



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Heart of England U3A

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December 2011 Newsletter

TODAYS SPEAKER

The speaker today is Margot McCleary of Velvet Glove presenting a storytelling entertainment, a witty performance of sketches and monologues in verse and prose.

NEXT MONTHS SPEAKER

Next month's speaker on 5th January is Tony Boullenier whose topic is his book 'Leoni and the last Napoleon'.

West Midlands Regional Seminar November 2011

David Sladden and I attended this seminar in Birmingham. It was aimed at but not exclusively for Committee members and Group Leaders. The morning was devoted to starting up and supporting new U3As, and their problems and the talk was given by the Education & Development Officer from National Office whose role it is. There was ample opportunity to ask questions among which were several on non-members joining trips and insurance cover, data protection etc.

It is planned to have three regional themed meetings a year, on Membership, Committees and Interest Groups, the latter on 18 November.

After lunch and networking with other U3As we heard about the Resource Centre (non-book only) and that a list for particular subjects is available from National Office, or a catalogue on the national web site. This was followed by a talk on Shared Learning Projects, in which a team from U3As and/or a local institution e.g. a university or museum explore a specific topic, normally in a set time. We have fuller information for anyone interested and there is more on the national web site.

There were some useful points made and it is always interesting to compare notes with other U3As.

Aline Cumming

Committee and Group Leaders Get-together 18 November

Group Leaders and committee members had a report from each Leader. The Archive (send Edwin your Christmas meeting photos please), The New Year Lunch, equipment, on-line courses and new groups were discussed. Finally David thanked the Group Leaders for their work.

Aline Cumming

Please support the Creative Craft Group's Christmas Raffle – "What's my Name?". The delightful doll prize was knitted by one of our members, Sheila Ritchie. There is also a prize for a second name.

All the proceeds from this raffle will be donated to Warwickshire Association for the Blind based in Leamington Spa. This association offers support to all residents of Warwickshire with a visual impairment and has been of help to several of our members. For more information – see their web site at

www.wa4b.org.uk

The Archives

I would ask all Group leaders or organisers to make a special effort over the Christmas period to record something of their Group's activities for inclusion in the Archive. Perhaps a photograph of the Group with a note of or short description of the activities. Material can be passed to me as paper copies or computer files. Hope you all have a pleasant Christmas and New Year.

Edwin Lilly

On Line Course from National Office.

A list of the free untutored courses available to members may be found on the notice board. Units for these courses are sent to members via e-mail. The courses provide interest for an individual, or a self-help group to study the material for a few weeks/months. Research may be done via the library, the internet or using material within the home.

For more information, please contact Robyn - redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

The China Group has received the 3rd Unit of the course and will be taking a bit more time to research it bearing in mind the extra commitments members have over Christmas and New Year. Unit 3 will cover 206BC to 220AD with the spotlight on Chinese Inventions which changed the world.

The next get-together to discuss research on Unit 3 will be held on Wednesday, 18th January from 2.30 to 4.30 in the Side Room.

Robyn Nicoll

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Art Appreciation Group



It was a full house for Annabel Shirt, textile artist, who gave an inspirational talk with many superb examples of her work. The blend of fabrics, threads, stitching and colours in designs was amazing.

Don't forget Christmas lunch is on Friday, 16th December, at The Opposition in Sheep Street at 12.30 - see you there!

Pat Wood

Big Band Swing Jazz Group



You know that saying "I just do not know where the time has gone", well that is how I am feeling. October 2011 saw me stepping down as the group leader for the Heart of England Swing and Jazz Group. Ten years ago I had a request to set up this group, and with the help of five stalwart enthusiasts, we began as a house group. Then like Topsy, we just grew and grew, until it became, because of lack of space, it was obvious a second group (the Stratford Swingers) was needed to ease the overflow of enthusiasts waiting to join.

I so enjoyed the enthusiastic, friendly and unstinting support of the group, I never missed attending a meeting throughout the ten years. For without that high level of support and enthusiasm, we all would not have listened and chatted together for so long.

So a grateful and heartfelt "Thank You" to all those past and present, who contributed so much, to keep us nattering and listening for so long together.

Thank You for your very generous parting gift and for your kind comments at our October 2011 meeting end. I know Tony Badham our new group leader with your continued unstinting support, will allow us many more years of successful nattering and music.

Dennis Sully

Bridge Group



The Bridge Group is friendly, sociable, keen to encourage new members and we offer encouragement to "rusty" ex- players. The Group meets every Tuesday afternoon at 2.30 in the Side Room next to the kitchen.

For complete beginners, separate introduction to card play is available. You can contact Ann Parker to arrange for introductory sessions.

John Yeomans

Chinwags



Our October meeting started with the topic Intrusive Advertising on TV and was sparked off by the serial ad during Downton Abbey. We agreed that whilst advertising can have its uses to make us aware of new products, on TV much of it has a negative effect. Who can remember what the Downton Abbey interruption was advertising? The ads to sell to children at Christmas came in for disapproval for putting cash-strapped parents under pressure. The advertising during sports events which usually consists of either fast cars with shapely females involved or betting leaves me in particular cold. The previews of TV programmes interrupting the cast list of the

previous programme caused particular rage. Much irritation was aired and we felt better able to enjoy our lunch. We meet again on 28 November, topic St Paul's Square. There will be NO Chinwags in December so see you all again on 30 January (the 5th Monday to avoid the New Year Lunch on 21st January).

Aline Cumming

The Choir



Although the Autumn leaves are still falling we are already practising for Christmas Carols! We sang into festive mode and could almost see the snow and hear the bells".

On Monday 12th December we shall sing for the History Group and look forward to that enormously. On a musical note – In order to stave off the winter blues, our chorus of quavering voices will endeavour to *minimise* any crotchety comments!

Tony Griffiths

Classical Music Group



We had another 'bring your own disk' programme for November. We began with an overture – Rossini's William Tell, a nostalgic reminder of the Lone Ranger – from George. Jean brought the third movement, Allegro Giocoso, from Brahms' Violin Concerto, with Igor Oistrakh the soloist. Rosemary's choices were the aria Voi che sapete from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro, the quartet Bella figlia dell'amore from Verdi's Rigoletto, the voices of Joan Sutherland and Pavarotti soaring, and the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from Nabucco. The first half finished sedately with the Allegro from Bach's first Brandenburg Concerto, Aline's contribution. After tea, Deidre provided two pieces by Chopin transposed by Liszt, My Joys and the Maiden's Wish played exquisitely by Benjamin Grosvenor. We finished triumphantly with Rosemary's other choice the Grand March and Ballet from Verdi's Aida. Thank you all for a most enjoyable afternoon. Next month Deidre will give us a Christmas programme, on 12 December at 2.30, **do come**.

Note: Someone lent Swan Lake to Nev McFarlane, to whom should it be returned?

Aline Cumming

Computer Group at Stratford School . (Formerly Stratford High School)



The Typing Course is well underway. The following dates have been booked on Thursdays from 4pm to 6pm. - **December 8th and 15th**. We plan to continue the Typing Course in the New Year and will include simple word processing, writing a letter, designing a poster and setting out a table.

Dates booked in the New Year will be advertised in the January newsletter.

Please let Ron or Robyn know if you have any requests for future topics.

Robyn Nicoll

Creative Craft Group



Our meeting on Thursday, 17th Nov was very productive. One group started making Christmas Stars with the guidance of Sheila Giles and the other group were using scraps of ribbon and material to make a Christmas wreath. Both creations will be completed at the December meeting. **Please note that this meeting will be held in the annex on Thursday 8th December starting at 2.00pm.**

Roma Rudd

Card Club



On Saturday November 5th three members spent an enjoyable afternoon at the Methodists Christmas Fair. We sold £32 worth of cards which was pretty good considering most were 4 for a pound! We also had a Make and Take item for the children. For 50p they had a demonstration of an easy card and a small kit to take home. After the first customer business really snow-balled! At the December General meeting there will be more bargain cards to buy. Proceeds are going to Age UK to help with their local mini-bus.

Caroline Leach

Dinahs



We had an enjoyable meal at Jimmy Spices in November, there were only seven of us. The food was good and we all seemed to be very relaxed and chatted about politics and embarrassing moments, some of us seem to have more than others: or is that because we would rather forget them!!

We next meet 6th December for our Xmas meal at The Vintners.

Sylvia Crooks.

Discussion Group (changed from Lets Talk)



Discussion Group Wednesday October 9. Our theme was heroes, past & present & it centred greatly around entertainers, because the death of Edmundo Ros aged 100 started the ball rolling. Some authors were noted & also a few figures from history but only Winston Churchill was there to represent politicians. We all regretted the loss of clean, family friendly comedians & wished that many more could be as funny without being smutty as, for instance, Victoria Wood mostly is. The next meeting will be Wed Dec 14. A Christmasy chat.

Athena Roderick

Family History Group



The Family History Group met on 17 November and included two new members.



The group will next meet on Thursday 15 December at Stratford High School at 3.45pm when we will combine with the U3A computer group.

Due to changes in arrangements with the school the December meeting will include a discussion about the future of the group.

We primarily use the Internet to research using Census returns and birth, marriage and death indexes, and there is always someone on hand to offer encouragement and advice. I also have lots of resources gathered over many years of research which I am happy to share.

New members are always welcome.

Sue Ocock

Grumpy Old Men Group



This month's discussion - "Should we keep our old traditions or destroy them" - introduced and expertly led throughout by Grump of the Month Sid Slaughter, resulted in the Grumps being strongly in favour of retaining as many as possible but recognising that some would and indeed already had disappeared as "fashions" changed. Many examples of much loved traditions - custom and practices of long standing - were produced such as Stratford Mop in the Town centre, Bonfire Night, Halloween, Pancake Day and Mothers Day (Mothering Sunday as it was known when we were young!!). The origins of some traditions were a mystery, for example unlucky Friday 13th and the launching of ships by breaking a bottle of champagne over their bows. The commercialisation now surrounding many traditions was decried and the attempts by misguided authorities, without consultation, allegedly for political correctness, to rebrand festivities such as Christmas to Winter Fest was vociferously deplored. a unanimous verdict then that we were infinitely better with traditions than without.

Next meeting - Wed. Dec. 21st. **Venue** - Le Bistro Pierre

Subject - My favourite Nursery Rhyme, Ditty, Limerick or humorous Poem - **introduced by - all attending.** **Chairman for the Day** - Jack Issacson

Graham Mitchell

Hand Bell Ringing



This month we are continuing to play from, normal music. This causes some fun and games!! We still need some more members to fully utilise the two Chromatic Octaves of Hand Bells. We are very much in need of Music Stands – if anyone has any surplus to requirements or know of a cheap source of supply, please let me know.

Ron Castleton

History Group



At our November Meeting Tony Whiteley showed us a film entitled "Oranges and Sunshine", featuring Emily Watson as Margaret Humphreys, a social worker. It told the story of the deportation of children from the 1920's onwards, but particularly in the 1950's and 1960's, to countries such as Australia, Canada, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The

children, some as young as three, were taken from their families to a "new life overseas" – hence the title of the film. The story of what happened to them was shocking – brothers and sisters were separated and many were sent to institutions where they were savagely treated and abused. Some were given different names and dates of birth so they could not trace their families. Margaret Humphreys was asked by a young Australian to help trace her mother and from then on she devoted her life to trying to unite families. Some twenty three years later the governments of Australia and Britain apologised for the part they had played. In his speech Gordon Brown drew comfort from the fact that so many of the children had grown up to lead happy and successful lives – despite the traumas of their childhood.

On 12th December the History group are having a Christmas Lunch at the Windmill Pub, followed by a meeting at our usual venue where we are going to be entertained by the U3A Choir.

Sheela Burchill

Keep Fit Group



Keep Fit is now full and we have started a waiting list.

For more information please ring Mary Palmer or Joy Baylis for further details.

Opera Group



The first meeting will be Wed 7 December, Time 2pm, venue: Bridge Cottage Warwick Road (at Aline & George's) We will see and hear the film of La Boheme by Puccini and decide some more dates

Aline Cumming

Pilates Group



Every Monday at St. Andrew's Parish hall Shotton between 12:15 and 1:15. For more information contact Gill Ganner.

Play Reading Group



We met at Gwyneths for our November Play Reading. The play this time was "The Real Inspector Hound" by Tom Stoppard, very funny and enjoyed by all. We meet again 9th December at Brian's to read something with a Xmas theme. Please ring Sylvia if you wish to come along.

Sylvia Crooks

Poetry Reading Group



Unfortunately two of our founder members are leaving the group because they are having to take on other responsibilities and will be unable to attend regularly. This means that we can take one or two more U3A members into the group. We meet at the West End pub, Bull Street, Old Town, on the second Wednesday of every month at 10.0 until 12.0 mid-day. If you love Poetry and would like to pay us a visit to see if this group is for you, please ring Jackie Williams.

Poetry and Prose Reading Group



Our November meeting had only four members attend, but the afternoon was enjoyable none the less with poems by Keats and Roger McGough. Included were Meg Meryles, O Blush Not So, The Eve of St Agnes, and To Autumn, Bees Cannot Fly, First Day at School, Your favourite Hat etc. The next meeting will be on 14th December.

Ann Davies

Reading Group – Monday



Apologies for our failure to report back every month but we have our meeting the 3rd Monday in the month, sometimes too late to be included in the next newsletter!!! Two of our members persevered with Foundation by Isaac Asimov, science fiction life on different planets but still with human frailties! Whatever the library offering is, we still have a good discussion about our varied life stories and enjoy ourselves. We would still like some

Reading Group – Wednesday



This month we did free choice reading which included the following.

“Brick Lane” by Monica Ali, the story of 18 years old Naseem brought over from Bangladesh to marry a man 20years older than herself and living in a council flat on a run-down estate in the East End of London.

“Little Boy Lost” by Marghanita Laski, the poignant story set in France of a couple separated by war . Jean, their young child hidden by the local priest and sent along the resistance route to be cared for by nuns in an orphanage. After the war when his father searches for him, can he be sure that the child Jean in their care is really his son?

“When God was a Rabbit” by Sarah Winman, a book about the childhood and later life of a brother and sister as told by the girl. The brother always being complicit in what happens to her. It tells of their move to Cornwall after their lawyer father had a large win football pool’s win and how their subsequent life changed when living in a large property run as a B & B. God is the name of her childhood pet rabbit.

“The Confession.” by John Grisham is about the false imprisonment of a negro football player for the murder of a white teenage cheerleader in East Texas. The story charts his life before and in prison and concludes with the confession of the real white murderer just 4 days before the execution on Death Row. Will there be time for the truth to convince lawyers, judges and politicians?

Sandra Whiteley

Reading Group - Friday



We had our first book that had been chosen by the library after they muddled us up with another group. This book was Utterly Monkey by Nick Laird. It is his first book and was well written particularly the dialogue a lot of which was in the Northern Ireland dialect in fact the title is a Northern Ireland expression. Some of the group enjoyed the book while others didn’t because of the genre. It is lad-lit which you either like or you don’t.

Coral Bradley

Rock & Roll Group



We had a most enjoyable meeting with a lot of people. As usual we had a mixture of songs covering the heyday of Rock & Roll. Next month Dennis and Mavis are giving us a programme so we will welcome anyone who would like to hear this.

I am not certain what I will do after that meeting as I will have to take some time off for treatment for Lymphoma. I am hoping that someone will be able to continue with programmes and if I can give any help from distance I will of course do that. If not we may have to have a Sabbatical for a while.

Coral Bradley

Science & Nature Group



On November 11th we went to Forge Mill Needle Museum near Reditch which illustrates the history of the needle and fishing tackle industry. It was a very different and interesting place to visit; with models and recreated scenes showed how needles were once made under dire and dangerous conditions. Reditch once produced 90% of the worlds needles.

There was also an exhibition that showed different aspects of Reditch's local history.

December 9th Christmas Social in the rear annexe at the Methodist Hall. £1 each. 2pm

January 13th Talk & DVD on James Bazalgette - the Sewer King! -- in the front lounge at the Methodist Hall 2pm.

Sandra Sladden

Stratford Swingers Big Band & Jazz Group

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 15th December 2011 at 2pm in the Lounge of The Methodist Church, Old Town, Stratford upon Avon.



Dennis Sully

New Year Lunch on Saturday 21st January 2012 at Le Bistrot Pierre.

Just to remind you that we are still taking orders for the NEW YEAR LUNCH to be held on Saturday 21st January 2012 at Le Pierre Bistro, Garden Room, Swans Nest Hotel starting at 12 Midday. The Booking Forms and Menu choice will be available at the next meeting and are also online and you can bring money (preferably cheques made out to HOE U3A)) to the next meeting. Athena will collect them at the door. Or you can send cheques to her, 17 Gifford Walk, SOA CV379LN - 01789 551416.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the celebration for next year.

Athena Roderick

Sunday Lunch Group

Just a reminder of the Christmas Sunday lunch on the 4th December, at the Henley Golf Club.

Brian Bradley



Our next visit to the Symphony Hall is a Matinee on Wednesday 25th April 2012.



CBSO "British Classics"

Conductor: John Wilson

Clarinet: Michael Collins

List to be signed at December/January
Main Meeting – ALL MONIES TO BE
PAID BY 25th FEBRUARY.

Elgar Imperial March

Butterworth – Shropshire Lad

Finzi – Clarinet Concerto

Coates – London Calling

Monckton – the Arcadians

Wood – London Cameos

Katelbey – In a Monastery Garden

Farnon – Jumping Bean

Coates – Dancing Nights Waltz

Delius – Hearing the first cuckoo in Spring

Dates for your Diary

Next Visit to Symphony Hall – Thursday 28th June 2012 – Matinee Performance. 2.15pm.

Theatre Group



We are going to Malvern on 3 December to see The Holly & The Ivy leaving Henley at 12.00 and the Leisure Centre at 12.30 promptly. As I will not be able to join the group Rosemary Davies will stand in for me. She has the tickets and if you have any problems her number is 01789 294862 or 07776228692.

The next trip is to the Belgrade to see Nora on 18 February. Details of this later. All the tickets have been sold.

Although I will not be able to go to the theatre for a few months the Theatre Group will continue as normal, Rosemary will take names and money at the monthly meetings and you can phone me to add your name for a play. As yet the spring brochures are not available but after Christmas we will be booking for other plays.

Coral Bradley

Walking Group



The next walk will take place on Wednesday 14TH December 2011 at 10 a.m. prompt. The walk will start from Loxley Close; just off the A429 in Wellesbourne adjacent to the Coop and you can park in the Lay by there next to the playing fields.

This is just under five mile very easy walk on good roads appropriate for this time of the year.

I recommend good walking shoes and also bring a drink with you, although I am trying to arrange a seasonal stop enroute. I look forward to seeing you.

Valerie Redfern

New Chess Group in Dene Valley U3A

We will be meeting alternate Wednesday afternoons from 2.30 to 4.30 in the Gallery, The Malt House Village Hall in Alveston. The next meeting is on November 16th. The standards will be from beginner through to expert and we will provide tuition and coaching. Group leader (Chess) Dene valley U3A

WHAT'S ON – Monthly Meetings at Stratford, Shotton and Dene Valley U3As.***Stratford – 15th December - Christmas Entertainment.******Shotton – 6th December - Social Event.******DeneValley – 6th December – “Who the Dickens?” - Janet Perkins***

Group Leaders Contact List		
Group	Group Leader	Usual Meeting date (Monthly)
Art Appreciation	Phyl Collins Pat Wood	3 rd Friday 2pm
Big Band Music & Jazz	Tony Badham	4 th Tuesday 2 – 4 pm
Bird Watching Group	John Stagg	See Newsletter for dates
Bridge	John Yeomans	Every Tuesday 2.30pm
Chinwags Luncheon Group	Aline Cumming	4 th Monday 12 Noon
Choir	Ruth Grahame Dorothy Jones	11.45 for 12 noon, Alternate Fridays
Classical Music	Aline Cumming	2 nd Tuesday 2.30 pm
Cooks Club	Chris Heaps	4 th Wednesday
Creative Crafts	Roma Rudd	3 rd Thursday 2 – 4 pm
Computer Group	Robyn Nicoll	2 nd Thursday - 4.15 pm
Dinahs Luncheon Group	Sylvia Crooks	1 st Tuesday for Lunch
Discussion Group	Athena Roderick	2 nd Wednesday
Family History – Genealogy	Sue Ocock	3 rd Thursday – 4.00 pm
Grumpy Old Men Group	Graham Mitchell	3 rd Wednesday for Lunch
Hand Bell Ringing Group	Ron Castleton	Alternate Mondays 10am
History Group	Janet Anslow	2 nd Monday – 2.0 pm
Keep Fit	Mary Palmer	Every Thursday am
Luncheon Group – Sundays	Brian Bradley	- see Newsletter for dates -
Pilates Group	Gill Ganner	Mondays – 12.15-1.15pm
Play Reading	Sylvia Crooks	-see Newsletter for dates -
Poetry Reading	Jacqueline Williams	2 nd Weds. 10 – 12 am
Poetry & Prose Appreciation	Anne Davies	As appropriate
Reading Group – Wednesday	Dorothy Jones	3 rd Wednesday 2.30 pm
Reading Group – Monday	Phyllis Bailey	3 rd Monday–2.30-4.30pm
Reading Group – Friday	Coral Bradley	As appropriate
Rock & Roll Music Group	Coral Bradley	2 nd Thursday – 2 – 4pm
Science & Nature Group	Geoff Bridgewater	2 nd Fridays
Stratford Swingers	Dennis Sully	4 th Thursday
Symphony Hall Visits	Dorothy Jones & Gwyn Bevins	As appropriate
Theatre Visits & Outings	Coral Bradley	As appropriate
Walking	Valerie Redfern	2 nd Wednesday

TEA ROTA. December – Pilates Group – January 2012 – Computer Group