



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust

Newsletter

Issue 86

September 2015

From your Chairman

WELCOME to our September newsletter.

I hope you all had a good summer and are now ready for our new year of lectures. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members and hope you too will enjoy the lectures and find some groups to interest yourselves. We will have our Interest Groups' Exhibition in October where you can browse the various activities on offer. These groups are run by members for members, so if a group is full or you do not see one that fits the bill why not talk to Ann Baker, our Interest Group co-ordinator, about starting a new one?

We do have some serious business to address before the Exhibition however. We have been advised by the National Office of The Third Age Trust, our umbrella organisation, that as a local U3A with an annual turnover/income over £5,000, disregarding that of the interest groups, we are obliged to register with The Charity Commission. This we have endeavoured to do, but our Constitution in its present form is not acceptable to the Commission.

In order to overcome this obstacle and ensure that our application for registration will be accepted by the Charity Commission, we have integrated our current Constitution into the model of the U3A. We understand from Lin Jonas (SEO at Third Age Trust) that this should avoid a rejection when we re-submit our application.

The committee have approved the revised Constitution, which may be viewed on our website and, being conscious of their responsibilities, the members of the committee recommend the Constitution to the members. Included in this Newsletter is a notice of a Special General Meeting to be held after the lecture meeting on 5th October to consider the revised Constitution, and if approved, adopt it as our Constitution. For those of you who receive a printed copy of the newsletter, you will also have a copy of the proposed Constitution.

With best wishes to you all, Anne Ling

Interest Groups' Exhibition

19th October 2015
10.30. To 12.30.

Tickets are £3 per person (one free for each interest group) and include homemade refreshments – scones, sausage rolls, tea or coffee. Tickets will be available at the lecture meetings on 7th September and 5th October.

As this is a ticket only event which is quickly sold out it is advisable to purchase tickets early. If you cannot attend the lecture meetings and would like a ticket please contact the Interest Groups Coordinator, Ann Baker – 01359 232161

Membership Cards

THE new year begins with the meeting on 7 September 2015.

Programmes will be available for those of you who did not collect one at the July meeting. A few are also in the rack in the New Green foyer and of course the programme is always available on the website.

New membership badges will be issued at the September meeting. To speed up the booking-in process we have included a barcode of your membership number on the badge which we will be able to scan into a computer. **This makes it doubly important for all members to bring the cards with them at subsequent meetings.**

Chris Ives, Registrar

Notice of a Special General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of a Special General Meeting to be held at New Green Community Centre, Thurston, on Monday, 5th October 2015 at approximately 11.00am (following the monthly lecture) to consider changes to our current Constitution.

A copy of the Constitution with the proposed changes may be seen on our website or from our Secretary, Maxine Wilde – 01359 230842

An Englishwoman's Life in Rural Turkey



JENNY Gibbs, our May speaker, dressed in traditional brightly coloured Turkish costume with very large pantaloons, told us how she fell in love with Turkey. On her first holiday abroad aged 50 she had a Shirley Valentine moment; abandoning work and taking the first bus from the airport she arrived at a quiet bay on the Aegean Sea. She worked in a local restaurant, met the man of her dreams and together they bought a ruined farmhouse in his home village.

Jenny embraced rural Turkish life. Their farmhouse contained neither kitchen nor bathroom. They lived on the first floor – cattle were below. What are beautiful carved beams without a bathroom? But wait, there were many cupboards. Open one and store your fez, another for pipes, one for bedding and then another with a rough marble floor was the bathroom – of course. Showering was two water pitchers dowsing you in your cupboard – water escaped through a corner hole, a surprise for the cattle below. The toilet was an outhouse containing a plank with a hole in it. Cooking was outside on a trivet set in a fire and your baklava was baked in the communal oven on the street corner. Friendly neighbours gave Jenny seeds in a handkerchief to germinate which were tucked under her armpit for warmth. Opening the package three weeks later she discovered she had hosted a seething mass of 2000 silkworm grubs.

The seasons govern village life. In summer everyone moves their cattle to higher pastures, living in yurts and in autumn they join the olive harvest, sleeping squashed nose-to-tail in a shepherd's hut.

Jenny experienced Turkey on the cusp of change. Today young people are deserting these villages for Western-style urbanity. Jenny's stories keep open forgotten cupboards of a life fast disappearing.

Carole Curtis

Round the World on a Container Ship



GOT three months to spare? How about touring the world on container ships piled high with TEU containers (20ft Equivalent Units) and at around £90 per day – a bargain! Peter Hesketh, our June speaker, abandoned his relieved wife and set off from Southampton to do just this.

He embarked on CMA CGM Thalassa, one of the largest container ships, which sailed regularly between the UK and China. Little drawbacks such as limited deck space, dicing with cranes, swinging containers and paraphernalia associated with a working cargo ship

were a challenge. In storm-tossed Zeebrugge, the ship's fire alarms sounded and Peter was horrified to see the ship loose and drifting across the harbour with four tugs valiantly trying to push it back. The bridge is towards the rear and the captain's closest view is half a mile ahead. Woe betide any vessel that cuts across the bows as they may be run down – although no-one admits this.

Off Somalia the ship was locked down and tension palpable. Ship's rails were festooned in razor wire and power jets stood ready to ward off Somali pirates. It must have been a relief to reach Shanghai docks even though the Chinese had moved the docks 22 miles out to sea. In Hong Kong he boarded CMA CGM Georgia. A long, narrow ship with an unhappy atmosphere, it wallowed across the Pacific in foggy, cold weather and Peter was relieved to reach that supreme feat of engineering – the Panama Canal. With very little clearance, mechanical mules guided them safely through the locks.

His final voyage from Savannah was happier accompanied by flocks of pelicans and frigate birds swooping for flying fish. Despite Atlantic fog round Newfoundland he still completed his circumnavigation, landing at Felixstowe! His blog: www.travelpod.com 'TEU World Tour' is fascinating.

Carole Curtis

Bats of East Anglia

NO belfries – but members were treated at our July meeting to bald baby Pipistrelle bats emerging from a flannelette pouch and a deaf, fully grown Noctule bat, all handled by Libby Ranzetta from Bury Bat Rescue (BSEbatrescue.org.uk).

John Pardon, a consultant ecologist, licensed to work with all bats, gave the talk. Bat fossils exist from 52 million years ago but John said bats might be even older as moth fossils (distinguished by their antenna) on which bats feed have been found from 100 million years ago. Although bat physiology with its webbed arms and hooks as thumbs is similar to mammals, bat DNA proves they are not mammal related but had a parallel evolution.

East Anglian bats are a micro species with lovely names, such as Natterer's, Noctule and Pipistrelle. Most weigh between 5 to 10 grams which makes sense as fat bats can't fly. All bats

have large appetites, eating up to 3,000 insects per night. They are nocturnal and are seen at dusk flying out from their roost. The different species of bat may be identified by the frequency of their echo location. This is usually inaudible to the human ear although young children, and curiously, pregnant females, may hear the bat calls. Bats mate in the autumn, hibernate and give birth in spring to a single pup.

John told us that sadly their roosts are disappearing and when he dealt with a complaint of bats roosting in a church, he pointed out that the nearby barn conversion was the bats' former home. It is a challenge to preserve trees, hedges and buildings for these wonderful creatures and gardeners should be pleading 'Come friendly bats and eat all those pesky mosquitoes and other destructive insects!'

Carole Curtis

Then and Now Group

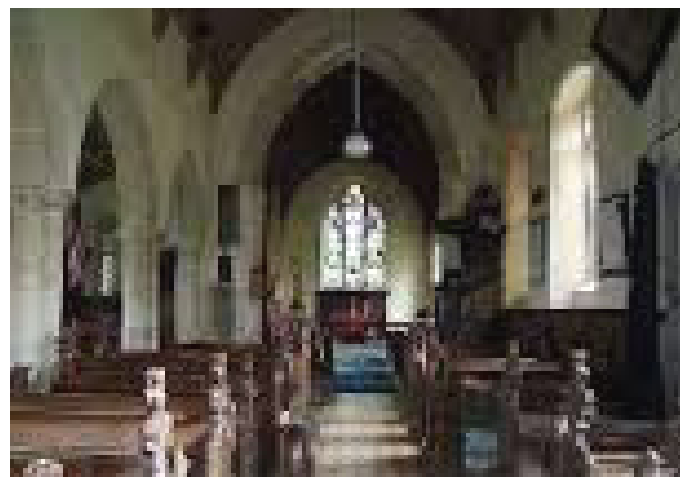
Brian and Barbara Milner stepped down as convenors of the Then and Now Group in December 2014 after six very successful years. Doug Cox took over as convenor, with Judith Constantine as secretary. Since then the group has enjoyed a variety of interesting talks on local history and the world in which we live today.

We recalled our childhood seaside outings in January with a demonstration of traditional Punch and Judy shows by Peter Battey who explained how the puppets are made and what happens inside the striped tent. In February Doug Cox told us about the development of air traffic control systems from the 1950s – a vital service that we tend to take for granted when jetting off on our holidays today. Pip Wright, local writer and historian, came in March with his collection of stories from old newspapers over 300 years which gave us an insight into the everyday lives of ordinary people who lived and worked in Suffolk.

In April we learned about the work of the River Gipping Trust whose volunteers are restoring the Stowmarket navigation canal which used to be navigable from Ipswich to Mendlesham. Bryan Thurlow, an actor, 'relived' the childhood of Billy Jackson when he was evacuated to an East Anglian farm during World War II in May. The following month we enjoyed an outing to Bentwaters airfield and the Cold War museum where we saw various aircraft being restored and discovered how our country was kept safe during that tense era.

Pip Wright entertained us again in July with the story of John Steggall, otherwise known as 'The Suffolk Gipsy'. Born in 1798 in Needham Market, John Steggall, son of a country curate, began his varied career when he joined a group of gypsies in Walsham le Willows. His adventures with them, his voyages as a ship's surgeon and finally his life as the parson in Great Ashfield are described in his

book *The Suffolk Gipsy*, first published in 1856. On this occasion we gathered at Great Ashfield village hall for the talk, then visited All Saints' Church where we saw the pulpit from which Revd Steggall preached his sermons for 50 years.



All Saints Church, Great Ashfield

Members also spent some time looking at the USAAF 385th. Bombardment Group memorial altar and window commemorating the airmen who flew the B17 'flying fortress' bombers from Great Ashfield Airfield from 1943 to 1945. Veterans used to visit regularly, and 70 years on their children and grandchildren still maintain links with the village.

New members are welcome to join the group which meets at 2pm on the fourth Thursday of the month at Great Barton village hall. For more information visit Then and Now Group on the BU3A website or phone Doug Cox on 01359 240186

Doug Cox and Judith Constantine

Educational Visits

The Regeneration of East London

JUNE'S educational visit was to see and learn about the changes that have taken place over recent decades to east London.

We were joined at the start by Clair, an official guide, who outlined the changes that have taken place to the area since the last war as we motored down the A12. First stop, for coffee, was at the Thames Barrier gardens where we had a good view of the barrier.

We then journeyed on to Canary Wharf. Vessels originally unloaded their cargo in the Pool of London where pilfering was rife but as trade grew it became necessary to establish larger more secure docks down river and the Royal Docks were established. Despite being badly damaged during the war the docks continued operating until 1981 when they moved to Tilbury. The area was then redeveloped and the tall buildings we know as Canary Wharf arose, built over acres of water.

After driving through the maze of streets we moved on to the Isle of Dogs, on the southern tip of the peninsular, with views across the Thames to the Naval college of Greenwich. What a difference! The community here had insisted on being involved in its redevelopment with the result that there are no high rise buildings and many of the old buildings still stand. Neighbourhood spirit is very much in evidence.

Back to Canary Wharf for a lunch break but sadly not time to do justice to the Docklands museum and then on to Stratford and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

This was another area that suffered badly in the war due to the bombing of the engineering works situated there. One of our group lived there as a child and remembers her father taking her to his place of work where he was a boiler maker for the steam locomotives built there.

Since the Olympics and with the involvement of the local community, the park is now being transformed into a place for everyone to enjoy. The swimming pool and velodrome remain for all to make use of. We walked through the imaginatively landscaped gardens making our way to the ArcelorMittal Orbit, the UK's tallest sculpture, which we climbed for magnificent views towards Canary Wharf and the City.



Lowestoft Museums – 27 July

OUR first stop was the Lowestoft Maritime Museum, set in the Sparrow's Nest Gardens, and voted Suffolk's Museum of the Year in 2012 and a finalist in 2014.

There are numerous displays featuring model boats and recreations of scenes from the past with hands on activities for all. A tiny cinema shows archive films and a wheelhouse where you can listen in to live VHF transmissions from passing ships.

Historically the main employment was the fishing industry, the catch consisting mostly of herring. Using drift nets, hauling in the catch was exhausting work and took several hours with a large catch taking all day. The fish were then stored in the trawler's hold and sold by auction on their return to the harbour.



During the herring season, Scottish women (locally known as "Scotch Lassies") came to Lowestoft to work gutting the fish. The herring were gutted in seconds with small sharp knives before being tossed into trays or barrels. Some were smoked in local smoke houses to become kippers or bloaters, others were packed into barrels between layers of salt to be sent inland by train or

exported to Northern Europe.

The catch was sold by the "Cran" which was a measure of 1000 fish and a quarter cran basket, which held about 250 fish is on display. These baskets had to be measured and marked with an official stamp proving that they were the correct size.

Lowestoft also has a long history of boat and ship building which employed over two thousand in the 1930s but their days were numbered and by the 1990s most shipyards had closed with production having moved abroad.

After lunch we went to Oulton Broad to visit the Lowestoft Museum in Broad House, Nicholas Everitt Park.

Here there are several collections of archaeological treasures and of fossils from the area. Also an collection of paintings by local artists and a display which evokes memories of the Eastern Coach Works and Pye electronics.

The museum is particularly famous for it's collection of the blue and white Lowestoft Porcelain, of which there are a large number of display cabinets containing vases, tea sets, christening cups and also a small selection of animals. The porcelain itself is very valuable and rarely appears on the market so watch out for it at car boot sales.

Linda Wells

Watching Birds

IN June members of the group had a short residential trip to Bempton Cliffs, Yorkshire, perhaps the most accessible sea bird colony in Britain.



*Courting Gannets
Tony Sear*

A walkway enables great views from the 400ft cliffs of the nesting sites of many birds that only touch down on land for breeding from February to early summer – 4000 Gannets (the only mainland colony in Britain), 45000

Guillemots not to mention the iconic Puffins and their young.

An afternoon boat trip around the base of the cliffs gave us different views of the seabirds, gannets circling lazily on their 6ft wing spans before landing at their nests.

On the way back to Suffolk we stopped for an interesting walk round Blacktofts reserve on the Humber estuary where the star bird seen by some was a Montague Harrier.

Tony Sear

Membership Badges

When attending monthly lecture meetings and appropriate interest group meetings, will members please ensure that name badges are worn. This makes it easier for Convenors to keep a record.

OLE

Members of the Spanish group enjoying end of term tapas



Theatre Visits Group

IN May 49 members of our group went to the Prince Edward Theatre in London to see the new version of 'Miss Saigon'. It was an excellent performance although the volume was a bit too much at times!

Southwold was the July destination for an early evening performance of 'How The Other Half Loves' by Alan Ayckbourn, a classic comedy, very well produced. It was a lovely summer's day and after lunch



several of us had an afternoon tour of the famous lighthouse. There were a lot of stairs to climb but the views from the top made the effort worthwhile.

In August we had a trip to Stratford upon Avon to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre to see 'The Merchant of Venice'. For some of us it was our first visit to the theatre since it was rebuilt and what an amazing experience! It was a young cast, in modern costume, performing on a stage with virtually no props, to an audience sitting on three sides of the stage – what a superb performance. For twelve of the cast this was their debut with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Our autumn programme includes J B Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' at Cambridge Arts Theatre on Wednesday 7 October and Northern Ballet's performance of Tchaikovsky's 'Nutcracker' at the Theatre Royal, Norwich on Thursday 26 November.

Phillip Webber

BOOK REVIEW

by Stella Chamberlin

"Spirals in Time– The Secret Life & Curious Afterlife of Seashells" by Helen Scales

The author is a marine biologist and tutor at the University of Cambridge, who has travelled extensively to further her studies on all things to do with our vast seas and oceans. She has presented documentaries on topics such as whether people will ever live underwater, the science of surfing and the intricacies of sharks' minds.

Seashells are the sculpted homes of molluscs – a remarkable group of animals which are some of our planet's most ancient and successful – and their fascinating tales and intricate associations with our own species are told with assurance and humour by this natural storyteller. Although some molluscs can kill you, this has not stopped people using shells in many ways over thousands of years as jewellery, currency, and food.

So many remarkable things are being learnt from molluscs – advances in engineering (extra-strong glue and building materials) and medicine (drugs and possible treatments for a variety of serious illnesses). The book tells us that shells are also bellwethers of our impact on the natural world but, rather than dwelling on what we risk losing, Helen urges us to ponder how seashells can reconnect us with nature.

Coincidentally, for a keen Scrabble player like myself, it contains some fabulous words – wampum, quahog, phyla, moai, dalasi, murex, and capiz, to name but a few. Perhaps our Programme Secretary can book Helen for a future BU3A lecture.

Published by Bloomsbury Sigma, ISBN 978-1-4729-1136-0.
Also available in paperback and ebook. £16.99, or order from your library.



Monthly Meetings

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

Monday 5 October
***Scott, Amundsen and the
Race to the Pole***
Robert Burrridge

Monday 19 October
10.30 am
Interest Groups' Exhibition

Monday November 2
The Coast of East Anglia
David Simmons

Monday Dec 7
The Road to Mandalay
John Wilkin.

Thelnetham Windmill

During their walks this year both Thursday and Friday longer walks groups have passed by this mill which stands on the edge of Thelnetham Fen.

Dating from 1819, it is one of only four preserved tower mills in Suffolk. While working successfully during the 19th. century, its condition deteriorated badly during the early 20th. century, and it had become effectively derelict by 1926.

It was purchased for restoration by mill enthusiasts in 1979 who managed to complete this work by 1987, and the mill that can be visited today is the result of this restoration.

The remaining open days this year are 12/13th. September and 11th. October

Produced by Bryann Ward
Printed by Profile Business Supplies,
Bury St Edmunds
Contributions please to:
publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk
**Copy deadline for December issue is
22 November**