

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 90

March 2019

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Well here we are into another New Year, and wondering what it will bring. One thing we know about, but I won't mention that dreaded word! I am sure that we are all tired of hearing it. At least we left last year with a wonderful musical Rock and Roll Party which my husband and I missed because of other commitments. But I was here for the wonderful show put on by The Strummers and lots of other members. At our first meeting of 2019 we celebrated our 30th Anniversary with anecdotes from past Chairpersons, (I hate that word) - a few funnies and a cake. There were photographs of past activities and other memorabilia.

I am glad to say that we have found two volunteers who have come forward to help with the running of our organisation. Ken Roberson is going to take over from Derek Ayshford looking after our membership records and Sheila Page is going to take over the job of Speakers Secretary, I thank them both for coming forward, I do appreciate it. We still need a Secretary to take over from Moira Bishop before the Annual General Meeting. I know that it seems a long way off but it is much easier to learn about the job beforehand and not like me jump in at the deep end with no experience. But I do need to bring to your attention, especially those who do not attend the monthly meeting, the problem we are having with the Group Leaders List. Jane Trow, who is the Group Co-ordinator, set this up with the information she was given at the time but since then she has had umpteen phone calls, some very abusive and this has got to stop. It is very difficult to get people to volunteer and at one stage I thought we would lose Jane. In future Jane will only accept written changes which will be recorded every six months. If you have any complaints about any of the Committee please contact me and I will deal with it. Despite all that we are a happy Committee so please come and join us.

I have recently had an e-mail from a Nursing Home offering a training room free of charge, if you are interested please speak to Jane although it may have already gone. I have no idea how large it is.

Can I ask that when you have got your coffee/tea and biscuit that you move away quickly down to the wall behind me thereby giving more room for people to queue. Also please remember there are other people who want to look at the notice board so please chat with your friends elsewhere. I must admit I never got to look at it. I wish we could have another notice board but there is nowhere to store it.

On a happier note I may or may not have told you (memory problems) that Ken and I recently became Great Grandparents, and we now have a delightful great grandson.

That's all folks.

Sheila Satterthwaite

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

URGENT !



We are in urgent need of volunteers to come forward to serve on the committee.

Secretary - Moira Bishop has completed her basic 3 years in post.

Hall Manager - Roland Scroggs is retiring through ill health.

If you are interested please contact a member of the committee. Our organisation cannot survive without people coming forward to fill the posts. (chairman@avu3a.org.uk)

Group Updates:

Jane Trow is trying to keep the information on all groups up to date so it vital that you keep her informed of any changes in personnel, time, meeting place etc. (groups@avu3a.org.uk)

At each meeting there will be an up to date list of groups, contact details etc. on the notice-board.

New Groups.

There is now a Creative Writing group 2 meeting on the first Monday of the month - details on the Website - Study Groups or contact Bobby at writing2@avu3a.org.uk

Basic Computing - not for the experts. The new 'Beginners Basic Computing' group started this month with a full house. It is very much aimed at the basic tasks in using a computer successfully and safely. We would like to keep it in the true traditions of U3A with sessions led largely by members willing to share their knowledge. A few areas already identified are ; Managing Files & Folders; finding files that have been downloaded or attached to emails; knowing which files and folders should be left alone; managing multiple programs open in different sessions; scanning and downloading pictures from a camera. etc etc. This is not an exhaustive list and new topics will come to light as the course progresses. If you feel that you have knowledge of any of these topics and are prepared to share it for all or part of a session please talk to Margaret Crafts at the meeting or get in touch with her via computers@avu3a.org.uk.

Painting Group: Sue Goodband (01296 487285) is now the leader - all other details are the same.

Swimming for Pleasure on Mondays has had to change its starting time to 13. 15. details from Pat Tompkins swimming@avu3a.org.uk

Having read the request for items relating to World War Two, I wonder if readers might be interested in this note about an earlier occasion?



My aunt who died some years ago aged 93 worked as a counter clerk in Blackburn Post Office . She was on leave on the day that W.W.1 broke out and received a telegram written in pencil from the Post Master saying "Return to work immediately".

Parcels for the troops had to be encased in cotton material with the contents listed on the outside. My aunt took in one without the required information. "You have to put a description on the parcel" she told the customer. "He's six foot two with a ginger moustache" came the reply.

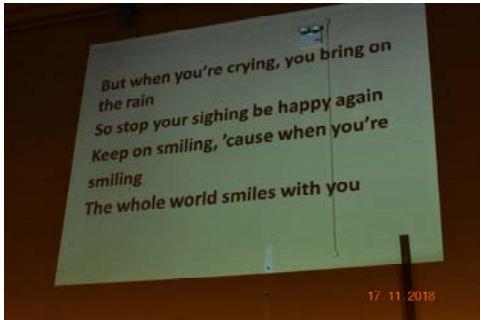
Barbara Whitaker

PLEASE NOTE AN IMPORTANT CHANGE OF DATE:

The visit to Jordan Mill and the Wimpole Estate will now take place on **Friday 10th May**, as they were fully booked on the original date planned.



ALTHOUGH THIS SEEMS TO HAVE HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO YOU MIGHT STILL LIKE TO SEE SOME OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CHRISTMAS SHOW TAKEN BY DAN MCGREGOR AND RICHARD CLARK





YOUR SPEAKERS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

WEDNESDAY 10th APRIL: SAFFRON SUMMERFIELD— ‘FROM MILTON KEYNES TO MISSISSIPPI’

A lively and entertaining show featuring a brief history of the guitar, in which Saffron plays classical, Spanish and Mississippi Blues music along with her own songs and tunes on woGuitars and Cuatro. There will be anecdotes and stories from a career in music which started in a North Bucks village and developed to performing live on John Peel's BBC Radio shows, writing songs for BBC R4's Start the Week, 2 - Channel 4 films and playing guitar with Blues musicians in Mississippi cotton fields.

(n.b. You may remember that this is a change of date from the original booking)

WEDNESDAY 8TH MAY: GORDON ROGERS - ‘THE SKY AT NIGHT’

As a keen amateur astronomer this talk covers astronomical topics of contemporary interest both amateur and professional. Gordon has a passion for Deep Space imaging and has built a state of the art observatory adjoining his house: He explains how this operates. Sir Patrick Moore filmed a whole “Sky at Night” programme at the Crendon Observatory and asked him to write a book about it in his astronomy series. Gordon is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. It is a staggering topic but with plenty of room for humour!

WEDNESDAY 12TH JUNE: IAN JONES—’40 YEARS BOMB DISPOSAL - STILL 10 FINGERS!’

Ian Jones has spent 40 years involved with bomb disposal operations. His first Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) tour of duty was as a corporal in Northern Ireland in 1974. He then gained a commission, returned to the Province in 1982 and, as a captain, was responsible for all bomb disposal operations in Belfast. In 1992, as a major, he was Officer Commanding 321 Company RAOC, responsible for all bomb disposal operations in the whole Province. This was followed by a year in an intelligence post gathering information on Improvised Explosive Devices worldwide. He left the Army in 1994 and joined the Counter Terrorist Command of the Metropolitan Police where he served as an Explosives Officer dealing with all incidents involving explosives in London. He answered over 2000 calls for assistance in the following 18 years before retiring after the Olympics.

He has written two books, ‘Malice Aforethought - The History of the Booby Trap’ and ‘London - Bombed Blitzed and Blown Up’ a history of the bombing of the Capital from 1867 to 2007. He is a member of the Durand Group which opens and explores WW1 tunnels and is a keen Cartridge collector.

OUR WEBSITE:

We are trying to keep the website relevant and up to date but we need your help. If you are running a group or organising a one-off event please let us know well in advance so that we can add it to the diary. If your group has a programme mapped out for the future however far ahead please let us have a copy so it gets the widest possible circulation. If you have photographs of your activities please let Shirley have copies in the first place so she can have the option of publishing them in the Newsletter, the website has more space so we can add any others to our gallery.



If you have any suggestions about how we might improve the site, or other information you would like us to include, please let us know (webmaster@avu3a.org.uk)

HAVING YOUR CAKE AND EATING IT!

As Easter is rapidly approaching, Mary Singleton thought that you might like to be reminded of the traditional 'Simnel Cake'.

The word 'Simnel' probably derived from the Latin word 'simila', meaning fine, wheaten flour. A popular legend attributes the invention of the Simnel cake to Lambert Simnel, however, references to the cake were recorded some 200 years before his birth. It is a light fruit cake eaten during the Easter period in the United Kingdom, Ireland and some other countries, originally made for the middle Sunday of Lent (when the forty-day fast would be relaxed). It is distinguished by two layers of almond paste or marzipan, one in the middle and one on top. The top layer is capped by a circle of "eggs" made of the same paste.

Conventionally eleven marzipan balls are used to decorate the cake, with a story that the balls represent the twelve apostles, minus Judas or Jesus. Simnel cakes have been known since at least medieval times. Bread regulations of the time suggest they were boiled and then baked, a technique which led to a myth, in circulation from at least 1745 until the 1930s, whereby a mythical couple, Simon and Nelly, fall out over making their cake. One wishes to boil it, one to bake it and, after beating each other with various household implements, they compromise on one which uses both cooking techniques. It is not the only myth which has become attached to the Simnel cake. They are often associated with Mothering Sunday, and in the twentieth century it was frequently said that young girls in service would make one to be taken home to their mothers on their day off.



Different towns had their own recipes and shapes of the Simnel cake. Bury, Devizes and Shrewsbury produced large numbers to their own recipes, but it is the Shrewsbury version that became most popular and well known.

Mary Singleton.

As a schoolgirl your Editor remembers cycling some 8 miles out to a country church to pick wild daffodils which grew in the Rectory grounds. The Rectors wife always made the weary cyclists a simnel cake to eat with their refreshing cold drink. We then cycled the 8 miles home where the daffodils were made into posies for Mothering Sunday . There are lots of recipes on your computer, so I hope that some of you may be tempted to start baking! I would volunteer to be a 'taster'.

SOME ADVICE FOR HIS GRANDCHILDREN - FROM CYRIL REED

Fantasy dreams of a tropical beach,
Fame and fortune immediately in reach
Celebrity status with riches galore,
Easy come, easy go as never before.

Reality sets in with the awakening dawn,
Blinking eyes change nothing, nor a stretch or a yawn.
The world is as it is, we have to be real,
The hand we are blessed with is that of the deal.

Diligently apply and life chances emerge
Engage each challenge with vigour and verve
Excitement, satisfaction, fulfilment the goal
It's there for the taking; now go, be bold

AVU3A Rock'n'Roll Christmas Party.

I would like to say a big thank you to all those who attended the 2nd AVU3A Rock'n'Roll Christmas Party. It appears everyone had a great rockin' time.

Monies raised for the Friends of OSCAR charity as a result of ticket sales and the raffle amounted to £150 (it was actually just under but we topped it up).

Two dates for you to put in your 2019 calendar are:-

Thursday 20th June for our Mid-Summer Rock'n'Roll Party and

Thursday 12th December for our 3rd Rock'n'Roll Christmas Party.

Entry is by ticket only and they will be on sale at the three preceding monthly meetings.

Any enquiries about these events please contact John Wilford.

Email: sound@avu3a.org.uk



READERS' CIRCLE 2

We had a very enjoyable December meeting which lasted longer than usual as we treat ourselves to a Christmas Buffet in one of our Member's homes. After the meeting, before we indulge in eating and drinking, we discuss books that we have read by ourselves and recommend them to each other. Readers' own choices are so different from each others and this is why Readers' Circle Members find themselves reading books they would normally never have given a second glance to.

Readers' Circle 2 will also be having a book stall at the May meeting of AVU3A when we will be selling our surplus stock of books, (many of which we have read) in support of a Prostate Cancer Charity and all monies we collect from this event will be forwarded to PCC direct. Hopefully, people who bought books in February will have read them and be looking for further reading material! We are very grateful to everyone supporting us.

Brenda Daniel





TUESDAY 19TH MARCH: U3A Coffee Mornings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every other month at 11 am at The Watermead Inn. It's an opportunity for new members to meet longer serving members in order to get to know people and hear about the groups that are available. A coffee and biscuit only costs £2 and we would be very pleased to see you. Contact me if you would like any more details: Mary Singleton at social@avu3a.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH: You may be too late but the ever popular Chinese Lunch will be held at 12 noon at the China Brasserie in Fairford Leys. It may be worth your while to contact Mary Singleton (as above) to see if she has any seats left. Cost £20 for the fixed menu.

THURSDAY 4TH APRIL: Thames Valley Regional Day at Benson – Polar Exploration. This is a continuation of our enquiry into the political and climate change effects within the Arctic. This next study day will focus on sovereignty and how it affects all aspects of exploration.

FRIDAY 10TH MAY: Coach outing to Jordan Mill and the Wimpole Estate (changed from 9th May).

In the morning we visit Jordans' lovingly restored watermill and have a guided tour to gain a fascinating insight into the heritage of flour milling in Britain. We see the mill in action and have time to explore the gardens with cereals and crops grown alongside fruit and vegetables. The Riverside Café is in a lovely setting and provides locally sourced food, while the Mill store supplies the full selection of Jordans' products as well as gifts and local produce.

In the afternoon we go on to Wimpole Hall (NT). The impressive mansion sits at the heart of a unique working estate, which contains a rare breeds farm, a working walled kitchen garden, a woodland garden, lakes and the national collection of walnut trees. Parts of the house are open including the grand hall dating from 1640. The interiors are well worth seeing. There is a restaurant and a shop.

Cost £22 pp (includes guided mill tour). Wimpole Hall £16.25 extra for non-NT members. To be collected in March . Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.30. return 6.00 approx.

TUESDAY 21ST MAY: Another of our very sociable Coffee Mornings– details as above.

TUESDAY 4TH JUNE: Join us for visit to beautiful Leeds Castle and the famous Sissinghurst Castle and Gardens.

Leeds Castle was a Norman stronghold, the private property of six of England's medieval queens, a palace used by Henry VIII, a Jacobean country house, a Georgian mansion and now one of the most visited historic buildings in Britain. Its extraordinary story is recreated in the Gatehouse Exhibition.

Sissinghurst Castle Garden has been described as a 'refuge dedicated to beauty'. Come and admire the colourful abundant planting in the 'rooms' of this world renowned garden.

Cost £35 p.p. Sissinghurst an additional £11. 85 for non N.T. members. Money to be collected in April. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.00. return 6.00 p.m. approx.

THURSDAY 20TH JUNE: The Mid-Summer Rock'n'Roll Party

THURSDAY 11TH JULY: To Longstock Park Water Gardens and Basildon Park.

Owned by Waitrose, the Water Gardens cover seven acres and are considered by some as the finest in the world. The water is always crystal clear and connects two islands and woodland valleys. The gardens host an array of plants from around the world and attract a variety of wildlife. The farm shop and café are in a quiet and secluded rural location where you can relax and enjoy the view over the plant nursery.

In the afternoon we visit Basildon Park. Sitting elegantly in 400 acres of historic parkland and gardens, this 18th century Georgian mansion contains a collection of fine furnishings and Old Masters. 'Below stairs' you can visit the 1950s kitchen and laundry, which provide nostalgic 'hands-on' fun for the visitors! There is a tea room and a shop for gifts and plant sales.

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Cost £28 pp. Basildon Park £12.70 extra for non-NT members to be collected in May. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.00. return 5.30 approx.

TUESDAY 16TH JULY: 11 a.m. Another lively Coffee Morning at the Watermead Inn. £2 for coffee and biscuits.

TUESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER: Ham House (N.T.) and Strawberry Hill House (N.T.)

Ham House is a rare and atmospheric Stuart house sitting on the banks of the Thames in Richmond. Internationally recognised for its superb collection of paintings, furniture and textiles-largely acquired 400 years ago - the house is reputed to be one of the most haunted in Britain. The restored 17th-century garden includes a productive kitchen garden with many heritage crops. There is a café, gift shop (with plant sales) and a second-hand bookshop.

Strawberry Hill House is internationally famous as Britain's finest example of Georgian Gothic Revival architecture. Built by Horace Walpole from 1749 onwards, he set about transforming a couple of cottages into his vision of a 'little Gothic castle' with pinnacles, battlements and a little round tower. There is a gift shop and a café with glorious views over the garden.

Cost £24 (collection in July) plus Ham House £11.05 and Strawberry Hill £16 additional charge for non N.T. members.

MONDAY 7TH OCTOBER: To Bourton-on-the-Water and on to Snowhill Manor (N.T.) and Gardens.

Bourton is a lovely place to visit however many times you have been before! Enjoy the morning at leisure and explore as you wish Birdland, the motor museum, the award-winning model village and the pretty centre with its shops and many eating places. Time here for lunch. Snowhill is a Cotswold manor house full of extraordinary treasures collected over a lifetime by Charles Wade. The manor is packed with 22,000 unusual objects – always changing - from tiny toys to samurai armour, musical instruments to fine clocks. The manor is set in a beautiful terraced garden with fine views of the Cotswolds. Time here for a cuppa before we go home.



The model Village at Bourton -on-the- Water

Cost £17 (collection in July) Snowhill an additional £12 for non NT members. Departing Jansel Square . At 8.00a.m. returning approx. 6.30 p.m.

THURSDAY 7TH NOVEMBER RAINHAM HALL (NT) & EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE:

These are two very different houses to the east of London. Rainham Hall has recently undergone a £2.5 million conservation project. It is one of the country's finest examples of an early 18th century merchant's home. Built by John Harle in 1729, it was to be partly a show home for the building supplies he imported. There is a new café in the old stables and a NT shop.



RAINHAM HALL-

Cost £17(Rainham Hall £6 extra, Eastbury £5 extra for non-NT members) . To be collected in September. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.30. return 5.30 approx.

Eastbury Manor House is a brick-built Tudor gentry house set in tranquil gardens dating from 1573, with little altered since. Early 17th century wall paintings show fishing scenes and a cityscape and there is a fine original spiral oak staircase. NT shop and a café for light refreshments.



THE ATTIC AT EASTBURY MANOR

A Right Royal Knees Up

Earlier this year, 2018, we were asked if we would like to attend the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in aid of the 'The Not Forgotten Association', our names were put forward and much to our delight some weeks later I received a form to complete about myself with a brief resume of my naval career. I later received the official invite with an accompanying letter to say that I had been selected to be presented to Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, so on the due day in my No 1's (Blazer for us retired oldies) and with a few medals and caught the train to London. We duly arrived at the gates to the Palace where we had to queue for about forty minutes along with all the other invited serving and ex-serving guests. At this point I would like to turn the clock back to the previous weekend where I had attended a Royal Navy Association's annual reunion dinner. This year it was held in the Wardroom of HMS Excellent a, naval establishment, and the guest of honour was Commodore Peter Tribe RN (Rtd) who coincidentally is a director of 'The Not Forgotten Association'. I was able to speak to him and he said I should make myself known to him at the Garden Party. This turned out not to be too difficult because as we entered the Palace grounds he was there to greet us. We were directed to the back of the Palace where there was a large marquee with tables and chairs inside and out on the lawns.

After settling down at a table I had to seek out a Lt Cdr Mike Bray RN who was responsible for the group I would be joining to be presented. It then all became clear why I had been selected as he said you are one of those who were on Christmas Island. After being briefed about times and protocol I returned to my friends where we lined up in the marquee for our lovely tea. I think there were about 2000 people at the party with a mixture of young and old, members of all three services, ex-service and of course those who had been wounded in action. At three o'clock, as ordered I went to my seat in the group being presented.. My wife Sheila had to stand behind as only the ex-service personnel were to be presented. There must have been about 300 and Princess Anne shook hands and chatted with each one as well. When it was my turn the Lt Cdr introduced me saying I had been at Christmas Island for the nuclear tests. The Princess then asked me about it and I said any fish we caught had to have a Geiger counter mike over it which in most cases registered. She then went onto ask me what I did when I left the services and I informed her I had become Safety Adviser to British Waterways to which she replied "Now the Canal and River Trust" as she has a canal at the bottom of her garden in Stroud. She seemed well informed and was interested in what I had done.

After this we returned to our friends and had a walk around the grounds to see the rose garden whilst the RM band marched up and down giving us a fine rendition of music. One unfortunate thing happened. Whilst we were waiting for the Princess they served strawberries and cream which we missed, my wife Sheila was miffed to say the least when we got back to the marquee after walking around the grounds so I was not popular with the 'one who must be obeyed'. A long and lovely day was had by all and my wife and I felt privileged to have been invited.



I am presented to H.R.H. The Princess Royal



Tea but no strawberries !

Ken Satterthwaite

KEN SATTERTHWAITE AND THE NUCLEAR TESTS.

On the previous page where he related his Royal Garden Party experience, Ken mentioned that he had not realised in advance why he had been one of the few to be presented to HRH Princess Anne. We felt that readers would be interested in the story that he had to tell the Princess, and that it was worth a page on its own.

At three o'clock, as ordered I went to my seat in the group being presented. I was in Group 'G' and it was a long wait, but well worth it. There must have been about 300 and Princess Anne shook hands and chatted with each one as well. When it was my turn the Lt. Cdr. introduced me saying I had been at Christmas Island for the nuclear tests. She seemed well informed and was interested in what I had done

Earlier I mentioned my little trip to Christmas Island (now Kiritimati), which is part of the 'Line Islands' in the Pacific Ocean. I was a young able seaman serving in HMS Cossack and we were assigned to be guard ship for six weeks in November 1957 for one of the nuclear test which Britain was undertaking named 'Operation Grapple'.

It was a bit of a boring routine patrolling looking for unwanted ships around this atoll and when not patrolling we were anchored off the Island which only sported a tented NAFFI canteen, so swimming or fishing was the only other sport. On the due day we steamed off on patrol a number of foreign flagged ships appeared (not Green Peace), but after trying to chase them out of the exclusion zone we took up our allotted position to watch the explosion. It was an air burst equivalent to 1.8 megatons of TNT (Hydrogen Bomb). What a sight that was. I was sitting on the upper deck along with most of the ships company on a clear sunny day we were ordered to sit down and place our hands over our faces. After the explosion we stood up and saw the mushroom rising to the sky it was not only something to behold, but also frightening to think of its destructive power. After this we closed down, rigged pre-wetting, this was just hoses, as we were a WW2 type destroyer with an open bridge, so as there was nothing built in like air conditioning in the

ship, it was stifling. Anyway off we sailed to a nearby island, which was in the drop zone, called Fanning (now Tabuaerun) to pick up samples for tests etc. and return them to Christmas Island. After a few more days we set sail for safer climes and a Christmas in Hong Kong. As you can see from my pictures I did not suffer any after effects as some who were based there were reported to have.



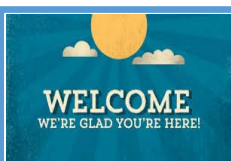
Waiting in the Royal Garden



HMS Cossack



Ken Satterthwaite



AS ALWAYS WE ARE PLEASED TO WELCOME SOME NEW MEMBERS. DON'T FORGET TO TALK TO THEM IF YOU SEE THEM (THEY SHOULD BE WEARING THEIR NAME BADGES!)

David Batty; Patricia Bell; Christine Campbell; Jean Carter; Jean Chappel; Frances Davies; Tony Eliman; Nel Guneratne; Sue Moynehan; Jean Thompson and Paul Trayling

THE HISTORY GROUP:

The History Group, as always, has been looking at a wide range of topics since last September; indeed, everything from major rulers in Britain to European and world events, social history, a touch of military history, the rise of religions and so on. We are fortunate in having at least 3 members (Richard Watson, Steve Thomas and myself) who studied history at graduate/post-graduate level and who are willing to lead sessions that seek not only to inform but also to discuss topics of interest to members and/or to the leader. Since last September, we have led sessions on the Agricultural Revolutions; The Making of Germany; Henry V – the man who almost reversed the Norman Conquest; the History of Flight; and the History of China – a very diverse selection, as I'm sure you'll agree.

We are also blessed with having a great deal of talent and knowledge among our members on various periods of history. Several of them have been willing to research and then speak for 20-30 minutes on a sub-set of a chosen theme. Just recently, we had an Elizabethan session, when Ann Dwyer told us all about an amazing lady called Bess of Hardwick, the richest woman in England in her time and certainly a role model for many women. Chris Sugg



examined the subject of Spies and Spymasters in that period, Norman McRae looked at the threat posed by Mary Queen of Scots to Elizabeth's throne and Gay Hancock told us about the Rise of Theatre during Elizabethan times. This was a brilliant session that we all enjoyed enormously. Other members have also contributed to other sessions and have gained more confidence in their ability to research a subject and talk in front of a group as a result.



This term we have already had the History of Islam, and Richard the Lionheart, the man and the king; and we are to be treated on 19th February to a session on 'The Pleasure Gardens of London' by Brian Robson,

who gave us a riveting presentation on 'The Ground Nut Scheme in the late 1940s' last year. Steve Thomas will cover 'The Rise and Fall of Persia, over 2 sessions, and between the two, I will lead on 'Edward VI (the boy king) and his Reign'.

Everyone is encouraged to ask questions during the sessions and lively debate often ensues, with dissention at times! The group fluctuates but now has about 16 signed-up members, almost half male and half female, though normal attendance is around 10-12 for each session. Noticeably, the main thing is the enthusiasm everyone in the group has for things historical, and we are willing to tackle any subject and hope that everyone expresses opinions on them.

We all feel that history is not a dead subject. It happens all around us every day

The room we use in the Church of the Holy Spirit in Bedgrove has plenty of space and we can take several new members without any problem. Come along to a session and see what we are about without any commitment. You'll find us a friendly bunch and hopefully you will enjoy it!



Paul Rosentall

HAVE YOU TRIED YOGA ?

You may have seen the notice on the board at a previous monthly meeting about this new group . It takes place at the Meadowcroft Community Centre so we know that you can find your way there, and will be held every Wednesday from 11—12 noon except for the second Wednesday when our main U3A meeting is scheduled. The class lasts for 1 hour at a cost of £5 payable on the day.



It has only been running for a few weeks but our members are enthusiastic and tell us that the leader Jan Baker makes each session great fun. It is very flexible and you do not have to attend every session. People with all levels of fitness and/or disability attend and Jan is an expert of finding exercises to suit each individual whatever their capability., All you need is an exercise mat, and Jan has a few to lend temporarily. and a small blanket or car rug. Wear loose clothing and if you don't fancy bare feet bring some non slip socks. At the moment there is plenty of room for new members—but hurry. There have to be sufficient members fees each week to cover the hall hire and other expenses.

THERE'S A LOT TO TALK ABOUT !

Our national press is full of world shattering headlines at present. But they are not the only ones turning their thoughts to how to solve some of the world's problems. Our own Current Affairs group had been discussing weighty issues over the last year. Here is just a small sample of some of the issues they chose to talk about:



National Electricity Supply – a major problem for the future ; Knife Crime – why and how to fix it; Why the major increase in homeless ? Facebook – Profit before Privacy; Have the PR gurus taken over politics in the UK? HS2 – British White Elephant? Should we worry about the rise of Populist leaders in the World and the UK ? Should we be thinking again about Foreign Aid? Poverty in the UK in 2019; The Windrush scandal and the Hostile Environment; Local Government struggling for even essential funding.

Knowing our members we are sure that some of you will also have been thinking about the same issues. So why not start another Discussion or Current Affairs group ? It only needs a comfortable room and somebody willing to host. The existing group would be willing to assist with setting up and could offer guidance if requested.

Alan Robinson

Last date for copy for the June Summer Newsletter will be 8th May so please send any items you may like to share with us to Shirley Stokes at newsletter@avu3a.org.uk . Thanks as always to all of you who contribute to the finished product, and who forgive me for my errors! Please continue to send in news of your activities within the U3A and for any other items which you feel might interest our readers. This issue demonstrates that there are many of our members getting out and about and doing interesting and exciting things outside U3A and it is good to share in them.

Our very productive photographers are reminded that under the new Privacy Laws, members featuring in the very welcome photographs submitted for publication should have given permission for their image to be so used. If you do not want your photo reproduced please make that plain! My thanks as always to Alan Robinson for proof reading, Richard Clark for photographic editing and particularly to Derek Ayshford who, when my computer says 'No' manages to make it behave properly. He is frequently called upon !

Don't forget to look at our website avu3a.org.uk where you will find up to date news and details of all our events and activities .