



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
www.u3awelhat.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1019563

NEWSLETTER Autumn 2018 Issue 59

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



Tony Tutton mastering the quiz at the Garden Party held at Breaks Manor

Garden party 2018

On the last Wednesday of the summer term we held our annual garden party as usual in the grounds of Breaks Manor, at 2pm. The management had even planted some roses around the lawn for us! Sixty or so members came along with delicious titbits. There was plenty of wine, spritzers and fruit juice available. *(Continued on page 3)*

J

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U3A Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

Published three times yearly, in Spring, Summer and Autumn.

Edited by Hazel K. Bell

Available on the Website, in full colour

plus cumulative index to issues 1-58

at www.u3awelhat.org.uk

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

Copydate for the Spring 2019 issue is 16 December 2018.
Send copy and photographs (as jpgs) to hkb@aidanbell.com

Jenny Roden, who'd organised the glasses and the beverages, even supplied us with ice to cool them down. This was most acceptable and enjoyed by all.

After about an hour of chatting in the lovely sunshine or shade we went in to choose our food. I have to say there was a wonderful array, from dainty sandwiches to healthy dips to crispy bits and savoury profiteroles. What a choice! As for dessert there was a tempting variety too – we were really spoiled.

Tony Tutton had been persuaded to do another 30-question quiz. It was very good indeed even though there was no arguing with the question-master!! Eileen Bannister did a 'name the Doll' competition. There were a hundred names on a sheet and for £1 you could pick a name. Not all of the names were sold so it remains a

mystery until next term when Eileen hopes to sell the rest. Then Eileen will open the envelope with the name in and one of our members will win the big bottle of Prosecco! All proceeds will go to Isobel Hospice.

The afternoon passed quickly with everyone in good humour and chatting away. Thanks to all those people who came along and supplied food, special thanks to Jenny, Tony and Eileen and also to Jill and John McKinnon for their bar work!



Ann Davies

Photos by Peter Fox

Summer rocks with the Beaucrees!

On 9 June, for the third time (so far!) Tony Tutton and his group The Beaucrees entertained 130 or so Welwyn-Hatfield U3A members. We had tried Breaks Manor as a venue but for various reasons we prefer the Ludwick Centre – so it's just as well that Tony has already booked it for 15 December so Winter will rock as well!

The atmosphere was once again joyful – happy and energetic. Many people just had to get up and dance for as long as various joints and feet would allow – and also join in with the lyrics, remembered happily from those distant days of our youth! The band really do manage to tap in to our collective memories. What an evening! What great fun!

The Beaucrees had prepared some new numbers for us so we were very spoiled. Tony sang wonderfully, and also showed us his versatility by playing the drums for one of the numbers. After a hectic first hour we enjoyed a welcome break for fish and chips before tackling the second half, fully refreshed and ready to continue.



I have to admit that I'm running out of adequate adjectives for this event. It really is, as far as I'm concerned, a fantastic highlight of our year! We are so very fortunate in having such a talent in our membership.

Tony, you're concerned that our interest in this shindig will wane: please be assured that we will not stop wanting to hear those iconic numbers again and again and again ... So thank you for giving us the chance to relive some magic moments!

Ann Davies

Photo by Peter Fox

Stop! Think! Don't bin it – does Marion Cleveland want it?

Frequently over the last year or so one of the Wednesday notices has been a request for various 'things' to be given to Marion Cleveland. Do you ever wonder what happens to the stuff you donate? Well here's an explanation.

It began with an appeal for wool, for Marion to pass to a group of ladies in Liverpool who knit for charity – AIDCONVOY. Wel-Hat U3A members provided wool – and also took to their needles, producing The “Oxfam Jumpers”. More than 600 of these were knitted by our members and their friends and relatives.

One of our members has used some of the donated wool which wasn't in suitable colours for the jumpers to knit “beanie hats” for our local homeless.



Marion Cleveland

As this work has come to the attention of various people, other requests for donations or knitting have come in from many sources, and Marion became what she describes as a go-between for various charities and Wel-Hat U3A. These



Small jumpers knitted by U3A members for Oxfam

charities include the premature baby unit at Whiston Hospital, who requested very small hats for the unit, and Oldham General Hospital, who requested fiddle muffs for the Alzheimers unit and for the Children's Ward. All of these go home with the patient.

Our members provide knitted and crocheted blankets that have gone to Syria, Africa and Thailand as well as the homeless in this country. Monica Fox makes "fiddleblankets" for Hospital patients with Alzheimers, and has made some beautiful creations. She always welcomes any suitable attachments to be sewn onto these.

There was a great response to the request for scarves which were needed by the charity Cancer Hair Care, which is based in Old Stevenage. Patients undergoing treatment for cancer with subsequent hair loss are offered advice and have beauty treatments specific to their needs. The scarves are used to make individual head coverings. This help is given to patients from The Lister, Royal Marsden and the Teenage Cancer Trust at UCLH. Self-referral is also possible.



Hats for premature babies

The WI in Portsmouth were saving plastic milk-bottle tops (each worth 1p!) to help provide a specialist wheelchair for a local disabled youngster. There was an amazing response to this! Six large black sackfuls were taken to Portsmouth for this appeal.

Subsequently Marion organised collection of the bottle tops for the Bedfordshire Air Ambulance, and once again had an amazing response. Lastly, she collected used stamps which go to the Isabel Hospice as a fund raiser for them.

Marion writes – "I want to send a Big Thank You to all our members who have responded with support to my charitable requests. I always welcome your contributions and can't thank you enough for your help with all of the above. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!"



A fiddle-blanket for an Alzheimers patient - "Under the Sea". *Photo by Peter Fox*

Marion received this letter of thanks from Liverpool Aid Convoy::

We send the beautiful knitted and crocheted items on to our various contacts, either to local hospitals, Women's Refuge, Homeless centre in Liverpool. Regular consignments are conveyed to Syria, Africa and Thailand – wherever we learn of safe means of delivery. New destinations “pop up” when we hear of Church members going abroad. No one goes with space in their suitcase!

AIDCONVOY is an organisation which was set up for regular despatch to Syria. You can follow their progress on their website.

Once again thank you for your lovely handiwork. Be assured it will all reach a much needed recipient.

Yours sincerely,

Vi Curl

Holding Back the Years

*In October 2017 Gary Watson, a BBC producer, asked whether our U3A could offer a volunteer to be featured in a new series, "Holding Back the Years", exploring different aspects of the lifestyles of elderly people and the ageing process, in a programme focussing on the possible loss of confidence / being more apprehensive as a driver as one gets older. **Myrtle Pit-Keathly** became our representative, agreeing to be filmed while driving. Her performance was shown on BBC1 on the 14th of March. She recounts her experience below.*

It was a beautiful early November morning when I arrived at Stanborough Lakes to meet Matt, the director and Johnny, the producer, both of whom were also cameramen; and Fiona Phillips, who was the interviewer. We were shortly joined by Fred, aged 90, who arrived in a large saloon, and later by Dave in his big red truck. We were asked to drive our vehicles to the other car park, then drive them back over the bridge in convoy, then to line them up and "stand by your cars". So there we were, cars in line and we three in place: the Three Musketeers, or maybe the Three Stooges! We were interviewed by Fiona who wanted to know if we had any age-related problems in our driving; we were filmed and re-filmed whilst we talked.



**Myrtle
at the
wheel**

***Photo by
Peter Fox***

From there we drove over to Albany Place in Welwyn Garden City to the offices of “IAM Road Smart” which is the Institute of Advanced Motorists. Here we walked in – twice, then went back to outside the entrance to officially meet Fiona – three times; the angle of the cameras has to be exactly correct! When we were finally settled Maxine, an instructor and examiner of the Institute, gave us a talk on what to be especially aware of as we drove, and made us realize that with age our reactions may not be as sharp as formerly etc. This was followed by a video showing various examples.

After lunch (M&S sandwiches and endless cups of coffee), Matt and Johnny, who both had schedules which they ticked as we went along, checked the next item. It was that one of us three would be taken by Maxine on a test drive. It would be a random selection: straws would be drawn and whoever got the short straw would be the victim. Then Matt said “We really would like you to drive, Myrtle”. So, I obligingly did. Then came the driving test. My one concern was what would happen if I failed to read the number plate of a distant car. which was the first test – but it was quite easy – we did it twice!

We drove around the area for an hour with a camera attached to the windscreen which filmed and recorded our speech. By the time we got to Albany Place it was about 3.30pm and I was beginning to feel tired and hoped that was it; I felt I’d done my bit. Maxine went through her comments on my driving, asked me what I thought and agreed with my views. She felt I was safe to be let loose on the road – so that was OK.

By this time home seemed a very good idea but no, Matt suddenly said: “Myrtle, could we go back to Stanborough?”

Me: – “No.”

Matt – “I just want to film you from the front.”

Me: – “I’m not driving back to Stanborough.”

Matt – “Oh. OK. We’ll drive round the complex.”

And we did.

Matt sat in the open boot, cross-legged, facing back, holding the camera, and the car drove round the complex with me following in my car. Once that was over I just said “Can I go now?” I got a big hug and kiss from Matt and I came home. I was so tired; it was 4.15pm.

It had been an interesting and enjoyable day, everyone I had met was delightful. A once-in-a-lifetime experience!

Myrtle Pit-Keathly

Notes from the Chair

Notes from a Vice Chair

From 16 May to the Garden Party on 12 July I stepped into Suzanne's shoes by giving out various notices, introducing speakers on varying topics, and trying to maintain order!

We again had an extremely interesting selection of speakers ranging from medicinal poisons through folk music to bagels and bacon. All these talks were fascinating and always told you something you didn't know or reminded you of something you once knew but had forgotten. The speakers team do a great job finding such a treasure trove of resources; many thanks are due to them. We are, after all, extremely lucky to have a weekly meeting with upwards of 150 people attending most weeks. The Summer Supper Dance was great and the Garden Party went well on the final meeting of the term despite the early possibility of poor weather.



Ann Davies

As we always need more people to lend a hand on Wednesday mornings we experimented by sending round a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help with the setting up of our meetings and with welcoming new members. Thanks to all the people who showed interest we have been able to add people to the teams. There is always room for more help so we might try again next term. After all, the more helpers there are, the more the tasks can be shared out.

The Travel group had a really good trip to Suffolk just after the end of term. Outings and visits are continuing all summer, as are some of the groups' meetings, so there's never a need to be bored. Enjoy your break and enjoy the weather even if it has been extreme at times!

See you on 12 September just after the Travel group return from their next holiday in Portugal.

Ann Davies

Notes from an errant Chair

Two months in Tasmania for my husband John and me have flown by, while the usual hive of activity has continued in Welwyn Hatfield U3A, by the sounds of it.

The Wednesday meetings continue to captivate, obviously. ‘The man who flew Concorde’, was exceptional as so many have mentioned it. Sounds like the Summer Dance was a hit, well done Tony and The Beaucrees, lucky that the glorious summer weather continued for the Garden Party.

My very grateful thanks to Ann Davies who has ‘chaired’ the Wednesday meetings, extremely efficiently by what I’ve heard, during my absence. It was good to go away knowing she was going to be standing in for me. Sounds as though her idea to encourage more volunteers on Wednesday mornings has been successful; many thanks to those of you who have signed up, many hands and all that.



Suzanne outside the Cygnet U3A venue – with coffee, needed to keep warm

While we were in Tasmania we went along to meetings of Cygnet U3A. Coincidentally their weekly talks also happen on Wednesday mornings. I found their website and emailed their Membership Sec, June. We received a very welcoming reply and went along eagerly but feeling rather strange being ‘visitors’. We arrived early to make sure we had a chance to find the place; they were still setting up chairs and the sound system in the Huon Valley Christian Centre where they meet, and a small portable heater was being moved into place. Lyn, who had phoned us beforehand, introduced herself and welcomed us, despite meanwhile ticking in arrivals, sorting badges, dealing with members queries – such is the lot of a U3A Committee Member!

Everyone we met was so welcoming! At our first Wednesday meeting, a notice was given out about a visiting couple who would like a lift, if anyone could offer – and we realised that was for us! Fortunately we had managed to borrow a car; however, Glenis, who like us travelled from Huonville, spoke with us about lifts. We broke for coffee halfway through and chatted with many friendly, welcoming people.



Notices before the Cygnet U3A meeting starts

Our first talk was from Alison Alexander, who has written on many aspects of Tasmanian history, on *The Governor's Ladies*: interesting stuff, we subsequently got one of her books from the local library to read more. Our next meeting was entitled *Creativity and Neuropsychology*; those who wanted to take part in quick exercises to demonstrate how we all have such different ideas and approaches – none right or wrong, just different. We found out why our relationship to creativity may change throughout our lives, and the benefits of creativity and creative thinking in later life. Aboriginal Archaeology in the Cygnet area was a fascinating talk: we certainly didn't know that there were seven different Aboriginal tribes just in Tasmania, all with their own language. Only those around Cygnet created a bark 'canoe', which was paddled standing up using a long stick, not an oar. A former ABC foreign correspondent created a lively discussion following a viewing of his documentary on the situation in Iraq. We also attended the Music & Film study group on Fridays, again fascinating sessions and interesting discussions ranging from Burt Bacharach, Paul Simon's *Gracelands* to Puccini and Wagner.

It was most interesting to visit another U3A group on the other side of the world and find how similarly organised it is to ours. Cygnet proudly boasts on its Welcome to Cygnet sign as you enter the town, 'First European Settlement 1834'. It is a beautiful place with a population of around 1500. They have a membership of a hundred or so, and Wednesday meetings regularly had 25 to 30 people attending — so a lively, interesting and interested group of people, just like Welwyn Hatfield! Unlike our 65 study groups they have just eight, most meeting weekly. As in Welwyn Hatfield, the Wednesday speakers were of a high calibre. Cygnet U3A have just one exceptional 'speaker finder' whereas we're fortunate to have a team beavering away on our behalf.

We really enjoyed our Cygnet U3A meetings and feel we have already made some friendships that we can pick up next time we're out there.

What a wonderful international organisation U3A is !

Suzanne Brown

Photos by John Brown

Group News

Book Club (2)

The Other Side Of You

About four years ago, we enjoyed reading *Miss Garnett's Angel*, Salley Vickers' first novel. So much, in fact, that we went to Venice to look for the paintings of Tobias and the Angel, featured in the book. We came to her fourth novel, *The Other Side of You*, written in 2006, with high expectations. We were not disappointed. It's an intricate fusion of psychology, art and the remedial power of storytelling.

Set partly in Italy, it was inspired by Caravaggio's painting, *The Supper at Emmaus*. It tells the story of a psychiatrist, David McBride, and his intense relationship with one of his patients, Elizabeth Cruikshank, who has attempted suicide and is unable to talk about it. Novelists and psychotherapists (Vickers is both) have a good deal in common. Both scan human behaviour for symptoms of hidden meanings and, as this doctor and patient make their way through a highly improbable seven-hour session, McBride struggles to find a way to connect with her. It is when he mentions a Caravaggio painting in the National Gallery that her defences come down and she's able to tell him her story. But it's not a one-way street – the session is cathartic for them both, as McBride becomes aware of the memories he, the therapist, has suppressed for so long following the death of his brother.

This remarkable book provided very rich material for discussion and we uncovered more meaning as we went along. Rather like what happens in a therapy session, in fact! Even in the last few minutes, we made sense of a cat that sits on a wall, then disappears. (I don't want to break the Spoiler Code, but think Schrödinger) One group member said she felt it was a book for the cognoscenti – I'm not sure I agree with that. It can actually be read on many levels, but the deeper you go, the more interesting and satisfying it becomes. We all enjoyed this book, despite the fact that, surprisingly, one or two of us didn't actually like many of the characters.

Highly recommended

Carol Bush

Exploring London (3)

Our first outing in the summer term was in June to **St Paul's Cathedral**. From Moorgate, we walked to the Guildhall and had a brief time in the impressive Art Gallery and excavated Roman Amphitheatre underneath. After a quick coffee, in the St Lawrence Jewry Church opposite, we made our way to One New Change a large shopping centre in Cheapside, which has a rooftop terrace affording wonderful views of St Paul's and the city skyline.

Our tour was led by an extremely knowledgeable guide and lasted for over two hours. St Paul's is a stunning building and impossible to do full justice to in the time we had. We were shown around the ground floor and the various chapels, seeing the largest monument - a statue of the Duke of Wellington astride his horse; the church organ, which is the third largest in the country; then down into the crypt, where the tomb of Admiral Lord Nelson and several past military leaders lay in splendour, together with several monuments to benefactors and other famous people.



The group on the rooftop terrace overlooking St Paul's

After the tour finished, we were shown some of the famous bells of St Paul's which were being removed for refurbishment. Some of us then returned for Evensong which is performed by the choir and held under the Great Dome with its wonderful acoustics.

On a very warm day in July we went to **The Royal Hospital Chelsea**. Travelling to Sloane Square we enjoyed a coffee break in the Royal Court Theatre next to the station, which has a refreshment area large enough to accommodate our group of 28.

After a ten-minute stroll to Royal Hospital Road, we entered the gates of another of Sir Christopher Wren's masterpieces. The grounds cover some 66 acres; the Hospital is home to 300 residents, has several historical buildings, plus a fully equipped hospital known as "The Margaret Thatcher Infirmary".

After a short video on the history of the complex, we were given an extensive guided tour by Albert, one of the residents resplendent in his scarlet coat (which must have been a trifle warm!). We learned that the hospital maintains a military-based culture which puts a premium on comradeship, and that women had only been admitted since 2009 and now comprise 27 of the 300 residents. Whilst in the grounds the residents are required to wear "The Blues" uniform, but when outside, the scarlet coat. We were shown the "bunks" where they each now have an en-suite room; the Great Hall where the communal meals are taken; the chapel; museum; the extensive gardens; and where the pensioners take part in ceremonial parades, the Central Court, with a statue of King Charles II who founded the hospital in 1682. We also saw the South Gardens where the Chelsea Flower Show is held every year. As usual we finished up in the gift shop.

Some of us then visited the Army museum next door, which houses extensive displays of military events and equipment and offers free entry. Another full and fun day.

Sue McLellen & Tony Dodd

Photography

Another good season, with an average of eighteen in attendance each time. Projects and sessions covered, once again, a variety of subjects. We talked Landscapes and Colour, Buildings and Straightening, Portraits and Cropping, Flowers and Selections.



*Left to right: Mike Nicholas, Stephen Hodges and John London at a group meeting.
Photograph by Viv Perry*

A most enjoyable session was at our venue with various arrays of flowers and plants to photograph, with the weather being, for once, amazing – which helped with shadows and highlights (a photographer’s experience!).

Apart from showing photographs in the second half of each meeting we also discussed the merits of printers and photographic papers.

The Easter Treasure Hunt results (photographs) brought forth the usual hilarious critiques and, along with a successful exhibition in March, I feel we have managed another free and easy term.

My thanks go to all the members who attend regularly and to Peter, Mike and Alan for their participation. Also, many thanks to Viv, our Tea maker.

Eileen Pegrum

Strollers

The Strollers met in a pub at Green Tye on 17 July, and made a circular walk of about 3.5 miles. The route passed by Henry Moore’s house, gardens and studio, so the group were able to view a number of the sculptures. On return to the pub – a well-earned, convivial lunch!
(*Photograph by Tony Tutton*)



Travel

THE BEAUTIFUL LAKE DISTRICT

*“One impulse from a vernal wood May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good, Than all the sages can.” – Wordsworth.*

It had been a long, cold, wet winter and the cold and rain was not forecast to abate for our Spring holiday. But we did see plenty of sunshine, although it was quite cold and yes, there were hosts of daffodils; the daffodils coming later in the Lake District, and we were fortunate to avoid much rain. Once again we had a packed and varied itinerary but, as well as the itinerary, we had the pleasure of the most marvellous scenery the Lake District has to offer viewed from our coach seats and occasional stops. Lakes, mountains, valleys and gardens provided a marvellous restorative to the greyness of winter.

Day 1 (30 April): En route to our destination we visited Dunham Massey with its extensive deer park and elegant Georgian Mansion. We stopped here for lunch and had plenty of time to explore the house,

its treasures and the gardens – this was an inspiring start to our tour. We then moved on to our destination, the Damson Dene Hotel at Crosthwaite. This had a warm, welcoming entrance hall and lounge with an inglenook fireplace; it was an ideal location for our tour.

Day 2 (1 May): Our first morning we set off to visit the **Ravenglass and Eskdale narrow gauge steam railway**, known as “La’al Ratty” by the locals. This runs from the coastal village of Ravenglass through two of the Lakeland’s most picturesque valleys on its seven-mile journey to Dalegarth. The hardest of us chose to sit in uncovered carriages, while the remainder chose the warmer option. On our way to pick up the train we passed Black Combe Rock, a geological feature captured by Wordsworth in a poem of the same name.

Continuing the Wordsworth theme, we visited his birthplace and childhood home at Cockermouth. The interior downstairs rooms aimed at an authentic recreation of the times and lifestyle of the family. In the garden there was an inscription on a flagstone from one of his poems and in a small summer house was a device which played extracts of some of his shorter poems.



Inside the house we climbed the stairs to the bedrooms; one was equipped as a child's room. On the wall was projected a modern animation which was an interpretation of the extract from Wordsworth's "The Prelude" known as "The Boat Stealing Episode" which deals with the development of conscience in the young child .

Day 3 (2 May): This morning we set off for **Holker Hall**, a grand Victorian mansion, lavishly furnished and with stunning gardens, just a short distance from Morecambe Bay. Of special interest were the Neptune Cascade, the Sunken Garden, the Pagan Grove and the 400 year old Great Holker Lime Tree. The Courtyard Café was a picturesque place for lunch. In the afternoon we took another rail journey on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Steam Railway, through the beautiful Levan Valley. From here we joined a one-way short cruise to Bowness-on-Windermere near our destination. It was wonderful to actually be on the Lakes at last. It was quite cold but there was some sunshine and the views we had of Windermere and its shores were splendid. This was a very full day of much variety.



Day 4 (3 May): We were off to the water again for a longer cruise on **Ullswater**, sailing from Pooley Bridge down to Glenridding. This was a marvellously relaxing cruise with stunning views of the lake and shore and with another fine day. In terms of imbibing the spirit of the Lake District this would have to be the highlight. After our cruise we headed to Kendal, the southern gateway to the Lake District, to explore and have lunch. In the afternoon we visited **Sizergh Castle** and Gardens, a medieval house extended in Elizabethan times and surrounded by beautiful grounds. The Castle housed an impressive collection of Elizabethan carved furniture. There is no doubt that the beauty and formality of some of the gardens we visited at National Trust properties perfectly complemented the rugged and wilder scenery in the wider Lake District. It also meant that our itinerary was very well balanced.

Day 5 (4 May): All too soon it was time to check out of our hotel; but en route we had a brief photo stop at Kirkstone Pass – a high point in the area – and then a visit to Quarry Bank Mill and Styal Estate near Wilmslow. This is one of Britain's greatest industrial heritage sites and afforded us the opportunity to experience the different worlds of owner and worker. Initially we were conducted into the schoolroom and, by means of a simulation and role play, introduced to the lives of





the apprentices. Later we could visit the mill owner's "cottage", where once again there were beautiful gardens and landscape to appreciate. And thence to our return.

Once again thanks are due to our organisers: Jean, Kathy and Tony. Behind the scenes they are responsible for seeing that everything runs smoothly – and the fact that it does is due to their effectiveness and consideration as leaders. We arrived home a little tired, but definitely invigorated by the landscape and the company!

Pamela Williams

Photos by Helen Bristow

The following holidays have been organised for 2019:

The Delights of Cantabria and Green Spain – six days from 11-16 May. Applications available from 12 September

The Historic Houses and Heritage of Shropshire and Ironbridge – five days from 8-12 September. Applications available from 9 January

To view these trips: www.tailored-travel.co.uk, click on View Your Tour and quote welu191 and welu192

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

Jean Mackie

Jean Mackie was born in Slough, and attended the Technical High School there, then attained an external London degree in Physics and Chemistry from the Central London Poly. She capped this with a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education at Southampton University, and set out on a career in Education that culminated in inspection, consultation, management and much travel.



This began with the teaching of physics at a succession of schools. In 1975 Jean came to teach at Dame Alice Owens School in Potters Bar – the first school where she taught in Hertfordshire, subsequently becoming an Advisory Science Teacher.

At a Hemel Hempstead school she met fellow teacher, future husband, Clive Parsons. They bought a house in Panshanger in 1986, and moved to their present home in WGC two years later.

In 1989 Jean became General Advisor in Barking and Dagenham, with specific responsibility for science. She moved to Enfield in 1996, becoming Chief Adviser in 2000. By 2002 she was an independent Educational Consultant for Training and Management, and an Ofsted Inspector for Primary and Secondary schools.

After thirty-five years of teaching and advisory work, in 2006 Jean, together with Clive, joined the Cambridge Education Project to inspect 1,500 schools in New York. They went there in 2006, and did this work for five years, also visiting schools in Connecticut, Los Angeles, North Carolina, Washington and Texas. By 2011, Jean says, she “couldn’t face another airport”, and retired, aged 62.

Back at home, Jean was particularly keen to find walking groups, a favourite occupation. She googled for these, and happened on the

WelHat U3A website. Liking what she saw, she joined in 2012, attended all Wednesday morning meetings, and joined the Book Group, London History Group and Wildlife Watch.

With her background in management, Jean took up the U3A Committee's constant offer to let interested members observe Committee meetings. At the first, she let it be known that she could work a projector – and so undertook management of this at the Wednesday meetings for the next six years. She joined the Committee and, with Ann Davies, served as Groups Coordinator from 2014-16. Meanwhile Jean was also Vice-Chairman to Jack Wood's Chairman. Jack said of her, in his 2015 report to the AGM:

“I truly could not manage without her; not only does that lady help to coordinate the Groups, but she looks after and prepares the magic lantern thing that gives us all our pictures on Wednesdays, as well as being my Vice-Chairperson, and I thank her for the times she has stood in for me, both on Wednesdays and at outside events.”

Then, succeeding Jack as Chair, in office from 2016-18, Jean used her training and management skills to render our U3A a properly structured organisation, setting up procedures and systems and providing documentation for future Committees: a master rota of helpers at Wednesday meetings and social occasions, a schedule for



**Enjoying a
break from
school
inspection –
Jean beside the
Golden gate
bridge, San
Francisco**

the Committee's monthly tasks. And as her successor as Chairman, Suzanne Brown, wrote:

"Jean was always so knowledgeable, erudite and charming on Wednesday mornings, and the most impressive of chairmen at committee meetings, making it all look so easy!"

Now Jean continues to attend our Wednesday meetings, and remains a member of Book Club (2) and Wildlife Watch, also now of Exploring London. She continues long-distance walking, recently on the U3A London Loop walk (recounted in the previous edition of this newsletter); she is also participating in the current U3A Herts Way walk. She was until recently a Governor of Mount Grace School in Potters Bar.

Jean regards U3A as "a magnificent organisation, opening so many doors for people, giving the opportunity to learn so much – especially WelHat U3A, with its weekly talks – a particular benefit of this one".

Hazel Bell

Book Review

The Old Hatfield Historic Trail: A short walk through the history of a town by Mark Bolitho: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018. pbk, 72 pp. ISBN: 1719347255 / 978-1719347259. £8.95. Available from Amazon: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Old-Hatfield-Historic-Trail-Walking/dp/1719347255>

As it says in the introduction 'This book is intended to accompany you on a walk around the area we now call Old Hatfield'.

It contains a timeline from 970AD up to 2015.

It highlights some buildings and stories that give us a history and insight of the town as it developed through history.

This book is well laid out. It takes the reader to places of interest and gives information at every location – accompanied by old



photographs in some cases. One word of warning: if a person intends to do the complete walk, some sections in Hatfield Park are closed on a Monday, i.e.: section (17) Real Tennis Court; section (18) The Old Palace; section (19) Stable Yard. After enquiring, apparently these sections are open Tuesdays through to Sundays.

As Old Hatfield is on our doorstep, it is amazing the amount of hidden history that is tucked away which people pass on the main roads every day.

For anyone interested in ambling around an area, finding hidden historical gems, this is an ideal little book.

Stan Mills, Leader, Strollers

Autumn Term 2018 – Wednesday Meetings

SEPTEMBER

12, Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Richard Thomas: "A walk with the Admiral"

19, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Ernie Arnold: "A Lifetime of Children's Entertainment"

Ernie has worked from Ilford to Istanbul and in Cottages and Palaces, for some very interesting people.

26, WGC **Sue Benwell: "Pitkin PA – My Life with Norman Wisdom"**

Sue met Norman Wisdom in 1994 when he was nearly 80 years old and says she will cherish the memory of that meeting forever.

OCTOBER

3, Hatfield **Peter Burley: "Marshalswick Manor & St Albans Country House Heritage"**

Peter will tell us about the house, gardens, the lives of the owners and tenants, and the connection with India.

10, WGC **Elizabeth Gowing: "Unlikely Positions in Unlikely Places; a Yoga Journey around the UK"**

Elizabeth tells the stories from her explorations of Yoga.

17, Hatfield **Brad Ashton: “The Job of a Laughtime”**

International TV Comedy Writer Brad Ashton tells of the laughs he’s had during his half-century career writing for top TV comedians.

24, WGC **Paul Griggs: “Diary of A Musician”**

Paul’s talk tells how he became a musician after discovering Lonnie Donegan and eventually becoming a professional musician in 1967.

31, Hatfield **Jenny Kelsey: “How to Control your Wife”**

Jenny was a special-needs teacher and did voluntary work supporting families with autistic children.

NOVEMBER

7, WGC **Alison Green: “Theobalds Farmhouse Garden”**

A Garden of “Rooms” created by owner and Garden Designer Alison Green.

14, Hatfield **Nigel Colman: “Sammy Davis Junior – What A Life!”**

Sammy Davis Junior – The Man who Made It.

21, WGC **Art & Photo Exhibition**

28, Hatfield **Martin Sirot-Smith: “A Tudor Christmas”**

We welcome Martin back. He will tell us how our forefathers celebrated the Festive Season.

DECEMBER

5, WGC **Christmas Party: Quiz at 10:30am**

Please bring finger food – drinks provided

12 Christmas Lunch at Homestead Court Hotel