



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust  
Registered Charity No. 1165448

# Newsletter

Issue 112

December 2022

## Merry Christmas!

*IT* is lovely to be able to state that we have had several offers of help which make our future as a U3A seem brighter for next year. Thank you to everyone who has offered help and thank you to all those who already help – our refreshments team, the assistants helping with the projector and the setting up for the speaker, those who keep an eye that there are sufficient chairs for our Monday meetings, our Interest Group Leaders and of course our small, but enthusiastic Executive Committee

This has been a positive year in many ways with numbers increasing for Monday monthly lectures and interest groups restarting. There is still much we can do to encourage new members and to make our presence felt within our community. We have had some interesting speakers and look forward to the new speakers in 2023. Compared to where we were post Covid we have done exceptionally well.

This Christmas season it seems very hard to stay hopeful and cheerful when looking at the outside world and its effects on all of us. We need to 'Stay Calm and Carry On' despite fears of more strikes, electricity and gas price increases and a high inflation rate leading to recession. This is the one big advantage of our U3a – we are a community looking out for each other and enjoying many simple interests and hobbies which do not involve a great deal of cost and provide fellowship.

Please stay safe and warm this Christmas and New Year. Enjoy the simple things in life and remember how fortunate we are compared to those in Ukraine, Pakistan and indeed those living close to poverty in our own country.

Happy Christmas

Bernadette Pitt, Lady Chair

### LECTURE REPORTS

These form the basis of the newsletter and I am indebted to those members who provide these. Currently there are just two people who take notes and provide a synopsis of the speaker's subject. They would welcome one or two more to join the team and spread the load. A summary of between 300/400 words fits nicely on half a page, often with a picture.

If you would like to try your hand, even perhaps just a couple of times a year, give me a call (01284 787508) or speak to Mary or Laurie for more information.

This edition also contains reports from Trav2, the visit to Sutton Hoo, some pictures of the Interest Groups' exhibition and the Art and Mixed Media group's exhibition plus a book review.

I am always grateful for reports/pictures from groups, no matter how short, and will do my best to include them.

Bryann Ward, editor

### Monthly Lectures

10.00am at New Green Centre

#### Tuesday 3 January

Auschwitz and the Holocaust

Mark Hunt

#### Monday 6 February

Suffolk Hedgehog Hospital

Paula Baker

#### Monday 6 March

AGM followed by

My personal journey with sight loss and how our dogs are trained.

Geraldine McKeag

## Interest Groups' Exhibition Monday 24 October



With 19 different activities on display members both new and existing were able to appreciate what diverse pursuits we enjoy. There were opportunities to discuss with group leaders exactly what was on offer and consider joining in.

It was pleasing to see recently formed groups – flower arranging, photography, tai chi and art history – were well subscribed.

Our thanks to the organisers, exhibitors and caterers.

**The Book Group** would love to welcome some new members.

It meets at Thurston library on the 4th Thursday of the month, 10.15 to 11.45.

Anyone interested should contact Lorrie Finley on 07778 790285 or [lorrief2@cloud.com](mailto:lorrief2@cloud.com)

**Educational visits** have been a popular feature of Bu3A for many years. As previously advised the current convenors are stepping down after eight years and nearly forty visits. It would be a real loss if no one comes forward to continue this group which is open to all members. The current convenors, Maureen and Linda, will be very pleased to hear from anyone prepared to step into their shoes.



Flower Arranging



Photography



Card Making



Tai Chi and History of Art



**The Art and Mixed Media group** recently held a very successful exhibition of their work in Pakenham village hall. It was well attended by the public especially in the morning and several paintings were sold. The home made refreshments were also very popular.

New members are always welcome. Meetings, in Pakenham village hall, are on the first and third Tuesday of the month. The convenor is David Morley – 01359 230193



## An Unusual Guide to St Paul's Cathedral



Our July speaker Gary Powell has been a guide at St Paul's for the past 14 years, so had a huge amount of information to impart, which he did in a thoroughly professional and entertaining manner. He explained that the present building is, in fact, the fourth such edifice on the site which is the highest point in the city, the first having been built in 604. That one, and two subsequent cathedrals burnt down, the latter being badly damaged in the Great fire of 1666. Christopher Wren was employed to repair the old cathedral but he decided it needed a complete re-build. Inspired by the Sorbonne Chapel in Paris, Wren made a wooden model of his proposed St Paul's design, which still survives today, although he managed to re-design it with the now iconic dome. Construction started in 1675 and took 35 years to complete, over the reign of five monarchs. Because it is the nation's protestant cathedral, no perceived "catholic" features (such as pews and mosaics) were permitted. The current capacity in the cathedral is up to 4,000, although for Wellington's funeral they fitted in some 13,000, somewhat precariously on high-rise tiers!

Sarah Mullally was installed in 2018 as the first female Bishop of London for 1,000 years, and St Paul's now has many female clergy (much to the

consternation of many visiting foreign Catholics!). However, only three women are actually commemorated in the cathedral. They are social reformer and pioneering nurse Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), philanthropist Maria Hackett (1783-1874) for her welfare of choristers, and wealthy Maria Fussell (1834-81) who left £100,000 in her will (today's equivalent would be £15 million) which paid for 32 new parishes, amongst other things!

We were further regaled with many fascinating stories about notable people remembered in St Paul's and memorable events such as Churchill's funeral in 1965 and the only marriage ever to have been held there, that of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. Famous visitors include the civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King and, after his untimely death in 1968, his wife Coretta Scott King (1927-2006), who was the first woman to give a sermon at the cathedral.

Gary concluded his talk by reading his own poem detailing all the highlights covered in his talk, to a very generous and appreciative round of applause. A fitting end to our 2021-22 season of lectures.

*Stella Chamberlin*

## The Life and Times of Edith Cavell

ATTENDED by just over 100 members the speaker for September was Melanie Gibson-Barton BSc (Hons)

Supported by photographs and her regular visits to Brussels, Melanie's talk explored the story of the British heroine who died in Brussels in 1915.

Edith was born on December 4th 1865 in Swardeston, Norfolk where her father was the local parson. Showing determination, even at a young age, she raised £300 to build a room for the Sunday school.

Following her education she took several jobs as a governess. At school Edith had shown a flair for French and in 1890 was recommended for a governess' post in Brussels where she stayed for five years. In 1895 she returned to Swardeston to nurse her father through a brief illness and resolved to take up nursing as a career. She had been deeply impressed with a free hospital she had seen during an earlier holiday in Austria and Bavaria.

In April 1896 she was accepted for training as a nurse and over the next eleven years held posts in several nursing institutions. In 1907 Edith returned to Brussels and was put in charge of a pioneer training school for lay nurses. She immediately rose to the responsibility and by 1912 the school was providing nurses for three hospitals, 24 communal schools and 13 kindergartens.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 Edith insisted her place was in Brussels to care for the wounded irrespective of nationality and the school became a Red Cross hospital. When Brussels fell, the Germans commandeered it for their own wounded and 60 English nurses were sent home but Edith and her chief assistant, Miss Wilkins remained.

Stranded British soldiers found their way to the hospital and an 'underground' escape route was soon established, masterminded by the Prince and Princess de Croy at a chateau at Mons. Guides were organised and some 200 allied soldiers were helped to escape. (The password was 'Yorc' – Croy backwards). For Edith, despite the risks, the protection, concealment and the smuggling away of hunted men was as humanitarian as tending the sick and wounded and she was prepared to face the consequences.

In July 1915 the organisation was infiltrated by a Belgian collaborator and Edith was arrested. On October 12th along with four others she was found guilty of treason under the German penal code and sentenced to death by a firing squad the next day.

Initially buried at the rifle range where she was shot, her body was exhumed on May 15 1919 and taken to Westminster Abbey for a burial service whereafter, on the wishes of her family, it continued to Norwich where her remains were laid to rest outside the Cathedral.

A captivating talk that left us feeling that we knew the real Edith.

*Bryann Ward*



---

## SAVE Britain's Heritage

Our speaker for October was Ben Oakley, conservation officer for SAVE Britain's Heritage. He explained that there are several organisations responsible for the care and upkeep of Britain's historic buildings, parks, gardens and landscape, for instance National Trust, English Heritage and Landmark Trust. There are also organisations with special expertise available to advise the planning authorities on specific areas of architecture or building techniques, for instance the Victorian Society.

SAVE Britain's Heritage was started in 1975. It is at the forefront of national heritage conservation. It intervenes to help historic buildings and places in serious danger of demolition or decay. This can be done by supporting applications for listing, but also supporting local campaigns where there is a controversial plan for redevelopment of a historic area, for instance modern tower blocks amongst mediaeval streets. It is also active in conserving more modern iconic buildings, for instance, the M & S store in Oxford Street. Locally there has been involvement with saving the railway station at Brandon.

It stands apart from other organisations by bringing together architects, engineers, planners and investors to offer alternative proposals which are in keeping with the area. This can include finding a re-use for the building. Some buildings can be retrofitted making a modern use for the interior leaving the original shell intact. SAVE Britain's Heritage will, where necessary, and with expert advice, take legal action to prevent major and needless losses. They maintain a risk register of interesting buildings that are no longer in use and whose future is undetermined. Redevelopment of an original building is much more eco-friendly than demolition.

Details of the ongoing projects and campaigns can be found on their website, [savebritainsheritage.org](http://savebritainsheritage.org) which includes a interesting history of Brandon station.

*Mary Dunbavin*

## The Montpellier of Suffolk

The November lecture was given by Adrian Tindall, Chair of Bury St Edmunds Town Guides. Until the meeting, I knew very little about Montpellier, a town in southern France located a few miles from the Mediterranean Sea so I was interested to hear Adrian's reasoning for the title of his talk.

It transpired that Bury St Edmunds was described as the Montpellier of Suffolk by John Macky in his book "A journey through England" published in 1714. Certainly the two towns are built in a similar grid style with the Cathedral in Montpellier being of similar design to the Abbey in Bury St Edmunds.

With his obvious enthusiasm for the history of Bury St Edmunds, Adrian was able to give his audience a reminder of the many connections between Bury St Edmunds and France.

We were reminded of Edmund King of East Anglia and his Martyrdom in 870, Abbo of Fleury and his Passion of St Edmund and King Canute famous for his belief that he could turn the tide.

We heard about Abbot Baldwin, a French Abbot responsible for the construction of the Abbey Church which at one time was bigger than St Peter's church in Rome.

Following the demolition of the Abbey there is very little remaining but during the last twelve months Stephen Grenville of [English Heritage](#) has produced a model of the Abbey showing its immense size with the bell tower probably 40 metres high.

The talk continued to cover the other famous buildings in Bury St Edmunds including St Mary's church where Mary Tudor, Queen Dowager of France and Duchess of Suffolk is buried, and The Athenaeum where people reputedly played card games with marked cards and loaded dice.

Adrian also covered famous people associated with Bury St Edmunds. These include Madame Tussaud who visited The Market Cross. An interesting name is Maria Louise Ramé a female author using her pseudonym of Ouida who was born in Bury St Edmunds and wrote over 40 novels but hated our town accusing the local people of ringing their own door bells to pretend they had visitors. A present day French connection is the Maison Bleu restaurant.

During his very interesting talk Adrian covered a large number of local facts and I am sure that those members who attended all gained additional knowledge.

*Laurie Marshall*

---

## Educational Visit – Sutton Hoo



Our visit in August took us to Sutton Hoo which lies along the bank of the tidal estuary of the River Deben. The estate belonged to the Pretty family until 1998 when it passed into the care of the National Trust.

In the 1930s Col. and Mrs. Pretty lived in Tranmer House on the estate and, in 1938, intrigued by the mounds that they could see from the windows, arranged for some to be excavated by local archaeologist Basil Brown and members of the estate staff. The remains of a burial ship were discovered including a pattern welded sword, gold belt buckle and the famous Sutton Hoo helmet. Further investigation was interrupted by the war when the site was used as a military training ground.

The burial ship mound was re excavated in 1965 and over the next six years other mounds were excavated including those of a warrior and his horse. Further excavations were undertaken between 1983 and 1993 in the area where the visitor centre now stands. This was opened in 2002.

In the courtyard there is a full-size sculpture of the ship found in mound one. Leaving the area you come to Tranmer House, the former home of Col. and Mrs Pretty, where the story of the various digs is told.

The Royal Burial ground was the final resting place of an Anglo-Saxon king along with his treasured possessions and you can now climb the 17 metre tall viewing tower giving you a glorious view across the site and beyond with views stretching towards the river Deben. Other treasures unfortunately have been lost due to grave robbers over time so who knows what other items could have been saved.

One major achievement must have been the actual burying of the Great Ship which would have had to have been dragged up from the estuary using horses, manpower and perhaps rolled on logs –no JCB machinery in those times!

At the moment there is an exhibition, Swords of Kingdoms, which brings together original treasures from the Sutton Hoo Great Ship Burial alongside objects from the Staffordshire Hoard. These are the most important Anglo-Saxon archaeological discoveries to be shown in this major exhibition at Sutton Hoo.

There is much more to discover on a visit and you can book a Burial Mound Tour. The volunteer guides are really great and the whole Sutton Hoo site is a lovely place to visit.

*Linda Wells*





## Trav2 Jersey holiday

In September, sixteen members of Trav2 flew to Jersey staying at the Merton Hotel in St Saviour.

Our first day was an included round the Island coastline tour stopping for refreshments en route. We think the driver must have been more used to city dwellers as passengers because he was obsessed with pointing every four legged farm animal going- sheep, goats but particularly Jersey cows of which there were many. At one point he stopped the coach opposite a herd of Jerseys until they all came over to stare at us, only moving off when the

traffic behind started to get impatient, the road not really being wide enough to safely pass!! We finished the day at Mont Orgueil in Gorey Harbour where, after having had no rain on Jersey for months, the heavens opened and we got soaked. The rain was so heavy that even walking a few yards to the coach meant a real drenching.

With a second included trip to Samares Manor and La Mare Wine Estate, with wine tasting, and two free days for independent sightseeing, between us we visited a lot of the Jersey sights. Some chose to visit Jersey Zoo founded in 1959 by the naturalist Gerald Durrell, others went to Elizabeth Castle on the amphibious vehicle where Jersey Heritage were filming for tourist publicity. Dressed as soldiers with muskets and cannon, they put on an unexpected demonstration of loading and firing for the visitors which was very, very loud! Many of us went to the Maritime Museum, Tapestry Gallery and Liberation Square as well as visiting the beach or walking through beautiful gardens to St Helier.

It was a lovely holiday, the company was excellent, the hotel very good, the weather was mainly kind to us, and we got to know new friends who had not travelled with us before. Looking forward to the next holiday.

Angela Gibbs



Photo by John Sawyer

## BOOK REVIEW

### ***“Human Compatible – Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control”***

by Professor Stuart Russell

(Published in 2019 by Allen Lane, £25, or from your library)

Having heard Prof Russell speaking on the radio recently, I wanted to learn more from his widely-acclaimed book. I found it very readable, although can't pretend I understood every word, but definitely felt I'd had my eyes opened to a probable future. One peer group review wrote that the book “lucidly explains how the coming age of artificial super-intelligence threatens human control; crucially, it also introduces a novel solution and a reason for hope.”

Creating super-intelligent machines would be the biggest event in human history. Unfortunately, according to the world's pre-eminent A.I. expert, it could also be the last. In this ground-breaking book, Prof Russell explains why he has come to consider his own discipline an existential threat to our species, and lays out how we can change course before it's too late. There is no-one better placed to assess the extraordinary promise and peril of this singularly transformative technology than Russell, who has spent decades at the forefront of A.I. research and is a leading ethical voice on the subject. Through brilliant analogies and lucid prose, he explains how A.I. actually works, and how it could lead to a golden age for humanity – but only if we ensure that we never lose control of machines more intelligent than ourselves. He shows how we can avert the worst catastrophes by reshaping the foundations of A.I. to guarantee that machines pursue *our* objectives, not *theirs*.

English-born Russell is a professor of Computer Science at the University of California, and an Honorary Fellow of Oxford University's Wadham College. He has advised No.10 and the United Nations about the risks of A.I., as well as being the co-author of ‘Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach’, the best selling textbook on A.I. which is used in over 1,400 universities worldwide.

If that all sounds too daunting, I'd urge you to listen to Prof Russell's four 2021 Reith lectures and the follow-up “Living with A.I.” radio programmes, on BBC iPlayer podcasts.

Stella Chamberlin



A Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year to all.

**Deadline for the March edition is 24 February**

Please send copy to [bryann@brysuward.plus.com](mailto:bryann@brysuward.plus.com)