Points of interest:
Membership numbers still rising
New interest groups being set up
Reduced membership fee for 2017/18

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Great musical partnership dream teams

Mike Levy has always been hooked on musical theatre – and by the end of his entertaining talk Royston U3A members were too.

“At the age of nine I was taken by my mum to see South Pacific,” said Mike. “It was my first trip to the cinema and it was so magical I was completely mesmerised.”

Getting the show on the road with Gilbert and Sullivan’s timeless operettas he highlighted partnership geniuses of words and music over the last 100 years.

The glory days of musicals came in the 1930s, 40s and 50s when it seemed the entire city of New York was awash with song writers and lyricists.

They included Lerner and Loewe, famous for the 1956 musical My Fair Lady which set a record for the longest run of any show on Broadway, and Bock and Harnick for Fiddler on the Roof.

Then there were the legendary Gershwin brothers of Rhapsody in Blue and Porgy and Bess fame, Rodgers and Hart with songs like Blue Moon and The Lady is a Tramp, on to Sondheim and Bernstein with their 1961 smash hit West Side Story.

“There are so many other great musical partnerships I haven’t had time to mention,” said Mike. “What makes them great is the art of collaboration and the spark of chemistry between them.”

Spring is here and the days are getting longer again so to keep up momentum we are planning to start up several new groups, details of which are listed inside this issue. We hope to get these up and running quite quickly and hope that many of you will make contact with Groups Co-ordinator Reg Hounsell to register your interest.

Our membership numbers continue to grow and we have now reached 430. It’s amazing how we continue to attract new members. It must be that word is spreading about how vibrant an organisation Royston U3A has become.

Just a reminder that we are coming to the end of our current membership year. The next membership year starts on April 1 and I have good news… we are reducing our annual membership fee to £14 and if you are a member of another U3A and want to rejoin Royston U3A the fee will be £10.50.

Membership renewal forms will be sent to everyone by email and for those without email it will be sent in hard copy form. Also forms will be available at the March monthly meeting. I do hope you have enjoyed being involved this year and will continue your membership in 2017-2018.

Jackie Gellert, Chairman
Getting new groups into gear

‘group leaders are needed to get new groups off the ground’

Plans are underway for a host of new groups - and members should be tempted because they include a curry club and pudding club!

With membership numbers soaring to 430 the committee has been looking at starting a variety of new groups for our expanding Royston U3A.

They include a local history group which is about to start, a pudding group with demonstrations of pudding making through the centuries and a meditation group meeting in The Barn.

Plans are also being investigated for a flower arranging group, more fitness groups including walking netball, and a curry club where members would face the challenging task of choosing which restaurant to eat out at once a month.

Another idea is for a shed group mainly aimed at men involving woodwork, metalwork, repairs and sharing tools – needless to say the search is on for the owner of a large shed!

A ukulele group is waiting to get up and running but needs a teacher. Plans are also being discussed for a cinema group and a buddy support group.

As always group leaders are needed to get new groups off the ground as the continuing success of Royston U3A relies on the skills and experience of its members.

“We have all these plans and ideas for new groups but we can’t achieve them all unless more members offer to help,” said Chairman Jackie Gellert. “If you’re enthusiastic and would like to play a more active part in Royston U3A please get in touch.”

If you’re interested in helping new groups or have any ideas for future groups email Groups Co-ordinator Reg Hounsell at regroystonu3a@gmail.com

Grand Designs at Wimpole Hall

‘in its heyday Wimpole Hall attracted grand visitors including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert’

The changing face of Wimpole Hall over the centuries was highlighted at our first talk of the year.

Veronica Bennett described how the site of the original mediaeval manor house was transformed into a grand country residence in the late 17th century. That was just the beginning as over the years Wimpole Hall was the subject of various elaborate makeovers from baroque to neo classical, styled according to the fortunes of its owners.

Notable architects to have left their mark include James Gibb who re-modelled Wimpole in the 1700s, constructing a library big enough for the collection of 50,000 books, 350,000 pamphlets and 40,000 prints owned by Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford.

Although the collection was sold to pay off the earl’s debts, Wimpole’s library is still impressive today, with its 9,500 volumes ranking in the National Trust’s top ten libraries.

In its heyday Wimpole Hall attracted grand visitors including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, but in the 1870s its great days as a private house came to an end.

The future looked uncertain at a time when underused country houses were under threat, but rescue came in 1938 when Wimpole Hall was bought by Captain George Bambridge and his wife Elsie, daughter of Rudyard Kipling. They turned it back into an elegant and attractive family home and when Elsie died in 1976 she bequeathed the home she loved to the National Trust.

George Bambridge and his wife Elsie, daughter of Rudyard Kipling. They turned it back into an elegant and attractive family home and when Elsie died in 1976 she bequeathed the home she loved to the National Trust.
A garden for all seasons at Anglesey Abbey

Spring was in the air for Gardening group members at their February meeting when Anglesey Abbey’s assistant head gardener David Jordan took them through the four seasons.

He started with the drifts of snowdrops for which the gardens are renowned as Anglesey Abbey has 300 snowdrop varieties – one of the finest collections in the country. But the gardens are spectacular throughout the year, from the sea of tulips and spring bulbs, sweeping herbaceous borders and scent of roses in summer to the late burst of colour from dahlias in autumn.

David, who lives in Royston, also talked about the new skylight garden where visitors can lean back and relax against oak structures, and the spectacular winter walk lights event which was a sell-out success.

“David showed us some wonderful slides and is so enthusiastic about the gardens at Anglesey,” said Val Fairbanks who runs the group with leader Maureen Hersee.

The next talk on Thursday March 9 will be on “Getting the best from containers” with Susan Greenbank. Meetings are at Market Hill Rooms, doors open at 2pm for refreshments with the talk beginning at 2.30pm.

Please note: the outing to Kathy Brown’s garden and Ascott House on May 11 has proved so popular that tickets are sold out.

For further details about the Gardening group contact Val at t.fairbanks@ntlworld.com

The Red Shoes works its magic

We had a wonderful visit to Milton Keynes Theatre to see the ballet The Red Shoes and Matthew Bourne’s production was a true spectacle.

As a teenager he loved the film of The Red Shoes, immortalised on screen by Moira Shearer, with its depiction of a group of people passionate about creating something magical and beautiful. He realised a 20 year ambition in bringing the story to the stage and the results are dazzling.

Preserving the film’s Forties setting, his adaptation traces the rise and fall of a young girl’s dream of being the best dancer in the world. The conflict it causes between her love life and her career unhinges her - with tragic results.

The dancing, music, sets and costumes were magnificent and dramatic as well as very beautiful and it was an altogether super production to see.

Thank you to all Theatre group members for coming along and supporting the visit.

Deirdre Smith
Time to get weaving with arts and crafts

If you feel like having a go at something creative the Mixed Crafts and Pottery groups could be just the answer.

Rosie Cowsley and Sue Higginbotham run monthly Mixed Crafts sessions and so far members have tried their hand at crochet, painting flowerpots, making felt flower brooches, glass painting and patchwork.

The highlight of the next meeting on Thursday March 16 will be a demonstration of amigurumi – the Japanese art of crocheting small stuffed animals.

Also coming up will be sessions on calligraphy, decorating ceramic boxes and learning the techniques of Fair Isle knitting.

Fortnightly Monday Pottery sessions are proving so popular the group is currently full, but Rosie advises anyone interested to get in touch to go on the waiting list.

The group, which includes several male potters, has created an impressive range of vases, bowls, plates and figurines.

“People are improving incredibly and they have such imaginative ideas,” said Rosie.

The Mixed Crafts group meets at 2pm on the third Thursday of the month in Room 11 of Royston Town Hall.

For further details about both groups email Rosie at rosie.cowsley@ntlworld.com

Swing, swear, look for the ball, repeat

Royston U3A Golf group has been running successfully since August 2015 with a core turnout of 10 keen players of varying levels, meeting at Kingsway Golf Centre, Melbourn each Thursday afternoon to play nine holes for fun rather than competitively.

It has become a weekly ‘must-do, not to be missed’ event for the regulars who thoroughly enjoy their golf despite the occasional random bad shot.

The camaraderie is tremendous with everyone encouraging and motivating each other to improve their game. Even the weather has proved to be no deterrent despite recent temperatures falling to zero degrees, the group still carried on playing.

Last year the group played a few away-days at nearby courses just to ring the changes and hope to do the same again this year.

So, if you used to play golf and want to get back into the swing then dust off your clubs and come and join us.

Ralph Gellert

Final thought…if you’ve forgotten what frustration is like, spend 10 minutes on a golf course!
Culture Club

I was so pleased to have been part of Royston U3A’s outing in February to the Royal Festival Hall to hear Beethoven’s Egmont Overture, Symphony No 7 and Violin Concerto.

The world class Royal Philharmonic Orchestra gave an impeccable performance with Principal Guest Conductor the world famous violinist Pinchas Zukerman.

All the pieces were sublime but the real treat came in the second half when Zukerman picked up his violin and began playing Beethoven’s Violin Concerto. His musical genius, artistic standards and outstanding technique are a marvel and it was spine-tingling listening to the pure emotion and sensitivity that this 68-year-old virtuoso produced on the violin. Even members of the orchestra sat transfixed by Zukerman’s performance. I sat in amazement wondering how he could produce such wonderful sounds. The audience gave him a rapturous ovation.

Then the Royston U3A group, who all said it was a fantastic concert, assembled back at the coach for a safely driven journey home in ever thickening fog as we approached Royston close to midnight.

What a wonderful evening from beginning to end. A big thank you to Annette Guttridge for organising this superb outing.

Jackie Gellert

Dates for your diary

March
Tuesday 28, 2pm
Royston Parish Church
Grazyna Tutak will give a talk on THE RESTORATION OF CALDECOTE CHURCH

April
Tuesday 25, 2pm
Royston Parish Church
Christine Adams will give a talk on MAY SAVIDGE MOVES HER HOUSE

May
Tuesday 30, 2pm
Royston Parish Church
Jason Middleton will give a talk on THE PEARL - a gemstone admired throughout history

June
Tuesday 27, 2pm
Royston Parish Church
Veronica Bennett will give a talk on SUTTON HOO ancient Anglo-Saxon royal burial site

Easy Guide to Interest Groups

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<td>MORNING</td>
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<td>Petanque/Boules</td>
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<td>French Conversation</td>
<td>Bridge for Beginners</td>
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<td>Gardening</td>
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<td>Pottery (Hand Building)</td>
<td>Wine Appreciation 2</td>
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<td>Tai Chi</td>
<td>Jazz Appreciation</td>
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<td>Mixed Crafts</td>
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For frequency and contact details about all interest groups please see the chart on the next page or check our website for more information www.u3asites.org.uk/royston. Announcements about future theatre trips and excursions will be posted on our website when details become available.
Interest Groups

Don’t forget to check out our website for more information

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<td>4:45pm</td>
<td>Monthly 2nd / 4th Thurs</td>
<td>Jackie Gellert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jackieyroystonu3a@gmail.com">jackieyroystonu3a@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Birding</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>8:30am</td>
<td>Monthly 1st Wed</td>
<td>Carol McGeoch</td>
<td><a href="mailto:carol.mcgeoch@hotmail.co.uk">carol.mcgeoch@hotmail.co.uk</a></td>
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<td>Monthly 1st Tues</td>
<td>Deirdre Smith</td>
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<td>Book Club 2</td>
<td>Fri</td>
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<td>Monthly Variable</td>
<td>Janet Burton</td>
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<td>Monthly last Wed</td>
<td>Elizabeth (Lee) Towers</td>
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<td>Tues</td>
<td>1:45pm</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Mike Thrower</td>
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<td>Frank Martin</td>
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<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Kathy Hounsell</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
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<td>Monthly 2nd Wed</td>
<td>Eric Heaton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ericroystonu3a@gmail.com">ericroystonu3a@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>French Conversation</td>
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<td>Monthly 1st / 3rd Mon</td>
<td>Elisabeth Goodman-Spain</td>
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<td>Val Fairbanks</td>
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<td>Ralph Gellert</td>
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<td>Reg Hounsell</td>
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<td>Monthly 3rd Thurs</td>
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<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Kathy Hounsell</td>
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<td>Rosie Cowley</td>
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<td>Weekly</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com">kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Reg Hounsell</td>
<td><a href="mailto:regroystonu3a@gmail.com">regroystonu3a@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Monthly 1st / 3rd Thurs</td>
<td>David Walker</td>
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<td>Jackie Gellert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jackieyroystonu3a@gmail.com">jackieyroystonu3a@gmail.com</a></td>
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Proposed New Interest Groups:
To register an interest in any of these email Groups Co-ordinator Reg Hounsell at regroystonu3a@gmail.com

and finally….

If anyone has a physical disability and would like to get involved in a group activity, please contact Jackie Gellert, Chairman, in the first instance to see if suitable arrangements can be made.

Royston U3A Committee

Chairman: Jackie Gellert  jackieyroystonu3a@gmail.com
Vice Chair & Groups Co-ordinator: Reg Hounsell  regroystonu3a@gmail.com
Treasurer: Kathy Hounsell  kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com
Secretary: Deirdre Smith  deirdreroystonu3a@gmail.com
Membership Secretary: Marion Martin  marionroystonu3a@gmail.com
Minutes Secretary: Sylvia Fuller  sylviaroystonu3a@gmail.com
Publicity: Pam Dajda  pam@dajda.net
Royston U3A News Committee Member: Ralph Gellert  ralphroystonu3a@gmail.com  01763 245988
Co-opted Committee Member: George Karger  01763 245988
Co-opted Committee Member: Barbara Andrew  barbararoystonu3a@gmail.com
Co-opted Committee Member: Karen Heaton  karenroystonu3a@gmail.com
Non Committee:- Eric Heaton  ericroystonu3a@gmail.com
Web Management: Rob Whatmough  robroystonu3a@gmail.com

Get it in the News

If you’re involved in a group why not publicise it in Royston U3A News? Send in a short report of your latest meeting or outing - photos welcomed too - to Pam Dajda at pam@dajda.net or phone 01763 246234