



Newbury



NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Number 137

Charity Number 1097700

NEWBURY u3a OFFICE

**Broadway House, 4-8 The Broadway, Newbury, RG14 1BA
Telephone 01635 760346**

**OFFICE OPEN: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 10.00 - 12.00*
When the office is not staffed, please leave a message.**

**e-mail: - office@newburyu3a.com
website: - www.u3asites.org.uk/newbury**

NEWBURY u3a CHAIR'S LETTER

Welcome to the February edition of the Newsletter. I write this with mixed feelings as I realise this will be the last piece I write to you as your Chairman. Following on from the AGM elections on 12th February, I will be retiring from this position and will hand over to a new Chair for 2024.

As someone who is passionate about all the u3a has to offer to so many retired and semi-retired people, I am delighted to have found an enthusiastic and competent successor to take over this important u3a role. I will do all I can to support all the new members of the Executive Committee and to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities. In the meantime, I will remain as the Groups Co-ordinator and will continue to be ready to help whenever needed.

It has been a privilege to have steered the Committee for the last four years, and I am so pleased to be handing over a thriving Newbury u3a after the setbacks experienced during lockdown. We should reach our target of 1000 members very shortly and we are once again running a busy and fully active programme for 2024.

If you did not attend our Christmas Social afternoon, you may be unaware of a new member benefit that we introduced. We held a special Draw for members which is open to all current members and will be repeated every month throughout this year. Two members will be chosen at random by the computer each month and the lucky winners will receive a voucher which will cover the cost of an Outing or Day event of

their choice to be taken during 2024. Please ensure you have renewed your membership to be eligible to be included in the next Draw. The two January winners have already been notified and we look forward to hearing of their chosen activity in due course.

I was asked to talk to Probus about Newbury u3a from its origins to the present day. The event was at the Chequers Hotel, and the photo shows the use I made of the banner originally created for the Market Stall!

A big change during the last 4 years has been how much we depend on the web site for sharing information.



Be sure to check the web site regularly as there are several new groups that have started recently. M.E.E.T. is now well established with its schedule of popular evening meetings, and Mindfulness is now meeting regularly. A further Book Group is being planned as the current ones are all full, and Learn Italian is about to commence shortly with Groups planned to cater for both Beginners and Improvers.

Also look out for a completely new group suggestion. M.O.T.O. (Members on their Own) will specifically be for members who find themselves on their own, giving them the chance to meet regularly and to get to know other members in similar circumstances. If interested, more details can be found in this Newsletter and will also be sent out in the Friday Update shortly.

Thank you for reading my messages over the years. It has been a pleasure to share u3a activities with you and I am grateful for the many friends I have made during my time in office. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both my colleagues and the many members who have supported me so well in my time as your Chair, and wish everyone another enjoyable and successful year ahead.

With best wishes

Rosemarie Franklin

Chair

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

First, the office would welcome additional volunteers to staff the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday slots from 10 to 12.

Second, if you would like to discuss starting a new Group, contact the office in the first instance.

Third – but not least - if you are interested in joining the Executive Committee, please contact any of the current EC via the office to discuss what is involved.

Fourth, we always welcome photos of events or Groups – please send them to Newsletter@newburyU3A.com, thank you!

NEW MEMBERS

New and returning Members since the last Newsletter are:

Adrienne Birch, Alan Lines, Andy Brown, Ashley Windsor, Chris Birch, Chris Marshall, Chris Capel, Colin Uden, Denise Smith, Derek Tozer, Ted Shaw, Elizabeth Capewell, Gillian Coles, Gill Venner, Hilary Konya-James, Irene Kent, Jackie Marshall, Jackie Markham, Jack Castle, Jenny Seculer, Jo Carroll, Joanne Windsor, Julie Brown, Karen Ashworth, Lesley Charlesworth, Linda Curson, Liz Rivers, Liz Coughlan, Maeve White, Maggie Harris, Maggie Dodd, Margaret Tozer, Margaret Wright, Margaret Letman, Pat Forster, Michael Smith, Mike Gibbs, Ola Adams, Paul Curson, Peter Seward, Rodney Cusack, Ron Brown, Rosie Bass, Sally Coles, Shyeena Williams, Stephen Rivers, Stephen Coles, Steve Tickle, Susan Cooper, Tony Seculer, Lydia Batten and Fay Milne

Welcome all!

MEMBER EVENTS – Monthly Talks

The monthly talks are held at St Nicholas Church Hall on the second Monday of every month. Check the web site for the topics and speakers coming up, and save the dates!

November Talk: ‘Saving Lives at Sea – the RNLI’ - Bridget Britton



The Royal National Lifeboat Institution is the largest charity that saves lives at sea around the coasts of the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man, as well as on some inland waterways. The RNLI provide, on call, a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service and a seasonal lifeguard service.

The talk gave an overview of the RNLI since its foundation, a history of the many types of lifeboats, from a simple rowing boat to the advanced craft used today. The short film showed real-life rescues and demonstrated just how rough the sea can become and the danger that the RNLI volunteers face.

The speaker, Bridget Britton, was born in the Weald of Kent and rarely visited the coast, apart from an occasional day out to the seaside as a child. Her husband Rodney was rescued by the RNLI as a child. After she married in 1984, Rodney, who had always supported the RNLI, joined the Tilehurst and Purley Fundraising Branch. After several meetings, Bridget joined too with Rodney eventually elected Chairman and Bridget became Secretary. Rodney became a speaker for the RNLI which he greatly enjoyed and continued until he became very ill and sadly passed away in the autumn of 2013.

We heard about the RNLI training centre which is based in Poole, and which serves not only to train the RNLI volunteers, but also acts as a repository for spare parts for boat repairs and for the storage and shipping of memorabilia which the RNLI sells to raise vital funds. It is possible to visit the training centre to see how the crew are trained. It was noted that the restaurant there is particularly good!

The RNLI rely solely on donations from the public. It costs over £188 million pounds per year to fund them. They help, on average, 45 people in trouble at sea every single day. In 2022, they also rescued countless dogs, several farm animals such as sheep and cows, a donkey, and a pair of ferrets!

Attendees were able to purchase some lovely Christmas cards and RNLI memorabilia which all helps fund their activities.

December – Christmas Social



January Talk: 'The Golden Age of Children's Television' – Jeff Evans

We welcomed back local author, Jeff Evans for an entertaining talk on the 'Golden Age of Children's Television', covering the start of television right up to the 1970's.

The very first programme broadcast on the BBC was with Annette Mills in 1946, playing the piano and singing songs accompanied by a puppet – Muffin the Mule. Muffin starred in 'For the Children' which was broadcast on Sunday afternoons for just 15 minutes.

Establishment of the BBC Children's TV Department in 1950 resulted in more programmes involving puppets, singing, and dancing and the first appearance of a small yellow bear with a black nose and ears – Sooty. Sweep and Sue followed but due to the social mores of the time, Sooty was not allowed to touch Sue as that would be improper!

The genre evolved from entertainment to include much loved drama series such as 'The Railway Children' and 'The Secret Garden' and comedy with 'Billy Bunter in Grey Friars School'. The actor playing the schoolboy was actually 29 years old and continued to play him until the age of 40. Pre-school children were entertained by 'Watch with Mother', featuring 'Andy Pandy', 'Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men' where Little Weed was on constant look out for the return of the gardener after his lunch break.

ITV began broadcasting to children in 1955 with programmes such as 'Ivanhoe' and 'The Adventures of Robin Hood' which they could license to the USA. As the 'space age' came in the 1960s, we saw the advent of the Gerry Anderson shows such as 'Thunderbirds', 'Joe 90' and 'Captain Scarlett and the Mysterons'.

Who could forget 'The Clangers' with their Soup Dragon, 'Noggin the Nog' ???????

GROUP NEWS

Amblers Walking Group

A great photograph from Gerald Finch of the Amblers walking group reminding us how blue the sky was in October. The group also spotted some tidy gardens along their route that day.



The Amblers enjoyed a Christmas lunch at The Furze Bush.

Members on their Own (M.O.T.O.)

A new Group is suggested for members who find themselves alone, particularly after years of living with a partner. These are members who might be widowed, divorced or have a partner in long term residential care.

The aim is to find like minded companions in order to continue to enjoy meeting up, self arranged trips out, walks or even holidays together. It would allow for more spontaneous choices in small numbers.

The person to contact if interested is Jenny Griffiths at e-mail address: jenny.griffiths88@gmail.com. The date for the first meeting to explore this idea is Wednesday 7th February at 2.30 p.m. at the Corn Exchange, Market Place. Please contact Jenny to express your interest.

Calligraphy

We each designed and made a Christmas card and added our greeting in our best script handwriting. Christina was the lucky recipient of the raffle for all of the cards.

We also had a lovely meal at The Furze Bush, organized by the group leaders, Sandy Edwards and Beryl Jones.





Pub Walking Group

Photo from Helen Cubitt. Bob, the leader, always carries his emergency banana.

Recorder Group



Did you see the ingeniously decorated u3a Recorder Group tree at the St John's Christmas Tree Festival?

The photo is of the Recorder Group are playing carols during the Festival. We have players of descant, treble, tenor, and bass recorders. If you would like to know more about the group, please ring Olive Maines 01635 228434, the coordinator. We meet 1st and 3rd Friday afternoons at 2pm in St John's Church and you would be very welcome to come and meet us and hear and see what we play.

M.E.E.T – “Members Enjoying Events Together”

The second skittles evening at the Club in Newbury on 13th November was again very well attended. You don't have to be an expert to play this game & fun was had by all. Another evening is planned for April, so watch out for details in the Friday update.

Our wine tasting evening was also a success. Brian, our lecturer, was very entertaining & introduced us to many lesser known wines from Southern Italy. A few members were already planning to go search for these different varieties in the shops. Not a great amount was actually consumed and many of our members went off with the unfinished bottles that were left at the end of the evening. The positive feedback received means we may well run another similar evening later in the year.

Places for the evening quiz on the 7th February are going fast. Held at the West Berks Indoors Bowls Club, a buffet is included and a bar will be available. Prizes will be given to the winning team(s). You don't need to be the brain of Britain, it's just a fun social evening with friends. You still have time to secure your place. The booking form is at [MEETQUIZ](#).

Moving into March, our Murder Mystery evening takes place on the 15th March at the British Legion in Pelican Lane. The play has been specially written for Newbury u3a by a local Amateur Dramatics Group. As is usual, during the performance one of the characters will be murdered. You will then have the opportunity to question the rest of the cast to try to guess 'who dun it'. Food can be enjoyed whilst you try to unravel the plot. More details and a booking form will soon be on the web site.

Lots of other events are being toyed with at the moment & may include a magic evening, comedy night or trip to the theatre. Even a treasure hunt. But if you have any suggestions for future evenings or would like to be part of the planning team, email the office, office@newburyu3a.com.

Travel Group

Lynne Clements writes "We ended the year with a third visit to Waddesdon. Any time of the year, this makes for a beautiful and worthwhile visit. This time in the house was open and beautifully decorated for Christmas using children's storybook themes. That was the warm bit!

The rest of the visit was outdoors exploring the Christmas market in the grounds of the beautiful house, and then we followed the creative light trail which walked us further afield. We wrapped up really warmly because it was extremely below zero cold, but incredibly atmospheric. We were in true Christmas spirit.

Hot chocolate and coffees were readily available and we made good use of these stops to warm our hands and fuel our legs! Our cheeks glowed on board the coach on the way home!

A huge thank you to Wendy for another great successful winter trip."

As soon as these trips have been fully researched you will hear about them in our Friday update and will then be able to book them from the website.

In the pipeline is a short holiday to Wales, the plans are ongoing but as soon as it is finalised and available, you will be able to find it on our website and of course we advertise everything in the Friday update as well so that you can keep up to date. Very much underway is our trip to the Dolomites in Italy.... We have 41 people who have

booked which is a tremendous response as we were not sure how popular this trip to Italy might prove. We are of course delighted and excited!



Things are moving on and are ever changing, with new additions throughout the year. We hope that you will take advantage of them and support us.

We are of course now busy with our 2024 programme which will include trips to Christchurch College in Oxford, with a boat ride on the Thames including cream tea. Full details will be on the website very soon.

Other trips in the development stage include a trip to Wimbledon to see behind-the-scenes, a trip to the poppy factory, and possibly a trip to Bristol and the Aerospace Museum.

Happy Travels 2024!



STOP PRESS: Dates for your diary

6th March - The Gilded Age - a blue badge guided tour of Pall Mall and Mayfair, with a visit to Two Temple Place, a house built for the Astors, including The Glass Heart exhibition. Booking form and flyer on website or click [Gilded Age Booking Form](#) and [GA Flyer](#). Please get your forms in by 16th February.

22nd May - a trip to Chatham Dockyard, including a tour of the Call The Midwife set. Lots to see and do. Flyers and booking forms with full details will be on the website very shortly.

Theatre Group

We are pleased to report that everything was right with the trip to Bath to see “Peter Pan Goes Wrong” on 8th November. There is so much action and silly humour in this production that the return trip meant that we had a very happy coach!

As reported in November we sold out the allocation for “**Everyone’s talking about Jamie**” (31st January). There are now waiting lists for “**2.22 a Murder Mystery**” at Richmond on 27th March and “**Drop the Dead Donkey**” at Woking on 29th May.

The Theatre Planning Group are meeting on 8th February to plan for the second half of the year, so please check Friday updates for “Forthcoming Attractions”.

Derek Child, honsec@newburyu3a.com

And finally, some Christmas jumpers seen at the December Social

Photographs by Bob Bosley!



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.

A special reminder – **the AGM is on Monday 12th February**. It will be followed by a talk by the THAMES VALLEY POLICE COMMISSIONER Matthew Barber.

It is in St Nicolas CHURCH, starting at 2.15pm.

Only paid-up members can vote - so have you renewed yet?

THAMES VALLEY NETWORK and NATIONAL u3a

Watch the web sites for news of activities and events.

Thames Valley Network

web site: [Welcome - u3a Thames Valley Network \(u3atvnetwork.org.uk\)](http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk)

National u3a

The Third Age Trust

156 Blackfriars Road

London SE1 8EN

Phone 020 8466 6139 open Mon to Fri 9:30 to 16:30

email: info@u3a.org.uk

web site: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Copy deadline for the next issue: 22 April 2024

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

Newsletter@newburyU3A.com

Editorial Team: Gill Ringland, Carol Swanborough

