



**The University
of the Third Age**

**WOKINGHAM
NEWSLETTER**

**JAN-FEB.
2008**

Monthly Meeting
Tuesday 15th January
2.00 pm at St Paul's Parish Rooms

Major (retd) Paul Whittle
Steaming On

Monthly Meeting
Tuesday 19th February
2.00 pm at St Paul's Parish Rooms

Tony King
Dickens' London

A View From The Chair

I have seen some of this newsletter in draft and know that it is full of opportunities for us members. Most of these opportunities are close us in our study groups - with more than eighty groups to choose from we are spoilt for choice. Most of them welcome new members and where there are waiting lists we seldom have to wait long before an enthusiast opens a parallel group. Next year should see a first for Wokingham U3A: our very own Summer Study Day. Its planning team has already identified ten separate subjects to be enjoyed and there is more on this in the newsletter. Register your interest and you will get full information in the New Year.

We don't have to go far out of Wokingham for more. Our U3A region has had a boost of enthusiasm and will be running at least four study days during 2008. Booking is already open for the first of these, Tracing and Recording Your Family History, to be held in Oxford on 12th March.

There is even more for those prepared to travel further: One U3A National Summer School in Cirencester and another in Newport, near Telford. Each of these has several subjects on offer; if you are interested book early, they fill up quickly. Another National event is operated by the U3As Science, Technology and Society Network in Abergavenny.

We are fortunate in being close enough to London to enjoy some of the excellent one-day events such as 'Staying Sharp' with the Dana Centre and 'U3A Out and About with the Ri'. Both of these are events that tend to fill up quickly.

My 2008 diary is already well marked with U3A activities and hopefully I've got the balance about right. Many are events where I hope to learn and there are others where I'll be teaching - but I expect to enjoy myself at all of them. Hopefully I'll see some of you also enjoying yourselves with U3A.

Colin Mitchell

Chairman

Wokingham U3A

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Structure of Thames Valley U3A Region.

A substantial majority of U3A chairmen in the Thames Valley Region have voted to adopt a more formal structure for the Region (see our website for details). Individual U3As now need to decide whether to affiliate to this new structure and declare their intention by the end of January 2008. U3As who join the Region can leave at any time; similarly, U3As not joining next year can do so later.

U3As which affiliate will pay an annual capitation fee of 10p per member and this gives them early information on regional events, an updated speakers' list and opportunities to influence programmes and policies. Members of unaffiliated U3As will be welcome to attend many regional events but will be charged extra to do so.

There were mixed views among our members on the value of a more formal region but with a majority appearing to be against it I voted NO at the meeting of chairmen. However, with a formal structure now approved I believe that Wokingham U3A should join it and that will be my recommendation to your committee when it meets on January 8th. If you feel differently then tell me or a committee member.

Colin Mitchell

Chairman

Tracing and Recording Your Family History

Any member of U3A is welcome to attend a one-day study day on Tracing and Recording Your Family History. This is organised by Thames Valley U3A Region and will take place on Wednesday 12th March at Rewley House, Oxford, from 10.00am to 4.30pm. The day will include speakers from the Public Records Office and the Oxfordshire Family History Society plus a talk and demonstration on preserving heritage photographs and memorabilia. The cost will be £15.00 and lunch will be available from £6.00: members of U3As not affiliated to Thames Valley Region will be charged a premium of £5.00 for the day.

Booking is essential. For further information contact A C Burdall, Chairman Thames Valley Regional Committee, 2 Fernham Road, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 7JY. Tel: 01367240713 Mob: 0784135 2938 Email: anthony.burdall@burdall.net

There is also a more detailed notice on our web site.

Thames Valley U3A Regional Conference

The Regional Conference for 2008 will take place on the 28 May 2008 at Lord Williams's Lower School in Thame, Oxfordshire on a theme of "*U3A - the Nuts and Bolts and The Way Forward*". The keynote speaker will be Eric Midwinter and there will be a question and answer session with Lin Jonas from the Third Age Trust.

Booking details will be placed on our website when they arrive and then in the first available Newsletter.

Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting of our U3A will be held on 8th January 2008 at the Friends Meeting House in Denton Road, Wokingham, from 2.00p.m till 4.30 p.m. Members are welcome to attend but should advise the secretary in advance of the meeting.

Thames Valley U3A Regional Programme 2008

The draft study programme is:

Study Topic	Date	Venue
Tracing and recording your family history	12 March 2008	Rewley House Oxford
Managing your health in Third Age	4 June 2008	High Wycombe
Comparative Religions	10 Sept. 2008	Swindon
Climate Change, causes and consequences	26 Nov. 2008	Reading

Booking details will be placed on our website when they arrive and then in the first available Newsletter.

Internet

Several of the notices in this newsletter refer you to the Wokingham or National U3A websites for further information (www.wokinghamu3a.org.uk and www.u3a.org.uk if you haven't found them yet). I know that some of you don't have computers and don't want one: that is your choice in the same way that some members don't read this newsletter. However, the Internet offers us a method of providing you with more comprehensive information than can go in a newsletter. The information can also be updated as things change or as they become known to us. So if you want the latest U3A information keep an eye on the local and national websites: you don't even need your own computer - Wokingham's libraries offer free internet access.

Colin Mitchell

Chairman

Groups Update

Is There Room For You In The Group Of Your Choice?

I have now completed a full list of all the groups (see opposite), with the help of the Convenors, showing which groups have spare places, which are full and those with waiting lists.

As you can see there are many groups who can accommodate further members but 21 which are up to capacity and 6 with waiting lists. If you are wanting to join a new group and it appears on the lists of those full or with waiting lists you should still contact the Convenor of that group because places do become available in these groups for various different reasons. However, I shall also be endeavouring to set up parallel groups when there are sufficient interested members and would ask the Convenors, after first discovering if there is a member of the existing group who might like to try convening a new group, to refer the the members who cannot be placed to me so that I can try to set up new groups.

Workshop - What Do Convenors Do?

The major problem in setting up new groups is that they all need Convenors and some members, quite understandably, are a little hesitant about putting themselves forward. In an attempt to encourage some members to try a period as a Deputy Convenor, standing in when the Convenor is unavailable, or to have a try with a new group, we shall be running another Workshop on TUESDAY 26th FEBRUARY in the morning (the venue and exact time will be given to you when you register). This workshop will be open for any member to attend but it is hoped that a mixture of experienced Convenors, relatively new Convenors and other members who might one day try their hands at convening will be among those attending.

The workshop will be part informational and part discussion and if you are interested in taking part please can you contact me by telephone or e-mail in January as we do need to have a good idea about numbers.

New Members Meetings

At the Group Workshop that was held a couple of months ago it was felt that New Members Meetings should be held regularly and that they should be advertised in the Newsletter. I am consequently giving notice of a New Members Meeting to be held on WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 20TH at 10.30am (the venue to be given to you when you either receive your invitation or register). Martha Mason, the committee member responsible for new members, will issue invitations but any new or relatively new member may also contact Martha by telephone on 0118 9785026 to tell her that they are interested in attending the meeting.

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Groups with spare capacity

Archaeology	Gardening	Intermediate
Badminton	Genealogy	Recorders
Ballroom Dancing	Golf - Duffers	New Beginners
Basic Computers & Family History	United (new)	Recorders
Beginners Bridge	Handbell Ringing	Scrabble
and Belote	Industrial Archae- ology	Scrapbooking
Beyond (formerly Beginners Bridge)	Italian Intermedi- ate	Showtime
Bridge - duplicate	Latin	Singing for Fun
Bridge for All	Local History	Snooker 2
Canoeing (summer only)	Lunching Out	Spanish Beginners
Card Making 3	Majong	Spanish Intermedi- ate
Chess	Maths (almost at capacity)	Starting Family History
Computers and Technology	Military History	Tai chi
Digital Photography	Music	Talking Investments
Discussion	Opera at Home	Tap Dancing
Earth Sciences	Out and About	Theatre
Film	Play Reading	Travel
Food and Drink	Writing for Pleasure	Walking
French Chat	Psychology of Eve- ryday Life	Whist
French Intermedi- ate 1 & 2	Recorders	World Music

Groups full but with no waiting list

(see notes overleaf for these groups)

Advanced French	French for Beginners 1	Needlecraft
Antiques	French for Beginners 2	Patchwork & Quilting
Art History	German	Petanque
Birdwatching	German for Beginners	Philosophy (beginners group may start)
Books B	Life Story	Snooker 1
Card Making 1	MOTO 1	
Card Making 2	MOTO 2	
Craft - Card Making	MOTO 3	

Groups with waiting lists

see notes overleaf for these groups)

Books A (2 waiting)	Movement to Music (2 waiting)
Italian Improvers (5 waiting)	Wine Appreciation (4 waiting)
Jazz (3 waiting)	** Yoga (large waiting list)

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In addition, there will be New Members Meetings held on a regular basis in APRIL, MAY and OCTOBER as well as February in the year so that all new members have the opportunity to attend a meeting. These will all be advertised in the Newsletter and invitations will be issued.

Notes

Please can any member wanting to join one of the groups which is full or has a waiting list still contact the Convenor of the group so that we know how many people are interested and when we should try to set up parallel groups.

Please can Convenors of groups that are full or have waiting lists, who see no vacancies likely to arise within a few months have no volunteer in their group willing to lead a new parallel group pass on the names of those waiting to me and I will start to try and set up parallel groups when the numbers are sufficient.

** The Yoga group presents a different problem in that we need a new leader trained in Yoga who is willing to give their services free with payment only of essential expenses. If anyone knows such a person please let me know.

New Groups

As a result of one of the new members meetings held before Christmas there are two fledgling groups starting up which are not advertised in this current Newsletter as they are still finding their feet. The two groups are Golf - Duffers United and Majong (daytime group as opposed to the existing group which meets in the evening) and there are spaces in both for further members. Anyone interested in either of these two groups should contact John Cope for the Golf (see his entry in this Newsletter) or me for the Majong group.

Fort Woosehill

Those of you who use one of the halls at Woosehill will know that a key must now be collected and looked after by group leaders in addition to using the door code. Wokingham Town Council also intend to ask for a £25 key deposit from those holding keys as from January 2008. In order to simplify matters Colin Mitchell, our Chairman, has negotiated an agreement with Wokingham Town Council to waive the £25 deposit per key for U3a users and accept a deposit of £100 to be paid from our central funds. This means that individual groups using the halls at Woosehill will not need to pay a deposit for their keys.

However, group leaders should make sure that they book the halls in the name of U3a plus the group name and note that key holders will still be responsible for their keys and for observing the terms and conditions of Wokingham Town Council re leasing the halls.

Hilary Taylor

Group Co-ordinator Tel 0118 9786475

Golf - Duffers Unite

I am pleased to say that our small golf section is now up and running or perhaps walking would be a better description! If there are anymore would be golfers who consider that a sense of humour is more important than a low handicap then please give me a ring. I look forward to hearing from you.

John Cope 0118 977 0892

Japanese Group

Barry Byrne would like to know if anyone is interested in starting a Japanese group within Wokingham u3a.

Possible areas of interest are:

Japanese language (level to be discussed)

Japanese and computers

Japanese art

Japanese history

Japanese literature

Contact Barry at barry.byrne@bcs.org or on 07926 179982

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 Gill Borlace for organising the trip.

Stan Hughesdon (Convenor).

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 2

Duplicate Bridge

Mah-jong

Personal Finance

This group ceased to run in November. However should anyone wish to restart it John Webb will be delighted to help get it underway.

The 'Phoney' War. My Visit To An Anti-Aircraft Gun-Site

My father was in the Territorial Army so he had been called up some time before the declaration of WWII on 3rd September 1939. By then he was already stationed on an anti-aircraft site in the depths of the Cambridgeshire countryside, along with others, including John Mills, the actor. They had been enjoying quite a hedonistic lifestyle, as Mrs Mills was sending their chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce from London to the site at intervals, laden with delicacies from Harrods and Fortnum and Mason.

However, before long John Mills was relieved of his military duties as "the powers that be, decided that he would be better employed acting in morale boosting films rather than shooting down enemy planes. So when my mother told me one day in the late autumn of 1939, that on Sunday we were going to visit Daddy at his gun-site, the famous Thespian had already left the unit so unfortunately I never got to meet him. I have no recollection by what means we travelled there and back on a Sunday in war-time, but my father must have given my mother very good instructions of how to reach our destination, and have had some idea of our time of arrival, for he was at the entrance to the site to meet us.

All the chaps were in high spirits for they had recently shot down their first German plane. The pilot had baled out and had been held in custody on site until the police came to arrest him. After a tour of the camp, a visit to see the anti-aircraft gun that had performed this deed, was, of course, a must. Then it was on to the field to see where the German plane had crashed. All the wreckage had been cleared away, but one could see the evidence in the scarred and burnt earth.

Soon after that we joined the chaps in one of the Nissen huts for the traditional Sunday roast, washed down with mugs of NAAFI tea. Afterwards we said goodbye to everyone and left for home. With hindsight I have come to realise that for the German pilot to be captured and sent to a POW camp so early in the war could possibly have saved his life. The following year brought the Battle of Britain, and in 1941 Hitler opened up the Eastern Front and invaded Russia; a German airman would have been lucky to have survived either one, or both, of these battles. My souvenir of this visit, or you could say 'my spoils of war', are the German pilot's pair of binoculars. They reside on my kitchen table, and although rather battered, they are still adequate enough to identify the garden birds, and keep an eye on the neighbours.

Rosemary Goldschmied

Fifty and Sixty Years Ago

I have now come full circle with transcriptions from my aunt's diaries which I started to publish in the newsletter in 1998 when I sent in excerpts from the 1948 diary. You may ask why I don't go on to the 1958 diary. The reason is that Jim, her husband, died in 1957 and the diaries for 1957/58 do not make for very happy reading and could prove upsetting for any member who has recently been bereaved. Also, as one would expect, she went for months without making any entries.. However I have the 1938 diary, and so as not to disappoint my readers can give you -70 years ago.

January 11th. Had hair cut, shampooed and set at Roe-Dore's which little frivolity cost me 4s 6d (22½p). Then one shilling for Jean 5s 6d (27½p). I wasn't so pleased with it as I have sometimes been: must try to keep it in nice condition myself. Had a glorious time at the Primrose League dance at York House. Friendly crowd there. Billy, Alf, Mary, Reg Blacker, Emily, Mr. and Mrs. Ratcliff and his brother and sister-in-law. I've never enjoyed a dance more. It was pouring with rain when we came home, but I tucked up my skirt and Jim had an umbrella, so all was well. Liked wearing my pink frock.

January 12th. Did housework this morning, not that I got much thrill out of it. This afternoon Jim and I went to see *The Good Earth* at the Regal: a wonderful film but so consistently sad that I felt fairly miserable. How awful it must be if people really do live like that. Emily (her sister in law. R.) came just after we got home. Think I shall name her *The Constant Nymph* though she wouldn't understand it if I did. She and Jim played crib which is the height of her delight. Anyway it's better than her sitting and yawning and going to sleep, which she would certainly do otherwise. Wish she'd stir herself a bit.

January 18th. Christine Deeks birthday, her 21st. She had some lovely presents. Jim and I gave her a pair of diamante ear-rings. We went in to drink her health this evening. I don't think she appreciated in the least the efforts Mrs. Deeks had made to give her a happy birthday party. She brought home yet another youth, a fair complexioned bod named Rudolf, who tried to be, and really was, amiable, yet somewhat at sea. The obsequious Tommy of course was there. We left at 11.30 whilst Christine prepared for a run in the car with Rudolf, (long term readers of the diary will remember that Christine went on to marry Spencer, an American Army officer during the war. R.).

February 4th. By train to the Connaught Rooms. Mounted the escalator and hope I kept my horror of them more to myself than I think I did. The ladies all looked smarter this year than last, and I missed my usual self-congratulatory look in the glass. As a matter of fact I wasn't very pleased with the result of two hours preparation, and my gloves were dirty. We had a lovely dinner and the ladies had a present of a scent spray. Home at 3am.

February 16th. Emily came worrying herself and everybody else as to where to invest £250. Wish she'd buck up and decide and have done with it. Twickenham Building Society offers 5% which is a great attraction. National Savings is safe at 3½%.

February 23rd. Emily has invested the £250 in the Twickenham Building Society and I certainly hope she'll get good dividends and leave off chanting about it.

February 26th. Went to the Q theatre with Elaine Deeks (Christine's sister. R.) to see *Bulldog Drummond Hits Out*. Very well acted indeed, and we both thoroughly enjoyed it. We've arranged to go to the theatre again on March 23rd either to the Richmond or Kew theatre.

Rosemary Goldschmied.

Copy date for the next issue is Friday 25th January

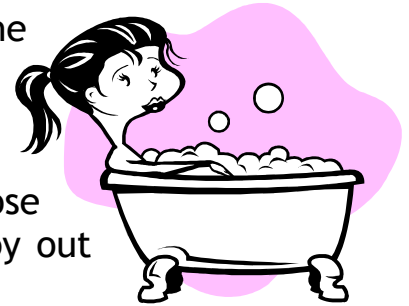
Long Time Ago



The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500's:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water".



Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs".



There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "Dirt Poor". The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance way. Hence the saying "a thresh hold".

(Getting quite an education, aren't you? - some more quips next time)

courtesy of Peter Harms

Music Hall

The Light Entertainment Group - Showtime - is now well into rehearsals for the Music Hall they are presenting in the New Year. It will be a great entertainment with singing, dancing, sketches and melodrama to hiss and boo at, as well as choruses for the audience to join in. We have an excellent Chairman to introduce the acts with the usual repartee with the audience. You are invited to attend in Victorian costume if you should wish but it is not compulsory.

In moving our production to Oakwood Centre in Woodley we are able to take advantage of the additional technical facilities provided such as computer-controlled lighting and projected scenery. These and other facilities have provided a great learning experience for some offstage participants.

Thanks to those who have volunteered since my request in the last newsletter we can now manage the front of house and backstage activities. All the members of the group are amateur - for many their first performance on stage was in the pantomime last year. We hope you will come to enjoy the show. Performances are on 31st January, 1st and 2nd February 2008 commencing at 7.30pm.

Tickets will be on sale at the January meeting but you can obtain tickets by filling in the coupon in this newsletter and sending it with a stamped self-addressed envelope and your cheque to Mavis Hoare at 8 Measham Way, Lower Earley, Reading, RG6 4ES. Telephone 0118 975 5428. A map pinpointing the Theatre and car park is printed on the reverse of the tickets.

Please send metickets for (£7.50. per ticket)

I enclose a cheque forpayable to Wokingham U3A and marked on the back "Music Hall" and a stamped self-addressed envelope

If you need wheelchair access please tick here

Name.....

Address

Tel No

Items received from National Office;

Shared Learning Project At The Museum At The Docklands; A Warehouse of Memories, U3A members are invited by the Museum to work with the Archivists. If you are interested in the History of London and in social history, if you enjoy research and working in a team this project may be of interest. The Project starts on Wednesday 16th January 2008 and will continue fortnightly. The last session will be after Easter on Wednesday 26th March. If you are interested please contact Ursula Steiger, Project Leader, Tel:012 2771 1536 or email: ursulae@btinternet.com.

Staying Sharp With U3A; How to maintain a healthy brain on Monday 10th March 2008, 14.00hr to 16.30hrs at Cine Lumiere at the Institut Francais, 17 Queensbury Place, London SW7 (nearest tube station : South Kensington). Tickets £10 to include refreshments. Tickets from- The Third Age Trust, 19 East Street. Bromley, BR1 1QH. Cheques made payable to The third Age Trust, enclose a.s.a.e. Tickets not available at the door.

Science, Technology And Social Network: The Annual Seminar at Abergavenny on Monday 18th to Thursday 21st August 2008.

U3A/Ri Out And About:

Each year the Royal Institution and the U3A team up to produce an afternoon of the best speakers from the Ri's programme. On 8th April 2008 this event will return with another line up of fascinating science. Tuesday 8th April 2008 at 1.30p.m. for 2.00p.m. at The Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road. London NW1 2BJ, Tickets are £15 (admission by ticket only). Please apply in writing to The Third Age Trust 19 East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE.

The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester.

Summer School South on Monday 11th to Thursday 14th August 2008.

Harper Adams University College Newport, Nr Telford.

Summer School South on Monday 28th to Thursday 31st July 2008.

Please contact Secretary Muriel Froom, 0118 9781647 or email: murielfroom@tiscali.co.uk for any more information and booking forms.

Annual General Meeting

California Ratepayers Hall

Finchampstead

at 2:00pm on 18th March 2008

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Last AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Subscriptions
6. Appointment of an Examiner for 2008
7. Election of Principal Officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary)
8. Election of up to 6 more members of the Committee
9. Motion to change the quorum for Annual and Special General Meetings
10. Any Other Business

Muriel Froom, Honorary Secretary

WANTED: Dry garage to rent. My hobby is restoring antique furniture and I need somewhere to store items and sometimes work on the bigger ones. If the garage has electricity so much the better. Philip Lewis 01344 776456

Wokingham U3A
ONE-DAY STUDY DAY

Great Environment!

Good Lunch!

Choice of Subjects!

Wellington College, Crowthorne
Wednesday 23rd July 2008
10.00 am - c3.45 pm

You will be able to choose from a wide range of subjects. The organisers expect these to include:

Three-session subjects

(choose whether to enjoy one, two or all three sessions)

BRIDGE	PAINTING	POETRY
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY	INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE	

Single-session subjects

(mix and match with up to two other session)

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE – ORIGINALLY?	NATURAL PATTERNS IN MATHEMATICS
PETRO-CHEMICAL PRODUCTS (experiences of working overseas)	
GANGMASTERS (Good or bad?)	JAZZ APPRECIATION

**COST (INCLUDING LUNCH AND OTHER REFRESHMENTS) no more than
£25.00 - Pre-booking will be essential.**

For more information **REGISTER YOUR INTEREST** with Patsy Thornton (registering an interest does not commit you to attendance).

You can register interest by telephone (01344 774812), E-mail (ted.t@talktalk.net) or post (6 Highway, Crowthorne RG45 6HE)

Please make sure that you tell Patsy:
Your Name, your Address, your Telephone Number and your e-mail address if you have one (use of e-mail helps the organisers to keep administration costs down)