



Bicester U3A Newsletter #90

November 2023

From our Chairman



A slightly quieter quarter than the last, but still lots happening, new groups, Astronomy, Mah Jong and restarting the French for Beginners.

We have had some interesting talks, Dr Audrey Brown's "Wildlife and scenery in the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica" was fascinating and contained some great photos, Alan Lavender's talk "Chef to 4 prime ministers" was a laugh a minute (and I thought I was the comedian!)

Christmas is coming, I am sure you are all looking forward to the U3A Christmas lunch, it is at Whiteland's Sports Centre near the Park & Ride Kingsmere. A new venue for us, chosen to be more convenient for you to get to. Choice of football, tennis or cross-country run before the meal to give you an appetite!

Next year's holiday to Northumberland is being finalised, there are no single rooms left, but there may be a couple of double rooms. Don't let that put you off, you could make a new friend! It looks like a good trip, with visits to three National Trust sites, Lindisfarne, Beamish Open Air Museum, Alnwick Castle and many other interesting places.

Membership has stayed pretty static, with new members replacing the ones that have resigned or passed away. Our new scanner for checking members into meetings is working well as is my request to bring your membership card, I just wish the print was a little bigger, so I could read the names more easily (I do struggle to remember names).

The new Group Leader's Folder is complete, Jan and her helpers have put a great deal of work into it. It gives guidance to group leaders on running their group, safety and within legal requirements.

David Jones

The AGM is coming up in January, you will shortly receive the papers. Included will be a nomination form for committee members: we will still be in trouble, we will be losing Audrey Luff, Mary Herbert, Margaret Herbert, Mike Luff, Doug Irvine and we still have no Vice Chairman. We desperately need a Vice Chairman, a Business Secretary and a Programme secretary. Please think about what YOU can contribute, none of the tasks are particularly onerous, we meet approximately once a month and we have a bit of a laugh.

Executive Committee

Chairman: David: (DJ) Jones
Group Coordinator: Janice Laker
Vice Chairman: Vacant
Business Secretary: Margaret Herbert
Membership Secretary: Val Day
Programme 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

Group Coordinator News November 2023

The last three months have seen consolidation of three new groups! The enthusiasm and dedication of group leaders is evident. As usual a big thank you to all new and current group leaders.

Chris Neville started the Beginners French group/s in September 2023. Luckily for us, and those interested, Chris was willing to run two beginner groups instead of the intended one. What is more, one member was attracted to join our u3a by seeing the Beginners French group advertised on the website.

Fiona Lunn started Mah Jong beginners in September 2023. She is running four beginners' groups and is also pioneering a kind of termly approach, and will negotiate with those interested to decide whether and how to continue after Christmas. Members have greatly benefited from Fiona's knowledge and patience and I am hopeful the groups will continue in some form.

Doug Wells started the Astronomy Observation group. This group again is slightly out of the ordinary being held outside at night. Doug is very willing to manage the joys and challenges involved in this, as they crop up, and group members are greatly benefiting from his knowledge and enthusiasm.

Potential groups

Three enthusiastic members who are experienced cyclists and have an interest in helping those who have less or no recent experience, have put a lot of effort into considering the safety and social needs of a group with mixed experience. This group will be ready to go as soon as the weather permits—most likely in early spring. It is open to new members!

I'm pleased to say that these new group leaders (and I) have survived the increasing organisational demands advised by national u3a in establishing groups.

A new Bicester u3a group leader's Handbook clearly explaining the required steps for setting up and running a group is complete. As mentioned in the last newsletter the wider UK u3a organisation encourages us to give much more attention than ever before to being accessible and considering the needs of everyone, as well as keeping all members data and other information, and members themselves, as safe as possible.

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 several) meetings on a theme. You can host a Gathering without it evolving into a group. For more information see: <https://u3asites.org.uk/bicester/page/128631>

I look forward to more 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

Best wishes

Jan Laker

Renewal subscription costs for 2024

I am pleased to advise that the Bicester u3a membership subscription will remain at £15 for 2024. The accounts are looking healthy, and the Committee has agreed that there is no necessity for an increase. This is particularly good news with many other costs rising.

Renewal details will be circulated early in the New Year, so no action is needed yet.

Audrey Luff

Treasurer

Bicester u3a General Notices

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

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

Internet and Email: If you have internet access and are able to receive future editions of the newsletter by email, please contact the Membership Secretary. We try hard to 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 keep in touch.

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.

Monthly Meetings

(4th Thursday)
The Clifton Centre, Ashdene Rd, Bicester OX26 2BH
2:15pm

Thur Nov 23rd Roger Umpleby: A Close up view of the Cotswold
Countryside
Wed Dec 13th Christmas Lunch

November 23th Monthly Meeting

Just a reminder that voting for the 2023 Photographic Competition will take place at this meeting. The photographs on the theme of "Seasons of the UK" will be on display again and the results will be announced at the Christmas Lunch on Wednesday December 13th.

Our November speaker is Roger Umpleby who will give us a close-up view of the Cotswold Countryside. I understand that he has some fabulous slides.

I hope you will come along.

Mike Luff

Programme Secretary.

Bicester u3a Residential Holiday 2024 Northumberland Sunday 16th June - Saturday 22nd June

At the time of writing, I still have three double/twin rooms available for this holiday. We will be staying at the Caledonian Hotel in Jesmond, Newcastle.

Day trips include Beamish Open Air Museum, Craggside (NT), Lindisfarne and Alnwick Castle and Gardens. Please contact me as soon as possible for

further details if you are interested as the deposits are due by the end of November.

Audrey Luff

Treasurer



Christmas Lunch Wednesday 13th December 2023

This year's Christmas Lunch will be held at the The Kitchen and Bar,
Whitelands Farm Sports Ground, Whitelands Way, Bicester OX26 1AJ.

Mary Herbert

Welcomers

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

Richard Herbert,

Wyn May,

Alex Sharpe,

Marguerite Scott,

Pauline Smith,

Joy Saville.

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.	Tesco Community Space
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 A&B	Chris Neville	Fortnightly	Members' homes

Garden Visits	David Jones	2nd Wed p.m. or all day	TBA
Gentle Exercise	Joy Saville	Monday a.m.	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

Any Type on Good Music

We had no meeting in August due to holidays. At the September meeting we had another selection of 'B' sides of well known songs through the ages. It really tested the grey matter trying to guess what the well known tracks were. In 2012 Rolling Stone Magazine updated their 2002 tabulated list of the “500 Greatest Albums of all time” created by looking at 300 different best album charts. For our October meeting we obviously couldn't listen to all 500 so I cut it down to the best top 30 albums, and we listened to Track 2 from each album as a random choice of tracks. This produced some great tracks and some that were not so great. The Beatles had four Albums in the top 30 with Bob Dylan having two. Those being the only artists with multiple entries in this chart. Others to appear were Michael Jackson, Fleetwood Mac the Rolling Stones and many others. Third came Joni Mitchel with 'Blue', second were the Beach Boys with 'Pet Sounds' and first was Marvin Gaye with 'What's goin' on'. Not my personal choice of top 30 albums but a very interesting afternoon's listening. We have spaces in the group so if you would enjoy an afternoon a month listening to a selection of “Any Type of Good Music” please get in touch with me or the Group Coordinator.

Astronomy Observation Group

The recently set up Astronomy Group had a lot of interest initially and so for now I have had to limit the group numbers with a waiting list, if and when a space (pardon the pun) becomes available at any time the next name on the waiting list will be asked if they wish to join.

The group has so far had a “taster” session on the 14th September and as the feedback was positive I organised a second session on 21st or 22nd of October (actual night dictated by the weather) and by the time this newsletter goes out that will have taken place.

The night sky objects observed on the taster session were Saturn, Jupiter and some deep sky objects such as Nebula, Galaxies and star clusters. The next session will include some of the same and more deep sky objects if the sky is clear enough. There was no moon visible during the taster session but

I have chosen a night with a first quarter Moon for the follow up session, The Moon in one of it's phases (as opposed to a full Moon) through a telescope is really nice to see with lots of detail and shadows on the craters.

Although I live in Bicester I am fortunate enough to have a garden facing South East and with no street lights visible, and the sky on a clear night is as good as it could be for a town location. Depending on how many members are at each session I can set up one or more telescopes.

I provide low level red background lighting and individual red LED torches all of which help preserve night time vision. Binoculars are also used to observe some objects and members are encouraged to bring their own. I print out relevant sky maps for each session and try to give as much information as I can throughout the evening. Keep looking up.

Doug

Book Group

"The Premonitions Bureau" by Sam Knight was our choice for August. This is a true story and is listed as a Times best seller. There was a Premonitions Bureau set up in 1966 to log details of dreams, flashbacks, and predictions from members of the public. They were invited to contact The Evening Standard with details. There is still a similar bureau in America. Major events such as the Aberfan disaster and the Charing Cross rail crash were "foreseen" before they happened. The book centres on the life of John Barker, a psychiatrist specialising in unusual mental disorders. It is certainly interesting, particularly as the events described happened in our lifetime and many of us remembered them. The author is a journalist and we agreed it needed more careful editing as it didn't "flow" well. There are interesting descriptions of Barkers work in the outdated Shelton mental hospital where electric shock treatment was used, and details of the harsh conditions the patients endured. Other snippets of information appear within the book. It gave us a great deal to think about and discuss. The book drew no conclusions about this fascinating subject. The group had mixed feelings, some really enjoyed reading it, but others disliked it or didn't continue reading. A good choice for a Book Group!

In September we talked about "Surely, you're joking Mr. Feynman" by Ralph Leighton. Richard Feynman was reputed to be one of the world's greatest theoretical physicists and won the Nobel prize for Physics in 1965. He was also an artist, safe-cracker, practical joker, and storyteller. Over a period of years, he had many conversations with his friend, Ralph Leighton, who set them down to form this book. Another good choice for the group as we had mixed views and feelings. Some did not care for it at all and didn't finish it,

others thoroughly enjoyed it and researched the man and his colleagues and friends for further knowledge. What comes through in the text is Feynman's outstanding intellect. Anything he started he did well and thoroughly believed in. He had an inquisitive mind, almost childlike at times, and gives back to basics, simple explanations for his experiments. The detail of those countless experiments becomes tedious though and it was necessary to skim through some of the text to focus on the lifestyle of the man. He was married three times and his relationships with women gave a basis for more heated discussion within the group. Not all of us found it funny! A very different book to widen our horizons.

We met in October to review "Storm Tide" by Wilbur Smith. Set against the backdrop of the American Revolution, the Courtney family is torn apart as three generations fight on opposing sides of a terrible war that will change the face of the world forever. Many of Wilbur Smith's bestsellers, dating back to 1964, involve members of the Courtney family. The "hero" of this one is seventeen-year-old Rob, who has spent his whole life in a quiet outpost on the east coast of Africa. He stows away on a ship, and arriving in London, enlists in the Navy and is sent to the other side of the Atlantic to join the war against the rebellious American colonists. Unbeknownst to Rob, his distant cousins are fighting against the British in a bid for American Independence. Some of the group described the book as a "good yarn". It was entertaining and the historical detail was interesting, particularly the trauma of being a sailor in the 18th century, the disgraceful slavery trade and the suffering it caused. The book contains some graphic descriptions which some of the group found unnecessary. Some of the situations were rather improbable, a little like a story from "The Eagle" comic from years ago. There are no strong female characters and there were mixed feelings amongst the group regarding the writing style. Wilbur Smith died in 2021 and this book was co-written by Tom Harper, himself an accredited author. The book gave us a great deal to talk about but was not to everyone's taste.

We are currently putting together our reading list for 2024.

Audrey Luff

Bridge

We continue to play at the library on Tuesday afternoons. Due to holidays we have averaged only two to three tables but hopefully this will pick up soon. We have welcomed one new member to our group who is hopefully, enjoying the sessions.

Bus Pass Adventures

The Bus Pass Adventures for July and September had to be cancelled unfortunately due to lack of numbers. The August adventure was meant to be to Aylesbury and was led by Susan Williams and Tricia Hallam, but the bus did not turn up so it was decided to catch the bus to Oxford. The group decided they would look around Jericho. The October adventure will be to Banbury.

Rennie

Camera Club 2

The highlight of the last three months was the October general meeting where we displayed some of our favourite photos. Everyone joined in and we were able to fill two large display boards. Well done to all the contributors and a special thanks to the small team who mounted the photos on the preceding Thursday. Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend the meeting but I have heard nothing but praise for all the photographers' efforts. We have also been busy with outings. In August we went to Lower Heyford in to hope of photographing some canal art. Surprisingly there was none to be found on any of the boats, but we had a good time taking pictures of the canal and its surroundings.



September saw us at the botanical Gardens in Oxford. We were very lucky as our visit coincided with a very interesting talk on the history of the garden. This picture shows one of the early gates with Christ Church tower in the background.



Our last outing was to Stowe. As it was October I challenged the photographers to capture early signs of autumn. I was unable to attend the follow-up meeting so did not see the results but all said they found it interesting and challenging. This was one of my early autumn shots

Craft Club

Our Craft Club is full! There is a waiting list for anyone who is interested in joining. We meet up on the first and third Monday of the month at Tesco's Community Room.

All our members are enjoying having a go at anything I throw at them (so far). We enjoy chatting, having a laugh, drinking tea and coffee with a few biscuits and maybe a bit of crafting, ha ha!! Over the past few months our talented crafty ladies have made a variety of crafts: glass painting, crystal bead hanging sun catchers and decorating vases and bottles, which seemed to be the most popular.

With Christmas fast approaching we will be making beautiful Christmas cards for our last two meetings in November. There will be no Craft Club in December due to Tesco using the community room for their own use. We will be starting again in the New Year, third week in January 2024. Looking forward to seeing what the crafty New Year brings.

Current Affairs

We continue to meet monthly, the first Monday of the month. From 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. Please note the venue changes as we meet in members' homes. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in joining our lively group. Topics are varied and many, although some sessions we do stick to the one prescribed discussion item, but this is rare 😊.

I have space for one more at the moment, but am happy to have a waiting list or if you want to attend for a "taster" session, I am sure that can be arranged. We contribute one pound each at our meetings for coffee, tea and biscuits, but this goes to charity, namely RNLI and Thames Valley Air Ambulance. These two because they receive no Government or Lottery funding and we never know when we or our family may need their help.

Pam Wakeling

Cycling Group

We are sorry to report that Barry has stepped down as group leader but will continue to cycle with us. Three of us have agreed to lead cycle rides for the u3a. Twelve people have expressed an interest in joining the Group. We were looking to have the first meeting and a short ride on the 27th October. No one expressed an interest to attend this meeting so it was cancelled. The

ride leaders will be organising rides in the near future (probably every two weeks) and a timetable for these will be issued shortly.

G Martin Williams

Drawing and Painting

We have settled into our new premises at Tesco Community room which is free of charge and we are provided with refreshments. We have not got quite as much room but is still very good. The Drawing and Painting group is now full as we can't accommodate any more members. I will start a waiting list if needed. We hope to exhibit our work in the near future.

Janet Hartley

French Conversation

The French Conversation Group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesday morning of each month. There is no set topic. We talk (and sometimes discuss) topics of interest both locally and nationally. We also enjoy hearing about recent holidays and, sometimes, these are accompanied by excellent photographs.

Garden Visits

Our August visit should have been Sudeley Castle, unfortunately only six members signed up to go. A poor turnout for a group of 46 people, not enough to pay for the minibus and a bit too far to take cars, so I cancelled it. Maybe next year. At the last minute I decided that the September and October visits were the wrong way round, we went to Oxford Botanic Gardens.



I had been the week before with the Camera Group, so, as there was nowhere to park in the minibus, I dropped everyone off and went for a walk on Shotover.



The pictures are from my camera group visit. The latter was better than the Garden visit, there are conducted tours on Thursdays & Saturdays, and it really brought the place to life. If you plan to go on your own, give them a call and make sure the tours are still running.



In October we went to Stanton Harcourt, hoping there would be more colour, it was perhaps a little early, but still a very enjoyable outing.

Gentle Exercise

All going well at our meetings with a good attendance. I think we are all enjoying it and feeling the benefits, so we have decided to meet every week starting at the beginning of November. In the New Year we will all be skipping about like Spring lambs!

German Group

We meet formally twice a month via Interests Groups Online, with nine active participants from around the country, including four core Bicester members. We hold monthly informal coffee mornings so that our four local members and other would-be German speakers can meet face-to-face to converse in English at times and German as much as possible. We met members from

Sutton in London in August and hope to repeat this opportunity somewhere at some point, but finding a date and traveling further afield makes this type of meeting an occasional event. There seems to be increasing interest in learning and improving German with U3a and we have seven waiting list members, all of whom signed up during 2023. There are two other German groups active within Interest Groups Online (Deutsche Klasse 1 and 2), and some of us are active in one of those groups in addition to the Bicester German Group. Using Zoom we find a maximum of eight or nine participants is enough to function well. Larger groups meeting online would of course help to reduce the waiting list numbers more quickly but might not be such a satisfying experience.

Murder Mystery Book Club

September 2023 - Last Bus to Woodstock by Colin Dexter

Beautiful Sylvia Kaye and another young woman had been seen hitching a ride not long before Sylvia's body was found outside a pub in Woodstock. Morse is sure the other hitch-hiker can tell him much of what he needs to know. But his confidence is shaken by the cool inscrutability of the girl he is certain was Sylvia's companion on the ill-fated September evening. Shrewd as Morse is, he is also distracted by the complex scenarios that the murder set in motion among Sylvia's girlfriends and their Oxford playmates. To grasp the painful truth and act upon it requires from Morse the last atom of his professional discipline.

October 2023 - The Crossing Places by Elly Griffiths

When she is not digging up bones or other ancient objects, quirky tart-tongued archaeologist Dr Ruth Galloway lives happily alone in a remote area of the Saltmarsh in Norfolk, land that was sacred to its Iron Age inhabitants - not quite earth, not quite sea. When a child's bones are found on a desolate beach nearby Detective Chief Inspector Harry Nelson calls Galloway for help. Nelson thinks he has found the remains of Lucy Downey, a little girl who went missing 10 years earlier. Since her disappearance he has been receiving bizarre letters about her, letters with references to ritual and sacrifice. The bones turn out to be two thousand years old, but Ruth is soon drawn into the Lucy Downey case and into the mind of the letter writer. Then another child goes missing and the hunt is on to find her. As the letter writer moves closer, and the Norfolk landscape exerts its power, Ruth finds herself in completely new territory - and in serious danger.

Qi Gong

After enjoying our August sessions outside on the grass we have moved back to Chesterton for our weekly sessions. Three new members joined our regular group and we hope they will enjoy, and benefit from, their Qi Gong sessions as much as we do. Once again thanks to Tania for her expert guidance.

Rock Group

I have been away in India for most of October so have been unable to attend any Rock Group meetings. Before I left we decided not to use the Bucknell village hall and go back to meeting at members' homes. This has happened and I am looking forward to meeting up with the group again to see if they have worked out any new songs for me to learn. I have an idea for a new song based on my time in India, but it is something that I think I will have to 'sell' to the rest of the group! More news next time.

Short Walks Group

In August, the group walked around Oxford. Unfortunately, it was raining so not many people turned up. We walked through University Parks and back through the City to Churchill Meadow. Some of us had lunch at the Four Candles pub. Due to holidays, there was no walk in September. Our last walk in October was from Great Tew. A derelict village in the 1970's that was rescued by the Johnson family who inherited the estate in 1985. In 2000 they reopened Great Tew's quarry to supply ironstone for building. Many of the cottages are Grade II listed buildings. We walked past the Beckham's Farmhouse and Soho Farmhouse (One of the Area's most fashionable destinations and popular with celebrities.) A Country Club offering health spa breaks and gourmet food. The walk ended at the Falkland Arms where we had lunch.



Falkland Arms

Table Tennis

We are a well established group who play every Thursday morning at Chesterton Community Hall which is an ideal venue. The only qualification for joining us is to have played at some time in the past, even if it was a long time ago! That's because we no longer have a coach to help us, but you will find us a very friendly group who have a lot of fun. Everyone mixes in as there's no better way of improving than playing with all levels of ability.

We play mainly doubles on four tables and so sometimes we need to use a sit-out system so that everyone gets an equal chance to play. All you need is a bat and lots of enthusiasm! (I do have a couple of spare bats to lend out if necessary until you get your own). Its £2 a week at the moment.

There's no waiting list to join, so just get in touch with me – my phone number is on the Membership card. Why wait? Get fit without realising it! You won't regret it.

Christine Cox

Wider Horizons

We are continuing our twice monthly meeting for a catch up and a chat, all welcome, just pop in at The Lamb at the top of Sheep Street after 10a.m. We are planning a Wider Horizons group trip to Warwick Castle for late November to see the Castle trimmed up for Christmas and a visit to the Light Trail in the grounds. Just hoping for fine weather. Can anyone suggest another trip out for us all? All ideas considered as we like to get out and about. The seaside in the summer would be good but I have drawn a blank on an easy/cheap way to get there, any suggestions?

Wine Appreciation

In September we were treated to a selection of wines from “The Wine Society”. For the whites we tasted a Picoul de Pinet from the Languedoc in France followed by two more from France, a Sauvignon Blanc and a Grenache. The first being the group favourite. For the reds we started with a Claret followed by a Rioja and a different Claret with the last two being the favourites. For the October meeting we tasted a selection of Rioja wines from Spain sourced from a wine outlet recently established on the new Graven Hill estate in Bicester. For the whites there were two different vineyards both of which scored highly followed by a Rose that was deemed ideal for a summer afternoon in the garden. All three reds were found to be

very palatable with the cheapest thought to be the best – amazing how often that happens.

We have recently lost a few members so have some spaces for any members interested in joining us. None of us are experts but are just interested in widening our knowledge of wine and increasing our selection of wines that we know we like to avoid any disappointments when venturing into the confusing wine market, and we have a fun evening once a month in each others' houses over tasting small samples of what are usually an interesting selection of wines. It would be advantageous for any new members to have a large enough house to host up to 12 people. If you are interested in joining us please contact me or the Groups Coordinator.

www.u3asites.org.uk/bicester
Registered Charity Number 1094759

Press Dates: Any item for inclusion in the February newsletter must reach the newsletter editor before 1st February 2024. NB this is an absolute deadline. You can contact the editor via the website contacts page or from details on your information card.

Editor