

Dear members,

August is proving to be a busy month. We have two publicity events, and we would welcome any friendly faces popping in for a chat at either event. Last month's talk with Laura Jones was stunning, as you can see from the summary below, and next month's talk should be really interesting too. It's about Queen Victoria's children. They married into several European Royal families and their influence on 20th C history was huge.

We are having to move the date of September's meeting as the car park will not be available to us at the Boniface Centre. I do hope you can make the alternative date of the 13th September as I know water quality is a hot topic for us all.

You can now pay at open meetings using your credit/bank card as we are now operating a card reader. It's helpful too if you're looking to renew your membership. We'll still be taking cash of course, but I know it's getting increasingly hard to have £1.50 in change.

Finally, I'm putting in a plea for a new Deputy Treasurer. I described the job of the Treasurer at the end of this newsletter as part of our series on the roles of Committee members. Please look at this and think seriously if you can help out. The deputy acts as a back-up and while being very helpful for the treasurer, is not an arduous role.

Liz Ouldrige (Chair)

Important dates

August 5th Publicity Stand at the Morchard Bishop Village Vintage Rally and Fair Day from midday.

August 12th Publicity Stand at Tesco's Crediton 10-12

August 15th Monthly coffee morning for all at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am

August 16th Open Meeting at the Boniface Centre: Stewart Raine 'The Merry Wives of Saxe-Coburg'. Refreshments from 9:30am, the talk starts at 10:15.

September 13th NEW DATE Open Meeting at the Boniface Centre: Peter Chave 'A Century of Water Quality'.

September 10th Monthly coffee morning for all at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am

July's Talk: The Origins of Mass Production Fashion by Laura Jones

Laura has a background in the fashion industry. She has designed and made costumes for films and TV, worked for couturiers, researched the origins of mass production in clothes, had her own fashion label, taught fashion at Plymouth University, and in her latest project has a shop in Crediton called 'The Makers' Boutique' where you can buy locally produced garments or even learn how to make your own garments. Well worth a visit!

Laura told us that before the industrial revolution, clothes were made in the home and were 'made to measure'. The very rich would employ tailors to visit their homes and construct garments to their own personal size and shape. At a lower level, most garments would have been made by the ladies of the house. However, there was a thriving trade in second-hand clothing and the poorest members of society largely wore these.

The industrial revolution saw tailoring moving from domestic situations into commercial ones. However, clothes were still 'made to measure'. This all changed with the advent of Elias Moses, a London-based Jewish tailor. His importance in the development of fashion has largely been ignored by historians, and Laura undertook substantial research to raise his profile. E Moses and Son were in operation between 1829 and 1884. Moses recognised that increasing national wealth and the blurring of class boundaries lead to a demand for high quality clothing at more affordable prices. The company was able to lower prices by introducing standardized garments produced in bulk and sold with a narrow profit margin. This led to the development of 'standard sizes'. Which in turn led to the need for a paper pattern and for consumers to know their 'size'. Perhaps you would be astonished to learn that the humble tape measure was not invented until the 1820s. Moses was also an excellent salesman and although based in London, his clothes were sold nationwide through catalogues.

Eventually other tailors caught on, and perhaps we all remember Montague Burton's Tailors with some affection. Moses's business declined when there were no grandsons to take over the business and today his amazing shops are no more than a few illustrations in old leaflets.

Clothing manufacturers have taken Moses's principles of mass production to extremes. Sadly, this has come at the cost of exploitation of workers in developing countries and also has environmental implications. Laura's new venture hopes to revive some of the skills of clothing production lost to this country when manufacturing went abroad.

The Role of the u3a Committee: Treasurer – current holder: Jerry Lee



This month in our whistlestop tour of the committee, I'm introducing Jerry, our treasurer. The treasurer is one of the three roles on the committee that must be filled if we are to be recognized as a valid branch of u3a. The treasurer keeps the records of income and expenditure, and also has a key role in operating the bank account. However, they absolutely do not have to be an accountant!

Jerry has only recently become treasurer and he wishes to thank the previous holders and members of the committee for their help in getting to grips with the role. He says he has enjoyed learning how things work and picking up new skills and if anyone else is similarly interested and feels like they might to help out then please contact Jerry or any member of the committee. He will be only too happy to share his experience. As mentioned earlier, he needs a deputy, who while not needing to do as much as Jerry, will be a much-needed back-up.