



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Jottings

The Newsletter of Church Stretton U3A February/March 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Dear Members, after the recent storms everything has calmed down and the evidence that spring is on its way is everywhere. I am sure you will agree that we had a very successful quiz before Christmas. Graham as our quizmaster certainly stretched our brain cells. The general meeting in January was equally well supported and Les Mackey's talk about his time in Nepal was fascinating both as an amazing part of the world but also as a time capsule. We have another interesting talk on 26 February about The Battle of Towton, 1461, one not to be missed I am sure. We are continuing to spotlight our special interest groups in Stretton Focus magazine and I would urge anyone interested to get in touch with the Group Leaders. Finally we are always looking for new interests, suggestions about afternoon talks and possible social events. **Lesley Dench – Chair**

VERY URGENT VACANCIES

GENERAL MEETINGS ORGANISER

GROUPS COODINATOR

We are looking for replacements to take on either of these roles. Anyone interested please contact the Chair, lmdench@googlemail.com in the first instance for further information.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

2020

February General Meeting

Wednesday, 26 February 2020, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

Wildlife on Prolley Moor – 16 years of living and gardening on 2 acres of the Moor, with Heather Williams

This is a last minute change to the published programme

March General Meeting

Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies, with Martin Lloyd

April General Meeting

Wednesday, 22 April 2020, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

Britain's Bloodiest Day – the Battle of Towtown 1461, with David Skellen

This is a last minute change to the published programme

May General Meeting, including AGM

Wednesday, 27 May 2020, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

Easy Read Shropshire Hills – a reading project for those struggling with reading, with Steve Gibbon

PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

November General Meeting – Sentenced to Beyond the Seas with David Clark

David Clark was Deputy Mayor and later became Mayor in Worcester and held meetings in the Guildhall where people expected him to know all about its history.

Under the courtroom of the Guildhall were the old prison cells.

There were 2 jails in Worcester, the city jail and the county jail, where cases were heard. Not all those up for trial came from the Worcester area but had to attend that court and cases were mainly due to theft of clothing.

Whilst looking into the history of the jails, David started researching the true and fascinating tale of 8 Worcestershire female convicts sentenced to death or transportation in the 1780's and published his findings. That land was to become Australia and those women the foundation of a new nation. One of them would be the ancestor of the largest living family group in Australia today. Another would return to England a rich woman.

One of the women from Worcester was in court in 1785 for stealing clothing and was on the first fleet of convicts sent to Botany Bay. The Lady Penrhyn sailed with only female convicts. A colony was set up on Norfolk Island where 6 of the Worcester 8 were placed and were among of the first group of 19 settlers.

One example of a sentence was 50 lashes for stealing a cabbage. The woman was given 25 lashes but then it was stopped due to her injuries and taken away to recover but once recovered she was given the other 25 lashes!



It was a fascinating talk with further information that can be found in his book, "Sentenced to Beyond the Seas", obtainable from Amazon. **Julia Felton**

December Social Meeting

The social evening was very well attended with 6 U3A interest groups represented as well as individual members and guests. It was a fun evening with a quiz that certainly tested the brain cells. There was plenty to drink and the food, purchased from Van Doesbergs, was excellent.

January General Meeting -1975 – A Year in Nepal with Les Mackey

During his working life Les was a Sergeant in the Royal Army Pay Corp. He had the opportunity to volunteer to serve with the Gurkhas and was lucky enough to join them for one year in 1975 as a Chief Clerk. He was stationed in the flatlands of Dharan, Nepal. Les gave a very interesting and varied talk based on his time there.

Originally there were 10 Gurkha regiments but during 1947 with Indian independence 6 regiments went under Indian rule with the remaining 4 regiments under British rule.

He showed many slides giving examples of life on camp and how they employed locals in their home to help with cooking, cleaning and gardening.

The British camp had many facilities, including a camp hospital which served both the Gurkhas and local residents.

An annual fair was held by the locals during which a goat and a young bull were sacrificed. This is no longer practiced.

When Les had 2 weeks leave he had the opportunity to travel with his wife to visit Kashmir, Delhi and Calcutta and he again showed us many slides taken during the visit.

The last section of his talk was about his trek to the base camp at Everest. It was first climbed in 1953 and is 29,035 feet high. The local Sherpas, along with a yak helped him and his friend to reach base camp. Les got so fed up with the bell on the yak that one evening he took it off. Next morning the yak was nowhere to be found so they had to carry their own supplies! It was interesting to see how uncrowded the trek was in 1975. Today the region in general has changed dramatically and now very much a tourist and climbers paradise. **Julia Felton**



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

Singing for Pleasure

The Singing for Pleasure Group is the largest U3A group in Church Stretton. We have around 80 on the roll with an average attendance of 50.

We sing everything from Abba to Mozart and you do not have to read music. Ru Trew and I run the group and enjoyment is the key!!

The group meets at the Parish Centre, Church Street from 2:15 to 4:15 on the first and third Tuesdays of every month. Future meetings on 3 March and 17 March.

If you want any more information, I will be happy to talk to you – 07853 862 432 **Margaret Sinden**

Scottish Country Dancing Group

When asked to write an article about our dancing group I decided to consult some of the 30 members of the group their opinions. Here is a selection of their comments:

“Scottish Country Dancing - is it for you? No need to be Scottish. No need to be from the country. All you need is a sense of fun and enjoy a good social occasion.”

“Beginners always encouraged positively and never made to feel useless!”

“Camaraderie, stimulation for ageing brain, laughter. Dancing lifts the spirits. Excellent guidance.”

“Good fun, good exercise and excellent patient teaching. All very friendly and sociable.”

“A super afternoon, good dancing and company. Most of my friends think I’m mad but they don’t know what they are missing.”

“We dance dances with names such as Joie de Vivre, Highland Rambler, The Swan and the Tay and, very appropriately, The Silver Grey.”

“We dance reels, jigs and strathspeys in sets of 2 couples to 5 couples using terminology such as Corners Pass and Turn, Promenade, Rights and Lefts, Cast Up, Dance Down and many, many more and with luck we end up where we started. It is a mixed ability group and new members are always welcomed. You don't need a partner, just a soft soled pair of shoes and a willingness to join in.”

“This group is so well run and caters for all abilities so release your inner Celt and come along. ”

We meet on Wednesday afternoons at the URC Hall between 2 – 4 pm. (Except the 4th Wednesday of the month when the U3A General Meetings are held in the hall.) **Alison Bradley**

New Groups

If anyone would like to join or start a new group please contact the Groups Coordinator via the website u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact for further details.

Contact a coordinator through the Church Stretton U3A website via the website link u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/groups, then select the group page.

Select the link next to the text send a message and complete the form. This information will only be seen by your choice of message receiver.

If you do not have an email address you can still get in touch by typing none@none.com in the email line and some contact details in the message section.

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Group	Coordinator
Art – drawing and painting	Daphne and Stewart Rankine
Art History	Sue Toghill
Book Group	Susan Lees
Book Group 2	Margaret Haynes
Bridge	Eric Brown
Classical Music	Ian Templeton
Family & Social History	Peter Thorpe
Hill Walking	Dick Ward
Landscape Archaeology	Ian Dormor
Philosophy	Bryan Pryce
Popular Music	Trevor Halsey
Scottish Country Dancing	Alison Bradley
Singing for Pleasure	Margaret Sinden
Writers' Group	Lesley Dench
Writers' Group 2	Jenny O'Shea

Your Elected Committee:

Chair - Lesley Dench

Vice Chair - Colin Carson

Treasurer - Grahame Hurst

Business Secretary - Jennifer O'Shea

Membership Secretary - Lesley Brown (01694 724330)

Groups Coordinator – Vacant

General Meetings Organiser - Vacant

Newsletter Editor - Julia Felton

Webmaster – Sylvia Davidson

Inventory of Assets held by U3A

ViewSonic Projector

Junior Desktop Presenter

Boomblander B100 plus accessories

Sony MHCV11 Black - High Power Audio System with Bluetooth & CD Player

Jottings

Updates and news from groups and comments on recent events from members are always welcome, and should be returned to me, **Julia Felton**, via the website u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact. Your input will be appreciated. The next Jottings is scheduled for June 2020.

Keep up to date with what's going on in Church Stretton U3A by checking the website at:

u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton

National Events:

Please go to u3a.org.uk for more details of National Events (You will have to create a login account to access pages for members) or the magazine Third Age Matters. If you have no access to the internet you may contact a committee member to help you.