

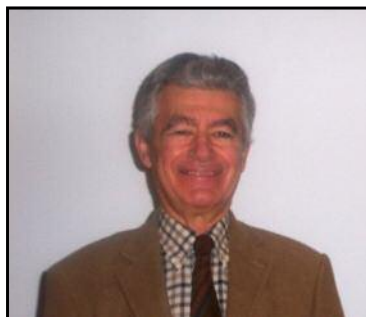
NEWSLETTER

Back in Wonderful Blighty

By Margaret Thompson Editor

IT'S SO lovely to be back home. My house looks so cosy and welcoming; everything (well nearly everything) is where I can find it. One of the great things about going away is the coming back and seeing one's life with fresh eyes. I guess I am one of the lucky ones as I am reminded how fortunate I am; except that the grass needs cutting. Ridiculous! What happened to the well earned rest from the lawn mower in the winter. Winter? What winter?

I have come home to Hellebores and Crocus and Camellias and a temperature at least 15 degrees above that of New York at 11C not 24F. I think that is about right. Strange isn't it that the US would have us believe that they lead the world in everything but they have completely reneged on the plan to go decimal. In the 1970s, when I lived in America, the temperature was measured in Celsius but it has turned out to be too hard for them so they have given up and slipped back to Fahrenheit. The US has yet to sign the Kyoto Agreement; some Americans have never heard of it and certainly some don't know where the light switch is to switch it off. So, although it was wonderful to see my son and his wife and my two eldest grandsons, not to mention the fabulous Manhattan skyline and the ruby sunset over the Hudson River from their apartment windows, I am very glad I live here in England where we are much more aware of our environment and are beginning to forge plans to protect it and our precious energy resources.



Talking of energy, those who were able to attend our last monthly meeting heard Professor Leon Freris, a member of our Science Group, give a very interesting and informative talk about the advantage of wind powered energy as a future alternative to non renewable fuels. At the present rate of

usage, these will be exhausted by the time our great grandchildren are grown up.

This is the 10th year of WU3A and I, for one, am looking forward to some magical celebratory events later in the year, that the committee, I'm sure will be planning. I so enjoyed my time on the committee, as your chairman and for the previous two years as a committee member and then vice chairman. Five years in all, so it can't be too onerous! One committee meeting a month, a few phone calls and lots of interesting things to plan and discuss for the betterment of our U3A and lots of pleasure and satisfaction with the results; so come on you lot - **Give it a go!** Especially if you ate my jam pies in Jan 2006. You know who you are!!

In the last Newsletter, on the front page, was an article telling all Members that there was a Meeting on 12th February at 2 pm at Hollytree House where the Committee Members would explain and discuss the various roles which need to be filled for the new U3A year following the A.G.M. All full Members and Associate Members were invited for this informal get-together but **ONLY 1 MEMBER** had the time or thoughtfulness to come. We all waited there for the whole afternoon but to no avail. If we do not get these posts on the Committee filled then we have no Committee which, in turn, means we have no U3A. I will talk more about the situation, from the stage, at our next monthly meeting.

Study Group Topics By Dennis Fitton Study Group Coordinator

FROM TIME to time I have suggested new groups that members might wish to join. People have signed up to signify their interest. They may then not have heard anything more. This is not because I have lost interest or given up. U3A is a self help group. If we do not have a Study Group Leader we do not have a group. I have spoken with SGLs who may have received calls from people who have not left their contact numbers and therefore will not receive a response. If this has happened to you, or you have been on a waiting list for some time, please don't assume indifference on the part of the SGL. Maybe a polite reminder call will do the trick.

I think that all members would do well to reflect on the amount of work that many SGLs do and the amount of equipment that they have to store and carry about. See if you can offer help to your SGL by running a session or storing some of the gear.

If the group you wish to join is full, why not start a similar group yourself? I and others would be happy to help you.

I believe that some U3As
Cont; page 2

Study Group Leaders Meeting

The next meeting for SGLs will be at Hollytree House

Friday 23 Mar 2.30 pm.

If you have anything you wish to put on the Agenda, please contact Dennis Fitton.

COMMITTEE NOTES

By Yvonne Fitton

The following items were discussed:

1. Clarification of who needs membership lists, keeping in mind the Data Protection Act.
2. An event being organised at Watford Coliseum in May and involvement or not of WU3A.
3. 25th anniversary of U3A and 10th anniversary of WU3A.
4. AGM and details of all paperwork needing to be arranged and sent out via 2 mailings.
5. Lack of volunteers, so far, for new committee in May.
6. New Study Groups being formed. Total now 49.

Obituary

Kath Edwards

We are sad to announce the death of Kath Edwards who died in January.

The members of the Writing group would like to pay tribute to Kath who along with her husband Aelwyn was one of the founder members of the group. She attended on a very regular basis for the last nine years. Through her writing she allowed us to share glimpses of her life from childhood to the present day. She tackled every aspect we dealt with and her humour, wit, compassion and sense of justice were always present both in her writing and in her relationships within the group. Her latest work was her contribution to the Performing Arts Presentation for the March Meeting. We will miss her.

Get out into the Green Gym.

By John Grainger

THERE have been very many surveys and trials over the years and they all come to one conclusion. A conclusion that the people at the beginning of the century knew was a fact.

Getting out in the fresh air is good for you. Connecting with nature. There is something about listening to the birds sing. I have an allotment and talking to other allotment holders they tell me that it gives them time to unwind from the pressure of work, time to relax. Even if they are digging, they do it at their pace, and can rest when they want to. They prepare the ground, sow seed, see the plants grow, pull out weeds, and finally eat the crop, that they have tended. There is nothing quite like a freshly pulled carrot, or peas, tomatoes straight off the plant.

If you don't have a garden or allotment to spend time in then try to get out in a local park or open space. Go for a walk and smell the grass, listen to the birds singing; feel the sun and wind on your face, admire the view. It costs nothing, only the effort to get out of that armchair in front of the telly and put on your walking shoes. And try to do it regularly. Have you wondered why people with dogs seem to be more content and healthy? They get out into that green gym at least once a day.

Study Group Topics Cont from page 1:

—have paid tutors. The law is that if we have such an arrangement, it is our duty to check on their status with respect to income tax and national insurance contributions.

If we do not do this and they are found to be not making the proper payments we are treated as their employer and are liable for any payments due. I am not prepared to do this, which brings us back to self help.

I have said before in this column that it is possible to run a language group by purchasing books and tapes and working together from these. The cost of these learning aids will be met from our funds. It's not easy but with enough enthusiasm it is possible. In my experience even a few words and phrases in a foreign language do help the holiday along a great deal. I speak as one with a great interest in foreign languages but a complete lack of talent. I relearned French as an aid to cycling in that delightful country. Even my poor standard of French means that I can get by and am treated with courtesy not shown to those who don't bother. So have a go. Where there is a will there is a way!

To back up the words of our chairman, no committee, no Watford U3A and nothing in this newsletter will matter.

WHO SAID HISTORY WAS BORING?

The Final Instalment sent by Peter Andrews

LEAD CUPS were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock them out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up - hence the custom of holding 'a wake.'

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a "bone-house" and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they thought they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night, 'the graveyard shift', to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be 'saved by the bell' or was considered a 'dead ringer'. And that's the truth!

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NO PANTO but does OLD TIME MUSIC HALL grab you?

IT HAS been decided not to put on another pantomime this year, but Pat Lucas has suggested we do an Old Time Music Hall which she is willing to direct. Pat has the material, consisting of songs and sketches, with the emphasis on comedy. A lot of audience sing-alongs and general participation also comes into it. If you are interested in joining the core of the pantomime group in learning some lines and having a hoot at rehearsals, then please let Dick Chapman know. Dick will contact all those interested to meet, see what goodies Pat has in store for us and decide how we go from there.

Science Interest

Commercialisation of Scientific Research

By Brian Mee



Mike & Colin setting up the U3A digital equipment for the talk . photo MCT

MIKE BARNES explained to us about the Commercialisation of Scientific Research. He worked as a research scientist for many years and said that about \$2bn is spent every year by government, public companies and charities. They all want a return on this massive outlay and Mike explained the processes by which technological devices might give a payback within a reasonable time.

About 1 in 20 original ideas are developed and of those maybe only a quarter will actually reach an end product and make big money returns. An idea has to be made practical and patented if it is original. The patenting process requires the patent officer to verify that the idea is original. For some devices many patents are taken out on one project to protect the company from others developing it for their own purposes. The timescale from 'idea' to selling a device on the open market can be as long as 10 years and cost \$500M for a new drug. Mike steered us through a most complex process in a very clear and informative presentation. He stimulated a lot of questions and discussion among the group.

A Stunning Winter Walk by Jeam Armstrong

IT WAS with great trepidation that on February 15th we contemplated our first outing of 2007, to the National Trust property near Cambridge, Anglesey Abbey, for their stunning winter walk.

The Group did this outing in 2003 and we were so impressed that we decided to go again this year so that members who hadn't been could enjoy the snowdrops and the colours and see how the garden was growing after 4 years. As my husband said, "God must be a gardener"; the sun came out and it was mild and beautiful.

The garden was even more stunning than last time. Of course since it was a lovely day and half term at that, the crowds rolled in and the receptionist said that it was the busiest day they had had since 'the snow-drop walks' began.



Anglesey Abbey; Silver Birch under planted with Bergenia . photo Hazel Jones

Explorers Gorhambury Walk. by John Grainer

FOURTEEN members turned out for the walk on the 2nd February. Our walk leaders were Diane & Allan. They always have interesting walks, and this one was no exception.

When we arrived at the Museum car park there was a large group of walkers from the Luton U3A setting out for a walk. All were very well equipped for serious walking.

The day was dry and fine with some sunshine. Our route was around the Gorhambury estate on made up roads, from the Roman Theatre skirting the magnificent Palladium Mansion, passing the ruins of the old Gorhambury House, and ending up near the junction of the M10, A414 and the M1.

After crossing the A414 into Appspod Lane we passed a large commercial composting site, with great mounds of compost stacked higher than a house, steaming away, but with all that compost there wasn't a bad smell. This lane took us to the Holly Bush P.H. On the way we saw some of the damage the recent strong winds had caused when a large tree had come down across the lane.

We then followed Ragged Hall Lane for some distance, before cutting alongside a wood and then over the M10 and into a housing estate, over the King Harry Lane and back to the cars across the Verulamium park.

A walk in early spring wouldn't be complete without seeing snowdrops, catkins, daffodils, crocuses, and newly born lambs and their mothers.

STUDY GROUP NEWS

Please keep 'The Study Group Diary' for Group Leaders contact numbers, times and Group venues.

Art Appreciation

10.00 for 10.30am at Hollytree House. This month we enjoyed a talk from Phil McMahon on contemporary painters.

12 Mar We shall have a talk by Aline Burgess, on Etruscan art and artefacts including the tomb paintings.

Classics

A new topic looking at daily life in ancient Rome. Newcomers very welcome.

Computers

Meetings at WESTFIELD COLLEGE. All meetings have been cancelled until further notice as the centre wishes to raise the fee from £11.00 to £107.20 per two hour session! Appropriate representations have been made and a search for an alternative venue is being sought as a precaution.

X Stitch Embroidery

Gwen Brackfield has offered to

run a group on the above topic. Numbers are very limited as she is only able to take about 6 people in her home. If you are interested please contact her.

Cryptic Crosswords

Recently Aline, Beverley, Dorelle, Janet, Jan & Jean have kindly combined to run one of our meetings each month.

2 Mar & 16 Mar next mtgs.

Current Affairs

10.00am at Hollytree House.

We'd a very good attendance at our February meeting, perhaps because we'd arranged for our annual lunch to take place immediately afterwards. The discussion was as lively as ever, starting with questioning the government's morality in forcing its anti-discrimination laws on Christians who cannot accept that an adoption society should be forced to allow same-sex

couples to adopt children. In the present age, it seems to many of us that the ethos of the family has largely disappeared, accounting for the recent UNICEF finding that the UK's treatment of its children is right at the bottom of a table of Western nations. Fewer families gather together for meals or simply to talk with one another. A factor in this is the advent of central heating, members of the family can hide away in their own separate compartments instead of huddling together round the fire! We talked about road-pricing and congestion charging, about the recent television programme "The Verdict", about organic foods and environmental change. We'll no doubt return to some of these topics at future meetings.

17 Apr Next meeting.

Cycling

Our meeting days will remain as the **3rd Wednesday** and from time to time the **1st Monday**.

21 Mar 10.00am Watford Met.

The Swillett and Chorleywood.

18 Apr 10.00am Watford Met.

The Aquadrome and Denham with Alan Betts.

16 May 10.00am Watford Met.

Aldenham and Elstree Aerodrome with Alan B.

Exploring London

7 Mar Old Operating Museum, St. Thomas and Bramah Museum. Please note earlier leaving time on your tickets.

3 Apr Trip round film site locations in Buckinghamshire - tickets all sold, waiting list.

2 May Geffrye Museum. Tickets on sale at the monthly mtg.

Food & Nutrition

27 Mar 12.00noon Holywell

Community Centre in Tolpits Lane, West Watford.

African Caribbean Association luncheon. The venue is about half a mile further on from Westfield School on the left hand side as the road curves sharply to the right. It is well signposted and there is a large CP. If you have not put your name down and would like to go please add your name at the General Meeting.

Gardening

15 Mar 10.00am Hollytree House, Mr Neal Holmes-Smith pays us a return visit, to talk about climbers and wall plants. Unfortunately with Capel

Manor being an educational establishment they couldn't arrange a morning visit.

19 Apr a guided tour of Capel Manor and possibly lunch. More details at the meeting.

17 May Another return trip; to Leonardslee Gardens near Horsham in West Sussex. We visited these gardens as one of our first outings, in May 2001.

When we left Bushey the rain was sheeting down, almost horizontal, yet we got to these magnificent gardens where the rhododendrons and azaleas were blooming to perfection, with reflections in the hammer ponds, the legacy of ancient iron mines. As ever, we welcome your ideas and suggestions for speakers and outings.

Greetings Cards

Hollytree House

There is the usual charge of 50p each to Hollytree plus £1 each to cover all materials.

8 Mar, 12 Apr.

History

12 Mar Two Themes: continuing 'The History of British Government' and 'The History of Westminster Abbey'.

Italian

10.00am alternate Thurs

Coinciding with the change of venue and group leader we have started a new course aimed at building our language skills from the foundation provided by the previous text book. This is very much a self help group, using audio/visual material as well as written exercises and original Italian texts. We are guided by a fluent Italian Speaker.

Jazz

Please come along and listen.

London Theatre Group

22 May We are going to Porgy and Bess on the **4th Tuesday** in May at the Savoy Theatre cost £26. This will be a matinee and lunch can also be booked for £10.75 if we have enough people who want it. Tickets on sale at the February/March monthly meetings; Associate Members can buy tickets by phoning Joy.

Needlecraft

2nd and 4th Mon each month at Combewood House, Garston. We are a full group at the moment. The space we have is just adequate for our needs not allowing us to take on any new

**The Peace Hospice
Gardens need YOU
2 to 3 hours to spare?
contact
Maggie on 335348**

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

members. This may be a good reason to start a new Group.

Pathfinders Group

Walks start at the Essex Arms at **9.25am** except London walks.

22 May 9.20am begins at The Watford Metropolitan Underground Station in

Cassiobury Park Avenue.

27 Mar Virginia Water.

24 April Sarratt

22 May 9.20am London Walk.

Meet at Watford Met Station

26 June Coleshill

I regret this group is full.

Performing Arts

4 Mar 7.30pm Dress Rehearsal

5 Mar performance of 'Voyage

of a Lifetime' at the Monthly

Meeting.

5 Apr (Thurs) 7.45pm. The second play (for those who have

ordered tickets) will be "Sherlock Holmes; The Last Act" at the Maltings Theatre St.

Albans.
16Apr 7.30pm A follow up discussion, again, at Johanna's house. On the two discussion nights we will also have some additional activity ready in case we run out of things to say.

Personal Development

19 Mar 2.15pm Communicat- ing more effectively with other people'

Poetry Read & Study

New members welcome. Non- group members welcome if the subject interests them.

Mar: Marriage, separation, divorce, widowhood.

Return to Cycling

Short rides in the Watford area based on Watford Council map.

1 Mar 2.00pm Pump House Car Park, Local Board Road.

5 Apr 2.00pm Watford High Street station.

Science Interest

NB: Hopefully meeting at Watford Central Library.

19 Mar Internet Security – Colin Richards.

16 Apr Introduction to Dorset: Rosemary & Richard Agg.

21 May Nitrogen to arsenic: Brian Mee.

New members very welcome.

Shakespeare

Last Wed 2.00pm

Twelve of us, the largest number so far, enjoyed an excellent showing of the video: 'Much Ado About Nothing'. It was displayed in full glory on a four foot screen, thanks to Colin Richards and the U3A projector.

28 Mar We continue reading the play we have seen. Although the Group is now up to strength, often some members are away on holiday, or even work; so do contact me if you are interested in Shakespeare.

Snooker

1st and 3rd Mon 11am-1.00pm

For further details, see under 'proposed groups' in January Study Group Synopsis.

Sporting Forum

We have been pleased to welcome new members who have joined us over the past couple of months. Our programme provides a variety of speakers, topics and activities. The racing Correspondent of the London Evening Standard in January, was followed by Clark Carlisle, from Watford Football Club, in February.

20 Mar Visit to Lords Cricket ground.

17 Apr Ten Pin Bowling.

Strollers

Meeting time 11.00am
Distances approximate.
pubs available.

13 Mar John & Judy; Pimlico (2.5mls) Park & Lunch at The Swan.

27 Mar Kate & Dorelle; Lakes at St Albans. (2mls) Museum CP -various lunch venues.

10 Apr Peggy & Robin Hemel Hempstead (2.5mls) lunch TBA.

24 Apr Gerry & Angela; Bricket Wood (2.5-3mls) CP & lunch: The Gate Station Road.

Thirsty Walkers

22 Mar CP at Startops End near Marsworth. Walk at Wilstone with Paul Telford 4 5mls.

Tuesday Trekkers

13 Mar 9.45am Aldbury village CP. Jean and John D.

10 Apr 9.45am Chorleywood cemetery CP Rickmansworth road opp Cricket Pavilion. Jean and Peter G.
New members very welcome.

Walking

Most walks start at JS A41.

Eight miles

14 Mar 9.00am London.
Meet Watford Met Station.

11 Apr 9.30am Windsor.

Six miles

28 Mar 10.00am K.Langley.
25Apr 10.00am Aldenham Meet Aldenham Church CP.

Wine Appreciation

Last Friday in the month.
During the last meeting one of the wines tasted was recom-

mended to go with "Elk" meat, according to the label!!

Feb & Mar our normal tasting of seven different wines on each occasion.

Apr meeting will be a special one to include lunch to further compliment the wines tasted. This session will be extended and start at 12 00hrs. New members welcome to go on the reserve list.

WitKnits

10.00am 1st Mon each month.

Writers Workshop

Come along and develop your skills. New members welcome.

ARE YOU A GOOD LISTENER?

Do you have some knowledge of the **NHS?**

The Patients Association

are looking for volunteers to work on their telephone helpline which deals with calls about :-**patient care, complaints, and information.**

The Association is voluntary funded and independent of the health service. The office is based in Harrow, close to Northwick Park Tube Station. Training is given and expenses paid. Information from

Katherine Murphy,

020 8423 9111

**www.patients-
association.org.uk**

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTHS CROSWORD.

ACROSS 1 Modernists, 8 Cuff, 9 Vertical, 10 Bionic, 11 Number, 12 Egg, 13 Study, 15 Drips, 17 Set, 19 Import, 21 Action, 23 Insolvent, 24 Wren, 25 Tambourine
DOWN 2 Oculist, 3 Elfin, 4 Novice, 5 Spring, 6 Slimmer, 7 Plate, 14 Dropout, 16 Protein, 17 Stream, 18 Tattoo, 20 Manse 22 Tower.

Attention Scrabblers.

As the group that Jean runs has been full for some time Carol and Alan Rose are willing to start a new group at their home. They can take 12 members. It will run on the **2nd Thursday** of the month from **10.00am**. If you are interested please contact them.

Peace Hospice Garden Party

Hunton Park

Sun. May 6th 1.00pm-5.00pm

Thank you to all of you who added your name to the volunteer list or to the list for home made cakes. If you have not yet done so but would like to help out we will take down your details at the General Meeting. We will also be distributing flyers to advertise this event.

Valerie Webster

NEXT RAFFLE

**in Aid of
The Peace Hospice
3rd APRIL 2007**

**All donations to
JUNE & JOHN BAUGHEN**

Either at any meeting (we are usually at the back of the hall) or to our home address:

26 Leaford Crescent

Watford

CAN COLLECT THANK YOU

TALKS PROGRAMME

6 Mar Performing Arts Group 'Voyage of a Lifetime' Written by the Writing Group.

3 Apr Robert Lancaster: 'Pull Yourself Together Girls'.

1 May: A G M

5 Jun Mary Bolster 'Burma'.

3 Jul Russell Cleaver 'The Ridgeway'.

7 Aug Study Group Fair.

Speaker Secretary

David Helliwell

Material for the

April Newsletter

MUST be received by:

20 March

For Written contributions see Study Group Diary or the website contact details.

E-mail copy to:

editor@watfordu3a.org.uk

Members may obtain this Newsletter by: 1. e-mail 2. Collecting it at the monthly meeting. 3. Asking your SGL or a friend to collect it for you. 4. Sending a sae to the editor.