

U3A

Whitchurch and District

Newsletter



February 2007

Committee matters

This newsletter is a little bulkier than usual because we have decided to include the groups' information produced in a booklet for new members.

This information is as correct as the editor can make it. Please advise Anne Monie if you find inaccuracies in those or any other pieces of information included here.

Notice of the 2007 U3A Summer Schools

At Chester [9th to 12th July]:

China-Life and Language

Cinema History

French for Fun

Heraldry

Industrial Heritage

Literature

Local history-Castles of North Wales

Philosophy

Storytelling

Writing.

At Cirencester [20th to 23rd August] :

Architecture of the Cotswolds

Art History

Botany

Crime & Society

History-ancient and modern

Literature

Music Appreciation.

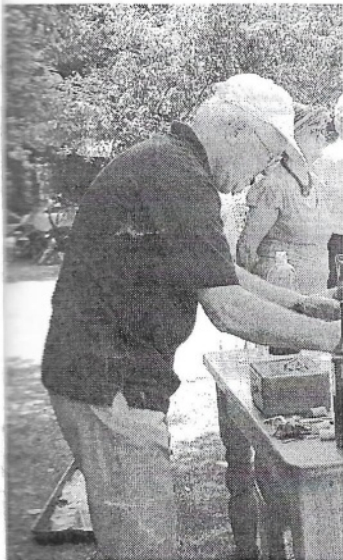
For further details and booking forms please contact Gordon Lorraine [redacted]

2006-2007 COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairman: Jill Waugh

The chairman of our U3A branch is elected at the AGM in October for one year.

Jill acts as the leader at the Monday Information Exchange, chairs committee meetings and is a public contact for the organisation. She is one of our Regional Representatives.



Secretary: Gordon Lorraine

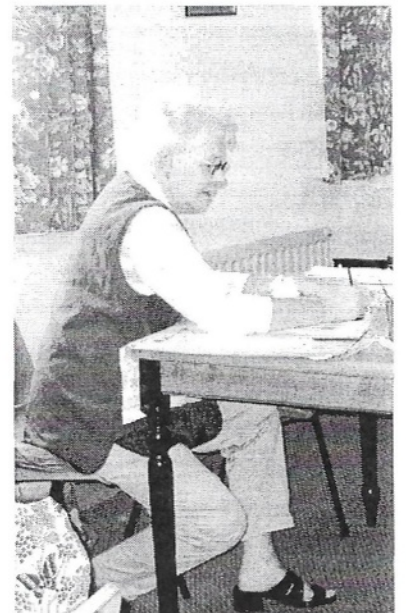
Gordon does much of the background work, preparing and sending out agendas and minutes, organising the Monday Information Exchange notice boards and refreshments, applying for grants and generally keeping things going. He circulates information via group leaders.

Membership Secretary: Maureen Rogers

Maureen is the person whom most new members first meet. She attends the Monday Information Exchange, contacts new recruits and maintains the membership records.

She is the person you need to contact if you move house or change your phone number!

Maureen is one of our Regional Representatives and also Vice-Chairman this year.



OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Diana Leadsom is Treasurer

01948 780 451

Anne Monie edits the newsletter and handles some publicity. Contact her if you want to advertise your group's activities or publicise changes to your group's venue or dates. This includes maintaining the contacts list and the Groups' Timetable at the back of this newsletter.

Gwyneth Rollins and Sylvia Faulkner have prepared the Speakers List for this year.

Gwyneth
Sylvia

Peter Spranklin is keeping the database of members and organising mailing of newsletters and U3A News.

Gwyneth Rollins, Rosa Ford and Grace Cunliffe (not a committee member at present) are keeping contact with members who are ill, in hospital or housebound.

Contact one of them if you know of anyone who goes into hospital.

Gwyneth
Rosa
Grace

Rosa Ford is organising the Coffee Rota for the Monday Information Exchange.

[Grace Cunliffe and Meriel Hudson are the liaison for Group Leaders, although not on the committee. Contact them with changes to your group.]

All committee members and officers are elected annually.

More committee minutes

Minutes of Committee meeting held on 6th November 2006 at the Archibald Worthington Club

Present: Trevor Davies (President), Jill Waugh (Chairman), Gordon Lorraine (Secretary), Diana Leadsom (Treasurer) Sylvia Faulkner, Rosa Ford, Anne Monie, Maureen Rogers, Gwyneth Rollins, and Peter Spranklin.

Apologies for absence: None

1. Minutes of meeting of 18 September 2006. Approved and signed by Chairman.
2. Matters arising: -
 - a. Membership. Reported that we currently have 165 members. Agreed that a notice be sent to Group Leaders and posted on the Notice Board advising that membership would lapse on December 1 for those not having renewed their subscription by that date.
 - b. Gordon Lorraine and Diana Leadsom will liaise on Christmas lunch arrangements. Agreed that we will seek to book a venue earlier next year to prevent the chosen date clashing with Group activities.
3. Finance Matters: -
 - a. DL reported that £1147.08 was held in the ordinary account, £240.04 in the Social account and £2858.33 in the premium account.
 - b. The bank mandates for the new committee have been completed.
4. Apportioning of Committee duties.

Membership Secretary: Maureen Rogers
Newsletter Editor: Anne Monie
Database: Peter Spranklin
U3A News/Newsletter distribution: Peter Spranklin
Coffee Rota: Rosa Ford
Supplies: Gordon Lorraine
Speaker Secretaries: Gwyneth Rollins and Sylvia Faulkner
Regional representatives: Maureen Rogers and Jill Waugh
Welfare: Grace Cunliffe/ Gwyneth Rollins/ Rosa Ford
Notice Board: Gordon Lorraine
Group Leader liaison: Grace Cunliffe and Meriel Hudson
5. Election of Vice-Chairman. Maureen Rogers was proposed by Gwyneth Rollins, seconded by Anne Monie and unanimously elected by the Committee to this post.
6. A.O.B.
 - a. Closure of Archibald Worthington Club in January. It was reported that the venue would be closed on January 8th and have building work in progress for the following fortnight. It was agreed that Gwyneth Rollins will enquire about the availability of St John's meeting room for those dates as an alternative venue.

- b. U3A is to run a bookstall in the Civic Centre on 9th December from 10.00 a.m to 1.00 p.m. in aid of the Bradbury Centre. Maureen Rogers is willing to receive books to supply the stall.
- c. The Committee gave permission for Gordon Lorraine to seek grant funding for the purchase of new visual aid equipment.
- d. Diana Leadsom is to provide information about committee name badges that will not damage clothing.
- e. Gordon Lorraine is to put up a notice requesting volunteers to be on a rota for greeting new members on arrival at a Monday meeting.
- f. Sylvia Faulkner proposed an information booklet be prepared to inform new [and existing] members of the nature of each group's activities. Anne Monie agreed to produce this, and also to publish it in the Newsletter.
- g. Next meeting to be January 15th.

Meeting closed at 12.07 p.m.

Minutes previously circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman

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Minutes of Committee meeting held on 15th January 2007 at the Brownlow Centre

Present: Trevor Davies (President), Jill Waugh (Chairman), Gordon Lorraine (Secretary), Diana Leadsom (Treasurer) Sylvia Faulkner, Rosa Ford, Anne Monie, Maureen Rogers, Gwyneth Rollins, and Peter Spranklin.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None
2. **Minutes of meeting of 6th November 2006.** Approved and signed by Chairman.
3. **Matters arising:** -
 - **Christmas lunch.** Reported that members attending seemed very happy with the event.
 - **Membership.** Reported that we currently have 175 members. Agreed that the Membership Secretary will ask new members on joining how they learnt about us.
 - **Bookstall at Civic Centre.** We raised £79 for the Bradbury Centre.
 - **Committee name badges.** Agreed that Secretary will bring samples preferably with pin or cord options for attachment.
 - **Meet & greet rota.** Committee members to approach members at the next Monday meeting to ask them if they are willing to participate.
 - **Information booklet.** Agreed that Anne Monie would have 10 initial copies copied for current new members and thereafter as required.
 - **Speaker list.** Now published. Secretary asked to be advised in advance if any speaker needed the slide projector or screen. The speaker for March to be contacted regarding his request for a digital projector and laptop, which we do not have.
4. **Correspondence:** - Letter received from National Office regarding the recent fire

destroying paper records and resources. It will be March before the office is fully functional. A copy of our third party liability insurance provided by National Office has been received.

5. Finance Matters: -

- Diana Leadsom reported that £1114.57 was held in the ordinary account, £60.44 in the Social account and £2858.33 in the premium account.
- Secretary will be added as an approved cheque signatory, to replace Trevor Davies who is moving next week.
- Secretary reported that a grant has been awarded to purchase a display board and publicity material, and that a further application had been made to fund the purchase of a digital projector and laptop computer.

6. Summer social event: - Agreed that a hog roast would be featured again. Chairman to approach possible providers of a venue for one of the optional dates: July 7/16/20/23 or 27, these being a Monday, Friday or Saturday. Secretary to be told of a preferred date so that Hog roast provider and can be booked.

7. A.O.B.

- Next meeting to be March 19th.
- Rosa Ford to post coffee rota list to those participating.
- Agreed that if no speaker fee is specified, a donation of about £25 would be offered.

Meeting closed at 12.05 p.m.

The annual U3A/Royal Institution day is to be held on 3rd April in London. Tickets are £14 per person and Lecture details can be obtained from the U3A website or Gordon Lorraine.

**GROUP LEADER'S MEETINGS
2007**

JANUARY 29TH

APRIL 30TH

JULY 30TH

OCTOBER 29TH

Squares: 30
Triangles: 35

HOG ROAST

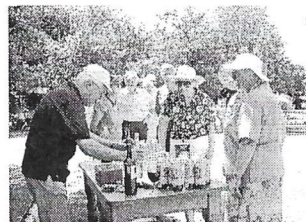
SATURDAY

7th July 2007

in

Marjorie Monbiot's garden
(Prees Heath)

Price to be confirmed



Whitchurch & District U3A: Speakers 2007

Date	Title	Speaker
Jan	No speaker	-
Feb 14	AIR AMBULANCE	TONY NEVILLE
Mar 12	TANZANIA	TOM KELLY
April 16	BINGS HEATH SMOKERY	MR BALL
May 14	ALBRIGHTON POTTERY	ANNETTE CHRISTOPHERS
June 11	"The King and I": my life as tutor to the Sultan of Brunei's children	NORA WALMSLEY
July 9	ONE MAN AND HIS PLANTS	DEREK JONES
Aug	No speaker	-
Sep 10	LIFE WITH AN ASSISTANCE DOG (K9 Partners)	MIRIAM CARTLAGE
Oct 8	ODD GADGETS AND CURIOS - QUIZ	JANET BLAKE
Nov 12	EXPLORING LOST ROADS	DAVID HAYNS
Dec	No speaker	-

Arranged by Gwyneth Rollins and Sylvia Faulkner

A speaker is arranged for 11.00am on the 2nd Monday in most months.

Groups' notice board

This is a copy of the information in the groups' booklet produced in January for new members. It will be updated regularly.

Please note they are not alphabetical for space reasons!

ARCHAEOLOGY

Meets on 1st Wed of each month
2.00-4.00 pm at ASH PARVA
Contact: Gordon Lorraine

This group is studying any aspects of archaeology, particularly of Shropshire. We hold indoor meetings in winter, with DVDs and slides, but have site visits in summer. As we do no excavation work ourselves the group is suitable for persons of any level of ability or prior knowledge of the topic.



ART APPRECIATION

Meets on the 1st Monday of each month
2.00 pm at various venues
Contact: Grace Cunliffe

We look at the life and times of artists and their paintings, using video and slides. Visits to galleries and exhibitions are organised.

All you need is an enquiring mind.

CHESS

Meets on Friday afternoons
Venue varies. 2.00 pm
Contact:
Peter Spranklin

These are not groups' announcements.

ART & CALLIGRAPHY

Meets on Tuesday morning each week
10.00 am-1.00 at the Senior Citizens' Club
in Pearl Yard, Whitchurch
Contact: Margaret Cooke

We cater for all tastes and interests: drawing, painting in watercolours, oils and acrylics, calligraphy. Those with more experience help those with less - we are very democratic!

No previous experience is needed, although your skills will be valued



BRIDGE

Meets on each Tuesday afternoon
2.00 pm at the Dodington Lodge Hotel,
Whitchurch
Contact: Elsie Warburton

This group plays cards.

Some basic experience is needed

CANASTA

Meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons
2.00 - 4.00 pm at 41 Roman Way, Whitchurch
Contact: Mary Sutkowski

You don't require any special skills or prior knowledge to play canasta, just a sense of fun! The afternoon is relaxing and you will get good company and a cup of tea, or even a scone!

Canasta helps improve the memory, but since it is played in pairs, the onus is not solely on you. We play 4 to a table, and could take a couple more before the space is full. Someone is always able to sort out the rules, and the skills are gradually acquired. Then, as the song goes, it's knowing when to hold them and knowing when to fold them!



CRAFTS

Meets on 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month

2.00 - 4.00 pm at the Bradbury Day Centre, Whitchurch

Contact: Marjorie Monbiot

Box making, beading, embroidery, card making, and other pursuits. This is an informal, relaxed, friendly group with 6 to 12 members. Bring along your UFOs (unfinished objects!). Learn new skills from those who have practised them!

No experience required; willing to learn new skills and talk.....

GARDEN VISITS

Meets on 3rd Thursday of each month

Venue and time are variable

Contact: Meriel Hudson

This group visits a mixture of local and more distant gardens, travelling by car or coach. A list is put up on the notice board at the Monday Information Exchange when the next visit is being organised. Places are limited!

A holiday is arranged in the summer to visit gardens in a more concentrated way.



COUNTRY DANCING

Meets on alternate Friday mornings
10.30 am at the Scout Hut, MARKET DRAYTON
Contact: Mary Tither

Traditional country dances

No experience needed, but you will require sensible footwear



INACCURACIES? CONTACT ANNE MONIE:

FILMS

Contact Rhoda Brooker for details.

4th Friday 2.30pm

History of cinema and Hollywood classics

ITALIAN

Meets on alternate Friday afternoons

2.00 - 4.00 pm at various houses

Contacts: Jennifer Hughes

or Doris Squires

We are learning Italian with the help of books, tapes, CDs, DVDs and videos.

HISTORY

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month
10.30 at 9 Marne Close, WEM
Contact: Mary Tither

History is a study of the past. Voluntary member participation in research. This covers various aspects of British history, local history and occasionally family history.

No experience is required.



LINE DANCING FOR BEGINNERS

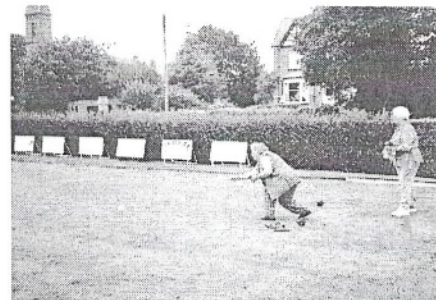
Meets weekly on Friday morning
10.30 - 12.00 AT Festival Drayton Centre in
MARKET DRAYTON
Contact: Suzanne Edwards

Line dancing for beginners

NOVICE BOWLS

Meets on Saturdays from the end of March to Oct.
2.00 pm at Tilstock Bowling Club
Contact: Richard Green

This is Crown Green Bowling. Teams of 10 or 12 usually play each other in proper matches: one from each team makes up a pair. Each player has 2 bowls (woods) and the objective is for you to get yours closest to the jack (a small ball). Points are awarded, and the first to get to 21 wins. Team scores are added up at the end.



MUSIC APPRECIATION

Meets on the 3rd Monday evening of each month
7.30 pm at 9 Marne Close, WEM
Contact: Meriel Hudson

We listen to CDs chosen by members, enlarging our knowledge and enjoying the company.

NEEDLEWORK

Meets on alternate Mondays
2.00 pm
St John's Park
Contact: Dorothy Chamberlain

This is a free and easy group, tackling every kind of needlework. Some members are expert, some are novices, so help is always available. No prior experience is needed.

READING GROUP

Meets on the 1st Thursday of each month
2.30 pm at the Bradbury Centre, Whitchurch
Hospital
Contact Maureen Rogers

We choose a book to read each month, and meet to discuss it. No equipment is needed.

PLAY READING

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month
10.00 am at St John's Park, Whitchurch
Contact: Edna Skidmore

Each play is cast for individual parts to be read. We read comedy, drama, etc, by well-known playwrights. We usually give a demonstration once a year at the Monday Information Exchange.

No equipment is needed. Experience is helpful but not essential. We need more ladies!

THE AMBLERS

Meets on the 1st Thursday of every month except January
10.30 am at Kwiksave, Whitchurch
Contact: Carol Wiggins

This is a gentle walk, not being more than 2 miles, taking approximately 1 hour, trying to keep on a flat gradient with a limited number of stiles. Followed by lunch in a pub!

All you need are walking shoes, a shower proof coat, an umbrella and a sun-hat!

THEATRE VISITS

Visits to the Nantwich Players about every 3 months
Shared cars, leaving Kwiksave, Whitchurch, at 7 pm

Contact: Edna Skidmore

A list is put up at the Monday Information Exchange for people to sign.

WRITING FOR FUN

Meets on 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month
10.30 - 12.30 at St John's Park in the small sitting room
Contact: Jill Waugh

This is a lighthearted venture into the realms of creative writing. We embrace prose in its various forms and occasionally limericks and rhymes. We have even written lonely hearts ads and replies. Most of us also write at home.

We welcome people with experience, but particularly enjoy those who have never written since school. These are the ones with no preconceived ideas. One member said it helped her write her letters!

THE GNATS

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month
10.30 start with various venues
Contact: Rosa Ford

This group meets on the 2nd Tuesday indoors for a teaching and discussion session and hold field meetings on the 4th Tuesday. Birds, fungi, botany, insects - in fact anything "natural".

Experience is not needed, although welcomed. Binoculars and outdoor clothes are necessary.



WALKING AND LUNCH GROUP

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month
Begin from Kwiksave, Whitchurch, at 10.15 am
Contact: Owen Darlington

Walks are usually about 4 miles in length, interrupted by lunch at a local pub.
Anyone able to walk this distance is welcome.

Strong shoes or walking boots are required.

NEW GROUPS ARE FREQUENTLY PROPOSED AND SET UP.

THE PROCEDURE IS FOR A NOTICE TO BE PUT UP ON THE MONDAY INFORMATION EXCHANGE NOTICE BOARD AND FOR EXISTING GROUP LEADERS TO PUBLICISE THE NEW SUGGESTION TO THEIR MEMBERS.

SUGGESTIONS SOMETIMES APPEAR IN THE NEWSLETTER

This is the end of the information leaflet.

Groups' notice board

Garden Visits Group Holiday

Plans for our garden holiday are now in hand. This year we are planning a **GREAT HOUSES AND GARDENS TOUR**:

July 23rd: Leave Whitchurch at 9.15 by coach for the Portland Hotel in Buxton, visiting Kedleston Hall and Gardens (National Trust).

July 24th: Whole day visit to Chatsworth House and Gardens.

July 25th: Whole day visit to Hardwick Hall and Gardens (National Trust).

July 26th: Whole day visit to Renishaw Hall and Gardens with guided tour of the house.

July 27th: return to Whitchurch with stop at Biddulph Grange Gardens (National Trust).

We hope to have plenty of free time in Buxton to see the gardens and town.

We await confirmation of the coach, but shared hotel rooms with breakfast and evening meal are £35 per head per night. Some places still available.

Contact Meriel Hudson: 

Archaeology

This new group of 10 has been going for three months now, and our diverse topics have included Sicilian ruins, understanding basic archaeological techniques, quizzes and comparative pathology-modern man versus our ancestors!

At our next meeting in February we plan to look at aspects of the archaeology of the Middle East, and the terracotta warriors of China plus another quiz. [We like to have fun with our studies.] Future events possibly include a guided visit to Lichfield cathedral, and in the summer to join the Shropshire County Council's Archaeology Service's field walks. We meet on the second Wednesday in each month at my home in Ash, and new members are very welcome. No prior knowledge is needed, only a curiosity about the distant past.

Gordon Lorraine

Groups' notice board

GARDEN VISITS GROUP: 2007 PROGRAMME

FEBRUARY	ATTINGHAM PARK TO SEE THE SNOWDROPS DATE TO BE ANNOUCED (IT WILL BE A SUNDAY) BY CAR (ORGANISED BY MAVIS RICKETTS)
MARCH 15 TH	CLAIRE AUSTIN NURSERY FOR A TALK BY CAR (ORGANISED BY SUE MATHEWS)
APRIL 19 TH	DINGLE GARDEN AND DERWIN NURSERY BY COACH (ORGANISED BY SYLVIA FAULKNER)
MAY 17 TH	DOROTHY CLIVE GARDEN BY CAR (ORGANISED BY JO HAMILL)
JUNE 21 ST	COUGHTON COURT (NT) BY COACH (ORGANISED BY GRACE CUNLIFFE)
JULY 19 TH	WOLLERTON OLD HALL GARDEN BY CAR (VOLUNTEER NEEDED)
AUGUST 16 TH	LOWER HOPE AND ULLINGSWICK BY COACH (VOLUNTEER NEEDED)
SEPT 20 TH	WOODHILL OSWESTRY AND MILLERS HOUSE BY COACH (ORGANISED BY DIANA THOMAS)
OCT 18 TH	MILLICHOPE HALL MUNSLOW BY COACH (ORGANISED BY FAY NUTTALL)
NOV 15 TH	PLANNING MEETING FOR 2008

Walking and Lunch Group 2006

As usual our British weather lived up to its reputation of varying extremes. My visit to hospital in March resulted in many offers of organised walks in my absence: many thanks to those involved.

We visited Ellesmere and Westhampton, Whixall Moss, Aston, Sound and Wrenbury (lunch at the Bhurtpore!), Hale near Market Drayton amongst others.

The Christmas walk was marred by RAIN, but everyone turned up at the Castle in Bletchley for turkey and Christmas pud!

Owen Darlington

Creative U3A

BOMBED OUT

I would like to take you back to the Second World War, 1944 to be exact, seven weeks before my 9th birthday. I was born in Kent and still living there at the time with my parents and older sister. I must explain that my father was not in the services as he was an oxyacetylene welder working on building aeroplanes that were constantly having to be replaced. The 9th of April was the fatal night. We were expecting a friend to stay, who would sleep in my sister's room and so my sister had to share my bed, which she still did, although the friend didn't arrive. This turned out to be very fortunate, as that particular room was very badly damaged.

Sometime during that night I awoke, and, looking up I could see the sky, which was full of stars. I felt for my sister's hand, and found that she was awake as well and also seeing stars. This obviously meant that it wasn't a dream. It seems amazing now, but, we didn't panic, just lay covered in rubble, glass and slates not making a sound until, on hearing my mother's voice I quietly called out "we're alright Mum." My father was trapped under a wardrobe which had fallen across the bed, but once he was freed the first thought was to get us safely out of the house. The stairs were found to be very badly damaged. However, with extreme care, my mother negotiated her way to the bottom and then my sister and I were literally thrown down to her, followed finally by my father.

Once outside we found the next-door neighbour crawling along the pavement shouting out "I can't see" over and over again. The two houses the other side of ours were just about standing and we later learned that two people were killed whilst trying to get into their indoor shelter, the name of which escapes me at the moment. The A.R.P Station across the road had been completely demolished; however, people were soon on the scene and directed us to where doctors were waiting. Apart from severe shock (for which we were given an extra ration of sugar lasting several weeks) we were all lucky to escape serious injury, mostly bruises and cuts, some of which had to be stitched. I still have scars on my face as a reminder.

A big worry was where we were going to live for the foreseeable future. My maternal Grandparents lived about ten miles away in the countryside, and we were able to stay with them, albeit rather cramped, until we were rehoused. The councils at that time requisitioned houses that were empty for families that had been bombed out to live in temporarily and we were sent to the next town. We lived in that house, as I recall, just over a year before returning home, to find that a shop and two houses had never been rebuilt.

Losing all our toys was very traumatic for my sister and me, as was, of course, the loss of clothes, furniture, photographs and other personal belongings for my parents. It was, looking back, amazing how everyone coped. I was more worried whether our cat Whisky was still alive. We did find him eventually, hiding and very frightened. The poor thing had to be put to sleep not many weeks later because we found that he had glass in his back which, when his fur and skin started to come off made him look a very pitiful sight.

This terrible episode was obviously devastating to my parents, and of course, to so many other families who went through a similar experience at that time. Sixty one years on the whole of that experience is very easily brought to mind, and seeing stars from my bed that night is "THE MOMENT I'LL NEVER FORGET"

Fay Nuttall

SOME ANCIENT HISTORY

Do you often wonder why that big machine like a bulldozer with a big blade on the front which pushes the snow aside is called a snow plough? It is nothing like a plough. Well, I have found whilst delving in some old historical documents that had remained hidden for centuries that it goes back to Good King Wenceslas. Among other things he was noted for making New Year's resolutions which he always kept.

After he had his magnificent Christmas dinner, he settled in front of a blazing fire and recalled the time, a few days previously, when he had seen the poor man gathering winter fuel and he had gone forth, with his page, to ply him with food and wine and some pine logs. He remembered the difficulties the poor man was having when he was first seen and also the problems that his page had striding through the snow, deep and crisp and even. The king realised that, as he was a big man, he managed reasonably well in deep snow but others were not so lucky and the going was difficult for them. Therefore, being the good man he was, one important New Year's resolution that year was to make it easier for all to get about next winter.

All through the following summer his mind dwelt on this problem and ideas were prepared and noted ready to be tried out. When the snow did come the next winter, he was ready to put these thoughts into practice. As soon as some snow fell he was prepared by having ready to hand the largest plough he could find in the fields. He hitched it up to the strongest horse in his stables and set it to work ploughing snow aside instead of topsoil that it was used to working. It succeeded to some degree but the poor horse was soon tired out with having to plod in the deep snow all the time. After a time, it was nearly as difficult and exhausting for the horse as it was for the poor man.

Thinking more about it, he realised that, if the horse could push the plough in front, all the strength would be concentrated on the plough and not on the horse's own efforts of plodding through the snow. The solution seemed to be putting the horse in the shafts of a small cart the wrong way round; that is facing the back, with the plough rigged up on the back, now the front. This did work much better but there was only a narrow furrow through the snow, enough for the horse and for a man to walk but it would be better if wider. Further thought raised the idea of having two or three ploughshares set up slightly staggered and, with a pair of heavy horses in the shafts. This proved very successful. It was now wide enough to take a small carriage and all the roads and lanes of the King's dominions could be cleared so that his resolution of the winter before was successfully achieved. But even then Good King Wenceslas still thought about making it better so he worked with his blacksmith through all the next summer to make improvements and a special cart was designed in which two horses could be comfortably harnessed, with one large blade on the front. The two horse-power snow clearing machine gave all the poor men the opportunity of moving freely when the snow lies deep and crisp and even, gathering their winter fuel for warmth and the food for their families without obstruction.

And, to this day, in those countries where Good King Wenceslas used to reign, as soon as snow falls it is cleared from all roads and lanes and the machine used to do this is still known as a snow plough.

A not too serious item of history by Lawrence Walls!

EGYPT WITH U.3.A

In November last year, six members of Whitchurch U.3.A. and our daughter Wendy flew to Egypt for two weeks on board a Nile cruiser, Viking III. Peter, Wendy and I flew out to Luxor from Gatwick where we met up with Dawn Zeferit (group coordinator) along with the majority of our fellow tourists, while the other four left from Manchester two days later.

Our first introduction to Nile Cruising was interesting to say the least as we abandoned our luggage on the bank for the porters to carry onto our ship while we descended three flights of stone steps, the last being particularly hazardous, which required the hand of a crew member to steady our descent onto a long gangplank and from there through the reception area of three other ships, before stepping onto Viking III. (A very precise bit of mooring by the navigators as no two boats were the same) Our arrival on board was nothing compared to what the porters went through in order to get all the luggage on board. Each porter had a couple of long leather straps attached to a flat piece of plywood which he slung over onto his back and onto this piece of wood he stacked up as many as three large cases, tightened the straps and took one case under one arm and balanced another on his shoulders as they proceeded through the same maneuvers we did, but without the assistance of crew members. No health and safety at work here! I could barely pull my suitcase along on its wheels, let alone lift it onto my shoulder.

The ship, it has to be said, was a little tired. The cabins, although en suite, were rather small and lacking in cupboard space, but the lounge, or as Dawn called it, the "Tarts Boudoir", was something else again. It might once have been meant to be sumptuous with its red plush sofas and armchairs, but I'm afraid, with the springs all sprung in the seating and the draperies of off white tulle it did rather live up to Dawn's description, (We didn't

ask her how she knew what the inside of those places looked like) However, the food was plentiful if a little boring, chicken or extremely well-cooked beef, but the fish was great, although I have no idea what it was, apart from the couple of times we had calamari. We had great breakfasts although not always sure of what we were eating, apart from the eggs. Their sweets were interesting variations of what we came to refer to as nuclear custard as these blancmange type desserts always appeared topped with psychedelic syrup of shocking pink or fluorescent green. There were also, quite a number of other interesting sweets and fruit including guavas, but none so rare as the Nuclear Custard.

The entire ship was taken up by U.S.A. or their guests and so we had a lot in common before we started, all being a little long in the tooth for instance. Our first day dawned brightly as we made our way off the ship, via the other ships and up all those steps before boarding a coach and being introduced to Hussein, our Egyptologist. We remained with Hussein for all our trips and he became a friend throughout our tour, staying aboard ship with us and eating in the dining room at mealtimes.

Our first port of call was to the valley of the Kings, where we visited three tombs; Rameses IV and IX and Tutmosis III. The first two had plenty of steps both up to and down into, but the last one was a killer with at least seventy steps leading up to the entrance and a lot more going back down into the tomb itself. It was also very narrow in places with little headroom into the next chamber. We were advised by Hussein to attempt this if we could, as this one most resembled the pyramids, which we were not visiting on this occasion. I think we were all truly amazed at the engineering skills involved in the building of these tombs and of the great state of preservation of the carvings and paintings of the artisans and builders of so many eons ago.

Hussein told us of the origins of the building of the pyramids and of how the Pharaohs tried to keep their tombs safe by building walls around them which were raised higher and higher to keep out the grave robbers, until, eventually they ended up with the stepped pyramid at Giza. The pyramid shape then became the route that the solar boat would take to the after life and anything other than a pyramid made it impossible for the dead to be re-born. So when the Pharaohs moved south to Luxor, it became a problem for the tomb builders among this mountainous area, until one of the kings decided he wanted to be buried there and paid the high priest to devise a way for him to do so. This the priest achieved by noticing that the topography around this valley consisted of many pyramid shaped atolls atop the mountain ridges and declared that this meant that the kings would lie beneath a pyramid's protection and so was born the Valley of the Kings and queens.

We returned to the ship for lunch before taking off for a visit to Luxor's large ancient temple, which covered many acres and was connected originally to the temple at Karnak (the largest in Egypt) by an avenue of sphinxes stretching for three kilometres.

This more or less set the programme for our weeklong stay in Luxor: tombs or temples or alabaster factories or papyrus factories or the jewellery quarter, coming home to the ship for our lunch each day. We not only visited the tombs of Kings and Queens, but also the tombs of the nobles and particularly the tombs of the artisans who built the tombs and as they had nothing worth stealing, their tombs had not been opened so still bore the brightly painted designs many of which were not used in the grander tombs. All the trips were included in the price of our ticket, but we did pay for a balloon flight at dawn where we could look over the Nile's green ribbon of fertile land in a sea of sand, and take a bird's eye view of the ruins and tombs we had visited previously.

After the first week in Luxor, we sailed for Aswan, stopping en-route at three other small towns where we visited their temples, including one dedicated to the crocodile god where we saw mummified crocodiles. We took a felucca sailboat out to Kitcheners garden island and spent one evening on Philae Island for a sound and light show at the temple of Isis. One day we took the coach out to the great Aswan dam built under Nasser's rule, which was to save the Nile from flooding and save the fresh water from being wasted by emptying into the Med. Canals run from this dam, helping to bring the desert back to life and we crossed one of these on our way to Abu Simbel, which we did have to pay extra for, but it was worth it, as was the early morning start at 3a.m., as we were able to see the spectacular sunrise in the desert and to witness mirages on the way back. We visited the Nubian museum, set in a garden and took a rock climb to gaped at the size of Hap shep sut's (notorious female Pharaoh) unfinished obelisk, which, when after many days or probably weeks of careful carving and manoeuvring of the rose granite, the whole thing split and had to be abandoned.

We saw so much and experienced such a lot that I cannot possibly put it all in this news letter, suffice to say, that this has been the best value holiday we have ever had and if you fancy doing it and are fairly fit, go for it! I believe Dawn is now starting to think about another such trip this year.

Margaret Cooke

Etna comes to LIFE

Last September I went on holiday to Sicily, staying in a village near Taormina on the east coast, some ten miles as the crow flies east of Mt Etna, which was clearly visible to us from our balcony.

Imagine our curiosity and excitement when, on the second evening, we thought we saw sparks arising from Etna. There had been an eruption in June, so another seemed unlikely so soon. ON the second evening there was no doubt; sparks rose up in a shower every minute or so. On the third evening the fireworks were every thirty seconds and by the fourth, it was a continuous display, rising higher than before. On evening five, there also appeared an orange-red streak on the mountainside - was this a lava flow?

By now, the local papers confirmed that Etna was erupting, and over the next few days the lava reached 300 metres, we read. During the day, all we could see was the smoke, which varied in its enthusiasm from gentle to billowing, and in colour from white to black to yellow to brown. I did not fear for our safety, as I remembered from my A Level Geology that Etna's lava is very thick and slow-moving. TV images from another eruption came back to me, showing villagers cooking on the lava as it slowly rolled down a street. We did have a hire car, should a rapid exit be necessary! It was a little worrying to see that our flat was fitted with metal doors, and the windows had strengthened glass and shutters! We just hoped there was no danger of pyroclastic gas as we slept - shade of Vesuvius and Pompeii came to mind - but we survived to tell the tale.

Gwyneth Rollins



Etna, seen from Gwyneth's holiday flat

**Spread the word: why not put up a poster
advertising U3A in a location where you think
people of our age might see it?
A4 posters available from Anne Monie**

Photo gallery

This photo was taken during a recent visit by the GNATS to the National Trust property at Lee Brockhurst. The purpose of the visit was to look at various woody plants, in particular trees, and to learn how to identify them in winter when they are without leaves. The weather was cold, with a sprinkling of snow on the higher ground, but fortunately the sun shone. In spite of an initial false alarm when we were misadvised by a local lady that the area had been sealed off because of fallen trees, the visit proved most interesting and enjoyable. The photograph was taken during a coffee break at a particularly good viewpoint known as Hanging Rock.



U3A EXHIBITION IN THE WHITCHURCH HERITAGE CENTRE

Whitchurch and District U3A was asked to put on a display in the Heritage Centre of art and craft items made by members. These photos show some of the exhibits. It is understood that the exhibition drew lots of interest.

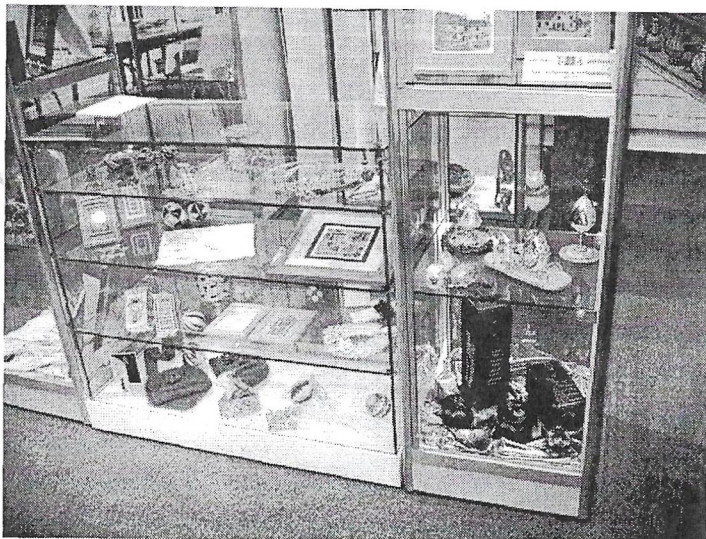
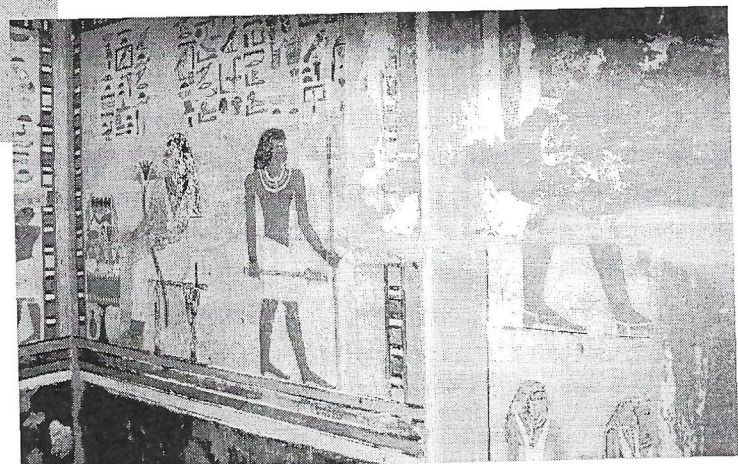


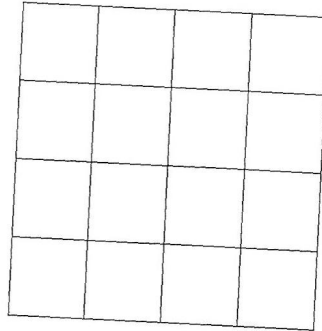
Photo gallery



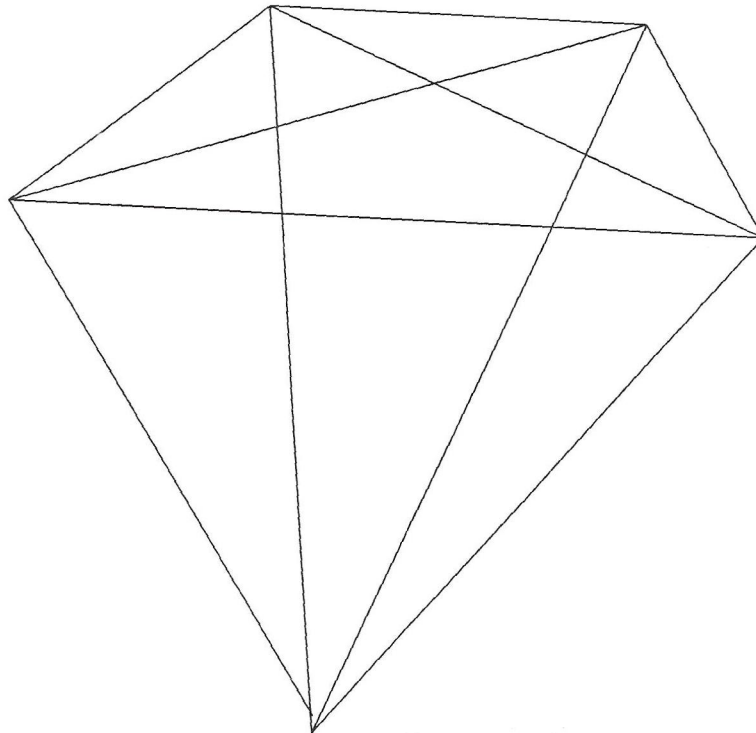
Some images from the
U3A cruise in Egypt



BRAIN TEASERS



How many squares do you see in this diagram? Most people can see 16 or 17, but you should be able to find more.....



How many triangles can you find here?

(Answers on page 6)

Whitchurch U3A : Study Groups and contacts

Group	Day and Time	Venue	Contact	Phone
Archaeology	Wed Week 1: 2.00-4.00	Ash Parva	Gordon Lorraine	
Art Appreciation	Mon Week 1: 2.00	Variable	Grace Cunliffe	
Art & Calligraphy	Tues weekly 10.00-1.00	Senior Citizens' Club	Margaret Cooke	
Bridge	Tues weekly 2.00	Dodington Lodge Hotel	Elsie Warburton	
Canasta	Tues Alternate weeks 2.00	Whitchurch	Mary Sutkowski	
Chess	Friday fortnightly: 2.00	Whitchurch	Peter Spranklin	
Country Dancing *	Friday alt weeks: 10.30	Scout Hut Market Drayton	Mary Tither	
Crafts	Wed Weeks 2 & 4: 2.00	Bradbury Centre	Marjorie Monbiot	
Films	Fri Week 4: 2.30	Wem	Rhoda Brooker	
History	Wed Week 3: 10.30	Wem	Mary Tither	
Italian	Friday alt weeks: 2.00	Whitchurch	Jenny Hughes	
Line Dancing	Friday Weekly: 10.30	Festival Drayton Ctre, M D	Suzanne Edwards	
Music Appreciation (1)	Mon Week 3: 7.30 pm	Wem	Meriel Hudson	
Needlework	Mon Alternate weeks pm	St John's	Dot Chamberlain	
Novice Bowls	March to October: Sat pm	Tilstock Bowling Club	Richard Green	
Play Reading	Wed Weeks 2 & 4: 10.00	St John's	Edna Skidmore	
Poetry	Mon Week 2: 2.00	Bradbury Centre	Margaret Morgan	
Reading Group	Thurs Week 1: 2.30	Bradbury Centre	Maureen Rogers	
Recorder Group	Wed Week 3: 2.00	Wistanswick	Geoff Tither	
Science in Society	Wed Week 2: 10.00	Ash Parva	Anne Monie	
Scrabble	Thurs Week 3: 2.00	St John's	Doris Ritchie	
Spanish	Tues Wks 2 & 4: 10.30	Various	Rhoda Brooker	
Storytelling	Wed Week 1: 10.00	St John's	David Gerty	
The Amblers	Thurs Week 1: 10.30	Whitchurch	Carol Wiggins	
The Gnats (Naturalists)	Tues Weeks 2 & 4: 10.30	Whitchurch	Rosa Ford	
Walking and lunch club	Thurs Weeks 2 & 4: 10.15	Kwiksave	Owen Darlington	
Writing for Fun	Fri Weeks 1 & 3: 10.30	St John's	Jill Waugh	
Garden Visits	Thurs Week 3	as announced	Meriel Hudson	
Concert Visits	as announced		Anne Monie	
Theatre Visits	as announced		Edna Skidmore	

01948 unless stated

* held in conjunction with Market Drayton U3A

Group Leader Liaison: Grace Cunliffe
and Meriel Hudson

Please contact them with changes to this list

A diagram showing the arrangement of group meetings can be found on the next page.

From the editor

Contributions to the next newsletter are always welcome. I should be grateful if all items of more than a paragraph are supplied on disc or by email to reduce the typing time involved!

Some items supplied to me have not been included this time for space reasons.

Thank you

Anne Monie:

Correct on January 20 2007: changes must be notified to editor if you want them included!

U3A Groups

See contact list for group leaders

		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 1	AM	Information exchange* (Archibald Worthington) QUIZ	Art 10 - 1.00	Storytelling 10.00	Amblers 10.30	Writing for Fun 10.30 Country Dancing alt weeks Line Dancing weekly: 10.30	
	PM	Art Appreciation 2.00 Needlewk alt wks 2.00	Bridge 2.00 Canasta alt wks 2.00	Archaeology 2.00	Reading group 2.30	Chess 20.. Italian alt wks: 2.00	Novice bowls 2.00 (Mar to Oct)
WEEK 2	AM	Information exchange* (Archibald Worthington) SPEAKER 11.00	Art 10 - 1.00 The Gnats 10.30 Spanish 10.30	Play Reading 10.00 Science in Society 10.00	Walkers 10.15 (all day)		
	PM	Poetry 2.00	Bridge 2.00	Crafts 2.00 - 4.00		Chess 2.00	Novice bowls 2.00 (Mar to Oct)
WEEK 3	AM	Information exchange* (Archibald Worthington)	Art 10 - 1.00	History 10.30	Garden Visits (all day)	Writing for Fun 10.30	
	PM	Music appreciation 7.30	Bridge 2.00	Recorders 2.00	Scrabble 2.00	Chess 2.00	Novice bowls 2.00 (Mar to Oct)
WEEK 4	AM	Information exchange* GROUP PRESENTATION	Art 10 - 1.00 The Gnats 10.30	Play Reading 10.00	Walkers 10.15 (all day)		
	PM		Bridge 2.00	Crafts 2.00 - 4.00		Chess 2.00 Spanish 2.30	Novice bowls 2.00 (Mar to Oct)

Some groups do not follow this pattern: check with the contact

Correct at 20.1.07

Please advise the editor of changes: don't complain when she doesn't know about them!

WEEK 5 as arranged

*Information Exchange weekly from 10.30 to 11.00