



Article Featured in Sheepwash Times – January 2020

In last month's edition, you were introduced to Branston & District U3A and the fact that it is open to anyone of the "third age" who is retired from full-time work or home care. But what about the "University" bit, which is often seen as being off-putting? Well, rather than thinking of the traditional meaning of University with its intellectual, qualifications-based overtones, think of it more as being "universal", in that all members are encouraged to participate, not only in learning and receiving, but also in leading and contributing.

This concept might seem a little daunting, but a number of our members have gained a great deal in discovering that they have talents and abilities they never realised they had, and have been able to do things that they previously thought were simply for other people. And this has seen their self-confidence and sense of self-worth rise. No need to worry, by the way, we do try to avoid making anyone uncomfortable in the process. Examples of this approach include members of the walking groups take turns in planning, checking and leading walks and Armchair Travel members take turns at giving presentations of their travel experiences.

We also invite expert speakers, and at the November STEM meeting, Professor Mat Goddard of Lincoln and Auckland Universities gave a fascinating talk on the ecology of microbes, describing the interactions of various yeast species in wine fermentation.

Our groups cover a wide range of interests, and recently our Visits Group had a coach outing to Chatsworth House, to enjoy the house itself as well as the Christmas themed displays – and the delights of the restaurant.

At our November main meeting we welcomed Louise and Laura from Happy Hooves of East Torrington. They told us about the charity's work with children and young people with special needs, and how their interactions with animals helps them to overcome their difficulties. They brought a selection of small animals which we were able to handle – including a giant African snail, ferrets, a Barn Owl and Lanner Falcon, so a great time was had by all.

You will be welcome to join us for our meeting on January 28th at 1.30pm for 2.00pm, in Branston Village Hall when Terry Nowell will speak to us on Charles Dickens. See our website, www.u3asites.org.uk/branston for further details.

James Hewson