

NEWSLETTER

U3A AWARENESS MONTH

by Margaret Thompson

UPDATE FOR APRIL

by Arthur Driscoll

Study Group Coordinator

WELL DID you do your bit in this merry month of March to publicise the U3A movement? I have been both saddened and angered at the patronising attitude and abysmal ignorance of some people who think we are dear old folks who are lucky to have some OAP association to keep us entertained and quiet. I thought I had better find my woolly bed socks and put my teeth back in the jam jar. **NOT!** If it weren't that some of these individuals are in high places it would be funny, but it underlines the work that needs to be done to educate such peoples as to our worth and continuing potential.

At the March Monthly Meeting, there were big smiles from our visiting firemen Ed Gallagher and Paul Blande, Watford Chief Fire Officer who gave us such a wonderful presentation about their fascinating and often dangerous work. It was very interesting to see the previously unseen footage of the Bunsfield Oil Depot blaze as they witnessed it, on arrival at the scene. We were very impressed but apparently so were they, telling everyone what a wonderful organisation we are at WU3A.



COMMITTEE NOTES

By Peter Birkett

1. A meeting to welcome Associate Members has been arranged for 2pm, Thursday April 27th at Hollytree House. The Committee and a number of SGLs will be there to raise their awareness of the various activities of our U3A.

2. In future, no extra charges will be imposed on visitors to any of our meetings but a maximum of just two visits can be made.

3. In further developments in the proposed web-site, the following team is being assembled: Alan Betts (webmaster), assisted by Colin Richards and John Carlton; and Margaret Thompson the Newsletter editor. A modified version of the Newsletter with names and phone numbers removed was shown to the Committee.

4. Comments have been made to the Committee regarding lengthy announcements by SGLs at the monthly meeting which merely repeat what is in the newsletter, give anecdotal personal stories and shorten the time for coffee. Please keep them short and relevant!

Well it may be late March but at -3C tonight and the heat on in the greenhouse, where is spring? There was a spring in the step, super glorious sunshine and big smiles from the 'Dig It Girls' when Our Elected Mayor Dorothy Thornhill came to 'open' the 'potting shed' on the Garden Group allotment. This is the only garden shed I know where they don't have a kettle for a warm brew, but bottles of champagne. Well it was a special day



Jean, Ann, Renee Melanie Val, Kate and Jean and the Hut enjoying the spring sunshine.

Photo MCT

April is a busy month. **Friday the 21st** sees another meeting of the **Watford Area Management Forum**, so if there are any issues you would like considered, let me know. The committee find it valuable to share thoughts and ideas and difficulties with other local U3As.

On Wednesday the **26th The Watford Senior Citizens Forum** is putting on a **Spring Fayre** at the Watford Colosseum. We will be represented by the Needlecraft Group and the Greetings Card Group and there will be photographs and displays from our Study Group Fair showing some of our many activities. Come and see.

Finally on **Thursday 27th at 2.00pm** the committee are holding a special meeting at Hollytree House to enable the Associate Membership to meet members of the Committee, Study Group Leaders and each other. Details will be included in the AGM paperwork at the end of March. I hope all Associate Members will come and really find out what your U3A has to offer you.

FOR THOSE members who put their name down for the proposed Wine Appreciation Group, and are wondering what has happened don't worry, Tony Pie is still on holiday. Meanwhile the list for this group produced a staggering (if I can say that!) 35 names; an excellent start. As soon as I have any more news about this group I will let members know.

Our Photo Board which is put up at our monthly meetings, has produced some really good photos of the groups, but has your group's photos been displayed on the board? As a suggestion, why not have a group photo done with all members present, and put that on the board? It will create a lot of interest to other members and serve as a good record of your group.

Yet another new group is about to be formed! A Sporting Forum Group' is being proposed by Dave Holland and Mike Harpin, which will concern all aspects of sport, games, and sport quizzes. If you would like to take part in this group (and it's not just for us men!) full details are up on the notice board.

SGL's please start to think about what you would like to put in the Summaries for the June Newsletter, regarding your group. May 10th is the deadline when Dennis Fitton must have received your contribution.

Message from Reg Cooke

I collect empty ink cartridges and discarded mobile phones for the Gray Cancer Institute.

Discover The New You!

See The Best of Watford's Fashions for over 50's

by John Grainger

SIX U3A volunteers attended the first rehearsal for the Fashion Show to be held in the Town Hall on the 26th April. None of them said, "It's not for me". They went through the basics of walking along a catwalk and displaying clothes. Now they are going to choose two outfits each to display on the day.

There is one more rehearsal before the big day, when the models will be polishing up their display techniques while the commentator works out the descriptions for the outfits and getting the timing right. They still have to chose the music for the show.

Watford Senior Citizens Forum

Healthy Eating & Life Style

Spring Fayre

Wednesday 26th April, 11am to 4pm

The Colosseum Watford

Cookery, Keep Fit & Dancing

Fashion Show

support your U3A members



Mystery Male Model. Do you know this guy? U3A strutting their Stuff rehearsing for Watford Senior Citizens' Forum
Photo JG

The Music Appreciation Group

Shostakovich

'In the drawer'

by Janet Carleton

IN MARCH we began our study of Shostakovich by looking at a video of his early life up until 1937. He was born in 1906 and from an early age showed great musical talent, both as a composer and pianist.

He studied at the Leningrad Conservatoire and wrote his first symphony as a graduation piece, which was premiered in 1926.

In 1934 the first performance was given of his opera Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk. It was a great success with the public and was performed to packed houses. In December 1935 Stalin went to see it and walked out in the middle. A few days later an unsigned editorial appeared criticising the work as "muddle instead of music". There were no more performances.

Shostakovich carried on composing, but did not dare to perform his Symphony no 4 and, along with other compositions, kept them "in the drawer" until safer times. However his 5th Symphony was a success and approved of by the "authorities".

We too enjoyed listening to the lovely first movement. This talented composer had to wait many years for much of his wonderful music to be performed, some of which we shall be listening to at our next meeting.

Pantomime Ahoy!

Planning is in progress so if the idea appeals to you in any capacity acting, singing, dance, backstage, scripts, costumes, resources, advice, back end of the horse etc.

phone

Dick Chapman

Of Carpet, Cava and Curtains by Jean Armstrong

ON WEDNESDAY 15th of March, Watford's elected Mayor, Dorothy Thornhill took up the invitation of the allotment's 'Dig-it Girls' to cut a ribbon and inaugurate our shed project. The



Watford Mayor Dorothy Thornhill opening The Garden Hut on the U3A allotment.
Photo MCT

curtains were up, the cava was already well chilled, having been in the car boot overnight and two pieces of blue carpet destined finally for the compost heap were pressed into service to avoid any muddy accidents. Mayor Thornhill duly turned up, cut the ribbon and wished us fresh air, fun and exercise and toasted the project along with Kathy and John Loveridge, who were instrumental in our getting the shed. Our Chairman Margaret Thompson was also in attendance together with Study Group organiser Arthur Driscoll, John Grainger, camera at the ready, and Study Group Leaders, Jean Armstrong and Cilla Bridgman.

By the time this piece will be read, hopefully there will have been something in the Watford Observer. The Mayor brought along one of the Publicity Officers from the Town Hall, who seemed to take great interest in the curtains!

It was remarked that the allotment project itself had started one

year ago exactly, when, after a talk by the Allotments Superintendent Mary Reid, Kate Klyhn and Valerie Webster got the bug and took the plunge. We now have two allotments and the hard work has started in earnest, with getting the beds ready for the fruit and vegetable planting. Hopefully the weather will warm up soon and we can really get going on all the things we have planned.

It was still very cold the following day when not quite a full coach left for the RHS Garden at Wisley. The 51 of us who went there enjoyed what we saw. Despite the chill north easterly wind, the guide turned up earlier than expected and walked us briskly round the highlights. We were able to duck into the restaurant for hot soup and a warming drink before tackling the rest of the gardens after lunch. The Bicentennial Glasshouse is well under way and will be a really modern addition to the gardens when it's finished. The allotment girls were particularly interested in fruit and veg. and went round the trial allotment garden as well as getting advice about fruit trees. All in all a worthwhile trip, even if the spring flowers are several weeks behind schedule.

Science Interest Group by Brian Mee

DEREK SUGDEN, an acoustician with many years experience, who was responsible for the acoustic quality of Concert Halls across the UK, including Glyndebourne and the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, gave us a fascinating and informative illustrated talk about the acoustic qualities of many concert halls around the world. He explained that ancient Greek amphitheatres were excellent for speaking but no good for music as the frequency ranges for speech are quite different from those of an orchestra. The 'shoe box' shape of Watford Town Hall (the Colosseum) makes it an excellent hall for music. It would appear that many acousticians have to work after a hall is designed and built rather than with the co-operation of architects! Acousticians also have to try and improve the sound quality of a building when it is renovated, so even painting a hall can improve its sound characteristics considerably. Derek's two projector system added an extra dimension to his talk and we were all captivated by pictures showing the variety of opera and concert halls around the world.

The Peace Hospice Garden Party Sunday, May 14th, 2-6p.m.

VERY many thanks to all those who have added their name to the volunteer list. It is not too late to add your name and details to the list on the notice board if you have not already done so. Gentlemen you are sorely needed to help with the setting up and organising the car parking. Do come along for I know you will enjoy the day immensely. More home made cakes are needed for the cake stall. If you can provide a cake please add your name to the list and take note of the special requirements. Details of how to get the cakes to us on the day will be given next month. Bric-a-brac, bottles and soft toys will continue to be collected at this meeting and the May meeting. **Val Webster**

News from the study groups

Complete list of Study Groups, Group Leaders names, contact numbers, Group times and Venues: p. 5

Antiques

At our March meeting we had a very interesting and informative talk on that important subject: tea, and the development of tea cups, tea pots, tea caddies, teapots, etc. From our member Anne Knee, we learned lots of things we didn't know, from the camellia, being amongst other decorative bushes from which the leaves were first picked, to the development of the cup, firstly without handles giving a new meaning to the phrase 'too hot to handle!' to the addition of milk. Was this to stop the fine china cups being cracked on the addition of the boiling water/tea? In which case the problem of putting the milk in first or last would be solved! A hearty discussion proceeded, helped along by some fine pictures in a wonderful book Anne had borrowed from the library and to see the imaginative designs for tea pots manufactured by various companies, from 'cabbage leaf' pots to cat (on the handle) and mouse on the lid tea pots. At our next meeting we shall be discussing porcelain, in particular that from the Royal Worcester factory. New members welcome.

Art Appreciation

Last month, Joan Manhire's research opened up to us the extraordinary world of Marc Chagall. We learned to recognise the recurrent symbols he used and saw how his paintings were influenced by the

difficulties of his Russian-Jewish background. We are very grateful for all Joan's hard work.

10 Apr We look forward to hearing Phil McMahon share his knowledge of Henry Moore.

Better Photos

24 Apr 10.00 am CP Rouse Barn Lane. (from Chandlers Cross) Whippendell Woods/Horrocks Wood. Spring leaves / bluebells.

Book Discussion Group

Future reads include *Wise Children* (Angela Carter), *The Echoing Grove* (Rosamond Lehmann) and *Alias Grace* (Margaret Atwood). The library supports us by supplying these books. This is a small friendly group and new members would be very welcome.

Chess

You are very welcome at our Chess Sessions.

Computers

There is a charge of £1 per person for the two hour session to cover the hire costs of the facilities.

NB change of programme to that previously published.

6 Apr Consolidation session.

18 Apr Keeping your computer healthy.

Cryptic Crosswords

7 & 14 Apr next meetings
Please telephone if you are thinking of joining.

Current Affairs

16 May It's difficult at this stage to predict questions that will be current next month, but

there are sure to be plenty of topics of interest; and we can always go back to the "old faithful", discussing *Yesterday's Papers*, if we exhaust other topics.

Cycling

3 April 10.00am Watford Met. Harpenden and return to Hemel Hempstead via Nicky Line.

19 Apr 10.30am Sainsbury's, Griffiths Way, St. Albans. Car or train assist. Alban Way. Pub lunch.

European Studies

We are still enjoying looking at the history and culture of 17th Century Europe.

26 Apr Britain after Cromwell.

24 May The Moorish Influence on Spain.

Exploring London

Only 2 tickets per person.

Family History

Apr No Meeting

May 11 Metropolitan Archives & Public Records Office.

June No Meeting.

13 Jul Kew Records Office.

Please phone if you wish to join.

Food & Nutrition

25 Apr 2.00pm A presentation from one of the Environmental Health Team from Watford. This is a hugely important topic and it will be great to hear how the team work in our locality to monitor the numerous food outlets.

Gardening

20th April – Outing to Springfields Festival Gardens at

Spalding, Lincs. Apparently apart from the bulb festival which is only one weekend at the very end of April, there are no acres of lovely colour as there used to be years ago but there are over 20,000 bulbs planted at Springfields so hopefully there will be some colour. There will be a tour round the gardens in two groups led by the Head Gardener and in case of inclement weather some retail therapy in the form of outlet shops as well as catering facilities. Get your tickets at the break, £11.50 and PLEASE NOTE THE TIMES ON THE TICKETS. As mentioned at the March meeting, pickup is STARTING at the Essex Arms on this occasion, with the last pickup point at the Synagogue, Bushey Heath.

18 May Another opportunity to see the Beth Chatto Gardens in Essex at a different time of year. We were there in high summer a couple of years ago and everyone wanted to go back for another look. More at the April meeting.

Our plant stalls will be in May, June and July, possibly produce from the allotments will be available later in the year as it comes in.

We welcome your suggestions for outings, discussions and speakers.

German

Conversational, with some German (however remote) assumed.

Greetings Cards

21 Apr The second Friday falls on Good Friday so we will meet the following week.

12 May, 9 June, 14 July

There is a charge of £1 each per session to cover drinks/biscuits and consumable materials.

Jazz Appreciation

We had a very different Meeting on Wednesday afternoon where Col. Bob had prepared a Jazz Quiz to see what everyone had learned and remembered from our Meetings. A couple of teams were formed and answered questions after hearing various tracks. A very good laugh between us all and some good music also, so well done Sir, we all enjoyed it. I only took the scores and controlled the music.

London Theatre Group

8 Apr We are going to The Old Country at the Trafalgar Studio. All tickets are now sold.

Luncheon Club

New members welcome.

Money Matters

Occasionally the *first Thursday* of the month comes *before* the U3A monthly meeting, so check your diary.

Music Appreciation

This year's subject: *Composers* Janet Carleton gave us, at the March meeting, a wonderful experience of Shostakovich. A combination of Video, talk and music on CD.

19 Apr Janet will continue with more music by this exciting composer.

17 May Beethoven; Paul

Woodmansterne, guest speaker.

21 Jun Beethoven continued Johanna.

19 Jul Vivaldi - Joan Manhire.

Opera

10 Apr 12 Garden Close, (David Hancox) for a 'not too difficult' opera quiz. NB. change of venue. New members welcome.

Pathfinders Group

25 Apr 9.25am Essex Arms Bluebell Walk. I regret this group is full at the moment.

Pathfinders 2

11 April 9.45am Meet at Rickmansworth Aquadrome Car Park for a 10.00am start to a walk led by Dennis. Pub lunch.

Performing Arts

There are a number of outdoor plays which I did not know about at the last programme meeting. If anyone would like to attend any please let me know by Mon 10th April and I will arrange to get tickets.

8 Jul 7.30pm £15 Cliveden, 'Merry Wives of Windsor' Chapterhouse Theatre Co.

15 Jul 7.30pm £15 Cliveden, 'The Importance of Being Ernest', Heartbreak Theatre Co.

22 Jul 7.30pm £15 Cliveden, 'Far From the Madding Crowd', Theatre Works Production.

29 Jul 7.30pm £15 Cliveden, 'Twelfth Night', Heartbreak Theatre Co.

9 Jun 8.00pm £14.50 Hall Barn Beaconsfield, 'The Tempest', Chiltern Shakespeare Company.

Personal Development

24 Apr NB this is the 4th

Monday in April. (due to Easter):

Finishing exercises to 'Improve our Self Worth'.

15 May TBA.

Poetry Read & Study

New members welcome.

Science Interest

No meeting in April

10 May Wed 11am Visit to Fire Museum (full).

15 May Why do things break? Bernard Steele.

19 Jun Enigma and the British Bombe - Alan Wray & John Harper.

Shakespeare

26 Apr read 'As You Like It'.

8 Jun (Thursday) we go to Stratford-upon-Avon to see 'Julius Caesar'. Newcomers always very welcome.

Strollers

11 Apr CP & Lunch, Green Dragon Flaunden. 3.5 mls Peggy & John M. Possibly muddy.

25 Apr CP The Pavilion. Oxhey Woods, Kate & Dorelle. Lunch Load of Hay Watford Heath.

9 May CP & Lunch Aldenham GC. Berry Grove Woods, (2.5-3mls), Audrey & Sheila.

23 May CP & lunch Red Lion, Chenies (3mls) Brenda W & Elizabeth.

The Explorers

All walks start at **10.00am** except when car sharing.

7 Apr 10 00am Church CP Chipperfield. Walk around the

Chipperfield area with Raymond.

May 5th 9.30 am Essex Arms, to car share Walk around Combe Hill, Wendover/ Dunsmoor led by Diana & Allen.

Walking

All walks start at JS A4.

12 Apr 9.30am Tonwell.

26 Apr 10.00am Jordans + picnic 6mls.

10 May 9.30am Whitwell (3rd time lucky.)

24 May 10.00am Windsor + picnic 6mls.

Whit-Knits

Meets on the first Monday of every month at 10am, venues various.

Writers Workshop

"What if?" You want to try the writing group; but haven't written before? It does not matter. Please ring the group leader and come along and develop your skills.

MEMBERS free ADVERTISEMENTS

Sherwood CD 3050R CDPlayer
Ariston TX-510 AM/FM Tuner
Aiwa 35W 8ohm Speakers
All in good working order
Phone Dennis

Advertisements may be edited or omitted depending on space available.

TALKS PROGRAMME

START at 10.00am

4 Apr Albert Tucker

'Fairtrade'.

2 May AGM

6 Jun Sarah Jones

Watford Museum, History of Cassiobury.

4 Jul. John Britten On horseback in the 'Tien Shan Mountains.'

1 Aug Study Group Fair.

Speaker Secretary

Material for the May Newsletter

MUST be received by:

20 April

Written contributions to:

The Editor

Obituary

JOAN EDMONDS

We are sad to announce, that Joan of 143 Mill Way, passed away on the 22nd February. Unfortunately because of the ill health of her husband and latterly herself, Joan was not able to participate in as many U3A activities as she would have liked. She greatly enjoyed Exploring Hertfordshire and she went on a few Exploring London trips. Joan enjoyed the Monthly meetings, the speakers and the lively exchanges at question time. Had her treatment been successful Joan would have taken a more active part in U3A. She will be sadly missed and our thoughts and sympathy are with her family at this time.

Saturday 27 May St Albans Abbey 7.30pm

The Classical Orchestra of The Woodmansterne Collection

With period Instruments

Violin **Adrian Butterfield**

Conductor **Paul Woodmansterne**

Beethoven: Violin Concerto & Symphony No 3 op55 (Eroica)

Tickets £15 from Johanna Woodmansterne

Saturday 3 June at 7.45pm St Mary's Church, Watford

IONIAN CLARINET CHOIR

concert of light music

in aid of YMCA work in Yangon, Myanmar/Burma

HEAR A VARIETY OF CLARINETS, FROM THE SMALL E^b
TO THE HUGE CONTRA ALTO, PLAYING from MOZART,
ELGAR, SCOTT JOPLIN, GLENN MILLER,

TCHAIKOVSKY and others with vocals by NINA COOK

Admission £5.00 (child £2.00) light refreshments included

For more information about the Ionian Clarinet Choir,
contact Russell Cleaver