



Chair's Chat

Welcome to our last newsletter of the year, a double edition covering December and January, which will give our amazing, hard-working editor, Rosie, a well-earned break at the end of the year.

The Christmas season is fast approaching and I must give a special mention to our Crochet groups, who have excelled themselves, producing quirky, seasonal bollard toppers to decorate Pershore High Street for the Georgian Christmas Fayre – have you spotted these ingenious creations around town? A brilliant advertisement for our u3a, raising many a smile – well done to everyone who contributed!



Other seasonal events - our Pershore u3a Singers are inviting members to their Christmas concert at St Andrews on **Wednesday December 6th at 3.15pm**. They will entertain us with singing and instrumental pieces, and lead carols for everyone to join in with.

Christmas Quiz Night **Thursday 7th December, 7pm**

**Abbey Room, Pershore Football Club
King George's Way, Pershore WR10 1QU**

Cost of entry - £1 per person, 6 members to a team, with prizes for the winning team.

Participation is for **members of Pershore & District u3a only**.

You can enter as a full team of 6, part of a team, or as an individual in which case you will be assigned to a team in advance of the evening.

If you want to take part, please contact me on the email below

Ian Smith, Treasurer

And don't forget our Christmas Quiz on **7th December**. If you don't have a team to enter with, our Quizmaster will put you together with other members – a great way to meet people! It's only £1 per person to enter and promises to be a fun and enjoyable evening. If you want to put your name down, either let me know, or get in touch with Quizmaster Ian directly.

Have a look, too, at the details for our **December 19th Monthly Meeting**, which will see Alan Benjamin entertain us with seasonal music – perfect to get us in the mood for Christmas!

A reminder that our AGM is coming up in the New Year, taking place at the start of our Monthly Meeting on **16th January**. Whilst it might seem a long way off, please put the date in your diary, as we

need your support for this important event in our calendar. If you can't make it to Number 8 on the day, you will be able to join us online via Zoom. Do look out for details about the AGM in your post or email, and come along virtually, or in person, to support us on the day.

As this is our last newsletter for 2023, may I take the opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas, best wishes for the New Year and for your continued enjoyment of our wonderful u3a.

Jackie

Jackie Jolley, Chair



Interest Groups' Latest News from John



Hello Everyone,

It's that time of year again, trying to arrange the last meetings of the year and fitting in the odd Christmas get together or two whilst doing the Christmas shopping and preparing for the big day.

We have had another quiet month really, but then as we already have nearly 90 groups, I cannot expect too many more new ideas each month. Wouldn't it be great to be approaching 100 active groups this time next year before I step down after my third year?

Just looking back at the new groups which began life in 2023, we added Badminton 2, Ballet, Bend Stretch and Balance, Driving Skills Revisited, new French and Spanish groups, the gardening groups were reformed, MOTO2, Sewing Bee, Skittles 3, Tai Chi, Theatre Trips and Wednesday Walkers. All of these have become established and offer even more activity options for our u3a.

The Coach Trip group is in place and hope to depart on their first trip next June to Port Sunlight. There are still some places available, once we get into 2024, I am sure there will be renewed interest.

We mustn't forget the established groups that have been meeting for years either, a lot of them still with their original group leader - thank you to you all for making things happen every month.

There is still an imbalance with our membership figures, 70% ladies v. 30% men! Maybe in the new year you chaps can come up with some ideas to cover your hobby/interests. There's lots of support available and we have a list of 20 venues that we use for various groups, ranging from homes to Number 8. Keep sending in stories and photos of your activities for use in the Newsletter and website.

Do have a Happy Christmas and New Year. Thanks to all the Group Leaders and their helpers. you make it all happen!and of course to all our members.

John Wright
Groups Coordinator



News from the Interest Groups

Theatre Group Trips

The autumn season of Theatre Group's programme has now come to an end. During the year, the group has enjoyed a number of productions, varying from ballet to Shakespeare. Most of our trips have been to the nearby Malvern Theatres, although we have also ventured as far as Cheltenham for a wonderful performance of the ballet Giselle.

At Malvern, we usually attend a Saturday matinee and have seen both comedies and classic thrillers. An evening trip to



see Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was especially interesting, as it was set in 1936, with a female in the role of Shylock.

We decide between us what to see, with the most popular plays and productions being selected. As costs for mini-buses and coaches have risen so much, we share lifts between members, giving a donation to the driver for fuel and car park costs.

Planning for next year will soon begin, so if you are interested in joining the group, especially if you are a driver and willing to offer lifts to others, please get in touch.

Jackie Jolley, Chair

Tai Chi/Qigong

The group, which was formed in June, has been working on seasonal Qigong movements, which work on specific meridians and organs of the body each season. For autumn we have been working to support the immune system and eliminate toxins from the body.



Flying Like a Bird

The exercises practiced have worked on the lungs to improve breathing – such as The Breath of Fire and Shaolin breathing exercises, as well as the large intestine. Balance has also been a focus, which has involved a series of bird poses such as Bird Stretches Upwards, Flying Like a Bird and The Bowing Crane – the arm movements (the wings) promoting

respiration and expanding the capacity of the chest. We have also been performing the Dao-yin of the Dragon, an ancient Daoist for health, the final sequence being called the Swimming Dragon.

These exercises work to detoxify the internal systems of the body through a deep internal massage and are about having the optimal flow of chi all around the body.

There have been some challenging moments co-ordinating the arm and leg movements in some of the more complex movements such as the Serpent Looks for Its Tail, but we have had some laughs!



The Dao-yin of the Dragon

My thanks go to the members of the group for their support and encouragement, as this is a new venture for me. My training continues with another three modules to complete. This time next year I should have completed the course.

Sue Harris, Group leader

Ukefest

On Friday October 20th the Pershore u3a Ukulele group went to Kinver for a 'Ukefest'. The driving conditions that day were horrendous but 13 of the group made it to this rather special event. Five u3a Ukulele groups came together to play: Kinver who hosted the event, Wyre Forest, Kingswinford, Stourbridge, Wolverhampton and Pershore, totalling 128 players.

With all the players assembled, we sat in our groups facing a splendid screen and each group had prepared 2 'solo' songs and a further 4 songs to lead the whole assembly to play. We were first to perform and we performed *Happy Together*, the applause took us aback - rapturous to the extent we have never experienced. Our second was *Run Around Sue* with Martin doing his excellent solo start. For the rest of the afternoon people from all over the room came to tell us how brilliant we were - amazing! At the end, we were told we had got the event off to a great start and set the bar high - so what more to say?! We all had a great afternoon and it was well worth the journey.



Thank yous are needed as it's always such a great team effort. John supported us on bass, Martin soloed and scatted as only he can: we all sang our best and played well: we looked good in our blue and yellow to match our stand signs. Jean led us in well and kept us on track - thank you! Just a great team effort. And when Kinver played their Status Quo Medley and asked for people to 'rock' it was we six ladies who dropped our ukuleles and danced and rocked our best - Pershore U3A is on the map!! Well done everyone. Next year's event has an organiser who volunteered on the day - we'll be there in 2024!!!

Yvonne McKeon and Joan May

Christmas Crochet Toppers! After our very successful and popular crocheted bollard toppers for the Plum Festival we decided to see if we could contribute to the Georgian Christmas Market on November 24th and 25th. So both the Crochet groups have been busy creating Christmas themed toppers which hopefully will bring a smile to your face until the end of December. There will be Christmas puddings, snowmen, crackers and Christmas trees adorning the bollards from the Banking House down to the Town Hall on High Street - have a look as you go round town.

Nicky Bailey, Sally Whyte and members of u3a Pershore and district Crochet groups 1 & 2





What3Words can be a lifesaver!

We make no apology for drawing What3Words to your attention again.

When you phone the emergency services they may ask for the postcode where the event occurred. It can lead to head-scratching delay. Smartphone users have another option. A free to download app called What3Words. It can find you in a flash and tell you three unique words that identify exactly where you are. Strange as it may seem, if you need an ambulance, for example, and give them the three words, they will be able to find you! They are unique to your location.

In 2018 one of the u3a bicycle groups came upon the scene of an accident where a touring cyclist had gone head over heels into a ditch and broken her collar bone. In vain we tried to explain to the 999 operator that we were just west of Ashton under Hill. The app would have saved lots of time and confusion.

A BBC article about What3Words is at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-49319760>

Jill Wilson



You may have heard that the acorns' shop is moving along the High Street into the larger unit vacated by M & Co. They have asked whether any of our u3a members might be interested in volunteering with them in the new shop.

They are particularly looking for help with cover at the till and sorting donations. However, they would also be delighted if anyone was able tackle their second-hand book section, was enthusiastic about antiques and collectables or knowledgeable about media and music.

Further information is online www.acorns.org.uk/shopvolunteer or pop into the shop.

Membership renewals

Hello everyone, this is just a quick heads-up that membership subscription renewals will be due at the beginning of March. Keep an eye on your email inbox for an email from me in mid-February. For those members not on email, a letter will be dropping through your letter box towards the end of February. Fees for the coming year, will be kept at the current level:

- Single full Membership **£13.20**
- Joint Full Membership **£24.20** for two members residing at the same address
- Single Associate Membership **£8.30** for those members who pay full membership to another u3a and wish to join more than one of our groups
- Joint Associate Membership **£14.40** for two members residing at the same address who pay full membership to another u3a.
- Cotswold Link Membership to remain free of charge for those members who pay full fees to another local u3a and wish to join one of our groups.

Thanks in advance
Mary Greer, Membership Secretary

Monthly Meeting Write Up

Driving Skills Revisited with Val and Howard Allen

The first question asked at our November monthly meeting - "How many of you have taken any refresher training since you passed your test?" (and speed awareness courses don't count!) - left many of us feeling that we might have a lot to learn during the talk!

Val and Howard, both members of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, run courses and take people out for refresher drives and guide those wishing to take the IAM qualification – the most elderly being 91!

There have been many changes to motoring, cars and the Highway Code since most of us passed our test, which we need to be aware of, such as the hierarchy of road users.

Val and Howard covered topics such as preparing both yourself and your vehicle for drives and suggested small changes we could make to cope with changes in driving these days.

Suggestions to help with emergencies included:

- using either 112 or 999 and pre-registering to use these numbers as a text message to call for help, where signal may be poor and phone calls not possible.
- having your next of kin listed as an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact.
- installing the app What3words which will pinpoint your location to a 3m square given a unique combination of three words. Very useful if you are in an unfamiliar or remote location.

The website <http://olderdrivers.org.uk/> gives lots of further useful advice.

If you'd like more information about the longer Driving Skills Revisited course running in Pershore, contact our Groups Coordinator John Wright. It's never too late to start improving common habits and implementing good practice.

Sally Whyte
Speaker Coordinator
Pershore & District u3a

Guest Speakers at our Monthly Meetings

All Monthly Meetings held at Number 8, High Street, Pershore.

No need to book, all welcome!

For more details, contact Sally Whyte Speaker Coordinator

<https://u3asites.org.uk/pershore/events>



Tuesday December 19th, 2023 at 2pm

Christmas Entertainment – A festive return from **Alan Benjamin (Morris dancer & musician)** as he entertains us on vocals, guitar, banjo and melodeon, to send us into Christmas, singing...

(No zoom, but will be recorded)

Tuesday, January 16th, 2024 at 2pm

Daniel Callicott - The Heritage Manager of Bourneville Village Trust will talk about two historical buildings in Bourneville village: Selly Manor and Minworth Greaves



Supporting our Annual General Meeting in January



Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday 16th January will take place immediately before our January Monthly Meeting at Number 8 and will be followed by one of our guest speakers on the subject of 'The Cadbury Connection' (Bournville Garden Village and two ancient timber framed buildings).

AGMs are essential in order to ensure we (your u3a Committee) are operating within the rules set out in our constitution and by the Charity Commission, and that we have our finances in order.

Please join us on 16th January to show your support, use your vote and ask us any questions. The AGM usually only takes 15-20 minutes out of our time at Number 8. The annual report, accounts and agenda will be sent out by email before Christmas to give you plenty of time to read them in advance of the meeting.

If you are not able to make it to Number 8 on Tuesday 16th, you will be able to take part in the AGM via the usual Zoom link that will be sent out a few days beforehand: this will include being able to vote.

We have space on our committee if you might be interested in joining us. We offer a warm welcome and a chance to provide practical support in a variety of roles. There is also a chance to observe at one of our regular bi-monthly committee meetings in the morning of Monday 8 January, before deciding. Do let me know and I will get the wheels in motion!

Jill Wilson

Business Secretary

Need further advice regarding Monthly Meetings?
Contact: Speaker Co-ordinator Sally Whyte

U3a Online Learning Events

u3a members can join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership! Most of these talks are presented by members themselves; sharing their knowledge with others across the u3a movement. There are also talks from well-known speakers and organisations, plus in-person events at venues like the Royal Institution. All of these events can be booked via Eventbrite, by clicking this link: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>



When Art and Literature meet at Christmastide

Catherine Stevenson of Newcastle u3a looks at the connections between art and literature at Christmastide.

Tues 5 December at 10am

Free - Online via Zoom



The Art of William Morris

A journey into the incredible work and beautiful art of William Morris

Wed 6 Dec at 2pm

Free - Online via Zoom



Exploring World Faiths: Christmas

Although Christmas is regarded as a Christian Festival celebrating the birth of Jesus, we will explore how other faiths celebrate Christmas.

Mon 11 Dec at 10am

Free - Online via Zoom

Pershore & District u3a – Committee Members and key contacts – Dec 2023

Chair	Jackie Jolley	<p>To contact a member of the committee, please use the contacts page of our website</p> <p>https://u3asites.org.uk/pershore/contact</p>
Vice-Chair & Speaker Coordinator	Sally Whyte	
Membership Secretary & Beacon Coordinator	Mary Greer	
Treasurer	Ian Smith	
Business Secretary	Jill Wilson	
Groups' Coordinator	John Wright	
New Members' Facilitator	Ingrid Fox	
Newsletter Editor	Rosie Chandler	
Beacon Database Admin & Technical Support	Peter Burnham	
Web Team	Mary Greer, Jackie Jolley, John Wright & Sally Whyte	
<p>Pershore and District u3a https://u3asites.org.uk/pershore</p> <p>Facebook: 'Keep Connected – Pershore and District U3A'</p>		

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Please send photographs and any articles for publication in the February 2024 newsletter to: u3apershorenews@gmail.com..... **by 20th January**

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