



Bude & District

WINTER NEWSLETTER



Registered Charity No. 1110029

February 2010

www.budeu3a.co.uk

CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

I am very sad to tell you that Audrey Armitage died in the North Devon Hospice on 25th January - just two days short of her 85th Birthday.

Audrey was a founder member of Bude & District U3A becoming involved right at the beginning, a year or so after her husband, Bill, had died. She always said she found it a "life saver" - giving her an introduction to a large group of new friends who, as she became ill, surrounded her with love and support.

Up until about 1998 when she regretfully decided she should no longer drive, she organised the WRVS Home Library Service, choosing books for housebound people and ensuring that they were delivered.

All the time I have been on the committee she was there as well - and could always be relied upon to provide important historical information.

And so (depending on when you believe the millennium starts) the first decade into the 21st century has passed - rather too quickly - I suspect this is what happens as we get older. I hope you all had a great Christmas and also that everyone who attended enjoyed the Christmas Lunch at The Falcon.

We all have abiding memories of Audrey with her roll of wallpaper signing us up for the Christmas Lunch with our menu choices - it will be one of the most difficult tasks for someone to do next Christmas.

Our thanks to Lucille Opie and the Play Reading Group (how did they all keep a straight face?), Kate Peardon's poem reading and the Singing for Fun Group,

all of whom really made it go with a swing!

The raffle made the grand total of £117.02 after paying for the hamper (thank you Mary for organising that) and of course my thanks to all of you who contributed prizes. This is a lot more than last year with fewer members attending! How did that happen? Did you all splash out and buy loads more tickets? Thanks to Brian Leonard for organising the winning tickets and to Pat and Celia who sold them. Also a big thank you to Linda Bunker and the people on her table who helped to do all the ticket folding and thank you, Jo, for providing the festive bucket!

The year started with a proper winter wonderland scenario except that the wonderland description hardly fits the bill when many of us couldn't get out of our houses or drives or, in some cases, out of the villages where we live for quite a few days. The children enjoy the snow, of course, but as we get older we feel our fragility more and become aware of how easy it is to fall and do ourselves some damage! So roll on spring and the joys of regrowth, green shoots and buds bursting open; the snowdrops, daffodils and our lovely camellias which thrive in this part of the country.

Our newsletter has evolved quite a lot in the last year thanks to all the effort Sue Evans has put into it - liaising with Martins to keep the costs down and experimenting with their guidance regarding size and format. I think the latest style with the smaller size and "booklet" form works really well and yet the content is

still wonderfully interesting thanks to all our contributors.

Do check our web site (www.bu-deu3a.co.uk) where the newsletter is posted (and lots of other information) thanks to Mike Roper's continued help with this bit of technology that few of us are up to date with. Many of us can just about manage emails but web pages

URGENT REMINDER

All members should have paid their subscriptions of £8.00 for the 2009-2010 year. If this has been overlooked please contact me as soon as possible OR you can pay via your Group Leader if this is more convenient.

All members should ensure that their details are up-to-date including their current situation regarding GiftAid. If you have not completed a GiftAid declaration

and the creation thereof are, I believe, a little bit beyond us. Certainly beyond me!

I wish all our members a very happy and peaceful 2010.

Sylvia Henry

and are a tax-payer please contact Ann Tizzard.

our tax situation has changed since you completed the form you must also contact Ann.

GiftAid is an important supplement to our income, keeping subscriptions down, so please register if you are eligible i.e. you will pay income tax in 2009-2010.

Thanks for your support.

Val Kerr – Treasurer

GROUPS' REPORTS

BOOK CLUB meets monthly on the second Wednesday at 2.30pm
Linda Mason

Over the last 4 months we have increased our numbers to 11 but we do have one vacancy and should anybody be interested then please call me at the above and you would be very welcome.

We had a very healthy discussion about Harlan Coben's thriller set in America – 'Hold Tight' - at our November meeting and some of the members were surprised to have enjoyed the book so much, endorsing the saying that you must not judge a book by its cover or short synopsis.

In our December meeting we discussed Thomas Hardy's novel 'A pair of Blue Eyes' and a lively debate about this well written classical book even though we did not think one of Hardy's best. We found the plot contrived but enjoyed the references to local places and scenes and the autobiographical content.

In January we met with no snow in sight but a warm feeling about the book we had read over Christmas- 'Cranford' by Elizabeth Gaskell. It was generally felt that the book reflected a similarity in some respects to society nowadays even though the ladies led such restricted lives. The authoress was brilliant in painting a 'tongue in cheek' picture of the feminine world, totally devoid of any masculine influence and we were delighted to find in some notes to the book that Mr Charles Dickens found Mrs Gaskell a formidable lady to deal with.

We are now settling down to a bouquet of Daphne Du Maurier with titles many of us have not read before. I must get back to my book!

Linda Mason

BRIDGE meets weekly on Mondays at 2.00pm

Richard Evans

It is with great sadness that we have to tell you that Ann Bray finally lost her battle against cancer on the 23rd November last year, just a couple of weeks before her 70th birthday. Ann joined us at Bridge after her husband Cyril became ill and they could no longer play cards together. She was an enthusiastic player who would not let her poor health keep her away from the card table. She was a popular and valued member of the Group and is sorely missed.

We were also sad to hear about Audrey. She was the instigator and original Leader of the Bridge Group. It was her interest and enthusiasm that got it off the ground.

Richard Evans

CANASTA usually meets on alternate Mondays at 2.30pm

Hazel Cook

Canasta is not a difficult game to learn and most of us have not played for about 30 years, so we are having to learn all over again and still get it wrong. We started off playing once a month but enjoy it so much we have made it fortnightly.

We have great fun but would love a couple more people to join us. You would be very welcome and if necessary we could arrange transport. You would be made very welcome so give me a call.

Hazel Cook

DISCUSSION meets monthly on the first Thursday at 10.30am

Jo Arnold

With all the poppies around in November it seemed appropriate to discuss Remembering. We agreed that the Poppy Appeal, the Services and the Festival of Remem-

brance are important, and especially the two minutes' Silence. But what about other acts of remembering, like marking out ancient battlefields? Does the Sealed Knot Society's re-enactment of battles like Stamford Hill count as Remembrance too? The Empire died decades ago, yet we still sing "Land of Hope and Glory". Does it do us any good to keep looking back?

Eventually we decided that although dreaming of past glories may be non-productive, celebrating the past can give us a sense of identity. We need to know where we have come from as a nation if we are to work out where we are going.

Our December meeting was on a lighter note. If we could invite any two people, living or dead, to a Dinner Party, who would we choose, and why? This stretched our imagination into all sorts of areas! Several members chose politicians or statesmen, wanting to discover the real person behind the public image. Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, Gorbachov, Golda Meir and Ian Paisley were all nominated, with Stephen Fry and Elvis Presley coming along to keep their feet on the ground. Survivors and self-sufficient individuals like Ray Mears also featured, to remind us how few of the material trappings of the 21st century western world we really need to sustain life. I opted for my great-grandfather with our present Queen. It would have been a great Party! Although we weren't trying to reach any conclusions we all enjoyed a lively morning sharing our ideas.

We came back to reality in January with a "Christmas De-Briefing". Several cards I had received, even those sold in aid of charities, had been made in China. That surprised me. Several of us had also received printed cards from charities we had supported during the year. Was this a good use of our donations? This led us on to discussing how charities frame their appeals, and how much we dislike those who send us "bribes" and/or raffle tickets. We agreed that charities need to send some sort of news to their donors periodically to indicate how our money is being spent, and recognised that the costs of sending out Seasonal Greetings could be more

than covered by the extra donations they generate, but regretted that Christmas has become so overshadowed by such commercial considerations

Jo Arnold

ENJOYING MUSIC meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 2.00pm

Iwan Davies

GARDENING meets monthly on the first Wednesday

Marion Hall

4th November

Fourteen very welcome enthusiastic gardeners came to Agan Chy to plan for next year's Gardening Group's programme.

As the sun was shining this afternoon, I invited the group to have a wander around the garden before we got down to business. There's plenty of colour in the garden and the veggies are doing well. The four foot wide, 'no dig' beds are being gradually raised by the addition of home made compost, rich with contributions from the chickens!

With lots of suggestions, enjoyable discussion and eventual agreement in about an hour and a half, the draft of 2010's program was produced. We had earned our refreshments!

2nd December

We were made very welcome by Sylvia Henry who hosted our speaker Mike Stephens from Coombegate near Liskeard. Mike had taken early retirement from teaching English, extending his time spent on his love of horticulture, especially those plants which give interest in the autumn and winter garden. His talk to us was 'Flowers for October and November'. He illustrated his talk with beautiful pictures on his lap-top, many accompanied by flowers brought from his garden and passed round to us to appreciate the textures, colours and scent.

Mike welcomed comments and questions, also occasionally testing our knowledge in his previous role as teacher! He has a small private nursery so we look forward to acquiring some of his unusual plants when

we visit his garden in April. A very enjoyable and helpful afternoon.

6th January

Cancelled due to the bad weather.

Future meetings

March 3rd. Higher Cherubeer, Dolton. A NGS garden opened especially for us.

April 7th. Coombegate Cottage, St.Ive, nr.Liskeard.

Mike Stephens will open his NGS garden especially for us.

April 15th. Plant Stall at the Open General Meeting at the Parkhouse.

Please bring and/or buy, plants, seeds, bulbs & gardening sundries.

May 5th. Hartland Abbey Gardens.

The bluebells stretch from the walled garden to the sea!

Please contact me for further details or see the full programme on our website.

Marion Hall

HISTORY OF ART meets monthly on the first Thursday at 2.00pm

Carolyn Merrett

PHILOSOPHY – meets monthly on the third Wednesday at 2.00pm

Pat Berkeley

November's meeting was held at Pat's, with Pam presenting. Based on Grayling's book 'What is Good', the group discussed the nature and meaning of good and evil and whether it is innate, objective or subjective.

At January's meeting at Kate's we looked at Gilbert Ryle, a modern philosopher (1900-1976) who shared many ideas with Wittgenstein and Russell on the influence of language on philosophy. Ordinary Language Analysis flourished at Oxford in the 1940's, but declined in popularity in the '60s and '70s. It approached traditional philosophical problems as rooted in misunderstandings philosophers develop by distorting or forgetting what words really mean. For example, a 'real' gun as opposed to a toy or replica, not whether it exists or not. By mapping out words and phrases, philosophers can generate 'implication threads', ie every word or phrase of a statement contributes to that

statement and the philosopher must show the directions and limits of the threads.

Kate Peardon

PLAY READING meets at the Falcon Hotel approx every two weeks on Mondays at 10.15am.

Mary Dobson

We managed to read only one play since the last newsletter and Christmas as we were rehearsing our exciting short play of "Cinderella" as part of the "entertainment" after our Christmas lunch at the Falcon Hotel. Also, the hotel is closed for part of January for its annual refurbishment, so we will not be meeting again until later in January.

However, we read another interesting Peter Shaffer play called "The Gift of the Gorgon". None of us had heard or seen this play before, but it held our attention well despite being sandwiched between "Cinderella" and Christmas! The story is about Edward Damson, a famous English playwright who had met with a violent death at his remote Aegean home. His son, Philip, whom he had never acknowledged and who wants to write a biography of his father, seeks out his stepmother, Helen, to ask permission to write his father's story. Helen, who is a pacifist academic, at first refuses, but then relents, warning Philip that it is a story he may not want to hear. In a series of interviews she grants Philip, she re-enacts the turbulent 18 years of their marriage in the form of a Greek tragedy, by which her husband had been inspired, but she tells that Edward took no notice of her reason and restraint, because of his need to depict violence and rage against the modern age of liberalism. Edward's subsequent rise to fame and his decline into ridicule and estrangement from Helen is portrayed as the Greek mythical story of Athena and Perseus, who slays the Gorgon, only to become a gorgon himself. The twist at the end, we'll keep to ourselves, but we were fascinated both by the story and the powerful writing and will, hopefully, read another of his less well-known plays this year.

Peter Shaffer was born in Liverpool and has a twin brother, Anthony, who is also a
Winter Newsletter 2009/10

playwright. He was educated at St. Paul's School, London and won a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge. He was a Bevin boy coal miner during the war and worked variously as a book store clerk and as assistant in a New York library before he discovered his talent for writing. "The Gift of the Gorgon" was first produced on 5th December, 1992 by the RCS at The Pit Theatre in the Barbican Centre with Michael Pennington, Judi Dench and Jeremy Northam in the cast.

If you wish to join the Play Reading Group, please contact me.

Mary Dobson

SCRABBLE 1 meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7.00pm.

Mary Norman

I am looking after Scrabble 1 until Gill feels well enough to take it over again.

SCRABBLE 2 meets on the first and third Friday of the month at 2.00pm

Sue Evans

6th November

Wendy, a new member of Bude U3A, joined us for the first time.

Kate, Wendy and I played together. Kate was handicapped by rack after rack of vowels and Wendy hadn't used two-letter words before. I told her not to worry as I remember being baffled by Audrey's skilful use of two-letter words when she helped us to set up Scrabble 2.

The players on the other table had mixed fortunes. Although Ros did well out of 'goolie' and she and I scandalised the others by breaking into a chorus of 'ging gang goolie'. Jen didn't mind too much as Ros had inadvertently opened up a triple word square.

Quotes

'I don't have any quotes for this game.'
'Good. I'm pleased to hear it.'

20th November

Full house today with two tables of four. Linda, Wendy, Jen and Ros played together. Jen started the first game with a seven-letter word and went on to win the

game. She was also the highest scorer of the afternoon with 210. Paradoxically, she came last in their next game with a score of 96.

Mary, Richard, Kate and I played together and I was able to show that if you have a balanced rack you can amass a good score.

Quotes

'How can you be nuder?'

'I think I'm going to have sex.'

'What's the coconut thing?'

'Ovulate?' 'No. Obviate!'

'I can do sex again.'

4th December

No Jen today. We are on tenterhooks – has her first grandchild arrived?

Ros, Wendy and I played together and Kate, Linda, Mary and Richard were on the other table. Richard gave up after only one game as he found it impossible to concentrate. Too much girlie chatter in one room?

Wendy got off to a cracking start with a seven-letter word scoring 70 points and went on to win the game. She was also the highest scorer of the afternoon with 260 points. It hasn't taken her long to settle in!

She then said that she wouldn't be here for the next game as she was going to Campinas in Brazil to attend a wedding. Ros exclaimed that she had also been to a wedding in Campinas!! Anyone else?

Quotes

'Ooh, I can have sodomy'

18th December

As we were feeling festive, the five of us decided to push the tables together. It was agreed that the Xmas lunch at the Falcon was a huge success, Mary missed writing down three scores, Ros dropped the tiles all over the floor and the mince pies collapsed in the microwave.

Quotes

'You can't have a Xmas lunch without pars-nips!'

'I've played the whole game with the wrong glasses on!' (Again?)

'I've put 'squits' so I'm not putting 'fat'!'

15th January

All eight of us made it today and we started by admiring the photos of baby Thomas (see note above).

After our usual random draw, the four most competitive players were on one table. As they tend to play a tight, tactical game, they completed only two games against the other table's three. Ros was the highest scorer with 206.

Quotes

'What a long hour!'

'It's another long hour!'

'No, I put down botty it was Ros that put down anal.'

'I don't think anal qualifies as a medical term.'

The unabridged version of this report can be found on our website.

Sue Evans

SERENDIPITY 1 meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 2.00pm

Celia Sousek

The November meeting was held at my house since I have now taken over as co-ordinator of this group. We all bought Liz some flowers as thanks for her hospitality since we started meeting together and also for having the idea of a Serendipity group in the first place. Without her inspiration we would not have enjoyed many interesting, entertaining and rewarding (sometimes frustrating) afternoons in her cosy kitchen or wonderful garden. We spent the afternoon discussing plans for the new year and came up with several interesting ideas that spun off each other in true 'serendipitous' style.

We did not have a meeting in December, as the day was so close to Christmas.

In January we planned for Julia Brooks to demonstrate semi-precious jewellery to us but unfortunately she was unable to come at the last minute, due to a hospital appointment, so we decided to have a go at Decoupage - which no one had done before. However, Marilyn has been inspired to make some large wall hangings for her house in France and, being inexperienced in such matters, had

asked if members of the group could advise her on how to go about it. She brought her plan and wonderful fabrics with her and an enjoyable afternoon soon passed while we discussed her project. Happily she has not been put off by the many and varied suggestions we came up with, and Linda has agreed to help her. Decoupage can wait for another day.
Celia Sousek

SERENDIPITY 2 meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 2.00pm
Linda Bunker

November found us knitting slippers; Lucille provided the pattern. Whilst our hands were busy, we were able to discuss the programme for 2010 and came up with a wide selection of activities. We plan on joining Serendipity 1 for some of these, one of which is a return visit to Penhallam Manor for dowsing.

December there was no meeting because of Christmas, but we met in January, this time at Hilary's who showed us how to make wreaths from apple tree prunings and willow. We all came away with some attractive bird feeders and door wreaths (a little late for Christmas, but none the less very attractive).

Happily we have had some new members joining us and we welcomed Carol and Wendy for our meeting this month. We also have had interest from other members and our numbers are increasing. However, we still have room for others and I would be happy to hear from you.

Linda Bunker

SHARING POETRY 1 meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 10.30am
Linda Farmer

In November members had a free choice of poems, no theme, as it was thought that everyone would be too busy to do much research. Ros found a very appropriate poem by Pam Ayres for the forthcoming season, "Eat, Drink And Be Sick" which brought back memories of eating far too much at celebrations in the past; members found it very funny, you might too.

We didn't meet in December as it would have been New Year's Eve.

In January we also had a free choice. As a group we especially liked "The Old Sailor" by A.A.Milne chosen by Elizabeth Whattler. Do try it.

Ros had a lovely Christmas present, a poetry book called "I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud - And Other Poems You Half Remember From School", edited/ chosen by Ana Sampson. Well worth having a look at. And for those of us who remember doing "Beowulf", there is a new translation out by Seamus Heaney which has had some very good reviews.

Linda Farmer

SHARING POETRY 2 meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 10.30am
Peggy Timms

We share poems with a pre-arranged theme on one month and then have free choice on alternate months. We also research the poets concerned - and so learn a little about the background to our poems.

At our January meeting we raised a mug to Audrey Armitage, a special and much appreciated member of our group whom we miss. This is a poem Audrey brought to the group in December 2008.

Ode to a lesbian cat by Audrey Armitage

She came to be mine at eight years old
A little black moggie with eyes of gold.
Her family were moving, she needed
another,
A nice warm home and a human lover.
Named after a bear, they'd called her
Pooh,
That friend of Piglet's. Yes. You know
who.
But she's not a bear; she's a feminine
feline.
She wanted a name more apt to her
station.
Treacle or liquorice, mindful of colour?
Blackberry or cherry? She has a sweet
tooth.

No, nothing so quirky, not pinky nor perky.
Pooh, little floosie, is now little Susie.
She`s a one-woman cat, not too sure about men.
There`s one she`d befriend, but he`s catophobic.
Small boys she eschews; too noisy, too manic.
She hides in the garden, her safe leafy den.
A lap-cat I had sought, a lap-cat I`ve got.
She thinks I am here just to sit in my chair
With nothing to do but to fondle her ears,
To tickle her chin and stroke her thick fur.
When I go to the bathroom she follows me there.
Does she think it strange how I clean my hair?
She says when it`s time to take me to bed
To purr by my pillow close to my head.
She doesn`t catch mice, is a friend to the birds.
Just sits there and watches them hopping about her.
At two collared doves she shows some elation
And at hedgehog and toad. Amazed fascination!
If you don`t like cats you might not like my ode
To my little black friend with her eyes of gold.
If you are a cat-lover you will know what pleasure
Can be yours in the love of a feline treasure.

On a personal note - we inherited Susie, Audrey`s beloved cat, on her death - and in our home she is not demonstrating lesbian behaviour - far from it. She is happy to jump on to the lap of the resident male if the lady of the house is not available! And of course she is a loved and loving link with our dear departed friend.

Peggy Timms

SINGING FOR FUN meets every second Friday in the month.

Ros Dolphin

Christmas seems ages ago when we had three enjoyable events, the first was to Abbeyfield where we went to sing Carols and where we were made so welcome. There were only five men and one lady. It was lovely hearing the men singing Good King Wenceslas. I commented to one of the men on his singing voice and he said he had been a chorister and also sang in the Metropolitan Police Choir in the 60's when I used to go and listen to them with my husband who was a Metropolitan Police Officer. Small world!!

Our second event was to Fairfield where we had a full house, again with some good men singers. We were made very welcome but we did miss Audrey who wasn't feeling too well, she was so good at handing out the song sheets and making sure the residents had the right page; we are going to miss her.

The last event was our U3A Christmas Lunch which we enjoyed and hope you did too. Again it was lovely having Audrey with us and thank you who took the photo with Audrey in it, the Singing group would love a copy.

We have only met once since Christmas due to inclement weather and we had a good old sing down memory lane. Sue Neal is wonderful at knowing which shows many of these songs came from.

Please come and join us, new singers are always welcome.

Ros Dolphin

THEATRE

Mary Dobson

On 12th November we went to see "**Ab-surd Person Singular**" at the Queen's Theatre Barnstaple. A good Alan Ayckbourn comedy with typical perception of human frailties and strengths. It is a story of three couples. Each scene was set in their respective kitchens and one could see exactly from the design of the kitchen, to which social strata the couple belonged.

The play works through each of their stories and in the end one couple be-

comes richer and more successful than the other two who, through their small mindedness and lack of vision, as well as their self-inflicted troubles, are left to reflect on what exactly went wrong along the way.

We all enjoyed this comedy and the smiles on the faces of our coach party said it all.

Later in November, we had a rare treat of seeing an excellent play called "**The Pitman Painters**" by Lee Hall, based on a book of a true story by William Feaver. It was funny, witty, sad and quite an emotional play, superbly acted by an almost-all male cast and was a co-operation between the Live Theatre, Newcastle and the National Theatre.

In 1934, a group of Ashington miners hired a professor to teach an art appreciation evening class. Rapidly abandoning theory in favour of practice, the pit men began to paint - with surprising results.

This also proved to be a very interesting play about the debate between art and socialism.

December saw us again at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth to watch "**Scrooge**" from Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", with Tommy Steele playing Scrooge. The staging of Dickensian London was excellent, the cast had lots of energy and lovely costumes and Tommy Steele was on stage almost all the time, which at the age of almost 73 is pretty remarkable. Tommy Steele received a standing ovation at the end, rightly deserved.

I read that the producer, Bill Kenwright, had no trouble in persuading him to take on this role and that the illusions were created by Paul Kieve, the special effects man behind Harry Potter films.

We thoroughly enjoyed this entertaining show.

Lastly, in January, we went to see "**The Birthday Party**" by Harold Pinter in the Drum Theatre, Plymouth. This being a typical Pinter play, we knew it was not going to be fun, but the acting from the

Tamaritans Theatre Company was superb.

The play takes place (in the 1960s/70s?) in a humdrum seaside resort with a landlady (Meg) of dubious intelligence and likewise her husband who just wants a quiet life. All seems very dull until two strangers arrive looking for the one and only guest (Sidney).

The two strangers find out that today is Sidney's birthday and they suggest a party. Meg becomes increasingly tipsy as the evening wears on and the strangers more menacing. Were they mercenaries, Mafia, or members of a secret organisation? We don't know, but Sidney obviously does and has a complete breakdown and the next morning they cart him off in their large car to an unknown fate.

When the play first opened in London, it had terrible reviews but "The Birthday Party" is now considered one of Pinter's best plays.

One of the comments made by the Group was that it was 'a typical Pinter play - comedy with underlying menace where the audience can put their own interpretation on the plot.'

More detailed reviews of these plays can be found on our website.

If anyone would like to join the Theatre Group, or just pay for a seat on the coach to go shopping, please contact me.

Mary Dobson

Future Trips

Thursday, 4th March

'Enjoy' by Alan Bennett at the Theatre Royal. Price £24.

Leaving Bude Rugby Club at 11.30am

Wednesday, 7th April

'Tosca' by Puccini at the Theatre Royal.

Evening Performance. Price £49.

Leaving Bude Rugby Club at 5.15pm

Saturday, 1st May

'Whipping it up'. A Political Comedy Satire by Steve Thompson at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter University Campus. Price £22

Leaving Budehaven School, Valley Road Side at 11.30am.

WALKING GROUP walks twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays meeting at Stratton car park at 1.15pm

Angie / Christine

We have been badly affected by the weather this Winter. Also, when we set out to walk the beach from Bude to Northcott mouth In January, the incoming tide swirled and eddied in such an uneven way that it was unsafe to continue.

Angie Whitehurst

Quite a Day! by Jo Arnold

What is the connection between a lamb shank, a piece of bamboo and a cow's horn? (Clue: a serpent and a rumble pot.) Puzzled? -- read on:-

Six members from Bude were part of a gathering of over 140 at a very special North Devon Link U3A Study Day in October. The lecturer was Jonathan Weeks, a one-time farmer with a degree in Mediaeval Archaeology who has both a fascination for musical instruments of the period and a talent for playing them.

During an enthralling day he took his audience through the whole range of those used in Europe, explaining where they were found and how they were made. What made his presentation so special was that he not only illustrated his talks with slides of contemporary paintings and sculptures of every instrument he mentioned, but also showed his amazing collection of authentic replicas and demonstrated their range and limitations by playing a tune of the Middle Ages on each one.

It would take all the space available in the whole of this Newsletter to do justice to Jonathan's knowledge and expertise, so I can only give you a taste.

During the morning we were introduced to the reed family and then woodwind, whistles, flutes and organs. Man was making music as long ago as 3000 BC, and probably well before that, as the oldest reed pipe ever discovered (in a tomb in Ur)

proves. In this Country the Saxons also played lyres, and the Romans brought us bone whistles, pan pipes and bagpipes. The original bagpipes were small and quietish in tone and were first used by shepherds to calm their sheep. Although their general use in most of Europe had died out by the 16th century, they are still found in Albania today. However, not everyone is happy with them; they are registered by the Geneva Convention as a weapon of psychological warfare!

When the Crusaders travelled to the Middle East they encountered the shawm, a single note, very loud, reed instrument which was most effective for curfews and alarms. They adopted it and we know that it was used for hundreds of years as one (six feet long) was recovered from the wreck of the Mary Rose.

Writing in the 1380's, Chaucer refers to the hornpipe, meaning a pipe where the reed is covered by horn to form the mouth-piece. The Hornpipe was a dance developed for sailors from below decks as a way of exercising their legs when they came up for their periods in the fresh air. Arms had to be kept folded so that no-one was knocked overboard. Compulsory dancing lasted until Nelson's time.

After an excellent lunch provided and served by a small army of helpers from the participating U3As we reassembled to the evocative sound of the conch shell. Its single note carries for miles, especially across open water, so it is an extremely effective transmitter of messages in morse code or other pre-set formats.

The afternoon session took us through trumpets, horns and sackbuts (which developed into trombones), and on to stringed instruments. The first of these was the lyre, as shown on ancient pottery, which evolved one way as the harp and the other, with a long finger board and a sound box, as the lute. The Middle Eastern zither, with strings of different lengths stretched across a sounding board, also developed in Europe in two ways. The psaltery, where strings were plucked, was the forerunner of the harpsichord, and

the dulcimer, where strings were hammered, was the ancestor of the piano.

The bow was introduced to stringed instruments to give a more sustained sound. The smallest, the rebek, was about 15 inches long with only three strings -- the predecessor of the fiddle.

A long single string with a big back box was known as the string drum, or hum-drum. This is bowed and emits a single note; it can be played with one hand while the other hand controls a flute. This combination is still heard in India today.

The final instrument we met on that memorable day was a small round pot with a skin stretched over it. A stick is moved up and down through a small hole in the centre of the skin and the vibration produces the sound; hence the rumble pot. So the answer to the puzzle at the beginning of this piece is that all three can

easily be made into Mediaeval musical instruments.

A short question time brought the day to a close, and we all went home having experienced once again the truth of the principle behind U3A -- that learning IS fun!

Jo Arnold

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter.

Reports and/or articles are usually anything up to 300 words but can be longer (if you are planning anything over 600 words, please let me know in advance).

The deadline for the next edition is the 30th April.

Sue Evans

suemail65-news@yahoo.co.uk

OUR COMMITTEE

Officers

Sylvia Henry	Chairman
Hilary Workman	Vice Chair/ Speaker Secretary
Val Kerr	Treasurer
Linda Bunker	Minute Secretary

Members

Anne Tizzard	Membership Secretary
Vera Roper	Groups Co-ordinator
Lucille Opie	Press Reports Co-ordinator

Sue Evans Newsletter Editor
Liz Whattler

Co-opted

Mary Dobson
Sandra Malschuck
Mike Roper Webmaster
(romper@onetel.com)

MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 126 paid-up members.

New Members

We are very pleased to welcome new

members: Ann Butler, Kate Compston, Wendy Day, Lynda Kaye, Olwyn Lovel, Gillian Ruddock, Betty Saunders, Margaret Smith, Janet Stewart, Emma Thorp, Sarah-Jane Whattler and Tina Wiles.

Subscription Renewal

Did you know that If you have not renewed your subscription by now, you are no longer considered a member and are subsequently not covered by insurance while taking part in U3A activities?

Also, please see the urgent reminder on Page 2.

MONTHLY PROGRAMME

The complete Programme for 2010 is available on our website.

18th March

Tim Dingle on the Butterflies of North Cornwall.

15th April **

Ruth Bealing of the "El Shaddai Charitable Trust, a registered, non-profit Charity working in India with orphans, street children and those from economically desperate conditions, will be giving us an illustrated talk about the practical work that this charity carries out in Goa".

**Plus the Gardening Group's plant stall.

20th May

Kath Brabbins on "Foot health and you - best foot forward". This talk will cover how feet function and how best to care for them as we get older. It will also cover how to cope with those changes and discuss conditions like arthritis and diabetes etc. and how these conditions can affect your feet. An ideal opportunity to learn more about footwear and your foot care.

AUDREY ARMITAGE

27th January 1925 - 25th January 2010

I have only known Audrey for 8 years and what a privilege it has been. A few years ago we decided to become prayer partners as we were both Christians and felt this would help ourselves and others. Susie the cat always sat on Audrey's lap. So most Wednesday mornings we would meet and discuss our week and the things that had happened and pray about them. She shared her joys and sorrows and I never ceased to be amazed at her fortitude and faith; she also shared how she felt in her down times. Whenever she went to hospital she always seemed to find someone to talk to, to comfort or to share her faith with. She was a

great listener and spiritual advisor I do not know what I would have done without her when I had problems, she was a wise counsellor.

It was amazing how people in our lives were linked, our sons worked together in London and a very close friend of mine in Herts had connections with her son Richard. Then in the Hospice Audrey was delighted to discover that the Chaplain also worked with Through Faith Missions which I am involved with and which Audrey supported.

I will, like so many of us, have wonderful memories of Audrey walking around her garden which she cared for so lovingly (I have lots of cuttings and plants to remind me of those happy times), seeing her far from home on a mission on her electric scooter oblivious of the traffic and with her roll of wallpaper making a note of who was coming to the U3A Christmas lunch and what they would eat, she did it so efficiently. What a friend she has been and what an example of how to live every day to the full regardless of the difficulties that she faced. To enjoy the simple things of life and to give thanks and not to take things for granted. Audrey will be truly missed by so many people.

Audrey can certainly say with St. Paul 'I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day.'

Now after a life well spent may she rest in peace.

Ros Dolphin

