

NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2017

Greetings to all our members. I am writing this exactly at the Spring Equinox, which is just about my favourite time of the year, as it brings hope of warmth and growth and holidays in due course. On this day the sun rises due east and the day and night are the same length. From then the days grow longer, the nights shorter, and we are out of winter and on the way to summer. Warmer weather means no more excuses about not coming out to attend U3A meetings, so we hope to see even better attendance this month.

SERIES

Our Great Courses series have been becoming increasingly popular as people have discovered that they are not so highbrow and scientific that they are only for the experts. In fact, both the one on archaeology and the one on structures have been accessible and fascinating, particularly as they have touched on things we know about, such as the story of Masada at the Dead Sea in Israel, and suspension bridges, why they work and why they don't. We have only a few of the series left in each case, so you won't want to miss them. The topics of each for this month are set out as follows:

ARCHAEOLOGY - The World's Greatest Sites:

On Monday 2 October, we remain in Israel when Prof. Cline describes his own excavations at **Tel Kabri**, from 2005 to 2015, centring on an elaborate Caananite palace from the Bronze Age, and the oldest wine cellar ever discovered in the ancient Near East. Then we move to **Jordan and Syria**, to Petra with its tombs and temples carved into the face of the cliffs; to Palmyra with its Greek and Roman architecture; and to Ebla with its great citadel and a cache of ancient tablets.

Then on Monday 23rd Prof. Cline gives a fascinating lecture on how **archaeological artefacts are dated** and preserved, and the problems of the looting of antiquities. This is followed by stories of antiquities found almost by accident – the terracotta army of China, the 7th century ship at Sutton Hoo, and human remains preserved in ice.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD'S GREATEST STRUCTURES

The previous lecture by Prof. Ressler told about suspension bridges. On Monday 9 October he will move on to **cantilever bridges**: Scotland's Firth of Forth bridge and Canada's second Quebec bridge. With the title "Tragedy and Triumph", he will cover the failures and successes

of this development. Secondly we will see how **iron and steel** revolutionised buildings, and set the stage for modern skyscrapers.

On Monday 20 October Prof. Ressler tells about **America's great skyscraper race**, with the Wainwright Building, the Chrysler Building, the Willis Tower and the World Trade Centre towers. We go even higher with the next lecture, on the versatility of concrete, ending with Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the world's highest building.

MUSEUM MASTERPIECES

We have two sessions of art this month, firstly on Wednesday 4 October, where we are again in the National Gallery, London, to see the golden age of Spanish painting, with El Greco and other masters, and then an introduction to Dutch art, with history paintings, portraits and daily life.

We continue the international tour in the second programme on Wednesday 18th, and here we look at Venetian and more Spanish masters, as well as light-hearted French paintings of the 18th century.

KEY SPEAKERS

Everything seems to be happening in twos in October. We even have two speakers lined up. The first, is **Carla Engelbrecht**, on Wednesday 11th October. She will tell us about the beautiful Venetian masks that she makes. Those who attended the Francesco da Mosta series on the history of Venice will remember the Venetian carnival, with magnificent costumes and masks. Carla has been to Venice to learn about the masks and her talk will be most interesting.

The second speaker this month, on Monday 16th, is **Jennie Anderson**. Some of our members have enjoyed her Tai Chi classes. Jennie is actually coming to speak on the benefits of participating in Tai Chi, which may inspire more people to try it out. Come along and find out what it involves.

FILM CLUB

The film this month is **Hidden Figures**. It will be shown on Monday 30 October at 19.00. All are welcome and wine will be on sale.

Brenda Hardy writes:

"HIDDEN FIGURES" is the incredible, true, untold story, based on the non-fiction book by Margaret Lee Shetterley, of three African-American women who worked for NASA in the 1950's and 60's. They served as "human computers", doing complex mathematics and engineering tasks to help launch the manned spaceflight programme and they served as the brains behind one of the

greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored confidence in the USA, turned around the Space Race and galvanized the world. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire future generations".

REGULARS - Special Interest Group Meetings

The Mah Jong group meets every Friday at 13.30, in the Small Dining room at FGV. Members are asked to contact Lyndsey Wright if they wish to join the group. Her phone number is 044 533 3528. Please remember to wear your U3A membership badge when coming to Mah Jong.

The Italian Conversation Group continues each Tuesday at 10.00, coordinated by Brenda Hardy. Her phone number is 044 533 5489.

The French Conversation Group meets each Friday at 10:00. For further information, please contact Ingrid James (044 533 0212).

The Science Group finishes the series on Time this month. The final talks will be, on Thursday 5th, The Multiverse, and on Thursday 19th, Approaches to the Arrow of Time. If you are interested it is not too late to get an idea of what they have been discussing. Meetings start at 15.00 and all are welcome. Contact Henri Timme (044 535 9041 or 078 877 5829) who will confirm the venue of the next meeting.

FINALLY

In the last newsletter we announced that our membership subscription for next year will be R180. Now I can announce that we are ready to receive your money! So if you wish to avoid the Christmas and New Year rush, you may make your payment already, in cash or by bank transfer, to U3A, and it will last until November 2018. This also goes for new members – sign up and pay now and you will get October and November thrown in for free!

Best wishes to you all -

Lynette Timme
tempusfugit1881@gmail.com