

Web Address:www.heartofenglandu3a.btck.co.uk

Heart of England

Newsletter Editor: Edwin Lilly, 9 Addison Drive, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 7PL Telephone: 01789 204 472. Email: Edwin_lilly@yahoo.co.uk Membership Secretary: Sue Tringham, 2 Guild Cottages, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HD Telephone: 01789 204 295. Email: suetrin@tesco.net

February 2015 Newsletter

TODAY'S MEETING

The speaker for the meeting today is Alan Rogers MBE. "A Policeman's Lot" A talk based on humorous anecdotes of the 33 years of my police service.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER

Our speaker for March is Andrew Gagg & his topic is "SLOWLY DOWN the GANGES" – the story of a fascinating voyage of discovery on board the riverboat ABN Sukapa on our recent journey down the historic and holy River Ganges.

CHAIRMAN'S FEBRUARY JOTTINGS

Hello everyone and a very warm welcome to our February monthly meeting. By the time you read this we will have held our annual New Year Lunch, most ably organised again by our Speaker Secretary, Athena Roderick, assisted by Robyn Nicoll. Athena is another of our unsung heroes, or should I say heroines, working tirelessly on your behalf to ensure Heart of England U3A is pre-eminent. It was a really excellent day, much enjoyed by everyone, and many thanks for your sterling work Athena.

An imminent date for your diaries – Johnsons Coaches are holding a free Waterloo Bicentenial Presentation on Tuesday 10th February (next Tuesday) at Henley in Arden Golf Club, starting at 10.30am. Hear how the Duke of Wellington defeated that 'upstart' Napoleon and the colourful characters involved. Their last presentation, featuring the WW1 battlefields, was excellent, so I heartily recommend this to you and there's free coffee and cake! Let me know at this meeting if you would like a ticket.

NEW YEAR LUNCH

The lunch, held again at Le Bistrot Pierre, was a great success. Everybody had a good time; the room is ideal, the food was excellent & the service friendly, as ever. It is a good way to start the year. My thanks go to everybody who helped to make it such a success. And we can do it all again, next year.

WHAT'S ON - MONTHLY MEETINGS AT STRATFORD, SHOTTERY, DENE VALLEY & ALCESTER U3A

Stratford	- 25th February	- 25th February - The County Air Ambulance Trust			
Shottery	- (no 2015 list published yet).				
Dene Valley	-10th February	- "The Spouse Girls or Anyone for Dennis".	- David Howe.		
Alcester	- March 3rd	- AGM.			

Geoff Brídgewater

Athena Roderick

NB - On-Line Course material is being updated and will not be available to members for a short time. The 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 is being studied at the moment.

For more details about courses, please contact Robyn (redbird22@hotmail.co.uk)

[National Web Site. www.u3a.org.uk Do look at the site to see all the opportunities and information available to U3A members.]

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

THE CHINA DISCUSSION GROUP

The group will be meeting again on **Wednesday afternoon, 25th February in side room1, 2.30 to 4.30.** Our topic will be "The Silk Road". Our first meeting for this year proved as stimulating as always with a short conversation session prepared by Patricia to begin, followed by our discussion on The Great Wall and then to conclude by seeing the set of photos on screen taken 2 years ago when Val visited China comparing them with Pat's album of photos from 1983. If you would like to join us, please contact Robyn.

More information from Robyn Nicoll. redbird22@hotmail.co.uk or David Ralph. david@ralphhome.com

ALL SWING & JAZZ GROUP

Report of the December 2014 Meeting.

Our December meeting was produced and lead by group member Derek Phillips. We were re-introduced to some of our favourite trad tracks and got off to a rip roaring start with the Chris Barber Band playing "Whistlin' Rufus, this was followed, Kenny Baker playing a haunting rendition of "Whats New" and then

Muggsy Spanier with "Sister Kate". Then it was on to a change of style with Harry James with "Two O'clock Jump", Count Basie"Jumpin' at the Woodside" and Glenn Miller at a "Down South Camp Meeting". We then had a treat with two local Midland Bands, George Huxley with "Dardanella" and The Antique Six playing "Someday Sweetheart" (At times we lose sight of the number of bands 'out there' playing live jazz). Then it was on the the final track of the first half with a return to swing with Les Brown, not forgetting his 'Band of Renown' playing "I've got my Love to Keep me Warm". The interval was 'buzzy' and mince pie laden before we rolled back to our chairs for the second half. Terry Lightfoot welcomed us back with "Tishomingo Blues" The Duke followed with "Perdido", not heard this arrangement before, then it was a superbly evocative 'film noirish' "Pete Kelly Blues" from George Huxley. Alex Welsh lined up next with a fast (and I mean fast) version of "Dippermouth Blues". Following that excitement it was a gentle 'put your feet up' listen to Stan Kenton with "Eager Beaver" and The Duke with "Take the 'A' Train" Next was a new name to me Micky Ashman, he played at various times with Barber, Lyttleton and Lonnie Donnegan, his track was "Tin Roof Blues".

Our final track was "When the Saints go Marching In" by Chris Barber but with the added special extra of Ottilie Patterson singing - perfect.

Thank you Derek for an enjoyable afternoon. Our next meeting will be on Thursday February 26th 2015 at our usual meeting place the lounge at the Methodist Church in Old Town, starting at 2pm. As usual all are welcome.

AMDRAM & SUPPER GROUP

We had a very enjoyable evening in December when we dined at The Kingfisher fish restaurant in Ely Street and then went to the Bearpit Theatre at the United Reform Church for a performance of "Vicar of Dibley".

Our next event will be on the 14th March when we will see a performance of "The Lady Killers". Drinks and dinner will precede. Keep an eye on the Newsletter and your email Inbox.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

We had a very enjoyable afternoon at Judith's home, we watched a DVD about Cezanne "Three Colours". It was very informative about his beautiful paintings, unfortunately his personal life was very sad. Thanks again Judith for your hospitality.

Robyn Nícoll



Geoff Bridgewater

Sylvía Kentísh & Pam Collíns



ART HISTORY ON-LINE COURSE

In 2010 a small group of us (4) decided to take advantage of one of the untutored U3A on-line Art History Courses. With trepidation we downloaded and printed off (with assistance from Robyn) our first course. This was "Great Northern European Artists 1450-1670.

Each of the four courses we have studied was composed of a number of artists, and we were tasked to answer a series of questions about each artist and their work. We each individually researched and answered the questions to the best of our varied abilities. Then once a month we met together to discuss our findings and compare our answers.

Now four years on we have worked our way through the four U3A Art History Courses shown below:-Great Northern European Artists 1450-1670.

Artists of Spain 1541-1904

Italian Artists 1400-1600

Venice and Her Artists 1400-1700.

We had great fun, learnt a lot and made good friends with our fellow Art Historians.

Mavis Pickett; Sue Scanlon; Phyl Collins; Dennis Sully. Participants were:

BALLROOM DANCING

The first of the new series of the Ballroom Dance Group met on the 21st. January Twelve members attended, each one paid their contribution to the hire of the room at the Holy Trinity centre. Two or three had sent their apologies and indicated they would attend the Feb 4th session.

The morning class took on the challenge to learn the Valetta Waltz with instructions from a YouTube video, then followed with Cha Cha instruction, all the group made good progress.

We wish to invite more people to our class both ladies and gents, they would be most welcome. Do come along - you do not need a partner. We meet every first and third Wednesday of the month at

10.30am till Midday at the Holy Trinity Church Hall, Old Town. The individual cost per member is £10 (9 sessions more) through to June 3rd.

February Meetings: Wednesday 4th and Wednesday 18th. Holy Trinity Church Hall. 10.30—12.00 noon.

BRIDGE GROUP

We play in a relaxed atmosphere and are always keen to welcome new members with some experience of

CARD MAKING GROUP

2015 got off to a good start with 14 members at our January work-shop. Our next one will be Feb 21st, new members welcome.

CHINWAGS

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

THE CHOIR

Tickets for our concert at the Methodist Church Hall on Friday March 20th at 2.00pm will be on sale at the February & March meetings. Tickets are £4 including tea and cake. We have a super programme with songs from the Sixties & Seventies, not to be missed!

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 2.15 pm in the Methodist Hall Side Room 1, next to the kitchen.





Dennis Sully

John B Barker

John Yeomans

Carolyn Leach

Belínda Sylvestor

Dorothy Jones

Aline Cumming

CLASSICAL MUSIC



We met in January for a delightful selection from Rita. We began with the Turkish Rondo by Mozart which was rearranged for orchestra from Piano Sonata No 11. Cantalube, who was born in the Auvergne region, is known for his collections of folk tunes and we heard Bailero sung by Kiri te Kanawa. Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending was inspired by a poem by a contemporary poet. The duet from the opera the Pearl Fishers is the only part of Bizet's Opera to be well known. Barber's Adagio from his string Quartet was discovered by

Toscanini and rearranged for orchestra by Barber. Two contrasting arias sung by Mario Lanza, Questo o quella from Rigoletto by Verdi in which the Duke sings of a life of philandering followed by Vesti la Giubba from Pagliacci by Leoncavallo. The clown has just discovered his wife is unfaithful, but the show must go on, don the motley. The first part ended with the first movement of Elgar's Cello Concerto played by Jaqueline du Pre. After tea we heard the third movement (Rondo) from Mozart's Horn Concerto played by Barry Tuckwell. We watched two DVDs of operas by Verdi, the Overture from La Traviata and finally the Grand March from Aida.

We are taking a break in February and March but will be back in April.

COMPUTER GROUP AT STRATFORD SCHOOL.

Computer sessions will not be held during the Winter.

We hope to resume in March/April so if interested in joining the group, please sign the sheet on the notice board table. You will be contacted as soon as arrangements are finalised. Proposals to change the venue and time for sessions are being discussed.

Members of the group are given one-to-one assistance to solve problems and are helped to increase knowledge and confidence. Members bring their own equipment: lap-tops, i-pads, tablets. A list of topics which have been covered are displayed on the notice board.

(Offers to help at the sessions would be greatly appreciated and names may be added to the list) Please contact Robyn for further information. redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CREATIVE CRAFT GROUP

The last meeting was spent largely on discussing what we hope to do during the coming months and everyone came up with ideas sufficient to last virtually all year! At our next meeting we will be making decorative bottles using decoupage techniques (making use of all the empty wine bottles from Christmas and New Year no doubt!!!)

DINAHS

Tuesday the 6th January Dinahs met in The Red Lion. Lovely to see and hear what everyone got up to at Christmas. One or two are planning an early break in the sun : sounds lovely. On a more serious vein we managed to chat about Stratford Railway Station, (once again) it never seems to improve. Also the traffic problems on the Birmingham Road : will it ever get sorted out and run smoothly!!!! Banks, Scams and politics were discussed. No one seems to have a definite idea where their cross will go in May. The Picture House and the 'Theory of Eve-

rything' was mentioned as the actor Eddie Redmayne is amazing as Stephen Hawkins.

We meet again in February, Tuesday 3rd February in The Red Lion again 12.15pm.

DISCUSSION GROUP

Our Discussion started with views on a proposed Memory Course. It was felt, on the whole, that it would be a very good thing. It will be interesting to see the information when it arrives. We then looked at some cuttings from "The Oldie", characteristics of old age. First 'Rigid in adhering to routines of daily life'. After much discussion, it was felt that we are not rigid, but routines do help us through the day. Second "Are we pessimistic." We felt mostly optimistic, with a good dose of realism. Third "Difficulty in decision making"

Sometimes, yes, but depending on the importance of the decision & state of health/mind at the time. Fourth "Multitasking". Definitely not as able as we once were & we felt that declining energy didn't help. Fifth "Blunting of feeling, apathy" We all felt that we wished we cared less about the state of the country/world, but it is very difficult to stop worrying when bad things keep happening. As usual, time was taken up with other bits of chat, so we didn't finish the list. Next meeting will be February 11th @ 1.00pm, again at The Windmill.



Sylvía Crooks

Athena Roderick

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Trícia Callaghan

Robyn Nícoll

FILM GROUP

This month we watched "Some like it Hot". This 1959 classic satirical comedy was directed by Billy Wilder and starred Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. The film has won many awards including, in 2000 being named as the greatest American comedy film of all times by the American Film Institute. The critics of the time said the film lived up to the statement of having swing, sex and slapstick. By today's standards the sex bit was very mild, but otherwise this was true. The film was enjoyed by all who attended and provided a light hearted period amongst all the gloomy and cold weather of January so far.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 10th February at 2pm in the Lounge at the Methodist Church. We still have room for a few more members, so do come and join us.

GAMES GROUP

We think that playing dominoes and whist helps our minds to keep active with the challenge of adding up the numbers and reacting quickly. Scrabble expands our word knowledge - you have no idea of how many two letter words there are! We have a modest charge of £1.50 to cover the hire of the room and tea and biscuits at half time when we change from dominoes to whist! We meet in Side Room 1 of the Meth-

odist Hall on the first and third Mondays of the month from 2 – 4pm. We welcome new members so just turn up.

GRUMPY OLD MEN GROUP

A superb introduction to our discussion topic "My Favourite Book or Author" earned Derek Phillips not only the Grump of the Month Award but also a spontaneous round of applause from an appreciative Grumps gathering. In a novel approach to his task Derek used quotes from many other devotees and literary reviews to illustrate his passion for the writings of P.G. Wodehouse which could be considered as the ultimate comfort reading and, although the stories were a bit "daft", could always be relied on to lift your spirits. Derek con-

cluded by reading a passage which illustrated the "perfect" world Wodehouse wrote about and his genius in the use of the English language. A little known fact - Wodehouse also wrote for numerous musical productions. Contributions from other Grumps ranged from the "classics" such as Anthony Trollope to modern authors like Jeffrey Archer, John Gresham, Robert Harris etc., etc.

It was apparent that a wide variety of "favourites" have been enjoyed during the Grumps life times which still continues to this day but more and more via e-readers!

Next meeting - Wed. 18th Feb. Venue - Le Bistrot Pierre

Subject - "Is our generation really to blame for the crisis in the National Health Service" Introduction by Brian Bradley.

HISTORY GROUP

In January Norma Hampson talked to us about one of the volumes in the archives of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, which records visitors to the Birthplace in the 1850s. The book records the signature, date of visit and the country of origin. Armed only with these details, Norma has done an incredible amount of research into some of the visitors, particularly members of the acting profession. Some of the visitors she researched were Ira Aldridge, an African/American actor who visited the Birthplace on 5th May 1851, Gustavus Vaughan

B, who described himself as a "tragedian" who came in 1851 and 1853, 23 soldiers of a Royal Scots Greys regiment who were subsequently deployed to the Crimea, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (one of the clearest signatures) who visited on 12th July 1853, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, often described as "the founding father of American literature" who came on 27th June 1855 and who stayed with his family in Learnington Spa. Norma showed us photographs/illustrations of these visitors, reviews of their performances and so on - we were impressed!

On Monday 9th February Peter Burgess is talking to us about the making of the Channel Tunnel. As usual, all are welcome.

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.







Sheela Burchíll



Graham Mítchell

Sue Tríngham

Mary Físhleigh

PILATES GROUP - MONDAY



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

PILATES GROUP - WEDNESDAY



PLAY READING GROUP

We met at Sylvia's for coffee, then read 'After Magritte' by Tom Stoppard, a farce, ridiculously funny. The 3rd Thursday, 19th February; some of us are at the C.B.S.O. so we will meet on Thursday 26th February at Sylvia's 10.30am.

POETRY READING GROUP

Winter had taken his toll therefore the gathering this month was select, though animated as always! So near January 1st "beginnings" seemed an ideal subject with plenty of scope - new year, new projects, new babies, new experiences, new friends, new loves, etc., etc. but NOT new resolutions. No poetry about those; are poets cynics or are they too busy writing and don't have the time?"

READING GROUP – MONDAY

Full marks to Sue Monk Kidd for 'the invention of Wings', the story of early Abolitionists in Charlestown in the 19th century It was a beautifully written and engaging tale. All our members were full of praise for it and had plenty to contribute to the lively discussion. Although some of the punishments handed out to slaves were 'blood curdling, the humanity of the heroine and her determination to end slavery made it eminently palatable. Strongly recommended... it has a sound historical basis..

READING GROUP – WEDNESDAY

Our January book was "How it all Began" by Penelope Lively. The novel started with one incident and followed its effects on lives tentatively linked to one another by the slightest of threads.

We all enjoyed the the book and would strongly recommend it to other groups. The characters were all fascinating, believable and humorous. The author used many memorable phrases: "We slide into old age"; "When he was 27 he seemed more like 53"; "We give birth to our children but we don't design them".

A super novel, beautifully written.

READING GROUP – FRIDAY

We read "Havisham" by Ronald Frame. The story tells the story of Miss Havisham in "Great Expectations". It was not an easy read but once into the style of writing it was not a bad story. The beginning could have been shorter and the ending could have been excluded. Some of our group found it a bit of a challenge.

ROCK & ROLL GROUP

We did not meet in January as the main meeting had been changed to our usual day. We will be back to normal in February.

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Coral Bradley

Coral Bradley

Sylvía Crooks

Jennífer Davey

Phyllis Bailey

Dorothy Jones

Copy to Editor for March 2015 Newsletter by Sunday 22nd February

SCIENCE, NATURE & THINGS TECHNICAL GROUP

For our meeting on Friday 16th January we went to Solihull Central Library to visit an exhibition given by the Victorian Society. The exhibition was about their work in publicising Victorian buildings, their beauty, the workmanship that went into their creation, the design that made them well suited to whatever role they were erected for. The Victorian Society was established in 1958 and has had many successes in preventing iconic building from being destroyed - St Pancras Station and Hotel to name but two. There have been some missed opportuni-

ties. Euston Station and Arch were destroyed in the early 1960s before the Society really got going. But there is some hope that the new redevelopment of Euston Station (the 1960s building was found to be not up to the job and is to be rebuilt) may see the return of the Euston Arch. There were many photographs of Victorian buildings saved, and lost, with narratives to explain. A very good exhibition.

Most of the party walked across the road from the library to the Church of St Alphege. This is a very early church; established by 1220 (as was Holy Trinity in Stratford) and of a similar construction to Holy Trinity with a transept form with tower above the transept. A guide gave us a very instructive tour of the church, including a chantry chapel below ground with a further chapel on a floor above it. Noted was the lean in the columns and arches flanking the nave. Tie bars and buttresses have been employed to counter the lean and it is hoped that it will not get any worse.

SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB

Out to

LUNCH

The next Sunday lunch will be on the 1st. March 2015 at Kings Court Hotel, Kings Coughton, Alcester. Names please to Brian Bradley, tel: 01789 488551.

SYMPHONY HALL CONCERTS

Our February 19th visit is now fully booked. Remember we will leave the leisure centre at 12-15pm and then proceed to the Johnsons Depot to pick up our Henley group

The programme for our May 6th concert at 2-15pm is as follows.

Haydn.....Symphony No 103

Mozart.....Violin Concerto No 4

Prokofiev Violin Concert No 2

Haydn Symphony No 104.

The CBSO conductor is Andris Nelsons, probably our last concert before he takes up his new post in Boston America. The cost of the visit is £32; this includes concert ticket and return coach from Stratford Leisure centre to the Symphony Hall Birmingham. Please make cheques out to Heart of England U3A and send to Dorothy Jones.

THEATRE GROUP.

On 21 February 2015 we go to the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. Meeting as usual at 12.00 in Henley and 12.30 at the Leisure Centre. All the tickets for this event have been sold. The next theatre trip will be on 11 April 2015 to Malvern to see "Arcadia" by Tom Stoppard.

WALKING GROUP

The walk in January was a very pleasant walk, all on hard surfaces. The weather was cold but sunny. We walked about 5 miles, starting on the Bancroft by the Gower Memorial, on a circular route around Stratford via the Lucy's Mill Bridge, the cemetery, Ann Hathaway's Cottage and woodland walk. We stopped for a drink by the allotments in Church Lane and returned via the canal towpath from Timothy's Bridge Road.

The next walk will take place on Wednesday 11[™] February 2015 at 10.00.am, starting from Bancroft Gardens, Gower memorial, Stratford upon Avon. We can park in the recreation ground.

This is a medium five mile walk on good surfaces for the time of the year and we will be able on the day to decide on the precise direction. Allow three hours plus travelling time. Please bring a drink with you and also good walking shoes are recommended. Look forward to seeing you.

Brían Bradley

Valeríe Redfern







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Dorothy Jones

Coral Bradley

GROUP	GROUP LEADER	USUAL MEETING DAY (MONTHL	
All That Swing & Jazz	Dennis Sully	4th Thursday 2.00—4.00pm	
AmDram & Supper	Geoff Bridgewater	As Announced	
Art Appreciation	Sylvia Kentish Pam Collins	3rd Friday 2.00pm	
Ballroom Dancing	John Barker	1st & 3rd Wednesday 10.30—12.00	
Bridge	John Yoemans	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	To Be Announced	
Dinahs Luncheon	Sylvia Crooks	1st Tuesday for lunch	
Discussion	Athena Roderick	2nd Wednesday	
Film Group	Mary Fishleigh Mavis Pickett	2nd Tuesday 2.00pm	
Games	Sue Tringham	1st & 3rd Monday 2.00—4.00pm	
Grumpy Old Men	Graham Mitchell	3rd Wednesday for lunch	
History	Janet Anslow	2nd Monday 2.00pm	
Keep Fit	Mary Palmer	Every Thursday 10.00am	
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 & Things Technical	Geoff Bridgewater	2nd Friday 2.00—4.00pm (or as Announced)	
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

MONTH	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>GROUP</u>
February 2015	Creative Crafts	May 2015	Dinahs Luncheon
March 2015	Choir	June 2015	History Group
April 2015	Ballroom Dancing Group	July 2015	All That Swing and Jazz Group