



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Heybridge U3A

News Sheet No. 2010/12

December 2010

Contacts:	Peter Thorpe	Chairman	01621 850828
	Brenda Dewar	Secretary	01245 400492

From the Chairman

I apologise for my frequent reference to the passing of time but, here we are, approaching the end of 2010. What happened to it? As a child, the six or so months between Christmas and my birthday seemed endless. As a working adult even the days between weekends seemed long. In retirement (my Third Age) the years fly by but perhaps now I have learned to appreciate them!

It is very encouraging that, every month, several people ask if they can become members of our U3A. I hope that they want to join us because they feel that we are both welcoming and friendly. Having joined our U3A I also hope that they enjoy the speakers that we invite and the wide variety of interest groups they can join.

Last month's meeting was packed and I am certain that Guy, the black Labrador, was the star of the afternoon. He brought with him Lindsay Hurrell (the Community Fund Raiser of the Canine Partners Charity) and Barry O'Connell. Barry described, with great feeling, how Guy, as a partner and not a pet, had enriched his life. For those of us who are fortunate to be fit it is impossible to fully appreciate the special bond between a disabled person and his professionally trained, loving and helpful dog.

I want to thank Dave Mason for putting our U3A into national print. Those of you who have read the current edition of the magazine U3A News will have read Dave's letter on page 53. Those of you who have not please collect your copy at the next meeting and turn to page 53!

Ian accompanied me to the Essex Association of U3As Network Meeting on 11th November. The all day meeting was arranged as a series of discussion groups examining a range of questions involving the running of our U3As. It was interesting to compare how we ran our U3A with other U3As from all over the county. I felt that the meeting was useful and constructive. It appeared to me that we have established our U3A, with our unique identity, as a full member of the Essex Association of U3As and that we are definitely "on the right track".

To celebrate the coming festive season we have booked Keith Baldwin as our speaker for the

December meeting when he will deliver us his "Christmas Package". I am certain that you will find it entertaining and humorous. I would also like to offer you my Seasonal Greetings and I look forward to seeing you in December.

Peter Thorpe

From the Editor

Members of the Computer Group have produced a couple of WEB pages. They hope to expand it as the months progress into the New Year. Those who receive this News Sheet electronically can view these pages now by clicking on the following link but make sure you are 'on-line' first:

<http://www.heybridgeu3a.org.uk> .

The Computer Group will welcome your comments on this new facility or on ways you would like it developed. I have not put down my ideas as this News Sheet is yours as is the content of the Heybridge U3A WEB site.

This advance copy of this News Sheet is again being circulated to all members who have provided their email addresses to the Membership Secretary. If you have an email address and have not received an emailed copy of this News Sheet please let me know, preferably by email (Email address below).

The Diary on the last page has been updated through to the end of January 2011. It is important that you as COG's, members of Groups or just members of Heybridge U3A, keep me up to date. If anyone has an interesting story, relevant pictures or activity that relates in some way to The Heybridge U3A or the U3A movement as a whole, then please contact me.

Most will know the publication procedure. Copy should normally be with me by the last Friday of the month (However, this month, December 17th will be the deadline so that the January News Sheet can be completed before Christmas). Please continue to send details to me, preferably by email, at ian.newman@tiscali.co.uk with 'U3A' or Preferably 'Heybridge U3A' in the title. Alternatively see me at the Monthly Meeting to decide other methods of providing copy. Publication will take place some seven to ten days later. Ian Newman.

Heybridge U3A Meetings

The next Meeting is on Friday 10th December, starting at the normal time of 14.00, in the Plantation Hall, Heybridge. This month we have Keith Baldwin who will be providing a Christmas Package full of anecdotes and humour with excerpts from Dickens, Dylan Thomas and others. The New Year brings us a talk on the Farleigh Hospice in January and a historical talk on Henry John Hatch the first Chaplain to Wandsworth Prison in February.

From the COGCo (Group Co-ordinator)

Last month I had so much to write about, having made several visits as well as my usual groups, that I really do not have much to cover this month.

My main objective in this News Sheet is to advise you that we will not be having a speaker at the AGM in March, but would please ask the Painting Group to put on another exhibition as the last two were very successful.



If any of the other groups would like to put on a display this will be very welcome. Obviously, this will not be to the same extent of that of the Strawberry Tea, but I am sure enough of you will be interested. Please let me know if you would like to do this and your requirements as to tables etc. We anticipate having the AGM and snacks to go with our tea or coffee to make a bit of a party atmosphere.

The end of October for me, after sending my report to Ian was hectic; Scrabble on the Wednesday, Luncheon Club and Sweeney Todd on the Friday and meeting some of the Weekenders for lunch after their walk on the Saturday. The various COGs will report on these activities. Sometimes it happens that many activities are all going on and at another times is really quiet and, much as I hate it, the clocks were put back.

Since joining the U3A I have tried many things and made some good friends but I am still trying to get more groups going. It seems to be the same people who belong to more than one group. We have many interests between us and perhaps we need someone new to start another group.

As part of the Computer Group I am working on a personal presentation of the Groups and having gone through *all* the News Sheets I have realised, once

again, just how many diverse interests are already catered for and how the conversations at the various meetings go from subject to subject covering, not only their own group, but many of the other groups.

Group Names, Co-ordinator, Contact Telephone

Group Name	Co-ordinator (COG)	Telephone Number
Ballroom Dancing	Joint with Maldon Jo Robson *	* 01621 828236
Bird Watching	Maureen Lenoir	01621 869871
Bridge	Lisbeth Bazzard	01621 843208
Coffee Morning	Margaret Brown	01621 854885
Computer	Tina Abeysekera	01621 858635
Esperanto	Peter Groves	01245 227018
Family History	Lesley Pomphrett	01621 817733
Gardening	Pat Yates	01621 892866
Local History	Carol Greenhalgh	01621 840339
Luncheon	Beth Jeffries	01621 853403
Maritime & Coastal	Brenda Dewar	01245 400492
Painting	Michael Kempen	01621 892974
Petanque	Barbara Barbrook	01621 855605
Photography	Peter Thorpe	01621 850828
Reading & Books	Ann Lees	01245 225153
Scrabble	Ruth Tyler	01621 869865
Theatre	Gill Bridle & Janet Morley	01621 892587 & 892626
Threads & Fabrics	Anne Thorpe & Pat Newman	01621 850828 & 01621 891184
Walking	Elizabeth Eastwood	01621 850618
Weekenders	Marilyn Corbett	01621 817518

I do realise that I have used the word "group" 10 times but that is my role and, hopefully, this will not bore you but interest you! This is an image I found when I

googled the word "group" but not indicative of what we do!! I hope some of you have the same weird sense of humour as I do.



As this is the last News Sheet of 2010 may I take this opportunity of wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Gill Thorne 0162 852294

gillthorne2@hotmail.co.uk

Membership Secretary

If you are not a member, and wish to join, please contact Lisbeth Bazzard on 01621 843208 or by email lisbethbazzard@talktalk.net You can also write to her at 2, Silver Street, Maldon, Essex. CM9 4QE or speak to her at the Monthly Meeting.

REPORTS

Art (Painting) Group

The painting group has decided that, as we members all get on so well together, we'll celebrate Christmas with a nice communal lunch in town. Our tables are booked for Friday, December 10th at the Secret Garden restaurant in Maldon High Street.

Yes, we know, it is the day of the Heybridge U3A Monthly Meeting. Several of us do aim to be there after lunch, even if we're a little bit late.

Friday 10th was chosen because we were nearly all free that day - and because we all enjoy our painting sessions so much we didn't want to miss one.

Happy Christmas!

Gill Carpenter

Bird Watching

On the last Friday of November the group faced a very cold but lovely sunny afternoon and visited Abbotts Hall Farm at Wigborough. The farm is owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and is still a working farm which is mostly arable with some crops grown for the production of bird seed.

John, a volunteer who was to take us round, met us. He chatted about the farm and what has been done to encourage the birds and wildlife.



Cormorant

The area is so large we could have been there all day. As we only had the afternoon we had a lovely walk to the lake where we sat in the comfort of a warm hide to watch an assortment of ducks. There were a number that we have seen before. It was lovely to see the Golden Eye, Pintail and Tufted Ducks again. Also, there were Moorhens, Coots, a pair of Swans and one Cormorant standing like a statue with his wings out.



We always thought that it was to dry themselves but John said they now think it could be to help with their digestion.

Widgeon

The sea wall was breached in 2002 to encourage more waders to the area. We, again had a lovely walk to see what had been done and watch the waders along the shore.

Having had such a lovely time we hope to go back again in the spring to see all the field and hedge birds they have there.



A coot and four mallards

No Bird Watching in December but if you want to join us next year please get in touch with Maureen on 01621 869871 or email symockturtle@yahoo.co.uk

Happy Christmas and New Year to you all.

Bridge Group

For details about any bridge duplicate session please contact me, Liz, on 01621 843208 or email me at lisbethbazzard@talktalk.net

Computer Group

Another enthusiastic meeting of the group was held on the 18th November. Best wishes were sent to Pat who at the time of the meeting was ill in hospital.

One member of the group asked for advice on the best laptop to buy and it was agreed that a 15.6 screen and the biggest RAM possible would be advisable. Also, if you are transporting your laptop the weight of the machine should be taken into consideration. Notebooks are the cheapest option but have many disadvantages and are, therefore, not a good buy. Most members preferred to purchase their laptops from smaller local firms rather than the big chains because of better service.

Peter then gave an in depth talk on the www (World Wide Web) and the setting up of the proposed Heybridge U3A website. This really was most enlightening as most of us were totally ignorant of the time and effort that goes into such a complex procedure. We were delighted to view some of the proposed website and, after discussion, everyone present felt we should now proceed with same.

The next meeting of the computer group self help surgery is at 1300 on Thursday 16th December when perhaps we shall find time to stop for tea and coffee and perhaps a mince pie!!!!

Audrey

Coastal and Marine Group

Our planning meeting proved to be very enjoyable. Thank you Jane for the lovely mince pies and to everyone else for their great ideas and suggestions. Hopefully, we now have a full programme to be enjoyed in 2011. I will be collating all the information, from group members who have kindly offered to organise visits, into a programme ready for the New Year.

We start 2011 with Tony's fascinating and very amusing talk about the Royal Yacht Britannia so, come along and join us at the Blue Boar on Friday January 21st at 14.00.

We have decided to visit the Greenwich Maritime Museum on Friday February 18th. As we are few in numbers a coach is not a viable option so, we shall let the train take the strain. The DLR takes us to

Greenwich from Stratford via Canary Wharf and Mudshute; an interesting concept! We can organise a conducted tour and see how the work on the Cutty Sark is getting on. There is also a great tea room in the Museum. It should be a great day out. Everyone welcome to join us. See you at the Blue Boar in January.

Brenda Dewar. (01245 400492)

Discussion Coffee Morning

The November coffee morning was held at Margaret Clark's house on the 19th November. Unfortunately I was not able to be there due to a hospital appointment and to my disappointment a little bird later mentioned that I had missed out on a lovely slice of Dundee cake!

The next meeting will be at Gill Thorne's house on Friday 17th December at 11.00. Details will be available at the next Monthly Meeting.

You can also telephone me, Margaret Brown, for information, on 01621 854885.

Family History Group

Nine members met on 25th November for our monthly meeting and Christmas get-together. Jean and Norman brought their laptops so we had three computers in use. There was lots of advise and help being given. Thank you Jean and Norman. The Family history Group really appreciated your input to the meeting.

As there are no meetings in December and January, I look forward to seeing everyone on Thursday 24th February at my house (10.30 to 12.30). I would like to wish all members in Heybridge U3A a very happy Christmas and wish you all health and happiness for 2011.

Lesley Pomphrett

lesleypommy@hotmail.com

Gardening Group

Unfortunately the talk on Winter Colour at Mill Race Garden Centre on the 30th November was cancelled due to the snow. I hope to re-schedule in the New Year, most likely February, if it has stopped snowing by then!

Pat Yates, 01621 892866 or pat.yates@tesco.net

Local History Group (LHG)

The Local History Group met at the Blue Boar for our November meeting. With our proposed speaker having to go into hospital, rather than come and talk to us, we resorted to Plan B [or was it Plan C?] which resulted in a very entertaining afternoon [even though Carol had forgotten the mince pies!]. Peter had the

good idea to provide us with two slide shows using the U3A projector and a 'powerpoint' presentation.

The first one was from the Maldon Museum and was a record of some of their artefacts. Peter explained that this had been prepared mainly to show to those visitors to the museum who are unable to access the first floor. It looks like a return visit to the museum would be much enjoyed by our group.

The second slideshow was of shots of Maldon that Peter has taken in recent years. As we went through these we were able to marry up many of them with pictures from Ellen's collection, or in books brought along by Carol. Members of the group chipped in with relevant snippets and stories. We may now try and put these photographs together in a more formal way.

We do not have a meeting in December. We next meet on Tuesday 19th January at the Blue Boar.

Anyone interested should contact me on 01621 840339 or e-mail george.smeed@virgin.net.

Carol Greenhalgh.

Luncheon Group

The Luncheon group are going to The Duke of Wellington on 3rd December for our pre Christmas dinner. Twenty three people have signed up.

Beth 01621 853403.

Petanque Group

Although we have officially hibernated through this very cold spell some hardy souls, I hear, are still playing. So if you fancy a game out in the fresh air on the Prom, please telephone Alf Bell on 01621 840158 and he will be able to help you. For me, I'll see you at the Luncheon Club. The Petanque Group will be starting for the summer season on 14th March 2011.

Barbara Barbrook.

Photography Group

At last month's meeting Photography Group members had taken and shown photographs with "colour" as the main subject. It was very pleasing to see the wide variety of interpretations of this abstract subject. It was also encouraging that so many members wanted their pictures to be viewed on the screen by the group. We continued our examination on how we see and photograph colours. The group chose "texture" (another abstract subject) for their December photographs!

If you are interested in photography and want to join us we normally meet in the Claydon Room of the Plantation Hall, on the first Thursday of each month at 13.00 (lunch time!). We laugh as we learn and you are welcome.

Peter Thorpe thorpe101@btinternet.com



Author - Angela Pleasance

Reading and Books Group

We had a very enjoyable and interesting meeting this month. The discussions related to 'Dreams from my Father' by Barack Obama. This was our book for the month of November and happily it was, in the main, enjoyed and gave rise to much discussion. This book had been written 10 years before but had been revised and re-published around the time of the Presidential election. We felt that this did impact upon the story which, to some extent, seemed to have been modified to make the story less contentious and agreeable to the American people.

The son of a black African father and white American mother Barack Obama retraced his life with his mother, and stepfather in Indonesia, his life with his grandparents in Hawaii and the search for and meeting of his father and his other family in Africa. The story, although an autobiography was, in the main, an attempt by him to reconcile himself to his divided inheritance.

We agreed that this was a beautifully written autobiography but lacking in the bite and aggression that one would have expected from a black man emerging from a broken home into a prejudiced and sometimes brutal American society.

At times, not sure to which part of the society he belonged, white or black. he was ultimately forced to accept that he was a black man in a land where the power belonged to the white community. It was concluded by us that for him to have become the president of the USA was a remarkable achievement both for the Americans as a nation and for a very likeable and compassionate man.

Our next meeting takes place on 15th December at the Meeting Room Plantation Hall at 14.30. If you are interested in joining the group, please ring Ann Lees on 01245 225153.

Scrabble

Our players this month visited Elizabeth, who made us all more than welcome. We had a jolly afternoon with a lot of good scrabbling and discussions about

various words some of us were not too certain about. We are learning such a lot, if only we could remember it all!!! We were pleased to welcome Brian to our Scrabble Group. There is no need for the rest of you men to be shy. As the days get more wintery the thought of a pleasant afternoon at Scrabble seems to be coming more popular and, sadly, this month we had to turn away two other members. This caused us to make a decision to use the Meeting Room at Plantation Hall for further meetings. The only afternoon available is Tuesday, so I have booked it for the following dates:

- Tuesday 25th January 2011
- Tuesday 22nd February 2011
- Tuesday 22nd March 2011.

Play will start promptly at 14.00, so please get there by 13.45, if possible, so that we can get organised.

I do hope this change will suit you all. I will arrange to take the necessary bits and pieces for tea/coffee etc. and we will discuss a small payment monthly to cover the cost of the room and refreshments. If you had noted the venues previously arranged for these three months please amend your diaries. There will, of course, be no need now to telephone before coming to a meeting but, I would like new members to ring me initially so that I can get their details on our register.

As you know we are not meeting in December so, Happy Christmas to you all and hope to see you at Plantation Hall in January.

Ruth 01621 869865

Theatre

Just a reminder to everyone who is going on the Albert Hall, Christmas Carol 'Singalong', trip on Thursday, 16th December.

Firstly, please DON'T FORGET YOUR TICKETS. The coach (Fords Coaches) will pick up at Plantation Hall at 09.00 and it is O.K. for people to park cars there. The 'Singalong' commences at 14.30 and everyone can do their own thing until then. The coach will pick up for our return journey at approximately 16.45. Let's hope the weather is kind to us and that the roads are clear.

Janet Morley: email dennis-morley@tiscali.co.uk or 01621 892626.

Threads and Fabrics

Our report this month is very short as we spent most of our time discussing which Christmas decorations we would prefer to make next month. December's meeting should be a very colourful one. We are all looking forward to making new things for our tables and trees.

Our next meetings is on the 7th December. Anyone interested should talk to either Anne or Pat as usual.

Anne and Pat.

Walking

Unfortunately, the bad weather meant that the walk planned for November was postponed. Hopefully, we'll try that one again next month (Jan 2011) if conditions permit.

December's walk will be local, around the Hythe Quay, to be followed by lunch. We will meet at the Izumi car park at 11:00 on Thursday 9th December for a shortish walk before lunch at Izumi (£6.80 for all you can eat if my memory serves me!).

Please let me know if you can join us- 01621850618 or e.m.e@talktalk.net

Elizabeth

Weekenders

It's been a busy month for Weekenders with twelve members enjoying a performance of Sweeney Todd in Witham at the end of October and, on the 6th November, ten folk went to Izumi in Maldon. The Quiz and Jazz nights very often clash, as they did this month, but the brains of the Weekenders apparently did not do too well so I can only recommend they join the jazz groupies and give their minds a rest! A large group of us travelled to Norwich to indulge in some Christmas shopping on the 20th and for some that, I know, included a pleasant lunch.

Our next outing will be to the New Times in Tiptree for our Christmas lunch on the 5th December at 12.00 noon and our next monthly meeting will be at Oliver's on the 11th when we will firm up dates for the meeting in January and also a planned evening meal to Ruby's in Tolleshunt D'Arcy. May I take this opportunity to wish all Weekenders and members of Heybridge U3A a very Happy Christmas and another successful New Year.

Marilyn Corbett 01621 817518

On the Notice Board

If you are planning to put something on the notice board that is not group related and it is available prior to the first Friday of the month, the Editor would be pleased to include it in this section of the News Sheet.

The following items of News appeared on the Notice Board in November:

- Two lectures on the 8th December on the heart and its diseases.
- Jazz Appreciation Study Day next June in Leeds. This notice can be found again on the Notice Board at the December Meeting.

U3A Magazine

The U3A Magazine has been available for a couple of months but can still be collected at next monthly meeting.

Members Article

On the way back from a holiday in the South of France in 2006 we stayed overnight at a hotel just on the outskirts of Cambrai, called Hotel Beatus. I was very impressed with this shabby chic hotel so returned there some six months later for a short visit in October.



This was serendipity as the owner of the hotel, Philippe Gorcsynski, was the person responsible for discovering the Flesquieres tank, a Great War tank D51 known as *Deborah*. Talking to him in the foyer on arrival he advised that he had the “key” to the barn where this British tank was kept and would we like to see it. The following morning we followed him through the tiny roads near Cambrai where he opened up a huge barn and there was this tank from the Battle of Cambrai November 1917. We were allowed to take photos but promised not to put them on the internet. It was a very poignant visit to see this surviving tank from almost 90 years ago.



He also showed us a site where it was planned to have a memorial for all the tank crews. The base of this was a concrete tank track in the centre (See picture of tank in the barn) and also the base of the

new memorial. We thought at the time it would be interesting to go back for the 90th anniversary but were advised that all the hotels were full and this was over a year before the celebration was due to take place.



As a battlefield historian Philippe also advised us which graves and memorials were the best to see and even wrote out an itinerary. It really shows that it is who you know rather than what you know! Although I was not around at this time! and my grandfather was in Africa the whole experience was very moving, especially all the graves marked “unknown”. The war graves are kept in beautiful condition with cut grass and flowers. One visit was to a memorial where the trenches were rebuilt and it was incredible to stand in one of these and realised just how close the German line was. Whilst on this trip I talked to several teachers who had taken groups of children from England to visit this area and ensure that this part of history is never forgotten.



Gill Thorne

Diary of Meetings and Visits For details see articles
and co-ordinators above.

Week Commencing	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6th December	6 Petanque 14.00 weather permitting	7 Threads 14.00	8	9 Walking + lunch 11.00	10 Painting lunch Monthly Meeting 14.00	11 Weekender Coffee at Oliver's	12
13th December	13 Petanque 14.00 weather permitting	14	15 Book Group 14.30	16 Computer 13.00 Theatre Albert Hall 09.00 at Plantation Hall	17 Submit News Sheet text Coffee Morning 11.00 Painting 14.00	18	19
20th December	20 Petanque 14.00 weather permitting	21	22	23	24	25	26
27th December	27	28	29	30	31	1 st January 2011	2
3rd January	4	5 Threads 14.00	6	7 Photography 13.00	8 Committee Meeting 10.00 Painting 14.00	9	10
10th January	10 Petanque 14.00 weather permitting	11	12	13	14 Monthly Meeting 14.00 Painting 14.00	15	16
17th January	17 Petanque 14.00 weather permitting	18	19 Local History 14.00 Book Group 14.30	20 Computer 13.00	21 Coastal and Marine 14.00 Coffee Morning 11.00 Painting 14.00	22	23
24th January	24 Petanque 14.00 weather permitting	25 Scrabble 14.00	26	27	28 Painting 14.00	29	30