



Bicester U3A Newsletter #89

May 2023

From Our Chairman

Voted in at the AGM as Chairman for another year, I feel like royalty.....even though I know no one else was prepared to do it! Our membership stays pretty constant, we lose some through getting too old, passing away or moving away, but we constantly gain new members. We are still short of a vice chairman... I have to do it all on my own and there is no one to take over.... please think about it. There will be other Committee Vacancies next year. We are now attempting to stick to the constitution, members can only serve three years in the same post, and a maximum of 9 years on the committee.

Your committee are working hard on your behalf, we have new one off pop up meetings that may lead to new groups, Square Dancing, Singing and no doubt more to come.

We are all looking forward to our Lake District trip in June and our visit to the Cotswold Wildlife Park on the 20th June. There are further day trips in the planning (I am not allowed to mention them, I have already had my wrists slapped for giving details prematurely).

We are looking at planning the Christmas Lunch, if you have any ideas for a venue for 100 people let us know.



Congratulations to all concerned, our £650 collected for the tree fund was a magnificent effort, I do think Jan's tree at the AGM was a great help, see the report below.

Congratulations to George on editing his first newsletter in February, in spite of having to do it on a Mac!

Preparations are well in hand for the Picnic in the Park, a rerun of last years on a slightly reduced scale. Make sure you have the date in your diary the 6th of July.

Dave Jones

Executive Committee

Chairman: David: (DJ) Jones
Group Coordinator: Janice Laker
Vice Chairman: Vacant
Business Secretary: Margaret Herbert
Membership Secretary: Val Day
Program Secretary: Mike Luff
Membership Advisor: Mary Herbert
Website: Tomy Duby
Treasurer: Audrey Luff
Welcomer Liaison: Carolyn Jones
Beacon: George Edmundson
GDPR: Doug Irvine
Newsletter Editor: George Edmundson
Committee Member: Anthony Lock

Membership Secretaries Report

It's been a busy 3 months for me since my election in January learning the u3a Beacon system. Renewals are now finished, very much with the help of Mary Herbert (outgoing membership secretary and now advisor) and our current membership stands at 281 and is growing each month.

I know you all like the plastic wallets and the lanyards or pin and clip sourced by Mary to hold your membership cards, they keep them fresh and clean and are less likely to be lost. As well as wearing to the monthly meetings, it would also be appreciated by Group Leaders if you could wear them when attending groups as well.

I look forward to getting to know more of you in due course through the year.

Val Day

Membership Secretary

Group Coordinator News May 2023

I'm sure we all know that group leaders give their time voluntarily; some give a lot! Over the last year I have had the pleasure of meeting group leaders and I am touched and humbled by the realisation that one of the overriding motivations is the urge to help people in some way.

Sometimes we may need a reminder that ‘we’ —that is ‘we all’ are the Bicester u3a.



We can all contribute receive something. Some helpers at events, help with meetings, some take a 3yr The committee recognises members to contribute if involvement and That’s where your

GATHERINGS can open a

something as well as members volunteer as teas or chairs at monthly turn on the committee. that it is easier for there are various levels of commitment available. involvement in **pop-up door.**

These are an innovation to make it possible for members to *get involved in a new way.*

The difference between a *pop-up* GATHERING and a Group, is that a GATHERING can be a one off (or maybe several) meetings on a theme. You can host a GATHERING without it evolving into a group.

Basically, a *pop-up* GATHERING needs three components.

1/ An idea for a GATHERING

2/ A member who can offer a room in their home or space for a few people to GATHER (e.g., 1 to 5 times)

3/ A member who can bring the idea to a form that can be the focus of a GATHERING.

Can you contribute all of those components?

If *not all three*, CAN YOU OFFER ONE OF THEM?

We have one offer of a space in a new member’s home—just waiting for a *pop-up* GATHERING!

Speak to a committee member for more explanation of how a GATHERING might work.

Progress so far.

April 20th 2023 saw a meeting to plan **Family History pop-up GATHERING** in a member’s home.

May 12th 2023, A **Square Dance pop-up GATHERING** at Chesterton Community centre.

- Date and venue TBA **Singing for pleasure pop-up GATHERING.**
- Date and venue TBA **Walking football pop-up GATHERING.**

It’s starting to happen!! Bicester u3a Needs you!

Please do get in touch. Group.coordinator@bicesteru3a.online.

Remember u3a Bicester “IS” YOU!

Your idea! Your Offer of a room! Your Offer to help an idea come to fruition as a *pop-up* GATHERING.

Monthly Meetings

(4th Thursday)

Clifton Centre

Ashdene Rd, Bicester OX26 2BH

2:15pm

We have seen a gradual increase in the number of members attending our monthly meetings and the speakers have been well received.

Shaun Todd, who talked to us in March about the History and Etiquette of the Afternoon Tea, waived his fee in favour of a donation to "Dogs for Good". I hope you have enjoyed the topics covered so far this year.

I have started planning the list for next year, some of the previous speakers can offer different talks for our entertainment.

However, if you have heard an interesting talk, perhaps presented to a group which you belong to, and feel that it would appeal to U3A members, please do pass any details on to me for consideration. I would be pleased to receive your recommendations.

Mike Luff. Programme Secretary

Thur May 25th Jeff Rozelaar: Winston Churchill Part 2: History and Humour

Thur Jun 22nd Peter Hague: Famous Jewels and Their History

Thur Jul 27th Quiz

Thur Aug 24th Roger Edwards: Murder, Mayhem and Mountebanks

Thur Sep 28th Dr Audrey Brown: Wildlife and Scenery in Faulkands, South Georgia Antarctica

Thur Oct 26th Alan Lavender, MBE: Chef to 4 Prime Ministers

Thur Nov 23rd Roger Umpleby: A Close up view of the Cotswold Countryside

Thur Dec 14th Christmas Lunch: (all details to be confirmed)

SAVE THE DATE

6th July 2023 is the date of this year's U3A Summer Event.

Bring your own picnic and refreshments and wait to be entertained.

We are planning games, music and entertainment similar to last year's enormously popular event.

This is for MEMBERS ONLY, so watch out for more information at monthly meetings and via email.

Thank you to all the people that have replied to our email asking for volunteers to help on the day.

A raffle is planned. Donations of prizes will be gratefully received.

**There are a few places left on the
COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK & GARDENS TRIP
TUESDAY 20th JUNE 2023**

**** £22 ****

Bicester U3A (*members only*).



There are timed talks around animal feeding, a narrow-gauge railway, shaded picnic areas and also a guided afternoon walk around the garden.

For more information contact -

Carolyn Jones, Welcomer Liaison

Residential Holidays

Hopefully the next newsletter will contain a report and photographs of our holiday to the Lake District this year.

Meanwhile, I am looking ahead to 2024.

Several years ago, 2015 or 2016 I think, there was a very enjoyable residential trip to Northumberland. I was unable to go for various reasons, but it is an area that I do not know and would like to explore.

If there is enough interest in Northumberland as a destination



for one of our group holidays, I am willing to put together an itinerary for next year.

The Beamish Museum, Bamburgh Castle, Lindisfarne (Holy Island) and perhaps Cragside would be worth



visiting.

If the idea appeals to you and you would be interested in the holiday, please would you get in touch with me. You may have knowledge of the area and I would be grateful to receive any recommendations for places to visit.

Audrey (Treasurer)

U3A 40th Anniversary Trees

Bicester U3A started a collection last year as our contribution to the above. We have collected £650 and we have now donated it to the Burnehyll Community Woodland project. Within the Burnehyll woodland an orchard is being created, and our contribution will go towards fruit trees. We hope that eventually there will be a plaque acknowledging the U3A contribution. Picture shows the 3 Davids!



Dave Jones , David Jones and David Pheasey, Burnehyll Treasurer

Well over three thousand trees have been planted to date, it is a labour intensive job so volunteers are always welcome. The woodland is located between Vendee Drive and Chesterton. If you would like to help, email me and I can give you the contact details
Dave Jones Chairman



Bicester u3a General Notices

NEWS OF MEMBERS: If you know of someone who is ill, PLEASE let one of the Committee know so that we can arrange to send a card or perhaps have someone make a visit.

HONORARY MEMBERS: When existing members reach the great age of 90 years, we like to mark the occasion by sending them a card and making them Honorary members of Bicester u3a. As we have no record of dates of birth, we rely on group leaders and friends to let us know when these happy events are approaching.

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INTERNET and EMAIL: If anyone now has internet access and is able to receive future editions of the newsletter by email, please contact the Membership Secretary. We try to hand deliver paperwork to members with no email but sometimes it is necessary to use the post, which does increase costs

PERSONAL DETAILS: The Membership Secretary keeps a master list of your personal details. Please remember to advise her if you move house, change your telephone number or email address in order to keep our records up to date and remain in touch with you.

EQUIPMENT REGISTER: These items are available to borrow by u3a interest groups. Contact the keeper to arrange a loan

Committee members: Dave Jones (Chairman), P.A. System and digital projector, screen, "iRoar" P.A. System and blue tooth speaker. Mike Luff, Nobo 3 panel desktop display boards (with cover). Audrey Luff, Laminator and free-standing flip chart stand/whiteboard. Mary Herbert. Guillotine.

Clifton Centre. Hinged notice board, floor standing projector screen, projector stand, U3A banner. Tea Urn with stand.

REFRESHMENTS: Refreshments at monthly meetings are prepared by group members. Sue Wilde will approach leaders with a request for assistance and compile a rota. Please help if you can. Supplies are maintained by Sylvia Frydland.

RAFFLE: The raffle at monthly meetings is organised by Jan and Alan Marshall. Donations of prizes are always gratefully received.

Photographic Competition 2023

Topic for 2023 Photographic Competition:

Seasons of the U.K.

Deadlines:

Submissions For Entries by Sept 28th Monthly Meeting

1st Viewing at meeting of 26th October

2nd Viewing and Voting at meeting of 23rd November.

Presentations and Results at Christmas Lunch. Venue and Timings TBC

Additional Information:

Number of Entries: - 3

Entries to be 7 x 5 or 6 x 4

Name and Membership No. on back of each entry please

Mike Luff: Programme Secretary. Contact Details: see your Members Information Card.

Welcomers

Carolyn Jones is our Welcomer Liaison. Her helpers are currently:

Richard Herbert

Marguerite Scott

Wyn May

Alex Sharpe

Joy Saville

Pauline Smith

Our New Members coffee morning was held on Friday 28th of April at the Littlebury Hotel

With 9 new members and 6 committee members in attendance. There was a friendly relaxed atmosphere, and committee members described the positives of u3a and what opportunities are available locally and nationally. We touched on how valuable offers of help are e.g., at monthly meetings, groups and events and even Committee Roles, once new members had settled in.

Jan introduced the new members to the "Pop-Up Gathering" concept where new topics could be investigated.

We talked about past and future trips and planned outings and suggested folks keep an eye on the website for all the latest information, or the notice board at the monthly meetings.

The Principles of the u3a Movement were also discussed briefly as follows:

- The Third Age Principle

Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.

- The Self-help Learning Principle

Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.

- The Mutual Aid Principle

Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.

Detailed information can be found by clicking on the link.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/about?view=article&id=312:vision-and-mission&catid=163>

This issue, we welcome the following new members to our U3A:

Beverly Forshaw, Brian Chapman, Chris Neville, Chris Neville, Debbie Pickford, Garth Perkins, Helena Tuckwell, Mark Powell, Judy Lacey, Kathy Greenfield, Kathy Skinner, Mike Tuckwell, Mona Thomas, Neil Wainman, Pauline Wainman, Peter Greenfield, Val Perkins

Bicester U3A Interest Groups(see our Information Card for phone numbers or contact Jan Laker for new groups)

| <u>Group</u> | <u>Leader</u> | <u>Meets</u> | <u>Venue</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Any Type of Good | Richard | 4th Mon. p.m. | Members' |
| Art Appreciation | Christine Cox | 2nd Thurs. p.m. | Bucknell Village |
| Arts and Crafts | Debbie | 1st & 3rd Mon. | Tesco |
| Blues Appreciation | Andrew | 2nd Friday p.m. | Members' |
| Book Group | Audrey Luff | 2nd Fri. a.m. | Bicester Library |
| Bridge | Denise Thornton | 1st,3rd, and 5th Tues. p.m. | Bicester Library |
| Bus Pass | Rennie | 4th Wed a.m. | TBA |
| Camera Club (1) | Dave | 1st & 3rd Wed | Members' |
| Camera Club (2) | George | 1st & 3rd Thurs. | Emmanuel |
| Canasta | Doreen | Weekly Wed p.m. | Members' |
| Creative Writing | Mike Wyatt | Last Friday. p.m. | Members' |
| Current Affairs | Pam | 2nd Monday a.m. | Members' |
| Cycling Group | Barry Rous | TBC | TBA |
| Drawing and Painting | Janet Hartley Joy Saville | 2nd & 4th Mon p.m. | St Edburg's Church Hall |
| Exploring Classical | Tomy Duby | 1st & 3rd Thurs | Zoom |
| French | Julie Evans | 1st and 3rd Wed. | Members' |
| Garden Visits | David Jones | 2nd Wed pm or all | TBA |
| German | Brenda | 2nd & 4th Mon | Zoom |
| Improvers Bridge | Audrey Luff | 2nd & 4th Tues. | Bicester Library |
| Jazz Appreciation | Andrew | 3rd Wed. p.m. | Members' |
| Mah-jong | Doreen | 1st & 3rd Mon | Members' |
| Murder Mystery | Mary Herbert | 4th Wed. p.m. | Members' |
| Qi Gong | Audrey Luff Denise | Weekly Tues. a.m. | Chesterton Com Centre |
| Rock Group | Doug Irvine | 2nd Tues. p.m. | Members' |
| Rummikub | Sheila | 1st & 3rd Wed. | Lamb Inn |

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|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Scrabble | Sue Barden | 1st & 3rd Thurs. | Members' |
| Short Walks | Mary Gough | 2nd Tues. a.m. | TBA |
| Sunday Lunch | Sandie | 1st Sunday 12.30 | Local Pubs/ |
| Table Tennis | Christine Cox | Weekly Thurs. a.m. | Chesterton Com |
| Ukulele Group | Bill Jeffries | 2nd & 4th Wed | Blackthorn |
| Wider Horizons | Joy Saville | 2nd & 4th Fri a.m. | Lamb Inn |
| Wine Appreciation | Richard | 3rd Thurs. Evening | Members' |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

News from the Groups

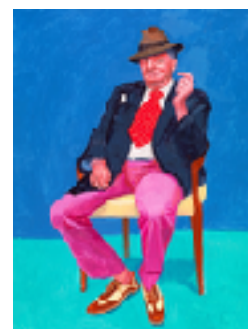
Art Appreciation

Newsletter Art Appreciation May 23

In February, our speaker was Joy Saville, who gave a talk on “Three Women Impressionists”, namely Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt and Marie Bracquemond. All had problems of acceptance as women in a man's world, but all exhibited and eventually found favour. Berthe Morisot was a friend of Manet and he encouraged her in her art which centred on flowers, women and children and gardens. Mary Cassatt was American and came from a rich family who disapproved of her chosen profession, but she introduced Impressionism to America and her later works also show the influence of Japanese art, which became popular at the end of the C19th. Marie Bracquemond is less well known and her pictures don't sell like the others, but she was a fine artist and had been encouraged by no less than Ingres. There were plenty of works to enjoy and it was a very successful afternoon.

Then in March, Sue Wilde's talk was on David Hockney entitled “A Bigger Picture.”

The title was taken from the big exhibition in 2012 of landscapes and flora of the East Riding of Yorkshire, near Hockney's birthplace Bradford. She showed some of his early pictures which really illustrated how his style had evolved through the years, especially the time spent in America. All of this showed how talented he is, painting in so many mediums leading up to his I Pad paintings of



his Normandy landscape and townscapes. He even designed a window in Westminster Abbey for the Queens Jubilee on his I Pad as he considered it was ideal for the project because, like stained glass, it was back-lit! Its almost the only stained glass window –in the Abbey - most of the rest are painted. Only his signature on one corner is painted.

April turned out to be a most enjoyable afternoon, despite an inauspicious start when once again we had a technical problem, which I now do believe we have cracked! We had another of our sessions where members were invited to talk about a painting on a given subject for no more than 5 minutes. This month's talk was on “Leisure – What people do in their spare time” and with 14 contributors we had a wide variety of subjects from sport (tennis, boules, walking, rowing, swimming, horse-racing) playing games(draughts and cards) going to a circus, meeting friends or quietly being by oneself (reading and sewing) and even one of Beryl Cooks hilarious pictures of a Panto Dame being heckled! Then tea and biscuits as usual and lots of chat rounded off an excellent afternoon.

Do get in touch if you are interested in joining us. You won't get frog-marched into participating and you don't even need to know much about art - all you need is an interest to learn and find out what you like. We meet at 2.30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month in Bucknell Village Hall where parking is easy.

Christine Cox

BOOK GROUP NEWS

We continue to meet in Bicester library and our book choice for February was “Prisoners of Geography” by Tim Marshall. We usually read works of fiction, so this was a first for the group. To follow world events, you need to understand many things, importantly, leaders are constrained by geography.

The choices they make are limited by mountains, rivers, and seas. Small things have a large impact, lack of a warm water port, a navigable river or a barrier of impassable mountains mean that countries invade their neighbours to improve their trade routes.

We found the subject fascinating and realised that modern day maps mislead us about the sheer size of countries we think we know. The book is a challenging read but well worth exploring.

Twelve of us met in March to talk about “The Last Runaway” by Tracy Chevalier. Grace Bright is a Quaker girl who travels from Dorset to Ohio in the 1850s to marry her fiancé. Her sister Honor travels with her and when

Grace dies on the journey, Honor continues alone. She stays for a while in a milliner's shop owned by Belle Mills who is involved with the Underground Railroad. This was a network of safe houses and food depots, helping runaway slaves make their way to freedom in Canada. The story progresses through Honors' meeting with her sister's fiancé and her own subsequent marriage. She is a skilled needlewoman and spends time making quilts. She has difficulty settling in America. She becomes involved with helping the escaping slaves herself which causes tension within the family.

We felt this was a well told story, maybe a little too much about the quilt making! We would have preferred more about the Underground Railroad.

At our April meeting we discussed "American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins. Lydia Perez owns a bookshop in Acapulco, Mexico and is married to a fearless journalist. In a city in the grip of drug cartels, friends become enemies overnight and when a bullet rips her family apart, Lydia has no choice but to flee with Luca, her eight-year-old son. North, to the border...whatever it takes to stay alive. Along their way they meet others in similar situations but who can they trust?

This book has you hooked from the very first sentence. These events are happening to real people every day. The characters are realistic, they know they are likely to die, be captured, robbed, assaulted, or beaten but they press on, looking for a better future, some helping others, forming a bond in the face of all manner of difficulties. Superb research makes this a very human story. A mother's love for her son and the lengths she will go to to ensure he has a better life. We all enjoyed this one and would recommend it. If anyone is interested in setting up a second Book group, please do get in touch with myself of the Group Co-Ordinator. Meeting in the library means we have been able to welcome extra members, but we have reached a comfortable maximum.

Audrey Luff

Bridge Group

Our new venue, the Bicester Library, is proving very successful, it is such a nice room and we now have space to store our equipment, which makes things much easier. Several of us also take the opportunity to change our library books while we are there.

We have welcomed a couple of new members recently, Brian and Mark, and have been very pleased to see Clive, a previous member, return to the group. Our numbers are slowly increasing and we now regularly have 8 or 9 pairs playing. Results are posted on the website after each session.

If anyone wants to join us for a friendly game of duplicate bridge on a Tuesday afternoon please contact me. Unfortunately we cannot cater for beginners.

Denise Thornton

Bus Pass Adventure group

25th January 2023 -



As we didn't know what the weather would be like our adventure this month was to Oxford. We looked into several colleges (closed to visitors) and learnt about the history and political/famous people who had studied there. At 2 pm we visited the Oxford Union who have an extensive library and debating chamber. The Librarian told us the history of the Union and about the famous speakers who had visited. It was a very

interesting afternoon.



22nd February, 2023 - The adventure for February was to Buckingham. As I was unable to go Susan Williams and Sally Styles offered to lead it. They had a lovely time learning about the history of Buckingham and would like to go back in the Summer to do the river trail.



22nd March 2023 - In March we went to Oxford. Joy led the group first thing as I was coming from London that morning. The walk was through the old streets of Oxford ending up at the Kings Arms for our lunch. The pub claims to be the oldest in Oxford.



26th April 2023 - This month turned out to be an adventure and a half. We travelled to Oxford as usual to catch the bus to Henley-on-Thames. Arriving at the correct bus stop, the sign didn't mention the bus number we wanted. After speaking to the driver of a local bus who checked his timetable, he agreed we were at the right stand, so we waited. We started talking to a young lady who was also going to Henley who said we would have to

change at Wallingford. The bus didn't arrive so we decided on Plan B (catch the next bus to Queen's Lane and see where we could go from there). Just as two of our group boarded the bus, the bus to Wallingford arrived so on we get. As it was getting late it was decided to have an early lunch in the Antiques Centre and then have a walk around Wallingford following a historic guide from the Information Centre, which everyone enjoyed.

Rennie Buxton

Camera Club 1

Down Memory Lane

In February's Newsletter, I discussed my Down Memory Lane project to mark the 10th anniversary year of the interest group.

The project's objectives were: -

- to compile photos from all those who have contributed to the group since its formation and create a 10th Anniversary webpage for Camera Group 1 on the Bicester U3A website.
- And to mark our anniversary year with a photoshoot and maybe a meal afterwards – date and topic of photoshoot/meal yet to be decided.

Exhibition

I also discussed the suggestion (by Bicester Library Staff) that we put on an exhibition of our photos in the town library. I've chosen the working title of '10 Years of Photography with Bicester U3A'.

For this exhibition, I wouldn't want to restrict entries just to those who have been part of Camera Club 1. I want to include the Camera Club 2 folks and indeed anyone from our U3A who feels they have a photo worthy of exhibition in the town library.

For each photo, I'm thinking of an A4 print with a description of why/where the photo was taken. And possibly, the photographic technique used and

how successful the photo has been in achieving the aims of the photographer.

Progress

I now have a new Interest Group called 'Photography Exhibition' which will allow me to contact fellow photographers and start to collect those all-important photos.

By the time you read this, e-mails will have been sent. So fellow photographers, check out your in-boxes, search through your archives and let's put on a show.

Best wishes to all.

Dave Thornton

Camera Club 2



We have had three successful outings recently. In February some of my members joined the table tennis group with the brief of capturing motion in their picture. They all did very well in difficult lighting and with lots of action going on around them.

March saw us in Oxford again. This time we visited a photography exhibition in the

Bodleian and then went out to take some pictures. This time I asked them to capture images that showed signs of people but without people in the actual photograph. This proved to be very challenging but they all come back with good results.



Our most recent trip was to Woodstock where I instructed the photographers to use a prime lens or keep their camera at a constant focal length. This helped them to realise the importance of positioning when trying to capture a good image although some found it to be frustrating not being able to use their zoom.

Cycle Group

"Cycling Group has not been active recently, due to lack of any REAL interest being shown.

u3a members who have made enquiries to join the group, will be contacted in the next 10 days."

Regards
Barry.

Drawing and Painting

Our group continues to meet regularly, we all hope to submit two pictures each in a different media as our project which we will exhibit later in the year.

Regards Janet Hartley

Exploring Classical Music

Today I have to start with a sad message: One of the founding members of this group, Julia White, passed away on 12-Apr-23. She and her husband, Ian, who died about two years ago, never missed a meeting until age got the upper hand... We will miss her!

Which of the last meetings did I enjoy most? It was the one we had on the Thursday before Good Friday. It was a *Desert Island Disk* meeting, where I asked the members to suggest a composition for the occasion. This time the occasion was Easter, Spring or anything suitable. This format has its charm as we never know what we will hear. Almost like a potluck: you never know what you'll get, but surely it will be good! This time the selection was really eclectic: Delius, Wagner, Albinoni, Rimsky-Korsakov and Vaughan-Williams. What caught my imagination was to hear Delius's *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and Vaughan-Williams's *The Lark Arising* together. It never happened to me before. And I do not understand why...

Tomy Duby
16-Apr-23

FRENCH CONVERSATION

Our confidence to speak French grows meeting by meeting and as a group we go from strength to strength with our conversations, only occasionally lapsing into English if we cannot find the right word. We have heard about a

recent trip to New Zealand and another to South America, made more interesting by showing photos of the trips on screen. We look forward to more holiday memories in the future.

JULIE EVANS

Friday evening at The Zoom Inn

FEATZI started during lockdown, bringing people together at a time when we couldn't get out to see each other. Even though all the restrictions have been lifted, we're still getting together twice a month in our virtual pub to put the world to rights over a drink.

There's usually about 12 people on each occasion and we're very relaxed. You can join in the conversation if you wish or just sit and nurse your drink, just like in a real pub.

We often have a loose theme to the evening, and sometimes a bit of a pub quiz.

Over the last three months, our themes have encompassed National Mulled Wine Day, Corned Beef and Cabbage Day and Nutrition and Hydration Day. We meet on the first and third Friday of each month, from 7:30pm until the landlord calls "time".

If you'd like to join us, get in touch via the Group Coordinator and I'll add you to the group. Details on your membership card.

Cheers!

Steve

Garden Visits

April this year, we met in the Blue Diamond car park and sheltered behind the minibus while we decided the weather was so atrocious no one wanted to go! This was disappointing, in view of the vista we missed last year. But we did start off well this year, our snowdrop visit in February was to Stowe, a beautiful day, plenty of snowdrops (although I don't seem to have photos of them!)





For our March visit we went to Cliveden



It was cold, but there of walking to keep you warm, particularly of you go down to the river



For April we planned to go to West Wycombe Park, many of us have never been before, but that was the day of the gales and rain, (12th April). Most of the National trust places were closed that day because of the weather and when I looked further I found that not only the house was closed but the cafe was closed (most members only go for the tea & cake!).

Dave Jones



IMPROVERS BRIDGE

Our “refresher” teaching from Denise, ably assisted by Dave, continues to tax our “little grey cells” and our twice monthly afternoon sessions in the library are enjoyable as well as informative.

We then play hands to see if we understand what we have revised. I think we are improving! We have a diverse mix of characters and Denise has the patience of a saint! Sometimes she goes over a topic several times to ensure we have a good understanding.

We have almost finished the current course and a few sessions will be cancelled in the coming months because of holidays and other commitments.

Hopefully we will resume in the Autumn and remember what we have been taught so far!

Audrey Luff

Jazz Appreciation

The Jazz Appreciation Group continues to meet every third Wednesday. The last session took the theme ‘Jazz Colours’ and was beautifully put together by Wini with suggested songs by members. Amongst the twenty songs we heard were: ‘Irish Black Bottom’ by Turk Murphy’s Jazz Band (1949); ‘Cool Blues’ by Charlie Parker (1947); ‘Blue in Green’ by The Miles Davis Quintet (1959); ‘Black and tan Fantasy’ by Kenny Ball (1961); ‘Misty’ by Ella Fitzgerald (1959) – there was some debate as to whether misty is really a colour!; ‘Blue Rondo a la Turk’ by Dave Brubeck; ‘Honeysuckle Rose’ by Ben Webster (1944) and ‘String of Pearls’ by Glen Miller – if we can have pearls as a colour I’m sure we can include misty too!

There are still a few spaces left so if anyone is interested in listening to some cool jazz in a comfortable setting, complete with tea and cakes, then please get in touch with the group leader.

Andrew Thomas

Murder Mystery Book Club

February – The Dark by Cara Hunter.

A woman and child are found locked in a cellar barely alive. No one knows who they are – the woman can't speak and there are no missing person reports that match their profile. The elderly man who owns the house claims never to have seen them before, then Detective Inspector Adam Fawley stumbles across a breakthrough, a link to a missing woman from an adjacent house. It is a unsettling mystery of long buried secrets and the monsters who hide in plain sight. As Fawley begins to unravel the two mysteries he eventually finds the common link. He finally works out the solution with the help of his team.

March – The Dry by Jane Harper.

A small town hides big secrets. After getting a note demanding his presence, Australian Federal Agent Aaron Falk arrives in his hometown for the first time in decades, to attend the funeral of his best friend Luke. Twenty years earlier when Falk was accused of murder, Luke was his alibi. As Falk investigates Luke's death, long buried mysteries resurface, as do the lies that have haunted him.

April – The Quiche of Death by M C Beaton.

Putting all her eggs in one basket, Agatha Raisin gives up her successful PR firm, sells her London flat and samples a taste of early retirement at the age of 53. She moves to the quiet Cotswold village of Carsely. Bored, lonely and used to getting her own way she enters the local baking contest. The problems begin when the judge is found dead having been poisoned by her quiche. She has to admit to buying her entry from an upmarket London shop. Has her cheating and meddling landed her in hot water, or are the threats she receives related to the suspicious death. She begins to feel the need to investigate.

QI GONG

Our weekly sessions with Tania at Chesterton continue to help us with breathing, posture, and general well-being. Sometimes members miss a week, other commitments clash, but we usually have a good attendance. Tania recently introduced a new exercise,

“Stretching the chest to control, relax and warm the internal organs”.

This one is a bit of a challenge. But, as with all our exercises, it has benefits to different areas of the body and internal organs. Apparently, it should leave us with a pleasant feeling of internal warmth.

(Sometimes it raises a laugh too!) We are fortunate to have a qualified teacher in Tania and are very grateful for her dedication to the group.

The road works at Chesterton are ongoing until July but we will continue to meet as usual.

Audrey and Denise.

Rock Group

The Rock group is running successfully and we have now had to open a waiting list as we now have a full compliment of musicians.

We hope to be meeting in a village hall starting in June as we need more space to use a PA in. We have a set list worked out and are using our practice sessions to improve our sound.

Scrabble

We are up to full capacity now and I have to remove and move my furniture around to accommodate everyone, but it is all good fun. We all enjoy the play and chat and congratulations when and if a special word is found. A favourite comment, when an unusual word is found is “ how will you use that in a normal conversation” It always makes it us laugh and think!! Hope it carries on in the same vein.

Sue Barden

SHORT WALKS GROUP



The Short Walks Group continues to be well supported. In January the group walked from Middle Barton to Steeple Barton Church and back via Barton Abbey The display of snowdrops in the woods was amazing this year.

Due to muddy conditions in February, we took an urban walk round Bicester. The route took us round Bure Park Nature Reserve and on to Caversfield and back

through the Southwold green area. Some of the walkers enjoyed a meal in the Bure Farm afterwards.

In March we walked around the beautiful Tusmore Estate. The estate is currently owned by Wafic Said, businessman and philanthropist. The house was built in 2004 in neo Georgian style on the site of the original house which was built in 1770.

Sunday Lunch Club

The Sunday lunch club continues to thrive we have a regular group of between 15 and 25 members.

Members dip in and out depending on their own commitments. We sign up from one venue to the next and of course at the U3A monthly meeting.

We meet the first Sunday of the month with a different venue each month.

Some of our favourites restaurants are Kirtlington Golf Club which we visited in January, Denis's, Bicester, Bull and Butcher, Ludgershall and of course The Littlebury Hotel.

We are always happy to have new members and do our best to make them feel welcome

Table Tennis

Newsletter Table Tennis May 23

Good News if you are interested in joining us!

Up to now we have had a waiting list but now with some members gallivanting off on holiday to exotic holidays and others nursing injuries, I would now like to hear from anyone who has played before (however distantly!) as we don't now have a coach to help us.

We play at Chesterton Community Hall from 10-11.45am on Thursday mornings and very occasionally on Monday mornings when the Hall is being used for other purposes. We have the use of 4 tables and mostly play doubles. We are a friendly lot and you would get to play with everyone each week. We do have some strong players, but there is no better way to learn than playing with all standards. If we have more than 16 players, we operate a sit-out system, so everyone has an equal chance of an extra rest. If at any time, you want to rest, you can do so, but I assure you its great exercise for mind and body!

No doubt you will have already read the report of Camera Club 2. It was interesting to see ourselves in action and it was quite a fun morning. I did notice several sneaking off to the loo before they arrived to make sure that they looked their best, but we relaxed when playing and tried to keep to watching the ball, not the cameras! Afterwards, they produced a booklet of

a4 size photos which we were able to look at before returning it to the Group Leader.

Our group will have been going for 10 years next month. I was one of the original members and am so glad I learnt how to play. I played tennis in my youth and still play badminton, but had never tried table tennis. Now it is the highlight of my week. I absolutely love it!

Christine Cox

Wider Horizons

We have been having our regular meetings at The Lamb with good attendance.

We try to arrange trips out and we have had a visit to the Oxford Natural History Museum. We had a lovely guide who explained the history of the museum and told us all about the superb architecture. We went into the famous debating chamber where the debate took place between Charles Darwin and T H Huxley in 1860. Darwin had just published his book 'The Origin of the Species' and Huxley asked Darwin 'whether it was through his grandfather or grandmother that he claimed his decent from a monkey'? We can recommend a trip to the fascinating museum and the cafe is good for lunch too.

If any u3a member would like to join us at the very informal get togethers at The Lamb you would be most welcome.

Wine Appreciation

For our February meeting we tasted a selection of wines that a couple of our members had drunk in various restaurants in the local area and in London. What was impressive was that they could remember which wines they had in those restaurants.

For the March session the 1st half was a selection of 3 different Pinot Grigio wines from Italy and we found significant differences in bouquet and taste even though they were the same grape variety. The surprise was that the favourite was the cheapest! The 2nd half was a comparison of 3 different Italian reds all made using the Passiamento style where some of the grapes are air dried prior to fermentation to increase the depth and flavour of the wine.

For the April session we were taken on a wine trip around Spain. We tasted 2 whites, a rose Cava and 3 reds. The 2 whites and 2 of the reds came from 2 wine makers, each one making a red and a white, and it was interesting to

compare them. The final red was voted the best and came from the Virgin wine club.

The group is currently full but if there is enough interest, and someone who would like to volunteer as leader, I am more than happy to mentor a new group as Wine Appreciation 2.

Richard Herbert

Ukulele Group



On February 22nd we entertained members of the Banbury U3A at Bodicote. There were approximately 70 members as our audience, our largest to date.

We were welcomed enthusiastically and were told, at the end, that we have inspired them to look at starting their own ukulele group.



We spent an afternoon, on April 5th, at



Spencer Court Care home in Woodstock playing and singing to the residents and staff. They enjoyed the afternoons entertainment so much that they did not want us to leave, “Can you please come back tomorrow” was one of there many comments made.

We had staff and residents up dancing and singing.



This was also a great uplift for us as a group, to see so many people enjoying our music. We have been rebooked for July 19th.

We currently have bookings for

the following:

| | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| 18th May | Forget Me Not Bicester |
| 31st May | Launton Arms Launton |
| 6th July | Bicester U3A Chesterton |



I am sure there will be plenty of other bookings to follow. I am looking at making contact with local residential homes and other groups with a view of performing/entertaining.

Within the group I am trying to encourage other members to take a step forward to play/sing, to showcase their individual talents. This will give the group a broader scope for performing in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my group members for their support, commitment and enthusiasm. As long as they continue to remember: "IT'S NOT MY FAULT"

Bill

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Press Dates: Any item for inclusion in the August newsletter must reach the newsletter editor before 1st August 2023. NB this is an absolute deadline. You can contact the editor via the website contacts page or from details on your information card.
Editor