

# AYLESBURY VALE U.3.A.



Issue No 82

## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMEN

March 2017

We hope you all enjoyed your Christmas and New Year Celebrations and had a chance to catch up with loved ones. We were delighted that the December meeting, with the variety show, was very well received, with only a small number of negative comments. It was a big gamble of ours to approach the committee with the suggestion that we "do our own thing", as opposed to bringing in entertainment from outside the organisation. Once we began the process, we knew, from the calibre and enthusiasm of the volunteers, that we were on to a winner. This was especially true with Sheila and Andy on board, as they have had years of experience of organising this type of entertainment. You will be glad to know that plans are already being put in place to have another show next year with maybe a similar format, but entirely new material. It's a pity because Greig will miss saying "I am so handsome".

During 2017, there are many exciting events being planned including study tours to Wales and Poland. Joe Southall has also organised an interesting range of monthly talks for us. We are trying to address the problems of visually impaired members by asking for suggestions about the format and the typeface of the newsletter.

Other initiatives the committee are exploring include:-

- feasibility of using the Beacon Software System to replace the present administrative system which is cumbersome and expensive. There are a growing number of U3A's already using or implementing the system.
- Removing the need for the Associate class of membership which will depend on the results of a three month trial.

We are delighted that there has been renewed interest in the gardening group, and hope it now goes from strength to strength. We'll soon be seeing our spring flowers appear, thank goodness, and hope they bring joy and energy to everyone, marking the end of the dreary days of Winter. When we are not involved with U3A activities, Greig loves to play bridge at Stoke Mandeville Bridge club, (and then brag about his scores) and Lynne can be found in her craft room or having coffee with friends.

Finally, may we say that we hope you enjoy the efforts of your committee and group leaders in the coming year, and ask you to pay particular attention to the item on Page 12 regarding the future of this newsletter.

*Greig and Lynne*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

### **HISTORY GROUP: First and Third Tuesdays— Church of the Holy Spirit, Bedgrove**

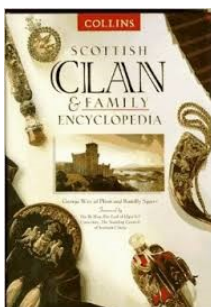
We always welcome new members and I thought you might like to have details of our 2017 programme and meeting dates even though some of these dates have now gone by.

7 February – Poland – The rise and fall of a great power (Richard Clark)

21 February – Alfred, Edward and Athelstan – the making of England (Paul Rosentall)

7 March – The French Revolution (Richard Clark)

21 March – Causes and Effects of the Russian Revolution (Paul Rosentall)



4 April – The Scottish Clan System (Norman McRae)

In addition to Norman's kind offer to cover the above topic, I would welcome any offers to talk about a subject of your choice for 20-30 minutes to follow on from Norman's talk, so that we can discuss both topics. I hope that something here will interest and excite you, and that you will be able to join us for some or all of the various sessions on offer. Please note them in your diaries.

*Paul Rosentall*



## **SOME THOUGHTS FROM OUR GROUPS COORDINATOR:**

Reading through our New Directory I am heartened by the number of groups that are being so well supported and the diverse choices that are on offer to us all. It is always healthy to have such a variety from which to enjoy our leisure time, but we can always accommodate more ! Anyone who feels that they would like to start a new group, but is unsure how to begin please talk with me and I am sure that we can move forward.



I am in the process of arranging the Annual Group Leaders Meeting (with coffee and cakes!) which is usually held in April at the Aylesbury Bowls Club. I will confirm the details of the time and date shortly.

*Jackie Rickard*

## HOUSEKEEPING NOTICES:

### 2017 Programme Card:

There are two incorrect telephone numbers on the above card. The correct numbers are as follows:-

Jean Ashton – 01296 489667

Jackie Rickard – 01296 488700

My apologies



Illustration by Chris Gash

*Moira Bishop*  
Secretary

## DO YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY READING THIS NEWSLETTER?

If so we would like to hear from you, as your U3A Executive Committee is exploring the possibility of producing a Large Print version of the Newsletter. This would be for named members who cannot get the full enjoyment and information from their newsletter if perhaps the Font size is too small for them. (See the advice below)

If you find that a larger size font would enable you to read more easily and would be interested in having a Large Print version, please let me know. You can do this by putting your name on a list that will be available on the secretary's desk in the foyer of the Main Meeting Hall or e-mailing me Moira Bishop on :-



[Secretary@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@avu3a.org.uk)

## SOME ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS ABOUT ACCESS FOR THOSE WITH LOWER VISION ...for your comments

Use 14 pt Arial Font (This is a sample) We use Times Roman 12 (like this )

A word or line of Block capitals will probably just be a blur. We use only for headlines—should we change as recommended. E.g. **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS** changes to **News from the Groups**.

Written text in columns reaches more people than across the page text. People can scan the columns more easily and those with really poor sight can follow from one line to the next

I can easily read this so I don't feel a change would help me very much.

I find this format carries on across the much easier and whole section. Is it quicker to read than time for a change ? that opposite which

## FIND A GROUP—WEBSITE UPDATE

Since the last Newsletter there has been a useful addition to the Study Groups Page. As I am sure you are aware there are around forty groups and accessing information on them, via the website, involved scrolling through the entries until you reached the group of interest to you. As the entries are in alphabetical order, if you had an interest in joining, for example, a Wine Appreciation group, this meant a lot of scrolling to obtain the information you required!



Not anymore! You are now able to ask the computer to jump straight to the Study Group of interest to you by simply clicking on the name of the group from the list that immediately follows the general introduction to the page. There is no restriction on how many groups you can access at one time, simply take the arrow (known as a cursor) back to the list at the top and click on the next group you would like to look at and the computer will display it for you.

Grateful thanks for this useful new facility has to go to Mike Bean for the hours of computer programming it took him, to set this function up. Mike is the creator of this website and he is always happy to provide Marilyn and I with support when required, which is much appreciated.

### *Maira Bishop*



This year saw the 9th Annual Burns Night Charity Supper organised by Lynn and Greig and enjoyed by 88 people, many of them U3A members.

£1,000 was raised for the Bucks Young Carers Charity, which will spend it on activities for young children who spend most of their time caring for adults and other needy members of their families.

Congratulations to them both for supporting this worthy charity.

The photograph above shows our Joint Chairmen with the Cheque which they will be presenting. The headless man on the right is Greig 'addressing the Haggis' in the customary way, before it is eaten at the traditional supper.

Both photos from John Harwood.



## **SPEAKERS CORNER:**

### **WEDNESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL: - TIMOTHY WALKER— THE LAND OF GIANTS AND VOLCANOES**

From 1986 to 2014 Timothy worked at the Oxford Botanical Garden and Harcourt Arboretum and from 2002 he was its Director.



The Pacific States of America are home to a wonderful array of huge trees and volcanoes, in addition there are some spectacular alpine meadows and some of the most dramatic coastline in the world. This talk looks at the botany of the region, and the influence of the volcanoes.

### **WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY: - MARGARET WATSON—HARP RECITAL.**

A highly experienced harpist, Margaret performs all over the U.K. delighting many audiences with her varied repertoire and often resplendent costumes. She has recently performed for HRH The Princess Royal, HRH Princess Alexandra, and HRH Prince Edward and Sophie Countess of Wessex. And now Aylesbury Vale U3A!

### **WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE: - BILL DAVIES—ON AND OFF THE FOOTPLATE.**

The title of this talk is a brief resume of Bill's working life on the railway. Starting as an Engine Cleaner, then Fireman on steam trains and a driver at Charing Cross. The last 29 years were based at Bedford as Driver Manager. It is a light hearted talk with plenty of anecdotes, a little history and some notable experiences.

*Joe Southall*



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

Jeanette Smith; Richard Peters; Wendy Peters; Ann Watson; Jeanne Ware; Linda Roberts; Irene Rayner; Dave Weidner; Linda East; Angela Mundy; Lynne Pask; Jane McCarthy; Trudy Cox; Theresa Guilfoyle; Leonie Toal; Jill Hendey; Roy Kelly; Marjorie Cullen; Margaret Franklin; Rosemarie Kraftchenko; Sue Clowe; John Wilford; Janice Wilford; Jerry Fagan; Jill Mead; Keith Mead; Ray Pierce and Beryl Sheldrake.



## NEW OUTINGS FOR 2017

### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May. A visit for art lovers – Sudbury and Flatford, Suffolk.**

We start with coffee and an introductory talk at Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, which is a museum as well as a gallery. The permanent exhibition explores the life and works of Thomas Gainsborough, who grew up in this lovely Georgian townhouse. After time for lunch in Sudbury, we are off to Constable Country. At Flatford we walk through fields on a guided tour to discover the locations of some of Constable's major paintings. You can visit the new Constable exhibition, wander round the pretty hamlet and enjoy tea in the tearoom before we leave for home.

£36 per person. Includes entry to Gainsborough's House with introductory talk and coffee, and guided tour at Flatford. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.00 return 7.15 approx.

### **Monday 12th June. Lacock village and Bowood House, Wiltshire**

Lacock is a National Trust property famous as a TV and film location (Pride and Prejudice, Cranford, Downton Abbey etc). Lacock Abbey is a quirky country house built on the foundations of a former nunnery. Visitors can see Henry Fox Talbot's study and the medieval cloister. The museum in the village celebrates the achievements of Fox Talbot in the invention of photography. This year a new collection of hundreds of cameras and toys from the 18th century to the late 1980s as well as nearly 3,500 photographic images will be on show here. We spend the morning in the village for you to see some of these sights.



We go on to Bowood House for lunch. This is a Georgian country House with interiors by Robert Adam and a garden designed by Capability Brown. Sights to see are Adam's library, the laboratory where Dr Priestley discovered oxygen in 1774 and the family chapel. There is also a remarkable collection of family heirlooms spanning 250 years on display. There will be time to visit the tearoom before we return home!

Cost £30 per person. This includes entry to Bowood but no meals. Lacock is £11.50 extra for non – NT members. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 7.45 return 7.00 pm approx.

### **Tuesday 18th July: Two National Trust houses in Kent - Knole & Ightham Mote**

Originally an archbishop's palace, Knole passed through royal hands in 1603 to the Sackville family, who still own part of it today. The house is undergoing massive conservation and restoration and new areas are being opened to the public every year. We spend the morning here and you will have a chance to buy lunch in the newly refurbished café. Seven miles away is Ightham Mote, a medieval moated manor house which carries you through 700 years of history. It is not a 'show home' for one period of time but a living 'blog' highlighting the changing fashion and needs of its owners. There will be time for tea here before we leave for home.



*Cost and timings overleaf*

Cost £ 21 pp. Knole is £10.65 extra and Ightham Mote £10 extra for non-NT members.  
Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.00, return 7.00pm

### **Wednesday 9th August: Ely and Angelsey Abbey, Cambridgeshire**

Ely has one of England's largest and most beautiful Cathedrals, and is also home to the only National Museum dedicated to stained glass. You can visit Oliver Cromwell's house and explore Ely's lovely waterside area, which is an attraction in itself. We spend the morning here, with time for lunch.



In the afternoon we call in at Angelsey Abbey, which is primarily noted for its spectacular gardens. The most visited areas are the rose and dahlia gardens, which should be at their best in August. You can also visit the water mill and the house, a converted priory filled with fine furnishings, books, paintings, silver and rare clocks.

Cost £19 approx. Admission Angelsey Abbey £11. 90 for non NT members.  
Depart Jansel Square 8. 00 return 7. 00 pm approx.

### **Thursday 7th Sept: Woburn Abbey and Safari Park**

The Abbey has belonged to the Bedfords for 400 years. There are 22 rooms to discover with over 250 works of art, a unique grotto, the State Apartments, the Chinese Room with its decorative wallpaper, and underground vaults containing a huge gold and silver collection. We spend the morning here exploring the house and lovely gardens, with time for coffee and lunch.

In the afternoon we take a drive round the Safari Park with a guide on board to tell us all about the animals. Afterwards there will be time to see the smaller animals on foot and/or to relax in the tea room before we come home.

Cost £42 pp. Includes all tickets and safari guide, but no meals. Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 9.30, return 5.30pm approx.

### **Tuesday 3rd October: Gloucestershire Warwickshire Stream Railway and Sudeley Castle**



We board the train at Cheltenham racecourse for a 25-minute ride to Winchcombe, passing through some beautiful Cotswold scenery on the way. We then take a short drive to Sudeley Castle for coffee and a short introductory talk while we drink, before we go off to explore. Sudeley castle was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the few castles that is still a residence. It has a long history of royal

owners and visitors *continued overleaf*

( Katharine Parr lived and died here and is buried in the chapel.) The castle rooms contain many fascinating treasures from Roman times to the present day, the pheasantry houses rare birds from around the world and it is all surrounded by ten award-winning gardens. We spend the rest of the day here and you can eat in the restaurant or bring your own food if you prefer.

Cost £41pp. Includes train fare, castle entry, coffee on arrival and introductory talk but no meals.

Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 8.00, return 6.45pm approx.

*Gay and Ian Hancock*

#### **THAMES VALLEY NETWORK.**

[www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk)



The T.V. network has again produced a full programme for you in 2017.



**Aspects of the Social History of the Thames Valley.** The first of these is to be held on the 22 March at River and Rowing Museum Henley. I have heard that this is now fully booked but they are repeating this on the 17<sup>th</sup> May at the same venue.

Cost £17.50. Applications from the above website and as space is fairly limited make sure you get your application in early.

**Heritage Crafts and Industries. 12<sup>th</sup> April** at the Parish Rooms, Wokingham.

**The work of William Morris. 10<sup>th</sup> August** at Kelmscott Manor.

Once again there is more information on the website including application forms. Whilst you are on there if you look under Events Programme 2017 you will see that they have a further 13 Suggestions for events and if you feel that you could help run one of these events let me know. They are always looking for willing helpers (aren't we all).

As you may know I have not been able to attend the last meetings but I am hoping to rectify this in the future. If you wish to know anything about the TVN contact me and I will try to help if I can, or at least point you in the right direction.

*Geoff Young.*





**THE FIRST EVER  
U3A CHRISTMAS  
REVUE.**

**WITH THANKS TO  
DAN MCGREGOR  
FOR THE PHOTO-  
GRAPHS**



## THE SOUNDS OF THE SIXTIES:



A year after its inaugural meeting, the 'Sounds of the Sixties' group continues to be a popular forum for those who enjoy sharing their teenage experiences and musical memories of that decade. The monthly meetings continue to attract 20-30 participants every time.

The leaders have been particularly grateful for the willingness of those members who have volunteered to give short presentations, supported by their choice of appropriate recordings. The various tastes of these contributors have meant that we have covered a variety of genres, from folk to traditional jazz, through rock, blues and Motown. We have also heard about records banned by the BBC, eccentric record producer Joe Meek and the joys of collecting Beach Boys memorabilia.

A 60s music quiz was held during the Christmas meeting. The winning team consisted of Peter and Barbara Matthews, Paul Fincken, Diane Richardson and Dave Tuffrey. Additional entertainment was provided by members who had brought pictures of themselves taken during those years.

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*Peter and Jean Ashton*



Jean sent us this photo of the Winning Team

## STOP PRESS—FOR YOUR URGENT ATTENTION !

**WEDNESDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST: HALF DAY RIVER TRIP WITH TEA.**

We drive to Folly Bridge in Oxford and board our private boat for a two-hour river cruise to Abingdon, where we have a delicious afternoon tea at the Crown & Thistle Hotel. Hiring a private boat is extremely expensive, but if we can fill this trip, there will be a considerable refund.

Our booking is not guaranteed until we have paid a large deposit and therefore we need to collect this money in **March**.

Cost £47 Depart Jansel Square, Bedgrove 12.15. return 6.00pm approx.

*Gay and Ian Hancock*





**THE AYLESBURY U3A SHOW—CHRISTMAS 2016.  
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO TOOK PART  
PHOTOS BY DAN MCGREGOR**



## 2017 THE CHINESE YEAR OF THE ROOSTER:



January 28th saw the start of the Chinese Year of the Rooster—the 10th of the 12 year Cycle of the Chinese Zodiac Signs. The rooster is the epitome of fidelity and punctuality. For ancestors who had no alarm clocks, the crowing was significant, as it could awaken people to get up and start to work. One Daily Newspaper reported that Chinese visitors were expected to spend £11m. in London over that New Year date as tourists flocked to London to celebrate the ‘Golden Week’ when Chinese people typically take the traditional 7 day holiday.

As always Aylesbury Vale U3A wanting to stay ahead of the game enjoyed their celebrations on Thursday 26th January when 57 members and friends enjoyed another excellent meal in Fairford Leys. Courses too numerous to mention included starters of honey spare Ribs, sesame prawn toast, and crispy seaweed. Then came another 6 or 7 courses. Even with all the diners saying that they couldn't eat another thing, the generous bowls of rice with beef and black bean sauce and sweet and sour chicken disappeared rapidly.

Our grateful thanks to Maxine for arranging another excellent celebration. We do appreciate all her hard work.

### IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER NOTICE

The Newsletter, produced quarterly, is available on line or in printed form. The former is a coloured document with better photographs. Three quarters of our U3A membership now have access to the internet. To read our Newsletter the address is:

<http://www.avu3a.org.uk/> clicking on NEWSLETTER.

The printed Newsletter this month is available for everyone as usual. This notice is for internet users to say if they wish to retain a printed edition or are happy to just use the better internet version.

If you still wish to have a printed copy please contact us either:

- at the registration desk at the March or April meeting; or
- 
- by email to [Members@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Members@avu3a.org.uk).
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If we do not hear from internet users by the April meeting we will assume you are content **not** to collect/have posted a printed Newsletter in future. However, if you find at any time you miss your printed copy just let us know!

*Tony & Jill Davis*  
Joint Membership Secretary

Last date for copy for the June Newsletter will be May 10th so please send any items you have to [Newsletter@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:Newsletter@avu3a.org.uk)