



Bicester U3A Newsletter #86 AUGUST 2022

It has been a fun three months since the last newsletter, we have had some very good monthly meeting talks and we have had the "Picnic in the Park".

The latter involved a great deal of work particularly from the organising sub-committee, Jan Laker, Margaret Herbert, Carolyn Jones and George Edmundson. It was great fun, many thanks are due to them and to all the other members who helped on the day.

Highlights of the day were: the Ukulele recital, many thanks to Bill Jeffries, the Square (or was it Round?)

Dancing, great fun, thanks to Bob Billingham (everyone enjoyed it, so why is the group so poorly supported), the Egg & Spoon race (how childish, but it was a sensation!) and lovely sunshine.

It has been suggested that we should repeat the picnic in some form on an annual basis, and many of you have replied to my email with suggestions and offers of help, we will keep you posted.

A request went out for groups to do something to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the U3A movement, as far as I know only two groups have risen to the challenge. Andrew Thomas went back to 1982 with the Blues Appreciation group and Mary Gough organised our monthly short walk to Forty Green with lunch at the Royal Standard.

Sad news last month to hear of Jo Warren's death, a much loved member known to most of us as she belonged to so many groups. We are all requested to raise a gin & tonic to her.

On the good news front, we do have quite a few new members and we have two potential new committee members.

Have you all submitted your photographs for the Photo Competition? I am struggling to find suitable ones.



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Plans are being finalised for the Ireland trip, I am sure you are getting as excited as I am! We will bore you with all the goings-on in the next newsletter.

And while we're talking about trips. Didn't Denise Thornton do a good job of organising and running our Portsmouth trip? A very enjoyable day out indeed. So, I'll end my report with a big thank you to her.

Dave Jones

Executive Committee

Chairman: David (dj) Jones,

Vice Chairman: Vacant Post,

Membership Secretary: Mary Herbert,

Treasurer: Audrey Luff,

Beacon and GDPR: George Edmundson,

Group Coordinator: Janice Laker,

Business Secretary: Margaret Herbert,

Newsletter Editor: David Thornton,

Programme Secretary: Mike Luff,

Website: Tomy Duby,

Welcomer Liaison: Carolyn Jones.

New Members/Welcomer Liaison

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

Janet Baldry

Pauline Smith

Gill Barber

Alex Sharpe

Joy Saville

Richard Herbert

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

John Adams

Julia Burchell

Jane Field

Patricia Hallam

Maria Howard

Alan Peck

Anne Tustian

Shirley Allington

Lindsay Donaghy

Helen Grainger

Jill Hornby

Lilian Metcalf

Valerie Prior

Monthly Meetings (4th Thursday)

25th August, Pam Newall, Zermatt and the Mighty Matterhorn

22nd September, Roger Edwards, People's Palaces - the Golden Age of Cinema
Architecture

27th October, Jan Warner, Survival of the Fittest (A Brief History of Child
Rearing)

24th November, Launton Bell Ringers, Recital of Christmas Rings

8th December, Christmas Lunch

Programme Secretary

We have seen a gradual increase in the number of members attending our monthly meetings since they re-started in February.

Old friends getting together, new friends being made, a raffle, tea or coffee and biscuits all contribute to a very pleasant afternoon.

We have had some excellent speakers already this year, mostly chosen by Janet Baldry.

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.

Editor

Monthly meetings will always be held with your safety in mind. For general advice on living safely with Covid-19, please follow the link below to check on the latest government guidance.

[Easy Read Living Safely with Respiratory Illnesses.pdf](#)

40th Anniversary - Continued Focus through This Year.

The u3a ethos means a lot to most of us. We each value different aspects of it—why not keep celebrating its 40th Anniversary together wherever we can?

Two groups have already been very creative with bringing the 40th anniversary theme into their meetings. Take a look at the news from the walking group and the Blues Appreciation group.

Here's a challenge for you.

Could your group bring “40th Anniversary” into one or more of your meetings as a theme sometime during the rest of this year? We will then celebrate what you have come up with at the Bicester U3A AGM in January 23.

Here are some thoughts that may help you come up with a theme to focus on in relation to your group.

The number 40. Google music, books, good wine etc with the number 40 in the title. Consider listening to it, reading it, or drinking it at one or more of your meetings.

The word Anniversary—as above

1982—in the year that u3a came into being in UK, what was popular; what was available in your groups interest area?

Make, achieve or visit something related to the number 40 or 1982 or the word anniversary?

Be creative—think outside the box—have fun—take photos

Any of us can make suggestions to our group leaders--Let's make it happen!

Trees

The Third Age Trust has a scheme whereby you can buy a tree to celebrate the 40th Anniversary .

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/press/u3a-to-plant-5-000-trees-with-help-from-members>

As an alternative our committee is considering supporting **Burnehyll community Woodland. Chesterton, Bicester.**

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/news/article/935/tree-planting-underway-at-burnehyll-community-woodland>

Our chairman David Jones has contacted the person who has pioneered the Burnehyll tree planting scheme.

There are a couple of options — we could make a small donation from the funds that we have in hand, or/and-we could make a collection to buy enough trees for a copse.

We could have a plaque with the name of Bicester U3A in the wood.

If you have interest in donating, contributing in some other way, or finding out more, please let one of the committee members know, or contact our chairman David Jones directly.

Jan Laker Group Coordinator

New Members Coffee Morning

We have held 2 coffee mornings since the last newsletter. The first on Friday 20th May and the other on Friday 15th July 2022.

We had 10 new members in May and 6 in July and it was lovely to meet them and get to know them a little more. We met, as usual, at the Littlebury hotel, who make us very welcome. Five committee members were there to greet them.

Both groups said they enjoyed the morning and it was helpful to be able to ask the committee questions, especially about the groups they might be interested in.

As committee members we are always interested to hear of the experiences of new members to help us get things right and make people feel welcomed, without overwhelming them. If any member has any feedback for us then please do get in touch with either of us mentioned below.

Another coffee morning is planned for September to include new members and those that may have been on holiday in July.

Margaret Herbert, Business Secretary and
Carolyn Jones, Welcomer Liaison

Residential Holiday 2022

Northern Ireland - September 26th to October 2nd

MEMBERS ONLY

Thirty-five members have booked to go on this trip at the end of September. We travel by coach and ferry and will be based mainly in Belfast. Our Itinerary includes a Belfast city tour, with a stop at Crumlin Road Gaol. Then on to the Titanic Museum.

The Giant's Causeway, and Mount Stewart, a National Trust estate with a fascinating history, are among other attractions we intend to visit.

We hope to have a report on the trip and some photographs to share in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Residential Holiday 2023

Lake District - June 12th to 18th

MEMBERS ONLY

I have received a great deal of interest in this trip and am working with Just for Groups on an itinerary. There has been a big demand for single rooms, and there may be difficulty accommodating everyone. If you have a friend who is interested and you are willing to share, that will be most helpful. We will be staying at the **Newby Bridge Hotel** at the southern end of Lake Windermere.

The cost, accommodation with Breakfast and three course choice evening meal plus the use of the coach throughout our stay has been quoted at £879 per person. (No supplement for single rooms but the number available is limited)

There will be optional daily visits and free time to pursue your own interests.

If you are interested and have not already contacted me, or have any queries, please get in touch as soon as possible.

Audrey Luff, Treasurer

Photographic Competition

Topic: Wild Flora and Fauna of the British Isles

Entry Submission by **OCTOBER 7TH 2022 PLEASE.**

I will be pleased to receive your entries as soon as possible, at the monthly meetings or at my home address.

1st Viewing at meeting of **27th October**

2nd Viewing and Voting at meeting of **24th November**

Number of Entries: **3**. Either **7 x 5** or **6 x 4**

Name and Membership No. on back of each entry please

The competition will follow the format of Pre Covid years. Printed photographs will be allocated a number and displayed on the boards for viewing

Presentations and Results at Christmas Lunch, **8th December**. Venue and Timings TBC

Please contact me with any queries.

Mike Luff. Programme Secretary.

Bicester Foodbank

Many people in the area are desperately in need of help, anyone who can give please use one of the following:

- 1 Tesco collecting box near exit.
2. Sainsbury's collecting box near exit.
3. Bring food to Foodbank at The Beacon, Wesley Lane, Bicester, Oxon, OX26 6JU, which is open Monday to Friday 10am to 12 Noon.
4. Make a monetary donation to our bank account which can be found on our website.

Thank you once more for the support you provide.

Bicester Foodbank Team

Portsmouth - 21st July 2022

Thirty-eight of us met early on Thursday 21st July for our visit to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Luckily for us the weather had cooled a little from the very high temperatures of the previous days. We had booked a 40-seater bus but when it materialised it had magically transformed itself into an 80 seater double decker so there was plenty of room for us all.

We arrived at the dockyard just after 12 and collected our Three Attraction Tickets. This enabled us to choose any three of the available attractions, excluding the Harbour tour. Faced with such a choice some of us opted to check out a drink and lunch first to prepare ourselves for the arduous afternoon ahead.

So, suitably refreshed, Dave and I decided to have a look at The Warrior first. I'm not sure what I was expecting but I was very surprised by this ship. It was built in the 1860s and its purpose was to show the world how great our defensive power was. It was never involved in active warfare although it carried a tremendous armament. It was huge, with a length of 418 feet and beam of 58 feet. Apart from the occasional trip down the west coast of the Iberian Peninsula, it spent most of its time sailing round the British Isles.



Then came the main attraction, the new Mary Rose Museum which was opened in 2016. This ship was the flagship of Henry VIII and served in his fleet for 34 years before sinking during the Battle of the Solent in 1545. Her remains were raised in 1982. The visit began with some interesting presentations about the ship then we entered the

galleries where we could see the remains of the ship. This was amazing, just walking past the part of the ship which had been recovered and restored gave me goose bumps. To think that it was over 500 years old and had been buried for so many years! The displays in the galleries tell the stories of the 500 men who lived, worked and died on-board. There are around 19,000 artefacts on display recovered from the seabed. We could have spent the whole day just looking at this exhibition.



With very little time left we took a quick walk round the Victory, although we certainly did not do it justice and will need to go back some time in the future. There was some restoration work being carried out on this ship so it was not possible to see it all anyway.



The good weather tempted some members of the group to join a harbour tour.

Audrey reports

'We had a great view of the Warrior as we pulled away from the quayside and there were various craft in the harbour, including ferries to the Isle of Wight.

The highlight was the superb sight of H.M.S. Prince of Wales and H.M.S. Queen Elizabeth. These enormous aircraft carriers have 16 decks each and flight decks that are 70metres wide and 280metres long. They are each capable of carrying up to 48 Lightning Aircraft and 4 Merlin Helicopters. With a minimum 700 crew on board, increasing when there are aircraft on board, they are awesome!!



The tour took about 45minutes, calling in at Gunwharf Quays to take more passengers on board. This popular shopping centre is dominated by the Spinnaker Tower. The area is known as "The Hard" and is home to the Tall Ships Youth Trust. Several of their training boats were moored close to our landing point, which is also the boarding point for the regular ferry across to Gosport.'

Dave and I had just time for a much-needed quick cup of tea on the terrace of the Mary Rose Café overlooking the Victory and the latest aircraft carriers docked in the Harbour before returning to our coach for the trip home.

Denise Thornton

Visit to Bath - Christmas Market

Following the success of the Portsmouth trip, I am proposing to organise a coach trip to Bath while the Christmas Market is on. The cost of the trip will be solely the cost of the coach. As well as the Christmas Market, which is located outside the Abbey, Bath has a good shopping centre for all your other Christmas Shopping. There are, of course many other attractions, for example the Roman Baths, the Abbey, the Crescent, and of course it was Jane Austen's home and the location of many of her novels.

I will be sending out an email soon asking for expressions of interest.

Denise Thornton

Contact details on Information Card - Bridge Group Leader

u3a Trolley Coin Key Rings

We still have a stock of u3a Trolley Coin Key Rings which will be available at monthly meetings for those who would like one.

Welcomers

I joined in August last year as a way to meet local people as I'd retired during lockdown. Having joined a couple of thoroughly enjoyable groups, someone, I can't remember who, asked me if I would like to join the committee as a Welcomer Liaison officer and I said yes.

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. I have had lots of support from experienced Welcomers and we now 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.

Carolyn Jones

Bicester U3A Interest Groups

(see our Information Card for phone numbers or contact Jan Laker for new groups)

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
MON	Fortnightly - Current Affairs 2nd & 4th - German	1st & 3rd – Arts & Crafts 2nd & 4th - Drawing & Painting 1st & 3rd - Mah-Jong 4th - All Types of Good Music	
TUE	2nd - Short Walks Weekly - Qi Gong Twice monthly - Cycling	2nd & 4th - Square Dancing	
WED	1st & 3rd - French Conversation 4th - Bus Pass Adventures	1st & 3rd - Camera Club 1 2nd & 4th - Ukulele Group Weekly - Canasta 4th – Murder Mystery Book Club 2nd – Garden Visits 4th - Jazz Appreciation	
THU	1st & 3rd - Exploring Classical Music Weekly - Table Tennis 1st & 3rd - Camera Club 2	4th - Monthly Meeting 1st & 3rd - Scrabble 2nd - Art Appreciation	4th - Wine Appreciation 1st & 3rd - Bridge
FRI	2nd - Book Club 2nd & 4th – Wider Horizons	2nd - Blues Appreciation 4th – Creative Writing	1st & 3rd - Friday Night at the Zoom Inn
SAT			
SUN	1st - Sunday Lunch		

Our U3A is providing services to our community thanks to a hard-working Committee and enthusiastic Group Leaders. In order to continue, we need more people who would be willing to lead our Groups. This may be due to Groups becoming full and a supplementary group being required; it may be due to an existing Group Leader stepping down; it may be that an idea for an entirely new Group can be added to our portfolio. If you would like to contribute, please contact the Executive Committee who will provide any assistance required.

Our members will be advised of any new Groups starting up. Look out for information on the Bicester U3A web site and at our monthly meetings.

Groups Co-Ordinator

As always a big thank you to all our group leaders! Where would we be without you?

I joined the committee as the new group coordinator in January this year. Since then it's been a pleasure to meet with many of our long term group leaders over coffee to learn from their experience.

It's also been a pleasure to welcome leaders of three new groups, Creative Writing – Social Cycling and the return of the Jazz Appreciation.

A message from the Jazz Appreciation group, "Please note the venue and day in the very first mailing about the restart some time ago were subsequently corrected to: Blackthorn Village Hall - currently on a Wednesday." In light of this if there are any more members free to join they would be welcomed!

Restarting

Cribbage, Rummikub, Improvers Bridge

The original leaders of the Cribbage, Rummikub and Improvers Bridge groups are hoping to restart their groups in the autumn.

Cribbage and Rummikub would alternate on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoon monthly. Learners are welcome.

Improvers Bridge would be on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoon monthly, hopefully with some refresher tuition. (NOT BEGINNERS) Venues are currently being discussed. Details to be decided

New Groups

Music

Do you have any instruments in your loft that you haven't played in a while? Have you got your instrument in pride of place and would love to play with others? **Here is your chance!**

Two people are eager to start up new groups, they have a good solid experience in their fields - all you need is your instrument, and a little musical knowledge.

The groups are:-

A Rock band - yes that's right!

If you have ever played, guitar, drums, piano etc—please get in touch.

A Brass band - yes that's right too!

If you have played a brass band instrument e.g. Cornet, Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba etc,—please get in touch. (I'm told that there may occasionally be room for a brass instrument in the rock band too!).

Please contact me if you are interested in joining any of these groups, group.coordinator@bicesteru3a.online and I will pass on your details to the Group leaders.

TWINKLE IN THE EYE GROUPS

Here is a warm welcome, in advance, to any groups that are just a twinkle in the eye at the moment. *Remember Bicester U3A needs you!*

There is friendly support for anyone with an idea for a group. It is fairly natural to be unsure about any ideas you may have – so if you'd like to talk through any ideas please get in touch with me. Our membership is growing, and with getting on for 300 members with a diversity of interests there is a high chance that there will be interest.

Please Support your group leader— And last but not least we have some groups that lend themselves to either contributing an idea or taking a turn at organising something. Is your group one of them? Let's grow the ethos of helping out where we can. — Many hands make Bicester U3A work!

Jan Laker Group Coordinator

A tutor who taught on the flute, tried to teach two young tooters to toot.

Said the two to the tutor, "Is it harder to toot or,

To tutor two tooters to toot?"

News from the Groups.

Art Appreciation

For our May meeting, we had a theme of Portraits and members were asked to choose a portrait to talk about for about 5 mins. This is a format we have used before and this time we had 10 contributors. A couple of members were away on holiday or not keen on talking to an audience, so they sent me details of their portrait and provided me with the text which I read out for them. We had a really interesting mix of portraits from 1607 to 2002, some of which we unknown to us as well as some favourites. The afternoon was a real success and we will continue using this idea a couple of times a year as everyone has the chance to take part.



"Laughing Cavalier"
by Franz Hals 1624

The postponed April meeting was supposed to take place in June, but having sorted out the previous problem, we unexpectedly found another! Fortunately, once again I had brought a DVD with me as an emergency stop-gap, but hadn't watched it before and it did prove to be a little disturbing at first as I had no idea what was coming. It was on Frieda Kahlo, a famous Mexican artist who died in 1954, aged 47. She had been severely injured aged 18 in a bus crash and had 39 operations on her back and legs, spending much of her time in a wheelchair. The love of her life was Diego Riviera, another artist who she married twice and by the end of the DVD, it was clear what had influenced her art.



“Portrait of Catalina Michaela of Spain”
by Sofonisba Anguissola c 1577

For June, I had my fingers crossed that all would go smoothly, as I was giving the talk on Sofonisba Anguissola, who nobody, including me until quite recently, had ever heard of, but deserves to be better known as she changed the style of portrait painting in the early C17th in Italy. She also had a remarkable life, being a well-educated young lady, which was unusual at the time. She was apprenticed to local painters, again unusual for a lady, and even corresponded with Michelangelo, who encouraged her. Some private commissions led to her being recommended to Philip II of Spain, who invited her to court to act as lady in waiting to his new wife, Elizabeth of Valois and to help the Queen and her daughters with their painting. She also did numerous paintings of other courtiers. Late in life she married twice and died aged 93, a year after the portrait of her by Anthony Van Dyke which now hangs at Knole, the NT house in Kent.

We’ve got plenty of space for new members as we meet at Bucknell Village Hall and the more the merrier!

Christine

One Saturday morning at three, A cheese monger's shop in Pairee.

Collapsed to the ground, With a thunderous sound,

Leaving only a pile of de brie. - Boom boom!

Arts and Crafts

Once again very busy ladies (and gents). Made some lovely decoupage boxes and Jackie helped us make a superb Iris Folded Poppy card. We have made lanyards for our u3a badges, necklaces and lariats all in the last few months so we certainly don't let the grass grow under our feet, not that it's growing much in this hot weather anyway.



Joy

All Types of Good Music

Along with a number of other groups we are now holding our ATGM meeting face-to-face at my house. It's not exactly an audiophiles dream as we put the music files through a TV so any associated videos can be watched. For the June session I shared a couple of hours of music videos trawled from the internet. It was a varied selection from the Doors, to Breton Folk, to David Bowie paying homage to the 50th anniversary of Ziggy Stardust (originally created in 1972).

For July Steve had a theme of 'chilled out music', some tracks were from well known artists (Dylan, Fleetwood Mac, The Travelling Wilburys) and some were from lesser known artists. All in all a very enjoyable 2 hours.

We will have no meeting in August due to holidays and in September there will also be no meeting as some of us will be in NI on the U3A trip, meaning we will reconvene in October with another varied selection of All Types of Good Music.

Richard Herbert

Blues Appreciation

June and July 2022

The Blues Appreciation group celebrated U3A's 40th Anniversary by taking us back to 1982. Beginning the session with a very brief history of U3A in the UK we then looked at the key news events of 1982, celebrities born in 1982 and those who passed away, how prices and incomes have changed over the last 40 years and the popular songs of 1982.

Members were asked, if they were happy to do so, to bring along a photograph of themselves in 1982, and to briefly say where they were living and what they were doing 40 years ago. Really fascinating. Everyone picked a number of songs they enjoyed back in 1982. These included Madness – 'Our House'; Culture Club – 'Do you really want to hurt me'; Bob Marley and the Wailers – 'Jammin'; Elkie Brooks – 'Fool if you think it is over'; Soft Cell – 'Tainted Love'; Altered Images – 'I could be Happy'; and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five – 'The Message'. John Cooper Clark appeared with 'Beasley Street' as did Joan Jett and the Blackhearts with 'I Love Rock and Roll'. 'I'll Find My Way Home' by Jon & Vangelis was a popular request, selected by four of the Group.

Having not exhausted everyone's selections in the June session we carried over the 40th anniversary celebration into the July session. Fascinating and most enjoyable hearing everyone's reflections and music selections.

Andrew Thomas

Book Group Report

What a treat it was to meet in person in May for the first time since lockdown.

We welcomed two new members and had two books to talk about as the April meeting had to be cancelled.

The first one was “Animal Farm” by George Orwell.

The book is a very clever story, using animals to reflect the course of a revolution. The pigs on the farm take over from the drunken farmer but gradually the pigs themselves take on many of the characteristics of the tyrant they have overthrown. The book is simply written, and the animal characters are cleverly drawn. A story of class struggle, very relevant today.

The second book was “The Garden of Lost and Found” by Harriet Evans.

Nightingale House, 1919. Liddy Horner discovers her husband, world famous artist, Sir Edward Horner, burning his best-known painting just days before his sudden death. Many years later, Liddy’s great granddaughter, Juliet, is sent the key to Nightingale House and opens the door to a forgotten world. This is a family saga which flits backwards and forwards in time. Full of history, we had mixed feelings about it, but the majority enjoyed it and said it was “a good read”.

In June we met to discuss “Elisabeth’s Lists” by Lulah Ellendar.

The author inherited a book of handwritten lists from Elisabeth, the grandmother she never knew. Elisabeth was an ambassador’s daughter and later wife, travelling to many countries with her father and then with her husband and children. At times she was very unhappy, living a life with no permanent home in an almost forgotten era. It was an interesting read and gave us much to talk about, but we would hesitate to recommend it.

Our choice for July was “Nala’s World” by Dean Nicholson”

Three months after Dean left his home in Scotland to cycle around the world, he found an abandoned kitten on a remote road in the mountains of Bosnia. This encounter changed both of their lives, they travelled on together, sharing photographs and video clips of their adventures on Instagram and YouTube. Dean discovers a purpose in what he describes as an aimless existence, and they raised thousand of pounds for animal charities. Not every member of the group enjoyed the book, but it is a gentle read. The descriptions of the people Dean and Nala met and of the countries they cycled through make interesting reading. Strangers warmed to this big burly Scotsman with the cat on

his shoulder. Recommended if you like cats!

We are exploring a different venue for our August meeting when we will talk about "Trust Me" by T.M.Logan.

Audrey Luff

Bridge

The Bridge group have enjoyed playing throughout June and July but have decided to have a 'holiday' during August. When we start again in September we will reconvene at the Pop In, Manorsfield Road. We enjoyed playing at the Methodist Hall but due to the return of the Rock Group in September we have decided to move back to the Pop In. If anyone is interested in joining us there please contact me - details on your information card.

Denise Thornton

Bus Pass Adventures



Some recent photos from our adventures.

Rennie Buxton

Camera Club 2

We still continue to alternate between trips and meetings to critique our work. Recently we have visited the surrounding villages and have discovered some gems on our doorstep.



We revisited Thrupp at the end of May. As we had all been there before I set a challenge to photograph in black and white. This makes the photographer think about light and shade in their composition. We were all very pleased with the results.





Another trip was to Islip where we discovered some interesting cottages and a great selection of wild flowers in the meadow by the river.



We also took our cameras to the 40th anniversary picnic where we helped document the event with our cameras.



George Edmundson

Canasta & Mah jong

CANASTA

I'm pleased to say that our numbers are picking up again now, after the Lockdown, when we lost a lot of players. We're now okay again.

MAH JONG

Well we never did lose any members after Lockdown in this group, so we still have plenty of players.

Doreen

Creative Writing

The Creative Writing Group has been busy these last few meetings. The membership has expanded and if there are any more budding writers, we may have to look for a new venue.

We have continued to write our individual short stories along several different lines: reading them to the group for comment and praise in equal measure. To the present we have only had a fleeting look at poetry, although several members are quite talented in this direction: producing pieces holding much emotion. We will be moving onto this subject at future meetings.

Last meeting we spent some time each writing a voice-over to advertise a fictitious product: then wrote letters of complaint when the advertised item did not come up to the standards expected of it. This produced much mirth and everyone enjoyed this exercise.

At the end of each meeting there is generally some voluntary homework to take away, the results of which are discussed at the following meeting. Last meeting the members were each given a list of 4 disparate items that have to be incorporated into a short piece. Hopefully this will produce some pieces of extraordinary mental dexterity and invention.

Come and join us!

Michael Wyatt (Contact Michael through our Group Co-ordinator)

Current Affairs

It is fair to say that our group has gone through a mini crisis and was in danger of dissolving into two very differing groups. However following a very simple Questionnaire we move forward as one (the government could learn a thing or two from our process) .

Having said that I have always been averse to waiting lists particularly at our age. I do not think that U3A was set up for never ending groups. On paper we have reached a comfortable maximum number, but I encourage anyone who wants to join Current Affairs to let me know, and it would be possible to start a second group for a fixed number of sessions.

We have discussed topics such as Woke, Gender, Transgender, and many other sensitive topics, the really positive issue is that the group feels safe to discuss, argue, disagree but to accept each other no matter the differences expressed in the group.

We charge a nominal amount for coffee and biscuits, and this goes to a charity at the end of the year.

We don't meet in August so begin again on 5th September.

Pamela Wakeling

Cycling Group

We had our second Ride on Tues 2nd August, Holidays having curtailed any activity in June/ July.

The route took us as follows:-

Bicester, Launton, M. Gibbon, Twyford, Poundon, then back to Launton & Bicester. We had a nice refreshment break in Twyford.

We are looking to build up our Membership numbers, so invite enquiries from Bicester u3a Members. We have details on the Bicester Website, or you can contact me or Jan Laker the Bicester Groups Co - Ordinator.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Barry Rous

Deutsche Gruppe

The German Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month between 10.30 am and 12.00. We are a friendly group, and welcome new members if capacity allows. Our maximum capacity is eight members, with a waiting list if needed. We are mostly at an intermediate level, but happily strive to meet the needs of all participants.

We work with texts, often a book that we read over several meetings. We take turns to read out loud, sometimes translating in full, or just clarifying any difficult phrases or meaning. Sometimes we use texts from the internet or news items. We also encourage all participants to talk to the group about something of personal interest; recent activities, plans and family events for example. This can be prepared in advance, or spoken spontaneously.

The group continues with zoom meetings and thanks to the Trust U3A platform we now have members join us from U3As from all over the country. Occasionally the Bicester members meet in person informally for coffee and try to chat in German (to the amusement of those around us!).

If you wish to join or just find out more, please do contact the Group Coordinator on Contacts web page.

Brenda Strohm

Drawing and Painting



You can see from the photo that we are all very busy in our group, the project we are working on is Van Gogh . We have used a picture of his and divided it into sections each person trying to recreate the image to learn his technique i.e. brush strokes, colour and movement. It is a lesson in observation, we will then join all the sections together and have the completed image. If we are happy with it we are hoping to display it at a monthly meeting in the future. I think

everyone has enjoyed the experience so far.

Janet L Hartley

Exploring Classical Music

I finished my last report with *Look out for more next time...* And reading my notes and reviewing the playlist for the last three months I have to smile: in every meeting, we listened to a composition that made us smile. We may not agree on which one was it, but surely there was one!

Last Thursday was our last meeting before the summer break. Its format was *Desert Island Disk*, that is members were invited to select a piece of music, that has a connection with summer, travel or holidays. Sandra selected the symphonic poem *Tintagel* by Arnold Bax, a composition I never heard before. Very nice music that leads us to the conclusion that we have to explore more this almost forgotten British composer. On the other hand, Celia's choice of the Overture to Mendelson's *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* cannot be more contrasting to *Tintagel*: This is a composition that most of us know very well and it is always a pleasure to hear it again. So when we parted last Thursday, I think that all of us were smiling.

In another meeting, we remembered Gwyneth, she sadly passed away during the lockdown. The little I knew about her was: that she loved Beethoven. And while she was working at the British Embassy in Moscow somebody advised her: *in Moscow avoid foreign operas, go and see the Russian ones!* Based on these two premises it was easy to build a program that I hope she would have enjoyed: A piano sonata by Beethoven and the first act of an opera by Mussorgsky. No, not *Boris Godunov*, but the amazing *Khovanshchina*. And a piano trio by Shostakovich...

Tomy Duby

25-Jul-22

French Conversation

We meet via Zoom. Holidays and travel are a frequent topic of conversation, although we do sometimes venture into current affairs and what is happening in our surrounding areas. Very seldom are we at a loss for something to say!!!

New members are welcome to join. If anyone is in doubt, join us for a meeting before making up your mind.

Julie Evans

French Books

During lockdown someone handed me a couple of boxes of French books to pass on to U3A members. There are some teach yourself books, some tapes and quite a lot of novels. I will bring them along to the August general meeting but if anyone is interested who will not be there please contact me directly.

Denise Thornton

Contact details on Information Card - Bridge Group Leader

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, Queens, Barry Manilow, Boy George and National Beer 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 information card.

Cheers!

Steve

A crossword compiler named Moss, Who found himself quite at a loss.

When asked, Why so blue? Said, I haven't a clue,

I'm 2 Down to put 1 Across.

Garden Visits

We have travelled a little more in the last 3 months, visiting some fascinating gardens.



In May we went to Sezincote, a 200-year-old Mogul Indian palace, set in a romantic landscape of temples, grottoes, waterfalls, and canals reminiscent of the Taj Mahal.



June took us to Buscot Park near Farringdon. Buscot Park is the family home of Lord Farringdon, who looks after the property on behalf of the National Trust, as well as the family collection of pictures, furniture, ceramics and objets d'art, known as the Farringdon Collection,

which is displayed in the house. You may notice from the people in the water garden photo, it was not taken on this visit!



To the west of the house, the mellow red-brick walls of the original kitchen



garden now shelter the Four Seasons garden, bright with the blooms of spring bulbs, flowering trees and drifts of multi-coloured day lilies, according to the time of year. To the east, woodland walks lead to one of Britain's finest water gardens, an unusual marriage of Italianate formality with an English parkland landscape.



In July we went to Saville Garden in Great Windsor Park

Resting in the heart of Windsor Great Park, The Savill Garden is one of Britain's greatest

ornamental gardens. Commissioned by George V and created by Sir Eric Savill in 1932, The Savill Garden has been an inspiration for all; a natural haven of 35 acres of beautifully designed gardens and woodland.



Dave Jones

Jazz Appreciation.

Is back - 4th Wednesday of the month at Blackthorn Village Hall.

Please contact Andrew Thomas for more details.

Murder Mystery Book Group.

May Aspire to Die by M. S. Morris.

When a beautiful, wealthy student is found dead in her room in Oxford's most prestigious college, Detective Inspector Bridget Hart is called to investigate. The murdered girl appeared to have no enemies, yet was killed in a brutal and bloody assault. Haunted and driven by her own personal tragedy, newly promoted DI Hart has a lot to prove as she leads her first murder case. Her investigation uncovers a tangled web of lies, lust and ambition, and brings her into conflict with powerful interests. Set amongst the dreaming spires of Oxford University, no one can be above suspicion.

June Paper Girls by Alex Smith.

This is the first in the Detective Chief Inspector Kett series of books. He has left his post at the Metropolitan Police and headed back to Norfolk with his three daughters, hoping to heal his family's wounds, after his wife has gone missing in London. His new found peace doesn't last when two newspaper delivery girls go missing and the clues point to a serial kidnapper. Kett is soon dragged into the centre of one of the darkest cases of his career, a case that pits him head-to-head against a horrifying evil. It is also a case that might uncover the truth of what happened to his wife.

July Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owen.

For years, rumours of the Marsh Girl have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet fishing village. Kya Clark is barefoot and wild, unfit for polite society. So, in late 1969, when the popular Chase Andrews is found dead, locals immediately suspect her. Kya is not what they say, she is a born naturalist with just one day of school, she takes her life lessons from the land, learning the real ways of the world. While she has the skills to live in solitude forever, the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. Eventually, she is drawn to two young men from town, who are each intrigued by her wild beauty. Kya opens herself to a new and startling world until the unthinkable happens.....

By Mary Herbert

Qi Gong

We meet weekly on Tuesday mornings at Chesterton and have recently welcomed more new members. This gentle form of exercise is ideal for our generation and most of us have seen benefits since the group started in 2019.

Tania, our qualified teacher and U3A member, remains very committed to the group and introduces new exercises from time to time, adding variety to our classes. We are a friendly group, and the sessions are fun as well as beneficial.

There is a small charge to cover the Hall hire.

You are welcome to come along and give it a try.

Denise Thornton and Audrey Luff

Scrabble

We have resumed our group with gusto and all 7 of us are really pleased to be back stretching our brains (or the dictionary) to discover new words. Unfortunately I have not got enough room in my home to extend the group, but as I explained to someone who enquired, that if there are more people interested they can always start another group. I hope this happens as I do not like turning anyone down.

We had our very belated Christmas meal at the Chinese restaurant on Kingsmere last month. Due to ill health etc. we finally were able to get together for this. Better late than never.

We hope to carry on and try to make more interesting words or full scrabble! as Marion did twice in one game just recently!

Sue Barden.

Now a limerick for you mathematicians

$$"((12 + 144 + 20 + 3 \text{ Sqrt}[4]) / 7) + 5 * 11 = 9^2 + 0"$$

Answer on page 32

Short Walks

In May, the Short Walks Groups walked from the lay-by near Sturdy's Castle. We started off on the Oxfordshire Way and then wound our way through the nature reserve to Wootton. There are stunning views of the Dorne Valley. The way back was through the woods to the start. A few of us had lunch at Sturdy's Castle Hotel.

In June we celebrated the U3A 40th Anniversary by completing a pub walk from Forty Green, near Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire. After our walk we had lunch in the Royal Standard of England. This claims to be England's oldest pub. The first mention of the inn, originally known as 'Se Scip' (The Ship), was made in 1213, although it is likely that an alehouse existed on the site prior to this date. However, it was not until after Charles II's restoration to the throne in 1663 that the inn changed its name to the Royal Standard of England, the only inn in the country with the honour of this full title. It is said that the new king bestowed the honour in recognition of the loyalty and support given to the Royalists and to his executed father by the landlord. It may also have been the case that Charles II felt obliged to do so as a reward for being able to meet his mistresses in rooms above the inn!



Our walk in July was from Annie's in Thrupp. We took a short walk along the canal and then walked across the meadows to St Mary's Church in Kidlington. From there we returned along the River Cherwell through Thrupp Community Forest to the start. Some of us had lunch at Annies.

Mary Gough

Sunday Lunch

Please come and join us for a delicious Sunday Lunch and good conversation with fellow U3A members 12.30 pm for 1 pm.

We visit various hotels, restaurants and pubs within Bicester and Surrounding Villages

First Sunday of the month to meet old friends and new for an informal lunch

Booking with Sandie is essential. Please add your name to the sheet at the monthly meeting or telephone Sandie to book - details are on your information card. If you consequently cannot make it, please remember to cancel.

Sun Sep 4th Kirtlington Golf Club

Sun Oct 2nd Denis in Sheep Street Bicester

Cheers,

Sandie Stevenson

Table Tennis

Once again we had to change some dates of playing from our normal Thursday mornings, as the hall was needed by the school on three occasions and one week was cancelled because of the Jubilee celebrations . We were offered alternative dates on Mondays and were able to find enough players for two Mondays, but had to cancel others.

I'm pleased that Monday or Tuesday wasn't our playing days during the heatwave, as normally the hall is nice and airy, as we open all the doors and windows, but not even we would have been able to play on those days!

Christine Cox

"A dozen, a gross, and a score, plus three times the square root of four,
divided by seven, plus five times eleven,
is nine squared and not a bit more."

Simples...

Ukulele

Since my last report we have been very busy.

Firstly, we entertained the Bicester U3A members at the 40th anniversary celebration party.

We performed at the Fringford Beer Festival. It wasn't the kindest of weathers, but we still had the audience singing and dancing.

Our third performance was to The Valentine Club at Steeple Aston, where we entertained around 60 of their members.

This was originally planned for 2020 but due to Covid was rescheduled for July 19th. Unfortunately this had to be again postponed due to the very hot weather constraints, we eventually performed on Tuesday 2nd August. We have been requested to return next year.

We have met at Matilda's Coffee Shop on non ukulele meeting weeks, to enjoy playing in public.

We will continue to meet on our scheduled dates.

Here's to future performances.

Bill Jeffries

Wider Horizons

We would like to arrange little 'outings' in the coming year so any ideas would be welcome. I have looked into hiring a 16 seater mini bus to go to the seaside for the day so we will get together and discuss that. Also perhaps a visit to Bletchley Park going on the X5 to Milton Keynes and then a short train journey to Bletchley Park may be another trip.

If you would like to join us we meet the 2nd and 4th Fridays. We start at 10am and finish about 12ish but you can come and go at any time.

Joy Saville

Wine Appreciation

For the last couple of years we have been holding our Wine Appreciation meetings on Zoom with each member/s having one bottle of wine based on a theme of a letter from the alphabet.

For June this year we tested out returning to our original format when we hosted 10 members in our garden. We tasted 3 white and 3 red wines all on a theme of V. There was an Italian sparkling white, two dry white wines from Italy and France. The 3 reds came from France, Spain and Chile. It was decided that we would hold future sessions face-to-face at members' houses, outside if possible though this might not always be the case because of our weather. The July session is already planned and then we move on to September as we miss out in August due to holidays.

Regards
Richard Herbert

U3A Thames Valley Network (TVN)

<http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk/>

TVN is a network of u3a groups that organise Zoom presentations, study days and representatives meetings.

Full details of the events are posted on their website and circulated to U3A's. The events are well attended regularly attracting over 200 participants. Ticket Source is used for bookings. There is normally a small fee for each event. See TVN website for more details.

Tuesday 6th September – The Wonderful World of Law, a talk by David Allen

Friday 16th September – Autumn Quiz, questions set by Avis

Wednesday 21st September – Botanical Art

Tuesday 4th October – The Battle of Agincourt, a talk by Patsy Thornton

Thursday 13th October – Life in the Stone Age, a talk by Jill Eyers

Press Date: Any items for inclusion in the November newsletter must reach the Newsletter Editor, by 1st November 2022. N.B. this is an absolute deadline please. You can contact the Editor via the Website Contacts page or from the details on your information card.

Editor