

From your Chairman

WELL, here we go with my first newsletter as Chairman of Blackbourne U3A. Just over a year ago I was not even on the committee, and now all of a sudden here I am as Chairman. How did that happen? Seriously, I feel very privileged to have been elected and will do my best to maintain the high standards of my predecessors.

I must firstly thank our retiring officers, whose sterling efforts have kept the good ship BU3A afloat over the past year and more. As Derek, Peter and Mary ride off into the sunset it has become clear that they will be a hard act to follow, but with the help of our committee (which includes several new officers) I will endeavour to keep the show on the road.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the willing band of volunteers, without whose help our monthly meetings would not be the pleasurable experience they are. Speakers need to be booked, chairs arranged, coffee served, members booked-in etc etc, and none of this would happen without the efforts of our fellow members.

Thanks are also due to our Interest Group co-ordinators for the work they put in, providing so much pleasure to their fellow members in a wide variety of activities.

So as I write these few words, still reeling under the bitter blow of relegation for I.T.F.C. at least I know that every month I can meet with a great group of people who have put their trust in me, and I will, with the help of the officers and committee, do my best to take BU3A successfully through the next year.

Best wishes,

Peter Lester

Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity



Pattie Barber, our February speaker, is a volunteer with the Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity. She described the history and ongoing work of this famous children's hospital (codenamed GOSH).

GOSH was founded by Dr. Charles West in 1852 and was the first hospital for children anywhere in the world, the Victorians previously not favouring the assembly of sick children in one location. Its early patrons included Charles Dickens, a significant donor, and Queen Victoria, the first royal patron. Subsequent supporters included J.M. Barrie, who bequeathed all royalties from performances of Peter Pan to the hospital in perpetuity, and Princess Diana, who served as president of the hospital from 1989 until her death.

The Hospital's numerous medical landmarks include the following: -

- 1962: first children's open-heart surgery
- 1980: first children's bone marrow transplant
- 1988: first children's heart transplant
- 2010: first tracheal transplant

The day to day running of the hospital is funded by the NHS. However, charitable support is required for all "extras", which include the installation of state-of-the-art technology, patient and family services, and research into new cures and treatments. Also very important are play workers, who visit the wards to play with the children in order to help them adapt to the Hospital's routines.

In January 2018 a new medical centre was opened providing improved facilities for both patient and family accommodation. Additionally, chaplaincy and spiritual support are provided in St. Christopher's Chapel, which is incorporated within the hospital's premises.

One of Charles West's original objectives for the hospital was research and this remains one of its major priorities. In particular it has already registered significant success in the field of leukaemia and, as it looks to the future, this world-famous hospital will in particular direct its focus on research into rare diseases for children.

Howard Chandler

Capability Brown – An Insight into this Famous Gardener

March Speaker: Dr. Twiggs Way

Lancelot Brown was famously nicknamed “Capability” not because of his innate talent as a gardener but because he would invariably tell his clients that their property had “capability” for improvement. Brown was born in 1715 in the village of Kirkharle, Northumberland and after leaving school at the age of 16 he worked as the head gardener’s apprentice at Kirkharle Hall until he was 23.



Thereafter he journeyed south where, following some initial landscape commissions, he eventually became an undergardener at Stowe, later becoming head gardener. Here he worked under, and was influenced by, William Kent, one of the founders of the new English style of landscape gardening. Brown’s work at Stowe, notably the creation of the Grecian Valley, was to establish him as a prominent landscape gardener.

The distinguishing feature of Brown’s landscapes was the adoption of a distinctly informal style, which

contrasted sharply with the predominantly formal design of English gardens that had prevailed previously. Typical components of his designs were concave sloping pastures from the house, serpentine lakes to which the pastures descended, trees planted in a more natural setting than the formal avenues of earlier designs, and the overall location occupied by small groups of cattle.

As his reputation developed, he was commissioned to work at some of the most prestigious locations in Britain. These included Hampton Court, Croome Court, Blenheim Palace, Harewood House, Warwick Castle and Kew Gardens. Brown was interested not only in the gardens but also in the houses to which they belonged and, together with his architect son, he redesigned several residences.

Inevitably, not everyone extolled Brown’s landscapes, a recurring criticism being that they all tended to look the same. Notwithstanding this, however, Capability Brown’s reputation remains assured as one of the most famous landscapers of all time.

Howard Chandler

“Is that a Crumhorn?”

Presented by Hexachordia – Tony Scheuregger, Jane Scheuregger and Sarah Doig



OUR presenters for April, posed the question “What is a Crumhorn?” at the commencement of their presentation. Having received the question, we would then have to wait

until the conclusion of their presentation to hear the answer.

Hexachordia provided a fascinating account of musical instruments dating from Medieval times. Their presentation was then enhanced by extremely informative pictorial illustrations and by their playing musical arrangements from the Medieval and Renaissance ages on models of each of the instruments they described.

The earliest music was sung by monks, but it was not until the Medieval era that music was first written down. Eventually instruments were developed to add complexity to the harmonies, and we were then entertained with musical compositions from that time.

Among the instruments played by Hexachordia were:

The harp, which has had a long and sometimes spiritual history

The psaltery, a member of the zither family and often shown in church windows

The recorder, which was designed to replicate the human voice

The gittern, a small round-backed stringed instrument made from sheep gut and which gives its name to the guitar

The vihuela, a guitar shaped stringed instrument which, like the gittern, originated in Spain

The lute, a very important instrument during the Renaissance

The rauschpfeife and the shawm, both very loud woodwind instruments typically played outdoors

The viol, second most favoured instrument after the flute

Finally, Hexachordia revealed the answer to the question regarding the crumhorn. It is, in fact, an unusually shaped member of the woodwind family characterised by a unique buzzing sound.

We left the meeting suitably enlightened!



Howard Chandler

Christchurch Mansion and the Ipswich Museum

Educational visit, 29 January 2019



Christchurch Mansion, built in 1846, stands on the site of a former priory. Having passed by marriage and sale through three merchant families, the Withypolls, Devereuxs and Fonnereauxs and having been rebuilt following a fire in 1670, it was sold to a property syndicate for redevelopment in 1894. One of the syndicate's members, Felix Cobbold, gifted the mansion to Ipswich Corporation as a museum and art gallery on condition that the Corporation purchased the remainder of the park for public enjoyment.

We were taken around the Mansion by The Friends of Ipswich Museum guides. In total there are 33 rooms over two floors including the Lower Chamber, which once formed the Hall of the house, and the impressive Great Hall with several family portraits of previous owners. There is a collection of the finest Lowestoft porcelain and painted panels, originally at Hawstead Place, near Bury St Edmunds, purchased in 1924 from the sale of contents of Hardwick House.



At the time of our visit there was an exhibition of Rodin and Suffolk Sculpture. The centre of the exhibition was the Rodin sculpture "The Kiss", depicting two lovers just before they are murdered.

After lunch we visited the Ipswich Museum originally opened in 1847 in Museum Street and one of the earliest public museums in the country. It moved to its present premises in 1881 to accommodate the expanding collection. Its remit was to educate the working classes in natural history and to this day the majority of the collections are so related.

We were shown around the galleries containing cabinets of fossils and birds some of which are now endangered species. In the entrance gallery you are greeted by a replica woolly mammoth and a mounted specimen of a giraffe. Its journey to the museum was quite a challenge as it had to be transported by train, supported with ropes and laid at an angle so as not to damage it as it went under bridges.

Two gems of museums in Suffolk both worth repeat visits to find things that you missed the first time!

Linda Wells

Monthly Lectures

Monday 3 June

The wonders of Fish

The connection between the oceans, people and the living world

Helen Scales

Monday 1 July

The Race to the Moon

The story, 50 years after Apollo 11's mission

Rick Shepperston

There is no meeting in August

Monday 2 September

Duleep Singh – The Black Prince

All about a former Maharaja of the Punjab who became a friend of Queen Victoria and settled at Elveden Hall, Suffolk.

Fraser Harrison

Our new website

As part of Blackbourne U3A's 25th anniversary celebrations we have commissioned a new website.

You can access it in the normal way, so give it a try and you will find bright and modern pages with links that are easy to read and follow

One major difference is that there will no longer be a web mistress / master who made all changes to the site (although one may be appointed at a later date). Convenors will now be responsible for their own pages, keeping events, timetables, news and photos up to date. They will all be issued with detailed instructions and our designers will be on hand to iron out any problems.

Another change will be that anyone interested in joining the Blackbourne U3A will now be required to do so on line via the website.

If there are any teething problems or feedback please contact :

Alan Crouch on 01359 241835 or alan.crouch@yahoo.co.uk

Sizewell B Power Station

Educational Visit, Monday 25 March 2019

Situated on the East Coast at Leiston, EDF Energy's Sizewell B is a Pressurised Water Reactor power station. Built between 1987 & 1995 it was first synchronised with the National Grid on 14 February 1995.

We had an introductory presentation giving us an insight into the workings of a Nuclear Reactor Plant where the raw material is pelleted uranium ore. Rather than burning a fossil fuel, a process called nuclear fission is used to create the heat needed to change the seawater into steam which drives the turbines.

With over 50 years of safe reliable generation in the UK, in an average year our nuclear power stations generate enough low carbon electricity to supply 50% of UK homes, avoiding about 33 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions, equivalent to removing almost half of the cars from UK roads.

Before we began our tour around the station quite a lot of fun was caused by donning all the usual safety equipment – high vis jackets, gloves, hard hats, ear defenders and safety glasses. Further security checks were done before we could continue, in groups of six, with a guide who brought to life the operational processes. Safety and security is paramount, with their own Fire Service and armed Civil Nuclear Constabulary,

Spent fuel from the PWR is stored underground on-site after going into special ponds to allow the radioactivity and heat to decrease. In the case of a failure in any area of production there are at least three other systems that can take over, many more than needed.

There are two sea defence barriers to fend off the very fierce North Sea which we were able to see whilst experiencing the fresh breezes. Water returned to the sea from the return outlet pipe contains fish which have been filtered out before entering the system so providing a fast food restaurant for the gulls. After this it was a welcome break to go into the turbine room, which was lovely and warm, and experience the power of this huge machine by putting our gloved hands on its sides.

A great experience which possibly allayed some people's misconceptions and worries regarding the nuclear industry.

Linda Wells

Quilting



AS part of their learning curve, members of the Happy Quilters, lead by Dominique Sutton, each made several squares that were then stitched together to form a large quilt. It was agreed that the quilt should be the prize for a raffle, tickets for which were sold at recent lecture meetings. A total of £150 was raised which has been donated to the BBC's Children in Need appeal.

The lucky winner was Margaret Wiseman who is delighted with the quilt.

Items for publication in the September issue should be sent to
bryann@brysuward.plus.com
by 18 August

2019 AGM

This year's AGM was held on 4 March prior to the monthly lecture.

197 members attended and 8 apologies were received.

The Chairman gave his report on the year's activities, followed by the Treasurer who's presentation of accounts was accepted by members.

The Accounts Examiner was reappointed and the new committee was elected, including the new Chairman and Treasurer – much to the relief of members.

The New Committee

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Chairman

Peter Lester 01359 241327

Vice Chairman

John Light 01359 220074

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Jane Storey 01284 827124

General Secretary

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