

NEWSLETTER

Buckingham and District



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

www.buckinghamu3a.org.uk

*Opinions stated within
are not necessarily those of the
editor or trustees*

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Clive Cowdy



After 5 years on the committee and three and a half years as chairman I shall be retiring at the AGM. It has been a really enjoyable period if, at times, challenging. So, in my last Chairman's Notes, I want to share some of the things I have learnt.

▪ **You can't please all the members all the time.**

After every speaker at the open meetings, at least one person will come up and say what a wonderful speaker we had and someone else will ask where we got such a bad speaker. Likewise, at our social sessions, although nearly everyone has a good time, there always seems to be someone who has not been entirely happy with their experience. Up to now the praise, happily, has well exceeded any criticism.

▪ **We improve our social life by joining learning groups.**

The U3A was founded to provide a self-help learning environment for people in their 3rd age. Almost without exception the people I talk to say that they join the U3A to make friends and improve their social life via the groups. The more activities they join the better the social life they have.

▪ **We grow best by word of mouth.**

Every time we run a new members' session I am impressed by how many there say that they joined because a friend or a neighbour recommended us. We grow by at least 50 new members each year, so we must be doing something right.

▪ **You are all too modest.**

Within our membership of more than 850 there is a tremendous range of knowledge and skills. But, with a few exceptions, you are all too modest to take a lead by running a group or getting involved in the running of our U3A. We will only improve and grow if you all share the time and skills you have. The most challenging part of my role has been finding and persuading enough people to help run our U3A.

Finally, thank you to all those who have helped over my period in office and shared so many good times with me.

I wish the new committee every success.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR OPPORTUNITY!

The current editor will be vacating the role at the end of this year, providing an exciting opening for a member (or two) to take up the position.

ARCHITECTURE

Peter Bowtell – Group Coordinator

Since its beginning in 2012, our group has grown considerably and we have covered a wide range of topics in our monthly illustrated talks, relating to both modern and historic architecture. We also try to plan at least five or six trips a year to interesting buildings, some with professional guides and some following our own course. Likewise, some of our monthly talks are by professional speakers, with subjects as diverse as the architecture of Seoul, the work of Milton Keynes Parks Trust, the AVDC Design Awards and the Victorian Battle of the Styles. We also like to encourage our members to do some research and talk to the group. This has generated some fruitful responses, again with much diversity, such as the design of London Underground stations, the building of English cathedrals, a study of tall buildings and the role of women in architecture.



Visiting tall buildings in the City of London.

CREATIVE WRITING

Susie Kelly – Group Coordinator

FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP

An all day workshop with novelist and short story writer

JUDITH ALLNATT

October 16

10.00 – 16.00

Buckingham Council Chamber

£30/head

Learn how to bring interesting characters to life, invigorate descriptions and structure plots. Explore tried-and-tested short story structure and techniques for planning a novel. Participants will leave with the start of a story to develop and the tools to plan a longer piece of writing.

Limited spaces - £10 deposit required

Contact Susie Kelly, 01280 816940 or susie@graybo.co.uk

TUESDAY GARDENING

Vee Sampson – Group Coordinator (01280 821850, v.r.sampson@gmail.com)

A lot of dry weather and some welcome sunshine got us off to a good start for the summer season and we were hopeful our garden visits would be blessed with good weather.

We started with a visit to Broughton Grange, near Banbury, where there are 350 acres of parkland, farmland and open meadow. It's a lovely garden with lots of interest, including a significant arboretum of 80 acres planted in 2003, and an impressive walled garden, with terraces and planting from the Victorian era.

Rousham House was the intended venue for a visit in June but unfortunately the weather intervened and threatened to spoil the day but as the second and third photos show, the sun did eventually shine on the four hardy souls who braved the elements.

Following a talk from the Head Gardener at Woburn Abbey in April, we visited the abbey gardens in July, so we could see for ourselves what he had described to us. This time the sun did shine and we had a lovely afternoon, rounded off with tea and cake in the tea room.

We took a break in August and resume meetings in September with programme planning for next year.

Good Gardening!



LATIN BEGINNERS

Steve Watkins – Group Coordinator

The first meeting of the Latin Beginners' Group will be on Friday 22 September at 1:30pm, at Thornborough Methodist Chapel, MK18 2DF.

We will be starting at the beginning, with amo, amas, amat and we shall be using the book 'So you Really Want to Learn Latin' by NRR Oulton.

Copies are available for sale, price about £15.

All welcome.

For further information, please email stephanos@eroumen.co.uk or phone 07900 955149.

HAND BELLS

Rodney Bennett – Group Coordinator

Our new members are settled in and ringing well!

We look forward to the autumn season when we will be ringing at various venues, with our next public performance at Whaddon, on 8 November and we're then ringing for Tingewick Diamonds Club in December.

Having new members allows us to ring 'extra notes' when the score requires them.

Please feel free to join us on Fridays and give ringing a try!



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**Date 1 October 2017**

Janti Mistry – Membership Secretary

The fee for an individual member is £10, or £6.50 if you already belong to another U3A. A joint fee for couples is £20 (£13, if members of another U3A). You may pay by direct bank transfer, standing order, cash, or cheque.

Cheque and bank payments should be made payable to Buckingham and District U3A and must be received by 15 October 2017. Membership cards will be posted early in November. If you do not receive your card by the end of November, please notify me immediately and provide your current address for verification.

Last year we received subscription payments of £13 instead of £10, from 28 members who had failed to change their standing orders, despite several reminders. If you have not altered your standing order to the U3A, please change it urgently.

Details for bank transfer and standing order:

Our bank: Lloyds plc
Account name: Buckingham and District U3A - subs acc
Sort code: 30-63-97
Account no: 22188268

Please quote U3A - membership number(s) in the reference section. If you have set up a new standing order, please let me know, so I may update the records.

Details for cheques:

Payable to: Buckingham and District U3A
Please write your membership number(s) on the back of the cheque and post to J Mistry, 16 Robin Ride, Brackley, NN13 6PU, or hand to me at the open meetings.

Details for cash:

Please do not send cash in the post. Cash payments may be made at the open meetings and a receipt will be issued.

Late payments: Although the majority of payments are made on time, I have been receiving payments up to July 2017. This year 82 members missed the first posting of membership cards. It is easy to set up a standing order with your bank and avoid this situation. In order to reduce postal costs your card will not be posted if your payment is not received by 1 November 2017 but will be available for collection at the open meetings. If you cannot attend, you may nominate someone to collect on your behalf. From December onwards, cards will be emailed for printing at home, or saving on your mobile phone.

Gift Aid: If you are a tax payer and wish to add Gift Aid to your subscription, we can reclaim up to 25% of the fee, which would help to increase our income. Please ask for a Gift Aid declaration form at the open meetings, or download it from buckinghamu3a.org.uk/how-to-join-2/

Contact details: If you have changed your home address, email or phone number in the last 12 months, please send me your details so I may update the records. We use email as our primary means of communicating with members to save on posting. Over 100 of the 700 households in Buckingham and District U3A have not provided their email address. If you think you may be one of these please send me an email, with subject 'My email address' and quote your membership number.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

We are looking for new committee members for the coming year; in particular, we need someone to take on the role of secretary and someone to be the social team leader.

THEATRE OUTINGS

Di Proctor – 01869 278149 tickets@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Musicals seem to have provided most visits to Milton Keynes. We have seen the excellent Billy Elliott, full of skill and energy. This was followed by Mamma Mia and La Cage aux Folles. There was also Northern Ballet's production of Casanova, which was well received. We saw two plays, the first, Jane Eyre was a modern and energetic interpretation by the National Theatre, which was enjoyed; the second play was Judgment in Stone, a Ruth Rendell mystery, which I found a bit disappointing.

Listed below are a variety of new shows to book, including the long awaited War Horse.

Title	Description	Date	Time	Seating	Cost	Pay by
Cinderella	Matthew Bourne ballet	Feb 15	2.30pm	Upper circle	£30.00	Sept 28
Hedda Gabler	Ibsen play by National Theatre	Mar 1	2.30pm	Stalls	£20.00	Oct 28
Crazy for You	Tom Chambers, 'Strictly' winner	Mar 22	2.30pm	Front circle	£25.00	Nov 24
The Little Mermaid	Northern Ballet production	Apr 19	2.30pm	Front circle	£17.00	Oct 8
The Case of the Frightened Lady	Edgar Wallace thriller	May 22	7.30pm	Front stalls	£25.00	Sept 21
Legally Blonde	Musical	May 30	2.30pm	Front circle	£20.00	Oct 15
Matilda	Musical / Roald Dahl story with music by Tim Minchin	June 30	2.30pm	Front circle	£35.00	Jan 1
War Horse	Moving production of Michael Morpurgo's book	Oct 3	2.30pm	Stalls, circle, upper circle (state preference)	£30.00	Feb 1

Shows still booking and going ahead

Cosi Fan Tutte	Mozart opera	Nov 23			£25.00	Sept 27
Beautiful	(One ticket remaining)	Feb 21			£35.00	Nov 13

DEREK SMITH – by [Hand bells](#) and [Recorder groups](#)

Derek Smith, who contributed much to the musical life of Buckingham U3A, died in early August, after a long period of illness.

Derek was a professional percussionist who was approached to conduct the hand bells in the autumn of 2006 and threw himself with enthusiasm into this new opportunity. He brought musicality, military discipline and humour to the role. Once familiar with the possibilities he moved on to arrange pieces for the group, some of which became favourites.

There were memorable moments when performing in public. Derek, in his trademark bow tie, and the ringers in formal black and white, looked very much the part but all didn't always go to plan! One day the heavens opened and we played in a small tent, unheard due to the torrential rain. The piece, which should have been straightforward but which required turning the page whilst playing, was a multitask too far! There were great moments too, when all went well and the

performance was warmly welcomed, the enjoyment being felt by performers and audience alike.

In 2012 Derek took on a further role when the recorder group was established. He was reluctant at first but after some qualms enjoyed the experience! He helped the group to come together as an ensemble, guiding, encouraging and teaching us to understand and perform the music to the best of our abilities. He took very nervous novices and moulded us into players. When he said that we were 'almost good' we were gratified by the high praise. His sense of humour was key in helping us to relax and enjoy the music.

It is a testimony to Derek's teaching that, when ill-health forced him to retire from conducting, the groups were able to build on the foundations he had built and continue to progress. When we play pieces that he had rehearsed with us we will always remember him with affection.

Our sincere condolences to Jennie, who was such a support to Derek in all his activities.

GROUP LIAISON

Lilia Bogle – Group Liaison

It's good to see that we are getting some sunny weather this summer and that our groups are making the most of it.

Over the summer, many of our members have been travelling the world but did you know you can visit World U3A? You can read about other groups around the world at myu3a.org and if you are travelling abroad, you can visit other U3As through worldu3a.org/signpost

Buckingham U3A is a life-line for many of our members and, as we know, you are never too old to learn. A recent study claims that continuing to learn helps to keep aging at bay and research suggests that continuing to learn in later life, as we did as children, may overcome the effects of aging. (From an article in the Daily Express by Anil Dawar, May 2017).

I'm pleased to say that we're seeing continued growth

of membership and interest groups. We've created another line dancing group to meet demands; the Friday meditation group is teaching techniques for relaxation and we are starting a Buckingham U3A orchestra in September. Writing and poetry, the history of literature and the theatre groups are all recommencing in the autumn.

Some groups are still looking for new members; singing a round, music for pleasure, folk dancing, Russian, singing for fun and recorders. If you're thinking of joining any of these don't put it off any longer, as these groups need more members to be viable and current members are keen to keep them going.

Please see the web page to contact the group coordinators and if you have any great ideas for new groups, please contact me.

Wishing you all a great time in what remains of this summer.

BUCKINGHAM and DISTRICT U3A SUMMER SOCIAL



A summer garden party was held on 26 July in the Community Centre. Attendees were treated to sparkling rosé wine and a selection of sandwiches and cakes. John Bercow agreed to entertain the 160 plus members, and he certainly did a great job of that! His extremely funny stories of fellow ministers, what actually happens in the 'House', along with great impersonations of said fellow ministers had us entertained for a full hour. John stayed on to chat to members and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the afternoon.

Photos of John Bercow, with:

Maggie Pringle and the catering team; Don Horne; U3A members and chairman, Clive Cowdy.

RECORDERS and RELAX with RECORDERS

Sue Norman, Helen Preston and Jo Taylor

Both recorder groups are recruiting!

We're very much enjoying the experience of playing together. However it can be daunting to join an established group and the main reason that new members don't come forward is lack of confidence. We all started that way but it's surprising how soon you can pick up where you left off in the 1960s or 70s! Perhaps you played another wind instrument and would like to try a recorder? On 4 October, at Gawcott Chapel, 10.00 to 11.30, both groups will play a few pieces, some nearly

ready for public performance, some definitely not! You can try some instruments and relax with a cup of coffee.

If you think you might want to join us but are still not sure, we will be starting an induction course of 4 to 6 weeks, starting on or around 9 October, the date depending who comes forward. This will enable you to find out what you can do (you might surprise yourself) and to decide, which group would be most appropriate for you.

Posters about these events are on the website and more details about the groups on our web page.

We hope to see you soon.



BUCKINGHAM and DISTRICT U3A CHARITY

Dusty Roades

The July raffle raised £223 for Project Street Life and Margaret Elliot raised £38 on her stall, so £261 goes to the project.

In September we will have the usual produce stall with lots of jams, chutneys and the now 'almost famous' St Clements Marmalade. There will be another raffle at the Christmas meeting and quiz sheets will be available at the AGM. Also at the AGM we will be asking for nominations for our 2018 charity. Don't forget, the £1 round coin ceases to be legal tender in October, so put any you have into the charity box in September (twelve sided ones will also be most welcome).

I have been running the annual charity for 6 years now and have decided to take a year or two out, so we need a volunteer, or volunteers, to take over for a while. Talk to me after the AGM if you would be prepared to carry on with this worthwhile job.

STROLLERS

Sheila Dalzell – Group Coordinator

Strollers have had a good summer, with village walks and canal walks. We even had a picnic on a slightly chilly but dry day in June, in Rushmere Country Park, ending in a 60s sing-song in the café (fortunately no other customers and the staff were amused). We also had a sing-along after a lovely summer walk round St James Lake, Brackley and the old railway walk, with a singing lesson at the Westbury Community Café. Another wonderful walk was seeing the bluebells at Hazelborough Forest as the picture below shows.



However, I think one of our favourite walks was at Wicken, finishing up at the Phoenix Community Project Café in Wicken Village Hall. We were made very welcome and enjoyed their delicious scones. This café is well worth a visit but is only open on the last Thursday of each month from 11.30am to 2.30pm. The picture below was taken at Wicken.



WALKING

Stan Surzyn – Group Coordinator

I am pleased to issue a confidential interim report on the trading position of the Buckingham U3A Walking Group ('the group'), which the city is eagerly awaiting. Our prior year sales were nil, and during the past year, sales have plummeted to nothing. At the same time, costs have doubled from zero to twice that amount. Full accounts have been made up by Messrs Backhander and Sine-Itov and are available to purchase, cash only, from the coordinator. These are excellent results, due entirely to my policy of accepting only the best people as members, and so I am increasing by 150% my annual bonus (prior year - zero). I also retain the fully expensed company car provided to all U3A group coordinators.

There is a pleasing note in the accounts that, like all the best businesses, we are 'trading whilst insolvent', so it seems a good time to sell the group as a going concern. A Mr Green was initially interested, but walked away (some reports say 'sailed away') when he discovered that we had no pension assets.

I hope this short report gives you confidence in the future of the group.

Hospital Car Service

URGENT NEED FOR DRIVERS

Do you have some spare time to help a local charity?

A group of volunteer drivers take patients to hospital appointments at various local hospitals.

The number of requests for trips has been steadily going up over the years and we are seeking new drivers to help cover this increase in demand.

You can specify which days you are free, how many times a week you are prepared to drive and which hospitals you are happy to go to. We pay our drivers 45p a mile.

If you think you can help us
please contact
Sue Watkins 01280 816266

ART APPRECIATION

Pamela Tonge – Group Coordinator

Tina Brown gave a thoughtful talk on Picasso's Guernica in April and the talk in May was a foretaste of the Royal Academy exhibition: America After the Fall: Painting in the 1930s, where we saw the iconic American Gothic by Grant Wood, together with works by Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keefe, Jackson Pollock and Alice Neel, amongst others. We also visited the Georgian House and Grounds at Compton Verney in May to view their exhibition on Creating the Countryside with works from Thomas Gainsborough, Constable and Turner to Grayson Perry. The staff made us very welcome and the coffee 'n' cookie, which greeted us on arrival, was much appreciated!

In June, we had a fascinating talk on the various interpretations of the Annunciation down the centuries by Philippa Atkinson and in July we studied the Newlyn School of Artists in Cornwall. Also in July, we visited the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge to see their mini display of the Cornish-born artist, Alfred Wallis, together with a painting by Christopher (Kit) Wood from the Kettle Yard Collection. We spent an enjoyable day looking at other art in the Fitzwilliam collection including their very fine display of early 16th, 17th and 18th century samplers.

The talk on Friday, 1 September on Stanley Spencer was an introduction to his work prior to a visit to the Stanley Spencer Gallery in Cookham on Tuesday, 12 September, via the Winslow Bus. All the outings have been well supported, as have the talks and the group has grown over the last twelve months but new members are always welcome. Please visit our web page for details of future talks!

Barbara Shaw
Textile Artist - Art in Textiles

The Stables, Claydon Courtyard,
MK18 2EX

11am - 5pm
September 16-24 2017
(closed 21 and 22)



LOCAL HISTORY 1

Runnymede – Windsor boat trip, May 2017

Ed Conroy – Group Coordinator

On arrival at Runnymede via Winslow Bus, 15 of us boarded The Queen of the Thames, (it can take 150 passengers.) On our leisurely way to Windsor we viewed some enviable riverside residences, a splendid coach and set of 4 grey horses and all sorts of birdlife: ducks, black swans, grebes, herons, as well as passing river craft who all gave us a cheery wave. On arrival at Windsor quay we were welcomed by dozens of friendly swans. The union flag was flying high at Windsor Castle,



just over the road from the King and Castle pub, where we enjoyed lunch before a leisurely walk across the bridge into Eton, where we admired the quaint shop fronts and old school buildings. We then filled ourselves with ice creams before boarding our bus and heading back to Buckingham. I cannot thank the French Brothers enough, they put on a special boat, which we had all to ourselves, they supplied us with refreshments and provided an informative running commentary. Once again thanks to Winslow community bus and driver Mike.



BUCKINGHAM and DISTRICT U3A COMMITTEE and OFFICERS

Chairman	Clive Cowdy	01280 824274 chairman@buckinghamu3a.org.uk
Vice-Chairman	Martin Paul	01296 713204 vice.chairman@buckinghamu3a.org.uk
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New Member Liaison	Ginny Booth	01280 813802 new.member.liaison@buckinghamu3a.org

SPANISH REVISION

Judy Austin – Group Coordinator

Hola!

We are a lively group of eight - four men and four women. We can all read and translate everyday Spanish, such as that found in magazine articles and simple short stories but our speaking abilities differ.

During the first hour of the meeting the host organises something for us to do; perhaps read a short story or a magazine article, occasionally a comprehension piece with questions, or a translation from English to Spanish, and, if it's at my house, grammar! We then break for tea before our Spanish teacher (she is Colombian) arrives. We have a different theme to talk about every week. Sandra starts us off and then we each make our contribution, which often leads to lively and amusing discussion and always a lot of laughter! Conversations have ranged over topics such as descriptions of family members and their characteristics, holiday memories, favourite books and films, music, and even religion and politics!

At Christmas or New Year we either have a lunch in a restaurant or take homemade food to the house of one of our members - Spanish food and wine, of course!

As there are nine of us, including our teacher, it might be difficult to accommodate new members but at holiday times we are sometimes reduced to three people, so it's always worth phoning to see if there is space for you!

Saludos,
Judy