



Saleha Way

## ***A Word from the Chairman***



As we come to the end of this year I think it must be an appropriate time to reflect on my first six months as Chairman of the Ross on Wye & District u3a. I'd immediately like to express my sincere appreciation to all those marvellous people who have selflessly assisted me in attempting to fill the shoes of my illustrious predecessor Jim Christie, who (thank goodness) has retained contact with us by agreeing to take on the onerous duty of looking after and in fact revamping the website.

Since the Autumn Newsletter we have had two entertaining and as ever well attended monthly meetings, in October when Peter Gill sallied forth in words, music and risqué stories about Noel Coward (any ladies requiring clarification of the telegram he sent to Gertrude Lawrence please contact me offline...) and a splendidly festive performance by the Roaring Megs Choir in December, which really got everyone infused with the Christmas spirit (what WAS in those mince pies I wonder?)

For our November meeting we had our Open Day, when all our Activity Groups showcased all visitors what u3a here in Ross has to offer. The attendance was terrific and all who contributed are to be congratulated – as a direct result of their unstinting efforts many new members were recruited, and we now have well over 500 members which I for one am mightily impressed with and bodes well for a successful future. We are actively pursuing the formation of new groups such as “Pickleball” and “Astronomy” and we'd like to hear from any members who might be interested and prepared to help in setting these and other groups up.

I had the pleasure recently of being the guest speaker at the Christmas lunch meeting of the Aston Ingham WI and judging by the questions aimed at me afterwards there seemed to be much interest in what we at the Ross u3a have to offer – hopefully we will gain some new members there too!

Finally many thanks to you all for supporting our u3a venture and may I wish you all the very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*William*

**Email: [u3a.ross.chair@gmail.com](mailto:u3a.ross.chair@gmail.com)**

# COMMITTEE NEWS

## Committee

Chair and Cotswold Link - William Lyons  
Vice-chair and Front of House - Mark Eardley  
Secretary - Anne Pye  
Treasurer - Alan Pitts  
Membership Secretary - Heather Whitehouse  
Beacon Administrator - Caroline Miller  
Groups Secretary - Marilyn Reynolds  
Publicist and Speakers Secretary - Catherine Silver  
Outings Secretary - Jane Ryland

## Co-opted onto Committee

Website - Jim Christie  
Newsletter - Saleha Way  
Deputy Groups Secretary - Judith Mackie

## Job Opportunity – Treasurer Wanted Urgently for Ross u3a

Are you a financial maestro? Do spreadsheets make you swoon and budgets give you that warm fuzzy feeling? If so you are probably overqualified for this job and would be able to do it in your sleep! But seriously though, our current treasurer, Alan Pitts, has reached the end of his three-year stint and we are urgently looking for a volunteer to take over and keep our u3a finances running smoothly. Even if, like Alan, you do not have a finance or accounting background please don't be shy in coming forward. Your u3a needs you.

To find out more please get in touch with Alan on 07876 491511 or email [treasurer.rossu3a@outlook.com](mailto:treasurer.rossu3a@outlook.com)

# GROUP NEWS

Following a very successful Open Day in November, we have quite a few new groups starting in January 2024. Have a look below – all the groups have space! Make it your New Year's resolution to Live, Laugh & Learn in 2024!

1. **Art Group 2** will be held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 10am. Contact Lynda ([Lynda.mower@btinternet.com](mailto:Lynda.mower@btinternet.com))
2. A new **Book/Crime Book** group will be formed in January. Contact Judith ([judith@mackiehome.co.uk](mailto:judith@mackiehome.co.uk))
3. A **Canasta** group will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Contact Pat ([patmilnes49@gmail.com](mailto:patmilnes49@gmail.com))
4. **Current Affairs 3** will be run on the 4th Monday of each month at 2:30pm. Contact Mary ([marycalam@gmail.com](mailto:marycalam@gmail.com))
5. **Gardening 2** will run on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. A "getting to know you" meeting will be held on January 23 at the Larruperz. Contact Maggie or Ken ([collcost@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:collcost@yahoo.co.uk))

6. **Local History 2** will meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 2pm, starting January 18. Contact Di ([di.english13@gmail.com](mailto:di.english13@gmail.com))
7. **Mini Bridge** will meet on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month. (starts on January 18) We are assured that this is a simple way to learn bridge (not so much memory needed!) Contact Roy ([roy5.milnes@gmail.com](mailto:roy5.milnes@gmail.com))
8. **Pub Walks 2** will meet on the 1st Friday of each month beginning February 2. Contact Carol ([carolcarney001@gmail.com](mailto:carolcarney001@gmail.com))
9. **Rummikub 2** will be held on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month at 2pm. Contact Sandie ([sandiecotterell@gmail.com](mailto:sandiecotterell@gmail.com))
10. **Table Tennis 2** will be held at the Larruperz on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month at 2pm. Contact Catriona ([catriona64@gmail.com](mailto:catriona64@gmail.com))
11. **Writing for Pleasure 2** will be held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 2:30pm. Contact Lynda ([lynda.roger@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynda.roger@hotmail.co.uk))

As well as the groups above, we have several more groups pending — they will be set up in the new year.

1. Astronomy
2. Craft 2
3. Life Story 4
4. Photography 3
5. Pickleball
6. Play Reading 2
7. Spanish Beginners 2
8. Wine Appreciation

All these groups have people waiting, whilst work goes on behind the scenes to set them up. If you are interested in joining ANY of the above groups, please contact Judith Mackie, our Deputy Groups Secretary, and she will add your name to the waiting list.

We must extend huge thanks to ALL OUR GROUP COORDINATORS for their time and support in setting up and running their groups. Without them, there would be no u3a!

All group information is available on our website, as well as at the end of this newsletter.

**Marilyn Reynolds**  
Groups Secretary  
[incaamba@gmail.com](mailto:incaamba@gmail.com)

**Judith Mackie**  
Deputy Group Secretary  
[judith@mackiehome.co.uk](mailto:judith@mackiehome.co.uk)

## **Keep the contributions coming**

**The Newsletter is getting an increasing number of contributions. We welcome articles, news, comments, notices, or anything that may be of interest to fellow members. Please send your contributions to Saleha Way at [u3a.ross.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:u3a.ross.newsletter@gmail.com)**



# OPEN DAY



## We pull in the crowd — and many new members

It was a Ross u3a Open Day to remember with busy groups welcoming close to 300 people — members and others keen to find out about activities on offer.

The total number of visitors well exceeded last year's figure, pushing our membership well past 500, with around 60 joining on that day alone and new groups being pursued.

Photos:  
Paul Clarke,  
Waterpump  
Shutterbugs







## An active bunch of explorers for all matters geology

Welcome to the Geology and Landscape Group within the Ross on Wye u3a. We are a well-established and dynamic bunch who, as the title suggests, have a fascination and passion for geology (local and beyond) and local landscapes.

Up to about a year ago, and entirely through the sterling efforts of our expert and mentor Peter Hancock, we enjoyed learning and experiencing all matters geology. Sadly, through a change in family circumstances, Peter was obliged to step aside.

We are now a self-lead group enjoying the plethora of geological delights that we are blessed with in the countryside in this area.

Our gatherings take on the first Friday of every month. The actual timings are up to the designated leader, but we tend to meet up at the Larruperz Centre or at the given RV point, usually at around 10am. (Car sharing for the Larruperz is the norm, not least as parking at the RV location can be an issue.)

Our gathering may last the morning or drift into the afternoon, with perhaps lunch and/or coffee at a convenient hostelry. But it should be said that our focus is very much on the practical aspects of geology and landscape, enjoying all that the outdoors and our countryside has to offer.

Although the majority of our members are not 'experts', the group has a number of experienced and knowledgeable geologists who willingly share their experiences and expertise. But we are a broad church, and rather enjoy whatever is on offer.

So where have we been in 2023? We started our 'season' with a visit to Symonds Yat, followed by Little Doward, Soudley Valley, Caplar, New Fancy, Kilpeck castle and church, a tour of Clearwell Colliery plus

exploring Clearwell caves, Huntley Quarry and Linton Nature Reserve. But we also very much appreciated a detailed explanation of The Map that Changed the World, and a visit to the Lapworth Museum in Birmingham; both organised with gusto by Valerie Boxley.

So what is happening in 2024? Well, we meet up for a Christmas social gathering at one of our Group member's home. While enjoying the seasonal good-cheer, we arrive armed with ideas for the following year: where to explore, when, and who is to lead (e.g. volunteered or be volunteered!) on that particular gathering. Thereafter, our coordinator publishes the programme and away we go – simple – and really good fun.

Valerie Boxley



Valerie Boxley





# DAYS OUT



## Great day out at the Bod

On November 28 a group of members visited the Bodleian Library.

The Bodleian or 'Bod' as it's known is one of 26 libraries that make up the Bodleian Libraries group.

The library is the main research library for Oxford University, named after its founder Sir Thomas Bodley and opening to students in 1602. It incorporates an earlier library from the 15th century, founded by Humfrey, The Duke of Gloucester.

It houses over 13 million printed items.

After the tours and lunch some members headed towards the Ashmolean Museum, others walked further into Oxford looking at the wonderful architecture and a spot of shopping.



ARTICLE: JANE RYLAND  
PHOTOS: JOHN RYLAND

# SPEAKERS' CORNER



## Noel Coward: The Master famous for his wit and flamboyance

October's talk entitled *The Wit & Wisdom of Noel Coward* was given by Peter Gill who describes himself as a musician, writer, actor, producer and public speaker.

Peter started his talk by saying that "Noel is as relevant today as 50 years or 100 years ago." He reminded us that Noel died 50 years ago. He was known as 'The Master'. He was an artist, novelist, poet,

playwright, composer, actor, director and singer

known for his wit and flamboyance. His biography took up three tomes. *Time* magazine referred to him having 'a sense of personal style, a combination of cheek and chic, pose and poise'.

Noel Coward was born in 1899 at Teddington, Middlesex. He had humble beginnings and lived in a semi-detached house with his parents. His father, Arthur, sold pianos. Arthur lacked ambition and industry, and family finances were often poor. Noel was the second of three sons but his eldest brother died aged six, before Noel was born. His performing life started early, and he appeared in amateur concerts by the time he was seven. At 12 Noel was in a production called 'The Goldfish' in the West End. Later, he directed and produced plays and enjoyed working backstage.

Peter said one thing Noel couldn't abide was children in the theatre i.e., on stage. It was this feeling that instigated a song he wrote, which Peter played as his first performance at our talk. It was 'Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage Mrs Worthington' which was written as a 'cri de coeur'.

Noel joined up in WW1 but he had health problems. In WW2 he worked in propaganda in France but Churchill thought he would be better entertaining.

Peter's second song was 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen', which Churchill was known to have loved. The third song was 'Don't Let's be Beastly to the Germans'. Noel wrote for a review called *Words & Music* from which Peter took 'Mad About the Boy' as his fourth number.

Noel retired in 1967 to Jamaica, where he died, in 1973.

Interspersed with singing the songs Peter showed some photos and recounted some amusing anecdotes. Peter gave an amusing introduction to his final performance, the song 'Bad Times are Just Around the Corner'.

Peter was a good raconteur and very animated about his subject. Best of all, he had a good projecting voice, which was just as well, as the microphone was not working well, so he dismissed it. Overall it was a very entertaining experience.



Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence, 1930

FIONA LEATHART, THEATRE GROUP

### Monthly talks at the Larruperz Centre, 2.30pm

#### **January 15: Alex Knight**

*Saxon era in Britain and their migration into Gloucestershire and Herefordshire*

#### **February 19: Robert Arley**

*Producing the BBC's Antiques Road Show*

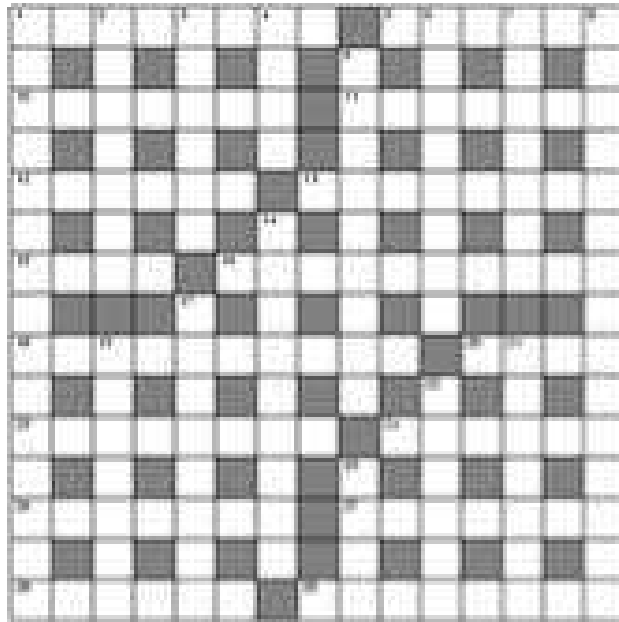
#### **March 18: Nigel Metcalf**

*Piers of the realm — an exploration of English and Welsh seaside pleasure piers*



# GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

## CHRISTMAS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



### Across

1. Makes happier with toast? (6,2)
5. Ascend awkwardly for bodily movements (6)
10. Red rose fashioned at church screen (7)
11. Singer Peter associated with heavenly messenger (7)
12. Holy men found in Southampton? (6)
13. Saloon car from Italian range? (8)
15. Sages in imaginary form (4)
16. Flyers in pear tree! (10)
18. A cross can't replicate being hallowed (10)
20. Restrain on the radio for cheese (4)
23. Classical lamb of God (5,3)
24. Bad art rendered for garment (6)
26. Money, it can be all pervading (7)
27. Engrave, rework - he exacts punishment (7)
28. Fertile crescent (6)
29. Send in ales for devotees (8)

### Down

1. Seasonal hits (9,6)
2. Angrier over piece of jewellery (7)
3. Dirty upperclass created ignorance (6)
4. Major or minor astral cluster (4)
6. Heavenly manna (8)
7. Agreeing with bell ringer! (7)
8. Metallic flags for coinage (6,9)
9. Sign Tosca renewed for non-believers (9)
14. Untamed sphere (6,3)
17. Holy charm for musical (8)
19. Calcium, nitrogen, oxygen, nickel and carbon conform to orthodoxy (7)
21. See Vangelis secrete the gospel (7)
22. Transport in desert (6)
25. Angelic instrument held by sharpshooters (4)

## Learn, Laugh, Live - Get inspired and learn something new today

I was working on the home page of our local u3a website and investigating the options for the u3a logo displayed next to our name. What looked best, plain 'u3a' or 'u3a learn, laugh, live'?

I plumped for the latter to tweak the interest of a casual reader of what we are all about. Hopefully, they will investigate further and learn that our u3a is just one of a nationwide network of learning groups to encourage older people to share their knowledge, skills and interests in a friendly environment.

'Learn' is the first word in our new u3a logo. I like to think we are inquisitive, always looking for new learning opportunities. Where to look next? How about looking on the internet — there is a wealth of learning options available, limited only by our ability to choose the right keywords when searching on the internet. Maybe a little help then to narrow things down?

The Open University (OU) offers **free** minicourses via the OpenLearn free learning platform. There are no exams or homework. Learning is for fun rather than gaining qualifications. Each course is studied online and is easily accessible from any web browser, whether it is a PC/Mac or a mobile device such as a tablet.

OpenLearn offers nearly 1,000 minicourses. Many are based on OU course materials, while others are written specifically for OpenLearn. The umbrella subject areas include:

- Digital & Computing
- Education & Development
- Health, Sports & Psychology
- History & The Arts (just a couple of courses shown below)
- Money & Business
- Languages
- Nature & Environment
- Science, Maths & Technology
- Society, Politics & Law



Agatha Christie is one of the OU modules on offer

Courses are available at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The number of study hours varies; 'Astronomy with an Online Telescope' has 24 hours of material, whilst 'Advanced French: At the Science Museum in Paris' has 15 hours. 'Agatha Christie and the Golden Age of Detective Fiction' requires eight hours of study, as does 'An Introduction to Music Theory'.



All courses are self-study; OpenLearn does not provide you with a tutor.

The study material is available immediately, without start and end dates; you can start at a time that suits you. You study at your own pace and spend as long as you like on a subject. I am half-way through 'Moons of our Solar System'...






Aberdulais Falls in Wales



Astronomy

If you would like to learn more about what OpenLearn has to offer, visit the website at <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

 <b>History &amp; The Arts</b>			
Course title	OU module	Hours	Level
Aberdulais Falls: a case study in Welsh heritage	A180	2	Introductory
Agatha Christie and the golden age of detective fiction	A893	8	Advanced
The American Civil Rights Movement	a113	3	Introductory
The Ancient Olympics: bridging past and present		5	Introductory
Approaching literature: reading Great Expectations	A210	15	Intermediate
Approaching plays	A210	15	Intermediate
Approaching poetry	A210	20	Intermediate
Approaching prose fiction	A210	20	Intermediate
Art and life in ancient Egypt	GA060	30	Introductory
Art and the Mexican Revolution	A344	7	Intermediate

## CRYPTIC CROSSWORD ANSWERS

### Across

1 Cheers Up, 5 Dances, 10 Reredos, 11 Gabriel, 12 Saints, 13 Dolomite, 15 Magi, 16 Partridges, 18 Sacrosanct, 20 Feta, 23 Agnus Dei, 24 Tabard, 26 Omniety, 27 Avenger, 28 Sickle, 29 Apostle

### Down

1 Christmas Carols, 2 Earring, 3 Rudity, 4 Ursa, 6 Ambrosia, 7 Chiming, 8 Silver Standards, 9 Agnostics, 14 Savage Eye, 17 Godspell, 19 Canonic, 21 Evangel, 22 Camels, 25 Harp

# ROSS u3a GROUPS

Highlighted groups have space

GROUP	COORDINATOR	TELEPHONE	MEETING TIMES	EMAIL ADDRESS
Ancient & Med History	Frank Bowden	01989 567125	3rd Thurs 2pm	frankbowden25@gmail.com
Armchair Opera	Alan Stringer	01989 562792	2nd & 4th Tues 12pm	alan.stringer26@outlook.com
Art	Margaret Hay	01989 763564	1st & 3rd Fri 2-4pm	m.hay008@btinternet.com
Art 2	Lynda Mower	07771 760052	2nd and 4th Thurs 10am	lynda.mower@btinternet.com
Book Group	Ginny James	01531 821904	3rd Wed 11am	vjames1909@gmail.com
Book Group 2	Judith Mackie	07766 134956	4th Thurs 10am	judith@mackiehome.co.uk
Bridge	Rochelle Nash	01989 563195	4th Tues 2:30pm	nash_rochelle@yahoo.co.uk
Canasta	Pat Milnes	01989 762028	2nd Wed 2pm (starts Jan 10)	patmilnes49@gmail.com
Chess	Dave Tomlin	01989 720455	1st & 3rd Thurs 10.30am	gorsleydave@outlook.com
Crafts	Joyce Meyer	01989 568607	Alternate Thurs 10am	sandiecotterell@gmail.com
Creating Your Life Story 1	Jane Travers	01989 562308	1st Thurs 10am	bjaneww@aol.com
Creating Your Life Story 2	Jane Travers	01989 562308	2nd Tues 10am	bjaneww@aol.com
Creating Your Life Story 3	Jane Travers	01989 562308	3rd Thurs 10am	bjaneww@aol.com
Creating Your Life Story Men	Jane Travers	01989 562308	2nd Wed 10-11.30am	bjaneww@aol.com
Crewel	Caroline Miller	07947 065247	2nd & 4th Mon 2-4pm	up7ailsa11@gmail.com
Cribbage	Suzie Kemp	07721 988125	1st & 3rd Thurs	witchiepool_007@yahoo.com
Crime Book Club	Sandie Cotterell	01989 763546	2nd Tues 2pm	sandiecotterell@gmail.com
Cryptic Crosswords	Phil Angus	01989 562455	1st Thurs 10am-12pm	pandsangus@gmail.com
Current Affairs 1	David Mason	01989 762022	1st Fri 11am	djmasonross@gmail.com
Current Affairs 2	Michael Wood	01989 769836	2nd Fri 10am	enawood1@gmail.com
Current Affairs 3	Mary Alam	01989 567009	4th Mon 2.30pm	marycalam@gmail.com
French Revisited	Elizabeth Holleis	01989 565352	Mon 10am-12pm	keholleis@gmail.com
French Conversation	Jon Stern	01989 577020	1st & 3rd Tues 2-4pm	jon.stern.kimpton@gmail.com
Gardening	David Thomson	01989 762949	2nd Tues 2pm	dthr95jz@gmail.com
Gardening 2	Maggie/Ken Jones	01989 568780	2nd Tues (starts Jan 23)	collcost@yahoo.co.uk
Genealogy	Di Taylor	07425 154730	3rd Fri 11am-1pm	zpundit@yahoo.com
Geology & Landscape	Tim Barrett	01989 567906	1st Fri 10am	trbarrett@btinternet.com
History of Science	Brian King	01989 769736	3rd Fri 10am	margaretfrances@hotmail.co.uk
Jewellery-making	Nola Bates	01989 610150	1st & 3rd Thurs 10.30am/2pm	nolabates1@gmail.com
Keep Fit	Rae Duffield	07971 968469	Wed 11.30am	glasym@hotmail.com
Line dancing	Hilary Smart	01989 762383	1st & 3rd Wed 2pm	hilarysmart@ymail.com
Local History 1	Belinda Legge	07964 821930	1st Tues 10.30am	belinda@richardnet.co.uk
Local History 2	Diane English	07845 088497	3rd Thurs 2pm (starts Jan 18)	di.english13@gmail.com
Mah Jong	Jane Collins	07887 768485	1st & 3rd Fri 10.15am	janelouisecollins@gmail.com
Mini Bridge	Roy Milnes	01989 762028	1st & 3rd Thurs 10am-12pm	roy5.milnes@gmail.com
Modern World History	Brian King	01989 769736	4th Wed 2pm	margaretfrances@hotmail.co.uk
Nature	Catriona Pearson	01989 769425	1st Mon 10.30am	catriona64@gmail.com
Philosophy	Brian King	01989 769736	1st Tues 2pm	margaretfrances@hotmail.co.uk
Photography	John Ryland	07752 661390	2nd Tues 10am	jryland42@gmail.com
Photography 2	Andrew Mackie	01989 750860	2nd Wed 10.30am	andrew@mackiehome.co.uk
Play Reading	Anne Summers	01989 218432	1st & 3rd Tues 2pm	annemesummers@gmail.com
Pub Walks	Dixie Collins	07789 474091	2nd Fri 10am	dixie4028@gmail.com
Pub Walks 2	Carol Carney	01989 780787	1st Fri (starts Feb 2)	carolcarney001@gmail.com
Quiz	Mike Travers	01989 562308	4th Mon 10am-12pm	miketrovers1@hotmail.com
Rock Music	Mike Goff	01594 862640	2nd Tues evening	mikejgoff@outlook.com
Rummikub for Fun	Sandie Cotterell	01989 763546	1st & 3rd Tues 10am	sandiecotterell@gmail.com
Rummikub 2	Sandie Cotterell	01989 763546	2nd & 4th Wed 2pm	sandiecotterell@gmail.com
Science & Technology	David Colenso	07857 940143	2nd Mon 2-4pm	davecolenso@yahoo.com
Scrabble	Nola Bates	01989 610150	2nd & 4th Wed 2pm	nolabates1@gmail.com
SOLO	Caroline Miller	01989 569903	Wed 10.30am	up7ailsa11@gmail.com
Spanish Intermediate	Diana Wood	01989 562355	Wed 10.30-11.30am	diwood407@gmail.com
Spanish Beginners	Marilyn Reynolds	01989 564830	2nd & 4th Tues 10am-12pm	incaamba@gmail.com
Table Tennis	Keith Westwood	01989 562697	2nd & 4th Mon 2-3.30pm	kw@keithwestwood.plus.com
Table Tennis 2	Catriona Pearson	01989 569425	1st & 3rd Thurs 2-3.30pm	catriona64@gmail.com
Tai Chi	Jane Travers	01989 562308	Thurs 2pm	bjaneww@aol.com
Theatre	Fiona Leathart	01989 565271	1st Thurs 3pm	leathart.holly@gmail.com
Walking	Vivienne Nutt	07812 826155	2nd Mon 9.30am	vivnutt@hotmail.co.uk
Whist	Rochelle Nash	01989 563195	1st Thurs 2:30pm	nash_rochelle@yahoo.co.uk
Writing for Pleasure	Marianne Wright	01989 762949	2nd Thurs 2pm	wrightmarianne9@gmail.com
Writing for Pleasure 2	Lynda Roger	01989 561045	2nd Thurs 2.30pm	lynda.rodger@hotmail.com
Yoga	Marilyn Reynolds	01989 564830	Wed 11am	incaamba@gmail.com