

Romsey & District U3A



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



Newsletter – November 2018

Web site: romseyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meeting Speakers

All meetings start at 10.30 am.

19 December **John Pitman**
The Pantomime

16 January **Roy Norton**
50 years in Television

A retired senior Producer/Director for the BBC and ITV, Roy's talk will look back at some of the great milestones in television history, from pioneers of the 1920-1930's to exciting present day technology.

20 February **Nick Saunders**
Special Operations Executive - WW2

An overview of how and why the SOE came into being, covering the training of Agents at Beaulieu. Some details about the training staff and the operational careers of two of the Beaulieu trained agents.

20 March **Richard Jordan-Baker**
Managing a Large Country Estate

This talk will cover the management of properties and the landscape of the Broadlands Estate.

Chairman's report

Nearly another year has gone by and this is the last newsletter of the year. I do hope you have enjoyed the many interest groups we run and have some good memories of the visits and friendships you have made.



Our Interest Group Coordinators, Jo Morgan and Margaret Marchbank, are creating new groups all the time. Do have a look at the list in this newsletter and see if any new ones interest you.

Many of our interest groups arrange car sharing if they are going out on a visit. Please do not be put off joining a group if you are no longer able to drive. There may be the chance that you can be driven to the venue but please share the cost of the petrol.

I am sure that you will agree that our Interest Group Leaders do a fantastic job, giving up their time and expertise to organise their group. The committee wanted to thank them for this, so we organised a Cream Tea for them at the White Horse in Romsey. We started off with an update for our Group Leaders on recent changes and then we all enjoyed the scones with clotted cream and jam and a hot drink. There was a lot of discussion, getting to know each other and sharing news about how our different groups are run.

Your committee have agreed a Safeguarding Policy in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission. It can be found on our website. It enables your committee to act appropriately where there are any allegations of abuse or neglect which come to our members attention, whether it be at home or in our groups. Please do have a look at this policy because it does give examples of the many forms of abuse which we need to look out for. I am sure, like me, you are saddened by the many forms of abuse that we hear about on our TV or read in the newspapers. We need your help with this, please do not let it happen to any of our members without reporting it to your committee.

Now on to happier news! We have had one person who has put herself forward for the post of our Chairman for next year. Also one member has come forward and is willing to job share the Treasurer's role, so we only need another person to help with this job share. Are you willing to help with this role!

This time last year, Romsey Archway U3A was formed. They have been very successful and have over 200 members. We welcome them to join our Interest Groups, if there are spaces. I have just checked with their Chairman and he says that their committee has decided that for the time being we are not allowed to join their Interest Groups. This they will review frequently while they become established. Obviously, if you do wish to join one of their groups you can join the Romsey Archway U3A group.

Finally, may I wish you and your family a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year.

Marion Fowler

News from around the Groups

TRAVEL GROUP - GUERNSEY

In September, seven of us had a lovely trip to Guernsey; between us we managed to visit every island that is part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

Angela Tours had arranged a taxi to take everyone to Southampton airport ready for our 11am flight. When we arrived at the Pandora Hotel we enjoyed an ample lunch before setting off to the centre of **St Peter Port**. It only took about 15 minutes (downhill)



and so much to see: there was a Gay Pride March, Clog and Morris dancers, plus a train that did a circuit of the town centre. Those who didn't want to walk back up the hill to the hotel hopped on a bus – pity they chose the wrong one – instead of a 10 minute ride they had an hour and 20 doing a circuit of the island!

On Sunday we all had a half day coach trip round the island. One

of the first places we stopped at was **The Little Chapel**, one of the smallest chapels in the world at 16 x 9 feet. It is decorated inside and out with broken pieces of pottery and was initially built by Brother Deodat in 1914. It has since been repaired and enlarged but is an amazing sight and wonderful to go in to and see the grottos, stained glass windows etc.

Our next stop-off was on the headland at **Vazon Bay** where various guns and bunkers have been restored. Some date back to 1804 and fortification against the French, others during German Occupation.

Our final stop was at the Guernsey Pearl, with a beautiful selection of jewellery but also a café with a good selection of food to keep us all happy while there. As the weather was good we sat outside and enjoyed the view across Rocquaine Bay to **Fort Grey Shipwreck Museum** and **Lihou Island** in the distance. There was also a Roman Ship – the basic wooden remains.



The staff at the Pandora were very friendly and helpful: it was reception who booked the flight to **Alderney** for the two Brenda's, Pam, Sandra, and Ann. We went for the day and shared a taxi to the airport arriving in Alderney just before midday. Before the flight departed we were 'entertained' by one of the crew who was supervising a trainee pilot for the flight. He loved the fact that we were from Hampshire and familiar with the older Alderney planes at Southampton.



On arrival he advised us about the 15 minute walk down hill into **St Anne** and then a further 'saunter' to **Braye Bay** and harbour. An enjoyable day even though some cafes and the steam train weren't available as it was a



Monday. Bob and Eileen spent that day at the **German Occupation Museum** which shows a lot about life and hardship for Guernsey during the occupation, also about people who were deported. The film released this year – **'The Guernsey Literary and**

Potato Peel Pie Society – has brought a lot of new interest to the Occupation.



Everyone went on the boat trip to **Herm**, on a lovely sunny but slightly windy day. Plenty of steep paths took us to various places of interest: **St Tugual's church**, **Belvoir Bay** and **Shell Beach**. At least there were cafes every so often to help us recover from the steep climbs! Two people who had been to Herm many years ago were surprised how few shells were now on Shell Beach – maybe its name should be changed!!

There was only one day when it was wet to start with, luckily not the **Air Show Day**. Plenty of WW2 planes on show and then the **Red Arrows** doing a marvellous final display.



Between us we visited the **Folk Museum** at Saumarez Park, **Guernsey Museum** at Candie Gardens where there is also a splendid statue of **Victor Hugo**, **Castle Cornet** – 800 years old at the entrance to St Peter Port Harbour, and the **Guernsey Tapestry** which illustrates 1,000 years of the island history on ten panels, each covering one century.

Sark was the final island to be visited, again by boat, luckily a better one than to Herm as the journey was twice as long. Once there it was possible to enjoy a **Horse and Carriage tour** of the island as there are no cars or buses. Local made chocolates were very popular.

Our evening meals together at the Pandora were very entertaining and with good choices of food. Even the waiters found us entertaining and on our last day we did give them a big Thank You. On our final day we left the hotel at 1:30 pm; pity about the long queue at the airport but we had all enjoyed our visit to Guernsey.



Brenda Sennett

Creative Writing

It wasn't meant to be like this

'You know it makes sense mother,' said Gerald. 'It really is a very good nursing home, and your friend who went there was quite happy. You told me so yourself. We could sell this house for you and you'd have a nice little nest-egg, not to mention the friends you would have around you permanently.'

'Cup of tea dear?' said Madelene, lowering her newspaper and targeting her son over gold-rimmed spectacles. 'Put the kettle on, there's a good boy.'

Gerald hated being called a good boy, and stumped into the kitchen, banging the cupboard doors in frustration as he searched for the teabags.

'It must be terribly expensive dear,' called his mother. 'I can't imagine how one would be able to afford something like that,'

Gerald's spirits rose. 'It would be easy mother. We'd get a good price for the house, and from some of the proceeds you could manage very comfortably.' He placed his hands behind his back and leaned over her, smiling patronisingly. It was an attitude he assumed whenever he felt a point had been scored.

'No, I mean the new car you've just bought dear,' explained his mother innocently. 'What make was it? An MWB did you say? How nice. Not too strong dear - you know it stops me sleeping.'

Her son winced and Madelene knew that he would have to report back to that glitzy, tarty wife of his, that he had failed to win her over.

'But mother, it would mean we'd be much closer to you and would be able to keep an eye on you, instead of having to drive a hundred miles every time to visit. You must see the logic in that.'

Madelene certainly did, and summoned up as much innocence as she could muster.

'But it says in this glossy brochure you gave me dear, that it's a unique driving experience, and that you'll never want to stop being behind the wheel. Surely a spin in the countryside occasionally to visit me is just what you bought a car like that for.'

Gerald was already preparing to leave.

Group Leaders Cream Tea : 21 October 2018

Over 60 people attended this event which was very interesting and successful. Information packs were handed out to all the Group Leaders, for their use and their successors. Many thanks to all who attended for making it such a memorable event.

Jo Morgan and Margaret Marchbank

Newsletter Comment

Please send **copy** for the **FEBRUARY** newsletter to:

Barbara Butcher : 01794 367539

barbarabutcher.1@btinternet.com

The deadline is Friday 25 January 2019

but please send any copy as soon as you have it!

Please remember if you have a printed copy of the newsletter, to collect it from the annexe at the monthly meeting, between 10:00 and 10:20, so that you can find a seat in the main hall before the meeting starts. They will also be available after the meeting.

Newsletter Team

DATES FOR NEXT YEAR'S DIARY

After the Main Meeting on **Wednesday 16 January**, there will be an informal '**Welcome Meeting**' in the annexe, to give new members the opportunity to meet and chat to the **Interest Group Leaders**. This will be a way of finding out more about the groups that are of interest to you and how to join them.

On **Sunday 12 May 2019** Romsey and District U3A will be holding their **20th Anniversary Celebrations**. Keep an eye out for further details if you would like to take part.

Interest Groups News

From January 2019 **Garden Visits 2** will change their meeting time from the 4th to the 3rd Thursday of the month.

The contact for **Short Day Trips** will now be Kay Lovell (previously Anne Scarborough): see centre pages for details.

Bridge for Beginners will now be known as **Bridge for Improvers**. Only those with some previous experience will be able to cope with the more advanced level of play.

The new **Cinema** group has been successfully launched and has already seen about 5 - 6 films. Discussions have taken place in the White Horse after the afternoon performances at Romsey Town Hall.

German Conversation has also been launched with about half a dozen members and seems to have made a good start. See centre pages to contact the group leader.

As mentioned in the last edition of the Newsletter, we are currently setting up a new group: **Strollers**. This is intended for those who like walking, but not as far or as quickly as the existing walking group. Around 44 people have already signed and if you wish to join them, please contact the coordinator whose name will be on the website.

In the **Walking Group**, **Lesley Woodbury** has announced that she will be stepping down at the end of this year and **Hilary Buttle** will be taking her place. Our thanks go to Lesley for all the hard work she has put into running this group so successfully and to Hilary volunteering to take over.

In **English Literature**, **Kath Wood** has handed over to **Mary Hill**. Our thanks go to Kath who has run the group for eight years for her interest and commitment and to Mary to whom we wish good luck for the future.

Books for Pleasure: This group are looking for a few more members, so if you would like to do more reading with discussion attached, please contact Elizabeth Crag (details in centre pages).

As always, if you have any suggestions for new groups, please see Jo or Margaret in the annex or contact them as below.

Interest Group Coordination Team

Jo Morgan : 01794 514134

Margaret Marchbank : margaretmarchbank@btinternet.com

News from around the Groups continued

Wine Appreciation

August saw the wine group meet in a member's garden for Afternoon Tea and Fizz. Twenty-two members arrived in the heat of the day and were welcomed with the first taster of the afternoon; this was followed by a selection of sandwiches and scones (plain as well as fruit, homemade by Jan) with jam and cream. We then tried a further three sparkling wines, before some very happy members made their way home.

In September we visited Brook Hill Vineyard at Bramshaw. The tour started by inspecting the vines, with an in-depth talk on how, when, and why the vineyard started. We then went on to where the grapes are taken once picked, and an explanation of the whole process through to the wine being bottled. As you would expect, the next stage was tasting the wine. We started with a sparkling rosé, which we all thought was very good; but Ian, the owner, insisted it needed a little longer in the bottle before it would be suitable for sale. The next three wines were: a still white blend from last year; a blend from this year's grapes, and then a very young still rosé, which were all very enjoyable. Members bought a selection of these wines.

Our regular Thursday evening tasting took place with a very impressive, informative and enjoyable tour of New Zealand wines. There were some very unexpected wines - and not a Sauvignon Blanc in sight!

The wine group continues to develop and mature.

Derek Morley

Short Day Trips - Hinton Ampner

On a beautiful September day a group of Short Day Trippers left Romsey en-route to Hinton Ampner.

A short journey took us to our destination where we enjoyed exploring the house and garden that was looking beautiful in the Autumn sunshine. The vegetables in the Kitchen Garden were particularly fine and some people enjoyed the exhibition in the Potting Shed which showed the damage caused by the fire some years ago.

Lunch was eaten in the sunshine outside the restaurant and everyone agreed it had been a most enjoyable day.

Yvonne Goodridge

SOCIAL HISTORY

Conscientious Objectors

I started in 1914, by looking at why Britain got involved in the war: Germany invaded neutral Belgium and Britain had alliances with France and Russia. The war was entered into out of a sense of duty and patriotism and in expectation of a rapid victory.

Britain was the only major European nation not to have a conscripted army. In Britain, the Army was highly respected and steeped in tradition. It responded more to history than to current needs and had little to do with the ordinary man or woman in the street.

There were three phases of the army during the war. The first was the 400,000 already serving in colonial garrisons and at home. Some 200,000 of these formed the **British Expeditionary Force (BEF)** under **General French**. **Emperor Wilhelm II** of Germany, who was famously dismissive of the BEF, allegedly issued an order on 19 August 1914 to "exterminate ... the treacherous English and walk over General French's contemptible little army". Hence, in later years, the survivors of the regular army dubbed themselves **The Old Contemptibles**. There is no evidence that such an order was issued. The government quickly realised they were too few and in 1915 instituted **The Derby Scheme**, which invited men aged 18 to 40 to attest they would fight if called on to do so. Some 46 groups were formed according to age and marital status, with the implication that older married men were most unlikely to be called upon. Less than 50% of the male population responded to this initiative. By mid-1916 all such groups had been sent to the front. **Pals Brigades** were amongst the number who did attest and suffered heavy losses. There was a lot of external pressure to volunteer from newspapers, theatres and music halls and posters. For example, the poster **What did YOU do in the war, Daddy?** was insufficient. The Government responded with **The Military Service Bill**. This introduced conscription, an idea very foreign to the British society of the time; a conscientious objection clause

was included. This clause proved very unpopular with the Press and general public but the Government thought it necessary. Tribunals would assess claims for exemption, but there was no common way of organising and running these tribunals, nor of deciding what was a genuine objection, nor how to deal with objectors.

An active anti-war, anti-conscription movement, led by the **No Conscription Fellowship (NCF)**, arose. This group ran meetings and lobbied Parliament. They kept a record of what happened to **Conscientious Objectors (COs)** who went before tribunals. The records of the NCF were better than those of the War Office, which asked to use them. The members of the NCF found themselves up before tribunals and also arraigned for discouraging military discipline and recruitment! All the NCF committee's male members were imprisoned at least once. COs included religious groups and individuals, Quaker or Non-conformists being the main ones, but also Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and other Orthodox faiths. The other main groups were political, especially Socialists, but also Anarchists and various splinter political groups. There were also a range of Ethical COs, concerned about the environment and waste of resources.

There were three types of CO: **Absolutists**, who would not accept any conscription or war service because they could not be forced to act against conscience and carry out deeds abhorrent to their beliefs. Failure to respond positively to military and governmental instructions led them to Tribunals and thence to prison, again and again; **Alternativists**, who were mainly professionals and who agreed to work wherever required as long as it did not aid the war machine, and **Non-combat Corps**, who joined the Army on the proviso that they would not have to handle, deliver or construct armaments nor do any task which directly aided the war machine. Many of them served in Europe and Africa. A lot of the last two groups became Absolutists subsequently when the Military and Government did not keep their side of the bargain. They were also concerned that in doing the tasks of others, they were freeing those people to be sent to the Front Line.

Most COs became victims of a cat and mouse system, where they were on a treadmill of arraignment, sentence, prison, freedom and re-arrest! For many, their spirit was unbreakable, but their health was not.

The Tribunals were deliberately unfriendly and included a serving military officer whose sole role was to undermine the appellant. The members were all men, mostly local "bigwigs" and their main purpose was to find reasons to reject claims. There appears to have been no appeals procedure (unlike in the Second World War). Punishments included prison, terms increased with each subsequent offence, beatings, crucifixion, terms of silence, imprisonment in the dark, mailbag sewing, building roads to nowhere, and bread and water diets. Families of COs received little assistance and a lot of abuse. One particular group **The Frenchmen**, who had been a particular nuisance, were transported to France, where they continued to disobey orders and were sentenced to death by being shot; subsequently commuted to 10 years' imprisonment in the UK. Parliament reduced this sentence, and it was made clear that no-one would be threatened with death for obeying their conscience.

The war itself, and an awareness of the consequences, led to a growing peace movement between the two Wars. When it became clear another war was on the horizon, a number of pacifists and peace campaigners decided that the war against Hitler was very different from the war of the old Empires and chose to register to fight. This move was aided by Germany's invasion of Russia which brought many British Socialists and Communists into the fight.

Again, conscription was introduced and this time included women. The Tribunals were reconvened, but much better organised and much better prepared. Some appellants found themselves in a newly formed **Non-Combat Corps**, where some volunteered for Bomb Disposal and some volunteered for medical work at home and abroad. **The Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU)**, which had won praise all round in the First War, once again found itself serving across the World in many dangerous locations. Entirely staffed by

COs (mainly, but not all, Quakers), it again exceeded its remit, helping those in need on both sides of the fight. After the war the FAU continued to provide support to those in desperate need. At the end of the war, Ernest Bevin praised the courage of many COs, but that didn't improve the treatment of returning COs or their families, nor deal with the shame that some people felt about having a CO family living among them.

Today it is incredibly hard to leave the Services as a CO. **The Central Board for Conscientious Objectors**, which took over the role of the No Conscription Fellowship of World War 1, ceased its role shortly after National Service ended in 1963. **The Peace Pledge Union** has taken over and works with the Quaker Movement to assist service personnel who are considering a CO appeal (see the website AT EASE). COs themselves are remembered in a memorial in Tavistock Square in London and by an annual **Commemoration Day** on 15 May.

Val Smith

Surprise, Surprise!



Following an unplanned few days in hospital, by Mike Stokes, (photo, bottom right) the Friday morning **Table Tennis** group, with his wife's permission, arranged a 70th birthday lunch at Prezzo on 16 October, instead of the usual coffee at the Rapids Costa coffee.

The restaurant were very supportive and allowed a birthday banner to be raised at the table, displaying table tennis bats and animal balloon models – two of Mike's skills. Clearly it was the right medicine and a tonic and one example of what U3A is all about.

Bob Wren

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Palmerston's Follies -- and bananas in Basingstoke

Looking back to midsummer: a trip out to one of **Palmerston's Follies**, on the longest day of the year. A select few of us from the Industrial Heritage group gathered at Romsey station for the train to **Portsmouth Harbour**. The train was "full and standing" - and we soon found out why. Most of the passengers were cheerily and blearily heading home after watching the solstice sunrise over Stonehenge, while our day out was just starting. Others were heading for the Isle of Wight Festival, so they would be passing our more select destination.

SOLENT FORTS	
TIMES & TIDES	
HIGH WATERS	17-13
LOW WATERS	04:39 / 22:10
SHIPPING FORECAST	
WIND	WV 7-42 MPH
SEA STATE	Moderate
SUNRISE	04:51 HRS
SUNSET	21:21 HRS
NEXT SAILING	10-00

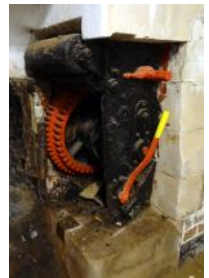


We'd booked a **Fort Experience Day** on '**No Man's Land Fort**', one of four forts standing in the Solent, commissioned by Palmerston in 1859 to protect us from the French. It wasn't completed until 1880, by which time the invasion scare was long over.

Although the navy continued to run the forts until the 1980s, they never saw action - and were sold to a succession of owners who developed some of them as luxury hotels, with varying success. One bankrupt owner barricaded himself in, about ten years ago, and said "it's lonely".



Jane Hargreaves had suggested the trip, and was keen to see the inside of the fort, having sailed past it on various occasions. Our private boat took us to the fort, and up the outside metal stairs, into the entrance hall. Our guide took us up on to the roof, and down and down to below the water level, where we could see some of the



old gun-loading fittings, and hear the water splashing against the solid stonework outside. There was a laser zone for corporate events where hard hats were issued, and no, we didn't try it out!



The current owner bought the fort in 2015, and added a glass-roofed atrium (very hot in the day, very cold at night), and a hot tub on the roof, not to mention several bars.

We were given lunch in the mess hall, and then had time to wander round on our own, discovering some of the many "museum items" that had been acquired over the years. And most of us ended up back on the roof, with its deckchairs on the astroturf and excellent views of the other forts, the Island, and Portsmouth harbour. You can stay overnight, but that was a bit beyond the budget, we thought.



Our return boat trip included most of the staff, since they're expected to commute every day from Portsmouth. We were very lucky with the weather that day - it can be much rougher, as they delighted in telling us.

And the '**bananas in Basingstoke**'? Our October trip, a behind the scenes tour of **Fyffes** ripening and storage depot at Basingstoke: handy for the motorways, though a bit far from the ports. There were pictures of banana boats on the walls, but now everything arrives in containers into Felixstowe; rather less romantic.

As a group, we interpret our remit quite widely: railways, tide mills, and breweries all feature, of course, as do transport and aerospace museums, and warehouses. We meet in Crosfield Hall annexe in the winter months, and out and about the rest of the year.

Janet Payne

photos by Glenda Taylor

*Merry Christmas
And
A Peaceful New Year*



*From
Your Committee*

"Christmas Lights" by Jeff Hawksley