

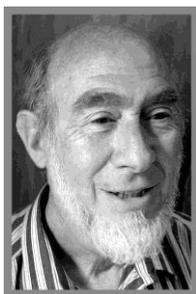
	<p>Newsletter Number 32 Autumn 2008</p> <p align="right">Registered Charity No.1071631</p>
	<p>The opinions and statements made in this Newsletter are those of individual members. They are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee of Buckingham and District U3A</p>

MONTHLY OPEN MEETINGS

Monthly Open Meetings are held at 2.30 p.m., in the Large Hall, Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham, MK18 1RP, usually on the 4th Wednesday of the month. We do not meet in August.

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
24 Sep	My Great Aunt's Birthday Book - Gill Twissell Gill is the author of "Rest upon the Wind". The writing of this book inspired her to research her family history. Her Aunt's birthday book provided many leads to the fascinating stories she uncovered.	Jams, cakes, pickles	Local History
22 Oct	AGM	Group Displays	Music for Pleasure 2
26 Nov	Superstitions - David Pickering David compiled Cassell's Dictionary of Superstitions. He will talk to us about the origins of some familiar superstitions and probably introduce us to some we are unaware of. He claims to have an antidote to the curse of a broken mirror!	Books & magazines	Outdoor
10 Dec	<i>Christmas Party – Note Change of Date Entertainment from groups within U.3.A.</i>	Raffle	Volunteer Helpers
28 Jan	"And Another Thing I Meant to Say" - Mel Rees A welcome 3rd visit from Mel who will entertain us with his observations on ordinary, everyday life.	Jigsaw Puzzles	Painting
25 Feb	The History of Claydon House - Philip Warner	Unwanted Gifts	Philosophy
25 Mar	"Another Opening -Another Show" Simon Gilbert	Books & Magazines	Play Reading
22 Apr	"Deaf but not Daft" - Louise Reed	Videos, CDs, DVDs, Tapes, records	Poetry
27 May	T.B.C	Plants and cuttings	Russian
24 Jun	Workaid in Africa Jane Alexander (of Windmill Vets)	White Elephant	Scrabble



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As I write this we are in the midst of our typical British summer: leaden clouds, trees swaying in the wind and rain threatening! By the time that you read this it will be autumn and another U3A year will be drawing to a close. Our AGM is next month and we will be looking for new committee members to help with the running of this organisation.

My appeal for someone to take over the editorship of this newsletter resulted in a volunteer coming forward, together with several offers of help with the production and mailing of the newsletter. This is the last edition under Don's guiding hand and I thank him for all the hard work that he has put into the newsletter over the past two years. The new editor is Sheila Dalzell and we wish her well and look forward to the December edition, which will be the first under her stewardship.

Our website is an established fact but I know that many of you were not happy with the need add information about your group activities nor with the necessity of keeping it up to date. Having got the website up and running; our webmaster, Tony, felt that it was time for him to step down and leave it to others to maintain. This will be happening in the near future; George Walker will be taking up the reins. We will probably change the format of the site slightly, so that it is less likely to appear out of date or incomplete. However, no final decisions have been made and the committee have still to settle on what it is that we expect to see on our site.

In time, I hope that members will make full use of this additional method of communication to find out what is going on and of any changes to planned activities. For some of the larger groups, putting a change of programme on the website will be so much easier than trying to make a large number of telephone calls, with the problem of people not being in at the time of the call. But we appreciate that it takes time for these new ideas to be adopted and that we must proceed at apace that suits all of you.

I regret to inform you that the Technology and Science group has shut down. I very much hope that this group can be revived at some future date.

I hope that you will all be renewing your membership, (BY STANDING ORDER if possible, please) and looking forward to another year of exciting activities with this growing and vibrant organisation.

ON LINE COURSE

In the last newsletter, in an article I wrote about making full use of the U3A Trust, I mentioned that I had signed up to an online course on "Garden History" and said that I would tell you how I got on.

Well, the course is divided into sections corresponding to recognised periods in garden history. For each section you are given a list of things you should find out. Also, there are links to a number of websites where you can find the answers to the questions asked. As it is an untutored course, there is no-one to say if your answers are right or wrong but if you have worked your way through all the information available it is fairly obvious that you have got it right. So, basically it is a guided reading list, using the internet rather than books. As such, it is fine, the cost is minimal and you work at your own pace, you acquire knowledge and in answering the questions posed you make your own notes about the subject.

So far, so good, the downside is that you have no deadlines and no schedule. There is always something more urgent to get on with: mowing the lawn, repairing broken appliances or playing with the grandchildren. So I have not got very far, I am only on the second section, medieval gardens but when I do make the time I find that I enjoy it immensely. One advantage of this erratic way of working is that you can never just pick up where you left off, you have to go back and refresh your memory, and this is a kind of revision and reinforces the learning process.

So, if there is a course on the list that you fancy doing, I would recommend that you give it a try. If you can be more disciplined than me and better at managing your time you should be able to get through the course in a few weeks. Give it a try!

John Walton

OUR WEBSITE

I know that some people question the need for a website, quoting the fact that we have managed for 10 years without one and I do understand and sympathise with this point of view. However, since we call ourselves a "University" I think that we must endeavour to look to the future and try and embrace new technology. I know that the rate of change brought about by this new technology is staggering. Some members will have never had cause to use a computer in their working lives, yet now, I expect that most members joining us have at least some experience of using computers and the internet. I expect that 5 or 10 years from now there will be very few members who do not embrace this useful means of communication and source of information.

Our newsletter only appears three times per year, so the information in it can easily become out-of-date. Although, telephoning people is a more personal approach it can be very frustrating when the person you are trying to contact is not available. If you are a group co-ordinator, needing to contact a large number of people, trying to do this by telephone can be very frustrating, when the line is engaged or the person is out. Using the Internet is not a replacement for all our traditional means of communication; rather it is an additional way of keeping in touch for those who are happy to use it. Also, the newly retired and those who have just moved to the area, are very likely to use the internet to find out about clubs and activities in Buckingham, many will specifically search out information about the U3A. Therefore it is important that the site is accurate and creates a good impression of Buckingham & District U3A. As it is becoming obvious that we cannot persuade enough of you to become involved with keeping the site up to date, we are taking advantage of the change of webmaster, announced in my notes, to review the contents of the site. Hopefully, the revised look will make it less necessary for you to become involved in adding or updating information on the site., whilst, at the same time ensuring that the site provides a good advertisement for our U3A.

It is your U3A and the groups that make up this organisation are your groups. If you want to be an open and welcoming organisation for those who have just retired and those who are about to retire then we need to accept that much has changed in the last ten years and people joining the U3A at the end of the first decade of the 21st century will expect us to have embraced the

technology that is a normal part of their everyday lives.

John Walton



At a recent computer expo

Bill Gates reportedly stated,

"If General Motors had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon."

General Motors issued a press release stating:

If General Motors had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics :

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash.....Twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a manoeuvre such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
5. Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive - but would run on only five percent of the roads.
6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single "This Car Has Performed an Illegal Operation" warning light.
7. The airbag system would ask "Are you sure?" before deploying.
8. Occasionally, for no reason , your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.
9. Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.
10. You'd have to press the "Start" button to turn the engine off.

BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

THIS NEWSLETTER

Editor: Don Horne

Production: Shirley Knight

WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Editor: Sheila Dalzell: phone 01280 817747

The deadline for contributions for the next Newsletter is 24th November

Email to

sheilaeditor@hotmail.co.uk

or

Post to

Sheila Dalzell

18 Partridge Close

BUCKINGHAM

MK18 7HH

¿HABLA ESPAÑOL?

Would you like to brush up your rusty School / University Spanish?

Take your pick from our three small Groups:

Our Tuesday morning Group is currently following the BBC's "Sueños 2" (intermediate) programme. We have a book with plenty of grammar and exercises, plus the accompanying CDs for recorded audio material. Sometimes one of our Group might bring along a video, or a short story or perhaps an interesting article taken from the Internet or from a magazine.

If you can't make the morning session, there is an alternative intermediate level Group which meets on Tuesday afternoons. Here the course of choice is "Pasos", but otherwise the format is much the same.

If you're a little less confident, why don't you join the Beginners, who meet on Tuesday afternoons. This Group has now been going for a couple of years and at present is using "Sueños 1" – book, CDs and BBC videos, along with audio material courtesy of *Michel Thomas*.

We take turns to host meetings in our homes, and we usually combine forces for a social get-together a couple of times a year.

Come and join us for *conversación, café y galletas* – new members, whatever your level, most welcome.

Have a look at the Group entries on the website, or give Vicky a call on 01280-847980 for more information / encouragement!

CHESS GROUP

We are just a few folks

And we love to play chess

We meet twice a month

Well, maybe more or less

We'll teach you if you'd like to learn

The midnight oil no need to burn

As we make our homes the venues

You therefore won't pay any dues

We have plenty of spare chess sets

You won't need any nets

You therefore don't need any "kit"

And you won't need to be super-fit

We're not a bit intellectual

And more players we would like

To become a bit more effectual

And get the balance right

The game may not be considered "cool"

Cos strategy is a useful tool

So if you have a competitive streak

It's folk like you we need to meet

So get in touch if this strikes a cord

Ring David or Cyril: the numbers are on the board

David Pond

BONJOUR, LES AMIS!

There is a move afoot to set up a **FRENCH BEGINNERS GROUP**.

A small nucleus of members is already interested but they would welcome a few more to make up the numbers.

The aim would be to cover basic French so that members could get by in France.

If you would like to know more, please telephone Ginny Booth on 01280 813802 or Valerie Shaw on 01280 812547.

BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE

Chairman	John Walton. 7 Partridge Close. Buckingham MK18 7HH	01280-814668 chairman.bucku3a@tiscali.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Bryan Weston-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@btopenworld.com
Technical Resources	David Angrave, 10 Moreton Road, Buckingham MK18 1LA	01280-816453 angrave@madasafish.com
New Member Support and Publicity	Mo Borrill, 2 Burleigh Piece, Buckingham MK18 7BB	01280-813735 george.walker7@btopenworld.com
Speakers	Jackie Page, 28 March Edge, Buckingham, MK18 7BP	01280-822320 posh_5@msn.com
Theatre & Outings	Beryl Carr, 16 Robin Close. Buckingham, MK18 7HD	01280-823808
Monthly Stalls	Margaret Elliott, 7 Fishweir, Stewkley, Leighton Buzzard LU70HB	01525-240174 mehippie@aol.com
Newsletter Editor (incoming)	Sheila Dalzell , 18 Partridge Close Buckingham, MK18 7HH	01280 817747 sheilaeditor@hotmail.co.uk

Jackie Page's telephone number is 01280-822320, not the one given on the 2007-2008 membership card

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EQUIPMENT REGISTER. TO BORROW, CONTACT KEEPER

Keeper	Telephone	Item	Item
June Lewis	01280 815849	Keyboard	
David Angrave	01280 816453	Radio Microphone (lapel)	35mm Slide Projector
		Radio Microphone (hand held)	Screen – floor standing
		Microphone with lead	Overhead Projector
Paul Radcliffe	01280 813352	Flip Chart Stand	
Merle Harrison	01280 821693	Miniature Tape Recorder	
Shirley Knight	01296 713765	Laptop Computer, Scanner	Laser printer
Valerie Shaw	01280 812547	Photocopier	
Mo Borrill	01280 813735	Magnifier	
Peter Cammas	01280 815279	Digital Camera	Projector Stand
		Digital Projector	
		DVD Player (multi region)	

In addition to the equipment listed above, we have purchased certain items, specifically to help individual groups to function. This equipment is the property of the U3A. It is held by a responsible person in the group. In general it would not be suitable, nor practical, to lend this to other members. However, any queries should be directed to the committee.

THE DIGITAL PROJECTOR



This is working very well. Don't forget that, like other items listed in the EQUIPMENT REGISTER section, **it is available for you to borrow.**

HOWEVER I feel that I should underline its limitations. Some borrowers have said that the sound output is very inadequate. This is true. It only has a tiny in-built speaker delivering a sound output of only 1 Watt (virtually all digital projectors are similarly specified). It is only designed to monitor that something is actually coming from the tape, DVD player etc. Indeed the instruction manual that comes with the projector suggests that the sound from the player source should be connected to an external sound system like a Hi-Fi or for example, the Community Centre's sound system. If you are using the projector for simply a slide show with your laptop and you are supplying the narration live, then none of the foregoing need concern you. Peter Cammas tells me that he is surprised it doesn't get borrowed more often (average twice a month) so what are you waiting for - GET BORROWING!

David Angrave

Editor's note: I have seen the equipment used in a small room with a small number of listeners (twenty) and it was adequate. BUT normal hearing ability was needed.

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WEEKLY TIMETABLE

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

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GROUP DIRECTORY –

MEZZANINE ROOM, BUCKINGHAM CENTRE- ALSO KNOWN AS “LIBRARY UPSTAIRS”

Activity	Co-ordinator	Telephone	Weekday	Time	Venue
Art Appreciation	Pam Tonge	01280 823770	2 nd & Last Thu	2.30- (10.30)	House
Book Group	Gillian Macdonald	01280 822688	4 th Thu	2.00-3.30	Buckingham-Parish Church
Bridge (Starters)	Russell Tobin	01280 817918	Mon	2:15	North End Court
Bridge (Improvers)	John Murray	01280 813792	Mon	10.00-12.00	North End Court
Bridge Tuition	Peter Holman	01296 720737	Tue	10.00-12.00	Maids-Moreton village hall
Computing (Intro)	Geoff Suggate	01280 812195	Ask Coordinator		
Crafts & Card Making	June Olliff	01280 823305	2 nd & 4 th Thu	10.00-12.00	Buckingham Centre
Creative Writing	Susie Kelly	01280 816940	1 st & 3 rd Mon	10.30-12.30	House
Croquet	George Walker	01280 813735	Fri	2.00-4.00	Buckingham Cricket Club ground
Digital Photography	Peter Cammas	01280 815279	2 nd Thursday	10.00-12.00	Buckingham-Parish Church
Exploring the Past	Shirley Knight	01296 713765	1 st Mon	10.00-12.00	Ask Coordinator
Flower Arranging	Anne Liddle	01280 823565	3 rd Tue	1.45-4.00	Maids-Moreton village hall
Family History	Geoff Kirk	01280 812772	1 st & 3 rd Tue	10.00-11.00	St.Bernardine's
French Advanced	Christine Strain-Clarke	01280 816832	2 nd & 4 th 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 st Wed	12.30	House
French Lunch 2	Judy Austin	01280 814864	3 rd Wed	12.30	House
Friendship Group	Leoni Seymour	01280 817165	3 rd Thu	2.30-4.30	Buckingham Centre
Gardening	Jennie Newcombe Lesley Suggate	01296 712476 01280 812195	1 st Tue	2.00-4.00	Maids-Moreton village hall
German	Cyril Cox	01280 817843	2 nd & 4 th Wed	10.30-12.30	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 nd & 4 th Tue	2.00-4.00	House
Italian Beginners	Peter Cammas	01280 815279	1 st & 3 rd Tue	2.00 p.m	House
Jazz Appreciation	Derrick Olliff	01280 823305	3 rd Fri	10.00-12.00	House
Local History	Sylvia Cooley	01280 816634	2 nd & 4 th Wed	10.00-12.00	Chandos Court
Music for Pleasure 1	John Hobbs Anthea Kay	01280 812234 01280 821680	1 st Thu	2.30-4.30	House

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Music for Pleasure 2	Dot Hamilton	01296 714307	1 st Wed	2.00-4.00	House
Outdoor	Val Bradley	01280 817746	Ask Coordinator		
Painting	Pam Gower	01280 823279	1 st & 3 rd Mon	1.30-3.30	Well Street Centre
Philosophy	Don Horne	01280 813587	2 nd & 4 th Thu	10:00-11:30	Buckingham Centre
Play Reading	Jane Walker	01280 813382			Buckingham-Parish Church
	Judith Bell	01280 813721	4 th Tue	2.00-4.00	
Poetry	Germaine Radcliffe	01280 813352	3 rd Thu	2.00-4.30	Buckingham-Parish Church
Russian	Roy Walker	01280 812836	1 st & 3 rd Mon	2.00-4.00	House
Scrabble	Rosalie Stein	01280 814373	Tue	2.00-4.00	North End Court
Singing for Fun	Kathleen Richmond	01280 823245	2 nd & 4 th Thu	2.30	Chandos Court
Spanish Beginners	Vickie Steadman	01280 847980	Tue	2.30	House
Spanish Intermediate1	Vickie Steadman	01280 813811	Tue	10.15	House
Spanish Intermediate2	Vickie Steadman	01280 813811	Tue	2.30	House
Square Dancing	Susie Kelly	01280 816940	2&4 Mon	1.30-3.30	Well Street Centre
Strollers	Lesley Suggate	01280 812195	Ask Coordinator		The Swan
Table Tennis			Sunday	10:00	Maids-Moreton village hall
Yoga	Gwyneth Jebson	01296 715674	Tue	10.00-11.30	Buckingham Youth Centre

FBI JOB APPLICATION:



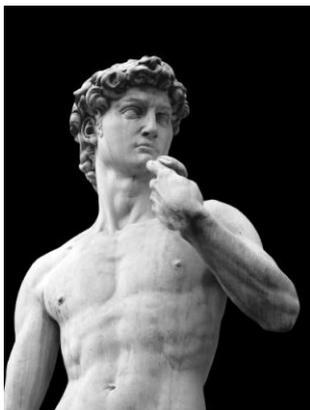
The FBI had an opening for an assassin. After all the background checks, interviews and testing were done, there were 3 finalists; two men and a woman. For the final test, the FBI agents took one of the men to a

large metal door and handed him a gun. 'We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances.'

Inside the room you will find your wife sitting in a chair . . . Kill her!!' The man said, 'You can't be serious. I could never shoot my wife.' The agent said, 'Then you're not the right man for this job. Take your wife and go home.'

The second man was given the same instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about 5 minutes. The man came out with tears in his eyes, 'I tried, but I can't kill my wife.' The agent said, 'You don't have what it takes. Take your wife home.'

Finally, it was the woman's turn.. She was given the same instructions, to kill her husband. She took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another. They heard screaming, crashing, banging on the walls. After a few minutes, all was quiet. The door opened slowly and there stood the woman, wiping the sweat from her brow. 'This gun is loaded with blanks' she said. 'I had to beat him to death with the chair.'



ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Since March our group has continued to progress through the story of art covering Byzantine, Islamic and Chinese cultures and British art during Neolithic, Celtic, Roman, Saxon,

and Norman periods. Our project has included jewellery, manuscripts, sculpture, architecture and a detailed study of the Bayeux Tapestry.

Some members visited the Exhibition of the Terracotta Army, organized by Beryl Carr, which tied in neatly with our study of Chinese art.

On 10th July, we made a group visit to the Round Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Northampton, built in 1100AD; All Saints Church, Earls Barton which has a fine Saxon tower and incorporates Norman, Mediaeval, Early English, Decorated, Perpendicular and Victorian features; All Saints Church, Brixworth, which has elements of Saxon and Roman architecture, as well as the Eleanor Cross in Northampton, a fine example of the Decorated style.

We travelled to the Courtauld Gallery on 15th July, to view some of Cezanne's masterpieces and from thence to the exhibition "Radical Light" of early modern Italian Divisionist Painters at the National Gallery in London, which also included the work of some of the Italian Futurists. It was a thought-provoking experience and judging by the chatter on the way home, greatly appreciated by all concerned.

Currently, we are looking at European Gothic influences in the 12th, 13th and 14th Centuries, prior to the Renaissance.

The group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month at 2.30pm and 10.30am respectively at each other's homes and we currently total thirteen.

Pamela Tonge Group Co-ordinator

BOOK GROUP

On every fourth Thursday of the month the Book Group meets in Buckingham-Parish Church from 2 to 3.30pm to discuss our choice of the month. Our choice is formed from the recommendations of those present: I don't like to call them members because we are really a "drop-in" group

and anyone is welcome to join our meetings just once or often. We shall be forming the next half-yearly programme in September so please come and help us by telling us about books you have enjoyed. Meetings end with a cup of tea and a chat about current affairs.

The December gathering is usually a tea-party in someone's house with literary offerings on a Christmas theme.

Here is our programme for the autumn:

Sep 25 - A Time of Gifts by Patrick Leigh Fermor

Oct 23 - The Island by Victoria Hislop

Nov 27 - The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera

We hope to discuss Anna Karenina on January 22nd after 2 months of dedicated reading.

All the books are in paperback or can be ordered from the library.

Gillian Macdonald 01280 822688

CREATIVE WRITERS' WORKSHOP

A workshop took place in the quiet surroundings of the conference room above the library in Verney Close on Wednesday 9 July 2008 from 10.00am to 3.00pm and was well attended by almost all the group.

Judith Allnatt, writer and lecturer at the University of Leicester, was our tutor and began the day by giving us four words – clock, blindfold, cellar and glass. We had to choose just one of the words and create a spider's web around it with associated words and ideas. This was followed by an exercise in speed writing, keeping our pens in contact with the paper for five minutes to write on whatever topic came into our heads.

Having got our creative juices flowing, Judith then suggested that every story needed a hook, a hint of intrigue or speculation to get the reader interested. To describe a visual scene in a confident manner, set a time and space, awake the senses e.g. darkness, coldness, heavy scent, sound, etc. and pen sketch a character. We practised writing with the raw material we had amassed in our spider's web and speed writing exercise.

Judith advised us about the Higher Education Certificate in Creative Writing course (3hrs per week over two years) which is offered by the University of Leicester at the Northampton College from September 2008 for £500. This

covers writing short stories, novels, scriptwriting, children's fiction, journalism, poetry and travel writing. Judith also told us about her latest novel "A Mile of River" which is set in 1976.

After lunch we began to think about the central character in our story. What do they believe other people think of them? Do they care? How does this affect the way they deal with people? What are they unsure about? What do they look forward to? How do they identify themselves socially?

Finally, we discussed structuring a story, setting up conflict and resolution. We listened to excerpts from other writers and discussed whether their hook had been successful and why. We read out our own efforts to each other and gave and received critiques.

Altogether a very enjoyable and interesting day and we decided to enlarge on our projects for the next meeting of the group. Especial thanks go to Susie Kelly for organising the day and to the U3A treasury for helping to fund it.

Pam Tonge



LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We have had a good summer despite the awful weather and have only once cancelled an outside visit. This was to Finmere, which we hope to rebook next year.

All the villages that we visited made us very welcome and we have had some amazingly good guides.

Stowe House was the last outside meeting and we were taken around the house by Dr Chris Brown. How he manages to remember all the dates and details we couldn't think.

One other exceptional visit was to Wicken during a lovely summer's evening - maybe the only one. Leo McNeir was our guide around the village, after which took us back to his house where 'The Time Team' had excavated a dwelling house and dovecote. This was extremely interesting and for an added extra we had remarkable food laid on by his wife.

We still have two more outside visits. One to Willen Hospice and Church and then an evening visit to Milton Keynes Museum. Julian Hunt will be our speaker in October at Chandos Court. We all look forward to hearing him.

Sylvia Cooley co-ordinator



MUSIC FOR PLEASURE I

The Music for Pleasure Group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 2.30p.m.

We normally meet in each other's homes with

the host/hostess choosing the programme for the afternoon and providing tea. However not all of us have space/seating for a large group. Where necessary, we meet in the home of one or other of our members able to accommodate us. We have a rota system and it is up to the programme organiser for that month to arrange with someone to provide a venue. Providing for tea remains the organiser's responsibility. It is also the responsibility of the organizer to find a substitute from the Group if they are unable to keep to the rota and to let us all know the new arrangement.

We aim to start promptly and, depending on the music, stop for a short tea break about 3.30p.m. We usually finish between 4.30-4.45 p.m. Though mainly classical, it is music for pleasure: we like to have a variety of music to suit everyone. The choice is entirely up to the programme organiser of that day.

The nucleus of our group has been meeting since the founding of the Buckingham U3A in January 1998. In the past we have made arrangements to attend a concert or ballet in maybe Milton Keynes or Northampton. Sadly with advancing years this has become more difficult. Nowadays we confine ourselves now to listening to the music chosen by the organising member for that month. There is ample opportunity in Buckingham itself to attend concerts and the festival in the summer is always well patronised by our members. We have the opportunity to attend excellent concerts in Milton Keynes at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone, the MK Theatre and the Stables and many of us manage to do so. Visiting companies also give us the chance to get to an opera or ballet from time to time.

We are not a performing group nor do we go into the technicalities of the work we hear. We are really simply a group of music-loving friends who meet once a month to listen to someone else's choice of music. As a result we have got through a quite incredibly varied amount of excellent music. Rarely does anyone duplicate a piece and if they happen to do so it always comes

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to us afresh. Composers chosen range from Tallis to McCartney and Gregorian chant to Gilbert and Sullivan. Our taste and choice is truly catholic!

We seem to be well supplied with CDs, tapes, records and on the odd occasion video/DVD. Our Library is able to help out quite frequently so I don't feel we have a real need to use the U3A Resource Centre though it is good to know it is there should we wish to do so.

As a small group I don't think inviting speakers would be appropriate. We are well served here in Buckingham with the local facilities and have the chance to attend pre-concert talks in Milton Keynes given by Adrian Boynton, the Director of Music/Conductor of the Cornerstone Chamber Choir and Orchestra. Mr. Boynton has also given illustrated talks at our regular monthly U3A general meetings.

I understand the U3A Music Appreciation Group Newsletter refers also to singing. We certainly don't include that in our eclectic music sessions! We very occasionally have an ad hoc gathering to watch an opera (or ballet) on a DVD. In any case I believe we have a very thriving "Singing for Pleasure" Group in our Buckingham U3A.

Ideally we liked to have a membership of twelve – the maximum any of us can comfortably accommodate in our homes. It is also a suitable number to give each of the members the chance to organize a programme in the course of the year. Sadly we have lost some long-standing members so have some vacancies. We would be glad to welcome two or three new members if possible. If you are interested please contact me on 01280 821680 for information.

Anthea Kay : Co-ordinator – Music for Pleasure I
Written by Clare Murray

PLAY READING GROUP.

We need more members to meet once a month (on the fourth Tuesday afternoon) between 2.00 and 4.00 pm at the church of St. Peter & St. Paul in Buckingham, in the downstairs Parish Room.

We read a variety of plays, obtained from the County Reserve Stock Library at Aylesbury, and always enjoy a cup of tea with a biscuit and a chat to other members.

Car parking is available in the churchyard. Please do contact the group leaders:

Jane Walker 01280 813382

Judith Bell 01280 813721



RE: CYCLE

Dear Sir,

Re: Cycle ...

Further to your communication of 30th July 2008 I regret to inform you that there are no facilities for transporting bicycles on current Eurostar services. You might wish to package the bicycle and send it as freight; in which case please contact the Freight Management services on 0800 600700....

That was the gist of the letter I received last week. It put me in mind of a very different rail service many years ago...

It's July 1950. Johnny Jordan and I are going to France. We've taken the advice of our French teacher and packed some tubes of condensed milk in with our clothes and Kendal mints; we've been over to Liverpool and got our Passports; we've given our bikes a good overhaul and we're on our way. It takes just five minutes to cycle to Woodside Ferry and cross the Mersey to catch the London train at Lime Street Station. Our bikes, properly labelled go in the Guard's Van. We're apprehensive but have been reassured about the procedure by Johnny's Dad who works on the railway and through whom Johnny has a free pass to travel up to 50 miles over the border into Europe.

The journey south passes quickly enough and we safely retrieve the bikes. We've checked the map and though neither of us has been to London before we find our way with no problems to Victoria to catch the boat train. Big Ben is disappointingly small as we glimpse it en route. But Victoria Station isn't. We get the first sight of sophisticated travellers – well dressed men with label-plastered luggage – snooty looking women with headscarves tied round the back of their necks rather than under the chin – people arriving in taxis. We ask directions from the Ticket Collector, find the special Cycle van where we hand over our machines for placement in the ingenious racks and make our way up the train to the 'through' carriages.

London suburbs look very grubby as the train eases out of the station – even more dingy than

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the Liverpool backs streets we left a few hours ago - but we're soon into open country and the train picks up speed. It's non-stop to Newhaven where we get off and cross the cobbles to board the ship. There's a car being loaded as we pass, swinging in the air as it's lifted on a cradle into the hold. Quite soon, but not soon enough for us, we edge out into the English Channel. Most passengers, like us, line the decks – in any case there doesn't seem enough saloon or cabin space for everyone – and the sun makes the sea breeze bearable. We see the advantage now of those headscarves!

In France now – our first time abroad; blue coated porters and dockers scurry round; the tannoy bellows something incomprehensible in what I suppose is French. We follow the crowd and, after a short wait, board what we hope is our train. An English passenger assures us that it is and an hour later we draw into the Station at Rouen. Somehow our bikes appear on the platform. We recognize that *Sortie* should mean 'way out' and follow the signs to the road outside where we do our best to remember the names we have to look for on the peculiar signposts. As well as having a useful father, Johnny has useful pen-friend and our first stop is going to be at his house. We're more than ready for tea when it arrives - a huge omelette with herbs – not like home but nice just the same – and we're more than ready for bed soon afterwards exhausted by the experiences of the day.

We make an early start next morning. We've got sixty miles (a hundred kilometres) to ride to the Youth Hostel we've booked at Mantes but fortunately it's not too hilly a route and we arrive in good time. The hostel seems also to be a sort of Youth Club; it's crowded with lads about our age and after we've booked in we're welcomed, not very warmly, with requests for cigarettes - "As tu une megot?" - Have you got a fag? There's other strange behaviour, too. Whenever someone new arrives he shakes hands with everyone there including us. The peculiarities continue. We ask for the toilet but no-one understands until we hit on idea of calling it the W.C. Then the penny drops (so to speak) and one of the lads leads us round the back indicating a wooden outhouse. I try holding my breath when I have eventually to use it, but can't hold it long enough to escape the fumes from the hole in the ground. The shower is outside too. I've only ever used a shower at the baths after swimming lessons and then reluctantly until the water was a little bit warm but here there is no warm water

and the shower is outside in view of everyone. I'll have to use it though, after two days of sweaty cycling.

To make up for its shortcomings the hostel at Mantes is on the bank of the Seine, at this point a pleasant twenty yards wide with grassy banks, fields behind. We plan to have a lazy day and when, after breakfast – more strangeness; the locals dip their bread into huge cups of coffee and scatter crumbs all over the place – we've explored the near neighbourhood for possible food shops, we head for the river bank. Our luck's in. While we've been shopping a trio of English girls has arrived and are already stretched out in swimsuits on the bank. We make ourselves known. The rest of the day is very pleasant. We swim in the river, dry off in the sun and get lots of good advice from the girls who are on their way back having spent a week in Paris.

It was good meeting that trio yesterday. We've swapped addresses so we can write when we get back to England. But today it's going to be Paris for us. We've packed our rucksacks and we're on the way. There's no problem now finding the right road signs. Paris is clear on them all and now we're leaving the riverside road we've been following and zipping along the broad streets of what are obviously the outskirts of the city. A bit later and we're on this enormous roundabout with the arch in the middle. We go round twice before can pick out the street we need but eventually find our way to the river and what even we can recognize as Notre Dame. We cross to the Left Bank (see how we're learning!) and look for the Boulevard St Michele (or Boul' Mich', as our new girl friends told us to call it), where we are going to stay at a hostel for Sorbonne university students.

The next days are an overwhelming string of discoveries. We leave our bikes and walk all over the city. We learn to use the Metro, buying a book of tickets. We eat at the student dining room, collecting our tray of dinner – a starter and main course, lots of crusty bread and a glass of vinegary red wine – trying to hide our uncertainty about what is on the plate. We get used to little old ladies sitting at the entrance to the gents measuring out a yard of 'loo paper or we pop into one of those circular pissoirs where your feet are on view to all passers by; we learn to order Pernod so we can make one drink last forty minutes while we rest our legs.

And now, finally, we have to head back. We've travelled more than our parents ever have. We know a foreign city better than we know any

comparable place in England. With luck we may even have imbibed some French to help us with our Higher School Cert next year. And our bikes have survived punctureless.

John Gleave

GERMAN GROUP

The Romance of Munich & Bavaria

With friends from Worcestershire, our group braved the Heathrow debacle of the T5 in early May this year. The terminal, vast and full of shops, was uninspiring but our luggage was not spirited off to Milan!

The hotel with, as ever, Germanic size breakfasts, was a short walk from the centre. Many areas of Munich were destroyed in World War II but much medieval architecture has survived; that which was partially damaged has been restored.

Throughout the week our group dispersed according to various interests. But we all watched and listened to the Glockenspiel (carillon) high in the tower of the town hall. My history was lost, it became something of a Punch and Judy but finally a knight of old bit the dust in the jousting – surely satisfactory. And here, in the centre we jostled nightly with many overseas tourists and heard little of the German language.

At the top of the tower we reached a balcony with an almost airborne view of Munich. No rows of identical rooftops and little back gardens here but a great miscellany of architecture where buildings of all shapes and sizes snuggle tightly together.

“Busking” here is, to me, remarkable. String quartets appear at street corners, sometimes a grand piano is rolled to a crossroads where singer and accompanist begin. I looked for, but found no hat or receptacle for Euros. The musicians were talented; classical music, mainly Mozart, mingled with traffic sounds and much human chattering.

The Frauenkirche (Church of our Lady) dominates the square. Here there was a service with beautiful singing in this so simple whitewashed bright interior which gave a deep sense of peace. But soon, at the back behind the screen I felt like an intruding stranger and left. The contrast of this simplicity with the amazing amount of baroque and rococo decoration in many buildings in Bavaria is astounding. Yet even here the Legend of Satan’s footprint stamped in the floor after an altercation with the builder remains rife: money for the builder but no

windows, thus darkness for Satan. He was cheated and the footprint remains.

The Englisher Garten with its cosmopolitan history is an area of more acres than Hyde Park or Central Park and does indeed have a feel of Englishness with paths snaking through tall old oaks. Then, around a bend, the river Isar crashes over a weir and under a bridge. (No time for “Pooh Sticks”). Deep in the woods we found a huge, dark Chinese pagoda, itself closed in by tall trees. It was an elegant black structure yet somewhat sinister; no sun penetrated. But turn your head and many little buildings, fronted by tables and chairs, offered food and drinks of many countries. But don’t ask for half a litre of beer, it’s not done, they only have litre glasses! The large swarded areas offer many relaxations: dog walkers, cyclists, joggers, sun bathing nudists on the grassy banks. I am sure I saw a nudist with a lap-top. Why did I keep my camera in my pocket?

A short bus ride took us to Audechs, a Benedictine monastery and pilgrim church on “Bavaria’s Holy Mountain”. Here, in the church, the rococo, baroque and scintillating gilt was, to me, overwhelming. A surprise was that in the Chapel of Sorrows is the burial chamber of Carl Orff whose secular, pantheistic, medieval music is positively joyous. At the high altar a miracle-working image of Mary and the Christ child with many putti is heavily gilded. Here too are legends: a mouse pulled a relic out of a long lost chest of relics from the Holy Land. A painting of the priest blessing the mouse, with a gilded plaque bearing the message, hangs in the south gallery. But the tradition of making liqueurs is no legend in monasteries. In this one it is a tangy “Kloster-Gold” with wafer chips of gold leaf – seemingly harmless.

The Bayerisches National Museum with its Gothic and Renaissance exhibits is too large for one afternoon so we concentrated on the wood carvings. Here, no description can suffice; they are simply exquisite. A visit to the Schloss Nymphenburg was a mind boggling contrast: a vast array of ornate sleighs, toboggans, carriages owned by Ludwig I and his son Ludwig II was countless. Well, OK, there is a lot of snow in Bavaria.

Some of us took a trip south to Garmisch. Germany is proud of its highest Alp, the Zugspitz. A cog-wheel railway trundles up the serious slopes to Schneefether Haus, a luxury hotel, from where a cable car takes you to the summit. There the views are magnificent – our week had

perfect weather. No wonder, the strange, romantic Ludwig was enchanted by his surroundings. The castles he built are not only surreal but incorporate tangible Wagnerian legends.

Not far from the “Dream King’s” castles are large lakes and we chose Ammersee to board a ferry which took us to and from small villages on the edges of the lake. It was a multifunctional vessel acting also as a school bus taking youngsters home for tea. There were glorious coloured ducks, the name of the species I have not yet found but am debating with a friend. Nearby is the Starnbergersee where, it is said, Ludwig II’s doctor drowned him in the lake.

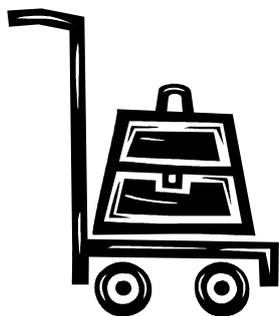
Munich is a big city, Bavaria, a big state, a week a miniscule of time. But we absorbed the atmosphere – there seemed little air of stress. Was it the many streets lined with horse chestnut trees? These are so abundant, I wonder how the roofs of the parked cars underneath survive. Autumn street sounds must be cracking and thunderous but I found no one who knew how to blay “conkers”.

Our last evening was in the oldest building (?) in Munich, a long family owned restaurant, with a “murder most foul” family history. True or false, it is fast becoming a legend. Did I mention the romance of Bavaria?

Our group is very grateful and say a big “thank you” to the organisers, Uschi and Antony and the leaders Roy and Margaret. How easy they made it for us.

As this “goes to press” we are off to a German lunch at Lilian’s. Our group doesn’t hang about!

Ulla Owen



THEATRE & TRAVEL

Looking back at the shows we have seen and places we have visited since the last Newsletter I realise what a busy time we have had. Who says that retirement is

boring! Our theatre visits were very entertaining. “Uncle Vanya” was well acted; I didn’t realise that Neil Pearson was such a good actor. Alan Bennett’s plays entitled “Single Spies” were good. I thought that Nigel Havers captured the role of an ageing Guy Burgess perfectly. Coming up are “West Side Story”, “Carousel”, “Evita” and

“Woman in Black”. Bookings for “Noises Off”, “Romeo & Juliet”, and let us not forget the panto “Peter Pan”, will be taken in September and “Nutcracker” will be taken in October. Looking further there is “Cinderella on Ice” at Milton Keynes in February. If anyone has picked up my recent events list please note that I made a mistake – can you believe it – I put that it was in January. Also in February are two shows never been seen in Milton Keynes before – “The Witches of Eastwick” and “All the Fun of the Fair”.

To me the highlight of the year, so far, was our trip to Sicily. It was a very full programme and we did a lot of walking but, I think, we all enjoyed the holiday. We are now looking forward to our holiday in York. At the moment we have twenty nine people going to Madeira next year. I have never been but everyone tells me what a lovely island it is. In the New Year I will begin to take bookings for our return visit to Croatia. We are going further North this time and staying in Porec. Both of these holidays are with Saga so we are fairly confident that we will have good hotels and good food, to say nothing of the free wine we will get in Porec!

We had a full day with our “Behind the Scenes” visit to backstage Theatre Royal Drury Lane where our guides were Richard Brindley Sheridan and Nell Gwynn – complete with her oranges! Afterwards we went for an excellent fish and chip lunch at Smolensky’s and then a flight on the Eye, a full day but great fun. Speaking of fun – I think we all enjoyed our trip on the Duck. We had eleven children with us and they were all very well behaved and, I hope, had a good time.

We were very lucky with the weather when we went to Salisbury. It had poured the day before so we think many people were deterred by the weather, consequently it was relatively quiet – and the sun shone! Our Blue Badge guide was very good and most informative.

I hope that everyone enjoyed our walk around Richmond. I guessed that it was about four miles but many people hotly denied that and said it was longer. We had a good lunch at “The Lass of Richmond Hill” pub, even though the assistant manager had forgotten to tell the manager that we were going. The poor man was rushing around like the proverbial bat.

As I type this I am making final arrangements for our trip tomorrow to Lacock Abbey. The rain is coming down but let us not be deterred and down hearted. I hope that if the rain is spoiling

things, the surprise cream tea will cheer up all the intrepid travelers.

I, regrettably, had to cancel the Classical Spectacular due to staff inefficiency at the Albert Hall but now that I have calmed down I will book the next one which will be in March 2009.

Alan, my stalwart companion without whom I couldn't cope with all the bookings, and I will be in our usual spot at the monthly meetings. We look forward to seeing you all with your cheque books at the ready.

Beryl Carr

SUBJECT: THE MORNING AFTER THE OFFICE PARTY



Jack wakes up with a killer hangover after attending his firm's Christmas Party. He doesn't even remember how he got home. It's 8.30. What

day is it? Thursday. His wife must have gone to work. As he struggles into consciousness through the fog of a pounding headache, his stomach plummets as he wonders what the hell he did last night.

He forces himself to open his eyes, and the first thing he sees is a couple of aspirins next to a glass of water on the side table.. And, next to them, a little vase of sweet peas, freshly picked from the garden. He sits up. The bedroom is clean and tidy, there is no trail of drunkenly abandoned clothes, fresh air is coming in through the window and all is serene. He stumbles to the bathroom, also pristine, and, squinting gingerly into the mirror, sees that he has a black eye. This is not a good sign, but no memories are returning.

As he concentrates hard on getting the world into focus, he sees a post-it note stuck on the corner of the mirror. It is written in red, with little hearts on it and a kiss from his wife. 'I'll ring your office and tell them you won't be in today. Breakfast is in the oven. Try to eat something and go back to bed for the morning. There's snooker on TV this afternoon. Take it easy today; hope your eye doesn't hurt too much. See you tonight. I love you, darling! Love, Jillian. x ' He stumbles to the kitchen and sure enough, there is hot breakfast, steaming hot coffee and the newspaper. His teenage son is sitting at the table, eating. Jack,

bracing himself, asks his son what happened the previous night.

'Well, you came home after 3 A..M., drunk and out of your mind. You fell over the coffee table and broke it, and then you puked in the hallway, and got that black eye when you ran into the door.'

Confused, he asks his son, 'So, why is everything in such perfect order, aspirins by the bed, a nice note from Mum and breakfast waiting for me?'

His son replies, 'Oh THAT!... Mum dragged you to the bedroom, and when she tried to take your trousers off, you screamed, 'Leave me alone you slapper, I'm happily married!!'

Broken Coffee Table £250

Hot Breakfast £3.50

Two Aspirins 20pence

Saying the right thing, at the right time.....PRICELESS

FROM THE BRIDGE TABLE

Tuesday Tuition Group

We continue to meet in Maids Moreton village hall at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday and usually have at least seven tables in play. Members playing ability continues to improve under supervised play with advice given as required. More competitive play has been introduced in addition to tutorial session followed by playing set hands to cover the subject.

The third annual Duplicate Bridge Pairs competition for the Buckingham & District U3A Challenge Cup will be played on Sunday 30th November 2008. This is open to all bridge playing members of our U3A not just those from the groups. Entry forms will be available at the AGM in October.

The Tuesday group is now looking forward to their weekend bridge break in Worthing on 21/23 November when we will be joined by other bridge playing members of our U3A. There is a waiting list which is dependant on more rooms being made available by the hotel. If anybody else is interested please get in touch and I will see what can be done.

Finally to those prospective members who remain on the waiting list to join the group, I am sorry but we are still full with a maximum of 36 members. Perhaps there is someone out there that would like to start up another group, if so please get in touch for any help you might need.

Peter Holman Group Leader