pork products. And as if that is not enough, Tracy spends a great deal of time talking to groups of young people, where she doles out tough love to those who may be in danger of choosing the wrong path, as she did.

This talk was a little bit different from many of our U3A topics, but, if you'll pardon the pun, Tracy certainly gave us 'food for thought'.

Peter Lester

Never a Dull Moment – 40 years of Business Travel

OUR July speaker, Cliff Kirby - Tibbs, was encouraged by his grandfather to live in France for four months while still a young man, where he would gain experience of the leather industry in preparation for an international career in selling.

It was a career that lasted for forty years and involved travel to many parts of the globe. The various forms of land transport that he experienced during this time included a motor bike taxi, a cycle rickshaw and a tandem bike which he used while cycling through Lille wearing a business suit.

Life was equally colourful in the air. On one occasion, while flying from the UK to Mexico,

the engine of his aircraft caught fire while at a height of 35,000 feet. This resulted in an emergency landing in Boston and earned him a gift of four bottles of champagne in recognition of assistance he had provided to the flight crew during the emergency.

As a member of the Saddlers' Company he had periodic contact with Princess Anne, a patron of the organisation, whom he found to be extremely supportive of the work of the Company and invariably easy to work with.

One of the countries that made a significant impression on Mr Kirby-Tibbs was India. In particular, he was struck by the

sight of very young children working in factories. When he questioned this practice he was informed that the children's working environment was good and that each week they were able to earn sufficient to provide for their family for a whole week. Additionally, he was advised that one of the few alternatives available to them was stealing.

Our speaker retired following 40 years of business travel, but left one significant legacy when he did so, namely that his son has followed his footsteps and is also now involved in a career of international business travel.

Howard Chandler

EDUCATIONAL VISIT 21 May 2018 Bletchley Park



[BLETCHLEY PARK](#), near Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire, was the Head Quarters of the British Military Intelligence Government Code and Cypher School during WW2. About 50 miles north of London it was based in the grounds of Bletchley Park and employed around 12000 code breakers and staff. Their cryptologists successfully broke the major codes used by the German military and High Command creating, with few resources, the most advanced computing sources of the time. Intelligence gathered from Bletchley Park is credited with significantly aiding the Allied war effort, shortening the war and saving thousands of lives.

Commander Alastair Denniston was the operational head of the GC & CS from 1919-1942. Those recruited had a variety of backgrounds suited to the complexity of the task they faced; chess champions and linguists were common and also top solvers of cryptic crosswords as these people had strong lateral thinking skills. It was soon realised that trained mathematicians would also be needed. Staff with different skills included Peter Twinn, Alan Turing, Jack Good and Bill Tutte. Joan Clarke was one of the few women employed as a crypto analyst.

Staff worked a six day week, rotating through three shifts with one week off four times a year. The irregular hours affected some workers health as well as social life and the routines of the nearby homes where they were living.

Two of the most notable pieces of equipment used were the Enigma Machines (a series of electro-mechanical rotor cypher machines used to protect German military communications) and the Bombe, also an electro-mechanical device, used by British cryptologists to help decipher the Enigma machine messages during WWII. Used by Alan Turing and Gordon Welchman it was partly based on the so called BOMBA, an earlier machine developed by Polish mathematicians in 1938.

Overall the site contains numerous buildings housing other code breaking equipment, wartime vehicles and several temporary exhibitions. During the school holidays a series of activities and workshops for children of all ages are run helping to keep alive the hard work done over the years to keep our country safe.

Linda Wells

EDUCATIONAL VISIT Mini plant, Oxford 23 July 2018.

ON the hottest day of the year our tour around the [BMW Mini Plant](#) at Oxford took about two hours and what an amazing experience it was.

The Mini, a car designed by Sir Alec Issigonis, has now become a worldwide icon.

Today three sites play a part in Mini production. Hams Hall near Birmingham produces the engines and in Swindon the doors, body panels and sub assemblies of smaller components are made. The plant at Oxford is the heart and birthplace of modern Mini production. With precision timing everything comes together here, body shell, paint finish, final assembly and where the finished car rolls off the production line. With the exception of the paint shop we were able to track the process around the factory floor with our guides.

Ultra advanced robot technology completes 95% of the process with just 5% human involvement as not every process could be done by these amazing machines. One Mini is completed every 67 seconds with up to 1,000 cars each day of which 80% are exported by rail via Southampton and Tilbury.



Each car is individually made to the buyer's exact specifications – colour, trim, engine size, lighting, tyres and wheel trims, the list is almost endless and it is highly unlikely that two Minis will be exactly the same.

Linda Wells

Wildlife Watching Group



THIS group was started by Rob Parker 16 years ago. Over the years there have been visits to many Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk sites to discover the wonders of nature on our doorstep.

Members have learnt much from Rob, former butterfly recorder for Suffolk, and by the pooling of each other's knowledge.

A few years ago, at Rob's instigation, we teamed up with Suffolk Wild Life Trust to monitor the natural regeneration of wild life at Grove Farm, Thurston (now Blackbourne Valley reserve) following the introduction of environmentally friendly farming practice there. This study increased members knowledge of pond life and plant life considerably as well as providing SWLT with valuable information.

Rob has now decided it is time to retire and we will miss his preparation and encyclopaedic knowledge that has helped make this group such a success.

It is to be hoped that the group can continue so if anyone is interested in convening the group, please contact Mary Dunbavin, the Interest Groups' co-ordinator.

Garden visits

Here are details of the next three garden visits, open to all members.

Wednesday 26 September

Houghton Hall, Norfolk,
Leaving New Green at 10 am
Cost £23.50

Wednesday 24 October

Capel Manor College Gardens,
Enfield,
Leaving New Green at 9 am
Cost £23.00

Friday 23 November

Visit to Anglesey Abbey
to see the Winter lights.
Leaving New Green
at 4.30pm. and arriving at the
Abbey at 5.30pm for a bowl
type supper on arrival.
Returning at 8.30 pm.
Cost £35.50 per person.

*No National Trust Concessions
are available.*

Booking can be made at the
Lecture Meetings with
payment by cheque at time of
booking.

Any queries, please email
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We rely on members for
contributions to the newsletter,
either individually or from Interest
Groups. In the absence of the
exhibition, new members especially
will benefit from news of your
Interest Group activities.

Please send copy to
publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk

**The dead line for the December
issue is 18 November.**

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PAKENHAM

Saturday 3rd November
10 am – 4 pm

ART EXHIBITION

Village Hall, The Street, Pakenham, IP312JU

Free



Entry

Original Artwork to purchase at reasonable prices
presented by members of Blackbourne U3A

Refreshments available