

Chairman's Note

It was good to see so many of you at the Festive Lunch at Knole Park Golf Club. This event has always been popular as it provides a relaxed get together with a good meal and the opportunity to catch up with friends. Thanks to Jim Purves for hosting us and Pam Walshe for the organisation.

This year marks the 800th Anniversary of Magna Carta; there has already been much in the news about this and the Third Age Trust are encouraging all U3As to celebrate the Government inspired event '**LiberTeas**' on **Sunday 14th June** to precede the actual anniversary on the following day. I have been approached by the Chairman of Knole U3A to explore the possibility of both U3As collaborating on a joint event and the Executive Committee also feel that we should enter into the spirit of this important milestone in our history. This could take the form of anything we want but would require the formation of a small joint Working Party to plan and implement an event. If you would like to help please let one of the Executive Committee know so that we can ensure Magna Carta Day is appropriately recognised.

Bob Ruffles chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Tel: 01732 461348

Meetings open to all

Monthly Meeting Wednesday 25 March

Community Centre, Bat & Ball, 2pm

The Special Operations Executive

Gilly Halcrow

The talk will be a tribute to the brave men and women who parachuted behind enemy lines to set Europe ablaze.

Post Script: After the last newsletter went to press we were informed that Professor Trevor Jones would be unable to give his talk on Infectious Diseases on 25 February. He has however promised to speak to us at a later date. In his place John Reuthen will talk about Historical Epidemics.

Other talks up to the AGM are:

Wednesday 29 April: Imogen Corrigan – 93rd Searchlight Regiment Royal Artillery

Wednesday 27 May: Vernon Rapley – Preventing Art Theft and Fraud

Wednesday 24 June: Annual General Meeting with a talk by a representative from Médecins sans Frontières

March Newsletter : Please send material by Friday 13th March to both Linda Young and Magda Sweetland

Computer Group Monday 16 March

Living in a Virtual 'U3A' World

What is the 'Virtual U3A' ?

Linda Clark, Chair vU3A

Why do we need it ?

How was it developed?

How does it work ? Who are these 'virtual' people?

How can you find out more about vU3A ?

(see the article on page 4 as a starting point.)

Oxford Village Memorial Hall, 2pm

All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome

£2 entry, includes tea.

Science Group Monday 09 March

Food for the birds: Brian Nobbs

This talk reviews how birds obtain their food, directly from plant structures, by catching invertebrates or vertebrates – including other birds – or by feeding on carrion. One decision they must make is whether to risk staying to "eat in", or "take away" their food to a place of safety.



Oxford Village Memorial Hall, 2pm.

All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome.

£2 entry includes tea.

News and Views

Magda Sweetland

Meopham U3A

The plans to launch a new U3A serving Meopham and the surrounding villages are progressing well.

Six members from different U3As responded to the notice in local U3A Newsletters last September, and they have formed the core of active support, delivering leaflets and putting up posters etc.

The date arranged for the launch is Tuesday 14 April, 2pm at Meopham Village Hall. At that meeting, Chairmen of adjacent U3As will talk about various aspects of running the organisation, and we hope to inspire and locate enough members to form a steering committee, and also a good tranche of Group leaders. The follow-up meeting is Tuesday 16 July, same place and time, when the new U3A will go live, taking membership subscriptions and recruiting to Study Groups.

If you have friends who live in the area, please encourage them to come along. Word of mouth is still the best recommendation for new members.

What members are doing . . .

Observant members may have noticed two interesting newspaper items recently. In Borough Green, there is to be a new War Memorial, on a site yet to be decided. The memorial itself has been designed by Patrick Moore, and Ramon Higgs, of the Sevenoaks branch of the Royal British Legion.

Of course, many of you will recall that both Patrick and Ramon are members of Sevenoaks U3A, and for many years they each led a Sculpture group at Cricketts Farm. Patrick specialised in **Modelling, Moulding and Casting**, and taught members how to mix resins and finish their work to a high, professional standard. Ramon's **Sculpture** group carved pieces in wood and stone, and both groups went on to exhibit their work at the bi-annual Arts Exhibitions. We hope to carry more news when the site is decided.

Money Matters

Geoff Dalton, a Knole member and leader of the shared **Money Matters** group, which is attended by several Sevenoaks members, hit the headlines in January when he was featured in the Telegraph's *Your Money* section. The banner headline was *Another Giant Insurer Underpaid Pensions for Decades*. This item was also carried on the front page of the main section. Geoff's perseverance in arguing his case was admirable, and he has lessons that will be useful to most U3A members. We hope to have an interview with Geoff at a later date.

Articles to Magda Sweetland

The Role of the Treasurer

Jim Purves

Greetings from your Treasurer!

It's great to have the opportunity to give you an update on the accounts and also about my role as Treasurer.

Firstly the accounts and I am pleased to report that they are, as ever, in a healthy state.

Each year we set a budget and this allows us to control our expenditure through the year and be in line with our annual forecasts. Over the past 5 years your Executive Committee has set a policy to operate on a small deficit every year which means there has been a shortfall of income against expenditure. Funds to cover this have been taken from our reserves, which under Charity Commission guidelines are too large and need to be reduced to about 50% of annual costs.

Our income is derived from two main sources, subscriptions and Gift Aid.

Our Expenditure falls under three headings: Third Age Trust, printing and postage and general group operating costs.

Printing and postage accounts for over a third of our total expenditure and this is an area where we can make savings by members volunteering to receive the Newsletter and other information electronically via the web/email.



In my role as Treasurer I maintain the accounts on an Excel spreadsheet, keep appropriate records and report to your Executive Committee on a bi-monthly basis. I deal with everyday matters such as issuing cheques for payment and making deposits to the bank where we have

online access to our accounts. Expenditure and income follows a fairly predictable pattern so the accounts are very easy to manage. The majority of subscription payments come into our account by standing order and those who pay by cheque deal through our Membership Secretary so this means very little work for your Treasurer!

On average there are about 10 transactions a month issuing cheques or making deposits. In addition, on an annual basis, there is the on line Gift Aid application which has been greatly simplified and the preparation of the year end accounts for the Examiner which once again is an easy task as all the accounts are up to date on the Excel spreadsheet.

All in all this has been an enjoyable role to undertake and not at all onerous. I have now overrun my time as Treasurer so I am hoping that one of you might consider taking on the role (I am happy to work in tandem with you for the first few months) and experiencing an equally enjoyable time over the next few years.

Laptops

We have now replaced our second oldest laptop which means that there are two old machines for disposal. Our oldest laptop is still working but has the Windows ME operating system, and early versions of Word, Excel and PowerPoint. It does not have any Internet connection but could be a useful training aid for anyone trying to get to grips with the technology.

The second laptop has a fault in its motherboard but may be of use for spares to a technically minded person.

Both machines are over 10 years old but if anyone wants either of these machines please let me know otherwise they will be scrapped. Bob Ruffles 01732 461348

Tax, Care and Toy Boys

The speaker at our January meeting was Chris Dingley of Collective Legal Solutions. He spoke eloquently about wills, long term care fees and powers of attorney. He stressed the need to obtain good quality professional advice to prevent potentially disastrous situations. Even though his firm will be more than happy to arrange home visits and act for our members, good quality advice is also available from many firms of solicitors. The meeting was followed by tea and cakes in the room at the back of the hall where tables and chairs were laid out. The use of that room instead of the cramped area around the serving hatch is proving very popular.

The team of helpers, led by Ann Howard (who has still not retired) and Di Latter, once more did a great job.



"Now I identify with Mrs. Robinson."

News from the Groups

Sue Henson

Snooker Group

The U3A Snooker Group is now up and running at the Olympic Centre in Swanley where there are 6 tables available for play. We have reserved 2 tables from 2pm till 4pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. The Centre is an easy drive from Sevenoaks and plentiful free parking is available. Charges are an initial annual joining fee of £11 and then a table charge of £3.40 per hour. You are encouraged to join now before we start to improve! Next session is Thursday 26th February. More information from Liz Lucy.

Modern Literature Study Group

This group would welcome new members. We meet monthly on Tuesday mornings. We discuss books and in particular how they reflect society and as a vehicle for ideas eg **Cancer Ward** and **Underworld**. Contact John Clark.

Italian Intermediate Group

Due to changes in peoples' circumstances, we now have space for 3 people in the Italian Intermediate Group. If you are interested, please contact Charmian Marsh.

German for Beginners

Bryan Marson-Smith would like to set up this new group. If you are interested, please contact him at his email address (see print version of Newsletter).

Social Events News

Pam Walshe

- There are a few places left for the trip to **Barnes Wetland Centre** on Tuesday 24 March. Please fill in the flyer, included in the Jan newsletter, if interested.
- We have nearly enough people to qualify for the reduction to £39.50 to see **Gypsy** at the Savoy Theatre, Strand for a Wednesday matinee between April and November. Please contact Vicki Joyce if interested.

Waddesdon Manor

Knole U3A has organised a visit to this famous National Trust property; a French chateau in the middle of the English countryside, it houses world famous collections of art and rare objects.

Date: Thursday 30 April 2015

Meet: 7.45am for departure at 8am sharp.
Baker's Yard, Otford Road, Sevenoaks

Timings:

Arrive 10am approx / Coffee 10.30am
Private introductory talk for 45 minutes by a member of Waddesdon staff 11am
Timed entry to house 12 noon
Private lunch in dining room 2pm.
Leave at 5pm.

Cost: £30 for National Trust members, inc travel, parking, gratuity, coffee, private introduction, two course lunch. Non NT members extra £13 each.

Apply: Send your details (name, address, Tel. No.) and a cheque for £30 (National Trust members) or £43 (non NT) per person, payable to **Knole U3A Extramural** to Wendy Willsher, 7 Morel Court, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3BG. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your receipt.

A flyer is on the Sevenoaks website.

Events open to all

First Friday Lunch **Friday 6 March**

Bricklayers Arms, Chipstead, 12.45 for 1pm. To book contact Christine & Alastair Macpherson.

Bridge for Pleasure **Weds 11 & 25 March**

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 28 January was Jim Hickey and on 11 February was Diana Esler. We are an 'open' group, so any new players can just come along. If you need to make contact, call Colin and Mary Butson.

The Strollers **Tuesday 17 March**

Starting at 11.00 from the Malta Inn along the river Medway. Take the A25 towards Maidstone, at Wrotham Heath take the A20 towards Maidstone. Carry on until you come to a turning on the left marked Aylesford, take this turn and go past Aylesford Station over the level crossing and round the village and bearing right along Forstal Road and through the industrial estate. Carry on over motorway bridge. Shortly afterwards you will see a sign to Kent Life (formerly Museum of Kent Life) and to the Premier Inn. Take that turning on the right, and more or less immediately turn left into the Malta Inn car park.

If you miss the turning to Kent Life and the Premier Inn, don't worry as shortly after you come to a turning on the right to the Village Hotel, which is huge and has a big car park where you can turn round and retrace your steps. There will be an optional lunch afterwards at the Inn.

Leader: Barbara Coleyshaw

Half Day Walking **Monday 23 March**

Meet opposite the Leicester Arms in Penshurst for a six mile circular walk to Salmans Manor, River Medway and Old Swaylands followed by an optional lunch at the Leicester Arms.

Leader: Nick White

Ambling **Wednesday 18 March**

Meet at Leigh Village Green (Grid Reference 549464) for a 4 mile walk, starting at 10 am. Park on the far side of the green away from the B2027 road. The walk will be followed by an optional lunch. New walkers are always welcome.

Leader: Grahame Lee

Diary

Diary

March

Fri 6	First Friday Lunch
Mon 9	Science Group Meeting
Wed 11	Bridge for Pleasure
Mon 16	Computer Group Meeting
Tue 17	The Strollers
Wed 18	Ambling
Mon 23	Half Day Walking
Tue 24	Barnes Wetland Centre*
Wed 25	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed 25	Monthly Meeting

April

Wed 1	Science Group visit*
Sat 11	Kent Study Day: Interrelationships*
Thurs 30	Waddesdon Manor (Knole visit)

May

Wed 20	Maldon and Layer Marney Tower
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*Flyer last month

Virtual U3A

The Virtual U3A or vU3A is like a local U3A Group except that its activities take place only on the internet. vU3A is affiliated to the Third Age Trust and went live in 2009.

One of its principal aims is to provide the U3A experience for those older people who are isolated through geography, immobility or personal commitments eg carers and are unable to play a full part in a terrestrial U3A. However all are welcome and vU3A has members from around the world.

The vU3A does not create or deliver formal structured online courses.

Members of the vU3A are encouraged to form their own informal learning and discussion groups, choose their own topics and share their experiences in the social areas of the site. It follows the principles of participative learning which have made the U3A one of the most successful educational and social groups for older people.

