



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

www.u3awelhat.org.uk

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NEWSLETTER Autumn 2017 Issue 56

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

Rock on Tony!

On 20 May this year more than a hundred Welwyn Hatfield U3A members enjoyed a fantastic rock music evening, dancing along to 50s/60s music courtesy of the Beaucrees, which is the name of Welwyn Hatfield member Tony Tutton's band (founded by Tony in 1963!). We were all transported back to our teens by lively renditions of songs by Chuck Berry, the Merseybeats, the Beatles and local boy Marty Wilde – to name but a few!

The music was so addictive and evocative that many of us just had to get up and dance along to it. Those who weren't able to get up and 'bop' sat enjoying Tony's stunning performance and his band members' musical prowess.



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U3A Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

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U3A members rise to the challenge. Photograph by John Brown

Tony has a great singing voice and often invited us join in with him. It's funny how we remembered all the lyrics from long ago! To keep our interest levels up there was a fish-and-chip supper organised by Suzanne and John Brown. The evening ended all too soon and the band were persuaded to do three encores. The next day many of us woke up with aches and pains from using muscles that had been under-used for a while – or is that only me?

Last year this venture was tentatively suggested to the committee by Tony, and he wondered whether there'd be enough people interested! Well, there sure are, Tony – and all of us who went are eagerly planning to attend the next one! Rock on !!

Ann Davies

Thirty Years On

Our Garden party, held on 12 July, was a celebration of the 30th anniversary of our U3A. About a hundred members attended, and the weather gods again smiled upon us. The grounds of Breaks Manor afford ample choice for placing chairs to enjoy the sunshine or seek shade under its many great trees. Viewed from the grounds, the house appears manorial indeed.

David Banks provided a splendid anniversary celebration cake with the U3A logo in icing sugar, and ceremonially cut it. Val Fieth, who founded this U3A three decades ago, was welcomed, and explained why and how she had done this, to the benefit now of so many. Judy Grant provided a photo-quiz showing public events of the last 30 years (won by Pamela Williams); and quiz-master Tony Tutton posed 30 questions featuring 1987, the year of our foundation. He presented the winning team (Jill Longman, Linda Gromniak and Maggie Compton) with a certificate and a small silver trophy. Jill says, “We were flabbergasted to receive a trophy for our efforts and will hold it proudly until it is awarded to new guardians”.

Members brought an excellent selection of finger food, spread over a



David Banks cutting the 30th anniversary cake





Val Fieth, founder of Welwyn Hatfield U3A

savouries table and a sweet table; soft or alcoholic drinks were served. So many gifts were donated to the tombola run by Tony and Corrie Godfrey that it raised £112: £56 each was sent to Breaks Manor and to Mercy Ships.

Altogether, our 30th anniversary was very well celebrated in the summer sun.

Photographs by John Brown

Volunteers needed

to listen to children reading in local primary schools

Can you spare an hour or two a week to listen to children reading in a local primary school? *Schoolreaders* is looking for more volunteers in Hertfordshire to carry out this important role.

Reading time for many children at home and at school is often insufficient. One in four children are now leaving primary school unable to read to the required standard. This can have a lifelong consequence. No qualifications are necessary: just a good command of spoken and written English.

Schoolreaders is flexible and will match your availability to an appropriate, local school. Our volunteers find the scheme incredibly rewarding, knowing that a few hours helping a child learn to read each week can have such a great impact on their life chances.

Please visit the website www.schoolreaders.org to join
or call 01234 924111 for further information.

Notes from the Chair

I do hope that you all had an enjoyable and productive break over the last month or so. I know that a number of you have continued to enjoy U3A trips to country houses, gardens, London, and further afield to Devon. As ever our summer term ended on a high note with a lively garden party celebrating our 30th anniversary. You can read more about it on pages 3 and 4. Many thanks indeed to all of those who made the afternoon so successful, including Jenny Roden and her team for organising the catering, plus, of course, the tasty food donations from those of you who attended.



Jean Mackie

The tombola at the party raised over £100. When this is added to donations from talks during the last two terms, Welwyn Hatfield U3A has contributed well over £1000 to charity this year. What remarkable generosity! I know that the recipient charities (Medical Detection Dogs, RNLI, Mercy Ships) have been hugely appreciative, so many thanks for all of your contributions.

A new addition to our programme this year was the supper dance, held in May, which you can read all about on pages 1 and 3. It was so successful that Tony Tutton has organised a second one to be held in December. Many thanks to him and his band for giving everyone such a lively evening and the opportunity to 'shake it all about' on the dance floor!

Once again, we've had a wide variety of talks over the summer term, ranging from The Nursery Rhyme Detective to Hertfordshire Murders! I particularly enjoyed the talk about the Foundling Museum, which explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity, established in 1739 by philanthropist Thomas Coram to care for babies at risk of abandonment. An amazing story – and a fascinating place to visit if you haven't already done so.

Groups continue to be active, although we have sadly lost French (1) as the tutor is retiring this year. There is strong interest in a second World Affairs group but we are still looking for someone (or two people) to co-ordinate it. Christine Hester stepped down as co-ordinator of the Multi-Media (2) group, but a new member, Jenny Veitch, has kindly offered to take it on – so many thanks to her and also to Christine for all her hard work over the years. Gerry Newnham, a stalwart supporter of our U3A, is moving to North London so will no longer lead London History or Family History. These well-supported groups will continue to operate, however, with Stephen Brown heading up the former and a collective arrangement operating for the latter. All best wishes and thanks to Gerry, who has already identified his new local U3A group!

Although it's been over six months since fees were increased, we are still trying to contact those members who have yet to change their standing orders. This has been a mammoth task, particularly for Suzanne Brown, Membership Secretary and Judy Grant, Treasurer. My thanks go to them for all of their efforts. Committee members have also played their part, following up with phone calls and emails. As a result, we have a much clearer picture of our active membership, which now stands around 800. The exercise has reinforced the need for members to please let us know when you change your contact details and/or move away.

I look forward to seeing you all again in the autumn term,
Very best wishes,

Jean

Group News

Book Discussion (1)

Fairly early in the year we read *My Brilliant Friend* – by Italian author Elena Ferrante – and that's all we know about her. Despite becoming a worldwide literary sensation, she has managed to keep her identity a secret. *MBF* is the first of what's become known as The Neapolitan Novels: a tetralogy which includes *The Story of a New Name*, *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay* and *The Story of the*

Lost Child, translated, beautifully, by Ann Goldstein and published in 2012 by Europa Editions.

The richly detailed narrative of the book makes it difficult to produce a short synopsis, although it has been billed as a ‘a kind of quasi-feminist *bildungsroman* that also happens to be a history of Italy in the late 20th century.’

The novel follows the lives of two bright childhood friends growing up on the outskirts of post-war Naples: corrupt, poor and violent. Elena Greco (the narrator) and her best friend Lila Cerrullo survive childhood, learning to navigate the corruption and violence that surrounds them and to fight for the limited opportunities available to them. It’s a brilliant, sometimes uncomfortable, look at girls’ friendships, including the destructive envy that we don’t like to own. The book was not an unqualified success with our group, which seems to be the case everywhere: you love it, or you really don’t. I couldn’t put it down and read the next three books right away, then dashed off to the Rose Theatre, Kingston to see the April de Angelis stage adaptation. All four novels are currently being filmed for a 32-part television series. **Highly recommended** by some, not at all by others.

Then we indulged in a bit of retro-reading, starting with Evelyn Waugh’s *Handful of Dust*, first published in 1934. This book, his fourth, is often described as a satirical comedy and that always puzzles me. I find it more akin to a horror story. Brenda and Tony have been married for seven years, living in his family pile, Hetton Abbey, with his mother, his nanny and eventually, their son, John. A guide book describes the house as ‘now devoid of interest’, a feeling that Brenda clearly shares. Her frequent trips to London introduce us to the IT people, who lunch, dine, dance and sleep with each other. So far so good, until Brenda falls for a lounge lizard and asks Tony for a divorce. From then on, though it’s still a comedy of manners, dear reader stopped laughing. Some of us, who had read the book years ago, were still haunted by the final denouement. It’s a good read, but whether it belongs in the comedy section of your bookcase is debateable. **Recommended.**

The Mitfords were an interesting bunch – five sisters – Diana, Jessica, Unity, Deborah and novelist Nancy. And it was to this writer we turned to read her best-loved novel, *Love in a Cold Climate*, a sparkling romantic comedy that vividly evokes the lost glamour of aristocratic life in England between the wars.

Polly Hampton, with her stunning good looks and impeccable connections has long been groomed for the perfect marriage by her mother, the fearsome and ambitious Lady Montdore. But Polly is bored by the monotony of her glittering debut season in London. Having just come from India, where her father served as Viceroy, she claims to have hoped that society in a colder climate would be less obsessed with love affairs. The apparently aloof and indifferent Polly has a long-held secret, however, one that leads to the shattering of her mother's dreams and her own disinheritance. When an elderly duke begins pursuing the disgraced Polly and a callow potential heir curries favour with her parents, nothing goes as expected, but in the end all find happiness in their own unconventional ways.

Like Waugh, Mitford writes of what she knows – the upper classes between the wars. We all enjoyed the viciously witty dialogue in both books. For example:

The worst of being a Communist is the parties you may go to are - well – awfully funny and touching but not very gay... I don't see the point of sad parties, do you? And left-wing people are always sad because they mind dreadfully about their causes, and the causes are always going so badly.

Nancy Mitford is definitely one you'd invite to your perfect dinner party! **Highly recommended**

Carol Bush

Creative Writing

Ann Smith produced this account when the group was asked to write about social occasions.

Party Problems

This is a powerful argument against my attending parties.

For a start even finding the venue can be problematic for me, born without a sense of direction. Too often I find myself leaning over the steering wheel desperately scanning for clues and helpful signs, whilst hopelessly spiralling around alien suburbs, re-acquainting myself with the same roundabout time and time again.

Once arrived, I am never quite at ease in party situations, for I find



Ann Smith

they are filled with objects and situations wholly intent upon humbling and humiliating me.

Firstly, I feel I lack sufficient upper limbs to handle plate, napkin, fork and glass to be able adroitly to convey the offered food to plate, then mouth. I wistfully envy the many-armed Hindu Goddess Shiva; she was born to party.

I find it hazardous standing around balancing selections of food on a plate in one hand and a glass of wine in the other. Perils manifest themselves in abundance when transferring the glass to the plate-holding hand in order to feed one's self, particularly if the plate is of the

fimsy disposable variety. For, unless my strict and unwavering attention is fixed on both plate and glass, a gradual leaning of both these receptacles results in an overflowing of liquid and the shedding southwards of the foodstuffs. How I envy people with the easy, smooth manual dexterity that allows them stress-free manipulation of well-filled plate and glass, whilst carrying on intelligent, witty conversations with other bright vivacious beings. My success in these areas is never equal to my expectations.

Sandwiches I avoid like the plague as I find the wretched things immediately begin to deconstruct themselves back to their separate entities, eagerly and generously sharing their fillings with the space around as soon as I take a tentative hold of them. Vol-au-vents present their own set of problems. Either they come in sizes that are too big for one mouthful, or too small to neatly nibble, and too often will contain fillings that defy culinary description. Biting demolishes the holding walls of pastry of the bigger varieties, allowing the gloopy, gleeful escape of the previously imprisoned contents, invariably down my dress front, resulting in permanent staining of the receiving garment. Worst of all are the caterers who malevolently present sausage rolls that are attractively tiny enough to pop into one's mouth in their entirety, innocently offering an apparently problem-free consumable, but served mouth-scorchingly hot. This will trigger in my mouth a frantic tongue tarantella, tossing the offending morsel

from searing spot to spot with an agility most remarkable. Naturally, this triggers an instant need for a mouthful of wine to dampen, cool and soothe the tortured palate. It is at this point that I invariably discover my erratic spasmodic reactions to the unexpectedly high temperature experienced has resulted in the spontaneous spillage of the entire contents of my glass, rendering me without means of ending my sufferings.

Another major drawback to my enjoyment of parties is my inability to *hear* over the constant background noise generated by dozens of liquor-liberated tongues. I try to paste an intelligent expression over the idiotic blank rictus grin of complete incomprehension as I nod brightly at the conversationalist trying to engage with me.

Summer outdoor parties present another raft of hazards. To start with, I am an absolute magnet to patrolling wasps; these puny little adversaries appear to home in solely on me and buzz around like angry little sawmills, either bent on claiming the fork-full of food being conveyed to my mouth, or intent upon drowning themselves in my glass of wine – a liquid grave where the suicidal wretch can pass over the palate unnoticed while I am straining earnestly to hear the conversation directed towards me. The peril of high heels sinking into soft turf that results in an undignified base-over-apex gymnastic action scores high points from the amused vertical party goers, but is of course, for me, yet another humiliating hazard of the party scene.

This may not be a well-structured argument against parties, it is wholly personal and subjective: just don't invite me to yours, for I am as comfortable as a gazelle down a coalmine.

Ann Smith

Exploring London (3)

Our first trip last term was to Greenwich, on 25 May, with 22 explorers. We met up with our knowledgeable guide at Tower Hill Station, walked down to the Thames and took the ferry across to Greenwich Pier and the World Heritage Site of Greenwich.

We (and our guide) were thrilled to see the bright orange time-ball on the observatory roof dropping at 1pm, as it has done every day since 1833. 1pm was originally chosen to enable the astronomers to



Greenwich Observatory *Photograph by Nick Mason*

undertake telescopic observations at noon, and the tradition is maintained today for the benefit of tourists. (In summer it drops at 13:00 [1pm] BST or 12:00 [Noon] GMT.)

We then explored the historical buildings, including a former Royal Palace, a hospital for sailors and now a naval college, together with a museum. Stunning architecture! We were given the opportunity to climb the hill to the Observatory, but declined (it was a very hot day!). The guide encouraged us instead to stand outside a local resident's house on part of the Prime Meridian Line which is longitude zero. I'm sure they weren't best pleased.

We then let the guide go and repaired to a local riverside pub for lunch, after which we visited the Old Royal Naval College building, another of Sir Christopher Wren's masterpieces. This has a magnificent painted ceiling currently under restoration. For a fee, we could have clambered up the scaffolding for a closer look – one of our party did!

Finally, we looked over the *Cutty Sark*, in dry dock outside, visited the gift shop and walked through the Greenwich foot tunnel under the river which was opened in 1902 to take the DLR back into London. A full day!

Our second trip, on 13 July, was somewhat different. Billed as a **Beatles Magical Mystery Tour**, this took 19 of us on a trip down memory lane around London's West End. Adam, our guide, was full of fascinating anecdotes and details of the buildings where the Beatles and other 60s pop superstars had their offices and recording studios. From Tottenham Court Road we went to Soho Square, to see the headquarters of Sir Paul McCartney's business empire; then graduated to Carnaby Street and inspected Trident Studios, where not only the Beatles, but David Bowie, Queen, Carly Simon and many others recorded their hits. This was followed by a visit to the pub where the Rolling Stones were allowed to play in an upstairs room long before they were famous, and a look at the 2i's Coffee Bar in Old



Members of Exploring London (3) in the Beatles Walk gift shop, joining the assembly for "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band". Photo by Alan Green

Compton, Soho where so many pop groups performed in the 1950s and 60s. This is now a recommended Fish & Chip shop, “Poppy’s”!

We then walked to Savile Row to the old Apple Headquarters, where ‘Let It Be’ was performed on the roof, and afterwards travelled to the Abbey Road studios in St John’s Wood. This appeared to be a shrine to the Beatles, with lots of graffiti and murals on the outside walls, where we watched tourists risking their lives on the famous pedestrian crossing and taking selfies. Next door was the inevitable gift shop and lots of Beatles memorabilia.

By this time we were hungry, so goodbye to guide Adam, and sixteen of us went to Harry Morgan’s, a Jewish Deli in St John’s Wood High Street, for Salt Beef Sandwiches, Chicken Soup and more. Exhausted, so then home.

Sue McLellen & Tony Dodd

Photography

Our last session has been a mixed time with numbers high, then low. As usual we have had hilarious moments with critiquing of members’ images, especially from the Summer Treasure Hunt. The interpretation of the subjects is extreme and inventive.

An underwater diver showed his photography, which was enlightening, dynamic and colourful. Sadly, that week not a vast number of members attended – and so missed a rare treat.

My thanks to Peter Fox, who is excellent with Photoshop and often demonstrates manipulation of images reinventing members’ photos.

We have had photography from phones and discussions as to why you take photos, how you store them and the aim of your own photography.

Unfortunately, we are losing two staunch members: Bob White, due to illness, and Karen Nevshehir, who is on the move. Both have been great contributors to our sessions and will be missed.

Eileen Pegrum



A macro shot of a fly mounted on a pin by Bryan Marsh, who demonstrated the use of a low-cost reversing ring, instead of an expensive Macro lens.

Shakespeare

In the Shakespeare Group we have now read (aloud, watched and discussed) Shakespeare's first five comedies, his first tragedy (*Romeo and Juliet*), and are about to embark on the English histories, beginning with the earliest chronologically, *King John*. Our understanding and enjoyment are both greatly increased by watching DVDs of the plays, on loan from The U3A Resource Centre in the National Office in Bromley.

This has a collection of non-book material available for all U3A groups to borrow free of charge (except for the cost of return postage). I do recommend all study groups to avail themselves of these splendid resources. Go to the national U3A website: <http://www.u3a.org.uk/>, enter the Members' Area and then the Resource Centre to find and search the online catalogue.

Hazel Bell

Travel

The Delights of Northern Italy – Padova, Veneto Palaces, Mantova, Vicenza, Ferrara and Verona – May 2017

We open in Venice We next play Verona ...
...Then Mantua, then Padua (*Kiss Me Kate*)

This little ditty kept running around my brain on this visit, obviously because those were the places visited but also, I think, because of the references Shakespeare made to this region. We didn't quite open in Venice but we flew to Venice Treviso Airport for the start of our holiday. We stayed in the very pleasant spa town of Abano Terme near Padua at the Terme Roma Hotel.

Padua was the destination for our first visit. Stepping off the coach and being told by the guide that Padua was the site of one of the oldest universities in the world, founded in 1220, and that Galileo, Petrarch and Dante studied or spent time here was like an awakening from a dream of modern-day reality and stepping into the world of Renaissance Italy. Crossing the Prato della Valle surrounded by some of Padua's alumni was awe-inspiring. We discovered that Antenor, fleeing from Troy, founded the city in 1185 BC, and we saw his tomb.



Casa La Malcontenta in Padova

(Recent science, however, proves that it does not contain his remains.)

We set off towards the Basilica of St Anthony and in the piazza in front of the façade was a large equestrian statue by Donatello to stimulate our curiosity for the interior. Inside the Basilica the tomb of the saint was remarkable for Donatello's magnificent marble reliefs on the walls surrounding it. Modern lighting enhanced it still further. We then walked up to the Piazza delle Erbe and the Piazza della Frutta. I had never seen such an array of fresh fruit and vegetables so enticingly displayed in these two market squares. Passing from one to the other in the shell of a great hall were many small specialist food shops selling a wide range of delicatessen items. We then proceeded on to the Piazza dei Signori – a most elegant square with an impressive clock tower on another palace. From here, we were led back to the university area for some free time and lunch. At this point it began to rain heavily and some of us sought refuge in a cosy pizza café. After the party reunited, we briefly went inside the entrance to the University to see the gardens and to admire the statue to one Elena Piscopia, the first woman graduate of the University in 1678.

In the afternoon we drove to see our first Palladian villa, La Malcontenta, built in 1560. It did not look its best in grey cloud and viewed from the rear – but the inside with its frescoes by Zelotti was well worth the visit. Andrea Palladio is seen as the father of modern architecture and still influences architects today. The scale and dimensions of the rooms, the *trompe l'oeil* door surrounds gave an aura of calm and harmony. The vistas from the windows were part of the design taking in the surrounding countryside.

On Tuesday we headed for **Mantua**, which was further to travel and we were delayed by traffic jams en route. We probably know of it best as the town to which Romeo was banished after killing Tybalt and where he purchased poison on learning of Juliet's "death". Just as we arrived we were greeted with a deluge of rain (shades of Montenegro) but it didn't last too long. We also discovered that this was a popular month for school visits by the large numbers of schoolchildren everywhere. Our guide pointed out in the architecture of the city the conflict that had existed over the centuries between the church and the state, run by powerful families such as the Gonzaga family here. We visited a small medieval church, La Rotunda, which had been partially buried over centuries but recently restored. It was a calm and simple structure. We learned that in 2016 Mantua had been a City of Culture



Mantua City

and was a UNESCO World Heritage Site on account of the old town having been a significant centre of Renaissance art and humanism. We had a short walking tour and then, in free time, some of us sought the frescoes hidden in a pizza restaurant built into the older palace walls.

After lunch some of our party went on one of the optional visits to the Palazzo Ducale occupied by the Gonzago family from 1328-1707. The first interesting feature of this was the “horse staircase” on a wide gently sloping incline to allow access to horsemen. We made our way to the Camera degli Sposi or Wedding Room which was decorated by frescoes by Mantegna. This was a very special place, decorated to celebrate the news that a son of the Gonzaga family had been elected to cardinal. The people depicted were very lifelike in fine garments and the scenery and animals were very beautiful. The ceiling contained a cupola which was, in fact, a *trompe l’oeil* as it was only the thickness of a cigarette packet. The plasterwork too was created by paint effects. From here we explored some of the palace’s other treasures including tapestries based on designs by Raphael.

On Wednesday we headed for **Vicenza** where there was an optional walking tour which included the architect Andrea Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico. This is Europe’s oldest surviving indoor theatre designed in

1579. With an abiding passion for theatre, this was the highlight of the trip for me. Palladio was deeply influenced by classical architecture and based his theatre on the circular designs of Greek theatre but adapted his design to an elliptical shape to fit the constraints of the old prison in which it was to be housed. Ingenious!! The *scaenae frons* or back screen across the stage appeared to be of marble but was in fact a series of statues constructed of wood and stucco depicting the labours of Hercules. In addition, the original scenery designed by Scamozzi for the first production of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* could be seen through the arches. This is probably the oldest stage set still in existence and depicted vividly by means of *trompe l'oeil* a series of streets and houses receding into the distance. They looked remarkably like those of Vicenza rather than ancient Thebes but evidently re-imagined for a renaissance audience. I was fascinated by the lifesize reproductions of the original costume designs for *Oedipus Rex* displayed at the entrance to the auditorium, for here were the protagonists of Ancient Greece dressed in the costume of the renaissance. This is the city where Palladio lived, and his presence is to be felt everywhere in the city.

Before lunch we headed off to the hill town of **Asolo**, much loved by the poet Robert Browning. The explorer Freya Stark and actress Eleanora Duse also



Asolo Town



Villa Barbaro at Maser

lived here. It commands beautiful views of the surrounding plains and is a charming town.

Our final visit of the day was to the Villa Barbaro at **Maser**, designed by Palladio and decorated with stunning frescoes by Veronese. We amused ourselves by putting on the oversize slippers necessary to protect the original flooring. The countryside around here was beautiful and the windows from the villa afforded ample opportunity to appreciate the vistas. This was the finest of the villas we visited and relaxed us all for the return journey.

Just one visit was on the itinerary for Thursday – to the walled town of **Ferrara** with its imposing 14th- century castle. The town had suffered extensive damage in the recent earthquake and cracks were clearly visible in the castle walls. The 12th-century cathedral was under scaffolding and covers so it was not possible to view its impressive façade. As we approached the entrance I did notice a plaque on an adjacent house denoting that Nicolas Copernicus, the astronomer, had lived there. This was another reminder of how this region was a centre of learning as well as art. We had a short walking tour of some older parts of the city where the ghetto had been, a testament to the existence of Jewish communities in this region for

centuries. Dominating the piazza in front of the castle was an imposing statue of Savonarola, the scourge of the Medicis, who was born here.

And finally, it was time to check out of our very comfortable hotel and head off for our last visit, to **Verona**. There is a new coach park just outside the town with large set pieces from recent opera productions at the Roman Arena – a novel addition and probably quite unique. We made our way to the Arena and were directed to the square housing “Juliet’s Balcony”. However, the crush of tourists made it less inspiring than the sights we had already seen. After lunch in a restaurant overlooking the arena we headed to Milan Bergamo airport for our return.

And so our visit came to an end. My mind was full of beautiful images, whether of frescoes, statues, architecture, landscape or those elegant piazzas. The Italian spirit seems to celebrate beauty and, as Keats said, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

Pamela Williams
Photographs by Helen Bristow



A view of Verona

Travel Group Plans for 2018:

The following are dates for the planned 2018 holidays with the dates when application forms will be available.

The Beautiful Lake District - 30.4.18 - 4.5.18: forms 20.9.17 - 11.10.17

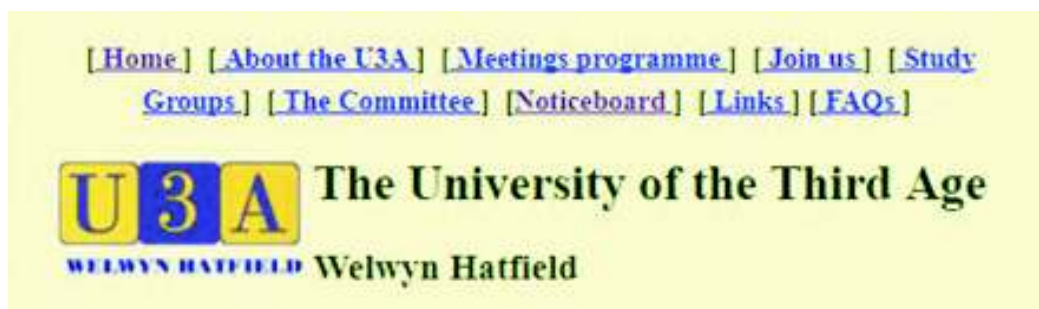
The Historic Houses and Heritage of Suffolk - 15.7.18 - 19.7.18
forms 1.11.17 - 22.11.17

The History and Heritage of Porto Portugal - 5.9.18 - 10.9.18:
forms 3.1.18 - 24.1.18

We hope you will find these interesting enough to join us.

Jean, Kathy and Tony

Using the Welwyn-Hatfield U3A website



To access the U3A website you need:-

1. A connection to the Internet;
2. A piece of software called an Internet Browser (e.g. “Internet Explorer”, “Firefox”, “Safari”, “Chrome”, “Opera”);
3. A computer (the term may include an iPad, Tablet, or possibly even a smart telephone).

You then need to find the website. You can do this in several ways, but I suggest that you put the address of the website (called a “URL” in computer-speak) into your browser. The URL is:

<http://www.u3awelhat.org.uk>

(Note – computers are extremely “picky”, so you must get it right!)
If you do this, and press the Enter (or Return) key, you’ll next see

the “Home Page” of our website, which is something akin to the contents page of a book.

On the Home page you’ll see some text in square brackets along the top, in blue and underlined, a logo, a main heading, and (probably) a picture of members of the U3A taking part in some activity.

There is next a section titled “Stop Press”. The text here is in red, and comprises messages that people may need to know about at short notice. They change quite often, so check on this frequently.

One of the most powerful features of the World Wide Web is that documents can have “hotlinks” (also called “hyperlinks”) that allow you, by clicking in the right part of a document, to jump straight into another document. The next part of the home page has a list of these hotlinks, plus an explanation of what you get if you click on the relevant hotlink. The hotlink is indicated by blue underlined text – and you’ll also find that if you move the pointer (on your screen) over the hotlink, the arrow will change into a pointing finger.

Just below the hotlinks list is another hotlink, to past copies of the newsletter – in full colour – and an index to all issues.

Now – back to the text in square brackets at the top of the home page. These are also hotlinks, and duplicate the hotlinks at the bottom part of the home page. More importantly, these hotlinks appear at the top of nearly every page on the website, which means that you can rapidly jump from one page to another while on the website.

The main other sections are:

1. *About the U3A* (this is mainly for prospective members)
2. *Meetings programme*. This has a list of the general meetings for this term (and sometimes the next term). You’ll often see an underlined “more” against the description of a talk – if you click on this, you can get more details about the talk and/or speaker.
3. *Join Us* – this is a membership form for new members.
4. *Study Groups* – this is a list of our study groups, with contact details. Any further information that has been sent to the webmaster will probably also be there. There’s also a lot more information – for example an overview of when all the groups meet, plus a list of outings.
5. *The Committee* – this is a list of all the members of the committee, showing names, photographs, contact information, and what each one does.

6. *Noticeboard* – the committee are sometimes sent information that, while not being strictly U3A business, might nonetheless be of interest to members. You'll find such information here. It's worth having a look at it from time to time. There's also a "Give & Take" section where members can list items that they have and don't want, and also items that they'd like to have.

7. *Links* – this has links to other websites that members might find of use, plus various items of administrative information.

While using the website, you cannot damage it or your computer – so have a go!

Roger Swaine

The sixteenth in our series of profiles of distinguished Welwyn Hatfield U3A members features ...

David Banks

David was born in Enfield in 1925, was raised there, and at the age of eleven went to Tottenham Polytechnic building school as an apprentice plumber. Leaving aged fourteen, he served his apprenticeship at Grants of London Plumbing Company. During World War II this company built 21 Maunsell forts which were sunk in Herne Bay to assemble convoys. David was by then working on the plumbing of research laboratories: penicillin plants, oil refineries and a factory making acetate silk for parachutes. This was priority work during the war, and David was excused war service as being in a reserved occupation.



Still living in Enfield, David was on its Youth Hostel committee, and there met Doris, whom he married five years later. He came to work at ICI in Welwyn Garden City, and in 1952 the couple moved into a newly-built house in Carve Ley as first occupiers – David has

remained there ever since.

They enjoyed camping holidays, when David would take over the cooking – and became a keen cook. His kitchen skills extended when Doris was ill before one of their two daughters' birthdays, and unable to bake her birthday cake: David took the task on. He produced a magnificent cake: the first of many, as it turned out, as he became enthusiastically engaged in provision of appropriately designed cakes, some tiered, richly decorated, even with icing sculpture, for many special occasions – weddings and christenings as his family grew and friends came to know of his proficiency.

After 29 years at ICI, David had become Site Services Supervisor, responsible for construction and maintenance. "I enjoyed every minute of my working life," he says. ICI then moved north to Wilton, closing the WGC site, and David took early retirement. Doris became seriously ill in 1996, and David served as her carer for eight years. Her death in 2004 ended 55 years of happy marriage.

David then did much travelling, driving right across Canada with Bill Hinkley, a fellow carer/widower, photographer and car driver. He became a member of U3A in 2013, eagerly attending the Wednesday talks, and joining the Photography group – photography being another of his skills/enthusiasms. He takes samples of his cakes to the Photography group meetings for the happy members, and provides cakes for our U3A parties – particularly recognizing our 30th anniversary with cakes iced with our logo, as shown on the front page of our Spring 2017 newsletter, and on page 3 in the report of our 30th-anniversary garden party.



David does this from a feeling of gratitude to U3A. He "gets a great deal of pleasure from the lectures" and, as a nonagenarian, he is an Honorary Member, paying no subscription. He "feels he must put something back", so, in lieu of paying subscriptions, he makes us splendid cakes!

Hazel Bell

Autumn Term 2017 — Wednesday Meetings

Doors open at 9.45; tea and coffee are served from 10.00 to 10.30 a.m. The meeting starts at 10.30 a.m. with notices, followed by the talk. Entry is free: tea or coffee at 20p.

SEPTEMBER

13, Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Sharon Marusic: ‘Save a Life – Air Ambulance’

The aim of Air Ambulance is to save lives, reduce or prevent disability or suffering from critical illness and injury, by delivering a first-class pre-hospital emergency medical service.

20, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Carole Grove: ‘Help for Heroes’

Carole is the East of England Fundraising Manager. She became involved as her father was in the Royal Air Force. We will hear about the history of the charity, the work they do, how the money is spent, fundraising and volunteering.

27, WGC

Mike Neighbour: ‘Paying the Price: Reading and Hatfield Turnpike’

Mike was born and lived more than half his life in London before ‘foolishly moving to Watford!’. His teaching career was mainly in Hertfordshire and he has written two books. After retirement he continues his interest in history with local projects. We will hear about this unusually long turnpike road which affected everyone living nearby, who either paid the toll or ... all will be revealed on the day.

OCTOBER

4, Hatfield

Martin Sirot-Smith: ‘Sulgrave Manor and the Washington Family’

Sulgrave Manor, near Banbury, Oxfordshire, was built in the mid-1500s by Lawrence Washington, George Washington’s five times great-grandfather. He lived there with his wife and eleven

children. It has a Great Hall and Tudor features, with a North Wing added in 1700 containing the Oak Parlour and Great Kitchen. When first opened to the public in the 1920s the garden was redesigned and remains largely unaltered since that time.

11, WGC

Dick Breeze: 'The Great Cannabis Con'

With experience as a pharmacist and then forty years experience as a hospital consultant physician before retiring, Dr Breeze has a detailed knowledge of the history, politics and medical implications of cannabis. He is concerned that the full potential of this plant in medicine, as well as in other areas, is being denied because of political and commercial interests.

18, Hatfield

Graham Laurie: 'Roald Dahl's War'

Graham, a historian and former RAF pilot, will tell us about the writer's life in the RAF during the Second World War and his subsequent rise to literary stardom.

25, WGC

Dick Smith: 'Life and Times of a Town Crier'

After over forty years as Town Crier in Beaconsfield, and having lived in the area all his life, Dick is an expert on the local area and its history. He has even won awards for Town Crying.

NOVEMBER

1, Hatfield

Martin Lloyd: 'The Story of Passports'

Martin is well established as a writer of history, travel, humour and fiction. He spent many years working with passports and researching the history of the passport.

8, WGC

Richard Thomas : 'The Gunpowder Plot'

We look at the involvement of Catesby, Percy and Guido Fawkes and the other conspirators in the 'Powder Treason', examine the events of November 1605, and hear of the subsequent trials and executions.

15, Hatfield

Christine Roge-Cope: 'Northaw During World War One'

Northaw is a village near Potters Bar which is well-wooded, especially in the north, where the Great Wood covers many acres. South of the village was once open common, which formed part of Enfield Chase, but the land is now enclosed.

22, WGC

Art and Photography Exhibition with demonstrations

29, Hatfield

Steve Roberts: 'Protecting Yourself Against Fraud and Scams'

Scams can arrive by post, phone call, text message, email or someone visiting your home. We will hear about some of the current prevalent scams, what action to take to prevent crime and learn how to safeguard our identity. Steve is a former Metropolitan Detective Inspector and during his thirty-year career has served on some of the specialist investigation units based at New Scotland Yard. Since retiring he has worked as a civilian trainer and as a private investigator.

DECEMBER

6, WGC

CHRISTMAS PARTY: Quiz at 10.30 am

Please bring finger food; drinks provided

13 CHRISTMAS LUNCH at Homestead Court Hotel

