



THE Blackbourne U3a have had their first Committee Meeting with the volunteers who came forward at the end of last year and saved our U3a from closing. We are now in a strong position to move forward positively in 2023.

We have formed a Visits and Events Group, organising Garden, Educational and Theatre visits as well as planning some social events from time to time. The first garden visit has been arranged to Chippenham Park on Monday 27 February and details of other visits and our first social event will be announced soon, so watch this space! These visits and events are open to all members and gives us an opportunity to socialise together and visit places of interest and see productions which we may not have been able to do otherwise – and in the company of like-minded people.

We also plan to expand the range of Special Interest Groups which we can offer to members and our newly appointed Groups Co-Ordinator, Geri Collingwood, will keep us informed of new groups as they get started.

Our AGM in March will formally appoint everyone to their different Committee roles and enable us to enjoy some of the exciting things which will be offered during the next few months.

A very positive start to the year, blue skies, sunny days and nature bursting forth – I saw snowdrops, daffodils and crocus on my drive home from February's meeting showing that Spring is just around the corner. A lot to look forward to.

Margaret Knock, Vice-Chair

How I came to be a Magician and The Magic Circle.

THE December talk was punctuated with various close up (not embarrassing) interactive tricks that our speaker, Sean Goodman, is known for.

He became interested in magic at the age of ten having watched the series "The Magician" starring Bill Bixby (the Incredible Hulk), who was actually a magician and performed the tricks shown on the programme without the benefit of trick photography.

In order to find out how to do tricks Sean borrowed books on magic from the public library and with persistence he managed to master some tricks. He met Alan Hudson who used camera trickery as part of his show. Alan was a semi-professional also having a job with Serco Engineering. As well as mastering the tricks there was the mastering of misdirection. Derren Brown, a mentalist and illusionist, performs using these techniques. He also mentioned some of the

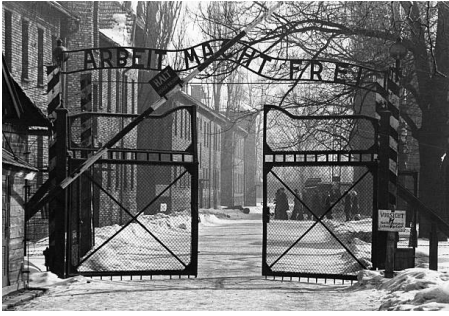
performers from the past including some that embarrassed the audience and also some of the tricks used on filmed performances (watch the audience).

Sean was rather nervous when he had his first show which was in a Care Home. In the meantime he continued his education getting a qualification in technology. His eventual aim was to give up work and become a magician full-time, which he succeeded in doing. He became a member of The Magic Circle. In order to become a member there is a requirement to prove one's skill through a performance. He is now an Associate of the Inner Magic Circle and lectures and demonstrates to his peers.

He mainly performs close-up magic at weddings, birthday parties and larger events. Sean certainly dazzled us with his sleight of hand.

Mary Dunbavin

Auschwitz and the Holocaust



AS the first Monday of January was a Bank holiday the January meeting was moved to Tuesday. An unusual day for a lecture meeting

The wrought iron sign over the entrance to Auschwitz translates as "Work makes you free". Obviously not to the vast number of people killed at this and other concentration camps, 90% of whom were Jews. One letter "B" on the sign is upside down and Mark asked whether this was accidental or a serious challenge to the German army's authority

and this together with the subject resulted in a fall in the number of members attending.

The lecturer, Mark Hunt, told his audience that he had been ordained in his late forties and had been responsible for organising a number of religious pilgrimages and he sees Auschwitz as a spiritual site. He followed his introduction by showing a number of photos with very little comment and this, I feel, focused the attention of his audience to the truly horrendous history of the camp.

He asked how Adolf Hitler and his colleagues managed to persuade the German people to allow the killing of the Jews to be acceptable. We were reminded that as long ago as the 12th century 57 Jews were murdered in Bury St Edmunds. The Germans were brainwashed into believing that Jews were responsible for the financial slump of the 1920s and that they were evil.

The prisoners worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week on awful food in temperatures that in winter months were 20 degrees below zero. These men were clothed in flimsy material with no warmth and arrived at the site in cattle trucks on a railway that ran directly into the site. A four to five day journey with no food.

Some 900 prisoners attempted to escape and about 200 succeeded. In August 1944 a prisoner tried to escape and 10 prisoners were chosen, at random, to be executed. One of the chosen people begged to be allowed to live as he had a wife and family. A single man offered to take his place and the prisoner survived Auschwitz and lived to be 95.

Without over dramatising the horrendous events that had taken place Mark made us all think just how cruel man can be to man. A very difficult subject covered in a careful way

Laurie Marshall

Saving Suffolk Hedgehogs

OUR speaker for February, Paula Baker, told us about the work of Suffolk Prickles Hedgehog Rescue (SPHR) which was founded in 2010, becoming a registered charity about four years ago. Their aim is the preservation of, education about and caring for hedgehogs which are on the red list. Based on road death casualties, their numbers have dwindled from an estimated 32 million in 1970 to less than half a million now. They are in dire straits everywhere although numbers in Ipswich are currently being sustained.

When a hedgehog is brought to SPHR it has to be firstly assessed. What treatment is needed? Can it recover? The care is carried out by volunteers who can receive training for a qualification of Hog Nurse Level One after six months. When the hedgehogs have recovered they are usually released to the area where

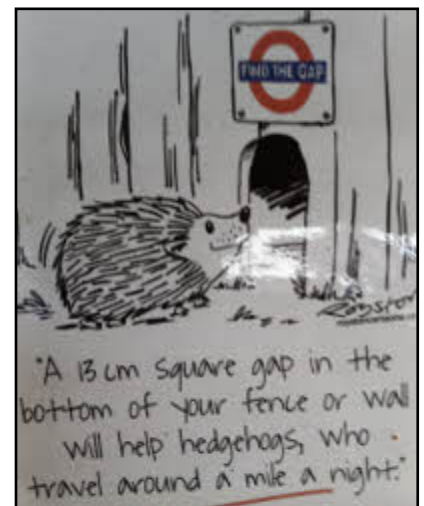
they were found as they are loyal to their home range. If the home range no longer exists for some reason then they will be released in an area where they can be monitored. Paula detailed the types of injury they see, some requiring veterinary treatment.

We were then advised the action we should take if we found a hedgehog out during the day. Before we do anything we should consider how it is behaving. A hedgehog that behaves as expected should not be of concern and left alone. If it appears unwell then advice should be sought.

There is also a need to provide a good environment for hedgehogs so that they can move across their home range and hide up during the day and also in the winter. Hedgehog boxes can be built, log piles, low bushy growth and hedges are all good places. Don't have a tidy garden! Apart from man their only

other predator is the badger. Properly maintained hedgerows with plenty of growth in the base are useful hiding places from the badger. It is advisable to check any area that you are proposing to strim before starting. Bonfires can be a problem so it is useful to light it away from where it has been built or at least check carefully before lighting.

Mary Dunbavin



Educational Visits

A message from Maureen and Linda

We would like to thank everyone once again for supporting us over the years and also for the beautiful flowers we both received. Such a kind thought and we hope that other members may think about taking over from us. It's lovely to visit places that you may not go to on your own, but everything is taken care of so you just have to turn up and enjoy!

Kett's Rebellion

FOR the last educational visit of 2022 we travelled to the Tombland area of Norwich via Wymondham. Accompanying us were Blue Badge guides Claire and Ian who told us of Kett's rebellion which originated in Wymondham. Our guides based their itinerary on fact and on "Tombland", an historical novel by C.J.Sansom.

In the 1540s common land was being 'enclosed' by local landowners for grazing of their sheep as wool provided a lucrative income. This meant that villagers and small farmers had less land to graze their own sheep and, with many facing real hardship, they started to tear down the fences.

Robert Kett, a landowner from Wymondham listened to the rebels who came on to his land and was sympathetic to their plight. He helped them remove his own fences and hedges, became their spokesman and led them to Norwich.

Our "battle ground" tour started in Wymondham where we visited the abbey and learnt its history from local guides. Originally a Benedictine priory dating from 1130, in the years following the Dissolution there was a gradual demolition of the monastic buildings for re-use of the stone leaving just the present church. Inside there are many features to admire including a splendid gilded altar screen dedicated as a war memorial, and two vaulted roofs. Originally shared for worship between the monks and

townsfolk there were many disputes as to whom parts of the church belonged.

Leaving the town for Norwich we followed the route Kett and his followers would have taken on 9 July 1549. More protesters joined the march and by the time they reached Norwich it is said they numbered 16000. Unable to enter the walled city they set up camp on high ground to the north east across the Wensum river at Mousehold Heath. They presented to the King's Council a list of 29 demands and grievances which was answered on 21st July. This declared them rebels and offered them a pardon which was rejected.

So, on the next day the rebels attacked Norwich, took the city and set up their own local government. The Marquis of Northampton was sent to win back Norwich but was defeated by the rebel forces. Then the Earl of Warwick was sent with a larger army and on 27th August forced Kett and his rebels to move from Mousehold Heath and a bloody battle took place. There were heavy losses on both sides, with reports of 10,000 rebels being killed. Warwick was victorious, and the rebellion was over.

Robert Kett fled the battle scene, but was captured the following day and with his brother, William, was imprisoned in the Tower of London and tried for treason. They were both



found guilty and were hanged on 7th December 1549; Robert at Norwich Castle and William at Wymondham Abbey.

After lunch there was time to visit the Cathedral before our guides showed us the places in the Tombland area where the battles took place and where the King's forces were billeted.

Our tour ended with tea and scones in the Maid's Head Hotel which dates back 800 years and would have witnessed the rebellion. Here the opportunity was taken to thank Maureen and Linda for all their hard work over the past nine years.

Bryann Ward



Flower Arranging

The Flower Arranging Group meet on the third Monday of the month at the Wesley Cafe, Elmswell. This month we did a modern arrangement using a Phormium leaf to support our choice of flowers, mainly roses were used but the Irises looked stunning! The base of the arrangement was composed of foliage from the garden and this demonstrated how we can achieve a very attractive design using just a few flowers at this time of the year.

Interest Groups Update

We have a thriving u3a membership and this is reflected in the wide variety of Interest Groups available for our members to join. Presently we have 26 active groups advertised on the website, and there are some new Groups currently being formed — Creative Writing and Social Bridge being the most recent.

Interest Groups are the lifeblood of our U3A. By participating in them we have the opportunity to share interests and make friends, whilst developing both new and existing skills.

New Groups are always welcome. For more information on any group contact Geri Collingwood, the Interest Groups Co-ordinator.

Creative Writing

This new group is for anyone who is interested in beginning or continuing to write short stories, poetry, family history or anything else that takes your fancy.

We aim to meet once a month to start with and will agree the format at the first meeting. The object of the group is to build confidence, encourage and inspire, but primarily to have fun with writing.

The group may in time become part of the national u3a network of Creative Writing Groups to share ideas and gain support.

If you think this is something you would like to be part of please contact Ann Hunter by email – hunterann25@yahoo.com or ring 01359 271329

Thursday Walks with Interest



St Mary's Church Haughley was the start for our February walk of five miles, walk led by Peter Kingsnorth.

Parts of the church date back to the 12th. century although it is known a church has existed in Haughley since Anglo Saxon times.

Setting off heading north we soon passed the raised mound where a Norman Castle once stood. This was

almost completely destroyed in 1173 but parts of the Castle Moat still remain, originally thought to be one of the widest and deepest in the country. Leaving the village we were soon in open arable country side and crossed the railway line using the pedestrian crossing that to date Network Rail appear to have failed to close.

Continuing around the fields we met the farmer of the area who explained that a crop we could see a few fields away was Elephant Grass. This is a very sturdy tall grass that grows from an underground rhizome which can remain productive for up to 16 years once planted. It dries as it over winters in the field and once cut and baled in March it is sent to a power station at Ely as Bio-Fuel.

Then we headed east towards Haughley Green reputed to be the home of organic farming. In the 1940s a group of people, concerned about the health implications of food using intensive farming methods developed during the war, carried out experiments. This resulted in the formation of the Soil association that still exists today.

Following the route of the railway we soon neared Haughley junction and turned towards the village entering along Old Street. This is a wide road for such a small village thought to be due to it being a market until a major fire destroyed most of the timber buildings on each side of the road. This fire resulted in the closure of the market and it being moved to Stowmarket.

John Light, convenor

Items for the next newsletter please to bryann@brysuward.plus.com
Deadline for the next issue is 24 May 2023

Art and Mixed Media Group

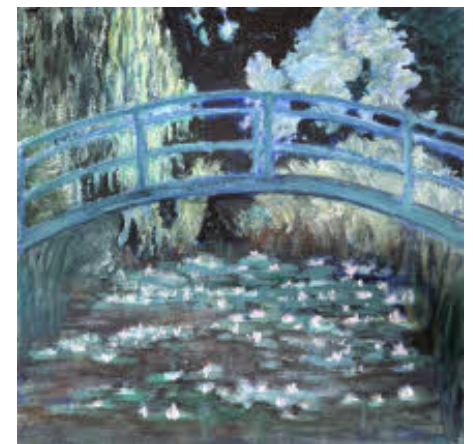
Each December members of the group have a go at copying a painting in the style of a well known artist. This time Monet was the chosen artist. These are the three joint winners of the competition



Poppies by Sylvia Pearce



Sunrise by Colin Burrows



Water Lily Pond by Sandy Davies

Trav 2 Group

This group is organising a spectacular holiday to Andalusia in November 2023. This 7 day/ 6 night trip, half board, with guided visits to some of the areas most prestigious sites including the Alhambra in Granada, is only £1,155.

This trip is open to all u3a members. More details from the Trav2 Convenor Gill Burgess on 07759603119