

From your Chairman

A Happy new year to you all and I hope you had a wonderful time over the festive season .

It is that time again when we start pleading for people to step forward at the AGM next month to fill the vacancies that arise due to members having completed their three year term of office.

In particular, we need to fill two important roles – those of Chairman and Treasurer, because without either of them we will not have a Blackbourne U3A.

It is astonishing that, year in, year out, we have to make this plea despite having a membership of 600. I fully appreciate that a number of you have done your turn but there is nothing to stop you coming back on the committee after a year's break.

I am afraid we are like so many organisations these days, struggling to get people to join committees. I also appreciate that we have a membership older now than ever before because we are not attracting younger members and that could be another factor.

So I hope that, when the nomination forms and details of the AGM are available, you give some serious thought about helping to keep this fantastic U3A alive.

Derrick Haley

Notice of Annual General Meeting

To be held in New Green Community Centre, Thurston
at 10am on Monday 4 March 2019

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 5 March 2018*
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts
5. Appointment of Accounts Examiner
6. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and other Committee members
7. Any other Business as previously advised in writing to General Secretary by 11 February 2019
8. Date of next AGM – 2 March 2020

Only BU3A members may vote at this meeting.

*** The Minutes of the 2018 AGM and nomination forms are available on the Blackbourne U3A website**

NO Chairman or Treasurer means

NO Blackbourne U3A means

NO MORE Lecture meetings

NO MORE Theatre visits

NO MORE Educational visits

NO MORE Garden visits

NO MORE Interest groups

DO YOU want to lose all these benefits and the friendship and companionship they provide?

IF NOT, why not step up and volunteer to take on one of these positions?

A Christmas Cracker

OUR December speaker, Vic Botterill, introduced his lecture by explaining that the original Father Christmas was called Odin, a Viking god who was responsible among other things for dispensing goodwill and seasonal gifts. From this myth Christians created St. Nicholas, a fourth century Turkish bishop, who was reputed to have saved three young girls from prostitution, and whom Americans named Santa Claus while the British continued to use the designation Father Christmas.

Traditionally, Father Christmas delivered presents to children who had been good during the year. However, he was accompanied on his rounds by a colleague named Black Peter; in the event that a child had not been good, Father Christmas would put them in a sack which was then carried away to an unknown destination by Black Peter.

Having discussed the origins of Christmas as we know it today, our speaker then amused the audience by relating a number of anecdotes concerning the Christmas festival. One of these

involved the legend of the Christmas spider, in which spiders saved Mary and the Infant Jesus by spinning a web across the mouth of the cave in which they were sheltering and so protecting them from Herod's soldiers.

Another intriguing legend concerned Robin Redbreast. It was said that on the first Christmas Mother Mary asked a robin to revive the embers of the fire in the cave in order to warm Baby Jesus. The robin obliged, but in doing so burned his breast. In response Mary said "From now on, let your red breast be a blessed reminder of your noble deed".

Our speaker then clarified one other source of debate, namely whether it is disrespectful to use the term 'Xmas' as opposed to 'Christmas'. In fact, the "X" comes from the Greek letter "Chi", which in English is "Christ", the "-mas" part originating from the Old English word for "Mass". In short, it is certainly not disrespectful to refer to Xmas!

Howard Chandler

Over paid, Over sexed and Over here

January Speaker: Dr. Geoffrey Kay



The memorial at Knettishall Heath

THOUSANDS of American servicemen were stationed in the UK during World War 2, including many in East Anglia. In 1943 one in seven residents in Suffolk were American and by D Day they numbered 2 million within the UK, with 57,000 of these being located in Norfolk alone. Interestingly, this gave rise to a potential three-way clash as opposed to a two-way clash, since the American GIs were clearly subdivided between whites and blacks.

To assist their cultural adaptation the Americans were provided with guide books advising on such matters as appropriate etiquette in English pubs. Having said which, the social divide within the US ranks was further emphasised by their designating some

hostelries as "white" pubs as opposed to "black" pubs. The local population, on the other hand, were equally welcoming to American GIs of all backgrounds.

American aircrews were 100% white, while black servicemen did much of the heavy lifting, including the construction of many new concrete airstrips throughout East Anglia. The airmen were very young, with some pilots aged only 19 and casualties among this group totalled 26,000 during the course of the War. Fittingly, they are commemorated at several sites in this region, including the American Cemetery at Madingley near Cambridge.

The US servicemen stationed in East Anglia during World War 2 included several well-known celebrities. Among others, they included Glenn Miller, Jimmy Stewart, James Cagney and Joe Louis, considered to be one of the greatest heavyweight boxers of all time.

A significant legacy of the American presence in Britain was the number of War brides who eventually left these shores for a new life in the USA. By the end of the War a total of 70,000 British women had married US servicemen. Additionally, it is estimated that between 1942 and 1952 a million American soldiers married foreign women from 50 different countries, including approximately 100,000 from the UK.

Howard Chandler



EDUCATIONAL VISIT TIME & TIDE MUSEUM GREAT YARMOUTH

DURING our visit to the [Time and Tide Museum](#), located in a Grade 2 listed curing complex built in the 1880s, we learned about the history of the herring trade from its beginnings to its height in the 1950s and its demise in the 1980s. During that period there were as many as 60 such enterprises in Great Yarmouth.

We saw the brine tanks where the process began and then pictures of the women in the riving area where the herring were rinsed, sorted and arranged on spikes ready

for the smokehouse. This consisted of very dark and high chimney like rooms where the fish were placed on louvres by boys and men of all ages climbing these wooden structures – no health and safety in those times!

There is a reconstruction of an alleyway of terraced houses complete with shops and parlours, including a chemist shop and pawnbrokers, not forgetting Alice the cat peering through the curtains to watch passers by.

Throughout the museum there are paintings by local artists depicting scenes of the industry, displays of fifties memorabilia, woolly mammoth tusks, seaside amusements, and if you were so inclined, Victorian bathing costumes to try for size. Some of our group had a go at catching our own fish at one of the exhibits, and also posed for a group photograph as some of the girls who did the work, one or two suspect characters there though!

A very interesting day and lots more to see than you may imagine in this collection of modest red brick buildings just inside the town's medieval city walls.

Linda Wells



The Website

FOR just over ten years Sue Prigg has been running our website but feels the time has come for her to step down.

The current site came into being in 2007 and is now on its fourth or fifth regeneration. Prior to that the site was hosted by a member in his own name.

Although Sue confesses to being a computer junkie she says she learnt “on the job” how to manage a website.

So, a big thank you to Sue for the time she has put in over the ten years.

The website is a vital communication tool for our organisation so it is to be hoped that someone will come forward, perhaps like Sue, to learn on the job.

Bryann Ward

Monthly Lectures

Starting at 10.00am

Refreshments served until 9.45am

Monday 4 March

Capability Brown – an insight into this famous gardener.

Dr. Twiggs Way

Monday 1 April

Hexachordia –

Is that a crumhorn?

An absorbing presentation about musical instruments of the medieval and renaissance eras, featuring live music richly illustrated with paintings of the time.

Sarah Doig

Monday 13 May

Lady Sue Ryder of Warsaw: Single-minded Philanthropist

The provision of homes for those who were damaged by trauma and injury experienced during the Second World War.

Tessa West

Watching Birds

THE year's first visit for the group was to the [Wildfowl and Wetland Trust reserve at Welney](#).

For the first time for some years all of the reserve hides were accessible using the footpaths. This year, the excess water from the Old and New Bedford Rivers was contained within the flood control area, thus attracting thousands of swans, geese, ducks and waders. The reserve is most famous for the hundreds of Whooper swans which fly the 1200 miles non-stop from Iceland to over-winter in the area. Fewer numbers of Bewick's swans migrate from Arctic Russia to Welney and other UK sites to spend their winter with us before returning in the Spring to breed.

Our Group enjoyed a welcome coffee whilst looking over Lady Fen, with very few species of birds on show, except for the many tree sparrows, gold finches and reed buntings on the feeders. We walked over the bridge into the centrally heated main hide where we enjoyed close up views of the whooper and mute swans. These were outnumbered by scores of mainly male pochards. Interestingly, the female pochards migrate further south into France and other parts of mainland Europe. Being female they must know something!!

A very impressive sight was a huge raft of roosting black tailed godwits on a mud bar. A recent count showed around 1700 of these birds on the reserve. Surprisingly these are on the conservation red list but the WWT have had some success in rearing chicks and releasing them on site.

One of the wardens gave an interesting introduction to Sir Peter Scott and the WWT and then talked about the visiting migrant birds on view. The birds were then fed from a wheelbarrow which this year didn't have to be floated out on an inflated car inner tube!

We counted a total of 35 species, marginally boosted by a few waders seen by those who ventured to the outlying hides.

Peter Heath



Whooper swans. Tête à tête. Sheila Hawthorne

The 100th Newsletter

IN the 25 years since Blackbourne U3A was formed there has been a quarterly newsletter and this one is the one hundredth edition.

The first few were compiled and typed by the secretary and available at the monthly meetings.

A member with desktop publishing skills volunteered to take on the task for several years, and tutored the current editor who had no such skills. That was ten years ago.

Initially there was no website nor indeed email. Membership was around 300 and monthly meetings could easily be accommodated in only the main hall at New Green.

Looking back through the previous issues on the website it is interesting to see how the content and style has changed over the years. Until about 2008 there was no logo, nor pictures but there seems to have been more input from the interest groups.

Looking ahead it would be good if **all** interest groups could contribute from time to time to show what an active membership we have. Just a few lines will suffice and photos are welcome too.

Much appreciated are the regular reports of lectures and educational visits but more additional items would be of interest to members. My thanks to all those who have contributed in the past and I look forward to a greater variety in 2019.

Feedback on the layout and content will be welcome but the latter is down to you, the members.

Bryann Ward

Dead line for the May issue is
28 April

Contributions should be sent to:
publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk