

**Newsletter No.31 – Winter 2014**

**A very happy New Year to everybody!**

Our membership continues to grow and the activity groups to flourish and proliferate – a hearty welcome to all newcomers. The photo gallery is up and running on the website and shows in more or less glorious colour some of the things we get up to: <http://www.wolverhamptonu3a.co.uk/gallery>

*THE ROBIN AND THE WORM*

*or - ROBINS SO IT IS SAID*



The early robin catches the worm  
Or so it is said,  
But does he enjoy it more, do you think,  
Than ten minutes extra in bed?

**To toil in the soil the worm was bred,  
Legless, speechless – but chop her in two  
She can grow a new tail and carry on - worming,  
Which is more than the robin can do!**

A robin in the hand is worth two in a bush.  
That's not entirely true,  
The robin is better off in a bush  
But what is the worm's point of view?

**All heaven is set in a rage  
When a robin's confined in a cage  
That seems an uncontroversial quote,  
But it's not how the worm would cast her vote.**

The worm wants that sparrow to kill cock robin  
Then she would get some peace and quiet,  
Unless cock robin could be persuaded  
To adopt a vegetarian diet?

**The rose is sick in her crimson bed  
Not so the invisible worm,  
She's eating her fill, quite safe from the robin,  
Be fair, let the worm have a turn.**

Cute little robins flirt around  
As you dig up the worms they seek,  
That's fine for the robins - but cruelty to worms!  
Those robins are red in breast and beak!

**But the robin must feed his family  
The predator must eat the prey,  
Those worms are destined for dinner  
That's how it must be, so they say.**

*Louise Henly*

## Around the Groups

### Poetry Reading



We've held four meetings so far and our numbers are steadily growing. During the two hours or so of a meeting we each read two to three poems, depending on the length, difficulty and need for discussion of each poem. We try to bring copies of what we read for everyone, which facilitates

appreciation, analysis and discussion, and renders unnecessary repeated readings of the poem under consideration. Ideally the printed copy is distributed *after* the first reading, since we agree that in the first instance poetry should be heard. But seeing the poem printed on the page clarifies enormously the poet's intentions, and techniques of achieving the poem's effect. Each member is left with a pleasant reminder of the poetic content of each meeting, and this can be referred to in private or at future meetings when questions of metre, rhyme scheme, imagery, influences of the poet etc are being discussed. It should also help with continuity if a member has to miss a meeting. The next meeting is at Woodlands Grange, Penn Village, the home of Eileen Bayliss, at 4.15pm on 6 January 2014. Advice on parking from 01902 336672. The theme is 'Hello or Goodbye'.

We look forward to 2014, when we will continue to enjoy each other's tastes in poetry and expand our knowledge of the great body of poetry in English!  
*Tony Hollingworth*

### Local History

Having completed our survey of the local pottery industry, 2013 saw us turning our attention to the local glass industry. First we looked at small glassware,



Phoenix ware, wineglasses, ornaments etc., so it was off to Stourbridge to visit the Broadfield House Glass Museum. Later we had a special visit to the Ruskin

Glass Centre and adjacent Webb Corbett Centre, when they opened specially for us and a charming young man gave us an excellent conducted tour.

Then it was the turn of industrial glass and once again we had a very interesting visit, this time to Smethwick Archives to see items from the archives of Chance Brothers Ltd. This was the firm that manufactured the 293,655 panes of plate glass needed for the Crystal Palace, built to house the Great Exhibition of 1851, the largest amount of glass ever used in a single building in the world! Now sadly no more, the remains of the huge factory can be glimpsed from the Birmingham train.

Our plans for 2014 include private visits to the new Birmingham Library with a look at their Archives department, the William Salt Library in Stafford, talks about local Villains & Victims, and a Sedgley Industrialist.

New members are very welcome.

*Christine Moore and Ann Eales*

### Classical Music and Jazz Appreciation Groups

Both groups have had a very successful 2013, with regular attendances of more than a dozen and benefitting from a number of new members who have brought with them fresh enthusiasms and knowledge. The classical programme has as usual been truly international and has included presentations on British composers (Benjamin Britten in his centenary year, Arnold Bax and Malcolm Arnold), French (Les Six), Russian (Shostakovich) Czech (Dvorak and Janacek), and Italian (Verdi in his bicentenary year).

In the Jazz Group we have had historical overviews of individual instruments (the trombone, the vibraphone, the double bass), surveys of the careers of artists such as Duke Ellington, Tubby Hayes and Steve Swallow, as well as selections from specific periods.

Many members have attended the quality jazz concerts now being put on at The Arena Theatre and in December, after a meal at the Bilash Restaurant, we went to a concert by the Orient House Ensemble led by the radical Israeli saxophonist Gilad Atzmon.

Details of the 2014 programmes for both groups are now on the U3A website. If you are interested in either group, please contact John Sheard ([sheard56@talktalk.net](mailto:sheard56@talktalk.net) or 01902 593392).

### Play reading

There are 2 play reading groups at the moment and we have been reading a variety of plays including Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, *The Gift of the Gorgon* by Peter Schaffer, *The Middle Watch* by Ian Hay, *For Pete's Sake* by Leslie Sands and the hilarious *Bang, Bang Beirut* by Cooney Heaton. Staffordshire libraries have a good selection that we can borrow. As plays have limited casts we cannot have too many in a group but we are starting a new group in January. Ruth Byrne will be the coordinator. Dot Deegan is arranging the venue at Lowlands avenue. The first meeting will be

on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm. Anyone wishing to join should ring Ruth on 01902 764564.

Sheila Moore

### **Walking Group Holiday: 2013**

In October, 34 of us had a most enjoyable holiday at The Royal Sportsman Hotel, Porthmadog in North Wales. The group spent three nights here, where both the food and service were quite excellent. The weather was generally kind to us, albeit that one adventurous group came near to being blown off the North Wales “Eiger” - Cnicht. Each day a choice of 2-3 walks was on offer, depending on the weather and how energetic one was feeling. Apart from the walking, some made other visits, including the delightful Portmeirion.



The evenings were enjoyed, with great fun and camaraderie, testing – not too seriously – our ability to identify music from our past; our literacy levels; to draw a picture [and to whisper]: laughing, shouting and getting too excited were forbidden.

All in all, members rated this a successful holiday – which may even be repeated next year!

John Black

### **Extracurricular**

David Starmer has contributed a few words on *The Stock Market* which he hopes might whet someone's appetite:

This morning I looked in at the Market. There are no stalls here, and I wasn't searching for lovely red apples or fresh vegetables. In this Market there are friendly bulls and non cuddly bears. You can't buy shirts, but you can lose them if you are not careful. Here the unforgiving rules of the jungle prevail and the swirling mists of uncertainty obscure the road ahead...

### **Welcome to the Stock Market: the greatest betting shop on earth.**

I think this is how it works:

The *Stock Market* enables you to buy and sell company shares, also called *Equities*.

The price of a share is decided upon by the *Market Maker*, employed by a company to deal in their shares via *Traders or Dealers* who live in the *Stock Exchange*.

You have to buy or sell shares through a *Stock Broker* who then instruct a *Dealer* who works on the *Stock Exchange* floor.

This set-up is wide open to skullduggery and ungentlemanly conduct in order to achieve ill gotten gains.

The *FSA*, (*Financial Services Authority*); a quasi-judicial body, used to regulate the *Market*, primarily to breathe down the necks of the ungodly who would, unwittingly, indulge in a little bit of *Insider Trading*. *Insider Trading* is the act of an individual working in the *Stock Market* to personally instruct a third party to trade in a *Stock* which they *know* is about to go significantly up or down in price.

Unfortunately in this age of the smart, well heeled, corporate lawyer, very few have actually had their collars felt.

The *FSA's* duties are now divided between three more robust bodies, namely, *The Prudential Regulation Authority*, *The Financial Conduct Authority* and *The Bank of England*.

This seems to work as there are now a number of miscreants languishing in Her Majesty's prisons.

*If you're interested, please contact David on 01902 684377 or email [davidstarmer@gmail.com](mailto:davidstarmer@gmail.com)*



Congratulations to Len and Christine Moore on attaining their eightieth(s) !!

## RENE GOES ADVENTURING

### You're Never Too Old

A letter came to me one day which caused me great surprise,  
Join our adventure group it said, I couldn't believe my eyes.  
Our group is quite a mixture, to Devon we are going.  
We guarantee you'll have some fun even if it's snowing.  
I quickly sent a letter back, I think there's some mistake,  
Adventure courses aren't for me, no way could I partake  
You know I'm nearly eighty-seven, you can't be sending me to Devon.

Almost by return of post there came back a reply,  
We think it's just the thing for you, why don't you have a try.  
We're sure that you could ride a horse or kayak on the lake,  
Plenty of help there'll always be in case there's a mistake.  
On one side of the gym you'll find a splendid climbing wall,  
No need to fear, with harness on you're quite safe if you fall.  
And so, at nearly eighty-seven I went to have some fun in Devon.

First time for me I rode a horse and even made him trot.  
I cycled on a KMX, the hard work made me hot.  
I scaled that wall right to the top and abseiled to the ground.  
With harness on I climbed the crates, and next the swing I found.  
Up to the ceiling I was hauled and with a quick release  
I swung – a giant pendulum with all the floor beneath.  
I was, at nearly eighty-seven, doing amazing things in Devon.

One day we paddled the canoes, all round the lake and back,  
Then to the woods to light a fire and cook ourselves a snack.  
I had a try at archery, at first was rather poor,  
But finally I hit the board and made some sort of score.  
That I had met these challenges gave me enormous pleasure,  
So if when old you wonder how you ought to spend your leisure,  
Why don't you do, when you're eighty-seven,  
Try adventuring in Devon.

*Rene Hayes*



### ***Organisational changes***

**Neil Moreland** was elected Chair at the AGM and will take over from **Jeanette Black**

**Janet Kerr** will be taking over from **Ann Eales** as Visits Organiser

**Chris Collins** will be joint Membership Secretary with **Jenny Williams**

**Mo Johnson** will take over from **Gwynneth Chubb** as Speakers Secretary for our monthly meetings

**Gerry Mills** is retiring from the committee after many years' sterling service

**Margaret Barr** has been our Treasurer for six years and will be retiring at the next AGM, so there will be a vacancy for this important post: if you would like to fill it please let Secretary **John Sheard** know (or any member of the committee)

***Our thanks and appreciation to retirees and a warm welcome to those taking new roles***

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