

NEWSLETTER - December 2023

Welcome to this Christmas newsletter. We very much hope to see you at the Christmas meeting on 13th December which will showcase the talents of members in different groups.

Christmas is a time of celebration and hope for the future, which we desperately need when the days are so short and dismal – so I hope you are all getting out your lights and putting up your tree, as well as enjoying the displays of your neighbours.

I feel sure that for many of us, it is also a time for reflection and remembering loved ones who are no longer with us. This too can be a celebration: of lives well lived and happy times together. So let us prepare for the feasts ahead and enjoy songs and merriment with friends and family.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas

Chris



General Meetings



Our speaker in
November

The Story Behind The song.

This month's talk was well attended by members. Those who were there were entertained both verbally and musically. The talk was about popular songs through a few decades, (1960's – 1980's) primarily.

All the songs and music talked about and played were all songs people knew and could relate to. It started off with a song called Save The Last Dance For Me. This was written by a chap called Doc Pomus for his wife. Doc Pomus had polio so was unable to dance and so this love song was written.

“As if we are not already beatled out?” as someone has said recently. The song Help was described as cry for help from John Lennon to Paul McCartney. John was experiencing a tough and troubled time. Particularly with the pressures of fame etc.

The song Help was originally supposed to be an acoustic slow piece. However, bowing to pressure from the record company, the Beatles made it a pop version.

The talk then moved onto the “Stalkers Song” Every Breath You Take by the Police. It has been admitted by Sting, that this song was written after the break up of his marriage. When listening to the lyrics, you can hear a sinister undertone. Big brother is watching you!.

Next was the turn of Abba and the song lyrics which express sadness, loss and pain when relationships break up. Sad but true.

Next came the song Oh Sweet Lord by George Harrison. This song was taken to court as it sounded like another late sixties hit. George lost and had to pay £1.6 million in compensation. When he passed away, the George Harrison then bought the rights to the song he paid compensation for.

Lastly, we finished with the King, Elvis Presley. This had him laughing during one of his songs as someone who was sitting in the front row of a concert lost his wig. Elvis found this highly amusing, couldn't stop laughing and even replaced some lyrics of his song with "I bet you wish you had hair".

Overall a highly entertaining and enjoyable talk.

Richard

Next Speaker Wednesday 24th January 2024

January 24th – The Real Queen Mother

A talk about the life of the Queen Mother. Her family, her youth, her marriage and her image. The result often comes as a surprise.

You are 'corgially' invited.

Presented by Jean Townsend

February 28th - The Titanic - What Happened Next?

We all know that the Titanic sunk on its maiden voyage, but the story of "what happened next" is not generally known.

This presentation will take us on that strange, shocking and somewhat unsettling journey into the class prejudices of the day and the poignant story of one little boys shoes. Beware though, there will be two quizzes and lots of tea and (hopefully) cake – just to assist us in our journey into the unknown.

Part of this this talk was previously presented to the u3a history group (without the tea and cake) and further information has since been added and new revelations highlighted.

Presented by Lesley Piper

March 27th – Victorian Medicine: Challenges, Champions and Charlatans

Presented by Em. Professor Robert Wilcox

April 24th – Commonwealth War Graves Foundation

Presented by Sarah Moody

Groups

Contacting group leaders

A full list of groups can be found on our website. <https://u3asites.org.uk/collingham/groups>.

To contact one of the group leaders by email please use the contact link on the specific group page.

New Group

NEW QUIZ GROUP

It is hoped that in the new year we will be able to start a new group making up & taking quizzes. No decision on time & date has been set yet as too many things happen at this time of year. So everyone who is interested, please watch this space. Anyone who has any ideas or advice, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

John Annis



Art Appreciation

In November Mary gave a presentation on Fresco.

We learned that Fresco is a particular kind of mural and that different methods have been used by artists over time to make Fresco. These are Buon Fresco, also called true fresco, Fresco Secco and Fresco Lustrato. Each of these needs the wall surface or the pigment (paint) to be prepared in different ways to produce different effects. Mary concentrated on Buon Fresco. This type of fresco is known to last for thousands of years. The fresco, 'The Fisherman', is one of the early examples.

The Fisherman Minoan(1640-1600 BCE)



One of the best known 'frescos' that has not survived very well is Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Last Supper'. This is because Da Vinci liked to experiment and he mixed his methods. Unfortunately, on this occasion, it did not work and within twenty years some of the paint had begun to flake off.

Jannet

Bridge

On Dec 1st The Bridge Group enjoyed a lunch in The Royal Oak, this was enjoyed by all, we then continued to play Bridge as normal.

Chris

Family History

The attendance at the December meeting was the highest of the year. Partly due to new members but also to the promise of a Xmas buffet!

We started the session with a game of Bingo, designed and presented by Bridget. Instead of numbers, each card had twelve names of sources used in family history research e.g. the 1841 census, wills, marriage certificates etc. The game then proceeded in usual bingo fashion. Any unfamiliar sources were explained by Bridget, so we all learned as the game progressed.

Family photographs are often found without any names and dates so a quiz by Charlie was based on this. The decade in which fifteen photos were taken had to be guessed with answers ranging from the 1890s to the 1940s. Several were taken in Collingham so additional questions were posed as to location or the event shown. This encouraged lots of debate as for several photos the correct answer was not actually known.

Members then enjoyed their extensive buffet and agreed to meet next on Tuesday 2nd January.

Charlie



Gardening

In July some of us did a Sunday trip to Sutton on Trent to visit one of the Open Gardens. This was well worth the time and effort. There was quite a lot to see and some interested and varied planting. The owners were more than happy to answer questions and offer advice. It's a shame that this was probably the last time they will open their garden to the public.

The October outing was to see Belton House gardens. Sadly we missed the best of the autumn colours but we were very lucky with the weather - the gardens were closed the week before because the paths were flooded. It was really pleasant to walk through the lovely grounds.

Plans for 2024 include a visit in the spring to Naturescape. They grow wild flowers and plants and harvest and sell the seeds. We hope to arrange a tour and will open this up to other u3a members - more next year.

Jan



Sutton



Belton gardens

History

At our November meeting, we were very pleased to welcome back Jannet Wright. Jannet gave us a presentation on how our art treasures returned from storage at the end of WWII. It is remarkable just how quickly our museums and galleries were up and running and open to the public.. Thank you Jannet.

Our December meeting will be on 15th at a later time 11.00am. please bring an item of finger food to share, plus a glass and a pen, yes there will be a quiz! I look forward to seeing you all there.

Ann

Italian

The Italian Group meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 2pm.

At our second meeting in November we were pleased to welcome yet another new member to the Group. This session was our Grammar meeting.

The 'warm-up' activity focused on number sequences. Each person chose a card on which a number is written and then having said the number in Italian they had to say what numbers come before (precedente) and after (successivo).

We did a final revision of all the work we had done on past tenses. This included a crossword puzzle which, when completed correctly, also gave us the names of two Italian rivers.

We will only meet once in December when panettone will be eaten during our refreshment break.

Buon Natale a tutti i membri u3a

Jannet and Mary

Literature

We have been reading Elisabeth Strout's latest novel 'Lucy by the Sea', which begins in March 2020 and follows Lucy's escape from New York and COVID 19 to a coastal house her ex-husband has rented in Maine. Rich with empathy this novel evokes the fragility and uncertainty of the recent past. As always, it will be interesting to hear opinions from the group at our meeting next week.

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We have had some sad news in the village this week, and the passing of Benjamin Zephaniah has suggested his poem 'People will always need people', appropriate at this time;

People need people,
To walk to
To talk to
To cry and rely on,
People will always need people.

To love and to miss
To hug and to kiss
It's useful to have other people.
To whom to moan
If you're all alone,
It's so hard to share
When no one is there.
There's not much to do
When there's no one but you.
People will always need people.

To please
To tease
To put you at ease,
People will always need people.
To make life appealing
And give life some meaning,
It's useful to have other people.
If you need a change
To whom will you turn.
If you need a lesson
From whom will you learn?
If you need to play
You'll know why I say
People will always need people.

As girlfriends
As boyfriends
From Bombay
To Ostend,
People will always need people-
To have friendly fights with
And share tasty bites with,
It's useful to have other people.

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Very Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Sheelah

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# Local History Research

The last 2023 meeting was held 6 December, complete with mince pies and sausage rolls!

David gave a slide presentation on documents and maps associated with the 1791 parliamentary enclosure of North Collingham. Both pre and post enclosure maps were shown. He covered how the enclosure surveyor set out the new holdings of land among the numerous former strips and how these were identified. In discussion it became clear we do not yet understand on what basis the surveyor was able to allocate the proposed size of each individual's new holding. A topic to be researched for future meetings.

Bridget gave a talk on her current research into cotton mills and their employment of child labour. Her interest had been sparked when looking into the location and history of a former cotton mill in Newark. This led on to finding that child labour was common place in certain cotton mills and could justifiably be considered child slavery so dire was their situation. Bridget read to the meeting some extracts from a memoir about Robert Blincoe, a former child labourer, written by a journalist John Brown, first published in 1828 in five weekly instalments. This detailed some of the appalling hardships that Blincoe and others had earlier suffered as child labourers in mills and workhouses. The infamous Lowdham Mill in Nottinghamshire provided noteworthy evidence. Its affairs were the inspiration for Dicken's opening chapters of *Oliver Twist*.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 10 January.

David

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# Music



# Makers

Our next session is likely to be the last of the year, at which we'll be putting the finishing touches to the upcoming performance at the Christmas meeting. We still need to cull the odd number to confine ourselves to the allocated slot in the programme - but better to have too many than too few.



**" Your car has been keyed. The good news is that the damage appears to B minor. "**

The new (and improved?) Seven Shades of Grey look forward to seeing you all on the 13th and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Phil

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# Photography

This month the group met face to face in order to have a more seasonal experience. We also reviewed 2 images from each member and shared why they were their favourites. Next month we will return to monthly theme images.

Merry Christmas,

Paul



The tulip image was built up from 6 photographs plus some extra artwork. I enjoyed the technical challenge and to be able to show there is beauty in decay. The picture of Clun Castle was the first steam image I have managed to take since Covid struck.

Paul Bass





The Tenby image is a reminder of a short break there and the nature reserve image shows there is beauty locally.

Gill Bass



Langford Nature Reserve



River Witham at Bassingham

I liked the early spring frost, the light and reflections in the river image. The textures in the fox-glove are what attracted me.

Jenny Macpherson



The landscape and the quality of the light in North Cornwall make them my favourites.

Colin Smith



Dramatic Sunset over the Sea at Tintagel



Sea View near Carbis Bay



The Doone Valley image brings back memories of a holiday with friends. The seals are what attracted me to this image.

John Geeson





I just liked the light in the yacht image and it was an unusual subject for me. The jellyfish image was taken in San Francisco Aquarium and will remind me of my holiday and the challenge of getting the image.

Jannet Wright



# Play Reading

In November we enjoyed a one act comedy called “Absolute Discretion “ by Stewart Auty; a diverse range of characters meeting up for a singles’ weekend with all the misunderstandings and complications you might predict.

This month we are going to enjoy a Christmas lunch at The Generous Briton and you might spot us doing a short piece at the u3a Christmas party.

In January, it’s back to normal and, as it’s panto season, we’ll be reading Alan Bennett’s adaptation of Wind in the Willows.

Sue

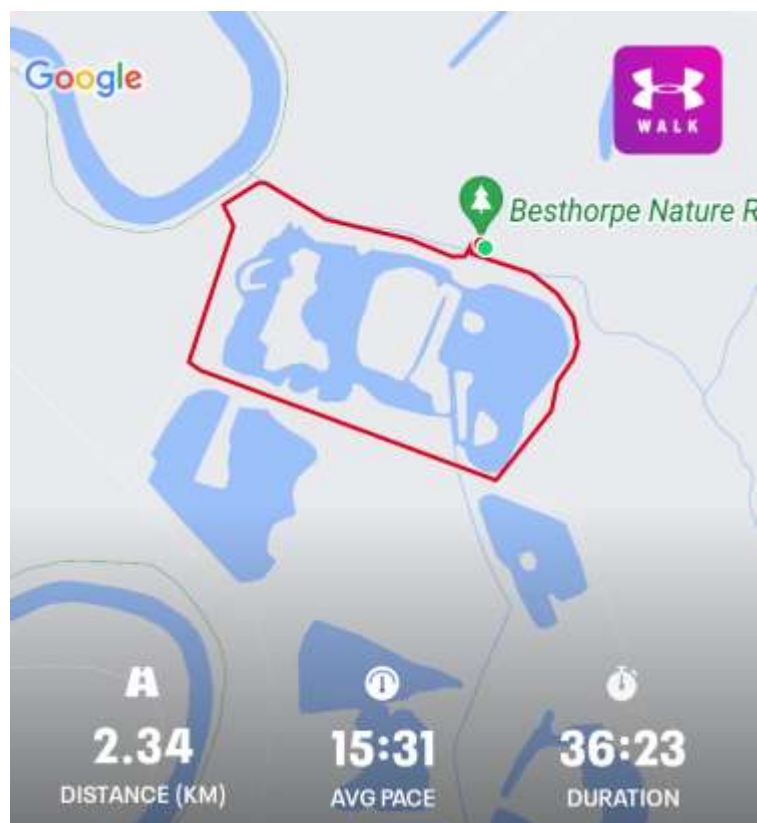
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# Strollers

On 6 December 13 Strollers had a glorious morning walk at Besthorpe Nature Reserve around Besthorpe lake. The weather was dry and had been frosty first thing, so there was ice in some parts, but the sun came out and we had a lovely 1.5 mile walk. The river was very high up the banks and fast flowing after the rain and snow of previous days.

We followed our walk gaining an additional 3 Strollers for our meal at The Lord Nelson, Besthorpe, who did us proud with an excellent 2 course lunch.

Marg





# Table Tennis

Our friendly table tennis group usually meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at the Winthorpe Community Centre for 1 hour from 10 – 11 am. Afterwards many of us enjoy a cup of coffee and the occasional cake at the Lord Nelson in Winthorpe. We do provide bats and balls and new members are always welcome.

Do come and give it a try!

**The dates going forward are as follows:**

**December 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>**

**January 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>**

**February 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**March 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>**

Peter

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# Thursday Talking Shop

November's topic of 'Philanthropy' provoked a very lively and free-ranging discussion starting off with definitions such as: 'The desire to promote the welfare of others, especially through the donation of money to good causes' and: 'The love of humanity - giving gifts of time, talent or treasure'. Just a few of the issues and ideas discussed and debated included: the role of social action and campaigning; the value of donating 'time', cultural sponsorship as part of marketing strategies and the danger of 'brand white-washing'.

There will be no meeting in December but on January 25 we will meet to discuss 'Quakerism'.

Anita

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# Weekenders



Our Christmas lunch at the Generous Briton, excellent food and service.

