

# NOT SO IDLE TIMES

Retford U3a Newsletter - JANUARY 2024

## CHATTER "FROM THE CHAIR"

Welcome to the January edition of the Not So Idle Times (NSIT). Well, here we are again at the beginning of another New Year. My wish for you all is that 2024 is healthy and peaceful and that you can make the most of your membership of Retford U3a to Learn, Laugh & Live.

The Christmas festivities seem a very long time ago now, but I hope you were able to spend time with friends or family, in person or virtually through the powers of modern technology. It certainly wasn't a 'White Christmas' was it? Quite a lot of the holiday period was somewhat soggy in my experience, and unfortunately several areas of the town were flooded again. For some of you travelling may have been a challenge. The changes in the weather patterns are something that the experts tell us to expect. The forecast for lower temperatures and possibly some snow this month does not appeal to this southern 'softy'. Personally I am hankering for some warmer sunshine!

However, on a really positive note the U3a interest groups have got back into full swing, and we have

more new groups about to start too which is really exciting. All group leaders, both long standing and newer, deserve huge thanks as they provide the life blood of our organisation. Please continue to support them in any way possible. For further information about groups and events coming up please go to our Retford U3a website. Please remember to support your committee who do a lot behind the scenes and thanks as always to Chrissie Cook who produces the Newsletter.

The speaker for our January meeting is Betty Merrick, one of our members. Betty's talk is The Italian Armistice 80 years on. Betty will relate some stories of escapes by Allied prisoners of war following the Armistice in September 1943, and of the bravery of Italian peasant folk who sheltered them in German-occupied Italy.

So here are my very best wishes to you all for 2024 and I'll close with this quote from Joseph Pilates. "Every moment of our life can be the beginning of great things." I invite you to go and be your greatest. Pippa Ramsay Chair Retford U3a 01777 704550 [chair@retford-u3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@retford-u3a.org.uk)

## BEREAVEMENT

Dr Mari Hall (Tankard) died on 27th December 2023 age 99 years. Many of you will remember Mari who was one of the original members of the U3a when it was set up.

A Life Ceremony at Babworth Crematorium took

place on 22nd January. (before this notice could come out)

Anyone wishing to make a donation to the National Arthritis society can do so via E. Hurton & Son, 73 Grove St Retford Tel 01777 703502

## NEWSLETTER CONTACT

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## 2024 SPEAKER PROGRAM

Date	Speaker	Title of Talk
January 25 <sup>th</sup>	Betty Merrick	The Italian Armistice 80 years on.
February 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Bob Blatchford	"A Justice in the Arctic
March 28 <sup>th</sup>	Georgina Lancaster	Arts and heritage officer Bassetlaw Museum
April 25 <sup>th</sup>	AGM	Talk by Bryan Gladstone subject TBC
May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Admin Dinah Wilcox	Workhouse story and songs
June 27 <sup>th</sup>	Lucy Kennedy Fraud & Cyber Protect Officer	How to avoid the fraudsters
July 25 <sup>th</sup>	Sam Millard	Rogues, Vagabonds - or Heroes?

## INTEREST GROUP NEWS

### FUN WITH FLOWERS

Hi a couple of pictures from the group earlier this week. Firstly we did a basic line arrangement enhanced with various sundries and different foliage, then some of us, made a hand tied arrangement.

Sally



### BIG NIGHT OUT

It was another full house for the Big Night Out Social Group at Retford Golf Club in January. The meal was excellent again, and excitement was high as there was a huge rollover jackpot riding on the table quiz bingo. Sue Paul set another killer quiz. Despite only finishing 3rd in total correct answers, Table 1 nipped in with a correct line in record time. Despite the blatant bias of the answer caller, Bryan Gladstone, they claimed the record-breaking £10 per person prize. Bryan, whose table narrowly missed out on the top prize in the previous Big Night Out, was seen weeping inconsolably on Sue's shoulder after the event! Good time was had by all, and everyone is invited to reserve a place at the next Big Night Out on April 19th. Sue will be taking reservations at the next General Meeting, so hurry to get your name down. There are only 64 places. Bryan Gladstone



### FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP

On January 6, the French celebrate La Fêtes des Rois, or **Three Kings' Day**. The Galette des Rois is a traditional part of the festivities and is a puff pastry tart with a delicious frangipane filling. It also has a small figurines called fèves' hidden inside. Whoever gets the fève' becomes the queen or king for the day and wears a gold paper crown to show their status. Our photos show the French Conversation group meeting at the home of Hélène who shared her 6th January festivities with us. Gillain found the King and Madeleine, the Queen. We celebrated royally - c'était délicieux Hélène, merci beaucoup!!



### PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Here are January's Photos of the Month.  
The theme was "Past Its Best"



**Wooden Tub**  
Pippa Ramsay



**Who Hit the Gate**  
Adrian Hetherington

### GARDENING GROUP

Our first meeting of 2024 was really well attended, mainly by members clutching cheques to pay for their first visit!

They also enjoyed a great talk by Martin Fish, not to be confused with Michael, on his life in horticulture. His engaging presentation 'My Life in Gardening So Far,' traced his career as garden journalist for several magazines and papers, and how that developed into broadcasting, mainly on midlands radio, and also his work as an RHS judge, and presenter at many of the big gardening shows.

We have altered our schedule slightly this year by taking a visit in February to enjoy the flowers and shrubs of a winter garden. On 15<sup>th</sup> Feb we are going to RHS Harlow Carr, just outside Harrogate. Due to demand we are now taking two coaches, and as I write this there are still some

places available, so we are happy to open the visit up to the wider U3A. The cost is £26 pp, unless you are a RHS member when it will be £12.

**We will have a table at the General Meeting on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> if you are interested, but would need payment on that day, by cheque to Retford U3A, or cash. Please come and see us, and may I ask any Gardening groups members who have signed up, to pay then too.**

Our second visit in May to The Old Vicarage, Rutland is fully booked, with a waiting list.

Our next meeting at The Well will be on March 21<sup>st</sup>, when Colin Ward will be talking about Hostas.

We are keeping our fingers crossed for 'reasonable' weather on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb!  
Irene and co.

### MILITARY HISTORY GROUP - UPDATE

Following December's presentation by Mike Garrett on Zoom, I have done some analysis of the last four months' meetings. Regular attendees will know these 'live' meetings have all been free entry, rather than the £2.00 we normally charge. The decision was made back in the Summer that we wanted to attract to meetings some of the lapsed members of the Local History Group which folded around a year ago. We have run the last 4 talks on subjects relevant to Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. From May to August this year on average we had 27 members attend the live meetings and the same number on Zoom. Apart from Retford u3a we had 13 other u3a Groups represented at these Zoom meetings showing interest in the subjects being discussed. Over the last 4 months, since we have aimed our talks at the local area, we have had an average of 40 members attend live meetings, with a further average of 24 joining us each month on Zoom.

The increase in members attending 'live' indicates the interest in local topics, and that also is shown in the slight fall off of Zoom attendees from out of the area, where the interest is not as high. Having said that we have had members from 12 other u3a Groups join us over the last four months. There will be a slight change of tack next month because on both dates (the 11th and 22nd) both presentations will be on Zoom. This negates any bad weather we may have in the New Year. The Zoom invitations will go out nearer the time. I shall be presenting a paper on the 100 Years' War.

In February Adrian Sumner will be telling us of the History of RNAS Howden and in March Bryan Gladstone will explain The Battle of Midway in the Pacific Campaign.

The live meetings will be on the morning of the second Thursday of the month and the Zoom meetings on the fourth Monday afternoon of each month. From the beginning of February we will once again be charging £2.00 per member for our 'live' meetings, but it is our intention to have free meetings once again next Autumn, from October, when again the talks will have a local influence.

2 members have had bereavements this last month. Both Ken Hoddy and George Teasdale have suffered the loss of their wives and on your behalf I am sending out all our sympathy to them both

*Thanks for all your continued support, especially from all those groups outside our local area. Roy*

### NEW HISTORY GROUP

A U3A without a History Group? Unheard of! The new (reborn?) History Group will hopefully be getting underway late Feb/early March and rectifying this situation!

The term 'history' encompasses a huge range of possibilities for study but with some well worn stock subjects. 'The Tudors', 'WW 1 or 2', 'the Rise of Hitler' being some particularly hackneyed themes while most are restricted to Europe or the Anglosphere. This approach ignores whole swathes of human endeavour and experience which have all contributed to, and form the foundations of, our present day lives.

We will be looking at history under a range of topic headings such as:-

- 1 History of Science & Technology
- 2 History of Ideas
- 3 Personal and Domestic History
- 4 World History
- 5 Local History
- 6 Economic History
- 7 Cultural and Social History

....plus others which may come to mind.

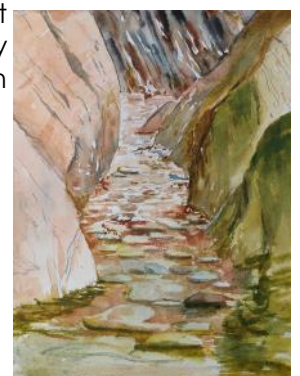
If interest is sufficient I shall be looking to hold the first introductory/organisational meeting in Feb. with regular meetings on a monthly basis thereafter. The location and time is yet to be decided but the frequency will be monthly. It would be very helpful, vital in fact, if you could email me at [veldavis@gmail.com](mailto:veldavis@gmail.com) to register your interest, as the numbers will dictate the cost, location and size of venue. Please email me if you have any other questions.

Vernon Davis



### WATERCOLOUR GROUP

For our November session our topic was "Shallow water/through water". This proved quite a challenge. That said everyone produced good work that were all very different. Our next session is "Unstructured flowers" on Thursday 25th January at 9.30 in the Maypole Court community centre, Wellow. If you are interested in joining us please contact Andrew Young on 01623 863327 or by using the link from the group's page on our website."



## NEW INTEREST GROUPS

**Beginners Bridge Group** Commenced on January 15th at Hallcroft Community Centre currently led by Sylvia Milner. It is running a trial period for 6 weeks the First and Third Monday of the month between 2-5 pm. We currently have 8 people interested but are looking for more members. This would take people through the basics of the game and help skill development. If you are interested in joining this group please get in touch with Sylvia through the website Bridge Group page.

**Book Group 4** The new Book Group had its first meeting on 4th January led by Linda Cadman. They have space for a few more members. If you are interested in joining them, please contact Linda directly through the website.

**Making Music Group** Commenced on January 19th January at The Well on the First and Third Fridays 2-4pm. This is being led by Angela Grant and has proved to be very popular with x 14 interested parties. All information on our website.

### Potential new Interest Groups:

**Local Historical Landscape** We are still keen to establish this group to be led by Ruth Edwards. If we have any members interested in this group please contact the group co-ordinators.

**History** We have a member, Vernon Davis, who is keen to lead a more general history group. He has written an article for this newsletter about this, and if you would like to join, please contact him directly at [veldavis@gmail.com](mailto:veldavis@gmail.com) (See page 3)

**Real Ale Group** Anybody for a pint - Real Ale! We

have noticed that some other u3a groups have Real Ale Interest Groups - we think this is a great idea, and if anyone would like to join or lead one here in Retford, please get in touch with the group co-ordinators.

**Calligraphy** We received an email from a member who would be interested in taking part in a Calligraphy group. If there is a member who has the skill to lead this potential new group please contact the group co-ordinators.

### And for something a bit different...

A new NOT u3a Yoga Group for Seniors at The Yoga Barn- Monday mornings 11.30-12.30.

For those members who were interested in joining a yoga group geared for more mature participants, that unfortunately we were not able to organise, we want to make you aware that there is a new yoga group for seniors starting in Retford at The Yoga Barn on Rectory Road. Whilst this is not a u3a group, we believe it is the only mixed senior yoga group in Retford so want to bring it to your attention. Senior yoga is a gentle and modified practice designed for older individuals, focusing on flexibility, balance, and relaxation. Tailored to accommodate various physical abilities, it incorporates gentle stretches, and breathing exercises to promote overall well-being in a safe and supportive environment. This is a weekly class, pay as you go, and the cost is £8 per session. You can book on the Yoga Barn website <https://yogabarnretford.co.uk/> To contact the group co-ordinators please email Caroline or Carol on [co-groups@retford-u3a.org.uk](mailto:co-groups@retford-u3a.org.uk)

## STRIDERS WALKING GROUP

A group of 16 gathered on a bright sunny but cold morning at the Vicar Water car park in Clipstone. We immediately took a good path up to the top of the former spoil heap of Clipstone colliery where there were clear views to the north and east before descending to the lakeside and following the track/road to the southern end of Sherwood Pines. We then followed a bridleway eastwards towards the centre of the forest. Sadly this was spoiled by frequent views of illegal dumping so we headed a little deeper into the forest along one of the winding cycle tracks and gradually made our way to the central part and the cafe. After a break with the opportunity for a hot drink and snack we ventured back to the car park using some of the less frequented tracks. The final distance covered was 7.5 miles and apart from the initial climb and descent the route was quite level. The going underfoot was excellent with scarcely any mud in sight - amazing given the amount of rain we have had over the past 2

months and the continuing sodden condition of many open fields. We are truly lucky to have areas on our doorstep like Sherwood Pines, Sherwood Forest, Clumber Park and numerous old colliery spoil heaps converted to outdoor use which drain away excess water quickly and provide great areas to walk in the winter months.

Next months walk will be on Monday 19th Feb and will be lead by Mike. The walk will be in the western part of Clumber Park. Details will be sent out to the Striders group in early February.

