



STOWMARKET AND DISTRICT
LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT
(UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE)
Registered Charity No. 1002987



Newsletter No 24

March 2010

From the Chairman:-

For me this is a new experience, working as your new Chairman, and I would like to thank you all for the marvelous support and encouragement that you have given me. As many of you already know, I am a great believer in the U3A and in all that it does, especially for the retired, for whom it was specifically designed. This is one of the very few organisations in this world that is organised from the bottom up and not from the top down. Therefore you must appreciate that your input is vital and essential for us to advance and to provide the services that can reasonably be expected by any and all of the retired.

Thus one of my aims and ambitions is to increase the number and range of our groups. As you will have seen we are trying to find out what subjects are of interest to you and that you are likely to support. Indeed, the biggest problem is to find persons who are willing and able to host and hopefully lead a new group. I and many others have found that to host a group is a wonderful way of making friends and widening ones social circle. What many do not realise is the joy and pleasure this often brings and very often with a great sense of satisfaction.

Another ambition we have is to try and run a few extra excursions each year provided, of course, that we get the necessary support. You will already be aware of our first thought, which is to run a day trip to see and explore the 'Olympic Site' in London either late this year or maybe in the early spring next year. In any case I hope that, like me you are looking forward to bright and successful seasons ahead. In any case let me or one of the committee members know what your views are.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528

From the Secretary:-

There has been an excellent response to the announcement of the summer outing to Pensthorpe Nature Reserve and Gardens. At the time of writing we have 39 bookings leaving only 10 remaining places. Tickets will be available for sale at the March meeting so don't miss your chance to take part.

We are having a new drive to encourage the formation of new groups, and at the February meeting we had four interesting suggestions, Play Reading, Dolls' Clothes and similar crafts, French conversation, and Tai Chi. If you are interested in any of these and/or have any to add to the list, please see the notice board for more information. For the existing groups, Town & Village History, Gardens & Things, the Discussion Group and the Myths & Legends Groups have all produced their 2010 programmes and again all details are on the notice board.

There has been considerable interest shown in a trip to the Olympic Village. Unfortunately the T & V History Group could not fit it into their 2010 programme but if sufficient numbers are interested it may be possible to organise a trip independently for this autumn. 21 people have already shown an interest and if you'd like to add to this number, please see the notice board.

Have you checked on our website, <http://u3astowmarket.wordpress.com> lately?

As well as detailing all our meetings and events, it's regularly updated with news from the groups together with pictures I've been sent. The 'links' page can also open many opportunities for the enquiring mind!

As requested in the last Newsletter, and in order to expand the readership to those members who may not be able to attend the monthly meeting when the Newsletter is distributed, group leaders are asked to take a few copies to their next meeting. Also, this issue and back copies (to February 2007, issue 15), are available in pdf format on the website.

By the way, have you forgotten to renew your membership for 2009/2010? A few subscriptions (held again at £10) are still outstanding so, if yours is one, please contact our Treasurer, Jenny Lawler.

Finally, can I please remind you that if you change any of your contact details, address, telephone number or email address, please let our Membership Secretary, Terry Potter, know as soon as possible

Peter Dakeyne

01449 781 562

Since the last Newsletter :-

October :-

Mr Ron Godbold's talk on 'A Walk along the River Path' enthralled us and our long term Stowmarket residents really enjoyed his presentation, which ended with a song to re-enforce his message.

November :-

To explore Suffolk and neighbourhood by the free bus pass as explained by our local historian, Pip Wright was really fascinating should be a great encouragement for us to enjoy our countryside in a similar way.

December :-

Once again our Christmas luncheon was a huge success - the catering being of a very high standard and followed again this year by an entertaining session from our Poetry Group. A really good and enjoyable occasion congratulations to all concerned.

January :-

Unfortunately, Peter's talk about yogurt had to be abandoned for reasons entirely beyond his control. At the next meeting, he apologised for spoiling their enjoyment and assured the audience that there were no long term effects from the incident. For those whose appetites may have been whetted, he will be talking about yogurt again at the AA5 in October.

February:- We heard all about 'The History of Stowmarket News Talk' from John Webb.

To come:

March:-

Mrs. Frances Hart hopes to give us a new view of 'Mozart as seen through the eyes of his wife Contanze'

April :-

'In search of the smoking gun' is the title of the talk on forensic science by Mr. Brian Heard.

May :-

This is our month where three of our groups will give us an outline of their work and ambitions. All the other group leaders are invited to display their interests and possibly encourage more people to join their group. So this will end up as being largely a social meeting.

June :-

On the Notice Board will be full details of our planned visit to Pensthorpe in North Norfolk, where the BBC Spring Watch programme was centred last year and again this year.

July:-

'Theatrical Disappointments' is the title of Mrs. Caroline Wheatley's talk this month. This should prove

to be humorous rather than sad as it concentrates on surprising things.

Computer group :-

As well as our faithful regulars we have recruited some new members to make use of our excellent facilities at Stowupland High School. We are so lucky to have the use of their superb computer suite every second Monday in term time from 10.30 – 12.30.

Although members from other U3As are joining us, there is still room for more of you. There are 32 computers in all, linked to an interactive whiteboard for display. It is an ideal opportunity particularly for those less confident computer users to get some instruction and one-to-one mentoring in the same session. This is what U3A learning is all about. We will be doing some more basic word processing in the next few meetings.

Remember to assemble at Reception in good time, ready to move off at 10.30 am. All our activities can be accessed on our website at:

<http://wendywhitecat.wordpress.com/>

In addition to regular meetings there will be an additional meeting at my house on the 5th.Monday 29th.March from 10-12 featuring the creation of video/slideshows. All are welcome. Please let me know if you wish to attend.

If you have not yet experienced the internet I am holding two sessions on Silver Surfers Day Friday 21st.May for you. These are not for existing group members. Meetings will be at my home in Hadleigh from 10-12 and 2-4. Only U3A members please! If you would like to come please let me know.

Wendy Morgan

01473 824 237

Country Strolls :-

Longer :-

The ice and snow forced us to cancel two walks over the Christmas period but we resumed on 15th January with a lovely walk from Bildeston to Chelsworth and back with snow still on the fields. In February we had a brisk walk from Pakenham Water Mill through Ixworth and back via the Windmill. We saw hares racing across the fields and a heron sitting in a tree! Spring is on its way so there should be snowdrops and other bulbs to see soon.

Andrea Burton



01449 774 869

Shorter :-

The walks for the last couple of months have been quite testing, either being very muddy or icy cold.

Unfortunately our first walk for 2010 had to be cancelled because of snow, but happily 18 of us had a very enjoyable Christmas lunch on the 22nd of January at the Lion, Needham Market after a stroll around Needham Lake before the meal.

Once again Angela, Thank You for being my back up, it is much appreciated.

In the past year our group has increased to 18 on one week - so lets keep those walking boots moving ! Happy walking.

Helen Mead

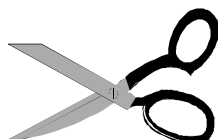
01449 673 660

Card Craft :-

Unfortunately this group has had to be abandoned for reasons that you may be aware of, at least until September, when we hope the sessions will recommence on the afternoons of the second Tuesday of the month at 2.00pm.

Liz Weir

01449 676 528



Discussion Group :-

The range of subjects discussed at our monthly meetings have been very relevant to today's issues and have provoked very lively debates among us. Our numbers have shrunk somewhat just recently, but that can only be a temporary problem, so if you would like to join us there will be not only plenty of room, but a very warm welcome as well.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528



Memoirs Group :-

We have now achieved "take off" and have managed to dig deep into our past. So far we have written about our Early Years, Our School Days and Memories of Christmas Time. At our meeting in March will be looking at "The Start of Our Working Lives" We are beginning to see our own personal "Memoirs" taking shape. It has been very interesting to hear how very different our lives have been and how varied are the experiences we have had. And of course we do an awful lot of talking especially now that we have got to know each other.

Pat Smith

01449 675 568



Music Appreciation (1) :-

Unfortunately building problems and noise make this group rather difficult to operate. Indeed, it obliged to cease functioning, at least for the



time being. However if a new host was willing there is no doubt that we could continue to be the lively group that we have been in the past. Any volunteers ?

Eric Adamson

01449 676 446

Music Appreciation (2) :-

We have been up and running for some time now with a very varied programme, usually finishing with a concerto. Sometimes one we all know, but often something a bit more obscure! Unfortunately we are limited for space and at the moment are unable to accept any more members.

Connie Ruegg

01449 674 673



Myths & Legends :-

This small group has been enjoying looking at old stories and thinking about their origins and possible meanings or effects in today's world. We will be looking at next seasons proposed programme very soon. We will welcome any new members willing to partake in our lively discussions.

Philip Weir

01449 676 528



Poetry Group :-

The poetry group has enjoyed reading the work of Charles Causley, Christmas poems, and Winter poems.

We are now having a change and studying longer poems.

Starting with Alfred Lord Tennyson's Mort D Arthur. What a richness of language we found within this poem the words painted a picture as we read and re read them. Next we plan to look at Tennyson's The Millers Daughter. Studying these longer poems is a challenge and some of us felt quite tired at the end of our session

We hope you enjoyed our poetry readings at the Christmas lunch as much as we did performing them.

Helen Freeman

01449 613 060



Eden Rock

They are waiting for me somewhere beyond Eden Rock:

My father, twenty-five, in the same suit
Of Genuine Irish Tweed, his terrier Jack
Still two years old and trembling at his feet.
My mother, twenty-three, in a sprigged dress
Drawn at the waist, ribbon in her straw hat,
Has spread the stiff white cloth over the grass.
Her hair, the colour of wheat, takes on the light.

She pours tea from a Thermos, the milk straight
 From an old H.P. sauce-bottle, a screw
 Of paper for a cork; slowly sets out
 The same three plates, the tin cups painted blue.
 The sky whitens as if lit by three suns.
 My mother shades her eyes and looks my way
 Over the drifted stream. My father spins
 A stone along the water. Leisurely,
 They beckon to me from the other bank.
 I hear them call, 'See where the stream-path is!
 Crossing is not as hard as you might think.'
 I had not thought that it would be like this.

Wine Appreciation Group

:-

December we gathered in Cotton, the table bedecked with Christmas candles and homemade mince pies to taste various rosés. Cotes de Provence rosés are generally drunk young and fill two out of three Provencal bottles. Asda's Cara from Italy made from the pinot grigio grape at under £4 was most popular and some of us then bought it to accompany the Christmas turkey! We found the Rosé d'Anjou made from Groslot grapes too sweet for most palates. In general the paler the rosé the subtler the aromas and tastier the wine.



January we watched a CD about the growing of the Cotes du Rhone vines before tasting a wide range of what the area had to offer. Syrah, Muscat, Grenache, Châteaux-Neuf du Pape, Gigondas, Hermitage - one could go on and on listing those succulent reds with pronounced aromas of violets and spice and flavours of blackberry fruits; Beaumes-de-Venise (known for a sweet white Muscat dessert wine the colour of pale amber and the taste of nectar) all come from the Rhone Valley. We then decided to switch to white wines from Alsace in February. After looking at the CD indicating how close to the German borders the Alsace vineyards are we started on the Riesling and Gewurztraminer. We found it incongruous to see that the ancient cellars belonging to the local hospital were used for the making of wine. One wonders if the fumes from the distilleries aided recuperation? None of the wines from Alsace were under £8 but for a

treat a cool glass of Gewurztraminer [if you can say it] would accompany a bowl of strawberries with no trouble. It was difficult to find many Alsace wines in England, maybe they keep them to themselves. Good wine is milk for the aged and drives out bad thoughts..



Zoe Bystricky

01449 676 220

Town and Village History :-

We had a well attended meeting in February to discuss and arrange the visits for 2010. Unlike last year, when it was postponed for a month because of the snow, it was on a bright and sunny day, despite this being the coldest winter for many a long year. Lets hope that this is a good omen for all the visits that have been planned and which are listed below:-

14th Apr.	Sudbury	M. Brown & C. Harford
6th May	Ipswich F.C.	Harold Turner
3rd June	Bury St Edmunds	Mike Hitchcock
1st July	Suffolk Punch Horses	E. Gray & I. Knott
5th Aug.	Shotley	Jackie Durrant
2nd Sept.	Little Stonham	Terry & Mollie Potter
7th Oct.	Felixstowe	Z. Bystricky & J. Prior
4th Nov.	T.B.A	

The April date was moved from the 1st Thursday because it fell in Easter week.

Details of the arrangements for each visit will be
Notified by the respective organisers at the monthly
meeting prior to the visit or earlier if possible
Terry Potter 01449 770 256

Art Appreciation :-

Tony Taylor :- 01449 771 168

Democracy & Election Systems :-

David Chapman 01449 736 223

Entertainment (Theatrical) Group

Joan Varley 01449 612 767

Gardens and Things :-

Harold Turner 01449 676 882

Luncheon Club :-

Angela Bentley 01449 780 274

Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954

Keep Fit :-

Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954

Theatre Going Group :-

John Chappell 01449 777 969

Scrabble Groups :-

Sheila Dobey

01449 677 265

U3A Suffolk & District Network: :-

The last meeting of the Network on 26th November 2009 was hosted by Stowmarket when some 23 members, from 9 of the 13 affiliated U3As, attended. James Earnshaw (Sudbury) resigned his temporary position as Treasurer and Rod Gray (Sudbury) was elected as the new Treasurer. Peter Dakeyne (Stowmarket) was elected Secretary replacing Suzanne Gould (Halesworth) who had completed her term of office. Topics discussed included AA4, which was deemed to have been a great success with 221 of the registered 263 attending on the day, the upcoming Spring Symposium 'Beauty and the Beast', and the new Eastern Region Forum held at Ely on 10th November. This latter had provided a very useful exchange of views for those who attended.

The next Network meeting will be held at Haverhill on 6th May, 2010.

'Beauty and the Beast' art event on 8th May, 2010 – is now fully subscribed and applications closed. Included with this Newsletter - check out the flyer for 'Autumn Academy 5' to be held at Combs Middle

School on Saturday 9th October 2010. Application forms available from Sally Taylor, Philip Weir or Peter Dakeyne.

Peter Dakeyne

01449 781 562

U3A Central Office :-

The closing date for the 2010 photography



competition is 31st March.

The theme this year is "Coast", the coastline of the United Kingdom; full details can be found on the notice board.

The January 2010 issue of the 'Sources' magazine distributed with the last direct mail U3A News was devoted to the very popular subject of Family History Life Stories. This and all previous issues of 'Sources' can be downloaded in pdf format from the member section on the U3A website, www.u3a.org.uk.

BBC television is making a documentary series about attitudes to money and would like to speak to people about the role money plays in their lives. For an informal chat, please contact Tara Nolan on 02075572364 or email her at tara.nolan@bbc.co.uk. Bookbite Project. This is a new project led by the reading charity Booktrust which aims to inspire older people to discover or re-discover reading and creative writing. There will be a magazine containing information on books, stories, book clubs etc and a website with other useful resources, www.bookbite.org.uk.

Summer school update. There are still some places available on the second summer school starting 23rd August and applications for Cinema History, Latin American Spanish, Philosophy, Poetry, Storytelling and Writing would be welcomed (see notice board).

Peter Dakeyne

01449 781 562

Some thoughts from Mark Twain :-

To worship rank and distinction is the dear and valued privilege of all the human race, and it is freely and joyfully exercised in democracies as well as in monarchies — and even, to some extent, among those creatures whom we impertinently call the Lower Animals. For even they have some poor little vanities and foibles, though in this matter they are paupers as compared to us.

If I had a phrase-book of a really satisfactory sort I would study it, and not give all my free time to undictionarial readings, but there is no such work on the market. The existing phrase- books are inadequate. They are well enough as far as they go, but when you fall down and skin your leg they don't tell you what to say.

The old saw says, "Let a sleeping dog lie." Right. Still, when there is much at stake it is better to get a newspaper to do it.

Urban Legend:

A story, especially one with a shocking or amusing ending, related as having actually happened, usually to someone vaguely connected to the teller.

So here are a few to ponder :-

Knock Me Down...

An architect was staying with an elderly couple while working on some plans for renovating their country manor. After supper the man excused himself in order to use the bathroom. On his way back to the dining room, he met a little girl, wearing an old-fashioned, white nightgown. She looked extremely upset, so the architect tried to console her. However, she refused to speak to him, and eventually he told her that he would go and look for her parents, believing them to be servants in the house. But at this the child looked even more scared and grasped the man by the wrist. Thinking that she was worried that he would not come back, he gave her his watch to keep until he returned.

Naturally, the architect asked his hosts where he could find the child's parents. However, the elderly couple looked horrified, and the woman became very angry, saying: 'Is this some kind of joke? There is no one else in this house but the three of us. The servants went home hours ago.'

The architect demanded that they come with him to see the child for themselves, but she had disappeared. The next day the architect returned home. Nothing else was said about the little girl, although the couple decided not to go ahead with the renovations.

Ten years later the couple died and it was decided that the manor house should be pulled down. The same architect was called in to design apartment blocks on the site. Demolition of the house was underway, when the architect received a call from a panicked worker. When he arrived at the site he found that they had uncovered a concealed room in which lay the skeleton of a child, dressed in a white nightgown, and wearing a man's wristwatch.

Came down in the last shower?

Miguel, a Mexican student whose girlfriend Conchita lived over a hundred miles away, drove every Friday night to visit her for the weekend. One Friday night he had a very lucky escape as his journey was considerably more eventful than the others. Miguel told his girlfriend that he had had to stop several miles short of his destination to change a flat tyre. Ahead of him a tornado had sucked a load of toads from a nearby lake and dropped them on to a motorway. All the squashed toads made the road really slippery and caused an eighteen-car pile up.

Dangerous Cargo

While making a routine refuelling stop the crew of a Russian cargo plane spotted a cow grazing just off the runway. Keen to make a little extra money from their trip, they decided to steal the animal. They stashed it in the cargo hold, but the cow became very frightened when the plane took off, and she began to charge about. The worried crew decided that it was too dangerous to keep the animal on board, and duly threw it out of the hold. Even out of the plane, however, the cow still managed to create chaos and destruction — it landed on a Japanese fishing trawler and sunk it instantly.

Light My Fire?

An elderly lady in Edinburgh asked her Granddaughter to look after her pet budgie while she was away on holiday in the Canary Islands. However, the day before she was due back, the granddaughter's boyfriend came round and, taking pity on the caged bird, decided to let it have a fly around the room. The budgie was so excited to have a little more freedom that it flew out of the cage and straight into a window, breaking its leg. Knowing how fond his girlfriend and her grandmother were of the bird, the boy was panic-stricken, but eventually hit upon the idea of tying a match to the bird's leg as a splint. Very pleased with his ingenuity, he put it back in its cage and left. However, what the boyfriend had not realized was that the cage was lined with sandpaper. As the budgie dragged itself across the cage floor, the match ignited and the unfortunate bird caught fire. All that was left to greet the grandmother on her return was a pile of ashes!

Have you heard this Babylonian story before ?

Smith found the missing parts of the Gilgamesh Epic. He brought home, altogether, 384 fragmentary clay tablets, among them the missing parts of the controversial story of Utanapishtim. This tale was a variation of the Biblical legend of the Flood. There are, of course, flood stories in almost every folklore, but this one was concerned with the very same deluge described, at a later date, in Genesis. Uta-napishtim, indeed, was the prototype of Noah. The following is the text of that section of the Epic concerned with Uta-napishtim. The friendly god Ea in a dream had revealed the gods' punitive intent to Uta-napishtim, her protege, whereupon Uta-napishtim decided to build himself an ark.

*What I had I loaded thereon, the whole harvest of life
I caused to embark within the vessel; all my family and my relations,
The beasts of the field, the cattle of the field, the craftsmen, I made them all embark.
I entered the vessel and closed the door. . . .
Wizen the young dawn gleamed forth,
From the foundations of heaven a black cloud arose. . .
All that is bright is turned into darkness,
The brother seeth his brother no more,
The folk of the skies can no longer recognize each other,
The gods feared the flood,
They fled, they climbed into the heaven of Anu,
The gods crouched like a dog on the wall, they lay down. . . .
For six days and nights
Wind and flood marched on, the hurricane subdued the land.
When the seventh day dawned, the hurricane was abated, the flood
Which had waged war like an army;
The sea was stilled, the ill wind was calmed, the flood ceased.
I beheld the sea, its voice was silent, And all mankind was turned into mud!
As high as the roofs reached the swamp! . . .
I beheld the world, the horizon of sea; Twelve measures away an island emerged;
Unto Mount Nitsir came the vessel,
Mount Nitsir held the vessel and let it not budge.
When the seventh day came,
I sent forth a dove, I released it; It went, the dove, it came back,
As there was no place, it came back. I sent forth a swallow, I released it; I
It went, the swallow, it came back, As there was no place, it came back.
I sent forth a crow, I released it;
It went, the crow, and beheld the subsidence of the waters;
It eats, it splashes about, it caws, it comes not back.*

Impossible to question the fact that the earliest version of the Biblical legend of the Deluge had been found. The story of Utanapishtim shows much more than a general analogy to the story of Noah and the ark. Specific events are duplicated, as for instance the freeing of the dove and the raven.

The finding of the Gilgamesh Epic posed for Smith's generation the disturbing question whether the Bible might not be nothing more than a repository of prehistoric wisdom.

Once again investigation with the spade had enabled the human mind to take a great leap into the past. Again unsuspected vistas unfolded. Was the legend of Uta-napishtim merely an ancient saga that confirmed the poetical nature of the Bible? Was everything chronicled in the Bible about the rich land between the two rivers doomed to become mere legend? Or ?

Do we learn something new every day ?

HONORABLE MENTION: SHORT ARM OF THE LAW

Lack of judicial restraint leads to a judicial error.

MAY 2002, PAKISTAN

Usually it's the criminal, not the judge, who attempts to take himself out of the gene pool. But not in this twist on a familiar tale! A man accused of possessing a hand grenade challenged police to produce it at his trial. When the police brought the grenade into the courtroom, the defendant claimed it was not real. The judge absentmindedly took the grenade in his hand while listening to arguments — and pulled the pin! He was injured but survived, no doubt with improved judgment.

The difference between genius and idiocy?

Genius has its limits.

Advance Concert Notice

A wonderful opportunity has arisen. The United Reformed Church, Stowmarket is hosting an evening with the **Kiev Singers**. They are a group of professional singers and musicians from Kiev in the Ukraine. Last year they held a successful concert tour in the UK. While performing they generated funds for the 'New Beginnings' charity, who have built a foster home outside Kiev for homeless children. By popular request they have been asked to tour again in 2010 and are coming to Stowmarket.

When? Saturday 24th April 2010

Where? Stowmarket URC

Time? 7.30 pm

Tickets? .5.00 each, available from Dan

Gurney or ring 01449 676 775

<http://u3astowmarket.wordpress.com>

Deadlines for the next issues :-

30th June 2010 for the July copy and 30th October for November copy

Edited by Philip Weir

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