

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 66

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Spring 2013

I have a confession to make. I don't like magazines. Since I retired my whole day feels wrong if I can't read my national newspaper with my morning breakfast. I love a good book but I have never enjoyed reading magazines. As all of you will know – you can't escape them. I get magazines from my car manufacturer, insurance companies and a whole host of charities. But while I was preparing the draft items for this quarter's newsletter, through the letter box plopped the 'Third Age Matters'. The plastic wrapper also contained the January issue of 'U3A Sources'. While I was cooking my lunch I took a quick look at 'Sources' it being the smaller of the two, and which I had thought was of more interest to group leaders – and I was hooked. The latter gives us all information about the wealth of material available to assist group leaders to be even more creative, but also has news of the activities of various U3A's throughout the U.K. Each issue concentrates on one particular theme, and this one was all about 'Creative Writing and Storytelling'. It made fascinating reading.

It illustrated how much skill and resourcefulness we have within our movement. Some group coordinators began by giving participants a sentence or a title to guide their next piece of writing. Another simply selected one word. How do you write a story around the word 'borborygmus'? (And yes, I had to look it up too, and it's something we have probably all experienced at some time or another.) In Northampton they began with a ten minute exercise of writing on the spot. In Sheffield they were even more imaginative. At their first meeting the group were tasked with walking around their local area and finding an observation point from which they could observe the comings and goings in a small village. They weren't allowed to take notes, it was the power of observation which was important. Then they returned to their local library to write about what they had seen.

There was no limit to the activities the various groups undertook and how they used the concept of writing; from exploring historical costumes, to making films and recordings. I particularly liked the idea of the Arun members who used both writing and craft skills to make a school Story Book Bag. My own Women's Institute craft group has made two or three of those, and they are much appreciated by local schools and playgroups. If you don't know what a story bag is, read your copy !

Perhaps I was wrong about magazines (and I still have my copy of 'Third Age Matters' to read). The next issue will be all about 'Photography, Imagery and Film' and the following in September will deal with the themes of 'Philosophy, Psychology and Religion'. Please read them whatever your interests. I will certainly be settling down with my copy!

Shirley Stokes

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Out and About Group

Although it seems a long time ago now, several members of the Out and About Group joined the Wyevalle Garden Centre trip to the Christmas Market in Bath. There were 140 stalls, set around the Abbey, selling a huge variety of craft and food items. The weather was chilly but dry and sunny so it was a very pleasant day out. There wasn't much time to see the sights but Bath is definitely a city to explore next year. We would recommend it!



Heather Edwards

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE BOWLING SEASON:

Although the weather is so cold as I write, Spring is coming, bulbs are showing and the 2013 Bowls season is approaching. Lets hope for a glorious Summer after one of the wettest on record last year. However in spite of the rain the heavens seemed to smile on us and we never had to cancel although we did take a few extended coffee breaks!



We will start again on April 25th (weather permitting) at Aylesbury Town Bowls club and meet every Thursday from 10.00 until 12.00. If any new members are interested in joining us please speak to Mary Rogers, details of the group can be found in your handbook.

We rounded off last season with our presentation lunch in January when 46 members enjoyed a festive meal at Foxhills Indoor Bowls Club. The Dorrance Cup, which is an all day mixed pairs competition, was won this year by Janet Meacham and Ken Cooper. The Scutt trophy is an individual competition and was won by Pat Baker, congratulations to them all.

This winter we are taking a trip to North Wales staying at Bodelwydden Castle and playing in a bowls tournament there. There will doubtless be tales to tell when we get back though they may need to be edited!

Mary Rogers



A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

Lesley Brackley, Maggie Coles, Eileen Gallagher, Mike Hann, Noelle & Ray Leong-Son, Sylvia McNulty, Diana Nelson, Pattie Smith, June Thomson, Sue Haines, Terry McGill, Roger Powell, Cheryl Brown, Terry Elliott and Mo Reeley. Perhaps we will be able to meet them at our Coffee Morning for new and associate members on 20th March! (See diary page for details)

OUR LONDON WALKERS HIT THE HEADLINES ONCE AGAIN

Our London explorers walked into a media frenzy in College Gardens, by the Houses of Parliament, on Friday 30th November. 'Hacked Off' just happened to launch their campaign calling for the implementation of the recommendations of the Leveson enquiry at the same time as our 'Walk around the St James's area' passed by. As the media were videoing Gerry McCann and Jo Yeates, London Walks leader Bill Gibbings and other U3A members walked into view. It was a great surprise to them all, on returning home and switching on the BBC News, to see Bill and colleagues in the news. In fact this video sequence seemed so popular with the BBC that it seemed to



The collage of four pictures shows some close-ups of the media scrum.



be on every news bulletin over the coming weekend!

This picture was taken just before the video sequence was captured that was shown on the News with the media to the left of the picture, the 'Hacked Off' group in the centre, and U3A Aylesbury to the right.

Photos taken by Peter Harding

WHY NOT VISIT IRELAND WITH US?

10TH – 15TH SEPTEMBER: Irish Study Tour. This very comprehensive tour is being organised by Roger Fox and Marg Southam. At the time of going to press there were 4 spare places still available: single, double or twin rooms. Cost £469.99 per person plus £40 single supplement. The itinerary includes nights in Dublin, Belfast and Londonderry, and visits to the Titanic Exhibition, Giants Causeway and the Guinness Store Factory, as well as guided City Tours in Dublin and Belfast.



A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am writing to let you know that, sadly, I am formally resigning from the Aylesbury Vale U3A. I hope to be moving to Leicestershire in the next few months and am finding increasingly that I can no longer commit to the various activities with which I am involved. Also, there is a waiting list, and I would not like to block a new member from joining.

I organized the Scrabble Group for quite a while, and hopefully two of the group members will take this over. May I take this opportunity to say what a wonderful organization the Aylesbury Vale U3A

has proved to be - I have made so many new friends and have had such good times with them – and learned such a lot. I have seldom before come across such kindness, generosity of spirit, and sheer good humour and fun.

I wish everyone good luck, good health, and much happiness for the future and shall never forget the good times spent with such delightful people.

Best Wishes



Eve Daintith

COME AWAY WITH US!

As you may remember, we no longer have a volunteer willing to organise days out. Ron and Rosemary Meadowcroft and others before them took us all over the south of England visiting interesting places and enjoying new experiences. It would be a great shame if we were no longer able to offer the odd day trip in our annual U3A programme.



Have you thought of arranging a visit – just one would do. We are not necessarily expecting one person to do all the work! Why not choose a stately home, museum or garden you have never visited, and arrange to take along 40 of your U3A friends? The coach companies can make all sorts of suggestions, and there are plenty of your fellow members who can help and advise. It is not too difficult – so why not have a go? You would be welcomed with open arms.

A HOUSEKEEPING NOTICE

Just a gentle reminder! Please let Diane Richardson, our Membership Secretary, know if you have changed your e-mail address. It provides a much quicker way for us to get into touch with you. We know that it is easy to forget some of the people who need to know when you make a change, but please count us in.

Membership@avu3a.org.uk or 01296 437265.

p.s.. Had a nice telephone conversation with a member of Cardigan U3A yesterday – admiring our web site, and asking for advice!



SPEAKERS CORNER

10th APRIL: FRAN SANDHAM – ‘ACROSS AFRICA SOLO’

Fran Sandham is an experienced lecturer and a former “Rough Guides” editor. This talk is an account of Fran's 3000 mile solo walk coast to coast across Africa. It was the first time anyone had crossed Africa, on foot and alone, from Namibia's Skeleton Coast to the Indian Ocean at Zanzibar.



8TH MAY: BILL SIMPSON – ‘RAIL IN THE VALE’

Bill Simpson is a local historian, with a particular interest in railways. He is a trustee and a volunteer at Quainton Railway Centre. He has written many books on the development of local railways, including one about the Aylesbury to Cheddington line when the chief engineer was Robert Stephenson.

12TH JUNE: CYNTHIA FOWLER – ‘PANAMA AND COLOMBIA’

Cynthia Fowler is, of course, one of our own members at Aylesbury Vale U3A and a familiar speaker at our monthly meetings. This time she will give us a fascinating insight into the history and culture of Panama and Colombia.

Colombia or Columbia – My apologies for the spelling mistake in the programme. I had relocated Cynthia to British Columbia. Well done for those who spotted the error. Of course it should have been Colombia.

Jeni Davies

Reflections

*When we are older,
And maybe we might grumble,
Think of our smile today,
Before our knees and minds began to
crumble.*

*When you run and jump,
And generally scream or laugh,
And we just sit and smile,
Don't suppose we are daft.*

*We had energy,
Climbed and even felled and chopped a
tree.
So now we reminisce,
Maybe in the company of banal TV.*

*When very young,
We're held in many loving arms,
In teenage years we survive,
Sometimes by luck, and a few charms.*

*Those mid life years,
That, wow, really fly by,
Bring us to senior hood,
Sometimes we sit and sigh.*

*The years don't matter,
It is how we feel inside.
Contentment, loving friends and families,
That's a fulfilled life
We sighed.*

*4th November
From a shy (ish) wordsmith*

*p.s This poem came from Phillip Rance
who agreed, reluctantly, that I might add
his name. These were his thoughts after a
visit to a residential home.*

Editor

REMEMBERING RABBIE BURNS —A CHARITY BURNS NIGHT



Lynne and Greig with the cheque for Children in Care

Over the past five years two of our members, Lynne Dawson and Greig Sneddon, have organised a Burns Night in aid of local children's charities. Ninety-five people attended this year's event in the Hub, Aston Clinton, including a good number of members of our U3A. The night began with the Parade and Toast to the Haggis then, after the Selkirk Grace,



Greig addressing the haggis with Chef John Smeaton

delivered by Gavin Ewan, everyone enjoyed a delicious three course meal prepared by local chef John Smeaton. Following the meal, the evening continued with some of the traditional elements of a Burns Supper.

Greig delivered the Immortal Memory which consisted of a brief outline of Burns' life followed by a few verses of some not so famous Scottish poets. The Toast to the Lassies was delivered by John Harwood who poked gentle fun at the ladies with a few stories and anecdotes. Sheila Sylvester then retaliated with the Toast to the Laddies where, amongst other things, she compared the various traits and foibles of men and women with those of everyday objects. Next on the programme was a Burns poems read by James Grieve and one by Pam Ayres read by Chris Brown. The toasts and readings were interspersed with everybody singing a few traditional and modern songs and a couple of Scottish Country Dances.

To end the evening we linked arms and sang Auld Land Syne. Thanks to the generosity of all who attended this fun Scottish evening, £1100 was raised for Children in Care. All being well we are looking forward to next year's celebration of the birth of Rabbie Burns.

Greig Sneddon

COPING WITH MODERN GADGETS

Ron Meadowcroft, who is something of a whiz with modern gadgets, has sent information about exploratory work at the Cambridge University Engineering Design Centre to help those of us who struggle to understand the workings of smart phones, tablets, notes etc. Most of these 'must have' modern gadgets are designed by young people with young people in mind. That is the view of Ian Hosking who works at the Design Centre. He says "This means that elderly people who have the most to gain from modern technology feel excluded." A brief on-line clip (lasting about 4 minutes) shows a 75-year-old trying to get to grips with different household gadgets. The researchers are looking at what we find more difficult to handle than the young who are brought up in an electronic environment which they take for granted. I hope that the research helps to simplify some of these items and make them so that even I can understand how to operate them! I am sure that Ron will keep us informed, but in the meantime, why not have a look at the clip yourself! It can be found at : – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20664470>.

DATES FOR THE DIARY



WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH: Coffee Morning at the Broad Leys P.H. Wendover Road at 10.30 a.m. Your chance to meet with other new and associate members, and 'older hands' to find out about our U3A activities. Cost £1 75 for coffee (or tea) and biscuits. Do come and join us.

TUESDAY 2ND APRIL: Gentle Walks Group visit the Ashridge Estate. Walk begins at 11.15 a.m. Further information from Veronica Stagnell. After all of these walks participants may take lunch together at a local pub – purely optional!

SUNDAY 14TH APRIL: An additional outing with the Gentle Walks Group to see the Spring Flowers at Waddesdon Manor. Entry free for National Trust Members.

THURSDAY 18TH APRIL: An invitation from Princes Risborough U3A to take a coach trip to visit Adam Henson's farm in the Cotswolds. The farm and Adam feature on the TV programme 'Country File'. Cost is £22. Contact Margaret Crafts.

TUESDAY 7TH MAY: The second visit of the year to Wendover Woods with the Gentle Walkers. Hopefully the bluebells will be fully out. It is advisable to share cars as there is a parking fee. Details from Veronica Stagnell.

WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY: Another coffee morning at the Broad Leys P.H. for existing, new and associate members. Come along and meet some of your fellow members. Details as for 20th March.

TUESDAY 4TH JUNE: This month it's College Lake for the Gentle Walkers. On their last visit there were very few birds, but an abundance of blossom in the wildflower meadow. Ample parking space where a donation is requested. Meet beforehand to share cars.

14TH TO 20TH JUNE: Northumberland Study Visit. Probably completely booked up by now, but there may be a cancellation: contact Ron Meadowcroft.

TUESDAY 18TH JUNE: The Garden Group make a day trip to London to see the Chelsea Physic Garden. (1½ mile walk from Sloane Square Station.) Entry Fee to Garden £9 00. It is necessary to book in advance, as there is a maximum number for this trip. Contact Anne Dwyer.

TUESDAY 9TH JULY: Gay and Ian Hancock are arranging a day visit to Salisbury (with guided tour of the Cathedral) and Stonehenge. Full details to be announced later at our monthly meeting.

Calling all book lovers:



News of a Thames Valley Region Study Day – ‘A Window on the World’, which sounds exciting. It takes place at The Emmbrook School, Emmbrook Road, Wokingham RG41 1JP, on Tuesday 28th May starting at 10.30 a.m. The day will be led by Penny Hunter, an engaging and experienced teacher of English Literature. Her opening session will begin by considering books as a way of viewing the world, discovering new authors and developing critical reading skills. There will be talks by Guy Pringle, Editor of New Books Magazine, who will tell how he finds authors, and some encounters he has had. He will also distribute goodie bags! Then Barbara Morris of Two Rivers Press will talk about local authors she features, and introduce two of them – Susan Utting who writes poetry and will read from her work, and Martin Andrews who writes on photography.

There will be 9 different workshops offering a choice of fiction, non-fiction, poetry or prose and finally a Panel where participants can ask questions and raise points of interest.

Further information from our TVR representative Geoff Young.

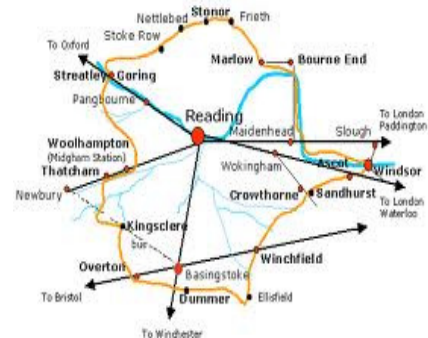
SOME MORE THAMES VALLEY REGION DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

March 14th - Historic Pathways Study Day – Henley

April 13th - Photography - High Wycombe.

Please support these events as you will find them interesting and they may give you ideas for your Group.

Geoff Young



Last date for copy for the Summer Newsletter will be May 8th 2013 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
Please don't wait for the closing date; the Editor would like your copy as early as possible so that you don't forget to share news about your activities and events.

Thanks are due to our Secretary Peter Gasson for help with the ordering and printing, to Alan Robinson for proof reading, and of course to all of you who send in articles and photographs.