

Newsletter October 2022



Dear member,

There's lots to report this month, but before I do, I have a request to make. The winter is fast approaching, and with it the season of colds, flu and, of course, COVID. We are a community of people who may be more severely affected by these infections than most. We would ask that you bear this in mind when attending u3a events. Please do not come if you have a cold, cough or flu-like or COVID symptoms. If you can, and you have any reason for concern, please do a COVID test before attending an event. If, shortly after attending an event, you test positive for COVID please notify the organizer so that they can advise other participants at the event of the situation.

We were a slightly reduced group at the open meeting this month, it seems September is when u3a members jet off around the world. However, we had an excellent talk from James Taylor. In October, we have two talks. On October 12th, Jenny Mallin talks about 'The Memsahibs and their Servants'. This is a Zoom talk, so you don't even have to leave the comfort of your own home. A link will be sent out soon, just click on this to join us. On October 19th, Tim Harrold talks on 'The Enigma Behind the Fingle's Memorial Plaque'. I won't spoil the mystery, but it concerns the activities of Dr Marian.

Trips are back, hoorah! If you are interested in signing up for a one-day trip, please visit the groups section on our website, then click on 'Trips out'. Here you will find a list of suggestions. By clicking on the bluebird icon on the top right, you can send an email to our organisers expressing your interest. Alternatively, we will have sign-up sheets out at our next open meeting. Also, at our next open meeting we will start collecting names for our Christmas lunch, so don't forget to bring your cheques book!

Liz Ouldrige (chair)

Important dates

Wednesday October 12th: Zoom talk: Jenny Mallin 'The Memsahibs and their Servants' 10:00

Tuesday October 18th: Monthly coffee morning at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am,

Wednesday October 19th: Open meeting: Tim Harrold talks on 'The Enigma Behind the Fingle's Memorial Plaque' Refreshments from 9:30am, announcements start at 10:00am. The talk starts at 10:15.

Wednesday 21st December: Christmas Lunch

News from the Groups

There's lots going on in our special interest groups. Five new groups are currently being formed. These are: Current Affairs 2, Energy Action Group, Vegan Friendly, IT for Beginners and Mahjong. If you are interested, then visit the groups page on our website, by clicking on the bluebird link, you can email the groups coordinator and tell her which group you're interested in joining. Alternatively, you can sign up at the open meeting.

September's Talk: 'The Voyage of the Beagle' by James Taylor

This five-year long voyage is well known as the inspiration for Darwin's ideas about evolution. James told the story of the voyage using artwork of the time, giving us a unique insight into the voyage and the voyagers. The captain of the ship was Robert FitzRoy. FitzRoy was a brilliant naval officer and scientist, but he was not an easy man to work with. His voyage with Darwin was his second to South America. Aware of the loneliness and stresses caused by long voyages, FitzRoy requested a 'gentleman companion'. They were an interesting combination. FitzRoy had fundamentalist Christian views, which contrasted with Darwin's more open mind. This led to FitzRoy publicly coming out against Darwin's theory of evolution when it was published many years later. During the voyage, they had a major row about slavery. Darwin was strongly anti-slavery while FitzRoy saw it as a necessary evil. However, they got along sufficiently well, despite FitzRoy suffering several periods of depression.

The voyage took them in a circuit round the world. Although their visit to the Galapagos was later seen to have huge significance, they only spent five weeks there. The main aims of the trip were to survey the coast and seas around South America and to verify the accuracy of the chronometers they carried on board. However, FitzRoy employed a resident artist on board ship to record the various sights they saw.

FitzRoy and Darwin are remembered very differently by posterity. Today, FitzRoy, if he is remembered at all, is remembered as the founder of the Met Office. Darwin lived quietly at Down House for many years before he published his work on evolution but today, his name is now known worldwide.