



CHAIR'S REPORT

With mixed feelings I write to tell you that my husband and I are moving to Devon later this year, therefore, I have no choice but to stand down as Chair at the May AGM. Yes, it's been a surprise to us too but a longer term plan to move out of Bracknell was foreshortened when an opportunity arose that has been too good not to take. I'm excited that a new chapter in my life will begin but also sad that I'm not able to complete my tenure as Chair as there are challenges ahead and much more that can be achieved.

Regarding challenges, the legal requirements emanating from the Charity Commission via the Third Age Trust will significantly increase the Treasurer's workload so I am appealing for a willing volunteer, who does not necessarily have to join the Committee, to assist Bruce with the less complex financial tasks.

Malcolm Mack, Membership Secretary, has taken the lead for ensuring that BFU3A meets the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) coming into force in May 2018. These Regulations will affect how we communicate with each other, not just within BFU3A, but also in our personal lives. The Membership Application and Renewal Forms have been amended to comply and Malcolm will be giving a presentation on GDPR during the Group Coordinators Workshop on Monday 12th April. I urge all Group Coordinators to attend the Workshop or ask a 'deputy' to attend as you will, by law, have to change how you contact your Group members and keep Group records in future. Please let me know if you or a 'deputy' will be attending, if you've not already done so, by emailing helenttonks@aol.com. Thank you.

The AGM is fast approaching and, as I write this report, there will be vacancies on the Committee next year for Chair, Web Editor and Minutes Secretary. Tony Bolt has completed 3 years as Web Editor and standing down and Marlane Hearn is relinquishing her role as Minutes Secretary due to health reasons. We have also been without a Publicity Officer for

more than 2 years – a vital role where, again, a willing volunteer need not join the Committee.

If you'd like to attend a Committee Meeting as a 'taster session' before deciding whether to stand for election, you're welcome to join us. Please email me on the address above for date, time and venue details and to ensure that we have adequate seating arrangements.

Two thirds of our members are 'of the fairer sex' but under-represented on the Committee so **LADIES** don't hide your light under a bushel – **YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!** - and gentlemen as well of course!

A huge THANK YOU to those members helping to man our stand at The Bracknell Cultural Festival on Saturday 24th March. The Festival is a lively event with singing, dancing and the opportunity to sample ethnic foods. It's being held at Bracknell & Wokingham College from 10am until 2pm with free parking on site. To those members who contacted me to say that prior commitments prevented them from helping this time, there will be future promotions requiring your help.

To end this report on a high note, our current membership now stands at 534 so here's aiming for 550+ by the end of May!

Wishing you a HAPPY EASTER and let's all continue to LEARN, LAUGH and LIVE.

Helen Tonks, Chair

SPEAKERS CORNER

5th April, 2018 at 2pm – The History of the U3A Organisation. Hilvary Robinson from National Office will talk about the U3A from its beginnings to the current day. The Third Age Trust is the umbrella organisation for over 1,000 U3As and 450,000 members.

There will be no admission to the Hall until 1.30pm to allow for safe setting up of the hall. Thank you.

Venue: The Open Learning Centre

Tea Team Rota: Blues, Rock & Jazz

24th May, 2018 at 2pm – Crowthorne Carnival – Running a Professional Event with a Volunteer Team. Ken Newland describes

the organisation of a carnival in a contemporary setting as subject to a host of complex, legal, safety, formal permissions and tight schedules that require a diligent and “professional” approach to be taken. Yet it is a project that is undertaken entirely by volunteers: volunteers who have different skills, priorities, and foibles.

There will be no admission to the Hall until 1.30pm to allow for safe setting up of the hall. Thank you.

Venue: The Open Learning Centre

Tea Team Rota: Book Group 1

5th July, 2018 at 2pm – Viki Rowland from the Alzheimer’s Society will talk on the effect of Alzheimer’s and dementia on the individual and their family.

There will be no admission to the Hall until 1.30pm to allow for safe setting up of the hall. Thank you.

Venue: The Open Learning Centre

Tea Team Rota: Book Group 2

Janet Russell, Speakers’ Secretary

Group News

CANASTA / RUMMIKUB

The next sessions will be on Wednesday 4th April and 2nd May at 1.30pm in the cafeteria at the Open Learning Centre Rectory Lane Easthampstead RG12 7GR. Any member interested in learning/ playing the great card game of Canasta and also Rummikub please contact davidlovesvalerie@gmail.com (these sessions may run fortnightly in future).

NEEDLEWORK GROUP

Is there a member who would be willing to start a needlework group in their house as the existing group is full? Please contact brenda.bolt1@btinternet.com if interested.

TEN PIN BOWLING

There are two sessions booked at the Peel centre Bracknell on the 27th March and 20th April at 5.40pm. Please contact davidlovesvalerie@gmail.com if interested.

Are any members interested in a **Spanish beginners or Portuguese beginners** group? Please contact brenda.bolt1@btinternet.com to show your interest.

Brenda Bolt - Group support officer

Summer Outing to Stoke Bruerne

This outing has been filling up very well and at the time of writing, there were only 11 seats left, after selling 41 in just over a week.

Because of the problems getting information from the Stoke Bruerne museum, due to their winter closure, I was not able to arrange for a booking form to be included in the last newsletter. This has meant that members without email addresses have been at a bit of a disadvantage in getting seats booked. In view of this, I am holding 4 seats back for these members to make a priority booking. I shall be saving those seats until 30th April. Any of those seats which are unsold at that date will go for general sale. That means just 7 seats are still left for other members to book at the moment. Once all the seats have been sold, members will be placed on a waitlist, in the order in which I receive their booking forms. So the earlier you book the better.

This should be another very enjoyable trip, and you get the opportunity to travel on a narrow boat through the Blisworth tunnel.

I have already reserved a nice sunny day, so get those booking forms in now.

Dave Lenton - Events Organiser

Architecture

At our last meeting we looked at some of the architectural projects designed either by Richard Rogers or by others in his architects' practice. He and his associates have designed many famous buildings: the Pompidou Centre, Barajas Airport, Antwerp Law Courts, the Millennium Dome, the Cheesegrater and the Lloyds building to name a few.

Love them or hate them, these buildings have been some of the most important buildings to be designed and built during the last 50 years. As in most modern designs, glass is an ever popular building material, and Rogers seems to be a fan of bringing the outside in, whatever that means. Like most modern architects, you either love him or hate him. Prince Charles is not a fan. Say no more. Very interesting though to have a look at his designs and try to work out whether you like them or not. A controversial architect and designer.

Pam Palmer – Co-ordinator

Art – Mixed Media

Mixed Media meetings have been very well attended in the past few weeks. However there is still room in the morning sessions, time now changed to 10:00 to 13:00. This is to encourage more people who do not like early starts. It is also going to help us going forward into the holiday period, when attendance is always lower.

The funds collected recently will hopefully shore up the finances for the slacker summer months, in lieu of the substantial unavoidable increases imposed by South Hill Park for the room hire.

The Mixed Media group has been approached by Fenwicks department store to possibly contribute to their Home Event in April. We are awaiting more information and will advise members when more details are available.

The spate of wintry conditions have inspired our members with snow landscapes, hopefully soon it will be spring and summer flowers!!!!!!

Sheila Arnold and Jaci Geens (Mixed Media)

Book Group 1

We really enjoyed our February book, it was *The President's Hat* by Antoine Laurin. The story involved President Mitterrand's hat which is left behind in a restaurant. Subsequently the hat passes between different people, each time appearing to improve and rejuvenate their lives. The book has the sparkle of Champagne and we were all invigorated.

Our next book *Are You Watching Me?* by Sinead Crowley was an Irish murder mystery. It was topically up to date with a young detective (new mother) dealing with murders related to an old men's meeting house run by a recovering drug addict (attractive young girl) who becomes a media star. Sounds complicated? Each chapter uncovered clues which built up to reveal the killer, but it wasn't him! The author saved the day by having the media star attacked by the real killer, but she somehow sent a message by PC which alerted the detective. All was well in the end. Oh, I forgot – mother was reconciled with husband who could not cope with looking after baby.

Future Books

Mrs Fytton's Country Life by Mavis Cheek 10 Apr

Half a Yellow Sun by C.N. Adichie 8 May

Dominium by C.J. Sanson 12 June

Brian Tonkinson – Co-ordinator

Book Group 2

We are a relatively small group who meet at a variety of venues - combining discussion with coffee(!) and we would welcome new members. We have room for one or two.

We have enjoyed reviewing our wide-ranging book list, including - *The Children's Book* by AS Byatt, *The Woman who went to Bed for a Year* by Sue Townsend and *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell.

In December our group enjoyed a pre-Christmas lunch. Very sadly, a week or so later, one of our members, Helen Morse, passed away. It is still difficult to believe, and we miss her enthusiasm and lively company, very much.

Our group meets on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2 - 4pm. Venues include my house in Chavey Down, South Hill Park and garden centres. If you would like to find out more, then please give me a ring.

Jen Vincent - Co-ordinator

Digital Photography

The Digital Photography Group continues to thrive, and over the last few weeks interest in joining the group has been expressed by even more potential members.

At our last meeting, we saw pictures taken by members amongst which were some of the Northern Lights. We have now changed series in our Great Courses set of DVDs, the latest set being exclusively by Joel Sartore, of National Geographic Magazine.

The subject in the March session was *Using the Light* and we were given some fascinating insights.

John and Mavis Cook – Co-ordinators

Local History Group

At our meeting in January, we planned our programme for 2018 which includes a number of visits to local places of historical interest. In February, Philip Wallington, who is a member of our group, talked about his two years as Mayor of Sandhurst, and the origins of the office of Mayor in the local community. Being Mayor brings a wide range of responsibilities and experiences.

For our March meeting, we are visiting Reading Museum, and will have an introductory talk on the special exhibitions there.

Janet Russell - Co-ordinator

MOTO 1

MOTO is a social group for **M**embers who are **O**n **T**heir **O**wn. We hold a planning meeting each month to discuss what members would like to do. This includes meals, trips and anything else that our members want.

February 12th saw 21 (brave?) members depart by coach from Bracknell train station. It was cold in Bracknell, but by the time we arrived in Eastbourne it was a lovely afternoon, so we were able to stroll on the Pier and promenade. Tuesday was very windy and it was raining, but that

didn't stop a trip to Brighton. Wednesday was still windy, but not as bad so we explored Eastbourne (some went to the Cinema). Thursday was a trip out to Rye and Hastings – wind had stopped and sun was out so a lovely day. Friday we journeyed home to Bracknell. Everyone had a great time – apart from the coughs and colds.

25th February was our 'Sunday Lunch' meeting at the Royal Ascot Golf Club. 16 members had a lovely lunch and chat.

Tuesday 27th February we had an outing to Milestones Museum – Several cars took members down to Basingstoke to visit this museum which is a bit of nostalgia as they have artefacts from around the 1900 - 1970s ranging from vehicles to kitchen appliances. They also have a few mock up shops including Ironmongers, General stores, Sweets and even a Pub. We met up with a group from Time Out who had also organised a trip there. This is an ideal outing for winter days as it is all inside a large building.

Our plans to see *Be Bop A Lula* at the Camberley Theatre were put on hold due to the snow so this will now be in April.

Tuesday 13th March – 11 members attended a group lunch at The Windmill in Windlesham. Good company and food is a lovely way to spend the day!

MOTO 1 is currently full, but there is a MOTO 2 group within Bracknell Forest U3A.

Diane Jones – Co-ordinator

Music Appreciation 1

Our February talk, by Liz O'Neill, aimed to celebrate that most versatile of instruments – the human voice. We listened to a range of operatic arias by Mozart, Bellini, Puccini, Handel, Donizetti etc, with Liz providing snippets of background information, such as the difficulty in performing Catalani's *La Wally*, where the heroine throws herself into an avalanche. We enjoyed the exquisite singing of Pavarotti, Domingo, Dame Janet

Baker, Dame Joan Sutherland, Jonas Kaufmann, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, etc and the audience were appreciative and supportive in this lovely group.

Liz O'Neill – Group Member

Music Appreciation (Modern)

There have been two group meetings since the last Newsletter, and at both of them we played several tracks from a member's Old Grey Whistle Test DVD collection along with some very early Rolling Stones "video" from BBC archives. Old Grey Whistle Test artists included Curtis Mayfield, Rita Coolidge, John Martyn, The Wailers and several others.

We played two quite different versions of *Amazing Grace*, one by Hayley Westenra and the other by Judy Collins. I think all agreed that the Judy Collins version was by far the best, superb a cappella singing. There followed some Pink Floyd and Johnny Winter. Quite a mixture.

Over the next couple of meetings I am hoping to devote half the time to a particular decade. Next meeting will start with the 60's.

Anyone wanting to join in our fun, nostalgic and otherwise, just drop me an email – blues@bracknellu3a.org.uk.

Tony Bolt – Co-ordinator

Spanish Intermediate

We meet from 10 am to noon on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, taking turns to be host. We start with some Spanish conversation. Recently we have talked about the difficulties of getting around in the snow and about holidays and trips out with family. Another topic was the recent BBC 4 programme about the art of Spain. At the coffee break we usually do a Spanish crossword and then pass on to some reading. At present we are reading a book of short stories with parallel Spanish and English text, which allows us to see where we are making mistakes.

We have room for one or two more people in the group, so do get in touch with me if you would like to come along to one of our meetings, to see if the group would suit you.

Shelagh Barnett – Co-ordinator

Times Out

On the 15th February fifteen of our members visited the Postal Museum in Mount Pleasant, London. The trip included a 20 minute underground mail train ride where more history about postal systems from yesteryear were projected on the station walls. (The train finished in 2003). A well recommended visit.

On the 27th February, five of our members visited the Milestones museum in Basingstoke which replicates businesses, shops and houses from centuries ago to the modern day from that area. There was also a large collection of domestic appliances/aids on display.

Brenda Bolt – Co-ordinator

Transport

The next outing for the Transport Group is to the de Havilland Aircraft Museum which is close to St Albans. The date to put in your diary is Friday 6th April. There is a good selection of aircraft for you to look at and some to look around. There is also other information there about the history of the de Havilland family and of the de Havilland Aircraft Company.

For those of you who may have an interest in railways, the museum is in the grounds of Salisbury Hall, which for a few years in the 1930's was the home of Sir Nigel Gresley, who was the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London & North Eastern Railway until his death in 1941. He was responsible for the design of Flying Scotsman and Mallard. We shall be arranging car share and will be leaving Bracknell around 10:00. If you would like to join us, please send me an email at davelenton@live.co.uk For anyone without email, then you can contact me on 07703 354262. Please let me know as soon as possible as I would need to sort out car share. If you are able to offer seats in your car, please let me know.

David Lenton – Co-ordinator

Walking Group

The numbers on recent walks have been influenced by the weather. For example, we only had 8 on a wet historic walk of Eton but we had 28 on the following walk from South Hill Park just after the snow had melted.

We have a twice monthly programme of walks for the spring and summer months and we will include a few longer walks when the weather improves. For our short walks we aim for up to 5 miles with a short break halfway round and our longer walks tend to be 7 to 8 miles with two breaks, one at coffee time and another for our picnic lunch. We walk at the pace of the slowest walker and have never failed to return with all the members who started out. Please feel free to try us out if you fancy a stroll in the countryside with friends. There is no limit to numbers and there are no charges, except for your costs of getting to and from the walk starting points.

Roger Jones – Co-ordinator

Editor's Note

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Grateful thanks to all contributors

Diary Editor: Janet Russell

Deadlines for contributions to the next editions are:

Issue no 132 – 3rd May 2018

Issue no 133 – 14th June 2018

Please send contributions to ALL editors via
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The editing team consists of:

Peter Arthur
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The Editors cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or for the views of contributors or for the statements and claims made in any items or advertisements appearing in the BFU3A newsletter.

Mini bus for hire

1st Easthampstead Scout Group have a bus which they offer for hire. It is a 17-seater and can be hired with or without a driver (i.e. self-drive). The cost would be £30 per day.

If an Interest Group would like to hire the bus for an outing, please contact Phil (a U3A member) on 07778 879 972 or email minibus@fesg.org.uk

Would you like to swing on a star...?

or

Is there life after H G Wells?

A thoughtful article by Alan Cocks

I loved the stories of space travel from early years - Flash Gordon in Saturday morning cinema club, Dan Dare exploits in the Eagle comic (1950s for me) and the science fiction of HG Wells. But sadly I learned that not only was space pretty big, but a scientist, Dr Frank Drake, calculated that it was likely that we were on our own in the Universe. Oh, well, they were good stories.

But wait! That was nearly 60 years ago!

In 2014 the Vatican Observatory co-hosted a Science Conference in Arizona, *The Search for Life Beyond the Solar System: Exoplanets, Biosignatures & Instruments*. If you didn't know the Vatican ran its own astronomical observatory, well, you do now...

On a different occasion, the Pope said he would baptise aliens if they came to the Vatican. Effectively saying 'Why not?'

This was a far cry from Flash Gordon and Dan Dare comics.

In 2015 NASA was able to declare that water, that useful stuff of life, is surprisingly plentiful both inside the Solar System and outside the Solar system.

Looking at the old Drake equation, other people sharpened their pencils and in 2016 did some more mathematics. Taking a different approach to Drake, and using data from the NASA 'Kepler' satellite and a few other instruments, researchers concluded that with modern information, the odds that another intelligent species has evolved were very, very good. Wow! 'Take me to your leader' and all that?

The Vatican was taking things seriously - in 2016 the priest who was the director of the Vatican Observatory, said without the slightest restraint that religion sees no conflict between believing in God and the existence of extra-terrestrial life. He said that "as there is a multitude of creatures on Earth, so it is possible that the universe is studded with many life forms, some more intelligent than us."

Report: Vatican: Get ready for the encounter with extraterrestrial brothers! (And, I would add, 'sisters').

In conclusion I suggest that if there were to be 'intelligent' life, it would be well advised to stay clear of Earthlings until we have grown out of our trigger-happy 'let's have a jolly good war' phase of evolution!

It still seems to be 'all quiet' on the space-age front, so maybe 'they' really are intelligent enough to stay well clear? (Smile)

References:

(1961) Drake equation (see wikipedia)

(2014) Is Alien Life Out There? Vatican Observatory Co-Hosts Science Conference in Arizona
<https://www.space.com/25060-vatican-observatory-alien-life-conference.html>

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-says-he-would-baptise-aliens-9360632.html>

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<https://www.nasa.gov/jpl/the-solar-system-and-beyond-is-awash-in-water>

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Drake Equation Revision Hugely Ups Odds of Intelligent Alien Life

<https://www.inverse.com/article/14957-drake-equation-revision-hugely-ups-odds-intelligent-extraterrestrial-life-exists>

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