



Stowmarket U3A



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Stowmarket and District Learning Activities in Retirement

Registered Charity No. 1002987



# NEWSLETTER

No. 45

SUMMER 2016

## April 20th Acquainting Afternoon

Last year we had the strawberry afternoon tea, this year the meeting took the form of a get-together enabling us to meet other members who we may not normally get a chance to talk to at our normal Wednesday gatherings.

On arriving, everyone was given a book mark with a picture and verse. After we had the tea and cakes (with fine china loaned by members) served by Keith and Lorraine suitable attired (well done, nice touch) we were asked to find people with like bookmarks and have a chat if we wished with someone we didn't know — which was, after all, the main object of the day.

With our U3A getting bigger all the time we sometimes don't make sufficient contact with the wider membership, and we hope that this is one way of achieving this objective in a nice friendly way.

Harold Turner



There was also a quiz sheet on each table and numerous others on the notice boards although with the amount of gossiping going on it's doubtful if anyone got around to completing any one of them!

If you're interested, the whole lot, Q and As (thanks to Philip Weir for putting these all together) can be seen on our web site. Follow the blue 'Acquainting' link on the Meetings page and open the pdf offered. Also on this page is a video of all the pictures taken on that day with accompanying soundtrack recorded at the time. <http://tinyurl.com/zpefu6h>

There were also some 'Guess the Baby' pictures. Unfortunately there were only three submitted, these being Dee Payne, Joyce Kay and Peter Dakeyne. Thanks to Dee for her organisation of this novel event.

Ed.

## U3A Speaker Review – May 2016

In the URC May magazine I saw the U3A advertisement about Pretty Corsets in Suffolk. That stirred up many memories for me as I worked in the wages office at “Billy” Prettys for 20 years.

Mr Roger Kennell, who is the local history recorder at Hadleigh, started his story with the early days of the Pretty family, and how they were involved with the building of Museum Street (Ipswich) Methodist Church and also paid for the organ. William Pretty was probably a millionaire in his day. Sutton Hoo, near Woodbridge was discovered by one of his family on their land – now owned by the National Trust.

William Pretty started up a corset (stay) factory in Ipswich and subsequently had small branches in several places, one being in Tavern Street, Stowmarket, where the British Legion now is. As trade progressed, Prettys combined with Footmans to become



Footman & Pretty, a big store known as Waterloo House, again with a branch in Stowmarket where Baldwins is now. This shop preceded the Co-op and was also known as the Waterloo.

When I joined William Prettys on leaving school, it was owned by Symingtons of Market Harborough, but the older (much older!) members of staff could tell tales about Tertius Pretty and how Lloyds Avenue (Ipswich) was the factory garden.

I worked in the wages office for 20 years working my way up – not quite to the top!

The factory not only made corsets but “women’s light clothing” (lingerie) as well. The girl machinists were mostly on piecework and when one week’s money was worked out and taxed etc., another week had already begun – an ongoing job. There were about 12 of us in the wages office, and although we were always kept busy, we had a lot of laughs as well!

The factory was again taken over, this time by Courtaulds, but that didn’t last; neither did the factory building, it was pulled down, and what was the site is now the car park behind Marks & Spencers.

Memories – many of them! Thank you Mr Kennell for your stories about “Billy Pretty”, and thank you U3A for letting me come and hear them.

Heather Rampley

## U3A Speaker Review – June 2016



Unfortunately the June meeting had a few hiccoughs along the way not least that the publicised speaker was unable to attend due to ill health. Fortunately and at short notice, Dee had been able to find a new speaker, Mr Alan Duran, to talk about his travels in Mexico. This was a slideshow presentation marred by the quirks of fate as the loop system speaker system wasn’t working, the blackout blinds could not be pulled and the screen was too high for the projector!!

Despite this, we followed his travels in the Oaxaca region in the south of Mexico taking in the typical Spanish looking churches found in Central and Southern America many of which had been built upon former Mayan church sites and some fairly intact Mayan archaeological sites one in which the temples to the moon and the sun were still evident. Many of these sites have the look of “pyramids” and the original inhabitants had the skills to level the mountain tops to build their monuments. The sites were interspersed with visits to local markets with their vibrant colours, to local schools and a zoo in which he saw inter alia a jaguar, a tree bear, wart hogs, snakes and vultures.

A trip was taken in a light airplane to reach some of the sites and a journey by boat down a gorge had its adventures. In one place they had to disem-

bark to allow the boatmen to manhandle the boat through the rapids before they could climb aboard again. Waterfalls and high moss covered steep sides to the gorge were some of the features before they reached the border with Guatemala to continue their journey.

Although this trip was some 20 years ago undoubtedly many of the sites and the architecture will have remained unaltered to this day.

Jackie Durrant





### Singing Group—New!

The Singing Group, started in May, is going from strength to strength. The aim of the group is to simply enjoy singing together. There is no audition, you won't need to be able to read music, you don't need a great singing voice - you just need to be ready to join in!

The variety and style of songs is really wide, for example we enjoy singing rounds, songs from the musicals, easy pop songs and traditional folk songs. Sometimes the singing is unaccompanied or percussion is used to enhance our enjoyment.



The group meets on Thursday afternoons at Hillside Community Centre from 2 'til 3.30 pm. There is a short refreshment break part way through. The cost is £2.00 per session.

The dates for the next few weeks are as follows:- 14th July, 21st July and every Thursday in August. We're currently 12 in number. Anyone interested in joining is welcome to simply turn up or phone **Hilary Foster** on 01359 241773 for further information. Looking forward to seeing a few new faces at our next meeting.

Three members of our U3A, Irene Hyde, Ann Russell and myself visited Haughley Park on their Annual Bluebells viewing over the last Sunday in April and first Sunday in May.

The Ancient Woods were packed with visitors on a glorious spring May Day and the bluebells were at their best.

As we slowly weaved our way through the wood, past the camellias, we began to smell the fragrance.

To someone on their first visit, you hear their disappointment as they see a large area open up before them with only sparse and scattered clumps of bluebells.

Smiling to myself, we carry on following the fragrance which intensifies, until there before you on the next curve of the trail opens up to an amazing and wondrous sight!

Bluebells amass! An artist has filled every space between shrub and tree, it seems. You think that's it but there's more

and more and more on each curve of the trail opening up to a beautiful vista of colour.

How blest we were and what an uplift for the soul strolling



on a warm spring afternoon in that ancient old woodland with birds singing as we walked or sat awhile taking it all in.

Anna Rodgers

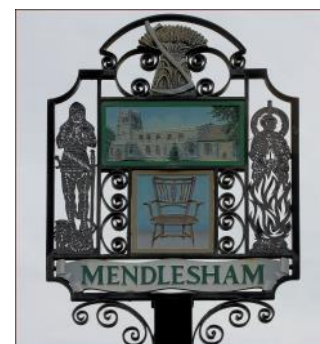
### Longer Strolls Walking Group

In Heather, we are very lucky to have our own photographer with us when we go walking. The pictures serve as a wonderful reminder of the lovely places we have trekked and ambled around the Suffolk countryside.

Recently we were up close and personal with a beautiful Suffolk Punch mare and her delightful foal who both enjoyed the attention we lavished on them. We were also lucky enough to pass a large valley bottom field with many Llamas in it. They were very curious about us and could not get close enough to spit, thank goodness.

This was all fairly close to Ipswich - off the Westerfield Road - I am always amazed and gladdened by the ease with which we can leave built up areas and almost get lost in the green lushness of the Suffolk fields and valleys.

Andrea Burton



## Town & Village History Group

The Town and Village History group outings are open to all Stowmarket U3A members and are publicised at every monthly meeting and on the website.

Our **April** 7th outing was kindly organised by *Angela Bentley* when we visited **Sounds of the Past** at Monks Eleigh



where Paul Goodchild has a collection of over 500 vintage radios, gramophones, televisions and other sound



related items. Paul gave a fascinating talk on how he began his collection in a shed but soon needed larger premises



and was offered the United Reformed Chapel Hall on the condition he kept the premises in good repair. Our group was also entertained by listening to some music played on the 1938 organ. We were pleased to give Paul a cheque for £100 as a donation to his charity

raising money for prostate cancer. If you were unable to come along the collection is open for visitors on the first Sunday of every month from 10.30 to 4pm.

Pouring rain and dreary skies could not dampen our spirits as we boarded the coach for our visit to **Mildenhall airbase** on **May** 10th.

After arriving and going through security checks on both ourselves and the coach we drove to the dog handling and training centre which was located well away from the base residential



areas. We saw 8 very lively mainly German shepherd dogs in their kennel facility and were treated to a display of dog obedience and handling. The dogs are invaluable for seeking out narcotics and explosives as well as supporting the security teams on the airbase perimeter.

After a break for lunch in the food court we were treated to a talk from two experienced pilots with slides explaining the technical issues of 'passing gas', a humorous title for - in other words - refuelling in the air, and afterwards we were able to ask questions.

It was still pouring with rain for the highlight of the day which followed when we boarded the coach and



parked right next to the KC135 Stratotanker aircraft where we could see up close the refuelling boom, undercarriage and huge wings (very handy for sheltering from the relentless rain) and we then boarded the plane to view the cockpit and cramped boom operators space at the rear of the plane.

Many thanks to *Janet Stanley* for arranging this fascinating outing.

**Landguard Fort** and museum was our destination on **June** 2nd kindly organised by *Ivy Wadsley*. We began our visit with refreshments in the cafe then browsed the 14 exhibition areas in the museum with displays of fascinating artefacts relating to social, military, Roman and medieval history.

The Fort overlooks the Orwell estuary and is one of England's best preserved coastal defences, built in the 18th century and continuously occupied through both world wars until 1956.

A date for your diary is November 3rd at 2pm when we will have our annual get together in the Salvation Army hall - your support and ideas for visits in 2017 are vital to ensure we can offer more great outings next year.

Co-ordinators

Linda Benbow 01449 673335

Angela Bentley 01449 780274

Photos by Harry Orde - See a lot more on the T&V page on the web site.

<http://tinyurl.com/hfjcap>



## Gardens & Things, Harold Turner

**April: 'Hillfarm Oils Ltd'** near Halesford - Jenny Rogers.

Thank you Jenny for organising something entirely new for this time. The Fairs family have farmed in Suffolk since 1967. In 2004 they became the first farm in the UK to grow, press and



bottle their own cold pressed rapeseed oil. We were given a full understanding of the process, particularly the pressing, extraction and bottling operations before going onto a tasting session where we evaluated 12 oils produced from different sources. We were pleasantly surprised to each be given a sample bottle of virgin rape seed oil and the opportunity to buy rape seed oil products at favourable rates.

Before going to a local pub

for our lunch we made a diversion to St Mary's Church in Huntingfield. This is famous for its ceiling which is a masterpiece of Victorian church decoration, painted from end to end in brilliant colours, with carved and coloured angels, with banners, crowns and shields, all in the medieval style and of a most intricate and detailed finish - painted by the vicars wife alone in 1859/60! These days the roof is lit up via a £1.00 coin in a slot meter.

**May: Paugers Plants** in Depden - Shirley Bonner

Our day started with a welcome cup of coffee at the Farmshop Cafe next door where we also returned for a delicious light lunch. At the plant centre we had a brief introduction on the background of how Paugers had evolved over sixteen years from a field with a deep ditch running through it to the very productive area it now is.

We were able to wander through the owners' garden admiring the plantings and design. The ditch is now an



attractive Shade and Bog garden! The whole area an example of human endeavour by Paul and Geraldine!

Walking on into the plant growing and sales area gave the opportunity to purchase some more unusual shrubs or perennials for our own gardens. (Well done Shirley for a great day's outing, especially for your first time as a group leader, H.T.)

**June: Stackyard Nursery,** Mendlesham - Dee Payne

We certainly saw a great transformation since our last visit in 2010. Stackyard are a specialist nursery growing trees and shrubs and Karon, the owner, also offers a design service. She told us that Stackyard has been bedevilled with planning permission issues and has had to

fight over a protracted period. With that all sorted, however, great strides have been made in building a main area for cafe, sales and other facilities. This will be a good place to revisit in a few years time.

We had lunch at a nearby cafe before Dee took us on a 'surprise' visit to her own secret garden in nearby Finningham. This was some-



thing special, a secret place in the middle of nowhere with woodland and lakes and a whole host of plants - the only things missing were



the 'fairies'. Certainly a nice surprise, well done Dee.

Harold Turner

## Discussion Group

Our new season starts in September and we have many topical subjects to consider, especially considering the present political turmoil. If you would like to join us you will be made very welcome, and we would like to hear your opinions.

## Myths and Legends



Yes, we meet again in September and have a full programme of subjects to investigate. New members will be made very welcome.

Philip Weir

## French Conversation

The group is still meeting on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 10am, but unfortunately is at full capacity - so there is once again a need for another group.

I can start to make a waiting list - and hopefully a host/hostess will come forward.

Our abilities vary and we do a variety of things, including reading, listening and grammar revision. And we do have a laugh!

Andrea Burton



## Stowmarket Exploring Art Meetings

For the SEAM meeting in June the group decided to visit the Sainsbury Gallery in Norwich.

We caught the 9:55 a.m. train from Stowmarket – arrived safely in Norwich and thence took the bus to the Sainsbury Gallery on the University Campus. Coffee on arrival - of course!

The main purpose of the visit was to view the Giacometti exhibition. When Sir Robert Sainsbury married Lisa van den Bergh in 1937, art collecting became their joint venture. The couple enjoyed building friendships with individual artists, often collecting their early works. The Sainsburys always remained fiercely independent in choices and would never buy something for its value or fashion.

Alberto Giacometti was one of the artists whose work they championed from a very early stage in his career and there are many pieces of his work in their collection. However, for the current Giacometti exhibition the Gallery has gath-



ered together pieces from international private and public collections so a full range of his work is on display. We all enjoyed the grainy, black and white video of Alberto Giacometti working in his studio; - cigarette in corner of mouth, working with his strong hands, modelling the soft clay and giving his insightful commentary as to how the finished piece should look. His restless, tireless moulding and remoulding of his sculptures is compelling and almost exhausting to watch.

Lunch and a further look at the permanent display (or more of the Giacometti) and then a mad rush for the bus. We caught the train with 90 seconds to spare!

A great way of spending a cool June day together and those who made the visit agreed that SEAM would like to organise more visits to galleries and displays. I'm sorry that SEAM is currently full.

Anna Bradshaw.

## Outing to Bletchley Park, Wed 17th August.

There are still a few places left on this trip and there's still time to book at the July meeting at **£26.00** per member.

If there is still availability thereafter, you can invite non-U3A friends or relatives to come along at **£28.00 pp**—please contact the Treasurer, Jean Roche, on 01449 675 984 before the end of July.

## Dates for your diary

**21st September.** AGM and Groups Day at the Cedars, see notice on last page.

**14th December.** The annual Christmas lunch, again at The Cedars. Please note that this has been brought forward to the *2nd Wednesday of the month* to avoid clashes with other Christmas related activities

## STOWMARKET U3A, ACTIVITY & INTEREST GROUPS, as of July 2016. Please contact the Leader/Convenor for more information

<b>ART APPRECIATION (SAAG)</b>	2/Month: 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays	<b>LUNCH CLUB (3)</b>	Monthly: 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday
Tony Taylor 01449 258 192	9.30am	Brian O'Shea 01449 614 129	12.30pm
<b>ART APPRECIATION (SEAM)</b>	Monthly: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	<b>MUSIC – Classical</b>	Monthly:- 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday
Anna Bradshaw 01449 745 829	2.00pm	Ian Hooper 01449 770 179	10.00am
<b>ART APPRECIATION (STOWART)</b>	Monthly: 4th Thursday	<b>MYTHS, STORIES AND LEGENDS</b>	Monthly: 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday
John Chappell 01449 777 969	2.00pm	Philip Weir 01449 676 528	2.30pm
<b>BOOK CLUB</b>	Monthly: 4th Monday	<b>PAINTING FOR PLEASURE</b>	2/Month: 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Fridays
Mary Bradley 01449 775 628	2.00pm	Nina Rouse 01449 612 042	10.30am
<b>BRIDGE BEGINNERS</b>	Weekly: Monday	<b>PATCHWORK</b>	Monthly: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday
Michael Last 01359 241 703	2.00pm	Kate Riddleston 01449 612 871	2.00pm
<b>CANASTA</b>	3/Month: 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> Wed.	<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	Monthly: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday
Hazel Burl 01449 615 581	9.30am	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562	2.00pm
<b>COMPUTER</b>	Monthly: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>PLAYWRIGHT STUDY</b>	Monthly: Normally, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday
Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562	1.30pm	Helen Barrett 01449 676 491	10.00am
<b>COUNTRY STROLLS Longer</b>	2/Month: 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fridays	<b>POETRY</b>	2/Month: 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays
Andrea Burton 01449 258 865	9.30am (variable)	Tony Taylor 01449 258 192	2.00pm
<b>COUNTRY STROLLS Shorter</b>	Monthly: Last Friday	<b>SCRABBLE PLAYING GROUPS</b>	Several - By Arrangement
Elizabeth Gray 01449 678 853	1.00pm	Michael Last 01359 241 703	
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	Monthly: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	<b>SINGING</b>	Normally, fortnightly: Thursdays
Philip Weir 01449 676 528	10.00am	Hilary Foster 01359 241 773	2.00pm
<b>FRENCH CONVERSATION</b>	2/Month: 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays	<b>SPANISH CONVERSATION</b>	<b>NB.</b> Currently a 'non U3A' Group
Andrea Burton 01449 258 865	10.00am	Alicia Beaton 01449 616 172	Please contact Alicia for more info.
<b>GARDENS &amp; THINGS</b>	Monthly: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	<b>TOWN &amp; VILLAGE HISTORY</b>	Monthly: 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday
Harold Turner 01449 676 882	9.30am (variable)	Angela Bentley 01447 780274	9.30am (variable)
		Linda Benbow 01449 673 335	
<b>LUNCH CLUB (1)</b>	Monthly: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	<b>WHIST</b>	2/Month: 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesdays
Angela Bentley 01449 780 274	12.20pm	Hazel Burl 01449 615 581	9.30am
<b>LUNCH CLUB (2)</b>	Monthly: 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday		
Pauline Taylor 01449 678 954	12.30pm		

## From the Archive.

**S**towmarket U3A (S.T.A.R) became fully operational and affiliated to the National U3A in early 1990. In the last issue, we had a chance to read the Chairman's statement from the very first AGM, held in September 1991.

*In those days there were only half a dozen or so study groups and it was the practice for each Group Leader/Convenor to make a report at the AGM after the Chairman's statement.*

*Here are a couple of those reports, as presented at that 1st AGM. As space permits further archive material will be published in future issues of the Newsletter .*

### Local History

**W**e, the local history group, normally eight of us, hold about fifteen fortnightly sessions on alternate Wednesday mornings at 10.30 a.m., thanks to the kind hospitality of Mr and Mrs Cutts. We took a summer break.

We have studied East Anglia in early days, including Sutton Hoo, Stowmarket and the river then off to Dunwich, Finningham, Haughley, both Gt. and Lt. Finborough, a glimpse of Bury St Edmunds, Gipping, Old Newton, Buxhall and finally Shelland with a visit to the church.

The sessions have, I hope, been of interest; one of the nicest features being the general discussion and members adding their knowledge of the character of people and places.

Hopefully, we will be looking at the other numerous villages around us.

Dick Pollard

### Literature Group

**T**he Literature Group has been in operation for over a year with nine members, meetings being held fortnightly on Tuesday mornings.

Each meeting is divided into two parts - the first hour is spent in discussing a subject - book, play, poem or an area of literature for which we have prepared in our own time. The second half of each meeting is devoted to contributions from members - an extract from a book, poem or periodical.

There is a remarkable diversity in these readings which arouse interest in works which are sometimes new to and sometimes have been half-forgotten over the years by other members.

The aim of the meetings is not study in depth of writings but to give pleasure and stimulate and widen the awareness of members.

Brenda Burrows

### David Hodes—'Travels in America Part 2'

**I** do hope you found the first episode of our American travels interesting, and now I'm going to recall some specific vacations we had on our various visits to the southern States. When we were first married Elizabeth's American family set us into a bit of a routine: one year we'd go over to visit them, and the next year they'd come and visit us — if not her family, then her brother would send over close friends of his he'd made in Texas.....

*This is part of the first paragraph but, as there's insufficient space here to recount the whole story, the full version has been published on the Stowmarket U3A web site - just go to the 'Groups' page, scroll down and click on the blue 'Memoirs' link which takes you to the necessary page.*

<http://tinyurl.com/gswc6z3>

*Here's the final paragraph as a taster.*

*Ed.*

.....One memory is still vivid in my mind — when we stood close to the Mississippi waiting to board the "Natchez" - looking at the river, very wide at this point, with noiseless

ripples in the stream, flowing fast and deep on its way to the Gulf — the unforgettable impression of immense power of the river, the sheer volume of water, anyone falling in is swept away and the river flows with such force that the stream carries on unchanging for many miles deep into the Gulf after it leaves its banks at New Orleans. I don't mind confessing that my knees wobbled a bit as we boarded, with the "Natchez", big though she is, was like a match-box compared to the river, tugging hard at her moorings. The river leaves an indelible impression of immense sheer menacing power. Many years later with all the damage caused by Katrina, I remembered the Mississippi during that visit and shuddered a bit at the immense damage the river and the hurricane had caused: I could visualise the brute force of all that water overflowing the levees.

The 3rd and final episode will follow soon

DH



## Annual General Meeting and Groups Day, 2016

**Venue** – The AGM will be held at the Cedars Hotel, Needham Road, Stowmarket, IP14 2AJ. Ample parking spaces available.

**Format** – The AGM notice alongside (and as published on the board at the July meeting) gives the timetable.

If required, group leaders will be able to start their set-up from 11.45am, prior to the AGM

The bar will be open from 12.00pm, and throughout for tea, coffee and alcoholic refreshments.

When the formal AGM business is concluded there will be the option to stay on for a buffet lunch, £6.00 in advance please, before socialising during the afternoon. As an alternative, members may wish to purchase a Cedars lunch in the restaurant on the day. *In this case, please contact the Cedars directly by 15th September to make a lunch time booking, 01449 612 668*

Group leaders and members of the groups will be on hand to talk about their activities and perhaps inspire you to try an activity you might not otherwise have considered.

The AGM, lunch and 'Groups' afternoon are open to U3A members and guests, so if you have any friends who have not yet joined but may be interested in what we do, please bring them along.

Notice of:

### Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 21 September 2016

Cedars Hotel, Needham Road, Stowmarket. IP14 2AJ

12:30pm – 1:15pm	AGM
1:15pm – 2:00pm	Refreshments & buffet lunch
2:00pm – 4.00pm	Group activities, displays & information

=====

The Agenda will be distributed on the day alongside the 2015 AGM minutes which will also be available at the July meeting.

The optional light finger buffet will be available at £6.00 pp. Tickets in advance, please, available at the July meeting. Alternatively, please contact the Treasurer, Jean Roche directly, on 01449 675 984

**Please note: The 2016/2017 annual subscription of £15.00 pp becomes due at this meeting.**

Please see the July Notice board re nominations for the Executive Committee.

## STOWMARKET U3A, COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2015/2016



Bryan Hilton



Connie Harford



Jean Roche



Andrea Burton



Dee Payne



Joyce Kay



Ian Hooper



Jenny Lawler

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	Mrs Joyce Kay	01449 676 852	
	Mrs Jenny Lawler	01449 675 506	

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<b>NEXT ISSUE</b>	Autumn 2016	<b>LAST DATE FOR COPY</b>	<b>30/09/2016</b>

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