

Dear Members,

I hope this finds you all getting over the many and various “bugs” that keep doing the rounds. We are all still coughing, but I must say the sight of the first few daffodils following the snowdrops are a welcome and very cheery sight! Spring must be in the air I tell myself.

Unusually, January did not seem to be quite so long, due to a short break and having my friend up from Kent. I still had some u3a work and a last minute visit from a relative so some extra cooking but I enjoyed that.

Since the New Year, the Committee has remained focussed on website development. We have returned to the original website designer for changes that we are not authorised to make and will be paying them for this work. This is in hand. Also, the visits to gardens and the theatre have continued with further ones being planned.

I recently did the Walsingham snowdrop walk which I really enjoyed. We are making the most of these visits which is good to see.

Planning for the 2024/25 Lectures is also underway with much of this already booked.

Looking forward, we will no doubt come up with more tasks, but at present I am just concentrating on what we have today.

Easter is coming and so I wish you a Happy and Healthy one with lots of sunshine!

My best wishes

Liz (Chair)

## Monthly Lectures

10.am at New Green Centre  
Refreshments served until  
9.45am

### Monday 8 April

Selfie Power–  
a history of Self Portraiture  
Tania Harrington

### Tuesday 7 May

Terry Wogan’s Hair Weave  
Graham Keal

### Monday 3 June

Suffolk Accident Rescue Service – its history,organisation and work

Derek Wilding

### Monday 1 July

From Beer to Bolognese  
Steve Ruthen

## Our Jolly Wassail with Chanter’s Jigge



The meeting on Monday 4 December was the opportunity to prepare ourselves for the Christmas season with music and songs played by Chanter’s Jigge and accompanied by various traditional music instruments. There were also descriptions and readings about the traditions of carol singers in past times.

With the audience being invited to join in, the male voice section was complimented for being the best performers that Chanter’s Jigge had encountered!

Mary Dunbavin



## MY CREATIVE JOURNEY

The January meeting was attended by 93 members and was held on Tuesday 2nd January to reflect the New Year bank holiday.

The speaker, Amanda Sutherland, is yet another strong willed and ambitious lady who entertained us to a talk that truly reflected her drive and enthusiasm for her subject.

Amanda showed her creative nature as a child and it was, it seems, inevitable that she would follow a career in theatre and bridal design having obtained professional qualifications at the London College of Fashion.

Her initial career activity was a nine month bursary appointment as a buyer for the Royal Opera House. She then had a number of jobs in West End theatres including Jesus Christ Superstar before she joined Angels the Costumiers, a company that had some eight and a half miles of fashion outfits. This figure has now grown to 14 miles.

After 22 years of being involved in wedding costumes covering some 350 weddings a year she

took part in the television show Escape to the Country although she later found her own dream home located near Haverhill.

Amanda Sutherland Accessories was initially launched in 2002 and by 2012, following her move to Suffolk, she started to trade in the market in All Saints Garden in Cambridge, specialising in hats.

Over the years she has expanded her activities using her ideas for reusing and recycling. Her products include jewellery made from coke cans and head dresses made from milk cartons and she also undertakes leaf and flower gilding.

Amanda has a range of hand warmers which, she says, are of special help to people suffering from Raynaud's Syndrome.

Following the talk there was a display of her creations for sale and judging by the amount of interest shown, the members of Blackbourne U3A were very impressed by her presentation.

*Laurie Marshall*

## Tales from the Top Table



Neil Hunt, past president of the National Association of Toastmasters, was our speaker for the February meeting

The talk started with the history of Toastmasters.

Originally they were "Keepers of the Wine" responsible for the

blending of the wine to produce an acceptable drink. This was often done by using burnt bits of bread to remove impurities. They were then invited to introduce the wines upstairs. Due to a recession it was not possible for a single household to continue to afford to employ them in this role so they went freelance.

There were over one thousand livery companies who needed someone to introduce the guests and at this time the Toastmasters were required to wear usual gentleman's clothing in the livery hall. Later this became more formal and they were required to wear black tails. However as there was some confusion with waiters one Toastmaster, William Knightsmith, mentioned this to his wife who suggested he have a

red tailcoat made. This became the norm except in the City of London where it was ruled that black is worn, however it is now worn there with a coloured sash.

We were then told about the actual duties of a Toastmaster. It is important to speak only with the Head Waiter (Floor Manager) first and no-one else. Once having discussed the event and seen the production crew about lighting etc, one meets the client and may have to suggest certain things. Once the guests start arriving it will depend on the type of event as there may be a reception for certain guests so an amount of tact may be required to deal with this.

It may be necessary to announce the guests. There are certain rules that have to be observed. In the City, because James I did not pay back a loan; when introducing people no mention may be made of the "gongs" they have been awarded. After the meal, once the dessert plates have been cleared and the coffee cups are on the table it is time for the Loyal Toast.

We were also told tales of certain incidences that had occurred. For instance one is not allowed to address royalty unless they have already spoken to you. There was on one occasion an issue with the cable for a table microphone!

*Mary Dunbavin*

## Walsingham Abbey



Travelling by comfortable coach, 42 members visited Walsingham Abbey to view the snowdrops for which it is famed. The abbey covers 18 acres and the snowdrops were fabulous. In the early 20th. century snowdrop growing became a cottage industry and large quantities were sent to Covent Garden Flower Market by rail which then came all the way to Walsingham. It is thought possible that snowdrops could have been there since Roman times, as there was a Roman settlement.

Walsingham is a very historical place with medieval buildings and quaint teashops. One of the teashops in the High Street that some of us visited was a former chemist's shop which still had the chemist's wooden sets of drawers that used to hold the various implements!

On the way back we called in at Thetford Garden Centre for pre ordered delicious refreshments in the conservatory area which we had to ourselves. A fitting conclusion to a very enjoyable day.

*Tina Taylor*

### Interest Groups' Update

Most of our groups are doing well with flourishing memberships allowing us all to explore and share hobbies and skills. Unfortunately the Scrabble Group and the Music, Listening and Learning Group are no longer able to run. If there is anyone who feels they could take on either of these groups please get in touch with me for support.

Indeed if there is any member with a germ of an idea for a new group again please contact me and together we can develop your ideas. Suggestions which I have been given recently include some form of gentle exercise for the "mature person" and also the chance to learn/improve basic IT skills – including getting the most out of a Smart phone. Is there anyone who can help me develop such groups? It has also been suggested that as both Dining Out groups are full with waiting lists could a third group be started?

Please email me at [gericollingwood@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gericollingwood@hotmail.co.uk) if you have an interest in any of the above.

*Geri Collingwood, Interest Groups' Coordinator*

### Flower Arranging



The Flower Arranging Group met on a very cold Monday in January (but warm in the cafe in Elmswell). Inspiration for a flower arrangement, with limited and expensive flowers on sale, led us to do an arrangement without flowers!

We found that if you choose foliage carefully, bearing in mind colour, texture and shape, a lovely arrangement can be done. Foliage, conditioned first in water, tends to last longer in centrally heated rooms than flowers. We collected all our material from our gardens and produced some great results without spending anything at all.

*Margaret Knock*

## Wildlife Watching



ON Thursday 15th February fourteen members of the Watching Wildlife Group visited the [Wildfowl and Wetland Trust at Welney](#), a wetland reserve and eco-friendly visitor centre.

We were very fortunate with the weather after what had been an extremely wet month as it was unusually warm, dry and with some sunshine. The area around the wetland centre has been flooded throughout February which unfortunately did not allow us to visit all the hides on the site but this did not deter us from seeing plenty of wildlife.

The day started with us having some refreshment before visiting the main heated hide to spend an hour bird watching. We were fortunate to observe many species including Mallard, Pochard, Tufted duck, Scaup, Teal, Wigeon, Goldeneye, Moorhen, Greylag goose, Whooper and Mute swan and Oystercatcher.

This was followed by a very interesting talk given by one of the wardens, about the history and development of the wetlands in this area, followed by the opportunity to find out the difference between the three types of swans that we have in the UK and also to see the feeding of the swans and other birds that were close by. The feeding of the swans is a regular event throughout the winter which over time has encouraged the Mute, Hooper and Berwick Swans to visit the site and the local fields in their hundreds.

By now we were ready for some lunch at the Wigeon Café where there was a selection of meat and vegetable pasties, wraps, hot soup and rolls, cakes and variety of hot and cold drinks.

Our afternoon was taken up with an interesting guided walk out onto to Lady Fen to learn about the Brown Hare where we were fortunate to spot a few hunkered down. They are known for their long blacked-tipped ears and fast running, reaching speeds of 45mph to evade predators. They live up to three or four years but rarely much longer. They make a small depression in the ground among long grass which is known as a form. They spend most of the day on or near the form, moving out to feed in the open at night. Breeding takes place in February and September and a female can rear three to four litters a year. We were also able to observe some Chinese water deer, a small deer species native to Korea and China. Its prominent tusks, similar to those of musk deer, have led to both subspecies being colloquially named vampire deer.

Angela Lee



Whooper swans. Bob Butler



Scaup. Bob Butler



Brown Hare. Bob Butler



Chinese Water Deer. Angela Lee

Compiled by Bryann Ward  
Printed by Profile Business Supplies  
Bury St Edmunds  
Please send contribution for the June  
newsletter to  
[bryann@brysuward.plus.com](mailto:bryann@brysuward.plus.com)  
by 24 May