

# u3a The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

## Committee News

# Happy New Year to all

### Christmas Quiz Results – Myrtle Moreton-Cox, Chair

Our Annual Christmas Quiz 2023 was won by the “No Eye Deer” team consisting of Andrew and Sally Pinch, Midie MacDonald and Margaret Whittal. They scored the grand total of 60 points. As promised, I will not name the losers but hope they have better luck next year. The Quiz Master was Jane Ball who, as usual,

organised a good mix of topics and questions including the Christmas round. John Walton, who it now appears is offering to organise a Quiz Group –well done John – very efficiently recorded and displayed the scores. The icing on the cake was of course the Mulled wine –



personally tasted and selected by Mary Ewens – with hot Mince Pies. These were prepared and served by Mary and her team of Elves. Thank you very much Ladies (not forgetting the one Gentleman Elf) – excellent service as always – please come again next year.



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**Group News**

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**Natural History Group – January 11<sup>th</sup> –Alan Keith**

The last meeting of the Natural History group took place at Slimbridge WWT on the afternoon of January 11th. Eleven of us met and visited all the main hides from which we were able to see large numbers of winter wild fowl and waders. There was a particularly large flock of wigeon, and several common cranes were spotted out on the salt flats out towards the sea. The water rails also put in an appearance and were showing well for about half an hour. Our visit culminated with the Swan feed with the very large flock of Bewick's swans that are wintering

at Slimbridgethis year.



*Pintail*



*Water Rail*



*Song Thrush*



*Wigeons*

Our next meeting will be a joint meeting with the travel group in the back room at the Methodist Church at 10.30am on Thursday, February 8th when I will be giving a talk on Greenland.



## Country Walking Group – January 4<sup>th</sup> – Alan Keith

16 of us met at the public car park on Stinchcombe hill for the first walk of the new year. The weather was remarkably good being the first fine day for 10 days. We had an excellent 3 mile walk around the perimeter of Stinchcombe hill with excellent views from the main viewpoints.



Our next walk will be on Thursday, February 1st at 10.30. Meet at Sheperd's Patch car park, the new car park in Slimbridge village for a 3 mile walk along the canal and back through the fields and the private nature reserve.

Greta will be leading.

## Wine Appreciation Group – 8<sup>th</sup> January – Claire Haines

Our Group – colloquially named Wotton Winos – delayed the meeting from the first Monday of the month to the second, for obvious reasons. It was an auspicious date – 8 January – Elvis' birthday. We were going to drink a toast to him but with all the other subjects that came up for discussion, we forgot. Sorry Elvis!



We met at Jacky's house for a tasting of wines that were, in the main, from Switzerland and Austria, with a bit of a nod to France. The wines were bought from Majestic Wines; they are always so helpful and provide very comprehensive tasting notes without being too sniffy about them (sorry about the pun!). The wines we tasted Cellar 99 Gruner Veltliner, Jacobins Cremant de Jura, Solomonar Reserve Red, Altus Jean Perrier, and Incant Pinot Noir. The Altus Jean Perrier was recommended to go with

Fondue – perfect! In fact all the wines were very acceptable and at a good price between £7.99 and £17.99 provided you bought 6 bottles

To go with the wines, Jacky provided a delicious supper based around fondue. Mindful of the everpresent threat of covid, we had strict instructions about 'double dipping' our bread and charcuterie, which by and large we followed – some of us (me) got a bit over-enthusiastic and forgot. . At one point a paramedic was nearly needed as the pointy forks were a bit too pointy for Leslie – but a plaster did the job so the emergency was averted.

There was much discussion as to the difference between a fondue and a raclette. According to Auntie Google one is a dish in which small pieces of food are dipped into a hot sauce or a hot cooking medium such as oil, and the other is a Swiss dish of melted cheese, typically eaten with potatoes. The things is – which is which? Answers on a postcard please.

As ever conversation was wide ranging with some subject discussion more heated than others, but we always manage to leave the evening as good friends. Thanks Jacky for a tasty and lively evening.

### Table Tennis – David Edwards



Just a reminder that we have two friendly Table Tennis groups (Less demanding than the real thing!) that meet on Thursdays 2pm to 4pm run by Pam Davis and on Fridays 10am to 12pm run by Richard Warrillow. These take place at the Chantry Centre in Long Street, Dursley, so



we will miss some weeks due to other events, such as the Pantomime which is on till the end of January, This needs the roll out of the seats that you can see in the background above.

Of particular note is that the Friday sessions currently have a small nucleus of players with Parkinson's symptoms who are doing what they can whilst they can and getting social interaction in the process, including half-time tea and bikkies break!

There are normally 2/3 tables set out, but more exist. All welcome. You can contact Pam ("Table Tennis too" group) or Richard ("Table tennis" group) in advance via our u3a web email\*, or simply turn up and give it a go.

\* Either use the web's menus: **Home > Groups > Table Tennis** then click the bluebird icon

Or, go direct to the web page for each group: (or call Dave on 07973 75 75 54)  
[Cam, Dursley & District u3a: Table tennis too \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk) (Pam – Thursdays)  
[Cam, Dursley & District u3a: Table Tennis \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk) (Richard – Fridays)

### U3a Special Interest Groups Online – Dave Edwards

Interest Groups Online offers a variety of peer led, online learning opportunities for its subscribers. To join a group you must become a member of Interest Groups Online. It costs £12 to join for the year, which runs from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. (£6 to 31 Mar). Including 12 Start-ups, there are currently 115 online groups available via zoom meetings. Link to the IGO Beacon system sign up form: [Details for each group may be found at:https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups](https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups)

Here is a list of the groups available – a really big choice, something for everyone.

3D printing at home	Forty Question Quiz	Science and Technology
A sense of History	Geology	Science in the News
Ad Hoc Art	German 1	Shakespeare Exploring
AI for everyone	Get more from MS Excel	Shared Art Appreciation
Ancient Rome and the Romans	Get more from MS Word	Short Story Book Group 1
Armchair Archaeology	Going Gently	Short Story Book Group 2
Armchair Travellers	In your neck of the woods	Slow French Conversation 1
Art Projects	Irish History and Culture	Slow French Conversation 2
Arts and Crafts	Irish Music	Smartphone Photo Art
Astronomy	Italian Beginners	Social History
Book Club	Italian Improvers	Spanish Absolute Beginners 1
British Cemeteries	Jane Austen Reading Group	Spanish Absolute Beginners 2
Canva (Graphic Design) Group	Jazz Hour	Spanish Group 1
Cercle français	Justice, the Law & Society	Spanish Group 2
Cinema!	Latin for Beginners	Start-up All about Whisky
Coffee and Conversation	Latin, Advanced	Start-up Black History
Concise Talks	Laughter Yoga	Start-up Chess
Conversare in Italiano	Law for Fun	Start-up Gardening
Countdown to COP	Local History	Start-up Learn Sign Language
Creating Cryptic Crosswords	Military History Group	Start-up Map reading
Crime Corner	Mindfulness & Poetry	Start-up Nevil Shute novels
Cryptic Crosswords	Modern Pop for third agers	Start-up Russian Conversation
Current Affairs Discussion 2	More Fun with Maths	Start-up Tennis News
Dance Exercise	Parliamo Italiano	Start-up The Environment
Deutsche Klasse 2	Penpals	Start-up Virtual Walks
Deutsche Klasse Montags	Philosophy Discussion	Start-up Wines of the world
Digital Skills	Play reading	Talking Art
Drawing and Painting	Poetry Patch	Welsh Conversation - Learners
Early Women Doctors Research	Popup Poetry	What are you reading? 1
Explorers & Travel Writers	Presentation Skills	What are you reading? 2 Friday
Exploring Classical Music	Psychology 1 IGO	What are you reading? 3 Tues
Extreme Knitting and Crochet	Psychology 2 IGO	What are you reading? 4
Family History	QuizZoomers	What are you reading? 5
Family History for Beginners	Railways	Words, Music and Rhyme
Fashion Group	Read, Write, Discuss	World History
Feminist Discussion Group	Recorders, Intermediate	Write Fiction & Non-fiction 1
Film Reviews	Retired Registered Managers	Write Fiction & Non-fiction 2
Find joy and fun in poetry 1		Writing for Pleasure
Find joy and fun in poetry 2		Zentangle Club

## Artificial Intelligence – Dave Edwards – it’s time to learn more...



Internet users may have already seen AI in action in your web browsers. A search on Microsoft’s Bing browser will come back with the traditional list of most relevant links, but also an AI generated coherent reply. Beware though, one may have to check validity of content. Our u3a national web has a page covering the topic of AI, including a couple of articles. Link: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects/artificial-intelligence>. We have an IGO (u3a Interest Groups Online) AI FOR EVERYONE group which currently has vacancies and can accommodate up to 100 members. Beyond our national u3a there exists a **u3acommunities.org** web, free, but rich in content. This site is run by a group of volunteers who share an interest in the use of technology to widen the U3A experience. They work closely with [www.worldu3a.org](http://www.worldu3a.org) and [www.myu3a.org](http://www.myu3a.org) and like them, are a free and open voluntary body with no fixed membership and no fees. At link: [AI for everyone – U3A Communities](#) is a list of AI articles.

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### Forthcoming Meetings and Events

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January 22nd	Family History	Meeting in Dursley Methodist Church back room at 2.30pm. Topic: TBA. If anyone has specific questions or subjects they would like to know about in future sessions – please let me know. Please bring £2 to cover room hire and refreshments (volunteers required please).
January 25th	Science and Engineering	Visit to Berkley Railway Engine shed and workshops, followed by SARA at Sharpness. Berkeley Railway: There will be a guided tour of their engine shed and workshops, where they renovate and rebuild the engines (steam & diesel) and equipment, as well as seeing the yard. The tour will take just over an hour plus time for questions. The workshop is an active working environment, with trip hazards etc, so not suitable for members with walking problems. SARA: Sharpness is the main control centre and lifeboat house for SARA. They have 5 lifeboats and a hovercraft stationed there as well as rescue Land Rovers and other equipment. The hour long tour includes seeing the boathouse etc and going into their operations room. Unfortunately, the ops room is up a flight of stairs, so may not be suitable for disabled access. Car parking is very limited, so car sharing will be required. The maximum numbers that they can cope with is 20. There will be no charge for the tours, but as they are charities, a donation to each would be appropriate. Note this visit is FULL, but to be put on the waiting list for another visit, please contact Bob Atack via the blue

		bird.
February 1st	Country Walkers	Meet at 10.30am at Shepherd's Patch car park, Slimbridge, on the Right before The Tudor Arms PH (GL27BP) The walk goes along the Glos/Sharpness Canal from Patch Bridge to the Cambridge Arms Bridge, through fields to the Wildlife Garden. Across fields to Slimbridge Church and back to the Patch. Greta will lead the walk. 4 miles, flat walk with some stiles.
February 1st	Science and Engineering	Visit to Berkley Railway Engine shed and workshops, followed by SARA at Sharpness. 2nd visit. see above visit for full details. Note this visit is <b>FULL</b> , but to be put on the waiting list in case of cancellations, please contact <b>Bob Attack</b> via the blue bird.
February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Historic Places	Owlpen Manor
February 8 <sup>th</sup>	Natural History	10.30am in the Methodist church a joint meeting with the travel group. "Greenland" by Alan Keith.
February 15 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly Meeting	<b>Monthly branch meeting to be held in the Dursley Methodist Church. Doors open 10.00 a.m. meeting starts 10.30 a.m.</b>  Ms. McCubbins will talk about "Medical Detection Dogs".

For later activities see the website. <https://u3asites.org.uk/cam-dursley/events>.