



Overton & District Newsletter 4

July 2015

May monthly meeting

The Sultanate of Oman



John Bowman

Unfortunately John was stranded in a storm at Hayling Island, but his wife stepped into the breach and gave an excellent talk, as she had also spent much time in Oman with her husband who worked in the oil & gas industry. They saw the Sultanate evolve from a poor and desolate place to a 'first world' country, and she was able to explain what living there was like.

June monthly Meeting

The Atlantic Ocean: its sea-floor & inhabitants -



Captain William Wells

Captain Wells, Master Mariner, was a former ship's captain and commercial marine pilot for almost 50 years. Fortunately he had an easily heard speaking voice so members were able to enjoy his entertaining, well informed and illustrated talk, despite the hall's sound system having broken down!

AGM

Lizzie Lewis and Sue Carter gave the chair's and treasurer's reports, and as there were only 6 nominations a vote was unnecessary. We were delighted to co-opt Edith Willcocks to the committee so this means that we have a full compliment for next year.

Your committee members are:

Lizzie Lewis – Chair

Beryl Beckett – Vice Chair

Wendy Morgan – Vice Chair

Laraine Beech – Secretary

Sue Carter – Treasurer / Membership Secretary

Marianna Lutyens - Meetings Co-ordinator

Edith Willcocks – Groups Co-ordinator

*Just in case you were unable to attend the AGM the **Chairman's Report for 2014-2015** is included in this newsletter below.*

When taking onto consideration that the majority of this year's committee were new to their roles, I believe that, we have had a successful and innovative year. This success has, in part, been due to Susan Staunton who

was the only experienced member and initially, we relied heavily on her for guidance and advice, and for this we were very grateful. Marianna and I were previously only co-opted members working together to plan the programme of speakers.

We have enjoyed a wide range of talks starting with 'Canine Partners', an entertaining and informative talk by Malcolm Wells. This was followed by 'Lutyens and the Great War' which we were particularly keen to have in recognition of a hundred years since the WW1. Richard Waldram's talk on Maps of Overton attracted a very large audience and was particularly well received. We have had amusing talks, Canterng Through Life was one and informative talks, The Code Breakers of Bletchley Park and The Sultanate of Oman.

Our greatest innovation was the introduction of Extra Curricular Talks, starting with 'Jane Austen and Steventon', with Michael Kenning followed by readings from Jane Austen novels by Jill O'Hare. This gave members the opportunity to hear about and discuss a subject in greater depth. We enjoyed an excellent buffet lunch, courtesy of the WI, and our session concluded with some well chosen and beautifully read excerpts by Jill.

Our next extra curricular talk was 'A Positive Approach to the Challenge of Dementia' given by Nicola Decker from our local surgery. This meeting was very well attended and was open to non members. Response to this session was amazing with members wanting to know what they could do to help local people suffering from dementia. The result has been the setting up of a Befriending Group that trains volunteers to support sufferers within our local community.

Although we are not involved in the organisation of this group, I believe, we should take pride in the fact that we helped to facilitate it.

One of our first tasks was to review the constitution and this was partly because we wanted to have it available electronically. As previously, the constitution is based on a model one from U3A, but this had also been updated. The changes are relatively minor but it does mean that we all have easy access to it. This is a positive move as headquarters are increasingly expecting communication to be electronic with all members nationally, but especially with returns required from local committees. As part of this review we realised we could have an Honorary President, and were delighted when Diana Goodwin accepted this role in recognition of all the hard work she put in to starting our Overton and District U3A.

We have over 250 members and more than 30 groups. The groups are the backbone of our U3A and thanks to Susan Staunton, over the last three years have continued to grow and flourish. We have new groups, Military History and Choral Speaking, then the ever popular lunch clubs and a range of modern language conversation groups to mention but a few. The garden group has recently reformed and although coordinated by Susan, each garden visit is organised by a different member, and so far this has been a great success.

In recognition of the hard work put in by our group leaders Susan has organised annual feedback sessions so that the committee knows what is going well and what we could do better. One thing that was obviously a cause for concern was the sound system, so

we called in an expert and just needed to make some minor alterations to the loud speakers we actually use. These sessions also allow the committee to show their appreciation of the work done by group leaders with tea and cakes, again from the WI.

We have also changed the format of the Newsletter through which we endeavour to keep members informed of past and future events and with some photographic evidence! We are also encouraging groups to make contributions. The website has been updated and we will be having an archive section for photos of group activities and trips out.

Finally I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work and support over the last year. Beryl and Wendy who are vice-chairs as well as organising trips and refreshments respectively. Laraine, our secretary, Sue our treasurer who does a lot more than just 'treasure'. Marianna who organises our talks and extra curricular programmes and finally Susan Staunton, our group coordinator. It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to her, she has worked unstintingly over the last three years and her term of office is now up but we will miss her. I would also like to thank Terry, Freda and Elsie for making the tea and coffee, Roy Staunton for helping with chairs, Phil Cook with sound and Srdja Popovic who often helps with setting up.

Thank you too to all our members for your continued support of your local U3A by attending groups, talks and outings.



Trip to Brighton

15th July

Members set off in a Mervyn's coach for a jolly day out at the seaside. We stopped for coffee at Arundel and proceeded to Brighton where everyone was free to do as they chose. Some visited the Royal Pavilion, some wandered round the lanes exploring the antique jewellers, restaurants and cafés. Some had lunch with wine, others a light snack or an ice cream on the beach. The weather was warm and dry with some sunshine. We all had a great day with thanks to Beryl for her excellent organisation.



Guess who???????



Supreme Court and Houses of Parliament - 26th June



A wonderful trip, beautifully organised by Beryl to the Supreme Court and the Houses of Parliament. At the Supreme Court we saw three court rooms, were told the history – how the Lords stopped passing judgement from the House of Lords and moved the Supreme Court to its own building opposite Big Ben and behind the statue of Abraham Lincoln. Cases will have already gone through the Courts in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales before landing at the Supreme Court for the final judgement. Anybody can come and ask for admission to the public gallery to hear a case.

The Houses of Parliament were beautiful and fascinating. It was a privilege to see the House of Lords and the Commons and stand among the benches where the Lords and the Parliament sit as we see on TV. (No sitting down allowed for tired feet, which is understandable!). We saw the Queen's throne, the Speaker's Chair, the Woolsack, the straight corridor between the two Houses, the Lobby, the sculptures of Churchill, Thatcher, etc. Our guide had a wealth of interesting facts for us and we ended where we started, in Westminster Hall, feeling enriched by the experience.

Did you know that if you want to lobby your MP you can take your petition to

Westminster Hall from where it will be passed on to the MP, who has to reply to you within 8 days!

We spent the two hours between the visits going on the London Eye, visiting Tate Modern or other exhibitions, walking along the Embankment or having a good lunch!

Report by Marianna Lutyens

Group Reports

Garden Visits



Bere MillWhitchurch. March 2015

At the end of March the garden group made its first visit of the season to Bere Mill. Before our tour the owner, Rupert Nabarro, gave a talk on the history of Bere Mill including its part in the development of Portals. Mr and Mrs Nabarro bought the Mill from the Portals estate in 1994. We were told how the gardens were inspired by working with the grounds and nature. We heard too that no garden designer had a hand in any of it! They told us they had purchased the land around the property to protect the site so allowing the gardens to empathise with the grounds surrounding the Mill.

We were fortunate that the weather was on our side allowing the group to enjoy a gentle walk around the Mill grounds. The

running water added too the gentle sound of birds and the bleating of the Black Welsh mountain sheep gave us a relaxing start to our garden year. Daffodils and anemones smiled up at us, helping us to look forward to the coming season.



Following our stroll we enjoyed a pleasant cup of tea, a piece of cake and of course a good chat!

Report by Susan Staunton

Tylney Hall

The U3A Gardening Group visited Tylney Hall on a beautifully warm and sunny St. George's Day. We were given a potted history of the house and estate and shown round the gardens by the Head Gardener, who was inundated with questions which he answered very patiently! The water gardens and neighbouring area had been designed by Gertrude Jekyll and these were now slowly being restored to their original plan.

A most enjoyable afternoon was rounded off by refreshments in the hotel.

Report by Sue Carter



Photos by Sue Teagle

The Garden Group have also enjoyed visits to Dippley Mill, The Vyne and the Lavender Fields near Selbourne.

Scrap Book Group

A big thank you to all the members of this group who contributed to their wonderful display at the June meeting. Members really enjoyed looking through the books and appreciated the skills and imagination that had gone into making them. What a creative way of preserving special memories and events!

New Groups

Just a reminder that we have two new groups, Ontology with Marianna Lutyens and Military History which meets at Bernard Byatt's.

Membership renewal

Don't forget your membership is due for renewal before September and you will soon be receiving a renewal form via email. We found that giving out the new membership cards and Group Directory at the first meeting in September worked well so we will use the same system this year. We will deliver the cards and directory to any who are unable to attend the meeting 16th September.

More seaside fun!



**WISHING YOU
ALL A VERY
PLEASANT
SUMMER**

from your

**OVERTON & DISTRICT
U3A COMMITTEE**



