

u3a

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SHOTTERY u3a

NEWSLETTER: March 2024

Tuesday April 2nd 2024

Interest Groups

DESK AND REFRESHMENT ROTA:

April – Ambling

May - Reading

- 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:

May 7th – ‘Perspectives on George Cadbury 1839-1922’ Andrew Reekes

June 4th – The Shakespeare Hospice

National News

Every week for three years, Maths and Stats Subject Adviser David has created a selection of maths puzzles for u3a members. Below is a question from next week's challenges - which will be the 200th challenge and themed around Easter.

Helen organised an Easter Hunt, hiding eggs of three sizes, large, medium and

small in the ratio of 1:2:6. She hid 36 eggs. How many eggs of each size did she hide?

The Easter Maths Challenge will be released next week. Until then, see all the previous challenges on [the u3a learning pages](#).

Places to visit: Home and Abroad

This is the next in our series of articles devoted to places to visit for days out and short (or long) breaks. This month's contributor is Yvonne who tells us about a recent visit by members of the Local History Interest Group to Sheep Street in Stratford on Avon. Thank you Yvonne

Introduction

A small group of us from the Shottery U3A Local History group have decided to explore the streets of Stratford, looking at things differently from when we just dash in to do our shopping. For our first walk we had intended to look at major places of interest in Sheep Street but digressed slightly as other opportunities occurred along the way.

Itinerary

- **Evesham Place**
We pointed out where the **old railway** ran: (Summertown Way → Severn Meadows Road → the Greenway) and have since found trace of the former East-West Junction railway on an old OS map of 1885. We have also now looked at photos of the old line and the stations that no longer exist (except for a platform partially visible along the Severn Meadows Road).
- Some of us remembered waiting at the **level crossing gates** and seeing the **old signal box**.
- We looked at the **houses** in Evesham Place - smart 'villa' residences with recessed doorways and bay windows on both floors built in 1897 on a field that had belonged to Thomas Mason (died 1867).
- We stopped to look at the **plaque near the traffic lights** (opposite Chestnut Walk) in memory of a pilot whose plane crashed there during WW II.
- We admired the **Peony Pavilion**, gifted to the town by Jiangxi Province, China in 2019, a gift that caused quite a bit of discussion at the time as to the best place to put it. We all agreed that it did blend well into the setting of the **The Firs Gardens** after all. These gardens were bought by Marie Corelli in 1910 to preserve them as an open space for the benefit of the town. The house called **The Firs** was demolished in the 1970s and replaced by the present day Police Station. There is an 18th century dovecot in the corner of the gardens (on the Grove Road side).
- Rother Street No. 47, used to house three **model railways** but the owner died recently so the house will soon be up for sale. You may have seen recent articles in the Herald with pictures of the model of the Bancroft basins.
- **Mason Court** was rebuilt around 1480. Some say it's the oldest house in

Stratford (others say Shrieves House in Sheep Street).

Information from Robert Bearman's book (see references below) : *It has retained much of its original character – you can see how accommodation was arranged - central hall, open from floor to roof, two-storied jettied wings on either side. The right-hand jetty has been underbuilt at a later date, but the form can still be clearly seen. In the 16th and 17th centuries the house was occupied mainly by yeomen and farmers, a reminder that the house then stood on the edge of town.*

- **Ely Street** (name from the 15th century - there was an **oil** mill), previously Swine Street.

- A **House on the corner**, the home of John Jordan, an 18th century Stratford poet, was demolished in the 1960s in readiness for 1970s development of the precinct and car park.

- No 26 **First Church of Christ Scientist**

Info from Robert Bearman's book : *c1600 imposing two-storied timber-framed building. 1849 sold to architect William Gibbs → refaced it in brick, added 'Gothic' windows and porch at the front, barge boards to gable ends and extension at rear. Early 19th century, used as a school for the sons of gentlemen (St John's Place, then the Shakespeare Academy). The school closed 1845.*

- No 6 the **Cross Keys Inn** and No 54 the **Queen's Head** built c1600, were refronted in the 1800s.

- No 5 Pizza Express used to be **Unitts newsagents** up until the 1980s. Lift your eyes to see 'Newsagent' still written on the brickwork. The building dates back to c1780.

- **Russell Court** (Ely Cottages) was a notorious slum (more on that when we study the courts of SonA, one of our future projects).

We finally reached the end of Ely Street and crossed the road to our intended destination !!

Sheep Street

- **Corn Exchange**, corner of High Street built 1855 demolished 1958 to create open space.

- **Town Hall**

1633 built as the town's Market Hall - open arches, prison and pillory

1643 wrecked by explosion of gunpowder

1661 repaired

1713 use granted to the Mayor but fell into disrepair

1767 most of it demolished, new building 1768

1769 David Garrick 'gifted' (at a cost to the Corporation) the statue of Shakespeare (N.B. 1769 Jubilee celebrations)

1781 arches were closed + lockable iron palissades added

18th century used for social functions but competition from other establishments

1864 enhancement work undertaken

1875 in need of repair once more

1886 orchestra gallery deemed unsafe but remained until the fire of 1946

1869 onwards regular meetings of the Town Council

19th became the venue for events of public interest

1920s and 30s new entertainment - dances, whist drives etc ...

1934 beam in floor sagged (death-watch beetle)

1946 fire – paintings of Shakespeare and Garrick destroyed (other stuff held in

safety in the bar of The Garrick Inn)
1948 renovation completed.

On the day of our visit there was an “Arts Rising” exhibition (local artists and authors). A young man outside persuaded us to go in (we digressed once more!). We also met Val Horton there, author of the excellent book “*It's Not About Shakespeare*”. Both were interested in our U3A Local History activities and our visit continued with them in tow!

- Next stop was at **No 1 Sheep Street** now a solicitor's, previously **the town jail** where Val and Carole had some interesting facts to recount.

- No 4 **Shakespeare Press**, now The Vintner

We recently discovered a new book “*Shakespeare Press, The Memoir of Gerald Jaggard*” (2023) by Andy Jaggard relating his research into the history of the shop and his family. Captain William Jaggard (1868-1947), his grandfather, opened the bookshop in 1910 and claimed to be a direct descendant of the Jaggards who printed the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays. He was responsible for the building's mock-Tudor facade (still seen today). Also, it seems, he was responsible for many truths and untruths that were aired about Shakespeare and the shop. His son Gerald, took over the shop after his death in 1947 and wrote an unfinished memoir giving an insight into life in Stratford and in the bookshop. In 1960 Stratford Corporation wanted to demolish No 4 and No 5 to build a row of new shops. Gerald was offered a new lease on condition he did essential repair work but this was far beyond his budget and he received an eviction order in 1964. The building was saved from demolition by Bob and Diana Chambers who lovingly restored it and Diana installed her antiques shop there until the 1980s. It is now The Vinter restaurant.

- We then turned our attention to the old **Post Office** on the opposite side of the street, built in 1891 and demolished in the 1960s to make way for a new furnishing shop and now Clinkard's shoe shop.
- We looked at **Shrieves House** from the opposite side of the street, comparing the present structure with photos in Levi Fox's book.

By this time we were all feeling cold, damp and tired and decided to retrace our steps with the promise that we would return to discover other secrets of Sheep Street

If you get there before us, take a look at the old Wheatsheaf Inn on the corner of Waterside. Even better, read Angela Hewin's book “A Stratford Story” and stand in front of No 31 which may date back to Medieval times

Sources:

- *Stratford-upon-Avon A History of it's streets and buildings*, Robert Bearman [ISBN 0 86067 114 3]
- *Stratford-upon-Avon As It Was*, Robert Bearman [ISBN 0 86067 054 6]
- *Stratford Past and Present, A pictorial record of the ancient town of Stratford*, Dr Levi Fox

[ISBN 0 902280 26 0]

- *A Stratford Story, Including The Dillen & Mary After The Queen*, Angela Hewins

[ISBN 0 19 283182 8]

- *The Town Hall Stratford-upon-Avon*, Mairi Macdonald ,Stratford-upon-Avon Papers No.1
- *The Shrieve's House Stratford-upon-Avon*, Peta Ree and Richard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Papers No.1
- *Marie Corelli, Shakespeare's Champion*, Jann Tracy

[ISBN 978 1 9997979 1 1]

- *Shakespeare Press, The Memoir of Gerald Jaggard*, Andy Jaggard

[ISBN ??]

- *It's Not About Shakespeare*, Val Horton
[ISBN 978 19 12 419760]

Do you have a place that you would encourage others to visit? Could you contribute a short article to the newsletter (we are happy to edit and proof read). If so, please send your article to Kate Shilvock at shotteryu3a@gmail.com

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

Rambling Group

If you wish to join the group, please write to Martin Young at xh558@yahoo.co.uk

Ambling Group

Amble 12 March - Broadway Tower

We had a very enjoyable 2.5 mile Amble. The weather stayed dry for us and we had beautiful clear views across to the Malvern Hills, and even apparently the Black Mountains beyond. Although it was muddy in places none of us slipped over!

Refreshments at The Barn, where we were well looked after, even with our muddy boots. Details of the next Amble on the 9th April to be circulated later. Margaret

Local History Group

Meetings will continue at Venture House on the second Thursday of the month at 2.15. The full list of meeting dates is published on the Group's page or the Shottery U3A website. Miles Scrivens Group Leader.

Keep Fit

The Shottery 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 shottery email (shotteryu3a@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

We had a well attended meeting in March with the subject 'Wood'. Photographs varied from Trees in Woods to items made of Wood. There were some very attractive wood carvings and objects made of wood, some made by members. Excellent photograph of wooden groynes on a beach. Some wooden boats/ships were also shown. The next meeting is on Friday 19th April at 2.30pm at John's. the subject is 'Close Ups'. Frances Freeman

Book Group'

In February we read 'our first non-fiction book – 'Dadland by Keggie Carew. It is a memoir of her father's life focusing on his exploits in France and Burma during the second World War as part of the Jedburgh group, a sub-set of SOE and his later life in civvi street. It is all told from the perspective of a daughter trying to investigate her father's life as he suffers more and more from the effects of dementia. Reaction was mixed with several members not finishing the book. Those who did agreed that the beginning years focused on France and the Jedburghs and the end section focused on the father's dementia were interesting but the middle section of events in Burma during the war and afterwards was too detailed, lengthy and confusing. 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 Shilvock

Play Reading

In March, we began a new play, 'Party Pieces' by Richard Harris and will continue this at our next meeting.

We have space for a couple of new members (especially, but not exclusively, male members). If you are interested please contact Chris Buchanan

Obituary

Colin Upchurch, a long-standing member of Shottery u3a died on Friday, 15th March. Formerly a keen member of Stratford Operatic society and the u3a choir, many members will remember him singing with the late Brian Richardson at our Christmas social events. Colin was an accomplished rower and a life member of Stratford on Avon Boat club. He was a regular attendee at the Play Reading Group.

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

shotteryu3a@gmail.com