

U3A

University of the Third Age



Stratford-upon-Avon

Website: www.sonau3a.org.uk

Newsletter: Issue 2019/2
February 2019

FEBRUARY MEETING

Today's Speaker:

Gabrielle Leese **Love Letters in a time of War**

A few years ago, Gabrielle discovered a treasury of love letters exchanged between her parents during World War Two. It inspired a live stage show and recording with actors from the RSC and musicians from English Serenata. In a vivid visual and audio presentation she will share with us their war-time experiences, including a first-hand account of the Dunkirk evacuation and the bombing of Coventry.

Gabrielle worked for years in music at the RSC. As director of English Serenata she has written many scripts for actors including Simon Russell Beale, John Nettles and Jenny Agutter to narrate at its performances. Her grandfather grew up in Stratford and went to KES before WWI, and her parents visited the theatre regularly - on bikes! So there will be photos and much of local interest.

JANUARY MEETING (MEETING? OH NO IT WASN'T OH YES IT WAS!)

Richard Westcott: Pantomime Dame

We were entertained with an excellent presentation? demonstration? by Richard Westcott of the insights into and confessions of a Pantomime Dame. Very apt in this Pantomime season. He encouraged us all to go to a Pantomime even if we had no grandchildren to take! He also encouraged people to join myself or Norman in the front row saying that being in the back rows would not prevent being picked on! Many in the non-front rows were picked on, including Audrey twice.

He then told us a bit about his 'Pantomime Daming', having last appeared in pantomime 7 years ago but now restricts himself to giving presentations. He started with a detailed demonstration of how to make up. He uses water-based 'pancake' makeup, up to his very high hairline and said that in the case of eye shadow you have to 'go for it' – and did. He advised a brush for lipstick and painted a wide smile. He then painted a beauty-spot and

told us in days of old where you applied the spot was a code for what type of 'amore' you wished! His application seems to need further research as in 30 years he has had no takers or givers!

He then showed us how to put on a very ample bra - from the back, then whipped off his trousers (a scary moment) to reveal very colourful pantaloons, then he donned a hooped petticoat and high heel shoes. He told us of the tribulations of buying and trying on high heels and the reaction of the female shop assistants. 'Yes, it is for me, I am a pantomime dame'. Then Audrey was picked on to help him into various dresses. One was an under? – no, overstated stated orange yellow and green dress which he said he was wearing when he was asked to repair a pot-hole! Then over-the-top necklaces and earrings. Then Audrey was asked to be his un-dresser and go for a world record speed. Norman was trusted to time this and announced 1 minute exactly. Apparently a world record. After several other dress changes he turned around (I thought) the spitting image of Danny La Rue. We then had a boys v girls singalong of 'Tiddly Winky Woo'.and 'Baa Baa Black-sheep'.

There were 48 members present and 6 guests. The vote of thanks was given by Norman Heads.

Jeff Cox.

NORMAN'S NOTES

Hello to you all. I hope that you have now all received my letter by email or post. I'm sorry that the "small bite" system didn't work, but the email system refused to send after "small bite 1"and is still refusing to send anything. I'm even hand-writing this notice.

I hope that you will all be at the AGM on March 27th (we have a speaker for after the AGM) and that we have the volunteers for a full committee. The situation **is** severe.

By now all group leaders should have their annual reports ready. Kay Dyer would like them soon (her email details are in the Committee list in this Newsletter).

Norman Heads (Acting Chairman).

NEWS FROM EXISTING INTEREST GROUPS

Chaucer Group

At our January meeting, on the ninth day of Christmas, enjoyed a selection of 14th century seasonal treats: Turkish delight, fruit jellies, and dates stuffed with candied fruits and walnuts. Thank you, Patricia!

Members of the group



we

Ambling Group

Our next walk will be on Wednesday 13th March in Evesham.

We will take the **X18 Evesham** bus which leaves:
Bridge Street (outside McDonalds) at 10:02 am and
Wood Street (outside Oxfam) at 10:05am.

Margaret Smith Joyce Steckel and Olive Puzey.

Wine Appreciation

We still have one vacancy (see last month's Newsletter). We taste 3 non-expensive wines a month, meeting in each others' houses in turn, aiming to drink modestly enough to drive home legally afterwards.

Anyone interested? Please contact me or Danièle Schofield (tel.:293379).

Barbara Cox

NON U3A ITEMS

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

Hello, Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW) is a large organisation with main sites in Stratford upon Avon and Leamington Spa. We have approx 120 volunteers and 25 FTE paid staff.

We would be interested in partnering with you for a new project that starts in April when Local Citizens Advice across the country will be supporting its clients with claims for Universal Credit. We are in particular looking for volunteers who would help our clients to make an initial claim for Universal Credit. They would learn about the benefits system, universal credit and have the opportunity to go on to learn about all the subject areas we advise on such as debt, housing and employment. Many of our volunteers find the adviser role interesting and a way to put back into the community. Our offices are busy, positive and friendly.

We are looking for individuals who are non-judgemental, have basic IT skills and who enjoy learning. An advising role is both challenging and rewarding. We would be asking for volunteers to offer at least one day per week to ensure they keep up to date with changes. CASW is also regularly looking to fill volunteering roles such as administration, reception and form filling. I hope that this is of interest and any help you can offer in raising awareness of volunteering opportunities would be very much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Jenny Harding

Advice Services Manager

Reply to Jenny Harding <jenny.harding@casouthwarwickshire.org.uk>,

Stratford's Trees

Hi, we have lived in the delightful town of Stratford Upon Avon for some 8 years now, and continue to find fascinating things to see and do on our many walks.

One particular thing intrigues me though, and I have been unable to get an answer from the council or the RSC.

Stratford boasts many unusual trees, many by/in the RSC gardens, but also quite a few around the town.

Many of these have a small plaque/label attached to them. These labels are numbered, which would suggest that somewhere there is a record of the variety of tree to which the number references.

The question is, where is that "list" does it exist?

Reply to Steve Walker <stevewalk@gmail.com>,

LIST OF CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Anne Foster	(on leave)	<u>annepfoster@btinternet.com</u>
Jeffrey Cox	Programme Planner	<u>Jeffrey.cox786@gmail.com</u>
Kay Dyer	Groups Co-ordinator	<u>kaydyer4@gmail.com</u>
Norman Heads	Vice Chairman	<u>heads24@talktalk.net</u>
Ruth Hopwood	Meet, greet and help new members	<u>rhopwood704@btinternet.com</u>
Olive Puzey	Treasurer	
Audrey Spencer	Refreshments	<u>peterandaudrey2011@btinternet.com</u>
Joyce Steckel	Membership Secretary	<u>jsteckel@btinternet.com</u>

TEA ROTA

February 27th.	Craft
March 27th.	Latin Improvers
April 24th.	Audrey and Friends

Note: Group Leaders do not have to preside over the teapot but just need to ensure that there are 2 or 3 volunteers who will. I am always on hand and will provide the necessary items of tea/coffee and biscuits for after the meeting. Any problems, contact me.

Audrey Spencer

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 27th March, 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.
Main Hall, Methodist Church Hall

Annual General Meeting

Followed by

Speaker: Jackie Lines

Jackie will be outlining the process of playwriting and acting, highlighting her play 'Streets Apart' which will be performed in April at the Playhouse in Stratford.

Editor: Sarah Gretton, Email for Newsletter: sonau3a.news@yahoo.co.uk

Copy deadline: For the March issue please let me have all items on **paper** by noon on **Wednesday March 13th** but

email items need to be 24 hours earlier, i.e. by noon on **Tuesday March 12th**. If you use email, PLEASE use size 12 Ariel font, single line spacing, and observe the standard layout of our Newsletters.

Please check that I have acknowledged receipt of your entry.