

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



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A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I've just returned from celebrating a friend's 70th birthday and as seems usual at such times there was a lot of reminiscing and a lot of laughter. The group has been associated with Aylesbury Climbing Club either as members or friends of members and is now spread across the country, but still we make the effort to get together for special occasions and once a year for a walking weekend somewhere with hills.

When we first got together the walks were up hills in the Lakes where the rise was somewhere in the 45° if not steeper. Ropes, nuts, chocks, karabiners, safety harnesses, the latest heavy weather clothing and boots were all sorted and donned before our intrepid enthusiasts ventured onto the hills. The stories in the bar afterwards centered on how difficult the climb or walk, how bad the weather, maybe how good the latest waterproofs. The worse the conditions the greater the stories and the greater the pleasure in recounting them or so it seemed to one who in those days only sat at the bottom and sketched.

Gradually over the years the climbs became less steep, the walks easier, poles became an important part of the equipment and someone who sits at the bottom and sketches was able to join in. So have the stories in the bar changed? Of course not, they still dwell on the difficulties encountered and celebrate the fact that although quite a few now have replacement knees, back problems and arthritis we are able to get out and enjoy the countryside no matter what the weather. We relive past climbs in the Himalayas and Kilimanjaro, routes put up in Canada and the US, how difficult the walk of the day has been and how pleased we are with ourselves for having covered the seven or more miles up and down dale in such a good time.

In a way we are our own U3A, sharing outings, memories and friendship with the hope that we may continue to do so for many more years to come.

Meryll Coe

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

POETRY AND POLITICS

One of the interesting things about exploring London is that it not only gives one a sense of geography and the building developments it also gives us a sense of our cultural history. For instance, on the walk around Highgate we came across the house where Samuel Coleridge had lived. This revelation prompted one of our members to recite part of the poem 'Kubla Khan', which he had learnt at school: a very impressive recall. Then on the Lambeth walk we discovered where William Blake, the poet and artist, had lived. A range of mosaics depicting his work were to be seen under the railway bridge in Centaur Street. He is remembered by many for 'Tiger tiger burning bright' and 'Jerusalem'. In the latter case the phrase 'dark satanic mills' is thought to originate from Blake's sight of the burnt out Albion Mills close to Blackfriars, London.



Of course, apart from poetry we also appreciate a sense of British and World politics. As a group we admired the statue marking the grave of Karl Marx, when we explored Highgate Cemetery. Conversation grew as we read inscriptions on the many varied styles, shapes and designs on grave stones of particular people including Michael Foot, a former Labour Party Leader; the novelist George Eliot; Alan Sillitoe; and the Great Train robber, Bruce Reynolds.

In the midst of the eclectic range of gravestones we saw a fox calmly sunbathing!



Peter Harding

OUT AND ABOUT GROUP CHANGE OF VENUE: This group which meets on the last Thursday of each month has now moved to The Bell at Stoke Mandeville.

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PLEASURE:



The Group recently enjoyed a morning at the Boarstall Duck Decoy which began with an informative talk from the Ranger, Ian, before exploring the area and taking their photographs. A very good morning enjoyed by 12 of the members.

Derek Fowle

TO RON AND ROSEMARY—THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES AND ALL THE YEARS DEVOTED TO ORGANISING STUDY VISITS



On the River Wye during the Hereford study visit



Enjoying a quiet walk in Hereford



Ron & Rosemary were enthusiastic members of the Photography Group, and are much missed! This was taken on one of the group's photo shoots in 2011



Looking happy and relaxed at Berrington Hall



Tea in Torquay



A painful experience in Yorkshire in 2010 ?

OUR U3A SUMMER !



Left—Tony Poth watches Ian and Gay Hancock enjoy a cream tea at Bodiam Castle and below—he photographed us crossing the moat.



Two happy passengers about to board the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Taken by Gay Hancock

Right—Messing about in boats at Bucklers Hard, and below—Elvis shows the group one of his cars at the Beaulieu Motor Museum. Both photos from Tony Poth.



SPEAKERS CORNER:

**WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER: RICHARD SILLS —
“PALMYRA OF THE NORTH – THE CONSTRUC-
TION AND BUILDING OF THE CITY OF
ST.PETERSBURG”.**



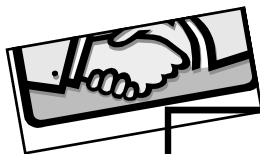
The city was created at the command of Tsar Peter the Great whose desire was to create a fabulous European style city as the capital of Imperial Russia. The speaker’s use of the name of the ancient city of Palmyra (in Syria) is based on his view of Tsar Peter’s ambition for his new city. Despite the immense difficulties encountered during the construction—the city site had previously been a swamp at the mouth of the River Neva—a stunning city has been created, as many millions of tourists will testify.

**WEDNESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER: DR.TONY MAISEY—“HOW DO WE AGE
AND WHY?”**

Tony is a retired local GP who has talked to AVU3A twice before. Those members who attended his talks will probably remember that he has some strong opinions which may be controversial as well as amusing, so you may need to hold on to your seats.

**WEDNESDAY 9th DECEMBER: JAMES MITCHELL AND GRAHAM O’CON-
NOR— “TWO BLOKES AND A PIANO”.**

Our entertainers for our annual December festive meeting will be a pair of classical musicians. James and Graham will entertain us with the music and humour of the famous Flanders and Swann duo, plus a little extra from their own repertoire appropriate to the festive season. (You may remember James who has talked and sung to us previously about opera.)



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

Annette and Tony Ashpool; Helen Bevan; Robin Blanchflower; Cleo Campbell; Maureen Drye; Bob and Marilyn Fowler; Fred Henley; Mick Hennessy; John Kenward; Clive and Kay Powell-Williams; Freda Roberts and Brian Rowe.

Don’t forget that new Full Members wear a red badge, and Associate Members have blue; so please say hello to them when they sit near you on an outing or other visit!

GUESS WHO ?

One clue may be that the photograph was taken by Jean Ashton—no doubt with heart in mouth! Yes, it’s Peter Ashton abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth; all 310 feet of it. He joined a party from Weston Turville U3A's Extreme Activities group for this event on May 15th. Members from other U3As also took part, making a total of 42 intrepid pensioners, one of whom, Michael Brackley of Weston Turville, was totally blind and who abseiled to raise funds for the Calibre Audio Library.



Jean comments “When he first mentioned that he would like to do it, I thought he was joking; after all he isn’t known for doing anything more extreme than mowing the lawn. Then I thought he was mad—possibly because I suffer from vertigo just standing on a chair. Then I decided that it would never happen, but it did. When the day arrived I was given comprehensive instructions on how to use his camera with strict orders to make sure I got some good shots. I had to wait for about two hours on a very chilly day in May before his descent and even with the zoom on the camera and binoculars it was very difficult to tell when it was Peter stepping off the ledge. (I had already taken some photos of someone else before I realised I’d got the wrong one!) In spite of the fact that my hands were shaking from a combination of cold and terror I did manage to get some good shots. I was greatly relieved when he reached the ground and even more so when he announced that he wouldn’t be participating in any more extreme activities.”

CRAFT GROUP DISPLAY TABLE AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING.

The Craft Group usually has a table in the hall once a year to display projects they have been working on. This year we have decided that we will also have items for sale—with most of the proceeds going to charity. We shall have some of the pretty baubles which were so admired last year, and other Christmas themed decorations. We also hope to have a few items suitable for gifts as well as cards and gift tags.



If anyone would like to come along to a Craft Group meeting and learn how to make some of these items (and they don't have to be made to sell) please contact one of the Group Leaders: Heather Edwards or Sheila Cruickshank.

Fabric Christmas Trees made by Annette Ashpool

ANOTHER MEMORABLE LONDON WALK

The June walk started from Waterloo Station where we saw the memorial, unveiled on the previous day, remembering the 24,000 allied soldiers who died 200 years ago at the Battle of Waterloo. Passing under one of the many railway bridges which we came across on this walk, we saw mosaics illustrating some of the poems of William Blake, passed St. Thomas's Hospital, the Florence Nightingale Museum, and admired the Coade Stone Lion. We walked along the south embankment enjoying wonderful views across the river to Westminster and the Houses of Parliament, saw Sir Robert Clayton's statue and learnt about the start of the Hospital. Next was the SOE memorial to Violette Szabo who was a heroine in WW2. At Lambeth Palace, home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, we learnt about some of its 800-year-old history. The Palace gardens and the Garden Museum there looked very attractive but we needed to move on as there was still so much to see before lunch. On Lambeth Walk Peter's phone played the tune and we did our best to remember the steps. Here also we came across Pimlico Plumbers' workshop which impressed us with their fleet of vans with number plates such as: 1 BOG; S1 NKS and LOO 2WET. The Royal Doulton Potteries moved to Stafford in 1956 but we very much enjoyed seeing the richly decorated exterior of Southbank House, their Lambeth headquarters, which is still there in Black Prince Road. The decorative brickwork and tiles, still intact, were spectacular.

Tired and hungry by this time we headed on to our lunch stop in the Tea House Theatre in Vauxhall Spring Gardens park. This was so special, unusual and delightful. We gathered around our reserved table and enjoyed our meal in extremely relaxed surroundings. The café regularly converts to the local community theatre and evidence of various productions were all around us alongside books for anyone to browse, toys for children and a trunk of dressing-up clothes. The food was good too! Revived and feeling perky again we boarded the rack of 'Boris bikes' for our group photo.

The Harleyford Road Community Gardens in SW8, saved from developers by the local community, were amazing. We talked to some of the residents in the community pleasure garden at Bonnington Square which was created on a derelict site caused by bombing during the war. We could have spent much longer there but the 4.12 train from Marylebone

was the next objective. On our way to Vauxhall Bus Station for the No 2 bus to Marylebone we saw several more points of interest including the New Covent Garden Market and the MI6 building.



Photo by Tony Poth

Sheila Sylvester

HURLING TO HEREFORD !

Ron and Rosemary have returned and we are hurtling along the M40 and the M5, en route to eighteenth century Berrington Hall near Leominster, with its fine views across to the Black Mountains. The lovely grounds were a late creation of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. That man gets everywhere! Our hotel in Hereford is so comfortable and welcoming and the food is superb, but waistlines have to expand! Saturday morning brings us to Westons Cider Mill at Much Marcle, agreeable surroundings on a lovely May morning. The tour is fascinating, a unique blend of traditional methods and modern technology and the samples enhance the rustic atmosphere! Herefordshire is a beautiful county with its high hedges, orchards and traditional fields, so redolent of childhood summers. An afternoon boat trip on the river Wye at Symonds Yat completes a lovely relaxing day. The focus of the next day is historical with visits to Ledbury and nearby Eastnor Castle. The latter built in 1820, houses interesting artefacts and pictures.



Monday is spent in Hereford and it rains! However, that does not prevent us exploring the wonderful cathedral dedicated to the martyred King Ethelbert. The chained library is fascinating but the Mappa Mundi, a thirteenth century illustrated map of the world, is literally unique. There are lovely walks by the river Wye; some are undeterred by the rain, but others make for the nearest coffee shop! Camaraderie underpins these U3A holidays. Evening games appeal to some while others prefer just to chat. It's a good excuse to reminisce, after all! Tuesday brings a memorable visit to the Welsh Borders. Our first stop is at Kington, a small market town seemingly stuck in the mid-twentieth century. Its simplicity is attractive and it has an informative little local museum.



Hilary Carter, Eileen Fenemore, Rita Booth and Magrit Kennedy sitting it out in Pembridge, one of the famous black and white villages of Herefordshire.

Ron Meadowcroft took the photograph.

On we go to Presteigne, crossing into Wales. Here we visit the Judges Lodging in the old Shire Hall, formerly the County Court, with its rooms set up as in 1870. The whole building is very atmospheric with even the smells of yesteryear. Flickering gas flames provide lighting in the basement, the servants having been selected as guinea pigs for this innovation – no health and safety rules in those days! The courtroom experience is enhanced by a scripted recording of an actual case, which helps to bring the scene to life.

We return to Hereford via Pembridge, an archetypal village for this part of Herefordshire, with a number of half-timbered buildings and a fine medieval church. Its detached, thirteenth century bell tower is the largest of seven in the county with the corner posts dating back to around 1210.

All too soon, it's time to return to Aylesbury, but there is still time for two stops en route. The first is at Tintern Abbey, a ruined Cistercian monastery founded on the Welsh bank of the river Wye. There is much to admire in this magnificent building which dates back to 1131. The second stop is at nearby Chepstow and its interesting ruined castle. Started in about 1067, it is built on a narrow cliff-top above the river Wye and dendrochronological evidence reveals that its doors go back eight hundred years, the oldest castle doors in Europe. Incidentally, a very welcome sight near the main entrance was a bench donated by the Chepstow U3A!



This photo of Tintern Abbey was taken by Brian Sanderson who entitled it 'Old goats in an old ruin'.

Ron and Rosemary prefer to keep a low profile, but I must record our grateful thanks for another wonderful holiday, superbly organised. Perhaps there could even be another one. Who knows?

Jan Hancock



Happy in Hereford; the whole group including Ron and Rosemary smiling as always!

DAYS OUT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:



TUESDAY 13TH OCTOBER: GREENWICH & THE EMIRATES CABLE CAR.

There is so much to see—the Maritime Museum, the Royal Observatory, the Queen’s House and the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College. You may find the Cutty Sark well worth a visit, or you may prefer to wander round Greenwich Market. Before we leave for home, we’ll take you on a return flight across the Thames on the Emirates cable car—an unforgettable experience which is **OPTIONAL!**

Provisional cost £25, which includes the cable car ride. £18.80 without the cable car ride. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.30. return 6.30 approx. Fully booked—waiting list only.

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER: BLENHEIM PALACE LIVING CRAFTS FOR CHRISTMAS FAIR.

Some 150 designer/makers from across the U.K. selected for their originality, together with food and drink specialists, will be showcasing their work. This is the perfect opportunity to choose handmade original gifts for all the family while enjoying the seasonal atmosphere. There will be musical entertainment and street theatre in the Great Court suitably decorated for the season.

Departing Jansel Square at 9.15 a.m. returning at approx. 5 p.m. Cost t.b.a.

SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER: CHRISTMAS CLASSICS CONCERT

At the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra. The programme includes the Overture from *Die Fledermaus* (Strauss); *Ave Maria* (Schubert); *Shepherd’s Farewell* (Berlioz); *In Dulci Jubilo* (Pearsall); excerpts from *The Nutcracker Suite* (Tchaikovsky) and *Panis Angelicus* (Franck), and a selection of seasonal music and carols for all with the Bach Choir and the Young Singers.

We leave from Jansel Square, Bedgrove at 11.15. arriving in London with plenty of time for you to have lunch before the concert starts at 3pm. Return 7.30 – 8.00 approx.

Cost £49. Fully booked—cancellations only

SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER: LUNCH WITH THEATRE MATINEE.

If you have never visited The Mill at Sonning, a very atmospheric small dining/theatre venue, why not join us for a matinee of ‘Out and About’? This play, which won an Evening Standard Drama Award, tells the story of the trials and tribulations of a Tap Dancing Evening Class (seven women and one man) as they prepare for an important end of year Charity Concert. Coach leaves Aylesbury 10.00 a.m. and the cost is £60 which includes an excellent lunch, theatre and transport.

MORE DIARY REMINDERS!

WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER: We invite all members, new or long standing and Associate, to join us for morning coffee and biscuits at the Broad Leys P.H. on Wendover Road at 10.30 a.m. This provides a sociable opportunity to meet other members in a small group and find out what is happening in the wider U3A. The cost is £1.75 and we look forward to seeing you there.

THURSDAY 15TH OCTOBER: Our ever popular Quiz and Fish and Chip Supper will be held at the Aylesbury Town Bowls Club on Wendover Road. We begin with tea or coffee at 3.00 p.m. followed by the quiz (tables of 6 please) and with supper at the end of the afternoon. It means that you get home before it gets dark and with a whole free evening for your own activities. Tickets are going fast and cost £8. If you were unable to be at the September monthly meeting you can contact our Social Activities Organiser Maxine Robinson at Social@avu3a.org.uk.

WEDNESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER: Our second Autumn Coffee morning (see details for September above).

AND SPEAKING OF DIARIES....The U3A pocket diary for 2016 has a green cover and the cost has been held at £2.00. There is no need to order. Diaries will be on sale at the September, October and November monthly meetings.

Peter Gasson



ONCE A U3A MEMBER.....

Ron and Rosemary may have moved to Yorkshire but a recent e-mail from them said: "This weekend we are off to Hayfield on t'other side of Pennines to meet with the U3A camping group. Hayfield is where they had the mass trespass on Kinder Scout that eventually led to the formation of National Parks. We are also meeting up with Gavin Ewan near Sheffield and visiting an historic scythe factory where he volunteers, then having a BBQ together. You can't get rid of old U3A members no matter how hard you try!"



YOU HAVE TO PLAY TO WIN!

Hazel Burgess, our Group Coordinator, having entered a free draw competition in the last edition of Third Age Matters, won two tickets to see 'Let it Be' at the Garrick Theatre in London. She says "It was a very enjoyable trip back in time. Not only could we sing along to all the songs but it even had us dancing in the aisles. A wonderful way to spend an afternoon."





Congratulations to Molly Sanderson: Many of you may have watched the BBC 1 painting competition called "The Big Painting Challenge". Following on from that came a competition for amateurs called "The Little Painting Challenge" with three categories. Entries were to be postcard-sized in any medium and Sheila Calver, who runs the painting group, persuaded Molly to enter this pen and wash portrait of a monkey. There were 30,000 entries and 1,000, including Molly's, were chosen to hang in the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester for a fortnight. We always knew that there was real talent amongst our members!



Another of the excellent outings organised by Gay and Ian Hancock in 2015 was a visit to the R.H.S. Garden Centre at Wisley on a lovely sunny day. These photos from the Simmons family show Jan and Dave Merri-son, their niece Caroline Hurford, and Tony Simmons.

In the second Dot Simmons was feeding this friendly robin, and finally another weird creature caught Dot's eye. Lovely reminders of another wonderful day out.



Last date for copy for the Xmas Newsletter will be November 11th 2015 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. But don't wait for the closing date; the Editor likes to receive copy as early as possible so that she knows what spaces are left to be filled!

Thanks are due to our Secretary Peter Gasson for help with the ordering and printing and to Alan Robinson for proof reading and particularly to all of you who send me articles and photographs. We like to hear about your achievements and adventures both within and outside U3A.