

The Autumn Issue

2023

MARKET DRAYTON



MAGAZINE



“University of the Third Age”

Cover Photograph – Just a fraction of the startling murmuration that some of us managed to see at Woodseaves earlier this year photographed by Brian Truslove in February. Brian, a member of our Birdwatching and Drawing groups, also took the photographs on page 12 and the bottom of page 14.

“Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought”

Albert von Szent-Gyorgyi, 1893 - 1986

National u3a Electronic Magazine

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Market Drayton u3a Committee Members 2022-23

Alan Cartwright	Chair and Magazine Editor
Phillip Glover	Secretary
Andy Shearer	Treasurer
Judy Cowdale	Membership Secretary
Colin Barthorpe	Programme Secretary
Pam Shryane	Committee Member
Sue Walker	Committee Member
Jacqui Wright	Committee Member

Other roles

Jill Glover	Website Administrator
Candice Danleigh	u3a National Office Contact

Newsletter

It is difficult to assess how the last twelve months will be viewed in the history of Market Drayton u3a.

The Group as a whole has continued to make progress following the events of a few years ago when there had to be concerns about its actual survival, with five new special interest groups having got underway in the last year. One of the latest of those is the 'Last Thursday' Lunch Club run by George Ruddock, so just two years after our previous Pub Lunches group came to an end we have two successors up and running. Our thanks go to everyone involved, not just the leaders of the new groups but also our other convenors who make such a good job of keeping things moving. It would be great if some of the other groups we have lost over the years could be restarted including Natural History and Bridge.

Somewhat sadly for us we recently lost our Recorders group led by Brian McClland. That, however, was simply down to its success, which had led to it attracting members from outside our ranks and simply outgrowing Market Drayton u3a. We are, of course, extremely happy that Brian and his wife are remaining members of Market Drayton u3a and the group is thriving as the Tither Recorder Ensemble. Best wishes to them for the future.

At last year's AGM the Group adopted the model constitution advocated by the Third Age Trust, bringing us in line with the national framework, and since then Jill and Phil Glover have taken on the ongoing responsibility for improving our website, many thanks to both of them.

Despite some concerns at last year's AGM about the existence of several unfilled officer positions on the Committee it has been at full strength since last September. Having said that, please note the door is always open for more of you to join it. Our former treasurer Pam Shryane is stepping down or has stepped down from the Committee at this year's AGM after years of service to the Group and Colin Barthorpe has ceased to be our Programme Secretary after arranging our line up of monthly speakers for the coming year. Our thanks go to both of them for all their hard work and, of course, to all other committee members. And our current magazine editor is also leaving us but no doubt he will find something to do.

2023 has, of course, been the year in which we have marked the 25th anniversary of the Group by holding a special social event at the Festival Drayton Centre on 20th July, more details about that later on in the magazine.

On the downside we have unfortunately lost approximately 15% of our members this year, which has only partly been offset by the thirty newcomers who have joined us. Given this the Committee is currently looking into how more support can be given to individual members, from new recruits through to convenors, and any steps that can be taken to improve our communication arrangements. We are also planning to step up our publicity and recruitment efforts, with early evidence of this being our display in the window of Market Drayton Museum organised by Jill and Phil towards the end of July, our thanks again. We have also booked a stand at the Creative, Culture and Leisure Festival due to take place at the Festival Drayton Centre on 25th October.

Sadly we had to cancel our coach trip to Salford at the start of September due to insufficient interest, which must also put future culture trips into doubt.

As everyone will know we have recently had to make changes to our financial arrangements, including increasing the annual subscription rate and cutting back on how members receive the national 'Third Age Matters' magazine from the Third Age Trust and our own in-house publication 'The Magazine.' We are sorry about this but they were our only options given the dramatic increase in the UK rate of inflation and the cost of living crisis.

This edition of the newsletter cannot be closed without brief references to Paul Bell and Arthur Barnett who both sadly passed away this summer. As a lot of you will know they were the convenors of our Natural History and Country Dancing groups until ill health forced them to step down not all that long ago. Our condolences go to all their family and friends, they will be greatly missed.

As said at the beginning it is difficult to work out just how well we have done this year in comparison to others. Hopefully, however, those members who were involved in starting Market Drayton u3a would be glad that it is still going and that we appreciate the challenges that lie ahead as well as our successes. Here's to the next twenty five years.

Best wishes,

Alan Cartwright, Chair of Market Drayton u3a



A shot of our display in Market Drayton Museum window in July thanks to Phil and Jill Glover

Future Speakers at our Monthly Festival Drayton Centre Meetings

Over the last year Colin Barthorpe has been working hard on organising the following line-up of speakers for us for 2023/24 before moving to a new position on the Committee at this year's AGM. (Please note that he had a long list of informative talks about Shrewsbury to choose from but you will quickly see what the Committee opted for.)

All our monthly meetings start at 2pm at the Festival Drayton Centre on the third Thursday of the month, with no meetings in December, July or August.

2023

20 October	Rachel Hawkins	The Red Cross
16 November	Carol Hitchins	Market Drayton Twinning Association

2024

18 January	Roger Browne	New Orleans to New York
15 February	Stephen Shakeshaft	Chester Uncovered Part 2
21 March	Tom Jones	A Miller's Tale
18 April	Dean Nixon	Antarctica, Trip of a Lifetime
16 May	Martin Lloyd	Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies
20 June	Nigel & Bridget Hinton	Shrewsbury Ghosts and Spirits



Our many thanks to Colin for helping to keep us entertained and informed over recent years.

Straight from The Centre (Highlights from our recent talks at the Festival Drayton Centre)

There's a Tapir at the Door – Gary Prescott, the Biking Birder, 16 March 2023



The Andean Cock of the Rock

Despite the title of this informative and entertaining talk about Peru it was only partly about the natural world. During the sixty minutes or so in which he was talking Gary touched on a range of other subjects including: the difficulties of riding his bike over very mountainous terrain which necessitated him pushing it on occasion; an all too conspicuous river boat; Machu Picchu, his favourite place; and the generosity and humour of indigenous people.

After retiring from teaching, Gary (aka the Green or Brummie Birder) cycled all around the UK in 2010, 2015 and 2016, visiting all 242 RSPB and Wildfowl and Wetland Trust reserves twice and becoming the British Green birding Year list record holder in 2015. En- route he raised funds for the two conservation charities as well as Asthma UK and the Chaskwasi – Manu project which enables the children of the Manu Rainforest in Peru to access education. In 2018 he took his exertions to a new level after making the decision to cycle and kayak around the South American country.

Before getting too far into his subject Gary mentioned the altitudes of some parts of his route, it went up to 16,000 feet in places, and referred to how the boat for his journey down the Madre de Dios River had been a bright yellow instead of the camouflage colours he had hoped for. Along the way he was, of course, keeping a record of all the birds he saw and taking photographs of them wherever possible. (Sadly shortage of space prevents us listing the names of all the places he visited and, besides, we can't spell them! – Editor.)

The trip was not without its dangers as Gary was reminded when indigenous people saved him from drowning in the river and a bull attacked him, the chassis of his bicycle fortunately providing him with an extra layer of protection and limiting the amount of physical damage he sustained.

Mosquitoes were another problem and Gary fully appreciated the advice from a female member of a local tribe that rubbing himself with the fruit of a nearby tree would help to keep them away. That was, of course, before he discovered she'd played a practical joke on him and he was a bright blue when he woke up the following day.

There were compensations for his hardships though including the friendliness of the people he met, which led to invitations to festivals and parties, and his ever-increasing bird total. By the end of his six months in Peru he had seen 634 species although a problem with his camera had prevented him photographing all of them.

So finally, where did the title of his talk 'There's a Tapir at the Door' come from. That arrived towards the end of his journey when staying for a short while at Manu Wildlife Centre he met Vanessa, a female Tapir who had been making regular visits to the door of the Centre for the past eight years for bananas.



Vanessa The Tapir at the door

Note

Unfortunately Gary accidentally made the mistake of starting his presentation by referring to an Egyptian trip he'd made, the subject of a different talk altogether. We were enjoying it so much though we have booked him again for late 2024.

Funny Turns - David Moylan, 20th April 2023

There is an outside chance you may have come across David before given that he is the resident magician at Warwick Castle although there is a lot more to his repertoire than just magic tricks. During the hour or so in which he entertained us he also performed a variety of songs from the days of music hall and early radio and told us a large number of jokes. He also told gave us a few details about his heroes in variety, the artists who had performed his original versions of the songs, including naturally George Formby but also Billy Bennett and Al Read, with his familiar catchphrase "You'll be lucky - I say, you'll be lucky!" (Surely I'm not the only one old enough to remember him? - Editor.) And yes, of course, there were the close up magic tricks with the final one being the extraction of what at the time seemed to be a never ending stream of paper tissues from his mouth, a trick it's probably best not to try at home. Quite how he did it was anyone's guess.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable meeting for most of us although it might not have been to everyone's taste given the smaller than usual attendance at the Festival Drayton Centre. There again, the April sunshine and holiday commitments might also have been factors in that.



Crimson Fields - David Bardell and Mick Byrne, 18th May 2023

In these days of overblown celebrity, it can be heart warming once in a while to learn about a genuine hero and Burton-on-Trent born William Colton fits well within that mould.

Serving as a stretcher bearer from January 1915 until the end of the First World War, he went far beyond his basic role of tending to wounded soldiers by repeatedly going out alone onto the battlefield under enemy fire to lead a number to safety. He also ventured out at night to collect dog tags from those killed in action. His gallantry led to him, as a lance corporal, becoming the most highly decorated non-commissioned officer in the British army, with a Victoria Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal and Military Medal amongst the many medals he was awarded. He was also somewhat modest. During a stop on a railway journey home, following the cessation of the hostilities, he accidentally discovered that a civic reception had been arranged for him at the next station, where he was due to disembark, and chose to avoid it by walking the remaining fifteen miles home.

These aspects of William Colton's life were described to us during a fascinating talk on the subject of medical treatment and advances during the First World War by David and Mick which received a lot of praise from an appreciative audience. They began though by telling us about the work undertaken by the different British nursing factions involved in the conflict, particularly the Voluntary Aid Detachment, VAD, and the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, FANY.



The talk was sprinkled with a number of famous names including those of Vera Brittain and Agatha Christie both of whom served as VAD nurses. The war years incidentally provided the latter with her detailed knowledge of poisons and toxins.

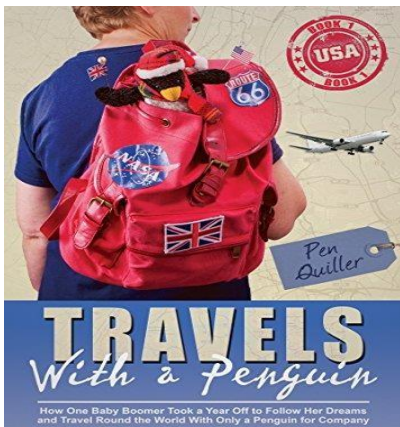
One other nurse referred to was, of course, Edith Cavell who was working as a matron at a Brussels hospital at the outbreak of the war and executed by the Germans in October 1915 for helping allied soldiers escape out of Belgium.

The war led to developments in plastic surgery given the increased need for facial reconstruction, particularly after the Battle of Somme in 1916. Up until then plastic surgery had not been a specialism and face and head injuries had basically been left to individual surgeons to deal with. A New Zealander, Harold Gillies, managed to significantly improve the situation through pioneering work in relation to skin grafts and the development of a specialist ward at Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot as well as a dedicated hospital in Sidcup.

Blood transfusion arrangements were also vastly improved through the introduction of 'indirect' transfers, making use of syringes and canulae where a Canadian, Lawrence Bruce Robertson, took the lead, the creation of the world's first blood bank by Owen Hope, and the establishment of procedures that facilitated the carrying out of transfusions away from established medical facilities. A last famous name for the moment at least, is Marie Curie who set up the first mobile x-ray units.

Sadly it has only been possible to skim over the contents of this excellent talk, which also covered the incorrectly named Spanish Flu that is believed to have actually originated in the USA, but don't worry too much if you missed it. With a further eight talks in their kit bags there is every possibility we will be seeing David and Mick again sometime in the future.

Travel with a Penguin – Pen Quiller, 15th June 2023



Some years ago Pen was living a comfortable life, working in the library of a London college of further education with her mortgage all paid off and a dog, Ben, for company in her leisure hours. That all began to change, however, when a new principal was appointed by the college, leading to her job becoming less secure, and Ben died.

The changes led her to start questioning her life and thinking about visiting the friends she'd made over the years, most of whom had moved out of London, with some living as far away as Southern California and New Zealand.

Making her mind up to do something about the situation she left her job, sold off her house after putting all her possessions into storage, and began to act on the travel plans for herself and her penguin companion, Scott. (Scott is a soft toy by the way but please don't tell him that, he'll get upset! – Editor.)

Avoiding hotels and travelling predominately by train or coach, wherever possible - plane would have been faster but wouldn't have revealed anything of the countries she was flying over – Pen's journey took her to the USA, New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Sri Lanka. She visited some famous landmarks along the way, of course, including the Kennedy Space Centre, Grand Canyon, Sydney Harbour Bridge and altogether too many to name in New Zealand, where she recommends taking a thesaurus in order to find more ways of saying 'wonderful.'

A number of her favourite memories came, however, away from the beaten tourist trail. In Japan, where she made a visit to Hiroshima, she discovered that having had to put a pair of slippers on to go to the bathroom during the night she then had to put a new pair on before she went *into* the bathroom. Pen also joined a holiday group for a tour of the countryside in Sri Lanka.

Although Scott didn't join Penny in going to the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge, as penguins don't like heights apparently (? – Ed) he proved an invaluable travelling companion by providing scale in her photographs and helping to break down social barriers.

In addition to those slippers there were further special moments in Pen's trip she hadn't been able to plan for: a friendly encounter with a koala bear, the sightings of Scott's real life counterparts, Yellow-Eyed penguins in New Zealand, butterflies with extraordinarily long wing spans in Japan, dingoes and sperm whales. She was also brushed by a whale on a swim, which a local informed her meant it had kissed her.

Six months after she had begun her journey Pen returned to the UK feeling a different person and a year later she had a new job, a home in Shropshire and had acquired a new dog, Tara, from a rescue centre.

She finished this entertaining, well illustrated talk by saying that ageing shouldn't be a barrier to pursuing your dreams and suggesting that "one day your life will flash in front of your eyes – make sure it's worth watching."



Updates on a few of our monthly talks at the Festival Drayton Centre

We have had a lot of good talks at the Festival Drayton Centre over the years (and maybe an odd one that didn't go so well) but time constraints have rarely allowed us to get the full story from our speakers. In a partial attempt to remedy this we thought we'd bring you up to date on what's been happening in relation to some of the subjects that have been covered:

In the **Autumn 2016** edition of The Magazine (your outgoing editor's first by the way) there was a brief write up about a presentation on the ukulele by John Croft, the 'Ukulele Man'.

As far as is known there have been no major design changes or alterations regarding the musical instrument since then but in September 2022 the passengers on a Southwest Airlines flight from Long Beach to Hawaii, the birthplace of the musical instrument, discovered the airline company and US music shop, Guitar Center, had combined to leave a ukulele and twenty minutes of instruction on how to play it on all their seats.

We can only imagine the resulting sounds, of course, but appreciative comments made afterwards, principally by people who weren't there, include 'I would have probably ended up trying to open the door in flight' and 'I am a big fan of Southwest but this might have made me homicidal.'



In **Autumn 2019**, we learnt a little about the history of chocolate and its health benefits from Jacqueline Smith, a chocolatier. In January 2023 there was the ground-breaking news that scientists at Leeds University had decoded the physical process that takes place in the mouth when chocolate is eaten. At a time when we are being forced to live with the cost of living crisis and rising inflation isn't that really great news although something it might be really helpful to know is that chocolate is considered good at relieving blood pressure.

And now a few final words from the outgoing magazine editor:

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the magazine over the past seven years, hopefully you and other members will ensure the Group's new post holder is supplied with plenty of material in the future. But right now:



Special Interest Groups

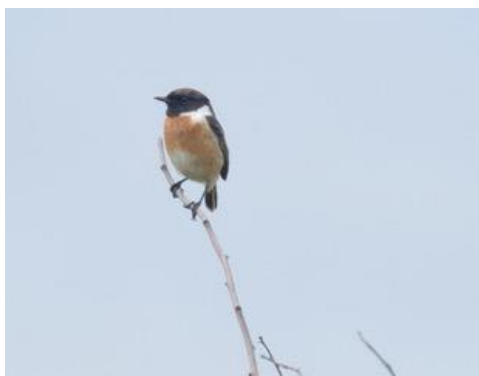
Market Drayton u3a Bird Watching Group - Colin & Sandra Barthorpe

The Market Drayton u3a Bird Watching Group began life seven years ago when Alan Cartwright set it up *but it somehow managed to overcome that* and has grown from strength to strength. (The words in italics have been added by the Editor.)

The Group normally meets on the third Monday of each month at 9.15am in Buntingsdale Road. Originally the idea was to visit local places where wildlife could be seen, with the aim of returning to Market Drayton by lunchtime. Recently it has developed so that the members combine local visits to such places as Ellesmere and Wood Lane, Belvide Reservoir near Brewood, Venus Pool near Crosshouses and Aqualate near Newport with day trips to such places as WWT Slimbridge and Martin Mere, RSPB Burton Mere on The Wirral and Middleton Lakes near Tamworth.

This year the Group has developed even further with its first evening trip to Cannock Chase to see Nightjars and a two night away trip to RSPB Minsmere on the Suffolk Coast. The Cannock Chase trip was an interesting experience:

“Monday June 26th – Nine members braved a late night as the Group enjoyed their first evening trip to (the) Chase. The primary objective was to see the elusive Nightjar. These birds only come alive at dusk, and you can hear their distinctive ‘chirring’ call before you see them. Seeing them proved to be more difficult than on the recce three weeks earlier but some members did manage a brief glimpse. Other species that were seen or heard included the Cuckoo, Tawny Owl, Long-Eared Owl, Stonechat, Willow Warbler Linet and Tree Pipit.”



The Stonechat seen on Cannock Chase – more extravert than those elusive nightjars

Membership of the Group is open to any u3a members with an interest in birds and wildlife. We also have members with an interest in wildlife photography. You don't have to be an expert in bird recognition, just have an interest in wildlife and an enjoyment in walking in the countryside with like minded people. The current membership is around 15. Car sharing and travel is usually arranged for each visit. The overall convenors for the Group are Colin & Sandra Barthorpe, with individual members being responsible for organising and leading the separate trips.

A record of the bird species we have seen or heard is updated after each visit. In 2022-2023 we have set what we believe may be a record for the group with 117 different species

including some iconic ones such as bitterns, snipe and nightjars, as well as avocets, woodlarks, long eared, tawny and barn owls alongside countless ducks and waders.

At the end of each season the members of the group meet for a short walk, followed by a lunchtime meal at a local hostelry and plan the following year's programme. This year that took place on Friday 18 August when we visited Aqualate mere and The Swan at Forton. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Colin & Sandra Barthorpe via colin.barthorpe@gmail.com or telephoning 01630 654954/07976 769936.



Members of the u3a Birdwatching Group on their recent trip to Minsmere

Music Appreciation (or 'Listen with Harry') – Alison Derwent and Andy Shearer

The Music Appreciation group provides a lively, enjoyable experience for everyone who attends its sessions as they learn and share in a warm, light hearted way.

The enjoyment comes from listening to a variety of different forms of classical music and hearing about the conductors and soloists, not forgetting the orchestras the group's convenor, Harry Hitchen, has discovered in his many years of involvement with music. The experiences have also enabled members to share memories of concerts and the imaginative scenes they have enjoyed, conjoined by the music they have heard.

Recent sessions have covered the Saint-Seans Organ Symphony No 3 recorded by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Daniel Barenboim with the organ 3,000 miles away in Chartres Cathedral and the Elgar Cello Concerto recording of Jacqueline Du Pre (then aged 20) with the London Symphony Orchestra, LSO, conducted by John Barbirolli in 1965. (Barbirolli had actually played the cello as a member of the orchestra at the 1919 première of the work. After hearing Jacqueline the great Rostropovich removed the work from his repertoire as she played it better!)



Jacqueline Du Pres

More members of the u3a are welcome to join the group.

Our 25th Anniversary Celebration

Despite some worries about how many applications we'd receive the number of members at our social event held to mark Market Drayton u3a's on 20th July was only just under the maximum limit for the Festival Drayton Centre's auditorium. From the resulting feedback it appears everyone enjoyed the afternoon and we have to express our thanks to the staff at the Centre and also the members of the Committee and other volunteers for helping to organise things. And that's not forgetting Paul Ray, who provided us with a great hour of comedy and magic, somehow managing to swallow a balloon in the process, who deserves a special mention. The afternoon could only have been improved by our guest of honour turning up but, after confirming he would be attending, he'd forgotten to put the date in his diary. (Why do people say that? If it's a decent diary the date should already be there!! – Editor)

Anniversaries are often tinged with a little bit of sadness so if you haven't already done it – we dispensed with speeches and toasts for the event – can you please raise a glass or a cup if you'd prefer, at some point and toast absent friends.

And, of course, here's to the next 25 years.



The History of A Good Idea (reproduced and updated from our Autumn 2018 edition for those who haven't seen it before) on our 25th anniversary

Market Drayton U3A was formally inaugurated on Wednesday 8th July 1998, a dozen years or so after the basic concept and lifelong learning model had been introduced into the UK from France. After a gap of 25 years we can only guess at what the early hopes and aspirations were for the Group but we do know that its establishment necessitated the submission of a group membership application to the Third Age Trust (the national parent body of the U3A) and the adoption of the Trust's model constitution. Market Drayton librarian Helen Ward very kindly facilitated the inaugural meeting at the Library, with members of Whitchurch U3A, an already up and running group, there to provide much valued support.

By that September the Group had held its first general meetings and registered approximately 80 members, with 12 special interest groups having been set up. At the first AGM, on 24th September, David Jenkins, who had acted as the temporary chairman prior to that and been highly instrumental in getting everything moving, was formally elected as chairman, thereby becoming our first leader until 2000. David was also our very first monthly speaker when presenting us with a talk on the history of Pell Wall House.

Incidentally the initial subscription for an individual member in 1998-99 was £10 – excluding the payment of a £2 one-off entry fee - not all that different from that payable in 2018-19.

In 2000 the Group's monthly meetings and AGMs began taking place at the Festival Drayton Centre and we have been there again since 2010, following a temporary relocation to the Beacon between 2001 and 2009. It has to be added that both establishments have treated us excellently over the years.

The Group has continued to flourish since those early events. Thanks to our successive programme secretaries, the Group has had monthly talks on roughly 180 different topics and that figure obviously excludes the hundreds or possibly even thousands of presentations given to our special interest groups. We have visited a diverse range of cultural hotspots ranging from stately homes and art galleries to nuclear bunkers with the members of those special interest groups having had opportunities for more.

Somewhere along the way, of course, we have also picked up over 200 members – it was nearer to 300 in 1998 prior to the pandemic - who obviously recognise a good thing when they see one.

Heard about the Opticians:

Whoever said that carrots can improve your eyesight is talking absolute nonsense. I actually got poked in the eye with one recently and couldn't see for a month!

What do you give to a Geordie who has conjunctivitis? Why eye drops of course.

An Irishman walks into an optometrist and says he requires at least three pairs of glasses. The optometrist looks puzzled and asks "why do you need so many pairs?" The Irishman replies "To be sure, to be sure, to be sure."

A man goes to the eye doctor. He sits down and the receptionist asks him why he is there. The man complains; 'I keep seeing spots in front of my eyes.' The receptionist asks, 'Have you ever seen a doctor?' to which the man replies, 'No, just spots.'

I only wear glasses when I'm playing tennis. After all, it is a non-contact sport.

A man goes to the eye doctor. The eye doctor asks him if his eyes have ever been checked. The man says "no they've always been brown."

And one final Aircraft Engineering Joke

A group of aerospace engineering professors are on a plane heading to a convention. Prior to take-off, the pilot comes over the intercom and announces "Distinguished professors, you should be proud to know that this particular plane was designed and crafted by many of your students."

Most of the engineers immediately panic and attempt in vain to get off the plane, afraid of what might go wrong during the flight. One of the more senior professors, though, remains calmly in his seat. When his neighbour asks why he isn't worried, the professor responds "I have been an engineering professor for over 35 years. If I know my students as well as I do, then there's no chance this plane will even get off the runway."



A photograph of something hopefully close to the balloon dog Paul Ray, the entertainer at our 25th Anniversary Celebration, promised to produce for us.

Confrontation in Market Drayton

It's normally difficult to imagine anyone in Market Drayton getting stirred up about anything but that hasn't always been the case. There was at least one issue that gained a lot of attention back in the mists of time but we'll let Peter Brown tell you about it:

'We Stand for Freedom!' – Peter Brown

Thus shouted the free paper in 1947, under the headline 'Defend Your Liberty'. In the article Field-Marshal Montgomery was quoted: 'Freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom to live your own life — here are things worth fighting for.'

And what was the vital principle at stake? It was Sunday opening of the town's cinemas. The Sunday Entertainments Act 1932 permitted local authorities to allow Sunday opening providing local opinion was in favour. This could be ascertained by a series of public meetings or by a poll. Market Drayton Urban District Council decided to organise a poll on Thursday 5 June 1947, with five polling stations open from noon to 8pm.



The Market Drayton Sunday Cinemas Association - presumably a combination of the Hippodrome (then part of the Southan Morris Super Cinemas chain) and the Ritz (located in the Town Hall which stood where the Library is now), no doubt with some outside help — issued the professionally designed and emotive 'News Bulletin' quoted from above. The Association also printed large posters which, it seems, were stuck on properties without the owners' permission. Councillor Percy Pearce said that one had been stuck on his house's gate. There was much criticism of the poster stuck on the Council's Shambles (meat market) property at the corner of High Street and Shropshire Street, as it implied that the Council was a supporter, rather than neutral.

The churches responded to the News Bulletin with a rather more amateur but reasoned paper. The main message was that Sunday should be preserved from being gradually commercialised and kept free for the workers. The paper attempted to answer the arguments used by those in favour of opening. It said that Church people were not dictating how others should spend Sundays: there was to be a free vote. Freedom is not the ability to do as one likes; furthermore it was the Churches, not the cinemas, which fought for freedom in Hitler's Germany. It is not true that if the cinemas are closed, young people will only go to the pubs or wander the streets; they don't go to the cinema every evening of the

week, yet find other things to do. Sundays don't have to be gloomy, thousands of young people finding it the happiest day of the week.

On polling day the pro-opening Alliance provided a fleet of cars to take voters to the poll, and a loud-speaker van continually toured the town. The turnout was 40%, a higher figure than in the local elections earlier that year. The result, announced at 8.55pm, was a clear majority in favour of Sunday opening: 1,217 in favour and only 366 against.

The first Sunday films shown at the Hippodrome were hardly an enthusiastic endorsement of the new freedom: 'Married but Single', a 1940 comedy (though the synopsis doesn't sound very funny) and 'Reformatory', a drama about a planned breakout at a juvenile detention centre, dating from 1938.



The Regal, previously and currently the Hippodrome

The Chair looks back (An opportunity to become better acquainted with your Chair)

Let's kick off with a confession, I'm a bird watcher. By which I mean that when I'm outdoors anywhere, whether walking, driving or anything else, there is a small part of me that is always aware of the small or not so small feathered creatures around me and I'll admit that I have made occasional trips in order to see some of them. What I am not is a twitcher which means I don't spend all my disposable income on specialist optical equipment or apps for my mobile phone - I don't carry a phone most of the time anyway - or devote all my leisure hours to seeking out the next sighting I'll gladly talk about for hours on end at some club or other, populated by others of the same ilk. I've had some good moments, a capercaillie I startled out of a bush near Aviemore comes to mind along with recollections of red necked phalaropes and red backed shrikes, but they have been more or less accidental rather than the result of hours of meticulous planning.

And because I have gone about things in a somewhat haphazard way there have been some instances in which circumstances have conspired against me. One of the birds I had difficulties seeing years ago was the kingfisher either because I was just a few minutes late somewhere or, even worse, happened to be facing in the wrong direction when one flashed past in all its gorgeous plumage. My so called friends, I am using the term in its loosest sense here, became really concerned about this for a while to the extent that every

Christmas card or birthday card they sent me had a picture of the bird on the front. Obviously they also regaled me with details of their own sightings, some of them sounding quite plausible although those involving the vegetable aisles at local supermarkets were possibly a little dubious. That's all true by the way, that about the cards and alleged sightings I mean. (Please note that I finally broke my duck, err, kingfisher on the Shropshire Union Canal just outside Market Drayton.)



A kingfisher, just in case you've had the same amount of luck as the Chair in seeing one.

One other bird I had problems with back then, not long after it had been reintroduced into several carefully chosen parts of the country, was the red kite. If my failure to see a kingfisher was down to bad luck that with the kite could only be attributed to fate.

A friend, yes, one of them again, had suggested we go over to a location near Snowdonia where a farmer was known to be regularly feeding some of the recently imported birds during the winter. As the said friend had kindly offered to drive and I'd got nothing better to do I said yes and agreed to book the hostel accommodation for the night prior to our farm visit. Making the booking was fairly easy as I recall but I hadn't expected the hostel warden, a different farmer's wife, to phone me back a few days later to ask what time we'd be arriving as she wanted to make sure everything was ready for us. That should have set off warning bells, of course, as that sort of thing might happen with hotels but never with hostels, well not back then anyway. Without thinking though I simply provided her with the information she was after and may have thought how hospitable the Welsh were.

I had a few different thoughts on the Saturday evening, however, when we found the hostel shrouded in darkness. We were forced to stumble around for a while, unable to see each other, before we eventually found a small card with the warden's contact details stuck in amongst all the usual hostel notices and junk on the far side of the firmly locked glass entrance door.

Fortunately she didn't live all that far away and it was only a matter of minutes before she came out to open the door for us and turn a few lights on. I'm pretty sure she was still apologizing for having forgotten about us as she was driving away. We were beginning to feel almost sorry for her – we were in the middle of sheep country after all so it was entirely possible the forgetfulness was down to a difficult lambing – when we discovered the building had no heating apart from a single bar electric fire and smelt of gas. And although duvet covers come in some attractive styles they can never compensate for a lack of duvets or blankets no matter how many you have. As I've said it was cold.

But just when we were thinking things couldn't get any worse they did when a much too cheery farm labourer approached the bird hide we were in the following afternoon and said the magic words, "Waiting for the kites are you? Sorry, the feeding stopped yesterday. They have to fend for themselves from now on."

Neither of us said very much on the long drive home but I am certain we were both determined not to go back there and we didn't, well not until just before the following New Year's Eve that is. In the intervening months my birding companion, who had previously appeared to be content with life as a bachelor, had met someone who was perfect for him apart from the fact she had the strange belief no one should ever leave things half done. We had decided to forgo the pleasures of a particular hostel this time but at the tail end of December the three of us were hunkered down in the same bird hide on yet another cold afternoon waiting for the 3pm feeding time, which we'd checked, double-checked and probably had written into a legal agreement somewhere. Feeding time was definitely, undisputedly, categorically 3pm and true enough, nothing happened, not then or at 3.10 pm, 3.20 pm or....

"We need to find out what's happened," one of us eventually snapped.

"I'm sorry," the woman said after opening the farmhouse door, wearing what had surely got to be a length of carpet over her other clothes in an attempt to keep warm, "We feeds the kites every day but my pipes was frozen this morning and I've got to get 'em fixed before I does anything else. Not my pipes, that's silly, I mean the house's pipes."

There was no way we could argue with any of that so we slowly began trudging back to the gate. We were just about to open it when Mrs Axminster shouted out "This is daft but as we've got the meat already cut up would you like to feed them." Would we?

Having had close to two hundred red kites flying around me has confirmed there's nothing wrong with a haphazard approach to birding and even life and someday I'll be happy to meet a kingfisher at a supermarket check-out counter or there again maybe not.....



Red Kite

u3a Market Drayton Website and Facebook

The website has been enhanced considerably in the last 12 months and hopefully this document will give you an overview on how to get to the website. Please take a look at it regularly to find out the current information for our u3a in Market Drayton e.g.: Newsflash, Magazine, News, Minutes of Committee Meetings, Special Interest Groups and more.

To load the site onto your device, go to your internet search bar and type:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/market-drayton>

Below is a screen shot of the first page that will be presented. Please be aware that information is changing all the time so you may see different text each time you go into the site.

The top area, which is yellow with blue titles, are the categories into which the website is split. Clicking on each one will change what you are looking at.



Please click on the Newsflash and News on a regular basis to keep up to date.

Home NEWSFLASH Welcome News Magazine Community Minutes **Groups** Events AGM 2023 Contact Discounts Links Gallery
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Groups

Group List

Art Appreciation Group 1	Wednesday p.m. 2nd Wednesday	Art Appreciation Group 2	Monday p.m. 1st Monday
Bird-Watching	Monday a.m.	British History	Tuesday a.m. 3rd Tuesday
Country Dancing	Friday a.m. Alternate MD	Cultural Visits	Various dates
Draw and Art	Thursday p.m. 1st and 3rd	Gardening	Wednesday p.m. 4th Wednesday
Good News Tuesday	Tuesday a.m. 2nd Tuesday	Line Dancing	Friday a.m. Weekly
Local History	Wednesday p.m. 3rd Wednesday	Mediumship-How Does it Work?	Wednesday a.m. 2nd and 4th Wed
Music Appreciation	Thursday p.m. 1st Thursday	Photography	Thursday p.m. 4th Thursday
Play Reading Group	Monday p.m. 2nd Monday	Poetry Reading	Wednesday p.m. 1st Wednesday
Pub Lunches	Wednesday p.m. 1st Wednesday	Reading Group 1	Thursday p.m. 4th Thursday
Reading Group 2	Wednesday a.m. 4th Wednesday	Reading group 3	Thursday meet in each others houses
Singing for Fun	Thursday a.m. 3rd Thursday	The Last Thursday Lunch Group	Thursday p.m. last Thursday
Walking	Thursday a.m. 2nd Thursday		

If we use the category Groups as an example - click on it and you will see a page of Special Interest Groups currently running with the day and time of each one.

Click on any Group name to find more information such as Convenor contact details, Group objectives and meeting times and places.

Home NEWSFLASH Welcome News Magazine Community **Minutes** Groups Events AGM 2023 Contact Discounts Links Gallery
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Minutes

Minutes maybe selected from the menu on the right

Links

- + 1) AGM 2022 Minutes
- + 2) Nov 2022 Committee Meeting
- + 3) Jan 2023 Committee Meeting
- + 4) Feb 2023 Committee Meeting
- + 5) Mar 2023 Committee Meeting
- + 6) Apr 2023 Committee Meeting
- + 7) May 2023 Committee meeting

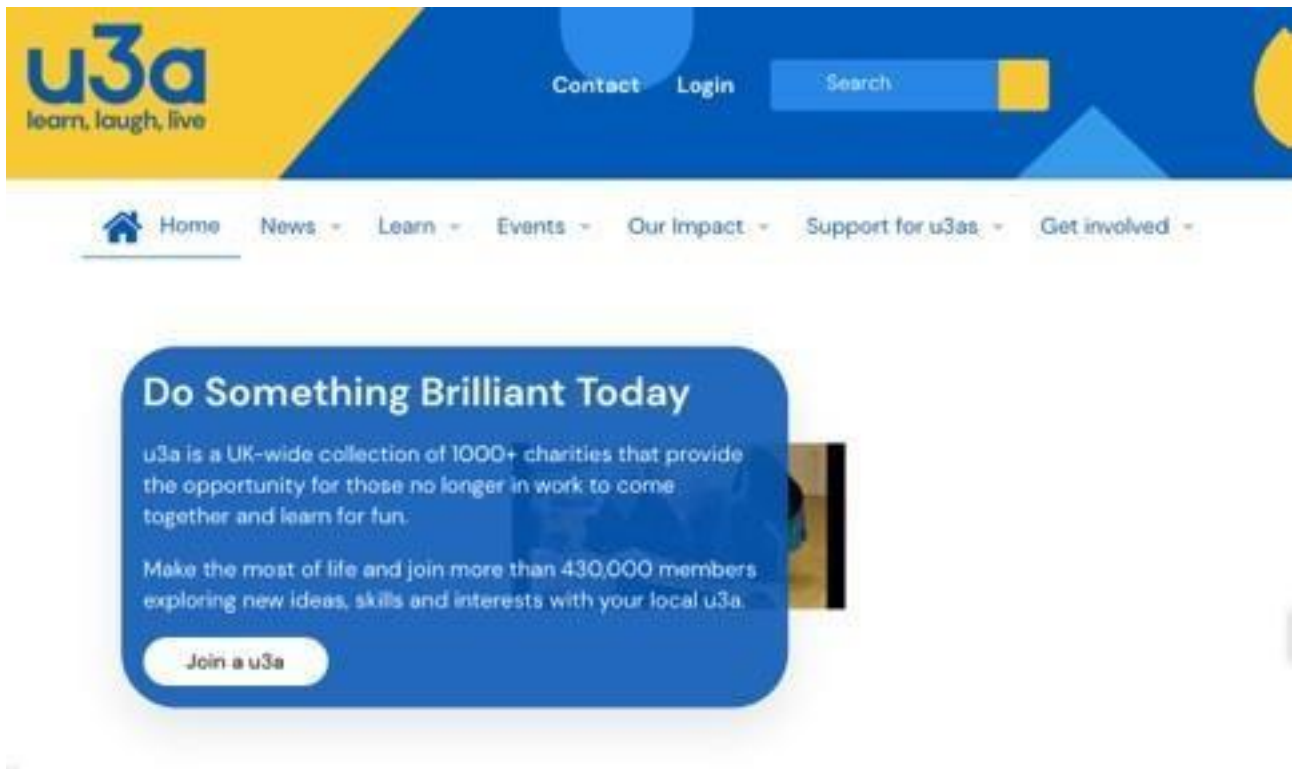
Page last updated 21/1/2023

If we use another example - click on Minutes.

You will see on the right hand side of that page a list of the Minutes by month and year. Click on any one to read the minutes.

Also on the top menu is where you will find the Magazine which you can print or read on screen.

If you click on National u3a there is more information such as News, Events, Offers and opportunities for online learning.



Facebook

Don't forget we do have a Market Drayton u3a Facebook Group page. Please feel free to look at it on a regular basis; make suggestions, comments, talk to others on the group.

The page is u3a Market Drayton. <https://facebook.com/groups/579724857221595/>