



**The University
of the Third Age**

**WOKINGHAM
NEWSLETTER
NOV-DEC.
2007**

**Monthly Meeting
Tuesday 20th November
2.00 pm at St Paul's Parish Rooms**

**Iceland
John Harrison**

**Christmas Event
Tuesday 18th December
1.30pm at St Paul's Parish Rooms
Details on page 7**

A View From The Chair

Should More Groups Meet In The Evening? One suggestion from a recent meeting of new members was that groups might consider meeting in the evening. When I joined U3A some years ago it was said that 'U3A people don't like being out after dark' and new convenors were advised to time meetings accordingly. Like any new boy I accepted the general view without question but began to wonder at its accuracy when I met other U3A members at evening meetings of the History Group, Wokingham Society, etc.

I think that the Film Group led the way to change with its evening showings in Wokingham Methodist Church Centre. Now the diary shows that Play Reading, Maj-Jong, Jazz Appreciation and Wine Appreciation groups meet in the evenings while some other groups such as Theatre, MOTO and Out and About may do the same on occasions.

Not surprisingly the views of other new members were mixed. Some were enthusiastic about groups meeting in the evening while others said that they might go to occasional late meetings but would not join a group that always met during the evening. What's your view? Would you like to see more groups meeting during the evening or do you think that new groups should meet during the morning or afternoon? Please let me or a committee member know so that we can advise new convenors.

Thames Valley Region. Views on revising the organisation of the Region are changing and I am starting to get more comments in favour of a new structure. Additionally I have accepted an invitation to join the provisional committee and this is giving me an insight into what a restructured Region might offer to the U3As that join it. I hope to share these with you at the SGM and monthly meeting on the 16th October.

Colin Mitchell
Chairman

Wokingham U3A

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U3A Summer Schools

Each summer there are two national summer schools where U3A members are able to follow a course of study from a choice of approximately 12 wide-ranging subjects, led by volunteer U3A tutors. In most cases previous experience is not required. The dates and locations for the 2008 Summer Schools are:

28th - 31st July - Harper Adams University College, Newport, Shropshire.

11th - 14th August - Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

The U3A Secretary will have more information in November when the details will also be posted on the national website www.u3a.org.uk. You can contact the Secretary for a copy of the material or 'phone or email the national office in November if you would like a personal copy of this information.

Out & About.

It's been 6 months since our group first met at the Friends Meeting House in Wokingham. Many thanks must go to Phyllis Smith & Muriel Froom for running the first 3 meetings. After taking over the 'reins' we got off to a shaky meeting (only 8 people attended) but never less we didn't lose heart and after telephoning every available member with the date and time of our next meeting, our attendance figure climbed to impressive 22 attendees.

We have participated in various outings during the last few months, some organised by MOTO and others by our own group. Some of the events that have taken place are as follows, a walk in London, a visit to Saville Gardens, narrow boat trip in Godalming, (all by courtesy of MOTO) and a guided walk around California Country Park, a visit to an Alpaca farm in Whitchurch combined with a visit to the Falklands Memorial Chapel in Pangbourne.

Future events that have been organised are, a trip around the House of Parliament, a guided tour around the Law Courts, a guided walk around Odiham, a coach trip to Bletchley Park, a possible trip to tour Wembley Stadium and a possible drink tasting experience at the Vinopolis in London.

Suggestions still in the forward planning stage are 10 pin bowling, a local theatre trip, a visit to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich and another London Walk.

Our membership has now grown to 36 - a 100% increase on the very first meeting.

We are still welcoming new members who wish to join to our group, 'the more the merrier' is our motto.

A personal 'thank you' to all those members who have arranged or helped to arrange the aforementioned trips.

Stan Hughesdon (0118 961 3556)

Patchwork and Quilting Group



Over the past couple of years we have attempted many techniques and designs. Some of these we have incorporated into our own projects, or put together to make group quilts. Recently we collected seven quilts, cot-size to lap-size, that were group efforts, or that individuals had supplied (shown in photo). One of our members delivered them to a co-ordinator for the charity 'Project Linus UK'. This charity focusses on

providing security through blankets (after the security blanket-toting character, Linus, in the Peanuts comic strip) and provides quilts and blankets to help sick, seriously ill, abused, bereaved or traumatised children - children in need of a big hug. They were greatly appreciated. It is nice to know that our samples will be put to good use, and hopefully appreciated by the children. It is also useful to have a target for our new ideas and we plan to send more in the future.

Thanks to all members of the group for their great input.

Janet Scotton

New Members And Groups

Recently we held a New Members Meeting at which there was plenty of lively discussion and which seemed to be both enjoyed and appreciated by those attending. Thank you to all the new members who came to the meeting and for their interesting input.

From the discussions there emerged some new ideas for groups. Several new members wondered if it was possible to set up a Flower Arranging Group, so if any of you would also be interested please contact me and we will try to organise a day and time.

There was also interest expressed in a daytime Majong Group as the small existing Majong group meets in the evening. Of those interested were new members who already could play and also several who wanted to learn. Anyone else who would like to join the world of 'Winds and Dragons' should contact me.

Other ideas that were floated were a Smocking Group and a Golf Group for the not too serious golfer, and John Cope's article in this Newsletter tells you about this idea.

Please respond if you feel that any of these possible groups might be something for you and I will endeavour to get things moving.

Hilary Taylor Group co-ordinator Tel: 01189 786475

Anyone for Leisurely Golf?

My wife and I moved to Wokingham 2 and a half years ago and apart from the actual trauma involved with relocation, we have both been seriously ill and therefore I have not played golf for a very long time. Although I had a high handicap I thoroughly enjoyed my weekly outing to the golf course and the exercise!

At aged 71 joining a golf club does not really appeal any more because I don't feel confident or indeed competent enough to do so. Also, I don't want the competition and commitment that a club basically demands.

If there are any like minded members who would like to thrash around 9 or even 18 holes, have a chat and a laugh at each others misfortunes, then please give me ring.

John Cope

0118 977 0892

Duplicate Bridge Change of Venue

Duplicate Bridge meets on the first Tuesday of each month and from October 2007 will meet in the Rose Room at the Methodist Hall in Rose Street, Wokingham, from 9.15am to 12.15pm.

This session is only for playing duplicate bridge and is not a teaching session. Players need to be able to play bridge fairly competently and be able to score.

If you would like to join us please phone Betty Hughes on 0118 978 8452

Out and About

The Out & About had a most successful guided tour of Odiham on the 15th September. A total of 18 members met outside St. Saviours Church where we met our guide, Jane. The guide tour started from within the church and then into the grounds outside. Jane was really well informed as to the history of not only the church but also of Odiham. Her family (farmers) have been in Odiham for over 200 years and she still lives there. After about a one & half hour tour we said goodbye to our guide with everyone agreeing that she had been most informative. The majority of the group then decided to take lunch at 'The Cromwell Arms' which is filled with photographs showing Odiham's past. A truly memorable day was had by all with special thanks going to Gill Borlace for organising the trip.

Stan Hughesdon (Convenor).

Seven go spotting at Stodmarsh!

We set out early for our September Bird Watching group meeting and travelled to Stodmarsh, a National Nature Reserve near Canterbury in Kent. When we arrived we were met by the warden who explained that he would walk around the reserve with us helping us to identify the various birds and ultimately to get the most from our visit. The countryside was looking particularly beautiful with masses of berries on the trees and a few leaves just beginning to change to their autumnal colour. The sun shone all day from a deep blue sky.



David, the warden helped us to identify several birds which are not local to Berkshire, including Cetti's Warblers, Marsh Harriers, and Egrets. We only got a fleeting glimpse of the Cetti's Warblers, but heard them repeatedly calling as they hid from us! In a meadow we saw a herd of wild horses which were imported from Poland about 6 years ago. These horses share the same genes as the original wild horses which roamed Europe and

England 7,000 years ago. Apparently the original 9 horses have settled well, 6 foals have been born, and they are all so hardy that they almost never need the vet.

At lunchtime we stopped at a viewpoint overlooking a large expanse of wetland. David trained his viewing scope onto the lake and we saw a flock of Lapwings resting in the heat of the day. Then someone spotted a Snipe just a few feet away, so we were all lucky enough to get a really close look at its speckled plumage. Suddenly we heard a really strange bird call! "That's a marsh frog" David explained. In the marshes we saw 2 big green frogs eyeing each other, and they kept us amused for several minutes with their antics.

Late in the afternoon we left the reserve and made our way into the village of Stodmarsh and stopped at the village pub The Red Lion. Here we enjoyed afternoon tea in the garden, ordered our evening meal for later, and then wandered around the peaceful little village. We explored the 13th century Norman church made of flint and with a wooden tower. By the door we found Crusaders' crosses, scratched by those crusaders who stopped to pray on their way to the coast.

Later we returned to The Red Lion and enjoyed a lovely meal. The landlord was quite a character - he could have come straight from a sit-com! As we were leaving, in the floodlit pub garden the locals had gathered for a game of "bat and trap".....but that's another story!

We all agreed that we had enjoyed the day so much that we would return to the reserve again in May when the bird numbers are at their greatest. So many thanks to Val Briault, whose idea this was, for organising such a successful day out.

Joyce Sweatman

Penny Raven writes

I will be leaving the Wokingham U3A after many years. My membership number is 74, a well established member of the group. I have made many friends and enjoyed countless meetings over the years. Thank you to the people who have supported me in both the Scrapbooking and Calligraphy groups and to the Convenors of the groups to which I have belonged.

We have found out that there is a U3A Group in Chipping Norton which we hope to join when we are settled in the area.

Penny Raven

Diary - Missing Entries

The following groups do not have entries in the Diary pages. Please contact the respective convenors for meeting dates etc.

Card Making 3

Discussion

Latin

Philosophy

Italian Intermediate

Mah-jong

Christmas Event 2007

As a follow-up to that mentioned in the last Newsletter and also at the September Open Meeting, the above will take place in the St Paul's Parish Rooms on Tuesday 18th December starting promptly at 1.30 pm and continuing to approx. 4 pm. Unfortunately, because of hall capacity restrictions, admission is strictly by pre-purchased ticket and these have now all been sold. However, if at a later date you find you cannot attend, please get in touch with Andy Lee on 0118 962 9041 as there is a waiting list for tickets.

For the lucky ticket holders it promises to be an entertaining afternoon. There will be a glass of mulled wine on arrival and raffle tickets will be available. Our own Bell Ringers, Recorder and Singing Groups will be strutting their stuff interspersed with other amusing and entertaining highlights. We finish with some rousing community carols to get us in the Christmas spirit followed by our refreshments at about 3 pm. This will operate in the same way as our successful Garden Party namely; each person will bring a plate of finger food on arrival that will be placed on a communal table. Also bring a drink of your choice, a glass and your ticket. We make one request: If possible please try and avoid bringing mince pies and sausage rolls as I am sure we all generally have a surfeit

of these at Christmas! With culinary imagination and also with what is on offer in shops we are sure that some tasty stuff can be produced - as at the Garden Party. At the appointed time members will be invited to help themselves from the choices available for which plates will be provided and then to sit down, enjoy and have a chat.

Regrettably on this occasion, we will not be selling any drink or be in a position to provide tea or coffee. After refreshments and as you leave you will be invited to dip into a bran tub for a small departing gift.

We look forward to your company and an enjoyable afternoon.

Peter Harms On behalf of the Special Events Group

Antiques Group

Group members regard themselves as learners and teachers sharing a common interest in Antiques and collectables. Some members are knowledgeable enthusiasts in various fields and give presentations from their own collections whilst others research a topic and present by notes, video/slides and relevant books and pictures often obtained from the U3A Resources Centre

Since its formation in 2004 the group has looked at (in some cases also listened to) and discussed English ceramics, Furniture, Clocks, vintage Gramophones, Treen and Silver and supplemented our meetings with visits to Museums, Antique Centres, Auction Rooms, Collections and Historic houses. Last years main topic was the Arts and Craft movement and for the next year it is the Art Deco period.

Our informal meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday morning of every month lasting for about 2 hours. As we presently meet in each others houses membership is limited. However we always welcome new members so please ring me if we are discussing a subject that interests you.

Brian Hoare

Can We Run A Study Day? Any Ideas?

As your Vice Chairman, I am working with a group of interested members to consider areas of possible future development of Wokingham U3A. One topic we have been considering is the possibility of running a single Study Day next summer, at the end of July or the beginning of August. We have found one or two venues in the area which would be attractive centres for such an event, and we think it might be fun!

However, it does depend on having some worthwhile and well-run courses to attract people from other U3A's in the area, as well as our own.

At the moment, we are looking for volunteers, suggestions for good outside speakers, recommendations of interesting courses which are already being run within our own U3A and might deserve a wider audience, or other ideas.

We are envisaging three sessions during the day, which might all be on related topics, or on different ones. We would expect 5 or 6 different courses to run simultaneously, but our ideas are in their infancy at the moment! Some of the subjects mentioned so far are heritage, archaeology, current events, recorders, bridge, genealogy, card making, producing a light entertainment.....

If you have any ideas or recommendations, I would love to hear from you, even if you're just prepared to come along and make coffee!

Patsy Thornton 01344 774812

ted.t@talktalk.net

Planning For The Later Years

Carole Beswetherick has only had one response to her request for volunteers. This event can only happen if there are enough members willing to lead workshops. Please consider if you are able to help. If you would like further information please ring Carole on 01344 771303

Equipment For Groups To Borrow.

Our U3A owns equipment that is available for groups to use for their meetings. Some of it is used frequently by some groups and group leaders should think ahead and book well in advance. In case of conflict the first group to book gets the equipment.

We currently have:

Projectors, Flip Charts, Screens, Etc

- 2 Portable Overhead Projectors
- 2 Kodak Carousel 35mm Slide Projectors with carousels
- 3 Electronic (digital) Projectors
- 3 Flip Charts with stands
- 4 projector screens
- Stands for 35mm and digital projectors

Computers

- 4 Laptop Computers (we are purchasing 2 more)

Audio/Video

- 2 Video Cassette Players
- 2 DVD Players
- 1 pair Active Loudspeakers (for use with digital projectors and VCR or DVD)
- 1 Public Address / Loudspeaker system with hand and lapel radio microphones

Musical

Digital Piano and Stand
Belleplates

How To Get Hold Of Equipment. All of this equipment is available for groups to use. Just book it through the appropriate Equipment Manager (see below) who will advise you where to collect it from. The Equipment Manager will need to confirm that potential users are members of Wokingham U3A and competent to use the equipment; please note that equipment training may be available from other members.

Storage. We don't have a central storage place for the equipment: some is kept in St. Paul's Parish Rooms (key held by Chairman), some in an Equipment Manager's home and some in the homes of other members. Members who borrow equipment may be asked to keep it until it is needed by another member.

Restrictions On Use. Our equipment is **not** available to non-U3A members, neither is it normally available for use outside U3A. There are a few situations when a member may borrow equipment for use outside U3A, for example to make a presentation to a local charity. These situations have been defined by the Committee and the Equipment Managers hold details of them.

Contacts For Enquiries:

Brian Pettitt manages Digital Equipment, Computers and Projectors. Tel: 0118 9783824. E-mail:skyquest@ntlworld.com

Ted Thornton coordinates other equipment and enquiries for use should go to him in the first place.

Sixty Years Ago

September 6th. I baked seed cake, currant cake/and apple pie and rock cakes. Also bottled tomatoes and apple pulp.

September 10th. Walked up to the town this morning and bought some biscuits for Dad, and it was quite a treat to have a polite assistant. A mistaken impulse led me to go to the Mothers Union sale at Holy Trinity church hall. Bert (her brother-in-law R.) glassily eyed me: he needn't have bothered I wouldn't have spoken to him. Win (Winifred her sister. R.) looking like a fictional. vicar's wife, was flapping around and naturally could spare no time for me. At the invitation of two ladies there I took a cup of tea and some hoary old nymph came up and demanded 6d. (2 ½p.). I was glad to get out.

September 12th. The first rain for over six weeks was falling when I woke up this morning and it's surprising what a difference it has made to the grass, which has become quite green again.

September 19th. Really steaming hot. Had hair permed at Semens in Twickenham and this afternoon went to the Ritz to see "Jassy" a British film starring

Margaret Lockwood, very real and interesting. Came home and planted white narcissus bulbs in the front garden.

September 23rd. Much colder. Bought gold coloured eiderdown from Edmonds for £5-10s. (£5- 50p) and couldn't think whether I'd done right or not. (The cost would be approximately £115 at today's prices, R.)

September 29th. The rounds inspector came with the bread this afternoon. Apparently the roundsman had got into a hopeless muddle with his book-keeping and cash, as he'd got all Whitton Road customers entered as debtors, me for 3s- $\frac{3}{4}$ d. (15p. approx. There were 960 farthings to the pound. The cost would be approx. £3-50p at today's prices. R.)

October 3rd. Went to spend the evening with Dad while Cis, George and Rosemary went to the dinner that the staff were giving the directors of Thomasons at the Osterley Hotel. Cis(her sister and my mother. R.)looked very nice in black lace, although as usual she wasn't quite ready when Mr. Scott came with the car. Rosemary (that's me) looked charming and self-possessed in mauve tafeta, and George (my father. R.) looked very smart in a blue lounge suit.

October 4th. Glorious day. I bought a pair of blue shoes at a shop in Whitton; so comfortable that I walked home in them.

October 18th. This afternoon Clive and George, the electricians, came and fitted the immersion heater-£11. Daresay they'd rather have the cash than a cheque.

October 29th. Christine had a letter from the American Shipping Co. asking her to let them know whether she'd be ready to sail to America on November 15th. She has decided to go. (long term readers of the diary will remember that Christine, a neighbour's daughter, had married an American army officer, Spencer, during the war, and that they had a little girl called Felicity. R.).

Rosemary Goldschmied.

Annual General Meeting

Preliminary notice of the Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 18th March 2008 at California Ratepayers' Hall, Finchampstead Road, Finchampstead at 2.00p.m.

The AGM precedes the Monthly meeting where the speaker will be Peter Harms, Music, Woods and my Camera, Audio-Visual Presentation.

To include any items for the agenda or Motions to be put to the membership at the AGM please notify the Secretary: Muriel Froom, 1 Mertonford, Pages Croft, Wokingham RG40 2HQ. Any proposal for significant change has to be submitted in writing and seconded by a U3A member.

Wokingham U3A 'Showtime Players' proudly present

A Music Hall

at Oakwood Centre, Woodley

commencing at 7.30 pm

on

Thursday, 31st January 2008

Friday, 1st February, 2008

Saturday, 2nd February, 2008

Tickets £7.50 each.

Traditional Victorian dress optional

Booking office: Tickets are available from 1st November from Mavis Hoare at 8 Measham Way, Lower Earley, Reading, RG6 4ES (tel 0118 975 5428). Cheques should be made payable to Wokingham U3A and marked on the back 'Music Hall'. Please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope.

The seats are well raked in six rows with handrails to the steps that reach them. All have an excellent view of the stage. If you wish to select your seat because you have special needs, such as wheelchair place or extra long legs please indicate this in your request and add your telephone number. The tickets will be on sale at the monthly meetings for November, and January (if there are any left by then). Oakwood Centre is a modern theatre opposite to a public car park (a map is reproduced on the reverse side of the tickets). It has excellent facilities for both players and audience. If you wish to attend and have no transport or if you are willing to offer a lift, please contact me (Pauline on 0118 9733083) and I will endeavour to match one with another.

Special Appeal We would like some more backstage and front of house help, such as: operators for music, lighting and computer equipment; ushers for performers and audience; refreshment providers for the interval, and another stagehand. If you are not doing anything particular on one or more of the evenings of the performance why not join the group now and help us create a great U3A event. Please contact me if you are interested.

Pauline Riocreux

Copy date for the next issue is Friday 30th November