



Group News—The Way Forward

Good News on Groups Restarting

With the lifting of the compulsory restrictions governing our daily lives being lifted on July 19th, many group leaders are already planning their autumn and winter programmes.

Below we have further details from the following groups:-

Art Appreciation, Music appreciation, Opera Appreciation, Computing, Photography and Local Discovery.

Thank you to the group leaders of those groups for sending in the information. If any other group leaders would like to drop us a few lines about what you are planning to do, we would be very grateful as it is interesting to see what groups are doing. It is also a good way to showcase what you do, if you want to recruit new members.

Recently, group leaders were asked for their thoughts and suggestions on how this year's Enrolment Day should proceed.

There was a good response, and like those of the country, opinions were very varied.

Some of you were keen to have Enrolment Day at the Edgar Hall as per usual, whilst others did not feel comfortable at the thought of attending a large indoor gathering and would prefer to renew membership online like last year.

Some felt that an indoor/ outdoor social event, possibly from September onwards, would be a good opportunity for everyone to meet together again safely over a coffee, tea and cake or even a glass of wine which is something we all miss.

Therefore, the committee are keen to develop ideas as to how and when we can welcome you all back, for groups to restart, new groups hopefully formed, lapsed members tempted back and welcoming new members but we must proceed with caution.

...continued on p 2....

With that in mind, the committee intend to invite all the group leaders to a Coffee, Cake and Conversation morning at the White Hart on Wednesday 8th September at 10.30.

Official invitations will be going out soon.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Also, all being well, we will be holding our first hybrid monthly meeting at the Edgar Hall on Friday 24th September.

(Hybrid meetings: attend in person or, if you prefer, by Zoom).

This will be a lovely opportunity for members to meet face-to-face for a coffee and a chat before the guest speaker.

More details in the September newsletter.

Here are some of the comments:-

- Using Edgar Hall would be a clear sign we are open for business as before with actual meetings.
- I would not be happy using the Edgar Hall at the moment.
- A lot of members just want to meet up in a social situation again for a chat and get together.
- I am keen to restart my group
- I will wait until the situation is more settled before restarting my group

Group leaders and group members

What would you like to see happen with your groups?

Are you happy to meet indoors or will you carry on using Zoom?

Have you the same interest in attending a group or have you found other things to do since lockdown started?

Everyone, how do you feel about attending future social events?

If you have any thoughts or comments please let us know.

We would really love to hear from you.

Sue Haigh

Group Coordinator

Zoom Dates For Your Diary

Monday 9th August

Rescheduled AGM 10.30 am

Friday 13th August

Trudi Zimmer, from NatWest bank will give a talk on scams

The AGM held on Friday 23rd July was adjourned as only 19 members attended.

The reconvened AGM will take place via Zoom on Monday 9th August at 10.30.

Members present at the time shall constitute the quorum of the meeting.

Joining instructions will be sent separately via email.

Group News

Local Discovery Group

The Local Discovery Group held their first meeting since September 2019 (!!) on 14th July in the Parish Rooms. The purpose of this meeting (apart from seeing friends that we had not met for many months) was to decide whether or not we would arrange any visits this year or leave things in abeyance until April 2020, as we do not normally meet during the winter months.

For a variety of reasons, it was decided not to meet in August but attempt to arrange visits for September and

October. Various suggestions for visits were made and more details will be available once reconnoitres have taken place!

We are not looking to open the group to new members this year, preferring to wait until next spring, when we will advertise any vacancies in the monthly Somerton u3a newsletter.

Joan Banbury

Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, Opera Appreciation

News about Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, Opera Appreciation groups

From Enid Thresher, group leader for the 4 groups

All being well, I intend to start my groups in September. This means that Art Appreciation will meet on Monday 20th September at 2pm, Music Appreciation on Friday 3rd September at 10am, Opera Group 1 on Monday 6th September at 2pm and Opera Group 2 on Thursday 2nd September at 2pm.

All groups meet at 94 Behind Berry Somerton. I have a few spaces in all groups so, if you'd like to come along, please contact me on cnethresher@sky.com or 01458 272915. Please be aware that, whereas the Art and Music Groups are 2 hours in length, the Opera Groups vary according to the length of the performance.

With Art Appreciation generally a subject e.g. 20th century portraiture, is provided each month and

members are asked to find out about it. Once or twice a year I will provide a painting and ask for members comments on the painting.

With Opera Appreciation, each member chooses an opera in turn from a list of my DVDs. I provide a synopsis a week or so before and then, on the day, notes on performers, composer, librettist etc. We then watch the DVD to the end, unless it is unusually long. This is why the Opera Groups sometimes exceed two hours.

With Music Appreciation we listen to pieces of music from all genres but mainly classical, usually chosen by me but sometimes by the members – if I can get them to volunteer!

Computing and Photography

Computing and Photography Groups return to Edgar Hall.

After what is an age, the above groups have returned to meeting at Edgar Hall in their Covid Secure environment. Currently the limit on numbers is 10 in the Conference Room but that will change as the restrictions are eased on July 19th. Both meetings were well received by members and we all enjoyed seeing each other after such a long time.

These groups will not now meet until September when the new season starts where the following topics will be looked at over the season.

Computing: Resolving members computer issues, a look at the new Windows 11, a continuous review of computer SCAMS and how to avoid them, alternative operating systems, keeping your operating system up to date, backing up your data and photographs plus any other issues raised by members. The group meets on the first Tuesday of the month except August and December.

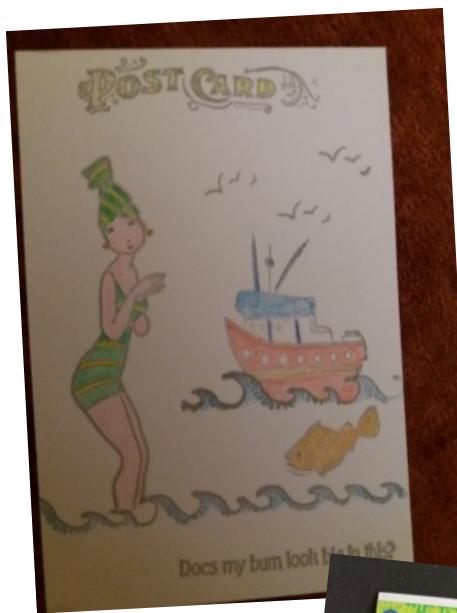
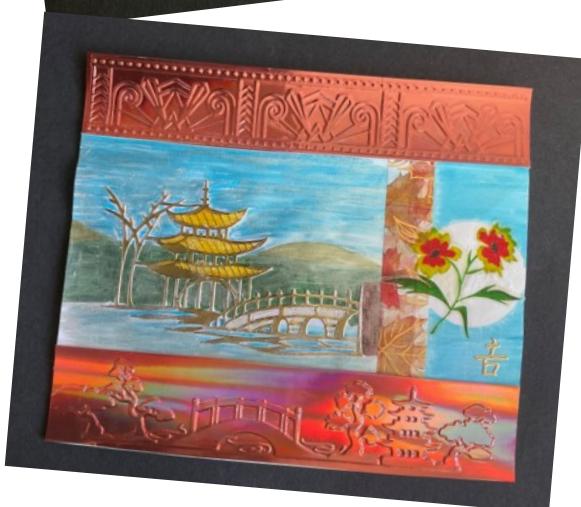
Photography: The years agenda will be driven by members but is expected to include, why composition is important and things to look for, editing your photo and what free/paid software is available, backing up your photos, how do I print my photos and options, how do I take a good landscape, putting it into practice on location visits. All these subjects will be aimed at the home user. The group meets on the third Thursday of the month.

Currently both groups have some space so if you are interested in joining in contact, David Slocombe on 0797 967 0358.

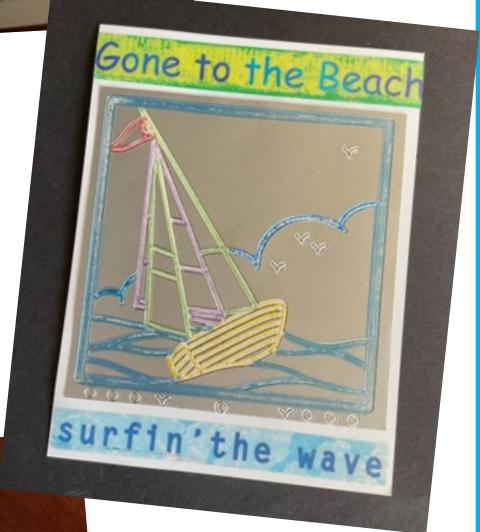
Regards

Dave Slocombe

Group News



A Postcard
from



Craft Group

Group News

Friday Afternoon Book Group

The Hare with Amber Eyes : Edmund de Waal

Several members of our Friday Afternoon book group read this fascinating book recently, so these are a few comments about it.

Edmund de Waal is a well known ceramic artist & writer who lives in London. The Hare with Amber Eyes is a biography of his family. It was inspired by the inheritance of a beautiful collection of netsuke and the title is the name of one of these tiny ceramic animals. They originate from Japan. Netsuke was a big tradition there.

De Waal was fascinated by pottery from childhood, then he studied English Literature at University and returned to ceramics as an adult. He has also made several visits to Japan, partly to research Bernard Leach who spent a lot of time there and de Waal stayed with his Great Uncle Iggie who lived in Japan until the end of his life and from whom de Waal inherited the netsuke collection.

The book mainly concerns the successful journey his Jewish family took through Europe into Paris and Vienna and then movingly describes what happened as the Nazis took over Vienna and those who were able to escape, scattered throughout the world.

The story is fascinating about the family's life in Paris at the turn of the century and all the artists they knew and bought from. This was one line of the family. De Waal's great great grandfather moved to Vienna in 1899. Fortunately there is a helpful family tree at the beginning of the book, so that you can follow the connections easily!

Most of the family's valuable artworks were confiscated by the Nazis and the netsuke only survived because they were small enough to be concealed.

It is a very moving document of the horror of that period in Europe and De Waal really enters into the lives of his ancestors, throughout this book. He did an immense

amount of research and visited all the former Ephrassi homes in Paris and Vienna and even to the earlier roots of the Banking family in Odessa

He is descended from his great grandmother, Elizabeth , who married a Dutchman De Waal, hence his own family name.

We highly recommend it.

My copy is published by Vintage and I found it in Oxfam, Wells (where in normal times) I volunteer one afternoon a week in researching and pricing books that come in from the public.

Jenny Oliver



Examples of netsuke – a miniature sculpture, originating in 17th century Japan, initially a carved button fastener, later developed into highly skilled pieces of craftsmanship



Garden Visits Group

Westbrook House, West Bradley

Twelve of the Garden Visits group visited Westbrook House on a very hot, sunny afternoon.

This elegant four acre garden is set around a fine mid Victorian villa in the quiet village of West Bradbury.

There are three distinct gardens with mixed herbaceous and shrub borders leading to meadow and orchard.

Owners David Mendel and Keith Anderson moved here in 2003, creating a gorgeous garden, open to its rural setting but with hints of formality around the house. Here the planting is bold and includes the repetition of clipped box spheres.

The beautiful use of colour, design and craftsmanship combine to make a visit here a very peaceful and relaxing experience.



Joan and Anita enjoying a cool drink after walking around the beautiful garden at Westbrook house



Relaxed planting in the borders



Barbara and Jane catching up, having not seen each other for quite a while.



Bird Watching Group

Great Crested Grebe

Group News



Great crested grebe with lunch
Dick Carlyon



The great crested grebe is a delightfully elegant waterbird with ornate head plumes which led to its being hunted for its feathers, almost leading to its extermination from the UK. They dive to feed and also to escape, preferring this to flying.

On land they are clumsy because their feet are placed so far back on their bodies. They have an elaborate courtship display in which they rise out of the water and shake their heads. Very young grebes often ride on their parents' backs.

Habitat

Great crested grebes can be seen in lowland lakes, gravel pits, reservoirs and rivers. They are also found along coasts in the winter. The photographs shown here are also taken at Ham Wall in July.

Population

4,600 pairs

Diet

Mainly fish



Diligent parenting from 2 great crested grebes



A bittern flying. Note the large throat to enable the bittern to boom

Dick Carlyon



Great white egret Steve Davis



*Cormorant drying its wings
at Ham Wall Steve Davis*



A family of great crested grebe

Steve Davis

Celebration of the life of Gemma Livesey-Cox

Memorial Service for Gemma Livesey-Cox

You are invited to join Chris Cox and his family in a Celebration of the life of his wife, Gemma, in St Michael's Church, Somerton on Saturday 25th September at noon.

After the service there will be a buffet lunch at The Globe, but numbers for this are restricted so please let Chris know if you will be joining him there by e-mailing cox.cj@btinternet.com

Meeting the Duke of Edinburgh

Just to set the scene.

It was 1972 at the Farnborough Air Show. It had been raining all week and on the day I went, on Friday, the conditions were atrocious, wet and mud everywhere. The organisers had put down mats and planks of wood so the crowd did not get their feet too wet. Billy Muggins here managed to skate across the boards and fall flat on my back so not only my shoes but also my raincoat were covered in mud.

The Tri-Star which was making its first appearance at the show disappeared down the runway in an enormous cloud of spray before emerging through the cloud of water when it took off.

I thought to myself that I would enter the nearest show

tent to try to dry off.

Without really thinking I climbed over a barrier and momentarily thought this is strange there appears to be a red carpet.

I heard voices behind me and on looking around I discovered that I was entering the tent in front of the Duke and his entourage.

Needless to say I just kept my head down and walked a little quicker.

Perhaps if I had been a little more bold I could have introduced myself.

Raymond Jones

Memories of a Welsh Childhood

Reading the piece on technology by David Robins in the February edition of the newsletter, he mentioned Brynmawr as his home town.

it sparked my memory of a rugby game of very short duration. Because of the intense cold, players failed to pick up or catch the balls as their hands were so numb. The match lasted about five minutes!

From Brynmawr, always a coat colder than Abertillery in the balmy south, the hill down Black Rock comes down to the beautiful Brecon to Newport Canal. Nantyglo and Abertillery schools arranged a Welsh version of the boat race on a stretch of this picturesque waterway.

On an extension of this canal, a few locks can be seen from the Malpas straight off the M4. The canal went

north as far as Crumlin and finished there under a railway viaduct, 200 feet above the track in the valley.

Sophia Loren and Gregory Peck were pursued by a helicopter, firing machine guns across the viaduct in a film called Arabesque. They survived but ended up in deep water, possibly Peryan Pond which topped up the canal.

Thank goodness enthusiasts saved a lot of the network for our enjoyment.

Idris Price

The Night Visitor

One morning about a year ago I was walking around the garden when I came across what I thought was a slug about 4cm long making a late return to shade and shelter. On closer inspection I found the 'slug' was in fact a hedgehog dropping.

We had not seen any previous signs of a visit over the past dozen years and traced the point of entry to a gap under the recently repaired fence, much shallower than the 5 inch high hole recommended in the guides on hedgehog highways.

Questions like, was this a first visit?, where had the animal come from?, came quickly to mind. A bit of on-line research revealed that hedgehogs are mainly solitary foragers and may travel up to 1 or even 2km a night, sleeping in a suitable hideaway during daylight hours.

So that we could find out a bit more about our visitor I bought a small trail camera, built a short, heavy tripod and moved it around the garden to see if we could get movement-activated infra-red night images of our visitor. Several nights later we got a first glimpse of our visitor and we continued to get images all round the garden. In one image we saw two hedgehogs so began to wonder if there had been several visitors over the summer taking turns to visit us.



Summer gave way to autumn and we began to think about winter quarters for our visitor(s?).

Our garden is quite small and doesn't have the 'quiet, undisturbed corners with rubbish or log piles' that wildlife pundits always seem to have. Nevertheless I set about making a hog-box based on an on-line design and we set aside a small place against a north-facing boundary wall where very few plants would grow. Having got the box in place I put a wire mesh cage around it and filled the cage with dry leaves for additional insulation. Some recycled garden compost bags were used to waterproof the box and also to protect the leaf pile. In due course we began to

get signs and, later, images that the box was in use. So far as we can tell the box is still in use and I have resisted the temptation, on the advice of the afore-mentioned pundits, not to open the lid to see what or who is in residence.

This has been an interesting lock-down project and an eye-opener as to who visits the garden at night. Some nights record no activity, others are pretty busy, our hedgehog getting 'in the frame' perhaps on three or four separate occasions. One night I got images of three different cats, one who has remained a persistent visitor. The busiest night produced almost 200 images thanks largely to a very busy wood mouse collecting small crabapples or checking the bird food dishes. In the late winter and spring we started putting hedgehog food and a water dish out under a plastic box to keep the cats from eating it.

So if you'd like to have a slug eater in your garden take the first step and make a hole at the foot of your fences. If

you then discover black droppings you'll know your garden has been put on a hedgehog's foraging route. Good luck!

John
Rickard



Neoloisms... *Laurence Reeves*

Once again The Washington Post has published the winning submissions to its yearly neologism contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternative meanings for common words.

The winners are:

1. Coffee (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.
2. Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. Abdicate (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. Esplanade (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent.
6. Negligent (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.
7. Lymph (v.), to walk with a lisp.
8. Gargoyle ☺, olive-flavoured mouthwash.
9. Flatulence (n.), emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.
10. Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.
11. Testicle (n.), a humorous question on an exam.
12. Rectitude (n.), the formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. Pokemon ☺, a Rastafarian proctologist.
14. Oyster (n.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
15. Frisbeetarianism (n.), (back by popular demand): The belief that, when you die, your soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
16. Circumvent (n.), an opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

The Washington Post's Style Invitational also asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

The winners are:

- Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
- Cashtstration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.

Keeping the Aging Gray Cells in the Brain Active

Johnny's mother had three children. The first child was named April. The second child was named May. ...**What was the third child's name?**

2. There is a clerk at the butcher shop, he is five feet ten inches tall and he wears size 13 sneakers. ...**What does he weigh?**
3. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, ...**what was the highest mountain in the world?**
4. How much dirt is there in a hole ...**that measures two feet by three feet by four feet?**
5. What word in the English Language ...**is always spelled incorrectly?**
6. Billy was born on December 28th, yet his birthday is always in the summer.**How is this possible?**
7. In California , you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. ...**Why not?**
9. If you were running a race, ...**and you passed the person in 2nd place, what place would you be in now?**
10. Which is correct to say,... "**The yolk of the egg are white**" or "**The yolk of the egg is white**"?
11. If a farmer has 5 haystacks in one field and 4 haystacks in the other field,**how many haystacks would he have if he combined them all in another field?**

Answers next month

IMPOSSIBILITIES IN THE WORLD

1) You can't count your hair.

2) You can't wash your eyes with soap.

3) You can't breathe through your nose when your tongue is out.

Put your tongue back in your mouth, you silly person.

Ten (10) Things I know about you.

1) You are reading this.

2) You are human.

3) You can't say the letter "P" without separating your lips.

4) You just attempted to do it.

6) You are laughing at yourself.

7) You have a smile on your face and you skipped No. 5.

8) You just checked to see if there is a No. 5.

9) You laugh at this because you are a fun loving person & everyone does it too.

10) You are probably going to send this to see who else falls for it.

You have received this e-mail because I didn't want to be alone in the idiot category.

Judi

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

Deadline for the September edition...20th August

No entries can be accepted after this date.

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please...**no pdfs!**

Web site:<https://u3asites.org.uk/somerton/home>