



# Bude & District

## SPRING NEWSLETTER



Registered Charity No. 1110029

May 2009

### CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

Gosh, I can hardly believe it is nearly June! Where has the time gone?

We have had wildly contrasting weather for the beginning of 2009 with major snow falls and frost destroying some of our more tender plants - plants which we usually leave out with impunity in Cornwall - and then the most wonderful hot and sunny Easter weekend whilst the eastern side of the UK had nothing but continual rain.

At the Cornwall Garden Society Spring Show at Boconnoc in April the blooms were described as the best for years because of the very cold weather which held all the buds in check and then the warm weather which brought all the blooms to perfection just at the right moment. The primroses have been magnificent and our magnolia stellata here in the garden has been the best ever!

By now you will all be wondering whether you have picked up the wrong magazine, but don't worry - it is the U3A newsletter, not a local gardening publication.

You will also, no doubt, have been confused by the layout. Our editor, Eric French, who has been producing our newsletter single handed since Bude and District U3A came into being eight and a half years ago has decided that he is unable to continue and we owe him a huge thank you for the wonderful job he has done over the years.

We are very lucky that Sue Evans and a small team of helpers have stepped into the breach. This newsletter has been produced in a very short time scale and the layout and appearance are still being worked on. Our hope is that by the time of the next newsletter the overall concept will have been resolved. It is the intention of the committee that in future

the newsletter will be more of a joint effort and not the sole responsibility of one person.

We also intend to continue posting the newsletter on our web site ([www.budeu3a.co.uk](http://www.budeu3a.co.uk)). An increasing number of you now have Internet access so we are hoping that those who are able will view it there. In this way our web site will become more vibrant and up to date and perhaps inspire more people to join us! The report of our open meetings which is sent to the Bude & Stratton Post is also on the web site. Mike Roper, our web master, does a great job.

So, roll on summer and let us hope that it is a better one than last year!

**Sylvia Henry**

### THANK YOU ERIC

On behalf of the Committee, I am very pleased to second Sylvia's huge vote of thanks to Eric French for carrying out the enormous task of devising and producing the Bude & District U3A Newsletter so successfully over the years. We are also indebted to him for his unfailing commitment and hard work.

I sincerely hope that we will be able to measure up to his high standards by putting together a Newsletter that our U3A will continue to be proud of.

**Sue Evans - Newsletter Co-ordinator**

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Vera Roper, our Treasurer, is retiring at the AGM in October and we need to find someone willing to take on the job and work with her beforehand to ensure a smooth handover.

Jenny Leyland, Membership Secretary is also retiring at the next AGM and it would also be helpful if her replacement could be fully ready to takeover at that time.

Our current Committee Members and the job descriptions for both these roles can be found on **page 14**.

**Please contact the Chairman or any member of the Committee if you are interested in either of these posts.**

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS**

### **BRIDGE**

**Richard Evans**

As it is the Bowls season, we are now meeting at 2.00pm every Monday. We have reached maximum permanent membership but would welcome Bridge players as reserves if they were able to play at short notice to cover for holidays and sickness. We would also be very happy to help anyone wishing to set up another Bridge Group.

**Richard Evans**

Back can be breaking and head aching, but we know there's going to be a cheerful welcome and there'll always be things to laugh about at our U3A Bridge group. Nobody pretends that our play is in the championship class - but it's good brain exercise, we do our best and we try to learn from each other - and our own mistakes. And of course there's no accounting for luck, We all get our share.

**Peggy & Teddy Timms**

### **CANASTA**

**Christine Davies**

We meet on alternate Mondays at 2.30pm at Marhamchurch.

We are usually only 5 or 6 players, always looking out for more! Ideally 8 altogether would be small enough to fit into my home,

but enough for lively competition. We do not play for rows of houses but we enjoy our couple of hours.

Despite my threats the others do not often let me win, but I relent enough to provide the tea and choccy bickies. If you enjoy a game of cards, do get in touch as we do not run a serious card school!

**Christine Davies**

### **CRAFT MINIATURES**

**June Cann**

We go under the name of Holsworthy Miniatures for the purposes of exhibiting and advertising for new members. We meet in Holsworthy on the first Thursday of every month at 1.00pm until around 4.00pm. If you would like to know more please telephone me.

**June Cann**

### **DISCUSSION**

**Jo Arnold**

Meets on the first Thursday of the month at 10.30am.

We have attempted some world-scale topics over the eight and a half years that we have been meeting, but probably none as close to our hearts (and pockets) as the global financial crisis and its repercussions. In February we set out to try to discover whether we could come up with any ideas to devise an alternative to Capitalism.

Quite a tall order for just one morning! The trouble with the System was easy to see - it is essentially built on confidence and trust and when everyone, especially the banks, loses their nerve everything collapses! The only completely alternative system we could see to Money is Barter and there is no way this could work in 21st Century worldwide trading. Ideally, therefore, we need some compromise or combination but this was too complex a project to devise in a couple of hours. However, we were sure that anyone who lent vast sums of money to an individual or a company knowing that they were completely unable to repay it must be a genuine philanthropist or an idiot and we know that the banks aren't the former!

A month later we turned our attention to ourselves and considered the question "Worry - why bother?" First of all we had to sort out what we mean by worry and the difference between that and concern. We recognised

that a lot of people waste a lot of energy (and can make themselves ill) worrying about things that may never happen but concern about things over which we do have some control can be good and can help to improve things for ourselves and others. The sum of our feelings is what makes up our humanity; they are good and can be useful if kept within bounds but are destructive if they get out of hand. Our discussion finished on a very personal level as some of our members shared their experiences of how Depression had affected their lives and how they had managed to cope.

With the prospect of the European Elections this Summer and a General Election next year our April topic was Universal Suffrage. Has it worked? Does Democracy work? Why don't we feel politically motivated? What is wrong with us - or is it our Politicians?

We agreed that our Representatives rarely enter the Political World from wholly altruistic motives but it seems that the current batch is somehow grubbier than previous generations. We decided that we don't trust them to be straight with us or even to do a proper job. We would certainly respect them more if those at the top accepted the blame and resigned when things went wrong on their watch. The thing to do these days is to blame someone else or, as in the case of MP's Housing Allowances, simply to claim, "I have not broken the Rules" and expect to get away with anything shady. Wouldn't it be great if we could find some politicians with integrity, some really great men and women, to look after the best interests of the Country rather than themselves?

But maybe we get the politicians we deserve - now there's a thought!

**Jo Arnold**

## **ENJOYING MUSIC**

**Iwan Davies**

Meets once a month on the second Tuesday at 2.00pm.

## **GARDENING GROUP**

**Marion Hall**

Meets once a month on the first Wednesday.

**February** - cancelled due to deep snow on the garden we were going to visit.

## **March**

On 4th March 2009 the Garden Group made another visit to The Garden House at Buckland Monachorum. We last visited this garden in the late summer so we had not seen it at this time of year. We did feel a little intrepid at times. As we arrived there was a very heavy hail storm so we headed straight for the restaurant where we all enjoyed an excellent lunch whilst being aware that the sun was now shining outside.

We ventured out after our lunch for a wander round the spring bulb garden above the dovecot which was very pretty - a shame all the crocus (croci?) looked as if someone had sat on them - and endured another hail storm under the shelter of a rather bare tree (unsurprising given the time of year). We then made for the walled garden where all agreed that it was better in the summer and we then took ourselves onto the Long Walk up to the acer grove with the wonderful pale bark peeling birch trees up near the magic circle at the top of the garden.

It was actually quite a chilly day and starting to rain again so we retired once more to the excellent tea room and had tea and cakes while (you've guessed it!) the sun came out again!

We did all agree that in spite of everything the garden was well worth a visit even in the rather inclement weather and that it was actually interesting to see the plants just beginning to show because you could appreciate how they grouped plants of one variety - the better to make an impact in the summer display.

And I have completely forgotten to mention the hellebores which were a delight as always.

**Sylvia Henry**

## **April**

On a lovely sunny spring day, fifteen of us arrived at Moyclare, Liskeard, a garden opened especially for us, and were made very welcome by Elizabeth Henslowe and husband Phillip. Elizabeth began our tour of the garden by giving us a very interesting talk about the history of the house, garden and family. Her aunt, Moira Reid & husband Louis, came to Cornwall in 1927 from County Clare in Ireland. The house they had built was named

'Moyclare', a combination of 'Moira' and 'Clare'. They began the then one third of an acre with plants bought with them from Ireland. In 1936 they bought some more land and extended the garden to one acre.

Elizabeth then accompanied us along the winding paths through this mature garden, resplendent with spring flowers including many Camellias, Rhododendrons, Magnolias & Pieris. There are many mature trees & shrubs resplendent in their new growth at this time of year. En route, Elizabeth pointed out and told the history of Atrantia 'Moira Reid', Camellia x williamsii 'Moira Reid', Camellia 'Elizabeth Henslowe' & Cytisus 'Moyclare Pink'. There is an extensive fruit & vegetable garden including some very healthy broad beans which had been protected over winter by some lovely old glass cloches. There are areas of grass ('not lawns' says Elizabeth) and a pond.

We were all so impressed with this visit that we asked Elizabeth to 'pencil in' a return visit for June 2010.

We ended our visit in the so called 'tearoom shed' with walls covered in photos and written history of the family, house and garden. Quite a few of us went home with some very good quality plants. A reminder of a very special garden.

### **Marion Hall**

### **Next Meetings**

June 3rd. Kings Cottage Nursery & Garden.

Southole, nr. Hartland.

July 1st. Longcross Victorian Garden.

Trelights, nr. Port Isaac.

Aug 5th. Ken-Caro garden.

Bicton. Near Liskeard.

### **HISTORY OF ART**

#### **Carolyn Merrett**

Meets on the first Thursday of the month at 2.00pm.

Leaving, for the moment, the intense colours that dominate the work of Matisse(1869-1954) and the Fauves(1898-1908), the group have moved on to the muted colours of Picasso((1881-1973),in his Cubist period, and the Cubists. Cubism(1907-1914) was created by Braque(1882-1963), a former Fauve, and

Picasso, and was concerned with the expression of form. The term came from landscapes of L'Estaque painted by Braque and rejected by the Salon d'Autumne in 1908. An art critic described the paintings as "petits cubes". Braque and Picasso's radical ideas explored multiple viewpoints in painting rather than the fixed viewpoint of traditional Western painting since the Renaissance. Braque introduced stencilled lettering into his paintings and mixed sand and sawdust with the paint to create a texture in his work. Picasso took pre-existing objects to explore the idea of painting as a physical object, and created collages. The group are finding the decoding of all this fragmentation an absorbing task.

With this in mind, the group decided to "jump" ahead to Abstraction. We seized the opportunity to visit the " A Continuous Line: Ben Nicholson in England" exhibition at Tate St.Ives for our April meeting. This national ten month exhibition has been touring to venues in Kendal, Bexhill and St Ives as a reflection of where Nicholson lived and worked in the U.K. Nicholson was surrounded by artists for his whole life, and travelled widely. His father was a successful Edwardian painter, his first wife, Winifred, an accomplished painter and his second wife, Barbara Hepworth, a world renowned sculptor. It was a very comprehensive exhibition of his work and included his personal letters and photographs which indicate the scope of his international contacts in the art world.

The group were very amused by the pseudo-naive horses in his Cumberland landscapes. After he first visited St.Ives, the horses in his landscapes were replaced by ships in his seascapes, reflecting his appreciation of the work of Alfred Wallis(Cornish 1855-1942). By the 1930s Nicholson was using incised lines in his paintings and collages, influenced by Cubism, and developing his art to Abstraction. Group members became very animated in front of his work as we debated their meaning and for each of us the meaning was different. It was good to be with and experience the original works. Later, we went for a well earned rest and lunch in the Tate Cafe before "doing our own thing" in the afternoon. The sunshine that day was perfect to appreciate the qualities of light that continues to attract artists to the St.Ives area.

Our next meeting in June will focus on Picasso. That promises to be a lively meeting, just like the artist himself!

**Carolyn Merrett**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

**Contact: Pat Berkeley**

Meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 2.00pm.

The Group continues to function as a joint venture, with each member taking it in turn to present a topic. Themes covered so far have been The Pre-Socratics, Grayling and Utilitarianism. At the present time, the group remains at maximum capacity.

**Kate Peardon**

## **PLAY READING**

**Mary Dobson**

Meets at the Falcon Hotel approximately every two weeks (as arranged) on Mondays at 10.15am.

"Noises Off" by Michael Frayn is based on the concept of a play within a play. Both "Noises Off" and the subsequent play of his we read, called, "Look, Look" are definitely not plays which can be produced for radio transmission as they need to be seen to be appreciated and understood! "Noises Off" was born in 1970 when Michael Frayn was standing in the wings watching a performance of "Chinamen", a farce that he had written for Lynn Redgrave and he felt that it was far funnier from behind than in front and he thought that one day he should write a farce from behind, so to speak.

The play started out as a one-act play entitled, "Exits" and at the request of his associate Michael Codron, Frayn expanded the play into what would become "Noises Off". In the plot, Frayn paradoxically called the play within the play, "Nothing On", which is set in a "delightful 16th-century posset mill" (whatever that is) that has been converted to a modern dwelling for which renters are solicited; the fictional playwright is appropriately called Robin Housemonger and each of the three acts of "Noises Off" contains a performance of the first act of "Nothing On". I hope you are still with me here?

Act One is set at the dress rehearsal, the night before opening at the (fictional) Grand

Theatre in Weston-Super-Mare, with the cast still coming to grips with entrances and exits, missed cues, misspoken lines and bothersome props - a plate of sardines. in particular.

Act Two portrays a Wednesday matinee performance one month later, at the (again) fictional Theatre Royal in Ashton-under-Lyne. In this act, the play is seen from backstage, providing a view that reveals the deteriorating personal relationships among the cast that have led to offstage shenanigans and onstage bedlam. There also appears to be no true resolution and the play simply falls into turmoil and disorder before the curtain is pulled.

In Act Three, we see a performance near the end of the ten-week run at the (still fictional) Municipal Theatre in Stockton-on-Tees, when personal friction has continued to increase and everyone is bored and keen to finish the run. The actors attempt to cover up a series of mishaps, but only compound the problems and draw attention to the bungling performance. Much of the comedy emerges from the subtle variations in each version as off-stage chaos affects on-stage performance, with a great deal of slapstick. The actors' on stage and off stage personalities are also a cause of comic dissonance.

I have been told that this is one of the funniest modern comedies ever staged, so if it comes to the South West, we must definitely see it for ourselves as it tended to lose the comedy round the coffee tables at the Falcon Hotel!

"Noises Off" was first produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London in 1982, starring Patricia Routledge, Paul Eddington and Nicky Henson and then moved to the Savoy Theatre in the Strand, where it ran until 1987 with five successive casts. It won the Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy.

"Look Look" on the other hand, shows the other half of the great confrontation which constitutes live theatre - the audience. They arrive as individuals, some with their aged mothers, some with other people's wives. One of them has had the misfortune to write the play, others could have written it better. Three of them arrive halfway through the first act, two of them have plans to leave before the second. Gradually they are moved by what

they see - some of them to tears and some to laughter, some to irritation and some to sleep. For a few moments, as they look, they become one single corporate creature and they are looking at us, the audience and we, the audience are looking at them, the actors.

"Look Look" was first produced at the Aldwych Theatre in April 1990 with Stephen Fry in Row H of the stalls, the author having given detailed diagrams of who should sit where in his directions.

We then went on to read two of William Douglas Home's plays, "Lloyd George Knew My Father" (4th July, 1972) and "A Friend Indeed". William DH was the son of the 13th Earl of Home, brother of Sir Alec Douglas Home, was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford and trained for the stage at RADA. He then made his first appearance as an actor with the Brighton Repertory Co. in 1937 and subsequently often appeared in his own plays, notably as Lord Pym in "The Chiltern Hundreds". During WWII he contested three parliamentary by-elections as an independent candidate opposed to Churchill's war aim of an unconditional surrender by Germany. In 1944, he was an officer in the 141st Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps (The Buffs), which was the first regiment to be equipped with the Churchill Crocodile flame-thrower tank. However, he was later arrested and imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs for 8 months owing to his "war against war" policy. In 1951 he married the equally aristocratic Hon. Rachel Brand and they had four children.

"Lloyd George..." has recently been produced at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh and it tells the story of an elderly couple, General Sir William Boothroyd and Lady Boothroyd who reads in the newspapers one morning that the government are planning to build a by-pass right through their property on the Warwickshire/Oxfordshire border. In protest she tells the family that she has decided to commit suicide as soon as construction begins. Luckily her soon to be son-in-law is a reporter and writes a large feature with photographs which produces good publicity - Lady Boothroyd is even asked to appear on television. However, the question is, whether she intends to go through with her threat, or will her claim force them away?

This is a story of the times, the latter half of the 20th century, with increasing traffic, and the government building ever more roads, but at the same time persuading local authorities and inhabitants that sometimes, areas of scientific interest, ancient monuments and areas of outstanding beauty need to be sacrificed to "progress". There is, of course, a link between the elderly, eccentric couple being amongst the last of their kind and a disappearing landscape in Britain. It is billed as a comedy, but there were many issues which are still pertinent today. It was William DH's aristocratic background (which is a recurrent theme in his plays) that sometimes prevented his success, especially in the 1960s and 70s, but it is the subject of the community at large which appeals to his audience, even today.

"A Friend Indeed" was produced at the Cambridge Theatre, London on 27th April, 1966 and the action takes place in the apartment in Rome of Sir John Holt, British Minister to the Vatican. This involves a tangled web of family relations, former lovers and stiff upper lips hiding liaisons a long time ago. We haven't quite finished reading the play, but it reads as a gentle comedy portraying the old adage, "it's not what you know, but who you know..." Although written in an England where manners such as these seem no longer to exist, the story is as familiar today as it was then. All plays have been immensely enjoyable and start the week with a smile!

**Mary Dobson**

## **SCRABBLE 1**

### **Gill's Gilkes**

Meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.00pm.

We are a motley group of eight who have become friends and support each other outside of Scrabble.

### **Quotes**

'I'm the vowel queen, not the bowel queen.'

'We're all a bit lopsided tonight.'

'Can I spell resumes - rezooms?'

'Why do I always think tou is a word, because it's not?'

'I'm not going to be beat!'

This last from our 90yr old and she was certainly not going to be beat as this is her philosophy for life.

Gill provides a prize for anyone scoring 400 or more. Some of us covet these prizes and some of us would rather not have them and that's my excuse for scoring 310.

Thanks to Gill for putting up with us.

**Christine Davies**

## **SCRABBLE 2**

**Sue Evans**

Meets twice a month on the first and third Fridays at 2.00pm.

I have included only three games but will put all seven on our website under 'Group Reports.'

### **20<sup>th</sup> February**

The sun poured through the patio doors while we played on this beautiful afternoon. We thought that perhaps we should be gardening instead of playing Scrabble until we recalled Jeanne Gimblett's excellent talk at yesterday's OGM and remembered that we don't do guilt any more.

We were only six as Ros and Mary couldn't make it and Richard was building a fence for friends. Actually, when he got back we could tell from his clothes and face that he was now painting it green.

There was hardly a sound (and regrettably no quotes) from Jen, Shirley and Emily on the other table, not even when Jen put down a seven-letter word worth 80 points. They also managed to play three games to our two.

Linda, Kate and I had two tortuous games as we all play the same competitive game with no quarter given and certainly no triple word squares intentionally exposed. In our second game Linda's 'vet' blocked the game on that side of the board until she made it 'trivet' and opened it up. I was very pleased to be able to put down my Q to score 22 but closed it again. Kate then put down 'joker' on a double word and scored 40 and Linda (who had obviously been honing her skills while playing Scrabble with her visiting family) put down 'jiz' and scored 54.

Linda was the highest scorer of the afternoon with 256 points (in the same game that I scored a lamentable 165 points).

After Jen and Shirley left, the rest of us had another game which was unremarkable except for the fact that Kate was so keen that she tried to put her words down on the board when it wasn't her turn.

### **Quotes**

'Isn't it quiet without Ros and Mary.'

'I could have sex.'

'I do like this new book after all.' (Linda being allowed 'wab'.)

### **20<sup>th</sup> March**

This particular Friday afternoon was absolutely glorious and we actually played with the patio doors open.

Richard was playing with Kate and Emily and they were so quiet that Ros, Linda and I hardly noticed they were there (so is it Mary who is the noisy one?). We choose who we play with by drawing tiles out of the bag but this week's random draw meant that Linda, Ros and I played together once again (this is usually a noisy combination). I chose to sit after Linda but it gave me no advantage as it was Ros who opened up the triple word squares. (Why Linda thought this was funny, I have no idea!)

I was taking a long time to recover from a truly awful cold and I was also feeling sorry for myself (not that I let it show, of course) and this did not improve my game. Linda did help me, though, by letting me know that 'rato' was indeed a word, which enabled me to put it down on a triple word square. None of us noticed that I had also invented a word 'ao', we sometimes get confused when using two-letter words. In my defence I had meant to put down 'ai' but my concentration was beginning to wane.

We were relieved when Ros started our second game with 'sexy' which meant she hadn't lost her touch. Over the course of our three games Ros had five seven-letter words but was only able to put down two and Linda had two and wasn't able to use either of them. I didn't have any.

In their first game, Richard had five Es and two Is and Emily had three Us, so it was not surprising that Kate had good letters but no vowels. Richard started their second game with a seven-letter word and went on to score 246 which matched Linda's score for our last game. Once again, Linda, Ros and I played

two games to their three and Kate and Emily managed an extra game when Richard took Jess out.

It was a very evenly matched afternoon as we each won a game.

**Quote** (yes, only one today!)

'I was going to put sex there.' (and I think we've had that before)

### 17<sup>th</sup> April

The first game had a low scoring start but soon improved for all of us, especially Ros who was able to take advantage of Linda opening up a triple word score. In her defence Linda said it was the only place she could go on the board but Ros was able to add 'aquas' to Linda's 'dirge' thereby doubling the triple word score and amassing 90 points. Not surprisingly, this was the highest individual score of the afternoon. At the end of the game Ros had scored 204 points. Jen went out first and took 20 points from her opponents giving her a final score of 170 points, I had 123 and Linda (I hesitate to say this) only 92! At one point we held our breaths as Ros put down 'shi' but fortunately then put down an 'n' to make it 'shin'. Phew!

The second game was far more evenly matched but Linda went out first and won the game, collecting 12 points from her opponents and beating me by 3 points! 'Well done Linda' was all I was able to say.

These two games took quite a long time and Jen and Ros had to leave after the second game but Linda and I decided to have another game. As I've said before, Linda and I play the same type of competitive game but she was handicapped by having a really unbalanced rack for most of the game which made it hard work for her. I, on the other hand, had a well balanced rack and more than my fair share of 'big jobbies' (see earlier reports) so I was able to win the game by 80 points.

We didn't finish until 6.30pm (I know!) and I had forgotten that I would have to take Jess out for her afternoon walk, as the Bowls season has started and Richard had left at 5.30pm. Fortunately the evenings are lighter now and I didn't have to take a torch, although Jess did try to pull me into the stream which runs onto Crooklets beach and I ended up flat on my back on the pebbles. Fortunately, we only had a small audience.

**Quotes** (these do seem to have dried up)

'Linda is better at adding up that I am.'

'I think I've just rung myself.' (Richard had forgotten to lock his mobile phone).

**Sue Evans**

### SERENDIPITY 1

**Elizabeth Whattler**

Meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 2.00pm

Since it is some time since I wrote a report about the 'happy accidents' that tend to take place in Serendipity 1, I will endeavour to give a flavour of what we have been doing.

In October and November - leading up to Christmas, we made pomanders, and decorations made from salt dough under the guidance of Linda with some super results, if rather sore fingers!

In January we learnt a T'ai Chi warm up from Marilyn, followed by a good old session dancing to Mamma Mia!

March saw us painting the salt dough products, or anything else that took our fancy - ie flower pots etc.

In April we had a go at 'Who Do You Think you Are?'. Pat brought us a cameo of the life of a past relative and it was absolutely fascinating. Celia put the idea forward, and we shall be definitely following it up with more.

We followed this with tea in the garden - again. During all these sessions an amazing amount of information gets exchanged - from adopting a dog from Battersea Dogs Home, to arranging a Wedding and just about everything in between.

Future hopes and dreams include exploring ways of creating our own 'Memory Boxes' - following the Who Do You Think You Are? theme further, a book review, a treasure hunt, an afternoon beachcombing, cutting out and maybe making up some shifts for Operation Sunshine (a job for a rainy day), learning about parchment work, and a talk about semi-precious jewellery - but who knows.....

**Elizabeth Whattler**

## **SERENDIPITY 2**

**Linda Bunker**

Meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 2.00pm

At long last I have got round to writing a report on the activities of Serendipity 2. It was last June that I last wrote a report. We are continuing to meet on the third Wednesday in the month and there are six regular members. Our activities follow a vast range of things and we are open to all suggestions.

In September, I was away, so Lucille arranged a day at Carol Vincent's studio. It was a beautiful day and they were joined by other U3A members, a good day was had by all. In October we went to Tregida smokehouse and in November we drove across Dartmoor to Delamore Gallery in Cornwood and enjoyed lunch in a local inn.

Our first meeting after the New Year was in February as I was away in January. We had a quiet meeting at my house to decide on our annual programme. Hilary brought her spinning wheel for Jose to borrow and we all had a try at spinning.

March found us at Cardinham Woods and we had an enjoyable walk up to the mineshaft and had lunch at the tea rooms there. Again the weather was very kind to us, an ideal sunny day with a brisk breeze, perfect for walking. This month we made and flew kites (very small ones as we decided the larger kites would take too long and seemed somewhat complicated).

Our programme for the coming year includes another trip to Castle Hill Gardens, hoping for better weather than last year and possibly visiting Plymouth for the firework display.

Should anyone be interested to join our group, please do not hesitate to call me or have a word at the monthly meeting.

**Linda Bunker**

## **SHARING POETRY 1**

**Linda Farmer**

Meets once a month on the fourth Thursday at 10.30am

Usually, we alternate between a theme and free choice, but there are no hard and fast

rules. Members are encouraged to come even if they can't find, or haven't had time to find, any poems on that month's particular theme, on the basis that if they are that busy, they need the oasis that listening to poetry provides.

The last three months have given us free choice in February, from which you might enjoy Charles Causley's 'Morewenstow'. 'A new poet to you' in March, and apart from one, all the choices were new to all of the group, quite a feat since we have been reading two or three poems each per month for nearly four years. Incidentally did you know Enoch Powell wrote poetry? We had his poem 'The Net' written about the Second World War, very powerful.

In April, since we met on the 23rd - we had St George and/or Dragons generally. Peggy Timms brought along a poem called 'By George!' written by a rather improbably named Elvis McGonagall. His self penned biographical notes were even funnier than the poem which was itself hilarious! Both are to be found on the Internet. We learnt from this that St George was not only the patron saint of England but also Georgia, Catalonia, Portugal, Beirut, Moscow, Istanbul, Germany, Greece, archers, farmers, boy scouts, butchers and sufferers of syphilis! And he was Turkish to boot! Amazing what one can learn at a U3A sharing poetry session.

**Linda Farmer**

**PS** from Sylvia. Having just visited the Italian Chapel on Orkney, St George is also the patron saint of soldiers, apparently!

## **SHARING POETRY 2**

**Peggy Timms**

Meets once a month on the fourth Wednesday at 10.30am

We are an informal group and our meetings feature free choice sessions, poems on a given topic, and every quarter or so the opportunity to share a poem written by ourselves. We also research and talk about the poets concerned. This sometimes produces surprises and new insights.

As we all know, listening to a poem being read aloud is different and can be rather special. Added to this we can be given a memory or an association that makes it that person's choice. We might share a few

remiscences here - sometimes as far back as schooldays when we rebelled against a teacher's views given as facts about meanings and interpretations that didn't fit our own ideas. And we learn as we hear about meanings previously unexplored.

We also enjoy looking for poems related to our given subject. Some of these have been Cornwall, Spring, The sea, Weather, Christmas, A poem we don't understand, Dreams, Poems that make us laugh - to name but a few. Research for this can produce undiscovered treasures, or poetry enjoyed many years ago and since forgotten.

So we listen, we learn and we laugh in true U3A fashion, as in a recent meeting when Audrey produced the Hippopotamus Song by Michael Flanders and everyone sang the chorus with gusto.

We also like to hear members read out their own poems - particularly when they tell us this is a new experience.

**Peggy Timms**

#### **Upon Becoming a Grandmother**

Oh, how I longed to reach that goodly state.  
At first it seemed that I would wait and wait;  
but then it gave me time to ponder and to see  
what kind of grandmother did I intend to be

Not one sat knitting quietly in her chair,  
innumerable garments no one wants to wear.  
Oh no, not me, no plump and comfortable  
knee, but rather fun and games, regardless of  
grey hair and all served up with a dollop full of  
glee.

At last, a grand-daughter; oh what joy,  
the woods and beach will be our only toy.  
We'll swim, we'll skip and find the sacred  
place in woods where fairies live, our secret,  
magic space.

And then a grandson, oh what fun  
we two shall have, we'll jump and run,  
lucky for me my grandson's still quite small,  
it gave me time to learn to kick a ball.

These two have taught me that a goodly state  
need not exist, instead we can create  
and joyfully grasp with both our hands the call  
to be the impish boy or dreaming little girl  
that still resides, unseen, within us all.

**Beverly Price**

## **SINGING FOR FUN**

**Ros Dolphin**

Meet every second Friday in the month.

We average about eight and sing old songs, new songs or anything that takes our fancy. Our pianist Jo, who originally joined the group to sing, but now accompanies us and also arranges second parts and sings whatever part is necessary, we do appreciate all she does for the group. We always finish with a Taize and manage to sing rounds unaccompanied.

We sing at Fairfield Residential Home every first Monday of the month, we are made very welcome and joined by relatives and some of the staff. It is an education for the younger members of staff as they have never heard of many of the old songs (I wonder what they will be singing in their latter days!).

We returned to Abbeyfield after our successful Christmas visit and enjoyed singing and chatting to the residents and also for a lovely tea, we will visit them occasionally.

So anyone who enjoys making a cheerful noise please come and join us, you do not have to read music or sing like a nightingale - just give me a ring.

**Ros Dolphin**

## **THEATRE GROUP**

**Mary Dobson**

This month's (April) treat was to see the musical "Buddy", based on the story of Buddy Holly who died at the tragically early age of 22 at the height of his short career, in a plane crash, 50 years ago this year. I wasn't sure if I was going to enjoy this play, as being a child bride, I was a young teenager when Buddy Holly registered on my musical radar and although I remember the newspapers and radio broadcasting news of his death, I wasn't particularly struck by his "geekish", bespectacled look and rather "tinny" voice.

However, I needn't have worried. With an international cast of extremely talented actors and musicians, the Buddy Holly story emerged as a very lively and action-packed one, full of determination, talent and single-mindedness, with an extraordinary list of

musical "hits" on both sides of the Atlantic. The young man who played Buddy Holly was a very versatile musician and guitar player - he even played with his guitar slung behind his head, resting on his shoulders- it seemed as if this part was made for him. The two/three members of the "Crickets" were similarly gifted and the cello was slung around as if it was a dance partner. His "wife", Maria Elena, played the saxophone and the whole cast took up some instrument during the story and produced a near perfect Buddy Holly sound. The musical is on its Farewell Tour and has been billed as the "World's Most Successful Rock'n'Roll Musical".

The story started in his home town of Lubbock, Texas when country and western-style music was all the rage. Buddy Holly was a pioneer in that he wrote his own material, used a recording studio for doubletracking and other advanced techniques and popularised the two guitars, bass and drums ensemble. In 1953 with his two school friends, Bob Montgomery and Larry Wellborn, he performed on the local radio station KDAV, but by 1956 he had secured a contract with Decca, writing "Peggy Sue" and "That'll be the Day" amongst other hits. He was asked to perform at The Apollo Theatre, Harlem, New York in 1957 where he and his group were one of the first white acts to appear, with great success (the management didn't realise they were a white group).

More hit records appeared, "Oh Boy", "Maybe Baby", "Think It Over", "Early in the Morning", to name a few. In October 1958, Buddy and the Crickets parted company (the Crickets went on to record their own hits) and he moved to New York, where he met and proposed to Maria Elena Santiago within about five weeks of first meeting her. However, a split with his then manager, meant complicated financial arrangements and in order to support his pregnant wife and earn more money, he went on tour with amongst others, "The Big Bopper" ("Chantilly Lace") and Richie Valens ("La Bamba"). Tired of travelling on a cold, dreary, bus, they chartered a plane on 3rd February, 1959 to take them from Iowa to Minnesota and the rest, as they say, is history.

The energetic cast received a standing ovation at the end and we went home with a pair of black, cardboard, Buddy Holly look-alike glasses and a lot of nostalgic memories.

A great show.  
**Mary Dobson**

### **WALKING GROUP**

#### **Sally / Angie**

We walk twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays but it is important to telephone one of us to make sure of the meeting and departure times.

We have enjoyed some great walks this year such as around Jacobstow Farm last month when we parked on the old original road and set off from there. We usually walk about five miles but do not gallop along as we like to take time to stop and look at the scenery.

We normally have about ten people on each walk but we always welcome new members and would be very pleased to hear from you.

**Angie Whitehurst**

### **NEW GROUPS?**

If your particular interest is not one of the above, perhaps you would like start a new group. If you are not sure how to go about it then please do not hesitate to have a chat with Elizabeth Whattler, or any of the current Group Leaders who, I am sure, will be only too pleased to advise you on how to get your group up and running.

### **Launceston & District U3A Seventh Annual Lecture Day 2009**

Fifteen members of the Bude & District U3A attended the lecture Day on 20 February and what a great day it was! There were three lectures by three excellent speakers who were explicit, humorous and whose knowledge of their subject could not be surpassed.

The first was given by Alison Bevan, Director of the Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance. Her lecture on the "The Newlyn School of Artists" was quite illuminating and many of the works of art we were able to see on screen. Alison spoke about the formation of the school in January 1884 by Stanhope Forbes and of the many artists who studied and worked there. In the early days many of them were of middle class background and had sufficient funds to work in places like

Paris, Antwerp or Brittany before settling in Cornwall. They came because they found the air was pure, clear and light and the climate so mild they could paint in the open air. Alison mentioned the Birmingham trained artist Walter Langley as one who came from a very poor background. It was he who first captured the working man at his trade, usually fishing, often using muted colours, as was the fashion.

Many of the artists are remembered today; Norman Garstin, William Kernow, Terry Frost, Mitchell and Titcomb, to mention a just a few. Today these paintings are considered pretty and attractive but at the time they were not really appreciated. Between 1880 and 1900 one hundred and twenty artists settled in Cornwall, however, in the 1890's the colony started to decline and a new generation of artists arrived. The 'old' ones used working class people as models, painting as they sat watching them at work but the 'new' ones paid models to sit for them. More than a thousand students passed through the school over the years which eventually closed in 1950.

After a coffee break we returned to the hall for a second lecture from a man who, like Alison, had a profound knowledge of his subject. Cliff Snell stood centre stage, large red book on his left arm and expounded his knowledge about the poet laureate "Sir John Betjeman – His Life, Times and Lady Friends". He enraptured us with his readings of some of Sir John's poems and we were riveted by his delivery.

As a very well known Poet Laureate we knew of his work and of his love for St. Enodoc, on the Camel Estuary of Cornwall. However, the finer details of his life came as a surprise to many of us. Born in Highgate London in 1906 into a well to do family John was lonely as he was an only child. This may have been one of the reasons he started writing poetry from a very early age and continued throughout his life. His relationship with his father was considerably strained as their personalities were very different. Father wanted him to go into the family business but John would have none of it. He was schooled at Marlborough College and was a borderline candidate to get into Oxford where he was very happy as he felt free at last from the constrictions of home. He did not complete his degree however, and there were a couple of failed teaching jobs

plus a term of unemployment before he finally obtained work as a journalist reviewing films for the Architectural Review. They were popular as he wrote them in verse. Also, he enjoyed the job because he was fascinated with church architecture from his youth and being somewhat of a loner he had enjoyed many hours in churches.

He met and married his wife Penelope Chetwode in 1933 and they had one daughter, Candida, born in 1942.

Then there were the lady friends! He met twenty two year old Jill Menzies in 1950, (He was 44). She was employed by him for four years but when it became obvious the relationship was more than platonic she had to leave. Apparently there were others but the last 'lady friend' was Lady Elizabeth Cameron who had a relationship with him for many years and was with him at his death. It was she who called his wife Penelope and daughter Candida, who were staying close by, to see him for the final time.

Clive Snell captivated his audience with his excellent rendering of many of Sir John's poems and the remarkable telling, (with hardly a glance at the big red book), of the life of the great "Sir John Betjeman."

We, the audience, couldn't believe we could hear a third lecture of the same high quality as the previous two but the afternoon lecture was no less! Standing beside a grand piano Mr Paul Drayton introduced his subject "Fascinating Rhythm – The Story of the Gershwins". He explained he was going to tell us the story of Ira and Georges' lives - interspersed with playing some of their melodies and we could 'hum along' if we wished. Well we certainly did and the rhythm was certainly fascinating!

The brothers father Jacob Gershovicz arrived with their mother in the USA in 1892. Ira was born in 1897 and George in 1906. George was a prodigious child with a great talent for music though the family had no musical background. But Ira also had the musical talent and they worked almost exclusively for each other for many years, composing at least two dozen great songs for Broadway. In fact, they made a song writing team whose voice was synonymous with the sounds and style of the Jazz Age from the time of their big hit "Lady, Be Good", starring Fred Astaire and his sister Adele. While today they are best

remembered for numerous individual song hits, their greatest achievement may have been the elevation of musical comedy to an American art form. Together they helped raise popular musical theatre to a new level of sophistication. Their now – classic opera “Porgy and Bess” is constantly revived in theatres throughout the world. Concurrently with the Gershwin’s musical theatre and film success, George attained great acclaim in the concert arena and as a piano virtuoso, conductor and composer of such celebrated works as “Rhapsody in Blue”, “An American in Paris” and “Concerto in F.”

In 1937, the year of his untimely death, George was contemplating work on a symphony and another opera. Ira continued to work in film and theatre with others and died peacefully in 1983 aged 86. His lyrics made critical acclaim in 1959, and are remembered for such songs as “Long Ago and Far Away” and “The Man that Got Away”, both nominated for Academy Awards.

The Gershwin brothers music is still very popular today, as we were reminded by many of the lovely songs Paul Drayton played so beautifully, interspersed with his fascinating words relating the story of the Gershwins and their -“Fascinating Rhythm”.

The end of a ‘Perfect Day’  
**Lucille Opie**

### **Paradise??**

What do you think about compulsory Identity Cards! Maybe they would be all right if they were secure? Perhaps with a thumbprint or eyepoint as well as a photograph? That should be safe enough. But what if that were too secure? What if we were only accepted as who we think we are if our biometric ID card backed us up?

In an inspired flight of fancy, which wasn’t actually looking all that far ahead into a possible future, a new play called “Another paradise” by Sayan Kent was presented at The Drum (Plymouth) in March. It showed us what life might be like in a world where the acceptance of our details by the Governments ID Computer determines everything we do and are. What happens if you lose your card? What happens if someone really steals your whole identity? Do you then get theirs? What

happens if your details become mixed with someone else - maybe someone of the opposite gender - either by mistake or as a result of malicious fraud? How would you cope?

In a swift moving and sparkling comedy a young cast list of five showed us what might result were a Machine really to take over our lives. They made it funny, but I neither like nor really trust computers and couldn’t escape the scary undertone that everything we think we are could be denied us because someone pressed the wrong key.

Despite the looming threat that anyone without an identity would finish up as a non-person and be sent to live the rest of their lives in Coventry, everything worked out all right in the end. But of course this was fiction - thank goodness!!

**Jo Arnold**

### **Thank you**

I just want to say a big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of our Newsletter. I am sure we have all enjoyed reading your news.

But, of course, it doesn’t stop there. Our Newsletter is published quarterly on our Website and for distribution at our Open Meetings in February, May, August and November. I hope that you will want to continue to contribute to it on a regular basis.

So, if you or your Group enjoys anything exciting, interesting, amusing (or even just run of the mill!), in the next three months, then do share your news and enthusiasm with us. You don’t have to be the Group Leader, any member of our U3A is welcome to send in reports or articles for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me at an Open Meeting, by phone or by email to: [suemail65-news@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:suemail65-news@yahoo.co.uk)

The deadline for the next issue is **31<sup>st</sup> July**.

**Sue Evans - Newsletter Co-ordinator**

## **OUR COMMITTEE**

### **Officers**

Sylvia Henry	Chairman
Vera Roper	Treasurer*
Linda Bunker	Minute Secretary/Newsletter Team
Hilary Workman	Speaker Secretary

### **Members**

Brian Leonard	Assistant Treasurer
Jenny Leyland	Membership Secretary*
Elizabeth Whattler	Groups Co-ordinator
Lucille Opie	Press Reports Co-ordinator
Audrey Armitage	
Pat Holdcroft	

### **Co-opted**

Mary Dobson	
Mike Roper	Website Editor ( <a href="mailto:romper@onetel.com">romper@onetel.com</a> )

The job descriptions for the Treasurer and Membership Secretary are as follows:

### **TREASURER**

- 1 Maintain accounts in the form legally required by the status of the U3A Branch.
- 2 Prepare annual accounts and submit for examination as required.
- 3 Submit regular financial reports at Committee meetings.
- 4 Give annual report at the AGM on the financial health of the Branch.
- 5 Collect and collate Group contributions to the Branch Funds from Group Leaders.
- 6 Collect (in co-operation with the Membership Secretary) member's subscriptions and record and issue receipt.
- 7 Ensure correct monies are sent to the National U3A to cover membership fees.

### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

- 1 Maintain detailed records of the Group membership (paid up or not) on a regular basis for Committee Meeting and annually for Tax and National U3A purposes – to match records of Treasurer.
- 2 Issue to new and renewing members, their membership cards and all "introductory" information and correspondence
- 3 Give enquirers an up to date 'welcome pack'
- 4 To keep all members' personal information confidential to the U3A Branch in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 5 Check that those attending group activities are all paid up members and follow up where necessary.

## Annual Programme 2009

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
15th January	Cornwall Wildlife trust and its work in marine conservation	Abigail Crosby
19th February	Putting the Bounce back in your brain	Jeanne Gimblett
19th March	On the Beam with Sound waves South West	Judyth Gwynne and Simon Sheridan
16th April	The work of Cornwall Hospice Care	Sarah Snell
21st May	The secret lives of rare marsupials in Oz	David Polglazel
18th June	An introduction to Astronomy	Brian Sheen
16th July	Canine Heros - the work of hearing dogs for deaf people	Janine Sargent
20th August	History of everyday things and their value	Philip Walters
17th September	Operation Sunshine	Felicity Derry-Thomas
22nd October	AGM	
19th November	Daphne du Maurier	Lynn Gould
December	Christmas lunch	