

CLEEVE CLARION

Bishop's Cleeve u3a

No. 100

10 January – 12 March 2024



13 February – Sally, Bishop's
Cleeve Village Clinic – Best
Foot Forward

12 March – Dr Gill
White – Katherine of
Aragon

Hands up for yoga

Member-led learning groups and activities for those retired
from full-time work

Chairman's Clarion Call

Val Hayward

Have you ever stopped to think what good value your membership of Bishop's Cleeve u3a is? It costs just £13 or even less if you are lucky enough to be half of a joint membership. For that, you get eleven Open Meetings a year with an entertaining speaker at most of them and a free drink and biscuit (sometimes cake) thrown in. The drink and biscuit alone, with today's prices, makes it worthwhile. Of course, not everyone attends the Open Meetings. On average we get around a fifth of the membership, but that number is going up. Then there are the groups where sometimes there is an additional cost, mainly to cover the hire of a room and perhaps the occasional speaker. However, with the groups being run by volunteers, costs again are kept to a minimum. I hope you have all renewed your membership to help keep your u3a viable?

The drink and biscuit alone, with today's prices, makes [the subscription] worthwhile

Did you know that this is the 100th edition of your Clarion? I feel that perhaps we should all stand and sing Happy Birthday to commemorate this, but that might be a bit over the top. Instead, I hope you will join me in thanking Marguerite Habgood, our Clarion editor, for her sterling work in producing this magazine every two months. Our thanks also go to the previous editors. Over the years, technology and their efforts have made it grow from a single sheet of paper to a colourful 24-page magazine. We thank you.

I've now glimpsed next year's program kindly put together by Joan Hall. It has subjects which are historical in nature, musical, and most informative. I am sure we will be kept on the **Learning** theme by some and **Laugh** at others. There is a cream tea planned for August, as we felt that, although there was no jubilee or coronation (we sincerely hope) on the cards for this next year, we should again forget the calories and **Live** a little. Surely one scone with jam and cream cannot hurt!

So, we have a packed year ahead and it only remains for me to say **HAPPY NEW YEAR** to everyone.

December's Open Meeting

Pershore u3a Ukulele Group entertains - and they did it very well!



One hundred editions - and the ghost in the machine?

When the [first Clarion](#) was issued at the inception of our u3a, did they dream of edition 100? Can we dream of edition 200?

Starting off in October 2007 as just three sides of A4 paper, Clarion has prospered over the years. By edition 4 we were seeking a new editor with a 'good working knowledge of Word', and by edition 6, Barrie Hall, a founder member, had stepped forward. Under his editorship the newsletter became [a bi-monthly booklet](#) with a coloured photo on the front cover and grew to 12 pages. After more than six years at the helm, he handed over to Rosemary Pullin, thanking his wife 'who has been almost a semi-professional proof reader,' and Mike Copson for help in producing Clarion. Rosemary continued to grow the publication for the next five and a half years, including more photos - and pages. I took over at edition 76, just in time for the Covid years! Two editions in, we were 'locked down' - businesses closed, no travelling, and we all stayed six feet away from each other. I produced the now 24-page newsletter for the Web only, and Philip Watson printed copies for the few members without email, and therefore probably no Web access. Will the rare editions 78 - 89 become collectable in the future I wonder?

By May 2022, near normality returned - but increasingly members were reading Clarion online. To prevent the waste of printing unwanted copies, only those paying the cost of printing of £18 per year received them, rather than, as previously, providing them to all as part of the membership sub. Having only a few printed copies has, of course, doubled the cost per copy. Perhaps edition 200 will be online only? Or will Clarion become a daily blog?

A bad thing about editing? Disappointing those who've sent in beautiful photos taken on their phones which don't have enough kilobytes to use. To produce a decent printed copy, pictures need to have enough pixels.

Good thing? Learning from a member that, on an iPhone, you can send versions of photos with more kilobytes! Does anyone know if Android phones can be made to do the same thing?

The ghost? When Rosemary handed over the template to me in 2020, I noticed that the name 'Mike' automatically appeared as the author. No problem, and I've never tried to change it, but who might Mike be? Researching

Our good deeds live forever

this piece, I wonder if it is the Mike who was thanked by Barrie for helping to produce Clarion? It would seem to be true that our 'good deeds live forever.' Or for nigh on 16 years anyway!

Mu3ac - 50 years or more fell away as I listened

My feet were tapping and I was transported back to the 1960s/70s as I listened to Mu3ac's performance at the YMCA in Tewkesbury back in **November**. I hadn't known what to expect - would they be any good or would it be a matter of downing our drinks and a swift exit?

But we had a great time. If you ever danced to **Make me smile**, by Cockney Rebel, **Light my Fire** by The Doors or The Rolling Stones' **Jumping Jack Flash**, you'd have appreciated their show. And they were good! I'm now a fan!

It took a while for a few souls to venture onto the dance floor - but then there was no stopping folk keen to reprise their Rock n' Roll days!

My shoes were the grippy kind (Note to self - get some dancing shoes before their next gig in April!) so I contented myself with swaying around in my seat. In my mind I was 16 and back in the Blue Moon/Night Owl club in Cheltenham's High Street. (Our shoes had slippery leather soles back then.)

The spirit of the 60s stayed with me as we made our way home; snatches of music playing again in my head. So much so that, pulling my jumper over my head to get ready for bed, I expected to smell cigarette smoke! Now some things have got better since my 'salad days'.



Annual Report 2023 Val Hayward (Chair)

The past year has gone very quickly for me. It does not feel like 12 months since Alan Hazell vacated the chairman's position and I took over.

Of course, in December he fell back into the slot when he hosted our **December** meeting, or almost, and we celebrated Christmas with carols, cabaret and cake. This had been planned for the year before but Covid reared its ugly head again and it had to be postponed.

January saw a good many of us at Hatherley Manor for our annual festive lunch. This had been organised splendidly by a team led by Ann Lewis. It is hard work sorting through everyone's menu choices, seating arrangements and places on the coach, as I know only too well. The event was very successful for me as I persuaded Chris Larkin, who was sat at my table, to join us on the committee and a very useful member he has turned out to be.

In **February**, we were entertained by our very own Bishop's Cleeve Players and treated to readings from their collection of mishaps. One in particular, set in a chemist's shop, resulted in much laughter from the audience.

March was a very busy month for our u3a as we had been asked to host the Cotswold Link meeting. It was interesting to meet delegates from other u3as and bounce ideas off each other. Dr Tim Brain spoke to us at our Open Meeting on The Life and Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams whose music has enduring appeal as evidenced by the fact that his 'Lark Ascending' has consistently polled at No 1 on the Classic FM Hall of Fame. Also in March, the first of the new members meetings was held, since before Covid struck. Obviously some of these members were not so new any more but it was a chance for all to meet up and learn more on the running of their u3a.

In **April**, Margaret Collins gave us details of the workings inside Worcester Crown Court. She told of the innocent but more often the guilty who would use any means - for this read **lies** - to get off.

May was, of course, the King's Coronation and we celebrated with a tea party. Not one but two specially decorated cakes were needed and the afternoon finished with us singing the National Anthem (trying to remember after all this time that it was a King not a Queen) and followed by a rousing three cheers for Charles III.

June brought the postponed visit - due to a heat wave the previous year - of the National Chair, Liz Thackray. She was rather nervous she told me but settled down to answer some searching, predetermined questions from our

members. It was also the Street Fair in Bishop's Cleeve on the first Sunday in the month and we had a very successful day where 16 new members joined.

In **July**, Dr Paul Lutter spoke of his trek in the Himalayas. He had some beautiful pictures to show us from his walk for which he raised over £28,000 for the British Heart Foundation.

Our final Open Meeting to be held in Woodmancote Village Hall was in **August**, and the speaker was Stuart, a Farm School teacher on Farms for City Children. This turned out to be so interesting that we are hopeful of organising a trip to the farm some time next year, possibly to coincide with lambing time.

In **September**, we moved to the Tithe Barn in Bishop's Cleeve for our Open Meetings. Not a decision we took lightly as it meant changing the day and time for our meetings but I believe, after the first one, practically everyone was in favour of the move. Members living in Woodmancote were disappointed that the meeting was no longer on their doorstep but as we had a large number of members attend who had not been to an Open Meeting before, it rather proved a popular move. Of course, our speaker, Mike Jackson, explaining the ins and outs of producing the Antiques Roadshow may also have contributed to the numbers. He was a very relaxed speaker who involved the audience (and a now famous 'Little Brown Jug') - but also finally having a speaker system that worked meant the whole audience could hear his talk.

October saw the return of the Showcase where members could drop in to speak to group leaders, learn which groups were available or even start a new one with the help of our group coordinator, Rose Hawkins.

Those who help

Throughout the past year I have been helped enormously by the committee, some of whom were new to the job like me. Margaret Cleverley has risen to the task as secretary and Rose Hawkins as group coordinator. Ann Lewis stood down as a committee member in June with Monica Wragg taking over as Meeter and Greeter though she has no wish to be on the committee, and Jenny Mackelworth was replaced by Jenny Waller as Webmaster earlier in the year. We thank them both for their service to our u3a.

There are many others who provide services or simply help out when needed. Some I can name, like Joan Hall who seeks out speakers for our

Open Meetings. She tells me she loves doing it and I am sure we are all happy for her to continue in the role, and Stella Caney who minutes our committee meetings and is here to minute our AGM.

Others are members of RUMS (Really Useful Members) and they are just that. They help out wherever and whenever they can, putting up and taking down the gazebo for instance at the Street Fair as well as putting in time on the stand, giving lifts to people, helping with refreshments, the list is endless and we thank you. But we could still do with more RUMS volunteers; people who get satisfaction from helping the group in all sorts of practical ways. Remember, there is no obligation at all to attend any particular meeting or event and you can **always** say no. To find out more, Chris Larkin is the RUMS leader who will answer all your questions and there is a sign-up list at the back of the hall today.

Thanks to group leaders

Also, thanks to the group leaders who organise venues, speakers, trips out, and generally keep their group members feeling like a small, sometimes not so small, club within our u3a. We start off with a shared interest, be it books, gardening, walks, whatever but we make friends in these groups and that is very important. Our membership has increased over the year but we do not want to get so big that we cannot provide spaces in the groups for people to join. Of course we can always form a new group but that requires a new leader, someone to stand up and volunteer. We, the committee, are here to help, so please ask.

A self-help organisation

Finally we come to the committee itself. David Trengrove is standing down after four years and we wish him well. There cannot be a Bishop's Cleeve u3a without a Chair, (me), a Treasurer (Simon) and a Secretary (Margaret). Those three positions are sacrosanct and we need to have someone waiting in the wings (so to speak) to take over these roles. We are a self-help organisation, which means we rely on everyone to play their part.

We are looking for people to 'have a go'. People like you who will join the committee in a general role – some of whom will eventually become Chair, Treasurer or Secretary when the current post-holders leave.

We will ease you into the role and you will have a named person to buddy up with you until you know the ropes. You will attend committee meetings and get to know us all and the jobs we do. You will shadow us and will

receive from us all the support and training you need. We are a friendly and outgoing group from all sorts of backgrounds and we would love to meet anyone who is even vaguely interested to find out more about what we do.

So if you are interested and would like to know more, come and talk to me or any member of the committee after the official AGM, or email our secretary, Margaret, when you get home.

I know how much u3a means to me and to you all **but our u3a cannot survive without a functioning committee so please talk to us.** Thank you.

Group News

Rose Hawkins - Groups' Coordinator (01684 301668)

Following our successful Showcase Event in October, some of the groups had waiting lists attached to them. To enable more members to enjoy these full groups, we are in the process of setting up further groups in the new year. We have had plenty of interest, so Alan Hazell and I will set up some inaugural meetings in 2024 to help these members form new groups. We hope to set up: Play Reading 2, Drama Theatre, Scrabble 3, iPad Group, and Coffee & Chat 6.

If you have any ideas for new groups you would like to have in our u3a, please do get in touch, so we can invite members to join to form a new group.

Remember, our groups are all run by members for the benefit of members. To help spread the load, many groups share the responsibility of running it between them so that it is not all left to one person as group leader.

Open Meetings

We now meet at 2.30pm at the Tithe Barn, Bishop's Cleeve on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Free refreshments available after the talk.

If you're thinking of becoming a member of our u3a, you're welcome to visit us once before joining.

13 February - Sally, Village Clinic - Best Foot Forward

12 March - Dr Gill White – Katherine of Aragon

9 April - Dr Timothy Brain – Life & Works of George Frederick Handel

Groups with spaces

Note - not listed alphabetically. Dialling code is 01242 if not stated.

Pétanque

John Walker (321728)

November's meeting saw fourteen members play two matches side by side on a divided Bouledrome.

With good weather for the time of year, and the floods from last month subsided, members enjoyed keen competitive match play.

The Group had two new members attending their first play. With no previous experience they were soon playing along, as instruction and guidance is given as play progresses.

The group meets each month on the third Friday.



Social Cards

Rose Hawkins (01684 301668)

The Social Cards group enjoyed a Christmas celebration of mince pies, shortbread and chocolate bites, whilst playing a game of Plonk. After a



break for tea, we all gathered round one table to play Chase The Ace, which was enjoyed by everyone.

We now have a couple of spaces in this group. We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month at St Michaels Hall, so do get in touch via the website, or call me if you would like to join us.

Country Dancing

Sue Weir (673544)

Come and join us on the 2nd Monday of the month, 2 - 4 pm at Woodmancote Village Hall. We have spaces and you don't have to bring a partner.

French Conversation 1

David Cook (675027)

We have vacancies, and would warmly welcome new members, please get in touch. We meet on alternate Mondays from 2.30 - 4pm.

French Conversation 2

Gill Calderwood (701938)

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 3 - 4.30pm and have space for three more members.

Economics

Timothy Powell (676919)

We meet every 3 weeks on Wednesdays at 10.30am and still have spaces.

Patchwork and Quilting

Jenny Waller (07743 754264)

We are a small, friendly group who meet to discuss all things patchwork and quilting related and show what we have made. Projects this year have included a weather quilt and an applique farm quilt.

We recently welcomed a new member but we still have a couple of spaces. We meet on the first Friday at 10am.

Badges at Open Meetings

The 'New Member' badges available when you enter our Open Meetings are not only for those attending for the first time, but also for anyone fairly new who doesn't yet know many people or much about us and would be happy for people to talk to them.

Local History

Joan Hall (680575) Barbara Jordan (07833 781832)

November's meeting - Air base at Stoke Orchard - 1939 onwards.

Next time I travel to Tewkesbury via Tredington, I will observe Stoke Orchard with new eyes, thanks to a recent talk by Richard Chatham.

To set the scene, we learned of the rural farming background - of past delectable cider and Perry in particular. In days gone by, the beautiful church was a stopping off place for pilgrims en route for Santiago de Compostela. But the quiet village changed dramatically in World War II.

In 1941, an airfield was completed on 100 acres at Stoke Orchard, for a relief landing ground and for training pilots. The 'Elementary Flying Training School 10' started in September 1941, with 54 Tiger Moths. But this only lasted till July, 1942, when it transferred to other venues. Then, the 'Glider Training School No. 3' arrived, with Hotspur gliders. The trainees needed to have some basic flying training already, but how dangerous and difficult to pass the certification needed, if they survived that far! The gliders were the deadly silent weapons of war, with the element of surprise! For the Normandy invasion, gliders were responsible for airlifting almost a quarter of air supplies, troops and equipment behind enemy lines; after landing, the air crew joined their fighting colleagues and never saw their own planes again. Other operations included Burma, S. France, Arnhem and the Rhine. Casualties were very high, many gliders landing in the sea. Many died defending their country.

...silent weapons of war...

In Stoke Orchard, a community of 1000 gradually built up, including resident and daily incomers. On site were hangars, WAAF trainees, officers and other ranks all with accommodation, armory, admin, kitchen and dining hall for 500, workshops, a flight control centre, and water tanks.

Amy Johnson lived there from 1938 till 1941. As a trained pilot she had famously flown to Australia in a Gypsy Moth in 1930. As a member of Air Transport Auxiliary, she sadly drowned whilst delivering an aircraft in 1941.

After the war, Stoke Orchard reverted to agriculture, though some of the air base became The Coal Research Establishment, and remained until 1995. The Royal Observer Corps was present during the Cold War in the 1960s, and some small industries used the old buildings at times.

2011 saw re-development of the area with housing and the Amy Johnson Coffee Shop came about. Plaques were erected to celebrate war heroes, especially glider pilots.

Kay D



Local History's December meeting - Phil's Advent Calendar



Local History continued

We welcome new members and meet on the first Monday of the month at 2pm in Woodmancote Village Hall for talks. In the summer months, we have a programme of visits.

5 February - Malcolm Watkins - **The Birdlip Grave Group – 2000 years of Mystery**

4 March - John Dixon – **Healings Flour Mill, Tewkesbury**

1 April - Easter Monday - **NO MEETING**

Science & Technology

Alan Green (672964)

We meet on the first Thursday of each month in the large hall at Stoke Orchard Community Centre. We range across the full spectrum of science, technology, and engineering, including the economic and social impact. As well as talks and discussions, we have occasional visits, and take time to have a chat and refreshments.

In **February** we will hear from the entrepreneur behind the world's largest Vertical Farming unit, on an industrial estate outside Lydney. In a facility equivalent to 70 tennis courts, they grow herb and salad products under totally artificial, fully controlled conditions. Their Leaf brand products are now available in Tesco, I see. Is this the future of agriculture?

In March, we will pay a return visit to Spirax Sarco's R&D team in Cheltenham to learn how this industrial energy management company's market and products are being transformed by the move to Net Zero and carbon neutrality.

We signed up seven new members at the Showcase, but still have scope for a few more: please get in touch if you like the sound of what we do.

Make a New Year's resolution ...

...To reply to your leaders' emails. We all do it - the email says 'how about that date, shall we do that or please let me know,' and we don't know if we're free or want to do it, so we think, 'I'll reply later when I've decided' and then we forget to reply! Why not make a note to reply and put it somewhere prominent? Remember to check your 'Junk' email file too, sometimes u3a emails end up in there!

Chasing up members for replies tests the goodwill of those who work hard on our behalf to arrange things. Helping them is helping ourselves really.

Ramblers

Liz Neeves (678599)

Regrettably, the November ramble along the Isbourne Way had to be postponed due to the weather. The weather forecast was horrendous but annoyingly on the day it wasn't so bad! Therefore when the weather forecast for December's ramble on Cleeve Hill looked none too favourable, 18 members were determined to walk. Most of the ramble took place in heavy cloud with visibility down to 30 metres! The cloud eventually lifted towards the end of the walk giving us the familiar views of Winchcombe to the east and the Malvern Hills and beyond to the west. Needless to say, coffee and lunch at Flynn's on the Hill at the Golf Club that day was especially enjoyable!



Clovis and Vi - Environmental Considerations for 2024 by GLF

<p>Well I never... We cats are the most invasive species in the world...fancy that!!</p> 	<p>This says we eat more than 2000 species... Better not let Vi see this!</p> 	<p>Oh dear, Clovis, the UKCEH says we humans have wiped out 1400 bird species...!</p> <p>OOOH!!!</p> 	<p>Well well - that certainly puts a new light on the matter.</p>  <p>Let's invade next door's garden!</p> <p>GLF 2024-1</p>
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Meditation

Marie Brain (674121 or 07711530131)

All active members report the benefits that regular meditation brings and have become aware of the cumulative effects.

We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 2.30pm at my house for group meditation and reviews.

We welcome new members, either active meditators or anyone interested who would like to do the six-week individual training course with me.

Please call for more information or to book training sessions.

Singing for Fun

Frances Yiend (522241)

We always have vacancies and are happy to welcome more members. We meet on the 2nd Friday of the month at 10.30 at the Methodist Church Hall.

General History

Keith Woodman (679301) and **Madeline Murkett** (696531)

We meet in the small hall at Woodmancote Village Hall at 2pm on the 4th Wednesday of the month - new members are very welcome.

24 January - Joseph Grimaldi: Greatest of all English Clowns, Keith Woodman

November's meeting

Venice; the History of how a declining former great power adapted to change - Neville Jackson

Neville described Venice from Roman times through its rise as a major power, with wealthy merchant families trading silk and spices from India and beyond. But restrictive political control and changing global trade patterns brought about a long, gradual decline. The Republic of Venice ended with Napoleon who ordered the destruction of the Doge's Golden Barge. French and Austrian control then prevailed until Venice became part of the kingdom of Italy in 1866. Today Venice, protected by flood barriers, remains a prominent cultural and political venue. Italy, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia as EU euro members all strengthen the economy of Venice and its region. Venice continues to be a city of world-wide significance.

Thomas Crockford, Gambling Entrepreneur - Keith Woodman

Keith related how Thomas Crockford rose from a humble background to the ranks of the fabulously rich. His gentlemen's club - Crockford's - was in St. James, where illegal gambling drew in young, bored, wealthy aristocrats who ran up phenomenal debts, sometimes losing the family fortune. Despite the satire of contemporary cartoonists, Crockford managed to evade prosecution and retired to enjoy the fruits of his crooked dealings.

We have space for new members – a warm welcome awaits you!

Golf Buddies

Melvyn Harris (672449)

The group is open to all, and has spaces, so please [contact me via the website.](#)

Family History

Wendy Stow (01242 701303)

We meet on the 4th Friday of the month and could take one or two more.

Luncheons

Mary Moore (693793 and 07970 685655) **Monica Wragg** (676647 and 07777612613)

Thursday **25 January** - Simpsons Fish and Chips, 75 Priors Road, Cheltenham, GL52 5AL, phone 01242 521964.

Thursday **29 February** - The Star Inn, Elmley Road, Ashton Under Hill, Evesham, WR11 7SN, phone 01386 881325.

Thursday **28 March** - Bombay & Co, 5 Portland Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NZ, phone 01242 250800.

As our group is very fluid there are spaces although at times it may be necessary to operate a 'first come first served' basis.

Sharing Poetry

Marguerite Habgood (678973)

Enjoying mince pies as we considered poetry in December, we paused to discuss **A Soldier's Silent Night** by James Schmidt, a very different take on Christmas written by a Marine in 1986. A poem by the recently deceased Benjamin Zephaniah - **Christmas has been shot** - proved to be a hard-hitting, angry poem about the troubles in Israel last century so we cheered ourselves up with **O Christmas Tree** by C C Naspinski, a light-hearted poem about putting up the Christmas tree: 'I used to love to put you up, Now it's a dreaded duty.' resonated with some of us!

Groups news

Yoga Group

Audrey Cooper (07949941608)

The yoga groups continue to attract new members and both groups are full with a waiting list. In January, we change venue, day and time:

Yoga will be on the 2nd Wednesday of each month as from 10 January. Chair-based is at 2pm and Floor-based at 3.15pm in the main hall of St. Michael's centre.

Book Group 1

Lyn McCaffrey (07464 405595)

We meet at St Michael's Centre on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 2pm and at the moment have no vacancies.

We've just had our pre-Christmas jollity with drinks, snacks and quizzes - with Andy and Vi coming up trumps, blitzing the opposition in Andy's case and Vi winning by a nose!

Over the Christmas season, we'll be looking at **Skipping Christmas** by John Grisham about a couple who decide to escape the frenzy that seems to engulf us all. This decision brings down the wrath of the neighbours who are hell bent on being the best decorated street. A funny, light-hearted look at the lengths the neighbours go to in order to make the couple fall into line.

Book Group 2

Stella Caney (676143)

In November, we read **I am, I am, I am** by Maggie O'Farrell. It was certainly a thought-provoking novel, and the last couple of chapters dealing with her condition, and her daughter's, were horrific to read about. However, we thought maybe some of the 'near death experiences' were perhaps just part of life, or self-inflicted!

December saw us reading **One August Night** by Victoria Hislop. This was a sequel to **The Island**, about the leper colony on Spinalonga island off Crete. Although interesting to raise the question of what would happen once the cure had been found (in 1957) and the people brought back into their families, we felt the sequel was not up to the standard of the first novel.

Table Tennis

June Hall (675711) Philip Watson (673267)

Good fun was on the menu at our Christmas meal at The Apple Tree, ably organised by Nick and Gerry with Marjorie providing the menu slips.

The quiz, set by John, exercised our brains and was the cause of many whispered conflabs between partners whilst awaiting our desserts. An event enjoyed by all. Table Tennis has a waiting list at present.



Short Story Reading Group

Alan Bulley (677824)

We have continued reading selected short stories from the Oxford anthology, including stories by Virginia Woolf, Evelyn Waugh, H E Bates, Elizabeth Taylor and Penelope Fitzgerald. It's fair to say that our opinions of these were not always unanimous. Sorry, we have no vacancies at present.

Poetry 1

Kay Duck (672474)

In our meeting in November, we enjoyed looking at **The Beat Poets** and **Liverpool poets**. We looked at work by Bob Kaufman, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and the Liverpool poets Brian Patten, Roger McGough and Adrien Henri.

In December, we enjoyed a hosted winter wonderland in Elmstone Hardwick, where we indulged in festive fare - oh, and looked at poetry too. Our theme was **'Time'** and the poems chosen comprised works by Thomas Hood, WH Davies, WH Auden, Carol Ann Duffy and Miriam Brown. What a great way to end the poetry year! This time last year there had been a fall of snow, but the weather behaved well this time, although it looked less picturesque.

At this time the group is full - and meets earlier now, as it's on the same day as the monthly meeting.

Technology Discussion Group

Brian Frodsham (676260) **David Owen** (699797)

Our group has recently acquired a new member, so is now full. We continue to have animated discussions on a wide variety of topics such as energy efficiencies, 3D printing, space flights, solar power and nuclear fusion. We are continually learning from each other in the best traditions of the u3a.

Photographs are taken at Bishop's Cleeve u3a activities for use on our website and other publicity.

At general u3a events such as Open Days, Open Meetings, visits, celebrations etc, you should tell the photographer or organiser if you do not wish to be included and move away whilst photographs are being taken.

Tell the Beacon Administrator and group leader if you do not wish to be included in your group's photographs.

Book Group 4 - 'The Borrowers'

Marguerite Habgood (678973)



Some of us met up at Webbs to celebrate Christmas with coffee, cake and conversation - in November! Such busy lives we lead!

Book Group 5

Mel Harris (672449)

In November, a couple of members were not available, but the rest of us met to discuss **The Salt Path** by Raynor Winn. The book is an account of the



real-life journey undertaken by Raynor and her husband Moth, who days after hearing Moth was terminally ill, and having lost their home and livelihood, decided to walk the 630-mile South West Coast Path from Minehead to Poole. We all enjoyed the book and some of the group have also read further books that Raynor has subsequently written.

By way of contrast, we are currently reading **The Man Who Died Twice** by Richard Osman. We'll be discussing this at our meeting in December, when we'll also be taking the opportunity to celebrate Book Circle 5 having been running for three years. It doesn't seem that long since the group's inception, when we first got together on Zoom in October 2020. It wasn't until June 2021 that we had our first face-to-face meeting. But looking back at my records, I can see we've read a wide range of different genres of book since those early days. Thanks to everyone's input, we have a selection of autobiographies, thrillers and novels coming up in our choices for the next few months.

Gardening

Janet Davis (674068)

The planter in Cleeve is planted up, all ready for winter and a good colourful spring.

We celebrated Christmas with a gathering in Webb's enjoying coffee and cake. We also planned next year, so we're all ready to go now. It has been quiet in our gardens for the last couple of months. The weather is so variable with plenty of rain again!

Wishing you all good gardening in 2024.

Music Appreciation

Stella Caney (676143)

In November, we listened to **music by Vaughan Williams** - a popular composer with a local connection, given that he was born in Down Ampney (in 1872). As musical editor of The English Hymnal he composed several hymns that are now world-wide favourites (**For all the Saints** and **Come down O love Divine**).

We had a seasonal theme in December, with Christmas oratorios by different composers, and the **Nutcracker suite** by Tchaikovsky (having refreshed our memories regarding the background story to the latter).

What do you learn at Coffee and Chat Groups?

Did you know, our u3a is a registered charity for ‘the advancement of education, and in particular the education of older people...’?

Which got me thinking about Coffee and Chat groups. Wikipedia tells us that in Oxford, in 1650, coffee houses were known as penny universities. They charged a penny admission for access to newspapers and conversation with the clientele who actively pursued advances in human knowledge, offering an alternative to structured academic earning. Sounds a bit like the u3a! I wondered about learning in our Coffee and Chat groups. So I asked. Here’s one group’s reply to my question:

‘We all enjoy a walk round Pittville Park every 2 weeks and have delighted in watching the cygnets grow to full size. The park is always beautiful through each season and we spend time on our walks discussing things we have enjoyed doing since we last met.

We often offer support to each other with good ideas about the best places to shop or good places to visit. We are always learning new things from each other, about our phones, or Facebook, or new technology that will impact on us.

Recently we have chatted about the different traditions that we all have at Christmas, as each family celebrates this in a different way. We often help each other out with suggestions about plants for our gardens and problems around the house that need fixing, with recommendations of local businesses we have used.’

So, lots of knowledge transfer about things that enrich our lives, including current technology, nature study, gardening, local knowledge and practical home maintenance (a dying art).

Do tell me about your Coffee and Chat group, what interesting things have you learnt? - email me at: **clarion@cleve-u3a.org.uk**

Melodies make money for Maggie’s

Mike Reynolds, of Mu3ac, tells us:

We made £207 for Maggie’s Cancer Care, Cheltenham from our performance at Tewkesbury’s YMCA in November.

This was the first time we had played there, as well as to a public audience. All the previous gigs have been mostly friends and family ticketed affairs.

Our next gig is 27 April, at the Gupshill Manor.

Three cheers...

...for our leaders! I can spot three people's names in Clarion No 1 who are still leading after 16 years. Naturally, most leaders have changed since then - you take a turn and hope that someone will take their turn when the time comes, so that groups continue or new groups form and our u3a will always be there for us all to enjoy and continue to **live, laugh and learn.**

Do email me your news and photos **by 22 February** for the next Clarion:

clarion@cleeve-u3a.org.uk, or use the website: www.cleeve-u3a.org.uk

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