



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Web Address:-
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Heart of England

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February 2016 Newsletter

TODAY'S MEETING

Our speaker for February is Jon Goldswain who will take us on a journey through Elgar's life, with pieces of Elgar's music on CD.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER

At our March meeting, which will be held as always on **Thursday 3rd 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. It's history, the major wine regions, and why you should never drink British wine...

CHAIRMAN'S JANUARY JOTTINGS

Geoff Bridgewater

Hello everyone and a very warm welcome to our February monthly meeting.

We held our annual New Year Lunch at Bistrot Pierre, most ably organised by Athena, assisted by Robyn, and a jolly good time was had by us all. The meal was delicious, the mid-course quiz was fun and the whole atmosphere was great. Just the tonic for a cold January Saturday. Many thanks ladies for your greatly appreciated efforts.

I'm sure that you will have noticed that the days are getting longer. Before we know it, it'll be Spring. We'll have put away our scarves and gloves for another year. But don't forget the old countryman's saying, "Ne'er cast a clout till May is out!". So many of you have suffered with coughs, bad chests, colds and flu over the festive period, do look after yourselves. My personal medicine is a daily tot of whisky at six o'clock (PM not AM) as it seems to work!

2016 DIARIES

Sue Tringham

The U3A 2016 Diaries are on sale at the monthly meetings. This year they are a very smart 'Colombia Green'. They are still at the bargain price of £2! They can be found on the table at the back of the Hall where Norma and Sue sit.

TODAY'S MEETING

Athena Roderick

At our January Meeting, the volunteers from The **British Motor Museum** waived their expenses & suggested that we use that money to arrange visits to Gaydon. So we will split the £50 between a group that Ian Roberts will organise for SNATTS Group & I will endeavour to organise a non SNATTS visit. If you are interested in visiting the **BMM at Gaydon**, would you express an interest to either Ian or myself & we can then start looking at dates & arrangements.

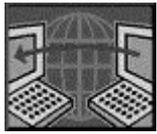
MEMORY COURSE

Athena Roderick

I am proposing to start another Memory Course, as soon as possible. I am getting in touch with all of those already on my list. But, if you have an interest, please join us, after the February Meeting, to get the process under way. An announcement about the meeting will be made at the February meeting.

COURSES ON-LINE-FROM NATIONAL OFFICE

Robyn Nicoll



Access to On-Line Courses has been updated and is different from our original method. All details may be found on the National Web site. 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 completed.

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.]

THE CHINA DISCUSSION GROUP

Robyn Nicoll

Our get-together on Friday afternoon, 8th January, was very entertaining with members presenting a short talk on a chosen Chinese character. These represented a time line from 260 BC to the present day, some characters better know than others but all with a story to tell.

Next meeting: Friday, 5th February, 2.30 to 4.30 in the lounge.

The topic: Chinese Family Names, how they are chosen and their meaning. We will also be choosing a name for ourselves, and interpreting the meaning in written form.

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 or David Ralph. david@ralphhome.com

ALL SWING & JAZZ GROUP

David Bradley



Report of the December 2015 Meeting.

December's meeting took the form of a celebration for Dennis Sulley's love of jazz and his fourteen years devotion to the Jazz Group which he started immediately on the inception of the Heart of England U3A.

He had prepared this month's programme fully intending to lead it himself, but died a couple of weeks before the meeting. Barry opened the proceedings by reading a note from Dennis's wife Jane, in which she said how much enjoyment he had got out of the group and how much he hoped we would carry on.

It fell to me to lead the meeting and, depending on Dennis's notes and tapes, we got underway. It seems nothing sets the tone better than the hapless leader making a mistake, and it was soon pointed out to me that I was describing and playing the wrong tape. This lightened the mood and the afternoon proceeded with its usual quips, laughter and interesting comments. It was a broad programme of both jazz and big band, which included British bands such as Alex Welsh and Tony Kinsey, and well known big bands as BBC Big Band, Bob Crosby and his Bob Cats, and Ray Anthony, the last surviving member of the Glen Miller Orchestra.

From the comments made I have every hope that the group will continue. Thanks to Mavis for the mince pies. 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

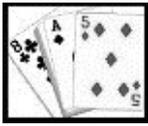
Sylvia Kentish / Pam Collins



On the 15th January we met at Judith's home to watch a DVD on the life and work of Frida Kahlo a female Mexican artist. We found the DVD gave us an insight into her artistic ability, but her life was difficult and extremely sad. Thanks Judith for your hospitality. Happy New Year to you all.

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 will be Feb 26th 12.30- 4.30 including a buffer lunch. New members welcome; call me for details.

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 welcomed some new members after Christmas and we are now rehearsing for our next concert 6 May 2-30pm in the Methodist Hall.

Tickets £5 will be on sale at the main meeting in March.

The programme has a Happiness theme, we are enjoying singing and I'm sure you will enjoy the concert.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Aline Cumming



A rather depleted Group met at Bridge Cottage for the January meeting, having omitted one in December. The programme was 'Bring your own disc' which was interpreted by Sue Hollingworth as her laptop and the web. She found for us the first movement of Symphony No 7 by Shostakovich. The theme was said to be the German invasion of Leningrad. It was played with great feeling by the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Continuing the Russian connection, Howard and Aline had both watched a TV programme about Rachmaninov including excerpts from his works. We chose the Piano Concerto No 2 on a CD, the first movement with the very recognisable opening bars. The soloist was Jorge Luis Prats and the orchestra the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Batiz. Over tea we discussed the Soviet treatment of these two composers. Shostakovich remained in USSR while Rachmaninov escaped and went to the USA making his living mainly as a pianist. We meet again third Monday 21 March as I will be away in February..

COMPUTER GROUP

Robyn Nicoll



A course of 5 sessions has been booked at the Parish Centre beginning on Wednesday, 27th January, 2.30 - 4.00pm. Many members have acquired tablets and i-pads so this course will be concentrating on becoming more friendly with these small computers with touch screens.

The dates booked: Jan 27th, Feb 10th and 24th, March 9th and 23rd.

The cost for the course will be £7 and will be collected in advance of the first session. Payment may be made in cash to Robyn at the January monthly meeting or by cheque (payable to Heart of England U3A). A cheque may be posted to Mrs R Nicoll, 165 Banbury Road, CV37 7HT.

More help for the "students" would be greatly appreciated. Please let Robyn know if you could offer some time and expertise during the afternoons. redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CREATIVE CRAFTS GROUP

Tricia Callaghan



Our January meeting was devoted to a discussion of what we might consider doing each month throughout the coming year. There were a few "show and tell" items and the ideas came thick and fast. We now have a full calendar of projects to be undertaken and 2016 looks set to be a very produc-

tive year. At the February meeting we will be making gift bags with matching tags which will be added to the card stall at monthly meetings so we hope you will look out for these in future.

DINAHS

Sylvia Crooks



Here we are at the start of a New Year. Gathered around our oval table at the Red Lion, choosing our meal from the new menu : which does take some time.

After catching up with how our Christmas went : I did hear a lovely story about a friend who is getting married for the first time at the age of 53 years : The couple were at university together. He had married and has four children. His wife had died and they happened to meet again; the rest is lovely : we wish them Best Wishes. One of us had been to Madeira, in between Christmas and New Year. Recommended, a beautiful island; not too sure about Ryan Air!!

We all agreed that I.T. technology is more important than conversation these days : watching the younger generation. Also challenge insurance companies for a better deal. To keep your business they will (amazingly) give you a cheaper rate.

We meet again on Tuesday 2nd February at the Red Lion 12.15pm.

DISCUSSION GROUP

Athena Roderick



We didn't stick to the proposed topic as the events in Cologne, Sweden & Denmark were much in the media. It appeared that we are not sure how much of the reporting we trust. Are the attacks on women in Cologne & the Swedish Music Festivals a little while ago all by Muslim men or is it easy to pick on Muslims, because they are foreign. Is it all about Europe being overwhelmed by refugees, with terrorists hiding amongst them. Are these attacks being 'organised' through social media networks. The attack on the polio clinic in Pakistan is definitely Deash, as they are saying that the vaccines are for sterilising the children. We were also concerned about the Junior Doctor's strike as we felt that poor administration in NHS is often responsible for a lot of problems. Bring back strong matrons, we say.

FILM GROUP

Mary Fishleigh



This month we watched the 1940 version of "Rebecca" directed by Alfred Hitchcock and starring Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier. This was Hitchcock's first Hollywood movie. The acting and photography was excellent and this moving and atmospheric film proved to be a great favourite.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday 9th February in the Lounge of the Methodist Church Hall at 2pm. You are welcome to join us.

GAMES GROUP—SCRABBLE, DOMINOES AND CARDS

Sue Tringham



In January we were pleased to welcome two new members who were introduced to the mystery of fives and threes, dominoes! We also play Scrabble and Partners Whist. We are now meeting in the Reception Area of the Methodist Hall at the usual time of 2 – 4 pm on the first and third Mondays of the month. Our meetings in February will be Monday 1st and Monday 15th. We contribute £2 for our pay and play sessions which includes tea/coffee and biscuits! We welcome new members so just turn up.

GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUP

Jayne Jones



Our first group get together was at the garden centre in Clifford Chambers - a chance to discuss destinations for our 2016 outings over a cup of coffee (and in some cases a toasted tea cake or slice of cake!). Members came along with some lovely ideas & suggestions for our 2016 programme. The National Herb Centre near Banbury, Snowhill Lavender Farm & Mill Dene an RHS partnership garden are a few of the outings that are on our agenda for this year. 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 discussion topic carried over from the December meeting gave us the opportunity to reminisce on how Christmas was celebrated when we were children, through to the present day and in to the future. Although the Grumps were born and brought up in many different parts of the country the celebra-

tions were very similar; a stocking filled with goodies, a main present (perhaps if lucky a Meccano Set or toys), annuals (Rupert/Beano etc.) and books. For Christmas Dinner a few had turkey but it was predominately chicken/cockerel followed by home made pudding including a silver sixpence. Entertainment for the, often, large family gathering was a singsong around the piano and party games. White Christmases seem more prevalent back then and trees were "real". For working people, even up to fairly recent times, the holiday was strictly Christmas Day and Boxing Day and if they fell at the weekend there was no time off in lieu. Families listened to the King's (and later the Queen's) speech on the wireless as a patriotic duty (One Grump still does!!!). The basic traditional format was maintained with our own children and continues through Grandchildren although of course it has evolved to suit modern times. With regard to the future, as a member pointed out, the spiritual side of Christmas had barely been mentioned and the Group concurred that with trends to a more and more secular society and with Christianity being suppressed to some degree a return to more religious based celebrations for the general public was highly unlikely. True to form we had a "grump" about the Christmas Season now having become a retailers paradise due to the over commercialisation and gross excesses of present day celebrations. What's it going to be like when this period of austerity ends!?

HISTORY GROUP

Jean Hicks



The year started on a high with a wonderful talk by Viv Thomas entitled "Plants, Gardens & Shakespeare's Social Universe". In his talk Viv gave us an inspiring illustration of the brilliance of Shakespeare's writing but also how it was such a rich source of horticultural information of the Elizabethan period. He showed, with numerous examples, how Shakespeare uses the world of imagery-simile, metaphor and analogy to paint his verbal pictures. He also showed how Shakespeare had an in depth knowledge of how plants grew, were propagated, grafted, pruned etc. Around 200 plants were referred to throughout his plays. The afternoon went all too quickly and we will be glad that Viv has agreed to return later in the year to continue his lecture.

We would like to thank David for taking over the organisation of the History Group and once again thank Janet for doing such an excellent job over the past 6 years.

Next meeting: Monday 8th February.

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 Monday mornings 10am-12noon. Everyone is enjoying the sessions and producing some interesting work. We probably have a spaces for 2 new members, so do pop in and see if you would like to join us. Our February meetings will be 8th & 22nd.

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



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

PLAY READING GROUP

Sylvia Crooks



We met on Thursday 21st January, where we read act 1 of 'Drowning on Dry Land' a comedy by Alan Ayckbourn. Next reading will be Thursday 18th February 10.30 at Sylvia's for coffee.

READING GROUP – MONDAY

Phyllis Bailey



We read 'Mistress of my fate' by Hallie Rubenhold with considerable interest and enjoyment. The discussion we had started on a quite 'plus' note but ended with quite severe criticisms. Some of the phrases used in our subsequent appraisal will indicate, perhaps, what occurred...'no proper end'..'body-ripper'...Mills and Boon...a real historical character!?...literary licence.. lacked real history..18th century.. women as chattels.. hard to put-down! used as an advert for 'to be continued'!! We would advise would-be readers to consult Google first! .

READING GROUP—WEDNESDAY

Dorothy Jones



We read "Dusk & Other Short Stories" by James Salter. The critics said " It's the short stories which make him one of the greatest writers of the last century and the present one". Our group thought " He had a jaundiced view of human nature and the environment." " No continuity of thought" "Couldn't understand or follow the gist of the stories" " I gave up on page 9.

We do enjoy our afternoons together and have many interesting discussions.!

READING GROUP - FRIDAY

Coral Bradley



We read a 'Man of Parts' by David Lodge. This is a biography written as a novel about H G Wells. He was a remarkable man who started from very humble beginnings and he managed to get himself educated and to mix with the highest in the land. His books were very popular and he was very far sighted by describing tanks before the first world war, atom bombs etc. He did have some strange idea about world governance and the role of women in the world. Unfortunately he had a habit that would get him into very serious trouble today – he seduced young girls and that was described in great detail in the book which meant that most of our group found it difficult to read. David Lodge is a very good writer and we felt he should have concentrated much more on the good things Wells did.

ROCK AND ROLL GROUP

Coral Bradley



We had quite a small group this month which was a shame as David Knight gave us a really interesting programme where we looked quite a lot on how country music influenced Rock & Roll. Thank you David; we enjoyed it.

SCIENCE, NATURE & 'ALL THINGS' TECHNICAL GROUP

Geoff Bridgewater



Over 50 members gathered in the New Room of the Methodist Church Hall on Friday 15th January 2016 for the first meeting of the new year. We were hoping to be transported to another world, away from the damp, cold and gloom of wintry Stratford and we were not disappointed. Pam Collins has worked extensively in Trinidad and Tobago during her working career and knows the flora and fauna very well.

She showed a DVD of the nature and wild life of Trinidad and Tobago which illustrated the diverse nature of the two islands and the various species of plants and animals and birds, both native and migratory. We all enjoyed the film with its glimpse of warmth and sunshine so lacking here at home. The audience had plenty of questions which Pam was able to answer and these continued into the refreshment time. Thanks very much Pam.

Our future programme:-

Friday 12th February – 'Did the Earth move for you?' An illustrated talk by Ian.

Friday 11th March – ‘By Eck, It’s Fred Dibnah’ A talk about the man in the greasy cloth cap by Geoff.

Friday 8th 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 Sunday lunch will be on the 7th. February 2016 at the Kings Court Hotel. 12 noon. 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



On February 20 we go to the Belgrade. All the tickets have been sold. We meet at the usual time 12.00 in Johnsons’ yard, and 12.30 at the Leisure Centre. Some people have asked why we are not going to Malvern as much, the reason is that the programme is not really interesting. I have booked the Birmingham Rep for 26 March 2016 for ‘The Government Inspector’.

In this play the Mayor is in trouble he has heard that an inspector is coming and there are many things wrong in the town, in the past bribery has always helped but things go wrong – a satire. As it is the Rep we will start at the Leisure Centre at 12.00 and then pick up at Johnsons’ yard at 12.30 the play starts at 2.00. The cost is £32.00

Other dates for your diary;

21 May 2016 Belgrade	-	‘Travels with my Aunt’	Graham Greene
18 June 2016 Belgrade	-	‘The Birthday Party’	Harold Pinter.

WALKING GROUP

Valery Redfern



The next walk will take place on Wednesday 10th February 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. Look for information at the main meeting or an email giving meeting arrangements.

Look forward to seeing you. Our last walk was around the outskirts of Stratford and was very enjoyable.

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

Stratford	-	24th February	-	“Chatsworth and the Cavendish Family”	-	Dr Gillian White
Shottery	-	1st March	-	AGM and “A Policeman’s Lot”	-	Alan Rogers
Dene Valley	-	9th February	-	“The History of Coventry”	-	Peter Walters
Alcester	-	1st March	-	AGM		

<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 Sylvester	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>
February 2016	Creative Crafts Group	May 2016	History Group
March 2016	Film Group	June 2016	The Choir
April 2016	Discussion Group	July 2016	Grumpy Old Men