

Blackbourne U3A News

A University of the Third Age in Suffolk

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From the Chairman . . .

With the sounds and sights of Remembrance Day fresh in my mind, my thoughts are now turning to all those people who give so much time and energy helping to enhance the lives of people in their own community. In reality, that is one object of the U3A. We help one another in new ways of learning, living and enjoying life as well as service to others. Now that the Membership has decided at the Special General Meeting held on 17 October to affiliate to the Third Age Trust (see below), I hope that our U3A will move ahead with renewed enthusiasm, vigour and commitment so that new study groups can be formed and ideas will come forward for the benefit of each and every member.

We need to get more members involved in the day-to-day running and administration of the Group as a whole. We are looking to the election of a new committee in March, and we do need more volunteers to help with jobs such as looking after our equipment, setting up the rooms and a myriad of behind the scenes activities. Please think about the future of your U3A and if any member has a new idea or suggestion – or even a constructive criticism – please let a committee member know as soon as possible.

As this is likely to be my last Chairman's message I would like to pay tribute to my Committee, who have been very diligent and hard working, and to thank them for all they have done to help me this year. As you will all understand, coming fresh to the Committee as Chairman is no easy task, but I have enjoyed the challenge, and the task has been made easier by their loyalty. My thanks to our publisher for all her hard work.

*A very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all.
Anne Anstead*

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

At the Special General Meeting held on 17 October, some 120 members attended to consider the question of affiliation of the Blackbourne U3A to the Third Age Trust.

Our Chairman, Anne Anstead, explained in detail the benefits of affiliation and the cost to individual members. Committee members, who had all done research on the implications for the Blackbourne U3A, added their own observations.

The discussion was opened by Alan Simpson, convenor of the Computer Group, which had originally asked the committee to consider the question of affiliation. Everyone who wished to speak was given full attention by the members present. Varying points of view were expressed by past chairmen, study group convenors, founding members and others, some of whom belong to a

branch of the U3A that is affiliated to the Third Age Trust.

The motion that 'Blackbourne U3A should affiliate to the Third Age Trust' was proposed by Anne Anstead and seconded by Bob Mountfort. Members voted and the ballot papers were counted by two non-member scrutineers. The Chairman announced the result:

YES 92 votes NO 20 votes. The motion was therefore carried.

The Chairman thanked members for their support, and explained that the time-scale for affiliation would be decided by the Committee in due course. Members will be kept fully informed. The Chairman and Committee were warmly thanked for all their hard work in addressing this matter.

NOTICE BOARD

Dates for your Diary

Monday 9 January

Pearl of the Orient *Ken Smith*

Monday 16 or 23 January

Visit to London: Cabinet War Rooms and Westminster Abbey (date and cost to be confirmed)

Monday 6 February

Poetry is portable *Mal Shepard*

Monday 6 March

Birds in Springtime *Trevor Gunham* — preceded by AGM

Monday 3 April

The lost city of Dunwich *Mark Mitchels*

EXERCISING OUR MINDS

Bridge for Improvers

The Blackbourne Bridge Group meets at The Cavendish Hall, Thurston, on alternate Tuesday afternoons from 1.45 until 4.45 p.m., beginning 6 September. Our membership now stands at over 50, though on a typical meeting we generally get a turnout of 20–30, and we are always hopeful that the number will divide equally by four! John Woolmore provides helpful and informative instruction for 45 minutes or so, after which we spend the remainder of the afternoon playing Chicago bridge. Occasionally John devises a quiz for us (the bidding problems he sets often have a twist to them – just in case we have got too confident!), and sometimes we play a sequence of prepared hands. Sadly our convenor, Colin Moore, died recently, after organizing the group so successfully, and he is missed by everyone.

Wanda Wagstaff and Tricia Pullan

Computer Group

The Computer Group has changed its convenor. After many years of dedicated service by John Freiyer, for which we are very grateful, I was persuaded to take over the role for this coming year and hope to

continue the success we have enjoyed during John's tenure.

The group meets on the fourth Thursday of every month, except December, in the lounge bar at Thurston New Green Centre at 2.15 pm. We are a self-help group open to any member of the Blackbourne U3A who, perhaps, seeks help on the purchase of a personal computer, or wishes to improve their computer skills in such topics as using the Internet, e-mail, word processing, desktop publishing, manipulating digital photographs and other applications.

Members range from novices to the more experienced so all are welcome. Give it a try and come along to a meeting (visitors are asked to contribute £1 per session).

Alan Simpson

French Appreciation

We are a group of about ten people who are interested in furthering our knowledge of France and the French language. We meet in each other's homes and try to speak as much French as possible. The format of our meetings varies, but we have been involved in conversation, reading books, watching films, taking it in turns to prepare a talk for the group and playing games all in the target language. We also spend some time studying the grammar and more formal aspects of French. The emphasis is however on fun. We recently had a treasure hunt in a member's garden where the clues and answers were all in French. That was very enjoyable.

We feel that we cannot include any more people into the group at the present time. Ten seems to be the maximum number for meeting comfortably in members' homes. However, if there are more people who are interested in forming a second group (perhaps for beginners) we would be happy to make a list and put people in touch and give some help, if needed, to a new group.

Frederick Spoun

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

In mid January we shall be going to **London** to visit the **Cabinet War Rooms and**

Churchill Museum in Whitehall, followed by a tour of **Westminster Abbey**. The date and cost will be confirmed shortly.

For 2006 proposed trips are:

1. **Dulwich Picture Gallery** and **Ranger's House** at Greenwich

2. **Danson House**, Kent, a Georgian mansion, and the **Red House**, home of William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts movement.

3. A cruise on the **Grand Union Canal** with lunch, followed by a coach trip around the Chiltern hills and tea at the **Ashridge estate**, Hertfordshire

To book please see John Morris at Monday lectures.