

u3a

Learn Laugh Live

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## SHOTTERY u3a

### NEWSLETTER: November 2023

Tuesday December 5<sup>th</sup> 2023

Christmas Fun

#### DESK AND REFRESHMENT ROTA:

##### December – Committee

##### January - Ambling

*Duties include checking members in at the entrance desk and serving tea and coffee and washing up afterwards ( dishwasher available). Generally 4 members are required. Where groups have difficulty in raising the necessary 4 members, please get in touch with Jan Grant– Group Coordinator. (01789 417721)*

#### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

**January 2<sup>nd</sup> - Dr. Vivian Thomas – “Shakespeare’s Plants and Gardens”.**

**February 6<sup>th</sup> – Miles Scrivens – “The Tearaway Years”.**

**Please note that there will not be a newsletter at the end of December, so take a note of the January meeting date here. We will also be renewing memberships at the January meeting ( Cash, BACS, cheques welcome)**

#### National News

87% of members nationally support having an Older People’s Commissioner. A recent survey of u3a members shows that members overwhelmingly support having a Commissioner for Older People. Given the increasing numbers and diversity of older people, having an independent person to advocate on behalf of all older people

was seen as very important. Members highlighted a huge range of issues that such a role could and should address. Most common was access to services (including health and social care) (85%), followed by social isolation and loneliness (83%), and ageism and discrimination (78%). Age friendly communities, access to affordable and appropriate housing, public transport, and design that included and factored in the needs of older people were some other issues identified.

### **Getting to Know Members**

This is the last in this series of life histories, at least for the present, though we may return to it later. We will be starting a new feature in the new year. Here, Laurie Scrivens tells us about her life to date.

Born in 1948, I spent the first two years of my life on a RAF base on the Essex / Suffolk border. My father had been a Lancaster bomber pilot and was not demobbed until 1950. From the age of two- until I was nine, we lived firstly in a 'prefab' bungalow and then a council house both on the outskirts of Cambridge. Both sets of grandparents lived elsewhere in Cambridge and I spent a lot of my time in the town. It was here that I saw the students thoroughly enjoying themselves, especially during Rag week, and decided that I wanted a 'bit of that' when I was old enough.

When I was nine, we moved to a market town in Hertfordshire so that my father could commute to London more easily. I spent my teenage years at the local grammar school, working towards my goal of getting into a university. I didn't get to Cambridge at first, but spent a delightful three years at the University of Nottingham. I studied for a BA Hons in Social Administration. It was expected that I would take up a career in social work and for a year after graduating, I worked as a trainee Careers Officer in the London Borough of Harrow. I quite soon realised that I found working with the students in the schools preferable to interviewing Personnel Managers! I then took a year out working in a library whilst I applied to do my PGCE at Cambridge. I attained that in 1973. One goal achieved!

After that I married Miles and taught variously in Surrey, Hertfordshire, Essex and in Suffolk. I have taught Preschool children, infants, juniors and students in a Comprehensive . These jobs were fitted around both motherhood ( I have two lovely, very grown up children) and also following my husband's progress through the ranks in his career. But the last years of my career I spent as a County Advisor for children with Special Educational Needs in Essex.

Almost all my life I've had three real passions. The theatre, writing and tennis. On retirement I took up my erstwhile hobby of directing drama full time and enjoying theatre, as an audience member, writing and directing plays locally. I have directed all of Shakespeare's comedies, including A Midsummer Nights Dream twice. I also wrote and directed pantomimes and school productions. As you can see I absolutely love the world of theatre!

So far I have two published textbooks to my name and a few published short stories.

I also took on the Chair of Trustees of a Nursery School, wrote and read for the magazine attached to a local Talking Newspaper and ran a playreading group. With Miles, I ran a Current Affairs group in the village on the Essex/Suffolk border.

When our daughter moved to Stratford for work reasons Miles and I decided to follow suit. It is the ideal place for a lover of theatre and also means I'm so much nearer to two of my four grandchildren.

I've enjoyed joining the Shottery U3A very much and love the activities and making new friends.

My favourite book always tends to be the one I am reading at the moment. Or the one I have just finished. Today I am reading Tim Marshall's The Future of Geography and I have just finished Absolutely and Forever by Rose Tremain. I think my most favourite book of all time, probably, is Little Women by LM Alcott! As for music, my taste has changed over the years but various classical works will always be my favourites. The Jazz Suite Waltz No 2 by Shostakovich probably comes out on the top. The sheer exuberance and rhythm of the piece are amazing.

When I was teaching and writing I had the wonderful experience of working on a school musical with one of the parents. Jack Bruce from Cream, the supergroup, wrote the music and I wrote the lyrics. The show was called ' Little Stars'. It was a wonderful experience for all involved. A magical time !

The most expensive item I have ever owned , apart from a car and a house, is probably a dress I wore to my son's wedding! There is a story behind it, but not one to tell here!

If anyone were to play me in the film of my life I would really like it to be Judi Dench, but being more realistic, I think Brenda Blethyn (Vera) would probably suit the part better.

### **New Feature**

We would like to run a series of articles about places to go, places members have been – holidays, short breaks, or just days out ( in UK or abroad, local or further away). If you have enjoyed a holiday or outing and would recommend it to others, please write an article to tell us about it. Where is it? How did you get there? What are the key attractions of the place or area? Why do you recommend it? It doesn't have to be a long article, if you prefer it to be short, that's fine. We are looking forwards to reading of your adventures! Articles can be sent to the email given at the end of the newsletter

### **INTEREST GROUPS**

We are always interested in expanding the number and range of interest groups that are on offer. If you would be interested in developing a new group, please get in touch with the Secretary via the website group

<https://u3asites.org.uk/shottery/home> .

## Group Reports

### Gardening Group

If you are interested in this group please contact Jan Grant

### Ambling Group

14 November 2023. Eleven of us did the above Amble of three miles, mostly through the woods at Meon Vale. Part of the walk had to be abandoned because of mud but we did have some sunshine through the autumnal trees. The rain started as we arrived back at the car park. We then all met up at Stratford Garden Centre for refreshments and had a good look around at the Christmas displays.

No amble on the 12 December but mulled wine and mince pies at 9 Brownlow Drive at 3.30pm for the group. Margaret. 01789 266764

### Rambling Group

Please note there won't be a December Ramble; 4th Tuesday always falls too close to Christmas day (so Merry Christmas!). If you wish to join the group, please write to Martin Young at [xh558@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:xh558@yahoo.co.uk).

### Local History Group

The Local History Group held a planning meeting in November, which was a lot more fun than it sounds. First we had a debriefing from those who had attended the session at the Birthplace Trust Reading Room. That led to a discussion about how to get the best out of the Reading Rooms varied resources.

The meeting addressed by Val Horton had inspired much thought and her distribution of a draft of a 'walk' based on her book for trialling led to about half the group spending a Saturday afternoon in Sheep Street examining the buildings. Val, coincidentally, was in Sheep Street at the same time and there was a very useful exchange of information and cups of tea.

We hope to get Matt Goodman, Leader of Stratford-Upon-Avon Local History Society to talk to use in the New Year.

### Keep Fit

The Shottery and Heart of England Keep Fit Group meets on Thursday mornings, 10am to 11am at St. Andrew's Church Hall. There is a waiting list so if interested in being added to the list, please contact Robyn Nicoll. via the web site or the shottery email ([shotteryu3a@gmail.com](mailto:shotteryu3a@gmail.com))

### Lunch Club

Lunch club on 2nd Thursday after Tuesday U3A meeting at 1pm. at different venues. Signing-up lists are put on the table at the Tuesday monthly meeting. Contact Joan Newton for more details.

### **Digital Photography**

Our November meeting was very well attended with a full house. The subject was 'Photographs of things beginning with an N'. These resulted in much laughter as the subject matter varied enormously. One member was brave enough to take a photograph of his navel! There were several noses! Two members managed 20 different N subjects. There were a few tenuous links to N, which sparked amusing debates.

Our next meeting is on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 2.30pm at Rickie's when the subject will be 'Glass'. Janet has agreed to do the refreshments.

Our January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting will be our social outing. We will be having refreshments at 2.30 at Hudson's Café (the old Bond café) on the Bidford Road. Members are welcome to bring guests along. Please let me know the numbers in time for booking. We have space for one more member. Frances Freeman

### **Play Reading**

We are reading "The Bride and the Batchelor by Ronald Millar. It's an enjoyable farce and gives plenty of scope for dramatic interpretation of the characters. We will finish this play at our November meeting and begin a new play in January.

### **Book Group**

In November we read 'The Heart's Invisible Furies' by John Boyne who is perhaps best known for writing 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' which, of course was made into a successful film. This book was a very different theme which was not accurately represented by the 'blurb'. It was enjoyed by almost all of the group, although one member did not enjoy or finish it. There was an interesting discussion about the hypocrisy, cruelty and dominance of the Roman Catholic church, the treatment of unmarried mothers in Ireland during the last half of the twentieth century and the persecution of homosexuals in Ireland and elsewhere. A long book with a dramatic opening, we felt it was worth persevering with. The group is currently full, but if anyone would like to start a second group, advice on how to do this is available – Contact Kate Shilvock

### **Obituary**

We are sad to report that Joy Bayliss died at the end of October she was 87. For many years she ran the Keep Fit group at St Andrew's church so many members will remember her.

### **Recommended Traders**

Recommended by Judith Suau-Marcus .  
Anna Wells from Bidford,.She's an excellent Electrician.  
mobile 07801 324016  
Email: [anna.electrics@outlook.com](mailto:anna.electrics@outlook.com)

Recommended by David Haines.  
Plumbing,, central heating, boilers etc.  
Mark Reeve : Tel: 07960 366610 e-mail: [www.gasbusters.co.uk](http://www.gasbusters.co.uk)

***Please send items for inclusion in the newsletter to Kate Shilvock or enquiries regarding interest groups or membership leaders via the email [shotteryu3a@gmail.com](mailto:shotteryu3a@gmail.com)***