



Number 19, Winter 2009/2010.

SUNSHINE IN JANUARY

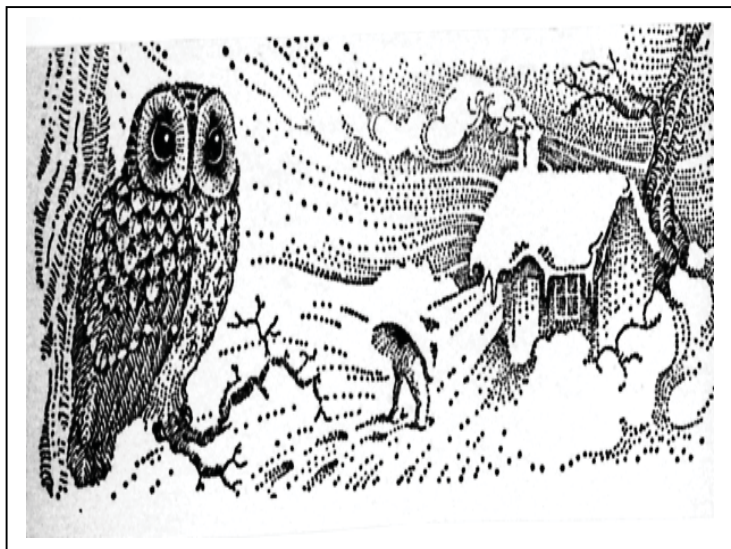
Dull clouds disperse: ecstatic blue
Bursts through rippling twigs and clings
To haloed spent seed heads then flings
On the grass a shimmering veil of dew.

Lambs tail catkins dust the breeze,
The faded autumn roses glow
And urgent spikes of snowdrops show
Through felted leaves beneath the trees.

Buxom squirrels leap and run
The strident great tit claims his site,
The blackbird preens in the sensuous light
But the cautious wren still hides. The sun

Abruptly fades. All colour lost,
The blackened twigs bear leaves of frost.

Louise Henly



A Happy New Year to all our readers.

We made a good start to the winter season with our Christmas Social, but did the Singing for Pleasure Group know what they were doing when they sang, "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow?" And as for Gerry Mills' hilarious Black Country deconstruction of Handel's "Messiah", we feel sure that we'll be hearing it again by popular request! Altogether a very enjoyable afternoon.



Electronic Equipment For Use By All Groups

Wolverhampton U3A now own two laptops, a digital projector and a printer which are available for all groups to use. The equipment is stored at the Tettenhall Wood Institute and can be accessed by booking through Gwynneth Chubb - see Digital Imaging Group section on the website for contact details. You can still make use of it at your normal meeting place, which is why I shall need one week's notice in order to retrieve it from the Institute. It will not be available for individual use as that is too difficult to manage administratively.

This is a fantastic resource which could enhance group activity, especially for those groups which deal in visual contexts, would like to promote internet research or make use of online resources. I would like to offer an equipment familiarisation session for all group coordinators, or a group representative, some time in the New Year. This session will be suitable for those who have virtually no knowledge of computers etc., as well as for those who are comfortable with the technology.

I shall e-mail all coordinators in January to try to find a date that people can manage.
Gwynneth Chubb

Active Arts

Newhampton Arts Centre is trying to set up a project to involve the "Over 60s" in active arts participation. U3A is one of the organisations they have contacted and I said I thought some of us would be interested. If you would like to hear more as this develops please let me know.
Margaret Barr - (01902) 843536

Criminal Records Bureau

When Gwynneth applied to the Grassroots Grant Programme for a grant to purchase two computers, a projector, printer and some software, initially for the Digital Imaging group but eventually for use by any of our groups, she had to have a CRB check! The reason was that she was working with "vulnerable adults", i.e. **us**.

Our CRB Check

You are all vulnerable
So they said.
We all need care
By someone suitable

To lead our learning.

We who have led and taught
All of our lives
Still learning now
So what was our thought

When they said?

"We need your documentation
You're all over 60
We need to check
You need some certification"

We found that funny

It's just a bureaucratic fad.
"Thanks for your grant"
We said with a smile
"But your rules are mad.

We'll carry on learning".

Jenny and Geoff

"Continuing our chronicling of the cycling achievements of our members we must record that in the Autumn, John Sheard and Neil Moreland cycled the South Coast of England from Land's End through Dover and round the Forelands (South and North) to Herne Bay - a distance of 500+ miles, All we can say is "Wow! well done!"

AROUND THE GROUPS

Beginners' German

Perhaps the title Beginners' German is a little out of kilter as we have now progressed to our second text book, "OOOHH, Further German Breakthrough" by Ruth Rach. Our group is small but beautifully formed and we do have Gut Essen (good food). If you would like to come and join us we meet mainly weekly, usually in Pittingham, on a day to suit us all, which varies from week to week, and progress is as fast as we want it to be, which is pretty slow really. The topics vary with each lesson and audio tapes are used to help with diction and pronunciation. If you would like any further information please call me on (01902) 700151, or catch me at the monthly meeting.
Linda Briscoe

Digital Imaging Group

The Digital Imaging Group is flourishing, with between 15 and 20 members as regular attenders. We now have a number of members who can offer skills to the group as a whole which has enabled us to expand our activities. This means that a Photoshop workshop can be happening in one part of the room, whilst another group is looking at the absolute basics of getting photos into a computer and out again at the other end.



Field day at Baggeridge

The new equipment means that we can show off our photographs to each other - we have now

instituted a monthly photographic theme, and the sometimes stunning results can be seen in the group's photo gallery on the Wolverhampton U3A website www.wolverhamptonu3a.co.uk). The gallery is updated regularly as is the group programme, including the theme of the month, under the Groups Listing on the website.

The funded laptops, plus those brought in by members, enable more of us to gain hands-on experience of using computers to store photos, retrieve them and edit them. The next stage is to be able to resize images in order to e-mail them to friends and family.

There is always room for more members to join us in Room 4 at the Tettenhall Institute, Wood Road, Tettenhall, on the first Wednesday of the month at 2 pm. It is often chaotic, but we get there!
Gwynneth Chubb

Cinema Group

We started in September with a short discussion to plan our programme for this session. We decided to continue with meetings in members' homes using DVD, but also to include occasional visits to the cinema for the big screen experience! A visit to the Lighthouse Media Centre was arranged to have a look "behind the projectors". We were shown the projection room and had it all explained to us by Jas Kapur the cinema coordinator. We were entertained with a short excerpt from "Meet me in St. Louis" as we had chosen a theme of musicals for the October - December meetings.

"Carousel" and "South Pacific" - old faithfuls - were enjoyed in Oct/Nov, but for December we met at the Lighthouse cinema to see a 2009 production "Morris - a

Life with Bells On". This was an unusual film portraying the mixed fortunes of Derecq Twist and his passion for Morris Dance. We all enjoyed watching on the big screen and there were very mixed opinions on the story and production which were aired over a cup of coffee in the café after the performance. The theme for the next three meetings will be Alfred Hitchcock. Olwen Boden

Jazz Appreciation Group

Hands up those of you who enjoy listening to Ella Fitzgerald. Or are you one of those who has a copy somewhere of "Kind of Blue" - the jazz album by Miles Davis that remains the biggest selling jazz record of all time? If you own up to either of the above, then the Jazz Appreciation Group might be worth a visit, or even joining. Meetings are monthly on the first or second Tuesday.



Ella Fitzgerald

The musical output of Miles Davis was so prolific and seminal in the history of jazz that John S. is covering it in two sessions. The first in November dealt with Miles Davis up to 1959 and the landmark recording of "Kind of Blue". The next session scheduled for March 2010 will deal with his music from 1959 to his death in 1991. Another member, John B.

devoted the December session to the music of Ella Fitzgerald, which gave rise to some interesting discussion as well as a further selection of treasured memories and artefacts from Chris C. Chris W. also entertained us with a presentation of jazz tunes based upon the chord sequence of George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm", and he's planning to do a session on Boogie Woogie in 2010. Neil M. led a session on the music of saxophonist Charles Lloyd who was a pioneer of Jazz-Rock fusion in the 1960s. Neil's next presentation will be on the history of jazz guitar, scheduled for April and the meeting in January will focus on the music of John Coltrane hosted by Len Moore. What the above shows is the varied eclectic range of music covered by our group. Other planned sessions for 2010 so far will be on Dave Brubeck (February) and the jazz music and influence of George Gershwin. Come along and try the music and company out! Dates and venues are on our U3A website.
Neil Moreland

Walking Group Holiday, Monmouth October 2009

Twenty-seven members of the walking group headed for Monmouth for our annual "are we really fit?" test. After a wonderful Autumn the weather had changed the weekend before and it rained. Then it rained again. We stayed at the Riverside Hotel in Monmouth where we were looked after extremely well by Louise and her staff.

On the afternoon we arrived the "fitter" group set off in a downpour on a steep but invigorating (!) six mile walk from the village of Michel Troy. While waiting to cross a stile John Sheard was accosted by two

young fillies with long dark hair and soulful eyes, - oh, and four legs each.

The other group were meant to undertake a typical U3A activity, a historical walk around the Town of Monmouth, but the rain made the guide books unreadable. The tea shops did good trade though.

We then had a good evening meal at the hotel in very pleasant company and afterwards exercised our brains on a demanding quiz compiled by Ann Eales.

Day two was a little better as we only had two periods of rain. We walked from Goodrich Castle over a ridge to the River Wye at Welsh Bicnor, then along the river and over Coppett Hill. As we reached the summit the clouds broke and we were rewarded with wonderful views over the Wye

towards Goodrich village. The Castle has a lovely welcoming café and it was even warm enough to sit outside for cakes and tea, and in some cases real ale. Thursday was wet again and one group followed the Offa's Dyke path up a steep wooded hillside to the National Trust Naval Museum, which was closed. Some then took a short route back down to Monmouth while the other brave souls continued along the Offa's Dyke path down to the Wye. In driving rain they found a shelter to cover in to eat lunch and then paddled a further three miles along the Wye Valley back to Monmouth.

Two bedraggled but intrepid groups then headed home. Everyone said they had had a really good time despite the weather, which perhaps proves that we are not over the hill yet! Jenny and Geoff Williams

Re-started Groups

The **Latin Group** has re-started with a new tutor who is keen to increase the size of the group. Will anyone interested in Latin, whether or not they have previous experience, please contact Len Moore? (01902)650130; leonardmoore@blueyonder.co.uk)

We still hope to re-start **French**. A meeting of those interested will take place in early January. Those interested please contact Len Moore as above.

The same hope is for **Music Appreciation**. Those interested contact Christine Moore - same details as above.



Obituaries.

Maureen Keightly a lively, long-standing member of the Cinema and Music Appreciation groups (with an enthusiastic liking for jazz, the louder the better!) Maureen suffered a long illness, but somehow managed to hang on to her sense of fun.

Joan Lloyd a member of the Local History group also suffered a long and invasive illness, bravely borne. Her wide-ranging interests, her Church, the Wulfruna Ladies' Choir and her continuing expertise in child protection matters has left her many admiring friends grieving at her untimely death.