

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 75

June 2015

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

What does the Committee do and why do we need one? The Committee is the glue that allows Aylesbury Vale U3A to run. We currently have 450 members and the Group Leaders and their Deputies run over 40 different groups. Out of that number we need 10 people to sit on the Committee and keep proper records (the Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer); organise events for members (Social Secretary and Outings Organiser); make sure the Hall is arranged for each meeting (Hall Manager); and that we get some tea and coffee (Coffee Rota run by Dot our Vice Chairman); that we have a speaker for each meeting (Speakers Secretary) and that the Groups have someone to co-ordinate their events (Groups Co-ordinator). Then someone has to keep all these people in order so we have a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Because each person on the Committee has a particular role the strain, stress and time taken to keep AVU3A going is minimal. We can sit for three years if we wish, but as has happened this last year I agreed to be Chairman for one year only. The number of years a person is on the Committee is up to them and they have to agree to stay on each year. Personally I feel that a short term of office is easiest and the turnover that creates gives any Club a buzz with new ideas coming in. New ideas bring new groups, new sorts of events and outings and they keep us all interested in what's going on.

We are currently working on encouraging members to take on roles for the next year and cutting back on the number of meetings that we hold. As most people have computers much can be done over the internet and there is always the phone. So we have cut out a few Committee meetings, so next year's Committee may meet less often if they so wish. Even the day the Committee meets and where, is open to discussion. Whilst we are against re-inventing the wheel just for the sake of it, change can be a good thing and bring new life. So give some serious thought to Committee work, it is fun, doesn't have to be forever and will ensure that AVU3A keeps going as the friendly outward-looking group we have always been.

Meryll Coe

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

POETRY GROUP 1

Poetry Group 1 is a lively group of like minded souls who meet up fortnightly at the Grange School. Our leader, Peggy Jovanovic, has been a member of the U3A since September 1992 and took over the Group in September 2006.



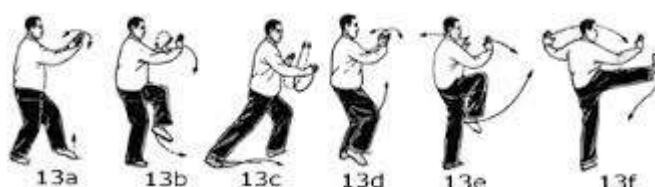
We cover a wide spectrum of both modern and classical poetry – recent meetings have explored the works of William Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, Benjamin Zephaniah, Seamus Heaney, and Robert Burns, to name just a few. Some of the poets are well known to us and others perhaps not so familiar or even totally unknown. It is always a good learning curve to read work by the lesser known poets and we can begin to appreciate the difference in styles of poetry throughout the years. Some of the poets' work we find challenging but we often have humorous poetry in the shape of Pam Ayres, Spike Milligan or Edward Lear, for example. Members have their own favourite poets and poems which crop up regularly and on one occasion we were introduced to the works of Vernon Scannell, a poet who had once lived in Aylesbury. This was quite a revelation to most of us who were unaware of his work.

Each session we choose a poet and a theme for the next meeting, giving us time to research and produce material for our meeting. Recent themes have included "New Beginnings", "Food and Drink" and "Humour" for example. We are reminded of long forgotten school days when the poems come flooding back to us – whole chunks of verse which amazingly have remained stored away in some secret compartment of our brains until they're nudged out of their hiding place.

We have a lot of fun and laughter in the group and on more than one occasion, the teacher whose room we use at The Grange has been known to linger longer than necessary whilst packing his bags and once quoted a piece of a poem himself, perhaps wishing he was fortunate enough to be a member of the U3A and able to spend time with us!

Come along and try it for yourself – you will find a very sociable and friendly bunch of people – contact Peggy Jovanovic for more details.

Jenny Corton



Lost

TAI CHI GROUP:

Joan Lewis is still looking for the missing five Training DVD's which were borrowed by past members of her group. As she has now got several newcomers who would welcome a bit of home practice, she would be grateful if they could be returned to her, or any member of the U3A Committee.

THE BOWLS GROUP:



February saw 53 of us set off on yet another Bowls holiday, we had 44 bowlers, the rest were supporters (partners and friends).

This year we went to Torquay where the format was a little different, we played against other clubs who were also visiting the hotel rather than entering a Tournament and this meant we were able to mix up our rinks and have our own personal competition. We had three different teams, everyone playing one game on each of the three full days but at different times giving everyone a chance to do their own thing when not actually playing.



Mary Rogers gets ready for action!

There was plenty to do both in the hotel and the town and nearby area and bus passes came into use for some.

Swimming, curling, quizzes, bingo (one of our group won the jackpot of £91.00 on the first night!), dancing and entertainment were just some of the things on offer. Cyril, as always, brought lots of games and was in charge of organizing those who preferred to play cards etc in the evening and there was also snooker and pool available.

We had our own little presentation on the Thursday evening when pens were given to the highest winning rink of each game and we had a Top Lady and Top Man trophy for those who had scored the highest aggregate of shots during the week. Bronwen Saunders took the ladies' prize and Roy Davies won for the men, well done to both of them.



Our U3A team deep in contemplation.
Both photos from Tony Simmons

Now as I write it is almost time for us to reconvene for the summer season when we will once again be playing at Aylesbury Town Bowls Club every Thursday from 10.00 until 12.00. See you then.

Mary Rogers

AYLESBURY HUNDREDS ROTARY CLUB:

The Chairman recently received an invitation to talk to the Aylesbury Hundreds Rotary Club about U3A. They felt that some of their members could potentially be interested in membership. As the Chairman was not available on the dates suggested, she asked me to do it on her behalf. I duly went along to the Foxhills Bowls Club, where I was fed and watered and made very welcome. They seemed to be quite overwhelmed by our membership numbers; I think they were expecting me to say that we had about 45! They were particularly interested in the waiting list numbers.

Shirley Stokes



Our London Walks Group always seem to find something new and interesting to see on their outings. Peter Harding took this photograph and adds: "Bright Bricks is a building company that creates anything from Lego bricks. In August 2013 they appealed for volunteers to help build a model of the Gherkin. The model is situated at 30 St Mary Axe, next to the actual Gherkin, and is some 4m tall. The aim of building the model was to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the actual building being completed and the model was made from 200,000 bricks. The model and the building are a short walk from Tower Hill and Aldgate which was on the route of our walk through the eastern part of the City of London."



Jean Ashton sent us this photo of the Craft Group in action. She also penned a few verses to accompany it. I have taken an extract from her poem, but you can see the whole poem on our website.

The Editor

THE CRAFT GROUP:

The Needlework Group it is no more
And the Craft Group has taken its place
With Heather and Sheila our leading lights
And a room with plenty of space.

You can stitch and sew and crochet and knit,
There's quilting and making lace
And paper craft cards and scrapbooking.
Is there chatter? Well yes, just a trace!

So when it's time to say goodbye
To work, to stress, to strife
Just say hello to the U3A -
New interests, new friends, new life!

CREATIVE WRITING:

We always start off with refreshments and a chat. What else could one expect from an AVU3A group? Then we get down to business. You see each time we meet, we have a 10 minute task set by the host/ess...yes we are given such a short time to come up with a few paragraphs on a given topic. The old brainboxes have to kick swiftly into action, working against the clock, then we share our masterpieces and briefly discuss them. Next comes the really interesting part where we sit back and just luxuriate in the offerings of each member. Bliss! Few pastimes are more relaxing than being read to. We are transported to exotic lands, exciting or desperate times and interesting, often unusual, situations.



Before we leave, we decide on the topic for the forthcoming month, which can of course be considered at a leisurely pace.

We want to share some of our writings with you and you will find them on the website. Your views on these – constructive of course – are very welcome. Otherwise we have no idea if anyone has ever read them . Our group is full and there is a waiting list, so if you find yourself inspired to form a second one please get in touch and I will give you all the help I can. No previous writing experience is needed, as most of us have not written anything creative since our school days. We often surprise ourselves at the wide array of responses to a single idea. Why not have a go? You have nothing to lose, may find hidden talents and surprise yourself too!

Linda Wells

'MILITARY HISTORY' POSSIBLE NEW GROUP

I am willing to start a new group on this vast subject. I anticipate we would meet monthly in a local hall for a couple of hours where we would have self-generated talks, discussions, outings to military sites and possible outside speakers on this subject. If you are interested please put your name on the list at the next meeting, or contact me direct.



Ken Satterthwaite.

OTHER NEWSLETTERS:

From time to time we receive copies of newsletters from neighbouring U3As. Some are in colour, and others just have a coloured title page and back page. It does add something to their appearance. The latest from Chiltern gives details of their monthly speakers – with some familiar names on the list. There are, of course, many similar groups too, but some newcomers: Latin for Fun anyone? They have Antiques and Collectables, which we ran as a short course once; Film Appreciation; Pilates; new technology and so on. Lots of ideas for our Speakers Secretary, Groups Co-ordinator and Outings Organisers.



Members much enjoyed the visit to John Taylor's Bell Foundry at Loughborough. The first photo shows the impressive sight of the molten metal being poured (see the website to appreciate the wonderful colours). On the right, the process of bell making is explained.

Photos by courtesy of Peter Harding

Roy Knight bought a postcard which tickled his fancy in St. Bride's Church on a recent London walk. He wanted to share its message with you!

Sure, I'll Listen to Your Troubles—

I like to hear Good News.

EXPLORING LONDON WALKS – April 10th 2015

*“We can all be refugees
Sometimes it only takes a day,
Sometimes it only takes a handshake
Or a paper that is signed.
We all came from refugees
Nobody simply just appeared,
Nobody’s here without a struggle,
And why should we live in fear
Of the weather or the troubles?
We all came here from somewhere”*

from ‘WE REFUGEES’ by Benjamin Zephaniah

The walk Exploring London on April 10th, took us past some amazing murals in Portobello Road, just past the junction with Golborne Road. The poem above was on the mural entitled Guernica Alley. This plaque commemorated the arrival aboard the ‘Habana’ of 4000 refugee children from the Basque region of Spain in May 1937 following the destruction of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War and to thank people who volunteered to care for them. The background of the mural was of the famous painting ‘Guernica’ by Pablo Picasso, which was painted for the Spanish Pavilion at the International Exposition in Paris in 1937. Picasso’s motivation for the painting was after hearing the news and seeing photographs of the German bombing of the town Guernica. There were many other fascinating murals nearby including those entitled ‘The Future Passage’, ‘Greydayno Way’, ‘Carnival Parade’ and ‘Out Ypres Way’, all having interesting street names and pictorial depictions.



On the right our walkers view the murals. Both photos by Peter Harding

Peter Harding



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

THURSDAY 9TH JULY: TENTERDEN, KENT & EAST SUSSEX STEAM RAILWAY & BODIAM CASTLE.

We have some time to explore Tenterden, one of the most charming towns in the South East with its fine historic houses, restaurants and pubs, as well as unusual shops and a stunning medieval church. Then we board the steam train for a ten mile ride through the unspoilt countryside of the Rother valley to terminate at the magnificent National Trust castle at Bodiam. This 14th century castle, although largely a ruin, is one of Britain's most picturesque. Cost of £38 will include the train fare, and a tour and cream tea at the castle. Depart lay-by, Jansel Square 8.00, return 7.30 approx.

WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY: 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 £1.75 – a bargain – and we meet every two months.

SATURDAY 25TH JULY: Buckinghamshire Family History Society invite you to their free Open Day: The Grange School, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

THURSDAY 6TH AUGUST: WORCESTER AND COUGHTON COURT (NT)

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.

SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST: Chiltern U3A invite you to their 'Summer Jazzfest' at the Drake Hall, Amersham Community Centre, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham, 7.00 p.m. to 11.00p.m. Traditional New Orleans jazz ; ticket entrance only – £15; licensed bar. (No food will be served – bring your own if you wish.) Further information from Peter Metcalf, 2 Long Park Close, Chesham Bois, Amersham HP6 5JY.

MONDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER: STRATFORD-ON-AVON WITH BACKSTAGE TOUR OF ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY THEATRE.

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 wildlife lovers.

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

SPEAKERS CORNER



WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY: MIKE PAYNE – THE HISTORY OF PINWOOD STUDIOS

Mike will take us from the opening in the mid-30's right through to the present day. Pinwood's output has played a major part in British entertainment history, in both films and television. Pinwood's film range includes notable documentaries made during WW2, and since then it has made us laugh with the 'Carry On' and the Doctor series and was also home to the famous Norman Wisdom comedies. It has been the home of James Bond and Superman and those very scary Alien films. Pinwood has also provided the home for some of the UK's best loved TV programmes including 'Midsomer Murders' and 'Emmerdale'. With Mike's talk we can combine "a walk down memory lane" at the same time as "going behind the scenes."

WEDNESDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER: JOHN TYLER – READING THE COUNTRYSIDE



John has been one of our most prolific speakers in recent years and this will be his fifth talk to AVU3A. John says: "Once you learn how to spot the clues, a walk in the countryside can reveal so much more about its wildlife, history and prehistory. There are even signs that will help you to find your way and to forecast the weather."

Our wildlife and local countryside guru has spoken. Don't forget to bring your notebook!

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:



This is a reminder that subscriptions of £15 for full membership are due on 1ST August. They can be paid directly to the membership secretary, Diane Richardson, at the monthly meeting or posted to her at 100 Kynaston Avenue, Aylesbury, HP21 9DS. Cheques should be made payable to 'Aylesbury Vale U3A'. Members who want their new membership badges posted to them should enclose a stamped addressed envelope for this purpose. Those who are currently associate members are asked to wait before renewing until they are contacted directly by Diane about the availability of full membership.

This year, on renewal, every member is asked to complete a short questionnaire about their involvement in AVU3A. The new committee will be made up of several relatively new members of the U3A and the information given will let them know about those who have made contributions in the past and those who are willing to do so in the future. Please ensure the questionnaire is returned with the subscription.

If anyone does not wish to renew their membership they are asked to let Diane know as soon as possible so that she can contact those on the waiting list to offer the places to them. She can be contacted by email at membership@avu3a.org.uk or at the address above or by phone on 01296 437265. It would be very much appreciated if those who are not renewing could return their badge holders and directories, including the contents, to any member of the committee.

WEBSITE UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: www.avu3a.org.

Marilyn and Moira are the new website editors and are keen to keep the pages relevant and up to date, and have sent the following request for help:



The website needs to reflect the Aylesbury Vale U3A and all its members. It is taking a little time to learn how to manage the website and we are still in training with Mike Bean who originally set it up! We would like to have your thoughts and ideas of what you would like to see on its pages and any suggestions of changes that you think could be made.

In order to help celebrate the talents and creativity of the members we would love to have photographs of projects. So any photos of craft work, paintings or even photos of places visited would be very welcome. Perhaps members of the photography group would like to have a gallery to display the fruits of their labours. We could do with some pictures of the local area for the front page. (Please check that anybody featured is happy to appear on the web.) Please look at the website and read some of the brilliant stories supplied by the Creative Writing Group who very bravely submitted their work as an example of what happens at some U3A groups.

There is a diary section of events, and details of all the fabulous outings run by Gay and Ian Hancock are linked to the Outings page . We could add more information about other events but we need to be given the information first.

Marilyn Dunnnett and Moira Bishop



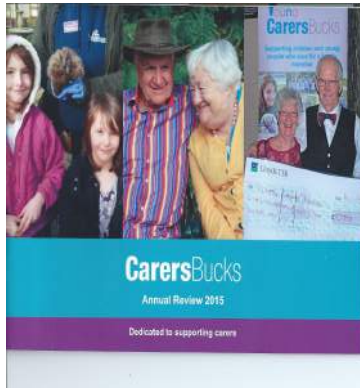
A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Christine & Dennis Clarke, Heather & Geoff Ellis, Felicity Garrett, Theresa Guilfoyle, Kathy Herridge, John Hobbs, Sally Jeffery, Jacky Kentish, Rob King, Tom & Arlene McSweeney, Ivor Rickard, John & Sheena Swinburn, Jan Unsworth



Look who our 'Gentle Walkers' met in Wendover Woods! The Gruffalo will be known to all of you who are Grandparents.

Photo from Barbara Lane



RECOGNITION! So grateful were Carers Bucks for the generous donations made over the years by the Scottish Country Dancers, that Lynne and Greig are featured on the front cover of their 2015 Annual Review. There is a personal thank you to Lynne Dawson for another successful Burns Night celebration, and another picture of our dancers on page 5.

Well done to them; we can all bask in their reflected glory!

APOLOGY!

Not for the first time the editor has to apologise for an error. We regularly receive wonderful photographs of the London Walkers from Peter Harding. In the last issue I inexcusably credited a photo to 'Peter Wright' (an early member who built our cupboards at Meadowcroft). Humble apologies to Peter H and I promise that I will try to do better next time!



Just a reminder that all coach tours now leave from the lay-by outside Sainsbury's on Jansel Square.

LATEST NEWS FROM THE THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

Here are some of the newest day courses on offer from the Network. Don't forget that these are always advertised on the special TVN notice board at the rear of the hall at our monthly meetings. Full details can also be obtained from our representative Geoff Young. But don't leave it too late; remember that there are another 37 U3As in the Network all receiving this information. So get your name down quickly if you are interested. They quickly sell out!

19th September: 'The Work of the Bodleian Library' at the Bodleian Library in Oxford

30th September: 'Forensic Science' at Culham Science Centre, Abingdon

19/20th October: Historic Pathway Residential at Wellington College.

If you can't attend the monthly meetings keep up with the TVN web page at www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk.

THE JOYS OF MOVING HOUSE:

It is almost 18 years since we moved house and since then we have become an online internet society. I'm not a dinosaur about new technology but I do often find that all these innovations make life more difficult.



For example I tried to inform my energy supplier of our meter readings and change of address. At that time our landline had not yet been connected so I tried to phone on my pay-as-you-go mobile. Instead of this being a free 0800 service, because I was using a mobile I had to pay. For several days I tried to get through. On one occasion I was told by a recorded message that there was a waiting time of 20 minutes. On another occasion I tried hanging on and ran out of money before I was connected. At this point I gave up and decided to wait until the landline was installed. When I did eventually get through to the supplier what should have been a five minute call at the most took 30 minutes as the operator had to follow a procedure which involved telling me all about the tariff which was the same one I had before and did not wish to have any more details about.

I tried to tell Premium Bonds my new address by telephone. Because I had forgotten my password (silly me) the operator could not alter my details on the system even though I could answer all her questions about my grandfather's profession and my eldest son's middle name. She offered to send me a new password by post. "Fine" I said. "Do you want my new address?" This threw her but we finally agreed that she would send it to my old address where it would be forwarded on.

These are only two instances of the difficulties I experienced. Not only do we have to endure robotic instructions to press one for this, two for that, three for something else but when we do get through to a real person they are so tied down to following procedures that it is difficult to get anything done simply.

So, we know that moving house is stressful but does it have to be made more so by modern technology making life even more stressful ?

Barbara Fraser

Last date for copy for the September Newsletter will be August 10th 2015 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.

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 as always 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. Some groups clearly have more opportunities to take interesting photos, but we want plenty of variety. So even if you have just one snap of an interesting sign, or something seen in your garden, please don't be too shy to send it in.