



# Newsletter

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From your Chairman

YES, it's that time of year again when the good ship BU3A sets sail on another 12 month voyage of friendship and discovery. This year will be rather special as we celebrate 25 years as an independent U3A, a milestone which will be marked by a small celebration later in the year, of which more details later.

As I welcome all those who have renewed their membership for another year (and hopefully have received new badges, and programmes), I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new members, many of whom have been waiting for months to join our happy band. It is interesting that we have quite a list of potential new members, whilst I notice that other U3A's in our locality frequently advertise for new members in parish magazines etc. Perhaps we are doing something right at BU3A – let's hope so anyway.

As usual, thanks are due to our hardworking Committee, without whom none of this would happen. If I could just put in a word on behalf of our door stewards, could you please, please remember to bring your membership cards to our monthly meetings as it makes the checking-in process so much easier and quicker.

Particularly, but not exclusively, for the benefit of our new members, an event is being arranged to take place in January at which Interest Group Convenors will be present to discuss details of their activities, dates, times, places etc. Details of this event will be publicised later.

So let's get on with new programme, make our new members welcome and make our Silver Jubilee year a special one.  
Best wishes,

Peter Lester

## Lady Sue Ryder of Warsaw

OUR May speaker, Tessa West, is a biographer of Sue Ryder and provided a detailed account of her life. Sue Ryder was born in Leeds in 1924, where her father had connections with Tetley's Brewery. Following the Great Depression in 1934 the Ryder family moved to Great Thurlow in Suffolk and Sue attended Benenden School in Kent.

At the outbreak of World War II in 1939 she volunteered to join the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (aka FANY) even though she was only 15 and was soon assigned to the Polish section of the Special Operations Executive, where her role was to drive Polish pilots to the airfield from which they would take off for their assignments in Europe.

After the War she moved home to Cavendish in Suffolk and commenced doing relief work, including some in Poland. With very clear ideas of how she wanted to help the less fortunate she established the Sue Ryder Foundation (later renamed Sue Ryder Care) in 1953. Its work included the establishment of a home for concentration camp survivors and the provision of nursing care for the elderly and disabled. Sue Ryder Care operates more than 800 homes worldwide, has approximately 500 high street shops and employs more than 8,000 volunteers.

In 1959 Sue married Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, founder of the UK charity Leonard Cheshire Disability, and together they both became Roman Catholic converts. In 1956 she was the subject of 'This is your Life', the publicity from which contributed significantly to her many charitable projects. In 1979 she was made a life peer, being created Baroness Ryder of Warsaw and thereby reflecting her Polish connections.

Somewhat sadly, in 1998 Sue severed her links with Sue Ryder Care following a dispute with the other trustees concerning the aims and principles of the Foundation. Subsequently she established the Bouverie Foundation to continue her own vision of charitable works.

This remarkable woman died in Bury St. Edmunds in 2000 and was buried in Cavendish alongside her late husband.

Howard Chandler

## Monthly Lectures

### Monday 7 October

From Toy Town to Buckingham Palace

John Stirling

From the age of ten, actors and artists have been John's life, whether appearing alongside them or directing and producing them. The story of his life culminating in a private audience with her Majesty with two donkeys, his wife and dog.

### Monday 4 November

Wimbledon – Tales of a line judge

Wendy Smith

Wendy Smith has been a line judge and umpire at Wimbledon for 35 years and has umpired at the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics as well as national and international tournaments.

### Monday 2 December

The History of Spoken English

Charlie Haylock

Charlie Haylock is one of Suffolk's leading entertainers. His informative and hilarious one-man shows are legendary in the county.

**After this talk there will be a celebration of the 25th anniversary of Blackbourne U3A.**

## The Wonders of Fish

DOCTOR Scales, our June Speaker, introduced her lecture with two significant statistics, namely that 70% of our planet consists of water and that fish are the predominant living species in the world. Specifically, there are over 30,000 types of fish, which are characteristically extremely diverse and capable of surviving in many different environments.

Some fish are capable of travelling immense distances, an example being the Bluefin Tuna which has been recorded as swimming 40,000 kilometres in a period of 20 months. By contrast, the Stonefish rarely ventures from a single location in which it remains stationary, camouflaged, and feeds on passing smaller fish.

Fish are frequently characterised as being smelly and boring and as possessing poor memories. However, there are many examples which prove this not to be the case. The Frill Fin Goby, for instance, learns the shape of the seashore in which it lives, which enables it to escape from predators when the tide recedes by jumping into a neighbouring pool. Another exemplar is the Cleaner Wrasse, which feeds on

parasites from larger fish, a process that simultaneously provides food for the Wrasse and health benefits for the fish on which they feed.

Dr. Scales posed the question "What are fish?". The answer is that there are several classes of fish within their family tree, including Hagfish, Sharks, Sturgeon and Teleosts, the latter comprising the overwhelming majority of fish. The essential defining characteristic of a fish, however, is that it possesses a backbone.

In conclusion, Dr. Scales illustrated that fish have numerous innate abilities. Among these is the ability to generate electricity, exemplified by the Electric Eel. Additionally, and of major significance, is the ability in some cases to produce and emit light through a process known as bioluminescence, an invaluable ability for fish that inhabit the so-called Midnight Zone in the world's oceans, namely waters which are over 1,000 metres in depth.

*Howard Chandler*

## The Race to the Moon



AT the outset of his presentation our July speaker, Rick Shepperston, stated that there have been a number of conspiracy theories that the moon landing had never actually taken place, including one assertion that the entire event had been staged in an airplane hangar in Arizona! The remainder of his talk proved conclusively that there was incontrovertible

evidence that man had, indeed, set foot on the moon.

The race to the moon began effectively in the 1950s and was contested throughout by the USA and the USSR. The three key elements in the struggle for supremacy were two rocket engineers (Werner von Braun versus Sergei Korolev), four presidents (Eisenhower and Kennedy/Johnson versus Khrushchev and Brezhnev) and six space programmes (Mercury, Gemini and Apollo versus Vostok, Voskhod and Soyuz).

In the years from 1957, when the Soviet Union launched the first artificial Earth satellite in the form of Sputnik I, through to 1969, when Apollo II landed on the moon, both

nations were vying for supremacy in the space race. Significant dates in these years included:

- 1958 - the formation of NASA and a team of seven US astronauts
- 1960 - US development of the Apollo Project and Soviet launch of Sputnik 5 sending two dogs into space
- 1961 - Yuri Gagarin becomes first human to go into outer space
- 1962 - Kennedy commits USA to put a man on the moon
- 1963 - Valentina Tereshkova becomes first woman in space
- 1967 - Apollo 1 disaster, with astronauts Grissom, White and Chaffee being killed
- 1968 - Apollo 7 becomes first US mission to carry a crew into space; Yuri Gagarin dies in a flying accident

Finally, in 1969 the Apollo 11 mission captured headline news when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped onto the surface of the moon. Notwithstanding this historical event, space travel and exploration continue to develop, with the establishment of the International Space Station in 1998 culminating in the replacement of US/Soviet space rivalry with a truly joint venture.

*Howard Chandler*

## Theatre visits group

MEMBERS enjoyed a picnic in the grounds of the Rutland Open Air Theatre, Tolethorpe Hall before a most entertaining and professional production of Twelfth Night by the [Stamford Shakespeare Company](#). The company has been in existence for 50 years and since 1977 their base has been at Tolethorpe Hall. Three different productions each year are performed during the summer months and maybe Philip can be persuaded to arrange a similar outing next year.



## Educational Visits

### DOVER CASTLE 20 MAY 2019

THE fortifications at Dover have protected the English Coast for over 2000 years. Henry II built the present castle in 1180-89 and during the course of the next 800 years it was adapted to meet the changing demands of weapons and warfare.

There are numerous areas to explore above and below ground. One of these is Operation Dynamo in the tunnels beneath the castle. With a mixture of original film footage, special effects and projections, the story is told how Vice Admiral Ramsey organised the rescue of 338,000 troops from Dunkirk in just 10 days in 1940.

Within the tunnels there is the Underground Hospital where you can follow the journey of a wounded soldier, accompanied with the smells and sounds of WWII.

You can walk around the ramparts discovering Avranches Tower with lovely views and, overlooking the harbour, the Fire Command Post and Port War Signal Station where you can learn about the role it played in the first World War.

In the grounds is the church of St Mary-in-Castro, a heavily restored Saxon structure built next to a Roman lighthouse which became the church bell tower. St Mary still serves the local population and is the church of the Dover Garrison.



Climb Henry II's Great Tower for more stunning views over the harbour and town of Dover. Inside the Tower there are room recreations and on visiting one of the bedrooms we wondered why the beds all seemed rather short. We were told that in those times people did not sleep lying down but propped up with a bolster and pillows so they did not inhale the fumes from open fires and other unpleasant smells. There was also a superstition that laying down with your mouth open, may have led people to believe that you had died in the night and that the devil had stolen your soul!

*Linda Wells*

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### **THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM and THE POSTAL & MAIL RAIL MUSEUMS August 5 2019**



THE [Supreme Court](#) is housed in a grade II listed building opposite the Houses of Parliament. It was built in 1913 and used by Middlesex County Council until 1965 for council meetings and administration. The Supreme Court was established in 2005 and the building was chosen as its home. Following a

major renovation, it was opened by the Queen in October 2009.

We were given a guided tour of the three courtrooms which look different from those in lower courts as there are no dock or witness stands. Trials to decide innocence or guilt are not held here but points of law are discussed and the courtrooms are designed to encourage an atmosphere of learned debate. The Court plays an important role in the interpretation and development of the law, making decisions that are relevant to everyday lives and that help to shape our society.

We were also allowed access to a new triple-height library which is not normally open to the public.

Our afternoon was spent at the [Postal and Mail Rail Museums](#).

The Postal Museum hosts a huge collection of memorabilia ranging from Post boxes to a delivery van and a horse drawn carriage that used to deliver the Mail.

There are many interactive exhibits; posters urging us to post in time for Christmas, old Christmas cards far more beautiful than anything produced today

Some of us heard a short talk from a volunteer who told us about the important work postal workers played during the wars. Units were set up overseas to help deliver large quantities of mail which was sent by sea and then distributed to the forces by the Postal Division of the Royal Engineers.

Our final experience was aboard the Mail Rail Ride. This is a 2 ft narrow gauge, driverless underground railway that was opened in 1927 to move mail between sorting offices. Operations were suspended in 2003 but since 2011 part of the network has been opened as a tourist attraction.

Taking about 15 minutes the train takes a loop under Mount Pleasant through the original tunnels. Films about the history of Mail Rail were projected onto the walls with commentary by a Mail Rail engineer.

*Linda Wells*

## Annecy and the French Alps with Trav 2

2-8 June 2019



AFTER an early start 26 of us set off for our trip to France. Inserting a full sized coach into what seems to be far too small an entrance to the EuroTunnel train always looks impossible but our driver, Adam, just slipped the coach in and we were on our way to Calais. With comfort and meal breaks on the way we arrived at the Mercure Hotel in Forbach. Here we had an evening meal and overnight stay before setting off for Annecy through the French countryside, crossing the Rhine and in and out of Switzerland. With the coach parked neatly outside the Best Western International Hotel we booked in and enjoyed our evening meal.

The following day we were met by our guide and set off to explore Annecy's extremely attractive and charming old part. Annecy is the largest city of Haute-Savoie department in south eastern France lying on the northern tip of Lake Annecy, south of Geneva. Sometimes referred to as the Pearl of the French Alps or, because of its beautiful lake and canals, as the Venice of the Alps. We learned that Annecy was once part of the Kingdom of Sardinia before being returned to France. Along with the ancient buildings we saw the flourishing market with stalls of every description.

After the tour many of us took the opportunity to join a one hour cruise across the lake and back before returning to the hotel.

On Wednesday we were off to Geneva. Nowhere to stop and park so it was a slow drivepast to see the Jet d'Eau fountain and then along the side of the lake to Lausanne for more sightseeing and a break for lunch before returning to Annecy.

On Thursday we travelled to Chamonix with the prospect of a ride in the Aiguille du Midi cable car up Mont Blanc. Sadly, with cloud well down the mountain we had to give that a miss and toured the town. It was surprising to see so many visitors in mid season which is a tribute to the beauty of the town and the area. Chamonix has many buildings of interest, some adorned with excellent murals.

In the afternoon we returned to Annecy for more exploration of the old town before returning to the hotel for our last dinner.

Friday saw us reversing our journey, stopping overnight in Forbach and then home on the Saturday. A long journey but well worthwhile.

Bob Mountfort

## Interest Group News

### Bridge

An interest has been expressed in forming an improvers' bridge group. There must be many members who play this card game so if you are interested in exploring the possibility of forming a group please contact the Groups co-ordinator, Liz Morgan, on [lizmorgano@gmail.com](mailto:lizmorgano@gmail.com)



Convenors at their recent meeting in Cavendish Hall at which a variety of topics were discussed, and taken on board by the committee

### Lecture Reports

I would like to record my thanks to Howard for the reports he has provided over several years. Always concise despite being limited to about 300 words.

I look forward to future reports from those who have kindly volunteered their services.

Bryann Ward

### Art Exhibition

The Art and Mixed Media group are holding their annual exhibition at

**Pakenham Village Hall**  
**On Saturday 2 November**  
**From 10 am to 4 pm**

Members' original artwork will be available to purchase at reasonable prices

Reports, pictures and other items for inclusion in the newsletter should be sent to [bryann@brysuward.plus.com](mailto:bryann@brysuward.plus.com)

**Dead line for the December edition is 17 November**