

Dear Member,

Those who were able to make the September meeting were treated to a fascinating talk by Peter Chave as you can see below. Some people were also able to talk to the IT expert from Age Concern. He hopes to be here again at the October meeting, so if you are having problems with your phone or tablet, just bring it along, there's no appointment system.

This month's talk, *The Story of Tin Pan Alley*, is about the influence that Jewish immigrants, to the USA, had in creating and promoting decades of popular American music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pianist and raconteur, Roger Browne tells the story of the publishers, composers and lyricists that were responsible for laying the foundations for *The Great American Songbook*. He illustrates his presentation with live piano playing. You will hear the wonderful compositions of Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Lou Donaldson, Harry Warren, Sammy Khan and many others. So do come along.

We are starting to collect names for the Christmas Lunch. If you want to come, please let us know before December 6<sup>th</sup>. We are taking bookings by post or at the Open Meetings. Unfortunately, the lunch is sufficiently popular that we restrict it to members only, sorry. Also, I must apologise for an incorrect phone number on the flyer for the lunch. The correct number for is 01363 82348. Finally, the Energy Action Group is looking for new members. If you would like to reduce your fuel bills, then contact the group leader by clicking on the bluebird on their webpage or sign up at the Open Meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you soon,  
Liz Ouldrige (Chair)

### **Important dates**

**October 17<sup>th</sup>** Monthly coffee morning for all at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am.

**October 18<sup>th</sup>** Open Meeting at the Boniface Centre: Roger Brown 'The Story of Tin Pan Alley'. Refreshments from 9:30am, the talk starts at 10:15.

**November 15<sup>th</sup>** Open Meeting at the Boniface Centre: Prof. Peter Edwards "The Life and Times of Galileo."

**November 21<sup>st</sup>** Monthly coffee morning for all at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am.

**December 20<sup>th</sup> Christmas Lunch** at the Waie Inn. See the flyer or website for more details.

### **September's talk: A Century of Water Quality by Peter Chave**

Peter told us about the history of our use of water starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so a bit more than 100 years! He divided the topic into three main areas, the quality of our drinking water, the treatment of wastewater and the quality of water in our rivers, lakes and the sea.

The drinking water story starts in the 1850s. At this time the quality of drinking water in London was appalling. In 1854, a cholera epidemic was initiated by contaminated drinking water from a pump in Broad Street. By careful detective work, Dr John Snow identified the pump as the source of the outbreak. However, the authorities refused to believe him, maintaining that the disease was spread by a miasma in the air. Snow removed the handle from pump, and the epidemic halted! This was one of the first instances where the source of an outbreak could be traced. By 1871, various legislation was enacted in London that required all drinking water to be filtered and available every day of the week. Water examiners were also employed to assess water quality. The legislation then spread nationwide. In 1945, the Water Act stipulated that water had to be 'wholesome' but did not define what this meant. Nevertheless, using WHO standards, drinking water quality could be assessed. It wasn't until 2016 that these standards became defined by law. Water from any source must be purified before being made available to the public. In the early days this was by allowing debris to settle and filtration through sand. Today, extra steps such as ion exchange are used to remove contaminants like nitrates. Finally, water is chlorinated to ensure there is no bacterial contamination.

The sewage treatment story also starts in London with the 'Great Stink' of 1858. The introduction of toilets that flushed straight into the local rivers meant that the Thames was effectively an open sewer. In the summer of 1858, the smell was so bad that parliament had to close. Joseph Bazalgette was employed to solve the problem. He built two huge sewers that ran along either side of the Thames. (They run under the Thames Embankment, that was built to house them.) Still in use today, they collected all the sewage from the rivers running into the Thames and took it downstream to be released into the river as the tide went out. Today, the sewage is treated at a large sewage works before being discharged. Gradually large civic projects across the country built similar sewers and treatment plants. In 1912, standards were brought into law that defined the quality of water that could be discharged. But until 1991, untreated sewage could still be legally discharged into the sea and some rivers under licence. Since 1991, no routine discharge into the sea or rivers is permitted. Sadly, underinvestment means that untreated sewage still reaches our waterways particularly after heavy rain.

It is only since 1976 that legislation has been enacted to set standards for the quality of water in our rivers and lakes. In 2000, the river framework directive called for plans to be set in place for the improvement of environmental water quality. This has proved difficult to do and the quality of water is not improving. This is partly due to pollution from sewage but also farm run-off and industrial contamination is a huge problem. Peter summed up the talk by suggesting we know what we what to do about water quality but do not seem able do it!

### **The Role of the u3a Committee: Membership Secretary – current holder Lyn Padley**



Lyn is one of the longest serving members on the committee. She efficiently manages the membership system. This means keeping the records of membership details and supporting those members and new members who wish to join or renew. She uses the Beacon Administration system to keep records. This system allows us to store your details securely, with information only made available to those who need to know. The system also allows us to send emails like the one accompanying this newsletter. She has a supporting role for the treasurer in areas like Gift Aid and membership payments and is a signatory on our bank account.