



Bicester U3A Newsletter #89

August 2023

From our Chairman



It has been a busy three months. The summer event was a scaled down version of last year's Picnic in the Park was still enjoyed by all.

This year's annual U3A holiday trip was to the Lake District, a most enjoyable week away to what I call the centre of the universe, it has to be one of the greatest places in the world. Many thanks to Audrey for organising it, she even found things I have never done before, the Gondola trip on Coniston and the visit to Whitehaven. See the report below.

The Cotswold Wild Life Park was a revelation, from my previous visit in 1977 I thought of it as a children's theme park, how it has changed, a fascinating place with so much to see. Thanks go to Carolyn Jones for organising this trip. We have had two interesting monthly talks; subjects of Winston Churchill History and Humour and Famous Jewels And Their History. At our July meeting we had a quiz, expertly fashioned by Gill Hawkins, it was fun with a good range of questions in each round from easy to difficult and the odd impossible one thrown in! Gill has agreed to put together a Quiz for our programme next year so our thanks go to her. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our dedicated Group Leaders, without them our U3A would be unable to thrive.

However the committee is becoming more and more problematic, we still have no vice chairman, our business secretary is not well and is unlikely to return to full duties, our newsletter editor is finishing at the end of the year and at our AGM next year we have at least three members leaving. If you want Bicester U3A to continue, we need volunteers, it is not an onerous task, we only meet once a month. Please see the appeal below. At our last meeting I almost wished I had taken a video to show you all what fun a meeting can be.

Dave Jones

BICESTER U3A, GOING FORWARD

If you attended the quiz in July, you will have heard our Chairmans appeal for new Committee members.

Sadly, our very efficient Business Secretary. Margaret Herbert has been struggling with her health for some time. Margaret feels that she must step down, so we urgently need to find someone to assist her. Part of her role is to do the minutes for our committee meetings which is causing her a problem.

We have had no Vice-Chair for the past two years. A difficult situation as traditionally, the vice-chair is the Chairperson in waiting. Our Chairman, David Jones had his arm twisted following the sad death of Nick Morse and agreed to take on the role for one year only. He is now in his second year and is only able to serve one more under the terms of our Constitution. (The Constitution is available from the links page on our website, the relevant pages are 8 and 9)

Luckily, we have a Treasurer -in-waiting but already know that we will need a Newsletter Editor and a Program Secretary next year. There may be more vacancies.

Despite past appeals for help, sadly there has been little response. The current Committee are a friendly team who care greatly about Bicester U3A and will happily help to nurture, train and support anyone who comes forward. Without a full Committee, we will not be able to function efficiently and may even have to **CLOSE OUR DOORS** due to lack of help. How would you feel if Bicester U3A closed?

We urge those who can, come forward please.

Bicester U3A Committee 2023

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

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, 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.

Group Coordinator News August 2023

What an amazing influx of members stepping up to offer their skills and enthusiasm there has been in the last three months!

The message, “Bicester u3a **IS YOU**” is growing strong roots.

A big thank you to all.

We have seen Joy Saville start the “Gentle exercise group”.

Bob Billingham restarted the “Square Dance group” with some help from Carolyn Jones who has helped him with email communications.

It’s encouraging to see roles that are necessary for a group to run being shared where that is helpful.

Potential groups yet to be finally established include: -

Beginners French, Astronomy Observation, and Mah Jong beginners.

Process for potential leaders of groups

Potential leaders of groups devote a lot of thought, time and effort to getting established. When really all they want to do is share a skill or interest they love.

These days the wider UK u3a organisation encourages us to give much more attention than ever before to being accessible and consider the needs of everyone, as well as keeping all members data and other information, as well as members themselves, safe as far as possible. It has become part of my role as group coordinator to pass that encouragement on. The setup process can be longer than you might expect as a result, but in the long run it is reassuring for us all to know that the encouragement is there.

Once established though, it’s all-plain sailing and group leaders can concentrate on their love of the subject.

The family history pop-up GATHERING organisers made a valiant effort to transition from the pop-up GATHERING status, to a full blown group. Sadly, the transition wasn’t possible at this time. But they did discover a lot of interest in the subject and fertile ground for a Family history group should it become possible in the future.

On the other hand, the Square Dance pop-up GATHERING has transitioned to a full-blown group and had their first meeting In July.

It’s good to remember that your involvement in **pop-up GATHERINGS may open a door**. 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 to evolving into a group. For more

information on how these works see: <https://u3asites.org.uk/bicester/page/128631>

I look forward to more potential groups getting established. As always if you would like to discuss possibilities of hosting a pop-up GATHERING or starting a NEW GROUP please contact me

grouip.coordinator@bicesteru3a.online

Best wishes

Jan Laker

Monthly Meetings

(4th Thursday)

Clifton Centre

Ashdene Rd, Bicester OX26 2BH

2:15pm

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
Wed Dec 13th Christmas Lunch: (all details to be confirmed)

SPEAKERS AT MONTHLY MEETINGS

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.

Just to be different, we had a Quiz in July, prepared by Gill Hawkins. Please let me know if you enjoyed the experience and would like another quiz next year.

Mike Luff. Programme Secretary

Photographic Competition 2023

Don't Forget The subject for 2023 Photographic Competitions :
Seasons of the U.K.

I will be happy to receive your entries at any time BUT
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 see
below

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.

Summer Event

Over 70 people joined our summer event with plenty of games and
entertainment to be enjoyed by all.

Most people took up the invitation to bring along a picnic lunch to enjoy.
Tea and coffee was served by the U3A.

Everyone enjoyed a good catch up and made a few new friends

The Ukulele group kicked off the event with various songs and got us all
singing along.



A spin off music group played some popular tunes to extend the music time for the afternoon.

The outside games were set up which included Grass skittles, Jenga, Egg and spoon racing.



Our Chairman kept us entertained with his jokes and some of us were lucky enough to taste his hand made 'deli bread'.

There was a quiz organised which was certainly very challenging and was won by 'Dauna's Pack of Cards' team.

The part of the quiz that required all the James Bond film titles' to be listed, provided a testing and interesting part, it is surprising what we all had forgotten and some remembered after much head scratching.

The Line Dancing section started well and plenty of new people trying it out for the first time and it proved to be very entertaining.

The Raffle was well supported and a wide variety of prizes were on offer.

The Raffle raised £154

The afternoon passed very quickly with so much to do so "A very large 'thankyou' needs to be said to the organisers and to the events team that ran the event on the day
The team was led by Doug with Caroline doing the bulk of the work ably supported by George and Anthony plus others.



Hope to see you at the next event.

Chairman

Doug Irvine

We started planning the Summer Event way back in March. I was very fortunate in having a sub committee of dedicated committee members who have worked very hard to organise the event for all the members.

We decided to take the format of last years event but reduce the complexity so that it became easier to organise.

We put out a request for helpers to assist with running the day and were overwhelmed by the response – Thank you!

The event day went without any real problems and I think everyone who attended enjoyed themselves .

Special thanks to everyone who helped on the day. Big thanks to the Ukulele group, the Rock group, the square dancing, the games teams, the raffle, car parking, the tea and coffee and the quiz. Also thanks to Jan for the idea of the games and the egg and spoon race rules.

Hopefully the event will run again next year.

THE u3a TOUR OF THE ENGLISH LAKES.

ALL POINTS NORTH(ERLY

Dateline: Monday 12th June 2023.

And off we go!! This was my first holiday trip since joining u3a and I was a little dubious as to how I would find it, being on my own. But I needn't have worried as the whole experience was interesting and thoroughly enjoyable. I have never visited the English Lake District and an organised trip such as this is the perfect introduction. Hand over your luggage to the coach driver and it arrives outside your hotel room, as if by magic.

And the hotel could not have been a better choice: The Newby Bridge at the foot of Lake Windermere: in Newby Bridge. Beautiful comfy room, a choice of menu for breakfast and for dinner and a pool and gym, if you felt so inclined to indulge.

So after the coach ride there, which was air conditioned and very relaxing, I came to the next potential conflict: where to sit for a meal and who would join me. But I needn't have worried as I was soon welcomed by a female member: also on her own as myself. A chat developed and all was well as I enjoyed my first meal.

Since this was June and the sun still up, I spent the remained of my first evening exploring the local environs, until with tiredness setting in I made my way back to the Land of Nod.

After a relaxing breakfast each morning our coach took us to places of interest, always with plenty of time to look around: trips to Wordsworth's Dove cottage, Ruskin Museum, Ravenglass and Eskdale Preserved Steam Railway for a ride, to mention but a few. Keswick meant an opportunity for shopping, where I purchased a print of a painting of Derwent Water as a souvenir. One day was free to do whatever you fancied: I walked to the next village and visited the Lakes Aquarium.

This holiday had been a good opportunity to meet other members of Bicester u3a, especially as we were encouraged to rotate tables at mealtimes. I personally met three ladies (they know who they are) who

enlivened my evenings. Apparently a glass of good wine helps the conversation along.

The Lake District has something for everyone: interesting places to visit, plenty of hiking routes and of course, water sports: and the good fortune for our visit of lots of warm sunshine. So a big thank you to our leader Audrey Luff who organised the whole shebang!

Michael Wyatt.

Some Pictures from the Lakes Trip



Save the Date : Christmas Lunch Wednesday 13th December 2023.

Please keep the above date free if you want to attend this years Christmas Lunch. It will be held at the The Kitchen and Bar, Whitelands Farm Sports Ground, Whitelands Way, Bicester OX26 1AJ. More information and the booking form will be sent out in early September.

Mary Herbert

Welcomers

The Welcomers are currently;

Richard Herbert,
Wyn May,
Joy Saville,
Marguerite Scott,
Alex Sharpe,
Pauline Smith,
Carolyn Jones.

2024 Residential Holiday

Following the success of the Lake District Holiday, I have been asked to go ahead and arrange a similar holiday for next year. June seemed to work well although I cannot guarantee a repeat of the glorious weather, we experienced this year.

There is a fair bit of interest in Northumberland, and it is an area that I have no knowledge of.

I am working with Just for Groups again and the first task is to find a suitable hotel which can offer single rooms with no additional supplement. I'm hoping to find something similar to our accommodation in the Lake District which is not going to be easy!

We can then put together an itinerary.

Beamish, Holy Island, National Trust "Cragside", Alnwick Castle and Gardens, and Bamburgh Castle have all been suggested so there is a good choice of options.



Once I have more details, I will circulate them. Meanwhile, please let me know if you are interested in joining the trip. No obligation, I am just getting an idea of possible numbers.

Audrey Luff. Treasurer

Bicester U3A Interest Groups

<u>Group</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Meets</u>	<u>Venue</u>
Any Type of Good Music	Richard Herbert	4th Mon. p.m.	Members' home
Art Appreciation	Christine Cox	2nd Thurs. p.m.	Bucknell Village Hall
Arts and Crafts	Debbie Cooper	1st & 3rd Mon. p.m.	Tesco Community Space
More than just Blues	Andrew Thomas	2nd Friday p.m.	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 a.m.	TBA
Camera Club (1)	Dave Thornton	1st & 3rd Wed p.m.	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	4th Friday. p.m.	Members' homes
Current Affairs	Pam Wakeling	2nd Monday a.m.	Members' homes
Cycling Group	TBA	TBC	TBA
Drawing and Painting	Janet Hartley Joy Saville	2nd & 4th Mon p.m.	St Edburg's Church Hall
Exploring Classical Music	Tomy Duby	1st & 3rd Thurs a.m.	Zoom
French Conversation	Julie Evans	1st and 3rd Wed. a.m.	Members' homes
French Beginners	TBA starting September		
Garden Visits	David Jones	2nd Wed pm or all day	TBA
Gentle Exercise	Joy Saville	Monday am	St Edburg's Church Hall
German	Brenda Strohm	2nd & 4th Mon a.m.	Zoom
Improvers Bridge	Audrey Luff	2nd & 4th Tues. p.m.	Bicester Library
Jazz Appreciation	Andrew Thomas	3rd Wed. p.m.	Members' Homes
Mah-jong	Doreen Shirley	1st & 3rd Mon p.m.	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 Com Centre
Rock Group	Doug Irvine	2nd Tues. p.m.	Members' homes
Rummikub	Sheila McKechnie	1st & 3rd Wed. p.m.	Lamb Inn
Scrabble	Sue Barden	1st & 3rd Thurs. p.m.	Members' homes

Short Walks	Mary Gough	2nd Tues. a.m.	TBA
Singing for pleasure	TBA seeking group leader		
Sunday Lunch	Sandie Stevenson	1st Sunday 12.30 p.m.	Local Pubs/ Restaurants
Table Tennis	Christine Cox	Weekly Thurs. a.m.	Chesterton Com Centre
Ukulele Group	Bill Jeffries	2nd & 4th Wed p.m.	Blackthorn Village Hall
Wider Horizons	Joy Saville	2nd & 4th Fri a.m.	Lamb Inn
Wine Appreciation	Richard Herbert	3rd Thurs. Evening	Members' homes

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation

I had to miss the meeting in July but showed a DVD on Jackson Pollock, who Time Magazine in 1956, mockingly called one of America's most important C20th artists, Jack the Dripper. It did so because Pollack stood for something new. With his “dripping “ and “pouring” paint, he originated Action painting, and created radical, subjective works, which revolutionised the world of art. Pollock, however, also typified the image of the drunken artist in search of meaning, who became a legend as a result of his premature death.

There was also something different in June as Banbury Museum was hosting an exhibition “Revealing the Human Form” featuring sculpture from British Artists of the Last Century. There were some big names included like Elizabeth Frink, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Antony Gormley, and several members shared cars to get there.

Then for July, another interesting afternoon, this time a shared one, Colin Cockshaw gave a talk about an Indian Christian artist, Johti Jahi, and showed and explained his recent works which depict Jesus in many different guises as part of his religion. Fascinating and new to all of us. Then, Wendy Edmundson, a member of the group who has been going to pottery classes

for the last six years, gave a talk entitled “Dug from the earth”. She explained the different types of clay she used and passed samples round for us to test and the different methods she uses in her work. She had brought along many things she had made and again passed the smaller ones round, leaving the larger models on the table to admire later and explained the different methods of making from throwing to moulding and her speciality, building up. She was delighted that some of her work sold during the recent Art Week . She belongs to the Bicester Sculpture Group, which meets in the old St Edburgs School and is still attending classes.

No previous knowledge is needed to join us at Bucknell Village Hall. Just an interest and desire to find out more. There's always tea and biscuits and a chat to look forward to, so do get in touch if you would like to try us out.

Any Type on Good Music

In the June meeting we listened to tracks from a double CD that was issued as a tribute to the renowned but sadly missed DJ John Peel. It had a wide range of Johns' favourite tracks ranging from Lonnie Donegan to The Undertones by way of the Smiths, Pulp. The Cocteau Twins and many more. A very varied and eclectic mix.

The June meeting was very different. In 1989 BBC enterprises issued a double CD called “Attack of the Killer 'B's”. This album contained the B sides of well known singles from the 50s and 60s. Fun was had attempting to guess what the A sides were for the tracks we listened to, not many were guessed. The list included Little Richard, Eddie Cochran, Chuck Berry and others from the 50s and Cliff Richard, The Shadows, The Beach Boys, The Kinks and others from the 60s.

There are spaces in the group for any members interested in listening to 'Any Type of Good Music'.

If anyone is interested please contact me or the Groups Coordinator..

Richard Herbert

Book Group

We continue to meet in Bicester library and have lively discussions about the book of the month, chosen by one of the group members.

“I heard the Owl call my name” by Margaret Craven” was the book for May.

A young Minister, Mark Brian, is sent by his Bishop to a remote parish in the wilds of British Columbia. There the people of a vanishing race, have their own rituals and beliefs, taking sustenance from the sea and the forest.

This is a gentle story with wonderful descriptions of the beauty of the area.

The traditions of its people and the changing way of life are well described

and make this an unusual book. It's very short, just 144 pages but well worth reading.

By contrast, our book for June was "The Wild Silence" by Raynor Wyn. This is the sequel to "The Salt Path" which the group read in 2021. Based on the real-life experiences of Raynor and her husband Moth, we didn't enjoy this one as much. After their epic walk along the length of the Cornish Coastal path, this story tells what happened next but frequently goes back to their early years together. There was rather too much "waxing lyrical" about nature and the author herself which at times was rather tedious.

There is a third book, but we will not be reading it.

Our choice for July was "Miss Bensons Beetle" by Rachel Joyce.

It is 1950. In a devastating moment of clarity, Margery Benson abandons her dead-end job and advertises for an assistant to accompany her on an expedition. She is going to travel to the other side of the world to search for a beetle that may or may not exist.

This is an interesting adventure story and has some very likeable characters. There is humour and pathos as well as a great deal of background information to keep the pace lively. Margery is a good example of many single women following the Great War and is the exact opposite of her companion, who has secrets to keep. The description of their sea voyage and the authors portrayal of the expatriate society are well drawn and at times, amusing.

The story is a little farfetched, but most of the group enjoyed it and would recommend it.

Audrey Luff

Bridge Group

Our sessions over the last 3 months have been well attended with usually 6 pairs playing. Everyone enjoys playing at the library and the afternoon sessions seem to suit more people. The scheduling of our sessions has been somewhat disrupted over the last couple of months due to holidays and an Art Exhibition taking place in our room in the library. We have avoided cancelling sessions although we have moved some to different dates. Hopefully it will settle down soon and we will be able to return to our set days.

Denise

Camera Club 1

At risk of being called out for repetition – remember 'Just a Minute'; the panel game in which the contestants are challenged to speak for one minute

without hesitation, deviation or repetition on any subject that comes up on the cards – here's a re-hash of the last Newsletter entry I submitted.

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 (of a sort)

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 – I promise to do it this time. 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

PS – Just a Minute is still running on Radio 4 – check it out, if you will.

Camera Club 2

We only had one outing since my last report. We met in Bicester and after a coffee I sent the photographers out to create a series of 5 photographs. A **series** is a collection of images that are linked and showcased together. The link can anything that holds a common thread through all the pictures. I choose to highlight the number of barber shops there were in the town

centre. I counted 15 in the immediate vicinity of Sheep street, Pioneer Way and Bure Place. Here are the 5 I choose for my series.



Creative Writing

The group has been busy again.

With potentially three new members, our little seed has started to grow: and a fine little seedling is springing up. Some of the work we have produced has brought to the fore the talented gifts possessed by the members. Pieces have included prose from the languid and lyrical to the downright darkness of the horror genre and poems encompassing a number of different styles: all this produced with a light touch and much fun along the way.

For our June meeting, one of our members led us all on a short 'sensory walk': enabling us to get in touch with our feelings for the environment and how those same feelings can be expressed in writing. Luckily it was a warm, dry afternoon and I think everyone benefited by it. We returned to discuss our observations and then went on to write short pieces utilising our thoughts on the matter.

In August, we will be discussing poetry in all its many forms and having a bash at writing some stanzas. I know little of the medium, so it looks like this will be quite a team effort. We shall see!

We are all amateurs and certainly partake to encourage one another in our writing endeavours. It does however seem that ladies are to the fore, so if there are any gentlemen out there who may wish to join and support me, I would gladly welcome you along: please enquire of the Bicester u3a co-ordinator. It would be good for the group, I feel, to have a male perspective on our work.

It matters not whether you have written before or not, come along and give us a try and above all.....join in the fun.

Mike Wyatt

Drawing and Painting

The Drawing and Painting Group will not be meeting during August and we hope to have a display sometime in the autumn.

Janet Hartley

Exploring Classical Music

This is the second time that I have to start with a sad message: Another founding member of this group, Lawrie Tabor, passed away on 23-Apr-23, aged 92. He was always ready to present his selection of classical music well worth exploring. Lawrie's last presentation was in January. The theme of his talk was *Water*. And he selected four compositions connected with water. No, this time it was not Smetana's *Moldau* (*Vltava* in Czech, the river that crosses Prague), which he used earlier in October 2018, but *The Water Goblin* by Dvořák, one of his favourite composers.

In June we had a memorial session for Julia White, another founding member. I am sure that she would have liked the *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka* by Johann Strauss in a piano arrangement masterly played by Yuja Wang. On a happier note: our membership is growing! More about that the next time...

Tomy Duby
29 July 2023

French Conversation

We welcomed a new member a few months ago who has an extensive knowledge of the French language. This has helped the group tremendously.

We continue to discuss everyday matters, learn about recent holidays members have taken, sometimes accompanied by Powerpoint photos.

All in all we fill the session quite easily speaking in French, made even better when there are home-made biscuits on offer with tea or coffee.

Julie Evans

Garden Visits

A slightly more successful quarter than March to May we did have 3 visits, although not all on the programme.

We didn't have a minibus for May, so had to use cars, (as Peggy Penfold did before I took over the group), it was rather, convenient that it was only a short trip to Rousham

April was supposed to be a visit to West Wycombe Park & Hill, we met at Blue Diamond as usual, sheltered in the lee of the minibus while we decided the weather was so atrocious that none of us wanted to go! So as June was supposed to be Mill Dene which is no longer open we went to West Wycombe Park. More of a park (in the name?) than a garden, but beautiful parkland with a very attractive lake. As for the hill, we couldn't get the minibus into the car park!



July took us to Charlecote Park, again not a very gardeny visit, but a fascinating house a well stocked deer park with a large selection of breeds and colours.

Support has been poor with only 12 people attending out of a total group membership of 43. We cannot afford to keep making a loss on the minibus, so please support us.

Dave Jones

Gentle Exercise

We have had a few meetings now and are getting into the swing of things. Taking it quite easy at first as many of us have not done much exercise for a while but we are enjoying it.

We just hope that we get a bit fitter for our effort but time will tell!

Joy Saville

Improvers Bridge

Our revision sessions with Denise and Dave have been very beneficial and we have hopefully "Improved" our bridge games.

This series of topics, based on our "red book" are almost completed and we plan to take a break during the rest of the summer.

We hope to get together again in the autumn and progress to the next level, always assuming that we can remember what we have already done!

Many thanks to Denise and Dave for their patience and commitment to the group.

Audrey Luff

Jazz Appreciation

"The Jazz Appreciation Group is for lovers of all kinds of Jazz Music. We have monthly sessions that are usually arranged around a theme and presented by one of the members. Come and listen to a wide range of Jazz Music in a comfortable setting.

We meet on the **third Wednesday** of the month from **2:00 pm to 4:00 pm** at the **home of the Group Leader**. Tea, coffee and cakes are provided.

We hope to see you there."

To find out more please [Click here to contact Andrew directly](#)

Or, contact me, Jan Laker group.coordinator@bicesteru3a.online.

Andrew Thomas

Murder Mystery Book Club

May 2023 Deaths Bright Star by V C Badderley.

The quiet room seemed to explode. People started out of their seats. Exclamations reserved and small in themselves grew like a whistle of steam. As there was nothing, he could do Davie stood watching the extraordinary picture. It was just another conference in a Cambridge College during the vacation, or so it seemed, but there were some disturbing features about it. For one thing too many people there knew rather too much about some very nasty poisons. Then someone stole a primitive blow-pipe from a local exhibition. So elderly but spry Dr Davie turned detective.

June 2023 Killed in Cornwall by Janie Bolitho.

Despite being busy with a new exhibition, artist Rose Trevelyan is always there to support her friends if they need her; lately it seems as though everyone has a problem to share. There's Doreen who is worried about her neighbour, Nathan is coping after his mother's death. Eva who is suspicious about her boyfriend's whereabouts and Barry who is concerned about his new employee. On top of that Rose's star pupil is fretting about her teenage daughter and her friends. Meanwhile Rose's sometime boyfriend Detective Inspector Jack Pearce is investigating a series of burglaries and a spate of vicious attacks on young women in the area. As secrets get shared and crimes become more serious, should Rose betray her friends' confidences or will Jack just accuse her of interfering?

July 2023 The Murder of Roger Ackroyd by Agatha Christie.

Considered to be one of Christies greatest and most controversial mysteries. The Murder of Roger Ackroyd breaks the rules of the traditional mystery. The peaceful English village of Kings Abbot is stunned when the widow Ferrars dies from an overdose of Veronal. Not twenty-four hours later, Roger Ackroyd the man she had planned to marry is murdered. It is a baffling case involving blackmail and death that taxes Hercules Poirot "little grey cells" before he reaches one of the most startling conclusions of his career.

Group Leader Mary Herbert

QI GONG

The roadworks at Chesterton did not seem to have any impact on the group, most members found a way of attending our weekly sessions. We had to cancel a couple of the meetings; one was because many of us were away enjoying the Lake District Holiday. Tania herself was part of the group and encouraged some of the passengers to join an impromptu Qi Gong class in the hotel garden! Dedication! They enjoyed the experience. Qi Gong is very beneficial when practised outdoors and the weather during that week was ideal.

As with many of our U3A groups, we are taking a break during August but will return to our regular weekly meetings in September.
Denise and Audrey

Rock Group

We have been rehearsing every Tuesday for the past 6 weeks to be able to play at the U3A Summer Event.

I hope those who came to the Summer Event enjoyed our small set.

Unfortunately we didn't get enough time to enable us to do a 'sound check' before everything started. This meant that the volume of the microphones to the audience wasn't as loud as it should have been. We know better for next time.

Lots of things to work on now and we may have a keyboard player moving forward.

All good fun.

Doug Irvine

Rummikub

My name is Sheila McKechnie and I run the the Rummikub group. Its a fairly new group. We started off with 4 of us and now I am pleased to say we have grown to capacity of 17 people. We are all very friendly and get on well. There is no waiting list but if anyone else is interested we could go up to 20 people but that would be the maximum. Hope everyone is enjoying the holiday season.

Regards

Sheila McKechnie.

Scrabble

We have been meeting with reduced numbers lately due to holidays, sickness and Marion's unfortunate stroke and breaking her ankle!! We miss her very much especially for her wise words and amazing wit! We took a photo of us raising our cups of tea to her to



wish her a speedy recovery.

As you all may know, we are at full capacity when everyone appears, but if and when we need another player I will let it be known.

Short Walks Group

Our walk in May, was a circular walk from Thrupp. We walked along the Oxford Canal to the bridge by the Boat Inn and then across the fields to Kidlington Church.

The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kidlington dates from 1220, when a new church was built on the site of a smaller Saxon church. It was designed in the shape of a cross, with a nave for parishioners, a chancel for monks, two transepts and a low tower. Many of the feature's date from the 14th century. The spire was added in the 15th century.

After stopping for refreshments at the Church we continued back to Thrupp along the River Cherwell.

In June we walked from the layby near Sturdy's Castle Pub to Wootton via the Oxfordshire Way and through a nature reserve looking down on the Beautiful Dorn Valley.



Wootton

July saw a group of us walking from the Market Square in Deddington. We walked towards Hempton with stunning views of the surrounding countryside. Our route took us downhill to Daads Wood and then along a track to a farm. We continued across fields to the old mill and then uphill

again to eventually meet the main road. Some of us stopped for lunch at the Deddington Arms.

Mary Gough

Square Dance

We had our first meeting on Thursday 20th July at Launton Parish Hall. We had a lovely group turned up and there was much laughter as they began to learn.

If anyone else would like to join us they will be made very welcome.

We are meeting next on 7th September from 2pm till 4pm

Bob and Pat Billingham

Table Tennis

In the last newsletter, I announced that we were looking for new members for the first time in years and I'm pleased to say that I've been talking to several potential players and so far have invited four of them to join us. As we no longer have a coach to help us, only people who have played before are eligible, however rusty they might be.

We play doubles and use 4 tables at Chesterton Community Centre on Thursday mornings from 10am to 11.45am. The doors open at 9.45am. We are a friendly lot and enjoy our sessions, warming up for the first period, resting for 10-15 minutes and then playing games to 11 points till we drop!

All the time we are moving round so we are playing against everyone eventually, both strong players and the rest of us. There's no better way of improving than playing against someone better than yourself. So if we have 16 playing, we play all the time – if there are more, we operate a sit out-system, which works best with only 2-4 players sitting out at a time.

So I'm still very interested in new members getting in touch, but joining us may now be dependent on our regular players, with people coming back after injury or changing their own plans.

Christine

Ukulele Group

Since the last news letter we have continued to be busy, apart from our usual meeting we have played at the following:
Forget Me Not Bicester, we have played twice at this location, both staff and members joined in with the singing and dancing. We have been asked to visit regularly.



Launton Arms Launton, this was a casual meet up to promote the cafe's start and we have been invited back.



Bicester U3A Picnic in the park, Chesterton.



We were booked in for our second performance on 19 July at Spencer Court Residential Home Woodstock.

I have had a further 4 enquiries about joining the group, 3 of which have paid us a visit and enjoyed what we do.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my group for being so enthusiastic when we play to other groups. Some of them are now taking front row position and playing as small groups.

My group are also very friendly and engaging with the members of those the we play to.

Earlier in the year we played to the Banbury U3A and I have recently been approached to kick start the ukulele group that they are trying to set up.

My aim is to continue to entertain the local community groups.

Bill Jeffries

Wider Horizons

Wider Horizons

We continue to have our meetings at The Lamb and have a nice chat and catch up with friends old and new.

We had a trip to the Oxford Town Hall at the end of April which was very successful. 20 of us met our guide in the entrance. He gave us a very interesting talk about the history of the building before he took us on a tour around. We saw the beautiful Main Hall with its domed ceiling, balconies and

stage with the impressive organ. Another room was the Assembly Room with a large stained glass window, vast fireplace and wood panelling. Then there was the magnificent Council Chamber and the now unused Court Room amongst many other rooms. We looked at a scale model of the building and couldn't believe the size of the whole complex, it is much bigger than we had thought from the facade on St Aldate's. There is also an excellent museum on the site as well as a small cafe. All in all a good afternoon. Feel free to join us for a coffee and a chat on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at The Lamb pub at the top of Sheep Street from 10am. All welcome.
Joy Saville

Wine Appreciation

We had no meeting in May as a number of the group were away. In June we tasted a selection of wines from ALDI and TESCO. The ALDI selection included a pink Fizz from France that was a lovely summer drink. Also a Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, a Tempranillo from Spain and (my favourite) a Grenache/Mauverde/Shiraz blend from South Australia. In July we tasted an interesting selection of wines from the Organic range at Waitrose. The whites included a Pinot Grigio from Sicily that was favoured by all the members. Also tasted was a Verdajo/Sauvignon Blanc blend from Spain and a Torrontes wine from Argentina. For the reds we tasted (again my favourite) a Shiraz from Yalumba in Australia. Other wines tasted were a Nero D'Troia from Puglia in Italy and a Cote de Rhone blend of Grenache/Shiraz. We don't have a meeting in August as experience has shown us that many members are on holiday or on Grand-parent duties this month, our next meeting is in September. Recently a couple of members have left the Wine Appreciation group so we have a couple of vacancies for new members if there is anyone interested. None of us are experts in wine but have an interest in tasting wines in a convivial atmosphere to better our knowledge of wines of the world, or to get ideas for what to put into ones wine cellar or cupboard. If interested please contact me or the Groups Coordinator.
Richard Herbert

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Press Dates: Any item for inclusion in the November newsletter must reach the newsletter editor before 1st November 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