

NEWSLETTER

SPRING IS SPRUNG THE GRASS IS RIS!

Margaret Thompson Editor

..and needs cutting!! But before that we can look forward this month to the Performing Arts Presentation of a Spring Miscellany, which promises to be good, and to basking in the glory of the Writers Workshop success.

Many, many congratulations to Janice Day and our Writers Workshop Group, whose play for radio, 'Bunkered' about an old folks home Randsome Park, is being published by the U3A. Those of us who acted in it thought it brilliant and now our judgement has been endorsed. [see p2]

Thank you to all 'email recipients' of the newsletter who experienced the machinations of Yahoo and Virgin Media and did not immediately blame your hard working and well intentioned editor. The two named servers, severally or collectively, managed to transpose my efforts into 'mime code', sending out gobbledegook in the main body of the email. We are not alone it would seem from the emails on their websites. Let's hope it doesn't happen again as it took some considerable time and effort to sort out.

Disappointingly, we didn't even get a mention in the 'U3A Newsletter Competition' but I know there are some great publications out there, all with different formats. I enjoy doing ours the way it is but I am always open to new ideas so I await with interest to see what won.....!

Is your membership card **cream??** If **not** have you renewed your membership!!?- which expires on **March 31st?** Membership forms were distributed or posted early, if not collected at the monthly meeting and all new membership cards have now been sent out. If you wish to continue your membership of Watford U3A please send your completed renewal form, 'poste haste', to Tom O'Callaghan.

COMMITTEE NOTES

From The Chairman
John Carleton

Once again, preparations for the AGM occupied much of our time. The Secretary reported that nominations had been received to fill all three positions on the Committee due to become vacant in May.

Looking ahead, in 2010, seven of the existing members of the Committee will be due to stand down, strategies were discussed to avoid such a large exodus taking place in one year.

The Treasurer reminded us that we have little or no control over 80% of our costs, a sobering thought in these inflationary times, but at least his report was clear, concise and reflected his justifiable confidence in his forward planning (unlike, other reports of the world at large in recent days!).

The Vice Chairman gave an account of his attendance at the Regional Conference of the U3A, once again matters discussed had little relevance to our own U3A at Watford.

Please would you ensure that you have given your email address to the SGLeaders of the groups you attend. This is a quick and easy way for you to be contacted should there be a change of plan, reducing the phone calls needed and you will be able to receive the Newsletter, early, in colour, on line.

Well my potato patch beckons and it is Good Friday so spuds need to be put in, or do they? It is rather early and very chilly out there! Perhaps a good book? I hope Easter Bunny came?

AGM SECRETARY'S NOTES

THE EXTRA information you are receiving, attached to this Newsletter, is important for you as a member. The AGM Minutes from last year, Tuesday 1st May 2007, and the current Chairman's Report, printed as an addendum in this newsletter, **should be brought with you to the AGM on 6th May 2008.**

There will NOT be lots of spare copies available as the whole point of the process this year is to try to reduce the amount of paper we use. Thank you for willingly accepting this new idea. I have had no adverse comments at all.

We now have the three nominations we need for new committee membership; **Margaret Foster, John Friend and Tom O'Callaghan** so the situation at present is that we will not need a ballot. Obviously if anyone still wishes to nominate this is perfectly acceptable and should be with me by 8th April 2008' as should any items for AOB.

I would like, on behalf of the Committee, to thank Dorelle Boardman for being on our Committee for the past 3 years, for her unfailing good company and willingness to do whatever is requested. Tom O'Callaghan has not only been good company and a superb Membership Secretary but he is willing to continue for another term. Many, many thanks Tom.

Study Group Topics

By Dennis Fitton

Study Group Coordinator

Studygroups@watfordu3a.org.uk

The SGL meeting was held on March 14. There was the usual support from our SGLs and useful discussions were held. The minutes will appear on our web site. I will have some hard copies available for those who do not wish to use the web site.

I spend some time organising the notice boards. It is very irritating to find a blizzard of non U3A notices covering up what I have put on the board. This must mean that on occasion people are unable to find lists that they need to sign up for a course or function. I know that it is often difficult to see what is on the boards. In order to improve your access to information I will implement the following changes. In future there will be 2 boards on the right as we enter the room. These are for U3A notices ONLY. There will be 1 board on the left on which you may put anything you wish to display to our membership.

If you are on my 'successful' list for London Architecture and find that you are unable to attend, please let me know as I have a waiting list.



Charlotte Peters gave us a very interesting insight into the working of the 'Dogs' Trust' at our last monthly meeting in March. I wonder if anyone was moved to adopt an abandoned 'mut'. Do let us know. Ed.

WE ARE BEING PUBLISHED!!

A FEW months ago we saw an article in the U3A News Magazine



Janice Day SGL with Aelwyn Edwards, John Grainger, Haydn Illingworth, Jill Bonell and Maureen Carrington. Photo Dick Chapman

asking for plays from any U3A writing groups. Those of you who have been members for a few years will remember Ransome Park. We wrote the first play at the request of the Performing Arts Group. Brian Redding had said to me, "Can your group write us a play?" I answered, "Yes," with more conviction than I felt. However 'Bunkered', the first instalment of an imaginary ongoing Radio series called Ransome Park, proved to be quite a success. It was well received by our own U3A and others in the district. On request it was followed up by another instalment called 'The Nelson Mystery' We submitted 'Bunkered' and seven out of fifty seven plays were chosen. **Ours was one of them.**

This is not our first success in a nationwide U3A competition. Several years ago a book called 'Travellers Tales' was published and three of our entries were chosen to be included. The plays are to be published in a book which should be available very shortly. Keep an eye open for details in the next U3A News Magazine. If you would like to find out what else we write about in our fortnightly Tuesday group. Contact me and come along to meet and chat to us.

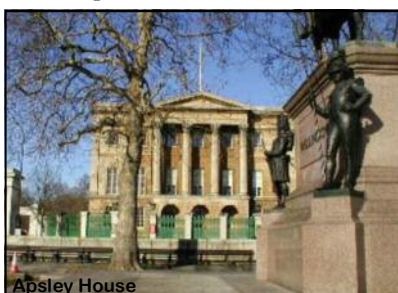
Exploring London

Apsley House. Pat Harding

OUR March outing took us to the Wallace Collection and Apsley House. After an unfortunate start when the coach was late due to the door mechanism failing, we eventually set off about 45 minutes late. Apologies to the two ladies who gave up waiting just too soon. We were dropped off in Manchester Square and either had coffee or started to walk round. Some of us joined a tour guide who was excellent and pointed out works of art and other treasures. The collection was bequeathed to the nation by Sir Richard and Lady Wallace and contains famous Old Masters by, amongst others Titian, Canaletto and Rembrandt; French 18th century furniture and paintings and a collection of Sevres porcelain. Four rooms had recently been refurbished and



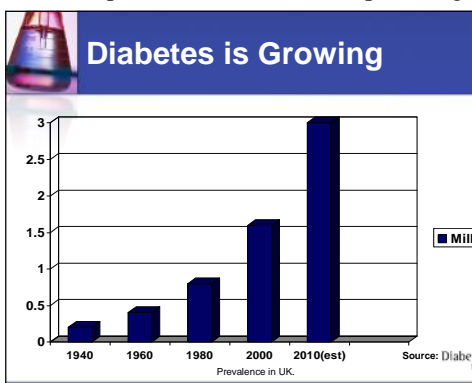
The Laughing Cavalier Frans Hals by kind permission of the trustees of the Wallace collection.



looked stunning. After Lunch we were transported to Apsley House, the former residence of the first Duke of Wellington and known as Number 1 London. We split into two groups and were shown round the extensive art and silver collection, and other memorabilia. It was a bit disconcerting to come across the 11ft. tall statue of Napoleon by Canova, standing at the foot of the stairs! It was interesting to see the tables set for a banquet using the silver service and the Egyptian china given to the Empress Josephine by Napoleon as a divorce present which she wouldn't accept. Again the guides were very informative and gave us an insight into the lives and time of Wellington, Napoleon and Josephine.

Science Interest by Brian Mee

COLIN RICHARDS gave us a very detailed account of Diabetes Mellitus with statistics showing all aspects of the disease. Colin explained that Type 1 diabetes may affect anyone, whereas Type 2 usually affects older people but can sometimes be found in young people too. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas stops producing insulin or does not produce sufficient to keep blood glucose levels down.



Diabetes Mellitus

Type 2 diabetes is where insulin resistance may have been caused by overweight and aging. Some people are able to control their condition with diet, while others need medication or injections of insulin to control glucose and insulin levels in the blood. Normally blood sugar levels are monitored by the body and insulin is released from the pancreas as required, to help process glucose in the blood. Sometimes however the body fails to do this and high levels of sugar and high levels of insulin can both be present in the blood of

diabetics, this can cause quite serious problems. Small testing kits are available for home testing.

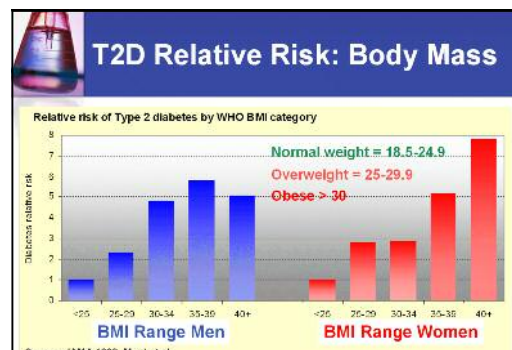
Colin tested his glucose levels after eating a massive dose of glucose. After two hours the level of insulin and glucose in the blood had returned to pre-test levels. Body Mass Index can give an indication of what food intake is best, in order to reduce obesity, which is a major factor in Type 2 diabetes. Genetic influences can increase the risk of diabetes and also ethnicity, with Asian and African races being more susceptible. Strokes, eye damage and blood vessel diseases can be more common among diabetes patients so careful monitoring and precautions are essential.

Diet

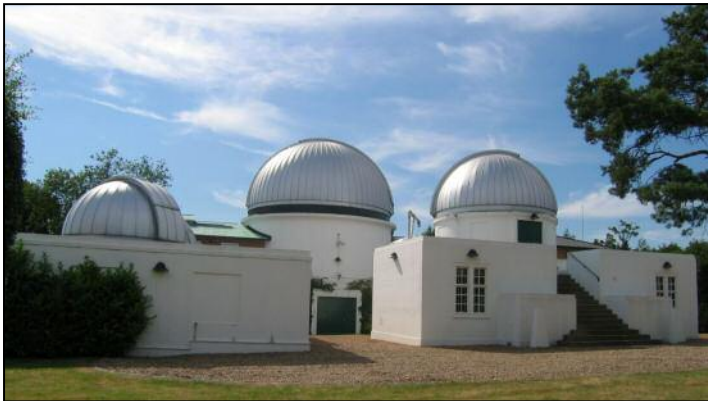
Eat regularly:
"eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a rich man and dinner like a pauper."

Types of food:

- Low fat
- Low sugar
- Low alcohol
- High in slowly-absorbed carbs
- High fibre
- Low sodium



The UCL Observatory at Mill Hill by Alan Wray.



UCL Observatory Mill Hill

We left home with a thick cloud, but this slowly cleared to give us a final look through the Fry 2 at Saturn, with its rings and moon. If anyone has not been and is interested, then I recommend you grab the occasional chance, usually on Friday evenings during college term time.

A Science group trip?? Ed.



DI AND I are members of the Hert's branch of the British Computer Society, which meets once a month at Steria in Hemel Hempstead. We had a brilliant evening lecture tour with them to the University College London Observatory at Mill Hill. The visit was managed by Theo, the assistant administrator, an engineer very knowledgeable in fighter jet engines, radar, electronics and now astronomical telescopes. He was also assisted by three bright, lively, young post and PhD graduates in Astro-Physics and Astronomy. There were 38 on the visit, but we were split into three groups. We were given a talk and demonstration of each telescope, five in all. The largest in power are the dual 18/24in Radcliff refractor and the 24in Allen reflector.

However, the most fascinating was the 8in Fry 2, a beautiful optical telescope built by Thomas Cook & Sons of York in 1860, top in their field, from Yorkshire of course and who knows, possibly related the Captain Cook from Whitby.

Left Saturn through the Fry 2 telescope. (R)



Round the Block in Nascot

From Kathleen McMahon

SPRING is just around the corner and all U3A members are invited to a **Patchwork and Quilting Exhibition** at Friends Meeting House on **Saturday April 26th**. 10 am-4pm. A group of 8 local people, "Round the Block Quilters" are holding the exhibition and all profits will be going to cancer charities. They are nearly all U3A members.

There will be a wonderful, bright display of quilts plus lovely handmade items to view or buy and there is a chance to win a beautiful wall quilt which is all hand quilted. There will be great fabric on sale for those who sew themselves at reasonable prices. Also on view will be toys and items from the old days and a bag surprise.

Light lunches and home-made cakes will also be on offer.

If you have never been to a quilt show, do give this a try - you may be surprised at the variety and quality of the work on view. A warm welcome awaits you.

Admission: adults £3 - children free. We hope to see you there.

Dear Editor

Re. Your note in the March Newsletter about Driving.

You may not be aware of the Watford Volunteer Transport Office. We provide transport for all sorts of people who have difficulty with public transport; a lot of it local to Watford, Clinics, Hospitals surgeries etc. and also shopping or even hairdressing appointments.

If we have drivers available we can also go to London hospitals and even South Coast Convalescent Homes. Our passengers have to be in the Watford Catchment Area. There is a relatively small charge for the service currently 44p per mile, cheaper than taxis and we'll often wait for the return journey.

Contact our duty officers on 01923 254400 between 1pm & 3pm on weekdays giving a few days notice or longer. Some members of our U3A already use this service.

Like many voluntary organisations we are always looking for volunteers who receive a contribution towards their petrol etc. Could YOU be one of our DRIVERS?

Your sincerely

John Crowder

28/02/2008

Explorers Walk March 2008 Redbourn

John Grainger

FRIDAY the 7th March looked like it was going to be a disappointing day for walking, as first thing it was very dull and there had been some rain overnight and into the early morning, but as the old saying goes "rain before 7, clear by 11".

Part of the walk was over a large field planted with a cereal crop, which we had expected to be muddy but it was remarkably firm and dry under foot. Perhaps they had not had the overnight rain. The sun was shining but the wind was cool. Visibility from the top of the field was very good. Part way round the walk we came to the Redbournbury Watermill, where there is now a bakery on site and the delicious, smell of fresh baked bread was too tempting for many of the walkers to resist. The baker put another temptation in our way, Hot Cross Buns. How can you resist such a treat. Needless to say the walkers succumbed to temptation.



Happy Explorers with Rebourn in the background. Photo JG

PEACE HOSPICE GARDEN PARTY

HUNTON PARK SUN MAY 11TH 2008 1.00pm-5.00pm.

We are collecting your donations of books, particularly children's books, bric-a-brac, soft toys, bottles of any description and CDs, videos and DVDs at the April and May meetings.

Tales from the History Group by E & B Long

OUR MARCH meeting featured talks on two war heroines. We were given a detailed account of the life of Florence Nightingale by Jill Bain. Born to wealthy parents in 1820, Florence was educated at home by her father. Her behaviour was expected to conform to that of a genteel young lady of her time, concerning herself with inconsequential local affairs. Gentlemen regarded an intelligent young woman, not afraid to express her opinions, with a great deal of suspicion.

England, together with most of Europe, was experiencing the drastic effects of the Industrial Revolution. With factories taking over from cottage industries, thousands of country dwellers were forced to move into towns, where living conditions were generally appalling and disease endemic. Florence, moved by their plight, wrote "My mind is absorbed by the sufferings of Man". In the face of great parental opposition, she learned all she could about nursing, which at that time, was not considered suitable for a respectable lady. Hospital hygiene was primitive, with patients unwashed and sheets unchanged. Few patients survived. In 1846, Florence heard about Kaiserworth in Germany, where respectable Deaconesses nursed the sick. She spent some time there and then went on to Rome, where she learnt about hospital management. In 1853, she was appointed Superintendent of the Institute for the care of sick Gentlewomen, in London, where she carried through a programme of reorganisation, hot water being piped to every floor, lifts installed to bring food up to the wards from the kitchens, and the patients given bells to summon help.

After the outbreak of the Crimean War 1854, the Foreign Correspondent of the London Times wrote about the privations of the British troops. Little provision had been made for the wounded. The barrack hospitals had no beds, no blankets; there were neither plates nor food to put on them. Due to lack of organisation, the Army was being defeated by cold, hunger and disease. The British public were horrified. The Times, with the co-operation of Sir Robert Peel, opened a fund to raise money to send help to the sick and wounded soldiers. The Secretary of State for War, Sydney Herbert, appointed Florence as Superintendent of Nurses at the English Hospital in Turkey. When she arrived with her nurses, at Scutari, she found miles of filthy wards alive with rats and vermin. There was no lighting, medical equipment, food or other basics. Florence used the Times fund to order essential supplies, and after much hard work was able to report to Herbert that wards were clean and kitchens working. In 1856 Florence returned home, to much acclaim, known as "the lady with the lamp." She submitted a detailed report to a commission studying Army Medical Services, for which she was elected a member of the Statisti-

cal Society. She set up a Training School for Nurses at St Thomas's Hospital, wrote a lengthy work on Health in the Army, continuing to campaign for better conditions, until she became bedridden in 1862.

Jean Armstrong followed with an account of the life of another war heroine, Edith Cavell, born in 1865 to the wife of the Rector of Swardeston, a village near Norwich, her early education was in boarding schools, one of which provided for the children of poor clergy.

Developing a flair for French, in 1890 she took up a post with a family in Brussels, staying with them for 5 years, then returning to nurse her father, which may have caused her to take up nursing as a career, training at the London Hospital. She became a Night Superintendent at St Pancras, Assistant Matron at Shoreditch, and finally, in 1906, temporary Matron at Manchester. She returned to Belgium in 1907, in charge of a pioneering training college for nurses. By 1912 she was providing nurses to hospitals, schools and kindergartens.

While she was on a visit to her mother, the Germans invaded Belgium. Nothing could persuade her to stay in England, saying that she would be needed more than ever. She returned to Brussels in Aug 1914, where she immediately sent the Dutch and German nurses home, stressing that their first duty was to treat the wounded, irrespective of nationality. At her clinic German soldiers received the same treatment as Belgian. When Brussels fell, the Germans sent 60 English nurses home, but Edith remained. When two stranded British soldiers came to her hospital, she helped them get away to neutral territory. Edith was arrested and sentenced to death. On the night before her execution she wrote "Standing as I do, in the view of God, I realise that Patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone".



Florence Nightingale

U3A London Walk March 12th 2008

By Joan Manhire

STARTING at St Paul's Cathedral 23 members of the Walking Group set off to explore the lanes, alleyways and tiny streets which make up the square mile of the City of London. Treading in the footsteps of Pepys, Wren, Dickens and Hogarth. The Romans, the plague of 1665, the great fire of London and the destruction during world war two, helped create the City as we know it today. It has been destroyed, changed, and rebuilt over the centuries, yet it still remains the centre of commerce and finance.

The area is a hive of activity Monday to Friday, and all but deserted over the weekend. In this century the buildings are being changed once again, some wrapped in polythene like gigantic parcels, others corseted in iron girders to be reborn as glass encrusted skyscrapers, totally dwarfing the spires of Wren's Churches. Standing at the foot of the Gerkin is an experience in itself! Churches stand on almost every corner, pubs on others and around 200 open spaces and small gardens can be found. It's where the ancient, the quaint and the ugly hold hands.



We enjoyed coffee in the Crypt of St. Mary le Bow, and our lunch was taken in the church garden of the derelict St Dunstan-in-the East.

Paternoster Square London
Photo J Morgan

Gardening Group Notes by Pam Grant

IN FEBRUARY we had an amusing and informative talk from David Chandler, Head Gardener at 3 Valleys Water. As one of three sons of a gamekeeper in Norfolk, he was told that he'd be the gardening one. After washing flowerpots, one of his first jobs was pollinating greenhouse flowers with a rabbit's tail on the end of a cane! His reminiscences included time in the Grenadier Guards, at Dockington Hall, Norfolk Lavender and Sandringham. Eventually he joined Colne Valley Water, now part of 3 Valleys Water.

He talked about his role in educating groups of children both at the works and in schools, also about water conservation in the garden and home. Ideas ranged from gel crystals in hanging baskets to hippos in the bathroom! We learned too that our local water is among the purest in the entire world. So forget the bottles!

There was also the chance at this meeting to thank Jean again for making such a brilliant job of running the group with Cilla and to present her with a potted nectarine plant from everyone. She will have run her last outing at the end of March to Kew but will still be one of the regular travellers with us.

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

STUDY GROUP NEWS

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

Art Appreciation

2nd Mon 10.00 for 10.30am at Hollytree House.

Last month Pat Woollard gave us a comprehensive review of contemporary American artists, giving rise to much discussion on the wide variety of modern art forms.

14 Apr Visit to Russian Exhibition at the Royal Academy. All tickets sold. Travel independently or join a group at th Watford Met. station at 9.15am. Meet at the entrance to the exhibition at 10.50am when Dorothy will give you a brochure.

April NO MEETING AT HOLLYTREE HOUSE.

12 May Phil McMahon on Norman Rockwell and a compilation of other US artists by Joyce, Margaret and Val.

13 May Group visit to Dulwich Picture Gallery for the "Coming of Age" of American art. Cost £27 includes coach, entrance and lecture. Cheques to D.A.Steele as soon as possible. More details later. A few places still available.

Antiques

2nd Tues of the month NB 2.00pm-4.00pm in my home.

Our member, John Friend, brought his fascinating collection of playing cards, both old and new. We learned all sorts of interesting facts, such as and this must be true! the fact that the suits, etc., all have a meaning: the 4 suits equals the four seasons; 13 cards in each suit equals 13 lunar months; 52 cards in a pack equals 52 weeks per year; and all the 'spots' on the cards add up to 364, plus 1 for the Joker equals number of days in the year! Coincidence or what?! We also learned some of the tricks of the cardsharp's trade and those of magicians. We were really enthralled, and also delighted to see John's well presented

album of his collection Next month we will be discussing silver, with members bringing some of their favourite pieces to talk about.

Better Photos

At the January meeting of the photo Group we concentrated on taking photos of small



Photo Jean Grainger

objects indoors with just the available light from a large window plus the help of a piece of white card or silver foil to reflect the light back into the shadow area. During the session the background was changed a couple of times and it was surprising what a difference it made to the end results. By the time you read this we should have visited Stockers Lakes to get some early spring photos. I'm sure we will all come back with something different.

28 Apr We are hoping to get photos of bluebells in Whippendell Woods. Let's hope on the day we get some diffused sunlight so the flowers are not burnt out.

Book Discussion Grp

4th Mon 2.00pm-4.00pm 9 Parkside Drive, Watford Computers

3rd Thurs 4.00pm Beechfield School, Gammons Lane.

NB this is the 2nd not 3rd Thurs (Early Easter)

17 Apr Combined session with Photography Group, getting the photos into the computer.

15 May Excel spreadsheets continuation.

There is a charge of £2 per person to cover costs.

Counted X Stitch

3rd Wednesday of the month NB 1.30pm-3.30pm
New members are welcome.

Cryptic Crosswords

1st & 3rd Fri of the month. 4 & 18 Apr and 2 May.

Current Affairs

3rd Tues 10.00am at

Hollytree House.

Our March meeting, as usual, covered a wide range of topics. China may have a

poor human rights record, but we daren't consider boycotting the Olympic Games there - it's our turn next. Pensioners are not well treated by the Government, but how do we

protest? Is an Oath of Allegiance to the Queen going to instil a sense of Britishness? Can the current approach to sex education help to reduce teenage pregnancies? What constitutes a City Academy and how should school places be allocated? As usual, we blamed the press for exacerbating many of our present problems but accept that they're a necessary evil! At present the group has reached capacity level, so anyone interested in joining should speak with one of the leaders first.

15 Apr Next meeting.

Cycling

10.00am 1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday starting at Watford Met Station. The Monday ride is run jointly with Watford Park U3A.

NB that the Monday rides are similar to those on Wednesday. They are no further or faster. As we cycle on canal towpaths, I must point out that we should all have a permit to do this. This is free from www.waterscape.com. Click on 'cycling' and then on 'get a permit'.

7 Apr Mon Belsize, Felden, Hemel Hempstead.

16 Apr Wed Elstree Airfield.

5 May Mon No ride today.

21 May Wed Bridle paths around Sarratt.

European Studies

We are pursuing our study of European History and Culture in the 18th Century and have many interesting subjects ahead of us as you can see and later on literature. France under Louis XV, the Slave Trade and what was happening in Spain and Portugal. There is no end to the possibilities.

23 Apr European Art NB. May and June are **not the 4th Wednesday** deliberately as we have changed them as I shall be on holiday.

7 May European Literature and French Literature.

11 Jun Schiller/Goethe.

Exploring London

2 Apr Royal Opera House backstage tour.

Waiting list.

7 May Winchester Waiting list.

4 June TBA. Tickets on sale at meeting.

Food & Nutrition

4th Tues of the month

Combewood House

New members welcome.

Gardening

Hollytree House.

17 Apr Hyde Hall RHS gardens in Essex. There are still some tickets remaining for this trip. Price £13.50.

15 May Ramster Gardens at Chiddingfold near Guildford in Surrey. These gardens are only open for a couple of months each year for us to enjoy the beautiful woodland areas, lakes and ponds and to admire rhododendrons and the many rare trees and shrubs.

We had realized that Emmetts (originally proposed) was only a small garden and more suited to a half-day visit but found nowhere really suitable locally to join with it. Only sandwiches will be available at Ramsters so consider bringing a picnic lunch.

19 Jun Stockwood Country Park and Toddington Manor. More details later.

German Conversation

Group now full.

Greetings Cards

Hollytree House

10 Apr Continue using fabrics with small beads etc.

8 May Small buttons/
Handbag designs.

History

Wallis Simpson was a woman making the front pages in old newspapers brought in by Jean Armstrong and Liz Shrivs gave us stories of life 70 years ago.

Italian

10.00am alternate Thurs

This is very much a self help group, using audio/visual material, written exercises and original Italian texts. We are guided by a fluent Italian speaker.

London Theatre Group

23 Apr Wed Come and join us for a double bill of Harold Pinter's "The Lover & The Collection." Timothy West will be leading a Post Play Q & A forum for us after this matinee performance. The cost for the play, talk and coach will be £30.50p. We will be selling tickets at the March meeting. Please phone if you wish to come but can't make the meeting.

MoneyMatters

1st Thurs of the month

Hollytree House.

We had another successful meeting in February when 37 persons attended and we were regaled with a fascinating talk and projection on ways to safeguard our home, savings and outgoings, from Inheritance tax, Capital gains, Care charges with various types of trusts, some of which the average solicitor or accountant doesn't know about. It was so interesting that not a sound emanated from the audience until question time and then the questions poured in and every one was answered. It was fabulous, ask anyone who was there! I find it amazing that with the cost of food, petrol and energy rising at the rate it is, that more people who want to cut their expense, don't come to MoneyMatters - that

is what we are about - to help you all SAVE your hard won cash. We had 23 people to the March meeting but we could have had more, no need to be shy! We don't expect you to get up and talk, come and listen, you may learn something useful and at the same time enjoy yourself. Looking forward to seeing you at our meeting on 3rd. April.

Music Appreciation

3rd Wed: 10.00am Coffee and chat. **10.30am** programme. Subsequent meetings will teach us about the members of the Orchestra, accompanied by relevant music.

Needlecraft

2nd and 4th Mon each month at Combewood House.

This group is full at the moment as the space we have is just adequate for our present needs but perhaps another group could be started?

Opera

14 Apr 2.00pm. at Christine's In March the group very much enjoyed the last exciting two acts of 'The Trojans' by Berlioz, and now look forward to our next meeting when we will be having a light-hearted quiz compiled by David Hancox (he recommends we swat up on our opera titles!). In the second half of the afternoon we shall be watching a recording on DVD of the first act of a great 1964 production of Donizetti's 'Lucia di Lammermoor', with Renata Scotto and Carlo Bergonzi.

Pathfinders Group

The Essex Arms **9.25am**

22 Apr Harefield.

27 May Apsley and Kings Langley.

24 Jun Rickmansworth.

I regret this group is full.

Performing Arts

Johanna's Mon 7.30pm

"As you Like It" @ Watford Palace from 4th April- 26th April. The "After Show discussion" is on 15th April. Can you please book your own tickets on 225671.

We will be performing an entertainment of poetry and prose on the themes of Easter,

Spring and April Fools day at the U3A April meeting.

1 Apr Perform for the U3A Monthly meeting.

28 Apr Discussion of "As You Like It".

12 May Play reading.

Personal Development

21 Apr NB. change of programme. "What I value about myself and goals for this year".

19 or 20 May Meal out TBA.

The Blue Check is not open on Mondays so would you like to go on a Tuesday instead? Partners invited.

Poetry Read & Study

Monday evening, monthly by arrangement. New members welcome.

Return to Cycling

2.00pm 1st Thursday This group is run jointly with Watford Park U3A. The rides are between 5 and 10 miles based on the Watford B C map of local cycle routes.

Please look under Cycling for my note about a permit to cycle on canal towpaths.

3 Apr, 1 May The Pump House, Local Board Road.

Science Interest

NB Same time but Change of Venue to Hollytree House.

21 Apr Leon Freris.

Technology of generating, transmitting and distributing electric energy.

19 May Phil McMahon. The Sun our nearby star.

16 Jun Pat Walker will talk about Radio Luxemburg. New members welcome!

Scrabble 2

2nd Thurs of the month

13 Mar 10.00am

Shakespeare

Last Wed 2.00pm

23 Apr Eleven of us are going to Watford Palace Theatre to see 'As You Like It'.

30 Apr Our usual monthly meeting to continue reading 'Anthony and Cleopatra' and to discuss the Palace performance.

28 May choosing our next play, in addition to our readings of play and sonnet.

Snooker

1st and 3rd Mon 11.00am-1.00pm. Town & Country Club.

Sporting Forum

Our March get-together featured fun, food and a flutter as we made an evening visit to Walthamstow Stadium for the greyhound racing. For the vast majority of 34 who attended, this was the first time they had been to such an event, and as one punter remarked 'How come it's taken me seventy years to experience something as enjoyable as this?'

15 Apr Tour of the new Wembley Stadium.

20 May Guest speaker Ed Coan - PR & Media

Consultant (formerly with Watford FC but now freelance, including work for the national FA).

16 June (Mon) Evening at Windsor Races.

Strollers

Meeting time 11.00am

8 Apr Kate, Pavilion CP (bottom of Green Lane/Highlands) Oxhey Woods Lunch The Load of Hay.

22 Apr Angele & Gerry CP & lunch at the Gate Station RD. walk in/around Bricket Wood.

13 May Gwen and Don -St Albans Museum CP Lunch at The Six Bells.

27 May Myra and Jane - Grimsdyke walk. Old Reddings CP Lunch at The Case is Altered.

10 Jun Brenda & Valerie, walk in/around Kings Langley Park, lunch The Young Pretender.

24 June Margaret and John - Bentley Priory Stanmore Cricket Pavilion CP Lunch at The Harvester.

The Explorers

09.30am Meet at the Essex Arms to car share

4 Apr Sarratt area. Raymond, CP near the Cock PH Nr Church.

2 May Harpenden. 3 Horseshoes, Ayres End Lane, Brenda & Elizabeth

6 June 09.30 Charlock Way, West Watford, to car share. Burnham Beeches Myra Jarrett.

The Rock 'n' Roll Yrs

4th Thursday each month 2.30 pm Hollytree House.

24 Apr Everly Bros.

22 May Eddie Cochran/Gene Vincent.

Thirsty Walkers

9.30am The Essex Arms!

(bear in mind the roadworks which may cause delays!).

24 Apr Sarratt (Bluebells, we hope), from The Cock led by John Reeve.

22 May Kings Langley, led by John and Cynthia Morgan.

Tuesday Trekkers

9.45am start at **10.00am**.

New members very welcome especially if you like walks of about 5 miles and a very worthwhile pub afterwards.

8 Apr Dolamore Duo Meet at Wyevale Garden Centre Great Gaddesdon off A4146 from Hemel, use over flow CP.

Walk starts 10 00am. If car share, Essex Arms 09 15am.

13 May Jean & Peter Groves have joined up with the lost tribe of Aldenham for this adventure

Walking

Walks start at JS A41

9.30am except **London ones**.

Eight miles

9 Apr Barton-Le-Clay.

14 May The Lee.

Six miles All 10.00am start

23 Apr London Colney.

28 May Gerards Cross.

25 Jun Harpenden.

Wine Appreciation

Last Friday in the month.

To oak or not to oak, that is the Chardonnay question In January our wine expert, Tony talked us through an afternoon of Chardonnay wines; 8 in all. They were all made from 100% Chardonnay grape oaked and unoaked. The former in new, old, French and American oak barrels and even one in stainless steel barrels. We enjoyed the variety of tastes and alcohol content irrespective of price. In fact, the most expensive bottle was given the thumbs down by us all. We are hoping to hold our annual lunch with wine occasion at our April meeting, so keep the date free.

WitKnits

10.00am 1st Mon each month

Writers Workshop

Come along and develop your skills.

New members welcome.

Any News from your Study Group?

COULD YOU HELP by offering to pen a few lines on behalf of the Group? Or send the 'copy', on your computer if your SGL does not have the use of a computer. Ed.

HOW TO GET FREE DIRECTORY ENQUIRY NUMBERS.

From Arthur Driscoll, Courtesy of Martin Lewis.

MOST Directory Enquiry services rely on similar number databasis, which is why when one makes a mistake, they all make the same mistake. Therefore the real deciding factor when you want an unknown number is the speed, ease of use, service and of course the price. This number is **FREE** from your home phone. How does it do this? The model is quite simple; as part of the call you'll need to listen to an advert, which usually lasts about 20-30 seconds and this subsidises the cost. **FREE** Directory Enquiry number is: 0800 100 100 **Pros** A real person answers the phone, no registration needed. **Cons** Accuracy issues, and only one enquiry allowed If it knows the number, this is a quick service with the advert only lasting 20 seconds. Better still the advert is only played after its confirmed it knows the number; so if not, you can ring off. Also it's an easy number to remember. The business model behind this is interesting. To make it viable, the advert you're played will tend to relate to what number you're asking for and also allows you to connect through, for free, to the advertiser. So, if you ask for the National Rail Enquiries number, the advert is for Eurostar.

Watford U3A's Projector & Laptop

To check availability and make a booking for the digital projector and laptop computer contact

Colin Richards

igitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk

Watford HF Rambling Club

Invites U3A Members to walk 6 miles in the Brighton Area on **Saturday 20th September at 8.00am.**

Cost £15.

Meet Coach at JS A41

Peter Manhire

TALKS PROGRAMME

2008

Apr Performing Arts

'Spring Miscellany' of Poems, Prose & Music.

May AGM

Jun Marion Birch
'Age Concern'.

Jul Gillian Stansfield
'Irrational Numbers'.

Aug Pat Purcell
'Tales of the Opera'.

Sep Kyle McClland
'Watford New Health Campus'.

For More detail contact
Speaker Secretary

David Helliwell

speakers@watfordu3a.org.uk

LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS SEEK HELP RSV

...which in this case stands for 'Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme,' a national charity, dedicated to helping older people make a difference in their local community, by offering their skills and life experience. Nationally, over 10,000 RSVP volunteers help in hundreds of different ways, and more than 4,000 help in schools.

If you have access to the internet, there is an excellent site at www.csv-rsvp.org.uk, but if not the local representative will be happy to tell you more.

Initially, RSVP is aiming to help two local Primary Schools. **Chater** and **Holywell Schools** welcome the prospect of volunteers to help, giving extra reading time to one or two children at a time, helping with writing, foreign languages, numeracy or creating a small school garden or just going in for a chat.

Visiting an Infants School recently I was surprised by the range of ability within a year group. It is fun getting to know the children, and seeing their confidence grow. The level of commitment depends on how much you feel able to do; although a regular commitment is preferred, as little as an hour a week will be gratefully snapped up!

Why RSVP? All RSVP volunteers are covered for personal accident and public liability up to the age of 85; (some volunteers are over 90). No volunteer should be left out of pocket by his or her activities, so expenses are paid. So if you are over 50, whether able bodied or disabled, and you would like to know more about making a difference in your local community, please call Tony.

WU3A. March raffle in Aid of The Peace Hospice

Thank you all very much for your generosity - We raised **£235.00**

The next raffle will be **Tuesday 3rd June.**

All donations gratefully received at any meeting, or to our home,

JUNE & JOHN BAUGHEN

at any meeting, or to our home
CAN COLLECT THANK YOU

Material for the

May Newsletter

***MUST* be received
by: 20 April**

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

E-mail copy to:

editor@watfordu3a.org.uk

Watford and District U3A

Chairman's Report May 2008

What does the Chairman really do? In short, keep a low profile and try not to get in the way of what is happening! When there is a Committee like ours that works as a team all pulling in the same direction with one major objective – the benefit of the membership, being chairman is not a burden but a pleasure. Inevitably with over 450 members there have to be some guidelines laid down for smooth running and in this we have been helped, right from the start, by the Third Age Trust (TAT). However, these guidelines need occasional fine tuning to reflect changing needs and for that reason we spent some time revising our Regulations, last September. Likewise, although Associate Membership had served well, by enabling us to eliminate a waiting list, when the opportunity arose this year we were glad to be able to offer full membership to all former Associates.

This year we passed our tenth anniversary and TAT its 25th. To mark these events we decided that with so much happening here and with so many people seeking membership in the area that the most appropriate milestone would be to help set up a new U3A, as a result Watford Park U3A was launched and is going from strength to strength.

Our Study Groups continue to grow in number and the breadth of the activities is stunning, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of the members and especially the group leaders. We were treated to an excellent display of many of these activities in the Study Group Summer Fair. The event was attended by the Chairman of Watford Borough Council, Councillor Tony Poole and his Consort, Mrs Sylvia Poole, who spent the entire morning talking to members; another example of the support that we receive from our local authority.

At our monthly meetings we have tried to shorten the business session in order to give more free time for coffee and chatting before the address, which, once again, has been varied, interesting, informative, and enjoyable. The staff at the Police Centre look after us very well at all of our functions and especially so at the Christmas Lunch where the food and service are of the highest order. Our December meeting was "An Old Time Music Hall", very entertaining with sparkling performances - though we did wonder whether some of the acts were evidence of a misspent youth!

I need hardly tell you that time continues to fly by for all of us. There is so much happening here and so many people actively involved that stagnation is not on the agenda! (It is also the reason why it has not been felt possible to name all of the names of folk involved). If further evidence was needed one only need look at our Newsletter, which continues to grow both in size and quality of its pages. But it is not all inward looking, there is much awareness of those in need both within and outside of our membership, this includes direct involvement in helping others and also indirectly by raising funds via the book stall, raffles and by study groups. It has all become part of how you see your U3A.

With very best wishes to you all

John Carleton

WATFORD AND DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Minutes of the Tenth Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 1st May 2007

at the Metropolitan Police Sports and Social Club, Aldenham Road Bushey, Herts.

Present: Peter Andrews Chairman and 198 members.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from 35 members, a list of the names is held by the Secretary.

2. To approve the Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 1st May 2006.

On a proposal by Margaret Thompson and seconded by Dick Chapman the Minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising, other than an item already on the agenda.

4. To receive and approve the Annual Report by the Chairman, Peter Andrews (copy already circulated).

The Chairman had enjoyed his year of office but was leaving the post with regret because of other commitments. It had been an excellent year thanks to such a supportive and friendly committee, which had been working for the benefit of the U3A. The Associate Membership was working well. The August Fair, attended

by the Mayor, Rabi Martins, had been a success as had many other activities. He thanked the Speaker Secretary, David Helliwell, for the range of Speakers.

On a proposal by Jean Armstrong and seconded by Terry Waterfall the report was approved.

5. To receive and approve the examined Accounts (available at the AGM).

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for managing the accounts so successfully. Once again there was a substantial bank balance at the end of the financial year. Additional Associate Members had contributed to this via subscriptions and Gift Aid. This had enabled the subscription for 2007/8 to be reduced and no need to re-introduce the 50p payment at the monthly meeting. She said that her time as Treasurer had been a very rewarding job and recommended being part of the committee.

On a proposal by David Wynne Jones and seconded by Marie Coe the report was approved.

6. To appoint an Examiner of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2008

The Chairman reported that Stan Hewitt had agreed to continue as Examiner of the accounts for 2007/8. The appointment was approved.

7. To consider motions from the Committee.

a) That Mr. Reg Cooke be re-elected as President.

On a proposal by Peggy Element and seconded by Jacqueline Godfrey this was approved

b) That the membership classification of “Honorary Member” be reclassified as “Honorary Life Member”.

The meeting approved the change.

c) That the “Regulations for the Conduct of the Affairs of the Watford and District U3A” be amended to reflect the above .

The meeting approved the changes.

A suggestion was made by Peter Birkett that the President be made a Life Member. The Secretary Robin Hurley replied that this was an official post and the President had to be elected. (The Constitution). Honorary Life Members were elected for services to the U3A.

Question from the meeting: can Associate Members attend an AGM? The Secretary replied that Associate Members may not attend but do receive copies of the AGM papers. Can they vote? No.

Margaret Thompson asked if the President and Honorary Life Members would be able to vote. The Secretary replied that the new wording of the Regulations allows the President and Honorary Life Members to vote.

d) That Shirley Ross be elected as Honorary Life Member.

This was warmly approved by the meeting. Shirley received her certificate from the Chairman and said she was delighted and honoured, praising all those who had contributed to the success of the Watford U3A.

8. An address by the President.

Mr. Reg Cooke paid tribute to all those who help to make the U3A so successful, not only the Committee and Study Group Leaders but, those responsible for the Raffle, the stalls and the Almoners. He thanked Peter Andrews for the way in which he had lead the Committee and his continuing contribution to Chess and Jazz Appreciation. He also paid tribute to Bob Wheal perhaps the oldest Study Group leader in the U3A nationally. Associate Membership made it possible for aspiring members to participate in the Study Groups, although unable to attend monthly meetings. He acknowledged the support from Watford Council in allowing Study Groups to meet in Residential Homes and the co-operation of their Managers. The Police Club benefited the U3A by making available their premises. He hoped a suitable celebration could be arranged to mark the tenth anniversary in September of the Inaugural Meeting of the Watford U3A. He thanked the retiring officers and committee members and looked forward to another active year under the chairmanship of John Carleton and the new committee.

9. To elect a Chairman.

Mr. John Carleton was the sole nominee and was elected unopposed.

10. To elect a Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Terry Godfrey was the sole nominee and was elected unopposed.

11. To elect a Secretary.

Mrs. Yvonne Fitton was the sole nominee and was elected unopposed.

12. To elect a Treasurer.

Mr. Alan Wray was the sole nominee and was elected unopposed.

13. To elect three Committee Members. Mrs Janet Carleton, Mr Dennis Fitton and Mr Francis Goode were the only three nominees and were elected unopposed.

14. To consider a proposal from the Committee that from the 1st April 2008 the Membership Subscription should be:

£15.00 for members renewing their subscriptions, or first joining between 1st April and 31st July;

£10.00 for members joining between 1st August and 30th November;

£5 00 for members joining between 1st December and 31st March;

£3.50 for members on Income Support, whatever time of the year the member joins.

Provided that the annual subscription may be increased to such sum, not exceeding £19.50, as the Committee shall recommend to the membership at by least three weeks' written notice given at any time and expiring not later than 31st March 2008.

Gordon Hitchman asked if Associate Members pay the same fees as they are unable to attend monthly meetings. Margaret Thompson replied that because they are unable to attend the monthly meeting the Newsletter and all other information is sent to them by post and this cost has to be met.

The question was asked why the subscription might have to be raised to £19.50. The Chairman replied that it was put in as a provision for unforeseen eventualities.

15. To consider any other business – none was received before the meeting.

Jean Armstrong proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee which was warmly supported.

It was suggested that the Speaker Secretary should become a member of the Committee as not everyone was happy with some of the recent speakers. This will be put to the new Committee. A statement by Mike Chapple praising the great range of speakers and topics was supported by the meeting.

16. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.16 am.

JFC/ U3A AGM 2007

Chairman.....Vice Chairman

Date.....

A Message from Our Almoners

As almoners we like to be aware of anyone experiencing difficulties such as illness, bereavement or having problems getting to meetings. We can only be of help if we know. We would therefore be grateful if you could let one of us know of anyone in need. SGLs often know when there is a problem so would they also let us know.

**Irene Lowe
Janet Carleton**

**Peggy Element
Kathleen McMahon**