

**Newsletter No.32 – Spring/Summer 2014**

**Welcome to Spring-and-nearly-Summer!**

Geoff has sprung into action to build us a new website because of problems with the old one: see his full article within and Louise poetically celebrates the whole spectrum of summer colours...

**THE HISTORY OF THE RAINBOW**

**Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain**

On Bosworth Field. I wonder, did it rain  
 And then the sun shine down  
 When Henry Tudor donned the crown?

**Red** haired William Rufus went out to shoot some deer,  
 But a ricocheting arrow ended his career.  
 The Glorious Revolution gave William of **Orange** the throne,  
 And when smallpox killed Queen Mary, he ruled eight years alone.  
 Disraeli's favourite flowers were **Yellow**,  
 Pale primroses the choice of this flamboyant fellow!  
 Robin Hood used camouflage, dressed in Lincoln **Green**,  
 Thus in Sherwood Forest he was rarely to be seen.  
 Columbus sailed the ocean **Blue**  
 In fourteen hundred and ninety two.  
 The New World gave us cornflakes, coke and roast potato  
 - But wise fool James 1<sup>st</sup> soon counterblasted tobacco!  
 A famous Stuart architect was **Indigo** Jones - but no!  
 Mea culpa, [poetic licence] his name was Inigo.  
 Finally, PM Herbert Asquith's daughter  
 Was colourful Lady **Violet** Bonham-Carter.

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Refraction and reflection of rays of light through raindrops  
 Create an Arc the same as that  
 First sent by God to Noah when his Ark  
 Grounded on Mount Ararat.  
 But - seven colours, magic number, was Isaac Newton's fix,  
 For everybody now agrees there's really only six.

*Louise Henly April 2014*

## The address of the new website is:

<http://u3asites.org.uk/wolverhampton>

As many members are aware, we have been having problems with our old website since Christmas, partly because the software which we use to update the site wasn't working properly, but primarily because our website host was not answering his phone or replying to emails.

We decided therefore to start again and build a new site using the template provided by U3A National Office. The new site is the result and I hope members will make use of it to keep up to date with all our activities. You should notice lots of improvements over the old site. The new site is easily navigable using the buttons along the top of each page.

To avoid spam no-one's email address is publicly visible. I've put a link on the right of the **About Us**, **Contacts** and each **Interest Group** page which anyone can use to send a message or send an enquiry. In the **Groups** section the monthly timetable summary is generated and updated automatically.

Events are now handled dynamically. Each future event is listed in the **Events** page and also in the **Interest Groups** pages. As soon as an event has taken place it disappears; however I shall still keep a record of previous topics where appropriate, as in the past. Where groups have kept an archive of previous activities in the past, you will find a link on the **Group** page.

The site is still very much a work-in-progress, so if you have any ideas for improvement or any requests for things you would like included please let me know.  
*Geoff Williams*

## Around the Groups

### Understanding Opera

So far this year we have studied Benjamin Britten's operetta *Paul Bunyan*, which English Touring Opera brought to our Grand Theatre in March. We then embarked on two of the operas in Welsh National Opera's Spring Season, under the title "Fallen Women", namely Verdi's *La Traviata* and Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, both of which came to Birmingham Hippodrome. Our last opera to be studied this season will be Verdi's *Nabucco* and this too is coming to Birmingham in the summer.

For our 2014/2015 session we have allocated our meetings in August, September and October to a study of Wagner's Ring Cycle which the Mariinsky Opera from St Petersburg will be performing in Birmingham in November: quite a coup for the City! The other operas to be studied in 2014/15 will be selected at our July meeting when we shall know the plans for both WNO in Birmingham and the Royal Opera live relays at the Lighthouse. That is, of course, assuming that the massive government cuts, both to local authorities and the Arts allow these to take place!!

*Andrew Milligan*

## Lunch Club

Dave Francis and Angela Spain have really enjoyed the Lunch Club organised by Linda Briscoe and feel it would be a great pity to let it fade away. So they will try to keep it going while she takes a break.

The next lunch will be on Monday 9 June at 12:15 at the Spring Hill pub, which is on the corner of Warstones Road and Springhill Lane, near the Lloyd Hill roundabout on the Penn Road (A449). The pub's doors open at 12 noon, there's a large carpark and it's on a bus route. Maybe more importantly it has a menu with plenty of reasonably priced choices and usually generous portions at reasonable prices.

Dave and Angela do not intend to compete with Linda's terrific organisational skills so they need a simpler way for members to book. Please sign the sheet at the monthly meeting held on the third Tuesday of the month at the Friends' Meeting House or tel. 01902 685584 to let them know you wish to come. Leave your tel.no. but you won't be contacted unless there is a big problem (but there shouldn't be – fingers crossed). The pub wants to know a week in advance roughly how many to expect so they can arrange seating. You can just turn up on the day but you may have to sit away from the main group. There will not be any advanced booking of menu choices, so it will take the kitchen a bit longer to serve you, so please be aware of this if you have afternoon appointments. Looking forward to seeing you there.

*Dave Francis, Angela Spain*

## Garden and Food – TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE?

On Wednesday 9 April 2014 the Food group was joined by the Garden group for a meeting about bees and honey.

After a brief sortie into the garden to check what was blossoming, we listened to a most interesting and informative talk given by Gerry Aston, a local beekeeper. He described the lives of honey bees, their activities in and out of the hive and his role in caring for them, for which he extracted honey in recompense. He mentioned the problems affecting bees: varroa mite, insecticides, monocultures and the commercial practice of frequently moving hives to crops requiring pollination. Although bees are responsible for the pollination of many of our food crops, other insects also contribute, and lack of bees would not necessarily be a total disaster threatening our food supplies.

It was an enlightening afternoon, and donations were forwarded to BeeCause, Friends of the Earth.

*Louise Henly*

## Book Group 3

A third book group is now established which meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m. If you would like to join please contact Jacki Griffiths Tel. 751962 or email her on: [itsjacki@yahoo.com](mailto:itsjacki@yahoo.com).

**FOOD**

**THE U3A (University of the Third Age)**

**WALKING**

I felt isolated in a new town  
Needing purpose and new friends to see  
Where to go, on one's own - and somewhere safe  
What could fill that void for me?

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

What could I do which would enhance my life,  
With interests to stretch the brain power,  
Where was it safe being new in this town  
Finding meaning from hour to hour.

**CREATIVE  
WRITING**

**LANGUAGES**

It was scary to enter strange places alone  
But a friend said "you like to read,  
You'll not see a gauntlet of faces or frowns  
Join U3A – it's just what you need"

**MUSIC**

**GARDENING**

U3A – whatever is that?  
She laughed that I didn't know,  
It's for people in the third phase of life  
To socialise, still learn and grow

**HISTORY**

**SOCIAL  
ISSUES**

This was real news and I took her advice,  
Discovered a large network around  
Took courage to go to my first meeting alone  
And was amazed at the welcome I found

**MEDITATION**

**READING**

One group at the start which then led to another  
Monthly meetings, new faces and fun  
Preparation filled space and made my mind work  
I felt proud at what I had done.

**ART**

**SCIENCE**

And now what a change - there is so much to do  
Lots of friends and people to see  
Groups of all sorts to feed mind and brain  
No need to reflect on it just being me!

So for anyone out there who's lonely and sad,  
Needs interests and just to belong  
Try out a new group, just one step at a time  
With U3A you'll never go wrong..

*Judith Glover*

**SINGING**

**CINEMA**

**COMPUTING**

## Our Network Events

March 17 saw a very successful Workshop for Group Coordinators organised by the Shropshire Area U3A Network, of which we have been an active member for many years. Over 40 participants were drawn from 15 U3As. The venue was the Millenium Centre in Market Drayton, chosen partly because of its excellent facilities but also because some half dozen new U3As were located in the northern part of Shropshire. Neil Moreland, our Chair, was to have been one of the key speakers but was taken into New Cross only days before the event. In semi panic mode Len Moore collected a copy of Neil's power point slides and after an intense brainstorming Sunday managed to deliver a passable imitation of Neil.

A more ambitious, and more in depth, Study Day will take place on **6 September in Shrewsbury** and notice of this has been put out by email. Quite a number of Wolverhampton members have already booked places and applications are steadily increasing. If you're thinking of going apply soon or you may not get your first choice of the topics on offer. The first of these ventures in 2012 attracted some 100 participants and the expectation is that this year will be as successful. There is a steadily increasing number of such one, and often two day, events across the country as the U3A grows so watch out for 2015 and future years. Contact Len Moore ( 01902 650130 ) if you are not online and want information about the Study Day.

## Miscellany...

How many different plants/flowers/species can you spot in this photo?  
(taken on Sheila Moore's Spring Flower Walk)  
Extra brownie points for the Latin names as well as the common ones!



Ed: Margaret Taylor

2014 AGM  
on Tuesday 23 September at 2pm  
at the Friends' Meeting House

Mercedes Fonfria is looking for someone to share the position of Treasurer: she will be responsible for the accountancy work but can't always be at the general meetings for collecting money etc. If you can help please let the Committee know.

and finally...

