



Hello everyone, and a very Happy New Year to you all!

It hardly seems six months since I took over as Chair. It is said that time flies when you are having fun. It was quite a busy year for us last year. We had all the usual group meetings all of which seem to be continuing and enjoying their various activities. In addition, we held our first 'u3a Day'. Our first attempt was thwarted by extremely hot weather, which took everyone by surprise and for some was totally overwhelming. I was camping at a Blues Festival when the temperatures soared. At outdoor events in the UK in a normal summer we all seek the sunniest spots - we were all hunting for shade and cold drinks! We regrouped and had the open day in October. The advertising online was very successful along with the posters around the town. We welcomed many new faces. Welcome to you all. The event took quite a lot of organisation, so thank you to all those who were involved in any capacity who helped to make the event the success it was.

The Whacky Watercolours group was launched at the Open Day and now has 7 members. We have a bit of a programme for the next 3 months so are a little more structured but do not take ourselves too seriously. Contact me if you would like to visit.

The Strawberry tea was well attended and the quiz was enjoyed by all. Thanks go to those who made it happen. Unfortunately the Christmas Lunch which took so long to get organised finally had to be cancelled. A lot of hard work wasted. Our thanks must go to the Home Office!

We have had some interesting and varied talks at the monthly meetings. This is set to continue with Lee Edwards, our visiting speaker for January from SOBBS. This is likely to be of interest to a wider audience than us. Posters have been put up in various outlets around the town and on noticeboards encouraging people to come along - maybe we will get more new members.

I have as yet been unable to finalise the Skittles afternoon in which some members expressed an interest. I will persevere! It will hopefully be on a Wednesday afternoon at Claines British Legion. More information will be available once all is booked etc. I am also hoping to organise a line dancing session and a 'keep moving' session in the coming months. If they are well supported they will continue and ideas for active sessions will be welcomed. Well I have much to get on with as you can see.

Here I must just emphasis that this is **your** u3a. I cannot continue as Chair year on year. Many of the current committee have been loyal active members over a long period of time. I know we have all been on committees and done 'our bit' but it is time to consider how best we can share the load. It is not onerous. One meeting a month for roughly an hour and a half. Some of the positions can be shared. Please consider contacting me to visit a meeting and see if you feel you can give a little time. It would be very sad to see Droitwich u3a decline.

I'm off to hang out the washing while the sun is shining! Hope to see many of you at the meeting on January 16th.

Sue Cook - Chair

Understanding the role of the Third Age Trust

As many of you will know there have been discussions, resolutions, and votes on what the National u3a organisation, the Third Age Trust, charges all u3a members for their services. While this short article is not definitive, I hope it gives you an outline as to the services they provide and the reason it exists. In the UK u3a's started in 1982 and there are now over 1000 u3a's nationally representing 430000 members.

This Third Age Trust can and perhaps does feel remote from our interest groups here in Droitwich, but they do provide us with vital services, these include national online talks and workshops via Zoom, together with ongoing initiatives such as logic puzzles, math challenges, creative writing, photography and others, plus advice and resources on specialist subjects are available to group leaders. These services are available free to members of Droitwich u3a. It also provides an online u3a with about 100 interest groups (<https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/groups>) for people who do not have easy access to a local u3a.

The Third Age Trust also provides other services that make your experience of the u3a relevant such as the platform for our website and associated IT services, legal and copyright services plus a personal help service. This service receives over 2000 calls per month. Whilst the Third Age Trust is not a campaigning organisation and I hope never will be, it would be remiss of the organisation if it did not represent the mutual interests of its members through initiatives such as challenging ageism and collaboration with the Design Age Institute on age-appropriate items.

The Third Age Trust is not run wholly by volunteers but employs a small number of staff at an office near London. The staff are supported by elected volunteers and these form the national committee. There are also regional groups that support the national committee such as the Cotswold Link, of which Droitwich u3a is a member. The regional groups share ideas to develop the u3a, their challenges and promote best practice in resolving these challenges for the benefit of us all.

Whilst local and regional groups are run by volunteers, about £5.00 of your annual membership fee does go towards running the Third Age Trust and its services. Your committee will always seek to ensure payments made for central services are appropriate and of value to our membership. I would encourage you to use the services and talks available because I am sure they will enrich members experience of Droitwich u3a.

I wish to extend a happy u3a New Year to you.

Mike Bracey - Vice Chair

Calendar dates

Monthly meetings/talks held at The Norbury Theatre 2.30pm

Monday 16th January - Save our brine baths by Lee Evans, Director of SOBBS

Monday 20th February - The history of Punch & Judy by Philip Collins

Monday 20th March - All things kimono by Nigel Evans

Talks by the Maths, Science and Technology group held at Rotary House:

Friday 17th February - How to design a solid propellant rocket motor by Pete Penny

Friday 17th March - How to design an aircraft by Bob Coupe & Ian Johnston



Spotlight on the Groups

The final visit of 2022 for the *Digital Photography Group* was to the Georgian riverside town of Bewdley. Meeting at the Dogs Lane car park we walked to the river and along Severn Side North past the Mug House inn to Bewdley Bridge.

Bewdley Bridge is a three-span masonry arch bridge over the River Severn, designed by civil engineer Thomas Telford. The two side spans are each 52 feet, with the central span 60 feet. The central arch rises 18 feet. Smaller flood arches on the bank bridge over the towpath. Continuing along the towpath on the opposite side of the bridge and then turning through Jubilee gardens and on to the rear entrance to Bewdley Museum. On through the museum and out onto the high street past the bronze statue of a famous son of Bewdley, Stanley Baldwin. Then to the café for the traditional coffee and cake.



We start up again on 10th January and new members are always welcome. To join us contact Alan Meyrick at alanmeyrick@btinternet.com.

Group Information Corrections

Please note:

- The History Local group meets at the Baptist Church Hall on the 2nd Friday of each month at 10.00 a.m. and not as previous notified.
- The German Beginners Group meets every Monday at 10.00 a.m.

STUCK IN A RUT?

Fancy something different?

Got an idea?



Why not start a new group? It's not as difficult as you may think and there is lots of help available to get you started. Seriously, if any member has an idea for a new activity please do contact me, information below, and let's discuss your idea further.

You may not realise but group activities appear to have a natural lifespan, some lasting since inception and others running for a shorter period before they lapse waiting for new members to take up the baton again.

New groups that are in the pipeline include:

Nordic Walking – a different slant on taking a walk, according to [What is Nordic Walking? – British Nordic Walking](#) 'Nordic Walking is an enhanced walking technique that uses poles to work your upper body as well as your legs. It gives you a highly effective all over workout that doesn't feel like one! Nordic Walking is a fun and social activity that can be enjoyed in town centres or open countryside throughout the year. Nordic Walking uses specially designed poles – not to be confused with trekking poles – to enhance your natural walking experience. With a technique that is similar to the upper body action of classic cross-country skiing, Nordic Walking is a genuinely whole body exercise that can be enjoyed at many levels, at low, medium or high intensity. ... And because Nordic Walking doesn't feel like hard work you'll be happy to walk further and for longer.'

Ah but I hear you say I've got mobility issues and can't walk far but the website says 'If you can walk you can Nordic Walk! It really is for everyone. The poles mean that effort is shared between the upper and lower body so it actually feels easier than normal walking, particularly uphill. Nordic Walking puts less strain on joints than other activities and can be very effective for people with mobility issues or those recovering from illness or injury. It's also great exercise for toning problem areas such as the upper arms and abdominal muscles.' So no excuses!

Poker – play for fun in the winter evenings. This is a group that is looking for a leader. How difficult can it be to organise a small group of members to meet every so often to play cards? It's not a game I've ever played except as strip poker when young when fortunately I wasn't the loser!

Sunday Brunch – this is a great idea especially for members on their own. Why not sample a wide variety of venues in and around Worcestershire for Sunday lunch with others. A chance to make new friends doing something we all enjoy. This group is looking for a leader. I can already hear you say 'but I don't know where to go'.

Here there really is lots of advice available as we already have two lunch groups that meet during the week and they, no doubt, have widely sampled many of the local hostelrys and the leaders would be only too willing to give suggestions to try.

I have run a lunch club that meets once a month on our estate for the last ten years or so as a way of keeping neighbours in touch, important at all ages but especially so as we get older – if I can do it anyone can. It's a date in the month we all look forward to for company and conversation over a meal.

Customs & Folklore - A new idea for a group - expressions of interest from members needed.

The following groups have formerly been active but need more people to join and/or new leaders to become viable again: Ancient Worlds, Astronomy, Chess, Current Affairs, Military History, Philosophical Discussion and Hand Bell Ringing. Please contact Gay Enoch through the website or on 01905 778743 if you :

a) would like to put your name down for any of these activities

b) need more information

c) would like to propose, and lead additional activity groups

d) would like to become a volunteer leader/co-ordinator for any of the groups listed above.

Have a skill to offer? Want to try something different? Please do think about starting a group as a way of making new friends, learning something new or just handing on skills you already have. We all have something to offer.

Happy New Year to you all.

Gay Enoch
Groups' Co-ordinator

Droitwich Spa Civic Society is hosting a talk/Powerpoint presentation entitled 'My 2,000 mile walk around England'.

The speaker describes how she walked every day, 7 days a week for 181 days encompassing 3 seasons. The walk ended at 10 Downing Street where she delivered a commemorative book organised by the Ramblers Association seeking the continued and improved access to the countryside.

Held in the Westly Room (to rear of) Droitwich Methodist Church, Worcester Road.

Thurs 17/1/23 at 7.30pm
£3 per person – all welcome

Thank you for reading this edition of the newsletter. Now is the time when many of us will probably be thinking about holidays and hoping for some respite from the rain we seem to be having at present! The article by Mike about the Third Age Trust is very interesting and I would encourage everyone to investigate the website – I've tapped into many of the resources and signed up for some incredibly interesting talks online.

*Unfortunately there's very little news from the individual groups so not a lot to report I'm afraid! Thank you to the Digital Photography group for yet another few great photos snapped in our area. The next newsletter will be published in March so please submit any articles/photos to the editor via the website by **Monday 6th March**.*

Please consider sending a few words about your group or something that you think would interest other members – even a single paragraph would suffice. Let's make the newsletter really news-worthy for all our members!

Editor

