



Wroxham and District  
Membership Number: 962/940/13

Chairman: John Long, 01603 722254    Secretary: Jan Barrington 01603 712150

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## **Newsletter for DECEMBER 2018**

The last newsletter for this year, I can't believe it where has this year gone?

Our meeting in November had a really interesting speaker one of the best I think, the meeting was opened by John who introduced Phyllida Scrivens who is the author of the book "Escaping Hitler" and was going to speak to us about the subject Joe Stirling, he



thenwelcomed 45 members and guests a lovely audience

Phyllida began by telling us how she came to write this book having taken an Open University course which enabled her to do her Masters at the UEA and start to write biographies.

Joe Stirling is now 94 years old and lives alone in Unthank Road in Norwich with his family living close by, he is unable to get out and about these days but sent us his good wishes. He was born Gunter Stern in 1924 in a village near Koblenz, there were only 3 Jewish families in the village and Joe (Gunter) was the only Jewish child. After 1935 when Hitler

came to power things gradually got worse for the Jews in Germany, his friends were told not to play with him and his fathers' business failed as people were told not to deal with him. Eventually they were forced to eat only potatoes and Joe was very lonely.

On "Kristellnacht" the Nazis burnt down all the Synagogues, smashed all Jewish businesses and homes and all men over 16 were arrested. Joe and his mother went back to her home and Father, who as he was over 70 was spared internment and locked in a cell for a few days. Joe's father Alfred was taken to Dachau where it was extremely cold and they had very few clothes, he caught pneumonia and was sent home after signing a document to say he would leave Germany, but with no money this was impossible and he and his wife stayed in Koblenz until they were interned and died in the Holocaust.

They discovered that Britain had agreed to take Jewish children on the Kinder transport and settle them here, Joe was on the list but when the call didn't come he took himself off and walked for 8 days eventually arriving in Holland intending to go to Harwich, he was picked up by a policeman and as he did not have the correct visa was told the only way to get to England would be to go back to Koblenz and wait for permission. So that is what he did and when the visa came through he and 300 other children was on the last train out of Germany.

He was sent to Birmingham and settled with the Free family and their daughter Mary. He was a very clever young man and had a bursary to go to the Grammar School. Unfortunately War was declared that September and the school moved to Gloucestershire and young Joe who was only just learning English stayed for a term in Wales in the holiday cottage and went to school there where he had to learn Welsh as well. In January 1940 he headed off to Gloucestershire and Lydney Grammar School where he stayed with Doris Allsop and over 3 years he also learnt about the Labour Party and workers rights , etc.

He avoided the internment of foreign nationals and in 1944 joined the Infantry in Scotland where he broke his ankle training for the "big push" and spent the rest of the war as a trainer near Basingstoke where he met Jean Skitmore who came from Attleborough where they later married in St Mary's Church.

Once he was demobbed he joined the Labour party in Norwich, he set up the first independent Travel agent Stirling Holidays in 1959, he worked all hours and with his business acumen made enough money to buy the premises and he expanded the business over the years to Great Yarmouth then Aberdeen and three decades later sold out to Norwich Airport.

He worked hard for charity as well and in his 50 years in The Lions raised lots of money, in 1975 he was made Sheriff of Norwich and had a wonderful year working with Joyce Morgan the Lord Mayor.

His wife died in 2002 and he has lived alone since then with his family all helping.

He was thrilled with the book launch in Jarrold in Feb 2016 followed in May by being published in Germany and in 2017 in the USA.

What a fantastic life and we were privileged to have had Phyllida share it with us.

John thanked her for this talk and she answered questions from the audience, the most pertinent being "How much is the Book?"

Following this and before tea Di spoke about the Special Birding meeting on Friday at Bijou and Liz about the painting group which meets on 20th where they will be making Christmas cards. Please remember that there will be no Art group meeting in December.

## **Activities**

**Poetry Reading:** It was good to see so many at our November meeting. Despite the limited time available Sue Badger gave us a splendid outline of the essential elements of poetry, well illustrated with examples both familiar and less well known, and a delightful coda: *Path to the Orchard* by a local author inspired by Munnings' well-known painting. I felt that we are now equipped to understand better why we like the poems we like. Sue has agreed to make another appearance at our February meeting with a presentation on Women in Poetry.

Next meeting is our Christmas lunch on **Dec 4** at The Horse and Groom. We will assemble at 12.00 and continue till closing time, so there will be a chance to share winter-themed poems.

There will be no meeting in January, as the first Tuesday is New Year's Day, and I have decided not to suggest a move to a different Tuesday. Jane Monks [jane@youatt.co.uk](mailto:jane@youatt.co.uk) 01603 789246

**Photography** We had a good meeting on Friday with some excellent photos from the last session. We discussed some errors and how we could improve our photography of dogs. The second half we photographed "Food" – not as easy as it would appear. We had some very interesting items and displays of food and all our skills learned over the past few months helped. Our December session on **Friday 14th December** is "Religious", very appropriate with Christmas not many days away. Hopefully we will make good use of our multi religious society and produce some interesting photographs. Mary Long 01603



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**Evening Dining** this month will be on **Thursday 13th December at 6.30 pm** at the Hotel Wroxham. There will be Christmas dishes available. Ring Maggie in good time if you wish to come. All are welcome. Maggie Flatman 01603 783091

**French Conversation Weekly Thursdays 15.00 – 16.30** at Bijou Wine Bar (opposite Hoveton Station). We have a regular core of about 6 people who drop in and out. We are comfortable with those who come just mainly to listen while they gain confidence. We encourage everyone to prepare a few words on a subject of their choosing. It might be a question of vocabulary, or you could bring a photo or an interesting object. If you give me your email address I can let you know of any changes, and I occasionally forward a snippet I have found on line. I don't teach as such, but give advice, help with vocabulary, and suggest online methods such a *Duolingo* which is free for those who want to improve their French. *Venez nous rejoindre vous serez bienvenue(s)*. This group is dementia friendly (as are all our groups). Jane Monks 01603 782496 [jane@youatt.co.uk](mailto:jane@youatt.co.uk)

**Art** The group meets at The Hub on the fourth Tuesday once a month. In November the theme was creating our own Christmas cards. At the next meeting on January 22nd 2019 we are getting ambitious, and having a crack at copying a Rembrandt! All are welcome from 2.30 – 4.30 pm. Liz Smith 01692 670468

**Classical Music** The group meets fortnightly on a Wednesday afternoon for a relaxing presentation of classical music at the home of Brian Keane, Prior Thatch, Beech Road, Wroxham. Brian has an endless supply of all kinds of music on records, CD's and tapes, but sometimes asks one of the members to prepare a programme from their collection. Brian also generously provides tea and cake in the interval. The next meetings will be **5th December 2.30 – 4.30** , and **19th** if there is enough enthusiasm so near Christmas. Call Brian if you are one of the regulars and would like to come. Brian 01603 782774

**Bird Watching** The November outing was to the east coast, but not many migratory birds were spotted. There will be no outing in December, and birding will resume in January. All enquiries to Di Stagg 784214

**Lunch Out** The meeting on **30th November at 12.30 pm** at "The Fur and Feather" in Woodbastwick will be the last one this year. There is still time to ring Corrie and book if you wish to come. We will resume in January. Meanwhile we hope to see you at the Christmas party on 11th December, and have a happy Christmas everyone! Corrie Mould 01603 782755 [candrmould@gmail.com](mailto:candrmould@gmail.com)

## History

**The History Group met on October 25th at the Kings Head Wroxham ( very noisy and we won't be doing it again!)**

**We enjoyed a lively discussion including Franz's archaeological finds, future topics and outings and a plan to visit the Ancient House Museum in Thetford.**

**The November meeting will be back at Bijou on Thursday November 29th at 2.00pm when Brenda and Frances will update the group on their Pocahontus research.**

**Our December meeting clashes with Christmas but the group will be meeting for a Christmas Celebration.**

**All new members welcome.**

**Brenda and Frances**

**Our next general meeting will be on December 11th (PLEASE NOTE THIS IS THE SECOND TUESDAY IN THE MONTH BECAUSE THE USUAL ONE IS TOO NEAR CHRISTMAS) and will be the Christmas party so please come along, with your food contributions, and enjoy the afternoon with quizzes and nibbles. January will return to usual on the 15th with Mike Weatherstone speaking about village signs.**

**In the meantime we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.**

**Jan.**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
and  
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

