

### **Chairman's Notes**

**Bob Ruffles** 01732-461348  
chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

As we start our new season of events I would like to welcome all the members that have joined us recently. As a part of this welcome we are holding a **New Members' Event on the afternoon of the 10<sup>th</sup> October**. This will provide an understanding of our U3A, how it links into the National Organisation and what is on offer in the way of Study Groups, Meetings and Social Events. Being a member of the U3A means that we are all members of a learning co-operative and the continued success of our U3A is dependent upon the commitment and skills that everyone brings.

In the last Newsletter all Group vacancies and Committee posts were advertised. Many of you may now be thinking of joining new Groups, but please remember to inform your intentions to the respective Group Organisers. If members find Groups are full please let the Group Development Team know, now under Sue Henson's leadership, as it may be we can start up another one. Also, if Group Organisers get enquires and cannot meet the demand for space please let Sue Henson know; we cannot help unless we are aware of difficulties.

The last Executive Committee meeting was held on Thursday 11 September and key issues arising will shortly be reported in the Newsletter.

I look forward to seeing familiar faces and our new members at our open meetings commencing in October.

### **Meetings open to all**

#### **Computer Group      Monday 20 October** **Greetings Cards in Microsoft Office Word**

How this can be done without using Publisher?  
What are the problems?  
Keeping the costs down.  
Choosing the right card size and material.  
Tired of writing out all those Xmas card envelopes?  
Creating your own labels is both sensible and simple to do.  
Come with your questions.

#### **Science Group**

**Monday 13 October**

Mary McKinley: **The Bloodhound Supersonic Car (SSC)** – Inspiring the Next Generation

The world land speed record is presently held by the Thrust SSC Team who achieved 763 mph in October 1997. The driver was Andy Green and the project director was Richard Noble. The same team is now building Bloodhound with the aim of achieving a speed of 1,000mph. The technical challenge of this enterprise is enormous so that this can be regarded as an engineering adventure. The presenter is very proud to be an ambassador for Bloodhound and will be talking about the car, the history of the land speed record and the major work that is involved in getting young people excited by the project. Our donation to the SSC project, in lieu of speaker fee, will ensure Sevenoaks U3A's name is engraved on the car, so come along and hear what it is all about.

Both the Science and Computer Meetings above are held in Otford Village Memorial Hall, 2pm  
All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome.  
£2 entry includes tea.

#### **Monthly Meeting      Wednesday 29 October**

Community Centre, Bat & Ball      Start at 2pm  
Richard Platt: **Smugglers in Kent**

In the early years of the 18th century, smuggling on the Kent coast was a small-time affair, played to rules that both the smugglers and preventives understood and adhered to. Later in the century, though, larger cargoes began to be brought in, and the increased scope for profit brought with it a totally different breed of smuggler.

The new entrepreneurs were not local men supplementing a meagre income from fishing and farming, but professional smugglers, such as members of the notorious *Hawkhurst gang*, based inland. The large out-of-town gangs were by mid-century gathering in groups of 150 and more, and carrying off their goods in long caravans of packhorses.  
The talk by best-selling author, Richard Platt, will develop this narrative.

#### **October Newsletter**

Please send material by Friday 17 October to both Linda Young and Magda Sweetland

## **News and Views** **Magda Sweetland**

### **The Kent Network**

#### **Outline Plans for New U3As in 2015**

At the July Kent Network meeting, there were some suggestions by Chairmen for a number of areas where we might consider setting up a new U3A. The Regional Volunteers have met and drawn up the following plan:

**Cranbrook** Leader: Fred Lemont

**Meopham** Leader: Magda Sweetland

**Sittingbourne** Leader: John Russell

We would welcome help from any members of existing U3As who are local to the planned new U3A area, and who would be willing to offer information and guidance on local facilities, publicity outlets or useful contacts in the local community. They may wish to join the Pre-Launch group, but this is not essential. We will also seek members of the local community to join the planning group.

At the moment, if any local U3A Chairmen have any members who they think would like to help any of the 3 projects in this way please contact the lead person for that project.

**John Russell** (Volunteer Co-ordinator)  
**Magda Sweetland** and **Fred Lamont**

The Network of 27 Chairmen continues to meet three times a year, in March, July and November, and attendance is high. The main business is to support existing U3As, and help form new ones. To make better use of the time available, it has been decided to run a Seminar once a year on a special topic, Finances, Recruitment/ Membership, Running Study Groups etc.. Members other than Chairmen would attend these, perhaps 3 or 4 per U3A. The new Kent Network committee is Chairman **Patrick Thomson** (Hawkhurst) Vice-Chairman **Lindy Bates** (Tenterden) Treasurer **Angela Howe** (Medway) Secretary **Valerie Willsher** (Malling.)

#### **Kent in World War I**

The third Kent Study Day on aspects of WWI was held at Salomons on 8 September, with about 80 members attending, of whom almost one third came from Sevenoaks or Knole U3A. There were four excellent speakers, **Bob and Fern Ogley** on the War Poets, **William Tyler** on The Home Front, and **Alex Patterson** who is the curator of a current exhibition at Chatham Historic Dockyard, on the subject of **Valour, Loss and Sacrifice**. This continues until the end of November and contains many rare and remarkable photographs of marine warfare, often overshadowed by the land battles. Details on the Chatham Dockyard website.

#### **The Way We Were**

The actual launch date for Sevenoaks was on Wednesday 7 September 1994. Looking back we were surprisingly well prepared, with a well designed folded leaflet which served as both an application form and a resume of the Study Groups we were offering. The fact that 115 members joined on the day is proof of its effectiveness.

#### **Groups and Group Leaders**

In the event, five of the Study Groups ran. They were Local Studies Arthur and Maureen Russ, German Conversation Hannah Eady, Botanical Painting Gordon Darby (the only group which is still running with the same leader), History of the House Jean Stirk, Book Group Magda Sweetland. However, ALL of these group leaders are still members of the U3A, and the subjects are still running in Sevenoaks U3A, some with duplicates.

What is more, several of those members took on committee roles and made a contribution to Sevenoaks on several fronts. The first committee was chaired by Magda Sweetland, with Nigel Britten as Vice-Chairman (who has since taken on running German Conversation), Arthur Russ as Secretary while Jacquie Hewitson, later a Group Leader, was the first Groups Co-ordinator, and Jean Stirk was the fourth.

#### **Continuity**

One of the hallmarks of Sevenoaks, therefore, was the stability created by those founding members. Twenty years later a good many of us are still around, leading groups or doing some of the basic work that keeps a U3A ticking over. Of course, this was 1994, and the period of that first recession when so many professionals, aged 50 or under, were losing jobs and status: the U3A appeared at exactly the right time for us, and gave many early members a sense of purpose and enjoyment that was both mental and social, and continues today.

#### **Changing demography**

It is a very different retirement scene now. The pensionable age is, of course, much later. Able retirees (particularly men) stay unemployed for just a short time before they are lured back to the workplace, while women find they are caring for elderly relatives and/or their grandchildren. This means that fewer new members have the time or energy to commit to their local U3A. Recent set ups have a slightly different orientation, with a focus on social activity, or on topics that are lighter hearted, while those with an attendant visit are especially popular. Fun is a welcome word.

#### **And what happens next?**

The U3A as a national organisation is hitting its stride, with a new U3A setting up almost every week, and existing ones expanding to numbers not imagined twenty years ago. It was good to be in near the start of that great adventure!

*Magda Sweetland President Sevenoaks U3A*

## News from the Groups

Sue Henson

### Newsletter entries

Would Group Organisers please note that any item sent to the Publications team should also be passed to the Group Development team under Sue Henson's leadership, so that they are made aware of changes to Study Groups. You might wish to add this note to your own copy of the Handbook: *'Those who place entries in the Newsletter about their group or the activity they organise should email material to **The Group Development Team** such that the Editors receive copy by the date printed on the front of the previous Newsletter.'*

### Digital Image Manipulation 1st year

This group is for beginners and there are several spaces. We meet on the 2nd Thursday morning at Holmesdale Bowls Club from 10 am - 12.30 pm. Contact: **Janet Austin**

# Photoshop

### Industrial Heritage

We explore the background of the industries of the South East in particular, with talks given by the members and visits where possible. The meetings are held in each other's houses on the 3rd Friday of the month, starting in October. New members would be very welcome.

Contact: **Janet Jones**

janetatjanetjones@btinternet.com

### Sculpture

We meet at Knole Academy West on Bradbourne Vale Road on Thursday mornings between 10 - 12noon. This is a new venue for us and we would welcome new members. Contact: **Ann Evans** or **Merilyn Canet** for more information.

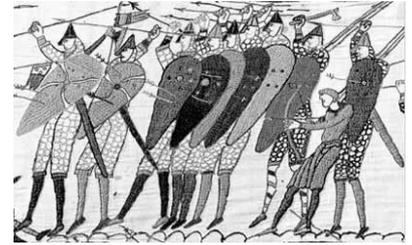


### Microsoft Publisher

John Cox has offered to introduce a small number of people to Microsoft Publisher; basic skills already used in Word will be all that is required to create booklets, posters and even newsletters like this one. There will be six ninety minute sessions spread over three or four weeks, with focused tasks each week. At this stage it would be good to know who might be interested, so please contact John.

## Seminar on The Bayeux Tapestry

For the second year running, the three Sevenoaks and Knole U3A medieval history groups joined together to hold an open meeting with a guest speaker. **Imogen Corrigan**, who is well known to U3A, gave a vivid and fascinating talk on the Bayeux Tapestry on 8 September.



With her usual blend of facts and humour, Imogen interpreted the events illustrated on the 'tapestry' (in truth, an embroidery) - introducing us to the key characters and the messages contained in the work. Imogen reminded us that, although embroidered by English needlewomen, the work was commissioned by the conquerors, with all that implies.

Imogen's military background came through when discussing the battle itself, with fascinating background insights into medieval warfare and the tactics of the English and Norman armies. Suggestions as to the original purpose of the tapestry, and the history of the tapestry since its creation were also discussed. A lively question and answer session followed the talk and conversation continued over tea.

### Snooker

A number of members have expressed interest in a new Snooker group, advertised in the last Newsletter, although others - especially any of the new members - would be very welcome. Outline plans are in progress at the Ightham Club, but it would be useful for prospective joiners to get in touch to arrange a planning meeting, and so establish the best day and time for all concerned.

Contact: **Liz Lucy**

**Nick White**

### Parking at Otford Village Hall

New charges have been introduced from mid-October, daily 7am to 6pm. The rates are:-

#### Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays)

First hour free (get a ticket)

2<sup>nd</sup> hour 50p 3<sup>rd</sup> hour 50p

Every subsequent hour or part thereof £1.00

#### Saturday

First hour free (get a ticket)

2<sup>nd</sup> hour 50p 3<sup>rd</sup> hour 50p

All day £2.00

This may affect members who attend the Science or Computer group meetings

**Social Events News**  
**Pam Walshe**

**Events open to all**

- ◆ **Guildford Cathedral and Wisley/Wisley Christmas Shop:** There are still some spaces for our trip on 4th November to Guildford Cathedral and the renowned Christmas Shop at Wisley (flyer with last month's newsletter). This event will now be opened to Knole members.
- ◆ **Paris in the Spring:** This month we enclose a flyer for our visit to Paris 17 -20 April 2015, to include visits to the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Musee d'Orsay, Versailles and a boat trip on the Seine. Please apply promptly.
- ◆ On Tuesday 7 October there will be a seminar on **Art Deco Design** led by Graham Whitham. The flyer was enclosed with the August Newsletter. Spaces are still available. Organised by Knole.
- ◆ On Monday 13 October there will be a visit to **Danson House** and **Eltham Palace** as a follow-up to the Seminar. This trip is now full.

**Mailings received from National Office**

Details have been received of two events which may be of interest to members:

1. An exclusive Study Day at the National Gallery, London, on Wednesday 26 November on 'Renaissance Treasures'. Tickets £18.00
2. Filmed live performance of Cinderella by the Dutch National Ballet at The Odeon Covent Garden Cinema on the afternoon of Wednesday 19 November. Tickets £14.00

**Diary**

**Oct**

Fri 3	First Friday Lunch
Tue 7	Seminar Art Deco and Design (Knole)** Places available
Wed 8	Bridge for Pleasure
Mon 13	Visit to Danson/Eltham Palace (Knole)** Full
Mon 13	Science Group Meeting
Wed 15	Ambling
Mon 20	Computer Group Meeting
Tue 21	The Strollers
Wed 22	Bridge for Pleasure
Mon 27	Half Day Walking
Wed 29	Monthly Meeting

**Nov**

Tue 4	Guildford Cathedral and Wisley Xmas shop **
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**Apr 2015**

Fri 17 – Mon 20 Paris in the Spring\*

Flyer sent previously\*\*

Flyer enclosed\*

**Note for new members:**

All of these are 'Open' groups, and so anyone may come along: there are three walks of different lengths, a lunch at a local pub and a popular and friendly bi-monthly Bridge group. It is not normally necessary to contact the Group Organiser, unless indicated below. You will be very welcome.

**Bridge for Pleasure      Weds 8 & 22 October**

The Group plays at Otford Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50am until 12.15pm. Car parking charges may well be in place, so please bring an extra pound. We are an 'open' group, so any new players can just come along. If you need to make contact, call **Colin and Mary Butson**

**The Strollers      Tuesday 21 October**

Meet in the car park of the Lullingstone visitor centre (small charge) at 11.00. The walk will be followed by an optional lunch at the centre. Leader: **Penny Watts**

**Half Day Walking      Monday 27 October**

Meet in the car park near the church in Kemsing, Grid Reference 555587, in time for a 10am start. A five-mile circular walk to Knockmill, Woodlands and Otford Manor followed by an optional lunch at a pub in Kemsing. New walkers welcome. Leader: **Nick White**

**Ambling      Wednesday 15 October**

Meet at Weald village green for a 4-mile walk starting at 10:00am. At the foot of Riverhill (A225) turn right into Morleys Road (signed "Sevenoaks Weald") for ¾ mile. At Weald Village sign go straight ahead and park close to the school (TN14 6PY) in Long Barn Road. Optional lunch at the Windmill, who will require us to pre-order. New walkers are always welcome. Leaders: **Robbie and David Hill**

**First Friday Lunch      Friday 3 October**

The Woodman Otford 12.45 for 1pm. Book with **Christine Macpherson** between 27 and 30 September.

**Newsletter Editorial team**

Victoria Baxter, John Cox,  
Magda Sweetland, Linda Young