

Hello and welcome to our March newsletter.

Since our last newsletter in November, we shared a Christmas meal in our normal meeting venue of the URC. Though we were fewer in number this year, we all enjoyed our time together partaking in good food and fun quizzes. Our thanks to Anne and Lorraine for all their hard work organising this event.

Also, in December we had a wreath making workshop run by Anne. Those of us who went had a thoroughly enjoyable time and were surprised by how beautiful our finished products looked.

Then in January we were thoroughly entertained by Charlie Haylock talking about his time working with Ralph

Fiennes and other members of the cast of the Netflix film 'The Dig'. Charlie was the dialect specialist who ensured the cast were speaking with a Suffolk accent. He had many hilarious stories to share of his time working on the production and particularly helping Ralph Fiennes master his Suffolk accent for his character of Basil Brown.

Our February talk was by Charles Garland, a writer, composer, television producer and director. He spent many years working with David Croft and Jimmy Perry. He gave a talk entitled 'Dad's Army', a series he re-edited for the BBC archive along with other classic comedies. He shared many funny stories of the people involved in the series.

You can find fuller reports on all the above in the following pages.

Our March talk is entitled 'Growing for Gold' – a talk about roses. Then April will be for those interested in astronomy.

We have a good number of our interest groups up and running but we are always looking for people willing to start a new group or revive an old one. The group does not have to be set up and run by just one person, it can be a pair of leaders or a more shared approach. If you have any ideas, please contact Liz our groups coordinator.

Lastly, we are presently planning our summer afternoon tea party, more news to follow when plans are finalized (p6).

Glynis Hunt - Chair.

Monthly Meetings since the last Newsletter.

November 2021 Monthly Meeting – The Science of Santa

Our November monthly meeting took us to the next normal – our first talk since the lifting of government restrictions, following the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic.

We are pleased to report that the meeting went off (literally) with a bang! Stephen Ashworth of the University of East Anglia shared with us a number of experiments to help decide whether Santa was a magician or a scientist. Although the experiments seemed to include quite a bit of magic, we think that the only conclusion you can reach

from the talk is that Santa is indeed an accomplished scientist.

Stephen showed how Santa gets down, and back up, the chimney, how all the presents can be stored in such a small space on the sleigh, how Santa keeps warm in the North Pole and how he can read the invisible writing on Christmas letters from children informing Santa what presents they would like.

But, please, do not take our word for it. If you missed the talk, you can decide for yourself. Peter Dakeyne has used his own Christmas magic, recording the talk, uploading it to the internet and giving you the opportunity to watch it.



Pure magic!! If you are reading the digital version, just click the play button above to start the video. If not, you can easily find it on our web site.

Keith & Lorraine

January 2022, 'Charlie & the Dig'

Charlie and Ralph Fiennes on set



We got off to a flying start to the year. More than 60 members turned out for the talk by the well known local celebrity, Charlie Haylock.

Charlie had been headhunted as speech coach to the cast of the new Netflix film 'The Dig' which was to reimagine the events of the 1939 excavation of Sutton Hoo. The producers were determined that the accents should be as authentic as possible—and that's where Charlie comes in.

Whilst mentoring the whole cast, including Carey Mulligan as Mrs Pretty, Charlie's main attention was with Ralph Fiennes.

Fiennes plays the part of Basil Brown, a

local self-taught archaeologist-excavator who was hired by Edith Pretty to tackle the large burial mounds at her rural estate in Sutton Hoo near Woodbridge.

Charlie described how Fiennes proved to be a perfectionist who, in order to get things right, acted in character on and off the set. They would go on pub crawls where Fiennes was sometimes recognised sometimes not, but he always conversed in the Suffolk dialect, practicing and learning as he went along. He also visited the British Museum to see the treasures and to read Basil Browns diaries to better understand and get 'into his mind set'.

Charlie gave us many anecdotes, surrounding the filming, too many to list here, but rounded off his talk by telling us more about dialects. Some of us were not aware that each region of Suffolk enjoys a slightly different version of the dialect and we were entertained in hearing all the subtle variations.

Finally we were entertained by quick fire versions of the multitude of accents and dialects around the British Isles.

He received a well earned round of

applause from the audience.

Whilst no longer doing the cinema rounds, at the time of writing 'The Dig' is still on Netflix' and for those who would like to have a preview, the official trailer can be seen [here on You Tube](#).

PD



February 2022, 'Dad's Army'

Charles Garland gave a talk about the well-known TV Series "Dad's Army". Charles, during his career with the BBC, was Series Editor and worked alongside Producers David Croft OBE and Jimmy Perry OBE. With his own entertaining and humorous style, Charles shared how the TV Series was



originally set up, how the show was originally called "The Fighting Tigers" before being re-named "Dad's Army" and how the stars were headhunted and recruited.

His talk included many anecdotes, personal experiences and insights about the writers and cast. There were

several chuckles from the audience as they relived their own memories of the show.

For those who missed the Monthly Meeting, Peter recorded the talk and, for a limited time, it will be available to access via the digital version of this Newsletter only. Just click the play button below. **Keith & Lorraine**





Gardens and Things



We held our first Christmas **Wreath Making Workshop** at Stowmarket URC on 8th December. 10 members attended and after a short demonstration on how to decorate a wreath, everyone set to work.

Each member brought a very interesting assortment of greenery, which together with all the various items provided, helped everyone to go away feeling very happy with what they had achieved.

Thank you to Glenda who kindly took photos of the wreaths, which were all very individual and stunning. I'm sure they were all proudly hung on front doors over the Christmas period. Well done to you all.

Tea, coffee, mince pies and cookies were also included in the price of a ticket. Everyone who attended agreed that they would like to take part next year, when we hope to incorporate a table decoration too. We will start advertising this event in October.

Thank you Lorraine for all your assistance, also to Keith and Phil, who kept us well supplied with refreshments throughout the morning and washed up at the end.

Anne Webb



All members of Stowmarket U3A are welcome to join any of the visits during the year. Registering for and, if the trip requires it, paying for each event at the monthly meetings prior to each outing, will normally be required. To keep costs reasonable most of the trips will be by car share, using the Co-op car park at Combs Ford as the meeting point. You can call or email me to get more information or to book your place on visits.

Upcoming:

April 21st: **KERSEY MILL**, Hadleigh, by car share. A guided tour of the restored water mill, water gardens and sunken Mediterranean gardens. A light lunch together at The Miller's Kitchen followed by some retail therapy at the on site outlets.

May 19th: **THE PLACE FOR PLANTS**, East Bergholt, by car share. A tour of the gardens with lunch in a local hostelry. An opportunity to visit the unique

ground level bells of the local church.

June 23rd: **HOLM HOUSE GARDENS**, Drinkstone By car share. A visit to these immaculate 10 acre gardens, including an orchard, parterre and borders, a woodland walk and much more. Afternoon tea at the conclusion of the visit.

See the full programme on our web site.

Stewart Dorward 01449 774 213

thedorwards@gmail.com

Walk and Talk

Since the AGM we are happy to report that we have had numerous requests to join our group from both existing and new members to whom we offer a warm welcome.

Walking continued into Autumn with the trial of a short walk around Woolpit, approx 3 miles (we intend to offer shorter walks in future when there are 5 Fridays in the month).



This was followed by walks around Cotton, Mendlesham and Norton; the



year ending with a walk at Haughley followed by a distanced Christmas 'take and share' lunch in Robert and Anna's garage.



The New Year started with a visit to Thornham, including the thatched St Marys Church at Thornham Parva which houses a famous altarpiece called the

Thornham Parva Retable, believed to have been originally made in 1330 for Blackfriars Dominican Priory at Thetford. There are also 14th century wall paintings.



The second walk in January began in Diss where we walked towards Wortham via the Ling and back to Diss, stopping off at the church with its derelict circular tower. At the end we had Fish and Chips eaten sitting on the park benches. Some had the energy to play on the nearby slides!

February started with a circular walk from Finborough. The walk began in the rain, but it soon brightened up and was a pleasant amble skirting around Buxhall, Harleston and Onehouse.

The second February walk was planned to be from from Wortham but was cancelled because of storm Eunice.

Phil Webb and Keith Shelton

Stowmarket U3A Short Course – Using Small Electric Power Tool Skills – for Women and Men

In conjunction with Stowmarket Meadlands Men's Shed, we ran a four week, short course in using small electric power tools. The course ran for two hours per week, in February and March. The feedback from the participants was very positive with them reporting that they gained confidence and skills and now feel able to tackle DIY jobs around the home. One participant commented that now they would like a more advanced course. The group were particularly

happy with the knowledgeable, approachable and friendly tutors who were very supportive and eager to give one to one guidance during the making stage. The group utilised their skills and produced two finished items (an insect house and a bird box) which they took home with them.

A second similar course is planned for April and May and has one space if anyone would like to take this up.

So, if are you wanting to hang a picture or mirror, adjust a shelf, put a flat pack together, mend a piece of furniture, select the correct wall plug and drill bit to be able to mount a heavy object, this

course offers you the opportunity to do that by learning how to use small electric power tools like a drill, a sander, jig saw and impact driver.

If so, contact **Keith Shelton** at shelton.keith@gmail.com or 01449 768744 and if there are sufficient applicants we will do our best to run another cohort. The course fee is £40.



Singing Group

The Group membership has recently increased in number which is really wonderful. It's a friendly and welcoming group and we always have fun as we sing together.

The group continues to enjoy a wide range of music. We usually start with a warm up, then sing a few rounds. After that we sing all sorts of songs; folk songs from around the world, sea shanties (with piano accordion accompaniment) popular songs from yesteryear, songs from the musicals and just about anything else that takes our fancy. No two weeks are exactly the same. Sometimes new, less familiar, songs are added to our repertoire. It's interesting

to find that these often become amongst our most popular items.

It's not necessary to be able to read music and there's no audition. If you don't know any of the songs you'll be surprised how quickly you are able to learn them. The group are very good at telling me when they want a little more practice. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome! In addition, on the occasions when I'm not available to play for the group one of our members, Susan, leads the group with a singalong session of well known pop music, mainly from the 60s and 70s, which has proved very enjoyable and makes a lovely change for everyone.

We've recently started to use a

projector so that the words now appear on a screen. This is a change from the folders we have used since the group began. The transition will take a little while as the words are being printed onto transparencies and have to be enlarged and set out differently to suit the new format but, with thanks to the help of another member, Irene, steady progress is being made.

We meet at 2 p.m. on the first and third of the month at the United Reformed Church on Stowmarket high street. There is parking in front of the church.

If you enjoy singing for the sheer joy of it - we look forward to hearing from you!

Hilary Foster Tel: 01359 241773

PLAY READING – Virtual

The Group has continued to meet twice a month on 2nd and 4th Monday, 11.00am – 12.00 noon. Recently we have read "Critical but Stable" by Jean-Pierre Martinez, "Pygmalion" by George Bernard Shaw and "Gaslight" by Patrick Hamilton. Next we plan to read "The Cherry Orchard" by Anton Chekov. I anticipate that the Play Reading Group will continue as a Virtual Group for the foreseeable future. If anyone wishes to join the Virtual Group, please contact me. Anyone who is interested in joining the Group once we return to live meetings, please

contact me and I will keep you informed when the situation changes.

Maureen Wingham-Eaton

Tel: 01449 771200 – email: Maureen.wingham@mwmedia.uk.com

The **QUIZ** group will restart this year

When: Thursday 24th March, 2.00pm – 4.00 pm approx., and the 4th Thursday of each month thereafter.

Where: Stowmarket Library
At the moment we can welcome new members.....

Please contact: Melanie Westenra-Hartley on 01449 767 757 for more information.

Poetry

The members of the Poetry Group had fun at their recent meeting sharing humorous poems and nonsense rhymes. It made a change from some of the more usual subjects when we have explored various poets old and new (mainly new) and different themes are chosen which can be highlighted by members' poetry choices.

Anyone wishing to find out more and perhaps consider joining the group is very welcome to get in touch.

Jenifer Adams 01449 615 581

Group Coordinator

With spring just around the corner things are definitely looking up. Most of us seem happy to be meeting with our groups again. It's nice to be able to do that and do a bit of socialising once more.

The '**Sunday Lunch Club**' set up by **Ken Snow** is up and running and meeting once a month. If you would like to join

please contact

Melanie Westenra-Hartley
(mwestenrahartley@gmail.com).

The '**History Group**' is also getting organised and has already had its first couple of meetings. Please contact **Keith** or **Lorraine** Shelton (contact details p8) if you are interested in getting some information or joining.

As previously mentioned the '**Painting for Pleasure**' group was disbanded

several months ago. I recently had a query about it and am therefore curious if anyone else is interested. Of course the group cannot function without some guidance or shared responsibility amongst group members. Please contact me accordingly.

And, if you have the desire to start any new group please get in touch.

Liz Power (elisabethz252@gmail.com)

Computing and Technology

We've had two virtual meetings since the last newsletter, December and February. Whilst there were only 6 or 7 in attendance at each we had much fun and chatter in amongst our more technical discussions.

December: A very wide ranging meeting. One or two had moved to Windows 11 but for the rest, their PCs were not up to it and there was little inclination to upgrade from Windows 10. We further discussed; the absolute necessity to make regular back ups (both data and system) and reviewed various free and paid for software recommended for the task; how to extract still pictures from movies using Windows 'Film and TV app' and VLC; an excellent successor the 'Windows Movie Maker' - 'Minitool Movie Maker' and yet more discussion on the Windows

context menu (right click).

There were also discussions on the reasons why a member's PC was running very slowly and highlighted several programmes that could assist in the search. Finally we had an amusing exchange of anecdotes about our individual introduction to computing so many years ago!

February: We followed up on several items from the previous meeting before going onto new topics, amongst which were What is a server? What's the difference between uploading and downloading? How come I don't need to put a Wi-Fi password into my mobile phone when in another house? (because you've been there before and entered the local password), What makes 5G better than 4G and 3G? What is 'The Cloud'? Do I need 'One Drive'?

The answer to some these and almost

any basic computer/technical question can be found on our favourite teaching site, 'GCFC Learn Free'. Follow the links...

[This is the main 'Tech section](#)

[This is the 'Basics' start page](#), and

[This is all about 'The Cloud'](#).

As our forum page is not as well used as we would hope, and whilst as a group being highly suspicious of 'Social Media', we decided to set up a closed 'WhatsApp' group as a trial replacement.

Our next meeting is in April. For June, we are grateful to one of our members who offered to host a live meeting at his home so we could meet face to face for the first time in 2 years.

Please let me know if you would like to join our group.

Peter Dakeyne

Enjoying our Christmas Lunch at the URC Hall



Coming up.....

March 23rd. 10.30 am to 12.00 noon at the URC
New Members' meeting.

To all members who have joined in recent months. This is an opportunity to meet the committee and other new members who may not belong to the same groups as yourselves.

April 20th. "Introduction to Astronomy"

David Moreton

May 18th. "Women can fly (at 7 miles a minute)"
Sally Dearman

One woman's journey from jumping from the landing window, to jumping out of aeroplanes, to becoming a civil pilot, to being the first woman through the fast jet flying training system of the modern Royal Air Force.

June 15th. "An English woman's life in rural Turkey"

Jenny Gibbs

Date for your diary

July 13th (note not 20th). "Summer Picnic"

We are having a Summer Picnic again this year. This time it will be at Red Gables in Stowmarket.

Full details will be available in early April.

East Region together in conference

u3a
40th Anniversary

THE U3A - PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE

Conference, clickable link [HERE](#)

Thursday May 19

10.30am to 3.30pm

Inspiring speakers offering challenging thinking

Gervase Phinn
Author and educationalist

Liz Thackray
National u3a chair

Patrick Forsyth
Author and trainer

Super venue



Christchurch United Reformed Church,
New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0AW

* Free parking * Buffet Lunch * Refreshments * Networking

Book your FREE place online at
<https://forms.gle/RX14gTp7Ttor9sbaA>

u3a
learn, laugh, live

Photography

Since the last Newsletter our topics have been 'Autumn', 'Tunnels & Bridges', 'New & Old' and in March 'Folds & Creases'.

You can view a full selection of pictures from past sessions [on our web page.....](#)

We started our group in 2013 and have not missed one meeting since then; January saw our 100th session.

From the beginning, **Roy Fidler** has been our 'guru' who has taken us through all the pictures and demonstrated how they could perhaps be improved by simple photo manipulation.

Roy has now decided to stand down after the April meeting. After this, and to show our appreciation for his inspirational teaching over the last 9 years, the group will be taking him and Lillian out for a celebratory lunch.

Peter Dakeyne

History Group

At our March meeting fellow member Neil Instrall gave a talk on Shepway's involvement in the Dunkirk Evacuation in 1940. Shepway covers the Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh area of Kent. 338,000 troops were evacuated from the shores of Dunkirk during the week of Operation Dynamo, involving 200 naval and over 650 other craft.

Not only was the evacuation from Dunkirk to Kent a tremendous feat in

itself but Neil shared how the railway companies also organised a massive operation in getting the troops out of Kent to neighbouring (and not so near) garrisons. Over 560 trains were involved. This occurred alongside the use of additional trains to evacuate over 2000 school children out of Kent where it was no longer considered safe. Although there was a high probability that Operation Dynamo would be an utter failure, it proved to be a complete successful evacuation and a surprisingly well kept secret with barely any

mention in Folkestone newspapers at the time.

Suffolk played its part with three Suffolk lightboats and other vessels being used in the evacuations. Neil gave an informative talk which was well appreciated by the audience.

Our next meeting on 6th April is, appropriately, a visit to the Albert Corey Lifeboat Museum in Southwold which is being organised by Jackie Durrant.

Keith and Lorraine

Geology

In the last two months we've had member presentations on Granite, including the controversy between experts concerning its origin; Limestone from York and its uses; Crystals and William Smith "The Father of English Geology" as well as YouTube videos on The Isle of Arran, a favourite field visit by Schools and Experts alike.

Our meetings are now on the third Tuesday at 2pm and for the next few months we shall continue to meet on-line as it has proved to be an easier way

for us to see presentations of slides, maps and video clips. Having said that, getting together, feeling the same rock and discussing it cannot be bettered so we will fit some of this in with our site visits. The first of these is on March 15th when we shall meet up in Cambridge and have lunch together in the Botanical Gardens before moving on to the Sedgwick Museum of Life Sciences.

We are studying the U.K.'s geographic position over billions of years and we will see many fossils and plants

illustrating the evolution of life and our bedrock. Also, we will be able to see a new exhibition of artist John Kelly's field sketches and objects collected from two very contrasting islands, one Icelandic and the other in the Outer Hebrides.

We are not led by an expert in the field of geology but we are a group of enthusiastic learners and information self-helpers. Currently we have spaces available for members interested in joining us.

Linda Reynolds



Table Tennis

Having recently recruited several new members we are now 20 in number and averaging 16-17 in attendance. Qualification to join? Be a Stowmarket u3a member. You don't have to be an expert player – even if you've not played since your teens, you'll soon pick up the basics again.

The objective is just to enjoy yourself and exercise mind and body in the process.

We can still take more members. Have a look at the information sheet on our web site [for full details](#).

Play the video to see us in action

Peter Dakeyne



ACTIVITY & INTEREST GROUPS – March 2022. Please note. Several groups are in need of a new Leader/Convenor and/or are waiting to restart if there is sufficient interest. If you can help, please contact Liz Power, Groups Coordinator on 07799 761 336, or email groupscoord@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Also, contact Liz if you have an idea for a new group and would like some assistance in setting it up.



BOOK CLUB	GEOLOGY	PHOTOGRAPHY (Virtual)
Sylvia Downs 01449 612 661	Linda Reynolds 07880 516 926	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562
BRIDGE INTERMEDIATE/IMPROVERS	HISTORY	PLAY READING (Virtual)
Carol Gibson 07918 743 154	Lorraine/Keith Shelton 01449 768 744	Maureen Wingham-Eaton 01449 771 200
CANASTA (1)	LUNCH CLUB (Sunday)	POETRY
Hazel Burl 01449 615 581	Melanie Westenra-Hartley 01449 767 757	Jenifer Adams 01449 615 581
CANASTA (2)	LUNCH CLUB (1)	QUIZ
Carol Gibson 07918 743 154	In abeyance	Melanie Westenra-Hartley 01449 767 757
COMPUTING & TECHNOLOGY (Virtual)	LUNCH CLUB (2)	SCRABBLE PLAYING
Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562	In abeyance	Contact Liz Power 07799 761 336
DISCUSSION	LUNCH CLUB (3)	SINGING
David Warner 01449 612 730	In abeyance	Hilary Foster 01359 241 773
FRENCH CONVERSATION (1)	MUSIC - CLASSICAL	TABLE TENNIS
Helen Mead 01449 677 846	Ian Hooper 01449 770 179	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562
FRENCH CONVERSATION (2)	MYTHS, STORIES AND LEGENDS	THEATRE OUTINGS
Neville Cox 01473 657 374	In abeyance	New convenor/organiser required
GARDENS & THINGS	PATCHWORK	WALK and TALK
Stewart Dorward 01449 774 213	In abeyance	Phil Webb 01449 614 616 Keith Shelton 01449 768 744

Obituary

We are sorry to report the death of member Dr Alun Davies who was a member of the new History Group. He'd had a distinguished career as Consultant Anaesthetist, North Staffordshire Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent. Alun and his wife Angela joined Stowmarket U3A early 2020 and we pass our condolences on to her and the rest of his family.

Stowmarket u3a Committee Members 2021/2022



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John Hunter Evelyn Russell Keith Shelton Linda Reynolds Anne Webb

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