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S T R A Y N E W S



Swinsty Reservoir

Maureen Rush

The Newsletter of Harrogate U3A

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Your New Committee for 2011/12

Chairman

David Davies — 871673

Vice Chairman

David Smithson — 861885

Secretary

Ruth Townrow — 886939

Membership Secretary

Pam Gilling

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Treasurer

Margaret Marks — 521480

Group Coordinator

Barbara Davy

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Programme Secretary

Roger Wilkins

Publicity

David Masterman

Committee members

Michael Moryson, Pauline Nolan, Lee

Parkes, Barbara Peel, and Carolyn

Watson

Chairman's Address

I feel privileged to have been elected at the September 2011 AGM as your chairman and am very conscious of the work of my predecessor Trica Ward and of her committee in their development of Harrogate U3A as such a substantial success.

Harrogate U3A has approx 830 members. In the UK as a whole there are now 837 U3As with 274,000 members total (Feb 2012 figures) which means that the average size of a U3A is approx 320 members. We at Harrogate may therefore be considered very large indeed.

With such a membership we are able to offer approx 50 interest groups ranging from Botanical Art to Writing for Pleasure as a means of catering for our members' interests and activities.

Our monthly open meetings at the Cairn Hotel now regularly attract 120 members to listen to a range of excellent speakers address a wide diversity of topics.

However, we cannot afford to become complacent. Size brings strength but can also bring problems.

I am well aware that some very large U3As have had to restrict entry to groups, create waiting lists for potential new members and are unable adequately to accommodate members at their AGM or open meetings. Additionally, in these

cases communication and engagement with the membership becomes attenuated.

Even a successful U3A such as ours must be sensitive to these potential problems and devise strategies accordingly.

Every U3A has a responsibility to "encourage the formation of new U3As in neighbouring areas." (Ref: Growth Matters--Third Age Trust, May 2011) and we must welcome the recent formation of Wetherby U3A and the imminent creation of Ripon U3A. We have provided and will continue to offer support as these and other local U3As launch.

Interest group leaders are at the heart of a successful U3A and we are fortunate that we have so many capable and enthusiastic people shouldering this role.

I would like to encourage members to take an active part in helping leaders with the running of their groups be it administration, coordination, or secretarial.

Such diffusion of leadership is essential to the future health of groups and of our U3A.

Finally, I am fortunate in having a committed committee where each member has willingly accepted a specific role appropriate to their skills and experience. The contact details of committee members and of our key communications specialists viz Val Cooke, Brian Graham, Chris Rush are listed in this edition of Stray News.

You will find them all willing to respond readily to any appropriate issues that you might care to raise.

I personally am happy to hear from members at any time and would like to offer you my best wishes in your U3A explorations.

David W Davies

Membership

Well over 100 members did not renew their subscriptions this year. However, our numbers remain fairly constant at 840 since over 100 new members have joined us. We welcome them and hope they are enjoying some of the many activities open to them.

We are now able to send 'U3A News' updates to well over half of our members by email. However, many of the messages have been returned to us because of their incorrect addresses. I have checked many of them on the subscription forms and find that I have read them incorrectly or the member has changed his address.

So please remember to let me know (by email) if you now have an email address or have changed it since sending me your subscription form.

If you have not been receiving emails, from Harrogate U3A and would like to be on the circulation list please contact Brian Graham by email at u3a.harrogate@googlemail.com

Pam Gilling

South American Trio

BRAZIL (from brasil wood), **URUGUAY** (from the Indian for “River of Birds”), and **ARGENTINA** (from argentum, the Latin name for silver)

Early 16th century explorers came to what they mistakenly thought was the mouth of a river, named what was to become a mega city of 11,000,000, after January and the saint of the day, Rio de Janeiro so São Sebastião.

Fast forward to January this year as my plane descended to land, the blackness of the sea in late evening was set against a necklace of lights spreading miles inland and into the distance along the many bays beyond. With arms outstretched the statue of Christ the Redeemer, 100 feet tall, atop of Corcovado or Hunchback Mountain, 2,340 feet, has welcomed all since 1931.

Next morning from my 20th floor hotel room I made the most of the view, from the sea to just one of the famous beaches and the ever welcome sight of palm trees as my visit would be a very brief. The coach ride along the seafont took in some of the luxury apartments and hotels with the cathedral just seen among the higher buildings.

At 11am, I joined the other passengers to board the Azamara cruise ship to later that day start the journey to Buenos Aires, with four ports of call along the way. The first two were small historical, picturesque Brazilian towns.

PARATI, where the past is always present in the all cobbled streets and low colonial houses, the front rooms of some are now shops for selling the colourful native arts and crafts.

ILHABELA, was a site for the slave trade, and bygone visitors were pirates and smugglers. UNESCO declared it a national monument in 1966.

Both towns have beautiful churches and share a background of jungle and mountains.

After two days at sea we arrived in **PUNTA DEL ESTE**, Uruguay’s top ultra modern holiday resort.

Most people know of three things of Uruguay,

- (1) They won the first football World Cup,
- (2) The sinking of the German battleship the Graf Spee,
- (3) Fray Bentos tinned corned beef, but what about, a town and department called Treinta y Tres, 33?

Tiny beside its giant neighbours, Uruguay has an area of 68,000 square miles, compared with England and Wales at 58,000, and has 400 miles of unspoiled beaches.

There is plenty of room, therefore, for the 3.5 million people and the cattle and sheep that outnumber them several times each.

By the way, in Fray Bentos, the meat-processing factory has closed, but the town of 26,000 people now has an industrial heritage museum, a paper pulp mill and the international river bridge to Argentina.

While in Punta Del Este we visited a modern art gallery set in acres of parkland and the house of artist Carlos Paez Vilaro, all white and reminding me of Gaudi's style without and Picasso's within.

Another explorer was right when he in effect said, "I see a hill", as **MONTEVIDEO**, with half the people of Uruguay, does have a hill just a few hundred feet high. It's a laid-back and friendly city with a fine natural harbour.

In **BUENOS AIRES**, the temperature was high but with a good breeze, the air was good for the sightseeing tour to the Plaza de Mayo with its tall palm trees, flowers, the Casa Rosada where Eva Peron and her husband addressed the crowds, the Cathedral, and other historical buildings. The tour continued to the La Boca district, full of very bright colourful houses where dockyard workers from Europe used what materials they could find including left over paint.

The last day included a Tango Show, it takes two but there were twenty dancers with music from accordions, piano and violins.

The ride down the Avenida de Julio claimed to be the world's widest, completed a perfect holiday.

Derek Evans

Open Meetings

*23rd March	The Musical Theatre of Gilbert & Sullivan	Bernard Lockett
27th April	A Taste of Africa	Sam Oakes
25th May	Astronomy – What's out There?	Martin Whillock
22nd June	End of the Pier	John Wallis

***N.B.** Please note the change to the subject and speaker for the meeting on 23 March

Bernard Lockett: Amongst other things Bernard is a trustee of the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival which takes place annually in Buxton.

Sam Oakes is a professional photographer based in Harrogate. His work has been published all over the world and his illustrated talk on Africa will include examples of his work.

Martin Whillock is a member of Easingwold U3A and Secretary of York Astronomical Society. His illustrated talk will include a tour of the Solar System plus something on what is further away

John Wallis visited us last year when he entertained with "The Rise and Fall of Music Hall/Variety". This time we have a summer theme with "End of the Pier" and can expect another typical John Wallis afternoon.

Roger Wilkins

Around Harrogate

NHS Seminar

Golden opportunity or unholy mess; is the Harrogate District prepared for the biggest changes to the NHS and social care in recent times?

On Tuesday 27 March 2012 Harrogate and Area CVS is hosting an event at the Cairn Hotel in Harrogate to bring together key players from the voluntary & community sector, NYCC, NHS NYY and local GPs involved in the NHS reforms and social care in our area. The desired outcome of the event is to improve understanding of what different partners can offer to each other and strengthen partnerships between local voluntary and community organisations and emerging Health & Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Event details:

- Time: 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.
- Refreshments and sandwich lunch provided
- No charge
- Ample parking

Programme

- Keynote presentations, workshop discussions and recommendations on the next steps to ensure that Harrogate District residents are in the best position to access good quality health and social care

If you are interested in attending please e mail bev@harrogatecvs.org.uk to reserve your place and further details will be issued once the programme is finalised.

If you would like to contribute a paper, help run a workshop or have suggestions about how the event should be facilitated please contact Karen Weaver at HACVS Karen@harrogatecvs.org.uk

This event is supported by the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action (navca)

Do older people have a big enough say in the decisions that affect their life?

One way of getting older people's voices heard is through a local Forum. Forums are independent, run by older people for older people and give members a chance to have their say. Forums can influence decision makers on matters that are important to every day lives and campaign on issues that members feel strongly about. There are several Forums in other Parts of North Yorkshire but nothing currently in the Harrogate District.

Harrogate & Area Council for Voluntary Service have been asking people in the Harrogate District who are aged over 55 about the best way to have a say on the issues which affect their lives. They wanted to find out from older people themselves whether they would be interested in having a forum and produced a short survey that could be accessed online.

Lots of people took part in the survey and the results are currently being analysed so watch this space!

If you are interested to find out more or would like to register your interest in being part of a new older people's voice group contact Christine Boxall at carerstimeoff@harrogatecvs.org.uk or call her on 01423 561061

New venue for table tennis players!

The Harrogate Racquets Club (Firs Road, Harrogate, HG2 8HA) is now operating a club afternoon for recreational play on Thursdays 2-4.30 pm. Anyone is welcome to join us at any age or ability level! A visitor's fee of £2 per session will be charged for non-members for the first three sessions. Please wear trainers and, if possible, bring a bat. For further information contact Sarah Jackson on 01423 540466 or Janet Carby-Hall on 01423 879304.

A New U3A for Ripon

The Ripon U3A started last month and already has a committee. Those of us living in the north of the Harrogate area may well find activities closer to home in future.

The Chairman, Dorothy Taylor, said that they were embarking on an exciting voyage of discovery, where older people could pursue a wide variety of educational and leisure activities just for fun. 20 interest groups have already been set up ranging from table tennis, singing, languages, book groups, history, theatre visits, and photography.

There will be regular monthly meetings at the Spa hotel in Ripon, the first of which will be at 10 30am on the 13th March when the speaker will be Roger Watkins a countryside Ranger from Swaledale who will give a Photo lecture on his work.

There will also be details of where and when interest groups meet and an opportunity to join them.

More details available from Sybil Whiting on: 01765 698565.

An Invitation from Settle

Settle Rotary Club is holding its 4th annual Settle Saunter on Saturday 19 May 2012 with four distances (3,10, 15, or 26 miles) on offer over a scenic and occasionally demanding cross-country route.

The entry fee is reduced for ages 65+. There is refreshment enroute and a hot meal at the finish.

Further information about the event and an entry form for download can be obtained at www.settlerotary.org.uk.

We would be delighted to host any of your U3A members who wish to take part.

Bob Hart 01729 830299
Event Organiser

Stop Crime (Theft) Event

Community Safety Partnership are hosting a Stop Crime (Theft) Event. Free advice and information on how to protect your property. Friday 16th March between 3pm and 7pm at St Mark's Church, Leeds Road, Harrogate.

Warning about Cylinder Locks

Euro cylinder locks

Following recent media coverage in West Yorkshire, North Yorks. Police have issued the message which is reproduced below.

Following concerns raised by West Yorkshire Police relating to the vulnerability of Euro cylinder style locks used mainly on uPVC doors, North Yorkshire Police has issued advice on the following site: <http://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8291>

The recommendation is that all vulnerable doors using Euro-Profile cylinders be upgraded to incorporate 'Break Secure' cylinders.

Concessionary Bus Passes

The following applies only to first time application. If you already hold a concessionary bus pass a renewal notification will be received prior to expiry date.

The existing issuing office at Victoria Car Park closed in December 2011. The service is now available from Harrogate library from Monday to Saturday during library opening hours.

See the links

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14283> (**bus pass - older people**) or

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14301> (**bus pass - disabled people**) for more information about concessionary passes. The older people page also includes an eligibility checker.

Harrogate Petanque

The project to convert the semi-derelict, Pier Head site at the top of Montpellier Gardens near Bettys to play Petanque (Boule) is a major step closer.

Planning for the installation of four courts has been approved by Harrogate Borough Council and the development is expected to be ready by the beginning of May 2012.

The 'Pier Head Bouledrome' will be run by Harrogate Montpellier Petanque Club (HMPC) which is being sponsored by the Harrogate based financial services company, Ellis Bates.

We'll be making it as accessible as we can whether you want to join the Club and play regularly, or for visitors and the occasional players who will be able to hire boules from the Oxfam shop on Montpellier Hill.

A prime objective of the Club will be to raise money for charity. As well as the Oxfam link, Harrogate MPC will be raising money for Saint Michael's Hospice by running a summer long, competition for teams of three from across the Harrogate community.

Further information is available on the Club's website: www.harrogatempc.org or you can get in touch by e-mail: info@harrogatempc.org, or phone: 07856 897086

Modern Technology

The Group ran as a series of meeting in 2011. Presentation notes can be accessed via the website.

Currently, the group is dormant. It could be restarted if new topics are suggested or as a repeat exercise. email me with your ideas.

Last year, members presented everyday topics such as

- Blogging - and we had a blog but its not our scene
- Digital TV - we were ready for the changeover
- HD TV - ready or full but your new digital recorder needs renewing.
- Mobile phone Use - now UK catches up with Africa with money transfer.
- Facebook- so intrusive and we don't want it ; but you have an account to keep up with what your neighbour or your children are doing.
- Twitter- tell the world what you are doing ; essential for ego, organising a party, a flash mob or a riot.
- iPod and MP3 players - shut out the world but where does the music come from?
- Ebay- the best recycling tool ever- and the biggest shop window.

- Bluetooth - move your pictures from your mobile to computer; send a wireless message to the next table or down to the servants; essential for delivery men.
- YouTube - watch your favourite video clips; send your family videos round the world. We don't need it but we have an account to show you our group meeting at www.youtube.com (search Harrogate U3A)
- Emails away from home - yahoo, gmail, hotmail, IMAG etc. No more getting away from it all.
- Kindle - download and carry 100's of books in your pocket - but Kindle won't read library eBooks (yes eBooks are available from your library to your computer - FREE)
- iPhone and Smart phones - Email, Apps and Android. Not sure that we need the spirit level but the satnav helps us to find our way home.
- Skype- great for free video chat; "grandad you do look old."
- Digital Cameras -choose a camera then, swamp yourself in photos
- IPAD - can't afford one - but top of my looting list.

Brian Graham
u3a.harrogate@googlemail.com

Is your head in the clouds?

Jill Pullman's is. I was about to include an item on web storage and sharing when I received a document from Jill using Microsofts Skydrive. Apple users will already be familiar with the iCloud but Microsoft and Google also have similar web facilities partially free. It is possible to store documents, photos etc in your private space and you can also share with others either public or by providing a link. A description can be found at http://askbobrankin.com/cloud_computing.html. You can search there for a Google docs and Word Web App comparison.

Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and similar social networking sites are also cloud based in other words on remote servers.

Chris Rush

GETTING OLD

I think I must be getting old
Things don't work as they should
Am I really so decrepit?
My mind used to be so good
I get into a tizzy when I cannot find my key
I search the house in every nook
But the damn thing won't appear
It's getting into a habit
Things simply disappear
Then just when I have given up
Declare the search in vain
I find it in my pocket
It's my memory again.
Oh damn and bother, blast and hell
Is it really any wonder?
I play a losing game
It's alright for the young ones
They haven't got a clue
They dance all night and work all day
Just like I used to do
Now when I get up in the morning
It takes me all my time
To wash and dress and brush my hair
And give my shoes a shine
I feel as if I'm cracking up
My energies caput
I'd love to go out hiking
But I've got a gammy foot
Yes, getting olds a funny thing
You long to stop the clock
Return to days when times were good
When I wore a mini frock
Imagine that, it's hard I know
But I have had my time
I've cycled in the country

My figure looked just fine
It isn't fair, this growing old
It catches unawares
Your joints start getting creaky
You're always feeling cold
Yet there are compensations
It isn't all downhill
You can please yourself in what you do
Now isn't that a thrill
A cosy room a blazing fire
The telly close at hand
A little sip of sherry
Makes you feel so grand
It isn't worth the hassle
You can't hold back the years
Live out each day as best you can
Forget about your fears
I know I'm pretty ancient
It's obvious to all
But inside all the wrinkly bits
I don't feel old at all
Inside I'm still a youngster
With all my life ahead
I dream of all the things I'd do
If I were young, instead
Of being in my dotage
A vintage OAP
Still I can sing and write a bit
So it's not too bad being me.

Ruth Alexander 30th December 2011

Healthy Eating / Vegetarian Cooking



In January, 12 of us had an outing to MANGOS Vegetarian Restaurant in Wetherby for our Christmas meal. The food, cooked for us by the owner, was delicious.

We all sat together and enjoyed each other's company.

In February we cooked a healthy meal. The menu was:

Starter: Cheesy Pesto

Mushrooms

Main Course: Herb Crumbled Haddock Fillet with new

potatoes and broccoli

Sweet: Mincemeat, Cranberry and Apple topped with ground almond sponge

As you can imagine we all thoroughly enjoyed this meal at a cost of £4 per head.

This is a very popular class and everyone joins in to prepare and cook the food.

Pat Turtle

Singing for Pleasure

The choir had a very successful 2011 performing seven concerts, three of them all being in the same week.

We very proudly sang for the Mayor of Harrogate and council members at the council office chambers for Christmas, which was a



very entertaining and pleasurable evening. We have five concerts already booked for this year and a charity concert is on the cards for later this year.

Our waiting list gets longer and longer.

Elizabeth Turner

Painting

Again we have been working on a varied and, sometimes challenging, programme. We painted 'Autumn Trees', a portrait in pastels or watercolour and 'City Shapes'. In early December we visited York to its Art Society exhibition and on December 13 we had a formal critique by Peter, each submitting two pieces of work.

In January we had an intense two-week drawing course, then our post Xmas lunch at the Ascot House Hotel.

We are currently wrestling with a collage and acrylic project on 'Market Stalls'. They are turning out to be very colourful and imaginative!

A small group of us are looking forward to a visit to Paris in late March

The group meets each Tuesday throughout the year. There are two groups, a morning and an afternoon one. If you are interested in drawing and painting, ring our group leader, Peter Kearney on 864358 for more information.



*Esme Paterson
Peter Kearney*

Croquet

Croquet season is approaching!

The U3A Croquet Group, which is part of Bishop Monkton Croquet Club, is already making plans for the new season which starts in mid April.

The section is limited to 40 members, and currently reminders are going to existing members to see if they wish to enrol again this year. Most are saying they do, so it is likely that only a few of those on the waiting list will be lucky

The section plays on Monday and Friday afternoons and most sessions are very well supported. Each afternoon includes tea which is always popular!

The group will again be playing in a number of friendly matches and hoping to repeat the successes of last season.

The leader is **Dawn Hey**.



Proposed Groups

Craft Group

Jenny Stacey is keen to get the Harrogate U3A Craft Group up and running. She is a qualified and experienced tutor retired from working in further education. She currently runs a craft class in Huby and helps to run the Leeds U3A craft club and is also a public speaker. But she does need someone to help look for a venue, take care of the money, refreshments etc.

Her idea is that the class could meet on a Saturday morning, once a month and she would do some crafting and encourage members to lead some classes.

This sounds like a wonderful opportunity to have a skilled leader who needs some assistance as she lives in Huby.

Hopefully some of those who did papercraft before will be interested. She is a paper crafter--and the group would make cards in different techniques including - tea-bag folding, iris cards, quilling, seasonal ones, mens and ladies cards, boxes, paper flowers, crackers and Christmas decorations.

If anyone is interested in joining the class and/or can help with admin - please ring Jenny on: 01423-734384 mob: 07803-717659 email: jennyspeaker@yahoo.co.uk

Dolls' Houses

Reading an article in this month's Saga Magazine about the U3A I saw that in West Wiltshire there is a Dolls' House Miniatures group. This set me thinking as I have several Dolls' Houses and wondered if any other U3A members are into this hobby – if so would you like to meet up on a regular basis – not sure what we would do at this stage but if anyone is interested please contact jeanmtweddle@btopenworld.com

Jean Tweddle

Musical Appreciation

This potential new group has had a delay. John Roho is not able to start this group at present. Hopefully problems will be solved soon.

Upholstery and Furniture Restoration

This is a very exciting new venture. At present Andrew is searching for suitable premises so if anyone has a good idea please let him know. Also if you are interested to join this group - do give him a ring. Andrew Middlemiss on: 01423 862790

GROUP NEWS

Updates

Bowls Group

We will be trying to get a group together on Wednesday mornings at 10.00 am commencing the 9th May, initially for 6 weeks at Bishop Monkton Bowling Club. Everyone is welcome, and equipment will be provided. The cost will be £2 per session. If you have already requested information I will be in contact again nearer the time. Beginners are welcome and basic tuition will be provided. For more information, or to book your place, call 01423 522820.

David Blyfield

Calligraphy

After four years of struggling for members we now have a group of 14. It has been a hard time and I have often felt like giving up, but it has been worth it. Our members really enjoy the meetings and thanks to Diana and Carol are making progress. Because we now have two teachers/advisors we are able to practice two different types of script. At the moment we are practicing copperplate and gothic both very different hands. We still have room for anyone else who would like to join and as we are at different levels it does not matter if one doesn't join at the beginning of the term.

We meet on the second Friday of the month from 2 - 4 pm at Community House. Why not come and try your hand at a very rewarding craft. 01423 509796

Ruth Ogle

Group News (Cont'd)

Gardening

We meet the 2nd. Friday of the month, at the Community Room on Bilton Lane for our indoor meetings, we also visit gardens of interest in the area, our 1st. visit in 2011 was to Newby Hall, one of the finest gardens in the north, our 2nd. was to a lovely private garden Thorpe Lodge, on the Bishop Monkton to Ripon Rd. We were lucky, as this was the final year that the owners were opening their garden to the public.

Our main trip by coach, was to Raby Castle and Gardens, at Staindrop Co. Durham, the castle is well worth a visit, it is one of the finest in the north.

I was for some year`s in the 1970`s Head Gardener at Raby, when the gardens were run commercially, with plant sales from the garden shop, and surplus to local shops in Barnard Castle & Bishop Auckland, & the Team Valley wholesale market in Gateshead.

2012 started with a talk by Joe Maidan (Grow With Joe) who some will know from his programme on radio Leeds, called Tim and Joe, which he runs from his potting shed, at his nursery on the Harrogate to Pool Road. Joe also writes for some gardening magazines and judges at many Horticultural shows; a great character, and amusing speaker.

To bring us up to date, this month Tony Rymer of the Alpine Society spoke on "Bulbs for All Seasons", explaining which part of the world they came from, and the best treatment for them. Tony is also a guide at Harlow Carr.

Ian Wallace and myself have run the group for Ten years this month. We first met round the table at the home of Margaret Douglas, one of the founder members, she tells me there were 19 round the table, we now have around 40 members.

Ian has not been well of late so we wish him a speedy recovery.

Richard H. Smith

Group News (Cont'd)**History of Art – Art of the 20th Century**

At the beginning of the 20th century the avant-garde of the Edwardian period moved on from Victorian **ideals** of art. They asked: What is painting about? Does it have to be a mirror of reality? Is there more to an object than its physical appearance?

The first movement Brian covered is Fauvism, who departed from photographic reality, to where colour became more important, and details less so. They used broad brush strokes of pure raw colour in their landscapes.

By 1907 Fauvism was giving way to Cubism, one of the most influential and revolutionary movements in art. Then the bright colours faded – giving way to darker tones, and structure/pattern in the composition. They refuted time honoured theories of art as an imitation of nature, no longer using one point perspective, rejecting classic techniques like making distant objects smaller, shading, foreshortening. Their objects looked flat, two dimensional, forms were split up into planes, facet like shapes. (A bit like the pixels in digital television!) In 1911 they were adding texture, wood grain, and montage.

Expressionism is the most difficult to define of the 'isms'. Nature was exaggerated and distorted to express man's terrible passions. It was popular in Germany and northern Europe between approx 1910 – 1924. Abstract Expressionism, in which there is no obvious subject, developed from this

In the 1920's and 30's Dada and Surrealism evolved, and then post W W II, a time most of us can recall, came Pop Art and Op Art.

Brian also covered art in war in the 20c, and the sculpture of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

We still have more topics this term, but Brian has explained to us that when appreciating this type of art, we should not apply the same criteria we would normally use, but to look for shapes, texture, pattern and colour in the compositions. Our group continues to have good attendance and rapt attention at all of Brian's lectures.

Group News (Cont'd)**History of Art — A Plea**

Having retired from teaching in 2004 I was disappointed that my offers to various Adult Education providers to run a series of History of Art lectures were falling on stony ground.

A chance conversation with Peter Kearney at a fundraising event alerted me to the existence of U3A and so in 2006 I started the History of Art group.

Since then I have given some seventy talks covering The Renaissance, British Art, The Baroque and Rococo, Impressionism and presently on the Art of the twentieth century. We regularly have some eighty members enrolled and usually have to close the list. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from September through to Easter.

It would be good if there were other U3A members who would be prepared to give talks (lasting about an hour maximum) on Art Historical subjects, not only to give me a rest but to give those who sign up a rest from me! If you fancy giving us a talk please contact me either at briansouter@hotmail.com or on (01423) 864043.

Brian Souter

Keep Fit

This group is continuing very happily and is really full, but if you are thinking of joining us at Jennyfield on a Tuesday afternoon at 2pm please give Val Cooke a call on 01423 506837 or email: valerie@evcooke.fsnet.co.uk The class is taken by Sandra - our instructor for the last four and a half years, who is experienced in exercise and aerobics for the more mature person! We work on a termly basis and plan to celebrate together with a lunch during the Easter holidays. The provisional start of the Summer term will be 24th April.

Val Cooke

Group News (Cont'd)

Looking at Churches – date changes

The next meeting will be on: 28th February, followed by - 13th March and 27th March and finally 3rd April. Contact Michael Crosby on 01423 561849 for more information.

Mahjong Group

Because of decreasing numbers in the more experienced group, I decided to amalgamate the two groups which has proved very successful.

The Beginners' Group are now in the realms of being experienced so I have introduced the members to Special Hands. While these do tend to slow down the play, it gives the mind more to think about and is proving to be quite enjoyable. I have some new members who are complete beginners but they are picking up the game quite quickly.

Unfortunately I have no room for more new members at the moment but I will open a Waiting List if necessary. Numbers do fluctuate, especially during the summer months so I could be ringing new members in the near future.

The Mahjong Group meets at 2, Grayson House, Beech Grove, Harrogate at 2.00pm every other Wednesday. The meetings in March will be on 7th and 21st.

Celia Hall

Painting & Drawing 3

The group is up and running again in the new facilities at Mowbray Community Church - Tuesday afternoon, 1-4pm. We love it's space and warmth.

Ripon U3A's beginning saw one faithful member transfer, but we have welcomed a good number of new participants. We are blessed with people with ideas and keep each other on our toes as we tackle various projects.

There is a general appreciation for our time together and we enjoy the banter as well as the opportunity to draw and paint.

Margaret Willan

Group News (Cont'd)

Reading for Pleasure

We are now into our twentieth year. Are we the longest running group? We met in September to decide the programme for the coming year, and we have chosen some testing books to read, which will also promote a lot of lively discussion.

Our first book for the year was "A month in the Country" by J.L.Carr, which was followed by "Major Pettigrew's Last stand".

The most challenging book so far has been "The Children's Book" by A.S.Byatt which received mixed reviews at the meeting in January.

Our book for February was "The Help" by Kathleen Stockett, which focuses on the treatment of black people in the Southern States of America during the 1960s. One of our members had lived there during the this time and was able to give a first hand experience of the situation.

Our current book, which we will be discussing in March, is "Hare with Amber Eyes" by Edmund De Waal.

Unfortunately, I am still unable to take any more member into this group as we are already 14 in number. I have had a lot of pleasure in co-ordinating this group. I have found new authors, and have met so many fellow reader friends.

Jill Pullman

Table Tennis

Table tennis is providing popular with U3A members.

There is now an active group playing each Tuesday afternoon, from 2 to 4pm at Bishop Monkton Village Hall.

Table tennis is great fun and provides a very healthy work out each week. The standard of play varies from beginners to those returning to the game after perhaps 30 or 40 years without playing to some really accomplished players who are glad to coach those less experienced.

The current quarter continues each Tuesday afternoon until March 13, and then resumes after a short break.

Group News (Cont'd)

There are currently just a few vacancies and anyone interested in trying it out should contact the leader, Richard Field by phoning him on 01765 677795 or e-mailing him at BMtabletennis@aol.com

Richard Field

Tai Chi — It is the Year of the Dragon

This group has consolidated and we are enjoying our weekly Tai Chi class. There is always room for more people and they are able to be assimilated into the group quite easily. Recently members of the Group went to the annual Chinese Dinner at the Horoscope restaurant to celebrate the Chinese New Year which was much enjoyed.

For more information contact Val Cooke on: 01423 506837 or email: valerie@evcooke.fsnet.co.uk

Val Cooke

Textile Crafts

After doing some card-making at our December meeting, we started the New Year by finishing previous projects and preparing for a new one.

This is concerned with goldwork - an embroidery technique some centuries old. The high point of English goldwork was in the fourteenth century when Opus Anglicanum was sought all over Europe and there was a further flowering of the work in the Elizabethan age. In the last fifty years, it has revived in popularity and we're lucky in having modern work of high quality to inspire us.

Although it's called goldwork, most of the gilding is artificial and is done to produce various types of thread: "rococo" is a zigzag thread, "purl" is hollow and "twist" speaks for itself. The group is starting with a small, floral design which will give the opportunity to use different threads and techniques.

We are having a mini-exhibition at the Open Meeting on March 23rd and hope to show work in progress.

Julie Clark

Miscellaneous

International Gilbert and Sullivan Association

Are this year holding a week long **CLASSICfest**, in Harrogate from 21st - 27th August - This is a festival of Opera and Operetta.

"We have a fantastic programme for this first event with performances of Quaker Girl, Chess, Merry Widow, Die Fledermaus, A Little Night Music, HMS Pinafore and The Mikado. We will have a choral spectacular in the Harrogate International Centre with a choir of 600 plus voices celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with an extravaganza of the very best of English music. A Festival Fringe is currently being finalised and will include an afternoon of Flanders and Swann and a visit from The Mousetrap Man."

Details can be accessed from G & S web site <http://www.gsfestivals.org>

Voluntary Arts

The following is an on line resource that may be of use to some of our groups. Only one level of resource is free. The links below allow you to find out more. Our own resource centre may offer as much or more.

"Everything you need to run your arts or crafts group

Running Your Group is a web-based resource designed to you all the tools they need to start up, fund, market and manage your organisation."

<http://www.learningpool.com/runningyourgroup/welcome/>

<http://www.voluntaryarts.org/news/>

Communications

Stray Bits April 2012 edition. Copy by 14th April please to: Val Cooke, Editor, Stray Bits – Tel. 506837 or email: valerie@evcooke.fsnet.co.uk

Web Site – www.u3a-harrogate.org.uk and send input to: u3a.harrogate@gmail.com

Harrogate U3A membership enquiries by telephone – 07986 361051

Stray News - next issue

Deadline for contributions: July 17 2012 (planned publication date August 2012 with AGM papers)

Send contributions to: stray_news@yahoo.co.uk

Or by post to:

Chris Rush Editor, *Stray News*, 3 New Row, Birstwith, HARROGATE, HG3 2NH

Telephone: 01423 770017

A Story in a Hundred Words

In the lecture hall of the 'Buckinghamshire Academy for Young Ladies', the speaker, known to his public as Charles Kingston Plantagenet Pomeroy (but known to his mother as Charlie Simpson) was delivering a long and boring lecture entitled "How to write a successful historical Novel."

He ended with the words..... 'whilst not forgetting *brevity* ladies, you *must* include the four essentials: - Religion; Aristocracy; Sex; and Mystery.'

In a matter of minutes, Speedy Susan, late for an anticipated steamy assignation, handed in the following:-

'Oh my God' said the Duchess, 'I think I am pregnant, I wonder who done it?'

Ron Williamson

Competition Time

Write a short story of exactly 50 words. Words used in any title do not count in the total.

To keep you out of mischief on a Spring afternoon enter our competition. No prizes except the pleasure of seeing the winners' pieces in print.

Entries to ***kenaitch@btinternet.com*** or by post to ***Ken Hulme, 26 Rutland Drive, Harrogate HG1 2NS***. CLOSING DATE 30TH APRIL. Given sufficient support Competition Time could become a regular feature of Stray News.

Science

Indirectly I have been supplied with a list of contacts at Leeds University who may well be willing to give talks in this field.

Is anyone out there interested in reforming the group ?

Sheena Pawson

For Sale

(1) Gents Falcon 'town and country' bicycle, 21 gears, good condition, little used.

Complete with panniers. — £25.

(2) Mantis Tiller / Cultivator, complete with a lawn 'edge tidy' attachment.

A lightweight two-stroke tiller / cultivator ideal for breaking soil down to fine tilth ready for setting seeds and planting out seedlings. — £50

Ring David Broadley on 01423 872476

Editor's Notes

I took over the editorship of Stray News from Maurice Line in Spring 2007 for Issue 25. I tried to introduce some changes to improve readability and interest and recently allowed myself to be convinced that an A5 format was acceptable. Mainly because it allowed me to introduce some colour at less cost.

This is the second issue in the A5 format that is much easier for our distributors to handle as no folding is involved and there is less risk of incurring extra postage.

Because I am receiving copy at the last minute more often than used to be the case I find that starting a layout before the deadline is no longer possible. For the next issue I am therefore giving myself more time after the deadline.

Five years on it is perhaps time for some other enthusiast to take on production of Stray News after the August Issue.

I would be happy to talk to anyone interested in giving it a go.

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Mid-Winter Fire by Eileen Crank

U3A Outing to York

Are you interested in joining a U3A outing to the National Railway Museum, York?

Date: Wednesday, 23rd May

Time: 10.30 am from Trinity Church, plus pick up at The Marquis of Granby, Knaresborough

Cost: A modest £5

Please contact Barbara Peel, 74, Westville Oval, Harrogate, HG1 3JW

Tel: 538150, email: ivan.peel@talktalk.net