



A.G.M. 2023

Annual Activities Report for the Year 2022-2023

31st JULY 2023

Speaker meetings (read by Trish Newell)

Speaker meetings are held every last Monday of the month (apart from bank holidays) at 2.30pm, Exning Road Club. We are now charging £1.50 per meeting in line with other groups. This still offers excellent value for money to listen to professional speakers who have never failed to entertain, amuse and inform us on a variety of topics. Full details of the speakers we have hosted appear in the Yearbook. I would like to give particular thanks to two of our members who stepped in at short notice to give talks: Richard Rigby demonstrated a Magic Lantern Show – entertainment for the masses before the advent of TV and cinema! David Soanes gave us an insight into the lives of the London poor in Victorian times. Another talk that stands out was our speaker for June, Bryan Thurlow on “We’ll Meet Again – an evacuee’s story”. Bryan literally transformed himself into the character of Billy Jackson, a fictional East Ender who was evacuated to Suffolk in the Second World War.

If you have never attended a Speaker Meeting please consider coming along for an afternoon to sit back and be entertained, plus a cup of tea or coffee.

Antiques Group (read by Niddy Walpole)

Having been moved to the Racing Centre over the Xmas period 2022, we returned to our more favoured venue of Tesco Community Room in the New Year. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month starting at 2.30pm. We are very grateful to our auctioneer David Palmer who drives down to us from Peterborough with many items collected each month for us to view. On two occasions when David has had other duties he sent a metal detectorist along to tell us about his finds and in December we had an auctioneer who valued the items we brought along to that meeting.

Please come along and join us.

Art Appreciation (read by Anna Smith)

The Art Appreciation Group has continued with a programme of talks, slide shows and visits to local museums and galleries. Subjects have included Impressionists, Fakes and Forgeries, Renaissance Venetian Painters, the life of Van Gogh, Arts and Crafts, Venetian Painters of the Grand Tour, and Puzzle Pictures. Looking ahead, we will be looking at some aspects of American art and the interchange between art and photography.

We enjoyed a visit to the Higgins Gallery in Bedford, an invitation to visit the homes of two of our members, the re-hung and enlarged People's Portraits at Girton College, and the Newmarket Moat House for lunch. A visit to Gainsborough's House in Sudbury is coming soon, and then to the NHRM for the Urban Colour show - we can't miss something right on our doorstep.

It has been pleasing to see new members coming along - if you are interested, do join us.

Bridge (read by Andy Webb)

We re-started the Bridge Club in October last year – it had apparently been in existence some years before. I'd originally chosen the third Thursday afternoon in each month to avoid clashing with other U3A activities but soon learnt this clashed with the existing Moulton Bridge Club meeting every Thursday afternoon! So I changed it to the third Monday afternoon in each month as second best as far as avoiding clashes with U3A but this date now clashes with the existing Ashley Bridge Club meeting every Monday afternoon! It's a pity, but that is where we are.

Since this initial upset, we generally have 7-9 players so we can get two tables going. One table started off as beginners under my wife's capable hands. The beginners are much better now, however, and we can now usually manage two mixable tables. I recently started an additional session on the first Monday of each month but this has not been so well attended and may be abandoned.

I send out explanatory emails from time to time on points of bidding or play that occur so we're making progress, one way or another. But the main thing is that it remains firmly non-competitive and we enjoy ourselves. If you want to join us we'd be very pleased to see you, no matter what your skill level or lack of it. The next session after the summer break will be on Monday afternoon, the 18th September at the Exning Road Club.

Andrew Webb 01638 602596

email Andrew.webb33@outlook.com

Brunch Group (read by Judy Herridge)

Over the years the Lunch Group has been a success thanks to the various organisers. So much so that it has outgrown itself. It has been increasingly difficult to find venues large enough which are still in operation to accommodate all the hungry diners and at a reasonable price.

There is now an attempt to keep members meeting on a monthly basis in Newmarket Day Centre. As yet there has not seemed a start and finish time which is suitable for all, but this is under revision, so please don't give up yet.

If members arrive at 11am and would like something to eat this seems to dovetail with the kitchen. The Menus are available online as well as being on the table at the time.

There will not be a meeting in August as this coincides with the Gredley Outing to Yarmouth. The next get-together will be on September 13th.

Camera Group (read by John Herring)

Camera Group meet on the first Monday of the month at Tesco to choose the winner of that month's photo challenge. Typically attendance since Covid has been around a dozen members at every meeting. Members submit up to 2 prints in each challenge with the winning photo chosen by the group published on the website. Over coffee we discuss the entries and the techniques of the winning photographer.

At the end of the year members nominate themes for the calendar of monthly photo challenges for next year, which group co-ordinators form into a final list published on the website.

Last year as well as our programme of monthly photo challenges Camera Group, in association with the publicity sub committee, held an Exhibition and general promotion event for U3A at Newmarket Library during October. Although a lot of work to mount, library staff reported the event had been very popular. The public vote for their favourite photo attracted 100 votes with Joan Watkinson's hedgehog photo being the most popular.

You don't need a fancy camera to join Camera Group and many of our regular winners use phones or ipads so if you would like to improve the results of your own photography why not join us?

Carpet Bowls (Read by Alan Gifkins)

The group has gone from strength to strength in the past year. The group now has up to 28 regular members, although the record turnout for an individual meeting stands at 26. Luckily coffee and chat make up for the time waiting to take to the carpet.

Several members of the group are continuing to make the 'pilgrimage' to Potters each year for their Carpet Bowls break. Fortunes vary but we enjoy the competition, each other's company and entertainment of various kinds.

We have also been able to meet with another bowls group for friendly competition. We had an enjoyable afternoon at Kirtling Carpet Bowls Club in May where results were mixed. At the return match earlier this month, although we were not on home turf but enjoying the bigger space available at the Racing Centre, we managed to draw the number of games won and came out on top on shots.

We have been grateful for the support of the group over the years and in particular Mike & Jean Bell and Brian & Lorraine Spalthoff who have deputised for us from time to time. I'm happy to say that from August they will be taking over as the primary co-ordinators whilst we take a step back.

Discussion Group (read by John Herring)

Discussion group meet on the third Tuesday of the month at the Racing Centre in Newmarket.

Over coffee we have congenial discussions on topical subjects which members of the group hold an interest in. We don't have a fixed programme, preferring to respond to topical subjects in current affairs as they arise each month.

History Group (read by Niddy Walpole)

The History Group meet on the first Friday of the month at Exning Road Club, starting at 2.30pm. Presentations are from a wide range of topics such as the Georgians. We had a guest speaker in October on Georgian fashion to round off our trilogy of talks on this subject. This year there has been Tudor Espionage, the history of all sorts of wall coverings ie wood; gilded leather; woven tapestry and the Lost Kingdom of the Black Pharaohs too.

New for our group in 2022, we enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Mangiare in Newmarket.

The programme is interspersed with a little research by members of the group themselves. Eg This year they have chosen an East Anglian person to speak about, no more than 2x A4 sides. This is for August's meeting.

In previous years, at 2 yearly intervals, we have also studied a local village eg. Chippenham, Isleham and in lockdown, Burwell. Although we were all going through some difficult times people enjoyed themselves as most research could be done online and necessary photos could be taken on days out. We printed out the completed booklet but it can be seen on our webpage by a link to the right of the webpage.

Later this year the village is Exning with Landwade. We will put this online only.

Do come along and join us. Niddy Walpole niddy198@gmail.com

Local History and History of Science (Alison Giles, read by Jane Nurse)

Local History:

We enjoyed meeting at Burwell Museum but the group was closed in February because Alison left her job at the museum. Subjects covered included the bombing of Newmarket, Molly dancing and the Burwell barn fire of 1727.

History of Science:

This year we have been looking at the links between the collections at the Whipple Museum and those at other museums in Cambridge. The group finished in July with a meeting in person at the Whipple Museum.

Both of my groups will have closed by August. Thank you very much for all your support while I was running groups for you.

Model-making and Coffee and Cook Off (read by Stephanie Ellington)

Who does not enjoy the opportunity to get together with friends, food and drinks and have a good natter? Hence the second Tuesday groups. The first to arrive are the model-makers and craft people (crafters?). The model-makers arrive complete with boxes filled with all manner of construction tools and parts for models and sit together, nattering and building their models in friendly companionship. The crafters have an impressive range of skills including knitting, tapestry and crochet and are happy to give advice and/or lessons to anyone requiring help.

Once the modellers and crafters are settled the cook-off team arrive with the outcome of the month's recipe. The recipes, which are chosen at the end of each previous meeting, tend to alternate between sweet and savoury and are circulated to all members well before our next meeting. Although all are provided with a copy of the same recipe the outcomes are hugely variable with some members ignoring all but the keyword and others happily substituting key ingredients, hence we have really interesting tasting sessions during which we taste each person's product. It is quite amazing how people (roughly) following the same recipe can have such very different outcomes. The model-makers and crafters are of course also offered samples of our culinary experiments. We have made a wide variety of goodies including Chelsea buns, Portuguese custard tarts, focaccia, Cornish chums, cornbread and bacon and onion tarts; each of us learning useful hints from others in the group.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month in the community room at Tesco: 10.30 for the model makers and crafters and 11.15 for the cook-off members. We thank Tesco for providing not only the room but also tea and coffee so we can eat, drink and put the world to rights during our monthly meetings

Lunch Group (read by Rosemary Foreman)

After many successful years, the lunch club has now been discontinued – it became rather too successful with an average of 35 members each month and it was increasingly difficult to find venues open on a Wednesday lunchtime. However, the group is now meeting at The Day Centre in Newmarket on the second Wednesday of the month – members arrive any time after 10.30 for coffee, a chat, and often lunch as well.

MOTO – Members On Their Own (read by Rosemary Foreman)

I'm pleased to say that the group for members who live on their own has proved quite popular, with numbers attending varying from a dozen to over 20. We meet once a month (no set day, it depends on the activity and opening hours of the venue) and have had a very varied programme, visiting such places as Fuller's Mill at West Stow, Burwell Museum, Bottisham Air Museum, Ely Museum and Scotsdales at Horningsea for lunch and a look round the Christmas-themed shop.

A slightly different event was the Friends' Day at Kirtling, when several of us went to the parish church to hear a fascinating talk on Medieval Graffiti by Matthew Champion. This was followed by some tasty refreshments. I hope we will be attending this year's event on 30th September and I will circulate the details when I have them.

Following the success of our cruise on the River Cam in July last year (with afternoon tea on board), we repeated this on 14th July this year, once again filling both boats (24 people). We had a last-minute change of venue due to parking problems and unfortunately we were not blessed with such good weather this year - it rained heavily all afternoon, making it a rather cold and damp experience for some. Despite this, I think most people enjoyed it!

Also very popular was afternoon tea at Scotsdales, Fordham, when 23 of us enjoyed a very substantial tea and most of us took home a 'doggy box' for the next day's consumption! Again, an event to be repeated.

Our February visit to Anglesey Abbey was also well attended – luckily it was a fine day and 18 of us enjoyed going round the Winter Walk, where we saw lots of snowdrops, hellebores, aconites, etc and a few winter-flowering shrubs. Then we all adjourned to The Shed at Lode for an excellent lunch!

Each month I e-mail group members to advise/remind them of what's planned – if you would like to be on that mailing list, please let me know.

Music Appreciation Group (read by Mike Jocelyn)

We meet on the third Friday at the Racing Centre with its excellent audio-video facilities where we enjoy a relaxing hour and a half of varied music with visual accompaniments.

We try to vary programmes and provide something for all tastes. Currently three members take it in turns to prepare and present the monthly programme.

We cover all forms of classical music, symphonies, concerti, chamber music, opera, ballet etc. All the instruments of the orchestra are presented.

U3A members are very welcome to come along for a taster to see if they like our set up. We have a short break for tea or coffee and a chat around half time.

With lots of much appreciated help from the other presenters, Judith Herridge & Richard Unwin, and the staff at the Racing Centre who sort out the room and put our sound equipment ready for us, and of course our loyal attendees which currently number around twenty.

I am happy to say the organisation of our group will improve now that Richard Unwin has agreed to be the new coordinator when we start the new season on September 15th with a programme of music by East Anglian composers. Look on the web site for more information.

Realm of Books (read by Margaret Jocelyn)

The Realm of Books group have been settled at the Racing Centre in Fred Archer Way for nearly a year now. The room we meet in is most comfortable and tea and coffee is provided. There are many other advantages such as air conditioning when it is hot, and we are not freezing cold in the winter months either. The downside is that the room is upstairs, although there is a stairlift even though it can be a little erratic at times.

We convene on the 4th Friday of the month. Sixteen of us are signed up and the average attendance is about twelve each month.

Over the year we have continued with our customary routine, reading a large variety of books designed to suit the taste of as many of us as is possible.

One of our choices for the year was "A Woman of No Importance" by Sonia Purnell about Virginia Hall who was a remarkable woman working in the Resistance, amongst other things, but had been hidden away. This book about her life gave us a much better understanding about WWII and the French Resistance. Another one that we read was totally different "The Architect's Apprentice" by Elif Shafak. Although again, it is historical fiction and centres on Jahan, who is to accompany a small white elephant called Chota to the menagerie at the Sultan's palace, where he falls in love with the Sultan's daughter, Princess Mihrimah.

Our full list, selected by all of us every few months, appears on our website by following the link on the Newmarket u3a website or you can get details by contacting Margaret on marg.jocelyn21@gmail.com or by phoning 01638 615252.

Rummikub (Rose Baxter, read by Chris Timmins)

Hello, I'm Chris and I'm a member of the Rummikub group and I'm speaking today on behalf of Rose Baxter, who is the Group Coordinator and cannot attend.

The game is very easy, a bit like rummy, but using tiles instead of cards. You start by picking up 14 tiles and make them into runs or groups by colour. It's a very sociable game, we chat during the game and you can take a break to help yourself to a coffee at any time. I believe some U3A members even take their Rummikub sets away with them on coach trips and holidays, so you can see it's very popular.

We meet at the Tesco community room, so there's plenty of space, and parking, from 2.00 till 4.00 on the 4th Tuesday of the month. We have 3 to 4 tables at the moment, and we can form groups of 2, 3 or 4 – so it's easy to join in. Why not come along – it's fun.

Scrabble (Janet Neville, read by Jane Nurse)

The Scrabble group is doing well, with good attendance, but there is still room for a few more. We are a friendly group and don't take the games too seriously so there is always time for a chat and a coffee.

Tablet Computers (read by Andy Webb)

I gave a six week course on tablet computers during March and April this year. We had an excellent location for the course in the training room of the Racing Club since this was equipped with overhead projector and wi-fi. I bought my own speakers along so we also had sound and music. I'd originally hoped to attract complete newcomers but in fact the course appealed more to those already owning a tablet and already reasonably familiar with using it. We settled down after the first session to an attendance of about 7 or 8 which actually proved to be good size for the group: not overly intensive one-on-one but small enough so people felt they could raise individual points as we went along.

The main area of interest proved to be using the tablet as cameras and associated aspects such as choosing the picture, editing and improving the picture. Unfortunately my own initial knowledge on these was dismal and there were definitely times when I was only a page ahead of the class! However, I was very grateful to be helped in this part of the course by Gordon Duthie from the U3A Camera Group. I also covered file management on the tablet and moving photos and other files between the tablet and desktops or laptops. Other aspects included finding and using useful sites online for entertainment, information, education and shopping.

If there is sufficient interest, I'd be very happy to run another tablet course in the autumn. This time it would definitely be aimed at enabling absolute beginners to become more familiar with their tablet computers and getting more out of their purchase or gift. It would start with turning it on and getting online! Then I'd cover using the App Store and Settings. Otherwise it would mainly concentrate on finding and using useful sites on the internet. It would be equally for Apple iPads and the many Android tablets such as Samsung, Amazon, Huawei etc. Please contact me if you're interested at Andrew Webb: 01638 602596 or Andrew.webb33@outlook.com

Walking Group (read by Rosemary Foreman)

Membership of the walking group continues to grow with 20+ walkers meeting each month and I thank Kath, Annie and Thelma for leading the various walks, which this past year have included walks around Brinkley, Ashley, Wandlebury, Kirtling, West Stow, Fordham, Exning/ Landwade, Burwell, Stetchworth, Burrough Green and Lakenheath Fen. All walks are followed by an optional lunch at a nearby pub which gives members a well-earned rest, good food and chance of more chat!

As with the lunch group, it isn't always easy to find a pub open for lunch on a Wednesday, but some pubs will open for us especially and our thanks go to the New Wellington in Newmarket and The Five Bells in Burwell for doing this.

The walks are usually 3 or 4 miles, mostly along public footpaths and across fields, at a steady pace (not too fast!), so why not come along and take some pleasant exercise in good company? The August walk will be on Cavenham Heath, meeting at 10.30 in Tuddenham – details have been circulated to walkers.

As with the MOTO group, each month I e-mail group members to advise/remind them of what's planned – if you would like to be on that mailing list, please let me know

Wings Wheels and Water Group (Tim Young & David Soanes, read by David Soanes)

During the last 12 months the WWW Group has had three main presenters, plus a presentation from John Wallace, a very welcome newcomer. who gave the Group a very interesting session on model-making. His models included a Churchill AVRE and an American Sherman tank, all beautifully made and set out in appropriate landscape. His PowerPoint presentation illustrated the effectiveness of these vehicles on the allied advance.

Steve Garner led us into the future with wings wheels and water of the future followed by introducing us to the concept of Autonomous Shipping. David talked on 'From the Junk to the Super Container ships - a History of Chinese Shipping'. Tim presented the James Webb Telescope a view of the past. Richard Rigby and David Soanes gave us the history of the London Underground from 1863 to the present day and this included a preview of the CrossRail project and the construction of the new Elizabeth Line.

Our topics need not be history based but up-to-date knowledge. Immediately after the Light Display at the Late Queen's Platinum Jubilee David presented the latest knowledge of drone technology.

We would welcome suggestions of topics that we might research and present in future work, ways in which we might update and refine the group's activities.

If any other members would like to lead a talk or an activity, we would be delighted to offer any help and support necessary. Researching topics and creating presentations is a fascinating activity, which we thoroughly enjoy. If you're thinking like to come along and listen and chat this is a friendly, like-minded group, who will provide an interesting and friendly morning.