

Chairman's Notes

This is the last Newsletter before our summer break. The next will be the August issue that will accompany the **2015-16 Handbook**.

As your retiring Chairman this will also be the final Newsletter to which I shall contribute. When you appointed me four years ago I set out to maintain the good aspects of our U3A, to bring us up to date and to lay foundations for the future. Failing to recognise the need for change and ignoring new and creative ideas to enhance the success of our U3A would be a recipe for decline. In the last four years, I have supported the revision and updating of our Website, introduced IT systems where required to improve our administrative processes, and shortly you will have the opportunity to opt into electronic distribution of our Newsletters. These initiatives help to improve our efficiency and keep running costs low, which is reflected in the very low membership fees we all enjoy.

However, I could not have done this alone. It has been a pleasure working with a professional and enthusiastic Executive Committee who work in harmony on behalf of the whole of the U3A. I also wish to pay tribute to the various sub-committee members who have worked with me and supported many changes, sometimes under difficult circumstances. Whilst this background work may not have been visible to all, it has been recognised by National Office and at our GOs' Conference the National Office Vice Chair reinforced what a successful U3A we are. I hope the future Executive will be able to continue the good work in the same harmonious environment.

It has been an honour to serve as your Chairman, I have enjoyed the work and wish to extend my thanks to all members; it is the talents that you bring that make Sevenoaks such a successful U3A.

I trust you will all have a good summer break and come back in the Autumn to our new programme of events starting with the **Open Afternoon on 23rd September 2015**.

Bob Ruffles chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

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The Executive Meeting held on the 14th May

The main focus of this meeting was the preparation documentation for the AGM meeting, reviewing the Annual Accounts, Trustees' report and proposals to be presented to the AGM on our membership subscriptions.

A review of our Group Organisers' conference was presented by Sue Henson where we received a number of good ideas for improving communications with our members, making new members more welcome and new ideas for groups. These will be taken further by the Group Development team and implemented in the near future.

Plans for launching the electronic newsletter in September were discussed and a team will be conducting the implementation process. The successful trial period has illustrated efficient methods of communication that can be used on a larger scale.

We were made aware of an exhibition presenting the concept designs for the new Community Centre by the Town Council. The EC agreed to maintain contact and make appropriate comments for consideration by the Council.

Bob Ruffles Chairman

Refreshments at the Monthly Meeting

After five years of organising the teas and cakes at the monthly meetings Ann Howard is handing over the reins. The team is always grateful for more members. They work on a rota so volunteers are asked to take their turn just once a year. If you would like to help, please contact Di Latter.



Copy for August Newsletter should reach both Linda Young and Magda Sweetland

by **Friday 14 August**

News from the Groups

Sue Henson

groupdev@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

U3A Study Groups Fair, Wednesday, 23rd September, 2015:

Members are invited to this Open Afternoon where Sevenoaks U3A group organisers will be telling others about their groups and signing on new members. All group organisers are expected to be there or to be represented there.

It was satisfying at our Group Organisers Conference on 12 May to get so many votes of confidence. Members obviously feel that U3A is doing a good job and that the size of Sevenoaks U3A enables it to cater for a wide range of interests – although there are some areas that still need covering.

A full analysis of the Conference is available on this site via "News/Group Organisers' Conference". Several particular points emerged:

- A revised *Group Organisers Guide* and the national office's *More Time to Learn* have recently been published. These should prove a useful source of help and information to Group Organisers. If you are a GO and were unable to attend the conference please pick up your copies at the Open Day on 23 September, or contact me.
- Where groups are too full to take anyone new, perhaps members would be kind enough to invite one or two interested persons to attend a few sessions of the group to give them confidence in setting up their own group on this subject. Upon personal acquaintance some members may well find themselves inclined to give positive help with the setting up of a second group!
- It is part of the ethos of U3A that able members help the less able to get full value from their U3A – and I am sure many members already support each other in this way. Please look out for ways you can help.
- We are considering setting up a 'buddy' system to help new members settle in – or to introduce 'greeters' at open meetings
- Please invite any recent retirees you know of to consider becoming members of Sevenoaks U3A. We need to keep up our numbers if we are to continue to cover the range of interests that we provide.

Sue Henson

Saxophones and More

At this year's Jazz Study Morning on 28th May, Snake Davis, one of the country's leading saxophone players, enthralled us with an inside view of his life as a busy jazz musician illustrated with a wide-ranging presentation about his music and the instruments he plays. Of the ten or so saxophones he mentioned (contrabass through to soprano) he treated us to a varied selection from his jazz repertoire, sometimes soulful; sometimes hot and dynamic. He also told us about his collection of flutes. In jazz he does use the normal classical flute but he also introduced us to others. As well as the four-holed folk flute and the much-loved tin whistle he showed us a Japanese bamboo flute called the Shaku Hachi. It has five holes and is played like a recorder but without the help of the mouthpiece. Snake performed on his shakuhari with much head-bobbing combined with bodily contortion as demanded by this difficult instrument. Yet his performance of the Japanese melody 'Sakuru' (Cherry Blossom) was an absolute delight.

But his real talent lies in his saxophone playing and though he covered many other aspects of his work, including how to shake off pre-performance nerves and what it's like to play in front of a Japanese audience of thousands, it was his solo saxophone numbers which made the morning special. And, in case you were wondering, Snake's friends call him that because it is a fair description of his gyrations when in full flow on the stage.

Note: The Jazz Groups who were responsible for the Jazz Morning may have one or two places available in September.

Theatre Studies Group

A celebratory end-of-season meal for the Theatre Studies group after a lively discussion, typically full of disagreement, on the merits of G B Shaw's *Man and Superman*. Shaw's provocative and very long play comes towards the end of a season which has included a Greek play, two Shakespeare plays. Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Stoppard's *Arcadia*, the first of Rona Munro's Scottish history trilogy, Hare's *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* (based on Katherine Boo's book) and Whitemore's *Stevie*. The final play which the group will see together and later discuss in July is Miller's *Death of a Salesman* which should also stimulate a vigorous exchange of views

Sevenoaks U3A Group Co-ordinator

After having been a member of Sevenoaks U3A for over 10 years, I was invited to become the Group Coordinator a year ago. I soon found there is a lot more to the role than I had realised! I am a qualified secretary and these skills are what a group co-ordinator needs, especially if he or she is to be involved in the administration of conferences and meetings. I cannot say that these are my favourite aspects of the job: I much prefer communicating with members, helping them to set up new groups or to solve their small U3A problems. These are what make the role interesting and satisfying. Would any member who wants to discuss anything about their group or, better still, would like to help set up a new group, please contact me at groupdev@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Sue Henson

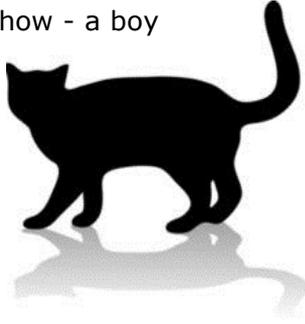
GOs – two requests from the Web Team

Thank you to all those who have agreed to using the protected email system – it helps and protects us all. If you have not done so, please do so as soon as possible. Just email webteam@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk with your name and personal email address and we will do the rest. By doing so you will be agreeing to having the protected email address for your group, as shown on the web site, being linked to your private email address, which is of course not shown. Any GOs taking over a group are also asked to sign up for this system – and please everyone let us know if your personal email address changes at any time.

Also, although information about groups in the new Handbook is limited to 20 words, you can put more text on your group's web page. Send your text to webteam@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk. *Jeff Lee*

Pantomime Cat

WANTED - for the mini pantomime that will be part of our November Show - a boy or girl of around 10 or 11 to play Dick Whittington's cat. No words to learn (just Miaow!). Performance will be on November 27th and a few rehearsals will be needed. Has anyone an enthusiastic grand-child who would like to act with us on the Otford Village Hall stage? Please contact Pamela Murphy at artsdrama@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.



First Lines

Our poetry group is hoping to recruit 2 or 3 new members for September. We're a joint Knole/Sevenoaks group. Each month we choose a poet to discuss and although we've been going for about three years, we don't feel we've scratched the surface yet. Sometimes we have a 'free choice' session where we talk about any of our favourite poems: that is what we plan to do on 16 September, so any new members can easily join in. We meet on the third Wed of the month at 2 pm in members' homes. If you might be interested please contact Val Rea.

All-day Walking Group 1B

Come and join our walking group to enjoy good walks and friendly company.

Our walks take place on the 3rd Friday of each month and are around 10 miles with a pub stop half-way. The photo was taken during our April walk and shows a typical lunch break! Walks are mainly local though we may travel further afield; for example Bewl Water, the Ashdown Forest and the South Downs. Members all take turns in leading. For anyone interested in joining us the contact is Sylvia Penzer at alldaywalk@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.



Revive Your Latin

A new course, aimed at those whose 1-3 years of learning Latin at school have long been forgotten.

We will be using the Oxford Latin Course which bases its material on the life of the young poet Horace, and gives a good introduction to all aspects of Roman civilisation. Meetings will be held on 1st & 3rd Monday afternoon each month, from 2.30 - 4.00 pm, starting in October.

Contact Judith Spurway at latinrevived@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Short Course on Fungi

Trudy Fleming is offering a short course on fungi identification along the Greensand Ridge, starting at Toys Hill on Monday, 28th September, then fortnightly thereafter.

If you would like to join in one of these short fungi walks, contact Trudy at fungi@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk



Social Events News

Pam Walshe

A flyer is enclosed for a trip to Hatfield House, plus details of spare places on a Knole visit to Cambridge.

A Christmas theatre outing by coach to the Mill theatre at Sonning to see Richard Harris' play **Stepping Out**, together with a meal, is being organised for early December. More information will be given at the AGM on June 24.

An overseas visit to Dresden and Leipzig is being planned for next May 2016. More details later.

Events open to all

First Friday Lunch Friday 3 July

Darenth Valley Golf Club, Shoreham-12.45 for 1pm. To book contact Pat Dallas or Fay Plant.

Half Day Walking Monday 27 July

Meet outside the school and church in Crockham Hill in time for a 10am start. Take the turning leading east at the top end of the village and park at the side of the road. A five mile walk will be followed by an optional lunch at the Royal Oak. Leader: Velma Keys.

Half Day Walking Monday 24 August

Meet by the church at Chevening (NGR 489577) in time for a 10am start. A five mile walk to the North Downs Way passing the Chevening Keyhole. The walk will visit Kipling's Way Through the Woods, the subject of his famous poem. There will be an optional lunch afterwards at the White Horse in Sundridge. Leader: Nick White.

The Strollers Tuesday 21 July

Meet at 11am at the Man of Kent. Leave Tonbridge on the A26 to Hadlow. Turn right into Three Elm Lane. Continue on this road through Golden Green to the Man of Kent on the left before you reach East Peckham. The walk will be followed by an optional lunch at the pub. Leader: Anne Gutteridge.

Bridge for Pleasure Weds 8 & 22 July

The Group plays at Otford Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50 a.m. until 12.15 p.m. The winner on 13th May was Pam Callahan, on 27th May was Eileen Stanton and on 10th June was Betty Medhurst.

After 22nd July, the next meeting will be on October 14th.

We are an 'open' group, so any new players can just come along. If you need to make contact, call Colin and Mary Butson.

Ambling Wednesday 15 July

Meet in the car park of The Bell pub in Golden Green (Post Code TN11 0BD) in time for a 10am start. Take the A26 from Hadlow towards Tonbridge and after 1.25 miles take the left turn into Three Elm Lane, there's a BP petrol station on the corner. Follow Three Elm Lane for 1.25 miles into Golden Green and The Bell is on the left. The walk will be followed by an optional lunch. Leader: Grahame Lee. There will be no walk in August.

The role of the Hall Manager

As the executive committee member responsible for monthly meetings, my role is to ensure that they run smoothly. The essential elements are booking the hall, displaying notices, the teas and the speaker. It is fortunate that Sevenoaks Town Council, which owns the community centre, has a good caretaker and that we have an excellent team under Ann Howard and Di Latter that procures cakes and serves teas after the talks. Until recently Lynn Mead organised speakers, but after she reached the end of her term of office I assumed that role. At first I had no idea how to find a speaker but, with the help of Kent U3A and members' recommendations, I have managed to build up a database of more than 150 potential speakers. I make every effort to produce a varied programme to suit all tastes, but if there is a speaker or a topic that you would particularly like to hear please let me know. My greatest fear is that a speaker will fail to arrive. It has happened to the Science Group and to Knole U3A and, in case it happens to us, I am on the lookout for volunteers with memory sticks who can give talks at the drop of a hat.

Nick White

Diary

July

Wed	1	St.Albans and garden of the Rose
Fr1	3	First Friday Lunch
Wed	8	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed	15	River Thames and Syon House**
Wed	15	Ambling
Tue	21	The Strollers
Wed	22	Bridge for Pleasure
Mon	27	Half Day Walking
Mon	27	Kent Study Day: Bridges over Time

Aug

Mon	24	Half Day Walking
Wed	26	Hatfield House*

Sept

Mon	7	Kent Study Day: The Welte Organ, Salomons**
Wed	9	Knole trip to Cambridge*
Thu	24	Science Group outing to Farnborough Air Sciences Trust*

* Flyer enclosed

** Flyer sent previously