



Affiliated to the Third Age Trust
Registered Charity No. 1165448

Newsletter

Issue 125

September 2026

From the Chair

Hello to everyone, and a warm welcome to our new members.

Once again, our Speaker Programme Co-ordinators have been busy. You should have received a copy of the new Programme recently. I hope that you will agree that the programme of Speakers at our monthly meetings for the next year is wide ranging and will have something to interest everyone.

What an interesting summer we have had this year. I don't mind a bit of warm weather when I go on holiday, but it has been relentless. We went on a river cruise on the Moselle at the end of June just as the heatwaves were starting and Germany was recording its highest ever temperatures - 40 degrees. No sitting out on the deck as we cruised along as the heat was unbearable, even in the evening. Nevertheless, it was most enjoyable and at least there was water in the river, unlike for some who were due to go in August.

I hope that your gardens have not suffered too badly. The new ride on mower I treated myself to in May has had little use so far as we currently have only a few little tufts of green in a sea of dust. Let's hope that the long awaited rain treats us kindly as we prepare for winter.

I look forward to meeting many of you at our monthly meetings.

Malcolm Chalmers



Hoxne Man
See back page

Monthly Lectures

10.00am at New Green Centre
Refreshments served until 9.45am

Monday 7 September

Moyse's Hall

Daniel Clarke

Monday 5 October

Bury in Bloom - behind the scenes

Chris Wiley

Monday 2 November

Dogs Trust Re-homing Centre

Paige Pope

Monday 7 December

Christmas and Ghost Stories

Mike Wabe

This will be followed by a social gathering with
seasonal refreshments



Owlets
See inside

LECTURE REPORTS

Ethiopia – The Historic Route

Patricia Alker of the charity Project Dukem gave a very interesting talk in June on the subject of Ethiopia –The Historic Route. Patricia's talk concentrated on the North of the country giving an insight into the lives of the people in the area and the help the charity has been able to give them to make their lives just a little bit better.

Once you leave the capital Addis Ababa and head out into the rural areas many of the basic facilities we take for granted here in the UK, such as clean water and toilets, are not available to many of the population. Project Dukem has funded both the supply of clean water and new toilet blocks for some communities. However it is still difficult to get all the locals to use the clean water points, with some still preferring to fill their water bottles from the rivers, where just along the way you are likely to find cattle and goats in the water.

We were shown many photographs of their way of life, with them still relying on cattle to pull their ploughs, donkeys to transport their goods and women having the job of carrying bundles of wood on their backs. This results in many women ending up permanently bent over and

unable to straighten up. Children were expected to spend all day up in the hills tending the cattle and goats, resulting in several getting no or little education.

We were also shown a photograph of a lot of girls, some as young as 13, preparing to dance watched by young men, who if they liked the look of any of the girls, would approach them to select a bride. Once a dowry had been agreed and paid to the bride's father the girl would move to her new husband's village and in some cases may never return to her own village.

Project Dukem continues to try to help the poor communities by funding some of the children to finish high school or college and then help set up others in business. They have provided funds for a library and for the buying of books, which are all in English, because when they go to high school they are taught in English. If they complete their schooling there are production jobs available in several factories built by Chinese companies, who have set-up in Ethiopia to reduce their costs.

Paul Taylor

How Trains came to Bury St Edmunds and changed the town

The talk for July was given by Catherine Buchanan



In order to distribute agricultural and other goods around the country a network of canals was being developed to link up with rivers. This was expensive and not very efficient and with the development of steam engines railway became the chosen way forward.

Before a railway could be built the proposal needed an Act of Parliament to enable the compulsory purchase of land required for the

building of the railway. A large amount of money was needed for this for which the railway companies would issue shares.

A proposed prospectus was issued in 1836 for a railway from Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds and also for various other branch lines. In order to build the railway there were various obstacles in the way, the main one being Stoke Hill in Ipswich. A tunnel was constructed to link the line with Ipswich station, then located at the other end of the tunnel. The first test run occurred on 26 November 1846. It had been constructed at a cost of £16,000 per mile. Other lines were constructed from Bury St Edmunds to Long Melford, Newmarket and Thetford which have since been closed.

The first Health and Safety Regulations were brought in for the railways in 1840, safety inspections were undertaken and the returns also included accidents. Travel insurance (Death only) was introduced. Details of various incidents on the line were recorded. There was also an increase in criminal activity, vandalism, fare dodging and trespassing on the lines.

Following the building of the railway network it was possible to trade goods across the area quicker and as a result fresher. Businesses were able to get raw materials more quickly and deliver products across the country. Commodity prices were thus reduced.

This also encouraged the start of tourism when Thomas Cook ran his first tour from Leicester to Loughborough using the railway. This developed to eventually include travel to the Continent. Other special trains ran for sporting events. The railway had an effect on fashion as the top hats, then in vogue, were too high for the covered coaches so were reduced in height.

Mary Dunbavin

Barn Owls

With the loss of habitat and nesting opportunities, period of around 8-21 days. After 31-32 days' by the turn of the century the population of barn incubation, the eggs hatch every 2-3 days, usually owls in Suffolk had fallen below 100 breeding pairs. in the order they were laid. This is termed The Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project, founded "asynchronous" hatching.

in 2005, has helped put up nearly 2,000 Barn Owl nest boxes throughout Suffolk, on nature reserves, farmland and on community spaces. The project has been an overwhelming success and has helped restore the number of barn owls to levels not seen since the 1930s.



Members of the Wildlife Watching group had the privilege of witnessing Patrick Barker, local farmer and conservationist, record and ring six owlets that were in a nest box on land owned by one of our members.

Most bird species do not start to incubate their eggs until the clutch is complete, so the eggs hatch at more or less the same time. But barn owls, like other birds of prey, begin incubation as soon as the first egg is laid and lay additional eggs over a

The picture shoes the difference in size of the six chicks with the oldest almost fully fledged. The youngest two are, sadly, unlikely to survive - but that's nature.

Thank you Marion for arranging the visit.

Blackbourne U3a Tai Chi Group



Tai Chi is an ancient form of Chinese exercise that can bring real health benefits through its gentle stretching and breathing movements, and which can improve body, mind and spirit, helping balance, concentration and calmness. It was originally a fighting discipline, used as a form of self defence, but these days it is practised by millions of people around the world as a form of gentle exercise and a means to improve health. There is a Set Form which is a sequence of 108 moves, taking about 20 minutes to complete. It takes several months to learn and remember the basic Form – and a lifetime to get it right!

The group in Blackbourne U3a is led by Richard Noble, who first started learning some 30 years ago, and provides full instruction on how to learn and perform the moves. The weekly class is an hour of turning and stretching movements, focusing the mind, stimulating the memory, improving balance and coordination – and all with a smile on the face!

Some member comments have been:

"As a newcomer to Tai Chi I've found the classes welcoming and inclusive, regardless of ability. Tai Chi is challenging but rewarding and I always feel relaxed and well exercised after a session."

"Tai Chi is the most relaxing form of exercise that I've ever done. It also helps improve your muscle strength and flexibility."

"Along with the movements we are also exploring the ideals and theories behind Tai Chi"

For further information contact Richard Noble on 07530 925120

Thursday walks with interest



OUR August walk took us to Hoxne, near Eye, which delivered some generous nuggets of history. This gave us a chance to test drive the new Hoxne Heritage Trail, a set of 12 information boards put together by the [Hoxne Heritage Group](#).

There are at least three places in the village where 'legend has it' major events surrounding the death of King Edmund in 869 may have taken place. More credible history is the discovery, in 1797, of man-made flint axes and tools from the Paleolithic era around 450,000 years ago.

In 1992, a metal detectorist found a wooden chest in a field. It contained nearly 15,000 Roman coins as well as jewellery and tableware – the largest collection of Roman coins found anywhere in the Roman empire. The 'Hoxne Hoard' is now on display at the British Museum.

We added a woodland loop to the Trail and found Hoxne Man, an 8-foot tall wooden sculpture of a Paleolithic man holding a flint, created as part of the Suffolk Hearts of Oak Project.

Our thanks go to Jill Williams at the Greengold Café, who does not usually open on Thursdays but came in specially to prepare a light lunch for our group. And to Richard Griffin from the Hoxne Heritage Group who popped in to tell us more about the Trail.

The group normally meets on the first Thursday of each month for a 4.5 – 5.5 mile walk from various locations. We currently have spaces, please email Di Finney di.finney@outlook.com or Lynda Heywood heywood.kinver@gmail.com if you would like to join.

INTEREST GROUPS UPDATE

Do you want to discover a new interest, develop a skill or share your passion and expertise with others? Take a look at our Interest Groups!

The groups are run by members, for members and cover a variety of topics from languages and artistic pursuits, reading books and plays, to outdoor activities.

We currently have 25 groups- including a new one, BIOGRAPHIES, set up just this summer.

Take a look at the website for details - or talk to any member of the committee.

If you feel that you have an interest which you could share- please contact me, Geri Collingwood, on 07590 317161,

or email gericollingwood@hotmail.co.uk

I can give you advice and support as to how to set up a group. It's easier than you think.

Art Exhibition

The Art-Mixed Media Group are holding their Annual Exhibition in Pakenham Village Hall

**On Saturday 24 October
from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm**

Entrance is free, paintings may be purchased and light refreshments will be available

Craft Group

Carol is once again offering Marzipan Fruits sessions in the run up to Christmas. These are held in her home, at a cost of £2.50 to cover materials. All participants go home with a box of treats – the fruits of their labour!

The sessions are on:

Monday November 2nd at 2pm

Thursday November 12th at 10am

Friday November 20th at 2pm

This has proved to be a popular activity over the years and spaces are limited. To secure your place Call Carol on 01359 408978 or 07961 112921

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Contributions and photos for the Newsletter from groups or individual members should be sent to bryward0337@gmail.com

Copy dead line for the next issue is 28 November