



**The University
of the Third Age**

**WOKINGHAM
NEWSLETTER
MAY - JUN.
2011**

May's Monthly Meeting

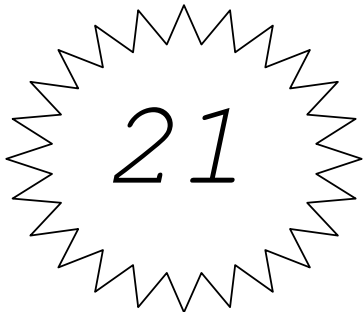
Bishops, Sex and Money

Tony Strafford -

Tuesday May 17th at 2.00pm in St Paul's Parish Rooms.

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**Wednesday
1st June**



At

**Blue Mountain
Golf Club**

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Sam Dauncey

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Carol Beswetherick

Holidays at Home and Abroad by
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Lucienne Hill

New Groups

Creative Writing
Complimentary Health
French Beginners
French Literature
Jiving

**Membership card enclosed for
those members who have
renewed their subscription**

Wokingham U3A

WEBSITE www.wokinghamu3a.org.uk

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A View From The Chair

I am writing this in the most perfect spring weather. The sky is a soft blue, the air full of birdsong and blossom, and spring flowers are everywhere. It has been a long winter. I do hope that you, like me, are enjoying the feeling of release and happiness, and are able to look forward to a stimulating summer of events and companionship in your U3A.

Last week was our Annual General Meeting, and I was able to report to a packed hall that Wokingham U3A is thriving. We have been very glad to receive over 200 new members this year, and we now have more than 141 activity groups, which I believe is one reason for our popularity. However, it is not always easy for new members to join groups where so many people know each other already. I ask you, therefore, if you find yourself in an open meeting, or in your own interest group, sitting next to someone you haven't met before, to say "hello" and make yourself known. We have a reputation for being welcoming, and it does make a big difference to those who are visiting us as newcomers.

At the AGM we had to say "goodbye" to Linda Herbert who has been the leader of our Groups Co-ordination Team. Linda has thrown herself into the role with typical energy and efficiency, and has been most helpful to new groups who are

just starting up. We are most grateful to her for all she has done, and wish her and her husband a marvellous time for their explorations by caravan.

I am glad to say that Lauraine Newcombe will be joining the committee as Groups Representative. I worked with Lauraine at Reading University for 4 years, and I know how fortunate we are to have her on the team. She has been a member of the U3A for some time, and I am very glad that she will now be taking on this role. She will be assisted by Peter Dawe, one of our new members who has been kind enough to put his impressive IT skills at our disposal.

You will be aware that Stephen Smith had to give up his Vice-Chairmanship last autumn, because of family health problems. Len Smith has been acting Vice-Chairman since then, and I am so grateful for his unfailing support and wise advice. Len, of course, will remain on the committee as our webmaster. However, we now have a new Vice Chairman, Jon Cole, leader of our natural history group. I am very much looking forward to the addition of Jon's enthusiasm and energy to our team. How fortunate we are to have such talent in the U3A.

My very best wishes to you all for a springtime full of happiness.

Patsy Thornton

Computing Libre

I am delighted to say that the proposed new group, Computing Libre, has now been successfully set up, and a first meeting has been held. The group has seven members initially and will meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 2pm at Alan Cocks' house in Bracknell.

This group is for novices and experienced users who want to learn about, use or discuss, 'software libre'. This is software which is published openly without restrictions on use, and can usually be downloaded gratis. Proprietary software can sometimes be gratis, but is encumbered with many restrictions, and also, has secrecy of content.

There is a lot of software libre for Windows and also for Mac and this is included, although most benefit is gained by using a system such as Ubuntu, and most time will be spent in this direction.

Ubuntu is an alternative system to Windows (though not a direct equivalent). If you use a PC and have not actually heard of Ubuntu and would like to know more, then consider attending an introductory session, just for the curious? Please contact Alan Cocks on that basis?

If you have a more committed interest in software libre, Ubuntu, then please join this group? The format is intended to be flexible. If you just want something sorted out occasionally, that will be quite ok with Alan.

email: aeclist@candt.waitrose.com

Alan Cocks,

Convener, Computing Libre

New French Beginners Group

Are you one of those people who have always wanted to learn French but never got around to it or maybe you have tried to join a group to find it is full? If so, this may be of interest to you. We have an opportunity of starting a new group for beginners in French so if you would like to know more then please contact me, Jennie Mew, on

jenjoy50@hotmail.com or 01344 483318

Now is the time to get fit !

Music to Movement 2 is now up and running and we would welcome any new members who would like to join us. We are a friendly group with a qualified KFA instructor and dates are in the diary, 11.15-12.15 on Wednesdays. To find out more, please ring Gillian on 01189 782317.

Gillian Walker

Creative Writing Group

This new group is intended for anyone who feels the urge to write something - do you feel you'd like to write a book? a play? an article? or just a story? We have not as yet decided on a programme or pathway, we'll just see where the group takes us. We would love to see you at our new group which will be meeting twice a month on the second and fourth Friday from 11 - 1pm. Lucienne Hill has kindly agreed to host these sessions at her home.

If you are interested, please contact me:

Vera Doe 0118 966 6781 or e-mail me at vera.doe@btconnect.com

French Literature

You are proficient in French and enjoy speaking the language?

You are interested in French Literature?

Why not join us?

We are a small group of francophones and francophiles who meet fortnightly at 2.30pm on Mondays [when I am in the UK - 7-8 months of the year] and will welcome any new member keen to read and discuss French books.

A bientôt!

For further information please contact Jennie Mew on 01344 483318 or jenjoy50@hotmail.com

Earth Sciences Group RIP?

The Earth Sciences Group convenor will cease to run the group as from June 2011. (ie last meeting in May) The group has been run by Roy Borlace and myself for over 12 years.

It has covered a very wide range of talks and lectures, from the Cosmos to micro biology.

We have been on annual outings to places as diverse as Culham Nuclear Fusion Establishment, a functioning brickworks, the Pitt Rivers Museum, (Behind the scenes with the deputy curator) a chalk quarry and an ancient sandpit with microfossils. Most outings have included optional lunch at a local public house or restaurant.

But unless someone is prepared to take it over, it will cease after May 2011.

This is due to Anno Domini and other pressures, including the wish to follow another direction.

I have thoroughly enjoyed lecturing and running this very loyal group.

Peter Fenton

Complementary Health.

The Complementary Health group will introduce us to the vast range of therapies, ideas and topics relating to health and well-being.

We will invite professionals from the various fields to talk and demonstrate their skills and answer any questions from the group.

Everyone's views, experiences and ideas I hope will contribute to this group and be an enjoyable, friendly and rewarding experience.

Hands on Aromatherapy, Reflexology, Life coaching and the 'Organic Debate' are a few of the therapies we will begin with.

We hope to meet in the first instance on Wednesday 21st September 2011, 2.00p.m-4.00p.m. The venue will depend on numbers. Please register your interest with Lauraine Newcombe 0118 979 1477

Poetry Reading 2

A new group for Poetry Reading has been set up. We meet on the first Tuesday morning of the month between 10 am- 12 mid-day. Our next meeting is on 3rd May. At present we are just five members and have space for three more. We meet in each others' homes. For further information and to find out the venue for May please contact Pat Tucker on 01189 784594.

Dinah Savage

21st Birthday Celebrations

As part of our celebration of the 21st birthday of our U3A it has been suggested that members both old and new could bring together their recollections and experiences of the early days when the establishment of Wokingham U3A was first talked about, the birthing pangs and the various stages of development of this creation right up to the present day.

It could be either in the form of an oral or a video record. However your Committee has a problem - none of us has the necessary experience to produce this record. Is there anyone out there who has such knowledge and would be willing to help us produce this?. We would like you to talk members through their experiences with our assistance and for this to be collated into a suitable form. It would be our intention to sell the resulting DVD as our memento of 21 years at little or no profit. Obviously agreed expenses would be met.

For further information please contact

Valerie Reeve on NewMembSec@wokinghamu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meeting Speaker

TONY STRAFFORD - Bishops, Sex and Money

Tuesday May 17th at 2.00pm in St Paul's Parish Rooms.

In the early 1080's William the Conqueror began to build a massive stone tower on the banks of the Thames in London. Through the centuries that followed successive monarchs added to the construction which became a fortress, palace, state prison and a place of execution.

Profiles, stories and little known facts are a speciality of our guest speaker who went to live with his family in one of the most interesting buildings in the world.

Tony Strafford will don his Beefeater uniform and entertain us all with tales of just some of the characters who spent time within those impressive walls

Badminton 2.

Badminton 2 has now been in existence for just over one year, in that time and starting from scratch we have built up a very good nucleus of players.

We are now moving forward by introducing "Variable Badminton".

What do we mean by that ??.

Commencing on the 5th of April 2011 we shall be playing from 10.30.am to 12 noon. At the same time we will also be offering members the choice of playing for one hour from 10.30.am to 11.30 am.

We play every Tuesday at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre, Rushey Way, Lower Earley, RG6 4DG.

The cost per Person is £2 for one hour or £3 for 90 minutes.

The centre is very well equipped and we have five badminton courts at our disposal. There is also a very well equipped gymnasium, swimming pool, cafeteria and a large free car park.

We are a friendly and helpful group with players of varied skill levels who are happy to give less experienced players help and advice.

SPECIAL OFFER. During the month of May and June 2011, any U3A member joining the Badminton 2 group will receive a free pass (Compliments of the Centre) to use the gymnasium for one day of their choice.

INTERESTED?. Telephone 01189 733011. Fred

Badminton 3

Badminton 3 is a new U3A group but it has in fact been running as a group outside of the U3A for some time (approx 2 years) and it is already full. It comprises 24 U3A members from Badminton 1 who wanted to play every Monday and not just the even Mondays of the month (i.e. as per Badminton 1). It has been agreed that the group become part of Wokingham U3A with Gordon Wyles as convenor.

Gordon Wyles

Possible Jive Group

If you would like to have an opportunity to do Jive as a U3A activity then please help to start a new group. This will be an additional and separate activity to the existing Ballroom held at Woosehill on Friday afternoons and will not be held on the same day. If you feel you have enough experience to give guidance to newcomers or those who feel they might need it this would be very useful and appreciated. I have already had some interest with this so if you would like help this group start up or otherwise help in some way please ring Barry Stebbings on 0118 9699 853 to set up an initial meeting.

Copy date for the next issue of the Newsletter is Friday 27th May

TVN Riverside Project

The Kingfisher Watch, Jon Cole jon@cole87.freeserve.co.uk 07875 475 788 would like to know every time you see a kingfisher, where and when it was, and if you manage to take a photograph so much the better.

Adopt a Lock is open to any TVN U3A, group or individual. Many locks have not yet had a claim staked so please contact Robin Ford robin@fordmail.co.uk 01494 727768 and let him know which lock you would like to study.

The **Riverside Poetry Competition** is open to every member and you really don't have to be Keats or Wordsworth to take part. Please send your entry, long or short, to Susie Berry susie.berry@virgin.net or post to Poppets Hill Farmhouse, Stoke Talmage, OX9 7HB

Riverside Project Calendar

Monday, 9th May Long Walk Goring to Reading
11 mile linear walk starts Goring Village Hall.
Ann Walsh Goring Gap U3A annwalsh3@aol.com

Friday, 13th and 20th May Small-group Visits to Eton College
Numbers are limited to fifteen on each day. No charge except for tea at Dorney Lakes
Mark Phillips Thameside U3A 01491 836659 markphillips38@btinternet.com
(Please do not ring Eton College about this tour)

Thursday, 19th May Walk from Dorchester-on-Thames to Wallingford
7 miles mainly level walking. Wittenham Clumps and Shillingford Bridge
Kevin Harrison Thameside U3A 01491 834632 kg.harrison42@tiscali.co.uk

Tuesday, 7th June Long Walk Henley to Bourne End
Jill Kendal 01189 722201 kendalwoodbury@supanet.com

Wednesday, 8th June Discovering Historic Wallingford
A Study Day organised by Thameside (Wallingford) U3A, Anne Stammers
Enquiries: StudyDay@Wallingford-ThamesideU3A.org.uk

Monday, 13th June Beale Park, Traditional Boating Day
Includes talks on boatbuilding and a chance of a trip in the first steam umpires launch.
The day is organised in partnership with the Thames Traditional Boat Society.
Robin Ford Chess Valley U3A 01494 727768 robin@fordmail.co.uk

Thursday, 30th June Explore Reading Museums
Illustrated lecture on the Bayeux Tapestry followed by visits to Reading Museum and M.E.R.L. in the afternoon with optional guided tours of the Bayeux Tapestry.
Mary Trout, Reading U3A 01491 682002 mrytrt@yahoo.co.uk

A lucky lad in WWI - by Sam Dauncey

My half brother, Ernest, was discharged from the army in 1917, that is to say before the end of the war. Rumour had it that he had an inoperable bullet in his back. However he lived on for many years, seeming to me, a child, quite normal.



Sam front centre, Ernest behind Sam's right shoulder. Ernest's sons either side of Ernest.. Father of Sam & Ernest far right

Some while ago I found one of his sons on the internet (a half nephew, aged about 82). We had an exchange of letters. The rest of this is a quotation from one of these letters, telling me a little more about Ernest's war wounds.

“Firstly a grenade burst on the top of the trench blinding him and then a shrapnel shell exploded above him and one of the shrapnel bullets went into his back, he could then only crawl and then he was gassed. Then his luck changed, at the Field Hospital he was taken to in France the matron was his aunt Helen Jordan! She quickly had him sent back to England and he was admitted to Poplar Hospital. . . . Molly contacted Alice (Editorial comment: Molly was a cousin of his and Alice was eventually to become his wife) and asked her to come up to London so she could visit Ernest. On going into the hospital they found that he was in a ward with all Indian troops. They had not recognised him as a white man as he was so discoloured from the

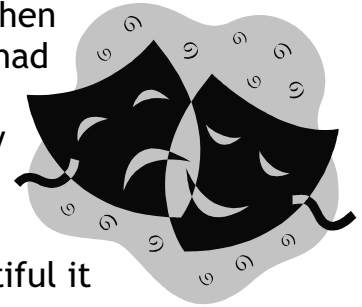
mud and metal which had been blown into face and top half of his body. In order to deal with his blindness he was taken to a hospital in Liverpool. The commandant of the hospital, Colonel Bradshaw, retired, was his uncle by marriage. He had married Aunt Hetty, your father's sister. So Ernest was well looked after! The doctors decided that they could do no more for his sight and it would be best if they took his eyes out.”

“At this time Ernest had a visit from a cousin, Hugh Smith, who had just graduated as a doctor from Liverpool University. Hugh heard what was proposed and persuaded the powers that be to try drawing the metal out of Ernest's eyes using powerful magnets. He was still wearing dark glasses for some years but the magnets worked well and it was many years before he had to wear glasses full time. However, it was the gassing that caused the main problems and very few who had been in gas attacks survived beyond their mid-sixties.”

Sam Dauncey

Translating for the Theatre by Lucienne Hill

I was understudying in a Lawrence Olivier Production when the great man asked me to translate a French play he had seen in Paris. “Just roughly,” he said. I don’t ‘do roughly’ as the young would say, I honestly don’t know how. How do you build a house roughly, bake a cake - make a dress - roughly?



“If a translation is faithful, it is not beautiful, if it is beautiful it is not faithful.” Some French wag said that, but it’s not true.

I spent days and half the night sometimes over that translation, aiming to keep the precision of French while using the richness of English, seeking a language which was elegant yet colloquial, but not slang, and mindful of the rhythm and the actability of it. It worked. I think it pleased the author anyway. (Perhaps I should mention that I had a French mother and French was my first language.)

The play was put in at the great Birmingham Rep. (with me in it, doing my nut I believe!), then on the BBC radio and London’s West End, where it failed I’m afraid. Oh well.....

However, the next (The Waltz of the Toreadors) was put on in the West End and Broadway, followed by a long US tour and I went on to translate another thirty or so, (some of which were put on, some went well, most failed!) The author of many of these was Jean Anouilh, a big name in the fifties, sixties and seventies, (for the information of those of us who can’t cast our minds that far back!)

To digress a little. Here is a little teaser. “Son grand corps blanc - “opening lines of Colette’s great novel “Cheri”. How do you render that? “Her big/grand/tall/long/large white body.” Settle for tall. I suppose, but you lose the grandeur - Not easy, is it?

Back to our onions. When the script is ready and discussed with the actors - some of whom - oh saints preserve us! - may know some French and ask to consult the original. Peter Hall, who directed three of my things, called it “The Chained Bible”. Even so, actors have a point. Nothing is set in stone after all. However, “a little learning etc” So there can be arguments!

By the time I came along authors were no longer discouraged from attending rehearsals, on the grounds that intellectuals (!) couldn’t possibly know about the smell of greasepaint or the arcane elements of stagecraft. (But that kind of inverse snobbery is out of style!) (Now, it seems, every director has an Oxbridge degree and is fluent in French as well).

Anyway, I found myself invited to attend rehearsals and add my two penn’orth, and that has its difficulties. One sits out front, making reams of notes and selects a tenth of them. No director wants to be deluged with advice.

Working in London’s West End is great. Broadway is something else. Postmortems take place every night, over the same hamburgers and nasty coffee, tossing ideas about, until the star and the director leave for their beds and I stay up

until three or four am doing the rewrites, which are learnt and put in for that evenings performance. “ ‘Great’. They all say.” Just right!

“No. Sorry. Still not right. Try again.” So here we go, again. Up until four. Into the show. No. Do it again.” This can go on for the whole of the six week tour.

Back in New York. Opening night. If you have a hit, everyone knows it, congratulations come flying in. If you flop you’re on your own. (Failure is catching, and you have the plague) so you spend days and days on your tod and finally sneak off to the airport. I’m told there are five flops to one hit. Grim. Still, nobody forces one to do it. And it’s put food on my table, shoes on our feet and a roof over our heads. And given me a huge amount of joy. Can one ask more?

Lucienne Hill

It’s Never Too Late For A Gap Year March 2011

Since our return from our annual February trip to Gran Canaria our departure date has been fixed and time seems to be flying by. We have decided that Richard will sail down to Falmouth where a group of boats will be leaving on 21st May, (or as soon as the wind is good), for a five-day crossing to La Coruña in north-west Spain. Long crossings are much better done in the company of other boats in case of problems. I will fly out to join him later that week. This way I will avoid crossing the Bay of Biscay and will not have to cope with rough seas early in the trip. He has found another crew member for that part of the journey. Pete is an interesting man having left England many years ago to sail round the world and eventually returning fifteen years later when his boat got beyond repairing. No worries there, obviously someone with plenty of experience. Then, a few days later, we received the insurance quote for our trip and they require three experienced sailors on board for the Biscay crossing, so Richard needs to find another person.



The boat has a new seawater inlet for the cooling system, so we are really hoping that the ongoing problems of an over-heating engine, that have bothered us since she was new, have now been solved. We could not get it fixed under the warranty as the builders went bankrupt six weeks after she was delivered; we just felt extremely lucky to have a boat, as many people lost a lot of money. The new doors on the formerly open shelving in the main cabin are nearly finished and Richard has spent several days rubbing [sanding?] her down ready for several layers of primer and anti-foul paint. We have also attached a water filter to the cold water tap in the galley.

There is a saying that sailing is like standing in a cold shower and tearing up fifty pound notes; it certainly has seemed that way since we planned this trip. Recent purchases include a new dinghy, modifications to our cockpit tent to provide a clear view but sun protection when on the move, a larger, heavier anchor

and a second motion sickness watch. We have to replace our flares, which we have not used but are now out of date (apparently Portuguese harbour officers are very hot on checking things like that).

Having decided to use two estate agents for the letting of the house, we chose David Cliff in Wokingham and Frank Schipper in Crowthorne. One of my sons was friendly with David when they were at the Forest School together. The house appeared on the internet on Wednesday 17th March and by Thursday afternoon we had a tenant for twelve months who wanted a furnished property. We are really delighted with this result, having been told that 95% of places our size are let unfurnished, so we do not have to worry about storage, but the packing of personal possessions continues, with journeys to Theale where one of Richard's sons has space we are using.

I found a temporary custodian for my car by Christmas and Richard has found a carer for his van and all his work tools, but while I am busy sorting. We have also rented a small container for all our personal possessions nearby in Sandhurst. Richard's son did not have enough space for all our things and this is conveniently close to home.

There is still plenty to do before we leave. I have a seventieth birthday celebration to organise for Richard and a leaving party to include both of our families, and a massive clean-up so that our home is returned to us in the state we left it. I have promised myself a treat: I have decided to have the oven cleaners in just before we hand over. I have never done that before!

I will give you the website address next time I write - Richard will have sorted it out by then. In fact, by the time you receive the next news letter, we will be on our way.

Carole Beswetherick

Holidays at Home and Abroad in the 1930's and 40's Part 5

For my summer holiday in 1948 I took the overnight train from Paris down to the South of France. It was a long and arduous journey; no TGV in those days!

I could not afford a couchette, and as the train stopped at every station along the way, any chance of taking a nap was disturbed by passengers entering or leaving the compartment. By the time the train arrived at Menton I was very tired indeed, but the sunshine and the sight of oranges and lemons growing in gardens restored my spirits, and there was nothing that a good night's sleep wouldn't mend.

I don't remember much about the hotel where I stayed. It would have been cheap; but luxurious compared with the Belgian youth hostels of the year before. There was plenty for me to see, I explored the old town and port and took walks in the surrounding countryside. So soon after the war there were very few tourists, but an enterprising English lady had already opened an English Team

Room, and I sometimes went there in the afternoon for a cup of tea and a piece of cake. There was also a delightful small fish restaurant built on the end of a little pier which jutted out into the sea, where you could sit outside and enjoy a meal of freshly caught fish. I think it was probably Cap Martin.

All too soon the holiday came to an end. The return journey by train to Paris did not seem so tiring this time, as I took the early morning train and travelled in the daylight. As a souvenir of this holiday I still have the small packet of MENTON - 10 Véritables Photographies en Couleurs which I bought to remind me of my first holiday in France.

A disastrous holiday followed in 1949. My old school-friend, Wendy, telephoned me one day, to say that she had read an advertisement in the personal columns of the Daily Telegraph about a voyage across the Channel to France in a private motor vessel, just carrying eight passengers. The advertiser stated that he had six passengers, but wanted two girls to make up the full quota. Wendy suggested that if I hadn't already booked a holiday, she and I should make up this quota. Of course I agreed. How naïve we were!

Alarm bells did not ring when we were asked to supply photographs of ourselves. We made the required payment for the voyage, and were excited about the prospect of our holiday. When we arrived at Hamble, the place of embarkation, we met the six other passengers. They were a Mr and Mrs Bass and their daughter Miss Bass, a Miss Ann Southern, and two men, Mr Rawle, and his friend Mr Robinson. By a strange coincidence the Mr Rawle turned out to be Alan Rawle, a work colleague of my mother's cousin, Maude, who worked for the American company, Parke Davis, I knew he was a married man, but there was no sign of Mrs Rawle. His friend Mr Robinson was also a married man, as Wendy and I discovered during the unpleasant aftermath which occurred after this doomed voyage. There were also two crew members; Charles Lewis, a cook, and Frederick Canever, a deck-hand.

A shock came when we saw our vessel. It was not the smart gleaming white cabin cruiser we had seen in the photograph shown to us by the 'skipper', Mr Dick Moberley, but an old boat with the paint peeling off her, named the Loyang. Mr Moberley made some excuse about the original vessel having some fault and that it had been replaced with the craft we were now to board. Amazingly nobody backed out or made a fuss.

We sailed out on the evening tide, and by the following morning should have been in sight of the French coast, but there was no sign of land to be seen. Then the 'skipper' gave us the news that one of the engines had failed, and that there was no alternative but to turn back. At that time the sea was quite calm, then as we limped along the other engine failed and we started to be severely buffeted by heavy seas. The situation now looked very threatening indeed.

To be continued

Rosemary Goldschmied

Wokingham U3A is



21st Birthday Afternoon Tea

Wednesday 1st June – 3pm to 5.30pm

Blue Mountain Golf Club

Tickets £10 per person

Have you bought your ticket yet?

There has been a huge response but we do still have tickets available.
We would hate to disappoint so please get yours NOW.

- ❖ *Gather on the golf club terrace at 3pm*
- ❖ *Mingle with friends, old and new*
- ❖ *Coming alone? Party hosts there to welcome you*
- ❖ *Sit down to tea at 3.30 ~ sandwiches, scones with jam & clotted cream, cakes and a nice "cuppa"*
- ❖ *Special diet? Not a problem, just let us know*
- ❖ *Need transport? Not a problem, just let us know*

Last chance to buy your tickets

Contact Muriel Froom, 1 Mertonford, Pages Croft, Wokingham, RG40 2HQ - 0118 978 1647
or Sylvia Mason, 23 Culloden Way, Wokingham, RG41 3UN - 0118 979 3502

Cheques made payable to Wokingham U3A; please include SAE.