



# Bicester U3A Newsletter #88

## FEBRUARY 2023

### From Our Chairman



Christmas is well and truly over for another year, we had a most enjoyable Christmas lunch, a very convivial atmosphere and the food wasn't bad (if you didn't have the fish), Mary did a great job organising it, although we wouldn't pay her expenses for a meal in all the different venues she looked at!. The Littlebury is a very convenient venue, easy to get to, particularly for

members that live in Bicester, and there is good parking for those who come by car. Any suggestions for this year's venue would be welcome.

The AGM was a great success (who wants to go to an AGM!), but we had so many attendees we ran out of chairs! Everyone must have had a premonition that there was going to be more humour with me running the show.

We have a new committee, with two co-opted from last year, Val Day and Doug Irvine now fully fledged members and one new member Anthony Lock. Val has already set off at a pace learning replacing Mary and membership renewals have kept them very busy.

We have extended the tree fund, with the great efforts of Jan Laker and her "money tree" at the AGM we have now collected £467 and have moved the target to £500, so if you haven't donated so far please try harder. Donations to me or Audrey the treasurer, please. Just to remind you, the trees will be planted at Burnehyll Community Woodland between Bicester and Chesterton, and the reason..... the 40th anniversary of U3A UK and Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee green canopy.

The committee are already working on some exciting outings and we have already booked the annual holiday, we are going to the Lake District, Audrey has worked hard planning it.

Mike Luff has planned a great programme of speakers for this year, try not to miss any. You never know what to expect, last year I was not particularly looking forward to "A History of Child Rearing" but it was fascinating. Similarly I had no great expectations from the Launton Bell Ringers, but they gave us great entertainment and a good start to Christmas.

We have 35 groups, including 5 new groups, Creative Writing, Cycling, Jazz Appreciation, Rock Band & Rummikub, we have lost, for the time being, Whist, Spanish, Square Dancing & Ten Pin Bowling. Jan is planning "pop up" groups,

these will be one offs or trial runs, the first one will probably be Singing for Pleasure. Most groups have reverted to face to face meetings, although one or two find Zoom more convenient.

Do make the most of your membership, join more groups, make new friends.

## Executive Committee

Chairman: David: (DJ) Jones

Vice Chairman: Vacant

Membership Secretary: Val Day

Membership Advisor: Mary Herbert

Treasurer: Audrey Luff

Beacon: George Edmundson

Committee Member: Anthony Lock

Newsletter Editor: George Edmundson

Group Coordinator: Janice Laker

Business Secretary: Margaret Herbert

Program Secretary: Mike Luff

Website: Tomy DUBY

Welcomer Liaison: Carolyn Jones

GDPR(Data Protection): Doug Irvine

## **2023 RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION £15.00**

Please note. Your Subscription is now due.

If you do not renew by 31st March, your subscription will lapse and you will no longer receive your copy of Third Age Matters (TAM) or our Bicester U3A newsletters.

All members with email addresses were sent an email with a link to a paper renewal form.

The form is two sided and requires a signature please. Be sure to tick the boxes to indicate your information preferences.

You can pay by BACS (Bank transfer) to our Subscription account quoting your membership number, or by cheque. (The detail is important as we have more than one bank account)

If you have any questions or require assistance with your renewal, please contact Val our Membership Secretary, Mary or myself.

A Big Thank You to all of you who have already renewed. 2023 membership and information cards will shortly be printed and will be sent to those of you who kindly included a stamp for this purpose. Otherwise they will be available for collection at the February meeting.

We hope that you will renew your membership but, if you decide not to, please let us know so that we do not send you unwanted reminders.

Audrey Luff

Treasurer.

## **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.

**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, “iRoar” P.A. System and blue tooth speaker. Mike Luff, Nobo 3panel 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 members of various groups, with the rota co-ordinated by Sue Wilde with Sylvia Frydland looking after the supplies.

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

## **Monthly Meetings (4th Thursday)**

Clifton Centre  
Ashdene Rd, Bicester OX26 2BH  
2:15pm

- Thur Feb 23rd Jeff Evans: The Questionable History of the TV Quiz Show
- Thur Mar 23d Shaun Todd: Afternoon Tea - What you may not know (History & Etiquette)
- Thur Apr 27th Roy Smart: Wallis Simpson and the Abdication Crisis of 1936
- 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 the Falklands, South Georgia Antarctica
- Thur Oct 26th Alan Lavender, MBE: Chef to 4 Prim Ministers
- Thur Nov 23rd Roger Umpleby: A Close up view of the Cotswold Countryside
- Thur Dec 14th Christmas Lunch: to be confirmed

## **Photographic Competition 2022 SUBJECT: WILD FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE BRITISH ISLES THE RESULTS**

The response to this year's competition was good, with 52 photo entries. The standard was excellent. Voting slips were handed out at the November meeting, with members choosing their three favourites. 70 slips were returned, with a total of 210 votes.

**Ladies  
First Place  
Viv McKay**



**2nd Place Patsy Parsons**



**3rd Place Denise Thornton**

**Gentlemen  
First Place and Overall Winner  
Richard Herbert**



**2nd Place Mike Luff**



**3rd Place David Thornton**

# Photographic Competition 2023

Topic for 2023 Photographic Competition:

## *Seasons of the U.K.*

Deadlines:

Submissions For Entries by **Sept 28<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Meeting

1<sup>st</sup> Viewing at meeting of **26<sup>th</sup> October**

2<sup>nd</sup> Viewing and Voting at meeting of **23<sup>rd</sup> November**.

Presentations and Results at Christmas Lunch, **14<sup>th</sup> December**. 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.

## **Bicester u3a are collecting to buy a copse of trees!**



This is Our contribution to Burnehyll Community Woodland

It is our response to the national u3a Trust tree planting initiative inaugurated to mark the 40th Anniversary last year. Bicester u3a contribution is also intended to commemorate the life of the late Queen and contribute to her 'Green canopy' initiative which has been extended until March 2023 in her memory.

The Burnehyll project stretches from the Park and Ride to the Chesterton junction alongside Vende Drive across approximately 110 acres. Oxford mail headline December 9th 2021.

"One thousand trees have been planted at the new Burnehyll Community Woodland between Chesterton and Bicester" This is just the beginning for Burnehyll Community Woodland.

We (friends of Burnehyll wood) intend to plant

25,000 trees in total over two more years" (By Dec 2023)

“This woodland is planted by the community for the community and for future generations. The combination of woodland, open space and balancing pond are essential for people to connect with nature, enhancing their well-being and improving their general health.

The trees have been chosen carefully to suit a range of soil conditions and future climate changes, and there is a wide range of native species.

The volunteers (who plant and care for the saplings) comprise Friends of Burnehyll Community Woodland, Bicester Green Gym, the 41 Club, Chesterton Rainbows and other local people. It forms part of Cherwell District council’s overall target to reach net zero carbon by 2030 as set out in Climate Action Framework”

Thanks to the generosity of members at the AGM on Thursday 26th January we raised £227 to add to the £240 already collected.

## Welcomers

Would you like to join the happy band of Welcomers that meet and greet new members and visitors at our monthly meetings?

Two or three Welcomers attend the monthly meetings at the Clifton Centre to guide new members to either a group leader, group information or introduce them to a member they can sit with during the talk. We need a couple more helpers to share this role. If you would like to help or need any further information please contact me, my details are on your information card or chat to us at the next monthly meeting. We would be happy for you to shadow us at the next monthly meeting to see what is involved.

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The current list of Welcomers is as follows :

Richard Herbert  
Joy Saville  
Alex Sharpe  
Pauline Smith  
Carolyn Jones  
Many thanks  
Carolyn

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

Leonora Blacker	Sylvia Clarke
Zeah Gaisford	Brian and Jennifer Hallett
Carol Hill	Gerald and Elizabeth Hodges
Geoff Julier	Helen King
Patricia Jones	Denise Moles
Marcus Payne	Amanda Robson
Mike Sipple	Mike and Eleanor Shakespeare
Gabi Twigg	Neil Walters



Martin and Janice Williams

## MEMBERS CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2022



The annual lunch was held at the Littlebury Hotel in Bicester on December 8th, with 85 of our members getting together to enjoy a two-course meal followed by coffee or tea with mince pies and chocolate nibbles. The Littlebury was chosen as it is easily accessible, with ample parking and room in the restaurant for up to 100 members. On the whole, the food was good, but feedback on the fish and the vegetables was not

complimentary.

The Special raffle was well supported, despite some apologies from those who no longer carry cash and the results of the Photographic Competition were announced, with the winners on display.

The room was beautifully

decorated and there was a lovely atmosphere, with

members mingling to chat together and enjoy themselves.

Many thanks to Mary who organised the event, with a little help from Val and Audrey.



## UPDATE on LAKE DISTRICT DELIGHTS RESIDENTIAL HOLIDAY JUNE 2023



Sadly, two members of the group are not now able to join the trip so I do have a vacant double room available if anyone is interested. I could probably change this to a



twin room if two friends would like to share. I have a waiting list for single rooms if any become free, otherwise they would incur an extra charge.

We will be staying at the Newby Bridge Hotel located at the southern end of Lake Windermere.

Planned excursions include Grasmere, Keswick, Ravenglass and Eskdale steam railway and Munster castle and gardens. A day trip to the seaside and a cruise on Coniston Waters are also on the list.

We hoped to include “Hilltop” which was the farmhouse home of Beatrix Potter. However, it is not accessible by coach and visiting is limited to small numbers. I am looking at alternatives. It may be possible to arrange for a small group interested in “Hilltop” to visit on our free day.

The final balance is due early in April and I will be contacting travellers nearer the time. Please do get in touch if you are interested in joining us.

Audrey Luff  
Treasurer.

## **Group Coordinator News**

### **Expanding membership and group provision**

At new member coffee mornings we have really tried to encourage the ethos of getting involved. What does getting involved mean?

Yes, joining groups. Yes helping at meetings. Yes supporting trips. Yes starting an interest group.

Are there other ways of getting to know fellow u3a members who may have similar interests?

I've given some thought to this.

This year I'd like to try a new 'way in' to try out your ideas and help us all get involved in a new way.

That is 'POP UP GATHERINGS'

Maybe you have been longing to take up a new interest—and would love to meet one or two more people who have, or would like to explore, the same interest with you?

Maybe an idea for a group keeps coming back to you—you wonder if it would work?

A POP UP GATHERING means that, at the very least, you can discover fellow u3a members with a similar interest. As a by-product you might find people that want to meet regularly to share an interest. It's an opportunity to meet without prior expectations one way or the other.

So if you have an interest or a hobby and you'd love to spend time with others exploring it, please consider a POP UP GATHERING as a possibility for finding fellow members who have the same interest. With almost 300 members there are almost certainly one or two people at least who would happily join you to explore it further.

## **What would a “POP UP GATHERING” look like?**

It might take any number of forms, here are some examples.

**A visit somewhere:**--For example, a wish of mine is to look at the stars through a telescope. I've recently discovered an astronomy organisation in Abingdon where that is possible, and would love to go there with a few others. This would be small scale with no need to hire a coach for example.

**Gathering in your own home:** For example, show stamp or other collections, share seeds for the garden.

**Meet to Discuss a common interest,** For example, History, Family History, Philosophy, Science, Psychology, Dream interpretation, Cooking, Sport, or Gardening. It could simply be watching an informative YouTube video together and discussing it afterwards.

**The list of possibilities is endless actually—the slogan might be –Just try it!**

I would help by sending out invites to THE POP UP GATHERING. I'm also available if you'd like to discuss an idea, or use me as a sounding board to think through the kind of gathering you want.

THE IDEAS and willingness to host if necessary will come from you as ordinary members.

**You don't have to be an expert at anything, just have an interest.**

### **Already Three POP UP GATHERINGS are planned.**

I'm delighted that two new members have already been inspired by the POP UP possibilities and come forward with three ideas! The first idea however came from Bob Billingham—who suggested a one off square dancing gathering

**So to start us off we have:-**

**1/ A POP UP GATHERING for Square dancing;** watch emails for date and venue. You may know Bob from the previous square dance group he ran Last year he suggested a one off u3a Square dance for this year. In fact , looking back I think the seed for the POP UP GATHERING idea came from Bob! Thank you!

**2/ A POP UP GATHERING to sing together for two hours;** this is planned for the spring. Watch your emails for date, song title/s and venue for it.

**3/A POP UP GATHERING for a Quiz in July;** a quiz used to be a regular event for Bicester u3a.How wonderful that two of our new members want to try this out for us! It's already on your 2023 program for July.

### **As for other group News.**

A member would like to know if there is interest in starting a family history Group. (This might form a POP UP GATHERING initially)

A few of the groups are actively seeking members.  
These include:-Creative Writing and Social Cycling groups as well as a couple of the music groups.

I'll be sending out a separate email with more detailed information to promote these groups in due course.

You will receive the 2023 group program shortly

Some groups are nearing capacity for various reasons, but there are possibilities for forming a second group in some cases—having groups 1 and 2 following the example of the camera group/s.

I hope you will be inspired to try getting involved in a new way. Please do get in touch with your ideas!—Remember the saying “There are no strangers here; only friends we haven’t yet met”

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

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

Group	Leader	Meets	Venue
Any Type of Good Music	Richard Herbert	4th Mon. p.m.	Members' homes
Art Appreciation	Christine Cox	2nd Thurs. p.m.	Bucknell Village Hall
Arts and Crafts	Debbie Cooper, Joy Saville	1st & 3rd Mon. p.m.	Tesco Community Space
Blues Appreciation	Andrew Thomas	2nd Friday pm	Members' homes
Book Group	Audrey Luff	2nd Fri. a.m.	Bicester Library
Bridge	Denise Thornton Dave Thornton	1st,3rd and 5th Tues. p.m	Bicester Library
Bus Pass Adventures	Rennie Buxton	4th Wed am	TBA
Camera Club (1)	Dave Thornton	1st & 3rd Wed pm	Members' homes
Camera Club (2)	George Edmundson	1st & 3rd Thurs. a.m.	Emmanuel Church Cafe
Canasta	Doreen Shirley	weekly Wed p.m.	Members' homes
Creative Writing	Mike Wyatt	Last Friday. p.m.	Members' homes
Current Affairs	Pam Wakeling	2nd Monday a.m.	Members' homes
Cycling Group	Barry Rous	TBC	TBA
Drawing and Painting	Janet Hartley/Joy Saville	2nd & 4th Mon pm	St Edburg's Church Hall
Exploring Classical Music	Tomy Duby	1st & 3rd Thurs am	Zoom
French Conversation	Julie Evans	1st and 3rd Wed. a.m.	Members' homes
Garden Visits	David Jones	2nd Wed pm or all day	TBA
German	Brenda Strohm	2nd & 4th Mon am	Zoom
Improvers Bridge	Audrey Luff	2nd & 4th Tues. p.m.	Bicester Library
Jazz Appreciation	Andrew Thomas	3rd Wed. pm	Blackthorn Village Hall
Mah-jong	Doreen Shirley	1st & 3rd Mon pm	Members' homes
Murder Mystery Book Group	Mary Herbert	4th Wed. p.m.	Members' homes
Qi Gong	Audrey Luff Denise Thornton	Weekly Tues.a.m.	Chesterton Community Centre
Rock Group	Doug Irvine	2nd Tues. p.m.	Members' homes
Scrabble	Sue Barden	1st & 3rd Thurs. pm	Members' homes
Short Walks	Mary Gough	2nd Tues. am	TBA
Sunday Lunch	Sandie Stevenson	1st Sunday 12.30p.m.	Local Pubs/Restaurants
Table Tennis	Christine Cox	Weekly Thurs. a.m.	Chesterton Community Centre
Ukulele Group	Bill Jeffries	2nd & 4th Wed pm	Blackthorn Village Hall
Wider Horizons	Joy Saville	2nd & 4th Fri am	Lamb Inn
Wine Appreciation	Richard Herbert	4th Thurs Evening	Members' homes
Zoom Inn	Steve Procopiou	1st and 3rd Fri. Evening	Zoom

# News from the Groups

## Art Appreciation

After all our technical problems this year, it was wonderful to have a problem free meeting in November. Colin Cockshaw gave us a superb talk on “Camille Pissarro – an artist in changing times.” It was so interesting to see many of his early works and to hear how he tried different things throughout his life, being influenced by Corot who was his teacher for a time and Seurat who led him to trying pointillism for a period. He himself was a major influence to early Impressionists and was instrumental in setting up the Impressionists Exhibitions.

We had a lovely meeting in December despite a few hiccups and the weather! I had invited everyone to bring an object ( vaguely artistic) which held special memories for them and to tell us briefly why they had chosen it. I had also reminded everyone that the hall would be lovely and warm. We arrived to find that the previous occupant (travelling post office) was on strike and the hall was freezing cold! So we all had to keep our coats and gloves on until, after a phone call, it started heating up. I did manage without a coat eventually and when the meeting started, we were all so interested in the different items brought and the stories behind them that we were all glad we came. A Xmas tea also helped. I think it was one of the most enjoyable sessions I remember.



I gave the first talk of this year entitled “Joaquin Sorolla – Spanish Master of Light” and was not surprised that no-one had heard of him before. Neither had I until I saw one of his later paintings and decided that I would like to find more about him. Like many artists, his style evolved during his life, and at first he was doing historical mythological, and social scenes and was exhibiting in many countries, and winning countless medals at Exhibitions but gradually his use of light became more marked in his outdoor

scenes, all of which were done “en plein air”. He did particularly well in America, selling lots of pictures and gaining portrait commissions, but didn't get as much attention in London and Germany. However in London he did meet a wealthy benefactor who arranged another exhibition at the Hispanic Society of America New York, which he had founded and which led to his most important commission – to paint a series of oils on life in Spain.

There's plenty of space in the group for new members and you would be assured of a friendly welcome. Don't worry if you think you need to be an art expert. None of us are, but we all are interested in finding out more.

**Please note that we now meet at 2.30pm, not 2.15pm.**

Christine Cox

## **Any Type of Good Music**

Our recent session was Part 1 of a detailed listen to music from the UK psychedelic music scene in the late 60s.

Next month (February) we plan to have a further listen to some more music from the same genre.

We are currently very short on members so if there is anyone with an interest in listening to, and discussing, Any Type of Good Music and would like to join our friendly group, please contact the Groups Coordinator or myself.

Richard Herbert

## **Art and Craft Club**

My last Newsletter as Debbie is taking over from me in the New Year but just to tell you what we did in our last few meetings.

Jennie once more helped us to do some of her fabulous cards. This time we used stamps and stamp pads and Christmas papers to create lovely cards. We also had a go at making felt Christmas ornaments for the tree. We have done Santas, Penguins and Snowmen before but this time it was a Cheeky Christmas Elf. Debbie showed us how to paint on pebbles which turned out to be very easy to do under her guidance and we all had a go with some super results.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported and helped me in leadership of our very friendly and successful group over the years. Long may the group continue under Debbie's Leadership as I am sure it will.

Joy



I'm new to all this as I've just taken over from Joy Saville as the new Leader of the U3A Bicester Art and Craft Club. I'm looking forward to carrying on the club with Joy's assistance. Our first meet up of 2023 was at Tesco's Community Room on Monday 16th January. We all went a little dotty!! With everyone painting dots, we have some very talented ladies as you can see from the photos. They were delighted with the results, it's amazing that just a few dots can create beautiful pieces. I know some of the ladies have got the dotting bug, no surfaces will be



safe!!! We will be trying all sorts of crafting that we can think of during the year, with some of the members leading. Our meet ups are every 1st & 3rd Monday of the month at Tesco's Community Room, next meet up will be Monday 6th February 2pm - 4pm. We will be trying our talents out with Highlight cards, simple but very effective. Look for the results in next months newsletter.

Debbie Cooper

## BOOK GROUP NEWS

We met in the Littlebury Hotel in November, to discuss "The Man who died Twice" by Richard Osman. This is his second book about four residents of a retirement village who find themselves involved in yet another case.

This time the story involves spies, stolen diamonds and violent mobsters. We all enjoyed the book, mainly for the way in which the characters are drawn. The author writes cleverly about issues which affect the older generation and sometimes the descriptions are very amusing. The plot is rather far fetched and it is useful to have read the first book to find out "who is who." An entertaining read. In December, we met in the refurbished meeting room in Bicester Library. The Littlebury made us welcome but it could be rather noisy and, where better to hold a Book Group than in a Library!

We had a full compliment of members plus two visitors. We talked about "The Magician's Wife" by Brian Moore.

Emmeline Lambert is married to an illusionist, sent by Napoleon 111 to persuade the Arabs, poised for Holy War, that France's might, and magic are greater. The story is loosely based on the real life French magician Jean Robert Houdini.

This was a really good choice as everyone had something to say. The author has good knowledge of desert life in Algeria and the influence of the Muslim faith. The 'magic' tricks add interest to the story and the descriptions of life at the court of Napoleon are quite enlightening.

I had to miss the January meeting but am very grateful to Marie who stood in for me and welcomed another visitor. The book choice was "The Island of Missing Trees" by Elif Shafak.

This book is a magical tale of identity, love, nature and trauma, set on the divided island of Cyprus in the 1970's and in present day London. Two teenage lovers, one Turkish and the other a Greek Christian meet secretly in a tavern with the unusual feature of a tree growing through the centre of it. Events separate them but they are re-united in later years. Their daughter wishes to learn of their past but the only connection she has is through the fig tree in her London Garden, brought from Cyprus as a cutting by her parents.

Acting as a narrator, the tree provides continuity to the tangled story. A well written book which we would recommend. The turbulent historical background is vividly conveyed, and the characters are really interesting.



If anyone is interested in starting up a second Book Group, please do get in touch with myself or the Group Co-ordinator. Meeting in the library means we have been able to welcome some new members but we have reached a comfortable maximum.

Audrey Luff

## Bridge Group

Due to the fact that the Pop In closed before Christmas the Bridge Group have changed their venue to the Activities Room in Bicester Library. This is a bright, airy room with lots of space, and, best of all it is warm. We have also changed the time the group meets to Tuesday afternoons - we now meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 2 pm, the 3rd Tuesday at 3 pm and when there is one, the 5th Tuesday at 2 pm.

We found that we were losing members during the winter as people did not want to go out or drive at night. Changing to the afternoon has encouraged quite a few members to return to playing bridge, so our numbers have grown.

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.

## Bus Pass Group



On the 26th October we visited Thame looking at the historic buildings and the museum. We visited St Mary the Virgin Church where we met an elderly gentleman

in the churchyard who showed us the grave of Robin Hugh Gibb from the Bee Gees and his house across the road. Before catching the bus home we enjoyed a “naughty but nice” drink at Rumsey’s Chocolaterie.



There hasn't been an adventure since October due to illness but it is hoped that we can visit Oxford in January (weather permitting) with a guided walk in the footsteps of politicians who have lived in the city and university.

There are 22 people on my list now but we average 9 each month which is a good number for coffee and lunch."

## Camera Club 1

### Down Memory Lane

2023 marks the 10th Anniversary of Camera Club 1 - our first meeting was on 6th March 2013.

In our anniversary year, I'd like 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.

Here's a couple of mine from 2013/ 2014 to get us started.



I also think we should mark the occasion with a celebration photoshoot and maybe a meal afterwards – date and topic of photoshoot/meal to be decided. I'll be in touch....

Exhibition

It's also been suggested (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.

I'll be discussing things with the committee to maybe get funding for the A4 printing. I'll keep folks informed as to how the project is progressing. Of course, I'm going to be swamped with entries. So, there may be some rotation of photographs from time to time.

Best wishes to all.  
Dave Thornton

## Camera Club 2

Just before Christmas we visited Oxford as the Christmas Market had just opened. I



thought there would be some colourful stalls to photograph, unfortunately I was wrong so I extended the trip to include some of the city. This was lucky as we had a few unexpected adventures. DJ manage to blag our way into the Real Tennis Court where we witnessed some players warming up. I was able to capture one interesting image in the market



and an image of a guitar all on its own.

In the new year the weather had turned very cold so we visited the Ashmolean Museum to be in doors



We had a good turnout and DJ captured this picture of us at our first coffee break. I set a challenge to take 5 photos that could be used in a brochure for the museum. This proved very challenging as the light was very dark in places. However everyone did a sterling job and we



had some good images to review



when we met up at the Emmanuel Church Cafe.

One of the things I found interesting was the pot of gold that was discovered locally in 2003 on a farm near Chalgrove.

## CANASTA

This group is going well and I've just found another member that has been having lessons with me and is now ready to move into the group which will be good, when some members are unable to come.

Regards, Doreen

## Creative Writing

3 items written by the Creative Writing Group around the theme of Forty (Anniversary of u3a)

### Forty Years

We were younger then  
If we could start again  
From that time  
Would we be any wiser?  
The Falklands War  
What was it for?  
To retain not gain  
A foothold in the icy wastes  
Of Antarctica  
In eighty-two,  
What was new?  
Test tube babies  
Artificial hearts  
Compact discs and players  
Is the world a better place?  
What have we learned as a race?

To live in peace?  
For want to cease?  
Looking back I see  
Strikes and strife  
A difficult life  
For many  
The same battles still are fought  
For basic freedoms which ought  
To be a right  
Enough to eat, a place to sleep  
Some things have changed for you and me  
A replacement hip or knee  
An eye repair to help us see  
Medication sets us free  
To live longer.

Marie Hutchison - Creative Writing Group.

### The 2022 world as u3a reached 40 in the UK

Here we are, in Bicester UK, another year has passed being involved with u3a activities. Jazz, art appreciation, book clubs and table tennis are but a few of the activities we enjoy together. Nationally the UK organisation has been running for 40 years. What, back then in 1982, led it's inaugurators to see a need for an organisation such as ours? Why 1982 and not before? Did older people not need ways to keep fit, healthy and occupied in older age before that?

Well, maybe not!

The UK State Pension started in 1909, given to those over 70 who were considered to deserve it! Life expectancy was only 51; in 1909 the overriding aim must have been to keep alive, not to

keep occupied. After the inauguration of the NHS in 1947 life expectancy began to increase rapidly, and over the same period retirement age decrease. By 1982 life expectancy was 76. The first UK u3a members in 1982 were able to retire either at 60 or 65, with a possibility of 11yrs to 15 yrs leisure time, on average, after retirement. Now, in 2022, with life expectancy at 81, there is a possibility of 20 years leisure time after retirement for some.

We know that in the UK retirement age is increasing again, people born in 1982 when the u3a started in UK, will have to work until they are 68, but life expectancy is predicted to gradually increase too. Over the next 100yrs, a quarter of the UK population are predicted to live to be 100 years old. So, it's likely that the amount of leisure time after retirement will also continue to increase. One can imagine that organisations like ours are here to stay. Long live u3a, long may it survive to help future generations of retired people keep in touch with each other, active, and interested.

We are lucky to have u3a aren't we, but, what about retirees in other countries in 2022? In China, men can retire at 60 years of age, while women who work in factories can retire as early as 50. Each year 3 million Chinese retire. Life expectancy is 77yrs. Many retirees have a lot of time and limited resources. They like to hang out in the streets chatting with their friends or congregate in parks doing tai chi, ballroom dancing or some other activity. One elderly man told the New York Times that many old Chinese love flying kites, "because it can take up much time, and its cost is free." In Papua New Guinea life expectancy is 65, the retirement age has recently been reduced from 65 to 60. The earlier retirement age is seen by some as a burden on ordinary citizens because ninety percent of people over sixty in that country do not get a pension.

There are 195 countries in the world and only 100 of them have a universal state pension. Many countries have a lower life expectancy than ours; one of the reasons for that is that people die earlier through poverty in old age. In the Central African Republic life expectancy in 2022 was the lowest world at 54years. It makes me wonder! Can our UK u3a organisation partner with NGO's (None Governmental Organisations) to address poverty in old age in other countries? (Statistics taken from Google search 2022)

Jan Laker member of Creative writing group.

## FORTY - IMPRESSIONS.

There are many occasions where forty is distinguishable:

For instance, there is the Forty(eth) Anniversary, the Ruby one, celebrated this year by u3a.

Then there is the area in the North Sea, between Scotland and South Norway which is designated as Forty.

There is currently a clothing company called Forty Streetwear.

Everyone should obey the forty miles an hour speed limit.

And Ali Baba had forty thieves.

For a refreshing break you can take forty winks.

Some say forty is fabulous.

The Irish have a cd of songs called Forty Shades of Green.

Forty is defined as the product of 10 and 4: and is 10 less than fifty.

Mike Wyatt

Creative Writing Group.

## Current Affaires Group

Little change in Current Affairs Group since last newsletter

We now meet monthly on Second Monday of each month at 10-11.30 venues change so please contact me we have one possibly two spaces at the moment . We are a friendly group We have looked at some quite serious issues

and some more light hearted ones it doesn't matter if we agree or disagree those issues stay within the group. It is important that members of the group feel valued even if they disagree with another member .

Please contact me if you want to join us.

Pamela Wakeling

## **Cycle Group**

' No recent activity, nothing to report, in Hibernation'

Barry Rous

### **Exploring Classical Music**

When George, the Newsletter editor, asked me to prepare the group report, my first thought was is it three months since my last report? So I checked my green group file and yes, it is right: There are six playlists with classical music, all well worth exploring. One meeting was dedicated to the Irish composer John Field (1782–1837). Another covered two middle European composers who could be hardly more different: Dvořák and Bruckner. Lawry introduced us to a group of French composers called Les Six. And we had a light-hearted Desert Island Disc session before Christmas that brought music from Haydn (Spring from his Seasons), Mozart (a heart touching aria from *Così fan tutte*). It was again Yuja Wang who brought the curtain down with playing the Tritsch-Tratsch Polka of Johann Strauss II. Ninety minutes of exciting classical music twice a month – that is pretty good!

Tomy Duby

27-Jan-23

## **FRENCH CONVERSATION**

We are enjoying seeing each other in person rather than on a screen and it is back to taking it in turns to host a meeting and provide refreshments.

Conversation varies from topical subjects to giving a brief summary of a recent holiday, to trials and tribulations we have experienced or anything else that might seem relevant.

## **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 Armistice Day, *The Mousetrap*, Boeing 747 and the Fête des Rois. We meet on the first and third Friday of each month, from 7:30pm until the landlord calls "time". The Zoom Inn is taking a break until March, but 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**

Last year's outings came to a rather catastrophic end, August's visit was cancelled as the weather was so atrocious, September never happened, members were kept waiting in the Blue diamond car park when the minibus driver dislocated a finger and spent the afternoon in the Horton. October had to be cancelled as I could still not drive the (manual) change minibus.

So into a new year and you should have had the new programme, although I think the dates are wrong! Our first visit is to Stowe, don't forget there is a good walk from the car park to the gardens, but there are plenty of snowdrops there.

Two bits of bad news, I lose my D1 licence to drive the minibus at the end of September 2024, I have now done 3 medicals (required when you are 70) and I will not be having another one, it is expensive and I do realise having 16 people behind you is a big responsibility. The second is that Carole is not well enough to help me any longer.

For those of us who went on the Ireland trip at least we had the visit to Mount Stewart, one of the best gardens I have ever visited.

Dave Jones

## **IMPROVERS BRIDGE**

The group suffered a minor setback in December, with the closure of the Pop-In Centre. We have been very fortunate in finding a regular slot in the meeting room in Bicester Library. It is warm!! There is plenty of space, a window which will open and good light. The tables are oblong, not ideal for bridge but manageable. We have been made most welcome and the Sainsburys car park is convenient. Our "refresher" teaching from Denise, ably assisted by Dave is high-lighting areas which our brains have forgotten. We then play hands to see if we understand what we have revised. We feel very lucky to have this opportunity. The group have all played bridge before but are gaining knowledge all the time. This group is not for Beginners but if you have some bridge knowledge and are interested in coming along, do get in touch. Audrey Luff

## **MAH JONG**

This group is going well and we may be getting another member to fill in when we are short due to hospital visits or holidays, which will make life easier.

## **Murder Mystery Book Group**

November The Man Who Died Twice by Richard Osman.

This is the second book about Elizabeth and her friends, who live in a retirement village. They have formed the Thursday Murder Club. The action starts when Elizabeth receives a letter from an old colleague, a man with whom she has a long

history. He has stolen a large quantity of diamonds and now has a violent mobster chasing him and his life is in danger. As the bodies pile up, the friends set out to find a ruthless murderer and maybe uncover the diamonds as well.

January Even the Dogs in the Wild by Ian Rankin.  
After retiring Rebus is dragged back into the Police Force as a detective, to assist in the shooting at a retired criminals house. He is then drawn into the murder of the former Lord Advocate, a senior lawyer after it is discovered that both criminal and the lawyer had received the same threatening letter. This is a taut, dark and expertly crafted tale that has plenty to satisfy the most exacting Rebus fan.

## **Qi Gong**

The Qi Gong group continues to prosper and we all enjoy our weekly sessions at Chesterton. The group is very popular and we have gained five new members in the last couple of months.

This month Tania has introduced us to a new set of movement exercises - The Flowing Qi Gong which we are finding very relaxing and invigorating.

Denise and Audrey

## **Rock Group**

The U3A Rock group is moving on.

We have two new members and things are getting a bit tight rehearsing in my front room, I think we will be seeking an alternate location soon.

Song wise we have added some new things and are working on tightening up some of the older tracks we have already worked on.

All in all a good start to a new group. We are still looking for someone who can play drums or is keen on using drum machines - please get in touch if this is you.  
STOP PRESS.. Post AGM we have a Drummer.

## **Scrabble**

We finally managed to have our post Christmas get together lunch at Bure Farm. It was a fun few hours and a good time was had by all. We'll start back playing at Ruby's as she likes us to go to her. I hope all our members have learned new words to use and astound us! Here's to 2023.

Sue Barden

## **SHORT WALKS GROUP**

During the last three months, the short walks group has stayed closer to Bicester to avoid walking in the mud. In November 25 people, walked 4 miles through Bicester's Green spaces. It is surprising how many there are tucked away. At the end most of them stayed for lunch at the Bure Farm Pub.



We had snow in December but that did not stop a few intrepid walkers joining me in Oxford for a walk around the University Parks and Christchurch Meadow. After the walk some of us went to the Four Candles for lunch.

Our last walk in January was very wet but a few of us walked about 4 miles from Bure Park shops. The route took us across South Wold to Caversfield and then back via the Bure Park Nature Reserve. We felt justified in having another lunch at the Bure Farm.

I hope to do a walk from Middle Barton in February when we should see some snowdrops

## **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**

We have never stopped playing since Covid rules were relaxed. If one of our Thursday sessions was required for other purposes, we played on the Monday morning of that week instead. Attendance was down before Xmas, but we have acquired another couple of players who could play on Mondays and I'm waiting to see how things work out, now that the festivities are over I'd like to start welcoming new members, but am waiting to see how crowded sessions are after Xmas when we had fewer players. If we have more than 16 playing ( on 4 tables) some have to sit out and play again in rotation. However, if you have played in the past, however rusty you might be, now's the time to get in touch with me and show your interest. If I don't know the demand, I can't do anything about it!

We play for nearly 2 hours, with a break half way, and for the first hour, we just knock up, practising shots. The last hour we play games to 11. At all times, we move round regularly, so that we get to play with everyone in turn. Some are strong players, some less so , but only by playing with everyone can we hope to improve. There's no opportunity for cliques to form. We are a friendly lot!

Christine Cox



## **Wider Horizons**

Another New Year and we started with a bang having a Very Late Christmas meal at our usual meeting place The Lamb at the top of Sheep Street. We had a lovely time and The Lamb supplied Christmas Hats and Crackers as well as our very tasty Christmas meal, and very good value too.

If you would like to join our merry

band for a nice chat and catch up with what we are all doing you will be most welcome. We meet 2nd and 4th Fridays at 10am.

See you at The Lamb.

Joy

## **Wine Appreciation**

Due to various members' holidays and Christmas we have had no meetings since November.

For our November meeting we tasted a selection of wines from the Wine Society. We are due to restart again in February.

Richard Herbert

## **Ukulele Group**

We met right up until beginning of December so have had a full year.

We occasionally meet up at Matilda's coffee shop in Fringford. Unfortunately this has had to close due to the Butchers Arms closing. We are not sure if and when this may be opening again.

We had a session booked for 16th November so had to look around for another venue.

We met up at Whitelands Sports Centre where we played in the Cafe and bar located on the first floor.

The venue was a little on the large size and left the acoustics a little to be desired. We may play there again but in a smaller function room.

We had a booking for Spencer Court for the 18th January but this was cancelled due to a Covid breakout at the venue.

We have a booking to play for the Banbury U3A in February.

Here's looking forward to the coming 12 months.

Bill

*Press Date: Any items for inclusion in the May Newsletter must reach the Newsletter Editor by 1st May 2023. N.B. this is an absolute deadline please. You can contact the Editor via the Website Contact Page or from the details on your information card.*

*Editor*

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