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SHOTTERY u3a

NEWSLETTER: October 2023

Tuesday November 7th 2023

AGM

**The Journey of a Paralympic
Jamie Harris**

Shottery u3a AGM 7th November 2023

Notice is given of the Annual General Meeting of Shottery U3A to be held on Tuesday 7th November at 2pm at St. Andrew's Parish Centre, Church Lane, Shottery

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of the minutes of 2022 AGM
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Approval of the Appointment of the Examiner of the Accounts
7. Motions to be put before the membership:
 - i Increase in annual subscription to £18
 - ii Introduce new items to newsletter – a)Obituaries, b)Recommended Traders (this has been suggested by members)
8. Election of Officers and Committee Members for 2023

If the motion to put Recommended Traders in the newsletter is agreed, members wishing to recommend a trader should pass the details to the editor via the email given at the end of this newsletter

DESK AND REFRESHMENT ROTA:

November – Photography

December - Committee

Duties include checking members in at the entrance desk and serving tea and coffee and washing up afterwards (dishwasher available). Generally 4 members are required. Where groups have difficulty in raising the necessary 4 members, please get in touch with Jan Grant– Group Coordinator. (01789 417721)

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

December 5th – Christmas Fun

January 2nd - Dr. Vivian Thomas – “Shakespeare’s Plants and Gardens”.

National News

87% of members support having an Older People’s Commissioner A recent survey of u3a members shows that members overwhelmingly support having a Commissioner for Older People. Given the increasing numbers and diversity of older people, having an independent person to advocate on behalf of all older people was seen as very important. Members highlighted a huge range of issues that such a role could and should address. Most common was access to services (including health and social care) (85%), followed by social isolation and loneliness (83%), and ageism and discrimination (78%). Age friendly communities, access to affordable and appropriate housing, public transport, and design that included and factored in the needs of older people were some other issues identified.

Getting to Know Members

This is the penultimate in this series of life histories, at least for the present, though we may return to it later. We will be starting a new feature in the new year. Here, John Harris tells us about his life to date.

I was born in 1938 in Carshalton, Surrey, and remember the bombs dropping on London. A V2 rocket demolished the house next door to us. The earliest memory I have is going down into the Anderson shelter carrying my toy monkey and my mother’s handbag.

In 1947 we went to live in Singapore for three years. My father was a civil engineer/ Clerk of Works attached to the RAF.

As there were no places at the British School, my brother and I went to the local school called ST Joseph’s institution, which is now an art gallery in the centre of

the city. My brother and I were the only two British boys in the school. The Indian school master called us by our surnames and my English lesson was reading aloud in English to the class every week. The Indian school master would then say 'boys and girls this is the way to speak English'. Going on the bus to school at seven o'clock in the morning each day we would see dead bodies (usually the Communists from China).

By twelve o'clock when we left, we would usually go to Singapore swimming club, the bodies had been removed. At mid-day the mothers of the other children would come into the playground and cook their children's meal, eating it from banana leaves as their plate!

In 1950 we returned home to Exeter. I went to Heles Grammar School, and only excelled in Rugby, being behind in most subjects, but had learned so much about people and life from being abroad.

At 18, and straight from school, I went into the Royal Engineers to do my National Service, but did three years to get extra pay! This was certainly a steep learning curve, spending a year on Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean, during the test of the atomic and hydrogen bombs.

After leaving the army I didn't know which way my life would go so went into Woolworths as a trainee manager at Plymouth in the south west of England. After three years promotion was limited so my next step was in the supermarket industry. Fine Fare was my first store, after six months in Malmesbury. After a while my role became as a trouble-shooter across the country getting stores that were failing into profit. One such store was at Perry Barr in Birmingham with 73 staff where each week a delivery of 11.5 tons of sugar would be delivered straight from the Tate and Lyle factory. The store was losing money mostly from pilfering and the stockroom, where n those days you held 3 weeks' worth of stock. It took three months, with the police involved, to find the perpetrators.

Next was on to Mothercare, newly opening stores across the country, as a director. The CEO had his own helicopter and we had to make sure there was a helipad close by for him to land. Crazy. This was in 1969. We were expected to work 168 hours a week for the company. Having no home life and three children, we decided to buy a village store in Bampton in the Cotswolds. It was lovely to bring the children up in a village but in the late 70's and 80's high interest rates and bank charges meant it became not quite the 'good life'.

A friend had a business at the newly opened National Exhibition Centre and I would help him with organising shows. Margaret ran the store with staff, whilst I was away. The I was offered a permanent job with an organising/ contracting company called 'Giltspur Exhibition Services'. We sold the business and came to live in Stratford. Giltspur was sold to P&O Exhibition Sevoces and I was made Sales Director

One of the highlights was helping to organise the G8 summit in Cardiff and the G7 summit in Brighton where we had discussions about the size of chair for a certain German Chancellor. This led us to having to order 70 larger identical chairs, also

larger conference tables because the ones e hired out were too small. A company in Italy had to produce and deliver these chairs in two weeks! The tables were made by a company in Cambridge with only two days to deliver, (the workforce apparently worked overnight). During the course of the G8 summit we hired out over 112,000 pieces of furniture and other items, having to obtain them from many of our competitors.

One of the many quotes I obtained was to build a temporary steel bridge at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton. This connected the Metropole Hotel to the Grand Hotel across a busy street, entering the Metropole Hotel on the first floor. This involved the police. Brighton and Hove Council, all services etc. At the meetings each month a delegation from the Labour Party in London would arrive and in total 30/40 people. This contract lasted for four years, involving making a hole in the hotel wall at first floor level each year and bricking it up again after the conference. There was still a threat from the IRA and safety was paramount but I believe it was a nice jolly down to Brighton for a day for the people from the London office!

The Farnborough airshow, held every two years was an interesting contract. I used to visit the Ministry of Defence which had offices in Soho, with high security everywhere, of course. After a few visits I was offered a cup of coffee by my contact, Pau He went to a safe, unlocked it , and out came a jar of coffee. I asked why it was locked in a safe. I was told that the CC Commander would not contribute to the cost of the coffee so it had to be hidden away! Incidentally, when these two people who did the planning for the air show, retired, they employed one person who did the planning in six months instead of two years, using modern technology.

I have met so many interesting people during my life, every day being different, with lots of challenges, especially with the Indians, Russians, Germans and Middle eastern countries.

I took retirement in 2000 but worked as a consultant on many shows, visitng Doha in Qatar, Switzerland etc. I was only able to achieve this with the constant back-up of Margaret.

I still miss the buzz, but my garden keeps me busy, and of course, taking lots of holidays

INTEREST GROUPS

We are always interested in expanding the number and range of interest groups that are on offer. If you would be interested in developing a new group, please get in touch with the Secretary via the website group <https://u3asites.org.uk/shottery/home> .

Group Reports

Gardening Group

If you are interested in this group please contact Jan Grant

Ambling Group

Amble - 10 October - Chipping Campden to Broad Campden. This walk of approx 3 miles started from The Market Hall Chipping Campden. Eleven of us walked across fields to Broad Campden, which is a small village/hamlet with a Church and pretty Cotswold stone cottages.

The walk back gave us some beautiful views across the rolling countryside and the town. Luckily the weather was dry for us and we ended up at Lower Clopton Farm Shop for refreshments, where we were able to sit outside. A very pleasant and interesting amble enjoyed by all.

Details of next Amble on Tuesday 14 November to be circulated to Group Members later. Margaret

Rambling Group

By the time you read this, the October Ramble from Blockley will have been and gone. November's Ramble is expected to start from Baddesley Clinton NT car park (subject to recce). Please note there won't be a December Ramble; 4th Tuesday always falls too close to Christmas day (so Merry Christmas!). If you wish to join the group, please write to Martin Young at xh558@yahoo.co.uk.

Local History Group

The meeting with Val Horton was well attended and proved very interesting, with lots of information about the 'non- Shakespeare' history of Stratford. Val had started her research through an interest in the history of her house, and spread out from there. Several members bought copies of her book, which she kindly signed. Later in the month several members of the Group visited The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Reading Room to discover how this local archive can help us learn more about Shotton and Stratford. No doubt we shall each be arranging more visits to inspect their archives.

Keep Fit

The Shotton and Heart of England Keep Fit Group meets on Thursday mornings, 10am to 11am at St. Andrew's Church Hall. There is a waiting list so if interested in being added to the list, please contact Robyn Nicoll.

please contact Robyn Nicoll via the web site or the shotton email (shottonyu3a@gmail.com)

Lunch Club

Lunch club on 2nd Thursday after Tuesday U3A meeting at 1pm. at different venues. Signing-up lists are put on the table at the Tuesday monthly meeting. Contact Joan Newton for more details.

Digital Photography

At long last we were able to show our photos of 'Transport'. Sadly Janet and I were unable to attend due to the flooding on the roads, it's a problem when we do not live in walking distance. 6 members were present and there were many stories to narrate with each image. We were pleased to welcome one new member.

Our next meeting is on Friday 17th November at 2.30pm at Rickie's when the subject will be 'Photographs of things beginning with a N'. We have done Autumn colours each Autumn for the past few years so its time for a change. It will be interesting to see what members find to photograph. Heather has agreed to do the refreshments.

Play Reading

Although some members could not make the October meeting, the five of us who met, read the second act of the comedy we are currently reading. It's an enjoyable farce. We will finish this play at our November meeting and begin a new play in January.

Book Group

In October we read 'A Month in the Country' by J L Carr. Set in the early years of the twentieth century, post World War 1, the plot followed the lives of country folk and of two veterans, each suffering from the trauma of war in some way, during one summer. The description of a rural life that has gone and of the effects of war on the two main protagonists was sensitively and gently drawn. This book was enjoyed by all members and prompted a wide-ranging discussion. We did wonder whether a younger group of readers would have enjoyed it as did we, who can feel an empathy with and remembrance of that period and way of life. The group is currently full, but if anyone would like to start a second group, advice on how to do this is available – Contact Kate Shilcock

Quick Quiz – *this is the quiz that was in last month's newsletter*

- 1 Which Venetian island is famous for its glass?
- 2 Who wrote the novel The Snow Goose?
- 3 In which musical was the song Love changes, Everything first heard?
- 4 Which countries signed the Paris Peace Accord in 1973?
- 5 What did troops in World War I call the area between the opposing battle lines?
- 6 In which country is the source of the Amazon river?
- 7 Which insect found in Britain is the heaviest.?
- 8 Who wrote the opera Cosi Fan Tutti?
- 9 Where do key limes, come from and what colour is their juice?
- 10 What is the common name for the trachea?

And here are the answers. How did you do?

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 Murano | 2 Paul Gallico |
| 3 Aspects of Love | 4 North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the USA. |
| 5 No man's land | 6 Peru |
| 7 The stag beetle | 8 Mozart |
| 9 Florida, yellow | 10 The windpipe |

Please send items for inclusion in the newsletter to Kate Shilcock or enquiries regarding interest groups or membership leaders via the email

shotteryu3a@gmail.com