



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Welcome to 2024! I hope you all had an enjoyable and healthy Christmas and New Year and have started the year full of enthusiasm for u3a - as well as other things!

A new year is always a good time to reorganise your life. If that includes new interests, why not check out our groups. No spaces for what you want or no group doing what you're interested in? Why not start a new group! Come along to Let's Talk on a Monday morning at 11.00am at the Marlow Donkey. There's always a couple of committee members there and we can help you to connect with other members to get a new group off the starting line. If you can't make it to the Donkey, our contact details are below.

I will be standing down as Chairman at the end of March after four years. It's a rewarding job which I have enjoyed and not too onerous as most of the groups are self-sufficient. As yet we do not have a successor to me. Please think about whether you could take on this very important role for our organisation. We are one of the largest (if not the largest) group in Marlow and we've been very successful and can continue to offer great opportunities to the people of Marlow - but we must have a Chairman. If you would like to know more, please contact me or any other member of the Committee or come along and chat to us at Let's Talk.

There are many interesting plans in place by our different groups for 2024 so don't hide yourselves away. Our monthly meetings are always worth a visit and a chance to meet your fellow members.

One serious point to make. There has been a lot of Covid around as well as other respiratory viruses. If you are feeling unwell, please don't attend meetings. We have a lot of vulnerable members and we need to contain the spread of infections. It is particularly difficult at this time of year to ventilate rooms so caution is necessary.

Isobel Hopewell

YOUR COMMITTEE

Isobel Hopewell

07947 890018

Chairman

chairman@marlowu3a.co.uk



David Part

475107

Vice Chairman and Technical Support

techsupport@marlowu3a.co.uk



Niki Ralfs

473377

Convenor of New Groups

groups@marlowu3a.co.uk



Pauline Pearson

483717

Secretary and Safeguarding Officer

secretary@marlowu3a.co.uk



Barbara Lawrence

486734

Membership Secretary

membership@marlowu3a.co.uk



Chris Eyles

487295

Treasurer

finance@marlowu3a.co.uk



Helen Glover

484074

Diversity and Inclusion

groups@marlowu3a.co.uk



MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Viv Binder, Anne Bateman, Felicity and Derek Cuttle, Annie Clarke, Alan Cook, Nan Kirkwood, Barbara Haley, Linda Phillips, Barbara Swinson and Parveen Hungin

For any queries regarding membership please contact the membership secretary either by email: membership@marlowu3a.co.uk or phone **486734**

Barbara Lawrence



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Liston Hall 2.30 on the 4th Thursday of the month

Thursday 25th January

'Mary Shelley'

Author

Greetings. My name is 'Mary Shelley', author, born August 1797. I realise that makes me almost 226 years old but please indulge me. When the bicentenary of the publication of 'Frankenstein' (arguably my greatest work) came and went with barely a ripple in 2018, I decided to set about acquainting the modern audience with my genius as well as the town's fascinating past. I achieve this through conducting walking tours and 'talks' and I deliver my historical accounts through rhyme and song. Therefore, I am delighted to have the opportunity of bringing my unique brand of enlightenment and entertainment to you all in January! Following a succession of personal traumas I wrote my final novel, 'The Last Man', which explores the idea of a global pandemic; somewhat prophetic one might say. As for the title, make of it what you will!

Thursday 22nd January

Jenny Mallin

My Travels Around India

An interesting and entertaining vignette of some of Jenny's travels around India – there have been over 20 in the past 25 years.

Thursday 28th March

John Caldicott

The History of the Foundling Hospital

In 2018, the Days Out Team organised a very successful and interesting visit to the Foundling Museum.

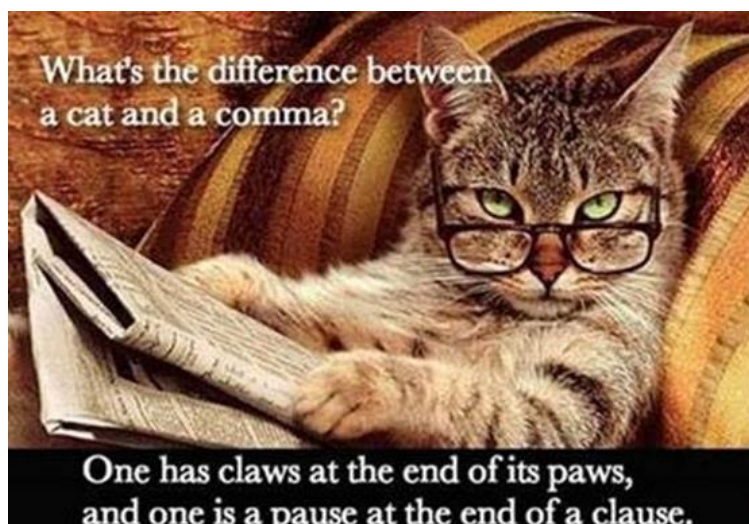


GROUP NEWS

groups@marlowu3a.co.uk

NEW GROUPS

If you are interested forming a new group, please let us know so it can be progressed. Either Helen Glover or Niki Ralfs should be able to help you. They can be contacted by email on groups@marlowu3a.co.uk.



MONTHLY MEETINGS IN LISTON HALL

December Christmas Entertainment



Photo used with permission from the parents and from the school.

Our December monthly meeting, held on Monday, December 11, in the Liston Hall, ended our Marlow & District u3a year on a high note, with an afternoon of entertaining Christmas-themed performances.

First up onstage were the Reception children of Marlow C of E Infants with a delightful selection of Christmas songs. Mrs. Downing, their music leader, conducted them in a lively performance of 'Mary had a baby' which encouraged the audience to join in the refrains.

Following on with the evergreen 'This little light of mine', augmented with well-drilled movements and gestures, the choir deservedly received a rousing acknowledgement of their young, enthusiastic treatment of this standard.

They concluded their set with their 'Donkey' song from the school's nativity production – rather appropriate to have a Marlow Donkey

reference in the year of the 150th anniversary.

What followed were a few questions from the audience as to what the children enjoy most about Christmas. 'Opening presents' and 'Eating chocolate'; Santa coming visiting' and 'Christmas trees' were popular answers.

Our thanks to all staff, parents and helpers who brought the children over to join us.



Then, over to the members who had prepared Christmas-themed poetry. The late Professor Benjamin Zephaniah was commemorated with his 'Turkey' poem, read by Dick Harris. Sheila Hooker came up, too, with a couple of Turkey-themed, amusing recitations, bringing peals of laughter from the audience. To finish, her husband, Alan Hooker's rendition of a version of the Kipling epic, Gunga Din, brought this collaboration to an end.

The finale was, possibly, the most interesting take on the Cinderella pantomime story yet. Presented with real meaning, facial expressions, gesticulations

and a fascinating range of stage props, the ladies who delivered 'Cinder Alfred & The Furry Boot' were a revelation. Ably led by Marilyn Short with her 'partners in panto' Jane Mann, Moira Mason, Pam Butler, Doreen Allard, and Olive Smith, they ran, or rather, sat amok amongst a gloriously inventive script with fascinating role changes and switching of headgear.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to a full house of jovial matinee entertainment.

Those who ventured into the Thames Room that afternoon, were treated to the additional impressive array of work by the Art group on display, courtesy of their talented members.

There was also the opportunity for members to buy a selection of the paintings alongside good value greetings cards, many of them focused on local themes.



Dave Part

COFFEE AND CHAT

This group meets on Friday mornings at Da Luca in Marlow Bottom at 10.30.

Barbara Shaffer 485333

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSPORT (ETT)

The ETT group holds its regular Monthly Meetings on the first Tuesday of Every Month at Christ Church (URC), 18 Oxford Road, Marlow, SL7 2NL commencing at 2.00pm (Doors open from 1.40pm). New Members are welcome to come along.

Our Meeting Co-ordinator has been very busy over the past few weeks and has put together a most interesting and varied series of presentations for our delight and enjoyment.

Programme for ETT meetings:

| | |
|--|---|
| Tuesday 6th February | Home Insulation and Air-Source Heat Pumps Libby James (Science and Tech Group, Risborough u3a) |
| Tuesday 5th March | Medical Diagnostics Helen Francis (Practice Plus Group) |
| Tuesday 2nd April | How to Take Good Photos Peter Davis (Wycombe Photographic Society) |
| Tuesday 7th May | Cars! Rod Greygoose (Marlow u3a) |
| Tuesday 4th June | Bird Flu, Man flu and Seasonal Flu Jane Sellwood (Science Group, Reading u3a) |

Please note that for personal or operational reasons the program may need to be altered from time to time.

Member's Health, Safety and Well-Being

Like all other Groups, the ETT is taking its members well-being very seriously and is continuing to monitor the situation in respect to the recent upsurge in infections caused by Winter Flu and the latest Covid Variants. As a result of these potential threats, the ETT is continuing to implement a couple of simple hygiene measures such as providing hand-sanitisers and ensuring better ventilation.

Most importantly, members planning to go to ETT Meetings are requested not to attend if they show any signs of an illness in order to safeguard and protect others.

Future Events

The ETT is currently planning two coach outings during 2024 to significant places of interest. The first trip is likely to be another attempt to visit to the SS Great Britain and the Being Brunel Exhibition in Bristol around late Spring. More details will be announced when our plans are completed.

Nigel Cornish



FRENCH IMPROVERS

Groupe de ceux qui souhaitent améliorer leur français

Bonjour et très bonne année à tous.

For the last 6 months the Group has remained dedicated to improving their French. The 6 members have enjoyed reading articles related to France and learning about the country and its culture, using podcasts and other material to study grammar. Most importantly reading aloud and discussing various topics to improve our speaking skills.

Whilst we remain dedicated and supportive of each other in our progress for 2024 WE NEED HELP AND GUIDANCE from a coach/teacher to keep us on track, especially with our speaking skills.

We meet weekly at each other's houses in the Marlow area and would welcome someone that could help with structure and guidance to support us on our journey, perhaps a former or current French teacher or a skilled speaker?

If you might be interested then please email me: valeriemgriffith@gmail.com

FAMILY HISTORY

The Family History welcomes new members. Are you asking yourself the following question:

Who Do You Think You Are?

Heir to the throne?

Related to the aristocracy?

Descended from a hero....?

....or a villain?

If you're a celebrity, the BBC will find out on your behalf and help you to tell the world about it. If you're not a celebrity, then our "Family History" group will guide you. If you are interested in people and history, do come along to share and/or discover your family's history.

We are a friendly group who meet at 10:00-12:00 on the first Thursday of each month, at Liston Hall Garden Room. The meeting usually starts with a talk / presentation, followed by a coffee break / chat and a chance to discuss or ask questions. Our members have a range of experience and between them can often give answers or advice.

In 2023 we had a mix of talks and videos, as well as sessions where members shared information:

Our plan for the next two meetings is as follows:

Thursday 1st February Old/useful family documents/letters: everyone invited to bring along examples of documents that have helped them with their researches.

Thursday 7th March 'It started with a question', one of our members will talk about her grandson who asked whether or not he could apply for dual nationality. This will be followed by a Q&A session, so bring along your questions.

Everyone has a story to tell. Can we help you find yours?

Adrian Spearman adrian.g.spearman@gmail.com



GERMAN READING GROUP

The German Reading Group (Der Lesezirkel) celebrated its 4th anniversary this December. It started with a few local members reading a Grimm's fairy tale a few Christmases ago but following a mention in the national u3a magazine it has spread further afield. We have participants from Norman in Aberdeen to Alison on the south coast.

We meet once a month and read a short story with each attendee being allotted a few paragraphs. A lively discussion follows the reading. So many are now signed up that we have to hold two sittings!



Alan Crease



INTERMEDIATE ITALIAN

The Intermediate Italian group is taking a break for Christmas. We will be meeting on the 12th January via Zoom and then meeting at La Cantina for our New Year lunch.

We have been working on our Italian grammar using a book called Chiaro. We have almost finished our reading book, which is by Andrea Camilleri and is called, 'La Moneta di Akragas'. Moneta is a coin. Our next book is by Carlo Cassola and is called, 'La Ragazza di Bube'. Both books are classed as Easy Readers but we are glad to have Ann Gravina's invaluable help in understanding some of the text.

If you would like to join us and have some knowledge of Italian, we have room for two more members. Please contact Christine Elam if you would like more information on 07802 547234, or 477278

Happy New Year to you all.

Christine Elam 477278



LUNCH GROUP

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|------------|
| Friday 23rd February | Côte, Marlow Ring Val on 524561 to book | 12.00 for 12.15 | £3 for tip |
| Saturday 16th March | Zizzie's, Marlow Ring Carole on 483903 to book | 12.00 for 12.15 | £3 for tip |

Carole Thorpe



MOTO GROUP

This group is for members on their own who wish to meet others in a similar position. We meet for coffee and a chat at The Old Brewery Public House in the middle of Marlow High Street on the third Tuesday of every month at 10-30

Tuesday 16th January

Tuesday 20th February

Tuesday 19th March

If you would like to join us but do not wish to come alone, please call **Carole** on **483903**

Carole Thorpe



MAHJONG

We have had a very successful year with a constant flow of 3 tables and during the summer months it increased to 4. We are always grateful to the staff at the George and Dragon for constantly looking after us regarding our refreshments and warmth.

We finished off the year with a lunch on Wed. 21st enjoyed by 14 of us and toasting those who went on holiday to warmer and colder climates.

Wishing you all a Very Happy New Year.



Pam Dawes



MUSIC APPRECIATION (MAG)

Our meetings are held on the third Thursday every month at Christ Church (URC), 18 Oxford Road, Marlow, SL7 2NL starting at 9.45am. The group is open to all members of Marlow u3a. The Attendance Fee is £3.00 (cash payments only).

November



A very talented young pianist played for us, **Shutian Cheng**, who was born in Beijing and began studying the piano aged 4, giving his first performance aged 7. He played:

Haydn Sonata in E minor
Bach Prelude and Fugue in F# minor
Chopin Barcarolle

Shutian Cheng was invited to give a performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 at the St John Smith Square in November 2022. He was awarded Second Prize at Rickmansworth Young Musician in 2023, First Prize in his age category at the Windsor International Competition in 2022 and was the youngest finalist in the 18-and-under category at the 8th James Waterhouse Piano Competition in 2018. He also received three First Prizes at the Chelmsford Music Festival in 2017.

The second part of our programme was called:

Haydn the Humourist – exploring the wit and playfulness in the music of Joseph Haydn.

What makes music humorous? Haydn became the first composer to incorporate humour in his music. A relatively slow starter, Haydn nevertheless became the most popular composer of his day, despite spending much of his life hidden away in a remote Hungarian Palace as music director to the court of Esterhazy. This was all explained by John.

December

A MAGnificent Christmas programme.

We started with a festive film – a Disney-style overture, excerpts from the Nutcracker and Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin. All accompanied by John on the piano.

This was followed by Joanna Lumley reciting "The night before Christmas" with music specially adapted by John in 2020 and played by the Philharmonia orchestra.

We managed to fit in a quiz based around Xmas carols and famous hit Xmas songs and some festive refreshments.



Dates for the next meetings are:

Thursday 15th February

Thursday 21st March

mag@marlowu3a.co.uk john@johnlenehan.co.uk



RUMMIKUB D

This group meets in The George and Dragon on the **first Wednesday of each month at 2:30pm**. Everyone is welcome – members who can already play and those who wish to learn. The dates for the next few meetings are:

Wednesday 7th February

Wednesday 6th March

Wednesday 3rd April

Niki Ralfs 473377

STROLLERS

Jill Kemp 416998, Carole and John Battersby 474366

All walks are 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month unless stated otherwise, which start at 11am

Please wear suitable footwear for the ground conditions. The walk leader should be contacted the day before to confirm attendance. If you need a lift or have any transport needs, please contact the nominated walk leader.

Wednesday 28th February Carole and John will lead a walk around Little Marlow Lake. Meet at the Queens Head car park. Where we will lunch on our return.

Wednesday 13th March Jill will lead a walk around Hurley. Meet and park in the car park at the end of the village. We will lunch in the village on our return.



NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

THANKS! Many thanks to all the people who have provided input to this Marlow Newsletter – without you our members would be looking at just a list of events or even just blank sheets. Your Committee and Editor work hard to make the newsletter both informative and interesting, but we can't do it alone. **We need your help!**

We will be even more grateful for contributions that come unprompted – i.e. ones that arrive without the originator being cajoled – or even bullied a little – into writing a few words for the newsletter.

HOW DO I PROVIDE MY CONTRIBUTION? In any way you like! Email it; scribble it down on a sheet of paper – whatever comes easiest to you. Ideally, Email to newsletter@marlowu3a.co.uk

APRIL AND MAY NEWSLETTER The deadline for your contributions will be **5th March 2024**. Please send your articles and photos to newsletter@marlowu3a.co.uk by then. Thank you.



This is the crib on the green at Stoke Row! The sheep are made of twisted metal strips and the faces are wonderful - Shaun the Sheep anyone! Seen on the walker's final walk pre-Christmas.

WALKING GROUPS SCHEDULE

Jane Statham 01494 881634 jes@withurst.co.uk

If you would like to join the walking group, please e-mail Jane Statham jes@withurst.co.uk
Details of walks will be e-mailed to members of the walking group about 10 days in advance and only members can join the specific walk by contacting the walk leader by email. Please arrive 10 minutes before the start of the walk. The numbers of walkers are restricted for any one walk. No dogs please. These are the dates of the walks and leaders for the next few months.

Wednesday Walks – Circular walks of around 5 miles

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 17 th January | Richard |
| 24 th January | Liz |
| 31 st January | Olivia and Clive |
| 7 th February | Mary and Christine |
| 14 th February | Win and Chris |
| 21 st February | Isobel |
| 28 th February | David and Lorraine |
| 6 th March | Tim and Jenny |
| 13 th March | Norma Baker |
| 20 th March | Mike Basnett |
| 27 th March | Liz |
| 3 rd April | Therese and Ivan |
| 10 th April | Jeff Short |
| 17 th April | Richard |
| 24 th April | Geoff and Jeanette |
| 1 st May | Jales and Jill Monk |

Long Loopers (Circular) and Long Leggers (from point to point) – Walks of between 8 and 10 miles

LONG LOOPERS

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| 5 th February | Richard |
| 5 th March | Jeff Short |
| 5 th April | Jill Cole |
| 5 th May | Peter |

LONG LEGGERS

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 21 st February | TBC |
| 21 st March | TBC |
| 21 st April | TBC |
| 21 st May | TBC |



SCRAMBLE

We all flew Spitfires – Paul and Roger and Harry and me – running around the playground with arms extended. Of course, we'd heard of the modern jets, the Hawker Hunter and the Submarine Swift (we couldn't pronounce *Supermarine*), but in our comic books the panicked scream of the enemy airman was always, 'Achtung Spitfeuer.'



Back then, I read a lot of books by Capt. W E Johns. I followed Biggles from his beginnings in a Sopwith Pup, through World War 1 and his exploits between the wars. When it came to the Battle of Britain, the book title was 'Spitfire Parade'. And you can guess what kind of plane I piloted at home, sitting in a wooden box, wearing an old leather motorcycling helmet, with the handle from a broken umbrella as a joystick.

The Hawker Hurricane was also a magnificent fighter, easier to manufacture and appearing in greater numbers in the early days. The Wellington and the mighty Lancaster meted out payback for the horrors of the Blitz. And many lesser planes, the unsung heroes, provided transport for supplies and personnel. But they aren't the ones that we remember.

Even now, when the RAF Memorial Flight pass overhead on their way to an air show, the exhaust of that Rolls Royce Merlin engine is like nothing else on Earth. It's the sound that my parents heard, in the days when nineteen-year-olds fought off the invasion, in an aeroplane that R J Mitchell created, working on through his terminal illness. We stop, look up at the red, white and blue roundels on those unique wings, and wave our arms. And we smile.

I overheard a foreign visitor in the nineteen-sixties:

'Look, that car with the aeroplane engine.'

Nonsense, of course. The Triumph Spitfire had an ordinary four-cylinder push-rod engine, but the name had a magic that probably sold a lot of cars. The magic of a nation that, like their leader, would never surrender. The magic of pride, in a country that was worth fighting for.

Graham Smith

