

NEWSLETTER



AYLESBURY VALE U3A

NUMBER 15 SPRING 2000



"THE KING IS DEAD;

LONG LIVE THE KING!"



Incoming chairman, Geoff Young,
takes over the reins from Ed Schoon
at the Annual General Meeting in October.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S CARAVAN



Hello and welcome to this first edition of the Newsletter in 2000. Christmas and the New Year celebrations are behind us and hopefully many of you managed to miss the flu. I also hope that all the New Year's resolutions are still intact; personally I never make them.

I expect a lot of you are looking forward to the summer holidays and after Margaret Deakin's talk those planning to go on the New England trip are even more enthusiastic. What an excellent talk and so interesting.

It is very encouraging to see so many of the group leaders coming forward to promote the activities of their groups. Without this members are not aware of what activities are going on and it may encourage some to try something new. We owe a lot to our leaders, who are the building blocks of our U3A and should be supported as much as possible. It is with this in mind that I pay tribute to two of our longest serving group leaders, Stuart Baker and Alan Dell, both of whom have decided to pass on their responsibilities to other members. Stuart was a founder member and Alan Dell was close behind. Both served on the committee in the early days with Alan undertaking the role as treasurer from 1991 to 1995. Who can forget Stuart and Alan combining their talents to entertain us at Christmas with their own brand of comedy? On behalf of all our members, I offer our sincere thanks for all they have done for our U3A.

As I mentioned at the January meeting many groups are quite small and meet in various members' houses. This often causes considerable disruption to the house with the movement of chairs etc. not to mention the extra milk and biscuits often bought. I find U3A members are great tea and coffee drinkers! It is for these reasons that I ask members to advise the group leaders as early as possible if they are unable to attend a meeting, especially the smaller groups, as it could save a lot inconvenience.

At present the Committee is busy sorting out the details for the Regional Conference on the 24th May. Some of you have already offered to help, and I thank them for that and if you feel you may be able to assist in some way please see one of the Committee members.

Finally, may I please ask you to read very carefully the following item on the Data Protection Act and, if appropriate, let John Counsell have your response straight away.

Geoff

DATA PROTECTION ACT

So far we have had to spend £150 on registration fees under the provisions of this Act although we could claim exemption on the grounds that we are an "incorporated members club." There are, however, important conditions that we must fulfil before such exemption can be claimed. The first is that every member must be asked and must record in writing that they do not object to having their details kept in a computer. When we asked that question some three years ago a very small number of members objected, although they gave no reasons for their objections. As a result we were obliged to register. Since that first registration our membership application form has incorporated a suitable question and so all new members have been able to express their acceptance. There remains the matter of acceptance by members who joined before the modified form was introduced. This aspect is now being dealt with in a different way by the following question distributed to every member by this Newsletter:

- Do you object to having your membership information stored in a computer?
- If you do object you must notify me in writing not later than 22nd March 2000 giving your reasons for objection.

You are assured that the information contained in the database is strictly for administrative purposes within our U3A and will in no circumstances be revealed to any third party without your permission. You may also, if you desire it, be given a copy of the information kept about you, subject to whatever costs may be involved.

John Counsell

STILL IN THE CHAIRMAN'S CARAVAN

And now a contribution from 'er indoors!

This was taken from the Leighton & Linslade U3A Newsletter, and is reprinted with their kind permission.

Val Young

Today, Dear Lord, I'm eighty and there's much I haven't done
I hope Dear Lord you'll let me live until I am eighty-one

But then if I haven't finished all I want to do
Would you let me stay awhile - till I'm eighty-two?

So many places I want to go, so very much to see
Do you think you could manage to make it eighty-three?

The world is changing very fast. There's so much more in store
I'd like it very much to stay - and live to eight-four

And if by then I'm still alive
I'd like to stay until I'm eighty-five

Technology changes things so much - now I'm in a fix
I'd like to see this strange new world when I'm eighty-six

I know, Dear Lord, it's much to ask (and I'm sure it's nice in Heaven)
But I'd really like to be around when I'm eighty-seven

I know by then I won't be fast, and sometimes will be late
But it would be very pleasant to stay to eighty-eight

I will have seen so many things, and had a lovely time
So I'm sure that I'd be willing to leave at eight-nine
(Maybe!)



Helena Croft



SPEAKERS CORNER

With my new Speakers' Secretary hat on, I am asking for volunteers and recommendations. Geoff has put together a very attractive programme for this year but we need to plan for 2001 and beyond already. If any member of our U3A would like to give a talk at the monthly meeting, please tell me. Secondly, if anyone has heard, or heard of, a good speaker, again do let me know (and perhaps more negatively, but just as important, warn us of anyone to be avoided at all costs!).

By the time you read this, you will know that best laid plans have 'gang agley' already and we were very sorry that Sir Lawrence Verney was unable to give his planned talk in February. I was so grateful to Geoff for stepping into the breach. This has made us realise that perhaps it would be a good idea to have a list of 'short notice' speakers. No, I don't mean a 'B' list; what I do mean is if any of our own members would like to give a talk and/or show slides and we can arrange an appropriate date, would he or she then be willing to have it prepared in advance so that we could bring it forward if necessary? If anyone would prefer just to give a short talk if needed, I would be very happy to have names for that as well—it needn't be for a full hour: two or three short talks can always be put together.

I await a flood of speakers with eager anticipation!

Sue John

☎ 01296 486682

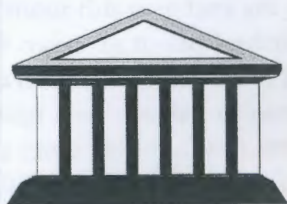
SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK. 20th to 26th May 2000

Adult Learners' week was set up to offer a chance to celebrate the role that learning can play in transforming lives. This year for the first time the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) has introduced a Senior Learner of the Year Award in England to recognise learning achievements among older people

Your committee had hoped to make a suitable and much deserved recommendation for this award, but our proposed nominee was too modest —and declined the offer. Although it is now too late to make an alternative nomination for the current year, members might like to bear it in mind for 2001.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES MONTH. 1st May to 4th June 2000



This month is to concentrate on celebrating museums and galleries as meeting places -of people and cultures. The three main themes are Turning Points in History, The Past Inspires the Future, and Welcome Days. Maybe some of our groups could incorporate something in their own programmes. How about consulting the County Museum about 'Looking at Photographs' or asking them to consider offering a talk on the History of Art in the Gallery?

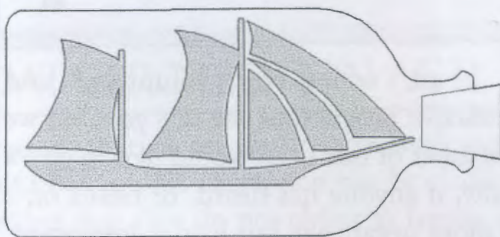
For more information contact Ylva French or Jennie Bond, Campaign for Museums. Tel: 0207 233 9796, or for our more technically minded members, visit their web site at www.may2000.org.uk.

MILLENNIUM FESTIVAL FUNDS

It is possible to obtain lottery grants for event organisers and community award schemes; The Millennium Festival Fund has been specially created for small-scale local projects, with grants between £500 and £5000. One of our neighbouring U3As has already applied and is eagerly awaiting an answer. Is there anyone out there in Aylesbury with an interesting idea?

For an application pack call 0845 6002040.

NEVER HAS SO MUCH BEEN SQUEEZED INTO SO LITTLE



The above comment comes from the Design Age Newsletter, and is a comment on one rail region's attempt to squeeze its passengers into ever-narrower train seats. (Not like our recent helpful speaker from Chiltern Railways). A number of U3As have set up groups to look at issues of design which relate to the needs of older people. These groups have already held one seminar in London, and hope to arrange another. Their newsletter makes fascinating reading.

The issues raised vary from the joys at public cycle paths in Germany populated in large numbers by third agers whose cycles were fitted with trailers to enable them to go supermarket shopping; to the installation of continuous carriers (or escalators) installed alongside long flights of stairs in some railway stations to enable suitcases and parcels to be carried painlessly between platforms.

U3A Bath is visiting local schools which use computers for A-Level design studies: Cardiff is collaborating with the School of Product and Engineering Design of the University of Wales Institute. They meet with students and staff who are preparing projects for assessment and offer constructive criticism. On an international scale, Reading is in touch with U3A colleagues in Australia and New Zealand who are piloting an imaginative project to provide courses by Internet to isolated older people who are unable to benefit from a local group. One London group is investigating the signposting in three major hospitals, (and photographing inadequate signs).

The newsletter is full of exciting ideas - perhaps Aylesbury will one day have an equally worthwhile Design Group!

SECRETARY'S SCRIBBLES

WHY WE NEED TO KEEP UP WITH THE NEW TECHNOLOGY



We are told that broadcast television in the U.S.A. took 13 years to reach an audience of 50 million; personal computers took 13 years; while the Internet achieved the same in just 4 years! There is a new phrase in current use, "The Digital Divide", describing the gap between those who have the skills and those who do not. Computing power is doubling every 18 months. "Those who fall behind will be left behind," says Michael Willis, the Minister for Learning & Technology. Why not take this opportunity to join one of our own computing groups and make sure you are not amongst those 'left behind'?

Shirley is practicing what she preaches and has recently dumped her old word processor in favour of her first PC. Shirley has been joined in improving the 'computer literacy' of your committee by Geoff Young, who has also dumped his word processor and Diana Richmond who has replaced her old 'steam' PC with an all singing, all dancing state of the art model. All they have to do now is learn how to use them! Ed.

BOSTON, HERE WE COME!



A small but interested group of members attended the slide show and talk given by a representative of the Collette Travel Agency on the proposed visit to New England next October. At the time of going to press, nine members had already signed up and will be paying a deposit of £100 by the end of February. As an added incentive, we were promised a discount of £50 per head for meeting that deadline, although it will be possible to join the group up until April 2000.

Another incentive for us to encourage more of you to fly with us is that if we can find ten members, the firm will arrange free transport from Aylesbury to the airport. So come on, all you who haven't decided on next year's holiday yet, take the plunge, and contact me to sign up.

Shirley Stokes



01296 392726



GARDEN PARTY

Once a year we have a Garden Party which in recent years has been at the home of Anne and Gary Legg who have a large and well cared for garden and who are kind enough to share it with us. The event is always very enjoyable and well attended.

COFFEE MORNINGS

Monthly coffee mornings are arranged and we have half a dozen pubs around the area to cater for us, rather than one particular venue. Those who attend regularly like the variety this offers.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Each December our monthly meeting takes on a festive air and we also organize a Christmas Lunch. I would like to take the opportunity to offer my apologies to those members who were disappointed with last year's lunch; your complaints have been passed on to the appropriate quarter. The perennial problem in arranging this lunch and any such function for that matter is to keep the price down and the quality up. Has anyone any helpful suggestions in regard to a suitable caterers and/or venue, with good car parking facilities, for this year's lunch? Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide a meal to the standard which we enjoyed at the 10th Anniversary lunch which was very generously subsidised from our reserves.

Barbara Goodchild

NEWS AND VIEWS

MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS



You may remember that last summer Mid-Bucks U3A member Brian Ewart invited our members to join with his members in a short exploratory series of waterborne activities on the Thames at Marlow. He has arranged another series of activities as follows.



1. **MONDAY, 8th May 2000. 09:45 to 15:30hrs**
Introduction to a rowing boat; practical experience in rowing and manoeuvring; heaving a line; sculling over the stern; some bends & hitches.
£9.00 PER HEAD - MAX 8 PERSONS.
2. **MONDAY, 15th May 2000. 09:45 to 15:45hrs**
Introduction to rowing as a crew of a 4 oar Gig (21ft) or a 6 oar Jolly Boat (18ft), (Taking control of the boat and its crew).
£9.00 PER HEAD - MAX 8 PERSONS.
3. **MONDAY, 22nd May 2000. 09:45 to 16:00hrs.**
Up river journey as crew /helmsman of a Gig (21ft) or Jolly Boat (18ft). Negotiating locks, taking control, coming alongside, man overboard drills (using a dummy!) etc.
£9.00 PER HEAD - MAX 8 PERSONS.
4. **SUNDAY 11th June 2000. 19:30 overnight to 09:30hrs Monday 12th.**
Down river in a Gig or Jolly Boat for an evening meal at "The Bounty". Return after dark to Longridge to sleep in bunkhouse accommodation followed by full English breakfast.
£13.90 PER HEAD (not including evening meal) - MAX 8 PERSONS.
5. **MONDAY, 19th June 2000. 09:45 to 16:00hrs (Part 1).**
Day one of a two-day sailing course (to RYA syllabus level 1). Full day's instruction.
TUESDAY, 20th June 2000. 09:45 to 16:00hrs (Part 2).
Day two of a two-day sailing course (to RYA syllabus level 1). Full day's instruction.



NB. THE RYA CERTIFICATE CAN ONLY BE AWARDED TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE FULL COURSE OF 3 SESSIONS PER DAY FOR 2 DAYS.

£48.00 PER HEAD – MAX 8 PERSONS.

6. **MONDAY, 26th June 2000. 09:45 to 16:00hrs.**
A power boat trip down stream to Bray, using diesel launch "Shackleton". Instruction in boat handling en route. Picnic lunch required.
£15.50 PER HEAD (Lunch not included) MAX 12 PERSONS.

N.B.

ALL PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO SWIM AND WEAR A BUOYANCY AID, WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED. WET WEATHER CLOTHING SHOULD BE TAKEN AND SOFT SHOES MUST BE WORN (NO WELLINGTON BOOTS PLEASE). SHOULD THERE BE A DEMAND FOR MORE PLACES THAN STATED ON EACH COURSE, ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTORS WILL BE DRAFTED IN WHEN POSSIBLE.

Contact, Brian Ewart, 25 Holly Drive, Aylesbury. ☎ 01296 583471

NEWS AND VIEWS

THINKING OF STARTING A NEW GROUP?

It is interesting to look at the Newsletters of other U3As. They refer to the activities of the groups in their organisations. Many of these are the same or similar to ours. Some others that perhaps might be of interest include:

SCRABBLE (Bedford, Milton Keynes)

Backgammon (Leighton-Linslade, Milton Keynes)

Chess (Bedford, Buckingham, Leighton-Linslade, Milton Keynes)

Money/Investments (Leighton-Linslade, Milton Keynes)

Bridge (Bedford, Buckingham, Milton Keynes) – at Aylesbury Vale until recently.

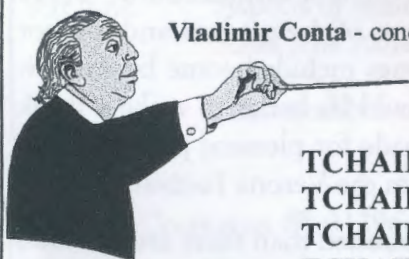
Sunday Lunch (Milton Keynes). This group meets monthly and has a top membership of 20. There is a waiting list to join. A different member chooses the venue for lunch each month. It is basically a social event but after lunch a visit may be made to a local place of interest.

If anyone has ideas for starting a new group, please let me know. If you do decide to become a group leader you can join all the other group leaders at a coffee morning in the summer.

Tony Davis ☎ 01494 763164

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Philharmonia Orchestra, Saturday 20th May 2000, 7.30pm



Vladimir Conta - conductor

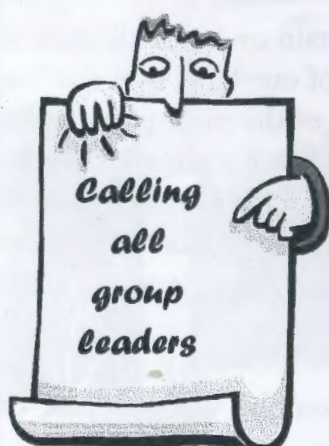
TCHAIKOVSKY: Francesca da Rimini
TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No.3
TCHAIKOVSKY: Capriccio Italien
TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No.2



Mikhail Pletnev—piano

£19.00 for coach & concert.

Interested? Contact Brian Samuels ☎ 01296 583312



On 24th May our U3A is to host the regional meeting of some 25 U3As. For this, would all group leaders provide a summary (no larger than a sheet of A4) of their group activities. These briefs will form part of a display on our notice boards, on

which the illumination will have been improved by this time. A little trumpet blowing does nobody any harm and we are pleased with our U3A are we not?

The briefs should be given to me at the Wednesday meeting on 12 April, or sent to me, on or before this date, at 17 Icknield Close, Wendover, HP22 6HG

Thanks,

Brian Samuels

AROUND THE GROUPS

HISTORY GROUP



The History Group is progressing with the Roman Invasion and occupation of Britain and is planning several field trips to Roman sites this year. If on some occasions we have to hire a coach there may be spaces for some non-members. I will keep you advised as and when this arises.

Another reason I am writing a piece for the newsletter is that I am trying to trace the whereabouts of two books borrowed at the beginning of last year. The first belongs to Barbara Fenner and is entitled *The Chronicles of London*. The second belongs to me and is entitled *Mayhew's London*. Both are quite large volumes and almost impossible to replace. So would you please check your bookshelves?

Thank you. *Geoff*

You have my sympathy Geoff. Following the death of a member of my French group, her daughter gave me a box "of mother's French books", which she thought might be of interest. In the box were a number of books with name and address labels attached which revealed that the owners of a number of these books were in fact three of our members who had forgotten that they had lent them and had given them up as lost!

Ed.



OPERA

The first meeting of the newly formed Opera Group took place on Tuesday 9th November at 7pm. There were eight in attendance, the maximum number if all were to see the television screen, and we started with Eugene Onegin Act I after some discussion on the videos available to us through Sir Roy and Lady Harding; and the resource centre at the Trust. It was a recording from the last night of the season at the new Glyndebourne Opera House so we were treated to some rare glimpses of the gardens and interior of the opera house. Introductions to the scenes included some by Andrew

Davis, the conductor of the orchestra. At the end of Act 1 we decided it would be better to make a break until the next meeting. Acts 2 and 3 were certainly worth waiting for and made for pleasant pre-Christmas viewing. The group met again on 11th January to watch *Tosca*, a recording from the Verona Festival.

Discussions are taking place as to future meetings. There are more persons interested than there are places so it may be that there will be two groups, with one certainly meeting on a Tuesday afternoon, but a different one to Music I Like, rather than in the evening. Brian Samuels will let us know future arrangements of this second group.

Leslie George ☎ 01296 484766 ☎



PLAYS

PROSE &

POETRY

Stuart Baker has decided to bring down the curtain on his leadership of this group. Stuart has been a stalwart member of our U3A over the last eleven years and his group continues to be one of the most popular; he has had a waiting list of members wishing to join for some time. Stuart will be remembered for his group's contribution to our entertainment at many of our Christmas meetings. On behalf of all members who have enjoyed this entertainment and/or membership of his group, we offer our sincere thanks.

Keith Potter, ☎ 01296 421863, has taken on the difficult task of succeeding Stuart as leader of this group.

AROUND THE GROUPS

SPOTLIGHT ON READERS' CIRCLE



This group was formerly known as the English Literature group.

We meet in a member's home on the second Friday of the month for the morning starting at 10.30am. If you like reading why not join us? Give any of the contacts shown below a ring to find out more.

Seven members of the reformed group met at group leader Roma Wood's house for the first time on 14th January to talk about Jane Austen's novels. Video extracts from "Sense and Sensibility", "Mansfield Park" and "Pride and Prejudice" were used to illustrate various aspects of her books which led to a lively discussion. The historical background to the ideas expressed in the books was also looked at, and although there was not always agreement on the video characterisations all enjoyed the varied presentation.

The February meeting, was held at Jill Davis's house in Little Chalfont, when the subject was children's authors e.g. Penelope Lively, Rumer Godden, Roald Dahl, J. K. Rowling.

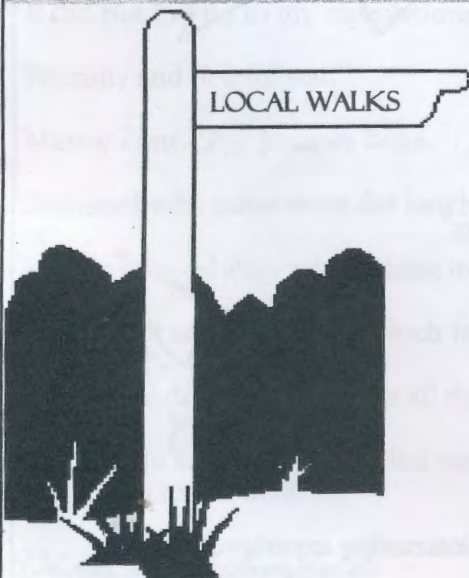
Below is the programme until the summer:

- 10th March. Humour - select an extract which amuses you.
- 14th April. Country reminiscences from anywhere.
- 12th May. "Whodunnits" -detective stories e.g. Ruth Rendell, Agatha Christie, Colin Dexter.
- 9th June. Aspects of middle age.
Read Jane Asher's "The Question" and/or Doris Lessing's "The Summer before the Dark".
- 14th July Historical Novels e.g. Anya Seton, Jean Plaidy, Georgette Heyer.

Contacts:-

Jackie Covington ☎ 01296 483412 Jill Davis ☎ 01494 763164 Roma Wood ☎ 01296 622609

Jill Davis



Alan Dell, the Group Leader for so long now has decided to hang up his boots as leader, but will still come along on the walks from time to time. We will miss his introduction that "the next walk will be as usual on the Monday after the Wednesday Meeting" and his 'education spots' on the walks.

Walk leaders will now come from the regulars —Brian Samuels, Derek Ayshford, Jill & Tony Davis or anyone else who has a walk they think we would all enjoy. Jill Davis has offered to be Group Co-ordinator to cover matters if problems arise e.g. organising a replacement walk for a person who cannot after all lead a walk they proposed doing; and simply to be a point of contact for any queries on the Local Walks group.

Contact Jill Davis ☎ 01494 763164

OUT AND ABOUT

TRIP TO THE MILLENNIUM DOME

If you have spent almost a year planning an outing it is more than a little annoying to find, at the eleventh hour, that you have been struck down with the sort of bug that means you need to be near a loo! Also when the necessary medication means you must not take your travel sickness pills.....! A coach journey was obviously out. However, a good time seemed to be had by one and all as you will see from their comments below.

Diana Richmond

Our U3A has joined the sound-bite craze! This is what the advertisements say.

"One of the wonders of the world"

"Breathtaking"

"A huge musical and visual extravaganza"

"Unforgettable"

"The biggest and best show on earth"

And this is what our members said.

"A mixture of the spectacular, the interesting and the trivial"

"Colourful and light-hearted visual experience"

"Fantastic day out especially the aerial show"

"Wonderful structure, brilliant show, imaginative and informative exhibits"

"Can't wait for my next visit"

"Unique, some exhibits took a little time to understand"

"Too much noise!"

"Much better than the reports in the newspapers"

"The glimpses into the future seemed menacing, noisy and harsh. A very interesting experience"



OUT AND ABOUT

"Many of the zones were rather superficial but Journey, Work and Learning were very good"

"Well organised but NOISY!"

"Worth a visit for the Millennium Show and the Riverside walk"

"Aerial ballet is spectacular and brought tears to my eyes"

"Good show - queuing minimal"

"Loved it"

"Overwhelming, spectacular central display. Very futuristic. Some exhibits noisy and poorly displayed"

"More for children under 10!"

"Several exhibits lacked substance and interest - in particular the Body Zone"

"Would appeal more to a younger generation"

"Facilities adequate & very clean"

"Some attractions more interesting than others"

"Some of the zones could have been better"

"A miracle of technological genius with excellent information service throughout"

"Rather too technical for the mature female"

"A fantastic day representing our fast changing world"

"Circus show excellent - much very mediocre"

"Planet Earth, Education and Ballet very good"

"Fantastic, a MUST for everyone. Do NOT miss the show. Food prices good"

"Part entertaining and part educational"

"It did not live up to my expectations"

"Friendly and helpful staff"

"Money Zone, $\frac{1}{10}$. Journey Zone, $\frac{7}{10}$ "

"Saturated with noise - even the lonely sperm reached its goal with a drum roll"

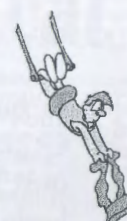
"Many of the exhibits were lacking in depth of information"

"A junket of commercialism which failed to achieve its purpose of a 'super, fantastic' event"

"Body Zone disappointing after all the hype - some parts of exhibits gimmicky but others were excellent"

So there you have it. This is what our group of Third Agers thought of the Millennium Experience. Shall we send a copy to Mr Blair?

Diana Richmond

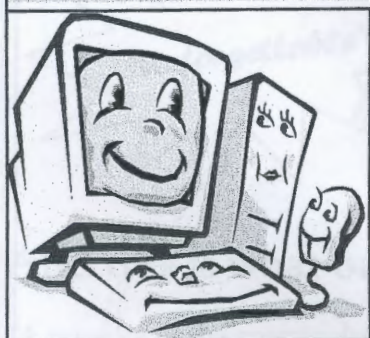


COMPUTERS IN AYLESBURY VALE U3A

In the June 1997 newsletter, I reported that five of our members were connected to the Internet. It will soon be 27! The electronic mail (email) addresses shown below are the latest that I have. If anyone is new to the Net, or has changed their address and not told me, or I have shown their address incorrectly, it would be appreciated if you would advise everyone listed below-by email!

Bill Skeggs

David Attree	D.N.A@tesco.net	Derek Ayshford	DAYSHFORD@aol.com
Margaret Beechey	margaret.beechey@virgin.net	John Buswell	jcb@wychert.demon.co.uk
John Counsell	haglis@cwcom.net	Margaret Crafts	C.Margaret@btinternet.com
Tony Davis	tonydavis@barclays.net	Anne Emery	EMERYINT@compuserve.com
Pip & Roy Harding	roypip.harding@freemove.co.uk	Mike Hasler	hasler@globalnet.co.uk
Sylvia Levitt	SYLVIA@smlevitt.f9.co.uk	John Little	jayell@zoom.co.uk
John Money	Bevan.MONEYs@ukgateway.net	Dorothy Nevin	Dnevin@nildram.co.uk
Don Rankin	don.rankin@tesco.net	Stephen Raynes	stephen@raynes-ayl.freemove.co.uk
Diana Richmond	Coming soon	Phillip Sadler	Phillip@Sadler24.fsnet.co.uk
Tony Saint	asaint@cix.compulink.co.uk	Joyce Salewski	Joyce.Salewski@tesco.net
Brian & Grace Samuels	grbr@cwcom.net	Joan Schoon	mail@schoon.free-online.co.uk
Bill Skeggs	W.E.S@btinternet.com	Shirley Stokes	Coming soon
Jean Watson	jm@hartwatson.freemove.co.uk	Jean (Jenna) Wood	Jean@wood33.fsnet.co.uk
Val & Geoff Young	VANDGO@tinyworld.co.uk		



In our U3A there is a continuing interest in and use of computers. The CUSS group has rapidly developed to a membership of around 30. In our own committee 3 members have bought a computer system since the beginning of the year. Many people are unsure whether to go ahead and acquire a PC due to the uncertainty as to how much they would really use it. If doubtful, computers with Internet access may be used in the larger County libraries at a charge of £1 per half-hour. The Third Age Trust have produced a leaflet (dated September 1999) entitled "Advice on buying a computer & software"-of which I have copies to loan.

The degree to which computer systems are now used in the running of our U3A is quite considerable. For administration support there is a Membership database and a Groups database. The production of the Directory and the Quarterly Newsletter are both carried out using a desktop publishing programme. We are now on the World Wide Web as are a number of other U3As. This site has reciprocal links with the Third Age Trust; with Aylesbury Vale District Council regarding Leisure Activities; and Bucks County Council regarding Continuing Education. This means that other people, wherever they may be, can see what we do in the Aylesbury Vale U3A just as we can see what others do. Users with access to the Internet invariably use email as a way of forwarding information between organisations, or within organisations such as we do at Aylesbury Vale.

Given the importance of these systems it is necessary that we keep to industry standards regarding practices and products used. Systems should be easily transferable between personnel whenever the need arises.

Tony Davis

MISCELLANEOUS MISCELLANY

DON'T BLAME ME, BLAME JASPER CARROTT!

I don't know how many of you spotted the gremlins that affected a couple of articles in the Christmas Newsletter, but Mike Hasler spotted them within ten seconds of it being handed to him at our Christmas lunch. Joe Cook is obviously a slow reader as it was not until 16th January that he faxed me to point out the error of my ways. They have both been appointed proof-readers for future editions! So, first of all my apologies to those of you who thought that they were either having a 'senior moment' or had suddenly become dyslexic. Apparently, some of the more gullible amongst you had concluded that Shirley was correct when, in a previous newsletter, she alluded to my advancing years. Anyway, I can now let the cat out of the bag and reveal the category of catastrophes that befell our last newsletter and categorically deny that it was my fault!

There is the usual reward -a free cup of coffee- for the member who can spot the most errors in this edition. Let me know and the lucky winner will be able to collect their prize, plus a free tin of kit-e-kat, at the March coffee morning.

Read on.

Ed

What's this to do with me? Who is this Skill Beggs anyway?



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e-mail//a

No more cat and mous

TO ANYONE who owns a computer and a cat, it's a familiar scenario. You leave your machine for just a few seconds to make a cup of coffee and return, only to discover that a visitor has been prowling around your PC in your absence.

In the middle of an important letter or e-mail is a tell-tale line of nonsense, proof that an inquisitive feline has just taken a stroll across your keyboard. But soon the nuisance of cats attacking computer mice could vanish for good.

American scientists have come up with a cheap program that can tell if a moggie is walking across a keyboard or has fallen asleep with its paws on the space bar.

If it detects the presence of a cat, it freezes the keyboard and sounds an annoying high-

pitched buzz, guaranteed to send the pet scurrying to safety.

The Arizona company, BitBoost Systems, sells PawSense package over the reports today. It claims it can sense a cat within 'one or two paw steps' and works by recognising unlikely combinations of two or three keys that a cat might press simultaneously.

BitBoost president Chris F. Wander said cats can do a lot of damage quickly, inserting nonsense into text or deleting vital chunks.

The program runs in the background while a user is working on processing or surfing the Internet. If the owner plays computer games which use unusual combinations of keys, these can be programmed into PawSense.

DAVID DERBYSHIRE

So now you know. I'm not as daft as some of you think! Ed



JASPER

It wasn't me!

It wasn't me either! It must have been that pesky computer mouse!



CARROTT

I'm off before they see me!

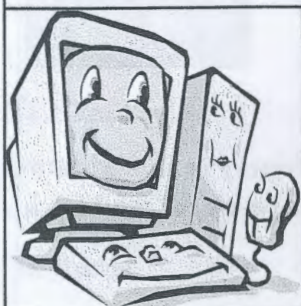
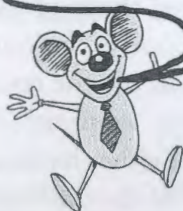


To be continued.....

MORE MISCELLANEOUS MISCELLANY



Gotcha!
Caught in the act!



COMPUTER
BASICS

The article in the Christmas edition of the newsletter drew an initial response of six members wanting to know more. This number was not sufficient to organise a 'tailor made' course through Bucks C.C. so the preliminary arrangements that I had made had to be cancelled. I had been fortunate in obtaining the use of the computer facilities at Hampden Hall and by the time the alternative "in-house" course started on 14th January, we had 16 participants! This "in-house" course numbers amongst its members our secretary, Shirley Stokes, and chairman Geoff Young -so Geoff is now dividing his attention between Roman History and 20th century technology. Variety is the spice of life! Both have recently bought their own computer and with fellow committee member Diana Richmond upgrading her original 'steam' model, we can look forward to great things from the committee over the coming months. *Before I get too many letters -or am I being too optimistic?- yes, I do mean 20th century. I belong to the band who believes that the 21st century does not begin until next year!*

Bill Sheggs



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

No, your eyes aren't deceiving you, we now have four chairmen, and Geoff can go off on holiday and not worry about who will chair the monthly meeting! Our new chairman was so concerned at the dearth of male members in our U3A that he decided to do something about it. You may not be aware that when Geoff refers to you as "one of his flock" it is not that he is a frustrated cleric but it comes from his consuming interest in sheep! (A visit to his home reveals a cut-out sheep grazing on the back lawn, a woolly toy sheep on the sofa, a sheep doorstep in the porch -and even a sheep breeds' poster to keep him interested whilst in the loo!). Having seen the results of cloning 'Dolly', the sheep, Geoff decided that he would use the technology to be the first human clone, and this is the result! Your editor has tried his utmost to get Val's reaction but at the time of going to press, she had refused to comment.

Geoff has been more forthcoming and tells me that he feels you can't have enough of a good thing and he sees no reason why he should not spread himself around. So he has started his own 'Escort Agency', exclusively for the lady members of our U3A.
Ed.

MORE MISCELLANEOUS MISCELLANY

COFFEE



MORNINGS

Spring was in the air when we visited the Swan at Little Kimble for the first time for the January coffee morning. I don't know whether it was the new venue or the unexpected sunshine but the turnout was very good -a mixture of old faithfuls and new faces- and there was a good 'buzz' all morning. As you will see below Barbara has already arranged another visit.

These coffee mornings afford an excellent opportunity to meet other members whom you may not meet in your other activities -and we would always like to see a few more members at these coffee mornings. Remember, you can only claim your prize at a coffee morning -what better incentive could you have?

More often than not some members hang on for a 'pub lunch' and there are usually one or two who say that they would have stayed on "if only they had known". Perhaps this could develop into a regular lunch get-together. So, if you are interested in joining up with some of your fellow members for a 'pub lunch' after a future coffee morning, why don't you let Barbara know? Ed

Barbara Goodchild ☎ 01296 612342

Our programme for the next five months is :-

Wednesday 29th March	The Red Lion, Wendover	10.00am*
		*Note time
Wednesday 26th April	The Horse & Jockey, Bicester Road, Aylesbury	10.30am
Wednesday 31st May	The Woolpack, Stoke Mandeville	10.30am
Wednesday 28th June	The Swan, Great Kimble	10.30am
Wednesday 26th July	The Plough, Tring Road, Aylesbury	10.30am

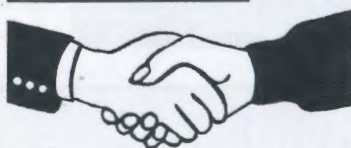


Christmas came early last year for Marie Waddell who became Marie Drury, following her marriage to Denis in December. Marie has now moved from Bishopstone to Weedon which now probably has the highest proportion of U3A members, relative to its population, in the country. We send our best wishes to Marie and Denis for their future happiness.

Marie's happiness was tinged with sadness following the death of long time close friend Margaret Groves.

WELCOME

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members;



David & Julie Kent Weston Turville

Rex Richardson Wingrave

On a more sombre note it is with great regret that we announce the death of Margaret Groves. Margaret joined our U3A in February 1994, and was an enthusiastic member of the Bridge, Gardening, Photography and Tai Chi groups until ill health restricted her activities. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

OUTINGS & OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 14th April	Worcester & the Potteries	Geoff Young
Wednesday 17th May	Rye & Scotney Castle (Photography group)	Muriel Beech
Saturday 20th May	Concert at Royal Festival Hall	Brian Samuels
Wednesday 24th May	Regional Meeting, Thames Valley U3As At Aylesbury United	Shirley Stokes
Wednesday 7th June	Bath. Museum of Costume & Roman Baths	Diana Richmond
Saturday 23rd September	Malvern Autumn Flower & Craft Show	Diana Richmond
Wednesday 4th October	Monthly Meeting, Note change from second Wednesday in month to first Wednesday.	
Wednesday 25th October	Annual General Meeting	
4th -12th October	New England, USA, Foliage Tour	Shirley Stokes



Contacts:-

Brian	01296 623859
Diana	01296 489812
Geoff	01844 345503
Muriel	01296 481833
Shirley	01296 392726

And finally. Contributions to your newsletter are always welcome. The way I look at it, we have one editor -me- and 289 potential reporters -you! It doesn't matter if more than one person sends in a report on the same subject -except outings, where someone, usually whilst subjected to a half-nelson from Anne or Diana, 'volunteers' to take on the task. Copy is acceptable in any format but if you have a typewriter, word processor or computer, so much the better. It would be very helpful to me, if you are using a typewriter or word processor, to type in a large, plain font -say 12/14pt- preferably on white paper, so that I can scan it into my computer. **Please do not type all in capitals** as, depending on which format you use, it might not be possible for me to amend it without retyping. If you have a computer you can put your contribution on a floppy disc and send it to me; if you have Internet connection you can send it to me by email. Wot could be easier?

Bill Skeggs

Editor: Bill Skeggs; 258 Wendover Road, Aylesbury, HP21 9PD.
Phone/fax 01296 434435. email W.E.S@btinternet.com
Copy for the next newsletter should reach the editor by 14th May.