

NEWSLETTER

OUT WITH THE OLD IN WITH THE NEW

by **Margaret Thompson** EDITOR

WELL THIS is the dawn of a new era. I feel most strange. I know I should be somewhere on the third Tuesday afternoon of the month. Now where was it? Oh yes the committee meeting, but for the first time in six years I am not expected to turn up! I feel as if I have let the children out to play, unsupervised! What will they get up to? Ah well, I must remember the old maxim 'No one is indispensable', our new committee will be fine and I wish them as much fun and satisfaction as I have had. It was so good, this year, to have a smooth transition to a new team of willing volunteers. We had a super 'post AGM' lunch at The Blue Check Restaurant in Bushey; an excellent venue, affording a good opportunity to say goodbye to the retiring members and to welcome those joining the team.



Above [photo Peter A] A smiling President Reg Cooke flanked by his wife Peggy and happy new and retiring committee members.
Below [photo Reg Cooke] L to R: Our new Vice Chairman John Carleton and his wife Janet, and Peter Andrews our new Chairman and his wife Sheila, all smiling into the future. Susan tries to console Arthur Driscoll our retiring Study Group Co-ordinator, who appears to be crying into his soup? Not really. He is actually deep in concentration, planning more activity in their wonderful garden.



I will now venture forth to 'pastures new' at the bottom of my garden where the nettles and the ground elder live. Actually I have got on quite well with my horticulture this year, planting out the runner beans, sprouts and celebese last week. Pity the pigeons have shredded the latter. I wonder what pigeon pie tastes like? Probably the newly transplanted vegetables I have put in!

Progress continues apace with the Website. You will have noticed the changes in this news letter to ensure that personal details are not posted on the Web. We have received one or two ideas to incorporate onto the site but it is not too late if you have any good ideas which we could include.

Our laptop and digital projector has had its annual overhaul, thanks to Colin Richards, who is now the custodian of all our software and electronic equipment, so if you want to check availability and book this out for your group please see contact details on page 7.

Tom O'Callaghan tells me that 20 Associate Members have been given full membership and can now enjoy the Monthly Meetings as well as all the Study Groups, all of which Ass. Mem. can join. We could all be out 3 times a day if we had the energy and inclination.

I would like to welcome 4 new Associate Members: Geoffrey Bould, Alan Humphris, Marion Wheeler, and Daphne Bloye. This brings our Associate Membership to 23 and I wish them lots of fun learning and friendship with Watford U3A.

Study Group Topics

By Dennis Fitton

Study Group Coordinator

ON APRIL the 27th we held a meeting to enable Associate Members to meet Study Group Leaders and Committee Members. I think this was very useful, helping to resolve a number of issues and making our new members feel welcome.

Some people said that they had found that groups that they wished to join were full. It would be helpful if SGLs, with full groups, could inform me and we could investigate if there would be enough interest to form a new group.

Another topic raised was computer courses for complete beginners. I will soon be putting out sheets for you to indicate your choice of computer courses. These have been running very successfully for three years at Watford Grammar School. As things stand, funding will run out after one more year. Unless more funding is forthcoming, this will be your last chance to attend these **free courses**. The areas covered have been: Microsoft Word, E-mail, Excel, Scanning, Internet and PowerPoint. For those of you doing Microsoft Word it is particularly important that you fill in the sheet indicating the areas with which you are familiar. If you have any particular needs related to computers, please let me know. This is a golden opportunity which I urge you to take. I think that this is particularly important for absolute beginners because as for all things in life, it is the first few steps which are the hardest to take. Speaking personally, attending these courses turned my computer from something I viewed with some trepidation, into a very useful tool. Those of you attending the monthly meeting can fill in the sheets, whilst Associate Members will receive details in the post.

COMMITTEE NOTES

By Joyce Hoffbrand

1. AFTER the Chairman welcomed the three new committee members, the following new appointments were made: Regional Representatives Terry Godfrey and Deirdre Ruggles. Publicity Officer Joyce Hoffbrand.

2. The subject of people leaving the Monthly Meetings early or arriving late was discussed. It was decided that a book be placed on the table outside the hall for such people to sign, thus keeping the tally correct should there be an emergency.

3. Capital expenditure was approved for two study groups: a water butt for the Gardening Group and essential equipment for the Greetings Card Group.

4. The membership stands at 379 full and 43 associate members. It was agreed that 20 Associate Members be offered full membership.

5. Two new groups have been formed: Wine Appreciation and a Sporting Forum.

Tales from the History Group, E & B Long

HOW DID WE ACQUIRE A GERMAN PRINCE AS KING?

AT OUR May meeting, Eric started our review of the Hanoverian period, by looking back to see how a German Prince became an English King. This was the outcome of the 1701 Act of Settlement, which had ensured a Protestant succession by naming Sophia, the grand-daughter of James I, who had married the Elector of Hanover, as the successor to Anne, the younger daughter of James II. Sophia died a few weeks before Anne, so it was her son who became George I of England.



Courtesy: Spartecus.schoolnet.org

George did not relish the prospect, preferring his homeland where his power was absolute, whereas in England, he would be constrained by the imposition of the 1688 Bill of Rights which limited the prerogative of the Monarchy. Speaking little English, he left government in the hands of his ministers, a

consequence of which, was that Walpole virtually became the first Prime Minister. George's personal life left much to be desired. While running two mistresses himself, he locked his wife away for 32 years, following her liaison with a Swedish colonel, Philip von Konigsmark, who disappeared, disposed of on the orders of George.

George I died in 1727, a year after that of his estranged wife. The only English sentiment seems to have been that at least he was better than a Catholic James III; a title claimed by James Edward (the "old pretender"), Son of James II, whose attempt to seize the throne had been ended by his defeat in 1715.

In our second session, Betty looked into another controversial period. While the historian Michael Jones was doing research on The Hundred Years War, he discovered, in the records of Rouen Cathedral, notes concerning the christening of the Yorkist king Edward IV. The records showed that Edward must have been conceived while his "father", the then Duke of York, was away, campaigning in another part of France. It is thought that Edward's natural father was, in fact, an English archer. Nevertheless the Duke allowed the boy to be brought up as one of his own, although of course, he should have been barred from the succession on the grounds of his illegitimacy.

As a consequence, after Edward's death, the rightful heir was Edward's younger brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, despite what Shakespeare, a Tudor propagandist, made him out to be!

Science Interest by Brian Mee

THE Fire Museum in Whippendell Road visited by the Science Group, is run by volunteer ex-Firemen and their wives. They have spent 10 years collecting and assembling an amazing quantity of fire-fighting equipment, spanning the years from mid 19th century until late 20th century. Books and photos record many of the big fires that have burned in Hertfordshire, including the spectacular and expensive Buncefield fire last December. Leather hoses, wooden ladders, man-hauled tenders, hand-pumped fire engines, brass helmets and steam driven water pumps were all on show.

Why do things break? Bernard Steele answered this question at our May meeting, by demonstrating with several materials that do not easily break. Stress causes materials to fail and he explained that 'stiffness' and 'strength' are not the same and that various materials have different properties, which gives them different uses. Glass is a very strong substance but brittle if scratched. A scratch will cause catastrophic failure in glass because the crack just gets bigger. Steel is very strong and has very high tensile strength. Bonds between iron atoms are strong making the lattice very even in all directions. Carbon in different forms has very different strengths. Diamond is the hardest known substance as its bonding is in three dimensions, whereas in graphite carbon bonding is mainly in two dimensions; in layers. The bonds between the layers are very weak and so graphite is used in pencil 'lead'. Atoms rub off on paper as the bonds break easily so graphite is used for writing.

Glass makes gypsum and cement very strong indeed, because it bonds to the gypsum or cement. Alkali resistant glass is needed to reinforce cement. Bernard hammered a glass reinforced gypsum tile and a glass reinforced cement tile, both made 40 years ago. Neither tile showed any weakness whatsoever. Buildings and pillars made of these materials survive today because there are no cracks in them. The bonds are strong and hence the materials do not break!

A Great Show

'Watford Senior Citizens Fayre' captured in words and pictures by Gerry Adams

THE WHOLE thing can only be described as a great show. I understand that there were about 3000



available free of charge, manned by volunteers who did a marvellous job. The Colosseum was flooded with music, when suitable, of the 60's and 70's variety and many

people were dancing in the allotted space. There was also some specialist dancing, such as Line Dancing and a group of Indian ladies gave a performance, made wonderful in their colourful saris. Very popular were the Pearlie Singers who in character sang a lot of the old Music Hall songs. The Fashion show went off very well and the models were very professional; a resounding success. All the surrounding stalls were busy with visitors and a lot of the posters and signs for the WU3A table were created by John Grainger and U3A Study Group Leaders. Can you spot yourselves in the pictures? I spoke to a number of people and they were all enjoying themselves and I feel it would be worth repeating next year.



people signed in and it is likely that at peak time there were 2000 present. Food and drink were



A Wonderful Sunny Day for a Stroll

by Audrey Holland

IT STARTED off well. The sun was shining, the rape fields were in full colour; the country side was at its best. Sheila Mann and I were planning the next strollers walk around Aldenham, looking for bluebells. We were just returning up the lane to the car, discussing alternatives on the map as we felt the walk we had done was rather on the long side and we hadn't seen many bluebells; when with my eyes off the road and my stick in an awkward position I fell full weight on my left hand.

At once I knew I had done something to it and with great presence of mind I removed my rings. Sheila drove me to Mount Vernon minor injuries unit who were very efficient and to be recommended. My ring finger hung in a strange position and after x-rays the words 'looking for a bed' were heard! I thought I had only broken a finger! It was deemed that 'the broken finger' should be strapped to the next finger, put in a sling and told to return early the next morning. After more x-rays the doctors decided not to operate but to put my hand in a splint.

Why do I tell you all this? It is to say how important every finger is. A broken finger is a great handicap and restricts the working of the whole body. U3A needs every member, not just the committee; a lift, a phone call, an offer of help, a word of encouragement; all are important. Don't think because you are only a little finger in U3A you are not important. You may be more vital than you think!



Strollers enjoying a shorter walk and seeing more bluebells. Can you spot the splint? Photo Sheila Mann

Dragon Arum (Dracunculus Vulgaris)

by Aline Burgess

TWO YEARS ago this rare plant unexpectedly appeared in our garden. The purple/black flower with its shiny black spike lasted for about five days and then shrivelled up. Last year it reappeared, but the flower withered away much more quickly. This time it must have been pollinated by the flies which are attracted by its evil smell, as it then produced a head of bright orange berries. This year a second smaller shoot has also appeared, so I am waiting to see whether it too will produce a flower.



Aline surveying her monster plant with some incredulity

Reg Cooke collects:

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

The Peace Hospice Gardens need YOU

2 to 3 hours to spare?
contact Maggie

News from the study groups

Please save Study Group Synopsis for details of each group, published bi-annually.

Antiques

At our May meeting we had a discussion as to what form the meetings should take in the future. We can see again the excellent videos on furniture, porcelain, art, etc. We have seen them two or three times, but no doubt new members will be pleased to see them and older ones will refresh their memories. We decided that in the summer months we could visit a museum or a stately home.
13 Jun 2.30pm visit to Watford Museum, to discover the delights in store therein. **NB** change of venue. If anyone has any ideas, as to what form future meetings could take, or any ideas for study please let me know.

Art Appreciation

Last month we enjoyed Pat Woollard's comprehensive presentation on Duncan Grant's work, even though Pat herself was not able to be with us! Dorothy Steele gave a brief review of Kandinsky's early work in preparation for our visit to Tate Modern in July, postponed from June since the opening of the exhibition had to be delayed. If you wish to go to this exhibition on July 10th. please sign up at this month's meeting.

12 Jun Pat Woollard will talk about Modigliani's work and Margaret Thomas will show a video on Henri Rousseau.

10 Jul Visit to Kandinsky at Tate Modern. **NO MEETING AT HOLLYTREE HOUSE.**

16 Jul The Henry Moore Foundation grounds at Perry

Green are open to the public as part of the **National Gardens Scheme from 12noon-5.00pm.**

15 Aug (Tues) Dorothy has booked for those who signed up to go to the Henry Moore Foundation on this date. This outing is now full. Details later.

Book Discussion Group

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

Computers

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

1 Jun Transfers to and from MS Office programs

20 Jun Help from the columns of The Telegraph / Intelligent use of Google

Cryptic Crosswords

2 & 16 June and **7 July** next meetings. Please telephone if you are thinking of joining.

Current Affairs

At the May meeting, our discussion on 'the erosion of individual freedom' covered a range of new rules and regulations; in its eight years in office the Labour government has created between 700 and 1000 new criminal offences; it has also seen the introduction of ASBO's which seem to cover a great range of anti-social activities. Nonetheless, some members tolerate the new restrictions because they give a greater feeling of personal safety. Other topics discussed included assisted suicide and living wills.
20 Jun Environmental changes

are of increasing concern to us all. This month's discussion can start with changes to traditional farming and how the government is encouraging farmers to become custodians of the countryside.

Cycling

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

21 Jun 10.30am CP Walton on Thames bridge.

3 Jul 10.00am Watford Met. Bricket Wood, Potters Crouch and Bedmond.

19 Jul 10.00am Watford Met. Ley Hill, Bovington and return to summer picnic chez Ken.

Exploring London

Diane Livesey has put the photographs of the visit to Islington on a blog at <http://u3aing.blogspot.com/>

Family History

Jun No Meeting.

13 Jul Kew Records Office. Please phone if you wish to join.

Food & Nutrition

27 Jun 7 00pm NB that this is an evening meeting. Enid Saunders from the 'Watford African Caribbean Association' is coming to give a talk and demonstration of foods from the African Caribbean culture. Tasty dishes for you to sample with hopefully some music to give the evening a swing. Do come along for what should be an entertaining time.

Gardening

15 Jun We still have some tickets for the 'Gardeners World' Live Show at the NEC in Birmingham.

This should be a great day out with show gardens, loads of plants and lots of equipment for the garden, as well as the chance to meet some of the television gardening gurus. Tickets are £22.

20 Jul Hitchin Lavender was already booked up when we got in touch earlier, also Snowhill Lavender in the Cotswolds, so our thinking caps went on and we came up with Waterperry Gardens, near Oxford. The Royal Horticultural Society's handbook describes Waterperry as "This 8-acre garden has one of the best purely herbaceous borders in the country, which flowers from May until the first frosts. There is a great deal more to interest the keen gardener, with rose and alpine gardens, a formal knot garden, trained fruit and nursery beds as well as a pleasant riverside walk." The gardens are part of the horticultural centre which used to be the Waterperry Ladies Horticultural School and includes nurseries, orchards, plant centre and teashop as well as a museum and an Art in Action Exhibition. Tickets on sale at the break at £11.75 which includes admission to the gardens. Remember we have two more plant stalls: June and July. We welcome your suggestions for outings, discussions and speakers.

Greetings Cards

9 Jun and 14 Jul
There is a charge of £1 each per session to cover drinks/biscuits and consumable materials.

Jazz Appreciation

On 17 May we heard an excellent programme by Peter Andrews, illustrating the early years (up to 1939) of the outstanding jazzman, Edward K. 'Duke' Ellington, composer, bandleader, and pianist. This provoked a lot of discussion and a good commentary by Col. Bob. We are so fortunate to have such experience and knowledge in our midst. Can't wait to hear part two next month, covering the great years from the 40's. Just what 'Jazz Appreciation' is about.

London Theatre Group

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

Money Matters

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

Music Appreciation

This year's subject: *Composers*
21 Jun Beethoven continued, Johanna.

19 Jul Vivaldi, Joan Manhire.

Opera

16 Jun Members are invited to bring along their favourite aria on CD, DVD, or excerpt from an opera video to share with the group and to say why they like this particular piece.

New members welcome.

Pantomime

19 Jun 7.30pm The creative writers' group report considerable progress and expect to have a contribution in time for our consideration; bring your diaries to plan rehearsals!

Pathfinders Group

All Walks meet at **9.25am** at the Essex Arms.

27 Jun Dunstable Downs

25 Jul Chipperfield

22 Aug Pitstone

I regret this group is full.

Performing Arts

25 Jun 12.00noon (Sunday), at the Study Grp Leaders home, '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 / animals.

Personal Development

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 1.00pm Bring and Share Lunch at Catherine's (partners invited). At the June meeting please let us know whether you can provide savoury or dessert. Also bring games/quizzes.

Science Interest

9 Jun Enigma and the British Bombe – Alan Wray & John Harper.

17 Jul Visit to Tringford Canal Pumping Station.

21 Aug NB: (New venue from now on), **Watford Central Library** Energy from the wind. Leon Ferris.

18 Sep Visit to Brickworks at Stewart, Bedford, £15 by coach.

Shakespeare

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

28 Jun Newcomers are welcome.

Sporting Forum

3rd Tuesday 2.00pm – 4.00pm (See page 5 for details.)

17 members expressed their interest in this proposed new group. 12 attended an inaugural meeting on 16th May and agreed that we should progress and become a 'recognised group'.
20 Jun 2.00pm Jane Parr, Senior Sports photographer from the Watford Observer will be our guest. New members welcome.

Strollers

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.

11 Jul Aldbury 4.5mls by the pond. Park where possible. Lunch 'Volunteer', led by Myra & Jane.

25 Jul Peggy's House. Planning Meeting. Lunch kindly provided by Peggy. Contribution £3.00.

The Explorers

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

2 Jun 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

22 Jun 10.00am Essex Arms Walk led by Tessa and David Hollingsworth through Sarratt/Chipperfield. We meet at the Essex Arms, Cassiobury, to arrange transport. Lunch at the Windmill pub.

Tuesday Trekkers

13 Jun 9.45am for 10.00am, starting promptly from the War Memorial on Sarratt Green (opp. The Boot) Jean and John D.

Walking

All walks start at JS A4.

14 Jun 9.30am Richmond Park.

28 Jun 10.00am Dudswell + Picnic 6 mls.

9 Jul 11.00am Summer Event Datchworth Open Day. 10 Village Gardens £5.00

Wit-Knits

5 Jun 10.00am

Writers Workshop

Come along and develop your skills. New members welcome.

* North Watford Methodist *
* Church *
* Free Concert *
* HOSANNA YOUTH CHOIR *
* From Alabama & Georgia *
* Tuesday 6th June 8.00pm *

TALKS PROGRAMME

1st Tuesday of the month
START at 10.00am

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.

3 Oct Ian Brazier

Northwood HQ

Speaker Secretary
David Helliwell

Peace Hospice Annual Garden Party

Tara Shaw Communications Manager The Peace Hospice T: 01923 335347
Over a thousand people turned up to Hunton Park for the annual hospice Garden Party on Sunday 14 May for a fantastic day for all the family. The event raised nearly £9,000 for the hospice, thanks to the great support from Watford U3A who helped with the manning and planning, coordinated by Valerie Webster.

The party offered something to suit all ages from the Borehamwood Brass Band, live jazz, and flower arranging demonstrations, to Salsa lessons from Revolution Bar Watford, to a wide range of children's entertainment.

The varied selection of refreshments was also a great success. Visitors enjoyed delicious cream teas, Pimms and beer along with a BBQ cooked by the Valeside catering team who prepare all the tasty food at the hospice for our patients and staff.

Gill Crowson Community Fundraising Manager said "The hard work of the organising committee and the hundreds of volunteers who turned up on the day ensured that the event ran smoothly. We are thrilled we raised nearly twice as much as last year. The date for next year is 13 May 2007."

Material for the
July Newsletter

MUST be received by:

20 June

Written contributions to:

The Editor