

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 77

Xmas 2015

A LETTER FROM THE JOINT CHAIRMEN

Season's Greetings to our U3A. Greig and I are very pleased to have been elected as your current co-chairmen (for political correctness I have threatened to refer to him as co-chairlady!) We decided to offer our combined services in the belief that our joint energies could handle the various duties and responsibilities of the role.

The coming year will be interesting and busy for us. Apart from the routine U3A Meetings, we will be running our charity Burns Night in January. This is a non-U3A event but a regular one for us raising money for Bucks Young Carers. We are hoping to go to France with the U3A Camping and Caravanning Group, the membership of which has given us many hours of laughter, adventure and activity. If you wonder how educational it is, then try putting up a tent for the first time or count the number of fascinating places we have been to during our stays at 12 different campsites.

Christmas 2016 brings new challenges when we are organising an exciting U3A event with our own talented variety acts. Plans are already underway with lots of enthusiasm from members willing to help by writing plays or pantos, singing and other form of entertainment. Greig and I love to be involved but we also enjoy gardening, ten pin bowling, family history, Scottish country dancing, psychology, craft, bridge, not to mention making pantomime costumes at Queens Park! All this, as well as of course spending time with family and friends.

We will do our best to carry on the good work of past Chairmen, and would like to thank Meryll Coe, Peter Gasson, the rest of the committee and other members for their encouragement in our new venture within the Aylesbury Vale U3A.

Keep warm and well.

Lynne Dawson (not to mention Greig Sneddon)

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

CAMPING AND CARAVANNING:

The Camping Group visited Hayfield in the High Peak district of Derbyshire at the beginning of August. We were joined by Ron and Rosemary Meadowcroft who came across from their new home in Knaresborough. We also met up with Gavin Ewan and his wife, Maggie, who moved up to the beautiful village of Dore, on the outskirts of Sheffield, eight months ago. Gavin kindly arranged for us to have a tour of the Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, where he is active as a volunteer with the Hamlet Haberdashers. We all enjoyed a very interesting talk and loved looking round at all the old buildings and machinery. This was followed by a BBQ at Gavin's new home. A great day out for us all. We also visited various local attractions including Quarrybank Mill (where the drama "The Mill" was filmed), Lyme Park ("Pride and Prejudice" with Colin Firth) and Hayfield itself where the drama "The Village" was filmed. It seems there are a lot of suitable locations for filming in the area! We learnt a lot and got good value from our National Trust memberships. The weather was good to us too.

Heather Edwards

In the photo from left to right:

Steve Edwards, Roger Fox, Ron Meadowcroft, Greig Sneddon, Clare Hawes, Peter Barratt, Rosemary Meadowcroft, Lin Barratt. Seated: Judy Eeles, Lynne Dawson, Heather Edwards and Gavin Ewan. Not forgetting the two dogs Megan and Ivy.



The Hayfield Camp Site

DO YOU KNOW WHO'S CALLING YOU? HANG UP ON FRAUD

The Metropolitan Police Force has issued a booklet on the dangers of phone call fraud, investment fraud and cold calling. In case of doubt they recommend contacting 'Action Fraud' which is the U.K.'s national reporting centre for fraud and internet crime. You can call them on 0300 123 2040, or report via their website: www.actionfraud.police.uk. We also previously featured the Thames Valley Police booklet – 'The Little Book of Big Scams'.



REMEMBER THE SUMMER?

Christine and John Dilkes, Marilyn Cunningham and Pat Griffiths enjoy the riverside park at Stratford-upon-Avon.

Photo from our indefatigable leader Gay Hancock.

Our back-stage tour of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre was absolutely fascinating and a real eye-opener! Some members also enjoyed a mini-cruise on the River Avon and an open top bus tour of the main sights in and around the town.



AFTERNOON TEA – U3A STYLE:

As we battle with the cold of Winter, members of our ‘Discovering Dishes’ Group reflect on the final meeting of the Summer, when they enjoyed a sumptuous home-made afternoon tea at the home of one of our members. You will see from the menu that the repast was very substantial but we all enjoy experimenting with new recipes and having someone to share them with.

Discovering Dishes meets monthly in members’ homes. Each meeting has a theme and three or four members cook dishes, sharing the recipes which can then be tried out at home. Of course, we get to taste everything, and this substitutes for our lunch! We now have an extensive repertoire of recipes with which to impress our families and guests.

Hazel Burgess

DISCOVERING DISHES

AFTERNOON TEA

MENU

- A Selection of Finger Sandwiches
- *
- Savoury Pin Wheels
- Spinach, Butterbean and Ricotta Frittata
- Cheese Stars and Straws
- *
- Lemon and Stem Ginger Scones with
Homemade Lemon Curd and Clotted
Cream
- Victoria Sandwich
- Strawberry Cream Sponge
- Carrot Cake
- Macarons
- Mini Bakewell Tarts
- Mini Toffee Meringues
- *
- Tea and Fruit Punch

AFTERNOON TEA: We thought that the afternoon tea outlined on the previous page sounded so scrumptious that you might like to see the photograph which Hazel sent in. (It looks much better in full colour on the web site!) Our modest cooks have sent in a collage, so that you can view more of the food and less of the bakers!



CHILDREN IN NEED:

Congratulation to members of the Craft Group who worked hard all year to produce attractive Christmas decorations and gifts for their Craft stall at the November monthly meeting. We raised a grand total of £456.85 for the Children in Need appeal.

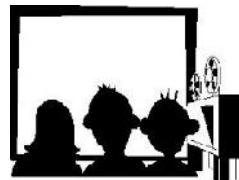
We would like to thank all of you who gave such generous support!

Heather Edwards and Sheila Cruickshank

GENTLE WALKS:

This very successful group has had a change of leadership. Veronica Stagnell has taken a well-earned retirement, and the members wanted to thank her for many enjoyable outings – mostly with good weather. As Veronica is a real film buff, she was presented with some cinema tokens at the pub lunch following her last walk.

Christine Dilkes will be the new leader.



Peter Ashton sent us these shots taken on the Greenwich visit. First a view from the cable car and then a very atmospheric photo of The Cutty Sark.



NEWS FROM THE BOWLS CLUB – AND A LAST REPORT FROM MARY ROGERS:

We tend to remember the summers of our childhood as long hot days, and at this time of year I remember the past summer by how often we had to cancel our Thursday morning bowls and once again we didn't cancel a single one though we might occasionally have had to take longer tea breaks! The group continues to flourish and we played our usual competitions with Janet Meacham and Alex Paterson (shown opposite) winning the mixed pairs to claim The Dorrance Trophy. The Scutt Trophy is played as an American Spoon Drive, a fun game where everyone plays for themselves and for the first time we had three people with the same score, Barbara Lane, Brian Rowe and Roger Walker, so they had to play extra ends with Barbara defeating the two men. A hot sunny day ensured that our fixture against Aylesbury Town went well and we had a very friendly game enjoyed by all even though we have yet to beat them.



I have decided that after running the group for 26 years it is time to hand over, and Elinor Paterson has kindly agreed to take it on with Ron Lloyd, who has been deputy for several years, continuing in this role. It is only appropriate to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Ron for all his hard work, he has been a stalwart, turning up early each week, advising and keeping everything going when I was off sick for a long period. Thank you also to each and everyone in the group for

all the support you have given me, it really has been a pleasure and has given me so much back. I must mention the wonderful send-off you gave me on our last week, Elinor and Alex had arranged a cake and champagne to be served at our break and the card signed by most of you will be a wonderful memento.



Still to come is our presentation lunch which again will be at Foxhills Indoor Bowls club on Thursday January 14th and I will be taking names, choice of menu and cheques at our December meeting. We will be returning to the Derwent Hotel in Torquay February 21st to the 26th, a day longer than last year, so that we will all have a day free from bowling to explore the area if we wish. This will be my swan song and from the start of next season, April 2016, Elinor Paterson will take charge, please give her the same support you have to me and of course I will continue to be a member of the group and enjoy your company.

Mary presenting the Scutt Trophy to Barbara Lane

I should like to thank Mary for all her contributions over the 26 years of her leadership of this group. I could always rely on her for a newsletter item. Now if only all the other group leaders did the same.....

The Editor



Our very own Three Wise Monkeys –
or so they say. We make no comment!

WINE APPRECIATION GROUP 1

This group currently has a vacancy for one or two new members. It normally meets each month on a Tuesday afternoon at the members' houses on a rotation basis.

The objective is to discuss, learn about, and importantly, enjoy the wines being tasted. It is also a great opportunity to socialise.

Any U3A member who is interested in joining and would like more details should telephone Michael Meacham.

CHESS GROUP

This group normally meets fortnightly at the Group Leader's house in the Bedgrove area on a Tuesday morning.

One or two new members would be made very welcome so please call Denis Wright for more information.

ELECTRONIC IGNORANCE:

Is there anyone there? says the caller
Using his mobile phone.
Although I keep ringing your number
I just get a dialling tone.

If I only knew how to send e-mails
I could send you a message instead.
You would tell me if you are still living
Or whether you've gone back to bed!

Surfing the web is a pastime,
That used to be just for the spider.
Now it's a source of all the world's ills
And is even a virus provider!

So how can we cope with computers
In this the mod-conical age ?
We go back to the days of the pigeon post
And write all our notes on a page.

Written with feeling by

Sheila Calver



A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Davina Birch, Inger Bunting, Nigel Clowe, Marian and John Cripps. Sandra Erwin, Jane Miller. Marion and Andy Mills, Kathleen and Kevin Powell, Lesley Skinner, Gillian Bateman and Mary Hunt.

We hope that you enjoy your membership.

YOUR FAVOURITE COMMENTS ON RETIREMENT:

Some of the perks of being over 60:

Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.
There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
Things you buy now won't wear out.
You no longer think of the speed limit as a challenge.
You stop trying to hold your stomach in, no matter who walks into the room.
Friends call at 10.00 a.m. and ask "Did I wake you?"
Your investment in Health Insurance is finally beginning to pay off.
Your joints are more accurate meteorologists than the weather forecasters.
Your secrets are safe with your friends, because they can't remember them either!

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN....

Only girls had pierced ears.

You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns at Easter time.

We fell out of trees, broke bones, or lost teeth and there were no lawsuits as a result.
We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when it was teatime.

We didn't have Play Stations, Nintendo, no video games, no mobile phones. We had FRIENDS, and we just went outside to meet them.

A FAVOURITE POEM: The Senility Prayer

Grant me the senility to forget the people
I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do
And the eyesight to tell the difference.

Always remember, You don't stop laughing because you grow old.
You grow old because you stop laughing.

Among retirees what is considered formal attire? Answer – tied shoes,

What is the best way to describe retirement? The never-ending coffee break.

Question to a retiree: What do you do all week? Answer: Monday to Friday, nothing. Saturday and Sunday I rest! (Not U3A members, our proof reader added!)

AND FINALLY: My Doctor told me to get more exercise, so I joined an aerobics class. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down and perspired for an hour, but by the time I got my leotard on the class was over.

SENT IN BY MEMBERS - WISHING EVERYONE A HAPPY CHRISTMAS



I used to be a banker but then I lost interest.

Jokes about German sausages are the wurst.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went and then it dawned on me.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

Velcro – what a rip off.

Know your English language: If one is a tooth and two are called teeth, why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth? If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? We speak of a brother and also of brethren but though we say mother, we never say methren! In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital.....and so on.

ROAD SIGNS THAT MAKE YOU THINK!

Children drive slowly

Surgery Parking only – 5 minute limit (Cataract and Laser Surgery centre)



MORE SCHOOLBOY HOWLERS:

Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper.

Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king.

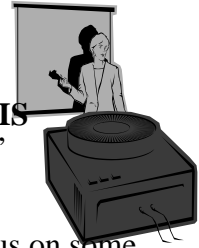
William Tell shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.

Question in a mock biology GCSE exam: Give an example of movement in plants and an animal that cannot move. Answer: Triffids and a dead cat.

Name the four seasons. Salt, pepper mustard and vinegar

SPEAKERS CORNER

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 13TH: ALEX PATERSON – “ELECTRICITY IS WONDERFUL”



Alex, who of course is one of our own members, is an engineer who spent most of his career in the power generation industry. His talk aims to enlighten us on some key questions which relate to our dependence on this vital resource. What is electricity? How is it produced? Are our electricity supplies secure? Can we continue to use electricity without causing excessive global warming?

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 10TH: TIMOTHY WALKER – “WHAT HAVE PLANTS EVER DONE FOR US?”

Timothy held the post of Director of the Oxford Botanic Garden for 26 years until his retirement in 2014. His talk will demonstrate that most human activity would be impossible without the help of plants, and looks at our dependence on plants for everything from food to film and from painkillers to paint. It also looks at ways in which our exploitation of plants could keep up with demand from an increasing global population and what we as individuals can do to help future generations.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 9TH: RICHARD POAD – “GRANDMA FLEW SPITFIRES! – THE FORGOTTEN STORY OF THE AIR TRANSPORT AUXILIARY(ATA)”

Richard is Chairman of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre which contains a museum dedicated to the ATA (and a Spitfire simulator!) He will tell us the amazing story of these brave men and women who ferried new and repaired aircraft of all types from the factories to the military airfields. As a result hundreds of operational combat pilots were released to fight the enemy.

Alan Robinson

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE ELECTED AT THE OCTOBER A.G.M.

Joint Chairmen	Greig Sneddon and Lynne Dawson
Vice-Chairman	Jean Ashton
Secretary	Peter Gasson
Treasurer	Richard Clark
Groups Coordinator	Hazel Burgess
Hall Manager	Derek Ayshford
Membership Secretary	Dan McGregor
Outings Coordinator	Gay Hancock
Social Activities	Maxine Robinson
Speakers Secretary	Alan Robinson.



A WINTER'S TALE

This is the month when we see signs of Winter appearing. It is also the time when many of us visit the doctor to get our annual flu jab, but 200 years ago it was vaccination against the dreaded scourge of smallpox which frightened people. The efficacy of Dr. Jenner's work involved taking the lymph from patients who had contracted Cowpox and inoculating both adults and children with this, using an arm to arm procedure, finally confirmed that immunity was indeed acquired as a result. One of Jenner's ardent supporters and lifelong friends was the respected London physician Dr. John Lettsom. They shared delight in Jenner's success when his methods were finally recognised both at home and overseas.

In 1819 the Duke and Duchess of Kent requested their Royal Physician to find a suitable subject from whom the vaccine lymph could be obtained for their infant daughter, the little Princess Victoria. The choice fell on the baby son of Elizabeth, daughter of John Lettsom and wife of John Elliot with whom she had 15 children. Thus in August 1819 their son Edmund was taken to Kensington Palace where the arm to arm vaccination between the two infants took place. A few days later Mrs. Elliot received a letter from the Duchess inviting her to the Palace in order to "show her the little Victoria whose

vaccination is going so well thanks to Mrs. Elliot's great kindness which will never be forgotten by the Duke and Herself. The Duke joins her with the anxious enquiry after the dear little boy from whom the lymph was taken....."

Following this episode a friendship sprang up between the two mothers and the Duchess would slip away to Pimlico House for an intimate cup of tea with the vivacious Eliza. Dr. Jenner must have felt immensely proud and gratified that all his work was now so widely recognised – and also had the Royal Seal of Approval! A picture of his white-washed house with a beautiful pink rose climbing to the upper windows is entitled: "Dr. Jenner's House – the Birthplace of Vaccination".

Spare him a thought when you next have a jab!

Sheila Thompson

Sheila sent her research to Kensington Palace, and received a letter of thanks saying that their Royal Highnesses were very interested to read this. We are following in Royal footsteps!

OUR ANNUAL QUIZ:

This year our Annual Quiz and Fish and Chip Supper attracted ten tables of six members. Food always features on U3A occasions, and we started the afternoon with tea and biscuits or a visit to the bowling club bar. When we plan a quiz, the rounds are somewhat random and we never have a joker (where teams may opt in advance to double their scores if they think they are experts on the topic in question) but at the end of the first half of the afternoon we introduced a special Round 5 based on anything to do with Christmas. Three tables tied with marks and Table 7 won the prize having given the more detailed description of what reindeer do! (Don't ask!)



We then had a short break for more drinks/chatting before commencing the final half of the quiz. In this section we do a round based on the Highway Code (my husband loves planning this round). The questions here were taken from the current theory test that all new drivers now have to take. Some of the answers were a little worrying, and the members on the losing table now each have a copy of the Code as bedtime reading. The final scores were reasonably close with Table Two (Jean and Peter Ashton, Libby and Eric Rose and Gay and Ian Hancock) winning – scoring 69 points.

OUT AND ABOUT GROUP:

It is now about seven years since the group was formed, initially with nine members, and its main aim was to encourage members who were on their own to come along and meet new people and make new friends. Many firm individual friendships have been made and small groups formed. We now have forty members and currently meet at The Bell, Stoke Mandeville. The staff are very welcoming and readily serve us with coffee and tea on arrival – I bring the biscuits!

Our meetings are very lively. Each month members come up with ideas about the places they'd like to visit, local activities they wish to support or films to see. Individuals then decide which activity appeals to them – it may have six followers or may attract 16.



Our monthly meeting at The Bell

We enjoy going to the Theatre and especially enjoy the Thame Theatre which puts on great plays – their amateur players are excellent. The Theatre only holds about 100, so you feel as though you are actually taking part. We also enjoy 'Music in Quiet Places' – a series of concerts which take place in different churches around the area. We have been to Craft Markets, Auctions, Day visits with Motts, and taken the 'Ghouls and Ghosts Walk' around Aylesbury. Some of the group met the cast of the BBC Antiques Roadshow when they went to Stowe and took some of their own items to be valued. We also met the BBC team from the 'Flog It' series when they visited Tring Auctions. Waddesdon Manor is another popular place for visits to their many open air events. Four members took a holiday in the Western Isles of Scotland, and three members are now considering a cruise to Greenland next year. All this and we had never met before joining 'Out and About'.

Why not come and join us and meet new friends!

Jean Coussens.



A stormy day on the ferry to the Scottish Isles (left) contrasts with a peaceful fish and chip lunch on the River Avon in Evesham. All photos from Jean Coussens



These photographs came from Gay Hancock our indefatigable tour leader who somehow finds time, with husband Ian, to organise the visit, keep us all in check and take photos too!

Last date for copy for the Spring Newsletter will be February 10th 2016 so please send any items you may like to share with us to Shirley Stokes on treveris9@btinternet.com or by post to 9 Windsor Road, Aylesbury HP21 7JG. Telephone 01296 392726. But don't wait for the closing date; the Editor likes to receive copy as early as possible so that she knows what spaces are left to be filled!

Thanks as always are due to our Secretary Peter Gasson for help with the ordering and printing and to Heather Edwards and Peter Ashton who kindly adjusted your photos as necessary and Alan Robinson for proof-reading. It is a bit like being at school again, when my 'homework' comes back annotated with all my mistakes to be corrected! I can assure you that I need Alan's help!

And of course to all of you who send me articles and photographs.