



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust
Registered Charity No. 1165448

Newsletter

Issue 113

Summer 2023

Hello to all our Members!

I thought I would introduce myself as I am your new Chair! My name is Elizabeth Morgan but everyone calls me Liz. I joined BU3A in 2015 after two years on the waiting list. Still working at that time so I did not get to the lectures but was lucky enough to join a new Group learning Mah Jong. I am still playing and loving it, along with joining several other groups.

My background is Mental Health Social Work and Probation, followed by Learning and Development management and Manager of an NVQ Centre in Probation and Prisons. Hence my interest in Lifelong Learning. I am organised and something of a “detail” person, but also very much a “people” person so really enjoy the ethos, friendship and variety of a U3A.

From 2018 I worked as the Interest Group Coordinator for over three years and enjoyed meeting and supporting the Group Leaders who work so hard on behalf of all of us. This overlapped with the Covid epidemic but once “allowed out,” the Committee at that time ceased holding Zoom meetings and we met in Nowton Park, sitting 2 metres apart and under umbrellas fending off the rain! We were a bit of an odd sight with our flasks, blankets and deck chairs!

Since appointment in March the Committee and I have been busy. We are working to organise visits and experiences for members to enjoy – some already enjoyed! In addition, we are working to ensure that policies, procedures, data collection, membership details and risk management are all compliant with our obligations as Trustees of the Third Age Trust, to whom we are affiliated.

This has been and remains, a substantial amount of work but we are well on our way with these items. It is early days but you have a good Committee, working on your behalf.

My best wishes to you all and have a good summer.

Liz (Chair)

Membership Renewal

I hope you have enjoyed your membership over the last year. We are slowly getting back to normal after the trials of Covid and the new committee is very active in finding interesting talks for our monthly lectures and days out to gardens, theatres and places of interest.

Membership fees are due on 1st June 2023 and we are able to keep the fee at £10.00 per person for another year in spite of increasing costs. Great value.

If you have a standing order in place your bank will send us the money automatically.

If you do not wish to renew please make sure you cancel the standing order yourself as we cannot do so from our end and it is very difficult to send a refund.

Other payment methods are available as follows:

BACS or internet transfer to

Sort Code 09 01 55 Account 9693 5188. Name. The Blackbourne U3A

Please include your name and membership number as the reference.

Cheque. Payable to The Blackbourne U3A. It can be brought to the lecture on 5th June or posted to the Treasurer: Brenda Last, 16 Bishops Croft, Barningham, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 1DX.

Cash. Yes we still take real money and will be happy to collect it from you on 5th June.

Finally, if you have not already done so and are a UK income tax payer please complete a Gift Aid form so that we can collect an extra £2.50 from the Government.

We are currently updating the website so please have a look at it for the latest information and let us know if you have any comments or queries.

Chris Ives, Membership Secretary

My personal journey with sight loss and how our dogs are trained.

GERALDINE McKEAG gave her talk following the A.G.M. in March which was attended by over 140 members, the biggest attendance since before COVID.

Geraldine was working as a nurse when, at the age of 30 she started to suffer sight problems. Tests showed that she had inherited low tension glaucoma. At the age of 40 she had an operation to release pressure on her eyes and by age 45, with two children aged three and six she was registered as sight impaired.

Geraldine was accompanied by her second guide dog SUBBI a German Shepherd that would not work for others.

We were treated to an in depth explanation of the breeding, training and caring of the guide dogs.

The dogs are purpose bred and as young as eight weeks they are given their first assessment and whilst the majority pass this test, those that fail are checked for other tasks such as drug finding. If successful, the puppies are then placed with puppy raisers for twelve months where they receive social training and introduction to all environments. At twelve months they are again assessed and then go on to learn control words and actions like road crossing. This takes between four and six months at which point they are fine tuned for their prospective owner. The owner then has a two week residential training period to form a working relationship..

At the time of placement the dog is about 18 months old and all guide dogs are retired aged ten. This shows the continuing need for more dogs.

Geraldine talked about the special skill of road crossing and assured us that the decision to cross was hers and not the dog's. They stop at the kerbside and she then listens to hear approaching vehicles. Although she thinks it is safe the dog will not allow her to cross if a vehicle is still moving towards them. As Geraldine said we must not assume that slowing down will encourage the dog to allow her to cross. If we see a guide dog at the kerbside we need to stop to allow them to cross and flashing our lights is no good to the blind person. Geraldine is concerned that the introduction of silent electric vehicles will cause her further problems.

COVID 19 has created many problems for guide dog production. The system closed down with no breeding taking place during lockdown. Puppy raisers were unable to train their dogs for social contact and dogs stayed at the same stage in their training. No funds were raised for the charity. At the current time under 400 dogs are in training compared to a normal level of 700 and a target figure of 1000.

I am sure that those lucky enough to hear Geraldine's talk went home much better educated and entertained.

Laurie Marshall

Atrial Fibrillation

Dr John Cannon and Ben Lord presented the subject for April's talk

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a heart condition causing an irregular and often fast heartbeat. The blood is no longer being pumped through the heart in a strong directional manner. This can result in the build-up of "sticky" blood in part of the heart where it can then become detached and move into the body mainly to the brain often causing a catastrophic stroke sometimes resulting in death or otherwise in long term disability resulting in enormous costs to the health services. About 30% of those admitted with a stroke had undiagnosed AF.

The symptoms of AF range from palpitations and tiredness to none. There are two forms, permanent AF and paroxysmal AF (fluctuating from AF to normal). The second type being more difficult to diagnose.

Once AF is diagnosed blood thinners can be prescribed so avoiding the build-up of the sticky

blood. There are now blood thinning drugs (DOACs) that unlike Warfarin do not require routine blood tests. After diagnosis it is important to start on these drugs straightaway and adjust the dose at a later date.

For this reason it is important for AF to be diagnosed. This is mainly done at a pre operation assessment or at a health review. This method is only diagnosing about 1.2% of cases. Ben Lord is an ambassador for the Atrial Fibrillation Association and has received a national award for his activity in screening which is identifying possible cases at a rate of 5.6%. It is not necessary to use a complex heart monitor to screen for the condition, a single line monitor can be used, for example the AliveCor, which is used with a mobile app.

The most important things are, to be aware of the condition, not to ignore the symptoms and be screened should the opportunity arise.

Mary Dunbavin

On Weaver's Way with Chanter's Jigge



Photo by John Sutton

The May meeting, held on Tuesday because of the Bank Holiday on Monday was attended by 76 members and one guest.

The brochure given to everybody gives a very accurate description of Chanter's Jigge when it says "Songs, ayres, jigs and jollies from around the world and across the centuries". However this presentation was focused on the British Isles and included some of Malcolm and Elizabeth Ecclestone's own compositions inspired by their walks along the

Weavers Way between Great Yarmouth and Cromer. These were played using a wide range of musical instruments including a crumhorn, a hurdy gurdy, a mandola, a saxophone and even the bagpipes. The audience was encouraged to join in and sing the choruses.

Some of the instruments were unknown to me and in many cases if I had heard of the instrument I had no idea what it looked like let alone what it sounded like. Certainly a crumhorn fell into this category.

We were entertained to a wide range of songs coupled with several anecdotes. This was a very interesting and entertaining meeting and I am sure that many members left the hall feeling well entertained and Chanter's Jigge had extended the musical knowledge of us all.

Laurie Marshall

Coronation Tea

On Thursday 27th April, 40 members of our U3a enjoyed an afternoon tea at the New Green Centre to celebrate the forthcoming Coronation. It was a lovely afternoon and gave members an opportunity to socialise together. We were entertained by The Wesley Ukes which was a nice way to finish the afternoon with a sing along.

Many thanks to Wendy who made a wonderful celebration cake(see picture) and also to her team who worked hard to provide our lovely tea.

Margaret Knock



Photos by Bob Butler

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monthly Lectures 10.00am New Green Centre

Monday 3 July

Oprah Winfrey Touched my Elbow

Graham Keal

Monday 4 September

Charlie and The Dig

Charlie Haylock

Monday 2 October

My Tutu went AWOL

Iestyn Edwards

Iestyn is a classical bass-baritone/ballerina and award winning one man variety troupe.

Garden Visits

Wednesday July 12 *Norfolk Lavender*

Cost £30

Wednesday August 2 *Hyde Hall*

Cost £28 or £16.60 for RHS members

For details contact Tina Taylor,
tt121@talktalk.net

Theatre Visits

Wednesday 28 June

Aspects of Love

One ticket is still available for this Andrew Lloyd Webber musical starring Michael Ball at the Lyric Theatre, London

The coach leaves the New Green Centre on Wednesday 28 June at 8.00am, travelling to London in time for lunch before the show.

The ticket costs £85 including the coach.

Friday 25 August

Lady in a Van

The Lady in the Van is based on the mostly true story of playwright Alan Bennett's encounters with Mary Shepherd, a crabby, eccentric, homeless woman whom he befriended. Bennett kindly told Miss Shepherd she could park her Bedford van in the driveway of his Camden home "for three months"– she ended up staying 15 years.

This is at the Rutland Open Air Theatre, Toilethorpe Hall, Stamford

Cost £45 including coach

For more information please contact
Margaret Knock, margaret.knock@sky.com

AGM

There were 145 members at the AGM held on Monday 6 March.

The annual accounts were accepted and the proposed constitution was adopted.

The officers and committee for the coming year are as follows.

Chair	Liz Morgan
Vice Chair	Dominique Sutton
Treasurer	Brenda Last
Secretary	Sue Adams
Interest Groups	Geri Collingwood
Membership Secretary	Chris Ives
Minutes Secretary	Bill Blackaby
Names Registrars and Newsletter Distribution	Stephen and Julie Cubitt
Visits Organisers	Tina Taylor and Margaret Knock



Thursday walkers enjoying a May ramble around Whepstead led by Trish and Dave Wilding. Crossing a meadow covered in buttercups some potential new members came across to join us!



Reports and pictures from Interest groups are always welcome, providing a varied content and view of our activities.

They may be sent to bryann@brysuward.plus.com

Deadline for next issue is 22 October