

# AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 74

March 2015

## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

New Year is a time for thinking, making a new start and of course new resolutions. One of my resolutions is always to respond in writing to the ‘Christmas letters’ from friends who have moved away, rather than the hasty email thanking them for their card and letter. Another is to get some of the photos on the camera iPad and computer-printed and put them in with the letters. That then brings back memories of times past when holidays and family events were recorded, printed and passed around at gatherings, frequently to the embarrassment of some members but to the entertainment of all where it created a bonding over shared memories happy and sad.

Prompted by the arrival of relatives from Canada, I began taking the old family photos and putting them into some order and into the album of today – a portable hard drive. Being younger members of the family they visited complete with laptop and tablets, so we were able to spend a happy morning over coffee laughing, remembering and sorting out which of our numerous collections to share. The hours spent at the computer scanning old photos had brought back those times with the printed photos and, as it were, restored the bonding over shared memories. It also made it easier to print and send some carefully edited photos along with the replies to friends.

So I find myself at the beginning of a New Year thinking that not too much has changed except the way we do things and the tools we use to do them and as I load the dishwasher I’m not too disappointed.

A very Happy New Year to all.

*Meryll Coe*

## AVU3A HONOURS SHIRLEY STOKES AND GEOFF YOUNG:



Members showed their appreciation to Shirley and Geoff at the January meeting when they were presented with Honorary Membership. Shirley and Geoff have been members of our U3A since 1992 and 1993 respectively and have been there to help in many roles from Group Leader to Chairman and are still active as Newsletter Editor and TVN representative today. A wonderful example to all.

*Meryll Coe*



## U3A CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF THE GOAT:

This year we decided that we would welcome in the Chinese New Year. Celebrations begin the day before the lunar New Year – in 2015, 19th February – and run for the 15 days thereafter. Some 42 members joined our party at the China Brasserie on Fairford Leys. We enjoyed spare ribs, spring rolls, seaweed, followed by crispy duck with pancakes. Then there was a choice between hot and sour chicken, beef with black bean and chilli sauce, beansprouts and rice, or chicken with ginger and spring onion, sweet and sour pork, mixed vegetables and rice. The meal concluded with filter coffee or tea.

Many of those attending already love Chinese food, while we hope that we ‘converted’ one or two newcomers. Some of us were relieved that we didn’t have to use chopsticks! There was the usual buzz of U3A friends meeting and sharing experiences, and we even celebrated a birthday (with applause rather than singing, much to the other customers’ relief!) As people left they were asking “When is the next one?” So, if we do it again – why not join us!

*Maxine Robinson*

*We would all like to thank Maxine for arranging this new event. Nothing can be nicer than going out for lunch with friends. We know that the one person who can't fully enjoy the meal is the organiser, but all seemed to go smoothly, so let's hope that the experience was satisfying enough to encourage Maxine to arrange another celebration next year.*

*The Editor*

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:**

### **TEN PIN BOWLERS FIND A NEW HOME**

We had a wonderful turn-out when Ten Pin Bowling returned to Aylesbury. Over forty people were there, many of whom hadn't bowled for many years. Everybody appeared to enjoy the experience and the staff at Rogue Bowling couldn't have been more helpful. A special rate has been negotiated for us and beverages and snacks can be purchased and brought to your lane whilst you bowl.

If you would like any further details you are welcome to contact me.

*John Harwood*



Above left – some of the happy bowlers, while on the right John Harwood literally sets the ball rolling.

Photos by John with one obvious exception!

### **TRANSPORT GROUP**

The Group started their new year in February with a talk given by Ken Hewer on the importance of non-destructive testing in aircraft maintenance and some of the group visited the BMW plant in Cowley on March 2nd. Jean and I are off to India soon, after which I shall be preparing a talk on the narrow gauge railway of the Harz mountains.

*Peter Ashton*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

### **Honorary Membership**

I would just like to express my thanks to the Committee for the honour they have given me and I am very touched by this gesture. As I mentioned at the monthly meeting, I always feel that you get much more pleasure from an organisation if you become involved in its running and when you can have some influence on its success. Both Shirley and I are now hoping that you, the membership, will continue to be involved so we can get some mileage from this Hon Membership! Remember that there will be vacancies for posts at our next AGM!!!



I must finish with my thanks to you all for making the last 22 years so interesting and rewarding and my hope is that long may it continue, not only for me but you also.

*Geoff Young.*

Like Geoff, I too am delighted to have received this quite unexpected honour. It has been such fun being Secretary, Chairman and Group Leader. I hope to continue as Editor of the Newsletter until such time as somebody more qualified, perhaps with some previous 'editorial experience', would like to have a go! It gives me the opportunity to go on 'talking' with many of you; and that has always been the joy of membership for me as well as for you, I hope.

*Shirley Stokes*



**Question:** What does the Chairman do when not Chairing?

**Answer:** Paints!

Not always successfully, as the final version of this has been consigned to the realms of experience. It was the product of a course I attended at the Buckingham Summer School in August to learn more about landscapes in oils. It was great fun; the tutor fantastic and I learned a lot, but as always, putting it into practice is the tricky bit. So this August I shall be back there trying my hand at portraits.

**Meryll Coe**

P.S. Details of the Summer School were announced at our monthly meetings! It pays to listen!

## **MORE NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:**



### **ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY**

We are now coming to a very interesting period in social history as we move from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and go into the 19<sup>th</sup>, from the Regency period in Britain on through all the changes that took place in the Victorian times. There is trouble on the continent especially in France and Spain, but there is also a realisation that social conditions in this country have got to change. Parliamentary Reform, Public Health and Housing Acts are passed with the hope of better standards. The coming of the railways, the telegraph and ultimately the internal combustion engine are all destined to make great and rapid changes to the way we live. There seems to be no end to the developments that took place and although we lagged behind on the basic ideas of personal hygiene and medicine, fortunately we did have some pioneering souls who helped us catch up.



If this interests you and you have anything that you feel you could contribute to our group, not compulsory of course, come along to the Church of the Holy Spirit, Bedgrove, 2.30 third Wednesday of the month.

*Geoff Young*

*Too much bathing weakens you!!*

### **READERS' CIRCLE 3**

Why belong to a Book Club? I find it absolutely astonishing how eight people can read the same book and come away with such different points of view on character, plot, style of writing and insight into human nature. You would never get such diverse observation into a book if you read it by yourself! In our imagination we climb the Himalayas, go into deserts with Arabs, witness love affairs and murders all from the comfort of our own home! This year we are to read "The Road Home" by Rose Tremain, "My Antonia" by Willa Cather, "The Girl you Left Behind" by Jo Moyes, "As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning" by Laurie Lee, "Olive Kitteridge" by Elizabeth Strout, "The Janissary Tree" by Jason Goodwin and "The Siege" by Helen Dunmore.



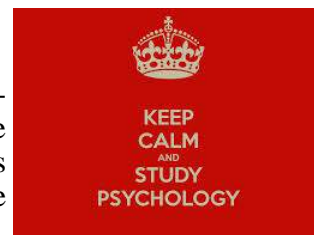
The group also offers friendship and laughter plus a surfeit of excellent cake and biscuits. What more would you want every month? We have two, possibly three places available to enlarge our group should you wish to join us on the first Friday of each month.

Interested? Contact Joy Neave.



## THE PSYCHOLOGY GROUP

Lynne Dawson and Pam Stocks took over leadership of the Psychology Group when Gavin Ewan stepped down in January 2014. Lynne had been a nurse and counsellor and Pam had studied psychology as part of a social science course, but they were both more than a little daunted because they had such large shoes to fill.



The Psychology Group was a small, dedicated circle of long term members meeting in members' homes. As there was quite a long waiting list, we decided to move to the Aylesbury Tennis Club enabling the group to grow to around 40 members with an average attendance of 20. It is a lively, friendly group and all contributions are welcome. We aim to make the meetings as interesting as possible, with a balance between theory and activities. So far the group has studied Personality, Nature versus Nurture, Colour, Old Age, Dementia, the acquisition of Knowledge and Religion, Child Development; and future meetings will look at Criminology and the role of the Psychologist. Every three months there is a guest speaker and these have included Pam Jordan talking about colour, Angie Pestka from Florries on supporting terminally ill and long-term sick children and their families, and Paul Fincken from the Witness Service on their role in supporting victims and witnesses when they attend court. We are also exploring a visit to Aylesbury Crown Court in the future to witness at first hand the criminal justice system in action. The group is currently considering a change to a more Mind and Body focus. Subjects could include the role of psychology in pain relief or the management of depression.

The group meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month between 10.00 and 12.00. There is a £2 contribution to cover the cost of renting the Tennis Club, the guest speaker's expenses and tea, coffee and chocolate biscuits! New members are always welcome.

*Pam Stocks*

## WHY NOT PLAY SCRABBLE WITH US?

The Scrabble Group is alive and well – we have about 12 members with seven or so turning up regularly. Only two men attend but they hold their own against us women. Any more brave men out there? Not too clever though. We are a very mixed ability group and most of us don't mind losing – regularly!! We like good company, getting the little grey cells working and, of course, the tea and biscuits. We do have our intelligent moments. Have you ever come across the word 'Waqf'? It means 'an endowment' in Muslim law. Not only does it get rid of a couple of the more awkward letters, but can score at least 57 on a triple square. The word was challenged at the British Scrabble Championships! Perhaps someone can tell us the correct pronunciation. There are approximately 113 two-letter words in the Scrabble Dictionary from AA (a type of lava) to ZO – Himalayan cattle. They do come in handy for filling in tiny spaces and using up odd letters towards the end of the game.



If you would like to join us we meet on every first and third Wednesday in the month – just give us a call: Anne Walker or Jenn Merrison.

*Jenn Merrison*

## CHARITY BURNS SUPPER 2015

Greig Sneddon, Lynne Dawson and friends have been organizing a Burns Night Supper for charity for the past seven years. This year's event took place in the Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville and was attended by 112 people. The chairman Greig, resplendent in his Hamilton tartan kilt, guided the guests through the various elements and traditions of a Burns Supper. After dining on a grand Scottish Supper, supplied by John Seaton, the guests were entertained with speeches, toasts, singing and Scottish country dancing. The event managed to raise £1085 for Young Carers Bucks.



Left – Happy dancers at the Community Centre, while below the essential Haggis is presented by John Seaton.

Photos by John Harwood



Greig tells us that although he usually recites the verse in the original Scots dialect, this year he used the English translation. He says “On reflection, because of my accent, I am not sure that the audience understood a word!” So here are both versions to help you out!

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,  
Great chieftain o the puddin-race!  
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,  
Painch, tripe or thairm:  
Weel are ye worthy o' a grace  
As lang's my arm.

Fair and full is your honest, jolly face  
Great chieftain of the sausage race!  
Above them all you take your place,  
Stomach, tripe or intestines:  
Well are you worthy of a grace  
As long as my arm.

## **GOOD NEWS ON THE WEBSITE:**

**We are delighted to announce that Moira Bishop and Marilyn Dunnett have volunteered to take over the management of our website. Many thanks to them. We look forward to the continuation of our highly regarded and much viewed pages.**



## **SPEAKERS CORNER**



### **WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL: BARRY HUGHES – MEDICAL DETECTION DOGS.**

Barry Hughes will tell us the amazing story of “The Medical Detection Dogs”. He will explain how these dogs are trained to use their ability to detect minute chemical changes in the composition of the breath of humans and also to detect behaviour changes in their human companion which indicate that a serious problem due to a medical condition has arisen. For example the dogs trained as companions for some severe diabetics will detect a sugar level imbalance and prompt the human to take medication before a collapse could occur.

### **WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY: CYNTHIA FOWLER – TRAVELS IN BURMA.**

Our ex-Chairman Cynthia Fowler makes a welcome return to talk to us about Burma. Burma or Myanmar is a country that has experienced many difficult times since gaining independence in 1948. It has only been open to travellers in recent years since the ruling military junta have withdrawn (a little) into the background. Our tour will start in the old capital Rangoon. We will see the rich culture and varied geography of this country of some 51 million people. We will travel almost to the border with China in the North and thence to Bagan – a star attraction with its vista of golden pagodas and stupas (shrines). As always a feast of images awaits us!

### **WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE: BARRY KAUFMANN-WRIGHT – THE ROLE OF A POLICE WILDLIFE CRIME OFFICER.**

Barry Kaufmann-Wright is going to talk to us about his rather unusual role within the police force. Barry was raised on a farm in the Chilterns, and has spent most of his life being involved with wildlife in many different ways. He has worked with Gerald Durrell at Jersey Zoo, is a prolific writer on wildlife and has had a lifelong passion for wildlife and landscape photography. Barry served with Essex Police for over 30 years including 22 years as a Police Wildlife Crime Officer. His illustrated talk will take us on a journey through his experiences both bizarre and entertaining while trying to protect the wildlife of Britain.

## **THE LAST LONDON WALK OF 2014**

If the circular walk from Marylebone had taken place a week earlier we would have allegedly seen: terrorists arrive at Westminster Magistrates’ Court, the Hyatt Regency Churchill Hotel on fire and Angelina Jolie looking for a house – if we can believe everything in the news! Thankfully, nothing unexpected happened and we had a leisurely stroll through streets and squares of London where famous and infamous people had lived at various times in the past; for example: Elizabeth Montague at 22 Portman Square – founder of the ‘Blue Stocking’ group; St John’s Ambulance HQ near the National School and St Mary’s Church just off of York St; Dr Stephen Ward at Montagu Mews and Sherlock Holmes in Baker St.

On this walk, some thoughts were directed toward food. Most of the group dined at the John Lewis Restaurant in Oxford St and enjoyed the ample portion of Beef Lasagne, as recommended by the leaders! The display of cheeses at the famous cheese shop, ‘La Fromagerie’, situated in Moxon Street, proved irresistible to many.

*Peter Harding*



## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### SOMETHING NEW! EXPLORING LONDON WALKS – FILM SHOW:

I had heard of good reports that the new cafe at the George and Dragon, Quainton, made great cake. So I thought that this was a must for the refreshments at the Year Review Film Show of 'Exploring London Walks' in January. I arranged for the cakes to be delivered and served at Quainton Memorial Hall. The choice between a slice of Chocolate or Coffee or Victoria Sandwich cake tempted most people! The film show was a new enterprise to ensure continuity at a time in the year when weather and light make a walk in London less feasible, and was open to our regular walkers and also those interested in what we do. Twenty seven people attended and we were comfortably fitted into the Committee Room. The shared memories and lively banter began. The experiment worked because the group joined in by making observations and comments, remembering details from a walk or by noticing new things they had missed. This not only enhanced the commentary but also brought alive the interesting walks again.

*Peter Harding*



The London Walkers and friends enjoy their reunion. Peter Harding also sent a mouth-watering photo of the cakes, but black and white doesn't do them justice!

### MESSAGE FOR ALL GROUP LEADERS:

You are reminded that it is still possible to display information about your group on a table at the back of the hall at monthly meetings. These displays are useful to attract new members if you have space, but are also of general interest to others who may be interested in learning of your activities. Why not contact Hazel Burgess to reserve a date? [Groups@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Groups@avu3a.org.uk).



### WANTED URGENTLY:

Now that we have lost Ron and Rosemary Meadowcroft to Yorkshire, are there any volunteers to run the one-week Study Visit in 2016? Members have so enjoyed them that it would be a pity to lose them!



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH:** Calling all potential Committee Members. See notice at the foot of this page.

**WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH:** Coffee Morning at the Broad Leys P.H. Wendover Road at 10.30 a.m. All members are invited to join us to share information about U3A activities, and to get to know each other better than is possible at the much larger monthly meetings. This is for you whether you are a long time member or an Associate Member. The cost is only £1.90 – a bargain – and we meet every two months.



**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL:** Group Leaders' Meeting at the Aylesbury Town Bowls Club from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon. All Group Leaders are invited to join us for coffee and cakes to discuss items of common interest. Your contribution is essential, so if you would like to raise anything relating to your own group meetings, please send them to Hazel Burgess a.s.a.p.

**WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY:** Another of our popular Coffee Mornings at the Broad Leys P.H. Details as for 18th March.

**29<sup>th</sup> MAY to 3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE:** A Taste of Herefordshire. The annual one-week Study Visit this year to Herefordshire. Although it is fully booked, it is always worth checking for cancellations!



### A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

James Cartwright, Linda Chalkley, Jane Elliston, Pat Griffin, Ursula Habermann, Carole Jones, Phyllis Martin, Peter Matthews, Lynne Padget, Mags Parker and Maggi Simpson.



### CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

We're having a coffee morning for members to come along and find out what Committee members have to do because we will need quite a few **NEW** Committee members to stand in October. Being on the Committee is fun and rewarding because you're meeting different people, learning or honing skills and most importantly helping our U3A to run effectively. 10.30 a.m. Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March at The Broad Leys P.H. Do come and find out if you can help. If you miss that one, keep an eye open, as there are sure to be other dates coming.

*Meryll Coe*

## **COME TRAVEL WITH US – EARLY NOTICE OF OUTINGS**



**BATH: TUESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL.** A do-as-you-please day in this lovely city. You could visit Bath Abbey, the Roman Baths, the Royal Crescent, the Assembly Rooms and Fashion Museum, Sally Lunn's tea house and kitchen museum, the Holburne Museum of Art and of course popular shopping areas. Cost (for coach only) £19 pp. Depart lay-by, Jansel Square 8.00, return 7.30 approx.

### **BROOKLANDS MOTOR MUSEUM AND RHS GARDEN WISLEY, TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY.**

A dual destination to cater for varying interests. The coach will go to both venues but each passenger chooses where to spend the day. Brooklands displays a wide range of motoring and aviation exhibits including the only Concorde accessible to the public in south-east England. Also on site is the London Bus Museum, housing the largest privately owned collection of London buses in the world.

Wisley is one of four gardens run by the RHS and is now a large and diverse garden covering 240 acres of formal and informal gardens, several glasshouses and an extensive arboretum.

Provisional cost £17 pp for coach only. Entry to Brooklands £10pp. Concorde £4. Entry to Wisley £10.80 if 10 or more in group. Depart lay-by, Jansel Sq. 8.00, return 7.00 approx.

### **BEAULIEU AND BUCKLER'S HARD, WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE.**

Beaulieu is best known as the site of a famous motor museum, but there are also many other attractions in the price of your ticket. Explore Palace House, home of the Montagu family, with costumed guides to give you a flavour of life below stairs; explore the Abbey ruins, visit the many exhibitions or wander round the lovely gardens. If you are feeling lazy, you can explore them from the open-top veteran bus or from Britain's oldest monorail. Also included in the price of your ticket is a visit to the nearby village of Buckler's Hard, once a hive of shipbuilding activity providing ships for Nelson's fleet. You will visit the Maritime Museum, a worker's cottage and enjoy a short cruise (30 minutes) on the Beaulieu River.

Provisional cost £37 pp. Includes access to all attractions at Beaulieu & Buckler's Hard. Depart lay-by, Jansel Square 8.00, return 7.30 approx.

### **TENTERDEN, KENT & EAST SUSSEX STEAM RAILWAY & BODIAM CASTLE, THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY.**

We have some time to explore Tenterden, one of the most charming towns in the South East with its fine historic houses and church before boarding the steam train for a ten mile ride through the unspoilt countryside of the Rother valley to terminate at the lovely National Trust castle at Bodiam. This 14<sup>th</sup> century castle, although largely a ruin, is one of Britain's most picturesque.

Cost to be announced. This will include the ride on the steam train but entry to the castle itself will be extra (£7.80) for non-NT members. Depart lay-by, Jansel Square 8.00, return 7.00 approx.

## **WORCESTER AND COUGHTON COURT (NT), THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST.**

We spend the morning in the fine city of Worcester. You could visit the magnificent cathedral, stroll along the banks of the Severn, explore Greyfriars, a timber-framed merchant's house (NT), admire the interior of the Guildhall or go to the Museum of Royal Worcester. There may possibly be an option to visit the nearby Elgar Birthplace Museum if there is sufficient interest. (£5 pp for a group of 10 or more.)

In the afternoon we travel to nearby Coughton Court (NT), for 600 years the home of the Throckmorton family. Their fascinating story is told through "Cabinets of Curiosities", artefacts that were hidden away during times of Catholic persecution and then proudly displayed as they gained the freedom to practise their faith. There are also beautiful gardens and a riverside walk.

Provisional cost £18 pp. Coughton Court will be extra (£10) for non-NT members. Depart lay-by, Jansel Square 8.00, return 7.00 approx.

## **STRATFORD-UPON-AVON WITH BACKSTAGE TOUR OF ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY THEATRE, MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER.**

On arrival at Stratford, we go straight to the theatre for tea/coffee before we have an hour-long backstage tour (both included in the price of the day.) After that you will be free to explore the town as you wish. There are several Shakespeare Trust sites to visit and you can also do short river cruises and even visit the butterfly farm near the theatre – a must for wild-life lovers.

Provisional cost £26 pp. Depart lay-by, Jansel Square 8.00, return 6.40 approx.



The lay-by outside the new Sainsbury's at Jansel Square is now in operation (just moved a yard or two along from its original site). We are particularly delighted for those poor residents of Cam Mead who had to put up with chattering groups early in the morning. May they now sleep in peace !

**The notice for signing up for each trip is usually put up at the monthly meeting four months before the trip takes place.**

Last date for copy for the Summer Newsletter will be May 13th 2015 so please send any items you may like to share with us to Shirley Stokes on [treveris9@btinternet.com](mailto:treveris9@btinternet.com) or by post to 9 Windsor Road, Aylesbury HP21 7JG. Telephone 01296 392726.

It is always a joy to receive information as soon as you think of it – that way, you'll not forget to write and send it, and the Editor will be able to judge how much more information she needs, and perhaps 'persuade' some others to contribute.

Thanks are due to our Secretary Peter Gasson for help with the ordering and printing and to Alan Robinson for proof reading And of course to all of you who send in articles and photographs, and apologies for any I have lost!