

Cheddar Valley **News**

u3a

Feb / March 2023

Volume 29 Issue 1

Registered Charity 1040522

www.u3a.org.uk



<https://u3asites.org.uk/cheddar-valley>

Facebook Page: @cheddarvalleyu3a



**Members of the
Easy Walking Group
at the Smitham Chimney,
a relic of Victorian lead
mining activity in East
Harptree Wood.**

*Thanks to Chris Barker for the
photograph.*



Chairmans' Chat

Spring is well on the way - hooray - and there are clumps of snowdrops appearing in gardens all around Cheddar. I think we may now have had enough rain to cancel out the effects of 2022's long hot summer.



At two events during the last year, one member was taken ill and another tripped and hurt herself. The committee feels it would be helpful if we knew who, in our membership, has current or past knowledge of First Aid procedures, so we can call on them in such circumstances. If you are among that number, please will you identify yourself to any committee member. We intend to include a relevant question on next year's renewal application form.

This is possibly the penultimate issue of CVU3A's bi-monthly newsletter in this form. Our doughty editor, Sue Bathe, is hanging up her keyboard after seven years of sterling work producing what is one of the best U3A newsletters in the organisation. The committee is asking again for any member out there with computer skills to step up and take on the job. Sue will show them how it is done, before producing her next, and final, issue and committee members will always be available with advice and guidance.

We are also still looking for someone to take on the Secretary's job from Brenda Anderson, who is stepping down after completing three years in the role. Cheddar Valley U3A can continue to operate without a newsletter editor - if we have to - by producing an A4 sheet with essential information and no photos, but without a Secretary it must close down. Again, assistance and training can be given by Brenda, but we must have a volunteer to take over from her after the AGM in May. Can you help, or do you know someone who might be persuaded? Please contact any member of the committee.

Your annual membership fee to belong to CVU3A (currently £10 a year) entitles you to receive Third Age Matters (TAM) magazine, which comes

from the publishers through the post. This is a glossy magazine that is printed four times a year, and contains news, articles, letters and photos from U3A groups around the whole country. If you aren't getting a copy but would like one, or if you're getting one but want to stop it, please contact Alan Anderson.

Finally, we are again hosting Coffee Mornings for new members only at the Riverside Inn, Cheddar, on Tuesday 7th February and Tuesday 14th February 2023. About 60 people have joined CVU3A since we last held these meetings - at about this time last year - and committee members will be there to talk about the wider aims of U3A, and answer any questions new members may have. Invitations will be issued shortly.

A belated Happy New Year to you all.

Helen Batt and Christine Barker

*See pages 10 and 21 for further details
of the Editor and Secretary roles.*

Welcome

Anna Dormer
Peter Dormer
Deborah Downton

Paul Roberts
Joy Sindrey

**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 2nd February at 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm
at Cheddar Village Hall**

"Don't look up"

Jo Richardson

In this talk Jo Richardson will take you into the centre of the Sun and highlight the amazing properties that our nearest Star possesses. We will investigate how it came to be, how its immense gravitational field controls all around it, some of its mysteries and what will happen to it (and us!) when it reaches its eventual demise. The talk will conclude with some fantastic astrophotography images of the Sun taken by Pete Richardson from right here in Somerset.

Jo Richardson is the owner and founder of the South West based company "Space Detectives", which has for ten years been inspiring children and adults alike in Space Science and Exploration. Jo is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society as well as the designated Astronomer for Exmoor National Park's Dark Skies Reserve. In addition to this Jo works on contract for Spaceport Cornwall and the European Space Education Resource Office as one of the current six UK Ambassadors. She lives at her home observatory in Somerset with her internationally acclaimed Astrophotographer husband Pete.

~~~~~

**Thursday 2nd March at 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm  
at Cheddar Village Hall**

**Musical Memories**

**James Vincent**

James Vincent provided this description of his background and experience and how he will provide an afternoon of Musical Memories.

"I started as a Blue Coat in a holiday camp entertaining the holiday makers with games during the day and dancing of an evening. Then I

turned professional, as a Vocal Organist, which took me onto Cruises visiting the Canaries and Spain, and I played in Bavaria at skiing resorts, also for summer seasons in many holiday camps including hotels on Jersey and in Blackpool. I came to Weston in 1980 and moved from playing the organ to the keyboard. Then I played all over the south west including at the Winter Gardens in Weston. I now run my own dance evening in Henton on a Friday and play at many dance clubs. I enjoy meeting different groups and telling a few stories as well as playing some good old standards."

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

"The Art of the Magician"

Tony Griffith

Details to follow in the next newsletter.

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 2nd February at 2.00 pm Scottish Dancing Group

Thursday 2nd March at 2.00 pm Solos

Thursday 6th April at 2.00 pm Woodcarving and
Day Trippers'

Coffee Mornings

The **December** Coffee Morning was well attended, and all the assembled enjoyed taking part in our Mystery Raffle (thanks to Chris Barker and Helen Batt), and the Christmas songs and carol by the Singing for Pleasure Group (thanks to Barbara Herring and all group members).

We hope that Suzanne Green will be coming along to our **February** Coffee Morning with information on the latest situation regarding the 126 bus service.

Barry Coppard Coffee Morning Co-ordinator

In Celebration of Coffee Mornings

In memory of Elizabeth A. Parry, a CVU3A member who died on 29th December at the age of 96, one of her poems is included on the next page. This dates back to when the CVU3A held Coffee Mornings at the Bath Arms.

The sentiments are still appropriate.

For more details see the Poetry Group article on page 29.

Cheddar U3A Coffee Mornings

Our Coffee Mornings bring such pleasure
A fruitful way to spend one's leisure.
Each month we gather in the Bath Arms
All ready to enjoy its rare charms.
Taking coffee, perhaps choosing tea
With cup in hand, one's then at liberty
To meet and mingle, have a natter
The room resounds to lovely chatter
Look at notices, Myra's card array
Finding a card for someone's birthday.
Listen to announcements with all the news
Noise starts up again as we exchange views
Then the chosen group shows what it can do
With displays or readings, other things too
Joyful harmonies from the singers
Melodic chimes from handbell ringers
All great fun, so if you've time to kill
The Coffee Mornings will just fill the bill.

Elizabeth A. Parry



Membership News

Mary Evans has resumed the role of Membership Secretary after her travels – welcome back.

Many thanks to Margaret Farnie and Margaret Woodliffe who covered the role in her absence.

The new email address for membership matters is:

membership@cheddarvalleyu3a.org.uk

Please note that the CVU3A Information Point at Cheddar Library on Monday mornings has been discontinued because it was not used.

Dates for Your Diary

Thursday February 2nd - Speaker Meeting at Cheddar Village Hall,
2.00 pm for 2.30 pm.

Saturday February 11th - Rock Band Valentine Concert.
See advertisement on page 9.

Thursday February 16th - Coffee Morning at Cheddar Village Hall
from 10.00 am to 11.30 am.

Thursday March 2nd - Speaker Meeting at Cheddar Village Hall,
2.00 pm for 2.30 pm.

Thursday March 16th - Coffee Morning at Cheddar Village Hall
from 10.00 am to 11.30 am.

Thursday April 6th - Speaker Meeting at Cheddar Village Hall,
2.00 pm for 2.30 pm.

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

Thursday May 4th - AGM. Details to follow with next edition.



U3A ROCK BAND



Valentine Concert

Cheddar Village Hall

Saturday 11th February 2023



Starting at 7.30pm



Entry by Ticket

(Tickets are available at Coffee Mornings,
Speaker Meetings & from some Group Leaders)

Bring your own refreshment

A voluntary exit collection will be made
in aid of the Cheddar Lions

Countdown 2 1

This is my penultimate edition of the CVU3A News. The April / May edition leading up to the AGM will definitely be my last. I have enjoyed being Editor, but after nearly eight years it is time for a change, and to welcome another person into the role.

Editing the Newsletter does take time, but the main tasks are in a week around the deadline once every two months, when the contributions from Committee Members, Group Leaders and Members are combined into one document to publish.

I am sure many of you computer-literate CVU3A Members have the transferable skills necessary, whatever your background. Anyone who has written or read reports or letters will be familiar with checking for typos and other errors, and will have organisational skills.

YOU CAN DO IT.

So contact Chris Barker or Helen Batt (Joint Chairman) asap for a fresh challenge in your life!

Sue Bathe

Submission of material for our next issue

Submissions for the April / May 2023 edition
should be sent to the Newsletter Editor:

Sue Bathe,

cheddar.u3anews@yahoo.co.uk

DEADLINE: Friday 17th March 2023

PLEASE read the further information on page 42.

Group Liaison

Hello to everyone in the Cheddar Valley U3A and a very Happy New Year to you all!

After all the festive celebrations it seems we are here in 2023 very quickly, all the decorations packed away for another year, and “back to normal” (whatever that is...).

This has been a quiet time for the Groups as we all took a break – that is except for the Handbells, Singing for Pleasure and the Rock Band groups. They had been working hard practising for their performance at the Christmas Revue back in December, which proved to be well received by a full house. If you enjoyed the music, the Rock Band will be giving a Valentine Concert on 11th February in Cheddar Village Hall starting at 7.30 pm. Tickets are free of charge but required for entry and there will be a voluntary exit collection in aid of the Cheddar Lions. Don't forget to bring your own refreshments.

If you wish to try something new there are still vacancies in most of the Groups in our U3A – not forgetting if you have a cracking idea for leading a new Group please get in touch and between us we shall “cook something up”. You can always contact me direct (see the back of the Newsletter) for any questions and assistance.

I would like to wish you health, wealth and happiness for 2023.

Lynne Hamlyn Group Liaison Officer

Day Trippers' Group

On 23rd November, on a brief fine day between rather a lot of wet weather, 41 members of the Day Trippers' Group set off for Exeter. The Christmas Market was set up on the Cathedral Green giving the whole area a magical pre-Christmas feel. Exeter is unusual in still having Debenhams, John Lewis and Marks and Spencer in the City Centre, so good shopping was available for those who needed some retail therapy! Exeter also provided plenty of opportunities to enjoy good food. Hopefully everyone who joined us on that day enjoyed themselves and we now look forward to our 2023 plans:

The trips planned for 2023 are as follows:

Stratford on Avon April 27th

Plymouth June 28th or 29th

Salisbury November 14th

More details of these trips will be available nearer the dates.

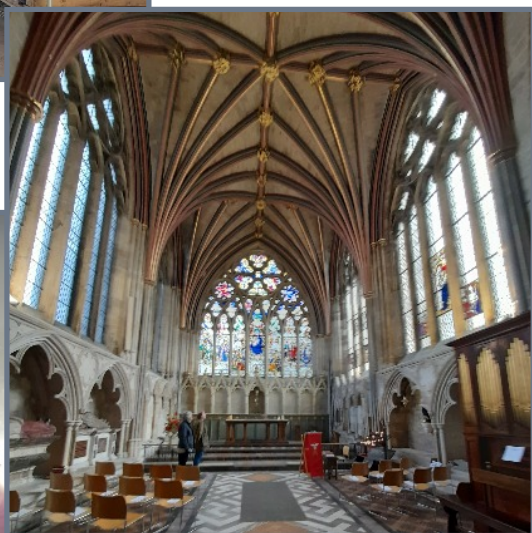
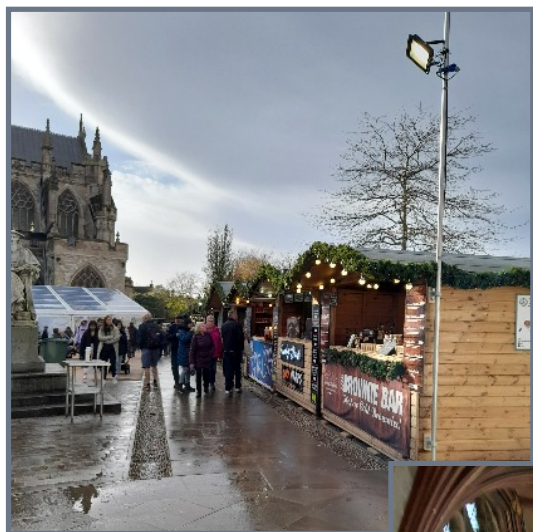
Details of the residential holiday in May can be found on pages 14 and 15.

Sylvia Hall on behalf of the Day Trippers' Group



A taste of the festive atmosphere of the Christmas Market in Exeter.

Thanks to Sylvia Hall for the photographs.



Cheddar U3A

Kent



Sunday 14th May 2023 / 5 days

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Lovely hotel in Folkestone

Visit to Chatham Dockyard

Visit to Leeds Castle

Visit to Chartwell*

CHOSEN HOTEL

Set in tranquil surroundings and overlooking the English Channel, the **Best Western Plus Burlington Hotel** was built in the 1890s and still holds its Victorian charm, whilst offering all the mod cons you'd expect of a contemporary hotel. Just a 10 minute walk from Folkestone town centre.

The hotel serves modern British food with an emphasis on locally sourced ingredients. A 3 course dinner menu with 3 choices per course and a full English breakfast.



Provisional Itinerary

Sunday – Travel to Folkestone via Windsor for lunch and free time

Monday - Chatham Dockyard

The Dockyard was once the country's largest and most important industrial site. Today its surviving Slips, big enough to protect mighty warships; and magnificent Mast Houses, long enough to store ships masts as tall as 90ft, mean there is no shortage of space and fresh air around our 80-acre heritage estate.

Tuesday – Visit to Canterbury in the morning followed by some free time in Folkestone.

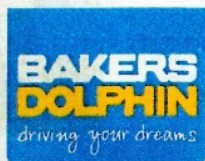
Wednesday – Visit to Leeds Castle. Known by some to be "The loveliest Castle in the World" 5 miles southeast of Maidstone. It is built on islands in a lake formed by the River Len to the east of the village of Leeds. A castle has existed on the site since 1119,

Thursday – Return Home via Chartwell (Former Home of Churchill) (*National Trust entrance payable if non-member) on the way home.

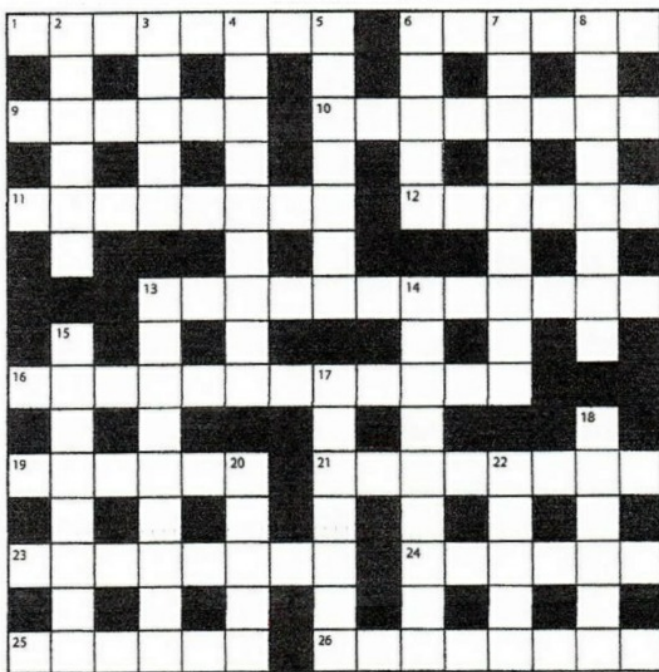
Price

£565

Single Room supplement £75 for the duration.



Issued 23/11/2022



ACROSS

1. Infringe (8)
6. Disturbs (6)
9. Slants (6)
10. Recommencing (8)
11. Languish (8)
12. Elegant (6)
13. Shy rinse sets (anag) (12)
16. Winter bled me (anag) (12)
19. Fixed (6)
21. Fundamental (8)
23. Slump (8)
24. Tell (6)
25. Relationship (6)
26. Infants (8)

DOWN

2. Enclosed (6)
3. Balm (5)
4. Resisted (9)
5. Howl (7)
6. Brown bear e.g. (5)
7. Forward roll (9)
8. Type of medicine (8)
13. Particle (9)
14. Suffocated (9)
15. Haslet (8)
17. Garments (7)
18. Souk (6)
20. Edible flower bud (5)
22. Mallet (5)

*Thanks to Barry Ede for creating
this crossword.*

Solution is on page 37.

The Christmas Revue

The Christmas Revue on the 1st December was a sell out and the audience was treated to a fine afternoon's entertainment. Proceedings got underway with the entrance of the Handbell Group ringers who performed a lovely selection of music. This was followed by a Pam Ayres poem performed by Val Webb and then it was time for the Singing for Pleasure Group who sang beautifully and were joined by the ringers for a final singalong with the audience of *Jingle Bells*.

Then it was time for refreshments and mince pies and in no time it was the turn of Sheila Eastland to take the stage with a humorous monologue about the Covid lockdown followed by another piece from Val Webb celebrating the talents of the wonderful Joyce Grenfell.

Finally it was the turn of the CVU3A Rock Band who put together a fine collection of modern Christmas classics from Slade to Harry Belafonte. The audience were only too happy to join in and sang and clapped their way through the seasonal regulars.

However none of this would have been possible without a team of helpers. I'm not going to single anyone out but I want to thank the people who decorated the hall, meeters and greeters, refreshments, the artistes, Jenny on the piano and all the other people who helped set the hall up and tidied away afterwards. It all went so well I might even do another one in 2023 so watch this space.

Richard Hamlyn Vice Chairman





*Thanks to Geoff Bathe for these
photographs of performers in the
Christmas Revue.*





Videos of the Christmas Revue

I have made four videos of the CVU3A Christmas Revue that was held at Cheddar Village Hall in December, and I have uploaded these videos to YouTube. There are brief notes about each of the videos below.

If you wish to watch a video on a computer or on a smartphone, then use the appropriate link. If you wish to watch a video on a smart TV, select YouTube and then do a search for the appropriate title.

I was unable to make a video of the monologues due to the low sound level.

ROCK BAND

Title: "CVU3A Rock Band play Eight Christmas Hits"

Video link: <https://youtu.be/-UTHWaDh3WE>

Description: "Cheddar Valley U3A Rock Band play eight well-known Christmas pop songs, December 2022."

HANDBELLS

Title: "CVU3A: The Bells Are Ringing"

Video link: <https://youtu.be/UcMsZfgi6kM>

Description: A performance by Cheddar Valley U3A Handbell Ringing Group, December 2022.

SINGERS

Title: "CVU3A: Singers Singing Songs"

Video link: <https://youtu.be/KqFijHr25jQ>

Description: Cheddar Valley U3A Singing For Pleasure Group sing a varied selection of songs, December 2022.

JINGLE BELLS

Title: "CVU3A: Jingle Bells"

Video link: <https://youtu.be/I7hou15NMi4>

Description: Cheddar Valley U3A Singing For Pleasure Group and Handbell Ringing Group join together to perform "Jingle Bells", December 2022.

Geoff Bathe

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP CHEDDAR VALLEY U3A

At the next AGM the current Secretary and Newsletter Editor will relinquish their posts, so we are seeking volunteers to replace them. The Secretary is a committee post, while the Newsletter Editor has a non-committee role, but usually attends Committee Meetings.

Information about the Secretary's role is repeated here. Details of the Newsletter Editor were printed in a previous newsletter (Oct/Nov 2022).

CVU3A SECRETARY JOB DESCRIPTION

- Book venues for Coffee Mornings, Speaker Meetings, AGM and Committee Meetings
- Every two months - Prepare the Agenda and take Minutes at the Committee Meetings - most Committee members write a report prior to the meeting so it's mostly amending these according to what is agreed at the meeting
- Annually give notice in the Newsletter of the AGM, prepare the Agenda and take the Minutes
- Prepare and keep completed Nomination forms for the Committee and Eligibility to be a Trustee
- Send each Trustee a current Constitution and Code of Conduct
- Annually download the Insurance certificate arranged by the Third Age Trust
- Annually complete the Annual Return received from the Third Age Trust
- Distribute to the Committee documents received from the Third Age Trust
- Distribute to the Committee any local items of relevance
- Requirements: Ability to type, laptop or similar

"150 years of the Bristol Suspension Bridge"

Bob Bruton our speaker in November arrived armed with two lap-tops intending to give us an illustrated talk on the history of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Sadly neither appeared to work which rather detracted from the enjoyment of his presentation.

From the initial legacy of 1,000 guineas in 1754 to the start of building 73 years had elapsed. I. K. Brunel's rather elaborate designs had been chosen but when work started in 1831 they had been modified. Two towers were built either side of the river to connect the Leigh Woods side with Clifton Down. Riots in Bristol coincided with money running out for the project and for some time a hanging basket suspended from the two towers either side which had been used to transport materials was the only means of crossing. A charge was made to members of the public who were brave enough to attempt the crossing. This was to remain for 17 years. In 1859 Brunel died having seen the project abandoned in 1843 and the Act of Parliament necessary to enable work expired in 1853.

In 1860 the project was resurrected by John Hawkshaw and William Henry Barlow as a memorial to Brunel. The original chains for the suspension had been sold to the builders of a bridge in Hungerford which was now being replaced. These were purchased and the bridge finished in 1864 with wooden planking, which was eventually replaced with iron as horse droppings were rotting the planking. One Mary Griffiths was the first to cross the bridge, (running), hitching up her crinoline gown to do so. The crinoline gown of a lady called Sarah saved her life when she threw herself off the bridge. Elephants have crossed over it, as have Daleks, Vampire Jets flown under it, and in November 2003 the last Concorde on its last flight symbolically flew over on its way to Filton Airport.

Contrary to popular belief the Clifton Suspension Bridge was not the first in the world. That accolade goes to the Menai bridge between Wales and Anglesey completed in 1826.

Sheila Eastland

A Brief History of Gemstones

The speaker for January was Rachael Boothroyd, whose talk was all about gemstones, their formation, history, and cultural importance. Rachael has worked in the jewellery industry since leaving school, and is also an auctioneer and valuer.

Man has always been attracted by pretty stones and shells, with decorative items being found in archaeological sites across the world and from before the ice ages. Precious metals such as gold and silver also have a long history, being used as status items and for trade. Gemstones cover a wide range of colours and types, some quite unexpected. A slide showing different stones coloured pink, blue and yellow were all diamonds. Red stones included rubies, and garnets, much loved by the Victorians, who were also fond of jet and amethyst. Other minerals such as jade are highly valued in Chinese culture.

The formation of gemstones is all about crystals and geology, the right conditions include time, pressure, heat and the necessary minerals. Rachael gave us a quick chemistry lesson on the different elements in various stones, how the colours vary from different locations, and how these facts can be used to identify natural stones and distinguish them from synthetic ones. She then showed us how stones are identified, using a variety of instruments from the jeweller's loupe or eyeglass, with a magnification of ten, through spectroscope, refractometer, to microscope, which was too big to transport. She explained how they are used, and gave a vivid example of three large blue stones cut with various facets. One stone had less sharp edges than the others, and was made of plastic! From the auctioneer's point of view, it was valueless. Both the other stones had sharper edges, and using such clues as internal inclusions and refractometer readings, she showed how one stone was a synthetic sapphire, worth tens of pounds, and the other was a natural sapphire and worth thousands of pounds. It was obvious that the valuer's job required one to get it right.

There were plenty of questions at the end of Rachael's very interesting talk. I am sorry I can't remember more of it, this write-up was a belated request.

Chris Barker

Charity Ball

Saturday 18th February 2023

7pm for 7.30pm dinner

Batch Farm Country Hotel

Music from **The Swinging Rascals &**
Disco 'til midnight

Raffle for Amazing Prizes

Tickets £45 to include 3 course dinner
and entertainment

All profits for
The Lydia Biddlecombe Star Tribute Fund
supporting cardiac children and their families at
Bristol Children's Hospital Cardiac Unit
For tickets contact Hannah 07828498524
or Pauline 07763628875

Contact John Morgan if you'd like to join a
group for this event.

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 38 to 41.

Classic Film Group

Cheddar Valley U3A's Classic Film Group is coming to the end of its sixth year - we have nine meetings from September to May each year. The group was inaugurated by the late Brian Nicholls, who amongst his many interests was a film buff with a very large collection of films on DVD. Brian died last Spring and Mary, his widow, has kindly donated that collection to CVU3A. Brian always devised the programme of films that we watched, and his input is very much missed.

This season we are watching films from his list of recommendations that were not previously chosen, on the grounds that if they made the list, they're worth a look. On 9th January we saw *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, a 1970 film directed by Billy Wilder. The film was cited by Mark Gatiss as his inspiration to create the *Sherlock* TV series starring Benedict Cumberbatch, and the parallels were obvious. The film also contained a delightful portrayal of Queen Victoria being not amused.

On Monday 13th February we will be watching *Fire Over England*, a 1937 film about the Spanish Armada. It is notable for being the first screen pairing of Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh, and led to Leigh being cast as Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*. All CVU3A members are welcome to attend.

Fire Over England will be shown on Monday 13th February, 2.00 pm at Hannah More Cottage, North Street, Cheddar.

Helen Batt

Handbell Group

You may have noticed a new name for making contact with the Handbell Group. This is the reason why.

Margaret Farnie has led the Handbell Group for at least 10 years. She has chosen the music and the venues, keeps the bells, repairs them and conducts us. But most of all she has kept 20 of us happy and feeling musically creative.

Margaret stays calm when we are not "looking at the conductor" ...again, and does not lose her cool when we drink coffee and talk for too long. She has helped us celebrate national and local events indoors and out and even exhibits good humour when audiences do not listen to our efforts.

Margaret is not leaving us, but at our Christmas meal she asked for help. We held a meeting, without bells, and everyone wanted to keep going. Margaret has agreed to stay on as Musical Director with a small group of committee to help with admin. etc. The group also agreed that Geoff Farnie should be supported with all his good humoured transportation of bells, tables etc., as well as his patient work with music stands!

So we thanked Margaret and gratefully agreed to play on together for more years to come.

Linda Mogford Tel:

~~~~~

## History Group

Our December meeting considered Christmas in the 1950s. Although many of the celebrations were similar to today's, presents were much simpler with maybe one big present and stocking fillers like sweets (we remembered the pink or white sugar mice!), fruit and chocolate coins in gold foil. Decorations were often home-made, for example paper chains made with coloured sticky strips; the threepenny and sixpenny pieces in

the Christmas pudding caused some excitement! As a contrast we discussed a YouTube video when a primary school girl interviewed her grandparents about their annual seaside holidays, always in the UK, with travel by rail or coach and guest house accommodation.

In January we looked at the important topic of health and medical care, focusing on the birth of the NHS in 1948. Many of the early problems in the 1950s resonated with today's news, such as the cost of free provision and doctors' concerns. However the changes had a massive impact on people's lives, especially of the poor, and those not previously covered by health insurance schemes. Several of our members were able to recount their own experiences in the nursing and care sectors.

Next month's meeting will deal with education and schools in the 1950s. We also start an ongoing project considering certain women of the period and their contribution in various spheres.

**Heather Davey**

~~~~~

Photography Group

We are approaching 2023 with a spring in our step with new ideas for the year. As most of us have an area of photography that is of special interest and, hopefully, shows an element of competence, we plan to ask our members to give a short presentation on their chosen subject at the start of each meeting. Simon will be talking about taking images of steam engines in action, Graham will talk about macro photography, and Margaret is planning a talk about incorporating a microscope in her photography.

Subjects running at present are silhouettes, implements, the weather, and three of the best images taken over the Christmas period. We are continuing with using a TV monitor to display images, with members bringing along memory sticks. Robin is kindly continuing to allow us to use his room in Axbridge. There will be no meeting in February, but we have one planned for Tuesday 7th March. Since lockdown we are being more flexible about not sticking to the third Tuesday in the month.

New members of all abilities are welcome, whether you use a mobile phone, an ipad, or a DSLR. For more information contact Liz Fosbury.

A Happy New Year to everyone.

Liz Fosbury



These images were taken by Simon ready for his presentation on steam engines.





~~~~~

# Poetry Group

We did not meet in December and hope to start a new theme in January.

We were very sad to hear of the death of Elizabeth A. Parry on 29th December at the age of 96. Elizabeth joined our Group shortly after moving to Cheddar in 2007. She was an active member of many Groups over the years. She wrote poems about our U3A including individual ones for our Groups. At our first Open Day in 2013 we produced a booklet of her poems which all sold out very quickly. She was a unique person and I know we will all miss her contributions to the Group and her poems.

# Glenys Runciman

## Cheddar U3A Poetry Group

In the Poetry Group we study poets,  
Their lives from birth to the dates of their obits  
We look at their writing, the ways they use rhyme  
How the style and the form and the themes intertwine.  
There are so many poets, so much work produced  
Once begin to appraise it one become quite seduced  
By such an extensive range of verse  
Composed by poets so very diverse  
There are lyrical sonnets, odes to nature all pastoral,  
Poems solemnly religious and poems metaphysical.  
Stirring ballads heroic, witty poems satirical,  
Long-drawn-out sagas which go on for ever,  
Short and crisp limericks both funny and clever.  
There are epics, love poems, war poems, poems political  
All presenting a challenge to our faculties critical.  
To understand poetry does rightly impose  
A more perceptive approach than is needed for prose.  
But a deeper appreciation brings an increase in pleasure  
Also an enchantment with beauty to delight and to treasure.

**Elizabeth A. Parry**

### ***Additional comments from Margaret Farnie:***

Elizabeth wrote many poems over her U3A time, in French as well as English. At one time I put them into a small booklet for our U3A members, I believe Glenys has all of her U3A poems.

Elizabeth wrote a poem about most of our U3A groups. I have sent a copy of her *Coffee Mornings* one to the Newsletter. This dates back to when we held Coffee Mornings at the Bath Arms and was one of the first times I came across Elizabeth, and felt intellectually in awe of her!

(This poem is included on page 7. *Editor*)

After writing the above paragraphs I came across *The Hookers* poem whilst looking through her poems, so couldn't resist adding it. A new group called (for only a short time!) "Hookers" started up to include anything to do with pins and needles.

**Margaret Farnie**

## **Cheddar Valley U3A Hookers**

The U3A now has a group of Hookers  
Bent over needles not over cookers  
Knitting, crocheting even tatting  
Embroidery, lace-making, and how about hatting?  
Tying knots and sewing seams  
Do they sew things in their dreams?  
What do they talk of when at their stitchery?  
Or do they weave spells in manner witchery?  
Such creative souls, they all do strive  
Like busy bees in a bee-hive.  
We hope to see a fine array  
Of all their work out on display.

**Elizabeth A. Parry**

~~~~~

Scottish Dancing Group (Beginners)

We continue to meet from 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:

Stained Glass

After a long spell of holiday and festivities over December, the group is back in action again, and continues to meet on the first and third Mondays in the month from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm in the Studio at the Arts Centre in Cheddar. We have a lovely large space here, warm and well lit, with higher than normal tables, good for working at whilst standing and working, and high stools for working whilst sat down.

The extra space means we can take on one or two new members to the group. In the past we have members join to make presents for birthdays and celebrations, as well as for themselves, we also have members making gifts to sell for a specific charity. Do let me know if you are interested in joining the group and learning this craft of working with lead and glass.

Margaret Farnie

~~~~~

## **Original Walking Group Programme**

### **Thursday 2 February 2023**

Leaders: John and Karen. Starting Point: Winscombe Recreation Ground free car park BS25 1AP. Time: 1.30 pm. Grid ref: ST421566. Walk 4 to 5 miles around Winscombe and adapted to conditions on the day. For further details contact John or Karen.

### **Tuesday 14 February 2023**

Leaders: Brenda and Alan Anderson. Starting Point: Old Coach Road, Cross BS26 2EQ. Grid ref: ST413547. Time: 1.30 pm. Walk about 5 miles, dependent on weather. For further details contact Brenda or Alan.



## **Wednesday 1 March 2023**

Leader: Christine. Starting Point: Wedmore car park, Cheddar Road, Wedmore. Grid ref: ST437478. Time: 2.00 pm. For further details contact Christine.

## **Thursday 16 March 2023**

Leader: Alan Bailey. Starting Point: Sharpham Road Playing Fields car park, Cheddar. Time: 2.00 pm. Grid ref: ST448534. For further details contact Alan.

## **Tuesday 28 March 2023**

Leader: Martin. Starting Point: Oakhill Sports Ground car park top of Zion Hill BA3 5AN. Grid ref: ST636476. Time: 2.00 pm. For further details contact Martin.

**Martin Fewings** Group Leader

~~~~~

Easy Walking Group

Five members of the Easy Walking Group braved the weather on January's walk. We set off from the car park at East Harptree Wood in the dry, and passed the Smitham Chimney, a relic of Victorian lead mining activity. We had views of Blagdon Lake which were rather hazy, as we were rained upon before we finished the circuit. We all returned to Cheddar for a reviving cup of coffee. Thanks to Margaret for leading the walk.

Chris Barker

A photograph of the group by Smitham Chimney is featured on the front cover, and shows, from left to right, Angela Golden-Hann, Margaret Smith, Helen Cardno and Fiona Torrance. Chris Barker was behind the camera.

Reading Group 1

"The Talented Mr Ripley" by Patricia Highsmith

During November the group read *The Talented Mr Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith. This was her third novel and was followed by a further four sequels. Basically, it is a story of obsession, identity and imitation. It follows the con artist Tom Ripley as he travels to Italy and befriends Dickie Greenleaf, son of a wealthy American shipping magnate, before killing him in order to assume his identity. This introduces Tom to the moneyed lifestyle he craves and results in a complex web of lies and deceptions.

Living and moving through Italy as Dickie and with the benefits of Dickie's bank account, Tom has to outsmart both the police and Dickie's girlfriend. He switches back and forth between identities and locations and at times this results in some confusion for the reader. We all agreed that the complexity of Tom's attempts to take on the persona of Dickie left the reader somewhat irritated. This novel did not rank among the most enjoyable books we have read over recent months.

Hilary Cheeke

~~~~~

## Reading Group 2

### "A Narrow Door" by Joanne Harris

*A Narrow Door* by Joanne Harris was our final reading choice of the year, a psychological thriller that follows the author's writing genre, third book in the "St. Oswald's School" series. Joanne Harris (OBE, FRSL) is an internationally renowned writer, with probably her most recognised novel *Chocolat* made into a film in 1999. She was born in Barnsley, Yorkshire, with an English father and a French mother where, unusually, French was the language spoken in the home. She speaks out strongly against sexism, with issues of identity and mother/child relationships which she incorporates into her many novels, apparently working from a shed in her back garden.

Rebecca Buckfast nee Price arrives at St. Oswald's determined to sweep away the dusty traditional out of date practices of the past. The first woman Head Mistress, ambitious, gritty, she introduces many changes including allowing girls into the hallowed halls of this all male Grammar School causing bitter opposition from the long established male tutors. Her older brother Conrad, the favourite and most beloved of the Price children, attended St. Oswald's back in the 1980's, until his sudden unexplained disappearance. Five year old Rebecca grew up emotionally scarred by her parents' lack of affection and their obsession in finding him. Forward to 2006, strong and determined she is out to prove her worth. When excavation work is carried out on the school premises and old school clothing found she is reluctant to inform the police preferring to keep the investigation within the school. However, this decision takes her through mental psychological turmoil where her past and present become blurred.

Generally accepted by the group, it is well written, though with a long rather confusing narrative partly due to the time shifts throughout, it kept us guessing to the end. We have no meeting through December.

**Pamela Hansen**

~~~~~

Reading Group 3

"Lamplighters" by Emma Stonex

Our last book of 2022 was based on a true story of the discovery in 1972 that all three keepers of a lighthouse had disappeared when relief for one of them arrived. The lighthouse door was barred from the inside and a table set for just two in their living quarters. This novel by Emma Stonex is set twenty years after the event when a young writer sets out to try and solve the mystery. Two of the keepers were married and the third had a girlfriend, prison record and a secret we never really discovered. It is by speaking to the women the young writer hopes to gain an insight into what happened. At the end of the book we discover that it was his father who made the discovery of the empty lighthouse. All three women have barely kept in touch since the event and are reluctant to speak to him but eventually do.

Most of us thought the novel is well written although one of us thought it contained too many similes and was rather florid. The tensions between the three men together in a confined space came over well, as did the plight of the women coping on their own. Though some of us found the constant change of time and place annoying.

The story progresses, elements of fantasy and horror are introduced. What is real and what is imagined? We follow the gradual decline into madness of one and the inability to separate imaginings from reality in another. Even we, as readers, were left with unanswered questions. Was the bird real, imagined, or maybe a metaphor for something?

This is a début novel which we would recommend, the majority of us would look out for her second book.

Sheila Eastland

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1. Trespass
- 6. Upsets
- 9. Angles
- 10. Resuming
- 11. Vegetate
- 12. Svelte
- 13. Synthesisers
- 16. Bewilderment
- 19. Static
- 21. Integral
- 23. Collapse
- 24. Reveal
- 25. Affair
- 26. Toddlers

DOWN

- 2. Ringed
- 3. Salve
- 4. Abstained
- 5. Screech
- 6. Ursus
- 7. Summerset
- 8. Tincture
- 13. Scintilla
- 14. Sweltered
- 15. Meatloaf
- 17. Raiment
- 18. Bazaar
- 20. Caper
- 22. Gavel

Special Interest Groups

Art	Patchwork
Ballroom & Latin Dance	Philosophy
Boules	Photography
Bridge (Wednesday)	Poetry
Cardaholics (Greetings Cards)	Quiz Group
Canasta	Reading Group 1
Classic Films Group	Reading Group 2
Computer: Apple Devices Group	Reading Group 3
Computer: Computer Users	Reading Group 4
Day Trippers' Group	Reading Group 5
French: French Conversation	Rock Band
French: Cercle Français	Rummikub
German	Scottish Country Dancing
Great Lives	Scrabble
Greek	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	Woodcarving

Group Meetings Timetable

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

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

Group	Week	Leader
THURSDAY AFTERNOON Speaker Meeting 2.00 pm Rock Band	1st 2nd, 3rd & 4th	At Cheddar Village Hall
FRIDAY MORNING Art Patchwork Reading Group 3 Social Tai Chi FRIDAY AFTERNOON Ballroom & Latin Dance Reading Group 5 Scrabble FRIDAY EVENING Woodcarving	4th 3rd 2nd Weekly Weekly Last Friday 2nd & 4th Weekly	
NO FIXED DAY Apple Devices Group Day Trippers' Group Walking: Original	By arrangement See page 12 See page 32	

Submission of material for our next issue

Submissions for our April / May 2023 edition
should be sent to the Newsletter Editor:

Sue Bathe,

cheddar.u3anews@yahoo.co.uk

DEADLINE: Friday 17th March 2023

I will acknowledge all e-mail communications.
If you do not receive an acknowledgement in a reasonable time,
you must assume it has not been received,
and use another method to contact me.



Please use identifying words in the subject line of your e-mail, and in the title of any attached files,
e.g. Group name and month of report, such as "Drama Group November report", and **not** just "Notes from November" or "U3A Article".

If possible please send in your articles and reports by e-mail.

The information can be in the body of the e-mail itself,
or be as an attachment in a common format,
such as Word, Open Office, or as a pdf.

(Please do **not** send anything as **.pages**, I cannot open it.)

Photographs of your groups and group activities
are also always welcome (as jpgs please).

Please always state who took the photograph.