

Ravenshead U3A Magazine



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



Ravenshead



“Are you going to sit there all day?”

Photographed by Alan Kirkham of the Ravenshead U3A Photography Group

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Welcome from the editor.

Welcome to our spring 2015 edition of the Ravenshead U3A magazine.

If you are reading this at our April meeting you will also be listening to our April speaker Dave Perry who will be telling us about his experiences showing at Crufts. But you may not know that one of our own U3A members has bred and shown champion dogs and has also received the ultimate accolade in the “doggy world” of being invited to judge at Crufts. I continue to be surprised and impressed by the range of interests and skills of our members! (To find out who this is turn to the article on page 4.)

Elsewhere in this edition you can read more about the history of Kighill Farm, check out the winning images from the Photographic Group and find out what some of our other groups have been doing.

Again thanks to all those who have contributed. We have had very positive feedback on the quality of our magazine from members of other U3As, so let's keep the standard high!

If you think you can produce an article for publishing in the next edition please submit it (preferably in a word processed format) to the editor, Judith Moore, by email or contact by phone

Deadline date for the next edition : **JUNE 21st, 2015**

Judith Moore (editor)

Philip Jones, David Morton (proof readers) Terry Moore (layout)

Ravenshead U3A Committee Contacts

Judith Moore	Chair	
Bob Ford	Vice-Chair	
Peter York	Treasurer	
Paul Craddock	Business Secretary	
Ivan McNulty	Membership Secretary	
Philip Jones	Coffee and Conversation	
Kate Asquith	Speaker Finder	
Alan Paul	Web Editor	
Alan Walker	Visits Coordinator	
Lesley Green	Committee Member	
Keith Adams	Committee Member	

Co-opted members: Val Ford, Groups Coordinator
Margaret Craddock, Minutes Secretary

By Invitation: Sue Owen, Welfare Terry Moore, Publications

Thoughts from the Chair!



It's almost that time again, when we mark another year in the life of Ravenshead U3A with our AGM. As before we will see some changes in the committee with some long-serving members stepping down and, hopefully, others stepping in to take their place. The committee meets once a month on the third Tuesday. You can read the roles and responsibilities document on the committee page of our website. We look forward to welcoming new members and hope that they will bring fresh ideas and insights into the role.

Another popular aspect of our AGM is the participation of our groups. It is a chance for groups to showcase their talents either in performance or in displays and we look forward to this year's contributions. Last year saw the inaugural performance of our guitar group, U3Acoustics at the start of their world tour (!) and the first outing of the play-reading group as well as several games and displays. For further details about the AGM please read the information below.

Judith Moore, Ravenshead U3A Chair

Our Annual General Meeting

Each year we hold our AGM on the second Tuesday of June, this year the meeting is on 9th June. We try to minimise the formal parts of the AGM but maximise the fun side with our interest groups putting on displays of their work and the performance groups entertaining us.

Our U3A has a formal constitution that requires us to retire one third of the executive committee each year. This element is essential to ensure we keep our committee refreshed with new ideas. The work of the committee is not onerous, but is necessary to keep our U3A flourishing and growing. The members of the committee can stand for re-election for up to three terms of office, the Treasurer for up to five terms. However, all committee roles have to go through the formal election process at each AGM. This is your chance to have a say in how our U3A is run. It also gives YOU the opportunity to seek election or to nominate others who you feel have a valuable contribution to make to the committee.

We do need your input to our AGM so please think carefully about becoming a member of our executive committee. Everyone has new ideas and experience that are essential components required to move Ravenshead U3A forward and keep us growing. Nomination papers are available from committee members. The closing date for nominations is April 24th.

Paul Craddock, Ravenshead U3A Business Secretary

GONE TO THE DOGS

Dogs come in all shapes and sizes, from the knot on the end of a lead like a Chihuahua to the pony-like Irish wolfhound, with different characteristics from the quiet and gentle to the rough-and-tumble, and the shaggy amiable through to the smart jet-set.

From a very early age, so I have been told, I have been fascinated by them, and spent my early years drawing pictures of dogs, mainly our family scruff of a dog. He was supposed to be a sort of guard dog, but he never realised that. He enjoyed lying around and we had to be careful not to trip over him as he spent most of his time resting and being very placid. I remember refusing to go on holiday without him.

Then I saw someone with a pedigree red Irish setter when I was about 8 years old and thought I would love to have such a beautiful animal, as previously we were used to seeing farm collies and nothing as glamorous as this Irish setter.

Since then I have owned and bred only pedigree dogs, many of which I have shown at championship shows, and some have become champions. I suppose my ultimate experience was when I was asked to judge at Crufts. It is very rewarding to see a sound healthy dog with the right breed standard do well.

As to dog showing, not only do the dogs come in all shapes and sizes, so do their owners, and when watching dog shows it is just as fascinating seeing the owners. Quite often it is said that owners and dogs look alike and match each other!

But of course the opposite can also be true; I have seen a very tall person showing



Mary Adams (centre) at Crufts with two of her main winners and their handlers.

a Yorkshire terrier, and there can be nothing stranger than seeing a small person showing a wolfhound. As part of the judging requires seeing the dog in movement, the dog and owner have to take each other round the ring. Sometimes if you have a boisterous dog he takes control and the owner is left in the dog's wake, not being as fit as the dog. On the other hand the reverse can happen when for example the dog is reluctant and the owner struggles to encourage him. The idea is that both dog and owner create a harmonious, fluent picture; easier said than done!

From an exhibitor's point of view, we naturally hope to win with our much loved dog, an impossible task since there can only be one winner to each class. We are all biased towards our own dogs and frequently question the judge's sanity when and if our own dog does not get placed or win, human nature being what it is! The plus side of dog showing is that you meet some lovely dedicated dog lovers over the years, some of whom become life-long friends.

I have owned many dogs, and over the years inevitably losing them due to their old age, which can be heart-breaking. With dogs one experiences the joys of a dog's companionship throughout life's ups and downs. They catch one's mood, sad, happy, or in-between, never judge you, listen to you, and are always there for you with a friendly lick!

Mary Adams, U3A member

Can you name these dog breeds? Answers on page 15.

1. 	2. 	3. 	4. 
5. 	6. 	7. 	8. 
9. 	10. 	11. 	12. 

Ravenshead U3A Photographic Group

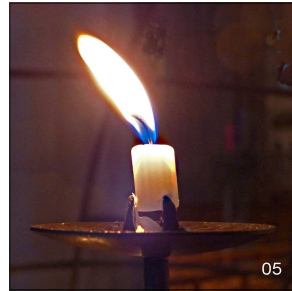
The Photographic Group started 2015 on a very buoyant note with great attendances in January and February. The group is now closed to new members so that there is time for current members to receive their desired amount of help and technical guidance.

This year we have started our monthly, theme-based competitions. The reaction has been very enthusiastic with 17 entries in January on the theme of “Close-up” images and 29 in February on a wide range of “Statues and Stonework”. Some of the images that earned a certificate for the winning photographers can be seen here :

January: **CLOSE—UP**



1st David Combs for “Common Garden Spider”



2nd Alan Kirkham for “A Light to Lighten the Darkness”

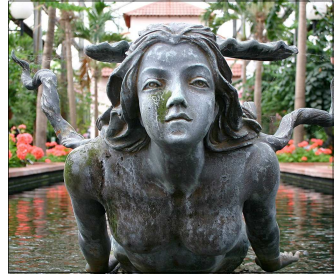
Everyone present at a monthly meeting, except Glynne and Dennis, votes for what they consider to be the best three shots. The intention is that all of these first, second and third placed images will be shown at the 2016 AGM. March’s theme of a “Rainy Day” will present a different kind of challenge and we are hoping to see people, umbrellas and reflections in the mix.

All members originally joined to improve their knowledge and expertise and so the second part of each monthly meeting is devoted to more technical matters. Tutorials on the ways to improve the look of photographs by simply making adjustments on the computer are often the order of the day. There is wide range of expertise within the group but not

February: STATUES and STONEWORK



1st Peter Bullock with "Fish Again"



2nd David Combs with "Home from the Sea"

everyone is interested in a result of ultimate quality. On occasion this makes it difficult to pitch the help at the right level for everyone attending. However, outside of the meetings, Glynne Payze generously offers tuition, on a one-to-one basis if desired, on any aspect of camera usage, adjustments to images using appropriate software or on photography in general.

We have, in the past, organized days out for members but arriving at a

mutually agreeable date for a given trip has proved problematic. However, we hope that small groups of like-minded photographers will collaborate amongst themselves in setting up a day out. If they then post the date, time and location on line, anyone in the Group who is interested and available can join the trip.

In future programmes, we hope to cover a few more of the intangible skills associated with photography such as composition, creativity, style and perspective etc. Photography is both an art and a craft and it is the combination of those two aspects that helps to develop a personal style. "Art is seeing and feeling and craft is doing" (Bert Eifer). Mastering some of that art can lead to better images which, in the long run, gives far more satisfaction to an individual photographer.

Like-minded people gathered together in an organization, like our U3A group, feed off each other and this leads to greater knowledge and understanding of the subject. Enthusiasm for that kind of interaction is now taking hold in our Ravenshead Photographic Group and we look forward to seeing some of the images that will eventually be produced.

Dennis Harvey, Photographic Group Leader

More games we play!

In the first edition of our magazine we included an article entitled "The games we play" which described the games then on offer: Bridge, Chess and Backgammon, Mahjong and Scrabble.. Since then Rummikub has been added and two new groups have been set up so members can enjoy Canasta and Cribbage. Here then is a brief description of these popular games.

Canasta (Spanish for "basket") is a card game of the rummy family of games believed to be a variant of 500 Rum. Although many variations exist for two, three, five or six players, it is most commonly played by four in two partnerships with two standard decks of cards. Players attempt to make melds of seven cards of the same rank and "go out" by playing all cards in their hand. It is the only partnership member of the family of rummy games to achieve the status of a classic.

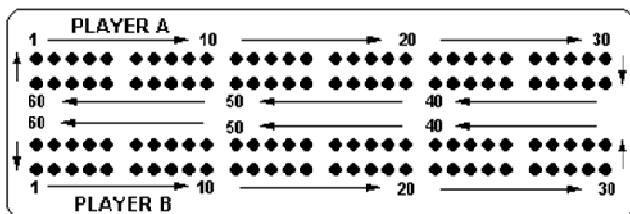


The game of Canasta was devised by Segundo Santos and Alberto Serrato in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1939. In the 1940s the game quickly spread in myriad variations to Chile, Peru, Brazil and Argentina, where its rules were further refined before being introduced to the United States in 1948, where it was then referred to as the Argentine Rummy and quickly became a card-craze boom in the 1950s.

Cribbage, or crib, is a card game traditionally for two players, but commonly played with three, four, or more, that involves playing and grouping cards in combinations which gain points. Cribbage is known for its scoring board – a series of holes ("streets") on which the score is tallied with pegs (also known as "spilikins" . Other distinctive features are the crib or box (a separate hand counting for the dealer), two distinct scoring stages (the play and the show) and a unique scoring system including points for groups of cards that total fifteen.

According to John Aubrey, cribbage was created by the English poet Sir John Suckling in the early 17th century, as a derivation of the game "noddy". While noddy has disappeared, crib has survived, virtually unchanged, as one of the most popular games in the English-speaking world.

The objective of the game is to be the first player to score a target number of points, typically 61 or 121.



Points are scored for card combinations that add up to fifteen, and for pairs, triples, quadruples, runs, and flushes.

Cribbage holds a special place among American submariners, serving as an "official" pastime. The wardroom of the oldest active submarine in the United States Pacific Fleet carries the personal cribbage board of World War II submarine commander and Medal of Honor recipient Rear Admiral Dick O'Kane on board, and upon the boat's decommissioning the board is transferred to the next oldest boat.

Rummikub is a tile-based game for two to four players, combining elements of the card game rummy and mahjong.

Rummikub was invented by Ephraim Hertzano, a Romanian-born Jew, who immigrated to mandate Palestine in the early 1930s. He hand-made the first sets with his family in the backyard of his home. Hertzano sold the first sets door-to-door and on a consignment basis at small



shops. Over the years, the family licensed it to other countries and it became Israel's number 1 export game. In 1977, it became a bestselling game in the United States.

Rummikub's main component is a pool of tiles, consisting of 104 number tiles and two or more joker tiles. The number tiles range in value from one to thirteen, in four colours (black, yellow, blue and red, or other). Each combination of colour and number is represented twice. Players each have a rack (container) to store tiles, without revealing the face of the tiles to the other players. Rummikub can also be played with two decks of 52 standard playing cards, plus two of the four jokers.

Our Canasta group meets at 2p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. We play Cribbage and Rummikub (alongside Scrabble) on Tuesdays at 10a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Notice Board

Do you have an interest that you would like to share with other members? You can use this notice board to post messages.

- Interested in trying Petanque (French boules)? A taster session is available at Nottingham City Petanque Club if anyone is interested.

Contact Val Ford XXXXXXXXXXXX

To post a message contact the Editor

RAVENSHEAD U3A – INTEREST GROUPS

Group Name	Leader	Phone	Meeting day and Time	Location	Full
Angling	Lionel Castle		Please ring for details		No
Art (Watercolour)	Audrey Leech		2 nd Monday 1.30-4.00	Brammer Room	No
Art Gallery/Museum	Antony Gordon		Various visits arranged	Please contact for details	No
Bird watching	Peter York		Usually once a month	Please contact for details	No
Canasta	Enid Thomas		2 nd & 4 th Tues 2.00-4.00	Brammer Room	No
Chess and Backgammon	Jan Fraser		1 st & 3 rd Mon 10.00-12.00	Home	No
Computing Beginners	Alan Paul		Mon 2.00 and Thurs 9.30	Alan Paul's house	No
Craft Workshops	Kate Asquith		Thursday 10.00-12.00	Kate's House (Please ring for details)	No
Creative Writing	Villia Bullock		4 th Fri 2.00-4.00	Members Homes	No
Current Affairs	Carol Wright		3 rd Wed 2.00-3.30	Brammer Room	No
Family History	Barbara Jukes		4 th Tue 10.00-12.00	Blidworth Methodist Church	No
Folk Dancing	Mike & Mary Adams		2 nd & 4 th Mon 2.00-4.00	Ravenshead Village Hall	No
French Conversation	Brian Machin		1 st & 3 rd Mon 10.00-11.30	Please ring for details	Full
French Conversation 2	Anick Spence		1 st & 3 rd Mon 2.00-4.00	Anick's house	No
Gardening	Peter & Sue York		Please ring for details or see website	Brammer Room	No
Guitar	John Bewick		1 st & 3 rd Thur 10.00-12.00	Church Lounge	No
Hikers (5 – 8 miles)	Steve Hargreaves			Please ring for details	No
Knitting & Crochet	Anne Lovegrove Liz Corner		1 st & 3 rd Fri – 2.00-4.00	Brammer Room	No
Local History	Philip Jones		2 nd Tues – 2.00-4.00	Kighill Farm	No
Luncheon Club	Chris Dean			Please ring for details	No

Group Name	Leader	Phone	Meeting day and Time	Location	Full
Mah Jong	Judy Bragg		1 st & 3 rd Tues 1.30-3.30	Brammer Room	No
Music Appreciation 1	John Harvey		2 nd Tues 2.00-4.00	Members' Homes	Full
Music Appreciation 3	Fay Garrison		3 rd Tues 1.30 – 3.00	Members' Homes	No
Occasional Visits	Alan and Judy Walker			Please see website, or info at monthly meeting	
Pastels	Wanda Parker		Gp 1 Wed 10.00-12.00 Gp 2 Frid 10.00-12.00	Please ring for details	Full No
Photography	Dennis Harvey Glynne Payze		Last Wed in month 2.00	Brammer Room	Full
Play Reading Group	Alan Kirkham		2 nd Wed 2.00	Members' Homes	No
Reading Group 1	Carol Payze		3 rd Tues 2.00	Carol's house	No
Reading Group 2	Pat Brown		3 rd Tues 2.30	Members' homes	Full
Scrabble, Rumikubs and Cribbage	Susanne Smith Leslie & Rhoda Newey		3 rd Tues 10am 1 st Tues 7.30-9.30pm	Brammer Room Brammer Room	No No
Singing for Fun	Graham Jukes		4 th Thurs 10.00-11.30	Blidworth Methodist Church	No
Thursday Walks	Paul & Margaret Craddock		2 nd & 4 th Thurs – 1.30 prompt start	Details on website or contact Paul & Margaret	No
Weekenders	Sue Owen Maria Gabrielczyk		Various visits and events	Please ring for info	No
Wine Group 1	Lionel Castle		3 rd Friday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 2	Brenda Beale		3 rd Tues	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 3	Michael Neville		2 nd Monday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 4	Judy Vaughan		3 rd Tuesday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 5	Sue Tidbury		1 st Wednesday	Members' homes	Full
Yoga 2	Bob Ford		Wkly 2.00-3.30 Tues	Village Hall	No
Yoga 3	Bob Ford		Wkly 10.00-11.30 Friday	Village Hall	No

More from the farm

The continuing tale of Kighill Farm

In our last edition Sue shared some of her early memories of living on Papplewick Lane, Linby and later on Longdale Lane. Her story continues with the move to Kighill Farm.....

Howard and Clarice Burton purchased Kighill Farm, Linby in 1956, complete with large dew pond and cottages with two sets of tenants paying 6s8d per week. Daisy Clarke and her daughter lived in the front cottage and the Minckley family in the back - George, Annie and three children. The water at that time came from the artesian well at the top of Kighill Lane and the toilets were in an outhouse (no flush). Dad managed to get the cottages condemned but asked that the building remain to be used for an agricultural store. The families were to be re-homed in council houses in Calverton on Pepper Road.

There was an oak tree near the gate and Dad hung a piece of rope on one of the branches with a stick through so that we could swing out over the dew pond. Unfortunately that was not to last as the dew pond was eventually filled in by dustbin lorries and, when Brookers sold up, all their baking tins etc. helped to complete the task. This is where our hens and ducks live now.

Pine View was sold to help fund the building of the bungalow and our house on Papplewick Lane was also sold. Mum and Dad dug the foundations for the bungalow themselves as money was "tight". When the building was almost complete we moved in, as the people who bought our house on Papplewick Lane insisted we move out as soon as possible. The joiner was still putting on skirting boards and doors and the decorator was painting them. It was decided not to have an electric cooker. Mum had always been used to gas anyway and there was no gas in the area so we had a Sunbeam solid fuel (coal) cooker. Baking bread was a nightmare so eventually Mum succumbed to having the inevitable electric cooker. There was still no mains water and when the pumps broke down we had water carts delivering water. Dad had churns of water which he had filled at the Papplewick pumping station as they would not deliver sufficient water for the animals. Dad was aware of the water problem so when the bungalow was built he had two large water tanks installed so that we always had sufficient water for the bath but you could not use much. Flushing the toilet was banned if you only had a wee (too much information). I still cringe at wasting water down the sink waiting for the hot water to come through. It usually goes in a jug and I water the plants. Thank goodness for mains water and mains sewerage but we still do not have mains gas onto the property.

Just after we moved into the bungalow a young couple moved in next door and lived in a converted railway carriage with a baby. Eventually a bungalow was built but they still had to live in part of the carriage until the bungalow was completed.

At that time a lot of the property in the area consisted of converted railway carriages and shacks. As there were no schools locally I travelled to Hucknall every day on the B8 blue bus from the top of Blidworth Way to Hucknall Byron. Mum took me to the bus stop every day and picked me up in the evening. I was not allowed to take further exams to go to technical college as this would have meant going to Eastwood and there was no transport provided. Personally I was pleased as this would have meant losing my school friends and I had already lost my friends from Papplewick Lane.



Sue Owen, Ravenshead U3A member

Book Review: Before I Go to Sleep by S J Watson.



This is a very impressive first novel written by the author between shifts when he worked as an audiologist in the N.H.S.

Before I Go to Sleep is a fascinating psychological thriller about a woman suffering from amnesia so severe that she wakes each morning with no recollection of the previous day's events and no recognition of the people around her. The story is utterly convincing, set as it is in ordinary life in suburbia. The plot unfolds slowly as the woman learns to keep a journal of each day's happenings and make notes about the people she meets. Small clues emerge which leave her more bewildered than ever.

Once started the book is hard to put down and will leave the reader looking back to see what clues had been missed. It is a great read for those who love puzzling over a good mystery.

Pat Brown, Ravenshead U3A Reading Group 2 leader

Hiking with History - Our Hikers Group

By the time this goes to print we have grown from one to around thirty enthusiastic members, from November 2014 until February 2015, an excellent beginning for our group.



The first photograph shows our group members congregated at the Delves Wood Statue commemorating the Eakring oilfield exploration/extraction.

In 1939 forty two 'all American' roughnecks from Oklahoma U.S.A, came to the U.K .on a secret and clandestine World War II mission to establish the first U.K. mainland oilfield.

Between 1939 and 1945 they drilled and began extracting crude oil from the geological deposits underneath Eakring, a vital war effort to supply Britain with oil to support our WWII effort.

Since supply lines of crude/refined oil from the US were consistently torpedoed and sunk by German U boats, the war effort demanded an independent oil supply at whatever cost.

The roughnecks worked without wages and on expenses only for the time of the project, no doubt impressing many locals with their claims of Hollywood Film production, ample supplies of 15 denier stockings and rich Virginia tobacco.

Of the forty two Oklahomans seconded to this war time mission thirty nine returned home and I assume three remained and settled in the U.K.

In its lifetime in excess of 2,000,000 barrels of oil was extracted from the Eakring oilfield and in 1966 it was donated by British Petroleum 'BP,' to the Woodland Trust and is now designated as the Delves Wood Nature Reserve.

The second photograph shows Hikers congregated in front of the Pulpit Ash, a point from which the new priest of Eakring (AD1670) preached to his parishioners . Because of his family links to Eyam and the suspicion of the influence of the Black



Plague it's claimed he was petitioned to preach on the outskirts of Eakring at this very location. However records of the Eakring Parish church imply that the church structure and building may not have been fit for purpose. (Health and Safety may well have existed in the mid 17th century!)

Additional information can be found at <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/eakring/hhistory.php>

William Mompesson remarried after losing his first wife to the epidemic of bubonic plague that had devastated his previous parish of Eyam in Derbyshire. His new wife was related, through her mother, to the Saviles. He had held the neighbouring living of Bilsthorpe in plurality with Eyam and continued to hold it with Eakring.

On his arrival in his new parish he found the church in a seriously damaged condition and the parsonage house barely habitable. The church was a dangerous and uncomfortable place to be in that year. There were two breaches in the south wall of the building, which could be remedied only by rebuilding, and rain came through the roof at several points. This same roof needed to be supported in five places to compensate for its decayed timbers. The window frames were damaged, the glazing destroyed and the floor paving was broken and incomplete. It would not be possible to salvage any of the timbers in the building.

Steve Hargreaves, Hikers Group Leader

Dog breeds : Answers

- 1.Beagle; 2.Boxer; 3. Basset Hound; 4. English Bulldog; 5. Doberman; 6.Pug;
- 7.Springer Spaniel; 8. Yorkshire Terrier; 9. Husky; 10. Mastiff. 11. Giant Schnauzer;
12. Chocolate Labrador Retriever

Remember December

On 16th December over a hundred members of Ravenshead U3A gathered at the Hostess Restaurant in Sookholme to celebrate at our "Christmas Bash". Here are a few memories of the occasion.



A night (or two) at the theatre

Top Hat : On 5th November 2014 twenty four U3A members made their own way to Nottingham Theatre Royal for a matinee performance of Top Hat. This show started life as a film back in 1934 starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. On this tour the parts were played brilliantly by Ian Burkitt and Charlotte Gooch.



Top Hat tells the story of Broadway sensation Jerry Travers who dances his way across Europe to win the heart of society girl Dale Tremont. It is an uplifting and hilarious romantic comedy celebrating 1930s song, style and romance. The stage show loses none of the charm and sheer exuberance of the film and includes some fantastic musical numbers including 'Isn't this a Lovely Day to be Caught in the Rain', 'Top Hat, White Tie and Tails', 'Dancing Cheek to Cheek' and 'Lets Face the Music and Dance'. There are also some wonderful dance routines and as the Ginger Rogers character says she does exactly the same steps as Fred but in reverse and in high heels! Everyone seemed to enjoy the show and I know Alan and I most certainly did and would actually see it again.

Barnum: 4th February 2015 saw thirty two members go to Theatre Royal Nottingham to see Barnum – fifteen travelling by the Village Mini Bus. This was a very lively show with some wonderful music – not so well known as the Top Hat music but no less enjoyable for that.



Brian Conley starred as Phineas T Barnum – a circus entertainer who later joined with Bailey to form Barnum and Bailey Circuses and who was famously known as America's greatest showman. The musical opened on Broadway in 1980 before transferring to the West End with Michael Crawford in the title role.

Brian Conley admits that this is a very physically demanding role which involves him walking a high wire whilst singing. In an interview for the Nottingham Post he says "I broke my finger and sprained my ankle pretty badly during rehearsals when I was on the wire at its full height which is eight foot off the ground." Luckily Brian managed to avoid any mishaps during this performance but another cast member was not so lucky! During the second half of the performance there was an accident on stage and this caused a thirty minute delay in the performance whilst paramedics came with an ambulance to take the injured cast member away.

Fortunately Eve, the driver of the mini bus, was very patient and waited even though the Traffic Warden was hovering, but after an explanation of the problem he was fine.

Judy Walker Ravenshead U3A member

Arek Hersh MBE

At our monthly meeting on March 10th 177 members of Ravenshead U3A filled St. Peter's Church to listen to Arek Hersh deliver an inspirational talk about his personal history as a young Polish Jew caught up in the horror that was the Holocaust. His is a story of survival, of tragedy and ultimately of the strength of the human spirit. Seventy years on from the liberation of Auschwitz we know that soon there will be no more personal testimony of witnesses who survived. Arek gives talks to groups of all ages and in 2009 he was awarded an MBE for voluntary service to Holocaust Education.



This then is his story.

Arek Hersh was born in the garrison town of Sieradz, Poland in 1928, fourth in a family of five children. In 1939 when he was eleven years old the first enforced migration of German Jews into Poland gave an indication of the inhumanity of the Nazis although it was difficult to understand or predict the horror which was to come. By September 1939 the German army had invaded Poland, and Britain and France had declared war on Germany. For the Jewish communities of Europe life had changed for ever.

Arek and his family moved to Lodz where they stayed with relatives. Before long, however the heavy bombing of this industrial town heralded the arrival of columns of German soldiers. Very soon the brutal treatment of the Jewish people began and Arek's father decided to take his family back to Sieradz. Here the Germans had begun to round up Jewish men and boys in the street and some were transported to work camps. At eleven years old Arek himself was taken by train to a camp called Otoschno. Here he survived beatings, near starvation and working days of up to fourteen hours. Eventually he was chosen to work in the kitchen, a decision which was to save his life! He witnessed the early murders of other prisoners in gas filled lorries. He was made to help take down the corpses of hanged prisoners. He was thirteen years old!

Amazingly, in the spring of 1942, Arek was allowed home to Sieradz. Although he was reunited with his family their joy did not last long as now all the remaining Jews in the town were rounded up and marched to the Kloister church where a few were selected for work. Arek left his mother and siblings to look for water. Outside the church he was asked whether he had a trade. He answered that he was a tailor. This was a lie but meant that he was selected for work and sent to the Lodz ghetto. Later Arek learned that all those left behind, including his mother, sister and brother had been taken to the Chelmno extermination camp and murdered.

Life in the Lodz ghetto was harsh. Periodically groups of Jewish people were “relocated” to the extermination camps. Arek spent some time in a Jewish orphanage but by June 1944 rumours of the advancing Russian armies prompted the liquidation of the ghetto. One hundred and eighty five children were taken from the orphanage and marched to the railway station where they were loaded onto cattle wagons. Fifteen year old Arek was on his way to Birkenhau, Auschwitz.

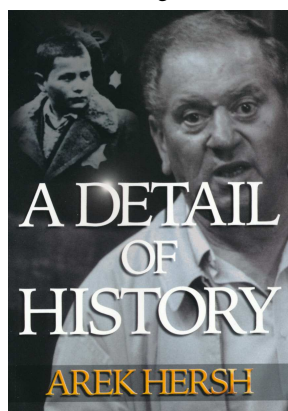
On arrival at the camp the surviving children faced the selection process. Like the other children Arek was placed in the left hand row but took advantage of a commotion to slip over to the right. Still not fully aware that he had saved himself from certain death in the gas chambers he shuffled in through the gates of the camp.....

Although he survived Auschwitz Arek endured two forced marches and internment in Buchenwald and Teresienstadt before being finally liberated on May 8th 1945. After the war Arek was amongst three hundred child Holocaust survivors who were brought to Windermere in the Lake District.

He met his wife Jean at a dance and together they have three daughters. They now live near Leeds.

Arek Hersh was one of eleven out of 2,500 to survive the Otoschno camp, the only one of 185 boys from his orphanage to survive Auschwitz. Of his immediate family only one sister survived. He says , "Somehow I survived, somehow I lived to tell the tale. In the time I have left, I feel I must tell it some more."

Arek's book, "A Detail of History" published by Quill Press in association with the Holocaust Centre documents his experiences in more detail. ISBN 0-9536280-5-1 All profits go to the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre near Newark.



Judith Moore Ravenshead U3A Chair and Magazine Editor

Dates for Your Diary

(check website for latest information)

Monthly Meetings

(10.00 a.m. St. Peter's Church, Ravenshead)

Tue May 12th	You and the Law. Speaker: Richard Howard
Tue Jun 9th	Annual General Meeting.
Tue Jul 14th	It's better than working for a living. Speaker: Canon Alan Haydock.
Tue Aug 11th	The work of the Air Ambulance. Speaker: to be advised.

Social Events

Coffee and Conversation, commencing 10am.

Dates: (MONDAYS) 20th April; 18th May; 15th June; 20th July; 17th August

Venue: Room 3, St. Peter's Centre. (Note change of venue).

Sun August 2nd Summer Luncheon, St. Peter's centre.

Occasional Visits

*Details on website **Occasional Visits** page.*

Wed Jul 1st 2015	Hampton Court Flower Show
Wed Jul 22nd 2015	Highclere Castle:now fully booked but we will start a waiting list – contact Alan or Judy on 793895
Wed August 12th 2015	Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre near Newark.
Mon 7 th September 2015	Eltham Palace. Names and deposits will be taken at the May meeting or call 793895



The current committee at the March meeting.