



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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Heart of England

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March 2015 Newsletter

TODAY'S MEETING

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.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER

Our speaker for April is Graham Sutherland & his topic is "Wicked Women. Looking at some women in history & it is up to the audience to decide whether they were wicked or 'Good Time Girls'".

CHAIRMAN'S MARCH JOTTINGS

Geoff Bridgewater

Hello everyone and a very warm welcome to our March monthly meeting, and an especially warm welcome to all of our new members. At last month's meeting, 135 members packed the hall and the atmosphere was great. I really hope that all our new members are enjoying their membership and have already tried and even joined one or more of our varied interest groups. Whilst the admirable stated philosophy of the national U3A movement is that 'It's never too late to learn', we at the Heart of England U3A also equally strongly believe in 'fun and friendship'. So, if you haven't already, why not make some new friends, have some fun, develop your interests and even learn some new skills. If you have any comments, questions, or need help, please don't hesitate to speak to me or a member of the committee.

National Office is now offering a useful Free 24-Hour LEGAL ADVICE service for U3A members. Details on the Chairman's notice board.

'Spring is sprung, the grass is riz', or about to, later this month! We can confidently look forward to blue skies, leaves on the trees, not being cold, saving money on the heating bills, no scarves and gloves – I'm cheering up already!

NEW GROUPS

At our meeting for new members we had several suggestions for new groups, A Gardening group and a Practical Art group. If you are interested in either groups, contact group co-ordinators, Sandy Stewart or Dorothy Jones. Hopefully we will find enough members to form these groups and also someone to act as group leader. Sandy and Dorothy will give their help and support in helping to get the groups started.

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

Stratford	- 25th March	- Annual General Meeting with entertainment	
Shottery	- 1st April	- "Stoneleigh Abbey"	- Sheila Woolf
Dene Valley	- 10th March	- "Welcome to my World"	- William French
Alcester	- 7th April	- "Southern Experience—a brief history of Louisiana & New Orleans".	- Ronald Gallivan.

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

Robyn Nicoll

As the group met at the end of February, the date for the next meeting had not been arranged before this newsletter went to press.

This discussion group developed following the coverage of two on-line courses studied over 3 years and a desire of the group to continue to follow their interest in China past and present. These get-togethers are informal and varied consisting of a short language session, followed by a discussion of a chosen topic often accompanied by a photo presentation and concluding with "what the papers say". Members are welcome to join us for these informal afternoons - there is no set day each month.

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

Mavis Pickett

Report of the January 2015 Meeting.

A full speed start to this month's meeting with Bobby Troup and His Stars of Jazz playing "Take me out to the Ball Game" This was followed by a 1934 recording of a track called "Dr. Heckle and Mr. Jibe, this was a mystery recording BUT it is thought that the line up included Benny Goodman, Bunny Berigan and Artie Bernstein. After Chris Barber had played "Mack the Knife" we had a very 'cool' rendering of "It's Alright with me" by Marty Paich and his Big Band. The trombone came to the fore next with Urbie Green playing a beautifully mellow "Stairway to the Stars. As we know Dennis isn't a great lover of vocals but he was extra kind to us on this first half in that we had TWO vocals. First was Ella Fitzgerald singing "Stone Cold Dead in the Market" calypso and then Robin McKelle an American singer with "Bei Mir Bist du Schon" which translates as My Dear Mr Shane. Nice backing on this last one. Leading up to the interval we had Ben Webster and Johnny Hodges playing "Big Ears" a perfect sound to introduce coffee and biscuits.

The Second half was introduced with a Marty Paich version of "I've never been in love before", with some beautiful solos from amongst others Art Pepper, Jimmy Guiffre and Bill Perkins. The next track has completely rubbished what I said earlier about DS and vocals because here we are again with Helen Mirrill singing "Why don't You Do Right". Then it was on to Chet Baker with a very introspective version of "Over the Rainbow" followed by the 'milky' tones of Paul Desmond and his Alto Sax playing "Hi-Lillie, Hi-Low. Then guess what?? Another vocal this time it was The Pointer Sisters with "Slow Hand. Then it was on to two big band sounds, the first "Take the A Train" with Jackie Gleason and his Velvet Brass and "Who Me?" with Count Basie which finished off the afternoon. Thank you Dennis for a good afternoon which pointed me to the computer to search for some of your groups. Our next meeting will be 26th March 2015 at the usual place The Lounge of the Methodist Church, Old Town starting at 2pm.

AMDRAM & SUPPER GROUP

Geoff Bridgewater

Our next event will be on the 14th March when we will see a performance of "The Lady Killers". Drinks and dinner will precede. All tickets sold.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Sylvia Kentish & Pam Collins



For our February meeting, members contributed to a meeting with the theme 'Representing the seasons'. The pieces that members had selected varied, with both craft items and pictures, and many artists, from Bruegel to Hockney, discussed. We enjoyed learning more about each piece and the stories behind each selection. Many thanks to Jackie Daniel for hosting. We are going to the Herbert Museum in Coventry for our next meeting.

BALLROOM DANCING

John B Barker



The winter session of Ballroom dancing started off with a swing. Most of the regular members signing up for the 10 meetings up to June 3rd. As our previous group meetings we danced the standard waltz, fox-trot, quickstep and cha.cha at basic level. In addition we spent time learning Square Tango, St Bernard's Waltz and Valetta. For the future we could try Basic Jive and in sequence dancing Rumba One.

We are all enjoy using the great dance floor in the Holy Trinity Community Centre it is a large room with lots of room to expand our group, so do come along to one our sessions and "have a go" and brush up your past rusty knowledge of dance. You will certainly enjoy the 1.5 hour of very pleasurable light exercise with tea and biscuits in the break period.

We meet Wednesday Morning at 10.30am on the first and third week of the month. Dancing to Strict tempo CDs. You do not need a partner - Do come along.

BRIDGE GROUP

John Yeomans



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.

CHINWAGS

Belinda Sylvestor



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

THE CHOIR

Dorothy Jones



We have a few tickets left for our concert on Friday 20th March at 2pm. Ruth will be selling tickets at our Monthly meeting. £4 including tea and cakes. What a Bargain! We have a super programme with songs from the Sixties and Seventies.. If you are unable to come on the 20th we are repeating the concert at Briar Croft Retirement Home, Alcester Road on Friday March 27th at 2-30pm. You will be very welcome.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Aline Cumming



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

COMPUTER GROUP

Robyn Nicoll



Arrangements have been made to hold the computer group at the Methodist Church, taking advantage of their new wifi connection. We will be using the new room on the 2nd and 4th Thursday afternoons in April,

May and June, from 2.30 to 4.00pm.

Dates to note: April 9th and 23rd; May 14th and 28th; June 11th and 25th.

There has been a very good response from members to this change so the group is now full. Also, several more members have offered to help so that one-to-one assistance can be offered.

All "students" will be contacted to find out what equipment they are bringing and what topics they wish to pursue. Approximate cost for the 6 sessions - £12.

Please contact Robyn for further information.: redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CREATIVE CRAFT GROUP

Tricia Callaghan



Many thanks to Jayne Jones for taking the lead in this month's project - decorating bottles and/or jars using paint techniques and decoupage. Jayne supplied plenty of bottles ready painted and, using paper napkins, doilies, wrapping paper, ribbons etc. We produced some very attractive potential candle holders. A doubly rewarding activity - first drinking the contents of your bottle and then upcycling into a useful object!

Next month we'll be looking at Easter goodies.

A group of us will be visiting the Creative Crafts Show at Malvern Showground again this year and will be looking for more inspirations for the future (and probably spending more than a few pennies in the process)

DINAHS

Sylvia Crooks



We met for lunch on the 3rd February in The Red Lion. It was an enjoyable lunch, after we had eaten and some small talk; we all chatted about Athena's Memory Course which she is starting soon. She will inform us, in due course when and where it will take place. Also the topic on that day was about having a baby from 3 people, a man and 2 women: quite amazing.

Athena was at the Hospital Rebuild meeting. **Building has started.** The Trust runs the Community Services throughout Warwickshire for the last 3 years. The Warwick hospital has 88% patient satisfaction: and was said to be the Best in the Country. Staff survey is among the best. Also run CERU Central England Rehabilitation Unit Heathcote. 1st The Energy Centre, electrics, etc. 2nd multi story carpark. 3rd New Build where old car park was. 4th Old building demolished. Top floor Cancer services. Learned from and improved from Warwickshire. Then Ophthalmology (Eye) On time to open November 2016. Funds raised so far £100,000K. Buses to pass every 15mins, but still negotiating 2nd access etc. We next meet on Tuesday 3rd March at The Red Lion. 12.15pm.

DISCUSSION GROUP

Athena Roderick



The topic was about imagination. During an interview with Mark Lawson, Michael Morpurgo had described how emotional he was when watching War Horse on the stage. He said that, although Stephan Spielberg had made a good film, it was seeing the puppets on stage that brought a lump to his throat & he noticed that people around him were much more touched than they had been in the cinema. So we

talked about how incredible it was to see the puppets behaving so like horses & we wondered if it was marvellous at man's ingenuity which touched us. It was also said that most of us have a soft spot for horses & found the carnage of the film rather hard to watch. As usual, we went off at a tangent & talked about some of our favourite films, which brought up other memories. We meet again on Wed March 11th @ 1PM at The Windmill.

Our speaker for April is Graham Sutherland & his topic is "Wicked Women. Looking at some women in history & it is up to the audience to decide whether they were wicked or 'Good Time Girls'".

FILM GROUP

Mary Fishleigh



Our film for February was "The Man Who Knew Too Much". This is claimed to be the film that launched Alfred Hitchcock onto the world film platform. We thoroughly enjoyed it although it did not contain the expected Hitchcock suspense. The acting and photography were very much of the 1934 era and this caused some amusement during our viewing. At the time of filming the star, Peter Lorre, had only recently fled Nazi Germany and did not speak any English. He learned his lines phonetically. This was not at all apparent from his performance which showed impeccable timing.

The next meeting is Tuesday 10 March in the Lounge of the Methodist Church Hall at 2pm.

GAMES GROUP

Sue Tringham



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 Methodist Hall on the first and third Mondays of the month from 2 – 4pm. We welcome new members so just turn up. Our next meeting is on 16th March.

GRUMPY OLD MEN GROUP

Graham Mitchell



Fed up with the never ending assertions by numerous "experts" that the cause of the current difficulties in the NHS is due to the "aging population" (that's us!), the Grumps joined in with some vigour to debate the Feb. meeting topic "Is our generation really to blame for the apparent crisis in the NHS?". In his very well researched and unexpectedly passionate introduction Brian Bradley put forward a very plausible assessment showing that it was "absolute nonsense" that we were to blame and that responsibility was principally down to mismanagement over many years, a conclusion supported by most contributors to the discussion. Brian, Grump of the Month, highlighted numerous aspects which had and were still having a detrimental affect on the health service and health care provision in general, particularly the proliferation of many quangos and the multi layers of bureaucracy which have been growing like Topsy. The Grumps recognise that demand had increased dramatically over recent years with the increase in UK population e.g. + 400,000 in 2014. It was felt that medicine had now become "the religion of today" with the expectation of endless free treatment from the cradle (and before!) to the grave. Indeed, should everybody really always expect to be treated for every ill. The financial cost of the NHS and overall health care provision is untenable in its present form and is probably in need of a complete rethink but of course this would be political suicide so it won't happen!! In conclusion, the gathering was adamant that, unlike many using the NHS, us oldies have paid our dues over many years and therefore will continue to be a nuisance until the day we finally fall off our perches. Next Meeting: Wednesday March 18th. Venue: Le Bistrot Pierre
Subject: Should we men be concerned about Girl Power. Introduced by Paul Burley.

HISTORY GROUP

Sheela Burchill



In February Peter Burgess gave us a talk on the history of the Channel Tunnel. The first suggestion of a tunnel was made by a Frenchman in 1802. By the 1870s the machinery available could bore through the strip of chalk marl which lay beneath the sea. People, such as Queen Victoria and Napoleon III, supported the idea, but the main problems were the railways in the south-east of England, which had a narrower loading gauge than the French railways. England would be vulnerable to invasion, and who would finance the scheme? Joint committees with the French were set up. Geological studies were undertaken in the 1960s. In 1973 a treaty was agreed, only to be abandoned in 1975 because of the of the railway link to London. In 1979 a Conservative government was elected by which time the influence of the railway companies had waned. In 1981 Thatcher and Mitterand decided to go ahead, finance was found, bids for construction were made in 1985 and in February 1986 a treaty was signed in, of all places, Canterbury Cathedral. The scheme was to consist of two railway tunnels (one in each direction) with an "escape" tunnel in between. Boring started on both sides in 1989, 14,000 workers and 210 banks were involved, the "thin" rolling stock was built and on 6th May 1994 the tunnel was officially opened. It had cost £4.6 billion (50 times the cost of the Suez canal). Nowadays the terminal at Waterloo is unused (St Pancras taking its place) and the company running the tunnel is entirely French. On Monday 9th March we are going to have a talk by Helen Cook on the First World War in Stratford. All 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.

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 meet this month on Thursday 26th, when we will read "For Better For Worse", a comedy by Arthur Watkyn.

Next month we will meet on the 26th March at 10.30am, not on the 19th because of Choir rehearsal : Friday 20th March is the Choir Spring Concert.

READING GROUP – MONDAY

Phyllis Bailey



We read The man in the Picrure by Susan Hill..a ghost story ,of sorts .It was a short book based on a painting of a Venetian carnival, It gets to the climax by the usual compelling route ,,,mysterious accidents , nightmares and bumps in the night. It was well written and led to plenty of discussion about ghosts ,tricks of the mind and fsmly history, Next month we look forward to reading the recommendation of the Wednesday reading group and are grateful to them for it

READING GROUP – WEDNESDAY

Dorothy Jones



We are reading "The Ingredients of Love" by Nicholas Barreau, set in Paris. We are having our meeting later in the month so will have a short review in the April newsletter..

READING GROUP – FRIDAY

Coral Bradley



We read "Rescue" by Anita Shreve. We have read one of her books before and really enjoyed it but this is not one of her best, It has a very predictable story – broken marriage and teenage daughter getting into trouble and an ending that one can see coming a mile away. The actual story is very thin and is padded out with descriptions of the rescues that the main character, who is a paramedic, is involved in.

ROCK & ROLL GROUP

Coral Bradley



Colin Taylor gave us an interesting programme focussing mainly on early Rock & Roll. We all enjoyed it. Thank you Colin.

SCIENCE, NATURE & THINGS TECHNICAL GROUP

Edwin Lilly



The meeting on Friday 13th February 2015 was introduced by our Chairman, Geoff Bridgewater, as a DVD about one of the Seven Wonders of the Industrial Age - the construction of the Hoover Dam during the early 1930s.

The DVD, probably due to time considerations, was very brief about the reasons for building a very large concrete dam in a very remote region of the USA. It concentrated on the construction process, the relentless drive to get ahead of schedule, the financial costs of falling behind schedule (the government had cost penalties and benefits in the contract to ensure the project was finished to a tight timescale). The human cost in deaths (over 100 in total), the desperate living conditions of the workers - living in crude tents for most of the early time until the government insisted that Boulder City - a constituent part of the contract - be finished so that workers could have somewhere with proper sanitation, water supply and amenities in which to live. Working conditions were always unsafe as there was

no legislation in place to control worker safety and unions were not allowed onto the site (by both company and government). The dam, the largest ever built at the time, was finished well ahead of schedule and has since brought prosperity to the south western region of the USA. The audience for the meeting numbered 37, one of the largest for some time. March 13 meeting is in the New Room @ 2.00pm. 'The Secrets of Holy Trinity Church' an illustrated talk by Geoff Bridge-water. Everyone welcome.

SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB

Brian Bradley



The next Sunday lunch will be on the 5th April at the Henley Golf Club. Names please to Brian Bradley, Tel: 01789 488551..

SYMPHONY HALL CONCERTS

Dorothy Jones



Our next visit to the Symphony Hall is Wednesday 6th May.

The programme is as follows

Haydn.....Symphony No 103 & 104

MozartViolin Concerto No 4

Prokofiev ...Violin Concerto No 2

The CBSO conductor is Andris Nelsons, probably our last chance to see him before he takes up his new post in Boston, America.

The cost of the visit is £32; this includes return coach from Stratford to Symphony Hall Birmingham.

PAYMENT IS NOW DUE. We still have eight tickets left.

Johnsons coach will leave the Stratford Leisure Centre at 12-15pm and then proceed to Johnson's Depot to pick up our Henley Group. Please make cheques out to Heart of England U3A and send to Dorothy Jones,

P.S. We were pleased Gwyn Bevins was able to join us on February 19th, she has settled into her new home in Birmingham and sends her regards to all her friends in U3A.

THEATRE GROUP.

Coral Bradley



Our next outing to the theatre will be on 11 April to see "Acadia". It is completely booked up; I just need the money now. The cost is £29.00. The times are as usual 12.00 from Henley and 12.30 from the Leisure Centre.

The next date for your diaries is 30 May when we go to Malvern to see "The Importance of Being Earnest" with David Suchet as Lady Brackell.

WALKING GROUP

Valerie Redfern



The next walk will take place on Wednesday 11TH March 2015 at 10.00.am, starting from the Bridge Free Car Park, Shipston on Stour (this is by the river).

This is a medium five mile walk on good surfaces for winter months and I recommend that you wear good walking shoes and that you also bring along a drink as there is nothing on the way and it could be a little bleak out there.

There are plenty of places to eat and drink in Shipston after the walk.

Look forward to seeing you.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>GROUP LEADER</u>	<u>USUAL MEETING DAY (MONTHLY)</u>
All That Swing & Jazz	Dennis Sully	4th Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
AmDram & Supper	Geoff Bridgewater	As Announced
Art Appreciation	Sylvia Kentish	3rd Friday 2.00pm
Ballroom Dancing	John Barker	1st & 3rd Wednesday 10.30—12.00
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	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

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