



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

www.u3awelhat.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1019563

NEWSLETTER January 2015 Issue 48

The full colour version of the newsletter is on our website at
<http://www.u3awelhat.org.uk/newsletters.html>

Art and Photo Exhibition



Ludwick Hall on 19 November was full of good things to look upon. Examples of the work of the Photography Group were splendidly displayed in groups of six on each of ten screen panels, with one computer showing pictures of the group's outings, another the findings in their regular Treasure Hunts. Anita Hoyle, Ivan Ladley and Ken Wright are much to be congratulated on the organisation and appearance of the display, as well as all the members on the quality of their contributions. (*Photographs of the screens by Peter Fox*)

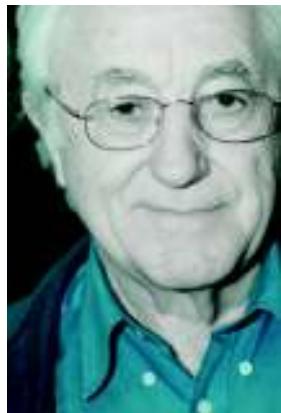


Along the sides of the hall, paintings were being created as well as displayed. Members of Multi-Media Art A Group were working in pastels with pictures in pastel, acrylic paint and watercolours all displayed (*shown below left*), while examples were shown on computer screen. Three members of the Watercolour Group were demonstrating their art (*below right; photographs by Bob White*).

Altogether, an exhibition of which Welwyn Hatfield U3A can be justly proud.



From the Chairman



George Burns, the great American comedian said “By the time you’re old you know everything; you just have to remember it!” I know exactly what he means! But one thing I do remember is that last time, in this little piece for the newsletter, I told you I was off to the Summer School, and I’d tell you all about it. Well, it was just great. I had a nice lot of people (24), they seemed to enjoy the course, the weather was good and the accommodation, evening entertainment and organisation excellent – as usual. I don’t believe though that anyone from Welwyn-Hatfield U3A was there, which was

a shame. You don’t know what you’re missing!

I’m going again next summer (to the Royal Agricultural University, just outside Cirencester), and the details of next year’s Schools have just been released. There are ten courses running at RAU (17th to 20th August): Drama, Garden Design, The Golden Age of Rome, La Bella Italiana, Literature, Scandinavian Noir, Science, Singing for Pleasure, Writing, as well as my own Music Appreciation. And at Harper Adams University College, in Shropshire, (13th to 16th July) there is a similar array of interesting courses.

The fee for each of these Summer Schools is £285 per person, which includes the course of your choice, your room, all meals, refreshments during seminar breaks, and evening entertainment. And I promise you, it’s very good value. More information (including detailed descriptions of the courses) is on The Third Age Trust website: www.u3a.org.uk.

So what else has been happening? Well, we had a lengthy tussle with our Bank, who seemed to find it extraordinarily difficult to change the signatories on our accounts. Our redoubtable Treasurer, Arseven Gumush, had to battle his way through the Bank bureaucracy for months, but was, in the end triumphant. He has been an excellent Treasurer for us, doing a great deal of work, unseen and unsung, and when he leaves post next March (as he has given notice he will), I hope there is someone among you who is prepared to take over from

him and join that merry band which is our Committee (Oh, yes we are!)

Someone else who has decided to take a well-earned rest, after the AGM next March, is the head of our Catering Team, Phyl Grainge. Existing proof of her expertise in the art of coaxing and squeezing out of people is the splendid array of food at the Christmas Quiz Party last week – yes, the food was brought in by Quiz participants, but it has to be arranged, displayed and cleared up afterwards. She has run an expert team to help her in all this for a long time now, and we will need someone to replace her after March. And as I write, my mouth waters at thoughts of the Christmas Lunch at the Homestead Court Hotel soon to come; always an event to be remembered. And if the sheer size and importance of such an undertaking puts off anyone who might like to take over from Phyl, I can assure you that her paperwork on such an event is meticulous, and will be passed to any possible successor.

But enough of people stepping down – I shall finish with a new arrival! One of the most difficult, strenuous and awkward jobs our Front of House Team does is to put up and take down the screen every Wednesday Meeting. Breaks Manor now has an electrically-operated one which glides up and down at the press of a button. So, for Christmas, we've bought one for Ludwick, which hopefully will be well in place by the time you read this.

That's all for this time. Although you won't read this till after the event, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a good New Year!

Jack Wood

Herts Network Quiz

We all love a quiz, don't we?

Armed with our speciality subjects, carefully chosen to balance our two teams, twelve bold volunteers set off along the M25 to Chorleywood on Wednesday, 29 October. It was a wet, dull, miserable grey day, but this didn't dampen our enthusiasm. The Barbirolli Hall at St Clement Danes school is newly refurbished and very impressive. This was the venue for the annual quiz for our U3A network. There were a record 30 teams of six taking part. They included two teams from St Albans U3A – the St Allbrains 1 and 2. We were called more modestly the WelHatoniens 1 and 2.

We assembled in the well organised, vast hall where the thirty

tables were efficiently furnished with team numbers, pens, a joker card, scrap paper, interval teas order list and answer sheets. Several of us, however, were reminded of sitting our A levels, especially as the question master (mistress?) wore an academic gown to officiate over the rather strident PA system! In good spirits we started looking at the round names in order to decide where to play our joker (which gains double points). This is where our hearts began to sink. Where was the Literature, the Science, the Geography or History? What a clever ploy to unsettle us! There were 8 rounds of 10 questions but they were enigmatically entitled 'Numbers', 'Letters', 'Colours', 'Also known as', 'Animals', 'Herbs and Flowers', and 'Round Britain Quiz'. The first round was 'Either/Or' – for which no one could play their joker. After much discussion we decided that the 'Round Britain Quiz' might be the best for us. With hindsight it has to be said (almost quoting Eric Morecambe) that 'all the right specialities were there but not necessarily in the right order' as each round had an eclectic mix of topics, including a music question.

The **Table Quiz** was a separate entity – four sheets of ten questions all based on the '50s/'60s! The rationale behind this was that at our age our long-term memories are more reliable! We had black-and-white photos of 10 politicians; we eventually got 8 right. No one on our table recognised Airey Neeve, nor an extremely young and slim Roy Jenkins. Then we had cryptic clues for wireless (not radio!) programmes which included 'left hand down a bit'. We got The Navy Lark correct for that. Then ten British sports personalities with alternate letters missing – here's one: -H-I- D-V-D-E. Have you heard of Chris Davidge, a rower in the 1952, '56 and '60 Olympics? Bravo if so! The final part of this was Classic British film titles.



Oh, good, you may think; well the catch was that they were in anagram form! We did get 7 of them eventually, but not this one: NEW LACE FRIEND, RIGHT? It's Witchfinder General – who knew? No one on our table. The winners were Potters Bar, who got 37/40; and we achieved 32/40. We didn't linger long enough to see where we were in the results table!

The winners of the main quiz were Lea Valley who scored 68/80. We managed a valiant 54 and came joint 13th. The quiz was set by Gillian Hill, who is a professional question checker for programmes like Mastermind, so it was set at a fairly high level. We were joking and teasing each other throughout; but it has to be said, we weren't enjoying ourselves as much as we expected, and felt that a quiz should be more accessible. Some of our answers were given in desperation and some were inspired, but the two WelHatonian teams agreed that we had a disappointing experience although the whole afternoon was extremely well organised.

It was, therefore, with a heavy heart that we set off home at just before 5 pm in the dark, the rain and the rush hour! To add to that I managed to make a wrong turn on the very familiar 414 and ended up in a jam and stuck for half an hour!

Hopefully, as with childbirth, we will forget the discomfort of the occasion and be willing to have another go next year!

P. S. My faith in quizzes has been restored, thank goodness, as at our Christmas party on 3 December Jack presented us with a great example of a good quiz! Five rounds, ten questions per round, no team names, no jokers and very good fun – and definitely no arguing with the Question Master!

Ann Davies

Sandy Pizsey, leader of the Speakers' Team, writes:

We had some excellent talks during the Autumn Term, from Poetry via Foreign Travels to the Buncefield Explosion, including some given by our own members. We were sorry that Philip Littlejohn was unable to talk on 'The *Titanic* – my grandfather's memories', as he had been taken ill, but we were able to book a replacement speaker at short notice. Sadly, we heard later that Philip Littlejohn had died. His *Titanic* memorabilia will be sent to a museum or other interested party as there is no-one in the family able to take over.

Following the Tall Ships

*At the first Wednesday meeting of the Spring 2013 term, Julia Ladds spoke on “Tall Ships and the Jubilee Sailing Trust”. This Trust, based at Southampton, promotes the integration of people of all physical abilities through the challenge and adventure of tall ship sailing. **Peter Jenkins**, one of our U3A members writes of what ensued in his own case.*

Along with many others I listened to Julia’s talk about the Jubilee Sailing Trust in January 2013 and picked up lots of literature afterwards. Later, when I was talking to our family about it, my eldest son, Simon, said, “If you want to go, I will be your buddy”. A challenge I could not refuse!

(A buddy is an able-bodied person who is allocated one to each elderly or disabled person. You can bring your own buddy. We sleep in two-tier bunks: the buddy has the top bunk and the disabled person the lower one, not so far to fall; but the lee sheet keeps you secure when tightened up.)

After completing the paperwork, insurance, medical forms, doctors approval, etc., we were booked for a six-day voyage from Southampton to Jersey via St. Malo. Joining the ship’s voyage crew was very formal, signing on, kitting out with ‘oilies’ and other gear; the biggest shock was receiving our watch cards, the full system – 4 hours on, 12 hours off – on a rolling schedule.

After tea we set off and had our first try at rope work. Each sail and spar is moved by ropes or properly called sheets; *Tenacious* is a three-masted square rigged barque, so there are lots of them, all secured by tying round a pin. We learned a new language such as 2- 6 heave, well there, secure to pin, etc., and anchored for the night.

The next morning we set the sails and started off down the channel. There was a good steady wind from port side so we ran at about five knots with quite a heel over, very enjoyable and time for ‘Smoko’ tea and cakes in the upper mess. The food was very good, full breakfast, lunch, and supper in the main mess plus smoko morning and afternoon and a continuous supply of tea.

Accommodation was pretty cramped but the bunks were comfortable with cords and a piece of fabric called a lee sheet to stop you falling out – very reassuring!

Watch duty kept coming round sooner than expected so there was



Surveying St Malo from the crosstrees.
Photograph taken by Simon Jenkins from the deck.

not a lot of free time, so the bar was rarely used. I found the night watches the most interesting, especially a clear starry night with a steady wind; just us up on the bridge plus duty officer who plots the course we have to follow. Lookouts are important to keep track of other ships, lighthouses, buoys, rocks, etc. The most interesting job is helming the ship: not easy to keep a steady course as we are continuously being pushed off by tides and winds and having to apply corrections.

Then we reached France and picked up the pilot to take us into St. Malo. Meanwhile we had an extended 'Happy Hour' to polish up the ship for entry into the harbour: just as well, as there were lots of people watching and waving as we came in, made us feel like celebrities! We had shore leave for the afternoon and evening to explore St. Malo, a beautiful old town that was smashed up in the war and rebuilt just as it used to be. I wished we had done the same in some of our old towns.

Next morning we had assisted climbing for the disabled, etc. With a

safety rope attached to the harness, I went up to the cross trees; the most difficult bit was the last 6 feet which has a reverse slope. One lady was so keen that she was hauled up in her wheelchair, totally safe.

We left about midday for Jersey, arriving the following afternoon. After a spot of shore leave we spent the next morning cleaning and restocking for the next crew who would sail *Tenacious* back to Southampton, while we made our own way home.

Not a holiday in the normal sense, but a very interesting and enjoyable experience that I recommend to anyone who would like something a bit different. I know we will make another voyage before long.

GROUP NEWS

A full list of groups, their leaders and times and venue of meetings is in the Wednesday Programme leaflet, and also on our website at <http://www.u3awelhat.org.uk/groups.html> where details of groups' activities and plans can also be found .

Group Leaders' meeting

Some forty groups were represented at the Group leaders' lunch at Verulam on 29 September. Leaders sat in groups of six to a table and shared their experiences, seeking solutions to common problems; then one member from each table reported back to the whole gathering.

Details of the new, free Community Room at Tesco were given and its potential as a venue for groups was widely acknowledged.

There was a discussion about the timing for the Meet the Groups and the Photo Exhibition with the possibility raised of perhaps swapping them. This is a matter that is being pursued by the committee and the groups involved before any changes to the programme will be made.

The issue of payment to tutors arose. The U3A ethos is very much a self-help and mutual learning approach, and this is what Welhat U3A would advocate. This particular issue is being discussed at national level and it is a case of 'watch this space'!

After consideration of these and other matters, another of Phyl Grainge and her team's splendid buffet meals was enjoyed by all.

Ann Davies and Jean Mackie

Arts Appreciation

This group meets for trips or meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. In January suggestions for the year are discussed and members of the group take charge of arrangements for each outing.

In 2014 our first trip, on a sunny day in March, was by train to The National Maritime Museum to see the Turner exhibition, followed by a tour of The Queen's House.

Next, train again, to Forest Hill and The Horniman Museum, started by The Tea Man. It is set in a park with lovely spring gardens.

In May we went to The Sir John Soanes Museum, near Holborn tube station. Our tour was in the afternoon so beforehand people either went to the nearby Silver Vaults or to The Huntarian Museum opposite – not for the squeamish!

Our first coach trip took us up the A1 to Rockingham Castle with a comfort stop in Kettering.

In July came Hughenden in the morning, followed by West Wycombe. We could have done with more time at other places as both were very interesting, but we got held up on the M25.

We were lucky in August as Audley End is English Heritage and as we are a study group there was no charge; so just our coach hire. In the morning we stopped in Saffron Walden on market day.

September's trip was organised by Margaret Tavner, our coordinator. Margaret took us to Bexley to visit Hall Place and the



Bridge End Gardens, Saffron Walden – Susan King



Hall Place, Bexley – Susan King

Danson house. Again, the M25 didn't help our time of arrival, but they kept the coffee hot for us. That was the final coach trip of 2014; but there was one more public transport outing when ten of us went to Dr Johnson's House, and after lunch to Handel House Museum.

Thanks to all the members who organised the various and enlightening programme.

There will be an ideas meeting at 2pm on Tuesday 13 Jan 2015 at No 1 Hatfield – that is just along from Martins the Post Office. Our meeting room has been much improved.

Susan King

Creative Writing Group

When the Group was set the task of writing a parody of a poem or piece of prose, Caroline Welch produced this U3A-oriented poem inspired by Rudyard Kipling's "If".

If you can keep your memory when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on others,
If you glimpse your face in a mirror view
And concede that it's just like your mother's.
If you can blog, and not let the PC be your master,
Or on Googling and surfing the net
Accept that an email is faster,
And without stamps your needs can be met.

If you can eat – and then recall what you ate last night,
If you can drink wine and keep your dear head,
If you can recall turning off the hall light
When you went upstairs for bed.
If you can ignore all your aches and pains,
Or subdue the niggles with bottles of pills,
If you can walk freely on country lanes
To blow away cobwebs and soothe all your ills.
If you remember your pass when taking the bus,
And recall if on leaving you locked the front door.
If you pay all your bills without making a fuss,
Or on shopping recall what you went there for.
If you fill your days with both work and play,
And make time to pay visits to those you hold dear.
Yours is the prize at the end of the day,
You're beating old age – there's nothing to fear.

Keep Fit

On Monday 15 December the U3A keep fit group celebrated Molly Luther-Smith's 90th Birthday. Much fun was had at the Buttercup tearooms in Chapmore End.

Molly was treated to a delicious afternoon tea, beautiful basket of flowers and birthday cards. The group were delighted to have the opportunity to show their warmth and appreciation to their leader for her dedication in running the Keep Fit group for many years.

A short ditty in one of the cards summed up Molly's zest for life:
There was a young lady called Molly,
Who was oh, so sprightly and Jolly,
She kept them on the run
And made Keep Fit such fun
Though secretly she's a ninety-year-old Dolly!

The group, that meets each week at 10.30 am on Thursday, is always pleased to welcome new members.

Lunch Group

A second lunch club has been set up – Lunch Club 2 ! It took a little time to organise because the people who had signed up could not all



The Keep Fit Group at the Buttercup Tearooms.

come on the same day of the week. We have solved that problem by meeting on a Tuesday and a Wednesday each month for the last three months. We are enjoying getting to know each other and exploring local eateries. There are still a few members we have yet to meet.

Janet Porter

Photography Group

We have had a varied and interesting term with Peter Fox, Pat Ellis, Anita Hoyle, and Eileen Pegrum giving talks and demonstrations on their preferred Photoshop enhancements. Bob White gave an amusing and informative talk and slide show on his interest and collection of Victorian and Edwardian photography. Kate Douglas showed us how she uses Photoshop in her work on the magazine *Horse Scene*.

Our main project this term has been the production of a calendar for 2015, showing our favourite local views. Geoff Bowers and Kate Douglas selected the photographs and Kate produced the Artwork and sent the calendar to print. As this was our first sales project we were a little apprehensive as to how many to print, but it has been a huge success and we had sold almost the hundred by the middle of November. We hope to buy some display boards with the proceeds.

Our group has swelled in number. We are of varying abilities, but



try to meet everyone's needs, and have as varied a programme as possible. The main thing which draws us together is a passion and enthusiasm for photography. We share our knowledge with one another in the true spirit of U3A.

Anita Hoyle

We show two pictures from the calendar: The Bull, Wheathampstead by Pat Ellis, and Gazebos at Ware by Anita Hoyle.



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Poetry Group

One of the things I missed in the five decades since leaving the university of my salad days was the study and discussion of poetry. The succeeding world of employment and household management held no place for such luxury. Those things past, I joined my local U3A, and was delighted to find and join its poetry group.

We don't write poetry: we just indulge in it, choosing a topic or poet for each meeting and each bringing six or so poems on that theme or by that poet, to read aloud to the group, which then discusses them.

I am surprised that, with such a large membership of our branch of the U3A, the poetry group is so small (less than 1%). Can you all realise how much enjoyment is to be had by the reading of poetry? How moved you can be by the simplest, shortest of poems – for instance, A. E. Housman's untitled war poem:

Here dead we lie because we did not choose
To live and shame the land from which we sprung.
Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose;
But young men think it is, and we were young.

How the density of poetry can imply much meaning in few words, in such lines as the opening of W. H. Auden's "Lullaby":

Lay your sleeping head, my love,
Human on my faithless arm.

Or how a poem may create a work of art using words instead of paint, as in Swinburne's greeting of the Spring:

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

We could take in, or even inspire, more enthusiasts for poetry. Our page in the Groups list on our website shows a list of the topics and poets we have discussed in the last three years. We meet on alternate Thursday mornings. If interested, ring me on 01707 265201, or email hkb@aidanbell.com

Hazel Bell

Solo

The Solo Group is for those who have lost their partners, whether by death, divorce or dementia, and find that the world is full of couples. We get together for a pub lunch on the second Sunday of each month, and consider other outings together. To join us, ring me on 01707 265201, or email hkb@aidanbell.com

Hazel Bell

Travel Group

The recently formed travel group had its first holiday in September, travelling to Hampshire and visiting some very interesting places.

On the first day, after picking up the twenty participants, we travelled on to the National Trust's Polesden Lacey, a beautiful country estate which had, in its heyday, entertained royalty, politicians and the best of Edwardian society. We as visitors were very impressed with the luxurious décor and furnishings. After lunch we continued our journey to the hotel which was situated just outside Winchester. The hotel proved to be excellent, with modern, spacious public areas and well-appointed rooms. There was an indoor swimming pool and spa facilities of which some of our more intrepid group took advantage.

Day two took us to a visit to Winchester Cathedral in the morning where we were guided on a tour by the Cathedral's own volunteer staff. The information they have to share with visitors is extremely interesting. After lunch there was an optional trip on a steam train on the Watercress Line, which has been lovingly restored and maintained by railway enthusiasts. The rest of the afternoon was a visit to another National Trust property, Petworth House and Park, landscaped by Capability Brown. These properties are so different from each other that it is a pleasure to visit them all.



At Petworth the kitchens are quite a feature, and one could imagine being the kitchen maid back in the day.

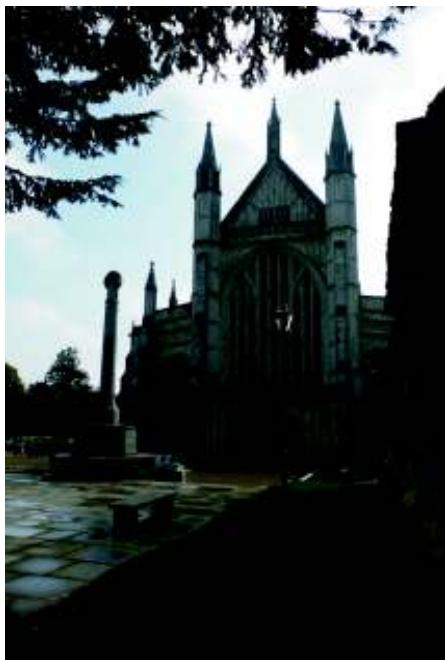
Beaulieu, the home of the world famous National Motor Museum, was our target for day three. There is so much more there than the Motor Museum. A monorail ride round the grounds, the Palace House, a small museum dedicated to the SOE from World War II, Victorian flower and kitchen gardens, Beaulieu Abbey and, of course, beautiful grounds and gardens to enjoy. In the afternoon we made our way to National Trust's Mottisfont Abbey Garden, House and Estate, another delightful place with unique features, lovely grounds and an interesting back story.

Our next adventure was at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard which is the home of the Mary Rose Museum, HMS Victory (Nelson's flagship), HMS Warrior (a three-masted, iron-hulled, armoured warship), HMS Alliance (a submarine museum) as well as various exhibitions and museums, and the chance to take a trip round the harbour. In retrospect we felt that we should have spent the whole day there! As it was we travelled on to the National Trust's Uppark House

and Garden: another very interesting place, a Georgian Mansion filled with fine furniture and paintings, located high up on the South Downs, affording glorious views.

Our last day gave us time to visit Salisbury Cathedral for a guided tour of this beautiful historic building. After lunch we boarded the coach for the last time and began the journey home. What a wonderful trip we had. We were so blessed with extremely good weather, congenial company and good memories.

*Jean Davis
Photographs of the Travel
Group and of Winchester
Cathedral by Tony Lammiman*



The tenth in our series of profiles of distinguished Welwyn Hatfield U3A members includes memories of the early years of our U3A, featuring ...

Pat Pike

Pat Howarth was a true Lancashire lass, born and raised in Bolton, who worked after leaving school there in the United Treadmills cotton mills. She met Geoff Pike at the Methodist Youth Club there in 1956, and married him in 1962 after he completed his 5-year apprenticeship for de Havillands in Lostock, Lancs, with the final three years at Hatfield. Pat then left Lancashire for a cleaner town – Hatfield. “No sooty coloured buildings here”, she says!

There she too worked for de Havilland, in the Strain Gauge Dept testing the strength of metals for aircraft, until the birth of her first son. Later she returned to work, first for St Ivel Cheese manufacturers; then moving into the Hertfordshire School Meals Service, being given a college training as cook. She became Head of Kitchen for various schools, and finally Contract Manager for 16 schools, responsible for the health, hygiene and cost of their meals provision.

Pat took early retirement in 1996 when Geoffrey became seriously ill. She takes up the story since then in her own words:

In January **1997** two friends and I, newly retired and tired of shop gazing, visiting Garden Centres and having lunch out, decided to visit the **Wednesday morning U3A Meeting** held at Cavendish Hall, Hatfield, to see whether this was something we wished to join while the husbands played their weekly Wednesday golf. We were welcomed by a member who asked if we were ‘new members’ and directed us to the two gentlemen on Coffee/Tea duty (yes! Two gentlemen). We then settled into our seats and were soon made to feel welcome as Enid Mills chatted to us. As other members arrived I was concerned that the knitted hats most of the ladies wore



might be COMPULSORY – a kind of ‘uniform’ – and was pleased to find out this was not so.

Ona Glover was the Chairperson then, and her introductory talk (always a joy to hear!) had us all laughing. At the close of the morning I enquired What was involved, What Groups could I join and How to apply. The Registration Form asked What was your previous employment? I wrote, Worked for the School Meal Service.

In March of that year I was asked to help organise a Finger Buffet for the **AGM at Campus West** – the WGC Meeting venue at that time. **Joan Bensley** as co-ordinator, myself and several Members held the first [I believe] Buffet at an AGM, this one being ‘special’ as the Chairman of U3A from Central Office in London was to attend. This was my beginning as Caterer for the U3A. Hot and cold buffets were introduced to follow the AGMs to encourage more people to attend, held at the various meeting venues: Campus West, Focolare Centre, Memorial Hall and Ludwick Family Centre.

In **1998**, the **10th Anniversary** of our U3A, a Special Summer Celebration was held at Charles Morris Hall, Tyttenhanger Green, attended by the Mayor of Hatfield. It included a visit to Peter Reeves’ attractive garden next to the Hall. It was a most enjoyable and special day, thanks to all those who helped with the food and decorated the Hall, and **Brian Milburn**, our regular Wine merchant!

Christmas Lunch that year was held at the Red Lion in Hatfield. As members attending had fallen to around twenty people, I was asked to source another venue, and Gosling Stadium was chosen for 1999, which some 80/90 members attended. After a couple of years, time for a change again, and after various enquiries, Homestead Court Hotel became our chosen Christmas Luncheon venue. This was a huge success from the start and continues to be popular.

In **2000** the Committee wished to introduce a **Newsletter**. **Rosemary Mitchell** agreed to organise this with ‘help’ from me. Another skill? Don’t think so! It was a very basic A4 sheet Newsletter, but a start! In **2003** **Peter Lomer** volunteered to take over the newsletter, with an improved layout and with PICTURES!!

Martin Brennan, Chairman 2000-2, invited me to be a Committee Member. This opened my eyes to the organisation and dedication of all the Chairmen and Committee Members who bring new ideas, development and expertise to ensure the continuing success of Welwyn/Hatfield U3A. Over the past few years they have brought our U3A into the 21st Century with the introduction of modern **technology** (particularly **John Middleton** as Chairman in 2009), and have gone

from strength to strength, with a huge rise in membership and an amazing choice of Groups to attend.

The **Summer Garden Party** began at Isabel Hospice Day Centre, where our Garden Group had tended the Hospice garden from the site development. Proceeds of our superb Raffle were donated to the Day Centre and Members brought items of FINGER FOOD for the communal Buffet. One year a member brought a delicious looking TRIFLE – sadly difficult to eat with fingers!!

One Crisis: in **2006**, two weeks before the closure for the Summer recess, a call from the Chairman, **Myrtle Pit-Keathley**: Focolare Centre informed us that redevelopment meant that U3A could not continue to use their premises from September. Myrtle began sourcing many Halls and venues in the WGC area, I looked in the BT Phone Book on Halls and Centres for telephone numbers. After various calls explaining WHAT our requirements were: Hall size, seating for 120, facilities to make Tea/Coffee, Parking – the **Ludwick Family Centre** met all our requirements. The Manager could not have been more friendly and suggested Myrtle and I viewed the Hall the next day. Hurrah! A result in one afternoon; we could inform the Members before the holiday break.

I became a Co-ordinator of the **Family History Group** a few years ago, finally stepping down last September. This was a real pleasure and through the Group I have learned such a lot, sharing ideas, suggestions and the expertise of several members while I played ‘Miss Marple’ solving my family riddles! Introducing a ‘Talk/Presentation’ in our monthly meetings by a group member, provided us with insights into their family stories; some tragic or amusing or on varied topics, many informative and interesting.

Pat remained editor of the newsletter for the first ten issues, and started and ran the original Bowls group. She joined the holiday group’s visit to Spain following Geoffrey’s death in 2004. She went on some Exploring London trips, still joins the Arts Appreciation Group and Theatre trips, and attends many Wednesday morning talks. She says of her own experience of (and participation in) U3A:

In a nutshell, the past 17 years (and more to come, I hope!) have been so pleasurable, at Wednesday Meetings, Group Meetings, Days out and Holidays. It has been a pleasure to have ‘done my bit’ in helping where I can and a huge delight in the many friends and acquaintances I have come to know over the years.

Hazel Bell



Christmas lunch, 2014, at Homestead Court Hotel, Welwyn Garden City, on 10 December. *Photographs by Roger Swaine*



Spring 2015 – Wednesday meetings

Doors open at 9.45; tea and coffee are served from 10.00 to 10.30 a.m.; the talks start promptly at 10.45 a.m.

JANUARY

7, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Bill Barr: ‘From Plough to Plate’

Bill Barr farms 650 acres at Butlers Farm and Dane End Farm between St Albans and Redbourn, using all the modern technology. He says, ‘people are often surprised how sophisticated modern farming is’. He has taken up an environmental scheme for some of the land and some buildings have been converted to alternative uses.

14, Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Dermot Wynne: ‘Medieval Islamic Spain’

Dermot Wynne is a Wel-Hat U3A member particularly interested in Medieval History. We will hear how Medieval Islamic Spain has special relevance to the development of the rest of Europe in areas such as industry, commerce, science, medicine, music, farming and much more.

21, Hatfield

Claire Robinson: ‘Where the Wild Things are: Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust’

The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire. With forty-four nature reserves spanning 1,900 acres, from woodlands and wetlands to rare patches of heath and orchard, members take practical action every day to help wildlife flourish. Claire Robinson, their Community Talks Officer, will tell us more.

28, WGC

Leon Freris: ‘Wind Power without the hot air’

Professor Leon Freris will explain the history, technology and pros and cons of generating electricity from the wind. Formerly at Imperial College, he joined Loughborough University in 1993 to set up the Centre for Renewable Energy Systems Technology (CREST), now the largest UK University Centre devoted to renewable energy. He is a founding member of the British Wind Energy Association and a Fellow of the Institution of Engineering and Technology, with over 150 publications and four books to his name.

FEBRUARY

4, Hatfield

Ken Griffin: 'Hatfield Convicts 1770 – 1870'

Ken Griffin is a 'Hertfordshire hedgehog' from Ware who now lives in Welwyn Garden City. Before retirement he worked as an Auditor for Herts County Council. His interest in convicts started nearly thirty years ago when researching his family history. We will hear about the crimes, the sentences and the victims, many of whom were the good and the great of the time.

11, WGC

Steve Lester: 'Insights into an Auction House and The Antiques Road Show'

18, Hatfield

Martin Flood: 'RAF Presentation Team'

Squadron Leader Martin Flood joined the RAF in 1985 and has conducted operational tours in many countries in addition to numerous military exercises overseas. He now has a new challenge as Head of the RAF Presentation Team. He will give us an insight into the RAF today, including roles, aircraft and personnel.

25, WGC

John Friend: 'The Mystery of Playing Cards'

John Friend is a member of the English Playing Card Society and the International Playing Card Society and was also a member of the Magic Circle. He has been collecting playing cards for the last fifty years. He will tell us their history and intriguing facts like why there is a Jack of hearts, clubs, diamonds and spades and why there is always a Joker in the pack.

MARCH

4, Hatfield

28th Annual General Meeting

Followed by readings of their own work by members of the Creative Writing Group.

11, WGC

Brian Curtois: 'More Memorable Moments Reporting for the BBC'

We welcome Brian Curtois back for a second visit. He worked for the

BBC as a news reporter at a time of great change and helped set up the BBC's televising of parliament operation, later achieving his ambition to become a senior political correspondent at Westminster. He will recall dramatic stories, embarrassing moments, contacts with royalty and politicians and thoughts on news reporting today.

18, Hatfield

Tony Eaton: 'Glen Miller's Curious disappearance'

Tony Eaton has a particular interest in unravelling some of the hitherto unresolved air mysteries of the Second World War and is a recognised authority on the disappearance of this famous band leader. He has been a member of the Glen Miller Society since 1955 and for the past decade has been the main UK contributor for its international 'Moonlight Serenader' magazine.

25, WGC

MEET THE GROUPS

Meet the Groups is an annual opportunity for new and existing members to meet the leaders of the many and varied groups than run within our U3A. The leaders and their teams provide demonstrations and display their wares so that members can find out more about what happens in each group. It is always a lively and enjoyable morning with a chance to meet old friends and make new ones. All are welcome. Tea and coffee as usual!

Next term starts on 22 April at Hatfield

U3A Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

Published three times yearly, in January, May and September.
Edited by Hazel K. Bell

Available on the Website, in full colour, plus cumulative index to issues
1-46, at www.u3awelhat.org.uk
© U3A Welwyn-Hatfield 2014

Printed by Triographics Printers Ltd
121 London Road, Knebworth, SG3 6EX

Copydate for the May 2015 issue is 6 April 2015.
Send copy and photographs to hkb@aidanbell.com