

# AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 64



September 2012

## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I recently read a newspaper headline “Loneliness: the Tragically Silent Killer”. Once again U3A is ahead of the field, for I firmly believe that just as important as our educational role, is that of meeting members’ social needs. I was saddened to read that it has been estimated that over one million people over the age of 65 say that they are often or always lonely. Apparently some 5 million people – half of that age group – claim that television is their main companion. As people now move freely around this country and overseas, families are often unable to visit as often. Certainly they are not in the next street or even next door as they once were. Many of us have no relatives at all in this country. When I was looking at my own family history I was surprised to see that a lot of of my Grandmother's village neighbours were in fact related. The network of support was strong.

On the other hand most of our own members complain that there is too much to do. For a number of years, like many of you, I did some voluntary work which involved being in Aylesbury's main shopping area to talk to people about that particular charity. We were well aware of our 'regular' visitors who just wanted someone to talk to. We also met people who had come in from neighbouring towns and villages just to fill in their day. We are lucky that we can meet in small groups with like minded friends to share experiences and talk about the happenings in our lives. Many of us belong to other organisations as well so our range of contacts is widened. There is a 'Campaign to End Loneliness' set up because it is known that people who have day to day contact live longer, healthier lives. That campaign may not be needed by most of us. We can, however, play our part in helping others. Many of us know neighbours or acquaintances who live isolated lives. We can share our good fortune by visiting or helping with errands for those who are housebound.

Research has shown that loneliness can be as harmful to one's health as alcohol and tobacco. So let us be thankful that we are members of an organisation which cherishes the friendships between its participants. That is why at our main monthly meetings I often stress the importance of saying 'hello' to the person sitting alongside us during the business session; or whom we stand alongside around the notice boards, or in the tea and coffee queue. A little 'hello' obviously goes a long way – and that is apparently a scientific fact!

*Shirley Stokes*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS



23 London walkers enjoyed this view of the London skyline as they crossed Primrose Hill

Photo by Peter Ashton

### THE GARDEN GROUP – UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: PROGRAMME WINTER 2012/13:

We have changed our meetings to the third Tuesday in the month as we were clashing with another group. We will now be meeting at Meadowcroft Community Centre from 3.05pm until 4.30pm. (The odd 5 minutes is to allow the previous hirers to clear the venue in peace!) So our new diary is as follows:



Tues Oct 16<sup>th</sup>: Peter Richardson from Preston Bisset Nursery  
Nov 20<sup>th</sup> : Rosemary Jury...History of Gardening  
Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 2013: John Branham... Vegetables  
March 19<sup>th</sup> 2013: Jill Carey...Clever and Curious

*Ann Dwyer*

### NEW VENUE FOR FINANCE GROUP:

The Finance Group's previous pub meeting place has been sold at very short notice. Henceforth they will meet at the Broad Leys Pub on Wendover Road, Aylesbury. (Just beyond the Police Station and before a garage on the left hand side as you travel towards Wendover). The next meeting at the new venue will be on 13th September (The Utility Warehouse Discount Club) and then 11th October – Diane Malone Part 2 (Diamond Insurance).

*Margaret Crafts*

## AND WE THINK IT'S COLD!

*I thought that readers might like to read this extract from a much longer article found amongst the papers of Alan Dell who sadly died earlier this year. His very full account of life as a Bevin Boy in the coal mines of South Wales during the last war is well worth reading.*



Any mention of cold weather brings to mind events which stand out in my memories during my three years as a Bevin Boy in South Wales. The winter of 1947 was so severe that the valleys were cut off for three days. All transport was at a standstill including the railways. A train was marooned overnight in a snowdrift in the Surhowy Valley and roads were blocked. It started snowing in the evening and about nine o'clock I remember looking out to find a pile of snow of about eighteen inches against the front door of the lady with whom I lodged with a little swirl of snow whipped by the wind rather like the top of a cornet ice cream. Eight hours later when I opened the door again the pile had grown to shoulder high with the swirl still in position. Never before or since had I seen such conditions. No encouragement was required to retire to my bed! Later in the day, fool that I was, I ventured out for a walk along a road which had been partially cleared to the village of Bedwellty. This was a hilltop place with an ancient Norman church after which, and until more recent time, the Parliamentary Constituency was named. A snowplough had been at work and a path cleared up to the mountain crossroads. There the work had ceased and the six feet drifts continued as far as the eye could see obscuring both the lane and hedges. When the transport position eased on the main roads we returned to work within three days but the freezing weather continued for the next three months and pedestrians on snow packed hill roads were able to look in the upstairs windows of adjacent houses; all in all, quite an adventure, and we were paid for three days off from our work down the pit.

*Alan Dell*





## MEMORIES OF SUMMER:


These photos were taken by Peter Ashton on the very successful visit to Bourton on the Water earlier this year. Where there is food, U3A members are never very far away!



## **BARBARA FRASER AND BARBARA LANE LOOK BACK AT GARDEN GROUP OUTINGS IN 2012**

 In spite of uncertain weather we have not had any days out which have been completely rained off although we have always kept our macs and umbrellas handy. In May we went to Beth Chatto's garden in Essex. A lovely garden which has been created from an overgrown wasteland with poor gravel soil and boggy hollows. The Gravel Garden began in 1991 on what had previously been the visitors' car park. The plants were chosen for their ability to stand drought and we saw many alliums, euphorbia and grasses in beautiful arrangements. The Water Gardens and the Shade and Woodland Gardens were also spectacular.

 Our June coach trip was a visit to Coton Manor Garden which we previously visited 5 years ago but felt that a return visit was well worth while. There are lovely borders and woodland garden; a splendid wild flower meadow and lots of unusual chickens and flamingos. The nursery is one of the best we have ever visited and we were tempted to buy many plants for our own gardens. Oxford Botanic Garden was visited by bus. It is the oldest botanic garden in England and was first laid out in 1621. The rectangular design is original as are many of the statues and garden ornaments. Everything is well labelled and is laid out both as an educational resource and as a pleasing living collection of plants. The palm house with its collection of carnivorous plants and other tropical flora was fascinating.

 Nearer to home we visited Rosemary Brown's garden in Spencer Road. She propagates most of her own plants and there were many on sale for us to buy. Our last two visits of the year will be to Homelands in Ellesborough and Waterperry Gardens. Both of these gardens we have visited before but they are both delightful and well worth seeing again. We will be handing over the Garden Group to Christine Reading and Ann Dwyer from October onwards and we both look forward to future visits and talks.



## **CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2012: WEDNESDAY 19th DECEMBER**



Val & I have arranged this year's Christmas lunch at the Aylesbury College's Hardings Restaurant and as last year we are limited to 70. We will be taking names of those interested at the September meeting but no money. We will ask you to look at the menu as they need to know your requirements in advance. Money will be taken at the October & November meetings as well as your menu choice.

The cost will be :- 2 Courses            £16.95.    3 Courses            £19.95.  
Drinks can be purchased from the bar and speciality coffees from £1.50.

*Geoff Young*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why not come by bus?

Bearing in mind the cost of fuel, the demand for parking at Meadowcroft and the fact that many of us at U3A are eligible for free bus passes, it is surprising that few members come by bus to the monthly meetings. Three bus routes serve the Community Centre. Orange route (3) buses pass the door (but do travel by a rather circuitous route); Blue route (2) turns from Jackson Road into Meadowcroft with a stop about 2 minutes walk from the Centre and normally has Easy-Access vehicles; and the No. 5 takes a similar approach but goes via Tesco. All these three services depart from the stops in Great Western Street at the Central Bus Station; the latter two travelling via the High Street, New Street and Bicester Road. The journey takes about 15 minutes. We normally use Blue Route (2) and find it very satisfactory.

See you on the bus !

*Anne & Graham Aylett.*

There are many not-for-profit groups across Buckinghamshire who are in great need of people who have skills to help them grow or even just survive. Our Expert Volunteer Initiative is looking for individuals to join our growing pool of people who fill very specific short or long term roles.



Such opportunities could be helping a charity writing a business plan or marketing strategy. Other groups might need assistance with financial forecasting or need policies and procedures revising.

We are always looking for volunteers with a wide range of skills. An expert volunteer could be someone who has previously run their own business, managed projects, someone with a professional qualification or a person with managerial experience. One of our Expert Volunteers, Mike Coote encapsulates the benefits of volunteering: *"A lot of satisfaction is derived from knowing that I may have made a difference to people and organisations I value."*

There are many different opportunities available, and we are always willing to discuss how you may best use your experience and skills to bring much needed strategic and professional knowledge to not-for-profit groups. Please contact [Alison@communityimpactbucks.org.uk](mailto:Alison@communityimpactbucks.org.uk) or call 01895 837545.

Our website [www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/pages/become-an-expert-volunteer.html](http://www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/pages/become-an-expert-volunteer.html) will also give you more information and case studies to read.

*Alison Holloway*



### A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

Rita Brown, Jerry Davies, Paul Dawes, John Gillman, Stan Goss, Jan Green, Brian Griffith, Caroline Hurford, Lionel Ladyman, Bobby Martin, Jean Newell, Jan Potter, Chris Quirke, Brian Saunders, Bronwen Saunders, Harry Shearman, Dorothy and John Sherrington, Chris and Jennie Sugg, Jeannette Walker, and June Watts





## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**WEDNESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER:** All new and associate members are invited to join us at the Broad Leys Pub, Wendover Road, Aylesbury for coffee and biscuits at 10. 30 a.m. Your chance to talk with existing members and find out all that you might want to know about Aylesbury Vale U3A.

**FRIDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER TO WEDNESDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER:** Annual Study Visit to Kent based on Folkestone.

**MONDAY 8TH OCTOBER:** The Thames Valley Region invite you to a Training Day at Reading (Berkshire Record Office) at 2.00 p.m. This is a new project researching local footpaths and their history. Members may wish to undertake only the research, but it is hoped that others will subsequently want to walk the footpaths.

**TUESDAY 16TH OCTOBER:** The Garden Group look forward to a return visit from Peter Richardson of the Preston Bisset Nursery.

**THURSDAY 18TH OCTOBER:** The ever popular Quiz afternoon followed by Fish and Chip Supper. 3 p.m. at the Aylesbury Bowls Club. Tickets £8 – only 60 places available. Tickets on sale at the September monthly meeting, and be warned that they go quickly so bring your cheque books. Associate members can send their cheques to the Social Activities Coordinator (address etc. in your handbook).

**THURSDAY 1ST NOVEMBER:** Matinee Performance of ‘Great Expectations’ at the Waterside Theatre at 2. 30 p.m. Tickets £15.

**TUESDAY 20TH NOVEMBER:** Rosemary Jury talks to the Garden Group Members on the history of gardening.

**WEDNESDAY 21ST NOVEMBER:** Another coffee morning to which all members are welcome – details the same as for September 19th.

**TUESDAY 18th DECEMBER:** Fully booked performance at The Mill at Sonning.

**WEDNESDAY 19TH DECEMBER:** Annual Christmas Lunch at Hardings Restaurant, Aylesbury College.

**THURSDAY 24TH JANUARY:** Matinee Performance ‘The Woman in Black’ at the Waterside Theatre; 2. 30p.m. Tickets £15.

**THURSDAY 31ST JANUARY:** World Premiere of Matthew Bourne’s latest Ballet Classic ‘Sleeping Beauty’ at Milton Keynes Theatre at 2. 30 p.m. Tickets £17. 50.

## THE STORY OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SWAN

The image of our Swan is a familiar sight – appearing on the Arms of the Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury District Council, the badge of the Boys' Grammar School, and, with the addition of a football at its foot, is the logo of Aylesbury Football Club. The bird with its raised wings and a crown round its neck from which hangs a chain is said to be 'ducal gorged and crowned'.



Less well known is the fact that the badge has historical origins, and for these we must look back to earlier times when, following the Norman conquest, England was dominated by powerful nobles who owned large tracts of land in the country. One such family was the De Bohuns whose own badge was a swan. When Eleanor De Bohun married the 6th son of Edward III (1327 – 1377) she retained the Swan Badge which was then handed down to the descendants of the couple who owned land in Staffordshire and Buckinghamshire. As Earls of both of these counties they used both the Staffordshire Knot and the Swan on their banners and pennons. (In 1443 Henry VI created the title of Duke of Buckingham.) Early in the 15th Century the De Bohuns were in a position of having no male heirs but had two daughters – sisters Mary and Alinore. Mary married Henry IV while Alinore married Humphrey Earl of Stafford and Buckingham. Each of these two heiresses retained the



family Swan Badge which was also adopted by their respective husbands. After a short 14 year reign, Henry IV died and was succeeded by his son Henry V. His role at the Battle of Agincourt was recounted in Shakespeare's drama, and in more recent times in the film 'Henry V' with Laurence Olivier as the King, ensuring that there is a lasting record of this King's part in our Island's history. Humphrey, Earl of Stafford and Buckingham fought alongside his King and the Swan emblem could be seen on both of their banners. One chronicler of the time wrote "The mustered men of

Buckingham are gone under the Swan – the badge of that old town."

Today the Henry V chantry can still be found in Westminster Abbey and its elaborate sculpture is decorated with three of the King's badges: the swan and the antelope derived from his Mother's family the Bohuns and a cresset or beacon. The two creatures are 'gorged and chained' and linked together as I have tried to link our own familiar swan to its ancient lineage.

*Sheila Thompson*

### **A WARM WELCOME AT THE GRANGE SCHOOL**

As you all know, we give an annual bursary to the Grange School as a 'thank you' for our use of the premises. Consequently, I was invited to attend their 'Celebration of Success' Awards evening just before the end of the summer term. It was an enjoyable and informal evening

with the prize winners invited to attend, but not knowing what their award was to be. Guests were given a friendly welcome by a reception line of students and I was left with the impression of a school whose pupils were proud to belong to it, and whose teachers were equally proud of their students

*Shirley Stakes*

## MORE NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

### THANKS TO ALL OUR GENEROUS READERS!

Readers Circle 2 collected just over £30 at the AVU3A monthly meeting held on 13 June. Many thanks to those who bought our surplus books and we hope they enjoyed reading them. The money collected will be put to good use in our Circle. We also gained two new names to join either Readers' Circle 1 or 3 depending on the spaces available and these names have been passed on to Ann Johnson for her attention. Our July Choice, the last in the current session, was 'A Game of Sorrows' by Shona MacLean - an historical mystery set in 1628. In June we read 'Before I Go to Sleep' by S.J. Watson – this will give you some idea of the diversity of the books we are reading! The August venue for our lunch outing was the Woolpack where we discussed amongst other things – guess what – books! and we all experienced a very enjoyable day out.

Again, our thanks to the purchasers of our books.



### SPEAKERS CORNER

**WEDNESDAY 10TH OCTOBER: Dr. Victoria Williamson:**  
**Why do Tunes Get Stuck in our Heads? (Musical memory).**  
(Details in last newsletter)



**WEDNESDAY 14TH NOVEMBER: Derek Pooley:**  
**Time-Clocks, Heavenly Clocks and Calendars**

Dr Derek Pooley is now an independent consultant on energy and nuclear technologies, and a member of the EU's Advisory Group on Energy. Previously he was Harwell's Non-nuclear Energy Director; Chief Scientist of the UK Department of Energy; Director of Winfrith; Chief Executive of the UKAEA and chairman of the EU's Nuclear Science and Technology Committee. He was appointed a CBE in 1995. He says "From childhood I have been fascinated by science, especially astronomy, but I have only recently started trying to pass on my fascination ... through 'popular' talks, mostly to local U3A groups". He will speak to us about aspects of time that we all use regularly without much thought. Few realise how complex and idiosyncratic those aspects are. Derek will explain how modern, ultra-accurate timekeeping highlights the deficiencies of our 'natural' time units.

**WEDNESDAY 12TH DECEMBER: Keith Baldwin: Christmas Greetings – Festive Anecdotes and Readings**

Keith Baldwin is a former Household Cavalry soldier and retired senior Police Officer. Throughout his service life he developed a wide range of attributes which enabled him to deal with people and situations and became a skilled communicator and negotiator. He gained a Master of Arts Degree and has now turned his hand to professional speaking. He starts our Christmas celebrations off with a talk to put us in a festive mood.



## HOUSEKEEPING NOTICES



### Group Display Tables:

Don't forget to look at the display tables at the back of the hall to find out what activities are happening within our groups. October 12th: Transport and Finance; November 12th: Gardening and Tai Chi

### Best Education Provider:

The 50+ organisation have now published their very long list of helpful organisations patronised by that age group. In the category 'Best Education Provider for the Over 50s' the Gold Award went to the Open University, Silver to U3A and Bronze to the Workers' Educational Association. I hope you all voted !

### Insurance:

The Third Age Trust has sent us some advice about insurance, which members may find useful and reassuring. Using your car to ferry U3A members does not affect your 'social, domestic and pleasure' insurance cover and does not require you to pay an additional excess or upgrade to business cover. In addition, accepting a contribution towards petrol is perfectly acceptable. Holding U3A meetings in your home should have no implications whatsoever on your home insurance, as it is no different from entertaining your family or friends.

### Food, Glorious Food:

We also have information about the above programme on ITV1. They are looking for people from all over the UK to send in their favourite recipes. The winning recipe from the series will earn its author a substantial cash prize as well as the pride of seeing the dish on the shelves of Marks and Spencer across the country, with all the proceeds going to charity. Further information can be obtained by visiting [www.foodgloriousfood.tv](http://www.foodgloriousfood.tv), telephoning 0845 6000 047 or emailing [foodgloriousfood@optomen.com](mailto:foodgloriousfood@optomen.com).

### Group Leaders' Expenses:

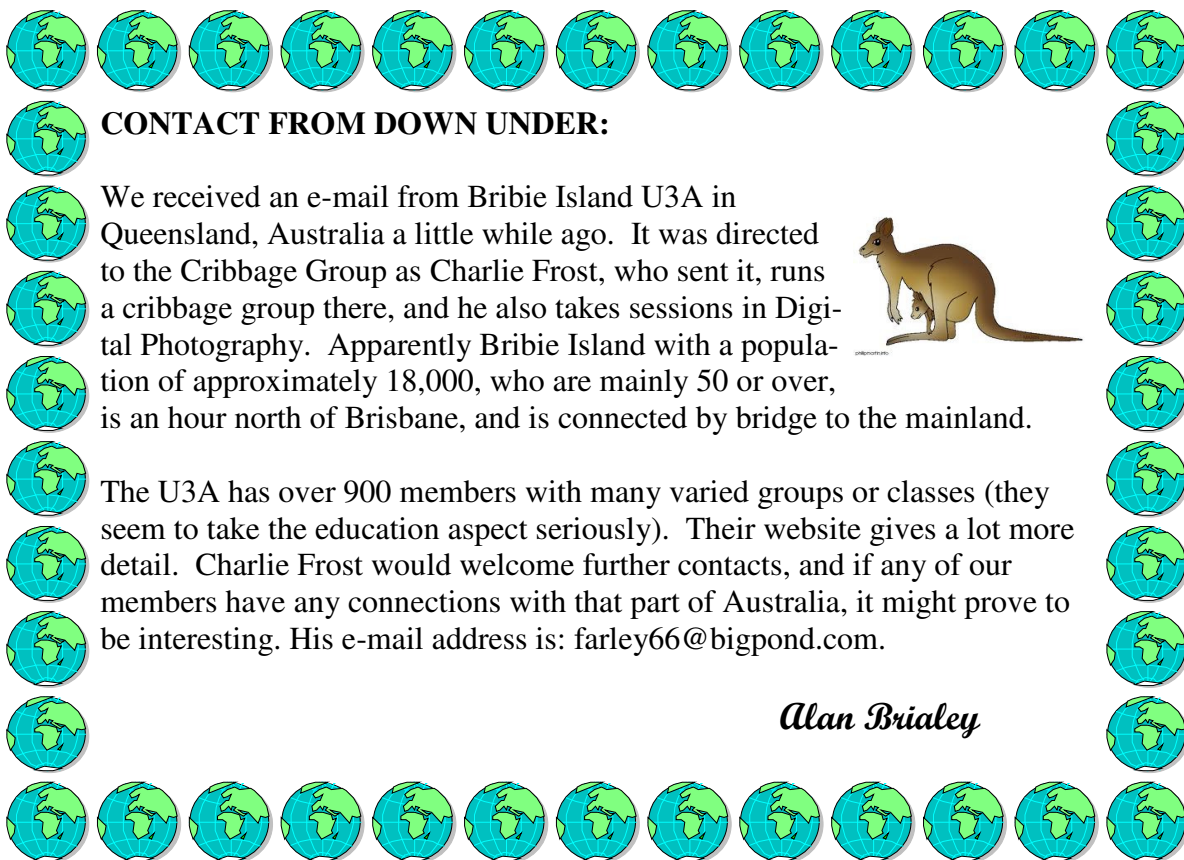
The committee has reviewed the £20 expenses allowance for group leaders which is only currently claimed by one or two groups. It has been decided that the allowance should be discontinued as it has always been the policy that all groups should be self-supporting. Now that we have a much larger number of groups the total claimed could be as high as £1000 which is equivalent to an extra £2.50 annually for each AVU3A member. The normal funding for groups is through the contributions made by its members and it was felt this is the fairest way. The committee further decided that an allowance of £30 could be made available to help in the setting up of a new group if required. (These expenses would need to be identified and receipts provided.) Additionally, as at present, a group leader can apply in advance for the purchase of specialist equipment if needed and any such items would remain the property of AVU3A.

★ ★ A CHANCE TO TEST YOUR BRAIN POWER ONCE AGAIN !

★ Ann Dwyer recently prepared another quiz for a History Group Lunch and we thought  
★ that you might like to try it too.

1. Which war correspondent said “I have counted them all out and I have counted them all back”?
2. What was Charles Dickens’ first job when he was just 12 years old?
3. In which road in London was Queen Elizabeth II born? (An extra pat on the back if you know the house number too.)
4. Who in 1942 was the man behind the radio programme ‘Desert Island Discs’? (He also presented the programme for 40 years.)
5. Which James Bond film was the first starring Sean Connery and in what year was it released?
6. El Alamein, a railway station in the desert, was a turning point for the British in WWII. Which country is it in, and who was the Commander of the German Forces?
7. On Captain Scott’s last ill fated expedition what was the name of his ship?
8. Which famous bug was born on 18/6/42 in Liverpool?
9. Where was the first stop for the Titanic after she sailed from Southampton?
10. What have all the above questions got in common?

**Answers on the next page.**



## QUIZ ANSWERS

Answer 10 first! The link is that all are Anniversaries being celebrated this year.

1. Brian Hanrahan: Falklands War (30 years ago).
2. Sticking labels on pots in a Boot Blacking Factory. (Dickens bi-centenary 2000.)
3. 17 Bruton Street, London – Diamond Anniversary.
4. Roy Plomley – Desert Island Discs is 70 this year!
5. Dr. No in 1962 – 50 years old this year.
6. Egypt; Field Marshal Rommel (70 years ago).
7. Terra Nova. Scott's death occurred 100 years ago.
8. Paul McCartney and the Beatles. He is 70 this year.
9. Cherbourg in France – 100 year anniversary.

## NO – NOT THESE PARALYMPICS!



I wonder how many of our members remember when the Paralympics were held at the Stoke Mandeville Stadium? For several years some of us at B.T. had helped in the office at the stadium during the annual games. In 1984 The Olympic Games were to be held in Los Angeles with the Paralympics following on. We were rather surprised when we were contacted to see if we could help once again as Los Angeles had decided at fairly short notice that they were unable to cope with the wheelchair athletes and Stoke Mandeville had agreed to host them. In just 3 months they had to arrange accommodation for 1000 athletes plus all their support staff. There can't have been a spare bedroom left in Aylesbury! There were venues to find as well – swimming at High Wycombe, weight lifting at our Civic Centre etc. Some firms had always allowed their staff time off to help at the annual games, and they came up trumps again with others including shops generously helping with uniforms. Guides and Scouts and other voluntary organisations were called upon, and many locals volunteered.

We 'Blue Banders' as we were known were under the command of Doug Joss and tasked with a variety of roles such as serving refreshments, sweeping paths, picking up litter, running with messages (no mobile phones then) and even sewing ribbons for the medals. Our motto was 'Whatever wants doing – do it.' Three things helped us through: marvellous sunny weather, the support of Prince Charles who at short notice opened the games – and much good humour. I feel so lucky to have played a small part in such an amazing achievement.

*Yvonne Noble*

## THE TRANSPORT GROUP VISIT BUCKS RAILWAY CENTRE AT QUANTON:

U3A Member Bob Davies, who is not only the husband of our excellent Speakers Secretary but also doubles as the Education Officer for the Railway Centre, led twelve members of the Transport Group on a 2 ½ hour tour of the centre, giving them an interesting and informative talk on the way round. These photos taken by Peter Ashton show them sadly contemplating the ‘Children Only’ sign – which they ignored; while Ed Schoon (a Past Chairman of AVU3A and famous for making his own model engines) appears from underneath a steam locomotive which he obviously found irresistible!



We can't believe it's all over – but at least one of our U3A members looked as if he was enjoying it all. (The photographer modestly forgot to put his/her name on the back of the photo – but thank you anyway.)



Last date for copy for the December Newsletter will be November 14th – the day of our monthly meeting. Send your contributions to Shirley Stokes on [treveris9@btinternet.com](mailto:treveris9@btinternet.com) or by post to 9 Windsor Road, Aylesbury HP21 7JG. Telephone 01296 392726.

Just a reminder about photos. Small groups are better than whole group photos. By the time the latter are cut down to fit the space available they are difficult to see. ‘Pose’ your action shots if possible, to avoid blurring (unless, of course, you are an expert photographer). Please remember to write on the back of the photo or on the accompanying email the names of the people; the venue/event; and the name of the photographer (the Editor doesn't always recognise person or place !) Many thanks to all of you who contribute.