

# AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



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## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am always a little bit disappointed when I hear a member say “I didn't come to the meeting on Wednesday because I didn't fancy the speaker's topic”. One of the most important aims of the U3A movement is to keep our minds flexible even though our joints may not be. We cannot do a lot about the latter, although some of us try, but we can continue to stretch the brain. When you think about it, the brain is a marvellous organism with an infinite capacity to absorb, and sometimes even to recall, thousands of pieces of knowledge. I know that I have often come to a meeting where the topic didn't set me alight with enthusiasm and those meetings have sometimes turned out to be the most interesting. An enthusiastic speaker can arouse our interest in hitherto unknown, or little thought about, issues. Even if we go away again still unenthused, we may have learned something new, enjoyed an inspiring speaker, and at worst we know why we were not particularly interested. Whatever the topic, it is always good to hear other members' views and questions.

When we think about keeping fit, we are usually thinking about our bodies from the neck downwards, but the health of the brain is important in everything we do. It affects our every movement and emotion, and even our sleeping. There is a lot of research into this whole area and while much of it stresses the importance of physical exercise, there also seems to be little doubt that keeping an active mind helps. Ron Meadowcroft will be particularly pleased to know that research by University College London showed that even surfing the internet helps. We may not be able to stop all our wrinkles and lines, but who will care if we are interesting to talk to and take a lively interest in everything around us. So next time you look at our programme and see something you may not like the look of at first glance, don't write it off. Come along to the meeting and listen. You never know, you may find it fascinating, and after all our main aim is 'education' in its widest sense.

*Shirley Stokes*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY OPEN DAY:



Our Family History Group has asked me to publicise this Open Day which many of its members already attend. Buckinghamshire's major family history event will take place in 2013 on Saturday 27th July, from 10am to 4pm at The Grange School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury. As always, this free event will have something for everyone – whether

beginner or experienced researcher – and wherever your ancestors came from.

The Society's research facilities will be available, including our Names Database (over 5 million names), Parish Register library, Bucks People (genealogies, histories, documents), and Bucks places. Let us help you track down those elusive ancestors. Our bookstall will carry parish register transcripts and other research aids for sale, and there will be lots of free help and advice available, including a talk for those just beginning family history. There will be the opportunity to meet guest family history societies from around the country, representatives of local history societies, and the wide range of commercial suppliers of maps and books, software, archival materials and services visitors have come to expect.

Tea and coffee will be available; why not bring a packed lunch and make a day of it? Entry is free, and free parking is available at the venue.

*Graham Gough* [publicity@bucksfhs.org.uk](mailto:publicity@bucksfhs.org.uk)

### SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING:

According to the NHS, Scottish Country Dancing is one of the best ways of keeping fit and active in mind and body. Our SCD group has now been running for two years and in that time it has made steady progress and now has over 30 members attending the twice monthly sessions and 54 members on the database. The Group Leaders are Greig Sneddon and Lynne Dawson who teach the dance steps in a fun and simple fashion. To date the group has learned 13 dances including waltzes, strathspeys and jigs. The sessions are open to men and women of different abilities. Some will have practised SCD in the distant past whilst a number are complete beginners. You will not need swords or kilts or even a partner (a spare is always available), nor do you need to attend every session, but you do need a pair of sensible shoes and a sense of adventure and fun.



The reputation of the group is spreading. About two months ago Lynne and Greig were asked to demonstrate to the Wingrave Brownies. This was carried out in the usual light-hearted fashion and a good time was had by all. The SCD meets on the first and third Friday of each month except August in the Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Centre from 1 30 – 3 30 p.m.

*Greig Sneddon*

## THE BOWLERS' FEBRUARY IN WALES



Go to Wales in February? What a mad idea! Notwithstanding, we bowlers are an intrepid lot and so we entered a Bowls tournament (albeit indoors) at Bodolwydden Castle and together with a few friends 50 of us set off by coach. Our optimism was rewarded with bright sunny days throughout; although a little chilly it was nothing like we have experienced since our return. The tournament organisers were disappointed that there were only 12 teams for this particular week and 11 of them were ours. For us this meant a relaxed week competing amongst friends and of course a good chance of winning! It didn't mean that we didn't try our hardest and the final was a tense and close game which was only decided by the two Skips having to play an extra end. The winners were Alex and Elinor Paterson with Geoff and Jean Vincent from High Wycombe. As well as the trophies they now have automatic entrance to another competition to be held in October at Hayling Island playing for £3,000. Do I feel another trip ahead to show our support? It was a great few days that we all enjoyed, the castle was most comfortable, with excellent food and some wonderful grounds to explore and of course the camaraderie made it all worthwhile. The tournament organisers having at first been apprehensive said what a smashing week they too had had, everyone so friendly and happy had made a pleasant change from what is usually a very competitive event.

It wasn't all bowling: classes in cookery some days, a swimming pool, snooker table, entertainment each evening and Cyril had brought a selection of card games and dominoes; there was lots to do! Those not in the last four teams had a free day on the Thursday when the castle museum was open or there was a coach trip to Betws-y-Coed and then to Anglesey stopping at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwl'llantysiliogogogoch (if our Editor can fit this in!) and back along the coast recalling childhood holidays for me as the place names came up. All too soon it was Friday and time to come home, though a puncture on the way back meant we extended our statutory 45 minute break by another 15 minutes. However Motts had it all under control and as Michael our driver had managed to pick us up earlier than anticipated we were still back in Aylesbury ahead of the estimated time.

*Mary Rogers*



### YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION WILL BE DUE SHORTLY!

Subscriptions of £15 for full membership are due on 1 August. They can be paid directly to the membership secretary, Diane Richardson, at the monthly meeting or posted to her at 100 Kynaston Avenue, Aylesbury, HP21 9DS. Cheques should be made payable to 'Aylesbury Vale U3A'. It would be very helpful if those who want their new membership badges posted to them could enclose a stamped addressed envelope for this purpose.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I came across this poem whilst doing research for our Poetry Group meeting and thought it very apt for our U3A!

As all of us grow older, I'm sure that we will find  
However we feel about ourselves, it's just a state of mind.  
Do not retire to vegetate or sit to wait and die,  
Get out, get active, use your brain or time will pass you by.

It's no use sitting in a chair bemused by films and soaps.  
They're full of fools and dreamers, and those who only hope.  
Go join a club, make new friends, spread yourself around.  
You'll find by giving of yourself, such happiness you've found.

You just get old and dusty if you sit upon a chair.  
Have some fun, laugh a lot – you owe it to yourself.  
Retirement need not be boring, it's the way you are inclined.  
Be prepared to take on the world NOW. You have the state of mind.

*By Rod Morris*

*from Jenny Corton (Poetry Group 1)*

**Chiltern U3A Jazz Appreciation Group** is holding a

**Summer JazzFest on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> August** at the **Amersham Community Centre** from **7.00 pm to 11.00 pm** (free parking). We have two bands – **Clive Burton and his Dixieland Jazz Band** and **Martin Hart and the “Benny Goodman” Celebration Quintet**. Both are well known in the Thames Valley region and we are looking forward to a really good informal evening with music which many of us will remember from our younger days. However there should be something for everyone to enjoy!

You are warmly invited to come and join us! Entrance is by ticket only and if you wish to come along simply send the application back to me at 2 Long Park Close, Chesham Bois HP6 5JY with a cheque and a sae.

Kind regards

*Peter Metcalf:*  
Chiltern U3A

## THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

The Network Events Committee are planning a number of Study Days which they hope will appeal to members of contributing U3As. In May they organised a Book Readers' workshop which was publicised at our meetings. I do hope that some of you were able to attend and that you enjoyed the experience. There will be another Training Day in October – details to be advised. Two further Study Days are also on offer: On 6th November “Crushed Grapes - Understanding Wine and Wine Tasting” and on the 15th November “Benjamin Britten” at Rewley House. Please try to support these events.

The Chairman, Shirley Stokes and my wife Val and I will be going to the TV Network AGM in Benson which will have taken place by the time this letter reaches you. In the afternoon of that meeting the National Chairman Barbara Lewis, who was newly elected last September, will be speaking to us and we look forward to hearing what she has to say. I will be reporting back to you in the next Newsletter.

Barbara Lewis:  
Third Age Trust .  
Chairman



*Geoff Young*

**EXTRACT FROM THE THIRD AGE TRUST INAUGURAL FOUNDER'S DAY LECTURE, APRIL 2013, ERIC MIDWINTER**

Is there anywhere in this country a working model of a service rather than a system, where education is for its own sake and for that moment, where it is based relevantly on individual wishes, fuelled by personal gifts and worked out in learning circles in which the vibrant co-operative spirit wins out over the dourly selfish competitive edge, where the group-leader is a kindly steward and facilitator not a programmed didact, where attendance is willing not grudging or enforced, where this engagement with mutuality is threaded into the interstices of the community in church and civic halls, social clubs, on walks and trips and, most endearing of all, in people's own homes instead of confined within enclosed institutionalised premises, where the mood is ever companionably supportive and the involvement life-enhancing, to the point where social, physical and mental well-being improves to the benefit of the individual, the family and the community, and where, most importantly, each individual is respected, valued and esteemed of being of equal worth? Yes – it is the U3A.



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

Pat Anderson, Liz Astles, Bill Astles, Elizabeth Byrne, Bobby Cadwallader, Linda Chapple, Sue Foster, Debbie Moore, Diane Ovenden, Robert Parker, Michael Sharpes, Joe Southall, Colin Spencer, Anne Urry, Marvin Crawford, Vanessa McLoughlin, Nina Sadler, Marilyn Sainsbury and Jan Storey.

**OUT AND ABOUT: A CHANGE OF VENUE**

As this very successful group has increased its membership, a new venue has become necessary. Meetings are now held over coffee at the Honey Bee pub in Fairford Leys. Further details from Jean Coussens.



**TAI CHI CHANGE OF VENUE:**

Tai Chi have also moved and are now meeting at the Multi Cultural Centre, Friarscroft Way, weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4p.m. Contact Joan Lewis.





## FOCUS ON MEMORIES OF RAY JUNIPER AT CRIBBAGE/DOMINOES

During a 'clear out' in readiness for a move nearer her family following the demise of her husband Ray, his wife Sylvia unearthed a cribbage pegboard. This she has kindly donated to the Cribbage/Dominoes Group. Ray was an enthusiastic raw beginners and novices with his game skills, adding good humour and a wealth of long strong and headed by Alan Brialey' and as such these donations appreciated, We are reminded of fulness of past members who have We can't forget model engineer- who 'just like that' knocked out a a piece of hardwood he happened Thanks a lot folks. Keep 'em com-



Some of the items donated to the group.  
Photo. by Pauline Brialey

The group meets throughout the Thursdays of each month 10 a.m. Aylesbury Tennis and Squash Club on Wendover Road, Aylesbury. Never played before? Now's the time! Make a start with Dominoes. Your Personal Trainer/Mentor/ Guru awaits. Don't worry. Just come along. Good fun! Good company! Lots of laughs! Join now; just turn up to a warm welcome.

*Alan Brialey*

## ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY

This is to let you know that we have finished for the Summer and will be restarting on the 18th September at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Bedgrove. We will be looking at the social implications of the Industrial Revolution, the Agrarian Revolution, the lives of the orphans and children's homes and the policy of placing the children in care in Canada and Australia.



Have a good Summer and come back full of information!!

*Geoff Young*



## CREATIVE WRITING

This new group meets fortnightly on Monday's from 11 – 12. 30 in members' homes. If you're interested we'd love you to join us. We provide plenty of encouragement and help; whatever you need to release your creativity. A little nervous? Why not just come and listen in.

*Vivienne Makin*

## CHANGES TO OUR SPEAKERS' PROGRAMME!

We have to announce two changes to our forthcoming monthly meetings.

**In June**, as Cynthia Fowler kindly stepped into the breach in March, our replacement will be James Mitchell who will give a talk entitled "Opera –Not Just Shrieking Ladies and Fat Tenors"



**In September** Anthony Jennings who was due to speak on 'The Clarinet Family' has withdrawn due to a change in personal circumstances. He has been replaced by Paul Ranford speaking on the topic "Human Origins and How Victorian England Reacted to Darwin's Unsettling News"

## OUR OWN HAPPY CAMPERS



These photos were taken by Rosemary Meadowcroft at the first 'away day' of the new Camping and Caravanning Group. Read all about it on the next page.



## MORE NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Wine Appreciation 1:

The Origins of the Clinking of Glasses.

The senses were at the table with a fine bottle of hock.  
The hand passed lovingly down the long neck to the cool body of the bottle.  
That feels well, said the hand, and drew the cork.  
Then the eye dwelt a little while on the gold of the wine in the clear glass,  
That looks well, said the eye.  
Then the nose caught the wonderful aroma, and the nostrils quivered to it.  
That smells good, said the nose.  
Ah, said the tongue as the wine touched it and passed, leaving the eternally elusive fragrance there.  
That tastes good, said the tongue.  
But the ear asked, "Have I no share in this matter?"  
So they clinked glasses.

*The above lines came from wine group member Elsebeth Kay's German Grandmother, but we don't know their origin. Anyone wanting to 'clink' with friends, and to find out more about the wine grape could join our group. We meet monthly in people's homes. Look in your pink file for more details.*

*Mike Meacham*



## CAMPING AND CARAVANNING



Our new group had its first meet at Winchcombe near Cheltenham, a beautiful and peaceful site where we were blessed with bright if cold weather. However we found a warm spirit of camaraderie quickly developing and were happy to aid each other in tent erection and general camping expertise. Each day we planned various activities from steam train worship to local walks in the blossom laden countryside to visiting nearby National Trust properties, each person deciding what they wanted and with whom they were travelling.

Sudeley Castle is renowned for being the last home and burial place of Katherine Parr, and as well as enjoying the gardens and chapel we watched a video presentation by David Starkey on her life and influence. The peacock in the pheasantry caused much camera clicking by displaying his magnificent feathers most wonderfully, and it seemed for our sole entertainment. Charles Paget developed the Snowhill Manor collection of curiosities, and spent thirty years accumulating thousands of unusual articles from armour to dolls' houses to model ships. No wonder his wife chose to live elsewhere! Hidcote Gardens were developed by an American who spent his lifetime finding new and non-British species to plant in his grounds and we ambled through the gardens and sculptured hedges in the sunshine.

Our evenings were spent either with a hearty pub meal, or in cooking up a camp supper, and finished with an uproarious game of skittles or word games. Finally it was time to pack up again and hope for as enjoyable a trip to Corfe Castle in July.

*Lynne Dawson*



## SPEAKERS CORNER

**WEDNESDAY 10TH JULY**

**COLIN OAKES – “NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD – LONDON 1957 – 1963”**



Colin Oakes is an archaeologist and a London guide. His knowledge of London's history and his superb delivery skills are both second to none. In the past he has talked about Dickens' Childhood, The London Docklands and Downing Street. This talk promises to be a trip down memory lane when he will recall London from 1957 to 1963.



**WEDNESDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER (Change of Speaker)**

**PAUL RANFORD – “HUMAN ORIGINS – AND HOW VICTORIAN ENGLAND REACTED TO DARWIN'S UNSETTLING NEWS”**

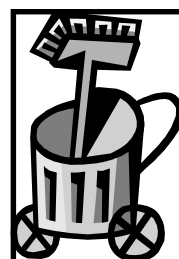
Unfortunately, Anthony Jennings can no longer give us his talk on “The Clarinet Family” on this date. However, we have been fortunate to get Paul Ranford to return to our U3A. He will discuss the evolution of humanity and how Darwin's Origin of Species and The Descent of Man were sensationally received by the intellectual world, by the church and by the British public.

*Jeni Davies*

## HOUSEKEEPING NOTICES

**DON'T FORGET THE INFORMATION TABLES!**

We hope that you remember to look at the information tables at the back of the hall at our monthly meetings. In June you can hear about the Recorder Ensemble, and one of the two Poetry Groups. July's table will demonstrate the activities of the Swimming Group and we know from past experience that they can be very imaginative in their use of props! Although it is a long way ahead, in September you can see what our Camping and Caravanning Group have planned, and find out about one of our newest groups – Creative Writing.



### **A VERY URGENT REQUEST**

Although our **Annual Meeting** is still months away, we are going to have several very important jobs to fill when the elections take place. We are asking you to consider whether you might be able to help. It doesn't matter how long you have been a member, or even if you are still an Associate, we need your help. We shall need a new vice-chairman and somebody to coordinate the outings to avoid clashes. (This person need not necessarily be arranging the days out themselves, although we look forward to some new ideas!) I am delighted to say that we have found two noble members willing to stand for election to the posts of Speakers Secretary and Groups Coordinator.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**TUESDAY 9TH JULY:** Whole day visit to Salisbury and Stonehenge

**TUESDAY 16TH JULY:** The Garden Group has an outing to Great Dixter Garden in Sussex. Colourful flamboyant gardens surround the house which was designed by Edwin Lutyens. Cost inc. entrance to House and Gardens £20. Coach departing Meadowcroft CC at 8.45 a.m.



**WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY:** Join us for our regular Coffee Morning for new, associate and long term members at the Broad Leys P.H. Wendover Road, Aylesbury at 10.30 a.m. Tea, coffee and biscuits £1.75 per head. Come along and find out more about your fellow members and the activities on offer in our U3A.

**TUESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER:** Whole day visit to Stourhead in Wiltshire (Nat. Trust). The Garden Group invites you to enjoy an Italian Experience. Cost inc. House and Gardens £24 (NT Members £12). Restaurant available. Dep. at 8.45 a.m. from Meadowcroft.

**WEDNESDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER:** Thames Valley Network Study Day at the Shillingford Bridge Hotel. Morning Talks from Dr. Simon Townley on 'People in a Chiltern Landscape' and David Hunter on the English road system from trackways to motorways. Choice of afternoon activities including a talk in Dorchester Abbey on Pilgrim Ways plus a variety of workshops and walks. Cost including coffee, lunch and parking £14. Contact Patsy Thornton patsy@thorntac.co.uk Or 01344 774812

**THURSDAY 10TH OCTOBER:** The annual Fun Quiz with Fish and Chip Supper at the Aylesbury Town Bowls Club, Wendover Road, Aylesbury.

**THURSDAY 12TH DECEMBER:** This is the date for our Christmas Lunch at Harding's Restaurant, Aylesbury College, Oxford Road. Numbers are limited to 60 so please hurry and book your place.

### **FORTHCOMING GROUP BOOKINGS FOR THEATRE PERFORMANCES:**

**Thursday 29th August:** Save The Last Dance For Me (Matinee)

**Thursday 31st October:** Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (Matinee)

**Friday 22nd November:** Priscilla – Queen of the Desert (5.00 p.m.)

**Thursday/Friday 19/20th December:** Sleeping Beauty Pantomime (Thurs. Matinee: Fri. Evening)

**Wednesday 12th February:** West Side Story.

**Further information from Pauline Colliver.**

## DOVER CASTLE—SECOND ATTEMPT!

Ever since the weather gods thwarted our visit to Dover Castle during the study trip last autumn, Margrit Kennedy has been determined that they should not get the better of us. She must have appeased them sufficiently in the intervening months, because we set out for Dover on one of the finest days of the year. Armed with her clipboard, Margrit was soon in control. We were all surprised at just how much there was to see at the castle. Some of the features are unique survivals, such as the Roman lighthouse and the mediaeval tunnels, which are a remarkable piece of military engineering.



Approaching the Great Tower

A must-see for visitors is Henry II's Great Tower. English Heritage has masterfully recreated the interior to look just as it would have done when the king and his court were in residence. Most surprising are perhaps the startlingly bright colours of both fabric and furniture. Paint colours in those days were made by crushing semi-precious stones, and possessing furniture



Some Members needed a rest after climbing the tower! All photos by Robert Burr

Painted in bright greens, reds and blues was a sign of extreme wealth, even more so than gold. Apart from the elaborate rooms such as the King's Hall and the King's Chamber, there are many other smaller rooms contained within the thickness of the walls, such as a scriptorium, the beautiful chapel of Thomas Becket and the well chamber. The latter gives access to the tower's remarkable well, sunk over 122 metres down into the chalk by the 12th century builders. It is as deep as Salisbury Cathedral's spire is high. Looking down on it, this is not difficult to imagine! Over the centuries this tower has had many uses. During the early 18th century, for example, it housed prisoners of war taken during the War of the Spanish Succession. Prisoners' signatures are etched into the stones.

A more modern attraction at Dover is the vast complex of tunnels cut out of the chalk about 20 metres below cliff-top level and capable of housing 2000 men. These were created during the Napoleonic wars and found a vital role as a secure naval headquarters for the command of the channel coast during the Second World War. It was from here that Operation Dynamo, the rescue of Allied troops from Dunkirk, was run. The atmosphere of those days is admirably evoked by an excellent audio-visual presentation. It is possible to visit two further levels dug in 1941-42 housing a hospital and dormitories accurately recreated from wartime photos. Even as late as 1984 the tunnels had a new lease of life as an emergency Regional Seat of Government in the event of nuclear war.



St. Mary in Castro Church from the Great Tower

It is impossible to see everything at Dover in a day. Will Margrit be organising a return visit? Not in the foreseeable future – she is too relieved that this one is over! Our grateful thanks go to her for all her hard work in making this thoroughly enjoyable trip possible.

*Jan and Gay Hancock*


**THE LITTLE BOOK OF BIG SCAMS:**

We would remind our members of the value of reading our U3A website regularly ([www.avu3a.org.uk](http://www.avu3a.org.uk)). There is usually some interesting information – and not just about our own activities – thanks to Mike Bean and Ron Meadowcroft who keep it up to date. (We recently had a phone call from an officer of Cardigan U3A saying what a good website it is, and asking if we could advise them on constructing their own!) As we recently heard of one of our members who fell prey to an expensive on-line scam, we thought that this item which they placed on the website might provide a timely reminder! A summary of the full article is given below:

Fraud costs the British economy £73 billion a year and criminals use a number of sophisticated scams to try and snare us. To ensure we are informed about these scams and to allow us to spot them, Thames Valley Police has produced a booklet which aims to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of fraud. The Little Book of Big Scams, which includes a foreword from Esther Rantzen, includes sections on identity fraud, scam mail, door to door scams, health and medical scams, bank and payment scams, internet scams’ and others too numerous to list.

As well as details on different types of frauds, there are a number of helpful hints, ten golden rules to avoid becoming a victim, and case studies. The booklet also gives details on where to go to get help and how to report fraud if you do become a victim. Heavy? It’s not!

You can read the whole ‘book’ on-line – Little Book of Big Scams or its individual sections.



Last date for copy for the Autumn Newsletter will be August 1st 2013 so please send any items you may like to share with us to Shirley Stokes on [treveris9@btinternet.com](mailto:treveris9@btinternet.com) or by post to 9 Windsor Road, Aylesbury HP21 7JG. Telephone 01296 392726. As we don’t meet in August, please don’t forget to send any news and information about your Autumn programmes to me in good time.

Thanks are due to our Secretary Peter Gasson for help with the ordering and printing and for ensuring that your telephone numbers and email addresses are deleted before we send the copy to our website, in order to protect your privacy; and to Alan Robinson for proof reading; and of course to all of you who send in articles and photographs.