

NEWSLETTER

Kandinsky at Tate Modern

by Margaret Thompson EDITOR

Study Group Topics

By Dennis Fitton
 Study Group Coordinator

WOW, Isn't it great to be a member of U3A. I would probably not have known about the Kandinsky exhibition if I was not a member of the Art Appreciation Group and I would certainly not have known so much about this amazing artist but for the talk we had from one of the study group leaders Dorothy Steele. To be able to see so much of his work,

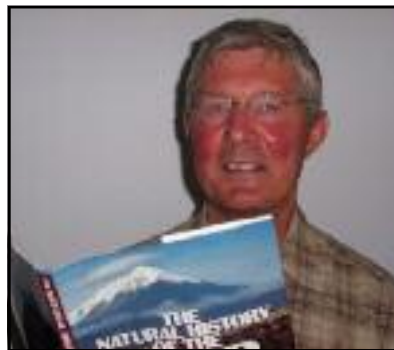
assembled from all over the world, including his native Russia, was truly wonderful. Thank you Dorothy and Margaret. The exhibition is on until 1st October. Visit the website www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/kandinsky/



Wassily Kandinsky *Cossacks* 1910-1911 Oil on canvas 94 x 130 cm
 picture courtesy of Tate Modern website

At yesterday's Committee meeting, there was approval for the design of the Watford U3A website, with its ease of access, and agreement that it should go fully live as soon as possible. There was a unanimous vote of thanks to Alan Betts, our Webmaster and his team for all the hard work in creating and delivering this excellent website, which will be a service to members and a sign to the world that Watford U3A may be grey but is certainly not fossilized! So folks get accessing: www.watfordu3a.org.uk and let us know what you think? Tell us if you feel something else could be included and if you find it user friendly.

Last month we were treated to a sojourn in the Tien Shan Mountains which extend from Uzbekistan to Mongolia, without even leaving our seats. John Britten, as usual a mine of Natural History information, regaled us with his tale of adventure, and showed us some of his beautiful bird slides.



John Britten in July photo Reg Cooke

Finally it was great to see some of the new 'full Members' at our monthly meeting. All of them seemed well pleased with our Associate Membership scheme, allowing them access to the Study Groups with the promise of full membership once a place is available. This month I would like to welcome Patrick Walker, Frances Zarifis and Bridget Trotman our latest Associate

Members. I hope you soon find the groups which interest you. If you don't, start one. Dennis our Study Group Coordinator we give you all the help you need. If you can access the web visit our website for more information or ring the Study Group Leader whose contact number is on pp5/6.

WE HAVE had a very strong response to computer courses for Absolute Beginners. Two courses are planned for the Christmas term. Details will appear on the notice board in due course. Keep an eye out for them.

Associate Members will be informed by post. Details of further courses will be announced later in the year.

The Study Group Diary is published with this edition of the Newsletter. I hope I have produced an accurate record. If there are any changes SGLs, will you please let me know so that we present up to date information to our members?

The next SGL meeting is on Sept 22nd starting at 10.00am at Holly Tree House. Please let me have any items that you wish to include on the Agenda.

Please **look** at the Notice Boards. There is a list of 'who's who'. The committee are trying to make themselves as accessible as possible.

From Reg Cooke
 U3A Lapel Badges
 I have obtained samples of enamelled lapel badges from The Third Age Trust - £1.40 each. If you want one add your name to the list at the next meeting so I can order them.
 I have also got 4 unused Hewlett Packard ink cartridge refills, 2 model 23 and 2 model 45. If any member can use these I will have them at the August meeting.

COMMITTEE NOTES By ???

.....and answer came there none!
 Ed.

First Meeting of the Wine Appreciation Group

by Arthur Driscoll

TO SCREW, cap or cork? This was just one of the questions raised at the inaugural meeting of the WU3A Wine Appreciation Group held at St John's Hall, Hemel Hempstead, on the 30th June. Tony Pye, our wine expert, replied that more and more of the top winemakers were going over to the screw cap tops as it is more convenient, with no more 'corking' of the wine, easier for us to open (no looking for that elusive corkscrew) and, of course, easier for us to re-seal the bottle, IF the bottle is not completely empty!!

Tony, who kindly agreed to teach our Watford group, came over from Decorum U3A. They have a similar, very successful group, to which I was invited. At our first meeting he introduced us to 6 wines for tasting and discussion, all costing under £10, available from Waitrose, the company for whom Tony worked for a number of years.

There were three whites and three reds with just a 'taster' of each. The first was a 2005 Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand (delicious!) and the last, a red Cabernet Sauvignon from Mendoza in Argentina. This is produced from grapes grown 3000 ft. up near the Andes; again a really nice wine!

With Tony giving us a full description of each of the wines and with a very lively discussion on each of these wines, the meeting finished well over our allotted time for the Hall!

This was a very good first meeting enjoyed by everyone, with a lot of questions for Tony and a lot of good humour from the seventeen members present, and I'm sure I speak for all those that were present, when I say a very big 'thank you' to Tony for all his help and the effort he put in to make this an extremely successful inaugural meeting. Thanks are also due to Dennis Fitton who got the whole thing up and running.

At the conclusion of the meeting Gill Neale kindly came forward to be the Study Group Leader for this group, and our thanks go to her for volunteering to take on this job. At the moment there is a small 'reserve' list, but I'm sure this group will be yet another group that you put on your 'wish' list to join.



Travel Insurance From Elizabeth Tothill

SHOULD you be unlucky enough to have an accident abroad, have an operation and return home early the following tips may help your claim.

1. Request copies of your medical notes.
2. Bring any X rays back with you.
3. Request a letter stating that you were not fit to continue with your journey. The insurance company will not pay your return fare without this.

Be aware that compensation for holiday curtailment may be a separate claim, your insurance company will not necessarily make you aware of this.

I had an accident in Chile in February and fractured my humerus, the Chilean operation was unsuccessful so I have had to have further surgery in the UK. This suggests that if you can travel home for surgery, do so!

Walking Group Summer Picnic by Peter Manhire

THE WEATHER on the 9th July was not promising before driving to the pretty village of Datchworth, a few miles north of Welwyn

The sun emerged as we picnicked before visiting the ten gardens on show, which varied in size and layout. Several gardens offered interesting plants for sale. The owners were happy to talk about their gardens to us. On route, scattered around the village, were many Scarecrows. We thought that these Scarecrows were the most interesting and imaginative we had seen. The route ended up at the Datchworth Church of All Saints, founded by King Edgar in 969, and it is recorded in the Domesday Book. Returning to our cars, we walked through fields of golden barley, with the hills in the distance and a beautiful blue sky.

The proceeds from the event are to be shared by four charities, All Saints Church, Red Cross, Isobel Hospice, and Jubilee House Trust.

On Wed 12th July the group walked through the beautiful countryside around the village of The Lee, in Buckinghamshire. Towards the end of the walk we saw a poster advertising, "Cream Teas 2.00-4.00 pm. at Garden Cottage". Just what we needed! The owners of the "Garden Cottage" were somewhat surprised to find their garden party invaded by 12 thirsty walkers! However, the kettle was soon refilled, and for £2 each we were soon enjoying tea, and the most delicious home made cakes. The profits were for the Parish Hall. Letters of thanks have been sent to both venues.

TALES FROM THE HISTORY GROUP

by Eric & Betty Long

IN JULY Anne Knee gave us an account of the history of tea and tea drinking. This commodity was of greater importance in history than may be thought. Indeed it was a factor in the loss of the American Colonies (cf The Boston Tea Party). On the positive side, its taxation contributed to Government income and made fortunes for tea importers. It was during the Civil War that Dutch and Portuguese traders from New Amsterdam brought tea to England. After the Restoration, Charles II and his Portuguese wife, Catherine, were confirmed tea drinkers.

By 1695, the national consumption of tea was sufficient for taxation to be worthwhile. In 1711 the East India Company was given the monopoly for importing tea. By 1783, the tax burden was more than 50% of the retail price, and in 1784 Pitt brought in the Commutation Act to reduce this burden. Victorians of all classes loved their tea, which was safer to drink than unboiled water. The pottery industry expanded to provide a wider range of tea pots and tea ware. In the 20th century cups of tea were the traditional comfort in times of crisis; such as after Dunkirk and the German air raids. By the beginning of the 21st century, life was becoming too hectic to wait for tea to brew in the pot. Drinkers merely dunked, teabags in mugs, thereby losing much of the essence, and making teapots practically obsolete. That is

except for the discriminating, such as U3A members, who have the time and patience to; warm the pot, brew the tea and pour it into more delicate chinaware. One consideration remains; milk in first, or add after pouring?

After consuming modern samples (using teabags of course), we turned to the continuation of our journey through the history of British government, dealing with the period between the Reformation and the Commonwealth. Both events and much between were caused by the deep impact that religious beliefs had on both monarch and population. The law of the land swung precariously between favouring Protestantism or Catholicism, through the reigns of Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, to the confusion of that of James I, who after initially promising Catholic toleration, was alienated by a group of disaffected Catholics who planned to blow up both King and Parliament.

By the time of Charles I, a further religious factor had entered the equation, the differences between High Anglicanism and Puritanism. However it was not so much Charles's love of ritual, favouring enforcement of the Anglican Bishops' form of Worship to the extent that it was considered Popery, that led to war. It was his belief in the Divine Right of Kings, that caused his undoing. After years of protest at his use of the Royal Prerogative, Parliament finally turned against him when he personally tried to arrest five of its members. (To be continued)

Another great day out. by Jean Armstrong

IN VIEW of the tremendously hot weather on the 20th of July I think most of us approached this outing armed with hats, bottles of water and sun protection cream. As things turned out, it was just as well.

The gardens at Waterperry are being watered, as it is also a nursery, so the long borders and the herbaceous plants were looking really great and gave us some ideas for dealing with drought without too much watering. Certainly bedding plants didn't play a great part, except in pots around the tea room, the art and craft gallery and the little museum of old farming tools. Some of us ate our picnic lunch sitting in the cool shade on the banks of the Thames. Molly Fitzpatrick's straw hat blew off and sailed into the water, but Di Faulkner managed to rescue it with her husband's walking stick!

Our journey there had been quick and easy so we decided to leave at 3.00pm instead of the usual 4.00pm; everyone was on time for our air-conditioned coach and we were back home in Watford in time for a welcome cup of tea just a bit after four o'clock.

Spotted by the Strollers

And photographed by John Grainger

THIS stone tablet, seen in the garden wall of a house near the Common, gave everyone pause for thought on the recent stroll around Chipperfield.



News from the study groups

Please keep Study Grp. Diary pp5/6 of this Newsletter for Grp Leaders contact numbers, times and venues. (published quarterly).

Antiques

Several members brought cameos, our subject for the meeting. It was fascinating to see the detail in the tiniest things such as ear-rings. We discussed the making of these attractive pieces of jewellery, their history, and how the name 'cameo' was given to the lovely glassware by the famous manufacturers of glass and furniture, Galle, who overlaid the glass objects such as vases, using the contrasts between transparent and opaque glass and clear and coloured glass to get his effects, designing a vertical disc for engraving deep into tinted glass, thus getting the 'cameo' effect.

10th Aug An outing to Moor Park Mansion, in the morning, and not the usual Tuesday afternoon. Members who were not at the July meeting, please note, and phone for details if you wish to come. If anyone has any ideas, as to what form future meetings could take, or any ideas for study please let me know.

Art Appreciation

Although our presentations at the monthly meetings are always of a very high standard, there is nothing quite like seeing the real thing! The sheer scale and intensity of colour of many of Kandinsky's paintings on show at Tate Modern were stunning.

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

This month, we return to our normal venue.

14 Aug Joyce Hoffbrand will follow up her introduction to David Hockney with a more extensive review of his work.

15 Aug 2.30pm guided tour of Henry Moore Foundation at Perry Green near Much Hadham for those who have booked. £3 to Dorothy who will pay for the group. The local pub is The Hoops (01279 843568) if you would like a pub lunch beforehand! Please assemble at the foundation for 2.15pm.

Book Discussion Group

This is a small friendly group and new members would be very welcome.

Computers

1st Thurs & 3rd Tues 10.00am. There is a charge of £1 per person to cover the hire costs of the facilities.

Cryptic Crosswords

4 & 18 Aug plus 1 Sep (which occurs before the Sept monthly meeting). Please telephone if you are thinking of joining.

Current Affairs

Meetings at 10.00am at **Hollytree House**, Gammons Lane. At our July meeting we discussed a range of topics, starting with the situation in the Middle East, the roles of Hizbollah, Hamas, Israel and Iran, with no clear ideas if there was any way of alleviating the problems. Extradition of the three NatWest bankers to the USA under an agreement that was not reciprocated, and the responsibility of the Police in

action against terrorism also featured. Charity appeals and the amount of unwanted mail they generate are a source of great irritation, as are the many decisions taken by those in authority, who sometimes seem to be lacking in common sense! Looking ahead, we touched on nuclear power and alternative and renewable sources of energy. Climate change, global warming and its effects on low-lying parts of Britain and other countries are also matters for concern. As are the possibilities and problems of 'genetic engineering'.

15 Aug These perennial topics are likely to feature again at our next meeting.

Cycling

7 Aug 10.00am Watford Met.
16 Aug 10.00am Watford Met. Combined day ride and 2 day outing to Ware. Details: Dennis.
20 Sept 10.00am Watford Met. Bridle paths around Sarratt.

Food & Nutrition

Aug No meeting.
26 Sep visit to Crestyl Watercress Farm, Moor Lane. Sarratt. We will be sharing cars to arrive at **11.30am** to be followed by a pub lunch at the Cart and Horses pub in Common Wood. Please arrange your own cars sharing. Travel details from me if necessary.

Gardening

17 Aug Our Allotment event will be from 2pm to 4pm so that the girls have time to pick and pack any produce which we feel we can sell. We shall also have

plants that we have been keeping since the July meeting. With the very hot weather, watering has been a problem, also weeding, since the ground is so hard, however we have runner beans and French beans, lettuces, beetroot and some tomatoes coming through, if they are still around in August. The allotments superintendent has said she will do an allotment trail map so that everyone can have a look round all the plots, not just ours. Bring a picnic tea and a chair, and try to share cars if you can. We will provide drinks but remember there are no toilet facilities! Except the porta-potty of course. Some location maps will be available at the August Fair, where the Gardening group share a stand with Needlework. We shall also have a list so that names can be taken and we can get an idea of numbers.

21 Sep Outing to Coton Manor Garden, near Guildsborough, Northants. £13.25; a 10-acre garden including a bog garden, herb parterre and a wildflower garden. More details at the August meeting.

19 Oct Our annual 'Autumn Colour outing' this time to Marks Hall, near Coggeshall in Essex. A reasonably new lakeside garden and arboretum according to their information "This 21st century garden compliments the replanted traditional long borders of the garden. Mediterranean species thrive in the microclimate created by the warm brick walls

for more information about our u3a and the activities visit our website www.watfordu3a.org.ok

of the 17th century walled garden". £11.25. Details at the meeting. We welcome your suggestions for outings, discussions and speakers.

German

3 Aug Next meeting.

Greetings Cards

8 Sep with 18 Aug (extra) for a local outing to Iver.

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

History

14 Aug we shall continue our study of the history of English government, looking at the period through the Civil War and the Restoration and beyond, and also at the history of the industrial city of Birmingham.

Italian

10.00am alternate Thurs

Jazz Appreciation

In June we had the 2nd part of the Ellington Profile. An assembly of keen enthusiasts were there at Col. Bob's. The Duke was a very prolific composer and arranger so the Profile being in 2 parts could easily have been in 3 or more! We think the listeners were happy with what they heard and the amount of Research I did to compile it all gave me a fantastic insight into the Man and his Music. Last month We gathered in a cool Sitting Room at Bob's to hear a selection of one of our members, Don Shortman's personal favourites. Very nice, too. Hearing a cross section of Jazz from over the years and with an interesting personal synopsis of why and when he chose them was excellent. Well done, Don. The cool fruit juice went down well too !!

16 Aug I will be covering the Compositions of Billy Strayhorn as played by different Groups and Bands over the years. The research is almost as interesting as the Music itself.

MoneyMatters

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

Music Appreciation

This year's subject: *Composers*

Needlecraft

The Needlecraft Group met on the 24th July and will now 'break-up' until September. We have had a busy year and have completed one quilt for the Hospice, had a workshop to

learn to make peg-bags - not ordinary peg-bags I hasten to add, but with appliquéd clothes lines, complete with clothes embroidered across them! We have learned to cover note books and been on an outing to Rotherford Greys to the home of Lucy Boston, the children's author; a magnificent patchworker. She worked during the war years when material was hard to come by and made some amazing quilts using all sorts of material.

4 Sep We return and will plan our programme until Christmas. With our coffee morning with the residents of Coombewood and everyone busy with thoughts of Bazaars and Christmas, which always come with a great rush and there is always still so much to do! We do hope you enjoy our display at the Study Group Fair.

Opera

14 Aug Venue: 6 Bellmount Wood Avenue. Many thanks to Ray Gwynne for a wonderful afternoon watching 'La Traviata' from Covent Garden last month. This month we will be listening to what is considered to be the definitive recording of 'Tosca' with Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi made in 1964, and also we will see the second act of the same production on video. Also tickets have been reserved for 18th November 2006 at Milton Keynes for the Glyndebourne Touring Company's production of 'Cosi Fan Tutte' Anyone interested please contact Christine. New members welcome.

Pantomime

14 Aug 2.00pm 4.00pm Rehearsals at Yeatman House Foxhill N. Watford.

Pathfinders Group

All Walks meet at 9.25am at the Essex Arms.

22 Aug Pitstone.

I regret this group is full.

Performing Arts

14 Aug 7. 30pm a Theatre visit programme meeting.

11 Sep 7.30pm at the group leaders address- We will be watching a DVD on work at the Globe Theatre. This is not the one previously shown.

Personal Development

Aug Afternoon tea parties to be arranged in members' homes.

Science Interest

Our visit to Tringford Canal

Pumping Station had to be postponed due to the growth of algae in the reservoirs, which meant that the Pumping Station became a treatment plant against the algae and was not open to visitors. It is hoped an autumn visit will be possible.

NB Permanent new venue:

Watford Central Library

21 Aug - Energy from the wind, Leon Freris.

18 Sep Visit to Brickworks at Stewartby, Bedford, £15 /coach.

16 Oct Einstein & Relativity Theory, Graham Marrett.

20 Nov Body Scanners Ian Jones.

Shakespeare

Last Wed 2.00pm

Newcomers are welcome.

Sporting Forum

15 Aug 2.00pm our guest will Jane Parr, Sports Photographer from the Watford Observer.

Visitors and new members will be most welcome.

Strollers

8 Aug at 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.

4 Aug 9.45am Chalfont Sports Ground, CP Elizabeth Ave. Chess Valley Walk/ Picnic, with Jean & John. Meet Train to Chesham and walk back to Chalfont with picnic on the way.

Tuesday Trekkers

8 Aug 9.45am Community Centre C P, the Nap, King's Langley. Jean Grainger.

12 Sept 9.45am Coach and Horses, Croxley Green Dennis.

U3A Singers

7 Aug Members are urged to attend this last meeting before our summer break, as we need to discuss our programme for the next few months.

21 Aug and 4 Sept No meetings.

18 Sept Resume meetings as scheduled.

Walking

All walks start at JS A4.

Eight miles

9 Aug 9.30 Hertford

13 Sept 9.30 Lea Valley

11 Oct Hampton Court

Six miles

23 Aug 10.00 Coy Carp

27 Sept 10.00 Kings Langley

25 Oct 10.00 Latimer

Writers Workshop

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to reply to these ads see contact editor details on the home page

Advertisements may be edited or omitted depending on space available.

TALKS PROGRAMME

1 Aug Study Group Fair.

5 Sept Colin Richards

Aerial Spills & Thrills at Northolt Airport.

3 Oct Ian Brazier

Northwood HQ

Nov Bob Johnson (A U3A members) Rye Meads RSPB & How to help birds 'overwinter'.

3 Dec The Pantomime Group 'Cinderella'

Speaker Secretary

David Helliwell

See June Synopsis or website for contact details.

Material for the
September Newsletter

MUST be received by:

20 August

For Written contributions see Study Group Diary p6:

E-mail copy to:

editor@watfordu3a.org.uk

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