



Newbury



NEWSLETTER

August 2023

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NEWBURY u3a OFFICE

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NEWBURY u3a CHAIR'S LETTER

Welcome to the August Newsletter. How quickly the year is flying past - we are now well into the summer months and holiday time for many. If you have been taking advantage of all the u3a events on our calendar you will have had a busy year so far!

Our regular monthly groups keep everyone happily occupied throughout the year thanks to our willing Group Leaders, and there are also plenty of extra events and outings to come for the months ahead. There are varied choices to suit all tastes from theatre trips to gardens to paintings, and even a Mystery Tour.

I have recently added the Chairman's Outing for this year to the calendar. It will take place on 20th September. This London outing will be a day of contrasts which should hopefully include something for everyone. Lovely gardens, History, Politics, Painters, even some shopping in Kensington High Street if preferred in the lunch time. All this is organised with the help of a Blue Badge Guide who will take us to Holland House famed for its Painters and Politics. Then on a tour of the beautiful Japanese Kyoto Garden complete with its peacocks. In the afternoon we visit Leighton House with the amazing tiled Arabic Hall said to be one of the most beautiful rooms in London, with some famous paintings to view before taking tea in the cafe overlooking the lovely gardens.

The full description flyer is on the Website but please book promptly if you are interested as September is not many weeks away. Full information and booking forms

for all our events can always be found on the Website, but new members please remember that early booking is always necessary to ensure a place as our day trips become full very quickly.

Although some u3a groups pause for August, our Monday Speaker Talk will continue as usual at St Nicholas's Church Hall on 14th August. The guest speaker is Tony Hersh who will give us a talk on Recent Discoveries and Mysteries in Astronomy. No previous knowledge of the subject is required as it is a completely non-technical talk about the wonders of our universe.

You can read below about our new initiative for u3a week in September when all u3a organisations nationwide will be publicising the u3a. We plan to have a stall in Northbrook Street on Thursday 21st and the Market Place on Saturday 23rd September. We are looking for volunteer helpers to chat to passers-by and to explain what Newbury u3a is all about: see the link below. We hope to promote more awareness of our organisation locally and explain what we have to offer to retired and semi-retired people to enjoy their leisure time.

Can I also remind you that our Office in Broadway House is only manned on 3 days a week, that is from 10.0am -12.0 mid-day on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Telephone messages outside these hours go to an answer-machine and will be answered as soon as possible by one of the office volunteers.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next events and I am always very happy to receive any ideas you may wish to suggest to enhance our thriving Newbury u3a. Please send me any email messages to: chair@newburyu3a.com.

I will leave you to read and enjoy the rest of the news at your leisure.

With best wishes

Rosemarie Franklin

NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

REQUEST FOR ADVICE OR HELP

The u3a Calligraphy Group is seeking advice or help on how to turn some original handwritten script with accompanying illustrations into a form that can be more easily displayed and shared. The work, by each group member, will be on small pieces of paper that will be fixed to one larger sheet to show a storyline of the terms used in calligraphy. Please contact the group leaders, Beryl Jones and Sandy Edwards if you are able to help, through Beacon and the website.

STALL IN NEWBURY – Market Place and Northbrook Street

In the May Newsletter we wrote *“40 Group Leaders and EC members met on 29th March. Among the items discussed were support for Group Leaders in such matters as using Beacon and hall management; and a number of ways of making u3a more*

visible to non-members. One idea was the possibility of an event such as a stall at Newbury Market during the u3a week in September. So, we may be looking for volunteers to help with this!"

We are planning it now! The Task Group to organise it met earlier this month. On both Thursday September 21st and Saturday 23rd – in National u3a week – we are planning for a stall to introduce more people to u3a. The Task Group is looking for volunteers to help man a shift on either Thursday 21st or Saturday 23rd, and to put up posters in places likely to be seen by potential members. Please contact Carol Swanborough or Gill Ringland via newsletter@u3a.com to offer!

NEW MEMBERS

New and returning Members since the last Newsletter are:

Brian Haycock, Caroline Lang, Christina Moran, Chris Lusby Taylor, David Brown, Elaine Roberts, Evie Brown, Jane Tanner, Joan Dyson, John Marsh, Julie Hastings, Kelsey Haycock, Laurence Abbott, Lesley Atkinson, Marie Schmittzehe, Marion Hayes, Marjorie Graham, Michael Tanner, Mike Youdan, Norman Bird, Pam Lusby Taylor, Patricia Noble, Paul Debenham, Peter Jones, Rachel David, Robert Buchanan, Sandra Goodyear, Sandra Smith, Sandra Grimditch, Susan Marsh, Sue Jones, Sylvia Page, Thomas Watkins, Yvonne Bell.

Welcome all!

MEMBER EVENTS

Member events cover College Lunches, the monthly talks at St Nicholas's Church Hall, New Members coffee mornings – we aim to start including more coverage of these in future Newsletters.

Monthly Talk 10th July at St Nicholas's Church Hall

The speaker, Russell Cherry, talked about "The Oldest Road" – covering the Ridgeway section from Avebury to the Thames at Streatley, including its associated history.



The talk started at Avebury, a Neolithic stone circle and continued to other Neolithic sites including Silbury Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow and along the West Kennet Avenue. It covered the Bronze and Iron Age sites along the route towards the Saxon sites near Wantage. The end of the talk showed The Bull pub in Streatley

where, in 1440, a monk and a nun were executed for “misconduct” – they are buried in the garden.

GROUP NEWS

Seated Exercise to Music

Katrina Greville

This new Group is starting in September, on Mondays, from 12-1, at St Joseph’s Hall. The cost is £5 per session.

There is plenty of parking and room for a few more members. If you are interested in joining this fun group, please contact Katrina on kaworthington1@outlook.com. She will let you know of the exact start date once arrangements are finalised.

Group Leader spotlight

Carol Swanborough asked a new Group Leader who leads an “artistic” group:

- **Why did you join the u3a?**
- **What made you offer to run your Group?**
- **Are you looking for new members of your Group?**

Jayne Hipkiss – Art History

- I joined the u3a so that I could improve my skill level of some of my hobbies, visit, learn and hear about unfamiliar topics and to socialise with my u3a existing friends and make new ones.
- Nobody else volunteered! I am good at organizing and planning, so I offered to run the group, even though I know nothing about Art History!
- Possibly one or two – just reviewing the current group membership and then I will ask each member if they want to continue in the group as some new ideas will be tried.

What else might interest our readers?

Art can reflect the universality of human expression. Artistic expression has been a fundamental part of human culture throughout history, crossing boundaries of language, culture, and time. Art often explores universal themes and emotions, providing a means for people from different backgrounds to connect and understand one another on a deeper level. It serves as a powerful tool for communication, reflection, and exploration of our shared human experiences.

You do not need to have a vast knowledge of art to join the group. Each month a group member presents a topic that they are interested in. This could be a specific artist or could be a theme for example ‘Art that elicits strong emotions’. We then have a general discussion followed of course by tea, coffee and biscuits!

The photo shows us discussing the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama today. Cynthia is holding a book showing a photo of the artist.

We are of course armed with cups of tea or coffee, a plate of biscuits and several art books!



Architecture

We are a friendly group that meet in the Pelican Lane club on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Members do a presentation on a style of architecture, recently we have had brutalism and roman.

Jan Wells organised a visit to Douai Abbey in June.

Pictured is the usual response upon entering the abbey, we stand and stare. Father Oliver had joined the order of Benedictine monks in 1968 so was well versed in the history of the abbey. He led us through the 1930's architecture and the more modern 1990's addition. 2004 saw a new library that now houses books and art from religious orders that have downsized.



Pamela and David Clarke

Art Group

Unfortunately, I forgot to take photographs at our last meeting - we were too busy having a good time creating some exciting pictures by removing charcoal layers with erasers!

There are two or three places available in our art group for enthusiastic beginners or more experienced painters. In the past we have had a different subject, style or medium to try each month but next year we are going to attempt a slightly different approach. Over two or three meetings, we shall concentrate on one medium such as watercolours or acrylics. This will enable us to finish more work (2 hours is not long!) while still trying some interesting challenges such as life drawing (clothed model) or taking the work of a particular artist as inspiration.

We meet at St Francis' church hall in Wash Common on the first Friday of the month from 10.30 to 12.30.

Jill Stickland

We are a friendly, supportive group who work well and have a chat over a cuppa as we near completion of our projects. I have only been leading this group for a year, so I am learning the ropes, too. Please contact me via the Art Group on Beacon, the website or at jillymilo14@gmail.com .

Calligraphy Group

Sandy Edwards

Oh! The joy of writing with a variety of pens and different medium is reflected in our calligraphy group. We are a friendly and enthusiastic bunch who have enjoyed studying and practising historical and decorative letter forms as well as modern calligraphy. We have worked on several projects to incorporate the many styles we have covered.



Our latest project used the uncial script, a script used during the 3rd to the 8th centuries by monks in religious texts. These scripts were often decorated with Celtic knot work, so we incorporated this into our work. We made book covers with some text in the uncial style.

As well as this we delved into italic, copperplate and gothic scripts. The Rennie Mackintosh style of writing added a new dimension to our work and some interesting and colourful results emerged. Some of us belong to the Hampshire Calligraphers and have had the opportunity to attend one day courses at Winchester or online. It's wonderful to learn from some of the most renowned calligraphers who run these courses, their demonstration and advice is invaluable.

We also occasionally run our own workshops usually on a Saturday when we ask a well-known calligrapher to demonstrate a particular aspect of the subject. In recent months we welcomed Mary Noble, a very skilled calligrapher who showed us how to write and use different gold mediums in our work. The group continues to thrive, and we have welcomed new members recently who have been keen to become involved in our exploits. We are looking forward to the coming months and a new topic to work towards!

Travel Planning Group

Noeline Rycroft

I am delighted to announce the group has new leadership. Although I have enjoyed working with this talented and imaginative group of travel planners, my ever -failing eyesight has determined I need to stand down. Wendy Walker and Lynne Clements have stepped up to lead jointly. Wendy and Lynne work well together and I know they have lots of new ideas and will inspire the group to deliver a good, varied programme for future years.

We also say goodbye to Anne Bennett who has decided to stand down this autumn once she and I have delivered the holiday to Durham and Northumbria in October. Anne has organised and led over thirty day excursions to all points of the compass in

fair weather and foul! and always carrying the dreaded virtual yellow and red cards that she was not afraid to hand out with humour to those of us who might be a wee bit late back to the bus.....Anne has been a great asset to the group and I am sure you will join me in wishing her well for the future.

Over thirty members enjoyed a short holiday to RHS Harlow Carr and the Yorkshire Dales, Ken Hunt's report with photos follows!

Most day excursions have been very well supported and those coming up are mainly waiting list only now. A new event is the Christmas outing - there will be a trip to Waddesdon Manor to see the venue lit up for Christmas. There will be a tour of the house, which will be beautifully decorated, a light trail through their beautiful grounds, and a craft fair with over 70 stalls. The date is 29th November, and the booking form can be found on the website.

Keep an eye out for announcements for day trips, and holidays in 2024. In May a visit is almost finalised to visit Chatham Dock Yards, the location used to film "Call The Midwife" and in June we are aiming to venture abroad for a holiday to the Dolomites. This will be the first holiday outside the UK since Covid – watch the website for further details.

This is a shot of the wonderful gardens at Mottisfont where members visited in June: photograph courtesy of Brenda Morris. More photos from this trip and others can be found on our Newbury u3a Facebook group. This is a closed group that you will have to ask to join. Search for Newbury u3a.



Our June Holiday - Ken Hunt

What a brilliant holiday we had travelling up through Derbyshire and to our destination in Yorkshire. On Sunday, the 25th of June, a group of 29 happy, but weary u3a travellers arrived back in Newbury after a very busy but enjoyable four-day break.

The previous Thursday, we gathered excitedly at the bus station to meet our Barnes Coach driver, Zak... and our adventure began.

We were heading for Derbyshire and stopped for a visit at the Crich Tramway Village near Matlock. It was great to see members riding the trams, exchanging memories in the museum and tram sheds, or enjoying a break in the café. We then made our way to our 4* hotel in Leeds city centre, a lovely historic red brick Victorian building that had been updated and well maintained.

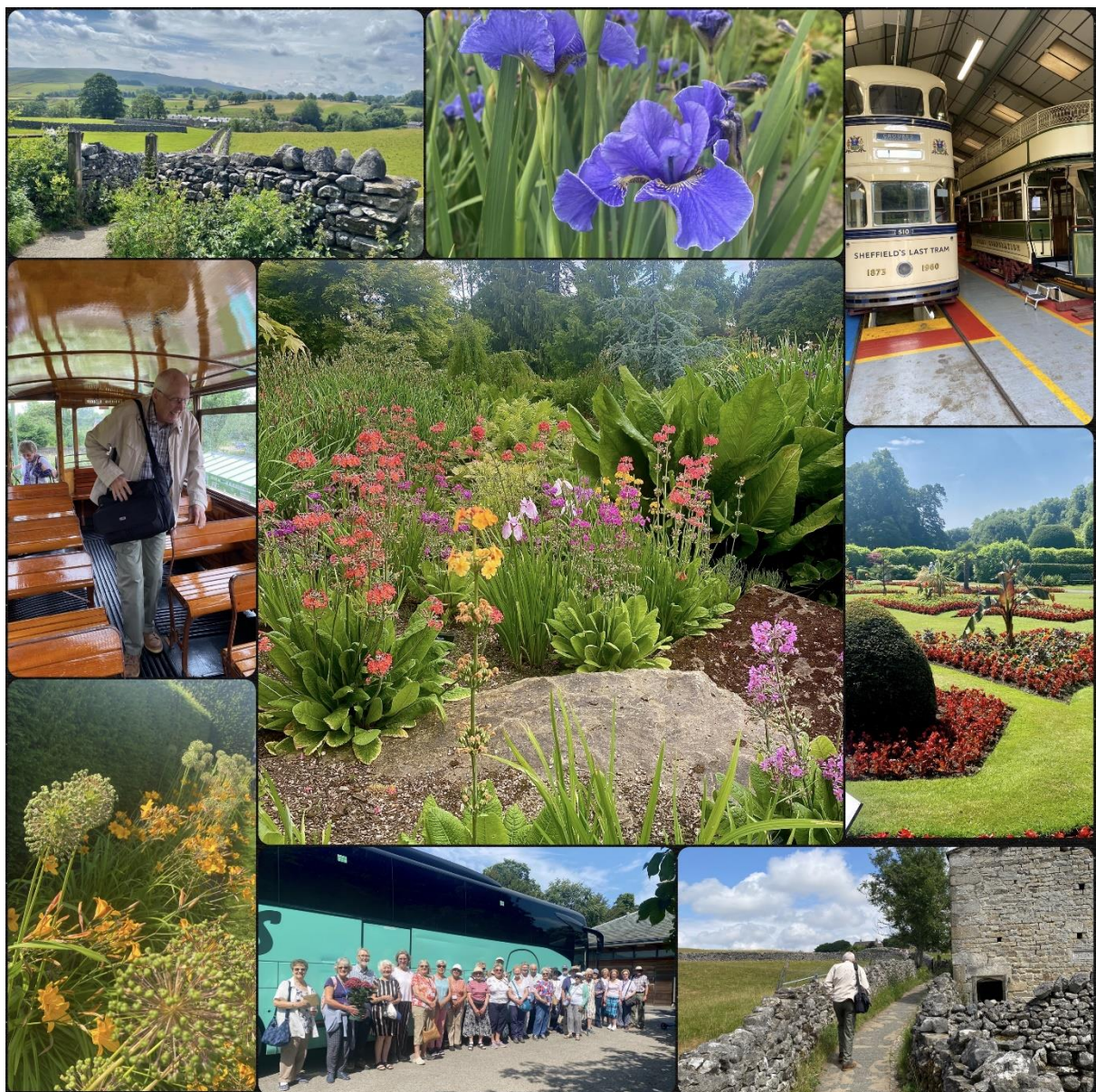
The following day we met up with our guide and for the next few hours, he did a splendid job of amusing us with his local information and stories as he took us around the beautiful Dales, stopping in Grassington for lunch. We then headed back to the

hotel via Harrogate, where we were able to spend the afternoon shopping and exploring the city centre.

Saturday, another beautiful day, was spent at RHS Harlow Carr, with its glorious gardens, herbaceous borders, water gardens, woodland walks, and various demonstrations on growing your own cut flower garden.

After a hearty breakfast on Sunday, the group set off on its return to Newbury, but enroute we stopped at the splendid Brodsworth Hall and Gardens.... a most interesting time capsule of Victorian life. More treats for the gardeners, but the final treat was a cream tea before departing for home.

Congratulations to the Travel Group whose slick organisation and planning made sure that everything ran smoothly throughout the trip. I am looking forward to my next holiday with them. Photo montage of the June Holiday is by Lynne Clements.



Gardening group

Sylvia Knight

The weather was just perfect for our coach visit to Leonardslee in April to enjoy the Azaleas and the beautiful grounds. The members all agreed that it was a great day.



The first of our Self-Drive visits was in May to visit **The Old Rectory at Inkpen**. Despite the difficulty in navigating the roads around Inkpen, we all managed to find this beautiful Queen Ann Rectory, set in a very unusual style of garden. We were greeted by the owner who gave a talk on the history of the garden and the thinking behind the garden as it is today, whilst we enjoyed tea and cake served on the terrace in beautiful sunshine.

For the May meeting we had a plant and seed swap which was very well received.



In June during the heatwave, we had our 2nd Self-Drive visit, this time to **Malverleys, East End**. The head gardener escorted us around the garden which has been developed in just 10 years, which amazed our members as it looked as if it had always surrounded the Georgian house. The inspiration for the garden came from a visit to Great Dixter. The day was concluded with a welcome cup of tea and cake.

At the Trough Competition at our June meeting, 8 troughs filled with edible plants were judged.

Photos Of Malverleys below by Pauline Phillips.



The third and final Self - Drive visit this year was to **Woolton House, Woolton Hill** in July. We had 3 gardeners escorting us around this extensive garden which is enhanced by several modern sculptures amongst the large old Oak Trees. Apparently, the oak trees from Woolton Hill were used to make ships in the days of wooden ships. We were quite intrigued by the size of the carp in the pool and watching them being fed. The tea and the yummy cakes were enjoyed under the beautiful trees.

Our coach visit to Wisley finished our summer season and was enjoyed immensely by all who went.

Our Summer Show had members bringing flowers and cakes to be judged whilst they enjoyed a cream tea. Winners received rosettes. This was our first Summer Show, and we look forward to September, which starts are new year's programme with a coach trip to **Pashley Manor on 14th September**.

Theatre Group

Derek Child

Our recent trip to Gypsy at The Mill at Sonning proved to be one of our best. Not only did we secure half- price tickets last September, but the Production proved to be of the highest quality. The replies to the subsequent questionnaire proved how much it was enjoyed by all.

"As You Like It" at Stratford received rave reviews by the Press and will have been seen by our group on 20th July.

The next visits are to "The King and I" at Woking on 29th September for which there is a waiting list and "Peter Pan Goes Wrong" at Bath on 8th November – Booking form will be available from the website on Tuesday, 1st August.

The Committee will be meeting soon to plan for 2024 and any suggestions for future plays to consider will always be welcome. Contact me at honsec@newburyu3a.com.

Introducing M.E.E.T – "Members Enjoying Events Together" **Linda Catheline**

This is our newest group, created by several members coming together to offer events that are a little different to those our u3a usually organises. With the impetus being on evenings or weekends, our first event was a skittles evening held at "The Club" in Newbury.



It was a fun evening in good company, with or without food. £5 gift vouchers were awarded to the winners with the losers receiving wooden spoons. A great success & very likely to be repeated in the future.

Our next venture will be to the races: Greyhound Racing in Oxford, Saturday 9th September. Transport will be provided from The Wharf, including a two-course meal & seating in the luxurious Savana Bar & Restaurant with a good view of the racetrack. Table service will serve our meals and take orders for drinks. You can have a flutter, although gambling is not a pre-requisite, you can just enjoy the evening's entertainment in good company. We'll have you home by midnight.



In the meantime, if you have any suggestions for events that you think might be popular or have always wanted to do something & have never had the opportunity, contact one of the M.E.E.T team or email the office (office@newburyu3a.com) with your idea.

u3a NEWBURY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Events Page [events](#) on the web site is the best source of up to date information on trips, groups and other activities.

There are still places for the [mystery tour](#) on October 2nd . Here is a futher clue.



THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

What is the role of the Thames Valley Network? By Mary Blake

Quite recently, I was asked this question. I had to think about it myself, as I had just accepted that the Network was there. So, I did a bit of investigation. In the TVN constitution, the objects of U3A Thames Valley Network are to advance the education of members of U3As in the region and encourage the provision of leisure activities for their social welfare all by facilitating cooperation between U3As in the network.

This really means that TVN can organise and run conferences, lectures, seminars and courses; publish books, pamphlets, reports, leaflets, journals, instructional matter and produce films and videos; participate in and assist in the development of neighbourhood and area groupings of U3As.

There are currently about 50 U3A groups in the network, ranging from Thatcham to Woodstock, from Hungerford to Milton Keynes, and all our Newbury members are eligible to take part in the activities that TVN advertise. At present, most of the talks and workshops are held online, using Zoom, so as many members as possible can attend. Details of the talks and events are listed on the TVN website (u3atvnetwork.org.uk), so do take look and register for those that you find of interest.

During the Covid pandemic there were more than 50 talks organised, and many Newbury members were able to take advantage of them. As we are now free to meet, the number of events has been reduced, but there are still some interesting topics coming up.



Current TVN Committee members

If you would like to receive information directly from TVN with details of Study Days and Workshops, please email your request to be put on the list to **events_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk**. You can, of course, use the same address to

'unsubscribe' at any time. If you have any ideas or suggestions for more study days or bite size Zoom events, then please contact the Events Coordinator.

NATIONAL u3a

The National u3a web site has links to a wide range of online (zoom) events and educational series, [u3a - Online Learning](#). Talks and Open Space events are led by u3a members – and cover topics from climate change to numismatics to mindfulness.

There are also [Subject Networks](#) covering topics from astronomy to a new initiative, a u3a Walkers Exchange.

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Well done for reading to the end. Did you get the mystery tour photo? It is Sandhurst Academy. Book now for a different day out.

Copy deadline for the next issue: 15 October 2023

Please send copy for newsletters, preferably by e-mail to:

Newsletter@newburyU3A.com

Editorial Team: Gill Ringland, Carol Swanborough

