

RECENT OPEN MEETINGS – with thanks to Pauline Adams

"Treading the Boards Off Stage" – Wayne Bennett

2017 got off to a great start with a fascinating talk in January by Wayne Bennett, a former stage manager at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Wayne grew up in North Wales, the oldest of four children, which, he claimed, "makes you a bit bossy", trains you in leadership skills and prepares you for a life as a stage manager at the Royal Opera House!



Originally a playhouse, in 1734 the first ballet was presented and a year later Handel's first season of operas began. The current building is the third on the site, following fires in 1808 and 1856, and only the facade, foyer and auditorium date from 1858 - almost every other element of the present complex dates from the 1990s.

Although giving the venue a unique and special atmosphere, the Royal Opera House's historical character causes problems too. Wayne spoke about the old, and modern, techniques used to put on a production, as well as the formidable talents who have worked there, both on and off stage.

"The Road to Mandalay" – Christine Shaw

The March Open Meeting heard about Christine Shaw's visit to Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) in Spring 2012. It was only the second such tour group to visit the country in recent years.

During her stay in Mandalay, Christine went on a trip to the longest teak footbridge in the world, the Ubein bridge, and later (in a backstreet garage!) enjoyed a play by the Moustache Brothers who had performed for Ang San Suu Kyi but also been imprisoned for their views.

Christine showed some of her beautiful photographs taken during her trip. She enjoyed a boat trip to visit villagers making exquisite crafts, and was captivated by the Shwedagon Pagoda. At over 300 feet high, gold plated, and with a diamond at its tip, the Shwedagon Pagoda was the highlight of Christine's trip.

BLANDFORD & DISTRICT U3A SUMMER 2017

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

I am going to keep these notes (fairly) brief as we are feeling the effects of Thelma Wood's retirement from the editorship of our acclaimed newsletter and for the time being will only have a quarterly news-sheet. Thelma enjoyed the creative nature of the job and so, I'm sure, will another member. If you can have internet and would enjoy the challenge of putting together four colourful and interesting newsletters each year with the input of fellow members, contact me for a chat.



A big thank you to all those members who attended the AGM at Durweston at the end of March – it was a brilliant turnout and we had a great speaker, Christine Shaw. Pauline Adams has put together reports on Christine's talk and Wayne Bennett's in January - full and unedited copies of Pauline's reports, plus our pre-Christmas meeting and reports from Historic Visits, are on the website www.blandfordu3a.co.uk where you will also find details on groups, upcoming events and committee contact numbers.

A piece of recent sad news was hearing that Don Herring, one of our founding members, has died. Don and the late Ian Taylor held the first meeting in the Corn Exchange to gauge interest among Blandford's residents - we owe a lot to Don for working so hard to ensure that B&D U3A flourished in those early years and send his family our heartfelt condolences at this time.

We had a lovely lunch at the Castleman Hotel & Restaurant in May and next on the social list is our upcoming Summer Party. An invitation is enclosed with this news-sheet – keep fingers crossed for some sunny weather and come along for a great few hours of quizzes, magic and a posh afternoon tea!

Have a great summer. *Christine Smith*

Start off every day with a smile and get it over with – W.C. Fields

Friday 30th June 2017

Open Meeting at Durweston Village Hall

Speaker: Adrian Green, Director of Salisbury Museum, on the life and times of General Augustus Pitt-Rivers, creator of The Larmer Tree Gardens

Timetable:

2.00pm	Meet, greet and seat
2.15pm	Welcome and notices
2.30pm	Speaker
3.15pm	Tea, cake and chat

£1 for refreshments – profits to Friends of Blandford Hospital
Book Exchange – bring old **paperbacks** and exchange for a new read

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

At the end of April we had another very successful Group Leaders' Meeting at Ashley Wood Golf Club with soup and sandwiches for lunch. The meeting is a good opportunity to meet and discuss the groups and any problems that might have arisen. We had only 19 group representatives attending and it is hoped the next meeting in Oct/Nov will see more being able to come – anyone from the group will be welcomed if the 'leader' is unable to be there.

The only new group to have started this year is Painting, which is going well with seven members. Please try and think of new subjects you would like and we will do our best to get a group going, but we can only do it with your help!



If any group has a waiting list please let me know so that we can look at starting up a second group. Likewise, if you feel that you have outgrown your current venue let me know and I will try to sort out a new one - there are a number of meeting rooms to hire in Blandford.

Pam Rees

GROUPS AND CONTACTS

American Square Dancing Koli Pluck 455627

Art History	Neil Houghton	857260
Bird-watching	Lorna Clark	722056
Book Group	Adrienne Shaw	450789
Bridge & Scrabble 2	Jean Palmer	450544
British Mythology	David Shepherd	860905
Craft	Marie Harris	453424
Criminal Law	Kevin Banks	454182
Cryptic Crosswords	John Rees	451673
Cycling	Peter Aldous	458510
Discussion 1	Bernadette Morley-Smith	453341
Discussion 2	Margaret Oliver	459319
French	Richard Pearson	488762
Garden Visits	Lynn Hawkey	455678
Genealogy (aka Family History)	John Rees	451673
Geology	Alison A'Court	453249
Historic Visits	Bridget Spiers	455081
History Group	Pat Ashworth	451557
History Research	Christine Smith	455113
Italian	Angela Warsany	861149
Latin 1	Gill Jackson	453376
Latin 2	Claire Smith	454182
Lunch Club	John Draper	455356
Mah Jong	Lynn Hawkey	455678
Medieval England	Auguste Shepherd	860905
Music Appreciation	Heather Rowland	454641
Painting <i>NEW</i>	Alan Dennis	454372
Poetry: Reading & Listening	Val Hodge	456498
Poetry 2	Heather Rowland	454641
Reading for Pleasure	Barbara Curtis	456367
Recorder Ensemble	Auguste Shepherd	860905
Russian	Chris Poole	454364
Scrabble 1	Shirley Lister	454748
Singing for Fun	Rachel Cook	452641
Spanish	Lin Bett	455569
Strollers	John Draper	455356
Theatre Goers 1	Thelma Wood	860191
Theatre Goers 2	Debbie Fuller	721306
Virtual Computer Group	David Shepherd	860905
Walking Group	Stuart McAinsh	459394
Welsh	Margaret Flood	880334
Writing for Pleasure	Thelma Wood	860191