

April 2013

Chairman's note

I trust you all had an enjoyable break over Easter.

Plans are in hand for a biennial conference and lunch for Group Organisers (GOs). This will be held on 17 June at the Salomon centre, Southborough. It is intended to give GOs the opportunity to interact with the Executive and each other and so exchange ideas and views about our U3A. Lunch is provided as an opportunity for Sevenoaks to thank GOs for their hard work and dedication in making our U3A the success it is. Beryl Mansell will be writing to all GOs shortly to outline plans for the event. I would ask all GOs to attend but, if you cannot come in person, please nominate a member of the group to represent you.

Plans for the 20th Anniversary are starting to materialise. A small committee under the Chairmanship of Arthur Russ is planning a season of events for 2014, starting with an Art Exhibition in April, and culminating in a party in September. With a wide range of events there will hopefully be something for everyone to enjoy. We would like to capture any information related to our first twenty years: if you have photographs, material, or just memories from our past, especially in the last ten years, please contact Arthur.

Bob Ruffles

☎ 01732 461348 ✉ chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Meetings open to all

Science Group

Monday 13 May

Rolls-Royce, Past, Present and Future: Sustaining the Traditions of Sir Henry Royce

by Phillip Ruffles

This talk will focus initially on Sir Henry Royce himself and the early years of the company. His brilliance as an engineer and his attention to detail earned the company the reputation of building the best motor cars in the world.

Its entry into the gas turbine business and the challenges occasioned by the development of the RB211 engine, which led to its insolvency in 1971, will be described. Its subsequent successful development, including the current Trent family of engines, and its entry into engines for naval propulsion and electricity generation will round off the presentation.

Computer Group

Monday 20 May

eBay Revisited

by Anthony Weston-Smith

What you need to know to sell items on eBay.
 How to go about listing items for the auction.
 The importance of positive feedback.
 Using other internet auction sites.

**Science Group and Computer Group
 meetings are both held in
 Otford Village Memorial Hall
 at 2pm**

**All Sevenoaks U3A Members are welcome.
 £2 entry includes tea.**

**Car parking is always difficult,
 both at Otford and
 at the Community Centre,
 so please share cars if at all possible.**

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday 22 May

Community Centre, Bat & Ball Start at 2pm

When Women Flew Spitfires

by Frank Matthews

Following a few years in the aircraft industry, Frank Matthews spent most of his career as a member of academic staff in the Aeronautics department at Imperial College London where one of his activities was to give undergraduate lectures on historical aspects of aircraft development. He also ran both teaching and research programmes with industrial and academic links in Europe and the USA.

His interest in the current talk was sparked two years ago when reading a journal report on a seminar devoted to these women. Since then there has been more publicity, including a BBC documentary, about this largely unknown aspect of World War II.

Booklets written by Frank on this subject will be for sale at the meeting. If there is a larger demand, we will reprint further copies.

Please send copy for the May Newsletter
 by **Friday, 10 May 2013**

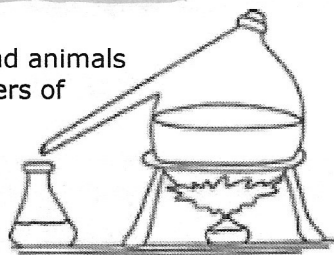
to both ✉ pethelind@yahoo.co.uk
 and ✉ MASweetland@talktalk.net

News and Views

Articles to MASweetland@talktalk.net

The Science Group

You will know that plants and animals are made up of large numbers of cells, but do you know the origin of the term? You would if you had attended the Science Group's talk by Adam Prickett on



Advances in DNA Sequencing. Do you know why there is still no conclusive theory to explain the properties of Ball Lightning? You would if you had attended our talk by Mark Steinhoff. These are but two examples of the Science Group's **talks**, open to all members, on the second Monday of each month in the Otford Memorial Village Hall.

The Committee which puts together the programme encompasses a broad knowledge of science, technology and engineering, and provide a balance of talks across all three disciplines. Attendance is open to all members of Sevenoaks U3A. The objective of the talks is to help them keep abreast of current scientific thinking. After all, it is a "few" years since any of us received any formal teaching on this subject and so much "progress" has been made since then that such scientific things dominate our lives: think about the food we eat and you may recall headlines about BSE, genetically-engineered foods and horse meat; consider the sources of energy we use and you cannot fail to be reminded of wind farms, nuclear power, shale gas; think about the weather and the on-going debate about global warming will spring to your mind. The only certainty is that this is a trend set to continue.

The Group also organises two or three **outings** each year to places of scientific and/or engineering interest, also open to the whole membership. The focus here is on scientific and engineering topics which are best covered visually or hands-on. In the past, these have included visits to the Enigma Museum at Bletchley Park and the Shepherd Neame Brewery in Faversham. This year's visits will include a tour of the Cook factory at Sittingbourne, a visit to Greenwich Royal Observatory and individual visits to see the once again restored Cutty Sark, and the 50th Anniversary static and flying displays of the Shuttleworth Collection at the Old Walden aerodrome near Milton Keynes.

The other key part of the Science Group's work is its **study groups**, five at present. Details are in the adjoining column. In all cases, subjects of discussion are chosen by the membership.

Suggestions for new Groups and subjects and/or speakers for talks are appreciated. Volunteers for the committee as and when vacancies arise are welcome. The talks programme for the 2013/2014 session is now complete: if you want to know all about the ageing brain, how 3D-printing works or the origins of Norvasc and Viagra, do come along.

Win Gutteridge

The **ethical dilemmas study group** is an open minded group who like to discuss topical moral and ethical issues of the day. Often we will have opposing views on the topics we discuss which makes the meetings more interesting. By its nature Ethics is a subject where right and wrong answers are problematic, so different views are welcomed. We often come away with our previous opinions modified. We usually have someone to research the topic and lead the debate. We have recently widened our discussions from mainly medical issues to anything that is morally controversial. Some of the topics that we have covered recently include Obesity, who's to blame? Parents' rights, Media responsibility and Problems with drugs. Our members obviously enjoy arguing as we have high meeting attendance with few leavers!

Ann Slater

The **geology study group** investigates all aspects of geology from the formation of the Earth to the many changes from the Pre-Cambrian, 4 billion years ago, to the present time. The group also follows a 36-part DVD lecture on subjects related to geology: tectonic plate movements, volcanology, mountain building, rock-formation, mineralogy and many more. At the moment we are concentrating on sedimentation and the sedimentary rocks formed as a result of this process. When the weather permits, fossil-hunting and rock studying trips are arranged. Members photograph rock formations and collect samples. They write short articles about the sites visited and present these to the group.

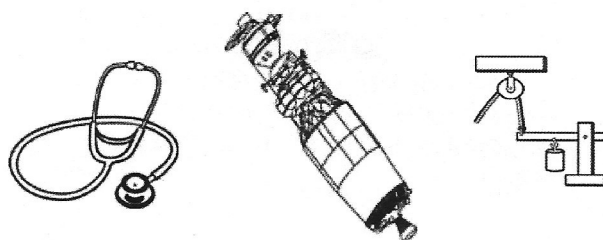
Tove Horntvedt

The **our universe study group** investigates the science of the universe. Included are topics such as how we know the life history of the stars, how far away they are, how old space is and the awesome range of astronomical objects and forces out there.

Stan Williams

The two **science discussion study groups** cover any science-related topic. This year, **Group 1** is focussing on two main topics: global population growth and weather science. For global population, we are looking at the predicted growth of the human population - from seven to eight billion over the next decade or so - and then at the impact this will have on food supplies, energy requirements and trade, all areas of potential stress that could lead to conflict. For weather science, we are focussing on both historical methods and the modern predictive approach to weather forecasting. **Group 2** is a new one. Its key topic this year is energy, both from the point of view of its generation from various sources and its consumption.

Bob Ruffles



Social Events News

Pam Walshe ☎ 01732 454769

✉ Pamwalshe@supanet.com

Latest news on forthcoming visits:

- Trip on Wednesday 15 May to **Walmer and Deal Castles**. Flyer sent out in March. There are spare places on this visit. Please apply to Lynda Alleeson ☎ 01959 525312
✉ brian-lynda@alleeson.wanadoo.co.uk
- A flyer is enclosed for a **Thames river trip** on Wednesday 3 July.
- A visit has been arranged for 14 August to the **Turner Gallery** at Margate plus the **Salutation Gardens** in Sandwich: flyer available in May.

Discussion with Knole Extramural team:

For the past three years, Sevenoaks and Knole U3A have been running social events in parallel, and have been pleased to offer spare places to the other and so ensure that all the trips run. The two committees decided to meet in March to see if closer co-operation could benefit both U3As.

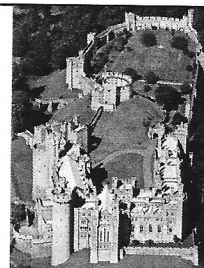
It was established at once that Knole did not foresee a total merger of the two teams, mainly because of the volume of work, the difficulty of allocating places on a shared trip, and the loss - for Knole - of a chance for its own members, who come from a very wide area, to get to know each other.

However, both teams thought there was potential benefit from closer liaison which might take these forms:

- an annual planning meeting at the end of the season, say October or early November, to review the successes and snags of the previous year and pass on experiences
- to exchange details of the trips that were well received
- to liaise more closely over similar trips, so that those who couldn't go on one date might be accommodated on the trip of the other U3A
- to review the service provided by coach companies and their charges
- possibly to each arrange a parallel trip, with one Study Day as an introduction (this is a formula which so far has proved very successful with Knole, with seminars on **William Morris and the Red House, Dover Castle, Japanese Gardening and Pompeii and Herculaneum**). An added benefit of this system is the possible formation of a new Study Group based on the subject
- to continue to offer over spare places, which was considered a success story
- a list of the visits undertaken by both U3As would be circulated, together with a list from the Kent Network

Trip to Arundel Castle

Knole has spare places on a coach trip to **Arundel Castle**, which was built by Roger De Montgomery in the 11th century. For much of that time it has been the home of the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors.



Date Friday 17 May 2013

Meeting Bakers Yard, Otford Road, TN14 5DW at 8.45am

Schedule Leave at 9.00am to arrive at about 10.30am. There are no guided tours and you will be free to explore at your leisure. Your ticket allows access to all the state rooms — except the bedrooms (additional charge of £2). The state rooms open at 12 noon, but the Medieval Keep, gardens, various restaurants/coffee houses and gift shop are open from 10am.

Cost £29 per person

Organiser Peter Smith ☎ 01732 761457

To Book Please send your details (name, address, telephone and email address) together with your cheque made out to *Knole U3A Extramural* to: Peter Smith, 19 Park Lane, Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 6NX. Confirmation will be sent by email. If you do not have an email address, include a STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.

Please indicate if you will be parking at Bakers Yard

News from the Groups

Beryl Mansell ☎ 01959 52501

✉ berylmansell@btinternet.com

New Groups

Mathematics

Would anyone be interested in forming a new group on Mathematics? The mode of operation will depend on the background & interests of those responding. It is anticipated that participants will have experience in some branch of maths. It is not the intention to teach mathematics. Please contact **Frank Matthews** ☎ 01732 456512 or

✉ frankmatthews@bayham63.freemove.co.uk

Digital Video Editing for Beginners

Most modern digital cameras come with video filming capabilities. Have you used this feature but don't know what to do with the end result? Then this group is for you. We will learn about software, how to download, edit or join clips. You will need a laptop or a memory stick. Members will find it helpful to purchase the editing software *traxX* which costs £32, but may use their own software. The group could take up to 12 members. We would also be open to members with video skills to help get this group running. Contact **Derrick Shaw:**

☎ 01732 461630 ✉ derrickshaw@talktalk.net

3rd Friday, 2-4pm, Otford Methodist Church Hall.

Events Open to All

First Friday Lunch

Friday 3 May

The Plough Eynsford, 12.30 for 12.45.

To book contact Fay Plant ☎ 01959 522127

or Pat Dallas ☎ 01732 456714

Half Day Walking

Monday 20 May

Meet outside the Buck's Head, Godden Green in time for a 10am start. A five-mile circular walk to Seal St. Lawrence and Oldbury Hill followed by an optional lunch at the Buck's Head.

Leader: Ann Matthews ☎ 01732 456512

The Strollers

Tuesday 21 May

Meet at 11am in the car park of the Rose and Crown in London Road, Dunton Green. From Sevenoaks, follow the A224 North through Riverhead, past the Tesco roundabout, through Dunton Green and over the M26. The Rose and Crown is on the right at the junction of London Road (to Otford). There will be an optional lunch afterwards at the Rose and Crown.

Leaders: Caroline Scales ☎ 01959 523200 and

Jeanette Woodrow-Clark ☎ 01959 523617

Ambling

Wednesday 15 May

Meet at Shipbourne Common car park for a four-mile walk starting at 10am. The car park is about 100 yards along Upper Green Road, which is opposite The Chaser Inn (postcode TN11 9PE) on the A227 Tonbridge to Ightham road.

Leaders: Janet and Eric Wilson ☎ 01732 458512

Bridge for Pleasure Wednesdays 8 & 22 May

The Group plays at Otford Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50am until 12.15pm. The winner on 27 March was Diana Esler and on 10th April was Nick White.

We are an 'Open' group, so any new players can just come along. If you need to make contact, call Colin and Mary Butson on ☎ 01732 458356.

Diary

May

Fri	3	First Friday Lunch
Wed	8	Bridge for Pleasure
Fri	10	Japanese Garden visit (Knole)
Mon	13	Science Group
Wed	15	Walmer and Deal Castle visit
Wed	15	Ambling
Thur	16	Japanese Garden visit (Knole)
Fri	17	Arundel Castle visit (Knole)
Mon	20	Half day Walking
Mon	20	Computer Group
Tue	21	The Strollers
Wed	22	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed	22	Monthly Meeting

June

Mon	3	Kent Study Day: Florentine Painting
-----	---	-------------------------------------

July

Wed	3	Thames River Trip*
Mon	8	Kent Study Day: Aspects of Law
Thur	11	Westerham U3A launch

* Flyer enclosed

Further Afield

New U3As

The Westerham launch was held on Thursday 11 April, with about 75 attending. Trustees from Knole spoke about the principles of the U3A, the running of the Study Groups, and what being a Group Contact (or Organiser) of a group involves.

Those present filled in a questionnaire and, at the end of the afternoon, the offers from these were read out. There were some twenty volunteers to take the initiative in starting up new Study Groups, and a good deal of support for Social events. An outline steering committee was formed and will have a first meeting with the representative from National Office on 16 May to adopt a constitution and arrange to open a bank account. The follow-up meeting, when the new U3A will take subscriptions and recruit to Study Groups, is scheduled for Thursday 11 July, in Westerham Village Hall, at 2pm.

On the same day, the launch took place of a new U3A in Rainham with about 200 attending, so it has also got off to a flying start! We are delighted to welcome two new U3As into being.

The meeting for a new U3A in Edenbridge is at the Eden Centre, on Tuesday 30 April at 2pm.

Magda Sweetland

Schools Debate

The inter-generational school debate was held on 19 March. Sevenoaks U3A was represented by Lesley Spence: she was teamed with two school pupils from Hayes School in Bromley to debate the topic 'Educating us: who is responsible?' It was a great success and the Hayes-Sevenoaks team, competing against three other teams, won the debate by a considerable margin. Our thanks to Lesley for her eloquent performance reflecting a well-researched topic, and for generating a good rapport with the two students involved. National Office was represented and may now encourage other U3As to follow the lead set by Bromley Schools together with local U3As.

Chichester Summer School

We have been advised that spaces are still available on some of the courses at the annual Chichester Summer School, run by the South East Forum. A flyer is on the Sevenoaks website. The dates are Tuesday 9 July to Friday 12 July. The costs range from £150 for the Summer School (non-residential with no evening meal) to £320 for en suite residential accommodation at the University of Chichester. Details and forms available from Helen Turner, Kent U3A Network, ☎ 01622 817264 ✉ turnhelen@gmail.com

Editorial team: Magda Sweetland, Linda Young, Robin Tonge and John Spurway