

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No 81

December 2016

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMEN



Welcome to the Christmas edition of your U3A newsletter. At this time of year we find that a number of groups arrange their own celebrations with a meal as well as all their continuing interesting learning experiences.

As always after the Annual Meeting some of our hardworking committee members are retiring. We give particular thanks to Alan Robinson, who as Speakers Secretary has chosen speakers to both entertain and educate us; Hazel Burgess who did sterling work in encouraging and supporting groups; Peter Gasson our efficient and indefatigable secretary and Dan McGregor who kept a record of our ever growing membership. We thank them all. The new committee is settling in well and continuing to develop their predecessors good work.

On a recent cruise down the Rhine we found that a number of our fellow passengers were U3A members from other areas. We would often swap ideas and anecdotes and this has encouraged us to forge links with other groups. Lynne and Pam Stocks attended a study day on Participative Learning which focused on teaching and learning methods within groups. They will be presenting the learning outcomes to the group leaders in due course.

We are excited to present our own Christmas show this year and we hope that you will enjoy the sketches and jokes and hope you find your singing voices in order to join in. The words will be on the large screen...so no excuses !

We look forward to 2017 and hope you enjoy the various activities being planned on your behalf. So we thank you for your support and may we wish you happy times with friends and family over Christmas and New Year.

Lynne Dawson and Greig Sneddon

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

THEATRE GROUP:

In early Autumn, the Theatre Group enjoyed a very different experience. By coach to a hotel in St. Albans and then on a lovely sunny evening with drinks on the terrace. Our ultimate activity was to enjoy an Old Time Music Hall evening (with supper of course) in a large marquee in the hotel grounds. The programme was designed around a celebration of H.M. The Queen's 90th Birthday, and there was a plentiful supply of Union Jacks to be waved enthusiastically. Although the Company only consisted of 2 performers, one magician and the Chairman they entertained us royally. The U3A chorus didn't disgrace itself, knowing all the words of the traditional songs.



Congratulations to Pattie Smith for noting the advertisement in the Third Age News, and providing us with another excellent evening. What a pity that she retired from her organiser's post this year but what an excellent event to go out on! Many thanks Pattie. Let us hope that we find a replacement soon.

OUTDOOR BOWLS:

Our outdoor bowls season has ended without a single morning being cancelled because of rain. We regularly have more than thirty enthusiastic players with shouts of 'a yard short', 'wrong bias' and 'bend, bend' filling the air. Any impression that bowls is a quiet gentle game is quickly dispelled although courtesy is always the order of the day. We do have competitions to keep us on our toes. This year the Dorrance Trophy (named in honour of Eric Dorrance, the first Chairman of our U3A) was won by Ron Lloyd and Billy McCunn who had to battle in the final against Beth McCunn and Michael Friend. Despite one side having to lose, marital harmony prevailed.



The competition for the Scutt Trophy involved points being given for each of the three bowls which finished nearest to the jack, and involved much discussion and measuring. This year's winner was Dan McGregor with Eddie Clifford as a close second. Our last competition this year was a match between the players of our U3A and the players of Aylesbury Town. We came so close this year, losing by only 2 shots, 79 – 81. It was played in good weather and in a great sporting atmosphere and was followed by an excellent meal provided by the club.

This year we had a new trophy, the Mary Rogers Cup, to be given to the best triple of the U3A team in the match against Aylesbury town; this year's worthy winners were Rita Cromar, Colin Spencer and Roger Fox. This cup is in recognition of the commitment that Mary has made to our bowls Group. She started the group at the request of Eric Dorrance just after our U3A was founded and stayed as leader until earlier this year when she finally retired from the fray. WELL DONE MARY.

Elinor Paterson



OUR U3A WEBSITE

Two years ago, Marilyn and I took over looking after the website, from the capable hands of Ron Meadowcroft days before he and Rosemary moved up North. This was a daunting time especially for me. I was used to using computers but I had never looked after a website. Fortunately Marilyn had some experience so plus help and support from Mike Bean, we got started! From the outset Marilyn and I were committed to keeping the website up to date to make it a useful source of information for members in a visually pleasing and lighted hearted way. We were helped in this when a member, Ron Adams, generously gave us access to his huge archive of beautiful photographs of the Aylesbury area, which meant we didn't risk infringing copyright!

If you have never visited the website all you need to do is key into your computer www.avu3a.org.uk and press enter. This will take you to the **Home page** of our website. If you look along the top of your screen you will see the titles of eight other pages that you can access by double clicking on the name. On the Home page are the 'Posts'. These are messages that alert you to changes, developments or requests. For example last December a local newspaper wrongly reported that our U3A Christmas meeting had been cancelled! Greig asked us to put an urgent post on the website reassuring members that our meeting was going ahead as planned.



Also on this page in the top right side is a list of **links to other websites** that may be of interest to you. To access them double click on the site you want to visit.

If you select the **About Us** page you will find the information on your Committee Members. Against each name is an e-mail address. If you double click on an address it will bring up an e-mail screen where you can write and send a message to the person you wish to contact. At the bottom of the list are Marilyn and my names with our e-mail address. This enables members to contact us if they want, for example, a post put on the website. Also on this page is a short history of the U3A, the Aylesbury Vale U3A Constitution and the Objectives and Principles of the U3A movement. Click on the **Diary** page and you have access to the current year's monthly Main Meeting speakers and Coach Outings at a glance. The **Membership** page provides information to people visiting the site who may wish to join our U3A.

Perhaps this is a good time to point out that our website is part of the World Wide Web and anyone anywhere with internet access can visit our website. Hence we never put personal e-mail addresses or telephone numbers on it. We have an e-mail forwarding system in place that keeps personal e-mail addresses private for Committee members and Group Leaders but enables us to still communicate with them on line.

The next page on our website is the **Newsletter** page. This is where you can access all the Newsletters that have been produced from the Winter 2009 Issue onwards. The big benefit of this facility is that you can view the newsletters in colour. Currently the paper copy is produced in black and white which does diminish p.t.o.

Cont. From previous page



the impact of members photographs somewhat. The **Social** page gives a flavour of the type of activities that foster friendship among members; especially important for new members to help them integrate and feel welcome. This page has a link to the **Theatre Group** page which is currently inactive due to the present leader leaving shortly and no replacement as yet identified.

If you click on the **Study Groups** page you will find a synopsis on each of the 40 plus study groups that are on offer to members along with the name of the Group Leader and Deputy and an e-mail address to make contact with them. They are presented on a scrolling page that can be moved using arrow keys on your keyboard or moving your mouse up and down the inner scroll bar / slider on the page. For example the **2016 Coach Outings** page provides important general information about coach trips. This is followed by specific information for each of the Coach Trips planned for the year. This enables members to select which trips they would like to go on and be ready to add their names when the lists go up at the monthly meeting. Finally the **Gallery** page was set up to enable members to display their photographs of, for example, a study group activity.

I hope this information on our U3A website has been useful to you. Marilyn and I would welcome any suggestions on how the website can be developed further, to make it more useful to members. We look forward to your e-mails!

Maira Bishop



Amongst the last of our Summer outings was the visit to Hatfield House, and here some of our members admire the Long Gallery'

Photograph from Gay Hancock

SPEAKERS CORNER:

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 11th: SIMON PRIOR FROM INTEL LTD - 'INTERNET SECURITY FOR SILVER SURFERS'.



Simon's talk will give us some very useful tips on keeping our digital devices safe from viruses or other potential attacks. He will tell us how to keep ourselves safe on social media; how to identify an email phishing scam and how to pay safely for items online. He will also discuss cybercrime & cyber-bullying.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8th: DAVID RICHARDS - 'THE LIFE OF MARC ISAMBARD BRUNEL'



This is the Brunel story that few of us know. A story about a man who gave so much to the world, and the father of his more famous son Isambard Kingdom. It is about escape from revolution, a close shave with a possible execution, imprisonment and a knighthood. The story of a brilliant engineer and inventor.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 8th: RICHARD SILLS - 'PALMYRA OF THE NORTH – THE CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDINGS OF THE CITY OF ST.PETERSBURG'

This will be Richard's first visit to our U3A. The city was created at the command of Tsar Peter the Great whose desire was to create a fabulous European style city as the capital of Imperial Russia. Richard's use of the name of the ancient city of Palmyra (in Syria) is based on his view of Tsar Peter's ambition for his new city.



Despite the immense difficulties encountered during the construction—the city site had previously been a swamp at the mouth of the River Neva—a stunning city was created, as many millions of tourists will testify.

Alan Robinson



THE WARMEST OF WELCOMES TO THE NEWEST MEMBERS TO JOIN US. WE HOPE THAT THEY ENJOY OUR ACTIVITIES AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING THEM.

Rosemary Knight; Jenny and Franz Laferton; Denise and Roland Scroggs; Wendy Phillimore; Vic Lightfoot; Neen Elliot; Joyce Turner; Joan and David Catton; Wendy and Richard Peters; Jeanette Smith and Elizabeth and Dave Robins,

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF ‘EXPLORING LONDON WALKS’

We have had two visits to Hampstead, which lies on high ground to the north of London. On the first visit we discovered The Pergola and Hill Garden which Lord Leverhulme (‘Sunlight Soap’) constructed a century ago. It is such a large structure that we were all in awe of its size and scope, a gem which maybe few know about.

On the second visit to Hampstead we crossed a stretch of the Heath; a large landscape of open ground and dense wood land. We imagined that in the dark and at night it could be quite frightening. After lunch at Kenwood House we headed south and climbed to the top of Parliament Hill which is 98 metres above sea level. From here there is a wonderful panoramic view over London. We were glad of the gentle stroll down the hill as the day had become increasingly hotter as the temperature rose to new highs for the year.

The next planned walk would take us from Hammersmith to Kew Bridge, at a low altitude close to sea level, as for most of the journey we would be following the River Thames. However, on the morning of the walk there was a weather forecast of a low depression and weather warning from the ‘Met’ office. The weather map suggested that we might have at least a drenching in the morning. As there was also a strike on the ‘Hammersmith & City’ underground line it was thought best that the walk be postponed for another time.

Let’s hope that one of our ‘lows’ is replaced by a ‘high’ when we walk along the Thames on a lovely sunny day next year.

Peter Harding



Left—The group gathered in part of the Pergola

Below—The group at Parliament Hill with the Shard and Post Office Tower in the background

Both photos by Tony Poth

To see the very interesting photograph of the Met Office weather forecast which guided the walking group’s decision turn to page 9. Better still look on our website where it is much more impressive viewed in full colour.

avu3a.org.uk





A visit to the Black Country Museum in September proved to be a photographer's delight with over 50 authentic shops, workshops and houses to explore.

Gay Hancock took full advantage of her opportunities and sent us this selection.

The first shows Val Sheppard and June Thomson in The Bottle and Glass pub just testing the alcohol to see if it was genuine (well that was their story!)



In the middle picture Caroline Hurford and Dave Merrison wondered if they were the same vintage as the car they were admiring.



Then Denise Harman and Roger Fox exchange comments on the 1930's kitchen in one of the houses.

SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2017:

Wednesday 29th March 2017

The National Space Centre & the Richard III Visitor Centre, Leicester.

The Space Centre houses the UK's largest Planetarium (where we have our own private show), and has six Galleries, a rocket tower and 150 interactive displays – you can try the Tim Peake launch experience for example! Next door, the Victorian pumping station is Leicester's Museum of Science & Technology and among other things it has displays on historic transport and public health.

Those who wish to go to the Richard III Visitor Centre (entry £7) and/or the cathedral instead of spending the whole day at the Space Centre can be transferred to the city centre for the afternoon. The Visitor Centre tells the fascinating story of Richard III's life and death and reveals one of the greatest archaeological detective stories ever told. You can visit his tomb in the cathedral nearby.

Estimated cost £31 pp (includes entry to Space Centre). Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.00. a.m. return 6.30 approx.



Thursday 27th April:

Audley End House and Saffron Walden, Essex:

Audley End House was once the most opulent houses in Jacobean England. You can visit the magnificent State Apartments, the 1880's service wing, the nursery, the coal gallery, the Victorian stables (complete with horses), the kitchen garden and the leisure garden, which in April is awash with colour.

A mile away is the picturesque mediaeval market town of Saffron Walden with its many historic buildings sporting elaborate plaster moulding. We spend some time here in the afternoon so that you can explore its pretty streets, and try out the many tearooms before we wend our way home.



Cost to be announced: Estimated departure from Jansel Square Bedgrove 8.30 a.m. Returning approx. 6.30p.m.

Gay and Ian Hancock

THE MONDAY POETRY GROUP:

Our Group would welcome new members. We sometimes select particular poets chosen by the group members and also seek out poems around a given theme. e.g. Autumn.

Meetings are held on Mondays at the Grange School and are from 3.30 to 5pm.



Philip Rance



This caught Gay's fancy recently at Blists Hill Victorian town. It is a postman's bike called a Pentacycle, nicknamed the Hen and Chickens, trialled in the Horsham area in 1822. It was never adopted into use because of the excessive wear on postmen's trousers! Gay Hancock thought you might like to share her amusement.

THE 2016 AYLESBURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL PRIZE GIVING:

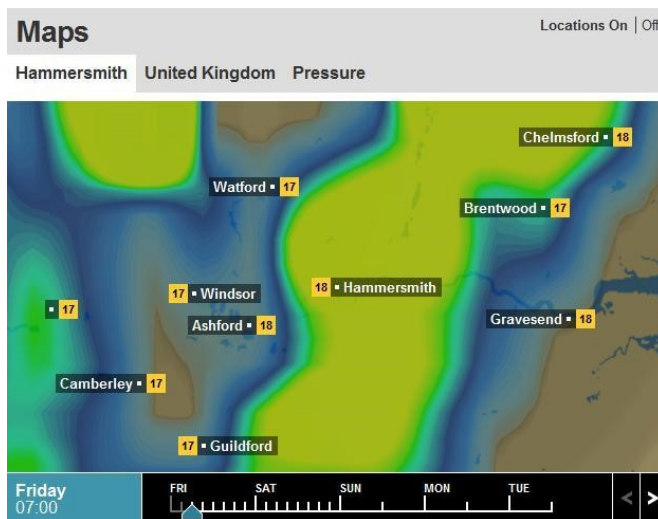
We attended the prize giving at the Aylesbury Grammar School for Boys. Our U3A donates an annual bursary for the pupil who is deemed to have carried out outstanding work in the community.

After a reception for guests and staff members we were guided to our reserved seats in the hall. The evening began with a guitar recital from two of the boys before the prize giving proper started. This took about an hour but was interspersed with outstanding musical performances by the school's jazz band and a classical piano solo from Michael Ng.



The U3A Bursary was awarded to Ewan Black who for the past two years has helped at Stocklake Park School for Children with Special Needs. He also gives great support to the young students in the school and is much loved.

Lynne Dawson and Greig Sneddon



This is a copy of the Met. Office weather forecast obtained by the leaders of the London Walk Group. Excellent advanced planning! And try the website!

See page 6.



WE FOLLOW OUR USUAL CHRISTMAS CUSTOM OF
PRINTING A SAMPLE OF THE MANY 'FUNNY' ITEMS
SENT IN BY READERS OVER THE PAST YEAR

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR? You joined a Health Club but you never go? You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions; you sit in a rocking chair but you can't get it going; you regret all those temptations you resisted; dialling long distance wears you out; you burn the midnight oil after 9.00 pm .

FROM THE CHURCH NOTICE BOARD: The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement on Friday afternoon.

This being Easter Sunday we will ask Mrs Andrews to come forward to lay an egg at the altar.

And following that—The nice thing about being senile is that you can hide your own Easter Eggs.

THIS MODERN SOCIETY: A family bought a new fridge and decided to put the old one outside in their front garden with a sign saying 'Free to a good home'. Three days later it was still there. Eventually they changed the sign to read 'Fridge for sale £30. The next day someone stole it!

THE BOYS TALE: Three boys in a playground were bragging about their fathers. The first said "My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper. He calls it a poem and they pay him £50." The second boy said "That's nothing. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper and calls it a song and he is paid £100". But the third boy went one better. "Big deal. My Dad scribbles a few words on a a piece of paper and calls it a sermon. It takes 8 people to collect all the money!0"

WISE WORDS FROM A HUSBAND: Men are not mind readers; Shopping is never a sport; crying is blackmail; Yes and No are perfectly acceptable answers to almost every question; Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument—in fact, all comments become null and void after 7 days; If something we said can be interpreted two ways, and one of the ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one. Christopher Columbus didn't need directions, and neither do we.

WISE WORDS FROM A WIFE: In a marriage one person is always right— and the other is a husband; never laugh at my choices, remember that you are one of them; never believe me when I say ' don't buy me anything special for my birthday'; taking my advice doesn't make you less of a man, just better as a husband; never forget that marriage is always about give and take— you give me money and gifts and I take them, I give good advice and instructions and you take them.

SENIOR CITIZENS INTERNATIONAL: A French senior citizen has his pernod and then sets off for a game of Boules. A Spanish senior citizen has his wine and lays down for his siesta; a German senior citizen has his medicines and sets off for work; an English senior citizen has his tea then goes to his club; an American senior citizen has an expanding waistline and sets off to exercise in the gym. A U3A member has his mouse and goes to surf the Internet.



HOMEWORK HOWLERS:

We nearly ran over a peasant at the weekend; it ran out from a farmyard.

We spend two weeks in grease every year.

We worked hard this holiday. My Dad got some slob to lay a patio in the garden.

Our Headmaster likes to snivel around on the black chair in his office.

When Joan of Ark met her end she was burned as a steak.

SEEING DOUBLE: Two Nuns were walking along the pavement towards a drunk and passed by on either side of him. He turned to look at them as they walked away and scratching his head, said in a very puzzled and drunken voice "How did she do that?"

JUDGEMENT DAY: A man in a hot air balloon realising that he was lost reduced altitude and spotting a woman below shouted "excuse me, can you help me. I am supposed to be meeting a friend, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied " You're in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You're between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be in IT" said the balloonist. "I am" replied the women,"how did you know?"

"Well", answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I've no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is, I'm still lost. Frankly, you've been no help at all, and if anything you've delayed my flight."

The woman below responded "You must be in Management"

"I am" said the balloonist "but how did you know?"

"Well" said the woman "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to your present position due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you've no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is, you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now somehow it's all my fault."

AND FINALLY: Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul . (Samuel Ullman)

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE FOR 2016/17

Joint Chairman:	Greig Sneddon and Lynne Dawson
Vice-Chairman	Jean Ashton
Secretary	Moira Bishop
Treasurer	Richard Clark
Groups Co-ordinator	Jackie Rickard
Hall Manager	Derek Ayshford
Joint Membership Secretaries	Tony and Jill Davis
Outings Co-ordinator	Gay Hancock
Social Activities Co-ordinator	Maxine Robinson
Speakers Secretary	Joe Southall.



BE A ONE-OFF VOLUNTEER ! Entertain your fellow members by volunteering to run an event. There are a number of one off delights that happen by courtesy of our Social Activities co-ordinator. like the afternoon quiz, or the Chinese New Year Meal. There are many other new activities that we haven't tried out yet! One or two members working together could perhaps offer to plan just one event—old or new. No need to serve on the committee, attend

meetings, or commit to more than one. Nobody would expect you to repeat the experience in future years. Think how much difference you could make to our U3A programme. Why not give it a go, there would be plenty of help!

The Editor

Last date for copy for the March 2017 Newsletter will be February 8th so please send any items you may like to share with us to 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. Photographs are also very welcome, as long as they are not sent as part of an email. (My own inadequacies not yours!)

Don't forget to look at our website where you will find details of all our events and activities and more photographs—in colour too. — avu3a.org.uk