

Haddenham u3a learn, live, laugh

Summer Newsletter August 2024

From the Chair Janet Mills

Welcome to the Summer newsletter. There are some interesting group reports in this edition. Thank you to the group leaders who have written them. It is good to hear there is so much going on in Haddenham u3a.

At the AGM in May the committee thanked Tony Barker, the retiring Secretary, and David Ackroyd, the retiring Treasurer, welcoming Sally Lajalati and Sally Logan in their roles. An all women committee! Good or not? There is still the vacancy for a vice chair!

Since then there have been presentations at the General Meetings on Harold Wilson, the Royal Bucks Hospital in the 1930s and wild life photography. Coming up in the Autumn will be a talk on the wit and satire of Gilbert and Sullivan, stories about legendary characters associated with the English Channel, a talk about young artists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in Oxford and the December meeting will have an unusual flavour, 'Walking into Grandma's Kitchen at Christmas in 1940s Madras'.

Thames Valley Network and Third Age Trust have Autumn programmes of talks on Zoom.

events_info@tvnetwork.org.uk

www.u3a.org.uk/events



Haddenham u3a Scarecrow, Chris Packham, Champion of the Natural World.

Once again we submitted a scarecrow in the Village Festival sited in The Ackroyds' garden opposite St Mary's Church Hall.

Do you know someone with time to spare?

U3a is not just for the retired! Anyone with time to spare is welcome to join. The monthly General Meetings are often where visitors decide to join us.

Reports from Interest Groups

The Friday Lunch Group

meets every two months on the fourth Friday in February, April, June, August, October and December at various local restaurants. It is a very enjoyable social event led by Linda Axford.



The Cycling Group

spent three nights staying south of Lincoln in June and discovered that Lincolnshire is not quite as flat as we thought! We did a very gentle ride the first afternoon which took us through arable countryside with crops of potatoes and cabbages, stopping in Collingham for a cup of tea.

The next day we drove to the Heritage Centre in the Old Station at Bardney to be met by the proprietor, a great character who opened the centre

specially for us to park. Over coffee he regaled us with stories of WW2 exploits from the local airfield and the Hurricane aircraft based there. Eventually we started cycling but the map soon led us along a rough track past a ruined abbey where the grass was knee high so our ride turned to a walk for a mile or so. But there were dog roses and honeysuckle in the hedgerows and fields of bright poppies to cheer us on under lowering skies. Another detour to avoid a farmyard (and the farmer) meant a narrow squeeze along a bridle path at the edge of a field observed by amazed cows and a couple of donkeys, but eventually we emerged on a lane and cycled to have lunch in Horncastle, a town famous for its antique shops. The heavens then opened and lashing wind and rain stung our necks and cheeks all the way back to Bardney. On the final day some people went sightseeing to see the Cathedral, the famous Lincoln Imp and the Magna Carta in the Castle. (The original Norman Diocese included Aylesbury!) The rest of us cycled on a traffic-free path along the River Witham into the city, lunching at a pub and then returning to the hotel against a strong, vicious wind. Despite the elements not being entirely kind we had a very good time with no punctures or mishaps and with excellent company which after all is what it is all about.

Marie Woodrow.

Square Dance Group

Step up and join in! "If you can walk you can square dance" says Alan Covacic, the expert caller for Haddenham u3a's square dance group. And he should know since he's been doing it for nearly 50 years. The raison d'etre for many u3a interest groups is to exercise bodies or brains. Square dancing is a great way to do both, gently and light-heartedly. Groups formed anywhere in the UK u3a for dancing are few and far between but here in Haddenham we are lucky to have the friendliest and most helpful bunch you could ever wish for. And we laugh a lot. Ballroom, disco, line and tap dancing all have their plus points. I've tried them all, but now I find square is cool. Not for you because you've never danced a single step before? Just remember what our caller Alan said. After the summer break, Haddenham's dancers will be meeting up again, every Thursday from 5th September 12-1.30pm, in the Village Hall. We turn up in casual clothes and ordinary shoes or trainers. All old hands or absolute beginners, single folk or couples will be welcome at the start of the new term.

Garry May

The Technical Group

had an interesting visit to the DAF Trucks head office in Haddenham Business Park which, being local, was very well attended. In this modern purpose-built headquarters sales staff and technicians from all over the UK are trained before assignment to the large network of dealerships and service depots around the country. Driver training is available and the financial operation is also run from here. After hearing the history of the DAF operation, originally Dutch owned and still building trucks in the old Leyland factory in Preston, we were shown the latest models with all the latest technology supporting haulage operators to keep efficient vehicles on the road. It was good to know that a locally based company, if international, is thriving here and offering both employment and, most importantly, a substantial apprenticeship scheme for the coming generation.

The Gardening Group

has had a very good year so far and many of the members have enjoyed visits to local gardens and further afield. In

April we visited a long-established garden at Denton House in South Oxfordshire and were given a guided tour by the part-time gardener who was very informative, having worked for the owners for a few years. In May we travelled up to Broughton Grange which is considered to be a terrifically well-designed large garden



and well worth a visit, generally open to the public on Wednesdays during the season. Another popular visit was to the Rothamsted Manor Gardens and Broadbalk Experiment field, the oldest agricultural Research Centre, based in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. We were welcomed by Helen Hague, Head of Farms, and taken on a tractor to the Broadbalk field where Sir John Lawes, the founder of Rothamsted, started his work in the early 1850s to improve crop production by adding firstly superphosphate and then later nitrogen and potash to the soil and measuring the improvements to crop yield. He also recognised the importance of manure to improving soil structure. The Centre continues to experiment with yields and monitor soil health and, as a retired farmer, I am well aware of the delicate balance that has to be struck between food production and security with the protection and preservation of our natural world. It is the Rothamsted scientists who help the worldwide agricultural community tread the right path.

The group was then taken by trailer to the Manor and gardens where, despite little historical record being available, the gardeners have been able to tidy up the overgrown shrubs and smartened the borders and lawns around which we then had free time to wander, discovering some old roses. The old Dutch style Manor House still sits beautifully centre stage and is used as a wedding venue, and we enjoyed a cream tea and reflected on how glorious the gardens could be if money was available to restore them.

The monthly garden visits are usually oversubscribed but we also have talks in Autumn and Winter which are held at Haddenham Methodist Church. A talk will be given in September by Chris Day from Buckingham Nurseries and in November Mike Wheeler will be talking about poisonous plants.

Sarah Darnell and Howard Roberts.

Ingrid Holmes: Memories of World War II

Long-term Haddenham resident and u3a member Ingrid Holmes recently contributed to the digital archive *Their Finest Hour*, run by Oxford University, a project which aims to preserve Second World War related stories and objects by those in the community who remember those times and have stories to tell or artefacts to donate. The link was made by **Sue Michel**, leader of the *Genealogy Group* and to whom Ingrid recounted her journey as a child fleeing from 1930s Vienna via Switzerland to England just before the outbreak of the War. Her family was helped by the church, in particular the Quakers, at both ends of their escape route and their first home was in Ware, Hertfordshire where her mother became a cook's assistant and then later as a housekeeper on the south coast. Her father however was unable to live with them at the coast and was sent to an internment camp on the Isle of Man, known as 'Douglas University' because of the large number of academics interned there. Ingrid and her brother were initially sent to an orphanage/boarding school in Birmingham, then lived with their mother in Arden in the household of a businessman owning the Swan pans company. Following his release in 1942 her father, Hans, became a teacher in Birmingham and Ingrid obtained a scholarship to Solihull High School, eventually qualifying as an orthopaedic nurse in Birmingham. Ingrid was very keen to mention the many kind people who helped her family, particularly the Quakers, who helped the family to get jobs, a home, attend school and college.

Stories from *Their Finest Hour* can be found at <https://theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk> from 6th June.

Sue Michel

Thank you for your reports. Thanks also to Jonathan Hawkins who puts the newsletter on the website and prints off copies for members who do not have access to a computer. Thanks to Mike and Sally Phillips who distribute these and to Geoff and Elaine Parkes who send the newsletter out by email. Finally, my thanks to Annette Marsden for her help in compiling and editing it.

"My Favourite Things?"

To commemorate turning 79 Julie Andrews made a special appearance at a Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall benefit concert and sang this song with her own lyrics. (Sing it, it is especially hysterical!) Ms Andrews received a standing ovation that lasted for over four minutes with repeated encores. We hope you enjoy it!

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.
Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.
When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.
Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.
Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favourite things.
When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.