

Chairman's Report

Sunshine day after day suits me well but we could do with some steady rain overnight to help the farmers and the gardeners. I find we recruit fewer members in the summer months but we continue to expand and the coffee mornings at Mark Cross are giving us publicity in the area.

If you have any friends or neighbours who might like to join the U3A please bring them along to a monthly meeting or ask me for a recruitment leaflet which would give them more information.



Mary Brentnall.

GERTRUDE LOTHIAN BELL (May 18th talk)

Anthony Wood is not only a master of his facts, but a master of delivery and enthusiasm. His talk on Gertrude Bell was riveting, especially as she is not as well known as her contemporary, Lawrence of Arabia, or other influential women of the period.

Not only was she arguably one of the great figures of the 20th century, but perhaps also of her age. Born into wealth and privilege in Durham in 1868, she had a first class education, an Oxford degree and an awareness of the responsibility of her position.

She had a brilliant intellect, and over her life was a mountaineer, a writer and translator, a political officer, garden designer, map maker and surveyor, archeologist and linguist, teaching herself many of these, and often being 'the first', and particularly the first woman to achieve the goals she set herself.

Her six major travels through the Middle East were how she became involved in the politics of the area, and played a major role in the establishment of the state of Iraq.

These travels, although usually comprising merely two or three attendants and a horse, mule or donkey, did also involve the careful packing of a Wedgwood dinner service.

Surprisingly, Gertrude Bell was not a Suffragette, feeling that most women had enough to do and didn't have the resources to get properly involved, and also that change should be brought about by less violent means than were being employed at the time.

She never sought fame, and ended her life in slightly strange circumstances after an illness in Iraq, in 1926.

Anna Thompson

GROUP REPORT

French Conversation

We meet in people's houses on the second Wednesday of the month.



We have members who are fluent so we do not often have to use a dictionary, but those of us who are not fluent are helped and encouraged in this friendly group.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 14 June, so if you would like to come for a 'taster' session please contact: marybrentnallu3a@gmail.com

and now an extract from a u3a committee meeting of past times
(See who you recognise...)

A COMEDY OF NOT-TOO-MANY ERRORS or U3A AS WE LIKE IT

Cast

Mistress Janet, a lady of standing within the community and an infamous gatherer of troops.

Mistress Polly a scribe

Sir John, the Keeper of the Purse

Sir Brian, keeper of the rolls

Mistress Sally, organiser of the revels

Mistress Juliet, organiser of the progresses

MRS. JANET

Now is the gloom of all this morning's news
made glorious sunshine by our gathering here.

Prithee take chairs and pass the loving cup

ere we commence our several utterances

But hark who comes?

Enter MISTRESS POLLY heavily laden and unkempt

MRS P

Forgive me , gentles all. This morn was but

an hour or so advanced ere I, beset

by clamorous ringing bells, was much delayed

in hastening to this venerable meet

MRS JANET

Distress thee not, good maid but sit thee there

and take a cup of wine to calm thyself.

Now to our cause. Tis sad I am to learn

that Mistress Price hath sent ahead to say

she hath some other matter to attend.

I know not why our comrades Hobbs and Mead

be not with us. No matter, let's proceed.

We have to hand our faithful scribe's true writ

of that which we agreed when last we met.

If we are of one mind that this be true
I will append my mark. Now this I do.
To good Sir John - how stand our coffers now?
You are again well-pleased with them I vow.

SIR JOHN

In good state verily most worthy dame.
I place before you all assembled here
my declaration that will truly show
all the transactions since a month has passed.
It doth rejoice my heart that many who
support our cause have at this time put monies
in our chest and though I have some duties
to discharge I say with truth
our fortunes thrive indeed.

MRS. P Pray Sir, be clear for I must needs record
the very figure of your reckoning.

SIR JOHN

Tis seven thousand sovereigns and yet more.
A princely sum. Pray write I am content.

And now to news of other bands of friends
who share our love of learned fellowship.
Know ye that henceforth we must imitate
the action of our comrades in remote
and far-flung villages of this fair land,
and suffer all without we charge a groat
to join whichever of our groups they choose.

SIR BRIAN - O happy day that we should rule it so!

MRS J

Amen to that. For this much thanks Sir John.
Sir Brian has but said the thoughts of all.
Now let him have his say for dear to all our hearts
is how our members have increased in strength.

MRS P

Oh Mistress dear. My members have not grown.
In strength at all since many years have passed.
My arms, my legs and all my parts are frail.

MRS J

Your wit is off misplaced O Mistress Scribe.

Remember thou thy state and hold thy tongue.

Sir Brian knoweth well the meaning of my words.

SIR B

Indeed, good Mistress Janet, and I say

that since our last deliberations,

none have come forth nor any left and so

the total number stays the very same,

two hundred and a score and one.....TO BE CONTINUED.....

and from the bard himself... "Saucy lackey!" (As You Like It, Act 3, Scene 2)

Please do email me with any ideas/ requests/ criticisms/ general comments.

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"Just know your lines and don't bump into the furniture."

Spencer
Bonaventure
Tracy

