

## FROM THE CHAIR:

Autumn, middle English *autumpne* was first defined in 15<sup>th</sup> C as a period of maturity. It is the season where the northern hemisphere begins to tilt away from the sun, trees prepare for winter (there is insufficient light for photosynthesis and trees close down their food production and reduce the chlorophyll in their leaves), hence there is a chemistry of colour. Apparently, people born in the autumn live longer but it can also be a time when there can be increased feelings of social isolation. What better time to be a member of u3a and benefit from companionship and comradery?

Welcome to the Autumn edition of KiT PLUS the newsletter which is designed to let you know what has been going on in the Chinnor u3a in the last 3-4 months. This time there has been a great response to the call for papers. Please keep them coming. As there are some space constraints on photographs, there are additional images on the website. We have responded to requests to bring back the 'at a glance' information on key regular events, groups and speaker meetings and so the back pages are to cut out and save.

The Chinnor u3a goes from strength to strength. Since 1 July there have been 21 new members and the creation of three new groups, including Movement to Music, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Sliver Screen and Nordic Walking made possible by our SODC funding.

However, in order to sustain this level of activity, volunteers are needed. **It would be great if you had some time to help.**

Here are some suggestions:

Speaker Meetings – help needed with refreshments, registering attendees or setting up the room and clearing away afterwards.

Special Interest Groups need members to undertake small tasks including serving refreshments, registering attendees or contributing to the program of activities – e.g. lead a walk, run a session, talk about a subject of interest to you.

The Committee, which meets 6 times a year (two workshops and four more formal minuted meetings) is looking for a member to take some notes at the meetings. The time commitment would be about one hour 1030 -1130 in March, May, July and November.

There is also a vacancy for a role to promote the u3a in the wider community and to communicate with new members. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact me 07711337243

I look forward to seeing you at meetings and events

**Nettie Dearmun (Chair)**

## MEET THE COMMITTEE

### DOROTHEA DUNN (Speaker Secretary)



Moved to Thame from West London in 2014, after a year, relocated to Chinnor in 2015. Prior to retirement in 2017, I worked in Retail and Corporate Banking, in London, Reading and Oxford majoring in Education and Healthcare sectors. Joining the u3a in 2017 I was talent spotted for the Committee and this provided an opportunity to meet many new people and become familiar with Chinnor and surrounding areas.

I was treasurer for just over four years and, this year, became the Speaker Secretary. I am an active member of History of Art; Medium & Long Walks; French Conversation and the Hempton Field Care Home visitation program.

### NETTIE DEARMUN (Chair)



Lived in Wainhill since 1994 and having given up paid work for the NHS in Oxford as a Senior Nurse Manager of Children's Services and a University Lecturer, I vowed never to sit on a Committee again! – but here I am. Joined the u3a in 2021 and was approached to attend a meeting as an 'observer'. I found the other members really friendly and I liked the whole ethos of the u3a so when the opportunity came up to become Vice Chair and ultimately Chair – I was delighted. I am also involved as Trustee at the Chinnor Village Centre and Action for XP a National Charity for Children living with Xeroderma Pigmentosum (a genetic skin and neurological condition).

### PERSPECTIVES ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> AGE (2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of 3 articles) - Brian Fowler (u3a member)



"A condition of growing old is..... talking to yourself"

Walking the golf course; just a friendly round. No competition, so not too demanding, but still the need for concentration, throughout the game. It's the hardest part of the game.

That concentration was broken once, not so long ago, when asked by my playing partner "What are you mumbling about? Talking to yourself – it's clear you're getting older". The instant response was with a joke, but it was after the game, and over a beer, that reference was made to the fact that "... oh! you're not the only one".

So, why do, mainly, older people talk to themselves? Is it simply a habit, or a sign that we are losing control over our senses? There is surely more to it than happenstance.

Who amongst the older generation are more likely to talk to themselves? Those that are alone by virtue of the fact that they have lost a loved-one? It is clear that is not the only cause. It might be that, even with a companion present, sometimes the energy required of a conversation wains and, in reaction, one partner will speak, perhaps not receiving, or even expecting a response.

I believe that the primary reason, for talking to oneself, is that we crave the sound of the human voice; even if, sometimes, it is our own.

The sound of the human voice, or at least the timbre of it, is carried to us in the womb. It is the first thing that we hear as we enter the world: words of concern, encouragement, are uttered as we are taken from our mother's body, and from that moment on we are subjected to language; a series of comprehensible grunts, that in time will allow us to interact with others of our kind to our mutual benefit.

In all that we are capable of we need to communicate; to ask, to advise, to establish and shape our place within our group. We have been defined as "group animals". In our family life then, in our work, in our wider social circles; it would be impossible for us to function as effectively without talking. The extent of the utterances we can create, and combine, to form the most developed verbal language, is a mark of our humanity; the nuanced communication unachievable, excluding mimicry, amongst other animals.

It defines us. We express that definition by talking. Talking is essential for our survival. Talking is a vital part of our living. Talking is necessary to order us, to develop us, to comfort us. Consider the penalties associated with punishment by solitary confinement. Without talking it is unlikely, undesirable, that we could, or would want, to exist.

Is it then odd that, in the absence of another who will, who can, respond verbally to our needs – we take solace in the sound of our own voice?

I would suggest that talking to ourselves is not simply a consequence of growing old, but a defence mechanism triggered by our increasing needs. Our ability to communicate, our hopes, and our fears. If we are unable to achieve those hopes, to overcome those fears, then we can at least articulate them - even if only to ourselves.

## OUTINGS & GROUPS IN FOCUS

**DUXFORD:** Paul de Jongh (Outings Coordinator)



The October outing was to Duxford to see the history of military aviation. The coach trip took 2 hours and so the refreshments on arrival were very welcome. Immediately it was discovered that a Spitfire was about to take off, not just one, but two taking off side-by-side. For anyone fortunate enough to see this - it was like many boyhood dreams, and was a sheer delight. As these were two person Spitfires it is possible to go for a ride in the co-pilot seat for a mere £3,000!

There was so much to see including some of the ground warfare machinery used a century ago, a massive hangar dedicated on the Battle of Britain, the control station as it was laid out at Duxford during WW2, and a hangar dedicated to American military aircraft (the B-52 bomber which just has to be seen to be believed ... It is gigantic) and a final section dedicated to aircraft of the Cold War era. All of it was absolutely fabulous. My personal favourite (apart from the Spitfire take off) was to see the Lancaster bomber ... absolutely beautiful! Thanks to Thelma Jones for leading this outing

Other outings included a **Riviera cruise on the River Seine out of Paris**. The weather was excellent and even the French could not believe how warm it was for the time of year. One of the party even went in the small pool on deck! One evening there was exclusive use of the ship's Bistro for a celebratory dinner with champagne. Apart from the cruising on what was a quiet and gentle river, and enjoying the good food and service throughout, the highlights of the holiday were the excursions including Monet's garden and house; the Bayeux Tapestry, Honfleur, Rouen and Arromanches where some of the remains of the Mulberry Harbour in the bay could still be seen. The visit to the British Memorial overlooking the Normandy landing beaches was emotional.

### Future outings

In 2024 there will be a **cruise on the Duro**

12 January – Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's **Slimbridge Reserve**. Founded by Sir Peter Scott and set within 800 acres it has a Gold accreditation from Visit England and received a silver award for Accessibility and Inclusion at the South West Tourism Awards.

March outing to **Nidd Hall** is almost fully booked.

For further information contact Paul 07885270390 [outchinnoru3a@gmail.com](mailto:outchinnoru3a@gmail.com) and see the website

### **'PEVERIL OF THE PEAK' AND BEYOND - Frances Wells (Walks Group Coordinator)**

This year's walking holiday saw 32 of us rock up at the village of Thorpe in Dovedale, eagerly anticipating the delights of the Peak District – we were not disappointed.

From the accommodation at the HF house, we were transported to several starting locations for optional hikes ranging from 8 – 13 miles with varying degrees of difficulty.



Day 1: Walking from various Edges (Baslow, Froggatt and Curbar), the impressive golden gates of Chatsworth came into view as we met for lunch in the grounds. The next stretch took us to Edensor (Enzor) also within the Devonshire estate. Slowly climbing out of the valley we carried on to Bakewell where all the groups met up for a cuppa' before the journey home.

Day 2: There were challenges along the way as we achieved desired objectives. Egged on by willing supporters, outstretched hands, a prod in the right direction and gallows humour, we reached the dizzying heights of Mam Tor, the Shivering Mountain, so called for its propensity for landslips caused by unstable levels of shale – don't we know it, Angela! Descending into the village of Hope we walked riverside to the village of Castleton where we learned of the rich seams of Blue John ('blue et jaune') stone quarried from nearby mines.



Day 3: Walking from the house, various routes descended to the Stepping Stones along the river Dove to Milldale, through the famous limestone gorge with rock formations that are prominent throughout the White Peaks. The more energetic climbed to the village of Alstonefield returning to the house across higher ground. Other folk visited local landmarks Chatsworth House, Hardwick Hall and Haddon Hall.

Staff at the hotel provided an excellent service and throughout the week, we were entertained by our exceptional HF leaders Andrew, Heather, Barbara and Diane who also hosted evening merriment. It was a close thing as quizzers pitted their wits against the best with keen competition from the Penrith group. To cries of "You Can Do it," a hilarious game of skittles took place on the final evening – everyone was a Star!

Fun and Laughter was the theme for the week and heartfelt thanks go to Peter Lambert for making it possible. The holiday next year will be in Derbyshire.



## **WALKING ON THE GRAND UNION CANAL - Peter Hetherington**

A windy, but dry, morning was the backdrop for a 6.5mile circular walk in this area famous for scenic reservoirs and canals. Twelve intrepid members followed the towpaths and passed through Wilstone, Tringford and Startops reservoirs.

Water is collected from local streams and significant volumes are then pumped into the canals via the locks. The barges progress through the canals, towards London, Birmingham West and Aylesbury and Wendover arms. The latter arm is part of a restoration project which was the topic of a Speaker Meeting a few months ago.

The area is a great place to see birdlife. Although inhibited by high winds, Swallows and House Martins (just before migration to Africa) were seen skimming over the water as well as Chiffchaff, Heron, Cormorant, Tufted and Gadwall Ducks, Grey Lag Geese. A flock of unidentified Waders were also there in numbers. The walk concluded with an excellent lunch at Wilstone Farm Shop Café.

If you would more information about Medium Walks please contact Frances Wells on 351877

## **NATURAL HISTORY GROUP: FORAGING FOR FUNGI - Karin Dawson-Smith (Special Interest Group Coordinator).**

On a bright Sunny Monday morning in October the Natural history group met up at Aston Rowant nature reserve to forage fungi with guide Dr Judy Webb (Ecological Consultant, volunteer and regular member of the Reserve team). This was a very enjoyable and interesting day.



Judy explained that fungi should be prolific this time of the year but the recent dry weather meant that fungal fruiting bodies (inc toadstools, brackets) would not be so visible. Therefore, she moved the search to the beech woodlands on clay in Little London Wood at the top of Beacon Hill. As fungi are mostly composed of water and clay holds more water than the free-draining chalk slopes, this encourages the emergence of fungi. Fungi can be camouflaged amongst the detritus of leaves, beech nut husks and rotting trees, making the search for fungi more challenging. As Judy began to find them, she was able to describe where they might be hiding and this enhanced our ability to spot them. We were fortunate to encounter the bright yellow bracket known as Chicken of the Woods (Sulphur Polypore) growing on a dead cherry tree. Thereafter we found numerous Common Puffballs, greasy topped Buttercaps and the pink-red staining Blusher Amanita rubescens.

There was a remarkable complete ring of yellowish wood mushroom *Agaricus silvicola*. A number of Stinkhorn *Phallus impudicus* 'eggs'(early stage) and one emerged Stinkhorn caused some amusement; luckily the Stinkhorn was mature enough to have lost most of its unpleasant smell.

Magpie Inkcaps found are an example of a toadstool that completely liquefies to a black goo of spores. Such black liquid was once used as ink. The most interesting and uncommon toadstool found was the Veined Sheild *Pluteus thompsonii*, which the guide had not seen before.'

If you would like further information about this group, contact Peter 07767647714

A longer article and more images can be found on the website

## **GARDENING GROUP: A VISIT TO RHS HYDE HALL - Krystyna Hewitt (Gardening Group member)**

*Photographs © Krystyna Hewitt*



It seems to me that Ann and Bob Hine (Garden Group Coordinators) must have a hotline to the weather gods – these gardening group outings are usually blessed with good weather. It didn't fail us on our coach trip to Hyde Hall in October. Despite incoming Storm Babet, we enjoyed the visit on a blustery, fine, if occasionally showery, day.

RHS Hyde Hall in Essex is a collection of interesting landscaped gardens, which have been developed over the last 70 years and reflect a modern approach to gardening, suited to the challenges of our changing climate. It is particularly known for its dry garden, with its

drought tolerant planting, but there are also long island borders – mostly planted in a prairie style, a winter garden, a woodland area, a flower garden and other smaller themed gardens, as well as a productive vegetable garden. There is plenty to inspire any gardener.

After coffee we all set off in different directions to explore the extensive gardens. Despite the time of year there was very little autumn colour in the trees as yet, but this was more than compensated for by the wealth of flowers still in bloom throughout. The rose garden was beautiful and the corner of the site, display which included alstroemerias, asters an excellent and good Doug, sat in the dry painting, whilst I areas of the gardens, flowers in photographs. winds is a particular



‘flower fantasia’ at a distant offered a very colourful roses, begonias, and many more. Following value lunch, my husband, garden to do a quick continued to visit other recording the views and Close ups of flowers in high challenge!

By 3 o’clock the winds blew harder and rain got heavier, so we made our way back to the coffee shop at the entrance, via the garden centre and shop, of course (yes, plants were bought by a number of us). Most of the group enjoyed tea and cakes before our journey home. The long journey to Hyde Hall had gone without a hitch but rain, the rush hour and the M25 meant slower progress on the way back – meaning more time to chat and reflect on the excellent day, organised brilliantly, as ever.

If you would like more information about this group, contact Ann [01844 351154](tel:01844351154) [ann\\_hind@tiscali.com](mailto:ann_hind@tiscali.com)

More images can be found on the website *Photographs* © Krystyna Hewitt. All photos by Andrew Tibbs OS data © Crown copyright Database right (2022) and OS Terrain 50 OS OpenMap (Local and Strategi right (2022) (CC BY -NC-SA)

## **CRIBBAGE GROUP: Ever thought of playing?. Mick Barnes (Cribbage Group Coordinator)**



This group, formed about a year ago, meets twice a month for a couple of hours to enjoy a friendly game of crib. There are about a dozen participants with a wide range of abilities.

Cribbage was invented by Sir John Suckling, an English poet, soldier and gambler (who allegedly cheated many of his nobleman friends by gifting them packs of marked cards). The word Crib refers to a set of cards thrown down from each player’s hand. It was first played in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and is fundamentally a card game which can be played by two or more players with the objective of scoring 121 points. Points are awarded for various lays of cards and include matching a previously laid card, known as pairing, and reaching a set number when counting the accumulated cards laid.

The key numbers are fifteen and thirty-one. Each player has four dealt cards and the round finishes when all four cards have been laid. The rounds continue until one player or team has reached one hundred and twenty-one. The point tally is kept on a scoring board, known as the crib board and a game will last for fifteen to twenty minutes.

During the sessions, there are refreshments and there is ample opportunity to get to know the other players. Help is always available should it be needed

If you fancy a relaxing couple of hours twice a month, contact Mick [07484662944](tel:07484662944)  
[m.barnes804@btinternet.com](mailto:m.barnes804@btinternet.com)

### **CARD GROUP - A COMPENDIUM - Pearl & Mike Dix (Card Group Coordinator)**



The group meets bi-monthly (1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays), 1400-1600 Chinnor Village Centre - Chiltern Room. Have you ever heard of Canadian Salad – intrigued? This is just one of the many fun card games you can learn to play. At each meeting members decide what they would like to play and divide into suitably sized groups accordingly. As an added bonus there is a break for refreshments at 1500 (ordered in advance from the Coffee Shop) this makes for a very fun and sociable afternoon. Why not come along and give it

a try? You will be guaranteed a very warm welcome. New ideas for games are always greatly appreciated.

If you would like more information contact Mike and Pearl Dix 01844353355  
[michaeldix636@btinternet.com](mailto:michaeldix636@btinternet.com)

### **NORDIC WALKING GONE LIVE! Dorothea Dunn (u3a Nordic Walking coordinator)**



Well, it has happened! In response to the tremendous interest (53 enquiries) in this low impact exercise, it has been necessary to have three introductory Taster Sessions.

The inaugural Taster Session took place on Thursday 5 Oct where 14 enthusiastic members of varying abilities showed up to be enlightened! Once measured up for the necessary poles, Anthea Osborn Jones, Nordic Walking UK qualified and an Occupational Therapist (Tutor) quickly put everyone at ease. The session commenced with various drill exercises which if the banter was anything to go by, were a lot of fun! This progressed to



applying the principles in practice, some taking to it more quickly than others! Certainly, Anthea proved to be very motivational, and was very patient!

This group has since progressed with a second lesson scheduled for early Nov.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Taster Session (11 members) took place on 12 Oct and the first lesson was scheduled for early Nov. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Taster session (11 members) has also now been arranged. Anthea will continue to work with us until suitable leaders are identified. Wouldn't Dr Michael Moseley be so proud of all of our well - intentioned members here in Chinnor?

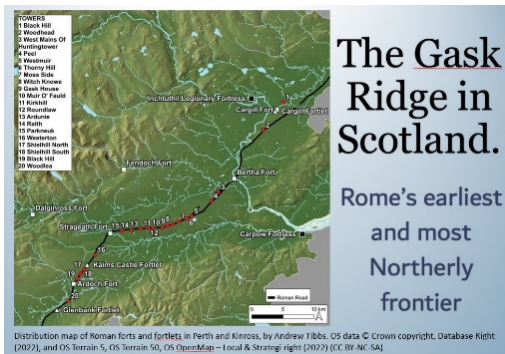
If you would like more information contact Dorothea 07741472803  
[spchinnoru3a@gmail.com](mailto:spchinnoru3a@gmail.com)

## ARCHAEOLOGY & GEOLOGY: Christine Prior (Group coordinator)

Heard of Hadrian's Wall? - of course  
Heard of the Antonine Wall? - maybe.

Heard of the Gask Ridge? - err, no!

It turns out that the Gask Ridge in Scotland is the earliest Roman land frontier in Hadrian's Wall and the G group were treated to a humorous and humorous Andrew Montgomery who first learned of the Gask Ridge was early 20th century and been found since. The Gask Ridge is actually part of a much larger and more complex system. One of the forts along the Roman road in this area, Ardoch Fort, is the best-preserved fort in Scotland.



Ridge, near Perth in and most northerly Britain, built before Antonine Wall. The A & an excellent, interesting presentation by (group member), the Gask Ridge as a fascinated by it, more. Evidence of the discovered in the more evidence has

If you would like more information contact Christine Prior 07947117467  
[christineprior48@gmail.com](mailto:christineprior48@gmail.com)

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## SPEAKER MEETINGS Schedule 2023/2024

Separate document to follow.