

NEWSLETTER

TIME: A PRECIOUS COMMODITY

by Margaret Thompson

STRANGE it is, to contemplate, *not* being your Chairman after the AGM. What will I do with all the time at my disposal? Probably what I have done with all the time I knew I would have once I retired!! Fill it up; with all the things I have not had time to do over the past few years. Time is so precious, once gone never to be regained. I used to say to

my class don't waste 'precious moments'. I try to value the precious moments as they slip by. The first smile on a baby's face; the little green shoots pushing through the earth in cold February, signs of hope and warmth to come; laughter and friendship and cups of tea. It is all too easy to worry and fret about tomorrow and completely miss today.

I attended my last Watford Area U3A Forum last week, where many aspects of U3A management were debated and new ideas gleaned. This is a very useful 'chat room' and I know will be continued by those who take the U3A movement forward.

Everyone was impressed by the talk on Fairtrade by Albert

Tucker (right, **Photo Reg Cooke**) at our last monthly meeting. It is good to know that we in Watford are doing our bit to see that farmers and growers in far flung places are paid a fair price for all their labour.

The website team led by Alan Betts, held another meeting and development moves on apace. It will not be too long before we go 'live', then no more wondering where your copy of the constitution or the regulations are? (you refer to these all the time don't you?!) Well, when you want to make sure your committee are 'doing it right', all you will have to do is call up the website and no excuse if you don't have a computer or any expertise. You just go to the nearest public library where there will be a machine and willing help and tuition.



Finally I would like to thank, on your behalf, all those who have served on the committee over the last three years, making my task of chairman so pleasurable and rewarding. All we can do is our best! Anyone who puts themselves forward, being prepared to give of their energy, enthusiasm and the most valuable commodity of all, TIME, has to have WU3A's best interest at heart. Thanks Guys for a good 'watch' and all the very best to those who carry the baton forward.

END OF TERM.

by Arthur Driscoll

Study Group Coordinator

YES, my 3 year term in office as Study Group Coordinator has come to an end and those years have simply flown by, but it has been a very rewarding and enjoyable experience, and I must admit it has certainly kept me busy! Above all, doing this particular job has really opened my eyes to the fantastic effort and energy that the Study Group Leaders put into their groups, and this column gives me the opportunity to say a very big thank you to them all for their hard work, and for all the cooperation I have received from them during my term of office.

It has been a real pleasure to see new groups succeed, to find that people are still coming forward to lead new groups and to have been instrumental in their formation. This all suggests that our U3A is still moving ahead and that members want to enjoy and participate in our activities.

I would also like to thank the Committee, alongside whom I have worked, for all the fun and laughter we have had. Yes it's not **all** hard work, although we do get through an awful lot of work at these meetings, and the proof of this is just how smoothly our U3A runs; it doesn't just happen! To illustrate this last point, you will not even notice the transition when my assistant, Dennis, takes up my position from today.

I would also like to thank him for all his help and support and to say how pleased I am that he is taking on this role and to wish him as much enjoyment as I have had as Study Group Coordinator, and through that office, of getting to know a lot of the members of our very successful and very friendly Watford U3A. Thank you to everyone for all your support.

COMMITTEE NOTES

By Margaret Thompson

1. AGM PLANS were finalised, AOB points discussed and the final agenda agreed.
2. The accounts, approved by our auditor, were inspected and his comments noted.
3. The regulations were updated after a unanimous decision: 'that Associate Members be eligible, with the agreement of the committee, for accelerated full membership, once a place is available, if they are prepared to lead a study group, serve on the committee, or undertake specific work on behalf of WU3A' This will become 2.(ix) of the Regulations and will appear on the website and the next time they are printed.
4. The progress of the website and the very positive feedback from the Study Group leaders was discussed, both with regard to content and privacy of personal details in the new Newsletter format and in the dissemination of their information.
5. A budget for Speakers at the monthly meeting was set at £500 for the coming year.
6. An article about the opening of the Garden Hut has been sent To Third Age News so we hope for publication!
7. 365 full members have renewed their membership.
8. In line with our Equal Opportunity Policy the definition of disability was discussed and will be an agenda item for the next meeting.
9. The forthcoming Associate Members Meeting, hosted at Hollytree House by our Chairman was planned.

TALES FROM THE HISTORY GROUP –by E & B Long
Abbeys and Monastic Buildings

AGAIN these featured in our March meeting. Brenda Woodley began with a talk on St Albans where she has lived for some time Today's fine city with its ancient Abbey near the top of a steep hill, is the successor of a pre-Roman settlement, and a major Roman town sited by the River Ver running at its foot.

Albanus was a senior Roman citizen of Verulamium, who had aided a Christian fugitive to escape, adopted Christianity himself, and denied the Roman Gods. For these offences he was executed, high on the hill above the town. In the eight century, a Benedictine monastery was built close to the place where Albanus had been executed. In 1087 the Normans rebuilt the Abbey, using bricks from the ruins of the old Roman town. Those in the nave were painted over to represent stone. In the 13th century, further building work employed pointed arches in the Gothic style, in place of round Norman ones. In the 14th century, part of the nave collapsed killing two monks. Repairs were paid for by Edward II and his wife, Isabella. At this time the Abbey interior would have been very colourfully adorned with wall paintings, mostly washed over at the time of the Reformation, although some traces remain. At this time, statues of Saints on the Rood Screen were destroyed, as was St Alban's shrine. After the monks had been evicted, the Abbey was deserted until it was bought by the townspeople and used as a school This was later removed to the 13th century 'Great Gateway', which had been a prison at the time of the Peasant's Revolt in 1381.

In 1215, Magna Carta was drafted in the monastery. Nicholas Breakspear, born locally in Bedmond, was educated in the monastery, becoming the only English Pope, being elected as Pope Adrian, in 1154. The first battle of the Wars of the Roses was fought at St Albans, in 1455, when Henry VI was taken prisoner, and lodged at the Abbey. In 1553 Edward VI granted St Albans a Charter for self government, including market rights. In Tudor times, the Abbey housed Courts of Law being evacuated

From John Grainger.

An Ode by **Valerie Hoyland**, "Strollers"
 Walking Group, Crew & Nantwich U3A

An Ode to Walkers

Us walkers get our priorities right
 We first find a pub, then walk with delight
 Come rain, snow or shine, we greet with good cheer
 In bright woolly hats, and all the right gear.

For walking is good for you, they say
 And talking lubricates the way
 Makes us supple and keeps us trim
 Exercises the lungs and every limb.

Midst delightful scenery with historical interest
 Amongst the company, we are invigorated in spirit,
 Wild flowers in profusion and birds of all kind
 We never quite know what we will find.

We take into our stride every mile
 And clamber over stile after stile.
 The going is tough and the mud is thick,
 Glad I brought my walking stick.

Gosh not another hill, wonder if we will need a pill,
 It's quite a climb, surely it must be time,
 Can't be far – Ah! It's a pub of course
 We're so hungry we could eat a horse!

from London in time of plague. Major restoration of the Abbey was carried out in the 1870s, shortly after it was designated a Cathedral Church. The rood screen and shrine were restored. Today we may see the shrine of St Alban with the marble plinth and cover decorated with the wild flowers of Hertfordshire, through which Albanus would have passed on his way to execution.

In our second session, Betty continued her review of the history of Westminster Abbey, focusing on a monarch's plans for his own memorial in the Abbey. Richard II had effigies of himself and his

Queen, Anne of Bohemia, constructed, but some time elapsed before he could take his place there. His cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, took up arms and defeated the King. Richard was taken to Pontefract Castle, where he died, probably being starved to death. It was Bolingbroke's son, on becoming Henry V, who had Richard's body taken from it's resting place in Kings Langley and reinterred in the chosen place in Westminster Abbey.

The usurper king, Henry IV, on suffering a stroke whilst praying in the Abbey, was carried to the

Abbot's retiring room, where he died. When, as a young prince he had been on crusade, it had been predicted that he would die in Jerusalem. This prediction appeared to come true, for the Abbot's room was called the Jerusalem Chamber.

Henry VI, having been crowned in the abbey (incidentally being the only English King to also be crowned in 1431, King of France in Paris) had planned to be buried near the tomb of Edward the Confessor and that of his father Henry V but his untimely death in The Tower, at the hands of Edward IV resulted in him first being buried in Chertsey Abbey, later to be moved to Windsor by Richard III.



St Albans Abbey photo Courtesy of St Albans Abbey Website.

Keeping the Mind Sharp at 91

Happy Birthday Bob



By Peter Andrews
 THE CHESS Study Group has gone from strength to strength over the last two years. Most players were school 'wood-pushers' or just casual players but with good potential. We now have a thirty minute session, at the start of our meetings, to discuss 'Openings and Strategy'. This tuition

has made most players games both more interesting and certainly stronger in depth. We have a dozen or so regulars whose playing strengths have improved 100%. We play for 'Pleasure' never for 'Blood'. My next ambition is to find another U3A Chess Group that we can have a Match against. Col. Bob at 91 plays a fine game, so if you want to play—

**Peace Hospice Garden Party,
 Sunday May 14th**

Please make sure to bring own lunch if needed. Tea/ Coffee will be provided throughout the day. If you haven't confirmed the exact time you wish to work please indicate on the sheets on the notice board.

Cake Stall Could all people making cakes either bring them to Hunton Park on the day or deliver them to Liz Shrives at 27 Oundle Avenue, Bushey on Friday 12th or Saturday 13th - telephone first please on 020 8386 1139. Don't forget to pass on your flyer to another family to help publicize the event. There will be a few posters available if you wish to display one or know of a suitable display area. Thank you.

Reg Cooke collects
 empty ink cartridges and
 discarded mobile phones for
 the Gray Cancer Institute.

Charity Raffle
 The next raffle in aid of the
 Peace Hospice will take
 place at the June meeting.



The Thirsty Walkers Stride Out by John Reeve

ANOTHER walking group marches forth for fun and fitness. Ten people met on a glorious sunny day for the inaugural walk of the 'Thirsty Walkers'. Here they are striding through Whippendell Woods. Peter Birkett led the group across Cassiobury Park and over the golf course to York House, thence through Horrocks and Whippendell Woods, a distance of about five miles, along good, dry tracks and no stiles to negotiate. Few of the happy band noticed the miles as they engaged in a lively "social on the hoof". See below for details.

WELCOME TO THE FOLD
WE HAVE a number of new members whom I welcome to Watford U3A and wish many happy, precious moments throughout the coming years. They are Pat Philips, Geoffrey Bould, Alan Humphris, Patricia Ashby, Celia and Edward Lock, John and Margaret Foster, Barbara Woolner, Sheila Ryde-Weller, Mo Read, Joan Hawkswell, Patricia and Roger Bailey, Pat Phillips, Marlene Fox, Leslie Jennings, Anne Avery, John Maguire, Betty Saunders.
Margaret Thompson Chairman

News from the study groups

Please save the complete list of Study Groups' details: Group Leaders, contact numbers, times and venues, as p. 5 will only be published every 3 mths.

Art Appreciation

Last month, Phil McMahon shared his knowledge of Henry Moore's work. The PowerPoint presentation showed the wide variety of his output from his wartime drawings of Londoners sheltering from the Blitz in the Underground to the more familiar monumental sculptures which grace numerous public gardens and civic sites.

16 July The Henry Moore Foundation grounds at Perry Green are open to the public as part of the **National Gardens Scheme** from **12noon -5.00pm**.

On weekdays guided tours of the park and studios can be arranged for groups. If there is sufficient interest, we may be able to take a party in 3 or 4 cars.

8 May. Pat Woollard will talk about the work of Duncan Grant and Dorothy Steele will review Kandinsky's paintings before the visit to Tate Modern. Please bring your new membership cards to this meeting.

12 Jun We intend to make a group booking for the Kandinsky's Exhibition at Tate Modern. Please sign up at the May meeting if you would like to go. Visitors welcome.

Book Discussion Group

The library supports us by supplying these books. This is a small friendly group and new members would be very welcome.

Classics

Jean Firbank has continued to lead a very stimulating

discussion inspired by our group reading of Cicero's "On the Good Life"

12 Apr 2.15pm at a new venue, Jean Firbank's address, 44 Avenue Rise, Bushey.

Pat Purkiss, our excellent secretary, has kindly agreed to take over the leadership of our classics study group. Our future news and study projects will be announced in the newsletter

Computers

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

4 May Organising files and folders.

16 May Miscellaneous problem solving.

Cryptic Crosswords

5 & 19 May and **2 Jun.** next meetings. Please telephone if you are thinking of joining.

Current Affairs

16 May There are sure to be plenty of topics in the newspapers which we can discuss, but for a start this month we can talk about "*the erosion of individual freedom*", which concerns us all.

Cycling

17 May 10.00am Watford met. Bricket Wood and London Colney for pub lunch.

5 June 10.00am Watford met. Harpenden and return via Nicky Line. Pub lunch at Hemel Hempstead.

21 June 10.30am CP Walton on Thames bridge.

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.

Family History

May 11 Metropolitan Archives & Public Records Office.

June No Meeting.

13 Jul Kew Records Office.

Please phone if you wish to join.

Food & Nutrition

23 May 2.30pm Talk and demonstration from Billingtons, the manufacturers of unrefined and Fairtrade sugars. We need an audience of 50 people for this talk so do make sure you come along and receive a free bag of sugar as well as having a most entertaining afternoon.

Gardening

18 May There are still tickets left for Beth Chatto's Gardens in Essex. We were there in high summer a couple of years ago and everyone wanted to go back for another look.

15 Jun 'Gardeners World' live at NCC Birmingham Tkts available. Our plant stalls will be May, June and July and possibly produce from the allotments will be available later in the year. We welcome your suggestions for outings, discussions and speakers.

German

18 May No meeting
Conversational, with some German assumed.

Greetings Cards

12 May, 9 June, 14 July

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

History

At our April meeting, Johanna Woodmansterne presented a slide show featuring Westminster Abbey's roll call of celebrities from princes to poets who found their final resting place, together with such architectural features as the tomb of Edward the Confessor and Henry VII's Chapel.

8 May 'The Hanoverians', a period which saw much constitutional change, whilst witnessing the social impact of the Industrial revolution.

London Theatre Group

We saw *The Old Country* on 6 April. We had a full coach and I believe everyone enjoyed this. Afterwards there was a question time with Timothy West and the rest of the cast which was excellent.

30 Aug Next theatre outing is a matinee performance of *Guys and Dolls* rice £28. Bring your cheque books to the monthly meeting.

Money Matters

As the name implies, we apply ourselves to ALL aspects of ways of economically using our finances. In essence we are a discussion group debating financial issues that either have affected individuals or have come to the notice of someone who thinks important

information has not been dispersed or displayed widely enough. Occasionally we have a speaker as the result of a particularly complicated subject raised by a member.

NB: The *first Thursday* of the month may be *before* the U3A monthly meeting!

Music Appreciation

This year's subject: *Composers*

17 May Beethoven; Paul Woodmansterne, guest speaker.
21 Jun Beethoven continued Johanna.

19 Jul Vivaldi - Joan Manhire.

Opera

15 May The second half of Gounod's Faust with Bryn Terfel and Angela Georghiu.

NB: this time we are meeting on the **3rd Monday** in the month. New members welcome.

Performing Arts

22 May We will see a video on the work at the Globe Theatre.

25 Jun 12.00noon (Sunday), at 12 St Mary's Ave, Northwood,

The Performing Arts Party.

The cost will be £5 a head to cover food and drink. Please contact us to book a place. It would be helpful if you could send a cheque at the same time. If you would like to prepare a 'party piece' the theme is pets or animals.

Open Air Theatre Events

Tickets still available, cut off date 7th May.

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

15 May Sharing, then "Why it is important to be able to use our voices appropriately!" to include practical exercises!

19 Jun "What Rules do we live by?" Everyone has their own set of rules often instilled by parents and teachers. Which rules do you accept and which do you question or reject.

17 Jul Bring and share lunch at Catherine's. TBA.

Science Interest

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.

17 Jul Visit to Tringford Canal Pumping Station.

21 Aug Energy from the wind. Leon Ferris.

Shakespeare

31 May we are continuing reading 'As You Like It'.

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

28 Jun next meeting new comers are welcome

Strollers

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.

13 Jun CP Clarendon Arms Whippendell Woods (2.5-3mls) Lunch Coach & Horses Croxley green. Brenda O'C & John M.

27 Jun CP/Lunch Windmill Chipperfield (2.5mls) John & Jean Grainger.

The Explorers

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

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

2 June 9.30am Charlock Way, West Watford. Black Park,

Fulmer, led by Myra, around the Woods and Black Lake.

7 Jul Rickmansworth or Stanmore. More details later. Walk leader Jean Groves.

The Thirsty Walkers

Peter Birkett

We held an inaugural meeting on March 21 and the first walk through Whippendell Woods two days later. We intend to walk on the **4th Thursday** of each month, leaving the Essex Arms at 10am, so come along!

25 May 10.00am Second walk TBA, Alan Betts.

Tuesday Trekkers.

9 May 9.45am Bluebell walk led by John Reeve starting from Essex Arms promptly at 10.00am.

Walking

All walks start at JS A4.

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

24 May 10.00am Windsor + picnic 6mls.

Whit-Knits

May No meeting

5 Jun 10.00am at 15 Wentworth Close

Writers Workshop

9 May & 23 May Come along and develop your skills. New members always welcome.

The Peace Hospice Gardens need YOU
If you have 2 to 3 hours to spare please contact **Maggie**

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 MOZART, to JOPLIN, & GLENN MILLER vocals by NINA COOK

Admission £5.00 (child £2.00) light refreshments included

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

Pantomime Ahoy!

19 June 80A Parkside Drive, **7.30pm** planning meeting to go through/ discuss the script written to that date.

'Cinderella'

December 5th Christmas Monthly Meeting

Members present at this meeting will be the audience for a performance of our pantomime. Enough members, willing to act their shoe size rather than their age, have come forward. The Director (Jackie Godfrey) and Assistant Director (Pat Lucas) have been appointed. The Creative Writing group are busy away, writing an original script with a U3A theme and other groups including the Singers. have offered their services,

Should be fun!!

Dick Chapman

Sporting Forum

There was an encouraging number of members interested in this proposed new group. Should anyone else wish to 'sign up' the list will be on the notice board at the AGM after which arrangements will be made for an initial meeting. Contact – **Dave Holland**

TALKS PROGRAMME

START at 10.00am

2 May AGM

6 Jun Sarah Priestley Watford Museum, History of Cassiobury.

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

1 Aug Study Group Fair.

5 Sept Colin Richards Aerial Spills & Thrills at Northolt Airport.

Speaker Secretary

David Helliwell

Material for the June Newsletter

MUST be received by:

20 May

Written contributions to:
The Editor