



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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## May 2015 Newsletter

### TODAY'S MEETING

Our Speaker for May is David Bartley, and his talk is entitled "More Black Country Humour from David Bartley." It promises to be as entertaining as his last visit.

### NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER

Our speaker for June will be Susan Marshfield & her talk is entitled, simply "You can choose your friends, but..."

### CHAIRMAN'S MAY JOTTINGS

*Geoff Bridgewater*

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

Well, we've reached a milestone in the fourteen year history of the Heart of England U3A – we now have over 300 members! 'Fun and friendship' seems to be working. We mustn't lose sight, though, that the founding principle of the U3A movement is that 'it's never too late to learn'. Athena's first memory course was a great success, with more to follow. Remember, the brain is a muscle, so keep exercising those 'little grey cells'!

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

Stratford	- 27th May	- "Highlights of the Ashmolean Museum"	- Jude Barritt .
Shottery	- 2nd June	- "Population Matters"	- Professor Steve Brown .
Dene Valley	- 12th May	- "Chusan: the Opium Wars etc."	- Liam Darcy Brown .
Alcester	- 2nd June	- "Remembering not to forget"	- David Howe.

### MEMORY COURSE—TO BE RUN IN AUGUST

*Athena Roderick*

Our first Memory Course finished recently and the course members said that they found it useful and interesting. You will also find a little more about it in the Winter 2015 edition of the Quarterly Magazine on the HOE website, it is the last report (key CTRL +END to find it)

We intend to run another course in August and I will be making a list of interested people at the May Meeting. It will be a 4 week course, on the same morning each week and taking 2 hours each session and this includes a 15 minute comfort break when tea/coffee & biscuits are served. Courses run by other U3As have been for 12 members & that seems about right. We will be using email to take care of the clerical work, as that simplifies matters. We will know a little more about costs, once we know how many people are interested.

The course isn't academic, although a little studying of the book provided is essential, to prepare for the next session. The main aim of the course is to encourage more confidence in our ability to use our brain/memory to its best advantage. All easy things to do, but it should help new course members to stop worrying about their memory and to take steps to help keep the brain cells working at maximum capability. There will be some interesting facts about things related to memory, such as how the brain is constructed and what part of the brain does what. Also a little about lifestyle etc. It isn't dry and we found it most interesting when members engaged in the discussions. If you are interested, please be in touch with me [athena.roderick@btinternet.com](mailto:athena.roderick@btinternet.com) or 01789 551416 or with Edwin, who has offered to take care of the administrative side of things ([edwin\\_lilly@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:edwin_lilly@yahoo.co.uk) . note underscore between the two names.)

## **COURSES ON-LINE-FROM NATIONAL OFFICE**

*Robyn Nicoll*

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](http://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*

Our meeting was held on Friday, 1st May and our topic for discussion was The Three Gorges Dam which spans the Yangtse River. The Three Gorges Dam, completed in 2012, is the world's largest hydro-power project and most notorious dam. The massive project sets records for number of people displaced (more than 1.2 million), number of cities and towns flooded (13 cities, 140 towns, 1,350 villages), and length of reservoir (more than 600 kilometres). We were treated again to a show of photographs taken by some of our members who have visited this site.

Patricia introduced the meeting by helping us to revise sounds.

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](mailto:redbird22@hotmail.co.uk) or David Ralph. [david@ralphhome.com](mailto:david@ralphhome.com)

### **ALL SWING & JAZZ GROUP**

*Mavis Pickett*



#### **Report of the March 2015 Meeting**

##### **The Man with a Diamond in his Tooth.**

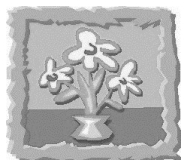
This month we had a totally different program produced for us by group member John Satchwell. He took one artist, Ferdinand 'Jelly Roll' Morton, and explored the man and his music through the voices of people who worked or were connected in some way with him. These views were collected by Charles Fox an English writer who specialised in jazz as a critic, author and regular contributor to the BBC Radio 3 Jazz programmes. John took these interviews and wove round them the story of Jelly Roll with appropriate music interspersed. By the age of 14 he was playing jazz in a 'sporting house' and earning his living gambling and pimping, but also composing works including "New Orleans Blues" and "King Porter Stomp". He arrived in New York in 1911 where he introduced the North to 'the blues'. By 1915 his "Jelly Roll Blues" was the first jazz composition ever annotated and published, previously southern blues musicians guarded their work. After a short time in Canada he settled in Chicago and released his first commercial recordings after getting a recording contract with the Victor Recording Studios. His recordings at this time of Jelly Roll Morton and his Red Hot Peppers are regarded as classics of 1920's Jazz. With the Great Depression his recording contracts were not renewed and whilst his compositions were being recorded by Fletcher Henderson and Benny Goodman he received no royalties from these recordings. In 1938 Alan Lomax the music folklorist invited Jelly Roll to record music and interviews of his life and music, These form the basis of a fascinating look into jazz history.

Jelly Roll is widely recognised as a pivotal figure in early jazz, most notably his being an arranger of what until that time had been a genre rooted in improvisation. A few remarks from people around him were 'Very Self Important Person', 'Egotist', 'Bragadocious', 'bumptious'; all probably true but he was also a great piano player and a great composer and arranger of the Blues.

John our thanks to you and I apologise for not having space to note down the tracks you used to illustrate this fascinating programme. Our next meeting will be on the 28th May 2015 in the lounge at the Methodist Church, Old Town starting at 2p.m.

## **ART APPRECIATION GROUP**

*Sylvia Kentish & Pam Collins*



In April we learned about the art of Iceland from Liz Coxon (Worcester U3A) and Christine Howe (Chesterfield U3A). After three art-oriented visits, they are both very enthusiastic, as well as knowledgeable, about Iceland and the art of that country. They emphasised the variety of public art that can be found everywhere, from busy places like the airport to remote hill tops, and the ways in which the unusual landscape of Iceland has influenced its artists. Liz then focused on the work of two distinguished artists, a sculptor, Asmundur, and Kjarval, a painter. Finally, in reviewing other Icelandic art, she selecting a moving sculpture by Einar Jonsson as her favourite piece. We all appreciated Liz and Chris's unique perspective on a very creative country.

For our next meeting we will be going to 'Love is Enough', an exhibition at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery featuring the work of William Morris and Andy Warhol.

## **ART GROUP**

*Dorothy Jones*

We had a group of very keen potential artists and we have all gone off to see if we can find a suitable hall to hold our sessions. We were also fortunate that Maurice Hiom, a member and local artist joined us to offer help and advice. We will meet in the side lounge after the main meeting to plan the way forward.

## **BALLROOM DANCING**

*John B Barker*



Hello Dancers. We are now in the "Merry Month of May" with only three more dance meetings before the end of the current group sessions.

Unfortunately the Wednesday morning meetings at 10.30am have not been popular with the group which has been reflected in the number of dancers attending. Therefore it has been decided that arrangements for the future Autumn period will commence at 2.30pm. until 4.00pm. The day is yet to be confirmed depending on the availability of the Holy Trinity Community hall.

At each meeting we enjoy a good mix of strict tempo dance music from waltzes, foxtrots, quicksteps to Latin rhythms of cha. cha. cha. rumbas and tangos. We have lots of fun, do come along and give it try. You do not necessarily need a partner. We are there to share, learn from one another and enjoy ourselves.

The next dance meetings are May 6th, May 20th and June 3rd at 10.30am, then planning to restart a new group in September. Details will be published later..

## **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.

## **CARD MAKING GROUP**

*Carolyn Leach*



Our next work-shop will be on May 15th !2.30- 4.30.New members welcome, Just 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 are looking forward to hearing our CD which we have been recording for the last few weeks. Stewart is very patient with us so we are hoping for good results when we hear the final recording on Friday. Also looking forward to our Choir social evening at Briarcroft.

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

*Aline Cumming*



The first part of our programme was four pieces recorded from a concert broadcast in January by Lang Lang. (It was somewhat broken up by advertisements to be skipped). He began by playing three early Sonatas composed by Mozart when he was a boy. Although not normally played as they are seen as too slight, Lang Lang managed to derive some interesting playing from them, but we saw more of his facial expressions and not enough of his hands for our taste. This was followed by a piece by Chopin which made a contrast although the fireworks may not have been Chopin's intention.

After tea we heard the second movement of Beethoven's seventh symphony, and the fourth (of unusually five) movement of Mahler's fifth symphony. The first movement of Rimsky Korsakov's Scheherazade took us to sea in Sinbad's ship and we ended with the finale of Saint-Saëns' third Symphony complete with organ.

We meet again at Bridge Cottage on Monday 18 May for Howard's choice.

## COMPUTER GROUP

*Robyn Nicoll*



Unfortunately we are unable to continue using the Methodist Church premises for the computer sessions. Alternative dates have been arranged at the Holy Trinity Parish Centre. Please note the new dates.

**Wednesday afternoons: May 13th and 27th; June 10th and 24th; July 8th. 2.30pm**

All "students" and helpers have been notified of this change and at present the class is full.

Please contact Robyn for further information.: [redbird22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:redbird22@hotmail.co.uk)

## CREATIVE CRAFT GROUP

*Tricia Callaghan*



Our project for the April meeting was another example of upcycling when members created small baskets and bowls using plastic bottles, string or wool and glue. The next workshop will be held on Thursday afternoon, 21st May, when we will be covering coat hangers with fabric or knitted lace. New members are always welcome. Please contact Tricia Callaghan for more details.

## DINAHS

*Sylvia Crooks*



We met for lunch last 7<sup>th</sup> April at the Red Lion. Lots of chat as usual over drinks and ordering a meal. We talked about Tax and our Pension Pot: whether to cash in or stay safe. Martha Lane Fox was mentioned: I went on line to find more information about her. She started Lastminute.com in 1998 with a friend Brent Hoberman. She was appointed the UK Governments digital champion in 2009, worked closely with Labour and coalition governments. Last year joined house of Lords as a crossbencher becoming youngest female member; now officially known as the Baroness of Soho. She has struggled to cope following a major car crash in Morocco in 2004. I was so amazed reading about this young woman.

Bamber Gascoigne a name from the past: (starter for 10) as he has inherited an historic mansion from an elderly aunt: 50 bedroomed West Horsley Place in Surrey. A house visited by Henry VIII during which he enjoyed a 35 course lunch!!!.

Heather chatted about her lovely cruise around the Canary Islands and southern Spain. Also, the Food Bank and the great work done by a few.

We meet again on Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> May at the Red Lion 12.15.

## DISCUSSION GROUP

*Athena Roderick*



Transitionstratford set out debate topics for hustings held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April. We discussed the topics & I went along to see what the 5 prospective candidates made of them. Except that they didn't keep to the plan. In our discussion, we were very clear that the town is constantly growing, with no regard being given to our very poor infrastructure. The only effort to solve the problem of shortage of facilities is the new hospital which our standing MP likes to take credit for, but it is thanks to the ability of the chief Executive Glen Burley & his second in command that the project is going ahead. Roads are in an appalling state & the jaw-jaw is still going on as has been going on for 20 odd years. Unfortunately, despite all of

the concerns of the people of Stratford, including our Discussion Group, we will probably get the 'same old' rubbish while the fat cats get fatter. Our next meeting will be on Wed 13<sup>th</sup> May at The Windmill at 1PM.

### FILM GROUP

*Mary Fishleigh*



This month we broke with our normal routine and viewed a current release, The Grand Budapest Hotel. This was chosen as a recent film that had won a lot of critical acclaim and many awards. It was good to contrast it with some of the older films that we have watched which had also won lots of awards.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May at 2 pm in the Lounge at the Methodist Hall.

**Please note:** the date of our June meeting has been changed. It will now be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, so on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**.

### GAMES GROUP

*Sue Tringham*



We had a full house for our only meeting in April with one table of Scrabble which then changed to dominoes, and two tables of dominoes and partners whist. We will be unable to meet in May because of the Bank Holidays but we will be meeting on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June at the Methodist Hall.

We play in Side Room 1 from 2 – 4pm.

We welcome new members so just turn up. Our next meeting is on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June.

### GARDENING GROUP—NEW

*Sandy Stewart*

A small number of ladies had a chat after the April meeting to discuss the possibility of a gardening group.

It was proposed that we could begin by meeting in the morning on the second Tuesday in the month but this is open to further discussion if necessary. We thought the sessions might include informal chats about gardening, hints & tips and even plant swapping! There was also interest in visiting gardens in the surrounding area.

If any else is interested, gentlemen most welcome too, please initially contact Sandy Stewart on 01789 268689.

### GRUMPY OLD MEN GROUP

*Graham Mitchell*



A truly splendid introduction to our discussion topic "Is this a good time to be old" deservedly earned Colin Robberts the accolade of Grump of the Month. Using the extensive research he had undertaken, Colin took us on a journey through the 20th century to present day illustrating the contrasting conditions "enjoyed" by old people. Poor sanitation and housing, disease and malnutrition meant life expectancy was about 47 years in 1900 compared with about 80 years today due to vast improvements in all aspects of our standard of living and advances in medical science. Colin covered many salient points which led him to conclude that, although far from perfect, there hasn't been a better time to grow old but he warned that in our more affluent and selfish society there was a danger that loneliness amongst the elderly could become a real problem. Generally the Group agreed with Colin's conclusions although the IT revolution caused concern amongst some Grumps that more mature citizens were now being excluded from many activities they had previously undertaken. Others stressed the many positives associated with the computer age particularly the development of "tablets" (the electronic kind!!). Some worried that the changing mix in the population of the UK would have a detrimental affect on our way of life in the future and therefore old age may be less satisfactory than currently. Summarizing, the grumps agreed that the elderly had never "had it so good". This is a good time to be old and anyhow getting old is generally much better than the alternative!!

Next meeting - Wed. May 20th Venue - Le Bistrot Pierre.

Subject - Forecasting the Future from the Election Results. Introduction - All Members.

### HISTORY GROUP

*Sheela Burchill*



In April David Ball gave us an illustrated talk on the history of the Black Country, which lies to the west of Birmingham and which acquired its name in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when thousands of furnaces and chimneys filled the air with smoke and the mining of coal, ironstone, fire clay and limestone created large areas of dereliction. There had been iron working and coal mining since the middle ages but it was the advent of machinery which led to the industrialisation of the region. In 1712 Thomas

Newcomen built the first successful steam engine and this was developed further by James Watt. It was used to pump water from the mines. A full scale working replica of the 1712 engine can be seen in the Black Country Living Museum at Dudley. In the many buildings on the site, craftsmen and demonstrators re-create activities such as mining, chain-making, brewing, glass-cutting and brick making. There are various shops - sweets, bakers, pawnbrokers, hardware, chemists. A toll house, chapel, public house and Workers' Institute represent a cross section of the social and industrial history of the region. The museum operates an electric tramway system and there are horse drawn delivery carts and travellers' wagons in the collection. Life on a canal boat is demonstrated. Nowadays, the area is 'green' rather than 'black'.

At our meeting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May Delia Garrott is going to be our speaker; at the time of writing she has not decided on her subject so you will have to come to the meeting to find out what it is.

### **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.

### **OUTINGS**

*Coral Bradley*



**On Friday 12 June we will have an outing to Gloucester leaving Henley at 8.30 and the Leisure Centre at 9.00. The coach will take us to the centre of Gloucester and we will have coffee at the Cathedral. Guides will meet us there and give us a tour of the city, this is on level ground and lasts for 90 minutes. There will be a 2 hour break for lunch so that you can go shopping or to the Cathedral. Then we will go to the Eastgate Chamber which is below Boots and is the remains of Roman Gloucester a tour here will take 1 hour with a talk and we finish with tea and cake.**

**The cost including, morning coffee and afternoon tea and cake, is £24.50.**

### **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 last met on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April, where we started reading "For Better For Worse" by Arthur Watkin, a comedy.

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May we will meet at Sylvia's 10.30 to read Act II ..

### **READING GROUP – MONDAY**

*Phyllis Bailey*



We enjoyed a lively meeting on a sunny afternoon and all were impressed with the story and writing of 'The Innocents' by Francesca Segal. Family life of strict Jews in north London is always interesting to Gentiles as are the dilemmas encountered by their offspring. It raised the issue of fundamentalist sects, their literal interpretation of sacred texts and the sense of security they offer adherents

## **READING GROUP – WEDNESDAY**

*Dorothy Jones*



The April meeting was cancelled. Next meeting on Wednesday 20th May.

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

*Edwin Lilly*



At our April meeting Ian Roberts gave an illustrated talk entitled “The Perfect Cuppa”. He was very ably supported by his other half, Elaine, who produced a seemingly endless stream of sample glasses of different teas. From being for twenty years or so non tea drinkers, they have become some what connoisseurs of tea. His talk took us through what tea is and where the plants are grown, how the leaves are picked and processed. He also touched on caffeine content and the effect of differing steeping times. The net result is, for black teas as most in Britain are, select your tea variety and brand, steep for 3 minutes at 98°C, pour into a china cup before drinking. Milk may be added if you wish and that may be either first (you are a MIFFY) or afterwards (you are a TIFFY). Strength of flavour is adjusted by varying the amount of tea, not by varying the steeping time as increasing that leads to higher caffeine content.

Our May meeting is a visit to the Glass Festival at Stourbridge on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May.

## **SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB**

*Brian Bradley*



The next Sunday lunch will be on the 7 June 2015 at the Stratford Golf Club. Names please to Brian Bradley, Tel: 01789 488551.

## **SYMPHONY HALL CONCERTS**

*Dorothy Jones*



May 6th 2015 2-15pm.

The concert is now fully booked. We do have a reserve list.

**Please remember we are leaving the Leisure centre at 12-15pm and picking up our Henley group at Johnsons Depot.**

## **THEATRE GROUP.**

*Coral Bradley*



On 30 May we go to Malvern to see ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’. All the tickets for this have been sold. We leave, as usual, Henley 12.00 and the Leisure Centre 12.30

On 27 June 2015 we go again to Malvern to see ‘The Business of Murder’. Leaving at our usual times.

Cost to be announced at the May meeting.

## **WALKING GROUP**

*Valerie Redfern*



The next walk will be on Wednesday 13th May. Please check for emails from Fred & Val. Please wear good walking shoes as the going may be muddy at times. Also bring along any refreshments you may need for the mid-walk stop,

<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 Pam Collins		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 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 Thursday 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	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
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>
May 2015	Dinahs Luncheon	August 2015	Art Appreciation
June 2015	History Group	September 2015	Bridge
July 2015	All That Swing and Jazz Group	October 2015	Science, Nature & All Things Technical