



**The University
of the Third Age**

**WOKINGHAM
NEWSLETTER
SEP - OCT.
2008**

September's Monthly Meeting

Tuesday 16th at 2.00pm

at

St Paul's Parish Rooms

Mercyships

Liz Goddard

OPEN HOUSE

TUESDAY 21st OCTOBER

1.00pm to 4.00pm

at St Paul's Parish Hall

see page 12

Full programme of Monthly Talks for 2008-09 is listed on the back page.

A View From The Chair

I am writing this in the afterglow of July's splendid Study Day at Wellington College. There's an article about it in this newsletter but I want to take this opportunity to thank Patsy Thornton and her team of volunteers for all the work that went in to organising and running the day. Patsy was the driving force behind the event but other members came from all over this U3A to help - thank you all!

The rest of this 'view' is difficult for me to write because it may be my last one. You will see from a separate article in this newsletter that I have accepted your committee's nomination to a vacancy as SE Region Trustee and a membership of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Third Age Trust. If I am elected at the AGM in September I will immediately stand down as chairman of your U3A. The announcement of this will be at the monthly meeting on 16th September after which and with your approval Len Smith will take over as acting chairman until our own AGM in March.

I have thought long and hard before accepting this nomination because of the need to move out of this chair if elected (there are no 'rules' about this - I just could not physically do both jobs). Wokingham U3A is important to me but we are now a member of the new U3A SE Region; I am tempted to say mega-region because it is the largest region and contains 149 U3As. Therefore, the very first SE Regional Trustee will have an important role in making sure that the NEC remembers that the Trustee from the South East is speaking on behalf of 23% of the U3A's membership in the UK.

If I am elected it does not mean withdrawal from Wokingham U3A where we have always said that our heart is in the interest/study groups. Hopefully I will still be active in 'my' groups and a contributor to this newsletter with news from the NEC and around the SE Region.

Colin Mitchell,
Chairman

Wokingham U3A

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Payment To U3A Members.

U3A members should not accept payment for their U3A activities: this is one of the principles of U3A in Britain. I know that some members feel that this is unfair to U3A members when we pay occasional speakers from outside U3A; none the less it is one of those things that we should accept on joining U3A.

This applies to monthly meetings just as much as it does to groups. It also applies to U3A activities outside Wokingham, for example the U3A National Summer Schools and Regional Study Days/Summer Schools where U3A members give their time without reward.

This principle does not mean that U3A members should be out of pocket because of speaking, tutoring or convening activities. For example, I get paid travelling expenses for tutoring summer schools and do not pay for accommodation at them, material costs can also be recovered. Similarly, convenors should make sure that they recover any expenses in connection with their groups from the members of the group.

Colin Mitchell

Chairman

Tutors, Speakers And Leaders Who Are Not U3A Members

Some U3As employ tutors, speakers or leaders from outside U3A. This has an impact on payments, insurance and qualifications:

Payment. Where U3As employ paid regular tutors, speakers or leaders from outside U3A they are required by HM Customs and Taxes to confirm that the person concerned has made arrangements to pay income tax on their earnings. The Trustees (U3A Committee) should see proof of this. NB this payment rule does not apply to occasional speakers such as those at monthly meetings or those who tutor or guide an occasional study group activity.

Insurance. Paid tutors and leaders for 'active' groups such as yoga or movement to music must carry their own personal liability insurance or be insured through a professional or sports body. The Trustees should see proof of this.

Qualifications. Paid tutors and leaders for 'active' groups should be formally qualified in the subject they are leading. U3A members leading such groups do not need to hold a formal qualification but should be competent.

U3A Insurance

All U3A members are covered by the U3A's Public and Products Liability insurance. This will indemnify you against all sums which you may become legally liable to pay as a result of:

- Accidental bodily injury to, or death of, any person.
- Accidental loss or damage to material property not belonging to you. arising from or in connection with a U3A activity.

Incidents not covered

- Injury or damage sustained due to a defect in a hired building.
- Injury or damage sustained whilst under instruction with a third party i.e. a specialist instructor who is not a U3A member.
- Injury or damage sustained whilst participating in hazardous activities such as abseiling, handgliding, whitewater rafting, bungee jumping etc UNLESS the activity has been cleared in advance by National Office
- Claims where no injury or damage is sustained.
- Injury or damage arising from the result of a motor vehicle, aircraft or boat.
- Incidents which are not attributable to U3A activities.

Please note that this is liability insurance and not personal accident insurance.

Accidents

Whenever an accident occurs during a U3A activity the leader of that activity should make sure that a U3A Accident Report Form is completed. The completed form should be held safely in case of later insurance or medical claims.

Trustees

Committee members as Trustees of the charity Wokingham U3A are protected by trustee liability insurance.

Equipment

Wokingham U3A's equipment is insured separately and the electrical equipment is tested annually.

Colin Mitchell

Chairman

Lifts And Car Sharing

Some of our members don't drive and can find it difficult to get to group and other meetings. This can be a severe difficulty to new members who haven't yet got to know many other members, it can be serious enough to deter them from joining particular groups. Please remember the non drivers and be generous with your offers of lifts and enquiries about getting to meetings.

Please don't forget car sharing either. It saves fuel and reduces the bother of parking as well as making a small reduction in carbon emissions.

Hopefully it goes without saying that passengers will wish to contribute towards the costs of journeys.

Colin Mitchell

Nomination Of Colin Mitchell As Regional Trustee For Our Region

At a recent meeting of your U3A Committee, it became clear that there was a vacancy on the National Executive Committee of the Third Age Trust for a representative for our region. We all thought that Colin would make an excellent choice. He is energetic and far-sighted and has a great interest in the activities of the movement as a whole. For many years he has taught on summer schools and is national coordinator for Science and Technology. His nomination would be supported by other U3As in this area.

We therefore encouraged Colin to allow his name to be put forward for election, although he has still some months to go as our Chairman. It would be impossible for him to fill both these posts at the same time (Janice would like to see him just occasionally!). We don't yet know whether or not the election will be contested. We therefore decided, on your behalf, to ask Len Smith to act as Chairman in Colin's place, should Colin be elected as Regional Trustee, just until the AGM in March. We are delighted that Len has accepted our invitation. We feel that, as he has already been elected by the membership as Chairman for the previous term of office, you would be happy to accept him as Chairman for this interim period.

We feel that it would be beneficial for Wokingham U3A to have a voice on the National Committee, and that Colin would bring a breath of fresh air to their discussions. We do hope that our actions will meet with your approval.

Patsy Thornton

Vice Chairman

on behalf of Wokingham U3A Committee

New Philosophy Group

The Philosophy Group, having started as beginners with an introductory course in 2003, has triumphantly finished a course on the history of philosophy (stopping, naturally, short of any philosopher still alive). In September we shall go on to study the subject by topic, using Roger Scruton's *Modern Philosophy: an Introduction and Survey* as a basis for our discussions. The group will be renamed **Topics in Philosophy** and will continue to meet on the third Wednesday morning of the month.

As a matter of policy we are not closed to new members but, since most people who express an interest in philosophy to me regard themselves as beginners, I would like to start a new group **Introduction to Philosophy** with a preliminary meeting in November on What is Philosophy? and a discussion on how we could operate. From past experience, some members would find an introduction over a year or so both interesting and sufficient (satisfying in both senses), others would wish to continue in greater depth. If you are interested or would like to know more, please phone me or talk to me at the Open House on 21st October.

Hugh Davis 0118 978 6532.

Barmy English summer day

It was on Friday..the 13th?... no Friday the 25th July, MOTO 4 decided on a walk along the Thames to Henley, with a steamer back. Twas a lovely summer day. At Shiplake, the Thames Path went away from the Thames, but there was another route along the river, which we decided to take. The route in question hadn't been used much and after about a 1/4 mile trying to negotiate nettles taller than we were & the undergrowth (ney, overgrowth, even) getting worse, we decided to go back to main route(It might have helped if the leader ie me (Alan Ager) had pre walked it). Never mind, we continued to Henley & after a pleasant meal at the Catherine Wheel, we ambled back to the Thames, had an ice cream and waited in anticipation for the steamer. And we waited, and we waited, but to no avail. The steamer never came. I found out later that it had developed a fuel leak. So, as no one fancied the walk back, we ended up sharing taxis. Well it never rained!

Alan Ager

Deaf or hearing-impaired?

Perhaps you have avoided some U3A meetings for fear of being unable to take part. If you are interested in being part of a group for the hard of hearing or, if hearing, want to be aware of how to communicate with hearing-impaired people and understand their problems, contact Mo Cole on mo@cole87.freeseve.co.uk or 07876 593 738 (text only please). Suggestions welcome.

Military History Group Visit

In July ten members of our group, led by Don MacDonald, visited Southwick House, (formerly HMS Dryad) in deepest Hampshire. This historic building is where the D- Day landing was planned. The highlight of the visit was the vast D-Day wall map. It was commissioned from the toy company Chad Valley and arrived in sections. The pieces covered the European Coastline from Norway to the Spanish border in order not to give away any secrets. The two carpenters who erected the essential section of the Normandy coastline were then required to remain in Southwick House to maintain secrecy until the invasion was underway. The map, when completed, showed where troops, vehicles and ships would be gathered, also sea routes, mine fields and landing beaches, the names of which are very familiar to us now. We had a very knowledgeable guide. We also toured the Military Police museum, again with a very knowledgeable and amusing guide.

After a pub lunch we drove to Fort Nelson on Portsdown Hill, above Portsmouth. Fort Nelson is one of the five forts built in the Solent and known as Palmerston's follies. They were built in 1860 when parliament became very concerned about a possible French invasion, but they have never been used in defence. The fort, now part of the Royal Armouries, houses over 350 big guns and historic cannons. They show re-enactments of historic military events and one of the large guns is fired daily for visitors. The conducted tour was very comprehensive with, once again, a very knowledgeable guide, who also appreciated the input to his knowledge from some of our group. This was altogether an interesting and worthwhile day.

Jean Pettitt

Group Member Movement To Music

As stated in the previous news letter, Jill Bright, our current Movement to Music Instructor will leave at the end of July to spend more time with her family. We wish her the very best for the future.

Fortunately we have found a professional Keep Fit Association (KFA) instructor who is willing to continue our Movement to Music Group from September. She will provide an exercise regime compatible with our age group.

For more information please contact Margaret Williams on 01344 771951.

Margaret Williams

The Gardening Group

A group of people with an interest in gardening, meet on the second Tuesday of the month. This year our programme has included visits to a number of gardens including Potash at Southend-Bradfield, Kew Gardens and Loseley Park, with the RHS Gardens at Wisley to look forward to in the Autumn. In between, we aim to

use the monthly meetings to get together to mull over the gardening seasons, discuss our problems and successes and even exchange cuttings, plants, as well as an abundance of views and ideas, all over a welcome cup of tea, or two. None of us are experts, but between us, one might say we have a 'wealth of knowledge' and in particular, we do love our gardens.

We welcome new members, both novices to gardening and those who may have years of experience, perhaps to inject new ideas and enthusiasm to our friendly group of gardening buffs.

Sandra Chambers Phone: 01344 771582 email:lansandra@btinternet.com

Card Games

Some of the newer members, & perhaps others, may not realise that BELOTE is a card game. If you enjoy a game of cards, perhaps you might like to give Belote a go. This game is played & enjoyed extensively on the continent, but it never seemed to reach across the Channel. It is nowhere near as complicated or serious as Bridge & you will have no problem in picking up the rules.

We meet at 2pm on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month at Woosehill.

If you would like to know more, please give me a ring on (0118) 9016592.

Alan Ager

European Parliament comes to Wokingham U3A MEP visits Wokingham U3A

You missed a corker of a meeting on 26th June. Forgive me for my presuming you didn't attend but 95% of our membership missed the meeting. Their loss.

James Elles gave us an illuminating and entertaining talk on the workings of the European Parliament and its future challenges. James is one of the MEPs serving our constituency. After the formal talk and questions we relaxed over a glass of wine and much informal discussion. Eventually people drifted away and we locked up the hall about 10pm.



James Elles (centre) talking with Colin and Judith

Painting For Beginners

Several people have expressed an interest in starting a group to learn to paint and we need someone to show us how. If you can help or if you would be interested in joining such a group, please ring me on 0118 979 3332 and we will see what we can do.

Christine Hedges

The Garter Ceremony



Windsor Castle

16th June 2008

by Sylvia Mason

Thanks to Martha, a group of us from MOTO4 were able to enjoy the Procession of the Most Noble Order of the Garter at Windsor Castle. We had a fantastic view just opposite one of the side entrances to St. George's Chapel, where many of the dignitaries entered the chapel, including Prince Harry, Camilla and Kate Middleton. Having secured our place on the grass and having an hour or so to wait, we settled down to a picnic lunch, washed down with a glass of wine (well some of us know how to enjoy ourselves!!). We were even blessed with a beautiful sunny day. There was always something to see and for those who enjoy

'people watching' it was a perfect occasion to watch people who were there to be seen.

Finally at about 3 o'clock the procession began with the military bands and our brave soldiers, followed by the Knights of the Garter in their magnificent gowns, walking passed us to the ceremony taking place inside the chapel. Prince William was invested as the 1000th Knight of the Garter - this being a gift from his grandmother, The Queen. The service was broadcast to the crowds listening outside. Afterwards, many of the members of the Royal Family left by open horse drawn carriages. The whole thing was over by 4pm and we joined the crowds slowly making their way out of the castle.

A few of us then went on to meet another group at Windsor Races, to enjoy an evening of fun and excitement, winning and losing a pound or two on the 'gee-gees'.

And then (with apologies to George Ridley) To See the Windsor Races

I love the atmosphere of a live event. The sights, sounds, the whole ambience but I've never actually managed to get to many race meetings. You see, in my previous life, before I moved to this area, I had a bit of a reputation when it came to the horses. Unfortunately, not a winning one, more that my chosen steed tended to lose sight of the winning post. As my husband used to say, "For goodness sake, Christine, give the horses a chance and don't bet!"

But, back to Windsor. We met up with other members of the group and bought our race cards. A steward kindly explained what all the jargon meant and we sat down to study form. After much furrowing of brow, pouting, pointing, raising of eyebrows (I was carefully watching what others were doing) and looking at the horses in the paddock, I made my selection. Technically speaking, it was more did I fancy the name of the horse, the jockey, or both.

It was exhilarating standing at the fence, watching my horse go by - well it was more like waiting for my horse to go by to be honest. By the time the sixth race arrived, one or two in our group were actually asking me for my selection. You see, by then, I had started to win by not betting because at least I still had my stake money. Perhaps they misunderstood?

It was the last race of a beautiful, warm, balmy evening, with everyone in good spirits. We were standing close to the winning post, eyes on the big screen watching the approaching horses. People were shouting, punching the air, the excitement was palpable and then...on the screen...I saw my jockey fly through the air. I wonder, did anybody explain to him that it was a flat race and it wasn't up to him to do the jumping?

Ah well, onward and upward as someone used to say to me. Come to think of it, that's exactly the direction my jockey was taking...

Christine Burns

A Lighthearted Look at the Races

Group Leaders Please Help

Several times each year I have phone calls from members complaining that they have not received their diary for sometime, and are unable to check meeting dates and venues. When I check the list of unpaid subscriptions, I usually find that they are on it. I realise that you have only had this list for the last couple of years, but would ask you to check membership cards occasionally, as you are the only ones who can be sure that all of your group are fully paid up members.

It would also be useful if you had a policy for people who try out your group before joining U3A. I would like to suggest one visit if the group meets monthly, maybe two visits if you meet every week. Over the last two years I have tracked

down visitors who have been attending groups for as long as six months without bothering to join. This is particularly important if you are running a group which involves physical activity, as this may jeopardize your insurance.

Carole Beswetherick

Our First Study Day



Wednesday July 23rd, saw the first ever Wokingham Study Day.

As we had never attempted such a thing before, we were more than a little anxious, but in the event the sun shone, Wellington College looked splendid, and the team did a magnificent job. There were 169 students in all, mostly from Wokingham U3A but also from nine other groups in the region. There was also a team of 27 helpers! These comprised tutors, presenters, meeters and greeters, admin staff and refreshment experts and all those who stepped into a breach when they saw one. There were ten different courses to choose from, ranging from poetry to maths, and bridge to painting.

Let me leave you with a few quotes from our student questionnaires:-

"Perfect location"

"Attention to detail and hard work of Wokingham U3A excellent"

"Sheer enthusiasm of participants was great. Those leading classes knew their audiences."

"Choice of courses fantastic"

"Venue stunning"

"Organisation excellent"

"Great value for lovely day"

And all responders said they would come again.

If we ever do another one.....

Patsy Thornton

OPEN HOUSE

TUESDAY OCTOBER 21st

1.00pm to 4.00pm

at St Paul's Parish Hall

Antiques
Archaeology
Art History
Badminton
Ballroom Dancing
Belote
Bells
Birdwatching
Books
Bridge
Card Making

Chess
Computer Technology
Digital Photography
Industrial Archaeology
Gardening
Genealogy
Languages
Local History
Military History
Music And Opera
Petanque

Philosophy
Recorders
Singing For Fun
Showtime
Travel
Walking
Wine Appreciation
And Many More!

Please all come and see what everybody does in their groups, talk to members of other groups, generate new ideas and generally enjoy an interesting afternoon.

Seventy Years Ago

Sept 15th. Mr Chamberlain flew to see Hitler at Berchtesgarden this morning. Pray God they will avert war.

Sept 19th. Started Home Nursing Course at Heston Senior Schools tonight. Many VAD's are in the class. I'm not going to join the unit because I'm not keen on nursing, I'm only going because I think everybody should have a working knowledge of nursing, if only an elementary one. But, after I've finished this course and the ARP course I hope the world situation will be such that I can turn my thoughts to other matters.

Sept 20th. So far the Czech question seems to have been settled by Britain and France agreeing that Germany shall be handed over the control of that part of Czecho-Slovakia occupied at present by the Sudeten Germans. This seems a victory for might over right.

Sept 21st. Most interesting anti-gas lecture this afternoon. Europe is still in a turmoil over Czecho-Slovakia.

Sept 24th. Jim came back from getting his evening paper to say that we had to get our gas-masks tomorrow.

Sept 25th. GAS MASK SUNDAY. Hundreds of people, Jim and I among them, queuing up to be fitted with gas-masks.

Sept 26th. Hitler made his speech tonight and raved like a lunatic.

Sept 28th. Mr Chamberlain announced in the House of Commons that Hitler had asked him to go to Munich for another conference.

Sept 29th. We all feel wonderfully relieved this morning and only pray with all our hearts that the conference in Munich between Hitler, Mussolini, Daladier and our splendid Mr Chamberlain may be the forerunner of peace. Despite the slackened tension ARP people are still continuing to prepare to defend. They were digging trenches at Alexandra Schools; whitening the kerbs, or rather making white patches along the edges of the kerbs. Searchlights were locating aeroplanes - all the aspects of war-time.

Sept 30th. Thank God it is peace. We are thankful for this from the bottom of our hearts, and whereas yesterday we could do nothing for suspense, today we can do nothing for joy. First Aid exam for the ARP at 2.45 this afternoon. Don't know whether I have passed or not, but I do know, that I should have felt far happier about it if I'd left myself time to get there without rushing, and if I'd taken my own pen. My bandage wasn't good. Anyway will hope for the best.

Oct 7th. Have scraped through First Aid exam - just.

Rosemary Goldschmied

The Diary Page

I would like to take the opportunity to explain some things about the production of the Diary Page which is distributed with the newsletter.

First of all I would like to thank those leaders who regularly provide the input to me on time and in the way I have requested. It does help to make my task easier.

I have a list of leaders and with their copy of the newsletter I send a form requesting information for entries to be included in the following diary. On this form I have pre-printed most of the information (eg dates. times). This is done to both save leaders' time and to improve the accuracy of the diary page. Where the leader returns the paper form it is only necessary to add the missing detail and amend any details which need changing. When responding by email, again it is only necessary to add the missing detail and advise me of changes. Those that repeat all the correct detail in their email are creating extra work for me as I have to check each date etc to determine whether it has changed.

Some leaders have asked why I need verification of the input for every edition of the newsletter. The reason is to maintain high accuracy. Several times I have been given a schedule for several months in advance only for some details to be subsequently changed with the result that the diary was incorrect.

Some leaders have noticed that the pre-printed forms sometimes have some extra invalid dates, eg 34th April. This is unfortunately down to the mailmerge technology and I have not found a way of suppressing them on the pre-printed forms. The technology which prints the newsletter does suppress them so the end product is OK.

For anyone starting up a new group please let me have the basic details (eg meets on 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2.pm) and I will produce a proforma for your group.

Editor

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 TWO

Digital Photography

Whist

Italian Intermediate

Recorders

Bridge Beyond Beginners

Mah-jong

French Intermediate 1 & 2

Yoga

Local History Group

If you might be interested in joining our Local History group please come along to the Open House on 21st October where we will have the results of some of our research on display.

U3A Calendar For 2009

Images of Water, the theme of this year's national photography competition, produced a very large entry and judging was a hard task for the independent judges, Bob Aylott (Features Editor of Amateur Photographer) and Peter Arkell, freelance photographer.

Bob Aylott commented "the standard and quality were tremendous and equal any national competition for amateur photographers that I have been involved in". Both judges were really encouraged to see how many U3A members are embracing new technology and thoroughly enjoying it".

The 12 winning pictures will form the new U3A Engagement Calendar 2009 available from late July at a price of £5.00. Full details, together with the photos, may be seen on the national website, or by contacting National office.

Thanks from the Editor

As you will have seen there are a several articles in this edition describing activities of a number of our activity groups. It is great to have them and I would like to give a big thank you to the contributors. If you have also enjoyed them how about writing one about your group. Please keep them coming in.

Paul King

Copy date for the next issue is Friday 26th September



**The University
of the Third Age
Wokingham**

Monthly Meetings Programme

The provisional programme of monthly talks until May 2009 is given below. Unless otherwise announced, all meetings will take place at St. Paul's Parish Rooms, Reading Road, Wokingham at 2.00pm. There is normally a charge of £1 for attending these meetings.

16th Sept. 2008

Liz Goddard
Mercyships

21st Oct. 2008

Open House
No monthly talk

18th Nov. 2008

Alan Copeland
Tales of the Unexpected

16th Dec. 2008-07-29

Guide Dogs

20th Jan. 2009

Moira Bonnington
A Nest of Hornecks

17th Feb. 2009

Ian Currie
Weather Law – Fact or Fiction

17th Mar. 2009

AGM followed by
Hugh Granger
Village Sayings

21st Apr. 2009

to be arranged

19th May 2009

Hugh Gibbons
Tsunami/Flying Crooked Tales

U3A 2009 Diaries

A limited supply of U3A diaries for 2009 has been obtained and they may be purchased from our secretary, Barry Byrne, at the September meeting.