



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Web Address:-  
[www.heartofenglandu3a.btck.co.uk](http://www.heartofenglandu3a.btck.co.uk)

# Heart of England

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## *March 2016 Newsletter*

### **TODAY'S MEETING**

At our March meeting, which will be held as always on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March & not Friday** as printed in our programme, our speaker will be Rob Price from Birmingham Wine School who will take us on a journey through the wonderful world of wine, its history, the major wine regions, and why you should never drink British wine...

### **NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER**

Our speaker for April will be Maggie Wood & her topic is:- 'The Sheldon Tapestry Map of Warwickshire'. One of a set of four maps woven in the 1590s for Ralph Sheldon, the Warwickshire tapestry map is a rare and wonderful pictorial representation of Elizabethan Warwickshire, and gives a tantalising glimpse of Shakespeare's county at a time when map-making was in its infancy.

### **CHAIRMAN'S MARCH JOTTINGS**

*Geoff Bridgewater*

Hello everyone and a very warm welcome to our March monthly meeting and an especially warm welcome to our many new members. I hope that you are enjoying your membership. Perhaps you have already joined an interest group and are making new friends. Every year, the chairman and the committee invite our new members to a very informal get-together for you to meet us and for us to meet you, have a 'cuppa and a bickie' and a chat. This year we are holding it at 2.30pm in the Methodist Hall New Room on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May, so put that date in your diaries. I will be sending you a 'proper' invitation nearer the time and I really hope that you will be able to make it.

Unfortunately, a few of our members are not enjoying the best of health at the moment and our very best wishes go to you. If you need any help to get to and from our monthly meeting, please don't hesitate to ask a member of the committee. I know that some of you don't hear too well these days or your eyesight is perhaps not too good so, if you let us know, we'll organise a seat nearer the speaker for you. I'm even contemplating reserving a row of seats near the front. Let me know if this would be helpful.

Finally, on a brighter note, the warm sunny days are just around the corner, you'll soon be mowing the lawn again and getting the deck chairs out of the back of the shed. I really don't enjoy the winter months, so I cannot wait.

### **'OUR WARWICKSHIRE' WEBSITE.**

The 'ourwarwickshire.org.uk' website is a new website being created by local museums, archives, local history groups, and communities. It is now operating and already has a mass of material and information about the local area. Please search for the website and look it over. There are opportunities for study and to get involved.

### **GARDEN HISTORY**

There are a group of people who want to study the Garden History untutored course. We shall be having our first meeting on 1st March at the White Swan Hotel, Stratford. If you have not already done so please contact Suzy Genge ([suzygenge@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:suzygenge@yahoo.co.uk)) if you want to join in.

## COURSES ON-LINE-FROM NATIONAL OFFICE

Robyn Nicoll



There is a vast list of courses available which may be found on the National U3A Web site. For a detailed list, you will need to access the Members' Area by creating a user name and password. **National Web site: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)**

The Australia U3A offer a large selection of topics which may be studied individually or in a small group as we have done previously but with an annual charge to sign up. (For an individual - \$25; For an Organisation - \$15.)

The topics include: World Affairs and History - 10 courses; Nature - 5 courses; Writing and Creativity - 12 courses; Lifestyle - 11 courses; Science - 11 courses. (See the notice board for a detailed list)

NB The original free Untutored Courses have been downloaded and saved so are available to members as before.

A list of these courses may be found on the notice board. These courses may be forwarded to members via e-mail or transferred to a memory device. These courses are ideal for a small group to study together.

Courses studied so far: Garden History, Art History, and China History Ancient and Modern. The Russian History Course has recently been complete and a second Garden History Course has been proposed.

*For more details about courses, please contact Robyn ([redbird22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:redbird22@hotmail.co.uk))*

[NB: Do look at the National Web site to see all the opportunities and information available to U3A members.]

## THE CHINA DISCUSSION GROUP

Robyn Nicoll

Our February get-together was very entertaining. Members had researched how surnames and given names were chosen and had discovered an appropriate name for themselves with characters. We were surprised to find that there are predominately 100 surnames which cover 89% of the population. Also, women usually keep their paternal family name following marriage. The more we discovered, the more confusing it became.

**Next meeting: Friday, 18th March, 2.30 to 4.30 in the new room.**

The topic: Chinese Signs of the Zodiac and Superstitions. This is the year of the Monkey indicating that for those born in this lunar year are advised to stay calm, take it easy and try to be more sophisticated. (a small selection of advice)

Our get-togethers are informal and varied consisting of a short language/practical session led by Patricia Wy, followed by discussion of the chosen topic often accompanied by a photo presentation and concluding with "what the papers say". If you would like to join us, please contact Robyn.

More information from Robyn Nicoll: [redbird22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:redbird22@hotmail.co.uk) or David Ralph: [david@ralphhome.com](mailto:david@ralphhome.com)

## ALL SWING & JAZZ GROUP

David Bradley

### Report of the January 2016 Meeting.



The programme for the meeting of the 28th January 2016 was composed and presented by John Cooper. The first half of the programme was from a compilation by the Rev. A L Kershaw, and consisted of music ranging from 1924 until the middle 1940's. This included bands such as King Oliver & Savannah Syncopators playing *Snag it*, Johnny Dodds' Black Bottom Stompers playing *Wild Man Blues*, Bob Cosby's Bob Cats with *Five Point Blues*, and finishing with Bunk Johnson and his New Orleans Band playing *Tishomingo Blues*. Interestingly, these bands included a number of famous jazz stars from following decades. By contrast the second half included big bands such as Woody Herman and his Orchestra with *Four Brothers*, Tommy Dorsey with Frank Sinatra singing *East of the Sun*, and Glen Miller, Count Bassie, and Duke Ellington and their Orchestras. A good, varied and interesting programme. Don't forget our meetings take place on the **4th Thursday** of the month in the lounge of the Methodist Church, Old Town, and begin at 2pm.

## ART APPRECIATION

Sylvia Kentish / Pam Collins

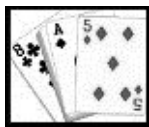


Our February meeting was a 'Members' selections' meeting. We chose art pieces, based very loosely on a marine theme this time, and discussed the item, the artist, and why that piece appealed to us. As always, we had a variety of things displayed, and all the pieces were appreciated, and each generated lively discussions. Our host, Phyl Collins, had a particularly interesting contribution. Inspired by our proposed theme, she had created her own picture of a beach in Gozo, and led us through its four

iterations: a sketch; a pen and ink study, and two versions in pastels.  
At our next meeting we will view and discuss a DVD on J.S.Lowry.

### **BRIDGE GROUP**

*John Yoemans*



We play in a relaxed atmosphere and are always keen to welcome new members with some experience of the game. If you would like to "try us out" please come as a guest so that you can decide if you would like to join the Group. We meet every Tuesday afternoon for a two and a half hour session starting at 2.00 pm in the Methodist Hall Side Room 1, next to the kitchen.

### **CARD MAKING GROUP**

*Carolyn Leach*



Our next work shop is March 24th. New members very welcome, please call me for details. The sale of cards at the monthly meeting has raised another £50 for charity thanks to our supportive customers.

### **CHINWAGS**

*Belinda Sylvester*



We are still at Le Bistro Pierre where good food, chat and laughter are on the menu.

### **THE CHOIR**

*Dorothy Jones*



We are busy rehearsing for our concert "LETS SING A HAPPY SONG" to be performed on Friday May 6th 2-30pm in the Methodist Church Hall.

Tickets are now on sale £5 (inc light refreshments). Buy now as they sell like Hot Cakes!

The Choir was mentioned in the U3A magazine "THIRD AGE MATTERS", re the Open Door policy which our local U3A groups support. A good article which was brought to the attention of the National U3A by Tony Whiteley a former Chair of Heart of England.

### **CLASSICAL MUSIC**

*Aline Cumming*



(Editor's note:- No report this month as Aline is away)

We meet again third Monday, 21st March, as I will be away in February..

### **COMPUTER GROUP**

*Robyn Nicoll*



A course of 5 sessions is underway at the Parish Centre , 2.30 - 4.00pm. on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday afternoons. Many members have acquired tablets and i-pads so this course has concentrated on becoming more friendly with these small computers with touch screens.

**The dates booked in March: 9th and 23rd.**

More experienced members have given their time to help the "students" and this has been greatly appreciated. If you are able to offer some time and expertise *please let Robyn know.*

[redbird22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:redbird22@hotmail.co.uk)

### **CREATIVE CRAFTS GROUP**

*Tricia Callaghan*



The gift bag making project went really well and we produced a total of 24 bags! These will be available to buy from the card stall at the monthly meetings so please come along and have a look.

We had a lively meeting this month and special thanks must go to Sheila Richie who brought along a cake she had made for us.....scrumptious!

Our next meeting will be devoted to book folding.

### **DINAHS**

*Sylvia Crooks*



We met last on the 2nd February , at the Red Lion once again. The staff are very good, lots of patience waiting for our chosen choices. One of us had just come back from New Zealand. They had been to their son's wedding in Auckland. It all sounded quite amazing.. We did chat about holidays this year, what we are planning: Majorca for one family, I do like

Majorca, happy memories of holidays past. Amdram was mentioned, 'Noises Off' is the next Bear Pit venture. Dinahs next get together is on Tuesday 1st March at the Red Lion, 12.15pm.

### **DISCUSSION GROUP**

*Athena Roderick*



We couldn't resist talking about Donald Trump and our concern if he becomes US President. Not good for the West, we all felt. We then looked at techniques we use for keeping calm. Mostly we felt that life had taught us to be calmer, some using deep breathing, others, meditation. But we felt that there is a problem with younger generations who don't sit together & talk through problems. This brought us on to children who don't listen, which seems hardly surprising as they are rarely encouraged to talk to adults in the home. Today's technology is wonderful, but it does seem to have a lot of drawbacks, with children spending so much time on iPhones etc.

### **FILM GROUP**

*Mary Fishleigh*



In February we watched an Australian film "Romulus, My Father". This is based on the memoir of Raimond Gaita, a German born Australian philosopher and writer. It tells the story about the personal hardships and tragedies endured by Romulus Gaita's immigrant family, one of the tens of thousands that settled in Australia in the early 1950s. The acting, particularly of the young Raimond, was good and the cinematography was spectacular. Despite covering very difficult times it was ultimately, a story of impossible love that celebrates the unbreakable bond between father and son that can never be broken.

Our aim for the group is to show films that are not on general release now – some oldies, some considered art or cult, some foreign films (with subtitles), some that are regarded as exceptional for the acting or production. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Mary or Mavis.

Our next meeting will be on March 8th at 2pm in the Lounge at the Methodist Church.

### **GAMES GROUP—SCRABBLE, DOMINOES AND CARDS**

*Sue Tringham*



In February Sylvia and Norma instructed two tables into the mysteries of Kaluki or Kalooki, spell it how you want! We thoroughly enjoyed the new game although Sylvia's table seemed to be chatting more than playing! Norma's table were very professional and I think we all gained the skill needed to play well. Does need a bit of brain power remembering how the cards score. It is played with two decks of cards including the jokers. Scrabble took a back seat at this meeting but one table played dominoes. We meet in the Reception Area of the Methodist Hall between 2 – 4 pm on the first and third Mondays of the month. Our meetings in March will be Monday 7th and Monday 22nd. We contribute £2 for our pay and play sessions which include tea/coffee and biscuits! We welcome new members so just turn up

### **GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUP**

*Jayne Jones*



The group's February outing was a visit to the garden centre in Clifford Chambers to listen to a talk on Snowdrops & Hellebores. The speaker told us that there are 20 different species of snowdrop & over 2000 hybrids that originate from Europe & Asia Minor. Most flower in winter but some species flower in spring & late autumn. Snowdrops are symbols of consolation & hope, purity & cleansing. Their scientific name is *Galanthus Nivalis*. The name comes from the Greek word 'gala' which means milk & 'anthus' which means flower. The second part of the name 'Nivalis', originates from Latin & means snow. The flowers are pollinated by bees in February & March.

Our March outing is on Tuesday 8th March to Hidcote Manor Gardens. We will be meeting in the car park there at 10am. If you would like to swap/share seeds with others then bring them along.

Please check the Chairman's board in the reception area of the Methodist Church hall for details of our 2016 programme.

### **GRUMPY OLD MEN GROUP**

*Graham Mitchell*



A near record attendance of the 19 Grumps gathered for their lunch meeting, no doubt attracted by the chance to air their views on the discussion topic "Is there a future for the House of Lords". The subject was introduced by the ever willing Derek Phillips who started by reviewing the current structure and procedures of the House of Lords and its place in the Government of the Country. The large

number of Peers (now about 825 and out of all proportion to the MPs in the Commons), their credentials for elevation to the peerage and cost to the tax payers etc., etc., was considered and criticised but the ability of their Lordships to send a Bill back to the Commons for reconsideration was seen as a positive and had actually resulted in better legislation. The quality of debate and discussion was also often seen as superior to the Commons' efforts. In the main the Group endorsed the views expressed in the introduction and particularly the need for a "2nd Chamber" to scrutinise the legislative proposals by the Government although it was unclear exactly what form this would take but it should not be an "elected" body and not bound by political allegiances. Ideally its composition should be composed of "experts" from a wide range of subjects and possibly it could still include religious leaders and some hereditary peers as often these groups have diverse expertise outside the norm. There should be an upper age limit e.g. 75/80 and a finite term in office e.g. 10 years and much reduced in numbers. And what should this second chamber be called? Perhaps for tradition's sake we should retain reference to the Lords, so what about "The House of Lords and Others". The Grumps were unanimous that the House of Lords in its present formed is doomed!!!

Next Meeting - Wed. March 16th - Venue - Le Bistrot Pierre.

Subject - Should there be an English National Anthem and if so what and why. Introduction - ALL. (Note; You will not be expected to sing your choice!!)

## **HISTORY GROUP**

Jean Hicks



Our February lecture, entitled "Development of Old Town Since 1800", was given by David our new Chairman and was a fascinating insight into our local history. He talked about the origins of the old town, formation of the boroughs and the history of the college which was pulled down in 1799. We were told how Charles Hunt formed the first bank in Stratford

upon Avon in 1790 but was bankrupt by 1796 having first bought New Place and Avon

Bank. Battersbee stepped in as a primary creditor. There was also a good example of inflation in land prices in the 18th century when Battersbee paid £380 for a cherry orchard which in 1705 had been purchased for only £70. The Midland Bank now occupies the site of the original bank. It was interesting to hear of the town's other famous residents such as Mrs Gaskell who lived at Avonbank House and Marie Corelli at Cambridge House. Finally the Borough Council opened a garden of Remembrance in 1954 and in 1956 NFU built Trinity Close.

The talk was punctuated with very informative slides and plans which led to a greater understanding of how the town has grown and developed.

Next talk: March 14<sup>th</sup>. Dr Viv Thomas continues his lecture on Shakespeare's passion for flowers.

## **KEEP FIT GROUP**



The Keep Fit Class is now full to capacity after a bit of a dip in numbers last year. We have a new instructor who keeps us active and we all think we feel much better for our efforts. A waiting list has now been started if anyone is interested. Please phone Mary Palmer on 204707.

## **PAINTING/DRAWING GROUP**

*Dorothy Jones*



We meet on alternate Mondays 10am--12noon, and have space for two more members, so pop in and see if you would like to join us. Our March meetings will be 7th & 21st. We are a very friendly group!.

## **PILATES GROUP - MONDAY**



Weekly at St. Andrew's Parish Centre, Shotton, 12:15 to 1:15. For more information call Gill Ganner on 269657.

## **PILATES GROUP - WEDNESDAY**



Weekly at St Andrew's Parish Centre, Shotton, 10.15 to 11.15. For more information call Sue Workman on 297061.



## **PLAY READING GROUP**

*Sylvia Crooks*



We met on Thursday 18th February. After coffee we read Act 11 of 'Drowning on Dry Land' by Alan Ayckbourn, a comedy. Next get together will be St Patrick's day, the 17th March, at 10.30 for coffee at Sylvia's.

## **READING GROUP – MONDAY**

*Phyllis Bailey*



"A spool of blue thread" by Anne Tyler was our book of the month. It was her 20th book and highly praised on the cover. Our response was more varied than usual! One member gave up quickly but the rest persevered to the end. It was a family history of an American family as the title suggests. We all agreed the 'stories' would have been less confusing and more satisfying had they been in chronological order rather than darting around some 50 years! The fact that a few members were going to find other books by the same author suggests some degree of success. The characters were interesting but rather too many to absorb!

## **READING GROUP—WEDNESDAY**

*Dorothy Jones*



We are reading the novel "PACKING UP" by Brigid Keenan. Our February meeting is after the newsletter is in print so will report next month.

## **READING GROUP - FRIDAY**

*Coral Bradley*



This month we read a book called "Ashenden" by Elizabeth Wilhide. It was quite unusual because it didn't have a main character nor a plot. It is a collection of stories of people who live in or around a house called in the book "Ashenden". It is based on Basildon Park in Berkshire. The book is very well written and the author really does understand houses; some of the stories were very interesting. Most of our group enjoyed the book.

## **ROCK AND ROLL GROUP**

*Coral Bradley*



We had a good meeting with a varied programme of music from the period. Some things provoked interesting discussions with a few artists sounding as if they had taken some substances before recording their music.

## **SCIENCE, NATURE & 'ALL THINGS' TECHNICAL GROUP**

*Geoff Bridgewater*



Ian Roberts gave an illustrated talk entitled "Did the Earth Move for you?" The meeting was well attended and Ian did not disappoint. His talk was informative, interesting and enlivened with some humour. Earthquakes and tremors was the core subject and he illustrated the subject with photographs, diagrams, and charts that helped to explain the subject. The measurement of tremors was also well explained and the audience were surprised to learn that the scientific community had still not developed a way of predicting them.

Our future programme:-

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March – 'By Eck, It's Fred Dibnah' A talk about the man in the greasy cloth cap by Geoff.

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April – A day trip into Birmingham to visit The Coffin Works Museum and the Jewellery Quarter Museum, with pub lunch.

## **SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB**

*Brian Bradley*



The next lunch will be on the 13th March 2016 at the Henley Golf Club. The following month, on the 3rd April 2016, will be at the Stratford Golf Club. Names please to Brian Bradley, Tel: 01789 488551.

## **SYMPHONY HALL CONCERTS**

*Dorothy Jones*



**SYMPHONY HALL CONCERT 26 MAY 2-15pm.**

The programme looks very exciting.

2 pieces by TCHAIKOVSKY "The Tempest" & "Symphony No5". Also A violin concerto by GLAZUNOV, Tasmin Little playing violin. The conductor is a former Bolshoi music director.

The cost of the visit is £35 which includes concert, return coach to Symphony Hall and driver's tip. We will leave the Stratford Leisure Centre promptly at 12-15pm and pick up our Henley group en-route to Birmingham.

I need to pay for the tickets in March. Please make cheques out to HEART OF ENGLAND U3A and send to Dorothy Jones.

## **THEATRE GROUP.**

*Coral Bradley*



Our next theatre trip will be to the Birmingham Rep to see "The Government Inspector". All the tickets for this play have been sold. Please note that for this outing we will be starting at the Leisure Centre at 12.00 and then going on to Johnson's yard as we are in Birmingham for this play.

The next play will be on 21 May 2016 when we will go to Malvern to see "Travels with my Aunt" by Graham Greene. The main character is a shy retiring person who is persuaded to go on a strange journey with his eccentric aunt where he meets some very strange people. There are 20 characters in the play and only 4 players so it should be interesting. The cost is £29.00

The other date for your diaries is 18 June 2016 for "The Birthday Party" by Harold Pinter at the Belgrade. Names for this play will be taken in April.

## **WALKING GROUP**

*Valery Redfern*



The next walk will take place on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at 10.00 a.m. It will be a five mile walk approximately and probably mostly on hard surfaces. I recommend good walking shoes or boots and bring a drink along with you. We meet in the free car park by the bridge in Shipston-on-Stour. Elaine Lilly will be the walk leader. Telephone Number: 07960 604 512.

## **WHAT'S ON – MONTHLY MEETINGS AT STRATFORD, SHOTTERY, DENE VALLEY AND ALCESTER U3AS.**

Stratford	-	30th March	AGM	
Shotton	-	5th April	"The Work of Sightsavers"	Nick Levinge
Dene Valley	-	8th March	"The Last Naval Hero"	Roy Smart
Alcester	-	5th April	"A Solo Walk across Africa"	Fran Sandham

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>GROUP LEADER</u>	<u>USUAL MEETING DAY (MONTHLY)</u>
All That Swing & Jazz	Brian Bradley	4th Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
AmDram & Supper	Geoff Bridgewater	As Announced
Art Appreciation	Sylvia Kentish Pam Collins	3rd Friday 2.00pm
Bridge	John Yeomans	Every Tuesday 2.00pm
Card Making	Carolyn Leach	As Announced
China Discussion Group	Robyn Nicoll	See Newsletter
Chinwags Lunch	Belinda Sylvestor	4th Monday 12.00 noon
Choir	Ruth Grahame Dorothy Jones	Every Friday 10.30—12.00 noon
Classical Music	Aline Cumming	3rd Monday 2.00pm
Creative Crafts	Tricia Callaghan	3rd Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
Computers	Robyn Nicoll	2nd & 4th Wednesday 2.30—4.00pm
Dinahs Luncheon	Sylvia Crooks	1st Tuesday for lunch
Discussion	Athena Roderick	2nd Wednesday
Film Group	Mary Fishleigh Mavis Pickett	2nd Tuesday 2.00pm
Games –Scrabble, Dominoes and Cards	Sue Tringham	1st & 3rd Monday 2.00—4.00pm
Garden Appreciation Group	Jayne Jones Suzy Genge	2nd Tuesday
Grumpy Old Men	Graham Mitchell	3rd Wednesday for lunch
History	David Dumper	2nd Monday 2.00pm
Keep Fit	Mary Palmer	Every Thursday 10.00am
Painting/Drawing	Dorothy Jones Lynette Forsdyke-Crofts	As Announced
Pilates - Monday	Gill Ganner	Every Monday 12.15—1.15pm
Pilates - Wednesday	Sue Workman	Every Wednesday 10.15—11.15am
Play Reading	Sylvia Crooks	See Newsletter for dates
Poetry Reading	Jennifer Davey	2nd Wednesday 10.00—12.00noon
Reading - Monday	Phyllis Bailey	3rd Monday 2.30—4.30pm
Reading - Wednesday	Dorothy Jones	3rd Wednesday 2.30pm
Reading - Friday	Coral Bradley	As Appropriate
Rock & Roll Music	Coral Bradley	2nd Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
Science, Nature & All Things Technical	Geoff Bridgewater	2nd Friday 2.00—4.00pm
Sunday Lunch	Brian Bradley	As Appropriate
Symphony Hall Visits	Dorothy Jones	As Appropriate
Theatre Visits & Outings	Coral Bradley	As Appropriate
Walking	Valerie Redfern	2nd Wednesday 10.00am

#### **HEART OF ENGLAND U3A ROTA FOR AFTERNOON TEAS**

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>GROUP</u>
March 2016	Film Group	June 2016	The Choir
April 2016	Discussion Group	July 2016	Grumpy Old Men
May 2016	History Group	August 2016	Reading Groups