



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust
Registered Charity No. 1165448

Newsletter

Issue 93

May 2017

From your Chairman

For those of you who did not attend the AGM in March let me introduce myself. My name is Derrick Haley and I have been a member for many years and for the last year a committee member. How did I end up becoming chairman? We did not have a General Secretary and our constitution requires us to have one otherwise there would not be a U3A. Stella Chamberlain who would have been elected chairman decided to forego that opportunity and take up the post of secretary **for one year only** so that we could continue. We owe her a big thank you. It is therefore very important that during the current year we find somebody prepared to take up the secretary's job otherwise the same situation will arise and we could close. When you consider we have 627 members why cannot we find a suitable person amongst the membership?

A big thank you must go to those who have stepped down from last year's committee and to the volunteers who make the tea and coffee and certainly not least those who set up the hall ready for our meeting. We had 221 members plus one visitor for our AGM and the lecture which meant we were almost up to our capacity of 250.

The lecture by Rob Spray, "Hidden Treasures of East Anglia's Secret Sea", was very enjoyable and members had lots of questions.

I hope my committee and I will serve you well in the coming year.

Best wishes to you all.

Derrick Haley

Your new Committee

Chairman

Derrick Haley 01359 230251

Vice Chairman

John Sutton 01359 231419

General Secretary

Stella Chamberlain 01359 242601

Treasurer

Peter Seager 01449 673620

Membership Secretary

Teri Carpenter 01359 408457

Lecture Secretary

Alan Crouch 01359 241835

Interest Groups Co-ordinators

Mary Dunbavin 01359 233045

Di Finney 01359 232578

Names Registrar and newsletter distribution

Chris Ives 01359 231746

Monthly lecture reports

Howard Chandler 01359 230404

Membership Renewal

Members paying by Standing Order are reminded that the annual subscription of £10 per person will be taken from their account on the 1st June 2017.

If for any reason you **do not** wish to renew your membership, please cancel your Standing Order and advise me as soon as possible, by contacting me by telephone 01359 408457 or e-mail tericarpenter19@gmail.com so that your place can be offered to someone on the waiting list.

For those few members who pay by cash or cheque there will be no further reminders. The Treasurer, Peter Seager, and other committee members will be at the lecture meetings in May, June and July to collect renewal payments. Alternatively your cheque (payable to Blackbourne U3a) can be sent by post to Peter Seager at 8 Netherhall Close, Old Newton, Stowmarket, IP14 4RP.

Please note that if any renewal payment has not been received by the end of July meeting, it shall be assumed that you do not wish to renew your membership and therefore your place will be offered to someone on the waiting list.

Teri Carpenter, Membership Secretary

AGM Report

THERE were 209 members present at the AGM held on 6 March, .

The outgoing chairman, Anne Ling, thanked all those actively involved in running BU3A and for the support of members generally. Peter Seager in particular had been involved in setting up gift aid for our subscriptions now that we are a registered charity. It had been difficult to form a committee and members were once again urged to put themselves forward for committee or group leaders.

Treasurer, Peter Seager, presented the accounts which showed a surplus for the year of £236 increasing total funds to £5283.

The committee members for the forthcoming year were elected as shown above.

The Vikings.

OUR speaker at the February meeting was an old friend of the U3A, retired police officer Richard Burrige, whose topic on this occasion was The Vikings. For those of us of a certain age the very title of the talk conjured up visions of the 1958 film of the same



name starring Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis. However, we were soon to learn that the reality was not quite as Hollywood would have us believe. The Vikings were not all tall and blond, did not wear helmets with horns on the side and did not fight with steel swords, as it was unlikely the average Viking could have afforded one.

The Vikings (inlet-dwellers) came from the fjords of Scandinavia, where the shortage of arable land caused them to venture out to sea and to other lands in search of food and trade – the pillage and plunder only came later. They had ample supplies of timber and became expert at building long, flat-bottomed boats. The Vikings were superb seafarers and navigators and ventured far and wide to places such as Peru and Russia and even reached North America

long before Columbus.

In 793 AD the Vikings invaded the North of England and liked it so much they decided to stay and eventually settled in much of eastern England including East Anglia, so the chances are that there were a few descendants of

Vikings attending the meeting. The Viking age began to peter out following the Norman invasion of 1066 when there was a change in culture as the power of Royalty and Christianity began to exert themselves

Although the Viking age was comparatively short-lived, there are many reminders still with us today such as place names ending in ‘by’ (small town) and ‘thorp’ (place in the woods) derived from old Norse words. Institutions such as Trial by Jury and the Manx Parliament also originate from the Vikings.

A fascinating talk, which brought us right up to date when we learned that even in today’s hi-tech world the Vikings are not forgotten, as Bluetooth is named after an old Viking King.

Peter Lester

The Sea and Suffolk – an Historian’s View

THE speaker in March, William Tyler, provided an entertaining account of the significance of Suffolk in maritime history.

In 1200 Ipswich obtained a charter which entitled it to control its own trade, enabling it to export wool, cheese, meat, lard and peas, while imports included coal, salt, wine, marble, leather and iron. Ipswich remained a major port until the late nineteenth century when Lowestoft, and later Felixstowe, began to grow.

In the eighteenth century Suffolk’s proximity to the Continent and its somewhat inaccessible coastline also made it a centre of smuggling, popular smuggled goods being tea, lace and brandy. So popular was smuggling among all classes that it was deemed that “everyone was at it”.

Fishing was also a key industry, especially the herring trade in Lowestoft which had its own fleet. However, the advent of steam powered ships that could travel further led to a decline in the herring industry as stocks diminished. Consequently, many

fishermen left Lowestoft to work in Hull and Grimsby.

Others, however, stayed and turned their hands to tourism, which in the twentieth century was being boosted by the railways. Not only Lowestoft, but also Great Yarmouth, Southwold and Felixstowe grew as tourist centres.

Strategically, Suffolk has always been in the front line during many wars. In 1672 nearly 4,000 seamen were killed in Sole Bay, Southwold, during the Anglo/Dutch War, and in World War Two the town was again a frontline town, the beach being mined, guns installed and beach huts being scattered over the Common to deter enemy gliders.

Finishing on a somewhat whimsical note, our speaker mentioned that the wife of Kaiser Wilhelm II stayed at Felixstowe with her five children in 1891. She was so enamoured with the donkeys that she and their owner took them back to Berlin where they stayed for several months before returning to Suffolk!

Howard Chandler

Educational Visits

There have been two educational visits since the last newsletter and full details can be seen on our website. The following are edited versions of Linda Wells' comprehensive reports.

Kenwood House and Highgate Cemetery



On a chilly January morning we started our day by visiting Kenwood House, now under the care of English Heritage.

The original house, on the northern side of Hampstead Heath, dates from the early 17th century and in 1754 it was bought by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield. The house was remodelled by Robert Adam between 1764 and 1779 to include one of his most famous interiors – the Great Library. As part of a major refurbishment between 2012 and 2013 the library was restored to its original colour scheme.

Edward Cecil Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh, and of the Guinness family, bought the house from the Mansfield family in 1925 and left it to the nation upon his death in 1927. He also bequeathed his collection of paintings by various artists including Rembrandt, Turner, Vermeer and Gainsborough and a large number of these are displayed in the rooms throughout the house.

The house is set in beautiful parkland and gardens containing sculptures by Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Eugene Dodiégne. Had it not been foggy we would have been able to enjoy extensive views towards the city of London.

In the afternoon we went to [Highgate Cemetery](#), one of the earliest private cemeteries in England. The original West Cemetery opened in 1839 but doubled in size with the purchase of 19 acres to create the East Cemetery in 1860 which we were able to visit.

Cemeteries became a tourist attraction early on, as people admired the memorials and the epitaphs, which were thought to improve their reading.

Some of the more famous 'residents' include Karl Marx, political philosopher and revolutionary socialist, Sir Ralph Richardson and Corin Redgrave, actors, William Foyle, founder of Foyles Bookshop, Jeremy Beadle, Max Wall, and Bruce Reynolds, the mastermind of the Great Train Robbery.

Downham Market and Kings Lynn

The educational visit at the end of March started with a visit to the Heritage Centre, Downham Market, housed in the former fire station and run by volunteers who kindly provided us with light refreshments. Here we were able to learn the history of the area and that the nickname “Gingerbread Town” is due to the large number of red brick buildings built with the local carrstone. A prominent feature of the town is its clock, presented in 1878 by a local businessman, James Scott.

We then went on to Kings Lynn. Originally in the manor of the bishop of Norwich it was called Bishop's Lynn, changing its name to Kings Lynn when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries.

There are several historic buildings to be seen dating back to when the town was one of England's important trading ports and a member of the Hanseatic League – an influential trading association of towns around the Baltic and North Sea.

The Customs House (now the Tourist Information Centre with elegant rooms above portraying the trading history) was built in 1683 as a merchant's house and converted to the Customs House in 1717.

The Guildhall of St George, built in the 1430s, is the largest surviving English medieval guildhall in England. Once a theatre, it is now used as an arts centre and owned by the National Trust.

Our last port of call was to St Nicholas' Chapel which was opened specially for the group so that we could view the “angel roof” which was the subject of a recent talk given to us by Michael Rimmer at New Green.



Town clock, Downham Market

Hidden Treasures of East Anglia's Secret Sea

ROB SPRAY, our April speaker, has a keen interest in marine conservation and started diving 17 years ago. He and his partner, Dawn Watson, are Eastern Coordinators for Seasearch which commissions amateur divers to conduct seabed surveys. It is easier to conduct this work off the Norfolk coast than the Suffolk coast because the Suffolk seabed is much murkier as a result of the underlying strata.

Underwater nature is very different from nature on land. On the surface gravity dominates and animals are shy; underwater, gravity does not dominate, personal space is relative and animals tend to ignore you.

So, what does one see? In terms of smaller sea creatures, the answer includes gobies, 300 varieties of sea slugs and many varieties of crustaceans, including crabs, barnacles, prawns and shrimps. In terms of larger creatures, the answer is wrasse, bib, hermit crabs and the common lobster (which can live for up to 70 years).

Three sea creatures have somewhat unique characteristics. Firstly, the velvet crab remains virtually stationary, eats anything - including sewage - and periodically changes its shell, with the male crab guarding the female crab during the process. Secondly, barnacles attach themselves to available surfaces by their heads and catch food with their feet! Thirdly, the peacock fan worm lives on the seabed and is equipped with a tube (made of mucus and food waste) that enables it to catch food above the sea bed.

Our speaker stressed that marine exploration and conservation is extremely important because so much of underwater life is never normally seen.

Howard Chandler

Mah Jong 2



TWELVE BU3A members recently attended a five session beginners course in the ancient Chinese game of Mah Jong. Most of the members were complete beginners although a few had played a little before.

A new interest group, Mah Jong 2, has been formed and will meet on a monthly basis in members' homes at present although we may move to a hired hall if numbers increase.

We would welcome new members who have at least a basic knowledge of the game – unfortunately as novices ourselves we do not have the expertise to teach new players. Anyone wishing to learn how to play can register an interest with a view to us running another beginners' course when we have sufficient numbers.

If you would like more information please email us at mail@chrisandcarol.co.uk

Chris and Carol Ives

Deadline for September issue is 20 August. Contributions please to:
publisher@blackbourne-u3a.org.uk

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Monthly Lectures

Monday 5 June. **Boudica.**

Nick Sign presents and questions the well known story of the rebellion against the Romans, led by the queen of the Iceni. Beginning with the origins of her name and the many different images of her produced over several centuries, the lecture examines the nature of the surviving evidence and some recent publications to separate myth from probability and to offer an alternative view of those terrible events.

Monday 3 July. **Lasers**

The Light Fantastic by Dr Stephen Ashworth

There is no meeting in August

Monday 4 September.

Chocolate.

Tony Diamond uncovers the hidden delights of this confection.

Annual Convenors' Meeting and Luncheon

Monday 19th June, 12noon – 2.30pm at the Cavendish Hall, Church Road, Thurston

Invitations have been sent to all Convenors and Group Leaders (or their Deputies) who do such an excellent job in running our many and varied interest groups, which are the backbone of our U3A and much appreciated by all members.

This is a great opportunity for all our convenors to get together and share their views on anything and everything to do with running their particular group, as well as Interest Group matters in general. The committee feels this is also a good chance to thank them for all their hard work over the past year.

Please could Convenors/Group Leaders **reply by 5 June at the latest** to their invitation and remember to wear their name badges on the day as an 'aide-memoire'.

Mary Dunbavin