



**WELWYN-HATFIELD
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE**

**www.u3awelhat.org.uk
NEWSLETTER
September 2011 Issue 38**

HATS AT THE HOSPICE

Although, as Sue Kershaw told us in thanking the organizers of this otherwise perfectly running event, her order for sunny weather had fallen on deaf ears, the rain held off for our garden party on 20 July, and 76 members enjoyed excellent refreshments in the beautiful garden of the Isobel Hospice. Only fifteen ladies and eight gentlemen boldly sported hats as instructed, but their headgear indeed included some splendid confections.

Ona Glover awarded the prizes for the best

hats to Carol Frost (see below) and befezzed Bruce Piggott.

The proceeds from the 13-prize raffle, £118.05, and the putative speaker's fee of £60, were donated to the Hospice.

Photographs of behatted ladies below, left to right, top row: Kate Owen, Jean Copeland, Carol Frost, Judy Grant; bottom row: Elaine Evans, Joan Baron, Sue Kershaw — all by Tony Lammiman, shown on duty in the last photograph, taken by Ken Wright.



COMMITTEE NEWS

Three unfortunate occurrences have arisen which will impinge on U3A Meetings.

Bishop's Hatfield Parochial Church Council has decided with regret that the Lord William Cecil Memorial Hall, Hatfield, will be closed permanently with effect from 1 January 2012.

The Committee are currently investigating all possible alternative venues in Hatfield and will keep you informed of developments.

The Hertfordshire County Council are proposing further parking restrictions in parts of Hall Grove, Autumn Grove, Moorlands and Archers Ride which will further limit parking around of Ludwick Community Hall.

Parking will be available at The Ludwick Arms only for those U3A Members who intend to patronise the Public House.

Situations Vacant

BAR MAN for U3A social occasions – Garden Party & Christmas Quiz. An ideal post for a gregarious, organised enthusiastic volunteer!

After more than ten years of running the Bar for U3A functions, Brian Milburn has decided to relinquish this position. Many thanks to Brian and his capable helper Barry

Jackson for making so many events pleasurable.

Advice and guidance readily available.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

In March 2012 this position becomes vacant. Elaine has thoroughly enjoyed her role and recommends it to anyone interested in wanting more involvement in the running of our U3A, and in making many more friends. She will advise anyone interested as to what is involved in the job.

DRIVER

We need a driver for the Welwyn Hatfield Bus. This is used by the Gardening Group (about four times a year) and occasionally by the Science and Technology Group. You need a D1 Licence and to be medically fit and preferably under the age of 70 years. For further details please contact the current driver, Brian Milburn, on 01707 326968.

Registration

Please register if you are prepared to read the Welwyn & Hatfield U3A Newsletter on the Website. This would minimise our ever-increasing printing costs. To register, email hkb@aidanbell.com

U3A Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

Published three times yearly, in January, May and September

Available on the Website at www.u3awelhat.org.uk

© U3A Welwyn-Hatfield

Collated by Harry Smith and Jean Hughes; edited and produced by Hazel K. Bell

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

Copydate for January 2012 issue is 12 December 2011. Send copy and photographs to – jean@fmjock.com / harry@biplane.freeseerve.co.uk / or hkb@aidanbell.com

News from the groups



ARCHITECTURE

We enjoyed another excellent outing to two places in June, organized as usual by our retired architect lecturer, John Onslow, who plans each part of our outings with enormous care to detail. The tea/coffee breaks are all arranged in advance, to allow everyone to have a carefree day.

We visited Chiswick House—a noble Roman-style Palladian villa built in 1729 for the 3rd Earl of Burlington. The pure exterior contrasts with the sumptuous interiors which were created by William Kent. The gardens have been restored to their former glory as the birth-place of the English Landscape Movement.

Marble Hill House, Richmond, is a charming Palladian villa bordering the Thames, and set in 66 acres of parkland. It was built between 1724-29 for the mistress of King George II when he was Prince of Wales.

At both houses we had first-rate guides, who by turns informed and amused us.

Do join our group on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 10am, in Verulam Close hall.

Photographs of Chiswick House by Roger Francis.

CREATIVE WRITING

Jean Hughes won first prize at the Wharfedale Festival of Performing Arts for her short story entitled 'Just One Tiny Pill'. The story will be printed in the fourth anthology of poems and stories by members of Welwyn-Hatfield U3A, which will be available at the end of the year. The group have raised more than £500 for various charities with their annual anthology over the last three years. Your support has been much appreciated.

Photograph by Val Fieth



Digital Cameras for Beginners

To Flash or not to Flash, that was the first lesson. This new group got together for just five sessions at the Verulam Communal Hall during June and July. The objective was to discover just what all those buttons on their digital cameras were for. Now we can all turn off the flash when we want to. This enables the taking of photos inside churches and museums (if allowed) without annoying others with that Flash. Many were surprised how easy it is to take an image of some small print using the Macro function, then magnify the view on the camera and read it. The various “scene modes” were explored, portrait, landscape and sunset ones being the favourites.

The new U3A projector was used for two sessions on how to load and organize photos onto computers. Many people brought their own laptops and lively discussions broke out as new programs and discoveries were made. Suddenly some laptop webcams were activated too much merriment. Computers are definitely not just for the younger generations!

Questionnaires filled in at the last two meetings showed that everyone had enjoyed themselves and got something from lessons and wanted more. This has led to the new Digital Photography for Beginners course being organized for the autumn term – info on our U3A website under Stop Press. Such is the interest that there are only a few places left.

Already some members of the group have gained the confidence to come along to the alternate Monday’s U3A Photography Group (see below), and take part in their “Out and About” sessions organized for summer. Photography in Welwyn Hatfield U3A is on the up and up!

Geoff Bowers

EXPLORING LONDON

On Friday 1 July, 34 members of the group gathered at Butlers Wharf, adjacent to Tower Bridge for a three-hour cruise down the Thames.

As the sun was shining, most of us were able to sit up on deck and enjoy the various landmarks only previously seen from the river bank. An hour into the trip we went below deck for a tasty buffet lunch.

En route (before and after lunch - not during!) we were given the sinister history leading up to and following some of the more spectacular murders that have happened on the Thames over the last few hundred years, ending with the activities of the Kray brothers. Some murders were never solved and some bodies have never been found. The commentator was an excellent story teller and his delivery made them seem all the more gruesome.

From the feedback I have received, everyone had a most enjoyable day.

We hope to organise a couple of walks before Christmas but in the meantime, Roger Swaine is organising a visit to tour the Globe Theatre on 21 October.

*Bridget Durham and Dennis Edwards;
photograph by Tony Lammiman*



GARDENING

Following talks given last December by Garden Designer Ivan Hicks and Angela Harkness, Butterfly World's Managing Director, we undertook an outing on a sunny Monday afternoon in July, to Butterfly World at Chiswell Green. The abundant wild flower planting is a sight to behold, with their great variety of insect-attracting scents: unfortunately, only a few butterflies were fluttering by that afternoon, to take advantage of it all. An effect, perhaps, of our early summer weather in April and May on their breeding season, or lack of rain for their plant habitats to grow, or simply they just didn't appear that afternoon – who knows? But this was more than made up for by the gorgeous, diaphanous specimens in the exotic butterfly house. As you wander through, some of these delicate, fragile creatures tend to land on clothing or hair, so you must take care not to crush or hurt them, and ensure that they are not attached to you as you exit.

There were many quirky individual garden designs to explore, with some really interesting ideas in their structures. The photograph below, by Anita Hoyle, shows the Thyme Garden. Some areas were designed to appeal to children – of all ages. A good place to take the grandchildren, as it has a natural play area with willow tunnels, etc., and educational learning areas for groups of schoolchildren, including an insect-study centre, where the life-cycles of butterflies and



moths are demonstrated. Then there are the two hairy tarantulas, encased in a glass cage, thank goodness!

The area where they hope to build the huge 100-metre dome to house a lush rainforest and thousands of butterflies, when funds permit, is at the moment covered by a mass of sunflowers – an awe-inspiring sight. A walk through the huge wildflower meadow evokes memories of childhood years – something which sadly seems to exist these days only in paintings or old photographs, so this really is a treat. In addition there is a shop and cafe, and of course lots of plants to buy which are guaranteed to attract the butterflies in your own garden.

It was a good afternoon out. If you haven't visited it, do: it's well worth the effort, and they need the support. Our grateful thanks to Sue King for organising the outing.

Carole King

THEATRE TRIPS

In the last sixteen years the Theatre Trips Group has made at least three trips each year, and seen some truly memorable shows. One matinee performance at the National was followed by a night-time trip on the London Eye – London and the Thames look quite different lit up by night.

I was also organising U3A holidays; wherever there was a suitable theatre nearby, we have been to see the show: for instance, *Annie* at Swansea and *Screaming* at Pitlochry (when we all had to troop out of the theatre due to a fire alarm!).

On a recent trip to Milton Keynes to see *Spamalot* we were also able to indulge in some Christmas shopping in the huge mall.

Among the shows we shall always remember our trips to are: *Coram Boys*, *Mack and Mabel*, *Hot Micardo*, *War Horse*, *My Fair Lady*, *A Funny thing Happened ...*, *History Boys*, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Guys and Dolls*

In October we are going to the new theatre in Aylesbury to see *One man Two Governors* which has been playing to sell-out houses at the National. In January we have another trip to the Watermill at Newbury to see *Wind in the Willows*. The Watermill is a favourite destination and tickets go almost as soon as a trip is published. This theatre also has an excellent restaurant and we always have a good lunch before the performance.

You don't have to join this group – just watch the notice board where I post news of each trip as I book it!

Margaret Hakansson

VIRTUAL U3A

The Virtual U3A (vU3a), which went live in January 2009, is an online-only U3A, affiliated to the Third Age Trust. One of its principal aims is to provide the U3A experience for those who are rendered isolated in some way by circumstances or geography and unable to play a full part in a terrestrial U3A.

More information is available on the public website www.vu3a.org where one can also apply for membership. Why not pay it a visit?

The vU3A already has an active membership but is currently seeking to

increase this with the hope of expanding the range of activity groups now in operation.

PHOTOGRAPHY

At meetings from May to July, Sheila Wilder demonstrated print mounting techniques, showing how to measure for the cut-out and to recover from a cutting error; members brought in and photographed Still Life and Table Top subjects; and enjoyed displays of prints of the "Butterfly World" visit, American Theme slides, and their own "Favourite Pictures", with reasons why they were taken.

"Out and About" visits were made to Rye Meads (where the weather was good and the hides clear), Stondon Transport Museum (seeing an amazing collection of vehicles) and Whipsnade (perfect weather –the group stayed for over six hours). Some of the resulting photographs (originally in colour) are reproduced here:

Members of the group photographing Still Life subjects, The Flying Flea? and Captain Scott's *Endeavour* by Ron Benfield

An old Ford by Shirley Benfield.

"Sunlight on Gull" and "Pretty in Pink" (flamingoes) by Anita Hoyle

Obituary

Anne Christine McDermott 1944-2011

Anne was born in Hatfield, and after retiring from lecturing at Oaklands College in St Albans, spent many years as a volunteer therapist at the Isabel Hospice, where she died of cancer on 21 June 2011. She joined U3A in 2009 and attended the Architecture group. She leaves her husband, Patrick, and four children.





AUTUMN 2011 PROGRAMME

Wednesday Meetings

14 September, Ludwick Family Centre,
WGC

Autumn Art Exhibition

Contact Jean Hughes. Exhibition and Works in Progress featuring Multi-Media 1 and 2, Photography, Greeting Cards and Watercolours Groups.

21 September, William Cecil Memorial Hall, Hatfield

Your Place in the Cosmos –

Carolin Crawford, Outreach Office for the Institute of Astronomy at the University of Cambridge

28 September, Ludwick

Russia Past and Present – Mike Beech

This talk will contrast the opulence of the Hermitage with the poverty of the countryside and explore how Russia is emerging from the constraints of 60 years of Communism

5 October, Hatfield

Do you know Your Consumer Rights? - part 2 – Sylvia Rook

Following her previous visit, Sylvia will continue to dig into the law regarding Consumer Rights

12 October, Ludwick

Insurance Fraud – Alan Gilmore

Alan worked in insurance, both at home and abroad, for 38 years. He will tell us about the scams, fraud and amusing anecdotes he encountered during this time.

19 October, Hatfield

Authors of Hertfordshire –

Hazel Bell and David Steed

David and Hazel are WelHat U3A members and Friends of Welwyn Hatfield Museums. They will introduce some local writers of the past, and read extracts from their work.

26 October, Ludwick

Traverse – a solo walk across Africa –

Fran Sandham

A former editor of *Rough Guides*, Fran walked 3000 miles coast to coast across Africa solo – apart from a disastrous donkey!

2 November, Hatfield

The History of Brickendonbury Manor –

John Loadman

John began his career as an analytical chemist with the Natural Rubber Producers' Research Association and continued in that area of work until he retired in 1999. He became interested in the 2000-year history of Brickendonbury Manor, just south of Hertford, as the site was purchased by the Research Association.

9 November, Ludwick

High Times at Heathrow – Sheila Kennedy

Sheila worked for 40 years at the Airport and will describe the interesting people she met and incidents that occurred.

16 November, Hatfield

'The women I have married' – Richard Selby

After retiring from banking Richard wrote and published books on Barnet Pubs and local history. This talk is a romp through the history of marriage down the ages as well as the Registration Service – his second career.

23 November, Ludwick

Edward Wilson and Scott of the Antarctic –

Isobel Williams

Edward Wilson, a friend and confidant of Captain Scott, accompanied him to the South Pole, sadly dying on the return journey with their three companions.

30 November, Hatfield

Memories of Japan – Joan Lilwall-Smith

Joan is a retired head-teacher, married to an academic geologist. She accompanied her husband on some of his trips when he was visiting professor at two Universities in Japan.

7 December, Ludwick

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Bring finger food, savoury or sweet. Wine and soft drinks will be provided. It will include another edition of Jack Wood's amazing friendly Quizzes

14 December

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

12 noon for 12.45 at Homestead Court Hotel, Homestead Lane, Welwyn Garden City. Round Table, Christmas layout. Tickets (£23 per person), menus and table numbers (for final table plan) will be available for booking at the Wednesday Meetings on 4, 11, 18 and 25 October.

Next term begins 11 January, Hatfield