

Brixworth and District Newsletter

u3a

Learn, laugh, live

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Interview with Pauline Judge – by Jackie Bird (photo by Jim Wardle)

Pauline is a regular member of Brixworth U3A. She not only attends a number of groups but has recently started leading the Conversational Greek group at her home. Those of you that know Pauline will know that she has a wealth of funny and interesting stories from her many years of working in and around Northampton. Pauline is a Northampton girl, she describes a very happy childhood in St James Northampton living near the park and getting into trouble from an early age when in her Sunday best she ran over to the park to look at the new 'builders' sand in the sand pit and as it had been raining slipped into the pit and was covered in orange sand. Apparently her mum was not pleased as Pauline had to be changed and they missed the bus to Granny's for Sunday lunch. Pauline's childhood is littered with similar amusing anecdotes. She describes herself as a bit of a rebel!



Pauline went to school at St James and then moved to Notre Dame where her sister was also a pupil. These school days are not her happiest memories but after leaving school she followed her desire to work with dogs and worked as a kennel maid at breeding kennels in Little Brington. It was here she met her husband. She recalls them waving to each other as he passed her on his scooter whilst she was walking the dogs but not knowing each other's names. Two weeks before Pauline left the Kennels they were formally introduced and from then on they met up every day.

After getting married Pauline and her husband moved to Broad St in Brixworth and after having her two sons Pauline went back to work initially temping to fit in with school and then worked for Kimbell's construction for fifteen years holding her own in a male dominated workplace and working up from a cost clerk to chief buyer. She was 'head hunted' by Crawshaw Robbins and moved to work for them for ten years until they sold the company. Life for Pauline wasn't all work, the family enjoyed their holidays and travelled around in their camper van which Pauline drove, gradually going further afield until they went to Crete which she loves. Having been left a small amount of money when her mother died, in 2001 she went back to Crete and found a house which she bought and they renovated and spent many happy holidays there. When both Pauline and her husband retired they split their time between the two houses, her present cottage in Scaldwell where she has lived for the last 44 years and the house in Crete spending six months of the year in each. Pauline always drove to Crete even as recently as last year but she does also like to fly as well. As a young woman Pauline had never flown until she won 1st prize in a raffle which was a flight in a 4-seater light aircraft. After the flight with her two boys she never looked back. She also recently added cruises to her holiday destinations taking her first cruise last year for a month and enjoyed it so much she has booked another shorter cruise for this year going with a friend.

Continued

But we can't end there, many of Pauline's stories relate to a time when she was a coach driver. She parked her coach in Scaldwell along the Holcot Lane where it was often much admired by the young lads in the village. She drove the school children to and from school, service trips for employees to and from work, football trips on one occasion having to spend the night in the coach after completing her hours for the day and not enough time to drive home that evening, tours in this country and abroad. She says that she did it all but her favourite was taking the veteran Yeoman for the annual visit to Belgium, Holland and France. Even after Pauline stopped working to look after an elderly relative she was asked to go back to do the school run which she did taking her relative with her on the coach, much enjoyed by all.

Pauline has had a very full life and plans to continue to travel, run her Conversational Greek class, attend the U3A groups she enjoys and support fellow villagers of Scaldwell as long as possible.

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

STROLLING GROUP –13th February 2024



Three very wet and muddy Strollers: left to right, Tim Parker, Ruby Harris and Rob Womack.

We met at the Brampton Halt and four Strollers decided to walk along the Brampton Valley Way. Photo taken when we stopped at Millers Yard for a coffee but despite their signs up outside, it was closed. (only opens Wednesday to Sunday!) So we went on



to the Windhover instead then walked back to Brampton Halt where we joined the Walkers for lunch, 27 of us in total. **Janet Womack**

CRAFT GROUP – latest news from Rosemary Jenkins

This is Needle Felting. It is done by having a piece of felt for the background. Then you have a design in mind and use roving



wool which is a very fine wool a little like tissue paper (photo on left – so pretty!) only a little stronger which you pull apart bit by bit and then layer it to what thickness you want before needling it into the design using different colours.

There's a lot of stabbing involved (!) but it is placed over a foam

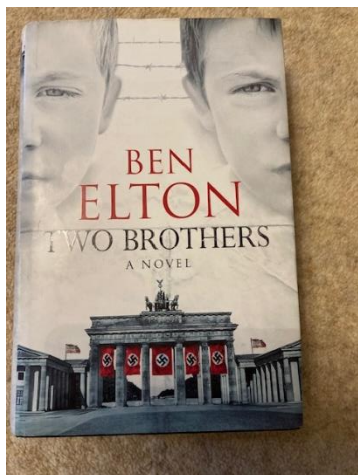


block to support it. Then the designs can be used for sticking onto cards.

We all enjoyed doing it. So I thought I would send photos for the newsletter.

Rosemary

BOOK CLUB 1: February 2024: The Two Brothers by Ben Elton



This book provoked a very mixed response within the group. Some really enjoyed it, some found the plot contrived and pursued by the author way beyond its' initial appeal, making the book very cumbersome and unrealistic.

The novel, set in Berlin, takes the reader from the birth of two brothers in 1920, through the Weimar period, the rise of Nazism, the war years, the division of the city and ends with the death of one character in 2003. If you enjoy historical fiction, we felt that the historical detail was good; the book provides authentic description and analysis of the horror of this period and how it impacted upon the lives of ordinary people.

We felt that the characterisation of the four young people who are the main protagonists was weak and improbable, which detracted from some excellent descriptions of some of the minor characters and how they lived during these traumatic times.

Forthcoming titles:

- 5th March: West with Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge
- 2nd April: The Spiral Staircase by Karen Armstrong
- 7th May: State of Wonder by Ann Pratchett
- 4th June: A Tomb with a View by Peter Ross
- 2nd July: The Girl with the Louding Voice by Abi Dare

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP – January meeting

The first meeting of the year was on Thursday 25th January at our new venue of Scaldwell Village Hall. 45 members attended – which I believe is a record! For those who weren't able to be there, we had a review of our 2023 programme with photos of the various group activities - which I'm sure our new members found very useful. Then I ran quickly through our 2024 programme (details on the u3a website). John Nicholson took us through the arrangements for the planned Chester House visit and a list was started for those interested in attending that on the 23rd May. I will be collecting the suggested £2.50 donation at the February and March meetings from those confirming their attendance.



We then watched an interesting (well, most of it was interesting) film celebrating the centenary of the Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph paper.

Chris Rowe

QUIZ GROUP – report by Jim Wardle



Amazingly, it has now been over six months since I took over leadership of the Quiz Group. I'm delighted to report that the number of attendees at our meetings has steadily increased over the second half of 2023, with the group seeing the return of some lapsed group members as well as a small number of new members joining the group.

During that period, 5 different group members have kindly volunteered to be question master, and we have also had 5 different members (Ricky, Karen, Irene, Pauline, Issy and Jim) who have emerged victorious on the day after the good-natured and occasionally somewhat chaotic competition.

Some other statistics on the quiz group meetings over the second half of 2023: As the meetings are held in my home, I have made and served around 50 cups of tea and coffee and have served biscuits that are too numerous to count. We have also had home-made Florentines as a pre-Christmas treat (Thanks Ricky). But there is a darker side to hosting the quiz group. I have unfortunately also had to wash up two mugs where the residue retained in the bottom of the mug has contained evidence of over-zealous dunking!

I think it is a close call as to whether the group spends more time quizzing or chatting (I suspect that chatting will win!), but the group has been, and continues to be, great fun. In addition, every week we leave the session having learnt a few facts.

The bi-monthly group meetings are held at my home in Brixworth on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, between 2pm and 4pm. New group members will be made very welcome. The only restriction on group membership is that you must be able to demonstrate a little control when dunking your biscuits! If you are interested in seeing whether the group is for you, please drop me an email via the pigeon icon on the Quiz Group page on the Brixworth u3a website.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY – update from Brian Robertson

The DPG met on Tuesday 6th February with a total number of three. Issy and Will Lambley and me. The topics were Winter and Animals

We showed a number of our photographs. The horse is at the entrance to the Blisworth Tunnel on the Grand Union Canal.



The statue of William, the cat with the raised leg is in Montreaux where there are many statues of him. This picture shows the cat with his leg upon a Jack being operated by a mouse.

Issy's pictures, the snow scenes are at Chamonix in France.



The next meeting of the DPG will be on 14th March 14.00 to 16.00. All are welcome.

POETRY COMPETITION RESULTS

At the January meeting the committee set a Poetry competition on the subject of either "New Year" or "Winter". The five entries were all very different and congratulations are due to those who took part. The entries were then emailed out to all members and 23 people voted on their favourite. The winner, with 9 votes was Diane Fenton's entry: "The Resolution", which I thought you might like to read again



The Resolution

I looked down and could not believe my eyes
I stared between my toes in disbelief
it must have been the Roses and mince pies
That caused this overwhelming sense of grief.

Reflecting, it should not have been a shock
I've noticed minor changes over time
My arms shrink when I'm putting on a sock
And stairs are getting difficult to climb.

My knees are painful, there is no disguising
And I've amassed a secret store of Snickers
And Marks & Spencer must have changed their sizing
'Cos I've had to buy some bigger pairs of knickers.

The scales have given me a solemn warning
This self-indulgence has to finish now
I have to make a plan this very morning
To be more healthy is my solemn vow.

I've joined My Fitness Pal where I record
My goals, my calories and my nutrition
I've bought a Fitbit watch as a reward
Ten thousand steps a day is my ambition.

I've also joined the Brixworth u3a
There's groups that help you get some exercise
It's lots of fun and not too much to pay
And making new friends is the greatest prize.

They say that resolutions seldom last
And gym equipment ends up with the litter
Bad habits I am putting in the past
But not the fags because I'm not a quitter.

Congratulations to Diane – seen above with her "prize"!

WRITING FOR FUN – Report from Jackie Bird

Writing for Fun group says a very sad goodbye to one of the group's first members Mary Parnell who joined the group when it was started way back as Creative Writing by Lynn Aitkin. We send our deepest sympathy to Mary's family.

On a much happier note Congratulations go to Diane Fenton for winning the Brixworth U3A poetry competition this year. Her poem was featured on the website in January (and in this newsletter - Ed). The Writing for Fun group have plans to produce another booklet of short stories this year which should be ready in time for Christmas and will make a great stocking filler. The 2022 edition did really well, feedback from people who bought it was very positive. The booklets were passed between friends and families and some given as stocking fillers reaching far and wide including Yorkshire, Norfolk, Corfu and Western Australia.

Closer to home the group have started the new year with some new and interesting titles and produced some amusing and intriguing stories one of which will be accessible on the website every month.

BRIXWORTH & DISTRICT u3a BRIDGE GROUPS UPDATE

2024 has started off with a couple of well attended duplicate bridge sessions, the first of them of Thursday evening 11th January, when there were four-and-a-half tables. On that occasion, we welcomed new members Maeve and Paul Taylor for their first taste of duplicate, after attending a ten-week refresher course with Brixworth & District u3a. The event was a closely run competition, with Ruby and Chris coming out on top at the end of the evening.

	IMPS	%		Tops	Joint Tops
1 st	58	60.4	Ruby Cole & Chris Williams	4	2
2 nd	55	57.3	Paul Jarvis & Brian Collett	6	0
2 nd	55	57.3	Richard Hartley & Bea Bennett	3	1
4 th	53	55.2	Sally & Simon Bevan	2	3
5 th	49	51.0	Mavis Sturgess & Jim Wardle	2	2
6 th	48	50.0	Jill Snedker & Rosemary Heaver	2	3
7 th	42	43.8	Chris Hill & Clive West	2	1
8 th	41	42.7	Del Smith & Lynda Stevenson	3	0
9 th	31	32.3	Maeve & Paul Taylor	0	2

On the afternoon of Friday 11th January, the monthly duplicate was a high-scoring affair because there were five tables, so lots of International Match Points (IMPs) to be won. That day we welcomed three new players Carolyn, Angela, and Janet who is the latest new member to the group. For me personally, my partner Paul and I had an amazing afternoon; one of those when everything went well. Paul only became a u3a member on 27th January 2023, after taking early retirement, and came for a crash-course in the latest bidding systems for the game, having initially learnt many years ago, even before he and Kath (manager at the new Coop) were married. And how things have changed since then with lots of new bidding techniques to get to grips with. His natural flair and skill soon shone through, and it was not long before I needed to introduce him to Northampton Bridge Club, where he is now making a name for himself on more than one day a week. So, he really has the bridge bug and, still being so young – compared to me anyway, he will go a long way in the game at the highest level.



I cannot review the results below without mentioning Tim and Sheila who secured a very creditable second place against some very good opposition.

	IMPS	%		Tops	Joint Tops
1 st	101	78.9	Brian Collett & Paul Jarvis	6	2
2 nd	78	60.9	Tim Smith & Sheila Jones	4	1
3 rd	71	55.5	Jim Wardle & Judy Peck	0	2
4 th	63	49.2	Carolyn Bennett & Angela Reed	2	1
4 th	63	49.2	Kathy Morgan & Paula Jones	3	2
6 th	60	46.9	Janet Reader & Fay Duckmanton	2	0
7 th	54	42.2	Ruby Cole & Chris Williams	1	1
8 th	52	40.6	Helen Coghill & Carol Phillips	3	0
9 th	50	39.1	Anne Weddle & Chris Russell	0	1
10 th	48	37.5	Del Smith & Jane Davis	3	0

Both bridge groups meet at the Heritage Centre one evening a week, with there being one session each month for duplicate bridge. Thursday evening's is the on second Thursday each month, with Friday afternoon's being on the third Friday each month. For all of the other days of the month, the members can relax and enjoy Chicago scoring bridge – so no pressure, but very good for practising and improving skills.

THURSDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2024

	IMPS	%		Tops	Joint Tops
1st	53	63.1	Paul Jarvis & Brian Collett	6	3
2nd	49	58.3	Jill Snedker & Rosemary Heaver	2	1
3rd	44	52.4	Sally & Simon Bevan	3	1
4th	43	51.2	Mavis Sturgess & Jim Wardle	1	3
5th	38	45.2	Ruby Cole & Chris Williams	4	0
6th	38	45.2	Denise Cowling & Lynda Stevenson	3	1
7th	38	45.2	Bea Bennett & Richard Hartley	2	2
8th	33	39.3	Barry Johnson & Clive West	1	1

FRIDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2024

	IMPS	%		Tops	Joint Tops
1st	86	67.2	Paul Jarvis & Brian Collett	4	2
2nd	81	63.3	Tony Nixon & Katie Lindenbaum	5	2
3rd	75	58.6	Ruby Cole & Carolyn Bennett	2	2
4th	72	56.3	Hazel Barr & Lynda Stevenson	2	1
5th	63	49.2	Belinda Collett & Sheila Jones	1	2
6th	61	47.7	Ann Maynard & Judy Peck	0	2
7th	59	46.1	Carol Phillips & Helen Coghill	3	1
8th	56	43.8	Jane Davis & Del Smith	2	1
9th	46	35.9	Chris Russell & Anne Weddle	0	0
10th	41	32.0	Maeve & Paul Taylor	0	1

We meet on Thursdays at 7.15 pm and Fridays at 1.30 pm.

Brian Collett

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP MEETING – FEBRUARY



On 22nd February, one of our group members, Mike Nice (aided by wife Helen!) gave us a fascinating talk about the history of Brixworth Workhouse. Some of the stories he told were quite harrowing – the conditions were not much (if any) better than prisons. It would appear that the stigma of ending up in the workhouse continues to this day, with some Brixworth residents refusing to go into the now “Workhouse” café. The area the workhouse covered was vast – from Naseby to the Bramptons and all villages in between. The Board of Governors comprised most of the local landowners, squires and nobility – whose sole aim seemed to be to spend as little money as possible on food and “comforts”

for the residents. Even the Cook said the food was bland and tasteless!

Eventually the Workhouse fell out of use, before being taken over as Council Offices, then an architects’ practice – before it was renovated and the café opened.

Mike finished the morning with a look at some of the artifacts on display in the cabinet at the Doctor’s surgery – and we were invited to decide which was the most valuable, less valuable or not valuable at all. In fact for insurance purposes they all turned out to be worth “peanuts”!

GARDENING GROUP REPORT JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2024.



At the very well attended January meeting of the Gardening Group, Chris Rowe gave a really interesting and well researched talk about “The Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement on Garden Design”. We were treated to beautiful photographs of many of the gardens that shealong with Colin....have visited on their travels. Chris pinpointed the key features of

the Arts and Crafts Movement in these photographs and showed samples of the gardens by famous garden designers, such as Gertrude Jekyll and Harold Peto. The talk certainly gave us inspiration for our own gardens later in the year. Thank you Chris for sharing your enthusiasm with us and reminding us of sunny garden visits to look forward to in the summertime.



**The Peto Garden, Wiltshire
(above)**

**Barrington Court, Somerset, (above) home of
the Lyle (Tate & Lyle) family, designed by
Gertrude Jekyll**

In February we had an outdoor visit to see the snowdrops at the Buddhist Centre in Thornby. It did manage to stop raining for an hour, so members walked in the peaceful grounds of the Centre, formerly Thornby Hall. Some members even ventured into the woods to see the last of the snowdrops, although it was quite slippery underfoot. Oh yes, a Risk Assessment was completed and members were told on the day to take great care! The view of the shoe racks in the entrance hall on returning to the Centre made a wonderful photograph, as everyone had either changed their boots and wellies for other shoes or simply walked indoors in their socks!



On behalf of the Centre, Jason said how much they enjoyed having us there on such a wet day. They wanted to say thank you for respecting their beautiful Centre and for your donations. They certainly looked after us very well

indeed. It is such a lovely building in a very peaceful setting. Several members had not visited there before but have said that they will return.....when it is a little sunnier and they can sit out on the South Lawn with their tea and cake! I think we are all looking forward to some sunny days.



In March the speaker will be Laura Malpass who will describe “Restoring the Lost Gardens of Canon’s Ashby.” This will be the last of our Indoor programme before the start of our Outdoor programme in April. You will be made very welcome if you come along to join us for Laura’s talk. All meetings start at 2 pm.

Annie Curtis and Sue Dodds-Smith (photos by Annie and Chris)



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY – Colin Rowe

On February 1st 13 members of the Science & Technology group visited the factory at Innovate Recycling Ltd in Northampton to witness the production of Polypropylene pellets from synthetic fibre carpets. The director Joe Ecclestone who had been a carpet salesman in the past and decided to explore the possibility of recycling all the wasted offcuts and old carpets which he removed from people's houses. As synthetic carpets have improved, using polypropylene fibres, they have become more acceptable and now compete favourably with all wool or a mixture of wool and synthetic fibres.

The process was easy to see as we walked round. Starting with separated "clean dry" carpets shredding them, removing the latex and the calcium carbonate from the backing then extracting the main ingredient "polypropylene" in the form of pellets at a particular size. This was achieved by heating the plastic mix to 153 degrees C and filtering out the polypropylene, which was fluid at this temperature, discarding the unwanted material in the form of a black spiral which can possibly be recycled also. A high capital investment has been made which will help to reduce landfill by recycling "plastic" carpets - the aim being to provide a high quality raw polypropylene material to moulders such as the automotive industry.

WALKING GROUP- report and photo by Colin Rowe

The morning of the 13th February, as forecast turned out to be a wet one. Peter Martin decided to go for it and 23 well clad walkers who met at the Brampton Halt headed out, some with umbrellas. The group headed along the Brampton Valley former railway track bed passing the Northampton & Lamport railway vehicles. We turned left along Merry Tom Lane then turning across a muddy field to Welford Rd. Crossing the road we turned right for Brampton Hill returning to the starting point via Chapel Brampton. Joined by the strollers most of the group had a well earned excellent hot lunch. The rain had persisted throughout the morning.



BADMINTON GROUP – Report from Eileen Truby



Having had a short break over the Christmas period, members of the u3a Badminton Group have resumed their twice monthly meetings (1st and 3rd Monday of the month) at Old Village Hall. Although our membership dwindled slightly during the early part of 2023, we are now up to a very healthy 15 members and most sessions are attended by at least 7 members which means we manage to fit in quite a few games on one court during the hour and half session.

If you are interested in joining the badminton group, please send a message on "The Pigeon" icon and I will get back to you with the date of our next meeting. We have 2 spare rackets and play with yellow plastic shuttles. Please wear comfortable clothing that is suitable for a little bit of running around and shoes/trainers with non-marking soles. Please note that the photo was taken at our last session in December 2023 and we don't usually wear Christmas hats and jumpers when playing!

NEW GROUP

CHESS GROUP – Leader, Barry Norton

Details for the chess group are as follows. We will be meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month, at my house (please send an email to Barry at barrynorton54@outlook.com for address details) at 10am until 12ish. If you follow satnav it may not get you to our bungalow, we are at the top of the hill when you enter the road. The first meeting will be on 15th February (I know that's the 3rd one misread calendar). I do not think there will be any cost to come for now, as we are working it all out together as we go.



MONTHLY MEETINGS

The monthly meetings are held at Brixworth Village Hall on the first Wednesday of the month at 2 pm. Come and join us for a talk/presentation from interesting and varied speakers, followed by refreshments and an opportunity to catch up with friends old and new.

6th March “Alan Turing and Bletchley Park” with Michael Kushner
3rd April John Constantine, Magician and Comedian
1st May Designing for the BBC with Christine Green

Full details of future meetings is on the B&D u3a website under “What’s On”.

Please do join us for a cup of tea and a chat after the meeting!



NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to our new members who have joined (or re-joined) us recently. We hope you find your membership of B&D u3a very rewarding and we look forward to seeing you at the monthly meetings and when you join any of our interest groups.

Fay Duckmanton	Sheralyn Snaith	Lynne Deady	Freda Skelton
Catherine Hole	Anthony Brunton	Yvonne Taylor	Christiana Monk
Margaret Howarth	Jean Mason		

BOOK SWAP TABLE

Please note that due to holidays, the Book Swap table will not be available at the March monthly meeting, but will be back in April.

COLLECTION OF USED SPECTACLES

At the April meeting we shall be trying in our own small way to save the planet by providing a drop-in box for any unwanted prescription spectacles that you may have (and if you are anything like me that’s probably a drawer-full!). So please bring them along from April onwards, and we will make sure that they are passed on to a Third World charity. Thank you.

Tim and Paula Smith