

Cheddar Valley News

u3a

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Members of the Scrabble Group enjoyed a celebratory lunch at The Riverside Inn in Cheddar

Thanks to Brenda Horwood for the photograph



Chairmans' Chat



This is Christine's and my last round-up of Chairmans' Chat, and we hope that as many members as possible will join us for the AGM at Cheddar's new Sports Pavilion in Sharpham Road on Thursday 4th May. We took this job on when, following Covid, it looked as if our U3A couldn't carry on, but a year later we have a Vice Chairman, Richard Hamlyn, ready to take over, a new Secretary to take on from Brenda Anderson who is stepping down after completing three years, and we say good bye to Barry Coppard, who has organised Coffee Mornings - amongst many other jobs. We thank all of them for their sterling service.

Membership renewal is due on 1st April, and renewal application forms are included in this newsletter. Please note that, as a result of CVU3A adopting the Beacon computer system, we will need a renewal form to be completed for each individual member, even if living in the same household. The form can be given with the £10 membership fee (cash or cheque only this year, please) to any member of the committee, or posted to Mary Evans, our Membership Secretary.

This is the last newsletter edited by Sue Bathe, to whom we all owe a tremendous vote of thanks for the job she has done for the last eight years. We still have had no-one volunteer to take on as Editor of the newsletter, which doesn't necessarily have to be in this format. It could be a page or two of information stapled together, and doesn't HAVE to include photographs. This may be the last CVU3A newsletter ever - which would be a shame. All U3A groups operate by calling on volunteers within the membership. If you can help produce the newsletter in any way, please contact any member of the committee. The system to distribute it to all members is already in place.

When completing your renewal application form, please be sure to indicate whether you still want to receive a hard copy of the newsletter in addition to the emailed version - if either is produced in future. In the

meantime, all information about future events and activities will be broadcast on the big screen at Coffee Mornings and Speaker Meetings in the Village Hall.

Speaker Meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month, and the organisers would welcome a team of volunteers to set out the chairs and clear them away after each meeting. If you can help, please contact Lynda Dearden.

The committee has decided not to put on an event connected with the forthcoming coronation because all our communities are planning their own celebrations, but CVU3A will be represented at Cheddar's party on the Sharpham Road playing fields on Sunday 7th May by the Rock Band and the Handbell Ringers. The Handbell Ringers have also been invited to play in the marquee at Cross Quarry on the afternoon of Saturday 6th May, if they can produce a squad.

Instead, we are planning a garden party in July. Full details will be sent out after the incoming committee has met following the AGM.

Helen Batt and Christine Barker

Welcome

Valerie Alan	Patrick McGowan
Angeline Duckett	Barbara Perry
Caroline Heath	Ken Perry
Adam Humphrey	Caroline Petty
Teresa Humphrey	Martin Windmill
Patricia Kastner	Sandra Windmill

**We wish all these new members
a very warm welcome to our U3A**

Monthly Meetings with Speakers

A programme of varied, informative and enjoyable talks is arranged from September to June. The meetings are held on the first Thursday afternoons of most months, usually at Cheddar Village Hall, but check the venue for each talk in the newsletter. Meetings start at 2.00 pm when tea and coffee will be served, followed by the talk, which will begin at 2.30 pm. There is no charge and visitors and guests are welcome.

**Thursday 6th April at 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm
at Cheddar Village Hall**

“Life as an Entertainer”

James Vincent

James started as a Blue Coat in a holiday camp entertaining the holiday makers with games during the day and dancing in the evening. Then he turned professional, as a Vocal Organist, which took him onto the Cruises visiting the Canaries and Spain. He also played in Bavaria at skiing resorts and during the summer seasons he played in holiday camps, including hotels on Jersey and in Blackpool. He moved to Weston in 1980 and moved from playing the organ to the keyboard.

He played all over the south west including the Winter Gardens here in Weston. He now runs his own dance evening in Henton on a Friday and still plays at many dance clubs. He enjoys meeting different groups and telling a few stories as well as playing some good old standards.

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**AGM on Thursday 4th May at 2.00 pm  
at the  
Community Pavilion,  
Sharpham Road Playing Fields, Cheddar  
followed by this talk.**

*Details of the AGM are on a separate leaflet enclosed with this newsletter. The Financial Statement will be available at the AGM.*

**“Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway”**

**Lynda Dearden**

Lynda is a local Cheddar U3A member and has been running the speaker programme since September 2022. On this occasion she will be giving a talk on the subject of "Feel the Fear and do it anyway". She has worked for 40 years in the health sector both in New Zealand and the UK. Before retiring she was a Consultant with the National Institute of Mental Health England and a part time Director/Trainer of her own company Positive Steps Ltd. Positive Steps offered training opportunities for people who needed help with the fear of speaking in public. This talk will explain more about the reality of fear and how we can deal with it.



**Thursday 1st June at 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm  
at Cheddar Village Hall**

**“The Art of the Magician”**

**Tony Griffith**

Tony Griffith has a background in education, including the Headship of a Primary School. His "Magic of Science" show has been presented to primary and secondary schools throughout the U.K. He has performed his magic for some of the UK's leading companies at trade exhibitions and other corporate events. He has entertained and lectured throughout the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the U.K. Tony has lectured and performed at The Magic Circle, London and The Magic Castle, Hollywood.

### **Speaker Meetings Refreshment Rota**

We have a rota system of groups to serve tea, coffee and biscuits and afterwards, clear cups etc. and wash up.



Thursday 6th April at 2.00 pm

Day Trippers

Thursday 4th May at 2.00 pm

Singing for Pleasure

Thursday 1st June at 2.00 pm

Industrial History



## So long and thanks for all the fish

*Oops, that needs editing...*



## SO LONG AND THANK YOU

This is the last edition of the Cheddar Valley U3A News that I will edit, after a total of 46 editions over the last eight years.

Thank you to all the members who wrote interesting articles and sent super photographs so that we could share in your activities. Thank you to the Committee members who supplied the comments and news for the first section.

Between us I like to think that we have provided a readable and informative magazine for all the members of CVU3A.

I hope that it will continue, when another editor volunteers.

Thank you for an interesting time. Farewell.

Sue Bathe

## Membership News

Since my return from Australia the U3A Committee have held two New Member Coffee Mornings at The Riverside on the 7th and 14th of February.

Attendance was low at both meetings due to prior appointments, illness or grandparent duties. There were eight in attendance at each and an introductory welcome chat was given by Helen and Chris, Joint Chairman.

Lynne Hamlyn, Group Liaison Officer, had a splendid display board with all the group activities plus leaflets and fliers about local events for new members to peruse after the coffee and chat. Other Committee Members and Meeters and Greeters were on hand to answer any questions.

As yet we are unaware if any members are feeling they want to dip their toe into the water and be a volunteer. The roles vacant were discussed at length and new members made aware to contact any committee member if interested.

There was some lively debate and ideas for new groups at both sessions and Lynne hopes to follow these up on behalf of members.

A total of 14 questionnaires were completed between both Coffee Mornings. All but two new members had been able to join the group of choice, while some had only had time to try a Speaker Meeting which was positively viewed. The overall consensus appears to be that they felt very welcome and felt CVU3A was friendly and well run.

Thank you to the New Members who were able to attend and to the Committee and Meeters and Greeters who helped on both days.

Membership applications have been steady throughout the year from March 2022 to March 2023, during which time CVU3A has had an increase of 83 members in total.

Please remember without volunteers to fill the posts available in May we will not be able to function – we need you.

Please note we have a transitional period from now to April for the Beacon U3A Database to get up and running.

More from Richard Hamlyn, Vice Chairman and Beacon Administrator, on this topic on pages 10 and 15.

This will mean some changes but in the long term the committee feel it will benefit CVU3A.

**Mary Evans**

**Membership Secretary**

membership@cheddarvalleyu3a.org.uk



## **Time to renew your membership!**

Renewal is due on 1st April 2023 so please return your form and payment promptly to the Membership Secretary, Mary Evans, whose address is on the form. Mary will also collect them at Coffee Mornings.

A Renewal Form is attached to the email that sent you this Newsletter. Two copies are included in the printed newsletter.

If you are unable to print out a form, please contact Mary Evans, telephone: or email membership@cheddarvalleyu3a.org.uk. Mary will have spare forms at the April Speaker Meeting and Coffee Morning.

**Every member is required to complete a separate form, even if they are in the same household.**

The Membership Fee is £10 per person. PLEASE NOTE CHEQUE OR CASH ONLY AT PRESENT. Cheques payable to "Cheddar Valley U3A".

## Information to accompany the membership forms

Dear Member,

As you may already be aware we have migrated our member management system to an online platform called Beacon. This will make the day to day running of your U3A easier and more efficient for the Committee and ensure greater data protection and accuracy for our members. However this requires some small changes in the way we sign up new members and the way we renew existing members from the previous process.

In 2023 we will only be able to accept payment by cash or cheque. I know many of you who use on line banking will see this as a retrograde step, however we are not in a position to migrate the financial aspect of our system to Beacon at this time, and we ask that you be patient. In future we intend to be able to offer BACs, PayPal and Direct Debit options and we will keep you informed as to progress on this.

We have streamlined the New Member Application and Membership Renewal forms to try and improve the accuracy of the information that we hold on your behalf, and to improve the way we can communicate to members and groups more accurately. To this end we need you to fill in a separate form for each member. The reason for this is that members in the same household often have different email addresses and nearly all of us now have separate mobile numbers. Some members also like to be known by different surnames, so individual forms help us to log these differences with less mistakes. However Beacon recognises members who share an address and only allocates one copy of the Third Age Matters magazine per household to mitigate unwanted copies and waste. Can you also help our Membership Secretary by printing as clearly as possible on the forms.

Renewal forms will be emailed to you and are also available in the newsletter and at Coffee Mornings and Speaker Meetings.

**Richard Hamlyn** (Beacon Administrator)

## Coffee Mornings

As arranged, the leaders of the Cheddar Folk Banners Project came along to the January Coffee Morning. Please see their Notice which is on page 26.

We have been delighted to see a continuing rise in attendance, from existing, new, and potential members. Our February Coffee Morning was the best attended since before the start of the pandemic.

In **February** Suzanne Green informed us of the latest situation regarding the 126 bus service. We are hoping she will return in May/June with better news for members wishing to travel to Weston-super-Mare by bus. There is a very interesting article on page 3 of the March edition of *Valley Life* which graphically illustrates the effects on the Cheddar area community. Suzanne has given more details on page 28.

Unfortunately Lina Curiale-Hopkinson, our new Village Agent, had to cancel her visit to the **March** Coffee Morning at very short notice, to the disappointment of several members who wished to chat with her. She very much hopes to be at our **April** Coffee Morning.

This is my last report for the Newsletter, as I am giving up the role at the AGM. Sally Heslop has kindly agreed to take over and looks forward to meeting you all at future Coffee Mornings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have attended our Coffee Mornings, the small team of setter-uppers for their invaluable contribution, and all Committee members and Sue Bathe (Newsletter Editor) for their support. Last, but certainly not least, my special thanks go to the Meet and Greet team (Carole Green, Jan Hillman, Frances Snelling and Gill Peakall) for constantly coming up with new ideas and their willingness to go the extra mile, supporting other events held by CVU3A.

**Barry Coppard** Coffee Morning Co-ordinator

## *Dates for Your Diary*

Thursday April 6th - Speaker Meeting at Cheddar Village Hall, 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm (see page 4)

Thursday April 20th - Coffee Morning at Cheddar Village Hall from 10.00 am to 11.30 am.

*With home-made cakes on sale to raise funds for Parkinsons UK*

Thursday May 4th – AGM at Community Pavilion, Sharpham Road, Cheddar at 2.00 pm followed by a Speaker (see page 5)

Thursday May 18th - Coffee Morning at Cheddar Village Hall from 10.00 am to 11.30 am.

Thursday June 1st - Speaker Meeting at Cheddar Village Hall, 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm (see page 6)

Thursday June 15th - Coffee Morning at Cheddar Village Hall from 10.00 am to 11.30 am.

## **New Walking Group - Faster Easy Walking**

Do you find the Easy Walking group too slow, but the Original Walking group too strenuous?

There is a proposal to have a new walking group, faster than the present Easy Walkers, but not going as far, or up and down hills as the Original Walking group. More information is on page 50, with details of a trial walk.

**Chris Barker**

## **Submission of material for the next issue**

As you should all know this is my last edition of CVU3A News as Editor. The email address I have used as Editor is not transferable to another person, therefore **it will no longer be in use**.

At the time of going to press there is no email address to which to send submissions for the next newsletter.

When a new contact point has been established you will be notified in an email that will be circulated by the Membership Secretary, so please look out for that.

Thanks again for all the support I have received, and thank you to all those who sent me good wishes for my retirement.

**Sue Bathe**

## **Group Liaison**

Here we are at last enjoying the arrival of Spring and hopefully a little more sunshine. Hibernation is over – hurray!

The groups are starting to get busy again and hopefully some new ones may start up – please see pages 12 and 14. All new groups will have support and assistance in starting up and attracting members to take part. You can always contact me direct for any questions and assistance.

The Valentine Concert held by the Cheddar Valley U3A Rock Band on Saturday 11th February was a great success. Everyone enjoyed the evening, the dance floor was very popular and at the end of the evening people were very generous in donating to the Disaster Emergency Committee in aid of the terrible earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Please see separate report in this Newsletter.

At the recent concert and possibly at a Coffee Morning we have two scarves that have been left by the members. If you are missing a scarf please let me know.

**Lynne Hamlyn**            Group Liaison Officer

Email:

# POTENTIAL NEW GROUPS

## Family History / Ancestry

There is a possibility for a new Group for this very popular subject.

I have had an enquiry from a member who has a lot of experience in using the software and program, researching and understanding the process.

However we would need someone to lead this Group and my contact is very happy to be a "second in command".

## Gardening Club / Advice

As we approach the gardening seasons I have been asked if there is anyone in our U3A with an interest helping with this very popular pastime. This could take the form of helping in the garden, giving advice and possibly operating a plant exchange in the growing season.

## Repair Shop

Help with all manner of small items/appliances etc. Do you have some knowledge - could you start this group?

All enquiries to **Lynne Hamlyn**, Group Liaison Officer at  
or Tel:



## Woodcarving Group

Please note this group has now closed due to lack of attendance. The Group Leader Terry White may be contacted on \_\_\_\_\_ for any further enquiries regarding woodcarving activities.

## **BEACON UPDATE**

As you may be aware the Cheddar Valley U3A is in the process of moving all its membership data to a secure on line platform called Beacon. This platform has been specifically designed by the parent organisation so that individual U3A's can manage their membership data in a centralised location which is encrypted and backed up on a daily basis to a remote server.

Prior to this your data was held on a variety of separate spreadsheets owned and maintained by volunteers and inevitably some input mistakes were made as well as a tendency for the information to become out of sync on the different spreadsheets.

The process of checking the accuracy of the information we hold on individual members, and then moving that data onto Beacon is quite an arduous one considering that we have well over 500 members. During this exercise several anomalies have come to light and we are busy working through them as quickly as possible so that when this year's renewals take place the process will run more smoothly and accurately.

I know many of you were disappointed to receive the round robin email informing you that for this year we could only accept payments in cash or by cheque. Many of you felt (quite correctly) that this was a backward step and as such it deserves a better explanation. Beacon has two basic functions. Firstly it stores and maintains membership data. Secondly it can manage the financial side and support BACS transfers and Standing Orders and even PayPal. However it was felt that to implement both functions in the same year was too risky, and so it was decided to do it in two stages commencing with the membership records. We thank you for your patience in this matter and we will update you of further changes in due course.

In the meantime please take care when filling out your renewal forms as clear concise information on these forms makes the job of maintaining your valued membership information much easier.

**Richard Hamlyn** (Beacon Administrator)

## Day Trippers' Group

The Day Trippers' are planning some exciting days out this year, starting with a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon on **Thursday 27th April 2023** at a cost of £25.00 per person. The next trip is to Plymouth on **Wednesday 28th June** the cost for this trip will be £27.00 per person. Booking forms for these two trips are on pages 17 and 19 and will also be available at Coffee Mornings and Speaker Meetings.

Later in the year we hope to visit Salisbury on **Tuesday 12th September** (Market Day) and following our very successful trip to Exeter in November of last year a shopping trip, when the Christmas market is running, possibly **Wednesday 22nd November** (date to be confirmed).

Thank you to everyone who has supported the trips in the past, and we look forward to welcoming you on this year's "adventures". Should anyone have any special requests of places they would like to visit please approach a member of the committee with your ideas.

**Sylvia Hall** for the Day Trippers' Committee

### *Sweet Treat for Charity*

*At the April Coffee Morning  
home-made cakes will be on sale  
alongside the coffee to raise funds  
for Parkinsons UK.*



# CHEDDAR VALLEY u3a DAY TRIPPERS



## Stratford-on-Avon

Thursday 27th April 2023

The cost of this trip is £25 per person including tip.

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO:**

**CHEDDAR VALLEY U3A SOCIAL FUND**

**To book a seat please send completed form together with your cheque to: Margaret Woodliffe at**

**. Tel:  
email:**

Full Name: .....

Mobile No: .....(for emergency contact on the day)

Address: .....

.....

**Email:** .....

Membership No: ..... Tel No: .....

(If you do not have an email address please enclose a stamped addressed envelope)

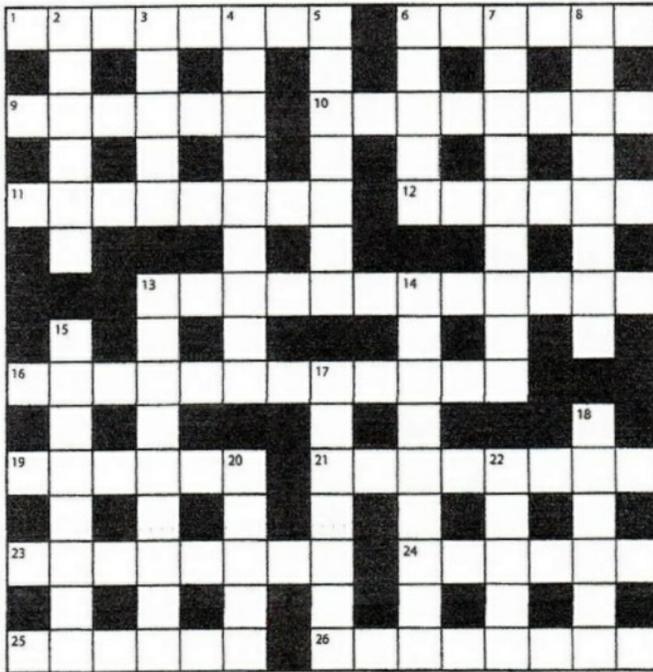
I would like to be picked up at: (please indicate):

**Bus Stop Bottom of Tweentown ..... Axbridge Town Hall .....**

Departure times will be advised later.

**Payment enclosed: Cheque £ ..... Cheque No. ....**

**Please note** that should you wish to cancel your seat once the coach is booked, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found.



**ACROSS**

- 1. Outsider (8)
- 6. Girl's name (6)
- 9. Drug (6)
- 10. Pessimistic (8)
- 11. Drawing Aid (8)
- 12. Cerumen (6)
- 13. We fed poor rat (anag) (12)
- 16. Directions in (anag) (12)
- 19. Carnival (6)
- 21. Instances (8)
- 23. Type of drink (8)
- 24. Types of homes (6)
- 25. Type of fly (6)
- 26. Giving (8)

**DOWN**

- 2. Devastating (6)
- 3. Maturing (5)
- 4. My casting (anag) (9)
- 5. Farmer (7)
- 6. Slant (5)
- 7. Daytime (9)
- 8. Drifted (8)
- 13. Small village in Kent (9)
- 14. Abolition (9)
- 15. Bygones (8)
- 17. Cast out (7)
- 18. Distinction (6)
- 20. Girl's name (5)
- 22. Experimental (5)

*Thanks to Barry Ede for creating this crossword.*

Solution is on page 20.

# CHEDDAR VALLEY u3a DAY TRIPPERS



## Plymouth

Wednesday 28th June 2023

The cost of this trip is £27 per person including tip.

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO:**

**CHEDDAR VALLEY U3A SOCIAL FUND**

**To book a seat please send completed form together with your cheque to: Margaret Woodliffe at**

**. Tel:**  
**email:**

Full Name: .....

Mobile No: .....(for emergency contact on the day)

Address: .....

.....

**Email:** .....

Membership No: ..... Tel No: .....

(If you do not have an email address please enclose a stamped addressed envelope)

I would like to be picked up at: (please indicate):

**Bus Stop Bottom of Tweentown ..... Axbridge Town Hall .....**

Departure times will be advised later.

**Payment enclosed: Cheque £ ..... Cheque No. ....**

**Please note** that should you wish to cancel your seat once the coach is booked, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found.

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

### ACROSS

1. Stranger
6. Amanda
9. Valium
10. Negative
11. Diagraph
12. Earwax
13. Waterproofed
16. Indiscretion
19. Fiesta
21. Examples
23. Dubonnet
24. Igloos
25. Tsetse
26. Donating

### DOWN

2. Tragic
3. Aging
4. Gymnastic
5. Rancher
6. Angle
7. Afternoon
8. Deviated
13. Wainscott
14. Ruination
15. Antiques
17. Ejected
18. Renown
20. Annie
22. Pilot

## GROUP NEWS FROM LEGPULLERS U3A

*Here in Cheddar Valley U3A we have over 40 special-interest groups, but it is still possible that you have a particular interest that is not covered by one of our groups. In this case you might consider trying to start a new group within Cheddar Valley U3A. Alternatively, you might find that there is an appropriate group in another U3A and request to join it. Here is the latest Group News, good and bad, from the Legpullers U3A:*

*The Rifle-Shooting Group is going great guns.*

*The Origami Group has folded.*

*The Nordic Walking Group is making strides.*

*The Bible-Reading Group is struggling with Numbers.*

*The Puddings Group is full to capacity.*

*The Skiing Group is going downhill.*

*Things are really looking up for the Astronomy Group.*

*The Bridge Group and the Pontoon Group have merged to form the River Crossings Group.*

*The Yoga Group is in a precarious position.*

*The Bonsai Group is growing, albeit slowly.*

*Joe King*

## Rock Band Update – Valentine Concert

Thanks are due to all those who helped to make this a successful evening. The support of approximately 90 U3A members and friends is greatly appreciated. The retiring collection raised £381.80 which has been sent to the Disaster Emergency Committee to help those in need due to the earthquake in Turkey/Syria. With the benefit of Gift Aid our total donation increased to £476. What a fantastic result with the proceeds going to such a worthy cause.

The concert comprised two sets of mixed Rock songs with a few ballads ranging from the 1950's through to the 1970's. Many of the audience were dancing the night away and from the feedback we received everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. My thanks go to band members for their enthusiastic performance not forgetting Geoff Farnie, our sound engineer, without whom we would not be heard. Also to Richard Hamlyn for his jovial role as Master of Ceremonies. For those who were unable to attend the concert, our thanks go to Geoff Bathe who recorded a video of the concert, details are given below.

Our next gig will form part of the Cheddar Parish Council's Celebration Picnic to be held at the Cheddar playing field in Sharpham Road on Sunday 7th May following King Charles' coronation. We hope to see you all then.

NB We still have Band vacancies for a drummer and lead guitarist. Meanwhile we carry on with the present line up.

**Basil Clarke**     Band leader

The YouTube links to Parts 1 and 2 of the Rock Band's Valentines Concert are:

<https://youtu.be/wrUAN-qHpm0>

<https://youtu.be/JUTSW7NVKxc>



The U3A Rock Band

Valentine Concert

*Thanks to Geoff Bathe  
for the photographs.*



## **"Don't Look Up"**

*Don't Look Up* was the title of the talk given by our February speaker Jo Richardson. Jo is a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and the amazing slides she showed were taken by her husband who is a renowned Astrophotographer. The object we were warned not to look up at is the Sun. The details we learned about it in this very professionally delivered presentation are mind boggling.

Until Galileo it was believed that the Earth was the centre of our universe but he discovered that in fact we revolve around the Sun. The diameter of this hugely dynamic ball of gas is 864 thousand miles. It is 109 times wider than the Earth and 93 million miles from us, is 4.603 billion years old and has another 5 billion years of life left. The chromosphere, the second layer of the Sun's atmosphere, is actually hotter than it's surface. Bodies with mass in the Universe attract each other and the Sun's pull on the Earth keeps it in orbit just as the Earth's pull on the moon keeps this in orbit. Both the sun and our moon affect the tides in our oceans.

Jo also told us of William Herschel (from Bath) who discovered Uranus in 1781, a renowned Astronomer as was Edwin Hubble after whom the Hubble telescope was named. Launched in 1990 with some servicing by astronauts some years ago the Hubble telescope was expected to last until 2006. It is though still going strong today and is sending back wonderful pictures of our universe and beyond.

Many members have said this was the best talk we have had at Cheddar Valley U3A and maybe the best talk they have attended. I agree. I do hope we can have Jo back at some time in the future. You can find more about Jo using [www.spacedetectives.com](http://www.spacedetectives.com)

**Sheila Eastland**

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"Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance"

Most of us will have seen the big yellow helicopter flying over at some time. Colin Thomas, a volunteer with the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, gave us the details of this publicly funded life-saving service at the March Speaker Meeting. Probably most of us will know of someone who has benefited from its use in an emergency. Cornwall had

the first air ambulance in 1987. In 2000 the services became a registered charity. The charity has nine Trustees under a chairman and fifteen staff.

The model flown by Dorset and Somerset (D&S) is an Augusta Westland 16, at one time the largest helicopter in voluntary service in the country. Its size and capabilities soon made it a favourite with many other regions. It costs £5 million a year to run and about £3,000 per mission and there could be up to five of these a day. Fuel use when flying is high using 84 gallons per hour. Patrons for the service include Paul Nichols, Martin Clunes and Jenson Button.

Available 19 hours a day, weather permitting, it has two crews, five pilots, five co-pilots, eighteen specialist practitioners and nineteen critical care doctors. The helicopter is based at Henstridge air field but the headquarters are in Wellington. The facilities at Henstridge include training areas, planning rooms medical and clinical storage buildings.

Calls out to Dorset last year were 54 and to Somerset 55. Managed by the Civil Air Authority the service can be anywhere in the operating area within 20 minutes with a speed of 165 knots (190 mph). There are five weather stations within the flying area. Cars can transport the medics when weather conditions prevent flying. The control room is in Exeter and has direct links with emergency service call centres. There are six Air Ambulances in the South West and a total of thirtysix in the UK. The service also undertakes education and highlights safety. It is a sad fact that one farmer dies as a result of accident every ten days.

There are many ways to support the service: they will take used stamps and old mobiles and for £50 per year you can enter the weekly cash draw. The service is reliant on its volunteers for fund-raising. Anita, one of our members, is one as was our speaker. On 7th May there will be a meeting for those interested in the Methodist Chapel in Cheddar.

Sheila Eastland



Thank you for your generosity

Donations totalling £181.67 were received for the benefit of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Charity when they attended the Speaker Meeting on 2nd March.

COMMUNITY NEWS

This Community News section of the Newsletter includes short specific items of local interest or about people and places which are indirectly linked to the Cheddar Valley U3A.

The Library Home Service

Being house-bound now I have joined the Library Home Service, at Cheddar Library, telephone 01934 742769.

A volunteer brings me books and returns them. He either brings me a selection of my interests or I order a book or disc by telephone.

The time I can keep a book or a disc is longer than normally and it is all free of charge. A marvellous service.

Margaret Earle

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### **Cheddar Folk Banners Project**

We had a great time chatting to members at your January Coffee Morning - a couple of whom came along to share stories at our coffee mornings. We would love to record people talking about their memories, or stories they know of the local area, for our upcoming exhibition in May. To participate please contact us by email on [inkjam2020@gmail.com](mailto:inkjam2020@gmail.com).

The banners depicting the stories illustrated by the children at First and Middle schools will be displayed around the village on the first May bank holiday weekend. There will be an exhibition of the banners, drawings, and memorabilia around the Folk Tales of Cheddar from Monday 15th May at the Arts Quarter, displaying for the rest of May.

We warmly welcome you all to the exhibition.

**Liz and Ness**

***Axbridge Community Theatre***

***The Birthday Party by Harold Pinter***

***Axbridge Town Hall***

***Wednesday 29th March to Saturday 1st April 2023***

***7.30 pm***

***Admission £12 – Licensed Bar***

***Tickets available from Axbridge Post Office or Pharmacy or  
online at Axbridge Community Theatre.***

## **Cheddar Country Market**

Cheddar Country Market is open every Tuesday in Cheddar Village Hall from 10:00 am to 11:30 am . We sell all your favourite baked cakes and savouries, preserves and local honey plus home grown plants, fruit and vegetables and lovely hand crafted cards, children's clothes and much more.

Refreshments are served so come and meet friends or make new ones. Always a warm welcome and we are always looking for new producers and helpers for this 102 year old co-operative social enterprise.

**Sue Simmons**

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Prickles Charity Shop

Prickles Charity Shop thank you for your support but do not need any more newspapers for the time being.

Janet Hillman

126 Bus Update

The Bus Recovery Grant provided by the Government has been extended until the end of June. This means that the 126 bus between Axbridge and Wells will continue on its existing timetable until then. However, there is no guarantee at the time of writing what will happen after June. The £2 single fare scheme will also continue until the end of June.

In order for the 126 bus service to continue, we need to:

Use the bus at every opportunity. Do you need to take the car, could you use the bus? You can save your car parking charges and help the environment.

It is also very important to get the route extended to its former stop in Weston-super-Mare and also to increase the frequency of the service back to an hourly rota. If you have been directly affected by the loss of service or want to make your feelings known about poor rural public transport, please let decision-makers know.

You can contact the following people to make your point:

Mark Harper MP, Secretary of State for Transport, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Phone: 0207 219 5056

Email: mark.harper.mp@parliament.uk

Richard Holden MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Buses) (Department for Transport), House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Phone: 0207 2193059

Email: richard.holden.mp@parliament.uk

James Heapey MP, Wells, 10 Broad Street, Wells BS5 2DN

Phone: 01749343255

Email: james.heapey.mp@parliament.uk

Somerset County Council

msrigby@somerset.gov.uk – Lead Member for Transport and Digital
mike.hewitson@somerset.gov.uk – Associate Lead for Transport and Digital

ben.ferguson@somerset.gov.uk – Cllr for Cheddar
pauline.ham@somerset.gov.uk – Cllr for Cheddar

As always, USE IT OR LOSE IT!

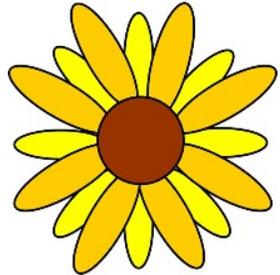
Suzanne Green kindly supplied this information.

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### *More than just a Flower Show!*

Cheddar Flower Show will be held on Saturday 19th August at 2.00 pm in Cheddar Village Hall.

As well as a chance to demonstrate your gardening skills by exhibiting your flowers, fruit and vegetables you can showcase your talents in Photography, Arts, Crafts and Cookery - not forgetting your delicious preserves.



There are ten classes for children, so all the family can join in.

Flower Show Schedules will be available online in April.

Go to **Cheddar Flower Show Facebook Page**

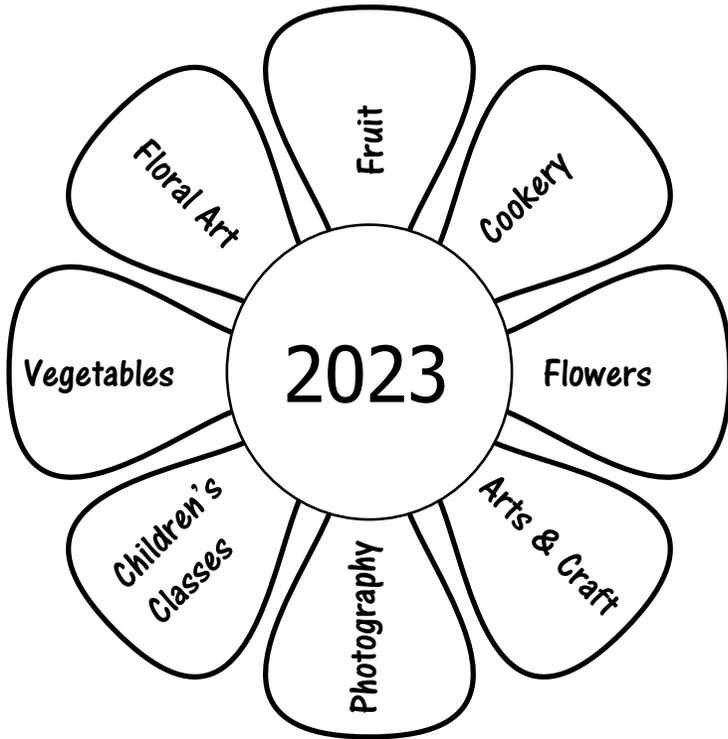
or **email [cheddar.flowershow@yahoo.com](mailto:cheddar.flowershow@yahoo.com)**

Printed schedules will be available at Cheddar Library, Katie Boo, Woodbury Insurance, Time Out, Hansford's Deli and Maunders Ltd.

### *Cheddar Scarecrow Trail*

This community activity is back by popular demand, and this year the time is extended to cover the August Bank Holiday weekend - as suggested by a U3A member - so that more locals and visitors can enjoy exploring Cheddar with a Trail Map.

# CHEDDAR FLOWER SHOW



Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August at 2:00 pm

CHEDDAR VILLAGE HALL

Open to all Exhibitors    Free Schedule





## **KINGS FITNESS AND LEISURE, CHEDDAR**

### ***NOTICE OF AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS***

#### ***TO ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS***

##### **Mondays – 2pm:**

Water Conditioning (Swimming Pool with Leanne)

Water Conditioning is a gentle exercise session that takes place in the pool.

The exercises are designed to relieve pressure on the joints and help to strengthen and condition muscles to maintain flexibility in the joints.

Equipment such as foam dumbbells and noodles are used to assist and add resistance to the exercises. **Booking essential**

##### **Tuesdays – 11.30am:**

Seated exercise (Studio 4 with Leanne)

Very low impact exercise class. All moves are done seated.

Equipment such as light weights, bands and mini stability balls are used during each session. **Booking Essential**

##### **Wednesdays – 10.30am:**

Seated Pilates (Studio 2 with Andrew)

Low impact chair classes for everyone. The movements can be done seated, standing or a combination of both depending on how you are feeling on the day.

Movements include some strength and balance exercise. Chair exercises can help with reducing the risk of falls. The movements increase blood flow and keep your joints active and lubricated.

These exercises also strengthen your muscles, improve posture, strengthen shoulders, lubricate joints and increase your upper body flexibility. **Booking essential**

**Thursdays:**

**11.30am** Soft Circuits (Studio 3 with Sarah F) A gentle exercise session focusing on balance, strength, fitness, and fun.

**11.30am** Seated Yoga (Studio 4 with Anna) Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga that can be done sitting on a chair or standing while using the chair for support. Benefits of chair yoga include improved flexibility, better concentration, and relaxation.

**1pm Standing Strong** (Falls prevention with Leanne) Exercises designed to help with balance, co-ordination and stability. Equipment such as balance boards and steps are used.

**2pm Gentle Pilates** (stretching & flexibility with Leanne)

Mat Pilates (chairs provided for support) gentle exercises to help with flexibility and relaxation.

**Fridays – 11.30am:**

Mat Pilates (Studio 2 with Belinda) These classes are a mixed level gentle class and is suitable for any age. The session is a slower paced class which incorporates balance & mobility exercises along with a series of stretches.

For further details contact Leanne Trainer, Kings Fitness and Leisure – Back2Health Co-Ordinator

Email: [ltrainer@kingsfitness.co.uk](mailto:ltrainer@kingsfitness.co.uk)

## Group News

*This section of the Newsletter brings you news of what our various groups have been doing recently. Not every group has an entry in every newsletter, but all established groups and group leaders are shown in the tables on pages 58 to 61.*

## Art Group



A Still Life

ready to be painted by the Art Group

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Boules Group

Fourteen members of the Boules group attended a "Late Christmas lunch" at The Woodbrough Inn in Winscombe on 16th January 2023. A pre order was arranged by Elaine Norman and a variety of dishes was duly served. Good conversation and no washing up, all participants left full and contented.

Elaine Norman



The Boules Group at their
“Late Christmas Lunch”

*Thanks to Elaine Norman for the
photographs*



Canasta 2

The Canasta group which has been going for several years now has been at full capacity for a while so a new Canasta Group has now started, called Canasta 2.

It met for the first time at the beginning of March and will meet every second and fourth Thursday afternoon in the month from 2.45 pm to 4.45 pm in the Wedmore Scout Hut. It is warm and bright there, with plenty of space inside, and parking.

The group is made up of beginners and more experienced players, we will play to the same set of rules as the original canasta group. If you are interested contact me.

Margaret Farnie Tel: or email



Classic Films Group

On 6th March the group watched the original 1930 film of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. That version won two Oscars when it was made - best film and best director. I was not looking forward to seeing it very much, as I avoid depressing subjects as entertainment, and am not very good with blood and gore. Our group contained two people who had seen the current version, and opined that the 1930 one was the better film.

It was in black and white and, having been made only 12 years after the end of the First World War the film almost gave the impression of being a documentary. Special effects have moved on a lot since 1930, and the war scenes were nothing like as graphic as what we see now. A great deal was left to the viewer's imagination, which was also very effective.

There were a lot of explosions, and scenes of soldiers rushing about in several directions at once, which is what one expects of any depiction of WW1, and it was nothing like as depressing as I feared it would be.

For our April meeting we have chosen one from Brian Nicholls' list headed "Films that bring joy and laughter", feeling that we'd earned it. I am away until 15th April, so we agreed to hold our next meeting on Monday 17th April at 2.00 pm at Hannah More Cottage, Lower North Street, Cheddar, when we will see *The Jerk*, a 1979 comedy starring Steve Martin in his first role in a feature film. All Cheddar Valley U3A members are welcome to join us.

Helen Batt

U3A Computer Users Group (U3ACUG)

The group continues to meet at the Cheddar Watersports Club on the reservoir, usually on the second Monday of the month from 10.00 am to 12 noon. New members are always welcome to join our group; come along to our meeting to see if it suits your interests.

Having moved through successive versions of Windows and Microsoft Office over the years there has never been any shortage of changes to discuss to keep us up to date. Most of the group now use Windows 11, having been reassured by Microsoft that it was the last version, with only upgrades in the future. The rumours of Windows 12 are obviously untrue!

However Windows 10 remains a favourite, and we cover both, so there is no rush to upgrade before it is retired in 2025.

For those folks who need to "clean up" their computer, we have recommended "CCleaner" in the past. The latest news from Microsoft is release of their new PC Manager which includes a health check and storage management and looks to be a good replacement for CCleaner. Try it at: <https://pcmanager-en.microsoft.com/>

Our meeting schedule (second Monday) has had to be altered because of upcoming bank holidays. The revised schedule will be: 17th April, 15th May, 12th June and 10th July.

Bryan Smith Email:

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## Great Lives

If you have not heard of this group before, you may be wondering what we're all about? We meet monthly at 2.00 pm on the last Tuesday afternoon, to discuss an earlier radio programme we have all listened to in which an individual has been described as a "Great Life". Whilst one of us leads the discussion (three or four of us take it in turns) everybody contributes their opinion and we usually reach an agreement at least with each other, if not the programme's presenter.

In January it was Isambard Kingdom Brunel who we all knew a lot about, or thought we did. Did you know he designed, and had built, prefabricated hospitals for the Crimean War? Voted by the British public as the second greatest figure of British history, after Churchill, we were nevertheless aware of a number of failures and a scant regard for his investor's money. Still, on balance he was thought a Great Life, even if he did not build the Clifton Suspension Bridge!

By the time you read this, we'll have talked about Scott of the Antarctic, I wonder what we'll make of him? In March I'll be proposing William Brown star of the Just William books and we'll no doubt be discussing whether a character in a book can really be called a Great Life. What do you think? Why not listen to the programme and see if you're inspired to come and share your opinion. The link is below, give me a call if you want to join us.

**John Morgan** Tel: .

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000bx24>

### **Robert Kennedy - A Great Life Discussion**

The Great Lives group met in-house in January due to on-going work in the village hall. The Great Life discussion focused on Robert Kennedy. Kennedy, over the past 55 years, has been regarded as the best President America never had, but was he?

Coming from a privileged background Robert Kennedy knew little of the plight of struggling white and black communities. After obtaining a law degree his main focus was on helping his brother John win the 1960 presidential election.

Following the election, he was awarded one of the most important jobs in the Cabinet, that of Attorney General. During this time he worked tirelessly to bring about the end of the 13-day Cuban missile crisis and the reduction of crime.

In 1964, Kennedy supported President Lyndon B Johnson and Congress in the authorisation of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which permitted Johnson to take any measures necessary to promote and maintain international peace and security in South-east Asia. By 1967, Kennedy had transitioned from a hawk into a dove in wanting to bring

about the end of what had become a war of attrition in Vietnam. He was also very aware of the detrimental impact it was having on America and its people.

He had become more aware of the plight of the poor, visiting areas where people were barely making a living and unable to feed their children. He who had once had no time for Martin Luther King later became an advocate of the civil rights leader.

Kennedy knew that racism wasn't confined to the South, it was across the whole country. He rallied against racist leaders and campaigned to overcome joblessness and hunger, using his seat in the U.S. Senate to pioneer anti-poverty programmes from the Mississippi Delta to Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant, which was the largest ghetto in America during that period. By the time of his death in June 1968, Robert Kennedy had become the most trusted white man in black America.

Could a man who had been so privileged and who was able to conduct himself in a hardened manner during his time as Attorney General and Campaign Manager for his brother John, become completely dedicated to the civil rights movement and ending the suffering of all who were underprivileged? Had he really been transformed or was this a way to get them on board and win their vote?

There were mixed feelings amongst the group as to whether Robert Francis Kennedy deserved the accolade of being called a great life. One member has great admiration for the Kennedy's, others who had been against him began to take a different view. Another member remained very sceptical and did not regard him as a great life. It could be suggested that Kennedy's untimely death at the age of 42 has resulted in him becoming something of a myth and legend.

**Julie Baker**



## **History Group**

We have completed our study of social life in the 1950s with members' talks on Clothes and Fashion, and Games, Hobbies and Pastimes. It has been an enjoyable topic with plenty of discussion and opportunities to share nostalgic memories!

Each member of the group has researched the achievement of a different woman in the decade, and so far we have had short talks on Marilyn Monroe, Edith Summerskill, Frieda Kahlo (a Mexican painter unknown to many of us), Richmal Crompton and Sylvia Plath.

We are not meeting in April on Easter Tuesday, but in May and June we plan to consider two significant events of the 1950s, the Korean War and the Suez Crisis.

**Heather Davey**



## Model Railway Group



Buildings ready to be located on the layout

*Thanks to David Woodliffe for the photograph*

The following was written by Simon Fosbury who has been involved in railway modelling for over 40 years and has been most helpful in getting the group started and to our current status, for which I am immensely thankful.

"The early phases of building a model railway must seem incredibly dull to outsiders. After all, building a baseboard is just carpentry and then there is all the checking that the planned track-work, lovingly drawn out on massive sheets of paper, will actually work in practice. Meantime some buildings for the layout are built in preparation (see photo) and finally the day comes when track-laying can really begin. We are very nearly at that point and now things become interesting. Quite apart from the railway itself, we need scenery made, buildings assembled, drawings to scale of buildings made and all sorts of skills which one might not associate with model railways. Then there are railway matters to consider, actually running the railway, maintaining the layout and the engines, setting up the required electrics, and considering the future developments such as working signals. And we must not forget the historians who can put us right on details such as current fashions, housing details and other important items. Whatever abilities you have, you would be most welcome to join us. It is crazy, but it is fun."

As Simon says, track-laying can now really begin. If you would like to join us, please phone the telephone number below and come along to see what you have been missing.

**David Woodliffe**      Tel.



## **Photography Group**

Our last meeting was fun. Si started the ball rolling with his presentation on taking railway photographs, which was very informative and the information related to other forms of photography as well. We then had a look at some of our images from Rome, photo collages from Sally, and Graham showed us images specifically taken only on his iPhone, which was something of a revelation, as the quality was so good. There still remains the problem of not being able to see the screen in bright light, plus the need to hold the phone steady when taking a photograph. Also, the cost is considerable, but not compared to buying an SLR. I am still reluctant to lose my SLR and its lovely zoom lens, but the technology is improving so quickly..... Everyone else contributed something including

some lovely weather images. Good to be meeting in person again and not having to bother with Zoom.

## **Future programme**

**Tuesday 18th April:** Graham will give us a presentation on "Macro photography".

**Saturday 22nd April:** A Safari trip to the RWA in Bristol, where there are two photographic exhibitions to view:

*A Celebration of Contemporary Photographic Practice* and *A Bend in the River* by Jem Southem exploring subtle changes in a local landscape over time.

**Tuesday 30th May:** Margaret has kindly agreed to bring along her microscope, which has been adapted to take photographs. This was postponed because of Covid.

For all of us plus those who can't make it to the RWA, we will add "Taking interesting images of buildings", which don't end up like rather ordinary postcards. Si has suggested taking our members to Wells Cathedral and having a go - inside and out- at a time of your choosing. We can add "Converging lines" to this topic.

Linda has offered to give us a presentation on "Wildlife Photography" later on in the year. So, lots to look forward to as we leave behind this endless winter.

We now have space for a couple more members, whether beginners or those with experience. We are a supportive group with the aim of improving our photographic skills.

We are happy for members to use anything from phones to sophisticated SLR's.

Please contact Liz Fosbury on [or](#) Mob [or](#) email

**Liz Fosbury**



These photographs of a grasshopper, leaves, and a street scene are all taken on an iPhone by Graham Sinclair





Clouds over Cheddar

Photograph by Linda Bolton



## Poetry Group

Our new theme is based on poems suggested by the Poetry Archive website on 100 Years of Poetry on the BBC 1922 – 2022. We will be looking at poems that were read on the BBC Radio over the last 100 years. This is a topic that will introduce us to poems that are new to us as well as revisiting some we haven't looked at for some time. We started in January with the 1920's when we listened to a recording of *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* by Langston Hughes, an American poet new to us as well as some we knew well.

In February we looked at the 1930's. John Masefield, who was the Poet Laureate, gave us *Coronation Ode* written for the 1937 Coronation of

George VI. The poets Sylvia Townsend Warner and William Empson were new to us. Other poets included Stephen Spender, Dylan Thomas, Stevie Smith, C Day Lewis, Idris Davies and David Jones. Although we were familiar with some of these poets, we had not previously read most of the poems.

**Glenys Runciman**



**Beginners Scottish Dancing Group**

We keep warm and fit at 9.30 am to 11.30 am each Wednesday morning in Axbridge Town Hall. We currently have around 20 members including a number who joined as complete beginners in 2022. You don't need a partner, but will be especially welcome if you bring one! Why not pop along and watch to see if this is something you might like to try, or give me a call for more information.

**John Morgan** Tel:



*Thanks to John Morgan for the photograph*

## Scrabble



On the second Friday of January this year the CVU3A Scrabble Group enjoyed a celebratory lunch at The Riverside Inn in Cheddar.



We were made very welcome by the excellent staff and seated in the pleasant conservatory for much of the afternoon.

We enjoyed a delicious meal followed by prize giving and two games of Scrabble.

*Thanks to  
Brenda Horwood for  
the photographs*

Our numbers have remained fairly stable with several new members joining in the last year and more interest this year so far, but we still have space for more interested members so please don't be put off. I look forward to seeing a few new faces in the near future.

### **Brenda Horwood**

A few unusual but useful words that can be used in Scrabble:

Vomer - a thin flat nasal bone

Weanel - recently weaned child

Xerus - ground squirrel

Yawp - gape or yawn

Ziff - a beard



### **Singing for Pleasure**

We had a belated Christmas party after our singing session at the beginning of February, in the form of afternoon tea. We arrived at the Hall to find that the tables had been elegantly set out by Margaret, helped by Sue and Jo, so many thanks to them. It was a pleasure to relax, have a chat and share cream scones, cakes and Anita's famous shortbread after our practice.

As we have no imminent performances planned this term, we are enjoying learning some new music and revisiting old songs without any pressure!

We are delighted to have recently welcomed two new members to help swell our numbers. We would love to see more, so do come along and give us a try, if you enjoy singing.

**Barbara Herring** Tel:

## **Solos Group**

Our group continues to meet at the Methodist Church Hall on the first Monday of every month from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm, this includes bank holidays.

On the Sunday following our meeting whenever possible we enjoy going out for lunch. We often have a group of 14 or more and enjoy one another's company on what can sometimes be a lonely day for those living alone.

In November last year eight members spent a leisurely short break in Torquay and each month we have a day trip. Over recent months we have visited Portishead, Sherborne, The American Museum in Bath, Dunster, Minehead and Cardiff. If you think this might be something you may enjoy please join us at our next meeting which will be held on Monday 3rd April at 10.30am

**Julie Baker**

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Stained Glass Group

The group have met twice monthly at The Arts Quarter in Cheddar where we still enjoy having plenty of space, tall stools and tables to sit and work at, and plenty of light. Most of us are getting on with our own projects, some of them are to sell in aid of charity.

We have plenty of space for at least three more members, do give me a call if you are interested. All materials and tools are provided.

Margaret Farnie Telephone or email:

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## **Original Walking Group**

In early March the Original Walking Group did a longer walk than we have done recently, seven miles from Wedmore to Nyland Hill and back. Several members of the group had never been to the top, including Martin, Group Leader. Eleven of us walked up and were rewarded with great views, though the weather could have been better.

**Chris Barker**



*Thanks to Chris Barker for the photograph*

## **Original Walking Group Programme**

### **Wednesday 12 April 2023**

Leader: Martin Fewings. Starting Point: Blackmoor Car Park, behind Charterhouse Centre, Charterhouse. Time: 2.00 pm. Grid ref: 505558. For further details contact Martin.

### **Thursday 27 April 2023**

Leader: John Morgan. Starting Point: Axbridge Reservoir Car Park. Time: 2.00 pm. Grid ref: 438543. For further details contact John Morgan

### **Tuesday 9 May 2023**

Leaders: Keith and Sheila Bellingham. Starting Point: West Huntspill Church, Church Road, West Huntspill, Highbridge, TA9 3RN. Time: 2.00 pm. Grid ref: 305455. A flat 4.5 to 5 mile route along the Rivers Brue and Parrett. Park in the adjacent Parish Hall Car Park or nearby roads. For further details contact Keith or Sheila.

### **Wednesday 24 May 2023**

Leader: Chris Barker. Starting point: Weston-super-Mare, Uphill Marina entrance. Start time 2.00 pm. Grid ref: 312587. A 4 mile walk around the nature reserves and coast path at Uphill, flat and no stiles. We might climb up to St Nicholas Church. Parking on the layby before Uphill Marina, in Uphill Way, in the Marina, or in the Beach Car Park at Uphill (£6 for 4 hours). The walk will go past the Beach Car Park, so anyone parking there can join from there. Postcode for all, BS23 4XY. For further details contact Christine.

### **Thursday 8 June 2023**

Leader: Pat Taylor. Starting point: Wedmore Playing fields car park. Start Time: 2.00 pm. Grid ref: 428475. For further details contact Pat.

**Martin Fewings** Group Leader



## **New Walking Group - Faster Easy Walking**

Do you find the Easy Walking group too slow, but the Original Walking group too strenuous?

There is a proposal to have a new walking group, faster than the present Easy Walkers, but not going as far, or up and down hills as the Original Walking group.

A trial walk is planned for Wednesday 5th April, from the Sharpham Road Playing Fields car park in Cheddar, post code BS27 3DR. It is on the right before you get to the Cheddar Reservoir car park.

We plan to leave at 10.00 am, and walk round the reservoir in 50 minutes or so. After the walk, we will go into Cheddar for coffee to discuss going forward.

We would love to see you, if you would like to give it a try.

For more information contact:  
Chris Barker, Tel: , Email: or  
Margaret Farnie, Tel: , Email:

## Reading Group 1

### "Songbirds" by Christy Lefteri

The book chosen for the bleak month of February was perhaps, in hindsight, a poor choice! Not a book to lift the spirits. Bleak indeed.

*Songbirds*, written by Christy Lefteri, the daughter of Cypriot refugees, explores the subject of immigration and the plight of the female migrant domestic workers.

The story takes place in Cyprus where the main character journeys from Sri Lanka to work as a maid in order to support her mother and daughter after the death of her husband. Her disappearance is at the centre of the story and as it unfolds we learn the shocking reality of the lives these women lead. Many are mentally, physically and sexually abused but the police are not interested in carrying out any investigation as to their whereabouts when they go missing. It was written with compassion as Lefteri shines a light on the reality of the migrants, the terrible working conditions that impair their human rights. The shocking reality is that this is happening in so many countries today and very few of us are aware of it.

The illegal poaching of songbirds is also detailed and at times the description of such captures is difficult to read. It is a very sad book and the outcome is tragically inevitable.

Hilary Cheeke

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Reading Group 2

"Three Daughters of Eve" by Elif Shafak

Our book for January was *Three Daughters of Eve* by Elif Shafak, an award winning author from Turkey. She is the most widely read female author in Turkey writing in English and Turkish, and has published 17 books. She explores Turkey's past and tumultuous present.

This book moves between Istanbul and Oxford and tells the story of Peri, from her traumatic Istanbul childhood to student years at Oxford with the rebellious professor who leads her and best friends Shirin and Mona to question every thing, and the scandal that tore them apart.

As a group we all agreed that we enjoyed it. Very deep and engrossing and completely different from our usual reads.

Our initial thought was how much Elizabeth Parry our popular group member would have enjoyed it so. She sadly died recently and we raised a glass to her in remembrance of a lively and perspicacious reader and friend. We will miss her dearly

“The Gardener” by Salley Vickers

Our book for February was *The Gardener* by Salley Vickers. Artist Hassie Days and her sister Margot buy a run down house in the Welsh marshes. While Margot continues her London life in high finance Hassie is left alone to work the long large neglected garden with the help of Murat, an Albanian migrant, and she is befriended by eccentric sharp tongued Miss Foot. As Hassie begins to explore the house, gardens and nearby woods old hurts begin to fade as she experiences the healing power of nature.

Not a popular read! Well written with a good description of gardening and nature but lacking a good story or excitement but there is a twist at the end!!

We were all a little sad as this was Myra’s last time with us before she moves to Bristol. We wished her every happiness in her new life and she promised to keep in touch.

Our poem for February was *The Snowdrop* by Mike McLellan.

Pat Panchaud

Reading Group 3

"Three Daughters of Eve" by Elif Shafak

There was a diversity of opinions from the group on *Three Daughters of Eve* by Elif Shafak, a novel about a Turkish girl who studies at Oxford. We first meet her as an adult married with a teenage daughter and living in Istanbul. On her way to a dinner party her handbag is stolen. She confronts the thief trying to get it back, a photo falls from the bag. It was taken at Oxford, picturing herself, two female friends and a man. We only discover the significance of this towards the end of the book. Like so many modern novels the story switches from the present to the past which can be confusing. I found it difficult to get into but eventually enjoyed it. Others liked the beginning but got bogged down by the end.

Peri, the main character, comes from a home in which her Mother is religious and her Father, who she adores, is secular. She battles constantly with trying to sort out her own beliefs, or lack of them. At Oxford she finds the contrast of her own chaotic city culture and that of Oxford a shock. A new friend introduces her to a renegade Professor, Azur, with whom she is having an affair. Azur pushes his students to study and discuss deeper and deeper into the nature of God. Peri falls in love with him. A love she thinks is reciprocated but it is not.

There is much deep philosophy in the book some of which is rather obscure. Is evil a divine retribution for our actions or is it the fickle actions of fate? The conversations at the dinner party reveal class pressure on women and some misogyny, but actually adds little to the story. "Where is the plot?" bemoaned one member. Most of us would not be encouraged to read another book by Shafak although one of us had read and enjoyed *The Island of Missing Trees*. This would have been our choice but the library had not enough copies including an audio one.

One of our members has very poor sight and we always try to get a book set with an audio copy. The quality of the reading makes a great deal of difference to the enjoyment of the book. This one was read by a Turkish person and it took quite a time for the listener to cope with the accent. We wonder if other groups use audio copies and what their opinions are.

"Raven Black" by Ann Cleeves

Considering the prolific output of writer Ann Cleeves it is surprising that as a group we have not read something by her before. Two of her sets of novels have been televised as *Vera* and *Shetland*. It is to these windswept isles this book takes us. The body of a teenage girl is found strangled with her own scarf in a snowy hillside not far from habitation. Several years before a younger girl had disappeared from the same group of houses, her body was never found. Suspicion in both cases falls on Magnus, who has learning difficulties, although there is no evidence against him apart from where he lives and the fact that the girl who disappeared used to visit his mother.

The writer conveys with much skill the bleakness of the island, the weather, the close knit ties between the islanders and a certain suspicion of outsiders. Although this may have changed since 2003 when it was written. One of our members commented, "not a good advert for the islands, I wonder what the tourist board thought".

The investigation initially is led by Jimmy Perez, drawn to Fran, who discovered the body. Although a detective from the mainland is later sent to help. There is a tension from the outset between the two who employ very different methods of working. Perez, slowish, methodical, with knowledge of the islands and the people and Taylor, anxious to gain promotion and get the job done. But eventually they find a way of working together.

Charlotte, the dead girl, was an incomer whilst Sally her friend is an islander. We are given an insight into life for the teenage islanders. Sally and Charlotte seem unlikely friends. There are red herrings galore before the murderer is unmasked following events at the highlight of the year in Lerwick we know as Up Helly Aa. We all enjoyed the book and would read another of hers. (I already have done so). Although we did think the person who committed the murder somehow seemed an unlikely choice.

Sheila Eastland

Reading Group 4

"Klara and the Sun" by Kazuo Ishiguro

Klara, an Artificial Friend with remarkable observational qualities, waits in the store to be chosen by a child. In a world where humans are becoming divided into those who take the risk to be "lifted" and those who do not have the choice, Klara's job is to fend off loneliness among the new elite.

Kazuo Ishiguro uses Klara's eyes and unexpected sensitivities to explore the meaning of love in a world where technology and enhanced intellect are outpacing the ideas of human tenderness and empathy.

Klara's new home is with Josie, a lifted child. Next door, lives Rick, who is talented but has not been genetically engineered. Josie and Rick have been sworn friends since early childhood but staying together is going to become difficult as their lives begin to take diverging routes.

Klara settles in well, but behind the comfortable existence of Josie's life there are dark undercurrents that take Klara some time to work out. Being lifted has its dangers and love is interconnected with loss. Klara has her own, surprisingly empathic, way of trying to help Josie and finds accomplices among her human acquaintances. Ultimately, Klara must learn that love and loss are as much about how others feel about us as how we feel about them.

Our reading group all enjoyed *Klara and the Sun*. Although none of us are natural science fiction readers, this was difficult to put down. So, whether you like dystopian science fiction or a deep and tender exploration of what it means to be human, this is a good book to read.

"The Slowworm's Song" by Andrew Miller

Andrew Miller is a British prize winning author and former journalist born in Bristol in 1960.

This beautifully written and poignant novel is written in the form of a letter by former soldier Stephen Rose to his recently reacquainted daughter with whom he is building a fragile relationship.

Stephen, a recovering alcoholic, lives quietly in Somerset but is still psychologically affected by his experiences in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. When he receives a letter from the Commission on the Troubles some 40 years later Stephen knows he has to face his past but if he loses his daughter he loses everything.

The book is both tender and brutal describing mental health difficulties, guilt, trauma and pain. Whilst our group were tentative about reading this highly emotional novel, we were really glad to have done so, and would recommend it to other groups.

"The Island of Missing Trees" by Elif Shafak

The Island of Missing Trees (2021) a best-selling novel by Elif Shafak, was recommended to me as an enjoyable read. That certainly proved to be the case in our group.

As intriguing as this title may be, rest assured there are trees on this island. But only one, a fig tree, plays a significant role. It embraces the main characters, Kostas a 17-year-old Greek Christian and Defne an 18-year-old Turkish Muslim and begins by telling us of their clandestine meetings in a local tavern run by a secretly gay couple, again, one Greek and one Turkish. All this against a background of escalating conflict between the Greeks and the Turks in Cyprus in 1974!

Inevitably Kosta's mother, Panagiota, suspects these illicit meetings and sends Kostas to London to live with his uncle for his own safety as tensions grow within Cyprus. Kostas remains in England becoming a successful evolutionary ecologist and botanist. Twenty-five years elapse before he returns to Cyprus ostensibly for research purposes but secretly hoping to be re-united with Defne who had never answered his letters. Having qualified as an Archaeologist, Defne works with the Committee for Missing Persons (CMP), a UN-backed organisation looking to recover the bodies of the people who went missing in the conflict of 1974.

Whilst the fig tree tells us what we can "see" and "feel", alternate chapters guide us through different timelines and one can't help but be absorbed by it all - the politics, the botany and the romance. An

enjoyable read? Most definitely. One we would recommend.

Elif Shafak is an award-winning British-Turkish novelist, whose many books have been translated into over 50 languages across the world. Two of her other novels are *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2008) and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* (2019).

Sue Gudgeon Tel:

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## **Reading Group 5**

### **"The Adventures of the Christmas Pudding" by Agatha Christie**

Over the Christmas period we looked at a collection of short stories by Agatha Christie under the title of *The Adventures of the Christmas Pudding*. Only the first story had a Christmas theme but it prompted discussions about childhood Christmas traditions, such as silver threepenny bits in mince pies. For the remaining, stories it was impossible to read them without the picturing the image of David Suchet and hearing his voice. One conclusion was that whilst the subject matter was dated, the style of writing was more dated than we remembered from reading Agatha Christie many years ago, nevertheless a good light-hearted read.

### **"Becoming" by Michelle Obama**

The next book was *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, her autobiography covering the years from childhood until leaving the White House after the second term. It gives an insight into Michelle growing up in black America with a strong sense of community and family. This was something which Michelle and Barack managed to maintain during his eight years in office, alongside the inevitable demands that public life placed on both of them.

We all agreed that it was extremely well written and a worthwhile read.

**Geoff Farnie**

## Special Interest Groups

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Art                           | Patchwork                |
| Ballroom & Latin Dance        | Philosophy               |
| Boules                        | Photography              |
| Bridge (Wednesday)            | Poetry                   |
| Cardaholics (Greetings Cards) | Quiz Group               |
| Canasta 1                     | Reading Group 1          |
| Canasta 2                     | Reading Group 2          |
| Classic Films Group           | Reading Group 3          |
| Computer: Apple Devices Group | Reading Group 4          |
| Computer: Computer Users      | Reading Group 5          |
| Day Trippers' Group           | Rock Band                |
| French: French Conversation   | Rummikub                 |
| French: Cercle Français       | Scottish Country Dancing |
| German                        | Scrabble                 |
| Great Lives                   | Singing for Pleasure     |
| Handbell Ringing              | Solos                    |
| History: History              | Stained Glass            |
| History: Industrial History   | Table Tennis             |
| Hola España (Spanish)         | Tai Chi - Social         |
| Jigsaw Exchange Group         | Walking: Easy Walking    |
| Lace-making                   | Walking: Original        |
| Model Railway Group           |                          |

## Group Meetings Timetable

| Group                    | Week        | Leader |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------|
| <b>MONDAY MORNING</b>    |             |        |
| Computer Users           | 2nd         |        |
| Rummikub                 | Weekly      |        |
| Solos                    | 1st         |        |
| <b>MONDAY AFTERNOON</b>  |             |        |
| Boules                   | Weekly      |        |
| Canasta 1                | 2nd & 4th   |        |
| Classic Films Group      | 1st         |        |
| Hola España              | Fortnightly |        |
| <b>MONDAY EVENING</b>    |             |        |
| Stained Glass            | 1st & 3rd   |        |
| <b>TUESDAY MORNING</b>   |             |        |
| French: Cercle Français  | Weekly      |        |
| History                  | 2nd         |        |
| Lace-making              | Weekly      |        |
| Photography              | 3rd         |        |
| Reading Group 2          | 4th         |        |
| <b>TUESDAY AFTERNOON</b> |             |        |
| Great Lives              | 4th         |        |
| Industrial History       | 3rd         |        |
| Singing for Pleasure     | 1st & 3rd   |        |
| Table Tennis             | Weekly      |        |

| Group                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Week                                                                                                | Leader                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <p><b>WEDNESDAY MORNING</b></p> <p>French: Conversation<br/>German</p> <p>Poetry<br/>Reading Group 1<br/>Reading Group 4<br/>Scottish Country Dancing<br/>Easy Walking</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON</b></p> <p>Bridge (Wednesday)<br/>Quiz Group</p> | <p>2nd &amp; 4th<br/>Weekly</p> <p>3rd<br/>1st<br/>4th<br/>Weekly<br/>2nd</p> <p>Weekly<br/>2nd</p> |                                       |
| <p><b>THURSDAY MORNING</b></p> <p><b>Coffee Morning 10.00 am</b><br/>With Jigsaw Exchange</p> <p>Handbell Ringing<br/>Model Railway Group<br/>Philosophy</p>                                                                                          | <p>3rd</p> <p>2nd &amp; 4th<br/>Weekly<br/>(Phone first)<br/>4th</p>                                | <p><b>At Cheddar Village Hall</b></p> |

| Group                                                                                                                                                                  | Week                                                                  | Leader                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>THURSDAY AFTERNOON</b><br><b>Speaker Meeting 2.00 pm</b><br>Canasta 2<br>Cardaholics<br>Rock Band                                                                   | 1st<br>2nd & 4th<br>2nd & 4th<br>2nd, 3rd & 4th                       | <b>At Cheddar Village Hall</b> |
| <b>FRIDAY MORNING</b><br>Art<br>Patchwork<br>Reading Group 3<br>Social Tai Chi<br><br><b>FRIDAY AFTERNOON</b><br>Ballroom & Latin Dance<br>Reading Group 5<br>Scrabble | 4th<br>3rd<br>2nd<br>Weekly<br><br>Weekly<br>Last Friday<br>2nd & 4th |                                |
| <b>NO FIXED DAY</b><br>Apple Devices Group<br>Day Trippers' Group<br>Walking: Original                                                                                 | By<br>arrangement<br>See page 16<br>See page 48                       |                                |



## **Submission of material for the next issue**

As you all know this is my last edition of CVU3A News as Editor.

The email address I have used as Editor  
is not transferable to another person, therefore  
**it will no longer be in use.**

At the time of going to press there is no email address to which to  
send submissions for the next newsletter.

When a new contact point has been established you will be notified  
in an email that will be circulated by the Membership Secretary, so  
please look out for that.

Thanks again for all the support I have received, and thank you to  
all those who sent me good wishes for my retirement.

### **Sue Bathe**

*Yes, this is a repeat of the article on page 13.  
I am just checking that you do read to the end of the  
Newsletter...*