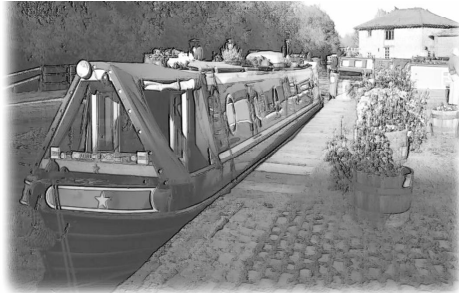


# AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 63

June 2012

## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Having just returned from another excellent visit arranged by Ron and Rosemary—this time to Flanders and Holland—holidays are very much on my mind. One of the many things I enjoy hearing about is the scope of the holidays which our members take. They include cruises, Indian railway adventures and bird watching expeditions. National travel providers long ago acknowledged the importance of the 'silver' market. These days I am less ambitious and I certainly do not miss the long hours spent queuing at airports.

I look at the T.V. news and see so many wonderful places I once enjoyed now almost impossible to visit. There were the wonderful house-boats on Lake Dal in Kashmir—once known as 'the Paradise of the Himalayas'. You could stand on your balcony and watch swooping kingfishers, and the small bustling boats called shikaras coming alongside to sell stamps or flowers. Now there are sad photos of derelict boats and overgrown pads of lotus blossoms. Syria is another magical place with many historic sites to visit. There are the Bedouin with their black tents; the walk on the street named 'straight' in Damascus (cited in the Bible), or wander among the ruins of the city of Palmyra where Queen Zenobia reigned, claiming to be a descendant of both Dido of Carthage and Cleopatra of Egypt. Now, all is destruction.

A recent newspaper article about a piece of scientific research also stimulated the imagination. Scientists issued a warning to the world's mountain climbers that the worst place in the world for altitude sickness is Ladakh, the wonderful and barren region on India's northern border with China and Tibet. Ladakh lies between the Himalayas and the Kunlun mountain range at a height of some 9800 feet (or 3000 metres if you are more up-to-date than me). Even when I visited many years ago we had to have an armed escort. Of all the talks that I have listened to over many years, it is the one about Buddhism listened to around a camp fire under the stars almost 8000 feet up in the mountains that I shall best remember. Now that journey is too dangerous an undertaking.

What a host of memories are locked away in the heads of our combined membership. While there are some things that we may no longer wish to do, we can recall many experiences that we have enjoyed in the past. The young don't know what they are missing!

*Shirley Stokes*

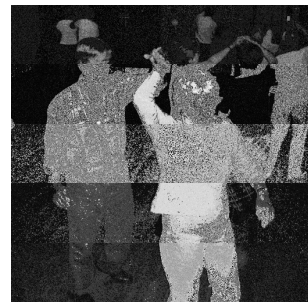
## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING GROUP:

The Scottish Country Dancing (SCD) group was established in January 2011 by the leaders Greig Sneddon and Lynne Dawson, and now has about 25 active members.

It celebrated its first birthday with a table display at the January 2012 monthly U3A meeting, followed by a demonstration of the Cumberland Reel by some of the group members.

The group meets twice a month and the members have managed to learn about ten dances from waltzes to strathpeys and reels. SCD is enjoyed by people of all ages and is recommended by the NHS for keeping fit, mentally and physically.



As light as a feather!  
Both Photos— Greig  
Sneddon



Our happy dancers

The group is very easy to join as you do not need:-

- ☐ to bring a partner as one is always available.
- ☐ to have experience of SCD or dancing.
- ☐ to use swords or wear a kilt.

What you do need is:-

- ☐ a sense of fun.
- ☐ to be reasonably fit and active.
- ☐ a good pair of soft-soled flat shoes.

Details for joining are in the handbook or contact Greig or Lynne.

### TEN PIN BOWLING:

The Ten Pin Bowling Group commenced in the Spring of 2002. We began meeting every other week and after a few weeks members of Wendover U3A joined us and we progressed to weekly meetings in term time. As the years passed we decided to meet every week including school holidays. Many folk have tried their hand at bowling; some have decided that it was not for them. We had 30 members bowling regularly.

It was quite a blow when it was announced that Jardines was to close and although we all signed the petition and wrote individually pointing out the potential loss to the town and various groups including the disabled who use the facility, as you all now know—it closed down. Although some of us will travel to High Wycombe to use their facilities (using our free bus passes), not all members will follow.

On the 27th of February we had our last bowl at Jardines and enjoyed a lovely lunch prepared by the staff. We shall miss the friendly helpful staff who went the extra mile to help all users whatever their playing standard. We wish them well for the future. You can see our photo on the last page of this newsletter.

*Pat Kuryba*



### **A HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER:**

This is the time of year when we hear a lot about people's holidays. U3A members are very adventurous, and this photo shows Frances Clark admiring one of the Easter Island statues. (Easter Island is a part of Chile.) She and husband Richard (who took this photo) enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime South American cruise which included visits to Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. They rounded Cape Horn (in calm weather) and also visited Tierra del Fuego (territory belonging to both Chile and Argentina).

Photo by Richard Clark

### **HOW ABOUT ANOTHER PLAY READING GROUP ?**



The Play Reading Group was started in October 1989 (one of our current members joined in 1991). Play reading seems to be one of the activities which people join and very rarely leave. We try and have a rota where everyone takes a turn in casting and directing the plays. We were somewhat horrified when we were told that the County Reserve Stock was closing down and would only be open on one day a week by appointment—which makes life rather difficult! Different people choosing plays from the Library means that we have a good selection. We read a fair number of murders, mysteries and comedies and also some of the classics. Recently we read the Forsyte Saga—in 2 hours—not bad going. I must admit it was a very potted version—we jumped 20 years moving from one scene to the next!

Since Christmas, we have also read “Serious Charge” by Philip King, “The Mousetrap” by Agatha Christie, “Pack of Lies” by Hugh Whitmore, “Dead Ringer” by Michael Ross, “Home & Beauty” by Somerset Maugham and “Separate Tables” by Terence Rattigan.

Usually the plays take around 2 hours to read so only when we go out for lunch before Christmas and again in the summer do we get a chance to chat. Currently the group is full and we are finding it difficult to obtain plays with enough parts for all our members. If we do manage to find plays with more parts, the heavier they are to carry home! If anyone would like to start up a Play Reading Group 2, I would be more than happy to help to get it off the ground.

*Dorothy Chater*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

### AYLESBURY TOWN CARPET BOWLS TROPHY MATCH

Many of our U3A Bowls group members are also affiliated to the Aylesbury Town Carpet Bowls Group. A new Challenge match was set up between those of them who choose to play in the afternoon (red) and others who play in the evening (blue) for the Axminster Trophy. Six mixed games were played. The winners by 2 shots were the Red team. During the match a buffet was served by Dot Simmons & Mike Meacham which was enjoyed by all. Gordon Lesse, who acted as Umpire and Scorer for the match, donated and presented the Axminster Trophy to Marg Southam the captain of the winning Red team. Now a return Match is eagerly anticipated by all.



The winning team had plenty to celebrate!

Photo by Dot Simmons

### STARTING ON THE 19TH SEPTEMBER—A NEW SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP



In the Autumn I am starting a new group to study English Social History. From the Industrial Revolution and the Luddites through the advances in Victorian Public Health to our modern Welfare State, the group has a wide area to cover and members will be expected to participate. We will look at the make-up of our society and how this has varied through history; the social effects of the Industrial Revolution and the movement of the population; the growth of the towns and the conditions associated with that. We will study the discontent this brought to the population and their reaction to modernisation of the workplace; the Luddites, the Captain Swing Riots, Chartists etc. Then there are the changes to the public awareness of Public Health during Victoria's reign and eventually on to the Welfare State and all things in between. I would stress that this is a group and all members are expected to participate, to contribute, and bring forward ideas for subjects for research.

1st Meeting Wednesday 19th September 2.30pm – 4.30pm and then monthly on the third Wednesday. Location: Church of the Holy Spirit, Bedgrove.

*Geoff Young*

Email: [socialhistory@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:socialhistory@avu3a.org.uk)

### HEARD ON A RECENT U3A OUTING !

Member One: Would a study of Docklands be called 'Dockology'

Member Two: In that case would a study of Aylesbury be 'Duckology'

Member One again: And if you like Aylesbury—'Luv-a-duckology'



## **FLORIADE 2012—Another Meadowcroft Tour de force!**

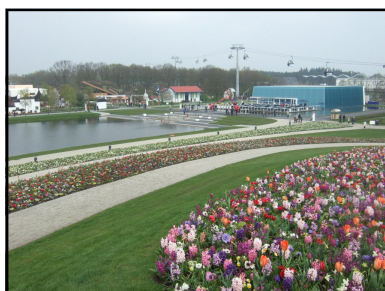
In April, 49 of us embarked on a short break to Flanders. Our base was Mechelen in Belgium, home to the oldest and most famous carillon school in the world. In the afternoons, the cathedral's carillon rings tunefully out across the town and it is fascinating to climb the enormous tower and see the ringing mechanism in action. Our hotel was close to the main square and ideal for exploring the historic and picturesque town centre.

Our first outing was to Chateau de Grand-Bigard on the outskirts of Brussels where, for a month each spring, over one million tulips, hyacinths and daffodils create a fragrant carpet of colour amongst the trees of this beautiful castle. The impact of this multi-coloured panorama is sensational. In the greenhouses a further 25,000 blooms are displayed in eye-catching arrangements renewed weekly.



You can't visit Belgium without trying the waffles! Both Photos - Tony Simons

The next day we visited the ten-yearly horticultural Expo known as Floriade. Spread across 240 acres of parkland, it celebrates all aspects of horticulture and the environment. These include shows, films, pavilions of many nations showcasing their culture, greenhouses, woodland walks and small decorative gardens, although there was much less colour than we had anticipated. The huge terrain offered something for everyone and our coach was a welcome sight to our footsore party at the end of the visit!



An overall view of the Floriade site

Our final day was spent in Ghent, where we explored the heart of this wonderful city with its churches, belfry and other fine medieval buildings, and had a good waffle over a waffle before taking a boat trip along the river Leie to hear about the city's history and see some of the buildings from another perspective. All too soon we were homeward bound, stopping en route at Ypres, where we lunched by the Menin Gate and strolled in the impressive square.

We learned a great deal about Flanders, thanks to Ron and Rosemary's comprehensive mini-guide. Our grateful thanks go to them for all their hard work in organising such an enjoyable holiday, meticulously planned and superbly executed.

*Gay Hancock*

**Editor's note:** *One of the many things which amused us at the Floriade Exhibition was the description in the Japanese Pavilion of a typical tea in England. "The host buys two types of tea; one which he likes and one which suits his guests. The family heirlooms are brought out and fresh flowers displayed on the table. Then, always in this order, cucumber sandwiches are served followed by scones with cream and jam and later—cake." Tea is always like that in my house as I am confident that it is in yours !* Editor





### THE THREE WISE MEN

They are obviously pondering on some problem—but what?

Taken at the Bowls Club by Dot Simmons

### A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



John Dilkes, Lesley Griffiths, Gordon Lamont, Wolfe and Elke Maldar, Melanie Maynard, Barbara Richardson, Jackie Rickard, Harvey Roberts, Valerie Sheppard, Barbara Singleton, George Tyrell and Linda Wells.

### SHARE YOUR LEARNING

Here is a way to make fuller use of the time, expertise and enthusiasm of U3A members.



The Third Age Trust supports and encourages Shared Learning Projects (SLPs for short). For an SLP a team of U3A members, usually from more than one U3A, explores a specific topic suggested by a U3A or by a local institution such as a museum, art gallery, library or historic house, or by an organisation such as the National Trust. Sometimes this will involve research into archives.

Shared Learning Projects started in 2002 with an introductory project at the British Museum. London is particularly fertile ground for SLPs because of the number and range of its museums, but here in Aylesbury we have the County Museum and the Centre for Bucks Studies, as well as a wealth of historic houses within easy distance.

If you have an idea for a topic which could be pursued through an SLP, you can get a leaflet from me giving more details including the name of the National SLP Co-ordinator.

*Peter Gasson*

Email: [Secretary@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@avu3a.org.uk)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**TUESDAY 3RD JULY:** The Gentle Walkers (steadily increasing in number) visit the Ashridge Estate; meeting at the Visitors' Centre at 11a.m.

**TUESDAY 10TH JULY:** The Garden Group strike out—and catch a bus to visit the Oxford Botanical Gardens (10 a.m. bus). Garden entry is £3 and then you can spend time in Oxford if you wish.

**THURSDAY 19TH JULY:** Matinee at Waterside Theatre. Dandy Dick—Comedy—starring Patricia Hodge. Previewing at Waterside before going to the West End. Matinee £19.50, evening £27.00. Not yet booked; if you are interested please contact Theatre Group Organiser.

**5TH—9TH AUGUST:** We visit the Edinburgh Festival Tattoo, the Royal Yacht Britannia and take a lake cruise on Loch Lomond.

**TUESDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER:** At 11. 15 another 'Gentle Walk' in Wendover Woods. Don't forget that there are parking charges to be paid, so share cars if possible.

**WEDNESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER:** Our bi-monthly morning for coffee and chat with fellow members at The Broad Leys P.H. at 10. 30 a.m. Coffee £1. 75. All new, associate and full members welcome. In May 28 members attended!

**21ST TO 26TH SEPTEMBER:** The much anticipated Annual Study Visit to Kent.

**THURSDAY 11TH OCTOBER:** Theatre Visit to Second Space (small theatre within Waterside) 6.45pm The Last of the Hassmans—a play, starring Julie Walters. Ticket price £13.50

**THURSDAY 18TH OCTOBER:** The eagerly awaited annual opportunity for you to exercise your brain muscle at the afternoon Quiz and supper to be held once again at the Aylesbury Bowls Club.

**THURSDAY 22ND NOVEMBER:** Waterside Theatre : Matinee performance of the musical 42nd Street. Ticket price £15 in Circle.

**THURSDAY 13TH DECEMBER:** (Matinee) Join us for a Christmas Pantomime—Peter Pan—Matinee, Aylesbury Waterside Theatre £13.00.

**FRIDAY 14TH DECEMBER:** as above, evening

## MORE NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

### NEW CRAFT GROUP – Meeting the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month

Starting: Tuesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> (next meeting September 18<sup>th</sup>)

Venue: Aylesbury Tennis Club, Wendover Road: 10 00 a.m. to 12 noon

Cost: £1.50 per session to include tea or coffee.



If you have expressed an interest in joining this group please make a note in your diary. Think about what you would like to work on. Look out those unfinished objects; bits of knitting and crochet, embroidery, beads etc. Buy a scrapbook for those old photos. Start making plans to get “crafting” come September. If you are not sure just come along to the first meeting and get some ideas. We have some equipment to assist with beadwork and scrapbooking. Please contact Heather before purchasing any fabric for patchwork as the suitability is very dependent on the project. Please do not hesitate to contact either Val or Heather if you want to discuss anything.

Queries: Val Penn or Heather Edwards.



### The Bridge for Improvers Group

Members of the flourishing Bridge Group in full flight. Members can play and enjoy their game while at the same time learning from each other

Photo: Daphne Shearer

THE THAMES VALLEY REGION:

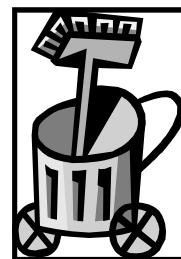
Your Chairman and Vice Chairman recently attended the A.G.M. of the Region held in Watlington and learned all about the exciting programme of study visits arranged for 2012. While Geoff Young will be reporting on them at future meetings, don't forget that you can always look on their web site: [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk).



## **HOUSEKEEPING NOTICES:**

### **NEW DIRECTORIES:**

It would be too expensive to post out the new directory files, so if you know anyone who has not got theirs yet and you could deliver it please ask Diane Richardson for a copy and so that she can list them as received.



### **WEB SITE AND NEWSLETTER:**

We would remind all our very welcome Associate Members that on our website they can find details of all the outings and activities which are normally announced at the monthly meetings. We don't want you to miss out—and popular events get booked up very quickly. The address is [www.avu3a.org.uk/wordpress](http://www.avu3a.org.uk/wordpress). The newsletter also gives advance warning of events planned.

### **NEED A WHEELCHAIR?**



We would like to remind all our members that we have our own lightweight wheelchair which is available for use on our days out and study visits. Ron and Rosemary Meadowcroft keep it and you should give them good notice if you would like to use it.

### **INFORMATION TABLES:**

Remember to look at the group information table at the back of the hall at each monthly meeting, when two groups will be telling you all about their activities. If you would like to join or just learn more about them please take advantage of their displays. The July table will tell you all about Genealogy and History. As we don't meet in August here is advance notice of the September Table—Scrabble and Patchwork.

### **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

Subscriptions of £15 for full membership are due on 1 August. They can be paid directly to the membership secretary, Diane Richardson, or posted to her at 100 Kynaston Avenue, Aylesbury, HP21 9DS. Cheques should be made payable to 'Aylesbury Vale U3A'.

It would be very helpful if anyone who does not wish to renew their membership could let Diane know as soon as possible so that she can contact those on the waiting list to offer them membership. She can be contacted by email at [membership@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@avu3a.org.uk) or at the address above.

### **NEWSLETTER INSERT:**

In this edition of the newsletter there are two pages for you to insert into your handbooks. One is a new page about a group starting in September on Social History (to be inserted between History of Art H-2 and Knitting and Crochet K-1). The other is about the Ten Pin Bowling Group as they meet at a different venue now.

We have also enclosed a short questionnaire about the U3A which we hope you will fill in and drop back at the next meeting or send to Anne Wales, Groups Co-ordinator.

## **SPEAKERS CORNER**



**WEDNESDAY JULY 11TH: JOHN TYLER—**

### **‘THE LOST FOREST OF BERNWOOD’**

Having studied Zoology and Conservation at university, John Tyler worked with the Trust for Urban Ecology, creating and managing urban nature reserves “so that children could learn about nature at first hand”. He spent the next twenty two years developing the Sevenoaks Nature Reserve in Kent, reclaiming the gravel pit lakes and surrounding woodland at Bradbourne. He is particularly well known to our Wildlife Group who have taken advantage of his wide knowledge on topics ranging from fungi to forestry.

His talk will introduce us to an ancient woodland landscape in Buckinghamshire with an insight into “what it was like to live in the forest in Mediaeval times, and some of the plants and animals that would have been familiar to the forest people”.

John has an excellent web site for further information—[www.johntyler.co.uk/index.htm](http://www.johntyler.co.uk/index.htm).

**WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH: GILLIAN CANE—**

### **‘IT’S A GIRL’S LIFE IN THE ARMY’**

Gillian Cane was among the first women to attend the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, for officer training, and the first woman to serve with The Royal Green Jackets. It is sometimes hard to remember that not so long ago women had to fight for the right to enter certain professions and careers.

**WEDNESDAY 10TH OCTOBER: DR. VICTORIA WILLIAMSON—**

### **‘WHY DO TUNES GET STUCK IN OUR HEADS?’**

Victoria Williamson is part of the Music, Mind and Brain group at Goldsmith’s University. She is currently undertaking research into why tunes, or ‘earworms’ as they have been labelled, seem to pop into our heads.

She writes on her web site:– “Despite the prevalent nature of earworms and the potential impact they can have on our normal thought processes, very little is known about what causes them, why they happen to some people more than others and why some tunes are more commonly heard as an earworm than others”.

Why not view Dr. Williamson’s website at [www.gold.ac.uk/music-mind-brain/earworm-project](http://www.gold.ac.uk/music-mind-brain/earworm-project) and take part yourself?



### **DO THEY LOOK LIKE THIRD AGERS ?**

When seven members of the Transport Group visited the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon in Warwickshire recently—they couldn't resist it! Do you recognise them all?

Photo from Peter Ashton

### **THAMES VALLEY NETWORK:**

There has been quite a lot of activity within the Network and on March 9th no fewer than 9 of our members attended an English Social History Study Day at High Wycombe with Trevor Rowley presenting the papers. This was enjoyed by all.

There are other activities lined up for your participation: 16th June the Abingdon Conference; 14th August a Study Day for Group Leaders and Co-ordinators at High Wycombe again, and there will be others later in the year.

If you would like more details, I have put them all on the Regional notice board which is available at every meeting.

*Geoff Young*



### **ST. ALBANS DAY VISIT:**

This visit was much enjoyed and we have received several photos from members. On the left above—members visit the Roman Theatre (photo by Rosemary Meadowcroft) while the splendid view of the Abbey Cathedral was sent in by George Clark.



Although this picture of our Ten Pin Bowling Group shows a lot of smiling faces, it doesn't tell the whole story. This is the last photograph of our players taken before Jardines Bowling Alley closed down. Some of the members are using their free bus passes to travel to High Wycombe, but is certainly the end of an era. We hear that the District Council, surprised by the public outcry about the closure, is looking for another site. Maybe this group will rise from the ashes in due course.

Photo from Pat Kuryba

Last date for copy for the Autumn Newsletter will be August 1st so please enjoy your holidays, but don't forget to contact Shirley Stokes on [treveris9@btinternet.com](mailto:treveris9@btinternet.com) or by post to 9 Windsor Road, Aylesbury HP21 7JG. Telephone 01296 392726

A very sincere thank you to all who have contributed this month including Alan Robinson for proof-reading and Bob Davies for making sure that the photographs are reproduced as accurately as possible. Just a quick word about photographs—unless you have a very good camera, pictures involving even the slightest movement can be blurred. Try 'posing' the members instead!