



Buckingham & District U3A  
Newsletter Number 35    September 2009  
Registered Charity No.1071631  
Web Address: [www.buckinghamu3a.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

The opinions and statements made in this Newsletter are those of individual members. They are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee of Buckingham and District U3A.

### MONTHLY OPEN MEETINGS

Monthly Open Meetings are held in the Large Hall, Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 2.30 p.m., usually on the 4th Wednesday of the month. We do not meet in August.

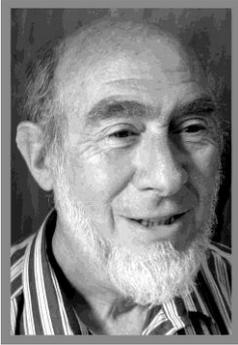
### MONTHLY STALLS

All contributions for fund-raising stalls will be gratefully received by Margaret Elliott. The proceeds from the stall go to our nominated charity. Tombola items will be collected throughout the year.

Date	Topic & Speaker	Stall	Tea Rota
23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	"National Parks – Not ours but ours to look after" Adrian Thornton will show what "National Park" means in England and Wales and take us on an illustrated tour of the present 12 National Parks.	Jams, cakes, pickles	Spanish Intermediate
28 <sup>th</sup> Oct	AGM.	Group Displays	Square Dancing
25 <sup>th</sup> Nov	"A Touch of Glass" – Gordon Casbeard and Tony Brown present a Victorian magic lantern show using a genuine magic lantern and original slides.	Books & Magazines	Strollers
16 <sup>th</sup> Dec	"Let me Entertain You" – Betty Page makes a welcome return to entertain and put all of us in that Christmassy mood.	Raffle	Committee
27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2010	David Vaisey to speak on "Treasures from the Bodlian Library".	Jigsaws	Yoga & Art Appreciation
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb	"Life as a BBC Camera Man"	Unwanted Gifts	Book & Cribbage
24 <sup>th</sup> March	Hearing Dogs	Books & Magazines	Bridge Groups
28 <sup>th</sup> April	Gordon Abbott on Evacuees	Videos, CDs, DVDs, Tapes, Records	Craft & Creative Writing

Please note the deadline for contributions for the next Newsletter is **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009**. Please e-mail or post to the Editor at the address on page 5.

The final page of this newsletter gives instructions of how to access the Buckingham U3a web site. This is a separate page to enable you to tear off and keep for reference when needed.



**CHAIRMAN'S NOTES**

Well my three years is nearly over. This is the last time that I will write these notes to you. By the time of the Christmas Newsletter the AGM will have come and gone and a new chairman and committee will have been elected. It has been an enjoyable three years. I now really appreciate the effort that so many people put in to make this organisation such a success: the committee members, without whom I could not have coped; the group co-ordinators, who beaver away often with little or no recognition; those who make the teas; those who step forward and volunteer to cater for our social occasions and those who offer to help whenever help is requested – a big thank you to you all.

A lot has happened in these three years, we celebrated our tenth anniversary a major landmark and we can feel confident that we are firmly established and can look forward to many years as a thriving association. We now have our own web site, which I hope every member will use and appreciate in the coming years. It seems that many of our new members find out about us because of the website. We have over 550 members, an amazing number for a town the size of Buckingham. By the time you read this, Bryan and Jackie will have attended a Third Age Trust conference on the problems experienced by rapidly growing U3As. This will enable a future committee to plan how to cope with our growing numbers.

Apparently, we have e-mail addresses for about one third of our members. It would enable us to save a considerable amount of money on stationery and postage if we could e-mail the majority of the membership when we need to get in touch. I am sure that those group co-ordinators who are able to contact their group members online find it quick, convenient and cost saving. If you are online and you have not let us have your e-mail address please consider doing so. If you are one of those members not yet online but are thinking about getting connected, I urge you to do so; it is a brilliant way to communicate and a

wonderful source of information. Don't be put off by the scare stories, they are mainly hype and there are simple ways to avoid problems. There are people within this U3A who can help you overcome your initial fears.

By now you will have received the letter about the increase in the subscription, that we are bringing back the 50p charge for the monthly meeting and the request for groups to contribute towards the cost of venue hire. I will not go over this ground again. I will just remind you that you should have sent your standing order to your bank by now, if you have not done so please do not delay, do it today. Likewise, if you are eligible please sign the Gift aid form, it costs you nothing but it is a large source of income for us.

I was disappointed that so few members attended the July social. The food was excellent and Sam, Buckingham's official Town Jester, kept everyone well entertained. Those of you who did not come missed a good afternoon.

Finally, I would like to thank each and everyone of you for making my time as chairman so enjoyable and to wish my successor an equally pleasurable term of office.

John Walton



In April Buckingham & District U3a competed against nine other local U3as in a quiz competition. We came a creditable 4<sup>th</sup>. This result is better than it might seem as there were only 3.5 points separating the first four teams. The other teams were from Milton Keynes, Bedford, Dunstable, Luton, Leighton Buzzard and Flitwick. The event was enjoyed by all who took part and it was decided that it would be repeated next year.

May I suggest that when there is an appeal for people to volunteer for the team it would be good if Buckingham could enter more than one team. This year's team comprised Pam Tonge, Anne Exelby, Tony Mayston, Maureen Sleight, Carolina Kenealy and myself.

John Walton

### Charity Choice for 2009/10

The committee received two suggestions for a charity to support via our fund raising stall for next year. After due consideration there was unanimous agreement that we should support the "Alzheimer's Society Memory Café". This provides a monthly meeting place where people with dementia, their families, friends and carers can meet in a safe and friendly environment. They provide entertainment, emotional support, education and social interaction for those suffering from dementia and those who live and work with them.

The local group meet at the Wells Street Centre on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm. All are welcome.

The committee felt that this was a local charity that desired our support.

Support for the fund raising stall has fallen off in recent months. This stall needs you to provide items to sell. It is also necessary that you visit the stall every month, find something to buy and donate generously. It looks bad if after offering to support a charity we only raise a meagre amount after a year's fund raising.

Remember, every month visit the stall and buy at least one item.

John Walton

### U3A NEWS

#### Do You Want it?

This glossy well produced magazine comes out three times a year. It is produced by the Third Age Trust, the umbrella organisation for all U3As throughout the country. It contains a wealth of information about the activities of other U3As, details about the services provided by central office and lots of interesting offers by advertisers. Three times a year, several heavy boxes are delivered to my house. I then bring these down to the monthly meeting, place them at the back of the hall for collection. A large number are left over which I then take back home. I repeat the exercise the next month but still end up with many uncollected copies. Gradually, we have been reducing the number of copies sent to us but still a lot end up in the recycling.

So, the question is do you want this free magazine to be provided for you. If so few members can be bothered to collect their copy should we cancel it altogether. It cost the U3A Trust money to send them to me, I have to use my car to bring them to the hall (I'd rather walk and save petrol and the environment) and then the surplus are dumped in recycling. May I suggest that you let the new

committee know what you feel about this during the forum session after the AGM.

John Walton

### Coffee Morning for New Members

There will be a new members coffee morning on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009** at 10.30 a.m. at the White Hart in Buckingham. We welcome any new members who have not been able to attend a previous coffee morning to come along and enjoy an informal chat and coffee. If you would like to attend please phone Sheila on 01280 817747.



### Tea Rota

Will Group Leaders please note that as from January we will be combining groups for the tea rota for the monthly meeting. In the case of large groups this will not apply.

### Tombola

Thank you to all those members who have kindly donated items for our tombola.

### Note for Group Co-Ordinators

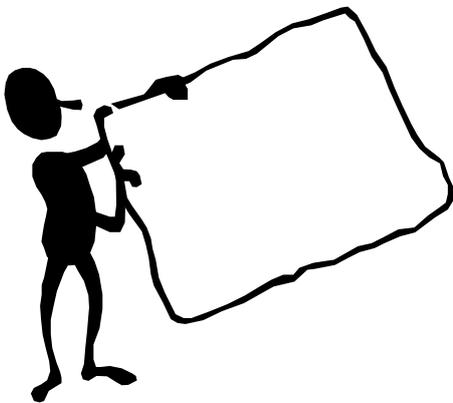
Gawcott Methodist Chapel is available to groups at a cost of £2 per hour. Currently it is available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday all day. Wednesday after 2pm and Friday after 1p.m. If any Group Co-ordinators are interested in using this venue please contact Pat Costello, our Treasurer.



## SECRETARY'S CORNER

### NOTE TO ALL GROUP COORDINATORS

We hope to have our usual display of group activities at the AGM on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October. This gives new members a chance to decide which groups to join and established members inspiration to start a new activity and it is always interesting to see what other groups are up to. If your group has something it would like to show, please will you contact me (01280 812547 or valshaw@care4free.net) before 19<sup>th</sup> October to let me know your needs (half a table? 2 tables? any special position?) so that we can try to accommodate you. Access is usually **from 2.00pm**; we shall need to know if half an hour is not long enough for you to set up.



### Two items related to computing activities:

1. The Third Age Trust is offering on-line untutored courses at a bargain subscription cost of £10. For further details, see the web site at [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)
2. Geoff Suggate has been approached by a gentleman called Marius Stuart, who wonders whether there is any interest amongst our members in tuition for advanced computing, such as power point and desktop publishing. Geoff usually covers just basic computing but if you are interested in other areas, please get in touch with him (01280 812195 or [g.suggate@btopenworld.com](mailto:g.suggate@btopenworld.com)) to discuss your needs and he will pass on details.



### Mah Jong Handbook

A 42-page bound colour booklet has been produced to enable beginners to learn the basics. It contains worksheets and quizzes and is available at £4 from the Third Age Trust, Old Municipal Buildings, 19 East Street, Bromley BR1 1QE. (Cheques to "The Third Age Trust"). As we have had several enquiries about Mah Jong, is anyone interested in starting a Mah Jong Group?

### Document Downloads

This booklet, along with 13 other start-up leaflets and information on reference handbooks, subject newsletters, insurance and "Sources", is available to download from the Third Age Trust web site ([www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) – go to "Document downloads" and click on what you want.)

Valerie Shaw

### Radio 2 & 6 Music Survey

The following is taken from a letter from Jean Goodeve the Chairman of The Third Age Trust. "First I must thank everyone who took the time and trouble to respond to my request to take part in an ad hoc survey of listening preferences. The information I received was analysed and passed onto the BBC Trust at a meeting I attended on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

The BBC Trust is carrying out a nationwide survey on what people think of Radio 2 and 6 music. I would urge all members to use this opportunity to express their viewpoints to the BBC.

For those of you who have access to the web you might like to open the home page of the BBC Website, and insert 'Complaints' into the search box at the top of the site. This will take you to the complaints page and if you click on BBC complaints and look under common issues, you will find, surprise surprise, their answer to the perennial issue of background noise and guidance notes for producers. If you wish to complain you can do so from this site.

I was told at the meeting that the BBC Trust was receiving fewer complaints on the issue of background noise. I expressed my feeling in a forthright manner and gave an example of a programme I had been watching over the weekend where I had turned the TV off in disgust due to the level of background sound. I also added if they did not act now they would experience this problem for themselves in 10-15 years' time. Over to you."

## BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

### COMMITTEE

Chairman	John Walton 7 Partridge Close Buckingham MK18 7HH	01280 814668 u3abuck@o2.co.uk
Vice-Chairman	Bryan W Thomas 18 Coopers Wharf Ford Street Buckingham MK18 1UP	01280 813664 pbwt@btinternet.com
Secretary	Valerie Shaw 8 Nightingale Place Buckingham MK18 1UF	01280 812547 valshaw@care4free.net
Treasurer	Pat Costello 17 Campbell Close Buckingham MK18 7HP	01280 815143 pat.costello.uk@virgin.net
Membership Secretary	George Walker 2 Burleigh Piece Buckingham MK18 7BB	01280 813735 george.walker7@talktalk.net
Technical Resources	David Angrave 10 Moreton Road Buckingham MK18 1LA	01280 816453 angrave@madasafish.com
New Member Support/Publicity	Colin Armstrong 1 Moorhen Way Buckingham MK18 1GN	01280 817285 laganal@virgin.net
Speakers	Jackie Page 28 March Edge Buckingham MK18 7BP	01280 822320 posh_5@msm.com
Theatre & Outings	Beryl Carr 16 Robin Close Buckingham MK18 7HD	01280 823808 berylalan@waitrose.com
Monthly Stalls	Margaret Elliott 7 Fishweir Stewkley Leighton Buzzard LU7 0HB	01525 240174 mechippie@aol.com
Newsletter Editor	Sheila Dalzell 18 Partridge Close Buckingham MK18 7HH	01280 817747 sheilaeditor@hotmail.co.uk

### **EQUIPMENT REGISTER**, to borrow contact keeper

June Lewis	01280 815849	Keyboard
David Angrave	01280 816453	Radio Microphone (lapel); Radio Microphone (hand held); Microphone with lead; 35mm Slide Projector; Screen (floor standing); Overhead Projector
Paul Radcliffe	01280 813352	Flip Chart Stand
Merle Harrison	01280 821693	Miniature Tape Recorder
Valerie Shaw	01280 812547	Photocopier
Mo Borrill	01280 813735	Magnifier
Peter Cammas	01280 815279	Digital Camera
Geoff Kirk	01280 812772	Digital Projector; DVD player (multi region); Projector Stand

Please note the changes to the EQUIPMENT REGISTER as above. The Digital Photography Group has gone into hibernation for the time being so Peter Cammas has suggested that it would be more appropriate if items that he looked after, except the Digital Camera, were transferred to someone else. Geoff Kirk is a significant user of the Digital Projector for his group, so kindly offered to look after it, along with the projector stand and the DVD Player. Normally he uses a plain wall for projecting his images so doesn't need a screen. That stays with me, along with all the other visual aids, such as a portable Overhead Projector and a 35mm Slide Projector. May I give a timely reminder to everyone, that everything shown in the EQUIPMENT REGISTER, is available for all our members to borrow. If you are worried about using any of the items, then just contact the listed keeper, to seek reassurance.

David Angrave, Technical Resources

## BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

### GROUP DIRECTORY: Buckingham Centre (Library), Maids Moreton (MM) Village Hall

Activity	Co-ordinator	Telephone	Weekday	Time	Venue
Art Appreciation 1	Pam Tonge	01280 823370	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thur	2.30	House
Art Appreciation 2	Pam Tonge	01280 823370	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fri	10.30	House
Book	Gillian Macdonald	01280 822688	4 <sup>th</sup> Thur	2.00-3.30	Buck Centre
Bridge (Improvers)	Russell Tobin	01280 817918	Mon	2.00-4.00	M.M. Village Hall
Bridge (Rubber)	Clive Cowdy	01280 824274	Mon	10.00-12.00	Chandos Court
Bridge Tuition	Peter Holman	01296 720737	Tue	10.00-12.00	M.M. Village Hall
Chess	David Pond	01296 714112	Tue	10.30	House
Computing (Intro)	Geoff Suggate	01280 812195	Ask Co-ord		
Crafts & Card Making	June Olliff	01280 823305	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thur	10.00-12.00	Buck Centre
Creative Writing	Susie Kelly	01280 816940	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon	10.30-12.30	House
Cribbage	Mike Baker	01280 816460	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thrs&4 <sup>th</sup> Fri	2.00	House
Croquet	George Walker	01280 813735	Fri	2.00-4.00	Buck Cricket Club
Digital Photography	Peter Cammas	01280 815279	Ring for info.		
Exploring the Past	Shirley Knight	01296 713765	1 <sup>st</sup> Mon	10.00-12.00	Ask Coordinator
Flower Arranging	Anne Liddle	01280 823565	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tue	1.45-4.00	M.M. Village Hall
Family History	Geoff Kirk Jenni Burke	01280 812772 01280 816546	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tue	09.45	Buck Centre
French Beginners	Ginny Booth	01280 813802	Fridays	2.00	House
French Advanced 1	Jenni Burke	01280 816546	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	10.00-12.00	House
French Advanced 2	Chris Strain Clark	01280 816832	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	10.00-12.00	House
French Intermediate	Judy Austin	01280 814864	Alternate Wed	10.30	House
French Lunch 1	John Murray	01280 813792	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	12.30	House
French Lunch 2	Judy Austin	01280 814864	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	12.30	House
Friendship	Jane Walker	01280 813382	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thur	2.30-4.30	House
Gardening	Jennie Newcombe Sandra Nicholls	01296 712476 01280 823491	1 <sup>st</sup> Tue	2.00-4.00	M.M. Village Hall
German	Ursula Archdeacon	01280 823640	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	10.00-12.00	House
Handbells 1	Derek Smith	01280 813946	Fri	9.30-10.45	Gawcott Chapel
Handbells 2	Derek Smith	01280 813946	Fri	11.00-12.30	Gawcott Chapel
Italian	Roy Walker	01280 812836	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tue	2.00-4.00	House
Italian Beginners	Peter Cammas	01280 815279	Ring for info.		
Jazz Appreciation	Derrick Olliff	01280 823305	3 <sup>rd</sup> Fri	10.00-12.00	House
Local History 1	Sylvia Cooley	01280 816634	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	10.00-12.00	M.M. Village Hall
Local History 2	Dorothy Shaw	01280 822087	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs	10.00	Parish Church
Music Pleasure 1	T.B.A.		1 <sup>st</sup> Thur	2.30-4.30	House
Music Pleasure 2	David Angrave	01280 816453	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	2.00-4.00	House
Outdoor	Val Bradley	01280 817746	Ask Co-ord		
Painting	Pam Gower	01280 823279	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon	1.30-3.30	Well St. Centre
Philosophy	Don Horne	01280 813587	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues	10.00-11.30	Buck Centre
Play Reading	Jane Walker Judith Bell	01280 813382 01280 813721	4 <sup>th</sup> Tue	2.00-4.00	Buckingham Parish Church
Poetry	Julia Randall	01280 821388	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs	2.30	7 Bristle Hill
Russian	Roy Walker	01280 812836	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon	2.00-4.00	House
Scrabble	Rosalie Stein	01280 814373	Tue	2.00-4.00	Buck Centre
Singing for Fun	Jane Walker	01280 813382	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thur	2.30	Chandos Court
Spanish Beginners	Vicky Steadman	01280 847980	Tue	2.30	House
Spanish Int. 1	Vicky Steadman	01280 847980	Tue	10.15	House
Square Dancing	Susie Kelly	01280 816940	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Mon	1.30-3.30	Well St. Centre
Strollers	Lesley Suggate	01280 812195	Ask Co-ord	10.00	The Swan
Yoga	Gwyneth Jebson	01296 715674	Tue	10.00-11.30	University Studio

## BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

### WEEKLY TIMETABLE

DAYS	FIRST WEEK		SECOND WEEK	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
<b>MON</b>	Bridge – Rubbers Creative Writing Exploring the Past	Bridge – Improvers Painting Russian	Bridge – Rubber	Bridge – Improvers Square Dancing
<b>TUE</b>	Bridge – Tuition Family History Spanish Intermediate 1 Yoga Chess	Gardening Scrabble Spanish Beginners	Bridge – Tuition Philosophy Spanish Intermediate 1 Yoga Chess	Italian Scrabble Spanish Beginners
<b>WED</b>	French Lunch 1	Music for Pleasure 2	French Advanced 1 French Advanced 2 French Intermediate German Local History 1	
<b>THUR</b>	Local History 2	Music for Pleasure 1	Crafts & Card Making	Singing for Fun Art Appreciation 1 Cribbage
<b>FRI</b>	Handbells Art Appreciation 2	Croquet French Beginners	Handbells	Croquet French Beginners
DAYS	THIRD WEEK		FOURTH WEEK	
<b>MON</b>	Bridge – Rubber Creative Writing	Bridge – Improvers Painting Russian	Bridge – Rubber	Bridge – Improvers Square Dancing
<b>TUE</b>	Bridge – Tuition Family History Spanish Intermediate 1 Yoga Chess	Flower Arranging Scrabble Spanish Beginners	Bridge – Tuition Spanish Intermediate 1 Philosophy Yoga Chess	Italian Scrabble Spanish Beginners Play Reading
<b>WED</b>	French Lunch 2		French Advanced 1 French Advanced 2 French Intermediate German Local History 1	OPEN MEETING
<b>THUR</b>	Local History 2	Friendship Group Poetry	Crafts & Card Making	Art Appreciation 1 Books Singing for Fun
<b>FRI</b>	Handbells Jazz Art Appreciation 2	Croquet French Beginners	Handbells	Croquet French Beginners Cribbage

### Crafts & Card Making

Just over a year ago, with a little shyness and in trepidation I asked a rather nice lady if I could join her craft group. For the anniversary of this bold move I feel I must tell the world, or at least all the other members of the Buckingham U3a what a wonderful time I have had. The lady, June Olliff, leads the group with humour and expertise. No task is too daunting for her to take on, not least motivating me into producing some half decent work. We are all encouraged to share our different and varied craft ideas and to try something new. Since I have been a member we have had demonstrations and practical hands on sessions. We have made bags and boxes, quilts and shrugs, toys and gifts. Some members are in the process of making the most attractive cards "for all occasions". Our Christmas crackers are fast becoming very desirable commodities both here and abroad. All hand made, often from scraps of card and fabric, the cost is low to negligible but the finished product has the personality of the maker evident, some pretty and delicate, others flamboyant, many intricate, many simple but all effective.

In addition to our sessions twice a month we occasionally take a trip to other venues to experience and research materials and equipment. We welcome the opportunity to try out new techniques and ideas and I sincerely hope that if you have a craft or wish to "have a go" at something new you will join us. I must admit that at the moment I have a large number of items for finishing off, but recently produced a double photograph frame in one session, as well as partaking of the tea, coffee and biscuits. My thanks to June. I will bring the birthday cake to the next meeting. My first year of retirement has been a cracker.

Freda Davies



### Poetry

The U3A poetry group has changed in style over the years. At present we are a 'select' group of poetry lovers who meet once a month to enjoy and read aloud poems that we have found on a certain

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theme. There is such pleasure to be found in rummaging through poetry books and then in sharing with others old favourites or perhaps new discoveries.

We have been meeting in the mezzanine room at the Library, but have decided that, since we are few in number, it would be nicer to meet in a private house, so, from October, we shall be meeting at 7 Bristle Hill in Buckingham instead. We are also changing the time of the meetings to Thursday afternoons, on the Third Thursday of the month at 2.30pm.

The theme for our first meeting after the break on October 15<sup>th</sup> will be 'Autumn'.

And finally, our new co-ordinator is Julia Randall at 01280 821388 who can give you any more information you need.

Germaine Radcliffe



*Tennyson*

### Local History 2

From October we will be meeting in the Parish Church of St. Peter & St. Paul on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 10.00a.m.

As well as talks on local history topics our programme also consists of walks and visits to places of interest. When we have a walk or visit we meet at the Swan statue by the river. For any information please contact me on 01280 822087. Dorothy Shaw



### German Group

Dresden Visit May 2009

In previous years we have visited Berlin, Krakow and Munich but this year it was Dresden. After the allied bombing of this historic city on 13 February 1945, what would we find? Would Canaletto's famous view of Dresden from the right bank of the River Elbe be lost forever? Our first full day was spent getting our bearings and familiarising ourselves with the most famous historical sights. We walked from the Kreuzkirche, where we saw the cross of nails from Coventry, to the long facade of the Art Academy with its round dome, the massive Albertinum, the newly restored Frauenkirche, on to the Bruhlsche Terrasse with views of the Hausmann Tower, the Standehaus (ex-Parliament), the Hofkirche and the finally the Semper Opera House.



After a most fortifying lunch of Goulash or lentil and ham soup, followed by waffles, cherries and ice cream, we were ready to face the afternoon itinerary. Firstly, we visited the Catholic Cathedral (Hofkirche), then onto the Zwinger (the name being derived from the site behind the town fortifications). This enormous Baroque structure was built during the reign of Augustus the Strong from 1710 to 1732. The double storeyed pavilions connected by long galleries were built around a central courtyard which was used as an open air ballroom, arena for parties and military extravaganzas. This needs to be seen to be believed.

Later in the week we visited The Old Masters Art Gallery (Gemaldegalerie Alter Meister) which is so extensive that we concentrated on the most famous works of art. We saw paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Cranach, Durer, Titian's The Tribute Money, Giorgione's Sleeping Venus and of course Raphael's Sistine Madonna. When we were confronted with Canaletto's painting of Dresden from the River Elbe ...we were not disappointed as the view is still awe inspiring!

We spent time exploring the picturesque area around Dresden. One of the most fascinating was a trip by train to the Elbe sandstone massif known as 'Swiss Saxony'. We arrived at Rathen then crossed the Elbe by ferry to the delightful riverside resort of Niederrathen. Some walked along the River Amsel to Amsensee, whilst others climbed to Bastei (310m above sea level). We walked across the Bastion Bridge (1851), crossed the ravine to view the magnificent labyrinthine gorge with its bizarrely-shaped rocks and a most rewarding view of the Elbe valley and the Lilienstein and Konigstein Table Mountains. We returned to Dresden by boat, courtesy of the Sachsische Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft, relaxing and enjoying the views along the banks of the Elbe. Bautzen and Gornitz were two more delightful Saxon towns that we visited; the former being the cultural capital of the Sorb/Wend community with their own culture, language and dialect. The journey to Gornitz, a medieval town on the border with Poland, was very eventful. The local train stopped suddenly in the middle of nowhere. The fluent German speakers amongst us learned that the police were searching for an escaped prisoner.



Whilst we were waiting, the guard came along and asked if we would all like coffee. A few minutes later we were all drinking piping hot cappuccinos. Would this happen on Network Rail? During the war Gornitz escaped allied bombing apart from the bridge linking it to Poland. This has now been rebuilt so we were able to walk across into Poland and have Kaffee und Kuchen.

Of course one cannot visit Saxony without going to Meissen, the home of Dresden china. It was fascinating, especially the guided tours around the workshop where each stage of the making of porcelain was explained and demonstrated. Each item of Meissen Porcelain is still hand painted. The Porcelain Museum is full of the most wonderful intricate exhibits from different eras, including several editions of the famous monkey band. We ended our visit by drinking a cup of coffee out of a

Meissen Porcelain cup and yes it did taste different. I could get used to it.

One of the highlights of our holiday was the visit to Leipzig, the centre of music. We stood in the very famous 16<sup>th</sup> century Nickolaikirche. It was here in 1989 where the 'Monday Demonstrations' took place which eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the DDR.



Johann Sebastian Bach was choirmaster from 1723-1750 in the Thomaskirche. Bach was cantor of the still world famous Thomanenchor (Saint Thomas Choir) which dates back to 1254. That afternoon there was a concert/evensong by the choir and we were able to get tickets. It was for me the icing on the cake to end an eventful week in Saxony.

To end on a warning... If you use a taxi in Dresden beware of the GPS on the dashboard. It may change into a TV screen displaying a live football match. It was quite an adventure watching the driver negotiate busy traffic whilst supporting his team. A nightmare... but at least I am still here to tell the tale!

Lilian McDonald

### Art Appreciation

Due to a rise in popularity, a second art appreciation group was formed in March this year. Group 1 has twelve members and continues to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month at 2.30pm. Group 2 has ten members and meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of the month at 10.30am in each other's homes.

Since Christmas, Group 1 has looked at the art of the Italian High Renaissance, Mannerist paintings and the Northern Landscape Tradition.

Group 2 began at the beginning of the story of art and so far has studied cave paintings, Egyptian, Ancient Greek, Aegean, Byzantine, Islamic and Chinese cultures and British art during Neolithic, Celtic, Roman and Saxon periods.



Visits have included the Birmingham Metropolitan Museum and Art Gallery to see the watercolours of David Cox and the paintings of Sir Edward Burne-Jones from the Stuttgart collection; the Baroque exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum; The Duke of Wellington's art collection at Apsley House in London and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Pamela Tonge

### Russian Group

Now well into our eleventh year, we in the Russian Group still find ourselves faced with the perennial problem of how to develop our oral skills. The language course we use, Ruslan, provides us with a superb means of practising reading, writing and listening to Russian, for it can be applied both in group sessions and privately at home, using recorded tapes or CD-Rom on the computer.

However, live contact with a native Russian speaker is not as likely to be met with as in the case of the other European languages represented in our U3A groups.

We have discovered partial solutions to our problem in applying ourselves to the computer. For some years now we have had e-mail contact with Vladimir, a doctor who lives in Oryol, a town lying to the south of Moscow. He is quite prepared to share his experiences, touching on everyday topics such as family news, holiday outings, problems at work, personal opinions and aspirations, and he thus provides us with authentic, colloquial Russian which we can read and adapt to our own circumstances and requirements. This contact was further consolidated when an opportunity occurred for a personal meeting with Vladimir when I visited Moscow last year.

Failing a personal contact, there exist innumerable internet websites from which topical language material can be gleaned, read and adapted for the purpose of oral question and answer. This is a line we hope to follow more in the future. Googling the Russian Federation can be both rewarding and fun. A good example of a newspaper site is the Russian Gazette (Российская Газета), accessible at [www.rg.ru](http://www.rg.ru), where you can click on государство (nation), политика (politics), в мире (world news), культура (culture), спорт (sport), etc. to obtain suitable articles. There is an English version of the site to keep us abreast of Russian affairs at <http://rbth.ru/> (Russia beyond the Headlines) and the Daily Telegraph publishes a supplement in its newspaper every couple of months (next one on September 29).

Easier material can be downloaded free from the BBC languages site at [www.bbc.co.uk/languages](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages)

clicking on “Quick fix” or “Other languages” at bottom left of the home page, then choosing the language you want.

Our Ruslan Russian course Book 3 is based in the Siberian town of Иркутск (Irkutsk) and employs an absorbing narrative revolving around Lyudmila, her son (Ruslan), and the men in her life. Nearby is Lake Baikal, one of the longest (636km) lakes in the world, and the deepest (1637m) lake in the world, containing 23,00 cubic metres of water. 300 rivers flow into it, but just one, the Angara, out of it, near Irkutsk. In and around it are unique flora and fauna, including the Baikal seal, the nerpa.

Jill Gawthorn, a friend of mine and a fellow member of the U3A, went on holiday to Western Siberia, including Irkutsk and Lake Baikal, in July, and we are looking forward to her coming to visit our group, talk about her impressions and show us her photos. This should lend impetus for us to plough on and further develop our interest in Russian affairs as well as in our language skills.

Roy S Walker



### Outdoor Group

The Outdoor Group, at the time of writing, is having a good summer. We have an almost full programme and, so far, have not had one walk cancelled because of bad weather.

We have walked in a variety of locations, from Wilstone and Tring reservoirs in the south to Greens Norton and Pocote in the north. Distances range from three miles to five miles and we have walked over fields, along canal towpaths and on hard paths. On one walk we climbed over more than 15 stiles, but also saw more butterflies than ever before. In one meadow, at every step we took, there was a cloud of butterflies rising before us.

As well as our more usual walks, we have had two special walks. The first involved 20 members hiring a canal narrow boat for a round trip of eight miles. We all took turns at walking and floating, except for one energetic soul who chose to walk the

whole eight miles. The journey was broken with a really good lunch at the Narrowboat Inn, Weedon, so we were all well refreshed for the return hike. In July, we repeated last year’s summer evening walk around Bourton Park, followed by a meal at Prezzo. Although the weather could have been more summery, we did not get wet and the meal was a great success.

After reading the national U3a magazine of a London group that have walked around London using public transport to get to and from the start and end of each stretch of walk, I am planning a similar venture around the 35mile boundary of Milton Keynes. Hopefully this will be completed in just over two years if we manage to walk one section each season. There is in existence a 65 mile route that takes in all the villages that come under Milton Keynes, but I thought that would be a step too far. The sections walked will depend on bus services and the important detail of a suitable pub for lunch at the end.

By the time you are reading this, we will be planning our Autumn programme, which will depend on the willingness of members to offer walks. If you would like to know more about our group, please see me at the main U3a meetings. We charge members £1p.a. to cover production of the programmes and we have introduced a fixed charge of £2 which passengers pay to whoever drives them to the start of each walk. All meals are paid for by the individual members. This means that we have no need to charge an “attendance” fee.

The first walk of the Autumn will be an “all-day” walk on flat firm paths, around Pitsford reservoir, about 7 miles in total but with a mid-day stop for lunch. A good start for the new season.

Val Bradley



### Theatre & Travel

It has been a fairly busy time for Theatre and Travel since the last newsletter. I think the highlight, up to now, was our holiday in Madeira. I suspect that everyone, other than me of course, came back a few pounds heavier than when they went, due to the excellent food we enjoyed.



Although the weather could have been a little warmer it did not deter us and we all had a good time. Our days out have been successful. Anglesey Abbey was most interesting. Although the rehearsal of the Trooping of the Colour had an extremely wet start we all enjoyed it, what a spectacular sight it was. I am sorry I had to cancel the Classical Spectacular at the Albert Hall and the trip to Dickens World due to lack of numbers – you can't win them all! Although I wasn't here for the Hatfield Flower and Garden Show I am told that everyone appeared to enjoy it, particularly the flowers in the House.

We have seen some good shows at M.K. Theatre, and more to come. I am afraid that London shows are becoming quite expensive – however more on that later. We are looking forward to our return visit to Croatia. Although we are a small “select” group I am sure that it will be enjoyable. The upcoming shows at M.K. in the next few months and into next year include “Chicago”.



I never miss seeing it because I think the Bob Fosse choreography is fantastic. Matthew Bourne's “Swan

Lake” is returning – maybe this time I will be around to see it. A new one for us is “La Cage Aux Folles! I didn't book for “Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang” because it was too expensive and we saw it in London a few years ago. I spoke of London shows earlier. I recently had the opportunity to see “Sister Act” at the London Palladium; I found it very lively and entertaining and most amusing. I think one of the ways to judge a show is to look at the faces of the people leaving after the show. People were smiling and some even doing a little jig. So I am keeping that in mind for next year, if I can get a reasonably good price. I want to remind you of our bi-annual visit to the Albert Hall for the Christmas Carol Sing-along, that usually comes the week before Christmas. They have a new policy and will only keep my booking for three weeks, so I have to move quickly on that one.

Plans are now underway for 2010. In June we go on the cruise to the Norwegian Fjords. Although the prices have increased slightly there are still good cabins available. In September I hope to do a tour of West Scotland. I think there are still a few twin rooms left for Thursford.

Alan and I look forward to seeing you at our table, with cheque book in hand.

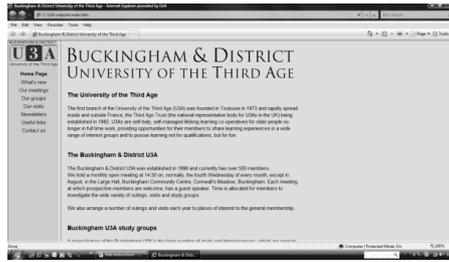
Beryl Carr



# BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

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For example, click on “Our Groups” and Our Groups page is displayed.

This page displays public information only.



Click on the U3A logo to access member pages.

The Groups By Name page is displayed. A “Click-Here” below the page heading switches between the Groups By Name and Groups By Day pages.



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