

Chairman's note

As this year draws to a close I am reminded of my comment in the January Newsletter that 2012 would be a historic year, and so it was. The events we looked forward to have now passed and hopefully all of you have some memories of both the Jubilee and the Olympics. The weather was of course another factor but perhaps best forgotten.

I am thinking about next year and the preparations that need to be made for our forthcoming 20th anniversary in 2014. To plan for this we will be launching a small working party in January to bring together ideas from you to make the event a success. We have had some offers and ideas already but there is room for more - please pass your thoughts to Arthur Russ or myself.

Also in this edition are more details about the forthcoming launch of our updated website. Please note the address has changed from its existing form and I encourage you to explore what is on offer. The new site will contain a lot more useful information and hopefully you will start to use it as a communication medium for your group activities. The site will be updated regularly by the web team. It is a live and dynamic environment and if there is any criticism or comment for improvement please feed it back to the web team through the links provided.

May I remind you that our Festive Lunch will be held on 4 January. It is a relaxed and fun event so if you have not already booked then please do so. There will not be a Newsletter in December so may I take this early opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas.

Bob Ruffles

☎ 01732 461348

Meetings open to all

Monthly Meeting **Wednesday 23 January**
Community Centre, Bat & Ball Start at 2pm

The significance of the ship burial at Sutton Hoo

Imogen Corrigan

The extraordinarily rich hoard found at Sutton Hoo dates to the early 7th century and tells us a great deal about the country's wealth, other cultures and status within Anglo-Saxon society. Imogen Corrigan uses images and Old English poetry to discuss kingship and power in Anglo-Saxon England.

Science Group

Monday 10 December

Advances in DNA Sequencing

Adam Prickett

Against a background of modern genetics and genetic research, this talk will focus on a new branch of genetic sequencing technologies. The ways in which their application has revolutionised genetic research over the last five years will be presented, and possible translations into new disease treatments and clinical applications will be discussed.

Monday 14 January

Wild Kent

Irene Palmer

This will be a slide lecture illustrated with photographs taken by Irene and her late husband, John. It will highlight Kent's contrasting scenery and diversity of wild places, including Kent's various Wildlife Trust Reserves.

Oxford Village Memorial Hall, 2pm.
All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome.
£2 entry includes tea.

Computer Group

Monday 17 December

3D Photography

David Prestage

Christmas photos with a difference! Just in time for Christmas David Prestage will take us further into the field of 3D Photography. We will be loaned the cyan/red spectacles that will be necessary to see some photos. Wine and mince pies will be served after the meeting.

Monday 21 January

Spring Cleaning Your PC

Martin Stoneham

A good resolution for the New Year - Martin Stoneham will focus on Speeding Up and Cleaning PCs. This will include transferring files/data between computers.

Oxford Village Memorial Hall, 2pm.
All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome.
Entry, £2 on the door, includes tea.

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

News and Views

Articles to Magda Sweetland

Sevenoaks U3A has a good language 'department' covering both modern and ancient languages. Here some of the Group Organisers, and members, describe their experience.

Che bella lingua!

'The food is delicious.. the architectural heritage amazing...the scenery varied and breathtaking... the cities vibrant, the countryside tranquil... the people, their art, music and especially their language are all so enticing': these are just a few of the many reasons given by our Group for wanting to learn ITALIAN.

Our membership also reflects a variety of past language learning experiences. Some have studied Modern Languages or Classics at school or university, often resulting in strong reading and writing skills. Others, who have also lived abroad, have acquired confident speaking and listening skills. Could we combine all these elements and make it succeed without an Italian teacher or a native speaker to guide us? We could but try...

Choosing how to start was simple – we followed the two *BBC Talk Italian* Courses where everyday topics were introduced both orally and in written form, plus grammar and revision. This approach allowed us, for example, to create our own role play scenarios or to write short accounts based on that week's subject. We felt we were making good progress in all the basic language skills. Added enjoyment came from sampling *la cucina italiana* locally or in shared lunches hosted by one of the group to celebrate each end of term.

Our choice of a follow-up text, *Easy Italian Reader*, almost two years ago has been both interesting and challenging. We have learnt about life as a foreign student in modern Rome and been led through Italy's political and social history. At present we are reading modern short stories with a wide vocabulary and discussing grammar and comprehension points as we go along. We can also call on a wealth of other resources such as CDs, DVDs and the Internet for language games or articles in newspapers and magazines. Indeed, the lure of watching *Inspector Montalbano* on BBC4 this autumn has been an added bonus for the female members of the Group!

However, as we've started this fifth year, our lack of a native speaker or Italian teacher has become more keenly felt. We have an imbalance between our strong reading and comprehension skills and our frequent lack of confidence when it comes to speaking. An ideal remedy would be something that doesn't yet exist, namely a third *BBC Talk Italian* course book.

Or even better - a Group visit to Italy for a term!

Linda Young: Italian Self-Help Year 5

Highways and byways of Latin

Some two years ago, six intrepid ladies started on a course in Latin. None had past experience of it, some had never even learned any other language. Undaunted by the intricacies of Latin grammar, they launched into a new culture and literature. *The Oxford Latin Course* introduced us to the family of the poet Horace, who as a boy at school read the mythical stories of Homer and Virgil – exciting, to say the least! And as we teased out the meaning, we realised just how much the Latin language had percolated down into English. We started to examine the way that a language develops and contributes to another.

We wondered how and why the English language evolved, from historical, geographical and social aspects. For example, we proposed a variety of highly imaginative and flippant explanations as to why the words head and chief both derive from the same source, the Latin *caput* (= head), but other languages chose alternative words – e.g. German *Kopf* (from *cuppa* = cup) and French *tête* (from *testa* = plate) for this part of our anatomy. We often digress into what constitutes 'good' English; how words change their meanings, especially when they move to a different society; how our mouths create different sounds; how writing relates to the spoken word. We always spend the first half of each session studying Latin, but after coffee – well, the 'words' just take over.

Judith Spurway: Latin for Absolute Beginners

Easy French Conversation

We are a group of six francophiles who gather twice a month under the benevolent gaze of our organiser, Corinne Milan, to discuss aspects of French life, past and present. Some of the topics covered during our first year were: Charles de Gaulle; French Impressionism; Flaine in the Savoie and the progress of twinning with a French village. Meetings are stimulating and good for our French.

We are encouraged to talk in French under our organiser's gentle guidance and to do some homework. It is interesting to compare daily life in France and Sevenoaks. We can also join Friends of Pontoise, the French town twinned with Sevenoaks and so extend our range. A weekend visit to Pontoise is organised for next May, when we hope to be a bit more confident about talking in the language during our visit.

Our sessions are a real joy. We listen, learn and, when replying or asking a question in French, feel quite relaxed because we are not worried that we might be laughed at as we are all very much on the same wave length. Our time at these meetings is spent in a happy relaxed atmosphere.

Corinne Milan: France and the French

Ancient Greek

Ancient Greek is a challenge for anyone, but I am full of admiration for the five committed members of our U3A group who over the last few years have been tackling this complicated but rewarding language, which is also in a different script. For the first hour of our fortnightly sessions we work hard at the grammar, going over the homework, and doing exercises, even translating from English into Greek, and reading adapted passages from our G.C.S.E. course book. After some well-deserved coffee we relax a bit and enjoy other aspects of the language and culture.

One reason for learning Greek is gaining an insight into how much of the English language is based on Greek. The derivation of what seems a strange word in English becomes apparent when the original Greek word is known. How much easier it is to understand some of the medical, botanical, scientific and theatrical terms in English with a little knowledge of Greek, eg *kardia* means heart, *graphein* to write = cardiograph; *rhodos* means rose, *dendron* is a tree = rhododendron; *dipsa* is thirst, hence dipsomaniac! It helps with spellings and crosswords too.

To date, we have translated excerpts from the New Testament, (slightly) simplified Herodotus, Aesop, Plutarch and Aristophanes, to name but a few, giving us insights into Greek literature and history - even poetry, with a Pindaric Ode written by Boris Johnson to be read at the Olympics which was full of witty puns.

Each year we enjoy going to the King's College Greek play, (in the original of course!) having prepared ourselves with key words and print-outs to help with the texts. It is good to hear the original lines spoken so beautifully.

I think we all feel that visits to museums, art galleries and classical sites are enriched by our increasing acquaintance with the language and culture of ancient Greece, and also that our minds are given some timely exercise at this stage of our lives.

Diana Atkinson: Ancient Greek

The Pre-Raphaelites in Sevenoaks

Peter Mountfield researched and wrote an article on this topic, prompted by the blockbuster exhibition which is currently showing at Tate Britain. We were able to copy the article and distribute it to everyone who went on the recent U3A trip to the exhibition, and it has caused quite a flurry of excitement. Virtually no one was aware that there was a PRB connection with Sevenoaks and Knole Park.

Stewards at Knole House have asked permission to circulate it, and we are now posting a copy on the Sevenoaks website for all to read. Our thanks to Peter for sharing the fruits of his research with us.

News from the Groups

Beryl Mansell ☎ 01959 525010

Groups with spaces:

Italian Intermediate

Due to a relocation we would welcome one or two new members to this group. This term we are revising grammar and redoubling our efforts to converse. Our ever-patient native Italian speaker will be returning in the New Year.

Contact: Charmian Marsh ☎ 01959 522609

Wine Appreciation Group 2

We would like to welcome some new members. We meet on the last Friday of the month, from 10am to noon. Members host one meeting a year, present four wines and discuss their origins and qualities. The host provides 'Nibbles', say Salami and Cheese and Biscuits. The research to present the wines and the subsequent discussion adds to one's knowledge of wine and sharpens one's enjoyment of wine. If you would like to find out more please contact Bill Taylor ☎ 01732 762735

Wine Appreciation Group 4

This established wine appreciation group now has space for two new members. The group meets monthly on the second Wednesday for wine tasting and discussion. If interested, please contact Anthony Weston Smith ☎ 01732 451528.

Kent Study Days

These popular Study Days will be advertised by flyer as each falls due:-

Florentine Renaissance Painting April 22 and June 3. Kent Study Day (choice of two dates) at Salomons, Southborough

Aspects of Law July (tba) Medway venue.

History of Gardening 14 September (Saturday) Kent Study Day at Tenterden.

An important date for your 2013 diary

The ever-popular series of Study Mornings arranged by the Jazz & Blues Study Group continues in 2013 with the story of piano jazz from ragtime to the present day. And we are extremely fortunate to have for this the great pianist and dynamic presenter, Geoff Eales. When he played with the BBC Big Band he worked with some of the very best arrangers in the UK jazz scene after which he became one of the most sought after session pianists in London. More recently he has done shows at some of the major UK venues. Geoff is something special. He has a broad knowledge of music as well being an accomplished and versatile pianist of the highest order. He has agreed to present to us: '100 years of Jazz Piano' on Thursday, 23 May 2013. Do get this date in your diary now as tickets will certainly be in demand.

SEE U3A 2012 – 2013 HANDBOOK FOR FURTHER CONTACT DETAILS OF PEOPLE REFERRED TO IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Social Events News

Pam Walshe ☎ 01732 454769

Festive Lunch **4 January 2013**

There are still places available. If you would like to come, contact Lynda Alleeson ☎ 01959 525312. Cost is £23 for three courses, plus coffee.

Trip to Gloucester **22-25 May 2013**

By 15 November, we received 42 applications for this trip, together with deposit cheques, and decided to accept all of them, rather than turn anybody away. Everyone should have received confirmation. Jenny Smith is now sorting out the travel insurance forms.

Events Open to All

First Friday lunch Friday 7 December
The Papermakers Arms, The Street, Plaxtol,
12.15 for 12.30. To book, contact Fay Plant
☎ 01959 522127 or Pat Dallas ☎ 01732 456714
by Wednesday 5 December

Bridge for Pleasure Wednesday 12 December **Wednesdays 9 and 23 January**

The Group plays bridge at Otford Village Hall on the second and fourth Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50am until 12.15pm. The winner on 24 October was Bill Taylor and on 14 November was Nick White. The group is an 'Open' group, so new players can just come along. Colin and Mary Butson ☎ 01732 458356

Ambling **Wednesday 16 January**
Meet in the car park at the Woodman public house at Goathurst Common (GR 499528) for a 10am start. From Sevenoaks, take the B2042 to Edenbridge and the pub is on the left just before reaching Goathurst Common. The walk is followed by an optional lunch.

Leader: Grahame Lee ☎ 01474 852007

There will be no walk in December.

Half Day Walking **Monday 28 January**

Meet at the Carpenter's Arms, Limpsfield Chart (Map ref. 426518) in time for a 10am start. A five-mile circular walk followed by an optional lunch at the Carpenter's Arms.

Leader: Nick White ☎ 01959 564145

There will be no walk in December.

The Strollers

The next stroll will be in March. Details will be in the February newsletter.

The Strollers will celebrate Christmas with a lunch at the White Hart on Tuesday 11 December.

Contact Anne Gutteridge ☎ 01732 454923 for details and to make a reservation.

www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

WEBSITE RE-LAUNCH DATE

Monday 14 January 2013

From this date the new website will replace the old, and the 'testsite' address will no longer work. We hope that members will find the new site stimulating, informative and helpful.

Thank you to those who have already sent comments on the test site. It will be 'work in progress' for some time, and comments and feedback will still be welcome. A new web team e-mail address for these will be on the site.

The website will show the latest information about activities, groups and events. The Newsletter will be posted there at the same time as the printed version appears, and the diary and calendar pages will list forthcoming events. By e-mailing the web team, members will be able to post urgent messages such as a cancellation via 'Stop Press' on the home page; and to post flyers for, or reports on, events in a Word or PDF file.

Application forms will need to be printed out and returned manually by members: they cannot be completed online.

No personal e-mail addresses will appear on the site. Group Organisers have been asked to agree to a disguised e-mail address system. Any who have not responded are asked to do so now to websitegroup@7oaksu3atestsite.org.uk so that any additions can be made before launch date.

We hope that members will enjoy exploring and using the new site.

Diary

December 2012

Fri	7	First Friday lunch
Fri	7	Pantomania – 2 ***
Mon	10	Science Group Meeting
Tues	11	The Strollers lunch
Wed	12	Bridge for Pleasure
Mon	17	Computer Group Meeting

January 2013

Fri	4	Festive lunch**
Wed	9	Bridge for Pleasure
Mon	14	Science Group Meeting
Wed	16	Ambling
Mon	21	Computer Group Meeting
Wed	23	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed	23	Monthly Meeting
Mon	28	Half Day Walking

May 22 – 25 Trip to Bowden Hall Hotel**

May 23 Jazz and Blues Study Day

** flyer in October

*** flyer in September

Please send copy for the May Newsletter
by **Friday, 11 January 2013**
to both Linda Young
and Magda Sweetland

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