



**UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
NEWSLETTER May 2014 Issue 46**

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

Groups well met



Meet the Groups 2014 was held at Ludwick Hall on Wednesday 9 April. It was a lively scene, well attended. Retiring Groups Co-ordinator Marjorie Gladwin told us that as well as 21 established Groups, three new Groups





mounted displays this year: Apple Mac, Inner Peace and Solo.

The displays showed variety and ingenuity. Books constituted the chief displays of the German Group, History in the Making, London History, Play Reading, Poetry and Solo; Photographs were shown by Architecture, Arts Appreciation, and of course the Photography Group; slide shows by Computing and Science & Technology; a variety of their own products by Greetings Cards and, the Multimedia Groups. The latter were spread over several tables, as well as showing a quilt, "Grandmother's Garden", with stitching showing that it had been "Pieced by Emily, 1994; Quilted by Shirley Smith, 2014". French was delightfully represented by a table set with red-checked cloth and napkin, wine glass and bottle, Camembert and





Guide to Paris; Walking by stout books, haversack, maps and guides. The Gardening Group mounted its usual excellent horticultural scene. Mah Jong and Scrabble were demonstratively played; and we enjoyed performances by the Line Dancing, Recorders, and Tai Chi Groups.

Photographs by Jean Tookey

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Greetings! For several issues, this Newsletter has carried a short piece of reportage from the person occupying the ‘Chair’ of the branch. So this is the first time that I have been asked to write ‘Notes from the Chair’. But although my name is Wood, I’d rather not be equated with a piece of furniture, so if the editor doesn’t mind, this is simply ‘From the Chairman’. As I write, it’s only four weeks since the AGM, so there’s not a lot to report. The Wednesday meetings have gone well, and been well attended, as usual, and the speakers have been well up to standard, with an interesting variety of subjects: Japanese customs, African exploration, and Police security.

As for the **AGM** itself, there were changes in our management structure, as always. I moved from Vice-Chairman into the Chair, following a really splendid tenure by Judy Grant, and I thanked her – as I do here – for the innovations she made on rotas and the placing of personnel, all to make our U3A life even better and smoother for all our members, new and old. Hers was a firm but friendly hand on our tiller, and I have a lot to measure up to!

Of course, I was not the only one at the AGM moving into a new position: after many years between them of excellent service to us all, Tony

Lammiman and Marjorie Gladwin (Membership Secretary and Groups Co-ordinator, respectively) have stepped down. And the position of Vice-Chairman was also left vacant by my elevation, of course. We have been exceptionally fortunate in having those places filled by talented and committed people: the Membership role has now been divided into 'Membership' and 'New Membership', to be taken by Suzanne Brown and Jill McKinnon; Groups Co-ordination will be managed by Ann Davies and Jean Mackie. Jean has also become my Vice-Chairwoman – so there's dedication! Finally, Raul Curiel has joined the Committee, so we are now at full strength.

And while we're on the subject of the Committee, don't forget that if you're interested, you can come to any Committee meeting to see and hear what goes on, and to judge whether you might one day like to pitch in and sit round the table yourself. There's no charge (!), but we do limit it to no more than two at a time. Think about it, and if you'd like to accept our invitation, speak to me or any Committee member, and we'll give you details of where and when.

As I said in my little 'speech of acceptance' at the AGM, I am not a reformer. I'm a great believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", and the Wel-Hat U3A is certainly not broke – in any sense of the word! We have a strong Committee, and our Front-of-House team, our Meeters and Greeters, the Sound-and-Pictures team, and the Coffee-and-Tea team are without parallel (often taken for granted and not appreciated enough!), so, providing the new Chairman doesn't mess it up, we can look forward to a bright and fulfilling future.

Have a lovely summer,

Jack Wood

Following the AGM, four members of the **Creative Writing Group** read excerpts from their work. Anne Higgs read a humorous story, "It's Your Funeral"; Paula Evans and Harry Smith read accounts of humorous episodes from their lives, long ago or recent; and Catharine Foster read two poems, "Ode to the Kitchen Sink", and "Down with Duvets", reproduced below.

Duvets are devilish, duvets are trouble,
Whether they're KING-sized, single or double.
Beginning the night all fluffy and plump,
In next to no time a monstrous lump.
Slipping and sliding all over the sheets
Exposing bottoms and bosoms and feet.

He pulls it this way, then yanks it that.
Upsetting the Mrs, disturbing the cat.
To change the damn thing you need a degree
In stuffing 'n'holding – Duvology.
Goose down, duck down and how many togs?
The cover all retro? Or squiggles and blobs?
I love my sheets, I treasure my blankets.
I am so blessed, the Lord be thankED.

Jean Hughes introduced the items, and spoke about the Festival of Words. The **Hertfordshire Festival of Words** 2014 got under way on Saturday 22 March at the Novotel Hotel, Stevenage, at 9.30am.

James Mayhew, children's author and illustrator of the *Katie* series, opened the festival and presented trophies to some of the winners. He also ran two workshops of story-telling and illustration in the reception area, and later in the day he adjudicated the illustration entries. The adjudicators were Catherine Foster and David Steed.

Jacqui Simpson of Bilberry Bloom entertained the children with paper puppet making and a light-box theatre performance. A lovely party atmosphere was created in the reception, along with Hoddesdon Books who were busy selling books which were later signed by our authors.

In the afternoon we were fortunate to have Holly Smale, local author (*Geek Girl* and *Model Misfit*) to chat to the youngsters and present the trophies to the winners.

The speech competition proved to be of a high standard, with two schools taking part in Choral Speaking. Almond Hill School chose to recite Marriott Edgar's "Albert and the Lion", and the Elaine Sharp Creative Writing Club performed an excerpt from Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha". Our adjudicators for the speech competition were Jenny Roden, Carole Payne, Rev'd Jane Weedon and Keith Wadsworth.

This year we included in the syllabus for the first time a category for duologue; this was performed by Emma and Katie Stapleton. Their performance was stunning, leaving the adjudicators speechless.

But the highlight of the day was our very own Myrtle Pit-Keathly, who looked after the children as they were called up to perform. She escorted them to the platform and stood chatting with them, settling their nerves until the adjudicators were ready. Well done, Myrtle, and thank you so much!

Jean Hughes

GROUP NEWS

*Details of all groups' activities and plans can be found on our website at
<http://www.u3awelhat.org.uk/groups.html>*

Computer Discussion Groups

Do you want to find out more about what you can do on your computer? Or do you have questions or problems about your technology? If so – we have the answer!

Two new discussion groups are now running as follows:

Computer Discussion Group – for Microsoft Windows users, held on the first Thursday in each month from 9-30am to 11-30 am. If you use Windows XP, Vista, 7 or the new Windows 8, this is the group for you.

Apple Users Discussion Group is for Apple product users, held on the second Thursday in each month from 10am to 12pm (noon).

This group will be specifically for anyone who has an Apple product – that is to say Mac/iPad/iPod/iPhone.

The idea is to bring along your product/laptop (and a notepad!) and any questions or queries related to your device. If you do not have any specific questions initially just come along and listen to what other members of the group have to say – which can be valuable, as we will all learn from each other. Technology, as you know, is a “moving target”– and it is sometimes difficult to keep up to speed.

These meetings are proposed to be informal, fun and educational, not “geeky”, and are open to all skill levels

Our meetings are held at Welwyn Garden City Bowls Club, 288 Knightsfield, Welwyn Garden City AL8 7NQ. This is a good venue with easy access, directly opposite a bus stop and with plenty of parking space.

If you have any queries about the new discussion groups, or that you would like to have raised in our meetings, call me on 01707 328943 or 07887 528811; or email me at tonytutton1@yahoo.co.uk

Tony Tutton

Exploring London

Tony Lammiman has produced a splendid souvenir for the **Exploring London group**: *Exploring London: Highlights from 2010 to 2013*, a 16-page, full-colour photographic record of their trips through those four years. There are marvellous pictures of the group at St Paul's Cathedral, Borough of St James, the Bank of England, Canary Wharf, Greenwich, the Royal Albert Hall, Benjamin Franklin's House, the Inns of Court, Little

WELWYN & HATFIELD
USA

Exploring London

Highlights from 2010 to 2013



About Bridget & Dennis




They joined the Welwyn Hatfield USA in April 2010. In which time they have taken members on many memorable trips to London.

They have both worked very hard in arranging guides and details of the various trips.

The journey begins with members collecting together at Welwyn Garden City & Hatfield rail stations forming where possible into groups of four to achieve the best price for train journey.

That's when the fun starts with members new and old meeting to discuss the day ahead.

Thanks for all their efforts, the trips to London have been most enjoyable and great success.

Keep up the good work.

Tony & Joan

Venice, Tower Bridge, and on a Thames River trip. The last page is a tribute to Dennis Edwards and Bridget Durham who organised all the outings.



London History Group

In February, we decided on a change from the usual format of our meetings. Each member brought in a book or books about London that we were particularly fond of. In the first part we briefly introduced our books – what they were about and why we liked them. We laid them out on tables and during and after tea we had time to browse through them, chat and discuss.

Every one brought at least one book, many had two or three, and no two were the same. They covered the whole range – history, photos, old prints, maps, buildings, novels, quotations, transport. It was a great success, and also gave us more opportunity to socialise.

We are now into the second year since our group was formed. We meet monthly and usually have talks by members on a wide variety of subjects. In the past they have covered such topics as – Thames bridges and tunnels; the Underground; the London Beer Flood 1814; Livery companies; boroughs of London; places where people have worked; London Coal Tax Posts; Benjamin Franklin; the history of University College London.

In the first year we chose the Inns of Court as a group project, and following a guided tour in the summer, individual or small groups of people took on various aspects to research and then present. It was a huge subject and took up most of the year, interspersed with other talks.

We meet in the large Verulam Community Hall so there is space for more members. Not all members are Londoners; many have worked there, or just have an interest in what is the most splendid of cities!

Carolyn Furukawa



Photography Group



The Group began the Winter term by looking at the photos taken previously for their “Treasure Hunt”, held in the Christmas break; the topic had been interpreted in several different ways. Shown above is Peter Fox’s “Ten – The lunch queue”.





They took Architecture as their theme for the term, beginning with members' shots of Modern Architecture. We show Jean Tookey's "Canary Wharf". They saw a variety of photographs epitomising Codicote, Knebworth, Welwyn, Brookmans Park and Stevenage, learning about their history; and members' memory sticks, containing a variety of shots of castles, cathedrals, churches and palaces. Anita Hoyle showed how she had persuaded a large carp to leap out of her loo!

They discussed camera exposures for night photography, and took shots of reflections of a tabletop display of shiny items set on a striped cloth.

They examined several Photoshop processes, including the quick selection and transform tools, colour reducing and burning shadows, histograms and the Transform menu, and tried out Skew, Perspective and Distort, learning how to correct imbalances and lighting, and to resize pictures for emailing.

Short Walks Group

After several days of brilliant sunshine, the day of the walk dawned with heavy rain overnight and showers forecast. In spite of this, we set off on our inaugural walk from the Barn Theatre Car Park down Handside Lane and into the area above the North Lake. Gradually the rain ceased and we had a pleasant walk round the lakes, the highlight being the group of great crested grebes performing at one end of the lake. We completed the circuit of both lakes and returned back to Handside Lane. Each of us in turn had seen a different aspect of the area. As it was my first walk with other U3A members it was a pleasant experience. Hopefully by the fourth Tuesday of April, the weather will have improved and more of the group will wish to walk.

Please e-mail me, if you wish to receive details of the next walk – hildargoddard@gmail.com

Hilda Goddard

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

Margaret Hakansson

Margaret Clark, born and bred in Enfield, has lived in Hertfordshire all her life; but has left it many times, for visits to fascinating places.

Travel and drama, indeed, have been major themes of her life. After studying speech and drama at Turnford College, where she gained LGSM and LRAM qualifications, she taught those subjects at a convent boarding school, Hanbury Manor near Ware. A variety of jobs followed the school's closing: secretarial, for a school, then a Radio Corporation; and as a receptionist at IBM in Welwyn Garden City. She became a tour guide at Hatfield House, continuing this work for fifteen years. Meanwhile she was acting and directing with several local companies: the Barn Theatre, Digswell Players, and others in Hertford and Potters Bar. "My life has revolved around drama", she says.



Margaret acquired her surname on marrying Dennis Hakansson, son of a Swedish market gardener, and added child-rearing to her busy life. She became a member of our U3A some thirty years ago, first joining the History, Keep Fit and Creative Writing Groups.

Then an organiser was wanted to arrange theatre trips for U3A – choosing a production, assembling an audience, booking a coach, handling the finances –, and Margaret found herself ideally suited for this task, with her wide knowledge of plays and productions, as well as a splendid faculty for organization. She volunteered. Then, too, an organiser was needed to take over holiday travel groups, and Margaret assumed that mantle also, booking passages, hotels, guides, sight-seeing ... A happy group, who came to know each other very well, travelled together twice a year, making one trip in the UK and one abroad. Their destinations included Austria, Cyprus, Holland, Italy, Scotland, Sorrento ... but eventually all this became stressful. Margaret's last trip was a tour of Dyrham Park, Bristol, the Cheddar Gorge, Bath and Lacock Abbey in 2010.



Disembarking at Limoni, Lake Garda

In 2011 Margaret wrote in our newsletter –

“In the last sixteen years the Theatre Trips Group has made at least three trips each year, and seen some truly memorable shows. A matinée performance at the National was followed by a night-time trip on the London Eye.

“I was also organising U3A holidays; wherever there was a suitable theatre nearby, we have been to see the show: for instance, *Annie* at Swansea, *Enron* at the Bath Theatre Royal and *Screaming* at Pitlochry (when we all had to troop out of the theatre due to a fire alarm!).



Margaret and Peter Reeves – All Aboard the Royal Yacht, *Britannia!*

“The Watermill at Newbury is a favourite destination. This theatre has an excellent restaurant and we always have a good lunch before the performance.” The Theatre is a converted mill in the charming, tiny, rural village of Bagnor, near Newbury; visits there make a thoroughly enjoyable day out.

“Among the shows we shall always remember our trips to are: *Coram Boys, Mack and Mabel, Hot Mikado, War Horse, My Fair Lady, A Funny thing Happened ..., History Boys, Moonlight and Magnolias, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Guys and Dolls.*”

Since then trips both theatrical and touristy have continued – until last October Margaret suffered a very bad fall, which incapacitated her for some painful months. However, the good news is that she is again taking up the theatre reins. We all, with great gratitude, wish her a full recovery soon.

Hazel Bell

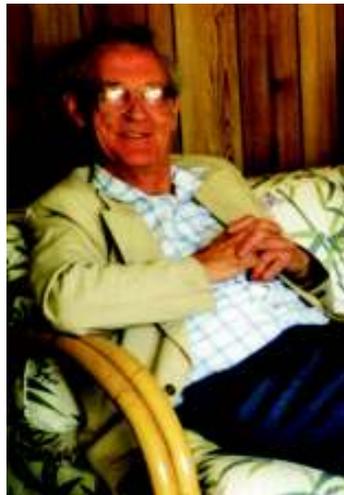
Obituary

Harry Stull 1923-2014

Sadly, Harry Stull died in February at the age of 91. He was an active member of the Play Reading Group for many years and attended the Wednesday meetings regularly. Harry was old enough to participate in the war and was assigned to the maintenance of Sunderland flying boats, so important in the Atlantic War against Nazi submarines. He maintained an interest in aircraft throughout his life and enjoyed visits to air museums and displays. He also had a passion for trains.

After the war Harry joined the civil service working within the Inland Revenue and probably soon found that this was a shut-off as far as conversation was concerned. However, amateur dramatics was a passion of his and he became active first on the stage and then as a recorder and historian for the Barn Theatre.

On retirement Harry joined the local Civil Service Retirement Fellowship. I first met him there, some twenty years ago.



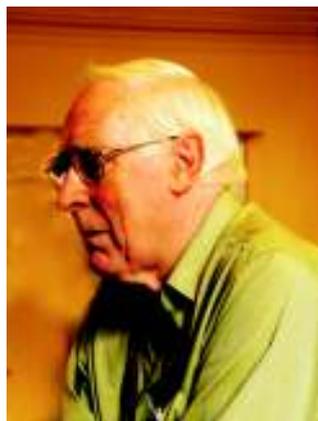
Together we ran trips to gardens, houses, museums and of course trains. However, a new organisation, U3A, appealing to a wider section of the retired population, was emerging and proved a greater attraction. After the death of his wife, Alice, Harry decided to join the U3A, and was enrolled into the Play Reading Group.

Harry joined many of the Theatre Trips organised by Margaret Hakansson, and wrote reviews of four for the Newsletter. He had a subtle sense of humour and a good turn of phrase; a person who ordered and drank a glass of wine at lunch but denied all knowledge of it when the bill came was said to suffer from selective amnesia!

We will miss Harry, his cheerful smile, his subtle wit and his friendship over many years.

Peter Lomer

It is with great sorrow that we announce that **Ron Benfield** passed away on Tuesday, 1st April. He was a brilliant photographer and a stalwart member of the Photography Group. His newsletter after each meeting was well-designed and beautifully written and kept us informed of what was happening. He was a really nice person, will be sadly missed, and long remembered.



Anita Hoyle

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Send copy and photographs to hkb@aidanbell.com

Wednesday meetings – Summer Term 2014

Doors open at 9.45; tea and coffee are served from 10.00 to 10.30 a.m.; the talk starts promptly at 10.45 a.m.

MAY

7, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Virginia Simpson: 'Where Do You Think We Worked?'

Virginia is the Co-ordinator of this WGC Heritage Project which began in June 2013. The objective is to discover Welwyn Garden City's industrial history in the 1920s to 1960s when many different companies located to the town – from construction to confectionery, pharmaceuticals to fashion.

14, Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Clare Fleck: '500 Years at Knebworth House'.

Clare worked at Luton Museum and then as a House Guide at Knebworth House which evolved into the role of part-time Archivist. She is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Lytton family archive, carries out research and is involved with the conservation of items in the House.

21, Hatfield

Dawn Cox: 'The Work of Wood Green Animal Centre'

From humble beginnings in London in 1924 the Wood Green Animal Centre has grown to become one of the leading animal welfare organisations in the UK, with three separate centres taking in animals of all kinds.

28, WGC

Jerry Stone: 'Space Exploration – The Cassini-Huygens Mission to Saturn and Titan'

In the 1980s Jerry was on the staff at the Science Museum where he covered Astronomy, Space and Exploration collections, including the Apollo 10 spacecraft. He is a fellow of the Interplanetary Society and the Royal Astronomical Society, and Director of the Mars Society UK.

JUNE

4, Hatfield

Speaker from Shaw's Corner: 'Shaw's Corner'

Shaw's Corner in Ayot St Lawrence was the primary residence of Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, from 1906 until his death in 1950 – now a historic National Trust property open to the public.

JUNE 11, WGC

Mervyn Edwards: 'Policing Environmental Protests – The Newbury Bypass.'

Mervyn was Operational Police Commander for all aspects of the policing of this controversial new road which was built in the late 1990s. Protesters, living in trees and tunnels, strongly opposed the building of the road and disrupted the work being carried out.

18, Hatfield

Keith Thompson: 'History of the Barn Theatre'

Keith is a member of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators and has acted and directed at the Barn Theatre for many years. This local theatre provides quality productions in what was originally a 17th century farm building – now a modern, well-equipped theatre.

25, WGC

Vic Botterill: 'Body Language 2'

We welcome Vic back for the second part of his talk. His thirty-plus years in the police have given him a unique insight into human behaviour.

JULY

2, Hatfield

Tom Yendell: 'Mouth and Foot Painting Artists'

Tom has a degree in Expressive Arts and is an artist with the Association of MFPA which represents eight hundred mouth and foot painting artists, who have no use of their hands, in seventy countries.

9, WGC

Laurence Smith: 'Fire Safety in the Home'

Laurence is a Firefighter from Green Watch, Welwyn Garden City. As part of their 'Full of Life' project which seeks to involve 'senior' members of the community, we will hear about the different aspects of the job, including fire safety in the home.

16, Hatfield

Garden Party: 2 pm–4 pm, Breaks Manor. Please bring garden chairs.

Next term starts on 10 September at Hatfield