

Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter



June-July 2013

Issue 2013/3

Chairperson's Letter

(Tel: 277 4187)

Dear Friends

At long last some warm sunny weather! Here's hoping that it continues and we can all get on with the challenges of the garden and enjoy the opportunity to get out and about in the fresh air.

And now the start of another new U3A year with plenty of good speakers booked on a range of interesting topics to look forward to. However, do remember to check with your Group Leader whether your group/s will be taking a break over the summer! Some information is on the website, and in What's On, but this is not always the full picture.

Many of you have had a very pleasant time in Llandudno and many are looking forward to a trip to Wengen at the very end of August. (As I write, I see that there is still a lot of snow on the Männlichen and at Kleine Scheidegg, but they should be clear by the time we go.)

A lot of things happened on this day in history: (some days when I look this up there is hardly anything of note)

1185 BC – Troy sacked and burned (according to Eratosthenes)

1685 AD – Monmouth rebellion against James II

1776 AD – Committee formed to draft U.S. Declaration of Independence

1943 AD – Himmler ordered the "liquidation" of the Jewish ghettos in
Poland

1987 AD – Margaret Thatcher won a third term as Prime Minister

From

Barry Hillyard
Chairperson

Countesthorpe



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

DIARY DATES: June-July 2013

Date	Group	Activity	Venue/time
16 June	Solo Lunch	Cradock Arms, Knighton Rd	Noon for 12.30 pm
17 June	Creative Writing	Theme: "Colour"	2 - 4 pm at Brook Court
18 June	SWANS	Welford Rd Cemetery	Call Pamela 277 2653
18 June	Literature	Visit to Howarth	Leave Leys at 8.25, then V Hall and Square
19 June	Singing for Fun		7.00 – 8.30 pm Methodist Church Room
21 June	CHEWS	Main meeting + weigh-in	Marlene's home, between 9.15 and 10.15 am
24 June	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
25 June	SWANS	Anniversary Lunch, Castle Farmhouse, Kirby Muxloe	Noon for 12.30 pm
25 June	History	Stokesay Castle and Ludlow Food Centre	Leave Leys 9.15 am, then VH, Square and Blaby
27 June	CARE Walking	5 miles from The Bell, Gumley + optional lunch	9.15 am from Village Hall
27 June	Art	Last weekly meeting in the Chapel until 5 Sept.	Can paint in Margaret's garden in July and August
28 June	Discussion	Topic: Can the Behaviour and Attitude of Professional Sportspersons affect Society?	10 – noon at Shirley's home
2 July	SWANS	Kilby Bridge to Crow Mills/retn	10.30 am roadside (Kilby)
3 July	Scrabble	Scrabble, Upwords, Rummikub	2.00 – 4.30 pm at Brook Court
8 July	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
9 July	Monthly Meeting	Life and Times of a Ship's Pilot <i>William Wells</i>	Doors open 1.30 pm Speaker from 2.00/2.15 pm
10 July	Flower Arranging		2 – 4 pm Village Hall
16 July	SWANS	Fosse Meadows	10.30 am in car park
17 July	Literature	Any Brönte novel	2 - 4 pm at Brook Court
18 July	History	Staffordshire Hoard	9.00 am from Village Hall
19 July	CHEWS	Main meeting + weigh-in	Margaret's home, between 9.15 and 10.15 am
26 July	Discussion	Topic: Does Size Matter?	10 – noon at Jackie's home

KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN'T GET TO MEETINGS?

If you do, then perhaps you would be kind enough to take them a copy of the monthly What's On and the bi-monthly Newsletter. There are always spare copies available in the display stands in the lobby.

Also, Group Leaders are encouraged to take a few copies for people in their groups who do not come to the monthly gatherings, so that they are kept up to date with what's happening and can join in if they wish.



FOLK DANCING

Next session will be on 24 June when there will be a slight change of emphasis, after May's Maypole dancing! Then 8 and 22 July - and everyone is welcome - please remember to wear comfortable shoes and bring your sense of humour. Also, please do tell me when things aren't clear!

Details from Patsy Paterson on 277 6259

IMAGININGS!

This year, on renewal of your U3A membership, each individual member or couple at same address receives a copy of Imaginings – poems, stories and descriptive pieces produced by our Creative Writing group. Don't forget to claim yours!

IF YOU DID NOT GET YOURS, JUST SEE JUNE IN SMALL LOUNGE TO COLLECT YOUR COPY!

This is being presented with the compliments of the Committee, and we hope that everyone will enjoy the examples of the group members' work - and perhaps even be inspired to join them between 2 – 4 pm on the third Monday of each month at Brook Court.

Details of Creative Writing group from Mikki Wilde on 277 5509



WE *DID* LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE!

Forty-one happy U3A members boarded the Robinson's bus and set off for the journey to Llandudno on Saturday, 18 June for a week's stay at the award-winning St Kilda Hotel, well placed on the central promenade. After a coffee stop on the M6 we went on to Ness Gardens where we had time for lunch and to admire the beauty and peace of the surroundings. Then it was off for our 'tea and scones welcome' at our hotel, to settle into our assigned rooms and perhaps followed by an exploratory stroll before dinner.

The next day dawned bright, though chilly and after an excellent breakfast we set off by coach to visit Bodnant Gardens – which were simply magnificent and well-deserving of their reputation as one of the finest in the UK. The late Spring meant that shrubs which would normally be past their best were still displaying their full glory. The azaleas, pieris, magnolias and rhododendrons were amazing, not only for their sheer size and vigour but for their stunning range of colour. The entire grounds were immaculately tended and I'm sure we will all have some wonderful photographs of this visit!

We strayed across the waters of the Menai Strait to visit Plas Newydd, where after a leisurely walk through the arboretum we arrived at the house –home of the Marquis of Anglesey. Some members enjoyed croquet on the lawn, whilst other took a stroll around the gardens along the Strait, with their tiered Italianate terraces and woodland areas. We had a conducted tour of the house, before free time to revisit the rooms at leisure. Leaving there, we called for photos and shopping at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch (mercifully shortened to Llanfair PG!) before returning to Llandudno. It was contrived in 1860 to give the railway station the honour of having the longest name. It means: St Mary's Church in the hollow of the white hazel near the rapid whirlpool and the church of St Tysilio with a red cave.

Our visit to the small estuary town of Conwy was fascinating with a wide range of sights to enjoy. There are the remnants of the town walls and the magnificent 13th century castle to explore – with fabulous views over countryside and estuary rewarding the climb to the top of one of its towers. There is also Thomas Telford's suspension bridge – the first of its kind in the world. This feat of engineering was completed in 1826 and replaced the ferry. Today, it is only passable on foot. Then in the main street there is the newly-restored and fascinating Plas Mawr which is said to be the finest surviving town house of the Elizabethan era to be found anywhere in Britain. Then in contrast there is the UK's tiny, red Smallest House inhabited by 6' 3" fisherman, Robert Jones, until 1900. The house has a floor area of just 10' x 6' with a total height of 10' 2" (for both floors together!) This little curiosity nestles alongside the bustling harbour with its marvellous Conwy Mussel Sculpture, created by Graeme Mitcheson from Kilkenny limestone celebrating the town's mussel fishing industry which has survived for thousands of years. Roaming around Conwy's narrow streets with their interesting mix of shops, galleries and tearooms made a wonderful day, complimented again by sunshine!

Another day, another fascinating day – this time to the Woollen Mills at Trefiw followed by the Llechwedd Slate Caverns – but this time with a twist. So far, I've said little about the coach travel – it all simply happens with efficiency and smoothness, as usual, but today brought one of those moments we will all remember, when we sat with our hearts in our mouths, hardly daring to breathe, as (at the second attempt and from the opposite direction) our coach was driven with barely an inch to spare over the stone three-arched packhorse bridge in Llanwrst. This is a right-angled turn off the main road, near a bend, close to the town centre. Mercifully Inigo Jones' 1836 landmark and Robinson's newest coach remained totally unscathed – thanks to the skill and determination of our driver, Bill Barker, (who later celebrated with *two puddings* at dinner!).

Wool is processed from fleece to fabric at Trefiw using machines from the 1950's or 1960's, powered by water turbines two decades older. The processes used were introduced in the industrial revolution, long before computerisation, and still produce the fabric for Welsh tapestry bedspreads, throws, clothing and all manner of small goods – which are on sale in the vast shop. The visit offers a fascinating insight into this traditional, yet still thriving, industry. Some members returned by public bus to Llandudno, whilst others continued on to Llechwedd Slate Caverns where, equipped with hard hats, we rattled along in the train – stopping periodically to alight and listen to information along the workings. Some intrepid souls ventured onto the deep cavern experience, descending 500 feet on a steep funicular cabin to follow a self-guided tour of various audio/visual presentations. Yes, *alone*, deep in the Welsh mountainside - but all emerged safely to rejoin their friends who had been enjoying browsing in the workshops and the gift shop!

Thursday morning brought a visit to Betwys-y-Coed – a pretty little spot where we explored the local church or took a riverside walk (in spite of the drizzle). Then it was off to Llanberis for the trip on the Snowdon Mountain Railway. What a grand ride and it was even clear at the top, though bitterly cold at -6° C! The wind nearly blew us off our feet, but at least we had a good view. Just as we rejoined the train, however, the clouds came down as did the snow, and we were glad to return to the comparative warmth of the valley, and thence to our hotel. How lucky we were!

Our final day was free in Llandudno with its wide range of attractions, shops or just wandering along the promenade or the pier enjoying being beside the seaside. There is the Great Orme – by train only, as it was too windy for the cablecar, the ancient Copper Mines, the Haulfre or Happy Valley Gardens and so much more.

In the evenings we had excellent entertainment in the hotel, or could sample the local Town Band or Male Voice Choirs in concert in the local churches. Something for everyone, it seemed!

Then it was goodbye to the seaside and home with a pleasant stop for lunch at Attingham Park gardens. This may make for an interesting future visit.

Our sincere thanks must go, once again, to Jenny for her hard work and fantastic organisation which made this a holiday which we will all remember for a long while.

HAVE YOU CHANGED ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER?

If so, then please let Sue Wyllie (our Treasurer) have your new contact details to ensure that you don't miss out on any information. Drop Sue a note (she sits at the table by the main hall doors at our monthly meetings), or email her at susanvwyllie@hotmail.com or telephone on 284 9959

We take great care to protect your privacy and all personal data is maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

**If not, then please don't delay – do it TODAY! Please see Sue Wyllie at the desk in the lobby. Where else can you get such fantastic benefits for just £13 per year!
(and remember to collect your copy of Imaginings)**

WALKING (C.A.R.E.)

The May walk, led by Judith Mace and Tricia Cornforth, was from the Chandler's Arms at Shearsby and attracted sixteen walkers including one new member.

We left the village on the Leicestershire Round and on reaching the outskirts of Bruntingthorpe took the track which runs parallel to the brook until we reached the road leading to Arnesby. After a short distance we stopped for our customary break and photo shoot. After setting off, we had drama; an excited lamb became trapped in the remains of the old netting from when deer roamed these fields. It took four of us to hold the lamb still before it could be released. We continued on into Arnesby and then followed the track back into Shearsby passing Saint Mary Magdalene Church.



New walkers are always welcome. Check details on the website, in What's On or call Allen Donkin on 277 3665 or Malcolm Skerritt on 277 2599.

HISTORY GROUP

Stokesay Castle and Ludlow Food Centre on 25 June £20

Staffordshire Hoard on 18 July ,leaving Village Hall at 9 am £15

Wrest Park and Bedford on 7 August, leaving Village Hall at 9 am £15

We also plan to visit Burrough Hill excavations in the autumn. More details in due course. A further three talks by Peter Liddle are planned, each 9.45 am – noon in the Methodist Chapel, in November, December and January, covering Early Anglo-Saxon, then Mercian, Viking and Norman and finally Medieval Leicestershire. These will again be £3 on the door, to include refreshments. Actual dates TBA.

For details of these trips and to book, please visit the History table in the small lounge, see the website or email June on jhawkins45@talktalk.net

HEALTHY LIVING

Your life . . . live it!



New exercise and lifestyle group!

The 6-week course will:-

**improve your heart health, strengthen your muscles,
help you move more freely, and make new friends!**

We have funding from Blaby District Council to run this, and now have a list of those members who are interested. We are in contact with the proposed tutor, and it has been decided to start these courses in the autumn as so many people are on holiday or have other commitments throughout the summer. Watch for details!

THEATRE PROGRAMME



Tues* 2 July	The Odd Couple	£16	Market Harborough	Leys 6.40 pm, + VH, Square	14 May
Tues* 24 Sept	People	£20	Curve, Leicester	Leys 6.35 pm + VH, Square	14 Aug
Thurs 31 Oct	War Horse	£60	Birmingham Hippodrome	VH 12 noon	9 April
Tues* 26 Nov	The Hindle Wakes	£16	Market Harborough	Leys 6.40 pm, + VH, Square	8 Oct
Tues* 10 Dec	Chicago	£20	Curve, Leicester	Leys 6.10 pm, + VH, Square	11 June

THE ODD COUPLE - Comedy, in which fussy Florence and sloppy Olive share an apartment, coping with each other, their friends and the two Spanish brothers who live upstairs.

PEOPLE – Alan Bennett’s newest play tours from its sell-out performances at the National Theatre in London.

WAR HORSE – BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! Don’t miss this last opportunity to see this amazing and heart-warming production! How can puppets be so life-like? *FULL, but you can join waiting list.*

THE HINDLE WAKES - A mill girl spends an illicit weekend in Wales with wealthy mill-owner’s son. Produced first in the early 20th century, this play explores the reactions and decisions following this shocking event.

CHICAGO – Get your Christmas season off to a great start with ‘All That Jazz’ in this award-winning show – bargain tickets and transport there and back as well.

June Hawkins – tel: 277 6330 or email: jhawkins45@talktalk.net

*** SORRY, BUT DUE TO ZUMBA CLASSES, THERE IS NO PARKING AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY EVENINGS – AFFECTING ‘THE ODD COUPLE’, ‘PEOPLE’, ‘THE HINDLE WAKES’ and ‘CHICAGO’. THE COACH WILL PICK UP AT THE LEYS, THE VILLAGE HALL AND THE SQUARE – TRY PARKING IN THE CO-OP OR CENTRAL STREET CAR PARKS (FREE AFTER 6 PM)**

PLEASE SELECT YOUR CHOICE OF PICK-UP POINT WHEN BOOKING AND THEN STICK TO IT! THIS AVOIDS US HAVING TO MAKE PHONE CALLS OR THE COACH WAITING UNNECESSARILY AT EARLY STOPS!