

## The Newsletter of HALSTEAD & DISTRICT U3A

Issue 17

03/19

### Dates for your diary

**8<sup>th</sup> March, 12<sup>th</sup> April & 10<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Coffee mornings**  
**in the Con Club at 10:45am**

**2<sup>nd</sup> April our AGM**  
**followed by a speaker**  
**and a treat from Hume's bakery**

(also from 15<sup>th</sup> March in cinemas-'Fisherman's Friends'  
a film including in its cast Sam Swainsbury,  
son of our members Maggie & Malcolm)

### Chairman's Message

from Valerie Lynn

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Spring is upon us and we can look forward to better weather and getting out and about more easily. Not that U3A members tend to sit about doing nothing at any time of the year – all our groups enjoy getting together and learning from each other all year round. Indeed, the reports in this newsletter show some of the wide range of activities our U3A groups share.

We've had some very well attended monthly meetings since Christmas with some inspirational and entertaining speakers. I enjoyed Charlie Haylock's talk immensely – right up my sociolinguistic street!

Looking ahead, next month is the AGM when we elect our new committee and chairman. Many of you know that I am standing down from the committee for health reasons. I hope that, as many of you as can, will attend the AGM as it is important that a new committee is elected to enable the U3A to continue to flourish in Halstead.

In the meantime, I hope you continue to enjoy your U3A experience. If there are problems or suggestions, pass them on to a committee member. I promise you, everything is considered and, hopefully, sorted out. With my very best wishes

### Coming Speakers



from David Ainge

In the next 3 months we have three very varied mornings at our U3A Group.

**In April** we have our Annual General Meeting, followed by Dr Alan Symington's talk on *the current work of the Friends of Halstead Hospital*. We all know that the hospital is there; and some of us make use of its

facilities from time to time; but how much does it provide for the local community? We'll soon know more.

**In May** we welcome Roger Dorking with his *Tale from the Smithy* – an intriguing title for an enjoyable talk about life in an earlier time.

Then **in June** we welcome Michael Baldry, a highly recommended Suffolk-based Art Expert, who will speak about early modern art from a Russian and German viewpoint. The title of his address is *Kadinsky & the Blue Rider*. You'll have to come along to find out more. So, come along to any or all of these meetings – and bring a friend with you. You may well find that they enjoy the meetings so much that they'll want to become full U3A members, and come to all our interesting meetings.

### Table Tennis

from Lin Gronland



To all those who are interested in playing this wonderful game.

The group was set up in October 2016 and it has gone from strength to strength - being 14 in number at the present time.

We decided we wanted it to be fun and therefore we don't keep to the same partners; we play doubles and generally have quite a laugh. We celebrated our two-year anniversary by having a meal out and it was a big success.

I understand that several other members would like to join but unfortunately and due to the restriction of having only one table, we cannot accept any more in our group. We are however, more than happy to assist with starting a new group and there may be one or two within our team that might wish to join it to play on a different day. Currently we meet at St Andrews Hall on the second and fourth Tuesday afternoon between 2 and 4. The table belongs to the St Andrews Hall and they kindly allow us to use it. We are able to use the kitchen facilities and take a break mid-way, supplying our own refreshments. Hire of the hall costs £10 per hour and we charge £3 per person each session. You would therefore need a commitment from seven people to run this in order to break even, or charge more initially, until others join. Most of us hadn't played for 'years' - we did however recall the experience with fondness and signed up with glee. As with all groups, the co-ordinator is not expected to 'lead' - what we didn't know, we found out between us.

If any of you wish to embark on this fun and lively venture – please speak to Karen Clarke, Groups Secretary, at the next meeting at Queen's Hall.

## Genealogy and Family History Group

From Mike Turner

Meetings continue to be held in Halstead library every Wednesday morning, well attended with between fifteen and twenty-four members at each meeting. We have welcomed a number of new members recently.

Group sessions are lively, and I could not wish for a more helpful, appreciative, and interesting group of people of which to be a part.

One meeting each month will now be dedicated to genetic genealogy where we discuss and try to understand and interpret the results of DNA tests. The first meeting was held on 30 January with twenty-four attendees. It is a fascinating subject and a new aspect of genealogy that is worth exploring and an objective that fits well with the core U3A aim of joint learning. Most of the group have now taken DNA tests so we have plenty of data with which to work; sometimes enlightening with notable discoveries and often confusing. It's a long road. There have been discussions as to how we cater for both experienced family-historians and those new to the subject. It is likely that we will divide the group in two by forming an advanced group with a different group-coordinator.

New members are always welcome.

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### The Ambling Group from Karen Clarke



Our Ambling group is going strong, we go to a different venue each Month on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues. We are a group of very friendly people and we enjoy getting together. Of course we also have a great lunch after. Our group is between 12 and 14 each month. If anyone would like to join us you are more than welcome.

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### Theatre Group from Malcolm Swainsbury

The group's mini-Shakespeare celebration is in its closing stages. Encouraged by the outstanding Donmar Warehouse all-female Shakespeare Trilogy, some months ago we embarked on a reading of "Julius Caesar" and both parts of "Henry 4<sup>th</sup>". Although it was challenging at times, it has been rewarding and enjoyable; any uncertainties we had about the text were always clarified by the performances we watched. When the Donmar's production was no longer available on iplayer we still could use recordings of the BBC's "Hollow Crown" series which is star-studded and excellent.

How to follow that was our next concern. The prospect

of a National Theatre live performance of Arthur Miller's "All My Sons" next May quickly solved that problem. So we will be changing centuries and countries for our next topic.

The trips to see live screenings of National Theatre productions began again recently when we went to see the premiere of David Hare's engrossing new play "I'm Not Running". Shows to come are "All About Eve", "All My Sons" and "Small Island". I'm also hoping to organise a visit to see "Witness For The Prosecution" in London. Details of all of these to follow soon.



Theatre Group at work

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### U3A and Me from Maggie Swainsbury

Having been a member of Halstead U3A for about eight years now, I've seen how it has changed in that time: the membership has doubled and there are a lot more interest groups.

Initially I joined one of the camera groups. Encouraged by this I joined the other camera group, the discussion group and ukulele. Table-tennis and walking soon followed. Oh, and there's the theatre group that Malcolm, my husband runs! That's 7 groups. It could be more but there just isn't enough time in the month to fit any more in! It's never too late to learn and I have certainly been doing that from the groups that I am involved with. The U3A has made such a difference to me in my retirement. As well as the activities themselves, the friendships I have made have been so important.

For the past five years I have also been on the committee and have enjoyed the different responsibilities I have had; speaker secretary, vice -chair and now trips organiser. It's time for some of the present committee members to move on and for new members to join and bring fresh ideas to the table. The prospect might seem daunting, but I've enjoyed the involvement and it's rewarding to see how our U3A has developed. Please come and join us and help us to ensure our U3A thrives.



You will have noticed we have had a few problems with the sound system in the Queens Hall over recent meetings. Please bear with us while we try to find an acceptable and reliable upgrade to the rather basic system that comes with the hall.

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## The U3A – learn, live and laugh Newsletter Editor- Patrick Ashcroft

Our website – [www.u3asites.org.uk/halstead](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/halstead)