

# AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 79

June 2016

## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMEN:

Hope the wet weather hasn't spoiled Springtime for you all. Our allotment is taking ages to dry out and early digging and planting is about three weeks behind schedule. A few weeks back, on a three day Cotswold break, we visited Warwick Castle, which is now owned by the Madam Tussaud Company. It was a great experience, with the participative displays a cross between Disney World and Monty Python. In May we began the camping season, with thirteen members of the U3A group visiting Hereford. The Camping Group has enabled us to keep in touch with members who have moved away in recent times. We now have 12 members in 7 tents and one camper. Gavin Ewan joined us in Hereford, whilst Rosemary and Ron Meadowcroft will be joining us when we venture up to Yorkshire. Talking of Rosemary and Ron they have also started to organise their own Camping and Caravanning Group there.

We have been very pleased to see that a number of new groups are up and running. The disappointing news is that some groups may have to come to an end if a new leader, or leaders do not appear soon e.g. Gardening, Theatre and Family History. Whilst we are progressing quite well on the committee front, there are still a number of vacancies, in particular the Social Secretary who organises the bi-monthly coffee mornings, New Year's Chinese Lunch and the Annual Quiz. However, events can always be different in future. Please consider having a go at this role.

We were surprised and delighted at how fascinating the Crop Circle talk was. The subject was completely new to us, and we have had some serious discussion on how to go circle hunting. However we would ask that, if you have to leave meetings early, you sit near the back of the hall, so that the speaker is not faced with a number of empty chairs. Furthermore, in order to abide by fire regulations, would you please remember to sign out as you leave. We would really appreciate your help in this matter.

As Joint Chairmen of the U3A, we attended the Aylesbury Mayor's Networking Event to mix and share useful contacts for speakers for our groups, and names of charities that we could help with the profits from our Burns Night. Finally we are still short of people to help with the setting up and clearing of the equipment used in the meetings. Please put your name down on the rota; any help would be very much appreciated.

*Lynne Dawson and Greig Sneddon*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING (SCD)

The SCD Group has been up and running for five years and is going from strength to strength. At our fifth birthday session earlier this year, there was a record turnout of 33 participants, including eight men. The group can now dance about 15 dances, although some are still not suitable for public display. Nearly all who attend have had very little or no previous experience of SCD but they find that it can be picked up very quickly. Some of the group paid a return visit to the Elmhurst Youth Club in Aylesbury, where they put the



boys, girls and volunteers through their paces. The session went down very well with one girl saying that it was better than school PE!

The group is always open to new members and all you need is a pair of sensible shoes and a sense of fun.

*Greig Sneddon*

### PSYCHOLOGY GROUP NEWS:

The Psychology Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Tennis Club on Wendover Road. In the last year we have studied a range of subjects including criminal psychology, depression and child development. Several sessions were devoted to criminal psychology and we have looked at the subject from a variety of perspectives including those of witnesses, juries, crime including terrorism, offenders, the criminal justice system, punishment and restorative justice. We visited Aylesbury Crown Court to watch a trial in action and listened to talks from Paul Fincken, from the Witness Service and Vivien Morton who has served as a Magistrate on the Buckinghamshire Bench since 1989. Further visits to Crown and Magistrates' Courts will take place in the next few months.



Members enjoyed a talk from Clare Hawes, who is a member of the Aylesbury Vale U3A. Clare is a Master Practitioner of NLP (neurolinguistic programming) which is an approach to communication, personal development and psychotherapy which can treat conditions such as phobias, depression and habit disorders. In January, Dr Katherine Mollart from Healthy Minds, based in High Wycombe, came to talk to us about the service and a new initiative called Living Well which is aimed at supporting older people with long term conditions.

If you fancy giving Psychology a try come along to a session. New members are welcome. Contact Pam Stocks at [psychology@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:psychology@avu3a.org.uk).

From a member who would prefer to remain anonymous.

## CERTAIN MEN

Who are they then, these certain men?  
You women, you know who I mean.  
Not friends,  
Just friends of friends, husbands of friends,  
Not close.  
But close is where they are.  
A peck on the cheek may be OK  
But those hands and arms –  
Those arms and hands.  
The patting and tapping, the hugging and  
holding.

What can you say as you back away  
From their smirking smiles and cheery chat-  
ter?  
'Your behaviour's inappropriate'  
Is what you want to say  
They'd be astounded and quite confounded  
To hear you voice these thoughts.  
'But this is me, a friendly chap,  
There's just no need to be like that.'  
They'd say as they move away to tell their  
mates  
How they'll never understand women.



These photos were taken in Dartmouth  
by Dot and Tony Simmons who suggest-  
ed asking readers to send in suitable cap-  
tions!



Some of our happy campers photographed  
by Greig Sneddon

## ATTENDING A GROUP:

At our recent annual Group Leaders' Meeting we discussed whether we might improve access to group meetings, in recognition of the national U3A philosophy that the U3A is open to all over the age of 55. We acknowledged that the aging process affects us all in different ways and our ability to do certain things adjusts with the years. However, we were unanimous in recognising that our U3A is renowned for its openness and friendliness. Many of our venues are public halls or buildings, the majority with ease of access and accessible toilets. There is always a helping hand into someone's home, many of which have a downstairs cloakroom. Many venues are on a local bus route. In this technological age it is easy to print handouts and reading material in large print. Our Bowls Group has its own wheelchair and the U3A has a wheelchair which can be used for days out (just ask the Group Leader – and remember you will need to find somebody to give you a push!); our Swimming group has access to a hoist. You will almost certainly find you live near to somebody in the group – you may be able to arrange a lift or share a taxi (lifts are a private arrangement and not the responsibility of the Group Leader or the U3A).



We would never make assumptions about a new member. We only know you need help to access a group if you share this with the group leader or members. If you do wish to attend a group, but are worried about whether it is suitable for you, do discuss this with the Group Leader, who is always open to considering reasonable adaptations, when possible, to help you attend.

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*Hazel Burgess*

## COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS GROUP:

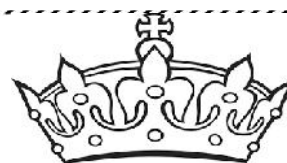
A new group is being set up for people who would like to learn or share their knowledge about different computer programmes and uses. This is not about programming, but rather tips and ideas of how to better use them and to learn from one another. The group will meet on a monthly basis where different topics will be covered each month (presented by one of the members or a guest), followed by a general discussion about that program or other programs. Members can also ask advice about specific problems during the meetings. Anyone interested can contact:



*Hanlie Croeser .*

## THAT CERTAIN BIRTHDAY PARTY !

You can't fail to have noticed a lot of publicity in the national media about the Queen's 90th Birthday party. You will be pleased to know that she shared it with one of our own members also celebrating her 90 years. Joan Kell took tea with the Queen at Buckingham Palace for their joint 80th birthday celebrations. Long standing members of U3A may remember that Joan wrote in a previous newsletter about her experience 10 years ago, (with a photograph). We offer her our congratulations, and hope that we may expect a joint 100th birthday to come!



## MORE NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

### STRICTLY SOUNDS OF THE 60'S

The latest meeting of the 'Strictly Sounds of the Sixties' music group was a great success and enjoyed by all of the 32 members who attended. We were even joined by a member of Mid Bucks U3A who turned up for their monthly quiz not knowing the date had been changed but decided to stay and take part.



Firstly we had a quiz with a picture round and a music round where we had to identify songs and singers and a further two rounds of 1960's themed questions. The photo shows the winning team of Peter and Barbara Mathews, Chris and Bobby Lowe and Wendy Copcutt with their winners certificate. Many thanks to Ann Dwyer for setting the quiz and to Barry for keeping score.



After coffee and biscuits Barbara Mathews did a piece on Burt Bacharach who, with his writing partner Hal David, provided some of the most well known and best loved sounds of the 1960's and we enjoyed listening to a few tracks with some of us even joining in.

We know it is early days but we have been encouraged by the willingness of so many in the group to volunteer to talk about and play the music of their heroes and idols of yesteryear so thank you to you all.

### A SUMMER JAZZ FEST

Once again Chiltern U3A invites you to what has become their annual jazz festival on Sunday 28th August at the Amersham Community Centre, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham starting at 7 p.m. Tickets at £15 each are available from Peter Metcalf, 2 Long Park Close, Chesham Bois HP6 5JY.

You will be able to listen to the FB Pocket Orchestra (1920's Hot Jazz) and New Orleans Heat (Traditional New Orleans Jazz). A licensed bar will be available, and although there will be no food served, you are invited to bring your own. No table or seat reservations is the rule, so get there early !

Cheques made payable to Chiltern U3A together with a stamped addresses envelope please.

Dates for the next meetings – Tuesdays  
June 28<sup>th</sup> and July 26<sup>th</sup>.

*Jean and Peter Ashton*

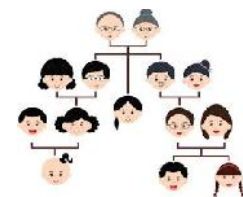
The Membership Secretary would like to have details of anyone not intending to renew their membership in the coming year. He has a long waiting list!



## READERS' CIRCLE 2 BOOK SALE IN AID OF PROSTATE CANCER CHARITY UK

Our book sale went very well at the AVU3A meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April. We collected a total of £76.80 and a cheque for £80 was sent direct to the Charity. We thank everybody who bought books together with their free bookmarks – some handmade, some donated – and also those people who bought a raffle ticket for our rather smart 'cat' bookmark which quite a few people were hoping to acquire!

We hope everyone is now enjoying reading the books they bought and again many thanks from us for supporting this vital Charity.



### HELP US WITH NEW STUDY GROUPS:

The following groups, some quite large and popular, would welcome new members:

Family History, Painting, Poetry 1, Swimming, Military History, Bowls, Photography (you can use any camera, even a mobile phone), Psychology, Backgammon, Cribbage, Dominoes, Bridge, Computer Programming, Sounds of the 60s.

Other groups will also have spaces. Just contact the Group Leader (details in the Directory or use the email link on the website).

We have launched successfully a number of new groups this year but there is always room for more. We are also facing the demise of some of our popular groups because we **need a new group leader**. Several of our groups have shared leadership, which works well. If you would like to explore starting a new group or could lead **Gardening, Theatre Trips Family History or Italian**, please contact the Group Co-Ordinator on [Groups@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Groups@avu3a.org.uk).

### BUDDING GEORGE FORMBYS ?

We recently held the second meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age Strummers . Once again we had good attendance with twelve Strummers being present. We are currently learning songs with just two chords in each to get people used to changing from one chord shape to the other. Although repetitive at this stage everybody is working hard and I am confident that we will be ready to perform at the U3A Christmas show.



*Andy Carter*

**GAY HANCOCK THOUGHT THAT YOU MIGHT NEED CHEERING UP !**



**The following questions were set in last year's GED examinations in Canada and the USA  
These are genuine answers (from 16 year olds)**

**Q. Name the four seasons**

A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar

**Q. Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink**

A. Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists

**Q. How is dew formed?**

A. The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire

**ATG THEATRE CARD OFFER FOR U3A MEMBERS:**

The Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) is exclusively offering U3A members a reduced purchase price of £25 (normally £35) for their Theatre Card valid for one year. The card can be used at all 38 ATG theatres across the UK. It allows you priority booking; offers with savings of up to £10, and even some tickets at half price; it allows you to exchange your tickets free of charge, and gives access to ATG Theatre Card workshop offerings.



To purchase your card you can go the national website [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk), and log in to offers in the members' area. Alternatively you can visit your nearest theatre box office (probably The Waterside Theatre). You are asked to take a copy of the ATG advert with you, and this can be downloaded from the web, or contact Patti Smith our retiring Theatre Group organiser. She will be bringing some copies of the ad to the June monthly meeting.



**A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS**

Christine Barling, Lynda Sumpter, Sue Alburg, Gillian Brown, Gill Gradley, Anne Redstone and Tom Sullivan, and we are delighted to welcome back Pushpa Mirchandani.

## NEWS OF OUTINGS:



Members admire the bust of George Washington, and visit the kitchen on a recent visit to Sulgrave Manor.

Photos from Gay Hancock



One of our early visits this year took place in good Spring weather when we took a short journey into Northants to visit two of its stately homes. Firstly we went to Sulgrave Manor always noted for its connections to George Washington the first President of the U.S.A. However some members were a little disappointed to learn that he never actually lived there. This is a delightful part Tudor and part Georgian house built by one of his ancestors – Lawrence Washington, a wool merchant who in 1532 had been Mayor of Northampton. In 1656 one of his descendants emigrated to the Colony of Virginia and it was he who was the great-grandfather of the more famous George! Nevertheless the Americans do regard it as a favourite site in the ‘old country’ and in 1914 the house was bought by public subscription to celebrate a century of peace between the UK and the USA since the war of 1812. It is still financially supported by America.

Canons Ashby is a Grade 1 listed Elizabethan manor house not far away. This house has been the home of the Dryden family since its construction in the 16th century although added to on various occasions since then. It is particularly noted for its Elizabethan wall paintings and its Jacobean plasterwork. As far as U3A members were concerned it was also noted for the excellence of the plants for sale in the courtyard, and more than one box of plants destined for gardens in Aylesbury was stowed in the boot of the coach. Another enjoyable outing arranged by Gay and Ian Hancock to whom go our thanks as always!

### AN S.O.S. FROM THE OUTINGS ORGANISERS:

Most of you will know that we can no longer automatically accept requests to add names to lists for a given outing prior to publication at the monthly meeting. We now ask that you sign up in person at the relevant monthly meeting or ask a friend to do so on your behalf. We realise that this may pose problems for associate members and the committee has agreed that we should give some leeway if this happens. The important thing is that anybody should feel able to contact us if they are experiencing any booking problems.



*Gay and Ian Hancock* [Outings@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Outings@avu3a.org.uk)



## SPEAKERS CORNER



### **WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JULY: MIKE BROWN – ‘THE SUBURBAN HOME FRONT IN WW2’ (Part 2)**

Mike is returning by popular request to continue his excellent talk given last year, which brought back memories for many of us. With the use of slides and examples of the physical objects themselves he will seek to create the atmosphere of those difficult times, and the highs and lows of people’s experiences.

### **WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER: PAUL RANFORD – ‘ARISTOTLE TO COPERNICUS’**

This will be Paul’s fourth visit to us, having previously covered Newton, Darwin and the Dark Ages. Our journey through the history of science continues - this time Paul will give us a tour of the history of astronomy and how the movement of heavenly bodies was visualised and calculated in ancient times, and how and why that view remained intact for over 1500 years until overthrown by Copernicus.

### **WEDNESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER: TONY EATON – ‘FAILED TO RETURN’**

Tony is another returnee speaker having enthralled us previously with a very convincing explanation of the demise of Glenn Miller. This time Tony will attempt to unravel the mystery surrounding the disappearance during the 1940’s of two British wartime icons. He will reconstruct the fatal last flights of aviatrix Amy Johnson (1941), whose RAF plane crashed into the Thames Estuary, miles away from its authorised flight plan, and film star Leslie Howard (1943), killed when the unarmed civilian airliner in which he was a passenger was shot down over the Bay of Biscay.

*Alan Robinson*

#### **IN THE NEWS.**

Those of you who carefully scanned the Spring issue of ‘Third Age Matters’ may have noticed two familiar faces on page 81. The news from Wetherby and District U3A showed a photograph of two very surprised Meadowcrofts. When they decided which U3A to join after their move north, they made a lucky choice as they became its 1,000th member. They received a bottle of champagne from the Mayor of Wetherby with a bouquet of flowers for Rosemary. We also got an honorary mention as Ron said: “We moved to the district last February and having been members of Aylesbury Vale U3A for over ten years decided to seek out a lively U3A here. We both know the hard work that goes into running a U3A, so I accepted the award on behalf of all the members.”

## RHS MALVERN SPRING FESTIVAL:

Many happy members headed off to the Malvern Spring Festival again. Several commented that they preferred it to the bigger London events, although with traffic jams stretching their travelling time to four hours they may have had second thoughts. It was a very hot day but with plant boxes and trolleys at the ready (not forgetting the wallets) they plunged happily into the crowds under clear blue skies. Not only were there stalls from most of the leading growers and plant specialists to be plundered but that day was also being recorded by the TV cameras for that evening's edition of 'Gardeners' World'. Some of us watched Carol Klein being interviewed, and hoped to be home for that evening's broadcast, but another 4 hour journey through heavy traffic scuppered that plan. So – no U3A stars on the screen.

You could also talk with Alan Titchmarsh, Christine Walkden and a host of other gardening greats. There were five separate theatres at which you could share in their expert advice and enthusiasm.



Gay Hancock wondered whether these carnivorous plants would like to share her sandwiches !

Some headed straight for the Floral Marquee, or the wonderful Show Gardens. Others were more interested in the latest specialist garden equipment or garden furniture. There was a daily demonstration at the Potting Bench Theatre in the floral Marquee. In true U3A tradition nameless members headed straight for the Food and Drink Pavilion where again there were talks and demonstration on all things culinary. The only

problem with this day out is deciding where to go first and what to buy. It is a good thing that coaches have big storage spaces, and helpful drivers willing to change them into mini greenhouses! The only down-side ?

When you get home you have to do a lot of gardening to get your new acquisitions in place while the weather lasts!

While Meryll Coe was fascinated by the woodcutter's cottage in one of the show gardens



## WELCOME TO YORKSHIRE!

It's amazing what you can pack into seven days when you try! This Study Tour was no exception. We managed three towns (Scarborough, Whitby and Knaresborough, plus Bridlington for the more independent travellers), a city (York), three National Trust properties (Kedleston Hall, Nunnington Hall and Belton House), a ride on the North Yorkshire Railway, a visit to the World of James Herriot, a riverside walk and afternoon tea at our leaders' new home. And the study? This came in the form of Ron's comprehensive quiz, which covered a range of topics from 306 AD to the present day and gave us a huge amount of information on what we were seeing. Did we cheat? Yes, of course we did – it's in the rules! Based at our hotel in Scarborough, we travelled far and wide across North Yorkshire. We all liked Whitby with its many Ghauts (alleyways)

*Continued overleaf*



Daphne in our Scarborough hotel

its striking ruined abbey and its famous fish and chips! We rode from there on the steam train across the moors to Pickering and memories were kindled of an era when a one pound fare could take you the best part of a hundred miles. In York there was too much to see in one day, but between us we managed most of it, including the Minster of course, which looked more like a theatre set as it was made ready to televise the Mystery Plays. In Knaresborough – a real gem – the Town Crier took us on a tour of the famous Town Windows and explained the town’s history as depicted in them, while in Scarborough we could explore the parks and sandy bays and ride up from the beach on the 1881 Central

Tramway.

The World of James Herriot in Thirsk gave us a fascinating insight into the life of a 1940’s vet. We saw a house in which our parents and grandparents would have felt quite at home, plus a rather gruesome collection of veterinary instruments. The town had recently welcomed the Tour de Yorkshire, and the unusual knitwear covering every conceivable object from bollards to bicycles provided a colourful backdrop to our visit. Our three National Trust properties were very different. Kedleston Hall was never meant to be a family residence but a showcase for the finest collection of paintings, sculpture and furnishings belonging to the Curzon family. Nunnington on the other hand is a picturesque Yorkshire manor and friendly family home known for its enchanting house and lovely gardens, while Belton is often cited as being the perfect example of an English country house estate with its magnificent collections, its deer park and its formal gardens.



We didn't like to ask what Sheila was doing – though James Herriot would know !

And so we bade farewell to Ron and Rosemary at the end of their final Study Tour. We thank them for all the pleasure they have given to so many people over the years and wish them well for the future.

*Jan & Gay Hancock*



Knaresborough was full of surprises. The Town Crier especially invited to give us a guided tour with one of the famous windows; knitted bollards; and tea in their new house with Ron & Rosemary Meadowcroft.





Paddington Bear has found a new admirer (Val Sheppard) at Paddington Basin

And Singing in the Rain—just to prove that it does sometimes rain on a London walk

Both photos by Tony Poth



#### **SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

**WEDNESDAYS 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY & 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER:** Coffee Mornings for members old and new to meet, chat and learn more about the U3A. Meet at the Broad Leys P.H. at 10.30 a.m. Cost now £2 per head for unlimited cups of coffee (or tea) but be quick if you want a second biscuit!

**WEDNESDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST:** Hatfield House. Depart Jansel Square 09.00. Estimated cost £28. Coach is now full but it's worth putting your name down on reserve list.

**THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER:** The Black Country Museum. Depart Jansel Square 09.00. Estimated Cost £34.

**THURSDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER:** Chatham Historic Dockyard. Depart Jansel Square 09.00. Cost £35 including coach, tickets and tour.

A reminder that we put the lists up three months ahead of each trip, with payment being taken two months in advance. In June, there will be two lists ( as no August meeting.) The lists going up will be for the September and October visits.

Last date for copy for the Autumn Newsletter will be August 1st 2016 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. 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 of course to all of you who send me articles and photographs. It would be nice if any of you taking part in outings or visits could volunteer to write a few lines, and take a few photographs too!