



Walking Group in the Malverns

**WELCOME** to the June edition of UPDATE. I have another bumper edition for you thanks to the many contributors who've put 'pen to paper'. Look out for new groups being started as well as news from established groups, a very interesting tale from Anne McKendrick and another from Norman Davies which, although written as a schoolboy, still resonates today. Pam Bryant follows up on her garden news in March and invites you to join in for the September edition. We have suggestions for your next read, along with recipes from the Cookery and Spanish Groups. So put the kettle on, sit comfortably and begin.



**From the Chair:** As our AGM approaches on June 15<sup>th</sup>, I will take this opportunity to thank all the present committee members for their efforts in keeping Churchdown u3a thriving. Special thanks go to

those who will be stepping down at this time: Robbie Philip has been booking our speakers for the past 6 years and has managed to provide us with a varied range of interesting topics from month to month. Louise Keeling has been Chair and Group Coordinator and Joyce Winwood has been the Membership Secretary over the last 3 years. It's a commitment to take on these roles and we all owe them our sincerest thanks with our very best wishes. If you enjoy being a part of the u3a, I urge you to consider whether or not you could spare a bit of time to help out on the committee. We meet quarterly and would welcome help, if you would like more information before putting yourself forward, please do speak to me or any present committee member. It's been fantastic to see new members joining and new groups forming since we've got back to operating normally and I look forward to the coming year with great optimism. **Paul Grierson**



## Membership Matters Joyce Winwood

I am delighted to report that after the challenges of the last two years our membership totals 237, a healthy number which will help our u3a flourish and develop.

This will be my last report as Membership Secretary, as after three years in this role it is time to hand on to new hands. It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve such a friendly, encouraging and interesting group of people. Thank you for making my job so easy, I wish my successor every success and I know you will continue to be cooperative and supportive.

The joy of u3a is that we are all in this together, so I'm not disappearing but will join with you as a member to assist the new Committee.

Please give a warm welcome to the new members who have joined us since the March UPDATE:

Gillian Helme  
Susan Harries  
Jean Hawkswell



## GROUP NEWS – Louise Keeling

At this moment there are 25 groups in Churchdown u3a which, considering we only number just over 230 members, is good news and something we should celebrate. Some groups have disbanded but new ones have started recently, including Industrial Heritage and Creative Writing. John Hawkswell is the contact for this one and says the aim of the group is to encourage members to have a go at creative writing (either poetry or prose) and to support each other's efforts, usually no more than a couple of sides of A4, of course, with the opportunity to socialise over coffee. He also says we will establish a theme for each session and members will be invited to share their contributions at the meetings as well as discuss authors that we admire along with writing tips.

It was interesting to read Eric Midwinter's article in the latest edition of TAM which included the comment that everyone in u3a should be involved. This is one of the founding principles of u3a and a topic he often returns to in his articles. A structure has evolved in order to facilitate the smooth running of groups and monthly meetings with 'titles' attached and clearly, good leadership is essential. However, this does not mean that a group leader has to 'do everything'.

It feels as though the term 'Group Leader' could be unhelpful and the National Body suggests Group Leader/Convenor in its document, 'Interest Groups Matter', which can be found on their web-site under 'Support for u3as'. In future, we will use Convenor, reflecting the role of enabling new members to join and being a link between the group and the Group Coordinator. With this in mind, please think of how you could help with the running and organisation of any group to which you belong; this could be collecting hall hire contributions and passing them to the Treasurer, opening and closing a hall, arranging refreshments or organising a planning meeting as a few examples. The paragraph 'Participative and Learning Styles' in the above document begins with this quote: ***'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.'*** Benjamin Franklin.

Please continue to suggest any ideas that you might have for a new group to the incoming Group Coordinator. You never know who else might be interested. On the subject of which, are you aware there is an active Badminton Group and they would welcome some new members to make hiring two courts viable.



## New Group Suggestion: Exploring Churchdown

Are you interested in discovering more about Churchdown, its flora and fauna, its history and byways? Pam Bryant would be happy to start up this group and suggests meeting once a month; in the winter doing research to find out about a building or history perhaps, then in spring, summer and autumn going out somewhere, for example to a park and surveying what trees, birds and insects are around. Any other ideas would be welcome as long as in Churchdown. Please contact Pam by email, [birdlodge@hotmail.com](mailto:birdlodge@hotmail.com) about starting this new group with Churchdown as its focus.

## Book Club – Joyce Winwood

Churchdown u3a Book Club meets at the library on the third Monday afternoon of each month. In July we plan for the year ahead which starts in September, allocating one book to be read each month. In the true spirit of u3a each member can nominate a book and we vary our choices each year. We also include a 'Show and Tell' session each month on a wide range of topics, for example; favourite book as a child, a book that made me laugh and favourite biography.

Refreshments are served at each meeting and there is always good humour and interesting conversations.

We are friendly and respectful, which is just well as we rarely totally agree on the books we have read but we happily tolerate different opinions and learn a lot from listening to each other's views.

As a treat we bring a wrapped book for a Secret Santa each December which has broadened our experiences and challenged us to read something different.

Three members' reviews on books we have read this year may inspire you. Happy reading.

**Ann Andrew:**

### **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot**

When asked to write a book review, I was at a loss as to which book to choose. I have been introduced to so many new authors since I joined Book Club, it was hard to make a decision.

The book I have chosen has only recently been returned to me after a long "borrow", as any book lover will tell you, favourites are always lent with the proviso "as long as you return it". They are our "babies". This book has it all, abject poverty, the wealth of the pharmaceutical giants and a family's fight for justice.

This is a question for all the ladies reading this review who have ever had a cervical smear, have you ever wondered how so much information can be obtained from the few cells that are taken?

If so, read this book.

**Norman Davies:**

### **The Venice Sketchbook by Rhys Bowen:**

What was it like to live in Venice during and in the period leading up to the second World War? We can only address such a question using our imagination. Even factual accounts of life at any time in the past rely on reports which have been processed by the consciousness of the person doing the reporting. Arguably therefore, imaginary accounts of the stories of fictional characters can be as plausible as factual descriptions, provided they recognise the limits of established truth. If the narrative does not, it becomes less of a historical novel more of a 'what if' view of what might have happened.

In this historical novel Rhys Bowen has chosen to tell two parallel love stories on two separate timelines. In 2002, Caroline Grant receives a bequest from the estate of Miss Juliet Browning – aka Caroline's beloved Great Aunt Lettie. As Caroline – or Caro as she is known by the men in her life - uncovers the truth about Lettie's life in Venice seventy years previously, she realises that her family's impression of Lettie as a sedate spinster couldn't be further from the truth.

The two timeline plots revealed to the reader by Lettie from 1938-1946 and by Caro's nameless narrator are constructed carefully. The author's style conveyed the artistic hedonism of Venice, its architecture and society, although a personal preference would have been for character descriptions as detailed as those which applied to the architecture. Overall, a good read.

*Book reviews continued:*

## **Maggie Thomas** *The Midnight Library* by **Mat Haig**

I enjoyed 'The Midnight Library', as I usually like slightly science fiction/fantasy books. It reminded me of the film 'Sliding Doors' (Gwyneth Paltrow), with the story of 'alternative futures' happening, based on one decision made at one moment in time.

It's something we've all done – wondering what would have happened if we'd chosen to do something different, or even with careful decisions. Sometimes we've made choices on the spur of the moment. As a child I loved 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking Glass', and this is like a grown-up, modern-day version. My children used to love 'Mr Benn', and I could see then how they loved finding out which world to go into for that day, depending on your chosen costume.

I really liked the gradual way Nora slowly comes to realise that there's 'no escaping from now', and that there's no such thing as 'the perfect life'. I thought it was quite a positive story, as she comes to accept that 'now' is all any of us have got and there's no point in having regrets about what would or could have happened. Mrs Elm, in the 'magic' library where she's caught between life and death, tells her the hard times are part of ourselves. In contrast to the highs and fun times, life's hard times are: 'The soil (where) seeds of happiness can grow'.

But on the negative side I think that halfway through the book she introduces too many rapidly changing scenes, or 'options', one after the other and I found it confusing. Just like a list of disconnected ideas. It would have made me dizzy if it'd been on a film. But in a way this aspect of the book would be more effectively shown as a film because the possible chances and coincidences in life are endless.

## **Cookery (Meet and Eat) Eve Anstis**



Six years and sixty-four meetings later we have tasted and shared a lot of recipes, learned a lot about cooking and have become friends.

Monthly meetings take place in members houses by rotation, giving everyone the opportunity to host. Everyone produces their own take on the planned topic and brings a prepared dish. This month's theme was Italian.

We discuss each dish; ingredients, technique, how easy to prepare, then enjoy the meal together. OK, in reality the actual meeting is an eating club, who would not want to join an eating club? Like raisins in a Chelsea bun the program includes a sprinkling of visits to outside food related organisations. Unfortunately, the present group is unable to take any more members but a couple of people would be very happy to help start up a second group if you would also like to be part of an 'eating club'. (Contact Eve as per the Group List if you're interested).

## *Lemon Tiramisu (Goodhousekeeping.com)*

(as per picture on previous page)

### Ingredients:

100g (3 ½ oz) caster sugar, Zest and juice of 3 lemons, 100ml (3 ½ fl oz) limoncello, 500g (1lb 2oz) mascarpone  
600 ml (20fl oz) double cream, 3 tbsp. icing sugar  
100g (3 ½ oz) lemon curd, 200g (7oz) savoiardi sponge fingers.

**To decorate (optional)** 2 large lemons  
200g (7oz) caster sugar

### Method

In a small saucepan heat the sugar, zest and juice of 2 of the lemons and 50ml water. Cook over a low heat until the sugar is melted then bring up to a boil and reduce for 2-3min until thickened, stir in half of the limoncello. Leave to one side to cool.

In a large bowl beat the mascarpone until smooth. Lightly beat in the cream, icing sugar, half of the lemon curd and remaining limoncello. And the remaining lemon zest and 1tbsp of lemon juice. Stir 1tbsp of lemon juice into the lemon curd.

One by one, lightly soak half of the sponge fingers in the sugar mixture and lay across a 20x30cm ceramic dish. Spoon over half of the limoncello

cream. Repeat with the remaining sponge fingers and cream. Leave to set in the fridge for at least 3hrs. Then slice the lemons as thinly as possible and remove any seeds. Bring a large pan of water to the boil and add the lemon slices. Boil for 1min then remove the slices into a bowl of ice water.

In a wide, heavy based saucepan add the sugar and 200ml water. Simmer over a low heat until all the sugar has dissolved then turn the heat up and add the lemon slices. Simmer gently for 1hr until lemons are translucent. Remove to a tray lined with baking paper and leave to cool. When ready to serve, decorate the top of the tiramisu with the slices of candied lemons, if using, some lemon zest and drizzle over the remaining lemon curd.

Another recipe for you, this time from the Spanish Group:



### 'Pollo con salsa y verduras de primavera'

'101 Recetas para Dos' by Angela Nilsen

**Take:** 2 chicken breasts, boned, 1 tablespoonful of olive oil, 200gms new potatoes, cut in thin slices, 500 ml of chicken stock, 1x200gm pack of mixed fresh vegetables: broccoli, peas, beans, courgettes (in slices), 2tbsp fresh cream, a handful of tarragon leaves, salt & pepper.

**To make:** Fry the chicken breasts in a wok or large frying for 5 mins on each side. Add the potatoes and stir to coat in the oil. Pour in the chicken stock and cover. Simmer on a low heat for 10 mins, until the potatoes are nearly cooked. Remove the lid and turn up the heat. Reduce the stock until it covers only the base of the pan. Cover again and cook for 2 mins. Add the cream to make a sauce. Season to taste, with salt and pepper. Then add the chopped tarragon. Serve immediately, straight from the pan.



## Table Tennis – Syd Leuillette

Between 2019 and now our records show that 17 of our players have left us. Some left for personal reasons and some because of the effects of Covid. Currently, we have 17 players who sign up regularly each month. Of these, 12 are members of Churchdown u3a and 5 belong to Gloucester u3a. We continue to play on a Wednesday (13:30 – 15:30) and a Friday (11:30 – 13:30) and usually have a turnout of 9 or 10 at each session. We have four tables at the GL3 Community Hub and so could accommodate up to 16 at each session. It would be nice to see a few more Churchdown u3a members come along and have a go.

The level of playing ability within the group ranges from good to learner level. We do not discriminate between the levels as during each session everyone plays everyone else and we also include some coaching sessions, too.

On Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> April, members of Gloucester u3a Table Tennis Group came to the Hub and played a “friendly” match against us. We each had four sets of doubles players and everyone played against everyone else giving a total of 16 matches. I am pleased to report that on this occasion Churchdown won 10 – 6. During the remaining hour of that day’s session, we mixed everyone up and just played table tennis and got to know the Gloucester players a little better. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and one which we hope to repeat at some stage.

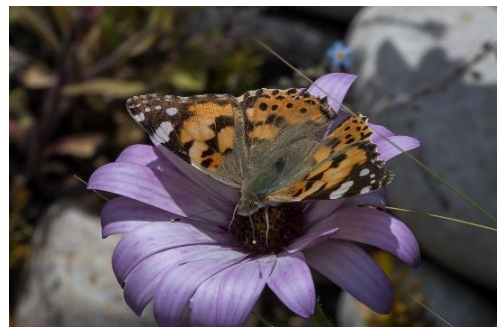
*The Walking Group provisional timetable to December is included at the end of the newsletter, in the meantime here are some contributions from individual members, starting with an update from Pam Bryant on the wildlife in her garden.*

## Wildlife in the Garden, March/April/May

The feeding birds in the garden are declining now with more fresh food available in nearby vegetation. We still have a few Goldfinches, Greenfinches, Blue tits and Collared Doves though. Sadly, the Blue tits abandoned their nest but we have had a young Robin, (not sure where the nest is). On at least two occasions the adults have been bathing and drinking in the small man-made stream.

Bee numbers are gradually increasing with lots of pollinators out in flower, mainly Welsh Poppies, Helianthemums, Osteospermums and more recently Alliums too!

Butterflies were a bit slow to appear probably due to the early cold weather. However, we have still seen Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Holly Blue, Comma, Speckled Wood, Green-veined white and just this week a Painted lady.



Other species we have seen are Shield bugs, Ladybirds, Moths, Beetles, Hoverflies, Spiders etc but too much to write about here!

If you share our hobby please get in touch to compare notes. Enjoy the summer everyone,  
**Pam and Frank Bryant**

## Anne McAndrew

### Shipwrecked in Antarctica

My husband Ian and I worked on board the very first cruise ship built to take passengers to visit Antarctica. We first met whilst Ian was working on the ship on which I was cruising in the Norwegian Fjords in 1969. We married and I returned to teaching when Ian left for the trials and first voyage of this new cruise ship, The Lindblad Explorer. It was a Norwegian/American, 100 passenger vessel built in 1969 to cruise tropical and Antarctic waters. Summers were spent in the Seychelles and winters in Antarctica, cruising from Australasia and South America. Ian worked as the barkeeper and I was 2nd steward/housekeeper.

We took Sir Peter Scott and his family for their very first visit to see his father "Scott of the Antarctic's" hut in Cape Evans. Also in his party was an ex-schoolteacher of mine from Denmark Road High school, and our group from Gloucester remained friends, often visiting Peter Scott's house at Slimbridge WWT.



Anne, Sir Peter Scott and Miss Sampson

Sailing from South America we crossed the Antarctic Circle, becoming the first cruise ship to travel the furthest south ever, in 1972. In that February however, we were

shipwrecked, (under the captaincy of the aptly named Captain Aas,) with passengers and crew taking to the lifeboats and Zodiacs at 3am in a heavy snowstorm. Eventually, 24 hours later, a Chilean Naval Supply vessel rescued us and returned us to the South American mainland with Ian still entertaining passengers and crew with his accordion and jokes during the several days it took to reach Ushuaia, Argentina. Ian and I returned to the UK and settled first in Cheltenham with our new daughter Jeanette, before finally moving to Churchdown. We continued to visit ex-crew members in Norway for our holidays and finally celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary by the Oslofjord in 2019. Ian died just before Covid struck, but his one request was that his final resting places should be Slimbridge, where he loved to visit with the family and the Oslofjord where he spent many a happy time.

We visited fascinating places both in Seychelles and Antarctica. An American group known as the Century Club joined us many times in order to visit new countries they could add to their list. Other groups were on board specifically for the huge variety of wildlife that could be seen.

It was an interesting and unconventional start to married life!



The Lindblad Explorer and friends

## PRAGUE RUGBY – Norman Davies

In April 1970 I was one of 22 enthusiastic schoolboys (mostly 16-17 years old supervised by three teachers) who embarked on a rugby tour to Czechoslovakia. I wrote an article for the school magazine just after we returned. Here it is, in its unadulterated form. The anger of the Czech students we spent time with is definitely understated (less than two years since the optimism of the Prague Spring of 1968 and the brutal Russian suppression which followed). I also make no apology for omitting antics undertaken by my fellow tourists under the influence of strong local beer.

By 6.a.m.on Thursday, April 2nd, a coach laden with 22 members of the 1st and 2nd XV's, accompanied by Mr. Ray Williams, the P.T. Master, Mr. Eifion Thomas, and Mr. John Thomas, headmaster of Pontyates C.P. School, was making its way through a veritable blizzard towards Pontardulais, along the A48. Destination - Prague, Czechoslovakia, via Victoria Station, London, Dover, Ostend, Stuttgart, Nurnberg and Cheb. Object - to play rugby. As I was one of the 22, I can testify to the physical strain of the two days of heaving bags from coach to train, to ferry, to train, and then to another train; and also to the night of half-sleep endured on the speedy, rocking, night express from Ostend to Stuttgart, which lay ahead of us.

However, this travelling was made well worthwhile by the hospitality extended to us by the people we met in Prague. Any impressions we formed that the stern-faced pistol bearing border guards were typical of the nature of the Czech population were quashed by the warmth and friendliness of the people we met. This brave nation has endured much, and her inner turmoil revealed itself to us in the form of slogans daubed on walls, as well as names of fallen liberalistic leaders - Dubjeck, Svoboda, and frequent anti-Russian remarks our guides and adversaries on the rugby field made to us in broken English.

On the field of play, the Prague Youth XV we faced on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, fulfilled the reputation that athletes behind the Iron Curtain have for fitness and dedication to whatever sport they participate in, even though rugby is a minority sport in Czechoslovakia. The Czech boys, influenced a great deal by French Rugby, made a lot of use of their main asset - hard running threequarters. The dry, dusty, bone hard pitches favoured the swift Prague backs, but Gwendraeth's greater playing experience became more evident as the game progressed and the final victory of 14 points to 8, though never inevitable, was none the less complete.

Leaving the cobble stoned streets, the trams, the musty odour of brown coal burning, which hung about the streets and the dingy, historic buildings of Prague, all of which gave it great character, and left a greater impression than more modern parts of the city, we made our way Olomouc, again by train, 200 miles to the east. Here also, we were well entertained, this time in a modern sports hotel, complete with restaurant, heated indoor swimming pool, and playing fields. Here also, the tell tale murals, hastily scrawled, indicating the deep resentment felt towards unwelcome visitors. Mode apparent in this town were the visitors themselves - the pride of the Russian Army.



## Walking Group – Provisional Programme to December 2022

<p><b>Thursday 23rd June</b>  <b>Painswick Beacon 6miles Paul Grierson: Dogs allowed: Travel donation £2</b>  <b>Meet Council offices 9.25 to leave at 9.30 or</b>  <b>10.00 at Stamages Lane car park GL6 6UZ Painswick</b>                  Lunch at a pub in Painswick.                  From the car park the route takes us via field paths tracks &amp; lanes to the beacon on summit of Painswick hill. The views from here are magnificent.                  Here there the return route is along the Cotswold way back into Painswick.                  This is an undulating walk but none of the ascents or descents is too steep or strenuous.</p>		
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	Woodmancote & Gotherington 4,5 miles	Phil & Trina Keir
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Painswick & Beacon 6 miles Dogs allowed	Paul Grierson
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Framilode 5miles	Mary White
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Maisemore 5.5 miles dogs allowed	Paul Grierson
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> August	Bidford-on-Avon 8 miles flat walk picnic stop half way	Paul & Kate Methven
Thursday 18 <sup>TH</sup> August	Lacock 6 miles	Mary & Tony White
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Malverns Starting near the common 6 miles Dogs allowed	Paul Grierson
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	Huntley /Birdwood area 5 miles	Mary White
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> October	Naunton & Upper Slaughter 6.5 miles Dogs allowed	Paul Grierson
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Selsey circuit 5 miles	Paul Grierson
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> November	Autumn colourings Robinswood Hill 4.5 miles Dogs allowed	Mary White
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> November	5-6 miles local walk from Brickhampton Golf Club	Mary White
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Short walk and Christmas meal - Corner Cupboard	Paul Grierson

**The next Monthly Meeting is on the 15th June and will include our AGM**

**Speaker: Brian Margetson on Ghosts, Royals and Ferrymen**

*With an immensely varied collection of strange craft, interesting individuals and unusual locations. Along with the weird and wacky stories that go with each of these ferries.*

## Current Group List

Please contact the Group Convenor if you wish to join a group

Or, for more information, go to our web-site: <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchdown>

Group Coordinator: To be advised following AGM

Contact: Paul Grierson (Chairman) 01452 857831 in the meantime

Group	Convenor	Contact Details
Art History/Appreciation	Martin Bowden	01452 854007
Badminton	Eamonn Doherty	07946 341270
Book Club/Literature	Joyce Winwood	01452 715099
Bridge for All	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Cookery	Eve Anstis	01242 235833
Crafts	Wendy Martin	01452 714049
Creative Writing	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Cribbage	Diana Sinden	01452 698713
Family History	Di Medland	Contact via web page
Film and Cinema	Norman Davies	07957 994390
Gardening	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Garden Visits	Jane Moore	07950 705993
Industrial Heritage	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Italian Appreciation	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Lunch Club	Tom Arnot	01452 498934
Meditation	Sue Grierson	01452 857831
Petanque	Ann Stollery	Contact via web-page
Photography	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Politics	Roger Streatfield	01452 713498
Singing Together	Alan Winwood	01452 715099
Table Tennis	Syd Leuillette	01452 857039
Spanish (Language & Culture)	Maggie Thomas	01452 676751
Walking	Mary White	07817 007706
Wine Appreciation	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Yoga	Sue Grierson	01452 857831