

NEWSLETTER



It's Spring Again!

Margaret Thompson Editor.

The seed potatoes are 'chitting' and the land dug over and 'mucked' ready for the planting on Good Friday. The blackbirds who fledged last year and have pecked happily around my borders all winter, are now fighting and falling out to see which male is to be King ousting his siblings to field afar. Ah well 'In Spring a young man's fancy- - -'

Crocus photos John Grainger

Did you know that once you reach the age of 70 you are entitled to free loft insulation and cavity wall infill (if you have a cavity in your walls); I do not! This does not depend on being in receipt of extra pension benefits, but if you are, you can get more help with energy saving measures and costs from the 'Warm Front' team by telephoning 0800 316 6014

Last Month we had a very interesting but disquieting talk from Mike Barnes in which he outlined the background history of the ancient country of Palestine, which has brought it to its present parlous state. He was careful to make clear from the outset that he was not going to discuss the present war between the Israelis and Hamas in Gaza as he felt we were all too aware of this, but listening to his outline of how long the conflict has been going on, how little land is now left for the Palestinians to live on, how their agriculture is continuing to be eroded and how restricted is their travel, one begins to better understand the present situation.

Editing this Newsletter gives me great pleasure and satisfaction but you can't please all of the people all of the time so I do occasionally come in for some stick. I was therefore so pleased to receive your round of applause for my efforts at the last monthly meeting. Gee Guys Thanks!!

Many of you now get the Newsletter by email which enables you to see it, and if you wish print it, in all its glorious colour. If you download our NL from the Watford Website

[<http://www.watfordu3a.org.uk>] you will get the edited version. This is because for the website I trawl through the pages and remove all personal phone numbers, email and home addresses, only sending this cleansed version for 'posting on the web' by our web master Alan Betts. To have the unedited version please send your email address to our membership secretary John Friend; membership@watfordu3a.org.uk Sending your e addresses to me has resulted in two parallel and differing data bases for our U3A. Not Good! John Friend has kindly agreed to distribute the NL by email, once the AGM is out of the way and our membership numbers are known. It is also *very* important to inform John if your address, email address or phone number changes.

Well, today dawned with a sharp frost but glorious sunshine has followed. I have nearly finished this Newsletter so I shall take up the expert advice I heard at the Gardening Group talk on Thursday morning and get lopping some of my very disobedient shrubs. Isn't U3A wonderful? Who needs Gardeners' Question Time. Not only does one make some wonderful friends but one learns so much. How many groups have you joined? Do make the most of your membership and expand your knowledge and interests amid good fellowship.



Committee Notes

John Carleton Chairman

No Committee Meeting in March.

Committee members

Chairman John Carleton
Secretary Yvonne Fitton
Study Group Coordinator
Dennis Fitton

Please take the AGM Documents printed as an addendum at the back of this Newsletter to the AGM in May. Ed.

Thank you to you all, especially SGLs, for your News from your Group. Only 5 Study Groups now of which we hear nothing?? Does they still exist??

Could someone please send in a report even if your group is full at the moment. Ed.

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Study Group Topics

By Dennis Fitton

Joint Study Group
Coordinator

Studygroups@watfordu3a.org.uk

BETTY and ERIC LONG have decided that it is time for them to retire from running the History Group. We are very grateful to them for the hard work and dedication they have shown for many years. Thank you. For the moment Jackie Connal will act as SGL and the venue will change to the Thorpe Community Room at Garston Fire Station.

I am sorry to report that the Story Telling group is also coming to an end. This was an exciting venture into something out of the ordinary. Maybe Dorelle or someone else will be able to restart it in the future.

We are hoping to produce an up-dated version of the SG Diary in a month or two's time. Will SGLs inform Margaret Foster or me of any changes we need to include please?

To repeat my perennial grumble; please don't throw it away when it is published and then wonder why you haven't any details of the Study Groups.

Unfortunately the course on Mandarin Chinese and Chinese Culture is full. We will be told if an additional course is to be run. I have no information on Holiday French. Keep your eye on the notice boards.

The SGL meeting of 20th March ranged over a number of topics of interest. Have the computer courses run their course or is there still a demand for them?

A sub committee reported on alternative ways of running the SG Fair in August. Watch this space. Should we reorganise the monthly meeting? No.

Use the information on our website and in the newsletter. There is a contact list for committee members in both. Members often don't know who the SGLs are. We discussed how to overcome this. Any bright ideas?

Strollers February 2009 by Dorelle Boardman photo Phil Redshaw

A LATE February experience has inspired me to end the nearly-four-year silence from the Strollers Group. Our last break into print concerned marauding chickens, though we have seen many sights worth remembering during our excursions since then. On this particular morning we met in the car park of the Whip and Collar at Rickmansworth for a walk round the lakes. It was a typical February day; grey, but not too chilly, and we crossed the bridge over the little stream behind the pub after a few minutes spent watching the ducks and swans. It was the time for communal ablutions and the birds were enjoying themselves enormously. Looking back through trees along the path, we saw a lovely scattering of snowdrops. The lakes themselves were at least as beautiful as they are when they reflect blue skies and sunshine. There wasn't such a broad colour contrast, but the silver-grey water showed off the great variety of movement all over the water surface, and birds flying down to land on it were dramatic against the pale sky.



The highlight of the morning, at least for three of us who were straggling at the back, had to do with the fish in the lake. We passed two fishermen, one of whom was in the very act of landing a really big fish. It was a pike, and was giving him some trouble as he brought it onto the bank. It was weighed, and turned out to be a 15-pounder; a beautiful creature with its great, astonishingly crimson gills clearly in view. The fishermen assured us that a pike could be on dry land for quite a long time without being distressed or coming to any harm. It was disentangled carefully and the hook gently removed from its lip before being photographed and then returned to the water. It flipped

its tail slowly and so gracefully, disappearing from sight apparently without a care in the world. The fishermen told us there is known to be a 35-pound carp in the same lake. Next time, perhaps!

Exploring London by Pat Harding

OUR first outing for 2009 was a tour of the Royal Albert Hall. We were divided into three groups and our guide Gaynor was excellent, as I understand, were the other two. The Hall was a vision of Prince Albert and was to have been built from the profits of the Great Exhibition together with the museums of Natural History, Science, Victoria and Albert and the Imperial Institute, now the Imperial College on the Kensington Gore Estate. Sadly Prince Albert did not live to see his dream and the Queen spent so much on the Albert Memorial that the Albert Hall was funded by selling 1300 seats to private investors at £100 each on a 999 year lease. Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales were the first to invest. Hence the Royal Box with 20 seats, is twice as large as the other boxes. Most of the seats are still in the hands of the families of the original investors.

Gaynor gave us a potted history of the hall and explained how the problem of echoes was resolved. The Hall has been extensively refurbished over the years and the decorations are now as in Victoria's time. We sat in the box next to the Royal Box and then went into the Queen's retiring room where portraits of the Royal Family were displayed. We then went one floor higher and looked down into the auditorium. Gaynor explained how the auditorium floor was changed depending on what sort of concert or event was being shown.

Unfortunately the organ was covered up but we saw pictures and Gaynor said she didn't know how the organist played such a complicated instrument. She told us about the various artists and events that had been held over the years and ended with showing us a film.

After lunch we all split between the other museums looking at the various exhibitions taking place.

ANSWERS TO CRYPTIC CROSSWORD NO 5 IN MARCH NEWSLETTER

Across 1 Youngsters 8 Fete 9 Assigned 10 Come to 11 Elapse 12 War 13 Issue
15 Aside 17 Bus 19 Course 21 Unpack (Clue should have referred to 'deck of
cards') 23 Sergeant 24 Ajar 25 Telescopes
Down 2 Onerous 3 Niece 4 Shadow 5 Easter 6 Signals 7 Press 14 Upright 16
Declare 17 Befall 18 Suites 20 Opera 22 Piano

Letters to the Editor

from Judy Benians

I would like to thank all the WU3A members who so kindly gave their love and support to me during the recent illness and passing of my husband, John Machin.

Thank you to everyone for all your visits, cards and letters, etc and for attending the funeral service in celebration of John's life. I was very comforted by knowing that I was surrounded by so many of John's friends.

from Philip Wolff.

Regarding the March monthly meeting talk. I would like to make one or two points.

What was expected to be a travelogue of the Israel/Palestine area turned out to be a political dialogue of a personal nature.

As to the contents of the speaker's presentation I feel some of his facts should be quantified. He neglected to point out that Hamas stored explosives in Hospitals, schools, mosques, etc., so that should they be targeted by Israeli forces, they would immediately claim so-called unwarranted civilian casualties. He also neglected to state that Israel dropped leaflets warning civilians to leave the area prior to air raids, to allow them to get away from the target areas.

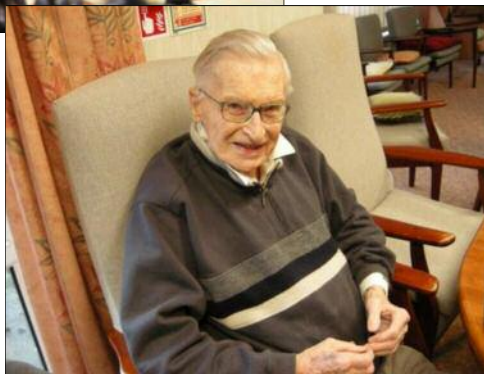
In earlier peace negotiations with Arafat, 95% of his demands was agreed to but he suddenly refuted it and the peace plan fell flat.

The speaker inferred that Israel should negotiate with Hamas. At no time did he point out that Hamas was elected on their avowed insistence that Israel should be wiped off the face of the earth. Neither did he point out, when he mentioned the extensive loss of life the Palestinians suffered (including 222 children) before the last Israeli incursion, that they were inflicted on Gazas' residents by Hamas' infighting with the Palestine Government's forces. Any loss of life whether by racial killings in London (the Laurence boy), or anywhere else is abhorrent. Preventative measures have to be taken against terrorists. In Israel the wall has reduced deaths both of Israelis and Palestinians, but after eight years, the rockets are still being fired.

What is U3A Head office's attitude to religious and political discourses at monthly meetings? Several members have commented that these monthly meetings should not be politically or religiously motivated. Trusting this will be published.



Peter Andrews Chess SGL enjoying a well earned cuppa & Col. Bob Wheal taking a well earned breather.



The Chess Group. from Jackie Connal

I WOULD like to thank Peter for all his help and patience when I joined

the chess group. Once a month I enjoy the opportunity to play chess with

some very clever, amusing and skilful players. I would highly recommend joining if only to see me say "I never saw it".

Wine Appreciation by John Britten

FEBRUARY'S meeting was in two parts. We began by commenting upon a range of wines from a new importer, and while doing so we also learned something about the methodology of wine "scoring", the appeal of different label designs, and the effect upon taste of the different types of wood used in barrel ageing. The wines on offer were predominantly from Bordeaux, and showed the improvement in quality when moving from a simple A.C. to a Grand Cru. But for easy drinking many of us preferred the fruity 100% Tempranillo from Spain's Ardena de Duero region.

Part Two introduced us to wines that few had tried before. They included a Pinot Blanc from Luxembourg, where vineyards are classified according to the local weather conditions rather than the nature of the soil, and a Saperavi from Georgia. This latter grape is unusual in that its flesh is red, as well as its skin, and so it can only be used to make red wine. It was a good wine, but expensive in comparison with the more traditional reds we'd tried earlier.

Unfortunately the third novelty - a 2003 Massaya Blanc from Lebanon's Bekaa Valley - was undrinkable, having become oxidised during storage. We witnessed the unusual sight of our wine being poured back into the bottle, for return to - and hopefully a refund from - the supplier.

The Group now has space for a few additional members, so if you'd like to spend a very enjoyable afternoon on the last Friday of every month, please call Gill.



"Nice wine -- shame about the label" JB

Better Photos by John Grainger

THE group has now been running for many years and over that time we have tried to do what our title says, to try to take better photos. A few of our members are still using film but the rest now have a variety of digital cameras between us, from the compact point & shoot to the more sophisticated SLR's. It has been an interesting learning curve for us all. Getting our heads round all the modern technology and the jargon. One thing we have all recognised is that a camera is a very personal thing. No two people use them in the same way. They have to be easy to operate and comfortable in your hands. If you are thinking of going Digital, go into a photo shop and handle as many cameras as you can until you find the one that feels right in your hands and is easy to use. If you have any doubts about the cameras walk out of the shop. It is better to waste a little time, than buy a camera that is not quite right for you.

Once you have your new shiny digital camera now is the time to get to know it and take photos, and find out what all the different settings do. Don't wait till you go on holiday and have left the instruction book at home. If some of the photos don't come out you can always delete them. Once you have a batch of images on your camera you can take the camera or the memory card into the photographic shop or photo processors and they will print off your images and give you a CD rom with your images on it, should you want more prints. You can then delete the images from the camera's memory card and use it again, and again, and again.

You don't need to be a computer nerd to own a digital camera but if you want to take your photography to a higher level then a little knowledge of computers and simple photo manipulation would be useful. It is astonishing how a few simple actions can make a world of difference to an image, Cropping (cutting out parts of the image) or lightening or darkening an image, and of course that bane of flash photos Red Eye.

Why struggle on your own when you can join a friendly group of people with a similar interest in getting a "Better Photo", be it on digital or film.

This year we have started a friendly challenge taking photos around a set subject. In January it was "Light" when we had offering from Dawn to Dusk and all things in between. The February challenge was "Markets" and we've seen Markets in Russia, France, Ireland and of course St Albans & Watford. The March challenge is "Patterns & Texture" It will be interesting to see how our group interpret the subject, and in April we will be visiting a local Garden Centre. More information? contact Jean or John Grainger.

Needlecraft Group by Jean Pearce

MEMBERS of this group meet regularly at Coombewood House twice a month. We have just completed two cot sized quilts for the Peace hospice and plans are afoot for another.

We are involved in many kinds of crafts from patchwork which covers the very simple to the most complicated, cross stitch embroidery, gold work, knitting, card making and anything new that catches our interest.

On the 6th April we have arranged a workshop on Stump Work and have invited Kay Dennis an expert teacher and lecturer to come and give us a practical demonstration.

Whilst our hands are employed, as you can well imagine, there is no lack of conversation and we have on several occasions put the world to rights!

We have always been made welcome at Coombewood and would like to thank Jenny and her staff for looking after us so well.

NB:- THE BOOK STALL

Will not operate at the May Meeting.

We will be at the Peace Hospice garden party

Hunton Park on Sunday 17th May

Please come and support us. Marie and Barry

Science Interest March **The consumerist Society**

by **Brian Mee**

BERNARD STEELE had done an amazing amount of research to find figures for all the different ways in which we, as members of a consumerist society, have to pay for energy, irrespective of our own personal activities. Manufacture and transport of goods, packaging and paper, production and transport of food, water purification, sewage disposal and military defence of the UK; the total for all of these amounts to about 11kWh per person per day.

Figures for personal travelling on different kinds of transportation were surprising, ranging from 2kWh pp per 100 miles for a train, 6kWh for TGV, 6kWh for the London Underground, 8kWh for coach travel, 64 kWh for an average car, 72 kWh for a Jumbo jet, 160 kWh for travel on a cruise liner and 185 kWh for a Range Rover.

Bernard then looked at home bills for electricity and gas. He showed us how to calculate totals of kWhs used per person per day, these ranged, in the group present, from less than 90 kWh per person per day to over 180kWh pppd.

Bernard challenged us about how we should or should not, travel, to consider lifestyle - always a difficult area to modify and how we could make the home more energy efficient. We may have to modify lifestyles in order for the human race to survive. James Lovelock, for example, casts doubt on the planet's ability to survive the profligate use of fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution, with the corresponding carbon emissions of green-house gases. But, technology improves all the time and even today we heard on the radio about carbon capture at a sewage plant in Germany, which is 'carbon negative' so perhaps things are not as bleak as we thought. Many renewable forms of energy will certainly, without doubt, be needed in the next half century.



Walking by Peter Manhire

THE January walk was changed from the hills of Berkhamsted to the Colne Valley due to the unfavourable weather conditions underfoot, so that we would have hard surfaces on which to walk; *but* this was not how it worked out. Our very first path was totally impassable. Water flowed from the lake right across the path. Retracing our steps we attacked our objective from another direction, eventually rising to much higher ground.

The group were soon studying the planes taking off and landing on the Denham airfield. Later the path went below the railway station to reach the pretty village of Denham for lunch. The house next to the village church displays a plaque to the former owner, John Mills, actor of the 1940's. We made our way back following the canal and river with lakes on every side to West Hyde. The group were most surprised to learn that they had covered 10 miles ! Which was a little longer than normal, but it was a grand walk with plenty of interesting scenes on route.

A Message from Our Almoners

As almoners we like to be aware of anyone experiencing difficulties such as illness, bereavement or getting to meetings. We can only be of help if we know so let one of us know of anyone in need especially if you are a SGL.

**Irene Lowe
Janet Carleton**

**Peggy Element
Kathleen McMahon**

STUDY GROUP NEWS

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

Art Appreciation

**2nd Mon 10.00 for 10.30am
at Hollytree House.**



Scanning the Royal Academy of art Magazines at the Art Appreciation March meeting where we all enjoyed an excellent, well researched, presentation on Etruscan Art by Aline Burgess.

**13 Apr NB:-No Meeting
Easter Monday.**

**14 Apr 10.45am info desk
Sainsbury Wing** Trip to the National Gallery Guided tour: The Development of Portraits [full] This precedes our look at portraits through time. Why? How? From Romans to the 21st Century.

Antiques

**2nd Tues of the month
2.30pm-4.30pm my home.** We had our usual hotpotch of subjects under the heading of 'Memorabilia'. This encompassed seeing more fascinating old maps, and a wonderful selection of old theatre programmes, on the way to finding out about kitchen equipment of by-gone days, the main source of information being good old Mrs. Beeton. We were surprised to find out that the very first pressure cooker was invented by Denis Pepin in the C17, though not having invented the safety valve, it wasn't a great success. We found that essential items in Victorian kitchens were larding needles, cabbage pressers and bottle jacks (for spit-roasting meat), and are still pondering over what a 'podger' might be. Surprising

and fascinating stuff.

There is now space for one or two new members to join us.

14 Apr Porcelain.

Beginners Bridge

**Alternate Weds
10.30am**

Dates sometimes vary. People are making good progress. Class full for the moment.

Book

**Discussion Group 4th
Mon 2.00pm-4.00pm**

The Group now meets at **28 Devereux Drive**. Telephone the Study Group Leader for a list of books to be read in the coming months. New members very welcome.

Chess

2nd & 4th Tues 9.30am

The interest and enthusiasm goes on and we now have some Members coming along to re-learn the game. It is my pleasure to take them aside to a quiet area and give some tuition/thoughts on the moves and strategy. Please join us if you want to start beating your grandchildren at the Game. Or to play competitively, but friendly, against any of our excellent Players.

Computers

**N.B. CHANGE of VENUE
3rd Thurs 2.00pm Thorpe
Community Room, Garston
Fire Station, St Albans
Road, (Next to Asda)**

16 Apr Copying from web pages or pdf documents (e.g. the Newsletter). There is a charge of 50p per person to cover costs.

**Cryptic Crosswords
1st & 3rd Fri of the month.**

At a recent meeting, some of the less experienced members were each mentored by two more expert cruciverbalists sitting on either side.

3 & 17 April & 1 May next meetings.

Current Affairs

3rd Tues 10.00am Hollytree House.

The recent proposal to increase the price of alcohol to reduce binge-drinking led us into our usual wide-ranging discussion. The general view was that 50p on a unit of alcohol would have only a limited effect. Better to reduce the incentives to drinking. Britain's population explosion was worrying, with the consequent overloading of services. We could understand the pressure from immigrants wanting to live in this country, not only because of the social welfare assistance available but largely because of our tolerant attitudes and freedom from restrictions. The government has a difficult task in coping with the problems. Are universities overtraining too many of our young people? Do they need an academic training for many of the jobs available? Apprenticeships and day-release had in the past provided a good balance of skills and should be encouraged again. Lunch at The Blue Check provided a good opportunity to continue our discussion in congenial surroundings.

Cycling

10.00am 1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday starting at Watford Met Station.

The Monday ride is run



Grand Union towpath near Black Jack's Mill photo Who?

jointly with Watford Park U3A.

6 Apr The Aquadrome and Denham.

15 Apr Aldenham and Elstree Aerodrome.

4 May Hockeridge Bottom.

20 May Felden and Apsley.

European Studies

Continuing our study of the 18th Century.

22 Apr Italy.

Exploring London

NB check your tickets for times as some are wrong.

Bushey Synagogue **8-30am**

Chalk Hill **8-35am**

Essex Arms **9-00am**

1 Apr BBC Tour and Westfield Shopping Centre. Waiting list.

6 May Canal Museum and Barge ride. Waiting List.

Film Group

2. 00pm 3rd Mon

Herga Court

The film is followed by tea and discussion. Please let Barbara know if you can come. Waiting list.

20 Apr Arsenic and Old Lace

1944. Director Frank Capra.

Cary Grant. Jean Adair.

Raymond Massey. Peter

Lorre. Completely Hilarious

Dark Comedy.

18 May Flying Down to Rio.

1933 Director - Thornton

Freeland. Fred Astaire,

Ginger Rogers, Dolores del

Rio. Comedy, Musical,

Romance.

Food & Nutrition

Combewood House.2.00pm.

28 Apr TB Confirmed - Talk by a representative of the Cooperative Society on their ethical stance with regard to the purchase of produce for their supermarkets. Hopefully this will take place for I feel it is a very important issue and the Co-op really stands by its moral principles. They also sponsor Fairtrade in this country which helped us enormously in Watford when we produced our Fairtrade directory in 2008. Do come along show your support.

Gardening

3rd Thurs 10.00am



Neil Holmes Smith photo MCT

For our March meeting we gathered at Hollytree House and welcomed back Neal Holmes-Smith to talk to us. On this occasion his subject was 'The Four Seasons', a very apt title in a week of glorious Spring sunshine. We were taken through the gardening year with lovely slides of attractive planting and beautiful foliage and flowers as well as photographs of some of our favourite gardens. We were reminded of tasks we should already have done and those that should wait till later and all came out hopefully inspired to enjoy our own gardens and perhaps copy some ideas.

16 Apr Outing to Abbey House Gardens in Malmesbury. Waiting list. Remember that you will be able to purchase lunch in the town or picnic in the gardens and will be able to move back and forth as you choose during the day.

21 May Exbury Gardens for rhododendrons. A few spaces remaining. Cost £18.

16 June (Note this is a Tuesday!) Visit to Sissinghurst. Fully booked.

Greetings Cards

Hollytree House

9 Apr Using acetate sheets and peel-offs. Please bring permanent colour pens if you have any.

14 May & 11 Jun

History

2nd Mon 2.00pm Fire Station Garston (Adjacent to Asda CP off the A41) Following the retirement of Eric and Betty Long as SGLs the Group has decided to change their venue.

Apr NO MEETING

11 May John Parsons will continue his account of the History of British Prime Ministers.

Italian

10.00am alternate Thurs A self help group, using audio/visual material, written exercises and original Italian texts. We are guided by a fluent Italian speaker.

Jazz

3rd Wed 2.30pm

We met today, at Col. Bob's as usual, and had quite a full house of enthusiasts. I did a Cool Jazz Session. All West Coast style with Mulligan, MJQ, Miles and Chico Hamilton, etc. Seemed to go well as a different style being presented!

15 Apr will be a Presentation by Dave Marsden on The Blues. Should be good, and a chance for one of the Members to give their thoughts on a style.

London Theatre Grp

10 Jun We have obtained tickets to see CALENDAR GIRLS at the Noel Coward Theatre. It has a great cast including Lynda Bellingham, Patricia Hodge, Sian Phillips, Gaynor Faye and others.

Coach times will be:-
Bushey Synagogue 12.00pm
Bushey Haydon Rd 12.05pm
The Essex Arms 12.30pm

Luncheon Club

4th Wed in month

We are still up and running and would be pleased to see any members who would like to join us for lunch. Please phone Fay for further details.

MoneyMatters

1st Thurs Hollytree House. 10.00am - Noon.

In spite of the absence of several of our regulars due to a very interesting outing with another group, we had a very acceptable turnout of 20.

We discussed the attraction and otherwise of investing in equities &/or bonds, together with the risk factor and ease/difficulty of selling, plus the possible advantage of a fixed interest. This led us into the realms of annuities; equity release including protecting the value of your home and Inheritance tax; where to get advice about pensions and what happens if an insurance company with whom one has an annuity goes bust; what happens to our income?

2 Apr Speaker Coming from Hertfordshire - Dacorum, Watford and Three Rivers - To explain how help can be

given, both practical and financial to people in difficulty.

Music Appreciation

3rd Wed: 10.00am Coffee and chat. **10.30am** meeting. **15 Apr and 20 May** the lives and music of Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky.

Needlecraft

1st & 4th Mon Combewood House. Group full.

Opera

NB change to the 4th. Monday in the month due to clashes with the Vue cinema productions. We will try this for a while to see how things work out. Our nearest Vue cinema at Woodside do not have any future opera presentations on their website at present. However, the Odeon at Hatfield Galleria have the following films listed on theirs.

Monday 30 March – Carmen
Monday 20 April – Norma
Monday 1 June – Rigoletto – Royal Opera House production

Tuesday 30 June – La Traviata – live from Covent Garden. I suggest you look at the Odeon website under 'Odeon Plus' to check these dates and times. I shall keep an eye on the Vue cinema website for any news.

27 Apr 2.00pm at Christine's. 'Rigoletto' by Verdi - a production recorded in 1974 with Placido Domingo as the Duke.

Panto Group

If you are interested in airing your talent next Christmas, Dick Chapman, Panto Study Group Leader, would love to hear from you and answer any queries.

Pathfinders Group

The Essex Arms **9.25am**
28 Apr Windsor and Saville Gardens.
26 May Bovington Green/Ley Hill.
23 Jun Ponders End.
I regret this group is full.

Performing Arts

Johanna's Mon 7.30pm
24 Mar to 4 Apr Watford

Palace Theatre The second play will be 'A Chorus of Disapproval'. Book

6 Apr 7.30pm A discussion evening about this play.

Photo Manipulation

Falconer School, Bushey
2nd Tuesday of the month
4.00pm– 5.30pm The lectures are by Gerry Adams.
Apr NB NO MEETING due to School Easter Holidays.
12 May We will be learning how to use the various Tools. Please remember to bring your Memory Sticks etc.

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. Short rides in the Watford area based on the Watford Council map, starting at the Pump House at 2.00pm.

2 Apr, 7 May, 4 June.

Science Interest
3rd Monday 10.00am; all meetings Hollytree House.

20 Apr What is Digital Electronics – Gavin Peacock.
18 - 20 May Visit to the Potteries.

15 Jun The Future of Low Carbon Heating – John Kellett, General Manager, Heating Division of Mitsubishi Electrical (Ecodan boilers)
New members welcome!

Scrabble 1

2nd and 4th Thursdays.
Our group is still full.

Scrabble 2

2nd Thurs 10.00am.
Our group is now full. Maybe someone would wish to start Scrabble 3?

Shakespeare

Last Wed 2.00pm
29 Apr We are going to enjoy a showing of the BBC DVD of: 'Henry the Fourth Part Two', again with the kind help of Colin Richards. The trip to Stratford-upon-Avon is now organized for Thursday, 17 Sept, to see: 'The Winter's Tale'.

27 May next meeting/reading.

Snooker

Every Monday (except Bank Holidays) **11.00am-1.00pm.** Joint Group with WPU3A.

Sporting Forum

At the March meeting members had the opportunity to put the 'Sporting World' to rights as they debated the important (sports related) issues of the day. March comes to an end with a trip to an Ice Hockey match at Slough skating rink.

21 Apr Evening trip to Wimbledon Greyhound stadium.

Strollers

Meeting time 11.00am New members will be welcome.

Distances are not shown but are usually 2.5 to 3 miles.

14 Apr Phil- Oxhey Woods (bluebells, with luck) CP The Pavillion; eat at The Load of Hay.

28 Apr Myra and Jane -the deer park, Stanmore CP Stanmore Cricket Club; eat at the Harvester (NB: carrots for the deer -but not obligatory)

12 May Angela and Gerry - Bricket Wood. Park and eat at the Gate, corner of Smug Oak Lane, (NB not Moor Mill).

26 May Jane and Myra - Grimsdyke (rhododendrons - lots of them) Park overlooking Harrow, near the Case is Altered; eat at the Harvester

The Explorers

5 Apr: 10.00am CP near The Case is Altered PH Leaders Jean Groves & Alan Rose Walk in Old Reddings area.

1 May 10.00 am Essex Arms Whippendell Woods Bluebell Walk. Leader Diane Falkener

5 Jun 10.00 am The Cock PH CP, Church Lane Sarratt. Leader Raymond.

3 Jul 10.00 am CP opp. the Windmill PH Chipperfield. Leader Elizabeth. Walks start at or near a public house where afterwards you might want to partake of food or liquid refreshment.

Wear strong walking shoes or boots, and bring a lightweight waterproof, and something to drink along the way. If you are joining us and you let the organizer or leader know by phone, then if you are late someone will wait for you.

The Travel Group **YORKSHIRE TRIP:**

Balance of Yorkshire trip is now payable. Kindly let Jackie Connal have your cheques a.s.a.p. She will forward them to Simply Groups on your behalf. CROATIA in October. This trip will be taking place. Please see Jackie if you wish to go and have not yet completed the forms.

The Rock 'n' Roll Yrs **4th Thursday each month**

2.30 pm Hollytree House.
Contact: Andrew Cannon
23 Apr Everly Brothers.

Thirsty Walkers

Every 4th Thursday.
Don't forget we meet at The Essex Arms at 9.30am to share cars. We had an excellent turnout for our previous walk through Whippendell Woods with Alan Betts. Perhaps it's the good company?

23 Apr Walk through Merlin/Harrocks Woods (hopefully lots of bluebells!). Led by John Reeve from The Essex Arms.

28 May Walk through Chess Valley and along The Grand Union Canal. Led by Mike Thomas from The Coach and Horses, Rickmansworth.

25 Jun Walk led by Jill Jenkins through Denham and Harefield.

Tuesday Trekkers

Meet 9.45am start at 10.00am. Walks of about



March found them in glorious sunshine on Stanmore Common

Photo John Morgan

5mls ending at a very worthwhile pub.

14 Apr Barton Way CP Croxley Green. Dennis leads, fresh from the OZ bush, how many corks hang from his hat now?

U3A Singers

1st & 3rd Monday 2.30pm

Walking

Most walks start at JS A41

Eight miles 9.30am

8 Apr Lea Valley.

13 May 9.00am London meet Met Station with Bus Passes.

10 Jun Hertford.

Six miles All 10.00am start

22 Apr Rickmansworth.

27 May Chalfont St Peter.

24 Jun Great Gaddesden.

Wine Appreciation

Last Friday in the month.

Writers Workshop

Come and develop your writing skills.

New members welcome.

Peace Hospice March Raffle

Thank you to all who bought tickets, our lovely helpers who sold and folded tickets and to our Chairman for drawing and announcing the ticket numbers.

We raised £251.00 and we were also recently given a nice donation from The Opera Group, so we are on our way to raising another good sum for the Peace Hospice.

We won't be at the May Meeting so please bring any donations on the day of the **June raffle**. We will however be at the April Meeting and can also collect if you care to call us on Watford

Thank you,
JUNE AND BAUGHEN.

Peace Hospice Garden Party

Sunday May 17th

1.00pm- 5pm

Margaret Redding and I will be available in the coffee break to take down details of those of you who would like to volunteer to help on the day and also to make cakes for us. We made a good profit for the hospice last year and it would be great to repeat this. The plant stall made a great contribution to funds and if you could produce plants for us we would be delighted. At the moment we do not have anyone to run the plant stall and if you feel you would like to do this then please come and see us and you will be welcomed with open arms. In addition we will be selling Balloon Race tickets at £1 each so do look for the balloons in one corner of our meeting room and there we will be waiting ! Donations gratefully received will include - Bric-a-brac, mainly china and glass, Bottles of every description, Soft toys, Books, especially children's books, CDs and DVDs, Cakes and plants on the day as above. Thank you. Valerie Webster

GO TO A CLASSICAL CONCERT FOR ONLY A FIVER? YES!

**Concert 2: Thursday 30th
April 7.30 pm** Wagner
Prelude & Liebestod from
Tristan & Isolde + Bruckner
Sy. # 7.

To tempt you along, for either concert, a ticket is available as 'A Test Drive' and will cost you only £5. Alternatively buy a ticket for both concerts for £20 on production of this advert on 19th March. Contact the Box Office 888230 10 am-8pm. (24 hour voice mail), Or Tony Platts

**Help promote security
West Herts Against Crime.
contact Russell Cleaver**

MICROSOFT OFFICE PROFESSIONAL WORD, EXCEL, AC- CESS, OUTLOOK, POWERPOINT, PUB- LISHER.

MRP Cost: **£400+** special offer to bona fide members of the U3A **≈ £97**
Contact: THE THIRD AGE TRUST
19 East St. Bromley Kent
BRI IQH
tel 02084666139
email:national.office@u3a.org.uk

CHARITY DANCE

as a Farewell to Val from Hollytree house.

**7.30 p.m. Friday 3rd
April 2009.**

Orbital Community Centre
Haines Way (off Sheepcot Lane) Garston.

Live Band: 'Rock of Ages'

www.rockofagesband.co.uk

**Price: £8.00 per person,
food included but no bar.**

There will be a raffle.

Clear proceeds to: Watford Multiple Sclerosis Society and Zimbabwe Orphans Fund

Tickets: Call Val Hubbard on 01923-678131

WANTED



Thank you to all of those members who brought along, to the last meeting, their unwanted spectacles. I received 51 pairs, approx 11% of the membership. If any of you have more, I will collect for the last time at our next monthly meeting, Tuesday 7th April. Thank you.

Jacqueline Godfrey

JB Computer Services
01923 230607
jb.computerservices@yahoo.co.uk

Computer Repair Home visits
Viruses cleaned; Memory upgrades; Data backups
Price agreed in advance
10 years repairing PCs
John Boughton

Watford U3A's Projector & Laptop

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

Colin Richards

Email

digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk

MEMBERS free ADVERTISEMENTS

2 drawer nearly new wooden filing cabinet **for sale**. Cost £30 accept **£18**. Tel

Advertisements may be edited or omitted depending on space available.

TALKS PROGRAMME

2009

7 Apr Red Cross First Aid.

5 May A.G.M.

2 Jun David O'Neale NHS Foundation Trust

7 Jul Mike Pocock Three Rivers Water.

4 Aug Study Group Fair
**For More detail contact
Speaker Secretary:-**

David Helliwell

speakers@watfordu3a.org.uk

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 2009

It only seems a short while since I presented my last annual report, but that was twelve whole months ago and what a lot has happened in that time!

Our study groups continue to flourish, new groups have been set up, we now have over fifty catering for the different interests of our members, but all characterised by enthusiasm, a willingness to share knowledge and skills with others and to be actively considering new avenues to explore, including making use of new technologies to enliven presentations. With the latter trend in mind your Executive Committee has been planning ahead to try to ensure that our equipment is kept up to date to meet the needs of our organisation, including the widening range of activity, study and interest groups; to reduce risk of breakdown and also to keep abreast of new developments.

For some time the Committee has used e-mail to communicate and to circulate documents in advance. This medium has enabled us to reduce the number of meetings held this year from eleven to seven without, we hope, loss of efficiency. We have been glad to receive comments and suggestions from members, which are always carefully considered and actioned as appropriate.

We have continued to benefit from courses in computing skills offered by Watford Boys' Grammar School and have now been joined by members of Watford Park U3A. Early next year we look forward to courses in modern languages at the same centre. We also continue to enjoy the use of facilities in other establishments, including schools, residential homes, the Metropolitan Police Sports Club and even the Garston Fire Station(!). This interaction between U3A and the community is greatly appreciated by us and our hosts and also may improve the perception of what the "third age" has to offer.

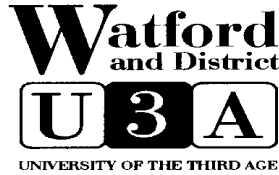
In the Autumn we were treated to a series of lectures on London Architecture followed by another on the London Underground, both open to all members. These were given by David Burnell, a visiting lecturer from Harrow, and have been so successful that they are now being repeated.

A low point in the year was the death in October of our Founder and President, Reg Cooke, followed in February by that of his widow, Peggy. Reg, and Peggy will long be remembered for their loyal and unobtrusive support of all aspects of our U3A, they represented the quintessence of this organisation.

In order to function smoothly any organisation needs volunteers, the "hewers of wood and drawers of water", who get things done. We have a committee of ten, eleven assistants to the committee, over fifty study group leaders, organisers of book sales, raffles and charitable events together with others who are prepared to step in and help at short notice when need arises. You are too many to name individually, but without you the organisation would not be what it is.

With very best wishes to you all.

John Carleton



TWELTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

At the Metropolitan Police Sports & Social Club, Aldenham Road, Bushey

Tuesday 5th May 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

FINAL AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Approval of Minutes of AGM held Tuesday 6th May 2008 (copy with April Newsletter).
NB Item 10 –corrected date (1st April 2009 not 1st April 2008 as notified to members in June 2008 Newsletter)
3. Matters arising from the Minutes – if any.
4. To receive and approve the Annual Report by the Chairman, John Carleton (April Newsletter).
5. To receive and approve the examined Accounts (available at the AGM).
6. To appoint an Examiner of the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2010.
7. To elect three Committee Members. Only three nominations have been received - Mrs Tricia Ashby, Mrs Frances Ayrton and Mr Richard Chapman - and so a ballot is not required.
8. To consider a recommendation from the Committee that from 1st April 2010 the Membership Subscription shall be:

£21.50 for members renewing their subscriptions, or first joining between 1st April and 31st July;
£15.00 for members joining between 1st August and 30th November;
£7.50 for members joining between 1st December and 31st March;
£4.00 for members on Income Support, whatever the time of year the member joins.

Provided that the annual subscription may be increased to such sum, not exceeding £25.00 as the Committee shall recommend to the membership by at least three weeks' written notice given at any time and expiring not later than 31st March 2010. *Note: The above subscriptions include the increased per capita levy due to the Third Age Trust.*
9. To consider a proposal from Donald Reid duly notified in advance:

'In view of the serious threat posed by Climate Change, and the letter to all U3As from the National U3A Chair in 2008 calling on us to seriously consider the implications of Sustainable Development, this meeting calls on the Committee of the Watford U3A to prepare a report on ways in which this U3A and its Study Groups can reduce Carbon emissions. Examples might include the promotion of car sharing and the avoidance of flying. Advice is available from members of our own Science Group.'
10. Any Other Business
11. **Date of next AGM to be 4th May 2010**

Yvonne Fitton, Secretary

WATFORD AND DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Minutes of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting held at 10.00 am on Tuesday 6th May 2008 at the Metropolitan Police Sports and Social Club, Aldenham Road Bushey, Herts.

Present: John Carleton Chairman and 188 members.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from 21 members, a list of the names is held by the Secretary.

2. To approve the Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 1st May 2007.

2. 2006 AGM held on Tuesday 2nd May not 1st May. 4. Correction; Rabi Martins title not Mayor but "Chairman of Watford Borough Council". 14. 1st April 2007 not 2008*.

On a proposal by Trevor Boardman, seconded by Peter Andrews and carried nem con., the Minutes were adopted as a correct record. * see footnote at end

3 Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising.

4. To receive and approve the Annual Report by the Chairman John Carleton (printed in April Newsletter).

The Chairman said what a pleasure it was to work with the members of Watford U3A and with such an excellent committee. He thanked Dorelle Boardman, the retiring committee member, who had worked extremely hard with the Associate Members to make them welcome and feel part of the U3A. He thanked Tom O'Callaghan, who has offered to stand again as Membership Secretary, for all his hard work.

On a proposal by Jean Armstrong and seconded by David Wynne-Jones the Report was accepted nem con.

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

5a The Treasurer thanked the Committee and the Members for their support. The Auditor approved of the SGLs' reports and accounts.

5b The Treasurer said the surplus had been too high in 2007 according to the Charity Commission guidelines, but having reduced it we now had to make provision for the future replacement of ageing equipment. Our surplus was now well within the Charity Commission guidelines.

5c In response to a question by David Wynne-Jones concerning the Social Surplus the Treasurer replied that it was money accumulated from various accounts such as Christmas Lunches.

On a proposal by Terry Waterfall and seconded by Jean Pearce the Accounts were accepted nem con.

6. To appoint an Examiner of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2009.

Stan Hewitt was willing to stand as Examiner of Accounts for the year 2008-2009.

On a proposal by David Helliwell and seconded by Bernard Steele the appointment was confirmed nem con.

7. To consider motions from the Committee.

7a That Reg Cooke be re-elected as President.

On a proposal by Tony Platts and seconded by David Ware the motion was carried nem con.

7b That Mrs. Margaret Thompson be elected as an Honorary Life Member. This recognition by the Committee was for all of Margaret's work with the U3A as Chairman and all the time spent and effort involved producing the excellent Newsletter.

On a proposal by John Grainger and seconded by David Wynne-Jones the motion was carried nem.con.

The presentation was made by the President to the acclaim of the membership. Margaret expressed her appreciation and said how much she enjoyed editing the Newsletter.

8. Address by the President Mr. Reg Cooke

The President paid tribute to all those mentioned in the Chairman's Report who helped with the smooth running of the U3A. He felt the appointment of Margaret Thompson to become a Life Honorary Member was well justified. He also thanked John Grainger, Robin Hurley and Colin Richards who worked in the background to add to the success of our meetings.

9. To elect three Committee Members.

Only three nominations, John Friend, Margaret Foster and Tom O'Callaghan (current Membership Secretary) had been received for the three vacancies and so no vote was needed.

The Chairman welcomed the new Committee Members.

10. To consider a recommendation from the Committee that from 1st April 2008 the Membership Subscription shall be:**

** see footnote at end

- £19 for members renewing their subscriptions between 1st April and 31st July.
- £13 for members joining between 1st August and 30th November.
- £6.50 for members joining between 1st December and 31st March.
- £3.50 for Members on Income Support, whatever the time of year the member joins.

Provided that the annual subscription may be increased to such sum, not exceeding £21.50, as the Committee shall recommend to the membership by at least three weeks' written notice given at any time and expiring not later than 31st March 2009.

In response to a question from Maureen Bates as to why the subscription was reduced for 2007-2008, but raised by 27% for 2008-2009 the Treasurer replied:

1. The income had decreased by the abolition of the 50p money collected at each monthly meeting.
2. The cash in hand had seemed a little high in 2007 by Charity Commission standards, but with rising costs of e.g. the monthly venue, postage and the photocopier maintenance, there was a need to make a revised forecast.
3. The number of Members was lower this year 415 (including 5 Honorary Members) as opposed to 465 last year. The reason for this was the new U3A to which 14 members had transferred, 20 simply resigned, and 14 did not notify the Membership Secretary at all even after a telephone reminder.
4. When notification of this year's rise was sent out no-one objected.

The Chairman said the potential rise was a caveat – in case of an emergency, needing extra expenditure. On a proposal by Monica Creegan and seconded by Dorothy Steele the recommendation was carried nem. con.

11. To consider a proposal, from Dr. Tony Platts, duly notified in advance.

11a THAT Clause 4(xi) of the Constitution of the Watford and District U3A be amended to read (with the amending words in italics):

4. POWERS In furtherance of the Objects but not otherwise, the Executive committee may exercise the following powers:

4(xi) Power to make and alter regulations for the conduct of the affairs of the U3A(provided such regulations are not inconsistent with this constitution *and are ratified by at least two-thirds of the membership present and voting at a general meeting*) and do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Objects.

Tony Platts spoke to his proposal on the grounds that the existing constitution gave excessive freedom to the Committee to make changes to the Regulations without prior consultation with the membership.

The proposal was seconded by Basil Groves.

The Chairman stated his opposition to the proposal on the grounds that members are able to raise any concerns over any action of the Committee either informally or formally (by requesting a Special General Meeting).

David Wynne-Jones and Alan Prest spoke against the proposal, supporting the Committee and its right to make changes to the Regulations for the smooth running of the U3A. Bernard Steele supported the two previous speakers adding that any change to the Regulations be published.

The Proposal was put to the Meeting and was lost by an overwhelming majority.

11b Tony Platts had withdrawn this second proposal before the meeting.

12. AOB

12a Alan Prest said that he was unable to access the information about the AGM on the website. The Chairman agreed to investigate.

13 Date of next AGM to be 5th May 2009.

14. The Chairman closed the meeting at 11 05 am.

Signed.....

Chairman

.....

Vice Chairman

.....

Date

* Change made in error **Incorrect date, should have been 1st April 2009.

Both to be rectified at the next Special General Meeting

JFC 6th May 2008