

Ravenshead U3A Magazine



Spring Arrives in Ravenshead (photograph by Terry Moore)

Issue No 13: Spring 2017

Charity Number : 1154123

Website : www.u3asites.org.uk/ravenshead

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Welcome from the Editor

Our regular “Spotlight” feature this issue recognises the fairly newly established Latin Group and the Play-reading Group which has been going for three years. We also enjoy celebrating the various life experiences of our members and this time we can read about Marjorie Eyres’ “fashionable life” and Patrick Ellis’ interest in Sweden and Swedish industry. Patrick has been a regular contributor to this magazine and is a man of many talents!

Thanks to Terry Moore who braved a very windy morning to go out and capture the photographs which he has combined into the spring photo on the cover. (As I write this the rain is pouring down and if spring had indeed arrived in Ravenshead it seems to have changed its mind and departed!)

Thank you to all the contributors who have submitted items for our magazine. We hope you will enjoy reading it, and maybe be inspired to write something for the next issue. We are interested in your feedback and ideas for the future: please send contributions (preferably in a word processed format) to the editor, Judith Moore, by email **XXXXXXXXXX** or by phone (number below). Closing date for the summer issue is July 1st 2017.

**Judith Moore (editor) Philip Jones, David Morton (proof readers)
Terry Moore (desktop publishing)**

Ravenshead U3A Committee

Judith Moore	Chair
Lesley Green	Vice-Chair
Alan Wilson	Treasurer
Maria Gabrielczyk	Business Secretary
Sue Owen	Membership Secretary
Phil Asquith	Groups Coordinator
Val Ford,	Deputy Groups Coordinator
Diane Rumsey	Speaker Finder
Steve Hargreaves	Trips and Visits Coordinator
Alan Paul	Web Editor.
Terry Moore	Publications and cloud storage

Contact Ravenshead U3A committee members via the CONTACT page of our website .

Or Freephone: 0300 030 2990

Thoughts from the Chair



As I write this it looks as though spring may have arrived at last, and we can look forward to lighter nights and warmer days. However, time passes quickly and June and the AGM will very soon be here. As before we will see changes in the committee with some members stepping down and, hopefully, others stepping in to take their place. This year there will be three vacancies as three committee members step down, including myself. This June I will have completed my three years as Chair of Ravenshead U3A and hopefully the role will pass to Lesley Green who currently serves as Vice Chair. Phil Asquith, who has served as Groups Coordinator will be leaving the committee, and another vacancy arises following the resignation of Ken White during the year.

Why not apply to join us as a Ravenshead U3A committee member and have your say as to how our U3A is run? You can pick up a nomination form at our monthly meeting or contact any committee member. **ALL NOMINATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE TO BE WITH THE BUSINESS SECRETARY BY FRIDAY 19TH MAY 2017**

We look forward to welcoming new committee members at our meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. Initially newly appointed committee members can be mentored by existing trustees so if you are interested in a particular role you will have a chance to get to know the relevant responsibilities. A full induction session on the general duties of trustees will be given. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the committee and will keep in contact as I continue to edit and produce this magazine. Please read the AGM agenda which follows.

Judith Moore, Ravenshead U3A Chair



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



Ravenshead



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE RAVENSHEAD U3A
WILL TAKE PLACE ON
Tuesday 13 June 2017 at 10 a.m.
at St Peter's Church, Ravenshead
*AGENDA on the next page***



Annual General Meeting Ravenshead U3A AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the AGM on 14 June 2016
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman's Report on behalf of the Trustees
6. To receive the annual accounts for 2016
7. To approve the appointment of an Independent Examiner – proposal that local member Ralph Chapman (Principal HMRC ret'd) be appointed
8. Motions (to be lodged with Business Secretary by 19 May 2017)
9. Election of the Committee for 2017/18

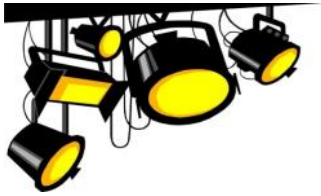
VOTING

REFRESHMENTS

PRESENTATIONS

10. Election results
11. Date of next AGM - Tuesday 12 June 2018 at 10 a.m. (to be confirmed)

As usual our June meeting and AGM gives us a chance to celebrate the activities of our groups. Following the business part of our meeting we will adjourn to the Centre where some of our groups will be displaying their work or demonstrating their skills. We are looking forward to presentations from the photography group giving us a chance to see a selection of some of their best photographs from the past year. There may be a chance to admire the work of the arts or crafts groups or join in some of the board games. Group leaders will be on hand to answer questions or provide information.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE Play Reading Group



The Play Reading Group started in spring 2014 and had its first public performance at that year's AGM. We meet in members' homes every month and our meetings are a social occasion with nibbles and drinks provided by the host. Recently a degree of competition seems to be creeping in as the biscuits and cakes are becoming more numerous and mouth-watering.

We have attempted a variety of styles of material since we first formed. Although in the main performing light-hearted works, with comedies and farces being read more often than any other type of play, we have tackled more serious stuff including Shakespeare, Dickens, Agatha Christie and Terence Rattigan. We sight-read the plays which leads to some hilarious moments when something inadvertently comes out which isn't in the script or when the unfortunate reader misinterprets the sense of what's written. We all do it at some time or another and it's always taken in good humour. Although few of us are accomplished actors we have accepted invitations to perform at U3A AGMs and once at the Christmas Bash. From the beginning though we have always faced a problem as we have more ladies than men. Most scripts have more male than female parts so the ladies have to adopt deep voices on occasions. At present we have just two men out of nine members, so we would like to recruit more into our group. So how about it you chaps? You don't have to be an actor, you just have to be able and willing to read out loud. I can promise that you will enjoy it. We meet the day after the monthly U3A meeting (always a Wednesday).



Why not come along to our next meeting and give it a try?

Alan Kirkham, Ravenshead U3A member

Telephone: xxxxxxxxxx

Science and Technology Group visit to Linneys in Mansfield

On the strength of an introduction by our U3A member John Bewick, the Science and Technology group had a very interesting afternoon visiting Linneys. We were cordially welcomed by Miles Linney in his newly occupied Design Processes building. We all enjoyed an enlightening and forward looking presentation and tour of the premises.

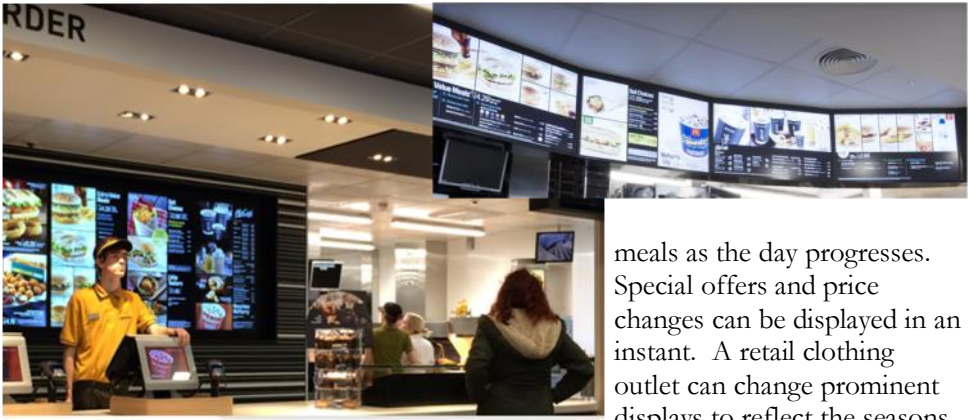


Two of Miles' colleagues described the possibilities of communication facilities coming to our homes shortly. Imagine a bee hive shaped unit about 150mm high which has digital Wi-Fi communication through radio links to a range of the services in our homes. We can talk to it, ask for information and give it tasks to perform. For example we could ask for the central heating to be switched on every day when the GPS in the car comes within five miles of home, or turn that slow roast meal on and close the curtains at nightfall. If we left the bedroom lights on we can ask for them to be turned off, or turn the TV news on at 7pm each evening. Wherever we are we can ask "Are there any phone messages today?"

The question was posed: How can Linneys make use of modern technology and apply it to their printing business? They have historically since the late 1800s offered a high volume communication service via the printed word and more recently through printed graphical images.

Linneys gave us an introduction to new methods of interacting directly with the public. Imagine an advertising poster on the High Street being replaced by a digital display, which can be changed at will or react to changing circumstances throughout the day, with cameras able to identify the profile of pedestrians (male 30 years old; female 20 years old; child 8 years old) and record how many seconds each of these people spend looking at any one of the changing advertising displays. This is very useful information for a retailer who is trying to identify the degree of interest in their products from members of the public.

On entering a fast food outlet we expect to see printed displays of the range of food available. Well, current practice is already using electronic display boards that offer breakfast menus in the morning and give prominence to lunch and evening



meals as the day progresses. Special offers and price changes can be displayed in an instant. A retail clothing outlet can change prominent displays to reflect the seasons

or even react, on sensing the arrival of rain outside, to display umbrellas and rain wear products inside the entrance to the store.

The design personnel at Linneys have developed these ideas into a reality and offer new ways for their clients to advertise their products and a design service for interior space layouts which are more conducive and effective in providing a service to their clients' customers.

Linneys described examples of work done for a wide range of national retail and service companies who regularly use their communication expertise. All of these innovations start as creative thoughts and processes in the design department; concept imaging often starts as a hand drawn graphical sketch or interactive digital display offered as a first suggestion to a client.

We were taken to view the printing processes, alive with a variety of machines. We saw printed A5 brochure booklets in process, all stapled (sorry "stitched" to use the correct term), from a reel of wire and finally trimmed, at a rate of one every second. Another machine was cutting out panels of printed images from a sheet of thin card that must have been at least two metres long. The knife was moving at lightning speed, with the card being held still by a vacuum under the work surface.

Elsewhere a computer aided printer that was capable of drawing/printing text and photographic images and which looked like a miniature gantry crane was printing large signs (approx. 2 m x 1.5 m).

Throughout the printing area there was an atmosphere of quiet efficiency, with machines producing finished products at amazing speeds, ready for dispatch.

We were all very impressed with what we saw and grateful to Miles Linney and his colleagues for giving up two hours of their time, in order to give us a very impressive tour of their activities.

Alan Paul, Science and Technology Group, Ravenshead U3A

Nobel and his Magical Coach

I visited Bofors on several occasions when I lived in Sweden, in Eskilstuna, which was known as Sweden's Sheffield on account of its cutlery factories. I worked as a methods engineer at Volvo's tractor plant and had the task of contributing to the plant's efficiency. A friend of mine did the same job at Bofors, a plant to the west of Eskilstuna which could trace its formation back to 1646 to two forging hammers on the Bo River, hence its name.

We met frequently as we had worked together at a research association based at Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire and had learnt Swedish before we joined our new employers. The Bofors manor house was at Björkborn and connected to the main railway line at Karlskoga where Nobel used to live.

Both Swedish works were very active, I hope the following article gives a flavour of this activity.

If you were lucky at Karlskoga railway station in Sweden you might see Alfred Nobel meeting one of his guests in his coach. He had had it made at his St. Petersburg works and it was drawn by stallions specially imported from Russia for just this purpose.

The local paper gives amusing glimpses of the legendary inventor travelling about the countryside.

"There he came dashing along in his fastest closed carriage at great speed. Only the brisk trot of the stallions could be heard, for the vehicle was soundless, being equipped with his own invention, rubber bands round the wheels."



He had a telephone link to the coachman and the light inside the coupe and in the lamps was produced by electricity from accumulators.

"Thus the Lord of Dynamite sped along, and had one caught sight of such an equipage flying silently through the night, blazing with light, fifty years ago, one would have thought that Old Nick himself was out on a pleasure jaunt – and who knows what else pious folk might have thought had they seen this equipage on an Easter night." (*Carriage and horses with attendants.)*

I said earlier that you would be lucky to see Alfred Nobel and this is because he was frail and could not stand the Swedish winter. He got around this by duplicating his research laboratories in both Paris and San Remo, Italy.

He was warned by his doctors to slow down but he continued until they insisted he put his affairs in order.

In the late autumn of 1895 Nobel spent two months in Paris and in his home at Avenue Malakoff he worked out the details of the will that became the basis of the Nobel Foundation and the prizes. It is a four page document written in Swedish in his own hand, dated 27th December 1895, and it had been worded without recourse to a lawyer. Because of this its formal defects were to lead to great complications in many respects. Alfred Nobel died in his villa at San Remo on 10th December 1896 from a stroke, attended only by a doctor and his servants – just as he had feared. At the time of his death he had registered 355 patents.



Patrick Ellis, Ravenshead U3A member

Garden Quiz

- * 1. True or False. Daffodil bulbs can be used in place of onions in many recipes.
- * 2. Which flowers were once known as gillyflowers?
- * 3. What name is given to the Japanese art of flower arranging?
- * 4. Helianthus is another name for which flower?
- * 5. Which artist's work included a series of paintings of water lilies?
- * 6. Which expensive foodstuff is obtained from crocus flowers?
- * 7. The chrysanthemum is the national symbol of which country?
- * 8. Which part of a flowering plant is often used to make oil?
- * 9. What is another name for a rowan tree?
- * 10. What is the popular name for the antirrhinum?
- * 11. What do yew, laburnum seeds and mistletoe berries have in common?
- * 12. Which are the largest and tallest trees in the world?

Compiled by Jill Bewick, Ravenshead U3A member

ANSWERS ON PAGE 19

RAVENSHED U3A – INTEREST GROUPS

Group Name	Leader	Phone	Meeting Day and Time	Location	Full
Angling	Lionel Castle		Please ring for details		No
Art Gallery/Museum	David Turner		Various visits to be arranged	Please contact for details	No
Beginners Bridge	Maria Gabrielczyk		10 – 12 1 st and 4 th Tuesday starting 04.04.17	The Centre	No
Bird watching	Peter York		Usually once a month	Please contact for details	No
Canasta	Trevor Davy		2 nd and 4 th Tues 2 – 4pm	Brammer Room	No
Chess and Backgammon	Jan Fraser		1 st & 3 rd Mon 10-12	Home	No
Computing Beginners	Alan Paul		On demand	Alan Paul's house	No
Craft workshops	Kate Asquith		Thursday 10.00-12.00	Please ring for details	No
Creative Writing	Villia Bullock		Friday of the week following the U3A monthly meeting	Members' Homes	No
Current Affairs	Carol Wright		3 rd Wednesday 2-3.30	Brammer Room	No
Family History	Barbara Jukes		4 th Tuesday 10-12	Brammer Room	Full
Folk Dancing	Alex Fraser		2 nd & 4 th Mon 2 - 4pm	Ravenshead Village Hall	No
French Conversation	Brian Machin		1 st & 3 rd Mon 10.00-11.30.	Please telephone for details	Full
French Conversation 2	Anick Spence		1 st & 3 rd Mon 2 – 4pm	Anick's house	No
Gardening	Elizabeth Clarkson		Various dates and locations	See group web page	No
Grumpy Old Men	Geoff Rogers		Various dates and locations	See group web page	No
Guitar	John Bewick		1 st & 3 rd Thursday 10.00 -12.00	Ravenshead Church Lounge	Full
Hikers (5-8 miles)	Steve Hargreaves		Various dates and locations	See group web page	No
Knitting and Crochet	Anne Lovegrove Liz Corner		2pm – 4pm 1 st and 3 rd Friday	Brammer Room, Village Hall	No
Latin	David Morton		2 nd & 4 th Wed -9.30 - noon	The Centre	Full
Local History	Judith Walker		2pm – 4pm 2 nd Tuesday	Kighill Farm	No
Luncheon Club	Chris Dean		Various locations monthly	See group web page	No
Mah Jong	Anne Eldridge Jennifer Philby		1 st & 3 rd Tuesday 1.30-3.30	Brammer Room, Village Hall	No
Mindfulness and Meditation	Mandy Conway		11 – 12 Thursday starting 30.03.17	The Centre	No
Music Appreciation 1	Joan Harvey		2 nd Tuesday 2.00 – 4.00	Members' Homes	Full
Music Appreciation 2	David Turner		3 rd Tuesday 1.30 – 3.00	Members' Homes	No
Painting	Mary Abbott		2nd Monday 1.30 – 3.30	The Centre	
Pastels	Wanda Parker		Gp 1 Wed.10.00 – 12.00	Wanda's house	Full No

Gp 2 Fri 10.00-12.00

Photography	Dennis Harvey Glynne Payze	Last Wed in month 2pm	Brammer Room	Full
Play Reading Group	Alan Kirkham	2.30 Wednesday after U3A monthly meeting	In members homes	No
Reading Group 1	Pat Brown	3 rd Tuesday 2.30pm	Members' Home	Full
Reading Group 2	Carol Payze	3 rd Tuesday 2pm	Carol's house	No
Science and Technology	Alan Paul	1 st Friday in month	The Centre	No
Scrabble, Rumikubs and Cribbage	Susanne Smith Leslie Newey	3 rd Tuesday 10am 1 st Tuesday 7.30pm- 9.30pm	Brammer Room	No
Singing for Fun	Graham Jukes	Last Thursday in the month 10.00 -11.30	Members' homes	No
Spanish	Joyce Capps	2 nd and 4 th Mondays at 11am	Sue and Stuart's house	No
Table Tennis	John Clay	2pm-3pm 1 st & 3 rd Monday	Cornwater Leisure Centre	Full
Thursday Walks	Paul and Margaret Craddock	2 nd & 4 th Thursday - 1.30 prompt start.	Details on the website or contact Paul and Margaret	No
Trips and Visits	Steve Hargreaves	Various times and locations		
Weekenders	Sue Owen Pat Van Grondelle Chris Munton	Various events and visits	For more information see the web site	No
Wine Group 1	Lionel Castle	3 rd Friday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 2	Brenda Beale	3 rd Tuesday	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 Group 1	Bob Ford	Wkly 2.00-3.30 Tuesday	The Centre at St Peters	No
Yoga Group 2	Bob Ford	Wkly 9.30 -11.00 Friday.	The Centre at St Peters	No

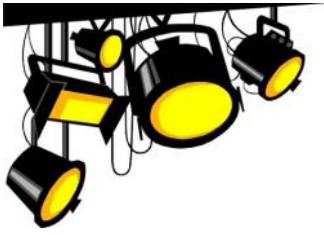
If you are interested in joining any of the above Groups but they are showing as full, please contact the Group Leader to ask to be put on a waiting list. You will then be contacted once a place becomes available or there are enough people to form a further Group.

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.

To post a message contact the Editor!



SPOTLIGHT ON THE Latin Group



In May 2016 when several new activity groups were being formed twelve members signed up for a place within a Latin group, perhaps out of curiosity, perhaps stimulated by TV programmes that explore historical themes including life in classical Greece and Rome. A group leader was found among our members and several important strategic questions were addressed. What did the twelve intrepid members want to learn? To speak Latin? To write Latin? To read Latin? Did they wish to focus entirely on the language or include some examination of Roman life and history? I imagine that other activity groups face similar questions about their desired direction of travel when they are first formed. We certainly had to make some choices.

Helped by our group leader, who pointed us to a Course Book that is popular among other u3a Latin Groups, we opted for a programme that aims to teach reading skills but also includes plenty of history and social culture. So where to begin?

We plunged immediately into life in the small Roman town of Pompeii, just south of modern Naples and close to Mt. Vesuvius, the dormant volcano that erupted spectacularly in AD79 wiping out the town under twenty feet of volcanic ash. Lost to the world for nearly 1700 years, discovery and excavation eventually brought it to light, together with the nearby town of Herculaneum that had been buried under sixty feet of molten lava. Among much else at Pompeii, the home and records of a banker, Lucius Caecilius Iucundus, were discovered; and it was about him and his family that we began to read simple Latin stories, carefully graduated as they introduced more of the language and became longer. We met him as the head of the household, his family, his slaves and some of his business clients. We met actors in the theatre, gladiators in the amphitheatre, bathers in the public baths, young men doing athletics and campaigners at the last local elections before the eruption.

While we were getting to grips with reading Latin in this scenario, our group leader introduced us to a somewhat unexpected way of studying Roman history: by asking questions. For much of the summer we raised questions about the Roman presence in Britain for nearly 400 years. We learned what questions to ask, how one question leads to another, what evidence exists (or is lacking). Not surprisingly we decided to

test out this approach by hiring the Community Bus to take us to Chester to see for ourselves the evidence of the presence there of the 20th Legion Valeria Victrix in its massive fortress. We certainly found the evidence in the museums and in a walkabout led by a



fully uniformed legionary soldier (see the photo). Our leader also helped us to interpret some of the inscriptions on Roman tombstones that proved the presence of this particular legion; but then he raised the question "Where were the civilians? Where were the retired veterans? Was there nobody other than young male soldiers in Deva (Chester)? If there were others, what is the evidence? Doing Roman history in this way was a novel and bracing experience. We were learning to think like historians.

And so we continue in our fortnightly sessions. The Course Book has now brought us from the ruins of Pompeii to the province of Britannia (Britain), where we are meeting a tough and arrogant Roman administrator named Salvius and a local British king, Cogidubnus (both these men are historical). They lived in or near Noviomagus (modern Chichester). Salvius' wife, Rufilla is more than a match for her husband within the family home. Who knows where the Course will take us next within an empire that at its peak stretched from the north of England to the eastern Mediterranean and beyond to the borders of Persia and lasted for more than 1,000 years? When do we get to Rome itself? Lector, specta hoc spatium.

David Morton (Ravenshead U3A Latin Group Leader)

Before we met as a group for the first time I approached the U3A national adviser for Latin and asked for some information and guidance about materials and text books. He advised us to use the Cambridge Latin Course Series 4. Little did I know then that our group leader, David, who had been a classics academic in his earlier life, was responsible for the development of the first series of these books and oversaw the introduction of a new method of teaching Latin in schools. This is not Latin as I remember it when we had to decline, conjugate, learn by rote (often without any understanding) and read about wars and crop rotation. On behalf of all the members of our group I would like to thank David for making Latin so alive, relevant and good fun. Magister optimus est!

Maria Gabrielczyk

The Nutcracker

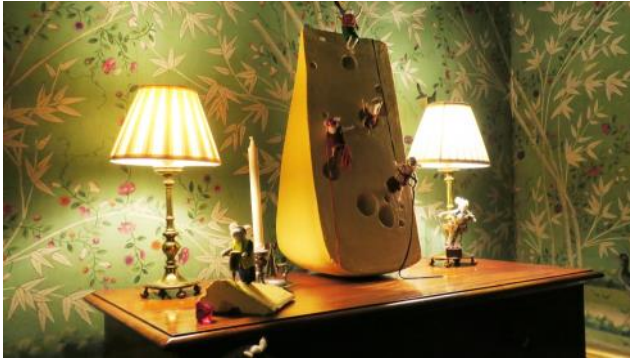
(Christmas at Chatsworth).

On December 10th the village bus left Ravenshead with a full contingent of RU3A members excited to be visiting the wonderful Chatsworth in all its Christmas glory. The theme for this year was “The Nutcracker”, the traditional Christmas ballet with music by Tchaikovsky.

The ballet tells the story of a young girl, Clara, and a battle between the Mouse Army and a Prince who has been magically transformed into a Nutcracker. The libretto is adapted from E. T. A. Hoffmann's story "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King", by way of Alexandre Dumas' adapted story "The Nutcracker". It was given its premiere at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg on Sunday, December 18th, 1892, on a double-bill with Tchaikovsky's opera *Iolanta*, but was not an immediate success. However Nutcracker has enjoyed enormous popularity since the late 1960s and is now performed by countless ballet companies, primarily during the Christmas season, where its two acts mix the excitement of a family Christmas with the fantasy world of toys, sweets, battling mice and fairies.

The story begins on Christmas Eve and family and friends have gathered to decorate the beautiful Christmas tree in preparation for the party. Once the tree is finished, the children are sent for. They stand in awe of the tree sparkling with candles and decorations. Amongst the toys is a wooden Nutcracker carved in the shape of a little man which Clara immediately takes a liking to. During the night the magical Nutcracker leads the toy soldiers in a battle against the Mouse King. He is aided by Clara who distracts the Mouse King long enough for the Nutcracker to stab him. The Nutcracker is then transformed into a handsome prince who travels with Clara to the beautiful





Land of Sweets ruled by the Sugar Plum Fairy. In honour of the young heroine, a celebration of sweets from around the world is produced before a final waltz is performed and Clara and the prince leave on a sled drawn by reindeer, waving goodbye to all their subjects.

Each room in Chatsworth House was beautifully decorated to represent various parts of the story. The house was transformed to present the festive tale complete with lavish costumes, beautiful decorations, Nutcracker soldiers, elegant ballerinas and dancing snowflakes. All the characters from the Mouse King and the Sugar Plum Fairy to the Nutcracker and Clara could be seen in various tableau scenes around the house. We walked along a corridor of clocks and candles for our first glimpse of Clara in the snowy forest before emerging into the room of the dancing snowflakes. A cosy sitting room complete with fireplace and Christmas trees gave us our first look at the Mouse King and from there we entered the Realm of the Sugar Plum fairy and the Land of Sweets. A final display of silhouetted ballerinas marked the end of the tour.

All of this, combined with a walk around the grounds and time for some extra Christmas shopping at the Chatsworth Estate shop made for an enjoyable outing.

Judith Moore,
Ravenshead U3A member



The Power of Dress or Nine Decades of Fashion

Did you know that our future and past as a country depends on many things? Finance, engineering, law and guess what is left – fashion! I ask you this because so few of us know the importance of the clothes we wear. Let me tell you how I was first drawn into this important industry.

I was born in 1921 in a small Lancashire town called Mossley not far from Manchester. Most of the population were employed in the cotton industry and as a child I was awakened by the clatter of clogs going to the many factories. Mossley was famous for having the largest spinning factory in the world with the most spindles and my mother was a spinster from the age of 14. My paternal grandfather, William Ratcliffe Wood, (or Bill of Rats as he was known by locals) was a Yorkshireman born in Saddleworth whose father had acquired a stretch of moorland in the Pennines. Edward VII used one of his shooting breaks whilst out with his shooting party and for this concession he gave my grandfather his gun, now owned by my son. Later my grandfather became an alderman and a grand master in the Masonic Lodge and was involved with the election of a young Winston Churchill as a Liberal M.P. for Oldham and Saddleworth. Through his many friends he heard that a railway was to be built from Manchester to Huddersfield and he bought land next to the station and built a pub called the Commercial Hotel.

Now I must tell you how my father met my mother. After my grandfather acquired his pub he went into partnership with another man and bought a cotton mill. At the outbreak of the First World War my mother, Nelly, was working for her future father-in-law. His youngest son called round to tell his father he had joined the army, caught sight of my mother and I think it was love at first sight. My mother was the daughter of Mr. Allsop, a meek and mild Rechabite non drinker and the exact opposite of the publican Ratcliffe Wood. The family lived in a modest cottage in Dobcross in Yorkshire but later moved down the valley and eventually to Mossley. This rift between rich and poor has affected my life. My father had been told not to contemplate marriage to my mother. The year was 1920. Mother was expecting me. They did marry in October 1920 and I was born in February 1921, thank goodness! And so the real story begins along with my mother's influence on my love of clothes.

If I were to ask you “What is the earliest garment of yours you can remember?” could you tell me? I am going to tell you my first memory. I am a toddler out shopping. We go into the tailor's shop. My mother gives the man a bag with black

velvet material inside and they discuss what is to be made: a coat with a full skirt and a tight waist, sleeves and a Peter Pan collar. My mother gives the tailor another bag full of pale mauve satin to line the black coat. Next we go into another shop, or rather a cabin just big enough for two people and me. The milliner has a circle of cardboard and covers one side with black velvet, the other with mauve satin. This is to be the back of my bonnet. The following week we visit the tailor and the milliner. The coat fits well, the bonnet has acquired a cover on one side joined to the round, and there is a turn back at the front of mauve satin and artificial forget-me-nots with two big mauve ribbons to tie under my chin. Absolutely beautiful!

Another dress I can remember (because I still have it) was really a “fancy dress”. I was about two years of age and it was worn at a fancy dress party. The top and full skirted white and silver tutu had differently coloured feathers stitched to the skirt. On my head was a band of gold with more long feathers stitched to the band like a crown. In my hand tied to my wrist was a velum bat in red and gold. I went to the party as a shuttlecock – and won first prize!

This reminds me of another dress my mother made for me. I was seven years old and I had been chosen to sing in the school concert. The song is “In my sweet little Alice blue gown”.

*In my sweet little Alice blue gown,
When I first wandered down into town,
I was so proud inside,
As I felt every eye,
And in every shop window I primped, passing by.
A new manner of fashion I'd found,
And the world seemed to smile all around.
'Til it wilted, I wore it,
I'll always adore it,
My sweet little Alice blue gown!*



**Marjorie Eyre,
Ravenshead U3A member**

Marjorie aged 3 wearing a brown velvet dress with fancy collar made by her mother.

Marjorie still has a few decades to go! Read the next instalment of her fashionable life in the summer issue of this magazine. Ed.

Visit to the Masonic Hall, Nottingham

On 14th March eighteen members of the Local History Group visited the Masonic Hall in Goldsmith Street, Nottingham. This neo-classical style building was designed by C.E. Howitt and built by John Howitt & Son between 1928 and 1931. The foundation stone was laid



by the 6th Duke of Portland on 11th December 1929. The building largely replaced the first purpose-built Masonic Hall which was opened on the site in 1881.

Our knowledgeable guides for the afternoon (both freemasons) showed us round some of the more ornate rooms of the interior, including four “temples”. We learnt how, on the night of 8th May 1941, a German bomb fell through the roof of the Hall on one of the few bombing raids over Nottingham. Fortunately nobody was killed.

Our guides told us that freemasonry had probably originated from the organisation of working stonemasons, who built the great cathedrals and castles in medieval times. Today it is a secular and fraternal organisation, teaching its members moral lessons and self-knowledge through participation in a progression of allegorical ceremonies. We were reminded several times on the tour that freemasons are not a secret society, as many people believe, but they are a “society of secrets”.

The organisational unit, the Lodge, began to accept men, who were not working stonemasons, in the 17th century in England. Today there are 84 lodges in Nottinghamshire, with the Masonic Hall being home to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Masons. After the National Lottery the freemasons are the largest donors of money to charitable causes in this country and a number of local causes have been supported by them in the past, including the Cornwater Club and the Ravenshead Reds.

Of special interest to us as local historians is the fact that Colonel Thomas Wildman, who acquired Newstead Abbey from the poet Lord Byron in 1817, was Provincial Grand Master for Nottinghamshire from 1823 until his death in 1859.

Wildman was a personal friend of Grand Master the Duke of Sussex, who frequently visited him at Newstead Abbey. Wildman founded the Royal Sussex Lodge as a tribute to him. Following his death Wildman's freemasonry links were recorded on his tomb in Mansfield Cemetery. At one end is the Wildman coat of arms and at the other the initials P.G.M. (for Provincial Grand Master) and the masonic insignia of the square and compasses.



At the Masonic Hall we were able to see an ornate gold collar worn by Thomas Wildman in 1854, when he was presented

with 200 guineas worth of silver and an address of devotion and gratitude from all the freemasons of Nottinghamshire. This is housed in the Museum which also contains pottery, glass, silver, jewels and regalia. It seems fitting that the honorary curator of the Museum is Geoffrey Bond, who is vice-president of the London Byron Society and lives in Byron's house, Burgage Manor, in Southwell.

Unfortunately time did not permit us to see some of the other relics associated with Thomas Wildman retained at the Masonic Hall, nor the Library, which holds many original letters from him dating from his time as provincial Grand Master. These will have to wait for another occasion.

Philip Jones, Ravenshead U3A member

Photographs: Judy Walker, Ravenshead U3A member

 * **Garden Quiz: Answers** *
 * 1. False. It is tulip bulbs 7. Japan *
 * 2. Carnations 8. Seed *
 * 3. Ikebana 9. Mountain Ash *
 * 4. Sunflower 10. Snapdragon *
 * 5. Claude Monet 11. They are poisonous *
 * 6. Saffron 12. California Redwood *
 *

Dates for Your Diary

(Always check the website for the latest information!)

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

- Tue May 9th** A thread in the web of time; Speaker Stephen Walker
- Tue Jun 13th** Annual General Meeting
- Tue Jul 11th** Traditions of flowers in Tudor England; Speaker Ann Barnes.
- Tue Aug 8th** Walking with the Wounded; Speaker Chris Vasper

Social Events

Coffee and Conversation, commencing 10am.

Venue: Room 3, the Centre at St. Peter's (3rd MONDAY of each Month)

Dates: Apr (cancelled) May 15th; June 19th; July 17th.

Occasional Visits

Details on website 'TRIPS and VISITS' page.

- Thu Apr 13th** Mansfield Veolia MRF
CONTACT Chris Dean
- Wed May 24th** Guided tour of Mr Straw's House
CONTACT Chris Dean
- Thu Jun 8th** RHS Flower Show at Chatsworth House
CONTACT Lesley Green
- Thu Jun 15th** Guided tour of Mr Straw's House
CONTACT Chris Dean
- Wed Jul 12th** Newby Hall, Gardens, Doll & Teddy Bear Exhibitions
CONTACT Jean Spencer
- Thu Jul 27th** Guided tour of RAF Cosford Museum
CONTACT Colin Wild
- Wed Aug 9th** Hanwell Vineyard Nottinghamshire
CONTACT Peter Eldridge
- Thu Aug 24th** Guided tour of Mr Straw's House
CONTACT Chris Dean

