

## Chairman's Chatter

*IN last year's July Newsletter I was wishing for a prolonged wet period to relieve the drought. No need to wish for that in 2012 as the hoses can legally come out once again. My 2011, drought-starved, brown lawn is lush and green again, so I hope your gardens and allotments are doing well now.*

*It's that time of year to renew your membership and you have been doing so in droves. Hundreds of Standing Order payments have come through to the BU3A account and yet more members have signed up for this easy way of renewing every year. Even last year's problems between the HSBC and Santander banks appear to be resolved. Laurie hopes to have around 70% of memberships paid by Standing Order this year. Thank you very much for your cooperation in our drive towards a simpler payment format.*

*The new lecture programme for 2012-13 is being handed out at monthly meetings and can also be found on our website - [www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk](http://www.blackbourne-u3a.org.uk) - along with details of the Committee and their contacts.*

*Your application for the next Autumn Academy must be in by 21<sup>st</sup> August. This popular annual event is on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October from 10am at Stowupland High School and has a particularly interesting programme this year. Details will soon be on our website with a link to an application form. Our Secretary, Stella Chamberlin, also has application forms.*

*Our Interests Groups' Exhibition is on 15<sup>th</sup> October and tickets will be available at the September meeting, and also from Stella, Tel: 01359 242601.*

*With no meeting in August, it only remains for me to wish you a summer of warm days and balmy evenings. If you experience that, you'll probably be in Spain, or Portugal, or some other Euro-crisis hothouse! Enjoy.*

*Peter Heath*

## Monthly Lectures

Start promptly at 10.00 am  
Coffee and biscuits are served  
until 9.45 am

Monday 3 September

**Hearing Dogs**

*Louise Brundell*

Monday 1 October

**Samuel Pepys**

*Dr. David Dougan*

Monday 15 October

**Interest Groups' exhibition**

With wine and cheese  
11.00 am start

Monday 5 November

**My Life and Experiences in  
the World of Antiques**

*Elizabeth Talbot MRICS*

Monday 3 December

**The Genius of Charles Dickens**

*Mark Mitchels*

## THE TITANIC - A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

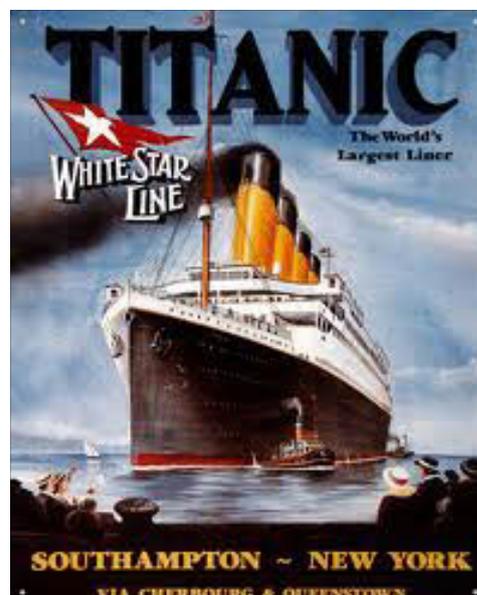
THE Titanic started sea trials on 1 April 1912 and Peter Heath, thanked Elizabeth Sharp our previous Lecture Secretary for arranging our speaker Peter Burrige to talk to us in April 2012, 100 years later.

Robert gave us a superb factual talk covering not the imagined scenes from recent productions but an account of the real events.

The Titanic, costing £1.5m, weighed 46,328 tons and was the largest moving man-made object in the world. She left Southampton on her maiden voyage on 10 April 1912 with 2,208 people on board but only 20 lifeboats, with capacity for 1178 people - a disaster waiting to happen!

On Sunday 14 April, with the sea like a mill pond and no moon, Captain Smith initiated a watch for icebergs at 8.55pm and then went to bed. At 11.40pm an iceberg was spotted about half a mile ahead. Unsuccessful avoidance efforts were made and the iceberg was hit. Although there was a shortfall of lifeboats, surprisingly many were launched only half full.

Continued.....



## INTEREST GROUPS

### Note to Convenors

We are sure members will be interested in BU3A Groups' activities, both past and present, so please let the publishers have details for us to include in the Newsletters. Not everyone has access to the website and some prefer to read a hard copy.

Below is news of some of our groups since our last Newsletter

### Church Crawling

In April the group visited Fornham All Saints' and St Martin's churches, and in May, Little Saxham and Risby Churches. Their next visit is scheduled for Tuesday 24 July.

### Then and Now

This group has recently had talks on a *Portrait of a Suffolk River - the Alde*, and *Tales from the Bench* by Graham Higgins, a local magistrate

### Travel Groups

In May both groups went independently for short stays in Bristol.

### Social History

Members have given talks on The History of Gardens, The Medieval Hospitals of Bury St Edmunds, and The History of Pub Games.

### Garden Visits

Gibberds Hall; Borde Hill, Haywards Heath; and Peter Beales Roses and Gooderstone Water Gardens.

### Educational Visits

June's visit was to Colchester Castle Museum and Layer Marney Tower

### Folk Dancing

Continues to meet but could do with more members. Please ring Joan Stebbens on 01284 769867

### Dining Out

In the last three months this group has eaten at The Queen's Head, Hawkedon, The Cadogan Arms, Ingham and The White Horse at Beyton.

## THE TITANIC – continued

The least likely survivors were male 2nd class passengers as they had neither the strength of character to force their needs nor the physical strength to survive in the sea, most dying from hypothermia. 1,517 people, some 68% of those on board, died although only 40% of 1st class passengers were lost.

Violet Jessop, a baby's nurse from Great Ashfield survived and is buried in Hartest; she lived to survive another major sea disaster.

Richard treated us to a series of touching anecdotes and reminded us of the cold business attitudes of the time in that as soon as Titanic sank the crew members ceased to be paid as they now had no ship!

After questions Richard received a well earned round of applause.

*Laurie Marshall*

## RACING at LE MANS

DRESSED in her racing drivers' overalls and without visual aids or notes, Celia Stevens gave an interesting, animated talk about her love of motor racing and in particular of her participation in the biennial Le Mans Classic Car Race.

She became interested in motor racing in the early nineties when Ian, her partner and classic car restorer, introduced her to Brands Hatch and she later became the first lady to gain a racing licence at Snetterton. In 2004 they were invited to travel to Le Mans as mechanics for a friend's 1930 Talbot car and this instilled in them the wish to race there themselves.

One of the criteria to qualify for Le Mans Classic is that the car be the same make and model as one that had competed in an original Le Mans 24 hour race. They decided they would like to enter a Peerless which had raced in 1958 and although these cars had only been built between 1957 and 1959 they located one in Scotland and purchased it. It was then stripped down so that it could be raced and was accepted as eligible for the 2006 Le Mans Classic.

Cars are split into six age groups and there are three races for each group which include the well known running start and a night race. Because of the age of the vehicles each race lasts just 45 minutes. There can be up to three drivers for each car plus mechanics so the meetings are very crowded and noisy with much repartee between teams.

Celia and Ian raced the Peerless again in the 2008 Classic, 50 years after the model first raced at Le Mans.

In the 2010 Classic, Celia was co-driver with the lady owner of a 1932 Citroen C4 Roadster that had been restored by Ian. Coming 49 out of 68 they were most surprised when they were each presented with a special watch by Richard Mille, the principal sponsor, for their solo effort.



1932 Citroen C4 Roadster

A member of the British Women Racing Drivers Club and one of just 30 current women racing drivers, Celia is also a qualified Racing School instructor.

*Bryann Ward*

## ARCHAEOLOGY FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST

THOSE attending our 11 June meeting were treated to a very interesting and educational talk by Angus Wainwright a National Trust Archaeologist, who attended at short notice due to the illness of our advertised speaker.

Angus quickly dispelled the belief that all archaeologists do is dig holes. He told us that digging holes could destroy archaeological evidence and should be restricted only to sites where another building or road is about to be created.

The talk, illustrated with a collection of slides, clearly showed that a tremendous amount can be learned simply by careful observation of a building; the lines of the brick work showing where previous buildings had been altered by brick infills, evidence of where doors and windows had previously existed as shown by still visible arches, and even the colour of the bricks and mortar defining additions.

Natural features such as snow can show signs of previous buildings or gardens as at Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire when a snow fall, blown across a previous garden area clearly showed a layout of a Union flag-shaped border and this was replicated in their new gardens. In dry weather when the grass dries off more quickly, lines of previous walls can clearly be seen.

Aerial photography is a major assistance in plotting the location of previous buildings. At Ickworth such a photo showed the outline of the previous manor house located, as was normal, very close to the estate church.

In describing the famous site at Sutton Hoo, as all of the original artefacts found at the site are in the British Museum, Angus explained why accurate modern versions of these can be seen at the visitor centre.

Angus completed his talk with a description of how modern archaeology is being used at Orford Ness to allow many of the old buildings to simply erode. This site was invaluable as a testing area in all aspects of military equipment during and after both world wars.

After a vote of thanks from U3A chairman Peter Heath, Angus received a warm round of applause.

*Laurie Marshall*

## ART APPRECIATION GROUP



Thomas Gainsborough, born in Sudbury in 1727  
Famous for his portraits and landscapes

THIS new group first met in February and decided to start with a good old son of Suffolk, Thomas Gainsborough. Each person agreed to find something painted by him or about him to bring to the second meeting.

We had an amazing range of works to look at and one very interesting potted history of Gainsborough's life to discuss and enjoy, to the degree that we ran out of time! We discussed the possibility of making a visit to his house and museum in Sudbury but this hasn't happened yet, for various reasons, partly because some of the group don't want to focus on just one artist.

If you are interested in joining the group please contact Gill Heath on 01359 232291

*Sue Copping*

## WALKING THE WIGHT

TEN members of the Thursday and Friday longer walks groups enjoyed three days in mid April exploring more footpaths on the Isle of Wight.



Day one started on top of Bembridge Down with extensive views towards the west. Dropping down we reached Bembridge windmill before returning through Brading Marshes.

The second walk, around Newtown nature reserve, was much less strenuous and we had time to admire the flora. In particular we passed through a woodland clearing carpeted on all sides with primroses.

The final day involved a steady climb from Chale Green to Hoy's monument on top of St Catherine's Hill. Despite changeable weather this was the only time we donned waterproofs and then just for the last few yards.



As in previous years, our base was the Eversley Hotel in Ventnor.

*Bryann Ward*

## Membership Renewal

The membership fee of £10 per person is due by 31st July.

Those of you who have signed up to pay by Standing Order should already have had your account debited.

The Committee is very keen to persuade our remaining members to renew by Standing Order. A form can be obtained from our Membership Secretary, Sue Cattermole, The Barn, Flatts Lane, Tostock, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9NZ, Tel: 01359 272572.

Those who still wish to pay their £10 fee by cheque can send their remittance to Sue, or renew at the July meeting.

Due to increased postal charges, we will not be contacting those members who have not paid by 31st July.

During August membership will be offered to those people on our large waiting list, in readiness for the start of the new membership year. If you wish to remain a member, please ensure you pay by the end of July.

It would also be helpful if you let Sue know that you have cancelled your Standing Order if you do not wish to renew.

## BEE ORCHID

This is one of the flowers seen recently at Grove Farm. Along with two other species this is the first time it has been officially recorded at this site.

It is a short to medium perennial plant that flowers in June and July on grassland, open scrub and dunes on lime soils. There are several flowers on



a slender stem each with pink or purple sepals. The petals are green and the rounded red-brown lip is patterned to resemble the rear of a small bumble bee.

## AN INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

THE Watching Wildlife group has just become involved in an interesting monitoring project which breaks new ground as a joint venture with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT).

Thursday 10th May marked the project launch with a special training day at Norton Village Hall, where three wildlife specialists delivered words of wisdom to a bunch of volunteers significantly older than their regular conservation work parties. The project has been set up to assist the SWT monitor the process of natural re-generation at the nature reserve near Thurston, Grove Farm, which lies between New Green and Norton.

A string of recently created conservation ponds brings to 20 the total number of ponds on the reserve, which is a working farm, albeit one where experimental management is being tried out along the field margins. Our volunteers will visit frequently and report back on the growth of rare arable plants, the spread of Great Crested Newts and toads from the old ponds, and the arrival of aquatic life in the new ponds. The range of aquatic invertebrates is remarkable, from pond skaters and leeches to dragonflies and water beetles, and the speed at which they can arrive to colonise is a topic worthy of scientific study.

The project, supported by a grant from the Suffolk Naturalists' Society (SNS), involves the SWT pond advisor Juliet Hawkins, "Newt Lady", the County Botanist and author of *A Flora of Suffolk* Martin Sanford, and the County Aquatic Invertebrate Recorder Adrian Chalkley. We will be visiting the ponds and field margins regularly and sending reports to provide the data for a report on natural re-colonisation to be written up at the end of a year's monitoring. Our work so far already shows that the ponds are by no means sterile, but are already showing their diversity.

SWT say that this is their first collaborative venture with a U3A, and SNS will evaluate the feasibility of using non-specialist local monitors to achieve scientifically valid results. We hope it will be enjoyable as well as educational – in the true spirit of the Third Age.

*Rob Parker*



On site with officers of SWT

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