

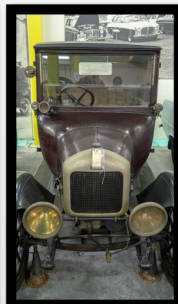
Ravenshead U3A Magazine



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



Ravenshead



www.pearlmountainsoft.com

Just a few of the wide variety of artefacts on display in the Birmingham Museum Archive Collection. More details of the visit on pages 14 & 15.

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Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to our summer issue of Ravenshead U3A magazine.

We have now held our AGM and you can check out your new committee on pages 3—5. We welcome new committee members and thank those who are continuing or returning in new roles. In a break from tradition we had a speaker at the A.G.M. The popular Martin Fish entertained us with his account of life as a R.H.S. judge. This means that the equally popular chance to showcase our many groups and their activities will now be held at the September meeting.

As always, we include a variety of articles as well as information on U3A activities. There have been visits to Eden Camp and the Birmingham Museums and our canasta and mah-jong groups enjoyed a meal out together. Regular contributor Marjorie Eyre looks at the fashion of post war Europe and new contributors Peter Walker and Alan Ratcliffe have provided very different but equally entertaining articles. You can also read the conclusion of Trevor Smith's article on Namibia.

Our next issue is planned for September 2019 so please send any contributions (preferably in word processed form) to myself at xxxxxxxxxx or phone me on xxxxxxxx. The closing date is Tuesday 13th August

**Judith Moore (editor) Barbara Jukes, David Morton (proof readers),
Terry Moore (desktop publishing).**

Ravenshead U3A Committee

Maria Gabrielczyk	Chair
Terry Moore	Vice-Chair, Beacon Admin, Publications
Trevor Smith	Business Secretary
Sue Owen	Treasurer, Membership Secretary
Frances Gilbert	Assistant Membership Secretary, Welfare,
Judith Moore	Speaker Finder
Alan Ratcliffe	Assistant Treasurer
Margaret Craddock	Groups Coordinator
Alan Walker	Social Account Treasurer
Barbara Smith	Meetings Organiser
Chris Dean	Trips and Visits coordinator
Co-opted:	
Alan Wilson	Treasury Team Coordinator

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

Or Freephone: 0300 030 2990

Thoughts from the Chair

We had our AGM earlier than usual this year and the format was quite different in that we had a speaker, Martin Fish who talked about the work of a RHS judge. We had brought forward the AGM from June because June is a holiday month for many members who like to take advantage of the summer before the schools break up. It was a bright day and we had a very good turnout.

Now, I ask myself am I the chair or maybe chairman or even chairperson? Well, I think a chair is a piece of furniture to be sat on. There might be odd times when members or the committee will want to sit on me but I hope we will all work as a team. “Chairperson” sounds impersonal and from experience I have found that whilst men continue to be called chairmen, “chairperson” is usually reserved for a woman at the helm. So in my book a “chairman” can be a man or a woman. Just look at the Interpretation Act and you will find that male embraces female! So, I think I will stick with “chairman” – but actually I will answer to anything!



I would like to thank Lesley and the outgoing committee members for their hard work and I welcome the new committee members. You will notice that where before we had one Treasurer and one Assistant Treasurer we now have what we have called a “Treasury Team” of four members. The work load has increased over the years and we found it was necessary to break up the tasks into smaller chunks or departments. Sue Owen is the Main Treasurer, taking over from Alan Wilson whilst Alan Ratcliffe (Gift Aid) and Alan Walker (Social Account) will assist her. The committee has co-opted Alan Wilson back onto the committee as an ordinary trustee and he will co-ordinate the work. We are grateful to him for agreeing to return so that with his huge professional experience he can advise and mentor the new team members.

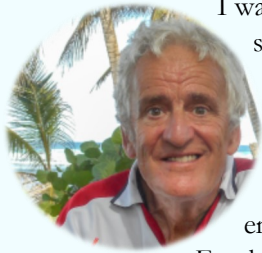
I am grateful to Judith and Terry and their team of proof readers and others for producing this magazine three times a year. Please remember that it is your magazine and your opportunity to share stories and experiences.

Summer is just around the corner and I hope the sun shines for you whatever your plans – here or abroad.

Maria Gabrielczyk, Chairman, Ravenshead U3A

Meet the Committee 2019

New member: Alan Ratcliffe



I was born in Rochdale, Lancashire many years ago and at school was always interested in chemistry. Not wishing to specialise or get bogged down in just one science I took metallurgy at university. In my first job I was delighted to be offered a position at Rolls Royce (Bristol) where they intended to turn me into an engineer. Making aircraft engines is very exciting and I followed the career path of Sir Frank Whittle by working for Rolls Royce and then General Electric in the States. One of the engines I was working on at GE was the GE4, designated to be used on the American version of Concorde. Sadly this aircraft never flew; the project was cancelled but it wasn't all my fault.

Aircraft engineers are the best in the world, particularly at Rolls Royce, and amongst such an esteemed peer group I began to realise that I was completely 100% out of my depth. So I decided to look for a career where I didn't get my hands dirty. After a spell as a production manager, not wishing to be restricted to one sector of business, I was attracted to the idea of management services and got a job as an organisation and methods analyst. This led to into my ideal career path as a management consultant. What a fabulous concept. You go around telling people how they could do their jobs better and you get paid for it.

Towards the end of the 70s companies were converting their operations over to computer based systems. I was keen to learn about computers and how they could be used. In the 80s there was a greater emphasis to use computers to control manufacturing processes. This is what brought me to the Midlands. It was during my two year spell at Glow-worm in Belper that I met my wife Una, (she didn't work there). The management had to learn how to use computers to make their boilers. However, when I completed my task there, one of the older directors gave me this advice. Always be a student. It could be the motto for the U3A.

Computer consultancy was a vibrant and rewarding career for the next twenty years thanks to the fears about the millennium bug (largely unfounded). Beyond that I have taken the advice given and always looked for something new to learn. Our U3A provides a wonderful opportunity to seek out exciting new challenges.

New member: Barbara Smith



Barbara, the daughter of a Nottinghamshire County Councillor, grew up in Mapperley and her early career was within the Civil Service. Subsequent marriage and motherhood saw her move all over the country including a spell in Germany, as she followed her husband's career.

As her son grew up, she became involved in insurance, and in later years, she worked in lighting and clothing shops. She returned to Nottinghamshire to be closer to her son and grandson, both of whom lived in the Nottingham region.

Barbara has been married to Trevor for 53 years. Barbara is a member of Ravenshead Inner Wheel.

Returning committee members (see roles on page 2)



Margaret Craddock



Christine Dean



Frances Gilbert



Terry Moore



Judith Moore



Trevor Smith



Sue Owen

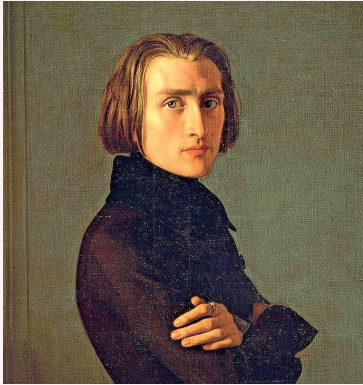


Alan Walker



Alan Wilson

The Day Music's First Rock Star Came Our Way.



Imagine for a moment that you were alive on the morning of a very hot late summer day in 1840, - Friday 11th. of September to be precise. You are travelling on the turnpike road from Mansfield to Nottingham, it's 10:30 and both you and the horses pulling your carriage are gasping for a drink. You stop at a popular coaching inn near Newstead Abbey - The Hutt.

A gentleman at the next table is talking about a concert to be held in Mansfield Town Hall that afternoon. The concert party from London had performed in Nottingham the previous night. The party is said to be headed by a superstar piano virtuoso from Paris, but if he is from Paris his name doesn't sound French, more like German with the name of Liszt!

A few minutes later a carriage pulled by four horses can be seen approaching from the direction of Nottingham at a fast gallop, followed by a horse-drawn van about 100 yards behind trying to keep up with the carriage. Just as they reach The Hutt the carriage slows to a halt and the van driver goes and speaks to a gentleman who gets down from the rumble seat at the back of the carriage.

You then notice a tall slim gentleman who seems to be holding a letter in his hand, sitting beside the coach driver. He is very elegantly dressed, and wears a white shirt, with a black waistcoat and bow tie. His long blond hair is down to his collar and his blue eyes seem to sparkle with excitement. This is Franz Liszt, the 29-year-old Hungarian piano virtuoso, composer, and huge Byron fan. Well known to music audiences in Europe and London for causing what is being called "Lisztomania", especially with the ladies, he is almost unknown in the rest of Britain.

The carriage and van start up again, but the carriage then turns left into the gates to Newstead Abbey. The horse van proceeds onward to Mansfield Town with its precious cargo of a 12ft. Erard grand piano, especially manufactured in London for Liszt's first British tour.

When the concert party reach the abbey, they are greeted by Colonel Thomas Wildman and his lady. It is probable that Liszt had managed to arrange to visit Newstead with the help of a Lady Blessington in London. She was a friend of both Lord Byron and Thomas Wildman, and Liszt had also become friends with her when he was in London earlier that year.

Liszt was suffering from a fever at the time, but he recorded the details of his visit in a letter he wrote a few days later to his partner and mother of their three children, the Countess Marie de Agoult.

“At Newstead I lay in the grass under a huge sun; a flock of crows cawed overhead. Then I went into the apartments. I was shown a cup which Lord Byron had fashioned from a monk's skull, and his hound's grave. As I moved outside, the moaning of forest pines awakened the harmonies of my soul, and I sang and mused quietly amid the sounds of nature. One day I shall write about it all.

I know not whether it was the expansion of my spirit, or indeed the sun and the warmth of the turf on which I lay outstretched for so long, but the fever seized me again an hour afterwards. Quinine was ordered for me, morning and evening. From the very next day I felt better.

But I bided my time so that I would be recovered for writing to you. One of my companions also made me consider that I had been most imprudent in leaving my flannel in London.”

Liszt and the concert party then proceeded to give what was called a morning concert - at 2 pm. Due to poor publicity arrangements, only thirty people paid their six shillings to hear the artistes. The piano was then put in the van and afterwards they carried on to Newark to give another concert in the evening.

It is believed by several of the abbey guides that Liszt returned to Newstead as a guest of Col. Wildman at the end of the tour and gave a recital there. If this is so the piano he played may have been the older Lyon square piano on display as it was there in Wildman's time.

Liszt was to go on to become the most famous and long-lived musician of the Romantic Era. In April 1886 in the last year of his life he returned by invitation to London. Now the “Abbe Liszt” he was applauded and cheered wherever he went. And yes, he played on several occasions, as Queen Victoria said – beautifully.

Peter Cooper, Ravenshead U3A



SPOTLIGHT ON THE MAH-JONG & CANASTA GROUPS



MAH –JONG & CANASTA GROUPS ‘ANY OCCASION’ LUNCH

Everyone was too busy for a Christmas celebration, so we thought about New Year, then Spring, then Easter. We finally decided that we really ought to celebrate everything and anything – hence the ‘Any Occasion’ Lunch held at Larch Farm on the 28th February. Twenty members from the two groups met at Larch Farm. I think they all enjoyed themselves – it was certainly quieter when we left!



Both Groups meet in the Brammer Room at 2 pm on alternate Tuesdays. The Canasta group meets every 2nd and 4th, and the Mah-jong group on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday.

Mah-jong is less well known in the UK than Canasta with some people thinking it is far too complicated and dull. Let me assure you it is neither, although I confess we were all scratching our heads at our first meeting!

It is a very old Chinese game, very roughly similar to the western card game of Rummy where the player has to build runs, 3 or 4 of a kind etc. Instead of cards, we play with tiles and instead of suits; we have bamboos, circles, winds and dragons etc.

If anyone finds this sounds far too confusing, I should emphasise that we are all learning. The skill levels in the group vary enormously and, although there is friendly competition, we are always ready to help and advise each other.

For anyone wanting a challenge, exercise the brain and a bit of fun – please come along to give us a try, you will be warmly welcomed.

Anne Eldridge, Mah-jong Group Leader

U3A Visits to Eden Camp, Malton, North Yorkshire



Visits to Eden Camp were made by 27 members in the trusty village bus on 28th March and the 8th April - beautiful weather on the 28th but less so on the 8th.

Opened in 1987, Eden Camp is an award-winning modern history museum of the Second World War. The museum is housed within 29 huts, built by 250 Italian PoWs in 1942. Outside there are many displays of tanks, aircraft, guns and an endless variety of machines. The exhibits within the huts range from the rise of Hitler to VE/VJ day in 1945 with displays such as the role of women, U boat menace, civil defence and Bevin boys in between.

My favourite hut was the Music Hall, listening to visiting infant school children singing wartime songs led by a puppet show! The members' favourite hut was clearly WinStan's Bunker Café and Garrison Cinema Bar which they summarily invaded - the outdoor assault course was less popular!

The PoWs worked mainly on the farms and the museum tells of their interaction with the local community. As a Yorkshireman myself, I'm guessing that even the English speaking Italians and Germans struggled to understand the local Tykes. Clearly undeterred though, many PoWs declined repatriation and chose to build a new life for themselves in Yorkshire – such good taste!

Eden Camp is a very informative day out and was enjoyed by all. I've now visited five times, so there's a recommendation!

Phil Asquith, U3A member

Marjorie's New Look (a tribute to Christian Dior 1905-1957)

When I started writing for the magazine it was to be called "Nine Decades of Fashion" but after the first two instalments it became more about me than the clothes, so now I am concentrating on my third and fourth decades when fashion became exciting! We have reached the post war era and adapting to hard times ahead. Who should come onto the scene but a French haute couturier by the name of Christian Dior. He had no idea of the effect he would have on the world of fashion. The 12th of February 1947 was the date of his first show in Paris. The weather was bad with low temperatures and a dusting of snow, yet a well-dressed and vociferous crowd was gathering outside number 30, Avenue Montaigne, the address of Maison Christian Dior. Inside was a throng of people, so many that even those with tickets, including Marlene Dietrich and other potential clients, had to sit on a step to watch the fashion parade. The end of the show was greeted with rapturous applause and Christian Dior was heard to say "My God, what have I done?"

The answer to this was "You have started a revolution. Your clothes have such a new look!" so the New Look was born. Dior himself wrote, "We are just emerging from a poverty-stricken parsimonious era obsessed with ration books and clothing coupons. It is only natural that my creations should be a reaction to this." I truly believe that Dior as much as Churchill changed the post-war world in many ways. In 1939 there were seventy registered Parisian fashion houses but during the war Germany tried to move some of them to Berlin. Some fled to New York, others had closed while those that were left struggled on with a depleted workforce. Now there was a chance to emerge from the restrictions of the war years. Dior declared that hats were too large, skirts too short, jackets too long and shoes too heavy. Time for a return to glamour!

Back with me! My mother with her instinctive intuition for the latest fashion trends from reading Vogue decided I should have a Dior style coat and hat but how could we afford this in 1947? A Dior dress cost roughly £350 or £2,500 in today's money! We lived close to a tailor who had made most of my clothes and he agreed to make me a coat if my mother found the material. She did. It was a darkish blue velvet that today we would call French Navy. The skirt of the coat was very full, almost circular with a tiny waist. The bodice had three buttons and a collar and sleeves without cuffs. It was a good copy. The hat on the other hand was the genuine article. It was a bright orange-red velvet "pillbox" style, brimless but well lined. I

wished I could wear it inside out just to show off the Christian Dior Paris label. Wherever I went in that outfit I was stopped by people wanting to know where I had got it and how much it cost as well as telling me how lucky I was as it was so glamorous. It was such a joy to wear. Princess Margaret wore Dior at her 21st birthday party so I was in good company. And I still have the hat!



Marjorie Eyre, Ravenshead U3A member.

Marjorie recently celebrated her 98th birthday. Congratulations Marjorie!



ARE YOU MISSING OUT ON BENEFITS? EVERY LITTLE HELPS

Did you know that one in three persons entitled to Pension Credit does not claim it? So, even if you think you're getting everything you are entitled to - it doesn't hurt to check. Are you entitled to other benefits but too embarrassed to ask? Now you can check for yourself, anonymously, on line. Go to www.turn2us.org.uk or www.entitledto.co.uk and find out if you are eligible to claim any benefits e.g. Single Person Council Tax Reduction, Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit etc.

Attendance Allowance isn't means tested, does not affect your state pension and doesn't affect other benefits you receive. You could get £58.70 or £87.65 a week - depending on how much help you need. You can spend the money however you like - it could help you stay independent in your own home for longer.

There can be additional help with Council Tax if one of a two-person household suffers from dementia and is "severely mentally impaired" because their liability is 'disregarded' and qualifies the other person to claim the 25% 'single person's discount'.

More information is available on the Citizens Advice website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk You can obtain a full benefits check and further information confidentially at one of the Citizens Advice offices. No appointment necessary. Gedling residents go to 32 - 36 Carrington Street, NOTTINGHAM, NG1 7FG Mondays to Fridays 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Wednesdays 12 noon to 4 p.m.) or on Fridays 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. to their outreach service at the Gedling Borough Council Offices, Arnott Hill Park, Arnold, NG5 6LU. Newark and Sherwood residents go to 5 Forest Court, New Ollerton, NG22 9PL which is open Mondays and Wednesdays 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Skiing for Seniors

About twelve years ago a good friend of mine called Bernice decided that our group needed some sort of physical stimulus to prepare us for the onset of old age. As she was an experienced skier the plan was to take a group of us, none of whom had skied before and introduce us to the skill. At this stage most of us were still in paid employment, (although not necessarily working). So my wife Una and I signed up for the expedition.

In advance of the venture there were certain preparatory tasks to be completed. Firstly was a trip to Swadlincote where there is a dry ski slope. This gave us the opportunity to become familiar with the necessary equipment for skiing and how to assemble the kit. It seemed simple enough, just slip on some skis just like slippers. Not quite. As we were still in tropical England, thoughts about clothing could be deferred. So the first thing to do was to put on ski boots. These are monstrously heavy things with a metal lip at each toe which is required for fitting onto the skis. No other items were required at this stage as we hobbled slowly from the changing rooms to the dry ski slope.

At the bottom of the ski slope we then proceeded to fit on our skis. The technique is to push the metal lip on each ski boot into a small slot in the middle of the base of the ski whilst keeping your heel raised. Next, you bang down on your heel and the boot clicks into place on the ski, hopefully secure. Next, repeat the process with the other ski. To remove the ski you have to press down on a lever at the back of the ski, which has been raised when the ski clicked into place. The reason for this mechanism is that when you tumble down the mountain later on, the ski will click open and be discarded. It's not much fun doing cartwheels if you're still attached to skis.

With skis attached we had to address the problem of elevation to the top of the ski slope. There are a number of ways of doing this but at Swadlincote the only way was by means of a button lift. This is like a large dinner plate attached by a rod and a cable to an overhead cable which traverses up the slope at about ten miles per hour. So you stand at one point and as a "button" approaches you deftly put it between your legs, get your balance on your skis and wait for it to pull you up to the top of the slope. At this point, you extricate your posterior from the button, let go of the rod and glide serenely down the ski slope. Doesn't sound too difficult does it?

This is what happened on my first lift. Having grabbed a button and begun to ascend, I had not got complete balance on my skis. Result – a little fall. No problem. The problem was in getting up. By the time I was half way up there was another button approaching at ten miles an hour so I had to dodge it by sinking to the artificial snow again. It took about ten minutes before I found the solution to



the dilemma, by rolling out of the path of the buttons. Meanwhile an enormous queue had formed at the start of the lift. In fact some skiers reasoned that it was quicker to walk up to the top of the ski slope rather than wait for me to clear the decks.

This was a pattern that would be repeated many times by me and others when we finally got on the real snow. However, before that there would have to

be some rather challenging exercises to be performed at home to strengthen muscles yet to be used. The most unpleasant of these was sitting with your back to the wall as if on a chair, except you don't have a chair. Furthermore, in addition to skis and boots, which we would hire at the resort, it was necessary to kit ourselves out with long johns, a ski suit, gloves, goggles and one other essential item. We were to observe that the best skiers wore some sort of woolly headgear but we decided that when we got to the resort we would hire crash helmets. It proved to be a very wise decision.

A few weeks later we were in a town called Aosta in Northwest Italy. Our ski instructor was English and particularly good at explaining things to the elderly even though this was a very unusual assignment for him. We discovered three other methods of elevating skiers to the top of the ski slope. The first is the gondola where you take off your skis, walk into it and out at the top of the slope, then put your skis on again. Slightly more difficult is the moving escalator. In this you shuffle on to it wearing skis and shuffle off at the other end, ideally not having fallen off in the meantime. The other method is the chair lift. It has the same principle as the button lift except you have a bigger area to sit on but at the start and end you have a tricky transition of transferring your weight to/from your skis from/to your posterior. Nevertheless, during this first week I had more falls in my relationship with the chair lifts than I did on any of the slopes.

Our first lift was a simple escalator. We all alighted from the top and proceeded in various ways down the slope. Now just like driving a car you need to respect the trajectory of other road users. There was a party of four year olds, possibly on their first ski, passing by. They were in perfect formation looking like a set of newly aligned bowling pins. Unfortunately at the same time Una got to the top of the escalator and started her descent. Being no more in control than any of the rest of

us, a collision was inevitable and she achieved a perfect “strike.”

As the week progressed we became more confident, whizzing along the easy wide slopes at high speed. Falling wasn't unpleasant at all as the snow was very soft. Equally enjoyable were the great gentle rides on the chair lifts through wonderful alpine scenery. From the highest point you could see both Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn.

At the end of the week our instructor gave us all a rating and a medal to show we had graduated at level one. There were three possible medals – gold, silver and bronze. I was quite happy with my silver until I saw that Una got a gold. This seemed most unreasonable as I was much faster than her on the snow. The explanation was that she showed a better technique and had better posture. It failed to assuage my annoyance. Posture might be a praiseworthy attribute for Strictly Come Dancing but for skiing – really.

Finally we all agreed that it had been a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. We considered ourselves fortunate that no-one had suffered any ill effects or injury, other than total exhaustion after each skiing day. Indeed we had been very fortunate and surely we wouldn't want to push our luck by repeating the exercise next year, would we? Would we ??

Alan Ratcliffe, Ravenshead U3A member

Hope you did Alan, you're a natural! Still chuckling - Ed

Birmingham Museum Collection

A group of 14 Ravenshead U3A members made a visit to the Birmingham Museum Collection on Friday 12th April, transported there on one of the village buses.



The collection is the archive for the Birmingham Museum and is located in a warehouse on a small industrial estate about a mile from the city centre.

It is limited access and you can only go around in a group or on the last Friday of

the month. The Friday trips are booked up to October.

It was a good opportunity to see what happens behind the scenes.

The building covers about 3.7 acres. The first section we visited contained the small items. There were several rows of cabinets. There were thousands of items in this section and almost everything you could think of.

There were model cars, model trains, jewellery, cameras, fabrics, early TVs, record players etc etc. In fact, anything small that would fit in a cabinet was on display. The list is endless.

We then moved on into the main warehouse. This again contained hundreds of items. The building was a warehouse and everything was on racks. It was difficult to see items on the higher levels as they were at least 10 feet up from the floor.

The selection of items was quite amazing. There were a lot of old machines from factories, old household items, early computers, sculptures, sleighs. Again, the list is endless.

An extension to the warehouse housed mainly vehicles. There were several cars dating back to 1900. Several of these were from small manufacturers which did not exist for very long.

There were also several old motor cycles and bicycles and an old fire engine.

We had about two hours in the facility but there was not really enough time to take everything in. We were free to walk around and our guide Tanya was on hand to answer any questions.

The building was previously used as a stationery warehouse for Birmingham City Council. The mind boggles as to what was kept there. I could not guess how many envelopes and memo slips they could have stored in there.

It was an interesting visit and everybody enjoyed the experience.

Gordon Cleugh
Ravenshead U3A
member



Apple Pie in the Desert - the Adventure Continues...

In the last issue of the magazine we left Barbara and Trevor enjoying a cocktail whilst watching the sunset over the Fish River Canyon. Now they continue their journey across Namibia.

After our stay at Fish River Canyon we headed back to the main road and made our way to Luderitz on the Atlantic coast, stopping en route at the Bahnhof hotel in Aus to enjoy coffee and cake. Several years ago I was involved with a South African company rebuilding the railway line and I could see the results of our work. I asked the hotel receptionist when the next train was coming to Aus and she laughed saying that there had been no trains for eight or nine years due to sand dunes covering the track near Luderitz. On we went looking at the track meandering across the desert as we travelled the traffic –free highway. Now Luderitz is a small harbour town sitting in a protected bay and was mainly built by the Germans during their occupation from 1884-1915. The church, banks, railway station and post office are clearly Germanic and were all built using funds derived from the diamond mining in the area. There is one German town just outside Luderitz called Kolmanskop which had a short life until the diamonds ran out and the village was just abandoned and the sand has gradually taken over. A lot of German is used for the names of town, areas and streets and with a strong German tourist industry many of the people speak German as well as English. After going round the headland and seeing the flamingos and terns we returned to Aus for fuel. I was told that the day before there had been a great celebration because the first train for nine years had passed through en route to Luderitz. What a shame to have missed it!

We now started to journey north, travelling the gravel roads though the hills and small mountains heading toward the Namib desert. This was to be a seven hour drive, but good progress was made. There was no congestion on the highway and nobody to overtake, so we were able to shave an hour off the schedule. We even had time to stop in Solitaire where we could sample the 'famous' apple pie at McGregor's bakery, where you are told not to ask for cream with your apple pie because the cows are on strike. The apple pie was wonderful and gave us sufficient energy to continue on our journey into the desert. Needless to say we had to go off road again for 10km to reach our next accommodation. Here we were given the honeymoon suite again, a huge bungalow complete with three areas of decking. An outdoor plunge pool overlooking the desert made the 400m walk to the main building well worth it. It meant that when we went for dinner, the beer, wine and fine food were more appreciated!

We stayed at the lodge so that we could go to see the famous dunes. We had to drive for an hour to get to the entrance of the park, pay our entry fee and then travel 89km past dunes on either side of the road until we came to Dune 45 and



later Big Daddy. One can walk up these dunes if a) you are fit, b) can stand the heat and sun and c) do not mind coming back down in sweat-soaked clothing. Climbing up over the extremely fine soft sand is not easy so suffice to say we started out but quickly decided that we wished to

continue to be coffin dodgers by staying at the bottom. The last part of the journey to Big Daddy can only be accomplished by 4x4 vehicles and even then the cars will slip and slide as you make your way to the end.

The march of time continued as we made our way west stopping off at a farm up in the mountains before heading back towards Windhoek through two mountain passes on a narrow gravel road with steep drops down canyons and no safety barriers. Fantastic views with several mountains looking just like Table Mountain in Cape Town! They were created during the same period when the Gondwana tectonic plate movement caused the ground to push upwards. Back in Windhoek for a night we headed to Joe's Beerhouse, a famous restaurant serving game and steaks. I had chicken, springbok, kudu, zebra and oryx on a skewer - very tasty! A good night's sleep followed prior to heading back to Blighty.

All in all we had travelled 2,300km around Namibia, involving thirty hours of driving in temperatures around 32°C. We had seen very few people on the roads but lots of animals and we had an opportunity to see an awe-inspiring kaleidoscope of scenery. We had no punctures and we had memories to cherish forever. Would we do it again? You bet!

Trevor Smith, Ravenshead U3A member

RAVENSHEAD U3A – INTEREST GROUPS

Group Name	Leader	Phone	Meeting Day and Time	Location	Full
Angling	Lionel Castle		Please ring for details		No
Antiques	David Turner Maureen Smith		Monthly TBC	Members' Homes	No
Belly Dancing	Sue Clipson		1 st &3rd Thursday 1.00pm	The Centre	No
Birders	Graham Jukes Tony Wardell		Usually once a month	Please contact for details	No
Bowls (Social)	John Chambers Ian Crowe		Mondays 2-4 pm New members welcome	Leisure Centre No equipment needed	No
Bridge for Beginners	Maria Gabrielczyk		Currently inactive. Please phone if interested	At leaders' home	No
Canasta	Trevor Davy		2nd and 4th Tues 2 – 4pm	Brammer Room	No
Chess & Backgammon	Jan Fraser		1st & 3rd Mon 10 -12	Home	No
Computing Beginners	Alan Paul		On demand	Alan Paul's house	No
Craft workshops	Kate Asquith Irene Chapman		Thursday 10.00-12.00	Room 2 The Centre	No
Creative Writing	David Turner		Friday after the U3A monthly meeting.	Members' Homes	No
Cryptic Crossword	Frances Gilbert		Thursday 10.00 – 11.45	Members' Homes	No
Current Affairs	Carol Wright		3rd Wednesday 2.00 -3.30	Brammer Room	No
Family History	Barbara Jukes		4th Tuesday 10-12	Brammer Room	No
Folk Dancing	Alex Fraser		2nd & 4th Mon 2 - 4pm	Ravenshead Village Hall	No
French Conversation	Brian Machin		1st&3rd Mon 10-11.30am	Telephone leader.	Full
Gardening	Elizabeth Clarkson		Various dates and locations	See group web page	No
Guitar	John Bewick		1st & 3rd Thursday 10-12	Ravenshead Church Lounge	Full
Hikers (5-8 miles)	Steve Hargreaves		1st & 3rd Wednesday	See group web page	No
Knitting and Crochet	Anne Lovegrove Liz Corner		2pm – 4pm 1st and 3rd Friday	Brammer Room, Village Hall	No
Latin	David Morton		2nd & 4th Wed -9.30 - 12	Room 3 the Centre	Full
Local History	Judith Walker		2pm – 4pm 2nd Tuesday	Room 3 The Centre and local visits	No
Luncheon Club	Chris Dean		Various locations monthly	See group web page	No
Mah Jong	Anne Eldridge Jennifer Philby		1st & 3rd Tuesday 2-4 pm	Brammer Room, Village Hall	No
Music Appreciation 2	David Turner		3rd Tuesday 1.30 – 3.00	Members' Homes	No
Painting	Mary Abbott		2nd Monday 1.30 – 3.30	The Centre	No
Pastels	Wanda Parker		Gp 1 Wed.10.00 – 12.00 Gp 2 Fri. 10.00 – 12.00	Wanda's house	Full No
Play Reading Group	Alan Kirkham		2.00pm on the day after U3A monthly meeting	Members' Homes	No
Reading Group 1	Pat Brown		3rd Tuesday 2.30pm	Members' Homes	Full

Reading Group 2	Carol Payze		3rd Tuesday 2pm	Carol's house	No
Science and Technology	Alan Paul		1st Friday in month	The Centre	No
Scrabble Cribbage Rummikub Groups 1/2	Susanne Smith		1st Tuesday 7.30p-9.30pm 3rd Tuesday 10am	Brammer Room	No
Spanish	Joyce Capps		Mondays various 10.30am	Member's Homes	No
Table Tennis	John Clay		1st & 3rd Monday 2-3pm	Cornwater Leisure Centre	Full
Thursday Walks	Graham Munroe		4 th Thursday of the month	Website or contact Graham	No
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		3rd Friday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 2	Brenda Beale 01158		3rd Tuesday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 3	Michael Neville		2nd Monday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 4	Angela Senior		3rd Tuesday	Members' homes	Full
Wine Group 5	Sue Tidbury		1st 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. Contact the editor.

Social Bowls Group

This group, which is looking for more members, meets each Monday afternoon at 2.00 p.m. in the Leisure Centre. Please come along and give it a try. Bowls can be borrowed and no special shoes or clothing are needed. The game is played indoors on a special full length mat, so no need to worry about the weather either!

Social events

We are hoping to set up some social evening events for all members, possibly two or three times a year. Ideas so far include a quiz night, whist or beetle drives and a general games evening. If you have any ideas contact the editor or any committee member. Our first autumn event may be a quiz with supper!. Watch this space!

Dates for Your Diary

(Check the website for the latest information!)

Monthly Meetings	(10.00 a.m. St. Peter's Church, Ravenshead)
June 11th	Nursery Rhymes Speaker: Paul Newsham
July 9th	TBC
August 13th	Working Dogs (Piper) Speaker: Ken Heathcote
September 10th	Groups Showcase - a chance to celebrate our group activities
Social Events	

Coffee and Conversation, commencing 10am.

Venue: Room 3, the Centre at St. Peter's (3rd MONDAY of each Month) **Dates: June 17th; July 15th; August 19th; September 16th.**

Occasional Visits	<i>Details on website 'TRIPS and VISITS' page.</i>
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June 7th, Chatsworth Flower Show (contact Alan Paul)

July 19th Mr. Straws House and Welbeck (contact Chris Dean)

Potential future trips under consideration:

Well Dressings (JUNE) & Black Country Museum (JULY)

Please contact Christine Dean for more information



Showing the living conditions of prisoners, this was just one of the displays at Eden Camp.