



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Heart of England U3A

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MAY 2012 NEWSLETTER

TODAYS SPEAKER

'Rule Britannia'. To commemorate the diamond Jubilee year of Elizabeth II, Philip Carr, as Professor Cruickshank will be our guide through the years of the reign of Queen Victoria and review the achievements of her empire. Her adventurous subjects like Brunel, Stephenson, McAdam, Cadbury, and Lever all contributing to the Nation's success.

NEXT MONTHS SPEAKER

Mike Miles will be our speaker on 7th June, talking us through the Lives of the Women who "Worked the Canal boats".

From the Chairman's Desk

The current Speakers Secretary, Ann Davis will be standing down at the next AGM in September, so we will be looking for a replacement to do this very important job. The task will be to organise the Speakers Programme for the year 2014 – Ann has already finalised the programme for 2013, as this has to be done 12 months in advance.

David Sladden

Courses On-Line from National Office.

Note: There is no charge for Untutored Course access to U3A members. Members will at first need to register at National Office for verification of membership.

National Web Site. www.u3a.org.uk Go to "Create an Account"

A list of the courses may be found on the notice board.

Several courses have been downloaded and saved over the past 2 years.

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

The China On-liners will be meeting on Wednesday, 23rd May, in the Lounge from 2.30 – 4.30 pm. We are researching the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) during which the Forbidden City was built taking an estimated 1,000,000 workers 14 years to build over 800 beautiful buildings. The Forbidden City is the world's largest palace complex and was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1987. Also during this period, a huge fleet of ships were built to explore the world, possibly reaching America, Australia and Greenland. Evidence of this is still being investigated.

The Group are planning to visit Compton Verney on Wednesday afternoon, 9th May, where we will be given a conducted tour of the Chinese Collection. Anyone interested is welcome to join us. The cost will be £8.50.

Do contact Robyn for more details.

Robyn Nicoll

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Art Appreciation Group



Several members met at the Old Silk Mill, Chipping Campden, to view the current exhibition - a mix of ceramics, paintings, photography and textiles - having enjoyed a lunch at Badgers Hall beforehand. We also ventured up the stairs to view the silversmiths' workshop which hasn't changed over the years and is still being used by descendants of George Hart who moved to Chipping Campden in 1902.

The next meeting will be at Beckford Silk Mill where a tour has been arranged for 11 am at a cost of £4 each. For transport arrangements please contact either Phyl Collins or Pat Wood. The date is Friday 18th May.

Pat Wood

All Swing and Jazz Group



A great opening to the afternoon with the Ray Anthony Orchestra playing a medley of tunes under the title "A Salute to Ellington" Then came tracks by The Eddie Thompson Trio and Terry Snyder and The All Stars. The latter playing "Blue Tango" (bit of a French feel to it – must have been the Accordion in the background).

The following tracks were by JJ Johnson/Kai Winding, ~The Harry South Stereo Brass, (a new one to me) and two by The Marty Paich Big Band. All in all a very Cool first half.

After the interval we swung into action with The Spitfire band playing "Baubles, Bangles and Beads," followed by Gerry Mulligan playing "Getting Sentimental Over you." Then it was off up t'North to hear The British Jazz Trio playing "Ilkley Moor Baht'at." We then had tracks by Urbie Green and his Orchestra and Ted Heath, before Chris Barber introduced a touch of Trad playing "Martinique!" The end of the afternoon was a Big Band feast with two tracks by Count Basie one by Gene Krupa and the final track by Kenny Baker with the Roland Shaw Orchestra.

Thank you, yet again Dennis for a good afternoon. Don't Forget our May meeting is on the 24th May in the lounge of the Methodist Church. We welcome new members to enjoy a complete cross section of jazz from Cool, Bebop, Trad and Swing.

Mavis Pickett

Big Band Swing & Jazz 27/3/12 .



This month's playlist was compiled and presented by Dereck Philips and included many favourites ranging from Sidney Bechet to George Huxley and greats such as Count Basie, Kid Ory & Johnny Hodges.

Our next session will be Tuesday 24th. April with a playlist created by Elliot Cave. Everyone is welcome so why not join us and enjoy the double benefit of good, if slightly barmy, company and a wide variety of Jazz & Swing!

Tony Badham

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



Thirteen of us met in March and talked about employment and the problems people are facing finding jobs while employers cannot find people with appropriate qualifications and experience. Various examples were quoted from our experiences. Ultimately we decided we could not see a solution.

We meet next Monday 23rd April on St George's Day, appropriately garbed, and will discuss whether we should be more patriotic.

Aline Cumming

The Choir



If you have always wanted to sing in a choir - come to the concert and sign up. We don't have auditions, the only requirements are an enjoyment of singing, a smile and a sense of humour

Dorothy Jones

THE CHOIR Concert "LET'S SING A SONG" - FRIDAY JUNE 15th in the Methodist Church Hall - 2-30-4pm.
Tickets £2-50(inc tea & cake) are now available at main meetings or phone Ruth Grahame or Dorothy Jones.
Come and join us to celebrate the Jubilee . There will be songs from all parts of Britain and beyond.
We'd love to see you and hope it will be a very entertaining afternoon.

Classical Music Group



Our programme on 11 April was provided by Gwynneth who also hosted it. We began with Mendelssohn's Songs without words, numbers 2 to 5, played by John Ogden. Then Shostakovich played his own piano Concerto No 2, it seemed as if he had extra fingers to cope with the demands of the score. Libera Me from Verdi's Requiem was sung by Mirelli Freni. After the interval we heard Pavarotti singing some Caruso favorites, then the Fantasie Overture from Tchaikovski' Romeo and Juliet. This was played by Andris Nelsons and the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, a treat to hear. Finally the Guitar Concerto No1 by Giuliani played by Martin Haselbock, and we commented on the style which was reminiscent of Mozart, a contemporary. It was a most enjoyable and well-balanced programme and we welcomed Gwynneth's return.

Aline Cumming

Computer Group at Stratford School.



The **Digital Camera and Computer Course** is underway.

Dates for May: Thursdays, 10th and 24th. from 4pm – 6pm.

The cost for this course is £10 for the 6 sessions.

Please give suggestions for topics you would like us to consider for courses in the future.

Contact Ron or Robyn or add suggestions to the sheet on the notice board table.

Robyn Nicoll

Creative Craft Group



At our last session on the 19th April, members continued the Tunisian Crochet project by producing Squares which will be assembled to make a knee rug. Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, 17th May** in the Annex from 2pm to 4pm.

Members will be putting away their crochet hooks and taking up knitting needles to knit little jackets for the charity "Little Hen Rescue".

The finished jackets will be on display (minus the hens) at a future monthly meeting.

Look at www.littlehenrescue.co.uk/jumpers.aspx for more information, Pattern and Instructions.

Robyn Nicoll

Dinahs



We met at Grants this month. A lovely meal enjoyed by all. I cannot believe this is Easter week, where did Xmas go! Lots of chat as usual catching up. 'Transition Stratford' was talked about as Sue Tringham, who is very involved, are looking for volunteers. Sue, who helped last year is going to be shown how to prune an apple tree. There is a new Art Deco Cinema in Evesham and well worth a visit. Holidays coming up, where to go, did you know there are some Seniors spend all their time travelling on Cruise ships. They have their own personal possessions in their cabins and when they want to transfer to another ship the crew just move all their belongings. Ireland had just been visited: a friend living there had just bought a Teacup Yorkie, sounds cute. A lovely companion when one is a Silver Surfer.

Watching Dinahs paying for their meal I thought; we aren't elderly we are just children at heart.

We next meet at Sorrentos on Ely Street, Tuesday 1st May.

Sylvia Crooks

Family History Group



The Family History Group meets on 3rd Thursday each Month. 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 resources gathered over many years of research which I am happy to share.

The group will next meet on Thursday 26 April at Stratford High School at 3.45pm, followed by meetings on 24 May and 28 June. The cost for next term will be £7.50 which must be paid at the beginning of term. If numbers increase then there will be an adjustment for the following term.

New members are always welcome. I will not be at the April meeting, but there will be friendly faces there so feel free to come along.

Sue Ocock

Grumpy Old Men Group



A stunned silence greeted the opening remarks of Grump of the Month Derek Phillips introduction to this month's discussion topic - "Professional Sport - Do the Public get value for money and is the money well spent?" - as the Grumps contemplated the magnitude of the astonishing earnings of top flight sportsmen. While the money received by Premiership footballers often hit the headlines it can pale into "relative" insignificance against potential rewards in other sports such as Formula 1, golf, tennis, American football, basketball, boxing etc., where incomes of up to \$100 million per year are not unknown. Professional sport is part of the entertainment industry and undoubtedly the rewards reflect the size of the audience attracted whether live or via TV which through the purchase of the broadcasting rights (particularly Sky) provides much of the money sloshing about at the top level. It would appear that in general professional sport is doing a reasonable job both in value for money and the way it is being spent as, despite what at times seem to be very high ticket prices, all the major sports continue to attract spectators in vast numbers to the excellent facilities they

provide. However, murmurings of discontent were noted regarding the £9.5 billion being spent on the London Olympics!!

Next meeting - Wed. 16 May **Venue** - Le Bistrot Pierre

Subject - The Power of the Media. **Introduced by** Robert Harding.

Graham Mitchell

Hand Bell Ringing



The big news for our Group, is that the Music, which the now disbanded 'Trinity Ringers' used has been found at the Trinity Parish Hall, (where we practice) and is now available to us – a very big saving in cost to our members!! Do come and join us.

Ron Castleton

History Group



The History Group did not meet in April. At our meeting on Monday, 14th May, we are going to see the film "Hobsons Choice". All are welcome.

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



We met at Bridge Cottage and enjoyed a delightful recording of La Fille du Regiment live from the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The tenor, Juan Diego Flores who is earning himself a world wide reputation, attacked his six high Cs with gusto and apparent ease and the soprano met the demands of both comedy and unhappines with feeling. We enjoyed it. We meet next at Bridge Cottage on Tue 24 April for some grand opera, Pavarotti in Il Trovatore.

Aline Cumming

Pilates Group



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

Play Reading Group



We last met 29th March. There were only 5 of us reading Act1 and 2 of Letter to a General by Maurice McLoughlin. Irish Nuns in China during the 2nd World War; enjoyed by all.

We next meet Friday 20th April 11.00am. Please ring Sylvia if you would like to join our wee group. 01789 416965.

Sylvia Crooks

Poetry Reading Group



The Poetry Group, which meets at the West End pub, was very privileged to have an important visitor last month. Through a chance encounter at the bar, when

ordering our coffees, we met Jeffrey Dench and he offered to join our next poetry session and to read some of his favourite poems. We could hardly contain our excitement until our next meeting and, true to his word, Jeffrey was there waiting for us, with a pile of his poetry books. We spent a very happy two hours, listening to Jeffrey while he talked about his background and his family and read many of Shakespeare's famous speeches and some of the sonnets. He also read other poems and, one which stood out especially vividly, was his reading of the "Highwayman". Jeffrey's voice was magnificent and we could see how he had been an actor at the RSC for over thirty years. What a gift he had been given, as had his sister and brother. There was a great deal of laughter and enjoyment and we hope that our visitor will be able to join us again in the not too distant future.

Jackie Williams

Reading Group – Wednesday



In April we read *The Master* by Colm Toibin which although was intended to be a novel was more a biography of the American author Henry James. It is described as a powerful account of the hazards of putting the life of the mind before the affairs of the heart.

Although we thought that it was well written and in parts gave sharp insights into several of the characters it was not a book the majority of the group enjoyed reading.

Sandra Whiteley

Reading Group - Friday



This month we read *Restless* by William Boyd. This turned out to be an enjoyable book. A daughter discovers that her mother was a spy in the Second World War. It completely changes her opinion of her mother as we and she learn what her mother did. We had some criticisms of the book but these did not really distract from our overall approval of it.

Coral Bradley

Rock & Roll Group



Another successful afternoon although with some criticism of the choice of biscuits. This group is very discerning with biscuits and only the best will do. Next month Tony Whitley will present a programme and the I have promised to supply better biscuits.

Coral Bradley

Science & Nature Group



On April 13th we visited the Blaenavon World Heritage Site, starting with the Iron Works whose development in 1789 led to the growth of the town of Blaenavon. The works were the first purpose-built multi-furnace iron works in Wales. By 1796 it was the 2nd largest producer of iron in Wales. We then went into the town itself. Visiting the World Heritage Centre based in the former St. Peter's School buildings, the Workmen's Institute (created by collecting a weekly halfpenny from the members' wages) and St. Peter's Church which had many cast iron features such as the font and pillars, outside several tombs had cast iron tops. Leaving the town we headed for the Big Pit National Coal Museum - based on the former Big Pit colliery which was sunk in 1860 and closed in 1980..

We climbed up steep steps up to the Miners Canteen to have lunch and came down again. To go 300 feet down into the old colliery. We were guided by a former coalminer who took us on a fascinating and amusing tour of the sights, sounds and smells of the mine. On returning to

the surface we continued around the museum seeing such things as the blacksmiths forge the explosives magazine and the pithead baths.

11th May "Warwickshire Landscapes: the 600 million year story"

Talk by Brian Ellis of the Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

Sandra Sladden

Sunday Lunch Group



The next Sunday lunch will be on the 6 May at the Bistro Pierre, Stratford. Names please to Brian Bradley, Tel: 01789 488551.

Brian Bradley

Dates for your Diary

Our second Visit to Symphony Hall – **Thursday 28th June 2012** – Matinee Performance.
2.15pm.



"SUMMER SERENADE"

Elgar – Serenade for Strings

Mozart – Sinfonia for violin and viola

Barber – Adagio

Dvorak – Serenade for Strings

The cost of the visit is £26. This includes return coach journey and ticket. The coach leaves Henley at 12noon and the Stratford Leisure centre at 12-30pm.

Please sign up at the main meeting or phone Dorothy Jones to reserve a place. We need to pay for the tickets now. Send cheques made out to Heart of England U3A to 14 Ascot Close, Stratford-upon-Avon. CV379FN

Theatre Group



We are going to see Lady in The Van at Malvern on 2 June 2012 all the tickets for this trip have been sold. Leaving Henley at 12.00 and the Leisure Centre at 12.30.

The brochure has been received for the Malvern Theatre for late summer early autumn and the prices have increased quite a lot. Most members of this group were e-mailed to get their feelings about this and generally it is likely that we will have to limit our visits slightly.

Coral Bradley

Outings

The tours of the Symphony Hall and Aston Hall on 18 May 2012 is now fully subscribed. The first pick up will be at the Leisure Centre at 9.00 and then on to Henley for 9.30. Leaving Aston Hall at approx. 4.30.

The outing to Tyntesfield on 22 August is also completely full some people still have to pay, though. More information about pick up points and times will be in the next newsletter.

Walking Group



The next walk will be on Wednesday 9th May 2012. Look forward to seeing you then.

Valerie Redfern

WHAT'S ON – Monthly Meetings at Stratford, Shotton and Dene Valley U3As.

Stratford – 30th May – “Who wrote Shakespeare's Sonnets?” - Ben Alexander.

Shotton – 29th May - “The Stratford and Moreton Tramway” - Roger Cragg.

Dene Valley – 8th May – “Garden Birds in Spring and Summer” - David Tideswell.

| <i>Group</i> | <i>Group Leader</i> | <i>Usual Meeting date (Monthly)</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| All Swing and Jazz Group | Dennis Sully | 4 th Thursday |
| 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, After 2 nd March - Weekly |
| 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 | 4 th 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 |
| Symphony Hall Visits | Dorothy Jones & Gwyn Bevins | As appropriate |
| Theatre Visits & Outings | Coral Bradley | As appropriate |
| Walking | Valerie Redfern | 2 nd Wednesday |

Tea Rota for 2012.

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|----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| January | Computer Group | July | Weds Reading Group |
| February | Friday Reading Group | August | Classical Music Group |
| March | Poetry & Prose Group | September | Rock & Roll Group |
| April | Poetry Reading Group | October | Science & Nature |
| May | Walking Group | November | Chinwags |
| June | Play Reading Group | December | Hand Bells Ringers |

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please ensure that any copy for the June Newsletter is sent to the Newsletter Editor before 27th May.