



Great Glen Newsletter

January 2017

Registered Charity No. 1099411

www.greatglenu3a.co.uk



Chairman's Chat

A very happy and peaceful New Year to you all. I hope that (nearly) everyone was able to enjoy the long festive break in whatever way they spent it, though I was sad to learn of the deaths of a few members over this period.

My thanks to the Music and Good Company Group for organising the Christmas Entertainment (see report below), and in particular to Jenny Hawley, our MC, and to John Gough who established his authority over the sound system to play the CDs.

Now that 2017 has begun, your Committee has started planning for our next AGM. This will take place on Tuesday 9th May 2017. Please put the date in your diaries now! This will be my last AGM as your Chairman, as quite rightly we limit the term of office for Chairmen to three years, so that new leaders can bring fresh ideas to bear. As previously announced the Committee is looking for prospective members, without whom Great Glen U3A faces a limited future. Anyone potentially interested should contact me.

Patricia Mansfield chairman@greatglenu3a.co.uk
270 8284

Forthcoming Events

Our speaker on 10th January is Roy Mitchell. His subject is Stoneywell, the National Trust Property in Ulverscroft. The house is a unique example of Arts and Crafts design set in four acres of stunning gardens.

The next Monthly Meetings

10 January 2017 *Stoneywell Cottage NT* Roy Mitchell
14 February 2017 *A Leicestershire Saint* Douglas Clinton
14 March 2017 *The Life and Works of Agatha Christie* John Martin

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 – see below.**

Coffee Rota

Coffee, tea and sugar are provided. Please bring milk (2 litres).

10 January – Line Dancing
14 February – Military History
14 March – Music and Good Company

Christmas Entertainment

(December monthly meeting)

Members were entertained to an attractively varied programme at the 2016 Christmas Entertainment. Ably compèred (or should it be commèred?) by Jenny Hawley, this began with two resonantly rousing renditions from the recently rostered Ukulele Group to which we all sang along.

We had three excellent readings of Christmas poems (from Stella Orbell, Marion Morley and Robert Mansfield) and another wonderful monologue from John Parrington concerning young Albert and a lion. Perhaps the highlight was the young singers from St Cuthbert's School choir, conducted and accompanied by their Head Teacher as they sang a medley of carols and Christmas songs. All the above were interspersed with music chosen by Jenny to conclude her homage to the U3A Groups that she had begun the previous year. Comments afterwards confirmed that this had been a much enjoyed event, which certainly showcased some of the talents with which we are blessed.

The event raised £145 for LOROS from the net proceeds from sales of tickets. In addition to this Sue Russell raffled a beautiful quilt of her own making. The raffle raised another £110 for LOROS and the lucky winner was Chris Smith.

Editor

WARTIME MEMORIES

I had just turned five when WW2 started. I remember the actual day as my Dad came into my bedroom as I went to bed in the evening and put up a blind and said to me 'You won't get bananas for your tea anymore.' It was a treat to run to the corner shop next door but one and buy a penny banana for my tea. Something I didn't do again until I was 11.

As I got older the war got more exciting. I was still a 'little owd boy', as we were referred to in those parts, but there was no danger in growing up in Lincoln and death and destruction didn't enter into it for a long time. True, my cousin died in France in January 1940 but I think I was too young to realise what had happened. My only other flirtation with anything to do with the human side of war was in June 1944 when someone came into our classroom and asked for one of my classmates to go home as his brother, who was in the 2nd Lincolns, had been wounded in Normandy. He got up from his desk and was promptly sick all over the classroom wall!

I remember exactly where I was on 6th June 1944 (D Day). I was ten and it was the day I took the second, oral, part of my scholarship for the local grammar school. I walked the three miles or so to the Lincoln School on Wragby Road and went in to answer

questions from the panel such as ‘If you had a shilling how many tuppence ha’penny stamps could you buy and how much change would you get?’ and, after hearing from me that I was helping my Mum to run the family allotment whilst my Dad was in the army, ‘How would you plant potatoes?’ I made a mess of that one as I told them I would set the seed 2 feet apart! When I came out of the school into the sunshine there was a seat by the side of the road and I sat on it. An old (50-ish!) lady came and sat next to me on the seat and said ‘They’ve gone then!’ and we chatted for a few minutes about what we thought would happen and our hopes for the future. Something I can’t imagine happening today.

What few football skills I had were mostly picked up from a German prisoner of war. There were a lot of them about both Italians and Germans. They wore a sort of boiler suit with huge round patches stitched on their backs. The boiler suits could be black or brown but the patches were a variety of colours. Where they came from I don’t know but they often appeared on the West Common to play football and we kids would play with them. One big blonde German was a professional footballer before the war and he spent hours coaching us. They all seemed to speak enough English to make themselves understood and we had a great time with them. They also had the advantage of having a proper

football, something which was almost unheard of at that time.

We had a Morrison (indoor) shelter which almost filled our front room. We had a quarter size billiard table on it and we played with cut down cues so that we didn't hit the wall every time. We were supposed to go in the shelter when the buzzer went (nobody called it the 'siren') and wait for the all clear, but it was much more fun to go outside into the back yard and look up at the heavens to see what was going on. Search lights would play in the sky and on odd occasions pick out and hold on to an aeroplane. I never saw one shot down but we did watch flares drop now and then, and later on in the war I watched a buzz-bomb go over with an orange flame shooting out of the back of it. I believe it was the only one that ever went over Lincoln.

There was a public air raid shelter in our street right at the end of our passage which left just enough room for a vehicle to pass by. We only went in to play in it. It was dark inside with rough wooden slatted benches. At each end the bricks were loose so that if you were trapped inside you could push the bricks out and escape through the end. As far as I know nobody ever went in it during the whole of the war. We also had an Emergency Water Supply tank just round the corner which was full of water to be used by the Fire Service

in case a bomb set the houses on fire but the nearest we ever came was when, fairly near to the beginning of the war, a Spitfire wheel dropped into the back garden of the house on our street corner after two had collided. I remember watching the pilots parachuting down and one of the planes landed on the roof of a house in my grandparents' street about a couple of hundred yards away. Of course when we were at school and the buzzer went we HAD to go in the shelters. The teachers always got us to sing and we had a great time, much better than being in school. We all had to have a cushion and I remember one of my mates had a blow-up cushion. I had never seen one before and it fascinated all of us. He let us borrow it sometimes when we were in the shelters.

Of course we all had to have a gas mask in case the Germans dropped some sort of gas bombs I suppose. These were carried in a cardboard box slung around the neck and were not what you wanted on your back if you were playing in the street. My sister was only a baby and she had to have one which resembled an iron lung and had to be pumped. Later, as she grew up she graduated to a Mickey Mouse mask which was bright red and was supposed to be fun to wear. I hated mine as I found the screen used to steam up and we weren't allowed to take them off to wipe them. After a time another bit had to be added to the filter as somebody had either invented another type of gas or else (more

likely) the government had found out the original filter didn't work! Fortunately I never had to wear it in earnest although we had to keep looking at the things rather like bird-tables which appeared everywhere and which were supposed to change colour when there was a gas attack.

There were very many airmen and soldiers about in Lincoln all through the war. They were of all nationalities (their country of origin was usually shown on a shoulder flash) and all types. There were also Land Army girls and members of the women's forces. We, as 'little owd boys', found the presence of the military very useful when we wanted to go to the pictures. At that time Lincoln had 6 cinemas and we would wait outside in a gang and ask to be taken in if there was a cowboy film on as the 'B' picture and an 'A' film as the main feature. We paid for ourselves, of course, all we required was an adult to buy the tickets and the army and RAF were only too willing to oblige. I hate to think what I would have thought if my own children had done that.

But my two big memories of the war are of military bands and Lancaster bombers.

The Lincolnshire Regiment band appeared to be in Lincoln for most of the time and were regularly marching round the city centre. I had only to hear the

sound of a drum and I was off at great speed and happily skipping along beside them in a little world of my own. My Mum frequently lost me when we were 'up town' and just had to follow the noise and she would easily find me again. I knew the face of every member of that band and longed to play a tenor drum, wear a leopard skin and swing the pompommed drum sticks, which were on the end of elastic, under my arms and above my head. The two tenor drummers in the band, who were on either side of the front rank, would swing their sticks in unison. I don't know how long they practiced but the final result was, in my opinion, magic. I was told that when the band marched back to their barracks on Burton Road the Drum-major had to throw his mace over the top of the main entrance archway and catch it on the other side as he marched through without breaking step. If he dropped it then it was drinks all round in the Sergeants Mess. I never did discover whether this was true. He would regularly throw his mace when they were out and about, something you don't see much of these days. In addition to the Lincolns there were other bands which also got me going. The Sea Cadets, the Army Cadets, the ATC and the Church Lads Brigade. The main 'other' band was the British Legion band the members of which wore smart green uniforms. My great aunt's husband played the bass drum in that band and once when the band was marching up the High Street they

turned left into Guildhall Street and he marched straight on and through the Stonebow on his own!

The other great band at that time was the Pipes and Drums of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. They were stationed somewhere near Market Rasen and their band often marched round Lincoln also. This was different but the effect on me was the same and I would march along with them thrilling to the sound of the pipes. They didn't wear their dress uniforms, of course, but they did wear kilts and glengarries. I have since contacted their museum and have been sent some very good photos of the Pipes and Drums in their khaki uniforms about this time. It brought back some great memories. I'm not sure now how long they were around but it was long enough to recognise their faces as well. As a result of all this I joined the ATC band as soon as I was old enough but all the drums had been allocated and so I had to be content with a bugle. The nearest I got to a drum was having to help carry the bass drum up Lindum Hill (1 in 10) as it was too heavy for the drummer to carry on his neck collar.

As I mentioned earlier my other main war memory is Lancasters. In Lincolnshire there were 27 RAF stations from which Lancasters flew and we really deserved the name of 'Bomber County'. The nearest airfields to where I lived were RAF Scampton and RAF Skellingthorpe but there were many others within

a few miles. They would take off late at night and come over the house at about what seemed like 20 feet with a terrific 'roar of the Merlins'. I and my friends, and I don't doubt many more people, used to count them out and then count them back in again when they returned in the morning. This time they seemed even lower and the noise was deafening at times.

Unfortunately there always seemed to be smaller numbers coming back than went out but you could regularly see the remnants coming home after the others. It was not unusual to see them coming home with one or sometimes two engines out, bits hanging off, holes in the fuselage and seeming to be only a few feet above the ground. When we went on the common or were in the fields there always seemed to be Lancasters going over. They were often so low that we could easily see the crew members and we would wave to them and occasionally we would get a wave back from the man in the nose cone. One crashed on take-off at Skellingthorpe when fully loaded with bombs and the noise was terrific. It broke windows over a considerable distance. I lost another cousin in 1944 who was a Lancaster pilot and was stationed in Lincolnshire at RAF Dunholme Lodge. The picture is typical of that time. It is called 'Lincolnshire Winter 1943' by Keith Aspinall and you can see the Cathedral in the background. It is available on the internet at £9 for a print. Just looking at it makes the hair on my neck stand on end. My uncle was stationed at RAF

Binbrook towards the end of the war and he would tell us of the escapades that the planes were involved in.

1945 came and with it the Victory parades (and the bands again) and what was the most magical moment for me when my Dad took me into town to see the lights back on again for the first time after the blackout. I had often wondered what had happened to the lamplighter who used to go out with his pole each night to pull the chains on the gas lights where we lived and to bring light where there was darkness. He used to wear a brown coat like Ronnie Barker's 'Arkwright' but during the war I supposed he was on the dole. He came back into his own again in 1945. We had gas lights in Lincoln for many years after that and when I was doing my National Service at RAF Cranwell the lads who came from other parts of the country could not believe how backward Lincoln was with its gas lights. I suppose we were lucky in that we were not bombed to any great extent and so the old systems were still in place and usable.

As I said, it was an exciting time but I am pleased that my children never had to go through it and I hope that future generations will also be spared the horrors which other people suffered.

Eric Orbell

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 next Newsletter is noon on **Wednesday 1st February 2017**.

Robert Mansfield robertrmansfield@btinternet.com
270 8284

Kilworth House Theatre Outing

Next year's summer show will be 'Kiss Me Kate', music by Cole Porter. Tickets have been booked for the matinée on SATURDAY 10th JUNE 2017 at this ever popular venue. The coach will depart from Great Glen Village Hall at 1.00 p.m. (No picnic this year as the performance starts at 2.30 p.m.)

"Kiss me Kate" with music and lyrics by Cole Porter is based on "The Taming of the Shrew", and includes such show stoppers as 'Another op'nin', another shrew', 'Always true to you in my fashion' and 'Too darn hot' to name but a few.

The cost will be £39 (£34 for the theatre ticket and £5 for the coach). Bookings

and payments will be taken at the December and January monthly meetings – as the theatre requires payment by the end of January 2017. Any queries, please call me after 6.00 p.m. Thank you for your continued support.

Pat Tate

259 1001

LEARN SOMETHING NEW!

TIPS ON SOLVING CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS
Friday 27th January, 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.

We have run a similar session very successfully in the past and thought you might like to have another opportunity to try it. Come along to find out more about the types of clues that crop up in cryptic crosswords, how to recognise them and how to solve them. We shall be using examples from the Times Quick Cryptic Crossword. Places will be limited so please get your name on the list if you are interested. The suggested donation for this sessions is £2.

Sue Russell sue@suerussell.co.uk 271 0889

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS – LEARN A LANGUAGE

**SPANISH - 3 sessions on Wednesdays 1st, 8th and
15th February 2017.**

2.30 to 4.30 p.m. at the Methodist Hall

Spanish is the first language we are going to have a go at. Others will follow later. We shall be using on-line course material that is freely available on the internet to watch and then practice together. If you have an internet connection at home then you can continue to practise using the same source material. If you previously signed up for Spanish then you should have been contacted already. There will be maximum of 16 places available. The suggested donation for these sessions is £2.

Sue Russell sue@suerussell.co.uk 271 0889

GROUP NEWS

Art Group

The dates for our next meetings are 5th and 19th January. The first meeting in February will be on the 2nd. All meetings are held in the Ruth Warner Room at 2.00 p.m.

Rachel Snashall rsnashall@hotmail.com 259 2830

Book Group

Our next Group meeting will be on 16th January at 2.00 p.m.

Liz Adams
6281

liza27@btinternet.com

271

Croquet

Indoor croquet has now returned to its usual pattern of sessions on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. If we had a few more members we could possibly start another session.

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

Duplicate Bridge (Evenings)

No firm details as yet, but all should be back to normal soon. Looking forward to a good New Year.

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

English Country Dancing

After the Christmas/New Year festivities what better way to burn off those excess calories than by enjoying some gentle and fun social dancing? Country Dancing provides good exercise that keeps both body and mind fit and flexible. The English Country Dancing Group will resume its regular weekly dancing on Tuesday 10th January. We meet in the Great Glen Sports Hall/Youth Centre, next to the Village Hall, from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. with a refreshment break halfway through.

We are always pleased to welcome new members who would like to try this fun activity. Most of our dances are conducted at walking pace, with occasionally skipping so are not too vigorous. The dances are performed in specific formations of circles, squares

and longways sets, and they span English Country, English Court (Playford), and American Square and Contra styles. Some dances date back to the Stuart and Georgian/Regency periods, or even earlier, while others were written very recently. The music we use ranges from classical (Handel, Purcell, Mozart, Bach, Strauss all wrote dance tunes!) to modern compositions, sometimes even jazz; for the older country dances many of the tunes will be familiar to those who enjoy traditional English folk music.

No previous experience is needed as all the dances are fully explained, the moves are walked through before setting them to music, and the dances are called throughout. No special clothing is needed – just lightweight shoes or sandals and comfortable clothing suitable for gentle dancing. Nor do you need to come with a partner; singles of both sexes are welcomed – we often change partners during the dances so that everybody is involved. The only requirement is to be prepared to join in, and enjoy yourself.

Peter Meacock petermeacock112@btinternet.com

279 3600

Family History

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 11th January at 9.30 a.m. in the Methodist Church Hall.

Eric Orbell ericorbell332@btinternet.com 259 2095

Garden Visits

Our next meeting is on Friday 20th January in the Methodist Church Hall commencing at 2.00 p.m. We shall be having a video on Cottage Gardens so I expect there will be a lot of "oohs and aahs" as we view those beautiful 'chocolate box' residences! A donation of £1 on admission is requested to help towards the cost of the room and tea and biscuits at half time. Do come along if you can – it will be better than going out in the fog and frost we are having at the moment! We wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year.

Linda Hobart lindahobart@outlook.com 319 8095

History

The next meeting will be on Monday 6th February 2017, 2:00 in the Methodist Hall. All welcome.

Peter Russell prussell@russellscott.co.uk 271 0889

History of Art

The first meeting in the New Year will be on 18th January and will be held in the Methodist Hall commencing at 10 o'clock as usual. We shall be looking at the work of Helen Chadwick. Never heard of her, I can hear you say. Come along and see what she did. All members welcome.

David Brooke dnbrooke@fsmail.net 259 2520

Indoor (Winter) Bowls

Indoor bowls is again in full swing on Tuesday mornings at 10.00 a.m. in the Market Harborough Leisure Centre. Anyone interested in joining should contact ...

Ann Spray spray194@btinternet.com 281 0324

Indoor Croquet

No firm details as yet, but all should be back to normal soon. Looking forward to a good New Year.

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

Line Dancing

Line Dancing returns after the Christmas break, this Thursday 5th January at 1.30 p.m. in the Sports Hall. I look forward to seeing all our regular dancers, and anyone else who would like to give our dancing a try. Just come along and join in and enjoy a fun time. The gentle exercise can help, if you need to get rid of some of the Christmas excess.

Jackie Jordan jkj1506@btinternet.com 259 9199

Luncheon Club

I have now opened a waiting list for anyone who may be interested in joining. We meet at the Bell, Burton Overy, on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 12 o'clock for 12.30 p.m. We alternate each month between starter plus main and main plus dessert courses. The food is of excellent quality and well presented. You

will find me at the monthly meeting, on the left as you enter the Village Hall, with the menu for the next lunch. If you cannot attend the meeting, and live in the village, I will put a menu through your door. I have sample menus for you to look at. Do let me know if you are interested in joining us.

Joyce Davies mervjoycedavies@btinternet.com

259 3436

Military History

The next meeting of the Group will be on Wednesday 1st February in the Methodist Church Hall at 10.00 a.m. when we shall be looking further into aspects of WW1.

Eric Orbell ericorbell332@btinternet.com 259 2095

Mini Bridge

No firm details as yet, but all should be back to normal soon. Looking forward to a good New Year.

John Lawson jlawson123@btinternet.com 259 3421

New-Age Kurling

The next meeting is on Friday 13th January 2017 10 a.m. Everyone welcome.

Peter Russell prussell@russellscott.co.uk 271 0889

Papercraft

We aim to start the new year by making some interestingly shaped cards. I hope to see you on 16th January at 2.00 p.m. **PLEASE NOTE TIME.**

Stella Orbell stellamo@hotmail.co.uk 259 2095

Quiz Group

The January meeting scheduled for Monday 23rd January has been cancelled as the room is required by the Church. The next meeting will therefore be on 27th February at 2.00 p.m. in the Main Hall of the Methodist Church, when Peter Russell will be setting the questions.

Rachel Snashall rsnashall@hotmail.com 259 2830

Sunday Singles Lunch

We meet on the second Sunday of the month, single ladies and gentlemen, at 1.00 p.m. We can now accommodate a few more members and gentlemen would be particularly welcome! The next venues are:
8th January 2017 – The Queen's Head, Saddington,
12th February 2017 – The Leicestershire Golf Club,
12th March 2017 – The Bell, Burton Overy.

Judith Measom

279 1509

Swimming

Swimming starts again on Wednesday 11th January. Attendances were disappointing prior to Christmas: 19, 15, 14 only. Our session on 11th January will give swimmers an opportunity to work off all that turkey, Christmas pud and mince pies taken on during the break. I trust we shall have a good attendance.

David Brooke dnbrooke@fsmail.net 259 2520

Table Top Games

After all the Christmas festivities we resume our usual pattern of meeting on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month in the Methodist Church Hall. Please aim to arrive at 1:55 for a 2:00 p.m. start. Newcomers are always welcome. Our next meetings are on 12th and 26th January.

Gillian Farrar 270 8375 Helen Edwards 212 7547

Table Tennis

We shall restart on 9th January.

Janet Freestone alan.freestone@mypostoffice.co.uk

259 2803

Tailpiece

A joke kindly sent in by a member

A husband and wife, who had been married for 35 years, were celebrating their 60th birthdays. During the celebration, a fairy appeared and said that because they had been such a loving couple for 35 years, she would give them one wish each.

The wife wanted to travel around the world. So the fairy waved her wand and the wife had the tickets in her hand for an around the world itinerary.

Next, it was the husband's turn. He paused for a

moment, then said shyly, "Well, I'd like to have a woman who is 30 years younger than me."

The fairy picked up her wand, waved it, and he instantly turned 90.

Best editorial wishes to all our readers for a healthy, happy and sociable New Year.

Editor