



[www.u3arugby.org.uk](http://www.u3arugby.org.uk)

Charity Number 1094479

**'Sharing Knowledge to Learn from Each Other'**

## **New Members**

We would like to welcome the following new members: Lindsay Tyzack, Cyntra Branagh, Catherine Swanson, Carl Swanson, Graham Neish and Sandy (Sandra) Nash

Please look out for them in your Groups and Monthly Meetings and help them to quickly feel part of our organisation.

## **Sad News**

We are very sad to report that Mervyn Raisbeck has died. He was a member of the Art group, and will be much missed. Please see also, a tribute to Mary Hinde whose death was announced in last month's issue. We have also been notified of the death of Brian Woolterton, another of our members.

## **Dates for your diary**

### **Coffee Morning Drop-Ins**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October at the Kanko Coffee Lounge, 41 Clifton Road, Rugby, CV21 3PY (corner of Bath Street)

### **Monthly Meetings**

#### **10th October 2pm to 4pm**

Richard Lloyd Owen, Opera Emporio (see end of newsletter for more details of the programme)

Singing songs from the shows and light popular opera. Please book your seat in Monthly Meetings on the u3a website: click onto Opera Emporio, scroll down and select how many seats you would like. £2 for u3a members, £5 for guests; to join u3a for the rest of the year and your seat: £12; to join the u3a for the rest of the year and next year and your seat: £15. This will help us with catering and fire regulations. Pay at the door at meetings.

We are advertising outside of the u3a group and the event will be attended by the Rugby Mayor, Simon Ward.

#### **14th November 2pm to 4pm.**

Amanda May, The National Grid: National preparedness for the forthcoming demands on the electricity supply.

#### **12th December @ 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Bobbie Darbyshire. Where do novelists get their ideas from?

## Group News

### WANTED

We still require another pair of players to make our planned ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS BRIDGE course viable. Can you help? If you would like to learn from scratch this wonderful game once described as “*the gymnasium for the mind*”, then please get in touch to learn more details about our Autumn term which is only two players short for our Thursday 12.30 sessions.

Once you have graduated you will be invited to join our current sessions of fun, friendly, social bridge where you will be more than welcome to put into practice the lessons you have learned.

David Harrison on [davidbagpipes@outlook.com](mailto:davidbagpipes@outlook.com) or 01788 823065

### Carry On Cruising / Travellers' Tales

We have been sharing cruise experiences at our Carry-on Cruising meetings recently and are considering broadening the remit to cover a wider range of holiday / travel types and locations. I know there was previously a Travellers Tales group which is not currently in operation and some of its former members may be interested in joining this expanded group.

I want to gauge interest – please let me know your thoughts – just e mail [cruising@u3arugby.org.uk](mailto:cruising@u3arugby.org.uk)

*Dawn Fassam (Chair Rugby u3a)*

### Report on September monthly meeting - History of a Northamptonshire Farmhouse

(For a picture of the property see: [https://maps.app.goo.gl/b4bVZrkPAHQJuVQx9?g\\_st=im](https://maps.app.goo.gl/b4bVZrkPAHQJuVQx9?g_st=im))

Kate Mawer gave a detailed history of the occupants of the eighteenth century farmhouse that she and her husband purchased in 1997 and where they have lived since.

Kate's research began in the late 1990s - that was before the days of the internet so much of her early discoveries were made by visiting libraries and poring through local records. This meant that progress was quite slow. Kate was also busy with a full-time job so did not have much spare time to devote to this research. By about the end of the first decade of this century however, the internet had become well established as well as many sophisticated search engines such as Google and family history software such as Ancestry that transformed the nature of her searches.

When Kate and her husband purchased the house, it had not been possible to put an exact date to its construction, but detective work that included looking at the structure of the building, as well as internal aspects such as the flooring and ironmongery (door handles, hinges and so on) were all consistent with a mid-eighteenth century build.

Until the start of the twentieth century the property changed very little, the main change being a brickwork cladding that was overlaid on to the original stone walls in about 1840.

Decorating the house soon after arrival, a copy of an old newspaper dated 1788 came to light so this helped to narrow things down. Subsequent enquires seemed to point to the property first being established in about 1758.

The history and fate of the property (known as The Cottage or 65, High Street) and the family that lived in it until the early 1900s, was very much tied up with that of the two adjacent properties, Braunston Lodge Farm and Langdon House, and the families that lived in them through inter marriage and so on. In essence, the same farming family, the Reeves, lived in the house until the early twentieth century. The adjacent Methodist Church, partly paid for by the family and later the local Anglican Church, played a big part in their lives, so much so that for about a decade the Reeves were heavily involved with the Temperance movement 'The band of Hope.'

In general, the farming business prospered and William, the son, became much wealthier than his father (also William) had been. There was also a fair share of tragedy, many of the family succumbing to TB in the mid-nineteenth century. TB was a common disease associated with dairy farming and unfortunately not curable at that time. The family fortune and the property were also lost towards the end of the nineteenth century because of drinking and gambling debts. This was particularly ironic bearing in mind their previous involvement in the Temperance movement.

In 1900, one of the daughters, Catherine, married the local parson Bernard Blin-Stoyle. Their son, Roger Blin-Stoyle, became a well know physicist at the University of Sussex. He made world class contributions around the structure of atomic nuclei and the relationships between the elementary particles of which nuclei are built. He died in 2007 aged 82. He is perhaps the most notable legacy of that relatively isolated local community.

When Kate and her husband purchased the cottage in 1997 it had been unoccupied for ten years so had fallen into a state of disrepair but loving care has transformed both it and the large garden to what it is today. The garden will be open to the public for one day in 2025 in aid of the Macmillan Cancer Charity, so there is an opportunity for anyone interested to get a view of the outside of the house and its location as well.

*Brian Radesk*

## **A message from Joe Heckels**

I am writing this to Rugby u3a as an entity and am happy to have it circulated as you may feel appropriate.

After 26 years of living with a Rugby post code I have now relocated to live in the North West of England. I just wanted to say, "Thank you and Farewell"

It was 2008 when we moved from Marton in to central Rugby and my (now late) wife persuaded me to join the u3a mainly to attend the monthly Thursday General Meetings and listen to the varied but always interesting talks. It didn't take long before we had joined several groups, mainly started by John Duffield whose technique was legendary. As Groups Co-ordinator he would start a group and find someone to take over as leader as soon as it was established. That was how I found myself as the Group Leader of "Living History". He used the same technique to start "The Buskers" and several other groups.

I was in several groups, too many to mention here, and soon found myself, during my first year as a u3a Member, co-opted onto the committee. They were a persuasive lot and still as a very new member of the u3a I found myself being elected Chairman of Rugby u3a.

As chairman it was my privilege to meet with many other u3a members form our area and further afield. It was then I realised that Rugby u3a was leading the way in many respects of upholding and driving the u3a and Third Age Trust principles. I believe that is still the case 12 years after I handed over the chairman's batten to more worthy successors who have continued to lead Rugby u3a as one of the best in the country (my opinion).

Over the past 12 years, since the death of my wife, Pam, my attendance at the multitude of groups has declined a little but I have continued to enjoy every minute of my time and I would like to thank all the Group Leaders who have taken over the reins and allowed me to enjoy being an ordinary member.

As a word of encouragement for the future of the u3a it has always been my view that the younger/newer members should be running the show. After all, their experience of work is more recent and they still have the energy to show us how it should be done. This allows us older, set in our ways people to eventually step back and learn from the new ideas of our newer members.

So, it is with some sadness that I will not be renewing my membership for 2025. I will look into the local u3a here in Merseyside and see if they can come anywhere near the standards set by Rugby u3a.

Thank you Rugby u3a for looking after me over the last 15 years and best wishes.

*Joe Heckels*

## **Tribute to Mary Hinde (28.12.1926 - 30.7.2024)**

(based on information included in the Eulogy delivered at her private funeral by her special friend, Jill Nicholls)

Despite being an intensely private person, Mary Hinde formed lifetime friendships, fostered by a genuine interest in what people were doing or thinking and by a true empathy with their problems.

Mary's Father, Henry Hinde, was a stalwart of the teaching profession and was awarded an MBE for his services to education in Rugby.

Mary followed in her father's footsteps becoming a primary school teacher at St Marks and a head teacher at St Oswalds. She was strict with the children and exacting as a head teacher but all this was characterised by a huge rapport with young people and a lasting interest in everyone she got to know. The friendships she formed were for life and maintained by a willingness to communicate regularly by telephone or letter - and latterly by email. She kept in touch not only with her initial friends but also with their children and grandchildren.

To a certain extent Mary's life was stalked by tragedy - the death of her mother from TB when she was a child, the death of her beloved father soon after he moved into the retirement semi bungalow he had built on Dunchurch Road, followed not long afterwards by the death of her stepmother; finally one of her closest friends died prematurely from breast cancer.

Mary's passion for gardening was lifelong and legendary. Her garden in Dunchurch Road (established originally by her parents) was famous for its wonderful displays of spring bulbs, for its camellia displays and for its vegetable garden and remained a joy to the very end. Mary's visitors always came away with gifts of lovely produce from the vegetable garden; visits always involved food and her mince pies were legendary.

Her relationships with her nearest neighbours over many years were characteristic of her kindness, loyalty and sense of fun and she could always be relied upon to help in a crisis.

Mary was a founder member of Rugby u3a and of The Retired Teachers Association. She travelled widely both with the teachers association and with friends - especially in North America and Canada. She was always forward looking - tackling modern technology and engaging in computer courses even as her sight began to fail.

Mary was a smartly dressed lady whose mental faculties remained intact to the end. To many she was a very dear friend whose insights and conversations ranged over many topics and were a constant comfort. Her first love however was children. She had an encyclopaedic knowledge of all those she had taught and her memory will live on forever in many people's hearts and minds.

## **An Inspirational Story**

In 1951, Nils Gustaf Håkansson signed up for the Sverigeloppet endurance race traversing virtually the entire length of Sweden. His submission was rejected because of his age – he was 66.

Their reasoning was that he would have neither the strength nor the stamina to compete with the 50 other racers, all of whom were less than half his age.

Nevertheless, having ridden 600 miles to get to the starting line, Håkansson was there on race day in the saddle of his roadster complete with mudguards, a headlamp, front basket and panniers. He wore a homemade bib with the number 0 on it.

Due to the volume of racers, Håkansson crossed the starting line about 20 seconds after the race had started, but five days, five hours and 1,000 miles later, he crossed the finish line first – more than a day ahead of the next rider.

Håkansson had not been bound to one rule that the other 'official' participants were obliged to follow. As part of race regulations, competitors were expected to meet and stop at a checkpoint at the end of the day to recharge and restart the next morning.

Instead, Håkansson took just an hour's rest before setting off again in the middle of the night. This allowed him to make up for the 10 miles he was behind after 300 miles and put a 20-mile gap between himself and the rest of the pack.

After three days and only five hours' sleep, Gustaf was leading the field by more than 120 miles. At one point the police tried to persuade him to stop for a medical examination, but he only laughed and pedalled on.

Eventually, with only 800 yards or so to go, Stålfarfar or "Steel Grandpa"; as he became known in the villages he'd passed through, came to an abrupt halt. But it wasn't sheer exhaustion that had stopped him – the old man's bicycle had suffered its first and only flat tyre.

Unperturbed, Gustaf dismounted and set towards the finish line where, with only a few yards to go, he remounted to cross the line at 2:15pm on July 7, 1951.

Despite the albeit unofficial victory, a subsequent audience with the king of Sweden, and generally being showered in fame and honour, Gustaf's greatest satisfaction came from proving wrong the doctors who had thought he was better suited in a rocking chair than he was in a saddle.

The Steel Grandpa continued to ride bicycles until his death in 1987 at the age of 102 and if that isn't a testament to the health benefits of riding a bike, then I don't know what is.

With thanks to Val Aspelung

### **To Be Pacific** by Brian Bilston

Why do you always go off on a tandem,  
say goodbye without further adieu?  
It's time you climbed down from your pedal stool -  
this is not a phrase you're going through.

when antidotal evidence suggests  
you've been freewheeling right from the start  
Or rather, *from the gecko*, as you might say.  
You're always upsetting the apple tart.  
I can't be asked to correct you these days:  
it takes two to tangle, I won't deny it.  
But when push comes to shovel and all's set and done,  
I just want a little piece of quiet,

to curl up in the feeble position  
so I can give my poor ears some rest bite  
from these sayings that do not pass mustard  
the flaws in the ointment you cite.

You're no escape goat or social leopard;  
I don't regard you as a hapless case.  
But be aware there are reaper cushions  
when you cut off your nose despite your face.

### **Lost Property**

Someone has left a good quality John Lewis black waterproof jacket at Elsee Road. It has the name 'Ridge' written on a label inside. This item has been hanging in the hall at number 13 for about four weeks now; presumably the owner has forgotten where they left it. If it is yours, can you claim it as soon as possible please.

## The Rugby u3a Website

I've heard of a number of people who are struggling to access the website and have difficulties with passwords. I've also helped several members overcome this.

Passwords and log-ins are a necessary pain for all us internet users, and I've set up the website with a utility that makes sure your password is stored so unless you log on via a different computer or phone, you will stay logged on and won't need to enter your password every time, but you still have to enter it once!

If you are having difficulties and want to log on to the website, please contact me at [treasurer@u3arugby.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@u3arugby.org.uk) and I can manually set a new password and explain the process. All those who have asked have successfully logged in. Other Committee members who have Admin rights also have the capability of re-setting passwords. Help is there if you ask.

We continue to have irritating issues with website emails not getting through. This seems to stem in part from the fact that we had to make a change and move to a new supplier, and possibly also with the increasing level of cybersecurity expanding over the internet. I'm continuing to try to resolve issues as I become aware of them, but often the problem lies on the recipient's computer which has decided our emails are "spam" and blocked them. Only the recipient can resolve this and it's not always easy and not just a problem for u3a emails. It's a continuing headache for all organisations sending out emails.

If you are not getting the Rugby u3a newsletter through on your email or you are not getting messages from group leaders, please again contact me and we can try to work through the problems.

*Dave Daniel – u3a Treasurer*

## Proposed Programme for next monthly meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October:

Brindisi- La Traviata- Verdi

Pretty Women- Sweeny Todd- Sondeim

Maria-West Side Story-Bernstein

Bess you is my woman now-Porgy and Bess-Gershwin

Bring him home -Les Miserables-Shonberg

Questo amore-Edgar-Puccini

Tonight-West Side Story-Bernstein

Stars- Les Miserables-Shonberg

Vissi d`arte- Tosca-Puccini

Au fond du temple saint-Les Pecheurs de perles-Bizet

Can`t help loving that man of mine-Showboat-Kern

Edelweiss- The sound of music-Rodgers & Hammerstein

Gendarmes duet-Genevieve de Brabant-Offenbach

O soave fanciulla-La Boheme-Puccini

Anges purs- Faust