



Great Glen Newsletter

April 2016

Registered Charity No. 1099411

www.greatglenu3a.co.uk



A very warm welcome to our new members: Mrs C Baker, Prakash Jethwa, John Johnson, Valentine Smith and Barbara Tams

Chairman's Chat

I love April, the month when the trees, shrubs and flowers are bursting with life again, the birds are building their nests and winter is finally over.

It will soon be 23rd April – St George's Day and Shakespeare's birthday. As a youngster I was a member of St. John's Ambulance Brigade and I have special memories of all the organisations in the city where I lived coming together and marching with bands in the St George's Day Parade, culminating in a Cathedral service. The 'St John's' gave me my first opportunity to meet a member of the Royal Family: when I was sixteen years old Princess Margaret presented me with my Grand Prior badge at Worcester Cricket Ground.

This year 23rd April is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday. I have been a member of The Royal Shakespeare Theatre since the 1960's when I lived very near to Stratford-on-Avon. Robert and I visit very regularly seeing all types of drama. My interest in Shakespeare started at senior school when a new teacher introduced us to him. We studied the man, his life and times. The teacher decided our class showed the most aptitude for studying his writing and so would rehearse a play to be performed at parents' day at the end of term. She chose *The Taming of the Shrew* – I leave you to guess which part I played.

As previously announced our AGM will take place on Tuesday 10th May – coffee at 10.00 a.m. in readiness for a prompt start 10.30. After completion of the formal business Toni Smith will show a selection of films. Please make sure you have the date in your diaries.

Patricia Mansfield chairman@greatglenu3a.co.uk
270 8284

Forthcoming Monthly Meetings

12 April 2016	<i>Excursion 4</i>	Sandra Moore
10 May 2016	<i>AGM and Films</i>	
14 June 2016	<i>Fascination of the English Language</i>	David Siddons

Meetings are held in the Village Hall on the second Tuesday of each month. Doors open 10.00 a.m. for tea and coffee, speaker 10.30 a.m.

Coffee Rota

Coffee, tea and sugar are provided. Please bring milk.

12 April – Book Group

10 May – Bowling Group

14 June – Three Groups: Bridge, Calligraphy and Crochet

In the Footsteps of Marco Polo – Neville Maggs

March Monthly Meeting

Neville Maggs is quite an extraordinary person, as he explained when introducing himself to the March monthly meeting. An inveterate traveller – he has notched up some 50 countries by now – he relishes physical challenge and adventure. He has completed 26 full marathons, and has now infected his second wife Judy with the bug. On a good day she has beaten him, but he does not seem to mind. He signed up as crew on a round-the-world yacht race without prior experience. He must be a quick learner as they gave him a couple of books to read and he survived! He and Judy divide their time between Great Glen and California, where they have a second home. Neville

has a repertoire of talks which can be lengthened and shortened to order. He gives these talks to raise loads of funds for the eponymous Neville Preparatory School in Ghana which he helped to found.

Our expectations were raised and he did not disappoint. We heard something of Marco Polo, a Venetian merchant who ventured overland to China around 1200 AD. He returned by sea, to be cast into prison for previous misdeeds. It was whilst incarcerated that Marco Polo recounted the story of his journey, which was then written up in the form of a journal. This inspired Neville to undertake his own journey some 800 years later. His magic carpet awaited us.

The talk was interesting at many levels: by turns focusing on historical, cultural, technological, political and scenic aspects. Trade between Europe and China was well established in classical Greek and Roman times. There was a variety of silk routes linking China with different parts of India and beyond to Russia, Turkey and the Balkans. The journey undertaken by Neville was about 6,000 miles, taking in the historic cities of Bokhara, Samarkand and Tashkent before entering and crossing China. The trip lasted a month. There were extremes of climate and spectacular views of mountains, deserts, oases and sunsets, and of course a camel ride.

En route we noted the shades of ancient legendary figures. Alexander the Great had ended his trail of conquests in Kyrgyzstan – a woman was involved of course! We saw how the Emperor Tamerlaine (*alias Tamberlaine the Great*) was commemorated by a magnificent palace and mausoleum in Uzbekistan. Genghis Khan had run riot with his marauding army, 200,000 strong, sacking the capital city of Jiaohe in eastern China, an important stopping point on the silk road in ancient times. The city was then reconstructed downwards by a remarkable excavation. We passed through Zhanyi, birthplace of Kublai Khan.

There were remarkable views of a notable built heritage. The huge Kalon minaret in Uzbekistan stands unscathed after hundreds of years upon straw foundations laid to withstand earthquakes. The structures, ornate brickwork, tiles and painting on ancient buildings bore testimony to highly developed architectural, construction and artistic skills dating back many centuries. The Central Mosque in Samarkand is the largest such building in central Asia. Perhaps equally impressive were the methods employed to supply water to centres of population, without which the silk roads would have been impassable and the movement of armies impossible. So we saw views of amazing aqueducts and heard about ingenious water tunnels miles in length.

The journey through China began at Kashgar, latterly the scene of a form of ethnic cleansing of the native Wega people and no longer open to tourists as a result of the ensuing troubles. Kashgar boasts an enormous subterranean market as well as abundant evidence of Buddhist and Muslim influence. We saw the eastern and western ends of the Great Wall, learning that its course had altered substantially over its long history as the Chinese Empire expanded and contracted. We marvelled at the scale and logistics of the effort required to build, maintain and garrison this gigantic fortification. We heard of a failed attempt to drive a rickshaw, which mercifully did not end with the loss of our speaker's worldly goods, and a never started trip on inflated pigskin rafts on the treacherous Yangtze River. We glimpsed the terracotta army and giant effigies of the Buddha. And so on to Beijing, less polluted then than it is today, to see the usual tourist attractions. We had all enjoyed glimpsing the parts that other tourists do not often reach.

Robert Mansfield

A Penny for Your Thoughts ...

If you have a memory, 'thought piece' or anecdote you are willing to share with other members please do send

it in to me. The cut-off date for the May Newsletter is noon on **Wednesday May 2016**.

Robert Mansfield robertrmansfield@btinternet.com
270 8284

OUTINGS

Summer Visit to Chatsworth House and Gardens

Thursday 26 May 2016

The coach will leave Great Glen Village Hall 09.00, departing from Chatsworth for the return journey at 16.15. Once you have arrived you are free to spend the day as you wish. The trip costs £28 per head, to cover the coach and entrance to the House and gardens.

Whilst there has been some response, so far the coach is only half full, so we need more support to be able to go. Please speak to me if you know of friends who would be interested.

Visit to Barnsdale, Oakham, with the Garden Group

Friday 17 June 2016

ALL U3A MEMBERS WELCOME – You do not have to be a member of the Garden Group. The coach will depart from the Great Glen Village Hall at 12.00 noon. The Coach will leave Barnsdale at 4.45

p.m. for the return journey. We shall be able to visit the gardens, the tea rooms, the shop and the plant nursery. The cost is £14.50 per person. **We need another 10 people!!!**

Any queries about these events, please ring (**after 6.00 p.m.**) ... *Pat Tate* 259 1001

Learn Something New

All these are single two-hour sessions unless otherwise stated.

New Age Kurling – Come and have a go *Stewart Newman* **Friday 13th May** Sports Centre

New age Kurling is a recently invented sport based on ice-curling but played on a normal flat indoor surface using rubber curling stones which have castors. It can be played by almost anyone and provides opportunity for gentle exercise as well as plenty of fun. If you are on the internet you can see a youtube demo at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kimoxxRppk>

We are grateful to Stewart for providing equipment from Hinckley U3A for this session.

Sign up for this session at the April monthly meeting, or contact me by phone or email.

Peter Russell prussell@russellscott.co.uk 271 0889

Group News

Art Group

The subject for 7th and 21st April is "Copying your favourite artist". Just a reminder that we meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month in the Ruth Warner Room at 2 o'clock.

Rachael Snashall rsnashall@hotmail.com 259 2830

Crochet

Lovely to see new members coming along. At our next meeting on the 19th April at 2 p.m. we shall practise treble crochets, using them to make a granny square and learning how to join them together. Newcomers very welcome, including absolute beginners.

Stella Orbell stellamo@hotmail.com 259 2095

Duplicate Bridge (Evenings)

We are back to our usual times: Tuesdays 7.00 p.m. (for a prompt start at 7.15 p.m.) till 10.00 p.m.-ish.

There is no play on the third Tuesday of the month.

Pairs will be made welcome, singles may be put on a waiting list. Anyone interested should contact ...

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

English Country Dancing

The Group continues to meet weekly on Tuesday afternoons from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. in the Sports Hall. Recently attendances have been a little low, which

greatly limits the range of dances we can try, so we are always pleased to welcome new members.

Several of the dances we do were first published in the Stuart and Regency periods, some as early as 1650 or even before that, and so have been danced for over 500 years. Others were written in modern times, from the 1900s to literally last month! All are in set formations and they span English Country, English Court (Playford), American Squares and Contra styles of dances. Most are danced at a walking pace, with occasionally skipping, so are not too vigorous – although there are some where we enjoy a good gallop down the room! The music we use ranges from classical (Handel, Purcell, etc) to modern compositions, even jazz, and often features tunes that will be very familiar to all those who enjoy traditional English folk music.

No previous experience is needed as all the dances are explained and walked through before setting them to music. You do not need to come with a partner; singles of both sexes are welcomed. Just wear light-weight shoes and comfortable clothing suitable for gentle dancing, and be prepared to laugh a lot!

Come and join us on Tuesdays for an afternoon of fun and gentle exercise in good company!

Peter Meacock petermeacock112@btinternet.com

279 3600

Family History

Meetings in April will be on 13th and 27th of the month at 9.30 a.m. in the Methodist Church Hall.

Eric Orbell ericorbell332@btinternet.com 259 2095

Garden Group

Our next meeting is on Friday 15th April when we are visiting Belgrave Hall Gardens, Church Road just off Loughborough Road (post code LE4 5PE). If you have not put your name on the list but would like to go, please contact Ros Aldwinckle (telephone 271 7338). We are meeting in the Village Hall car park to share lifts at 1.30 p.m. Cost approx. £3 to include refreshments.

URGENT APPEAL!! We are hoping to organise a trip to Barnsdale Gardens by coach on FRIDAY 17th JUNE (not Wednesday 15th as previously printed) and have arranged a 26-seater coach. (See the Outings notice above.) There are still ten places left. If anyone would like to come along and bring a friend or family member then please contact Pat Tate as soon as possible on 259 1001 (after 6.00 p.m. please). The cost is £14.50. It would be such a shame to cancel this visit owing to lack of support. Thank you.

Linda Hobart lindahobart@outlook.com (New No.)
319 8095

History Group

There is no meeting on 2nd May as it is a public holiday. We shall meet again on Monday 6th June 2016 at 2.00 p.m. when we shall be continuing our plans for researching local topics, and also viewing another DVD, this time about Oliver Cromwell. New members always welcome. Also, please see the announcement below about the planned private visit to Hallaton Museum, Church and Village on 4th July.

Peter Russell prussell@russellscott.co.uk 271 0889

Private Visit to Hallaton Museum 4th July 2016

Hallaton museum is running an exhibition called ‘Tales of the Unexpected’ at weekends from the end of April until the beginning of October; this is open to the public. We have the opportunity of a private visit, just for Great Glen U3A members, on Monday 4th July, which will include guided tours of the museum exhibition, the church next door and a village walk. The theme of the exhibition is “The fascinating and unusual stories of Hallaton men and women in different theatres of war.” I shall put posters up in the foyer at the April monthly meeting and on the notice board at the Methodist Hall where you can see more detail.

Please note that we would make our own way to the exhibition. The museum is asking for a voluntary

donation of £5 per person for a private party. This would be payable to me in advance.

We are looking for a party size of 20+. If you would like to take part in this visit please contact me NO LATER than Tuesday 19th April. If we have sufficient interest, I can then contact the museum organiser again to finalise details and report back to you. Whilst preference will be given (if necessary) to members of the History Group, expressions of interest from other U3A members and their friends are welcome.

Peter Russell prussell@russellscott.co.uk 271 0889

History of Art

The next meeting is on Wednesday 20th April when Stella Orbell will be presenting the painter George Large. The meeting will commence at 10.00 a.m. in the Methodist Hall. All members are welcome.

David Brooke dnbrooke@fsmail.net 259 2520

Indoor (Winter) Bowls

Indoor bowls will stop after Easter for the summer and will begin again in October.

Ann Spray spray194@btinternet.com 281 0324

Indoor Croquet

All groups are back to the usual times: Tuesday weekly, 1.30 till 3.00 p.m.; Thursday weekly, first

group 10.00 till 11.30 a.m., second group 11.30 a.m. till 1.00 p.m. All groups are full at present.

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

Line Dancing

The Line Dancing Group is flourishing, but there is still room for anyone who would like to give it a try and have gentle exercise, which is also a lot of fun.

We are all beginners so there is no need to be shy about learning the dances.

To date we have over 20 dances in our repertoire, with varying degrees of success, but a lot of laughter along the way. Why is it that your right and left feet, which have been in the same place all our lives, suddenly swap places with each other? Answers on a postcard please.

We dance to various music, with rhythms ranging from Country to the Waltz, a Rumba, and even an old Jazz number. Still to come are a Polka, Foxtrot, Charleston and a bit of Swing from Dean Martin. The mind boggles!

Don't forget, every Thursday in the Sports Hall, 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Jackie Jordan jkj1506@btinternet.com 259 9199

Military History

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 4th May at 10.00 a.m. in the Methodist Church Hall. Everyone is

welcome to attend. No previous experience is necessary!

Eric Orbell ericorbell332@btinternet.com 259 2095

Mini Bridge

We are back to our usual times – Tuesday weekly 9.45 a.m. (for a prompt start at 10.00 a.m.) till 12.15.

Singles or pairs are welcome, but please ring Terry (259 2102) or me before your first visit.

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

Papercraft

Our next meeting will be on Monday April 18th at 1.30 p.m. We shall have a go at two new iris folding patterns, so please bring some sellotape and any paper strips you have. (I shall have plenty if you need them, though.)

Stella Orbell stellamo@hotmail.com 259 2095

Quiz Group

The next meeting is on 25th April in the main hall of the Methodist Hall at 2 o'clock. The question master is Andrew Palmer. Peter Russell has kindly offered to take charge of the meeting in Rachael's absence.

Rachael Snashall rsnashall@hotmail.com 259 2830

Sunday Singles Lunch

We meet on the second Sunday of the month, single ladies and gentlemen equally very welcome – we could

do with a few more men just now! The next venues are: **10 April** – The Golden Shield, Fleckney, **8 May** – Leicestershire Golf Club.

Judith Measom

279 1509

Swimming

After the Easter holidays swimming recommences on Wednesday 20th April. I trust we shall have a good attendance.

David Brooke dnbrooke@fsmail.net

259 2520

Table Top Games

Canasta continues to be a popular addition to our repertoire of games. We welcome complete novices to try any of the games we currently offer (Rummikub, Triolet, Scrabble & Upword, as well as Canasta) and if you would like to introduce us to one of your favourites, please bring it along. We also have a few chess players, but it is best to check in advance with Gillian or Helen.

We now meet in the main hall rather than the Ruth Warner Room, so have plenty of room for group expansion. Come along on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month to enjoy a sociable afternoon exercising those little grey cells!

Gillian Farrar 270 8375

Helen Edwards 212 7547

Village Strollers

We are still looking for someone to succeed Linda Hobart as leader of this group, otherwise it will close. Linda is most willing to help a new leader to get established. **Is there a volunteer out there?** Anyone who might be interested is invited in the first instance to contact the Chairman ...

Patricia Mansfield chairman@greatglenu3a.co.uk

270 8284

Great Glen Library – Have your say!

Sent out with this edition of the Newsletter is a copy of the consultation questionnaire about future arrangements for the Great Glen library, whose future is as a voluntary organisation. If you have not already responded here is a further opportunity to do so. The closing date has been specially extended to 24 April.

Robert Mansfield robertrmansfield@btinternet.com

270 8284

Tailpiece

