

AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No. 80

September 2016

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMEN:

It's nearly a year since we took on the role of joint chairmen of our U3A. We are happy to offer our services for another year and to put ourselves forward for election at the AGM. However, if someone wishes to serve the full term of three years then we will stand aside. We feel that being joint chairmen works very well without being too onerous, and it's certainly interesting and thought provoking especially meeting with other U3A's in the County.

Jean Ashton, our Vice Chairman, has liaised with the Aylesbury Twinning Association and we hope to develop and share ideas and experiences with our counterparts in Borg en Bresse in France. The committee intends to buy a modern, lightweight projector, which could be used by any group. We are trying to find one that would be suitable for our communications and technology.

The plans for our Christmas monthly meeting extravaganza are developing well. The choir and the ukulele group are practicing very hard and the final rehearsals of poems, monologues, jokes and the five minute pantomime begin in September. We would like to thank Meryll Coe and her Succession Planning team for their hard work in recruiting new committee members to be elected at the AGM in October. However, we still need people who are willing to help at the monthly meetings. The work includes :-

1) Preparation and clearing of the hall. 2) Meeters and greeters. 3) Tea rota.

We were amazed to learn that some ladies have been doing the teas for about 20 years under the guidance of Dot Simmons and we would like to say a big thank-you and hope they get a break soon.

On a personal note, we have enjoyed the challenge of learning the ukulele, considering neither of us has ever played a musical instrument. Our joint interests include gardening and we are in the process of creating a small wild life pond as well as catching up with the work that should have been carried out during the cold wet spring and early summer months. Finally, Greig was very encouraged to discover that Monty Don's carrots had failed, just like his. Hope you all enjoyed the summer and are looking forward to the U3A activities in the Autumn.

Lynne Dawson and Greig Sneddon

NEWS FROM GROUPS OLD AND NEW:

THE MILITARY HISTORY GROUP

Well we seem to have got off to a good start in 2016, with interest from both Aylesbury and other surrounding branch members. We have had some interesting talks from members such as 'The RNLI in WW1&2' and an outside speaker Frances Hansford from the Trenchard Museum at Halton RAF base, on WW1 military training at Halton, which was well received. We will be having further interesting talks during the year, with a group discussion on the why's and where-fores of the Battle of Jutland, which took place 100 years ago. By the time you receive this newsletter we will also have paid a September visit to Bletchley.



In October we are joining up with the coach outing organiser Gay Hancock for a joint outing to Chatham Historic Dockyard. So as you can see we are on the map so to speak and anyone interested please do come and join us as you will be most welcome.

Ken Satterthwaite

GENTLE WALKS GROUP:



Those of you who are devotees of the T.V. programme 'Country File' will have recently seen a programme totally devoted to the British Wildflower Meadow. Well we beat them to it! Our Group visited the meadow at the College Lake Reserve just a day or two earlier, and the meadow was in full bloom. It was spectacular. In other years visiting this meadow and the one in Wendover along the Heron Path, we have sometimes been too early or too late. This time we hit it right on the head and a very satisfying time was had by all.

Shirley Stokes

MEMBERSHIP—AN URGENT REMINDER

We should like to remind all members that the membership subs are now due- £15.00 for Full and £12.00 for Associates. A gentle caution that any not paid **before** 1st. October will automatically be taken off the membership listing, and those members outstanding will have to re-apply as Associates, should they wish to continue. The list of Associates at present is over 60 members! Any foreseeable problems, please contact the Membership Secretary. Dan McGregor: e-mail [membership @avu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@avu3a.org.uk).



PIP RANCE LOOKS BACK AT THE SUMMER PAST

'Tis the summer of two thousand and sixteen,
With temperatures hotter than we've ever seen.

For months we've been waiting for summer to dawn.

It's here now, phew it ain't half warm

For many a month the sky was grey,
Now it's clear blue skies and not only today.

The heating been on and off but now, we want cool.

Keep curtains drawn is a good temperature rule.

Keep drinking lots of water,
Stay out of the mid day sun.
Put on plenty of sunscreen.
And a high factor one.

Do not over exert yourself,
Take things that bit more slow.
Only half an hour in the sun,
Will see your energy go.

Enjoy the warmth,
And remember to water your plants lots,
Or you'll have parched garden lawns,
And shriveled flower and vegetable plots.

And at night,
Even a sheet is too much.
Your forehead perspiring, leaking,
And your skin's hot to the touch.

But enjoy the sunshine,
Take care in the heat,
Enjoy lots of flavours of ice cream,
That surely is a treat.

It's hotter here than the Continent,
Yes warmer than abroad.
You don't have to jet off,
Isn't that a good reward?

So make the most of the sunshine.
Have some silly water fun.
Thank goodness for summer.
Enjoy the sun.

Pip Rance 20th July 2016

PETER GASSON ASKS—DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Currently we have email addresses for only three-quarters of our members. We'd like to have all your addresses so that we can send you information which won't wait for a Newsletter or monthly meeting. We are also considering sending the Newsletter by email to cut down on printing and postage costs. If you haven't yet given us your email address but are willing to do so, or if you have changed your email address since you last filled in a membership renewal form, could you please send it to me Secretary@avu3a.org.uk and to the Membership Secretary Membership@avu3a.org.uk

Your email address will be available only to members of the Committee and will not be passed on to any outside body. Members who do not use email may rest assured that they will continue to receive a printed copy of the Newsletter and other Aylesbury Vale U3A publications.

You may remember that in the June edition Dot and Tony Simmons invited readers to provide a caption for these two photographs taken in Dartmouth. There was not a great response, but herewith are a couple of suggestions.



I see no trawlers !

Where are all the fish?

The one that didn't get away.

Are they shooting another film?



John—don't do it!

Will it hold my weight?

I know I should have bought my own tie.

Lost your ship ?

GARDENING GROUP:

The Gardening Group was one of our most popular—and largest—groups and is much missed. We may have a volunteer to restart a Gardening Group, BUT they would like to do it with a partner. If anyone is willing to give this a go please contact groups@avu3a.org.uk.

SCIENCE

The recent insert in Third Age Matters has provoked some interest in a Science Group. If anyone would like to have a go at starting such a group please contact groups@avu3a.org.uk. There is a national Science co-ordinator and much material at the resource library, so lots of advice and help available.

Hazel Burgess

When one of our readers was looking for something on his computer recently he came across the following unsolicited fact at the bottom of the screen. 'Aylesbury Vale U3A ranked 756,593 in the U.K.' It sounds impressive but what does it mean!

SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP

Unfortunately, due to medical reasons, I will not be continuing with the Social History Group. I would like to thank all members for their support over the past 22 years and hope someone will come forward to continue it. The booking at The Church of the Holy Spirit has been cancelled for September and all following meetings. Thank you once again Geoff Young.



As many of you know Geoff has given sterling service to the U3A in many ways. His contribution to the Social History Group will be much missed, but as you will see from the article below, he will still be supporting us.

THAMES VALLEY NETWORK: www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk

Unfortunately I have not been able to keep you updated on the activities of the Network but I hope to rectify that in the coming months. For those members who are interested in the Study Days put on by the Network these can all be found on the website, address above. This will enable you to download all the information about events together with application forms which can all be printed off. I can hear the cries coming 'We do not have a computer or printer!' If you are interested ask your Group Leader to see if they can oblige, or a friend may be able to help. There are still some interesting events to come this year, including 'Robotics is the Future' on 23rd November. This is a shared learning project organised jointly by Oxford Brookes and U3A Thames Valley Network. It is a really great opportunity to study some of the elements of robotics and how they may affect our lives and those of future generations and to assess how both age groups perceive their impact. There will be 150 places for U3A members and 150 for OBU students.

I was looking through the website for the 'Historic Footpaths'. This is something which has been going on for about 2/3 years now and all the walks were in Oxfordshire and Berkshire—but none in Buckinghamshire. I know that we have some active Walking Groups and we do have some historic footpaths in our County, but obviously so far there has been no interest in recording these walks.

If by any chance you would like to find out more on how to record your walks, Patsy Thornton of Wokingham U3A is the person to contact—patsy@thorntac.co.uk. This is all part of the Riverside Project and they have produced a very good exhibition display illustrating all of the walks with maps. There has been some arrangement with the Ordnance Survey to be able to download some of the walks, although I believe that this licence runs out in October. As I have said ask Patsy Thornton for the latest news and she has all the details.

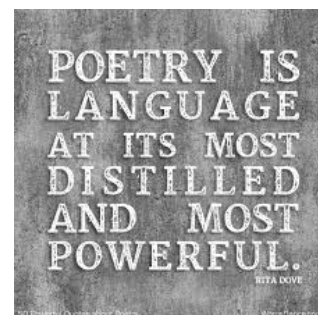


Taken on the TVN Riverside Project. See the website for more study day photos.

I hope to be able to attend the next meeting of the TV Network and I will pass on any information I get from there. The meetings are themselves very usefully because of the interesting information you can glean, not only about specific activities but also how other U3A's run their organisations and solve their problems.

THE PLEASURE OF POETRY:

Some may think there is no such thing as 'pleasure' in poetry because they just don't like it. Maybe they have been put off by having to learn something by rote at school, or having to write out a poem as a punishment (which looking back is a stupid thing to set and can put you off any piece of literature for good). In my case that was 'The Lady of Shalott' (for some minor misdemeanour of course!). Or perhaps you just didn't like the English Teacher. But sometimes, having to learn something or study it for GCSE can awaken an interest. For me it was 'Cargoes' by John Masefield, swiftly followed by Kipling's 'A Smugglers Song' and 'Sussex' (I am a Sussex girl).



There will be different reasons and different poems for all members of our Poetry Group but the one thing we have in common is that we look forward to, and enjoy, our poetry meetings. We have a theme each time and, as I have written in the Directory entry a lot of the pleasure lies in looking up to see what poems we can find. (There have been occasions when the search has become desperate!) The most innocent sounding topic can be hard to research. In the last few months we had an easy time with 'My Favourite Things' and 'Geography' but found poems about 'Science' and 'Secrets' much harder, and we never want to hear about 'Mythical Gods and Goddesses' again. That may be the hardest one we have had to struggle with but we usually get there – more or less. The subjects which have inspired poets can also be surprising. Who'd have thought that a London Bus, or Washing Up could be poetic!

While you are looking of course you come across previously unknown poems or poets whom you would like to read more about. Each member is charged with finding out a little about their choices. Since I have joined the group I have come across many modern poets who have become great favourites; Charles Causley, Elizabeth Jennings and U.A.Fanthorpe among them. If you would like to make a start I am sure that you would find something you like in their words. They all have that rare gift of being able to express what they want in just a few words and you get the picture straight away. Or you may prefer old favourites from a long way 'back in the day' as they say. We don't understand all we read but we have many good discussions and, truthfully, we learn a great deal from them especial when we go off at a tangent, and after all we are all meant to be about life-long learning in the U3A

So why not find yourself some poetry and hopefully you will re-discover pleasure in it- or even join one of our Poetry Groups.

Sue John

POCKET DIARIES

The U3A pocket diary for 2017 has a red cover and the cost has been held at £2.00. There is no need to order. Diaries will be on sale at the September and October monthly meetings.



Peter Gasson Secretary

THE GREAT POTTERY THROW DOWN: BY SHEILA THOMPSON

Many of you may have watched the above B.B.C. programme which was filmed in the historic Middleport Pottery in Stoke on Trent—not the first T.V. programme to use this site as an episode of ‘The Antiques Road Show’ had also been recorded there. It was one of the few surviving potteries in the ‘Five Towns’ area so well described in Arnold Bennett’s novels. The Middleport Pottery was founded in 1889 by William Leigh, and for five generations the factory produced the well known ‘Burleighware’ including the blue and white china known to many of us today. But after more than a hundred years success the factory’s fortunes suffered a decline and the pottery faced closure. This caused much dismay to the local skilled workforce and also to a young couple Rosemary and William Dorling. William’s mother and my mother were sisters, but as his family spent a lot of time in India he stayed with us frequently and I looked on him almost as a brother.



The Bluebird Jug

For many years the Dorling's had sold the blue and white china in their shop in Winchester. In fact one of their wedding presents when they married in 1990 had been ‘The Bluebird Jug’ hand thrown in the pottery in 1890 which had left the factory packed in straw on a narrowboat to eventually arrive in Hampshire 100 years later after an unknown journey.

William and Rosemary took the bold decision to try to save the pottery selling their house; giving up their shop and approaching relatives for financial support. Finally they put in an offer to buy the pottery which was accepted and in the summer of 1999 they became the new owners of the Middleport Pottery. Needless to say their Bluebird Jug travelled with them to their new home, and its place of birth. They were now the proud owners and custodians of this national treasure. Due to their enthusiastic management and the commitment of the workforce the business thrived until 2010 when they felt that they had earned their retirement. Prince Charles’ Regeneration Trust acquired the buildings while Denby took over the pottery where they still produce the blue and white china. Let us join in J.B. Priestley's words “May the ovens never grow cold and may Stoke on Trent, the pottery town, still continue to be the heart of British craftsmanship”

But Rose and William should always be remembered for saving this historic site, for without their courage and dedication the B.B.C. would not have found such a special venue for their Great Pottery Programme.



A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Phil Drye, Irene Scannell, Adrian Fox, Pauline Yerby, Daphne Hunter, Vivien Leeming, John and Mary Amos, Janice Halsey, Ann Tysoe, Peter Mussett, Helen Hanley, and Jane Scott.

We often receive some lovely photos for the newsletter and have no room to print them in the relevant issue, so we thought that you might like to see some of them in retrospect !



Frances and Richard Clark admiring the New Inn in Gloucester, described as the finest example of a medieval galleried inn in Britain today.

Taken by Gay Hancock on the July visit.



Tony Poth watched members enjoying their lunch at Mapledurham House in June after sailing down the River Thames from Caversham. And for the train spotters—Trains at Alresford Depot. Tech Talk - 34007 West Country Class 'Wadebridge'

Gay Hancock took this photograph on board the Thames cruise boat, where the crew member is holding up a glass of water just taken from the river to show passengers how unpolluted it is!





Moira Bishop was fascinated by this Trug Maker at the Malvern Show

Our Happy Campers—A group photo at the end of a very successful camp at Hereford.

Back row: Lynne Dawson, Greig Sneddon, Gerhard Croeser, Chris Quirke, Hanlie Croeser, Judy Eeles, Pat Quirke, Gavin Ewan.

Front row: Steve Edwards, Roger Walker, Heather Edwards and Roger Walker. Plus the dogs - Megan and Ivy.

Photograph taken on a timer by Gavin



Wine Group 2 at their July meeting. Well.....someone has to do it !

Photo from Linda Wells

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:



TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER: VISIT TO DORNEY COURT (HHA) AND THE CHILTERN VALLEY WINERY & BREWERY.

Dorney Court near Windsor is one of England's finest Tudor manor houses, where little has changed in 600 years. Here we will have a guided tour of the house. In the afternoon we will visit the Chiltern Valley Winery & Brewery. This is not our local one, but is out towards Henley. It has a Royal Warrant and produces a range of high quality white, red and sparkling wines as well as real ales using traditional techniques. We will have a guided tour and of course a tasting! Perhaps you



would like to buy some Christmas presents for your friends?

Cost £45pp. (includes both tours and the tasting). Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.45, return 5.45 approx. **Limited availability. Please contact us at outings@avu3a.org.uk**

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER : VISIT TO HAMPTON COURT PALACE

There is so much to see here, as well as always something new, so if you have been before, don't let that put you off! The first weekend in the month is dedicated to the Tudor days, when extra events are planned and this month of course the Palace is decorated for Christmas. Among new things to see are the Chocolate Kitchen (the only royal chocolate kitchen in Britain) and The Baroque Story film. You can watch them roasting meat in the great Tudor kitchens, see the Great Hall, Henry VIII's apartments and his crown, visit the Chapel Royal and William III's apartments, and explore the Georgian story and the story of the young Henry VIII. The gardens and the Great Maze are open too and nice to stroll in, even on a winter's day, and of course there are cafes and shops for those all-important souvenirs and Christmas presents.



Cost £29 pp. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 9.00, return 5.25 approx.

WEDNESDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER and WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER:

These may be the final two Coffee Mornings for new, associate and full members to meet and chat about the U3A. As always we meet at 10. 30 a.m. at the Broad Leys P.H. Unless we find a new Social Secretary for next year these much enjoyed events which have been held on alternate months since the U3A was formed will come to an end. We are grateful to Maxine who has done sterling service in arranging them. Please come forward if you could take them on! They will be much missed, and provide an ideal opportunity to socialise with your fellow members.

SPEAKERS CORNER

WEDNESDAY 12TH 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.

WEDNESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER: LOUISE REED—'MEET EMMELINE PANKHURST'

Louise will take the part of Suffragette Emmeline. In this costumed recreation she will vividly present the character and actions of one of the most significant women in British history. In this talk you will hear of Mrs. Pankhurst's early endeavours to promote "Votes for Women", get a brief guide to suitable clothing in which to "rush the House of Commons" and also details of life in Holloway Prison.

WEDNESDAY 14TH DECEMBER: YOUR VERY OWN—AVU3A HAS GOT TALENT:

Your very own Christmas Concert team are pleased to announce the details of a very special December entertainment. It will consist of songs from a choir, music from a Ukulele band, together with poems, sketches and monologues, all performed by our own AVU3A members. The meeting will finish with a good old-fashioned Christmas Sing Song.

Alan Robinson Speaker's Secretary

AN APOLOGY TO DAPHNE SHEARER:

My caption for the photograph of Daphne taken on the stairs at the Royal Hotel during the 2016 Study visit to Scarborough which appeared in the June issue of the newsletter was upsetting for Daphne.

I did not for one moment think that any readers would take it literally, and I apologise unreserved for causing Daphne some distress.

Shirley Stokes (Editor)

THE NEW U3A STRUMMERS:

Who are these people furtively approaching the Meadowcroft Community Centre each clutching several long canvas bags? If you are a devotee of old American gangster films you might be forgiven for thinking of those sinister Mafia hit men disguising their sawn off shotguns, But no, there is to be no massacre (unless it be of the music) for these are the members of the U3A Strummers – the new ukulele group of the U3A. (Is it a genuine mistake that each time I type 'strummers' my computer insists that I mean 'strumpets'? Is it trying to tell me something?) We file silently past the bingo players using the foyer and go to whichever hall is available to set up our magic circle of chairs, and battle once again with the music stands which appear to have grown new arms each time we unfold them. Then we settle down for a couple of hours of trying to stretch stiff fingers over the four strings, and keep in time often unsuccessfully – and over all looms the threat of that Christmas Concert. So why do we submit ourselves to this particular form of torture. Is it because we have already spent something over £60 buying our instrument, music stand, and tuner? The ladies involved have also had to sacrifice lovely long finger nails. No, the answer is simple.



We are all enjoying ourselves immensely. This is the usual companionable U3A Group where nobody really minds if we hit a wrong note, or lose the steady beat of the rhythm. Urging us all on is Andy our indefatigable leader. The very soul of patience. Now he can play his ukulele. He can play it backwards or forwards or behind his head, while belting out Sinatra-like the words of any song which takes his fancy (not necessarily the one we are trying to play) while performing a nimble waltz fit for 'Strictly Come Dancing'. His favourite phrase like Professor Henry Higgins in 'My Fair Lady' is "S/he's got it! By George s/he's got it!" And by the end of our afternoon we nearly have got it! We are sent away with our 'homework' for the next couple of weeks, and lots of praise for practising regularly and improving greatly as we go along. We are assured that one morning we will wake up and realise that we have indeed 'got it'. (Andy promised us). In the meantime we will just have fun.

Seriously though, we would recommend it to anyone. Learning a new skill at any age is rewarding, and this is one we will be able to astound our friends and family with – and we can strum away happily when on our own. We shall carry on with hope in our hearts!

A Happy U3A Strummer

Last date for copy for the Christmas Newsletter will be November 9th 2016 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! Traditionally at Christmas we include a page of your humorous contributions, and we are running out of your past submissions. So—more please!

Thanks as always to our Secretary Peter Gasson for help with the ordering and printing and amending the copy for reproducing on the website and, to Alan Robinson for vital proof reading and, of course, to all of you who send in articles and photographs. Keep them coming.