

CLEEVE CLARION

Bishop's Cleeve u3a

No. 101

13 March – 14 May 2024



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

14 May - Behind the
Scenes at a West
Wales Guest House

Over the hurdle! - See
page 17

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

Chairman's Clarion Call

Val Hayward

Isn't it good to look around and see snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils waving their heads in the March winds and know that spring is just around the corner? I cannot wait to get into my garden and get planting but in the meantime trips around my local garden centres fill me with enthusiasm for the year ahead. I hope the many gardeners amongst you feel the same.

Following the yearly membership renewal in December we had 429 members sign up for another year and then five new members joined in January, so I think you will agree that we are a thriving u3a. Our

We are looking for someone new to step forward to arrange [the Festive Lunch] ... so if you feel you are up to the challenge, please speak up.

two main recruiting drives are in June, at the Bishop's Cleeve Street Fair and in October when our Open Meeting is given over to the annual Showcase event. New members often join at these, but do remember that new members are welcome any time and if you have a friend or neighbour who would like to try us out, they can come along to an Open Meeting or a group to see what we do. Joan Hall has booked a wide range of speakers to keep us entertained over the coming months, all educational and some very funny and we hope to have a cream tea in August to add to the mix. In the meantime, the list of groups continues to expand with new ones being added. So please do check what is available online or with Rose Hawkins, our group coordinator, at the Open Meetings.

Finally, I would like to thank Maureen and Alan Hazell for all their hard work arranging the Festive lunch in January. Alan reported a few hiccups on the day but in general a "good time was had by all". We are looking for someone new to step forward to arrange this for another year, so if you feel you are up to the challenge, please speak up. If help is needed, I promise you will not be on your own and it always feels good to give something back. We are, after all, a self help organisation.

Artificial Intelligence - Our Brave New World?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a hot topic at the moment. Many of us are both interested in the benefits it might bring but also concerned about the unknown risks to our privacy and security and the spread of fake news if we just accept AI mindlessly.

The Third Age Trust has already set up an interest group with articles written by expert members. **On 7 March, there is a meeting online** led by Barry Hayward to explore the world of AI and answer members' questions. For details follow the link:

[Artificial Intelligence News Tickets, Thu, Mar 7, 2024 at 3:30 PM | Eventbrite](#)

A lot closer to home, Cotswold Link is holding its annual Special Interest Day on Tuesday, 4 June at the Pavilion, Hatherley Lane, Cheltenham.

The subject is 'Our Brave New World' and three expert speakers will talk about Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security and our interface with computers using Human Factors. The cost is £32 per person to include parking, access to all lectures, and lunch. You will find more details on the Cotswold Link website: [COTSWOLD LINK Special Interest Day \(u3asites.org.uk\)](https://u3asites.org.uk) Book soon - tickets are selling fast!

Whether you already know a lot about AI or are an absolute beginner like me, this should prove to be a wonderful opportunity to listen and then put questions to three experts in the field.

Margaret Cleverley, Secretary

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.

Festive Lunch '24

The big question was – would the cost of living crisis mean an end to our Annual Festive Lunch? The answer turned out to be a resounding “No!”

Sixty six members paid up for the privilege of dressing up, in many cases donning their best bling, and enjoying an increasingly rare opportunity to go semi-formal for a couple of hours. The bar area where welcome drinks were served was ideal for an initial bout of socialising, prior to moving to our allotted tables.

Since the dreadful floods of December 2017 enforced a rearrangement, it has become our u3a's tradition to hold this event in January, which seems to add to the atmosphere of relaxed jollity. Certainly, folk made the most of the non-cracking crackers, the usual terrible jokes, and at one point, the anarchic release of several balloons into the room all at once, adding a somewhat zany feel to the occasion (no one was injured!). The good food was efficiently served by the cheerful young staff, there were many convivial conversations with friends old and new, the Chair's speech hit just the right note – a good time was had!

Would you wish to attend such a lunch ever again? Are you tempted to do so even though you didn't this year? We hope so. Start saving your pennies now – if one is arranged, you won't need all that many pennies for more of the same next year!

Open Meetings

We 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.

12 March - Dr Gillian White – Katherine of Aragon

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

14 May - Behind the Scenes of a West Wales Guest House - by a previous B & B owner

Best Foot Forward

Sally - Bishop's Cleeve Village Clinic

We walk around 115,000 miles in a lifetime – that's four times round the world - and, on average, women walk more miles per day than men!

This was just one of the things we learnt at February's Open Meeting. Our

speaker, Sally, had got into podiatry by chance, she told us. After A-levels, a friend asked her to accompany her to an interview for the podiatry course at the London Foot Hospital. Sally joined in with the tour of the hospital and talks, found it really interesting and left clutching an application form. Her friend didn't do podiatry in the end!

Qualifying as a podiatrist after the 3-year medical degree, Sally worked initially in the NHS, but, with little chance of career progression, she bought into a private practice, with a single room at Badhams. In 2000, with business increasing, she found premises at Tarlings Yard and her sister, moving away

Sally ... left clutching an application form.

from NHS physiotherapy, joined her. They now have four podiatrists, four physiotherapists, a foot health practitioner and a massage therapist.

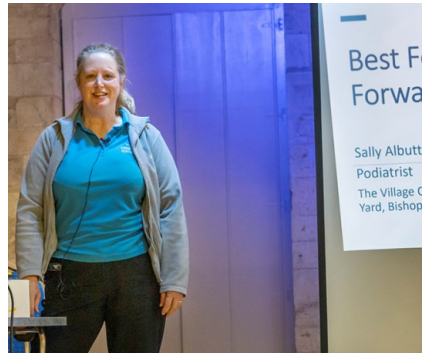
Sally had lots of good advice:

Rinse between your toes before leaving the shower - your feet have been standing in the dirty water! We lose half a pint of water per day through the 250,000 sweat glands in the foot. Dry well between the toes. Research showed that those using towels rather than air drying had fewer bacteria and fungi on their skin. Damp skin can split and allow in infection.

Cut nails straight across, or file them down. Filing nails down has to be done more frequently than cutting - once or twice a week. Podiatrists can shape the nails because they are able to ensure there are no sharp bits left.

Exercise and strengthen your foot. We were invited to remove shoes and socks and, keeping our big toe on the floor, lift the other toes. We then tried keeping our little toes on the floor and lifting the big toe - those of us wearing tights (or possibly holey socks), just watched!

Sally finished by explaining that NHS podiatrists no longer do routine care, only treating the high-risk foot. Foot Health practitioners are trained to do the more routine foot care and private podiatrists tackle more complex work.



Change is Afoot at the Third Age Trust

From now until April, the Third Age Trust (TAT) – u3a's umbrella body - is consulting on a radical new structure. It follows the concerns of many members that TAT has become too remote and doesn't adequately represent its members' views.

This is your chance to have your say and potentially influence the future of the u3a.

Members like you and me elect the Trustees who sit on the Board of TAT and the Regional Links who represent us more locally. Now TAT is proposing that a smaller Board (still all members, voted in by members) will be responsible for the governance (that is the financial and legal obligations) of the Trust. A representative Council of members elected by u3as will deal with matters of real day-to-day interest to us all, and communicate directly with the Board.

Since the Third Age Trust was set up, regulation of all charities by the Charity Commission has increased exponentially and the changes to the way u3a is governed will, hopefully, provide a solution to efficiently providing oversight and ensure compliance with charity and company law.

Please do go to the TAT website and read the reasons why change is necessary and details of the proposals: [u3a - Fit for the Future](#).

If you don't have a computer, please let me know if you would like a paper copy.

The consultation is open till April. Please don't waste this opportunity to have your say.

Margaret Cleverley, Secretary

Greetings to our new members...

Tim Oldham, Judi Walker, Janet Horton, Avril and Tim Badham, Barbara and Ronald Stevens, Jane Milward, Barry Minett-Smith, Phillipa Jones, Susan Bye and Jean Oliver. Welcome to you all.

Mu3ac's Annual Charity Gig an evening of music and dancing

Blues and Rock and Roll



Saturday, 27 April

Doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start by the supporting ukulele group 'The Flukes', which includes two Mu3ac members.

Function Room, Gupshill Manor, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury, GL20 5SY.

Full bar.

Tickets on the door £7.50 or £5 in advance - available from band members or email mu3ac2021@virginmedia.com

Supporting Maggie's Cancer Care

100 and counting - thank you

At February's Open Meeting, the editor received the gift of a commemorative mug in recognition of Clarion reaching its 100th edition.

Thanks go to previous editors and to all those who help or have helped over the years, not forgetting the contributors - what a team!



Clovis and Vi - Spring is here again

by GLF





Hidden crucks - update

It is almost a year since the erstwhile u3a archaeology group initiated the project to date the timber-framed houses in Bishop's Cleeve. It began with the group contacting the Gloucestershire Building Recording Group to enquire about the possibility of conducting a project for dating by using

dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) in order to produce an information sheet for villagers and visitors to enhance their understanding of the village. This had already happened in Gloucester, Newent and Tewkesbury. I took Andy Moir, the group's expert, around the village and not only was he very enthusiastic about the project but he was able to secure grants so that the project could be carried out with no cost to the buildings' occupiers. The first building to be examined was the Tithe Barn and members of the u3a might remember the launch meeting for the project, held in the barn in July, when Andy was able to announce the barn had been built in 1382, nearly a century before its earliest documentary record.

After the successful launch we contacted the occupiers of over twenty buildings in the village and received a positive response from nearly everyone and so investigations began in October. Very soon we came up against two unforeseen problems. Firstly there were far fewer crucks than we had thought; we have only found them in four buildings. Secondly, most of the timber is elm, which can't be tree-ring dated and so we have had to rely on stylistic features, which can bring an approximate date to within fifty years.

We have now examined a large enough number of buildings to start writing the reports. Andy Moir is writing technical reports on each building and I am investigating the archives to build a background for the project. We will produce a double-sided A4 sheet which will be made available in the village which will inform and guide people around the village. Some time in late April or May we intend to hold another open evening in the Tithe Barn to present our findings. We extend a special invitation to u3a members and will publish the details of the meeting in good time.

David Aldred - Author, Local Historian and local resident

Be Aware

There have been a number of scam emails recently involving the email addresses of our members.

If you get an email from someone you know, but it doesn't address you by name and just says something general like 'Can you help please' or 'Let me know if you get this' or 'Trust you're well. Did you get my last email?' or 'Can I ask a quick favour of you?'

These are scams and you should delete them.

Your email has **not** been hacked, but if you reply you are talking to a scammer who may try to get your details or money.

If you know the supposed sender well and have their phone number, you could phone them to find out if they have emailed you or if they know that their email address has been hacked.

If you have been hacked and aren't sure what to do, you can contact our treasurer, Simon Waller for advice.

How is an email account hacked?

Often by the owner of the account clicking on a link to a website or in a website or by opening an email attachment that downloads malicious code or extracts information from them.

Don't click on links or open attachments in emails from people you don't know, or from organisations emailing you out of the blue - especially if they don't use your name. They may not be who they pretend to be.

Advice on recognising dodgy emails and more is on the [Government Stop! Think Fraud campaign website](#).

Make sure your phone/tablet/computer has the latest security protection updates. Read the [advice on the Fraud campaign page](#).

Never use the same password on multiple websites.

Group News

Rose Hawkins - Groups' Coordinator (01684 301668)

Two new groups have been set up recently and I would like to thank the new group leaders for taking on their new roles and to Alan Hazell for his help in this process.

Play Reading 2 is being led by Gill Roberts, with Richard Robey as Drama Coordinator. They will be meeting on the 4th Monday of each month, starting on Monday, 26 February, between 1.30 and 4.30pm at St Michael's Centre.

Scrabble 3 is being led by Andy Mellor, meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month beginning on 14 March in members' houses.

We hope to get **Coffee and Chat 6** up and running soon with a meeting on 26 February to organise this.

Alan Hazell is helping to set up an **iPad group** with a meeting on 27 February.

Gerry Jones has a meeting on 21 February where it is hoped to set up a **drama/theatre group**.

Some of our larger groups are run by several members of the group to help spread the load and share the responsibility of running it between them so that its not all left to one person as group leader.

Groups with spaces

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

Drama Group

Gerry Jones (07823 883 203)

I'm starting up a new drama group, and it's so new we haven't decided what we are going to perform yet. It could be old fashioned music hall, with skits and sketches or it could be a one or two act play, or even a bit of Shakespeare or a Brian Rix type farce.

If you are interested in joining, please contact me on 07823 883 203.

Cinema Group

Ann King (698497)

Our activities were curtailed at the start of the year with the devastating news that films were no longer being shown at The Roses Theatre due to the breakdown of the projector and financial insecurity. We considered alternatives in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Evesham but there was no great enthusiasm, as The Roses was our 'go to' venue and we wondered whether the Group would continue.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, the short term future of the cinema was assured in early February when an interim server was made available. A limited programme of films is being shown and several members went to see **One Life** which tells the story of Nicholas Winton who rescued 669 mostly Jewish children, from Germany in the late 1930's. An emotional, difficult to watch film which evoked comments such as, "absolutely fantastic," "heartbreaking but glad I went to see it," and, as often happens in the group, there was discussion around what constitutes a good film?

We have unlimited vacancies and are always pleased to welcome new members.

Art - Painting and Drawing

Rosemary Pullin (321983)

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month from 2 - 4pm at Woodmancote Small Village Hall and **now have spaces.**

Short Story Reading Group

Alan Bulley (677824)

We now have two vacancies, so if you are keen readers but would like to try something new, please get in touch.

Working our way through the Oxford anthology we have continued to discuss stories by a variety of authors, including Evelyn Waugh, H E Bates, Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling and Rose Tremain. In our estimation, most of the authors' stories were excellent, but it is fair to say that, surprisingly, there was little enthusiasm for Dickens's 'The Haunted House'.

Book Group 2

Stella Caney (676143)

We meet on the 3rd Thursday and have space for one more.

In January we read **The Four Winds** by Kristin Hannah. This was a well-written book, but quite hard to read due to the subject, but we all felt pleased that we had learnt something about the particular period in American history. The story was set during the Thirties' depression, and takes place in the Great Plains - which at the time became the Dust Bowl, the climate forced successful farmers out of business, and without food or livestock, thousands had no option but to move to California. But these 'immigrants' were not generally treated well by the people who already lived there. The heroine of the novel is a woman who has to take her children West - having already had some grim episodes in her early life. But it is a memorable book, and gave rise to a good discussion in our group.

In February we read Kate Atkins' first novel, **Behind the Scenes at the Museum**. This was not about a museum, but rather the story of three generations of one family growing up in York. The main character was 'born' probably in the same decade as most of us, so interesting to think back on how life was then, and some of the episodes in their lives like the Coronation Party in 1953 caused some amusement. But we all decided it would have been improved by a Family Tree - a lot of characters from different generations appeared in successive chapters, so holding the storylines of the various people in mind was a bit of a challenge.

Local Walks

Ros Flaxman (674284)

After 15 years leading the Local Walks group, Sheila is now stepping back from the role. Since 2008 she has been on the corner of Millham Road and Station Road every other Friday at 2pm waiting to take us on a local ramble. Sometimes over to Gotherington, often along the many paths that criss-cross the slopes of Cleeve Hill, sometimes up to Cleeve Hill itself and, once a year, a marathon to see the bluebells in Queens Wood. Thank you Sheila.

We're hoping to continue the group, with members taking more of a lead when Sheila is not available. We will email the group every two weeks to let everyone know the details for that week.

Walks will continue to be between 3 – 4 miles (2 to 2.5 hours) and include gradients and stiles. Paths can be muddy; sturdy footwear is recommended.

Country Dancing

Sue Weir (673544)

Come and join us on the 2nd Monday of the month, 2 - 4 pm at Woodmancote Village Hall.

Our January meeting was a New Year Celebration event. We enjoyed a glass of fizz and some seasonal refreshments during the afternoon, with some of the group displaying a variety of very



interesting dance moves after the mid-session drink!

We still have a few places available in our group should anyone like to join with us in an afternoon of fun and

exercise - you don't have to bring a partner. The dances are very easy to follow and do not require a huge degree of fitness.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 11 March.



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.

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.

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.

Local History

Joan Hall (680575) **Barbara Jordan** (07833 781832)

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.

1 April - Easter Monday - NO MEETING

6 May - Visit to The Old Prison, Northleach

February's meeting - A Two-Millennium Mystery – The Birdlip Grave Group

Malcolm Watkins, described the 1st century Iron-Age Celtic items which can be viewed at Gloucester Museum.

When three skeletons, together with grave goods were found near Birdlip in 1879, John Bellows – a printer of Gloucester - was soon involved. (Bellows became the founder of Gloucestershire archaeology when he discovered part of the Roman Wall of Gloucester when extending his Eastgate premises.)

Bellows described three people buried head to toe in a grave lined and covered with stone slabs – known as a Cist burial. He said that the finds were all with the central female skeleton, but we do not know their exact location. The whereabouts of the skeletons is not known either; at the time skeletons were often sent to the Royal College of Surgeons in London for their collection - wartime bombing destroyed the collection and records.

A large bronze bowl was inverted over the skull of the central skeleton - we do not know why – causing green staining to the skull, Bellows reported.

A second, smaller bowl has a small hole deliberately bored into the bottom and both bowls contain cut marks. A bronze handle, shaped like a giraffe, may have been a knife, as rust suggests an iron blade. Malcolm postulated that these may have been used in magical ceremonies - inspecting entrails maybe?

An amber and black shale necklace with a pyrophyllite stone was a sign of the wealth of the owner. Modern testing showed Chinese pyrophyllite to be the best match – a possibility, as China did import silk into the Roman world.

Could this be a magic mirror?

The most impressive of the finds is a bronze mirror decorated with a flowing Celtic pattern and red-enamelling on the handle plates. Could this be a [magic mirror](#)?

Opinion is divided on whether the skull on display is actually female. It may not even belong with these finds. It was acquired in 1928 as a 'skull from Crickley' from Dr Cook's home. It is known that he worked on a 'very perfect specimen [skeleton]' from Crickley Hill. The green stain noted by Bellows is not visible, though it should not have faded if it was caused by the copper salts in the bronze bowl. Flakes of green paint were present.

Are these the grave goods of an wealthy woman keen on her appearance or, as Malcolm suggested because many could have magical properties, might they have belonged to a Shaman. We shall never know!

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.

We had hoped to visit Spirax Sarco's R&D department in Cheltenham in March, but the project that we hoped to focus on has hit some problems and slipped (as projects often do), so we have deferred the visit until later in the year. Fortunately, Simon Waller stepped into the breach to spread some light on **the future of the 5G mobile upgrade and the Internet of Things.**

In April, Tony Pawley and Lloyd Silverthorne will look to the past and speak about the **evolution of engineering over the decades at the BBC**, including their training and engineering department at Wood Norton, near Evesham. Tony's dad worked there (and wrote the book), and later Lloyd followed suit: a lot happened over that period, so their perspective should be very interesting.

I have a couple of irons in the fire for May, but it is not yet clear which will glow brightest: I am sure that you will enjoy it, however!

Our membership continues to creep upwards, but we still have scope for a few more: please get in touch if you like the sound of what we do.

Economics

Timothy Powell (676919)

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

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.

Ramblers

Liz Neeves (678599)

The weather is having an increasing effect on our rambles. In 2023 we had to cancel or postpone rambles due to high temperatures, very heavy rain and increased mud! We thought we had played it safe for January by choosing a walk around Pittville Park and along the Honeybourne Line but due to the extremely cold weather and the risk of falls on icy surfaces, we had to postpone the walk! However, we enjoyed the leisurely stroll a week later followed by coffee at the Heritage Deco Café at the Pump Room. Our Guiting Power ramble in February was not without incident. When the recce took place three days before, conditions were very good along the former drovers' trails and quiet lanes, and even along the Guiting Stream valley. Heavy rain for two days before the ramble increased the mud but did not cause us any serious problems. However, we had promised no stiles but in the first mile we encountered a fallen tree blocking the path - see front cover! Fortunately, everyone managed to climb or crawl over it! We were rewarded at the end of the ramble with a very enjoyable lunch at The Farmer's Arms.



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.

The topic in January was: **Joseph Grimaldi, the greatest of all English clowns**

An illustrated talk by Keith Woodman, this provided insights into the novel subject of Regency popular entertainment.

Born as a 4th generation clown, Grimaldi rose, through a combination of talent, sheer hard work and commitment, to become the darling of the Regency 'patent' theatres of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. However, he died in poverty, a man broken in mind and body, having made bad business decisions throughout his career and depended on advisors who let him down or cheated him.

Luncheons

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

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

Thursday, **25 April** - La Vecchia Bianca, 35 Church Road, Bishop's Cleeve, GL52 8NE, phone 01242 708401.

Thursday, **30 May** - The Beehive, 1 - 3 Montpellier Villas, Cheltenham, GL50 2XE, phone 01242 702270.

Thursday, **27 June** - The Hollow Bottom, Guiting Power, Cheltenham, GL54 5UX, phone 01451 539890.

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

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.

Sharing Poetry

Marguerite Habgood (678973)

Two poems were very on-topic for this month - **There will come soft rain** by Sara Teasdale and **The Rainy Day** by Longfellow! We had a spot of love with **Down by the Salley Gardens** by Yeats, and a helping of humour with **Father William** by Lewis Carroll and **Dustmen** by Michael Rosen. Members provided the discussion, reminiscences, camaraderie, coffee and biscuits!

Groups news

Yoga Group

Audrey Cooper (07949941608)

The yoga groups continue to be popular and are well attended. Both groups are full with waiting lists.

Book Group 1

Lyn McCaffrey (07464 405595)

We meet in the Quiet Room at St Michael's Centre at 2.00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month and at the moment have no vacancies.

This month we read **Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow** by Gabrielle Zevin. The main characters are Sam, Sadie and Marx who each follow their own path. The novel is part coming-of-age story, part love letter to the video game industry and part exploration of the enduring power of friendship, and takes its title from the famous soliloquy from Macbeth:

"What is a game?" Marx said "It's Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow. It's the possibility of infinite rebirth, infinite redemption. The idea that if you keep playing you could win. No loss is permanent because nothing is permanent, ever."

Next month we'll be heading to the Middle East following the career of Gertrude Bell.

Book Group 3 - Bookworms

Ros Flaxman (674284)

We are still meeting monthly, normally in Lowry's cafe. In December, when we found ourselves standing in the cold outside an unexpectedly-closed cafe, we went to the pub instead and enjoyed discussing our book of the month over mulled wine or coffee. We also had an excellent Christmas lunch at the Old Courthouse in Cheltenham earlier that month.

The books we've read and discussed in the last few months have been pretty varied. They include Colm Toibin's **The Magician**, which is about Thomas Mann; **Dear Mrs. Bird** by Amanda-Jane Pearce (a much easier read, about an agony aunt living through WW2); Sebastian Faulks' **Paris Echo**; and **Home Fire** by Kamila Shamsie. Most of the group felt 'Paris Echo' was not Faulks' best, and tended to agree with the reviewer who said "This is a puzzling novel, not entirely successful in its voices and devices, but brimming with Faulks's deep affection for Paris,". As for 'Home Fire', we'll be discussing it at our next meeting. It's a reworking of the Greek tragedy Antigone, this time based on the members of a Pakistani family living in London and the disasters that befall them. It's not enjoyable, but it's definitely thought-provoking...

Book Group 5

Mel Harris (672449)

At our December get-together, when we celebrated the group having been running for three years with cake and mulled wine, we discussed The Man Who Died Twice by Richard Osman. Everyone enjoyed it, to a greater or lesser extent, and some thought it was better than Richard's first **Thursday Murder Club** book, which we read for our January 2023 meeting. I was very tempted to read the book again to see if it was possible to spot the clues to 'whodunnit' ..

However, life moves on and there was a new book to start reading - **Old Rage** by Sheila Hancock - which we discussed at our meeting in January. Our group very rarely finds books we all agree on, and this was no exception. There were mixed feelings about this latest from Sheila - but differences of opinions always make for more interesting discussions!

By way of contrast, we are currently reading **Slow Horses** by Mick Herron - a spy thriller, which we will be discussing at our February meeting.



Gardening

Janet Davis (674068)

Well, what a couple of months - so much rain!

My garden is squelchy to say the least. However, spring seems to have arrived out of nowhere so it does stir the juices. Flowers in bloom everywhere - daffodils galore, croci, hyacinths, hellebores and trees in blossom too! Now's the time to get busy - mulching, weeding, pruning and sowing seeds.

No excuses now and much to look forward to.

Arts and Crafts 1

Pam Levermore (678276)

Following our December meeting we had an enjoyable lunch at The Pheasant after making felt Christmas decorations. We made a card with 'Husking' in January, which is a form of quilling without the

need for a quilling tool. We will be making a Panda using needle felting in

February. Later in the year we will be creating a picture using the technique of collage with paper and material. If I am successful in my test piece, we will be decorating a box with shells.



Art Appreciation

Brenda Bentley (676632)

We have enjoyed listening to presentations by several members recently, namely Frans Hals from Suzanne and Rembrandt from Sally.

We are looking forward to hearing about The Brotherhood of Ruralists from Paul. There is a talk about William Blake in the pipeline from Suzanne.

We always enjoy listening to talks from members who are happy to share their knowledge with us.

Art Appreciation group is full at the moment.

Music Appreciation

Stella Caney (676143)

In January, we listened to **music by Claude Debussy** - a powerful force in the early part of the 20th century. His musical styles were quite wide-ranging, but possibly his best-known piece is Clair de Lune.

In February, we listened to **Classic FM's take on Valentine's Day** with a mixture of (amongst other things) Puccini, Rachmaninov and Elgar.

Poetry 1

Kay Duck (672474)

February's meeting fell on the day before Valentine's Day, our topic was 'love and romance', so we were early!

Members contributed such a variety of poems: WH Davies - Love's inspiration; Wendy Cope - After the lunch; Anon - Shirt of a lad; Gillian Clarke - My Box; Billy Collins - Aimless Love; John Clare - First Love; UA Fanthorpe - Safe as Houses; Anne Bradstreet - To my dear and Loving Husband c1650.

We were all subsequently quite in the mood for Valentines Day on the horizon....

Scrabble 3

Andy Mellor (677489)

We are a brand new group, meeting on the second Thursday of the month. Our inaugural meeting will take place on Thursday, 14 March. At present we have no vacancies.

Arts and Craft 2

Sue Brisk (674006)

We all had a go at quilling this week and here's some pictures of our work. We all enjoyed this craft and will be continuing for the next few sessions.



I've got my tickets...

...for Mu3ac's gig on 27 April. Will I see you there?

Reckon I might have to pop along to a couple of Country Dancing sessions to build up a bit of stamina though. These days, after a minute of dancing round the kitchen to the radio I'm reaching for the kettle for a cup of tea and a sit down!

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

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

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