



HAVERHILL & DISTRICT

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

News and Views

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HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Our 30th Year

January 2024

From the Chair

I hope you all had a good Christmas and I wish you a peaceful and healthy 2024.

The Christmas Concert was very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all. I would like to thank the events committee for organizing it and for all the members of Singing for Pleasure, Sawston Hand Bell Ringers and the Guitar Group for entertaining us so well. Also my thanks go to everyone who helped on the day to get things ready and with the clearing up afterwards.

Haverhill and District u3a is 30 years old this year and we will be celebrating with a picnic in the park on June 29th. Tickets for this event will be on sale at the A.G.M. meeting on March 26th. The events team have been working very hard and the entertainment is booked. The members who attended the picnic in 2022 will be delighted to know that Angela will be one of the entertainers singing for us.

The A.G.M. will be at the end of March when the committee is elected for the following year. Several committee members will be serving their 3rd term and you will have seen my email regarding members to volunteer to shadow committee members with a view to taking a role in 2025. I hope you will all think about this very carefully as without a committee Haverhill and District u3a will not run.

I know we are all looking forward to spring and the cheering flowers this brings

Barbara Lavender

Speaker's Corner

On the 28th November, Siobhan O'Dell from SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Limited gave a talk about the Great Blakenham waste and recycling centre where all of the Suffolk waste goes for recycling or, for the black bin waste, is burned and the energy content turned into electricity. Siobhan gave explanations for the reasons why certain things are and are not suitable for recycling, and that one of the worst problems at the recycling centre are the 1,000+ dirty nappies put into the blue recycling bins every week and the problems caused by contamination.

On the 30th January our speaker will be Hannah from another Suffolk organization – The Suffolk Archives – who will talk about and include some of the Archive's treasures.

Sue Dickinson – Speaker Secretary

Walking Talking Munching

On the most glorious of autumn days, the group met in East Town Park for the last of the walks of 2023.

Following the parks nature trail, they crossed the Pooh Sticks Bridge to join the railway walk to Sturmer. A stop was made by the footpath to the Red Lion pub, as the adjacent garden was where in 1831 local nurseryman Ezekiel Dillistone, recorded the growing of the Sturmer Pippen apple. It was his descendants who took it to New Zealand from where large quantities are now exported. Continuing on to the end of the railway walk, where the Sturmer Station platform is still visible, the group took the bridle path which runs behind the village main road. Turning right at the footpath's

crossroads, the walkers came upon Mere Cottage, at what is the far end of Linnets Lane and dates from 1540. Before exploring the other properties in the Lane, a diversion was taken to view the paddocks, where rescue animals are kept. Although a little shy of such a large group of visitors, the animals were still inquisitive, and it was good to see them living in such well-kept conditions.



Rejoining the Lane, both Roost End Cottage and Linnets were viewed, and the assembly heard that Tudor wall paintings have been found in bedrooms and loft areas.

Following the main street back to the village hall, we saw an information board detailed the buildings history. The building had been the village school, opening in 1877. By 1881 93 children attended, it closed in 1947.

Rejoining the railway walk, the group members headed back to the Park before driving to Sturmer Nurseries for lunch in their cafeteria.

Ken Hainsby

Painting For Pleasure

The New Year is underway for this small group of u3a Members that have an interest in art solely for personal relaxation and achievement. Regular meetings with like-minded people provides the impetus to pursue this leisure activity that might otherwise just lay dormant in the mind. The meetings are social occasions that are not prescriptive in terms of subject or medium and there is no tuition beyond shared experience. Members are responsible for providing their own materials.

The group currently numbers 9 and meets alternate Wednesdays, 10am to noon, at the Loft of the Methodist Church Hall, Camps Road, Haverhill. The hire cost is shared among the members and collected at the beginning of each 6 meeting term matching our commitment to the Church. Currently £20 per head.

We believe the room could accommodate, and we would welcome, a further 2 people at our meetings.

We have had the first meeting of 2024 and have committed to the following dates up to Easter: January 31st, February 14th & 28th and March 13th & 27th. To arrange a sample visit or for more information, contact Iris or David Cook on 01440 761294

Iris and David Cook

Bridge Group

Our annual Christmas party was held on the 21st December when 24 members enjoyed a pleasant afternoon of Chicago Bridge. We played for the Terry Keogh memorial trophy.



This was followed by some delicious party food before the trophy was presented to Hillary Brewster, who finished well ahead of everyone else.

Wild Walkers Friday 15th December 2023

Our walk last month began from the Rose and Crown pub car park at Ashdon. This walk was slightly shorter than our usual 6-7 miles as we were having our Christmas lunch on our return. The group of 19

walkers made its way through the village and onto Kates Lane and began the slight incline along the field edge up to the Windmill at Steventon End. This beautifully restored Grade 2 listed building, also known as Bragg's Mill, dates from around 1763. The restoration took place between 2000 and 2006. Originally owned by the Thurlow Estate it was gifted to the Ashdon Village. I was informed that our group had actually visited the Mill some years ago and been taken inside for a tour.

Walking on, with beautiful sights of the Essex countryside all around us (and the sun trying to make an appearance), we traversed some quite high stiles (quite tricky if you only have little legs) the group helping one another when assistance was required. Passing the half-timbered Tudor house Ashdon Place we walked on through The Waltons. Although surrounded by a thick very high yew hedge it was evident this was a very grand building. Originally Elizabethan. A great part of it was destroyed by fire, and was rebuilt in the Georgian style. We carried on walking through the estate, watched by half a dozen beautiful horses in one paddock and 2 greys in another.

We now descended the hill and cross the Bartlow road near to Ashdon Villa football ground and then passed the Water Treatment works turning left towards Newham Hall Farm. Crossing the farm yard we had to be careful of the slurry covered surface, you just couldn't tell if you were going to tread in a hole and end up like The Vicar of Dibley, only muddier and possibly smellier. Crossing the next field, which was deceptively steep, we took a drink rest and



admired the view stretching over towards Bartlow and onto Balsham on the horizon.

I decided this would be a great place for photo of the group and they were all very obliging. However on returning home I found the camera had not worked. Subsequently we need a new camera. (I have used a photo from a November walk in Clare). Carrying onwards and upwards and downwards into Ashdon village crossing the road and past the church through some very muddy tracks and fields along the stream edge into Ashdon village centre.

A warm welcome awaited us at the Rose and Crown and the staff were absolutely splendid making sure we all had our drinks and meals as ordered.

We will definitely try this walk again in the Spring or Summer months as I'm sure it will look quite stunning with views of the countryside in full leaf.

We would like to give our many thanks to Helen McFeeley for coordinating the Wild Walkers group for over the past 10 years. She has done a terrific job of keeping us organised, informed and entertained. So Helen, from all of us Wild Walkers, a big THANK YOU! Wishing all Haverhill U3a members a happy New Year.

Jill and Alan Smith

Members Feedback

Reading (and singing!!) Auussie Jingle Bells reminded me of our first Christmas in Australia.

When I was 10 my 2 older sisters, my parents and I emigrated to Australia. We were luckier than many because Dad had been sponsored. His company had paid for a short term rent in a suburb called Hurstville not far from Botany Bay.

It was early November 1963 and the comparison of our last winter and the early Australian summer was mind blowing. We were not prepared for the extremity of the heat or the insect, spider or other wildlife.

As a young kid I was fascinated, but my poor older sister was not! A few days after we arrived a tremendous scream came from her bedroom. My parents closely followed by my middle sister and I rushed in. Janet: "there was a spider, it's

enormous, size of my hand!" My mother: "don't exaggerate, spider are not that big!"

Next day my mum was sorting out the washing in her bedroom. From her pinney pocket (remember those) out crawled the tarantula, behold my father spraying it with fly spray as it drunkenly crawled away! Jenny and I started the convent school at the top of the road not long after and when we, as a family, met the Irish parish priest after Sunday Mass he invited us to come to tea on Christmas day. He was a famous eccentric and his Christmas nativity crib had real animals...wallabies! So Christmas Day arrived my mother made up a picnic and went to the beach in Botany Bay (it had a shark net to keep swimmers from becoming the sharks' Christmas lunch).

We came home and opened a few presents and had our dinner in the presbytery with the 3 priests who gave us a small present each. It was a lovely day.

Marie Karim

History Group December Trip

On the very frosty and cold first of December the History Group walked the Talbot Trail in Sudbury. Although all the members had visited Sudbury many times before, many had never noticed the red iron posts surmounted by brass statuettes commemorating events that took place in previous centuries. There are fourteen in all illustrating a variety of notable occurrences, such as the 'Running Boy' James Bigmore, who in 1879 ran beside a coach all the way to Norwich, 'Blondin' the famous tightrope walker who in 1872 pushed a local man in a wheelbarrow across a rope suspended across the yard of the Anchor Inn and Lady Amicia de Clare who founded a hospital beside Ballingdon Bridge and also paid for a new bridge to be built in the 12th century. The trail is well worth following with guides available from the information centre in Gaol Lane.

The walk visited St Gregory's church where the leader Peter Tatam had arranged a macabre surprise. The group were shown into the small vestry where in a small cupboard they keep the severed head of Bishop Simon of Sudbury! In the 14th Century he was Chancellor of the

Exchequer and Archbishop of Canterbury which made him very wealthy. His downfall, like later politicians, was introducing a poll-tax. This sparked the Peasants Revolt in 1381 and Simon was decapitated by the mob.



The end of the walk found the group of eighteen having an early Christmas lunch at the White Horse in North Street. We were well looked after and after a couple of hours headed home quite happy with the day.

Peter Tatam

Country casuals walk 21st November 2023

It was raining as we set out, so it was just as well we had chosen a route round Linton which was mainly pavement.

We started at the car park near the Health Clinic and went down to the Crown Inn, across the High Street and down Horn Lane past the Free Church. After crossing the river we past the half-timbered Guild Hall, one of the oldest buildings in the village, and through the church yard of St

Mary's Church. We went across Camping Close and passed the old water mill which is now converted into flats.

Travelling up Green Lane we noted the Manor House. From there we went back onto the High Street, eventually turning right onto Bartlow Road. We carried on passed a new building site until we were close to the new roundabout on the A1307. Turning left we went up along a field edge to Horseheath Road where we turned left again.

After for a few hundred yards we split the group into two parties, the first went up a lane on the right and then across a field to the Millennium Wood. There, numerous large fungi were seen but not identified. Coming out onto Balsham Road the first party went through a housing estate and along Back Road returning to the car park and the inn.

The other party went down Horseheath Road, the High Street and the car park and back to the warmth of the Crown Inn public house and lunch.

Keith and Frances Armes

London Originals

Thanks to Sandra for organising a memorable evening of light entertainment! First was that delicious dinner in the Duchess of Cambridge "The hostelry not H.R.H". Not a light meal, but it did offer food for thought, as we then had our annual planning meeting. There were plenty of good ideas for trips to be organised by members in the coming year.



Now, a short drive in the dark to Wimpole Hall, for their Christmas Lights. Even though our entry time was before 6pm, the car park was crowded.

Sandra must have had a hotline to the forecaster in the sky as the weather was clear, dry, and not particularly cold (unlike the preceding and succeeding weeks).

The light show was extensive and a varied mix of vast fields of coloured bulbs, a light tunnel and tableaux effects, including the illuminated house.

The staggered timings meant that the thousands of visitors were well spaced over the route, and the queues for hot drinks and food, and mallows to toast, were minimal.



The group had a most enjoyable couple of hours, before trying to find our cars, which had been at the end of the parking area, but unbeknown to us, further parks had been opened, and now our cars were somewhere in the middle!

Ian Johnson

Sunday Strollers

Our first walk of the New Year, 10 members enjoyed a pleasant 3 mile circular walk starting from East Town Park. Conditions underfoot were better than expected after the recent heavy rains.

Our next walk, on 11th February, will commence at 10.30am from the Kedington Social Centre car park and will be approx.3 miles.

David Jefferies

London Originals

With temperatures hovering round zero, we used our bus passes from Trumpington Park and Ride to Downing Street (The Cambridge one) to visit the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. We enjoyed the ground floor featuring the many archaeological treasures found in the area round Cambridge, including lost villages. What a contrast to go to the two upstairs galleries to find exhibits from round the globe,

including a giant totem pole and artefacts from Amazon rainforest tribes and Polynesian islands, brought back by early explorers.

After lunch at Wetherspoons Regal, we returned to Downing street, just round the corner, for the Sedgwick Museum of Life Sciences. There, we were greeted by a giant Iguanodon skeleton towering above us. The extensive fossil collection and reproductions of the variety of life forms before the advent of man on Earth, was indeed staggering. Then in a quiet corner there was a display dedicated to Darwin, from his three years as a theology student to his voyage on the Beagle, and written accounts of his discoveries and treatises which resulted in the revolutionary theories of natural selection.



Following afternoon tea in John Lewis we realised how lucky we were that the University had provided all this for free, and the whole visit had been confined to a quarter mile square.

Ian Johnson

Mud, Mud and More Mud 'n' grub

Nine intrepid members of the Mud 'n' grub group met on the second day of 2024 at the Swan Hotel in Thaxted. After deciding that the factor 50 sun screen wouldn't be necessary, we set forth on our 4.5 mile walk. The walk was organised and led by the rain maestro Tim Dowling.

We all held lots of post Christmas conversations on future holidays etc. that we were planning to remain positive as we dealt with the deluge from the skies; although very wet it wasn't too cold. Everyone was happy to be exercising and socialising again. We kept seeing the local

post lady in her van on her deliveries and had a friendly wave and a smile every time. I think she was laughing with us as opposed to at us?

Weather aside, we all agreed the area deserves a summer-time return.



Back to the Swan for lunch and after bagging the wet stuff in the cars we headed into the restaurant for our previously ordered lunch, replacing lost energy. Then back home avoiding the local floods and pot holes.

Flanders and Swann sent their apologies and added a verse!

*Mud, mud, glorious mud,
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood.
So follow me, follow, down to the hollow
And there let us wallow in glorious mud.*
Alan Smith

Next Meetings: Tuesday 30th January
Tuesday 27th February

Deadline for the Rolling Screen
Tuesday 20th February

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