

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's thoughts | Dates for your diary | Interest Groups latest

Thoughts from the Chair

Belated wishes to you all for a very happy and healthy new year – and it seems a long time ago now, but I must mention our Christmas Extravaganza. Waddesdon Manor Choir entertained us with their beautiful singing and we all enjoyed joining in at the end. We had so many appreciative comments from members and lots of requests for a repeat performance next year. I must thank the Committee for their contribution to its success, Peter Wenham for the delicious mulled wine and Jenny Hardy for her piano accompaniment.

Thank you to all who returned our questionnaire and for their really positive comments. You can still send your views to any Committee member.

Our year got off to an excellent start with our January speaker and we look forward to many more interesting talks and trips and our growing number of interest groups this year.

Our thoughts are already turning to our 20th Anniversary in 2020 and how we can celebrate this in style. If you have any ideas please do let the Committee know.

Sally

Rousing prelude to the new year

Celebrations began this winter with seasonal choral music. Some 130 members enjoyed a highly professional concert in the Village Hall, led by Waddesdon Manor Choir. We like to think that the standards remained high even when conductor Russell Scott invited us all to join in!



Carols at Christmas

And dates for your New Year diary...

... topics for our General Meetings leading up to Easter are:

Monday 11th February only (see Stop Press), BAFTA-nominated Christine Green will share some of her 13 years' experience at the BBC, answering the question "What does a TV graphic designer do?" On **March 11th and 21st** Rebecca Raper of Oxford Brookes University will examine where artificial intelligence (AI) is heading and will consider related ethical issues in "The Future – Robotics and Artificial Intelligence". We round off the quarter on **April 8th and 18th**, travelling from "Milton Keynes to Mississippi" with writer and guitarist Saffron Summerville. She will talk about her musical career, including her radio and TV performances. If you enjoy music from classical Spanish guitar to American blues, this meeting is a must for you! Our AGM on **Monday 13th May** continues on a musical theme, when Prof Gerald Seaman will talk about his experiences in "My Musical Life in Russia and How I met Shostakovich".



February meeting

Work on HYCC's kitchen means our General Meeting will be held in St Mary's Church on Monday 11th February at 2.30pm. There will be no Thursday meeting that month.

Interest Groups

Ideas for new interest groups

have been put forward by our thriving membership to expand our horizons in Genealogy, Poetry and Basic Computer Skills. If you are interested in joining any of these groups, let Theresa Smith know which one(s) by email on groups@haddenhamu3a.co.uk. She will contact you when there are sufficient members interested and ask for one of you in each case to be Group Leader to liaise with her and the Committee.

Discussion group 2

The group was suspended last year after the sad death of their leader John Holloway. A number of people are ready to continue with the group. If just a few more would like to give it a try, then we will have a viable number. If you are interested, or just want to find out more, call **David Gregory on 01296 747528** for more details.

Music appreciation 2

At the inaugural meeting of the second music appreciation group, member Jim Robins played recordings under the theme "Time and Space". In a related quiz, he asked the group to identify the composer of a movement from Sinfonietta Millennia. The group failed to guess, despite the clue that the composer is "known". Jim then revealed that he had written it! Such talent within our U3A! And with a second music group, there are now places available for new members. Those interested should contact **Hugh Stradling on 01844 291607**. Is there more talent lurking elsewhere within Haddenham U3A?

Theatre trips

Wednesday 13th March 2.30pm



"Oceans Eleven meets the Marx Brothers"
– *The Times*.

There are still tickets available for this dynamite new comedy. Now in its third year in the West End, *The Comedy about a Bank Robbery* can be enjoyed at Aylesbury Waterside Theatre for just £25.

Wednesday 17th April 2.30pm

Calendar Girls The Musical, by Gary Barlow and Tim Firth, is the award-winning production based on the true story of the calendar girls – a group of ordinary ladies who achieved something extraordinary. Join us at Oxford's New Theatre for £41.



"Pure Gold"
– *The Times*.

Contact for theatre bookings is Margaret Ackroyd on 01844 292393.

Other visits

Tuesday 26th February

Churchill War Rooms



Discover the secrets hidden beneath the streets of Westminster in the underground nerve centre where Winston Churchill and his inner circle directed the Second World War.

>>>>>

>>>> Churchill War Rooms Visit

Visit the underground bunker which allowed Britain's leaders to plot the allied route to victory, and walk the labyrinth of rooms and corridors stretching below Westminster that sheltered Winston Churchill and his war cabinet. £35.50 including return journey.

Tuesday 30th April

BBC Birmingham Studios

Tour behind the scenes at the home of TV's *Midlands Today* and the longest running soap opera in the world, *The Archers* (production schedules permitting). £33.50 including return journey by coach.

To attend either of these events, contact Mary Paterson on 01844 291919 or email events@haddenhamu3a.co.uk



Events roundup

Gardening Group

Monday 18th February

Rob Jacobs from Waterperry Gardens will give a talk on the philosophy of the famous Beatrix Havergal and her legacy, and the history of Waterperry Horticultural College.

Monday 18th March

Paul Green will give a talk on his involvement with archaeology and digs that he has worked on. He will also show his DVD *Risborough – Origins of our Settlement*.

To attend either of these talks, please contact Doreen Barker on 01844 290377 or email twobarkers@btinternet.com



U3A more widely

Early booking is recommended if members wish to join the following U3A events elsewhere in the region. Thames Valley Network offers the following educational days – details at u3atvnetwork.org.uk



Tuesday 5th March

The Drama of Dunkirk at Henley (waiting list)

Thursday 4th April

Polar Exploration – at Benson

Tuesday 30th April

Medicine and Art – at Benson

Forthcoming **national events** – details at u3a.org.uk/events

Monday 4th February

Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and Book Art – British Library

Monday 11th March

U3A Explores Science at the Royal Institute

Thursday 21st March

Satire to Sublime: British Art from Hogarth to Turner
– National Gallery



Out and about

Last bus to Penge...

... with a few prospective passengers among nearly 30 ladies and gentlemen members of the Technical Interest Group who visited the London Transport Museum at the end of October. As well as historic tube trains and buses, a rare collection of London Underground memorabilia is housed under one vast roof at a working site next to Acton Town station. A film crew was also shooting a TV commercial in the train shed during the visit, but the production team were sworn to secrecy about the client!



Earth matters to the River Thames



Courtesy: River Thames Conservation Trust

A talk to the Earth Matters Interest Group in mid-November presented some of the wide-ranging work done by the River Thames Conservation Trust – from creating wildlife refuges and gravel beds for fish to spawn in, to dog entry points to the waterway. The speaker also highlighted the dangers of water-borne pollution, ranging from the chemicals in washing powders etc to toxic run-off from conkers squashed by passing traffic!

If you would like to get involved, the Trust can be contacted at www.riverthame.org

Local History group joins Museum celebrations ...

The U3A Local History Group varied their programme in November by joining the 20th Anniversary celebrations of Haddenham Museum, coinciding with St Catherine's Day. As she is the patron saint of lace makers, there was a talk and demonstration of Buckinghamshire lace, led by Elizabeth Oliver.

Over 250 people attended the celebrations, which opened with the launch of Number 16 of *The Haddenham Chronicles* by local celebrity and expert local historian Bruce Alexander. It included pieces by several U3A members, including Alan Rose, Christina Jeffery, Elaine Parkes, Elizabeth Oliver and Steve Sharp.

There were talks by U3A members Alan Rose on Amy Johnson's time in Haddenham and the History of the Haddenham Mummerys, and by Peter Gulland on Buckinghamshire Railways. There was also a performance by the Haddenham Handbell Ringers, and the weekend



Bruce Alexander with Alan Rose

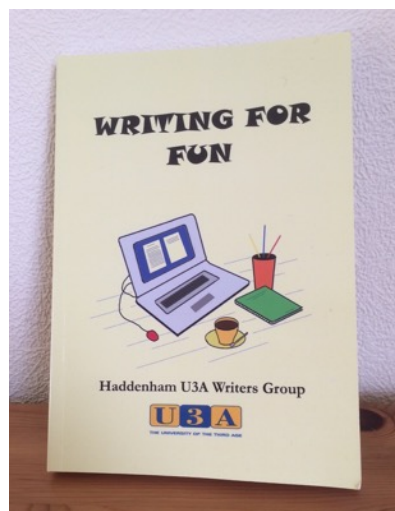
concluded with a service featuring the Witchert Chorale. The Museum in the High Street will be open again from the beginning of March on Tuesday mornings and Sunday afternoons.

Points of order

Writing for fun...

...is the title of a book published by our Writing Group. There are examples of creative writing ranging from extracts from novels, biographies and memoirs to poetry and short plays – a very useful guide for anyone embarking on creative writing. This 200 page paperback is available at www.lulu.com/shop price £10.

Members of the Writing Group will be also be presenting some of their pieces at the Community Library on **Thursday 7th February** at 10.30am. This event is free of charge, including tea, coffee and biscuits.



Lonely? Take a regular dose of U3A



Member David Gregory is, like many of us, in the Patients Participation Group of Haddenham Medical Centre. He has been in discussion with the U3A at a national level, and with doctors at the medical centre about the current debate on loneliness and health in the elderly, and how the U3A could make a valuable contribution to combatting loneliness and improving health in the elderly. Neil Dury has produced a leaflet about our U3A, listing all the various interest groups, for doctors to use with patients as appropriate. The medical centre have also agreed to have a U3A table with the leaflets and membership forms available. David is looking for volunteers to be on hand occasionally to talk to people about U3A. Anyone interested should contact him on 01296 747528.

Our survey: your opinions

Thank you to all the members who completed the questionnaire in our first issue, particularly quite a few newcomers. We believe the sample was reasonably representative. Analysis shows that the overwhelming majority joined for social reasons – to meet with new people, make friends, and find company of a similar age.

Others joined because of specific interest groups, the most mentioned being (in order) gardening, technical, walking and music. In view of the reported value of socialising, it is not surprising that most of the respondents often attended the monthly general meetings. All those with internet access reported making full use of our website whenever detailed information on meetings, dates, and times was sought. The committee is delighted to report that, when we asked what we could do to improve our U3A, very little was suggested! There was an overall preference for newsletter being issued quarterly, so the next issue will be at Easter.



A happy new year from your Editorial Team Neil Dury | Jerry Michell | Elaine Parkes