

Blackbourne U3A News

A University of the Third Age in Suffolk

ISSUE NUMBER 54

SUMMER 2007

From the Chairman . . .

Just a brief but important note to go with this short newsletter before we take our summer break.

The programme for the coming 12 months and membership renewal forms are now available and included with this newsletter if it is posted to you. For those of you who receive the newsletter by e-mail forms can be obtained from your interest group convenor or the membership secretary, Sally Rands.

*Yet again we have some interesting and varied talks lined up so to ensure your continued membership please let Sally have your completed renewal by the next lecture meeting on 3 September. After this date we shall invite those on the waiting list to join and once the 500 limit is reached we will regrettably have to decline further applications whether from renewing or new members. **So, book early to avoid disappointment!***

Elsewhere in this issue are details of our own photographic competition which I encourage you to enter (remember the tips given by Trevor Burlingham at his talk in March?) as you spend what I hope will be a pleasant and rewarding summer break.

Bryann Ward

NOTICE BOARD

Dates for your diary

Monday 2 July

Citizens Advice Bureau – what do we do?
Bury St Edmunds staff member and volunteer

Monday 3 September

The private lives of butterflies *Rob Parker*

Monday 1 October

The life and voice of Kathleen Ferrier
Christopher Fifield

Monday 15 October

Interest Groups Exhibition with wine and cheese

Monday 5 November

The history of Royal flying *Graham Laurie*

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2007/8 are now due. Membership application forms are available from Sally Rands at Monday lectures.

LECTURE NOTES

Organic Gardening

On 14 May 2007 163 members heard Karen Kenny speak on the subject of organic

gardening. Karen is well known on Radio Suffolk and has also written books on this subject. She gave an amusing and entertaining performance to open our eyes to the merits of this form of gardening. The principle Karen was keen to impress on us was that our very existence is dependent upon soil and that to survive we need to take care of what we have, using the life cycle of an oak tree to illustrate the self-perpetuating process of growth and decay through balance, which is the key to organic gardening. What you take from the garden you must put back. Chemical fertilisers to stimulate growth will upset the balance and kill the life of the soil.

We were told not to waste time weeding, composting and then putting back on the soil, but to allow weeds to grow alongside seedlings, to provide shelter from sun or wind, until the seedling is strong enough to survive on its own, then water well and mulch on top of the weeds. This puts the nutrient and water taken temporarily by the weeds straight back into the soil without all the waiting for them to rot down on the compost heap. Of course it is necessary to mulch before the weeds flower and set their own seed.

Correct watering is also key to the process of organic gardening. When soil is watered, 90% goes back into the air by evaporation and roots grow towards the surface in search of water and then die. Mulching after rain ensures that 90% goes down, and the roots grow down in search of the water and grow stronger.

We should also encourage natural predators such as the larvae of lacewings and hover flies, ladybirds, and birds such as blue tits to feed on aphids and other destructive insects, rather than spraying with chemicals. It is our responsibility as stewards of the planet to look after the life of the soil for the benefit of future generations.

A Walk Around East Anglia

Following the AGM on 5 March (see Spring 2007), 196 members and four visitors enjoyed a talk and slide presentation from Trevor Burlingham on 'A walk with a camera around East Anglia'.

Trevor started with an amusing preamble on local Suffolk anecdotes and phrases before showing a wonderful display of photographs covering varied subjects around the area, many of which we 'ordinary' folk miss because we fail to look up, or down, or even to see what we are looking at. Fortunately we were able to see pictures through Trevor's eyes, such as the superb roof inside Huntingfield Church, painted by a vicar's wife in the 18th century, and the parish chest of Hoxne secured with wonderful iron straps and locks. In Southwold a terrace of houses with little faces carved on the tops of pillars – what little joke were the builders having? In Ipswich the face above the door of the man who sold the land for a shop to be built – a long lasting memorial indeed. There were so many, each of interest in its own right, that we would have been happy to see more, but perhaps Trevor showed us that there is so much more to see if we learn how to look.

Search Dogs

172 members and two visitors attended the lecture on 2 April 2007 to hear Kevin Waterson speaking on the subject of search

dogs. Kevin is a radio ham, and an auto electrician by trade, and founded the Suffolk lowland search and rescue team in 1998, their van stating – NSARDA Anglia – 'turning lost into found'. NSARDA stands for National Search and Rescue Dog Association.

With Kevin is Brian Gregory whose job is navigator, plotting areas and advising on areas not searched. Also with Kevin is his dog Bess, a black labrador cross border collie, nine and a half years old, still fit and willing to work. Also in the team is Jeremy, Kevin's son, and his dog Chip, a springer spaniel. Jeremy is a qualified NSARDA dog assessor. Chip is the best qualified dog in the country and helped with the Ipswich murders investigation. Mark Green, and Ollie, a golden labrador, are local to Thurston, Mark also being the local police constable. Two lady members of the team are Liz, with her dog Teazle, a black labrador currently in training; and Briony with Morph, a chocolate labrador who does not like open-air searching but is very good searching in buildings.

All the dogs are on call-out lists and train fortnightly for 9–10 hours with the help of 'dogs bodies', volunteers who hide and wait to be found, either by trackers who follow crushed vegetation, or trailers who follow clothing scent and air scent, working on longer leads. Novice dogs are assessed after one year and then annually until fully operational, then every three years by an external NSARDA trainer who checks their obedience to control and command from handler. Dogs are often acquired from the police who have too many. They have never had a dog who was not suitable.

There is no funding from government. All monies come from team members and charity donations. Members purchase their own uniforms and equipment. The first year cost £14,000 of Kevin's own money.

Collection boxes were placed throughout the hall to support this so very worthy cause. The sum of £157.41 was raised and a letter of appreciation has been received from Kevin Waterson.

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Walking Group

The weather was perfect for a return visit by 14 members of the group to Ventnor on the Isle of Wight.

We had three whole days in which to explore the many paths of this quaint area just off the south coast with its country lanes and undulating landscape.

Mornings were spent climbing up to the tops of the downs to admire the views and then dropping down through woodland and meadows carpeted in primroses, bluebells and other spring flowers.

We scaled the highest point at Bonchurch Down (750 ft), the most southerly at St Catherine's Point and Lord Tennyson's favourite down which now bears his name.

After some liquid refreshment we then went our separate ways, visiting Osborne House, the Botanic Gardens, riding a steam train, ambling

through nature reserves or just sitting on the cliff top watching the boats go by before meeting up again at the hotel for a wholesome evening meal.

Photography Competition

The Photography Group is organising a competition for the 'Landscape Photographer of the Year' with the entries to be exhibited at the Wine and Cheese event on 15 October. The subject matter is 'An East Anglian Landscape or Seascape'. Full details of the rules can be seen on

www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk

or contact Ken Weston on 01359 244251. The closing date is **1 October 2007**.

Prizes will be: Landscape Photographer of the Year £20 Jessops/Boots tokens; runner-up £10 Jessops/Boots tokens.