

Stratford-upon-avon u3a Newsletter

April 2024

[Stratford-upon-Avon u3a: Home \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk)

Founded 2000

THIS MONTH

24 APRIL 2024 – NICK MARTIN - STORIES OF OUR BRITISH MAMMALS



Meeting 2 p.m. at
the Methodist
Church
All welcome



NEXT MONTH

29 May 2024

Katy Bellamy—the Neuroscience of Snoozing

Sleep perchance to dream

A chance to find out more about sleep and why we need it.

2 p.m.

Methodist Church

Deadline for copy for this newsletter is 17th of the month, it never varies, except December when we don't publish a newsletter.

NEWS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS

BRUSH UP YOUR GERMAN

With Rosel away, we did something different. Anne served Kaffee and Kuchen while Rodger gave us a splendid introduction to the Goethe Institute B2 course he has just completed. We were impressed! Using audio and handouts with texts, exercises and notes, he outlined its pros and cons. He also introduced us to [Deutsch-to-go](#) (online free) whose many audios look most useful for aural comprehension. A great session!

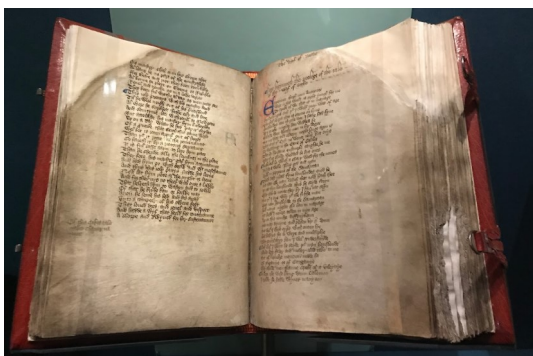


CHAUCER



In April, according to Geoffrey Chaucer, “[folk] longen to goon on pilgrimages”. So our April meeting took the form of a pilgrimage to Oxford to see an exhibition of Chaucer’s works and legacy.

It was a very comprehensive collection, comprising beautifully illuminated MSS and incunabula plus translations, dramatisations and even animated cartoons. There was also a wide range of items inspired by Chaucer’s characters. But the star exhibit was undoubtedly the Hengwryt MS (see photo left), one of the two oldest existing copies of the Canterbury Tales, which was produced by Chaucer’s own scribe, Adam Pinkhurst.



After viewing the exhibition we enjoyed an excellent pub lunch at the King’s Arms.

The next meeting of this group will be the last, so this was a fitting climax to 14 years of exploring the works, life and times of Geoffrey Chaucer. *Thank you, Patricia, for organising the day.*

u3a Choir

Summer Concert

Here comes the SUN !

2.30pm Friday 24 May 2024

Stratford Methodist Church Hall

Tickets £6 including light refreshments

Musical Director : Stewart J Wallace



A happy selection of songs about sunshine to greet the summer

Margaret Dews has tickets (km27dews@gmail.com)

FRENCH FOR THE TERRIFIED

Our numbers continue to grow, with our second new member in two months. In April we read and listened to a lively dialogue revising savoir and connaître and involving lots of questions. We considered the many ways of asking questions in French and then practised using some of them in questions to one another.

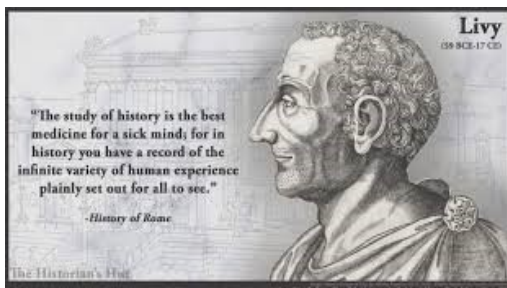
GERMAN CONVERSATION

We are at an early stage of setting up a third German Conversation group and already have four members. One or two more would be most welcome to join us. Meetings will be held in central Stratford and our first one is now being planned. Interested? For further information contact Norman via nmhharmer@outlook.com

IMPROVE YOUR FRENCH

With some of our more fluent members moving up to Friendly French Conversation and our Terrified spin-off currently appealing to anyone with hesitant French, we would be glad to welcome new members. So if you are averagely rusty and need practice in speaking especially, do get in touch via km27dews@gmail.com We are looking forward to welcoming back Jocelyne in May after her winter vacances à l'étranger.

LATIN (ADVANCED)



We moved on from one uprising and murder to another in April. Following the demise of Caesar we have been reliving the attack of the Gauls on Rome and its Senate as described by Livy in his History of Rome. Inspired by the clever Horrible Histories version of Boudicca's rebellion on TV over Easter, we are going to read a more sober account of the event by Tacitus, another great Roman historian, over the coming few sessions.

PIANO GROUP

Neville and Janet had been practising their Beethoven bagatelle and Bach prelude, so we had the full length improved versions this month. A Beethoven sonata, Chopin nocturne, Bertini study and two short pieces by Kabalevsky followed, with a couple of Gershwin duets to finish with. It was all most enjoyable again.

STRATFORD HISTORY GROUP

Margaret gave her "What's in a Name?" talk to a large group at Stratford Baptist Church last month and was rewarded with a generous donation for our History Group funds. Thank you, CAMEO!

In April we varied our usual diet of buildings and waterways with something completely different when Matthew Turvey and a couple of his Shakespeare Morris team gave us a presentation on the history of Morris dancing in England, with special reference to the Cotswolds, Warwickshire and Stratford.

It was encouraged here by the Flower family, becoming a regular feature of Shakespeare celebrations. The name Shakespeare Morris was chosen in 1959, since when the team has always been in demand for Shakespeare Birthday celebrations, May Day festivities and the Mop Fair. In 2015 it welcomed female dancers for the first time.

The meeting ended with an energetic demonstration, and we all left feeling very cheerful!



Next month Rodger Palmer, one of our own members, will tell us about the 20th century renovation of the Guild Chapel between 1954 and 1982

SPANISH

'The Spanish group met on the first Thursday of April. We now have a native Spanish speaker, Maria, supporting our group which we are all finding very helpful. She supported us in a discussion about festivals in Spain. Two members had just returned from a visit to Cordoba and talked about the festivals that take place there. One member had recently been in Valencia during the Fallas Festival and showed the group photographs of the March celebrations. To round off the afternoon Maria led a very enjoyable game of parts of the body Bingo'



Citizen Science: would you like to be involved? We received this email and wondered if any of you might be interested, if you are please apply directly

I am a PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London. I work on pollinator conservation and citizen intervention and am looking for volunteers for the second year of the citizen science study called 'Optimow'. This study will be looking into how you can manage your gardens to help bees, butterflies and other pollinators. In the study you will be given a mowing frequency to follow and then you will count pollinators in your garden each week. The study will take 15-25 minutes a week. No experience is required and we provide all information and training needed easily and for free.

This is the second year of the study. In 2023, we had an amazing 180 participants and saw a 75% increase in pollinator numbers in one of the groups!! We hope to build on this work, so we have robust advice to give members of the public about managing their lawns to help pollinators.

I was hoping this would be of interest to many U3A members as it will provide an opportunity to learn more about pollinators and plants and gain skills in pollinator surveying and identification. If you are interested in taking part you can sign up and find more information on the google form below (<https://forms.gle/scmLF3h1XvoHTkcSA>).

Any questions don't hesitate to drop me an email.

Thanks in advance,

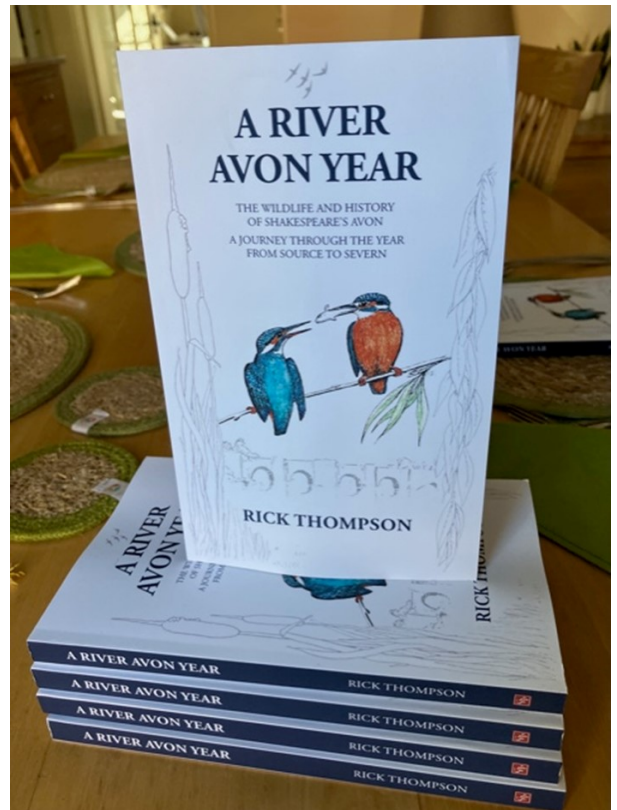
Morgan Morrison

Twitter: @morgsmorrison73

Please note: This email address has been created for the study. This is not a spam email. If you are apprehensive please google search 'mark brown lab optimow general-7'. This will take you to a website with more information about the study. Or look at my twitter @morgsmorrison73.

A River Avon Year

An invitation from Janet Palmer to a free event that might interest those who enjoy nature and local history. WRITER RICK THOMPSON, AUTHOR OF "A RIVER AVON YEAR, The Wildlife and History of Shakespeare's Avon" WILL BE IN STRATFORD ON FRIDAY 10TH MAY to give a talk about his book at the Crowne Plaza hotel. During the evening, there will also be a summary of the river water testing results carried out by Stratford Climate Action volunteers as part of the SafeAvon Project. Rick will be selling his book at a discount at the end of the evening and is happy to sign copies. The event begins at 7.30pm and will end at 9.30pm. Book your free ticket for "A River Avon Year" on Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/ysph5s3f>



Net Zero

If you were at the last u3a AGM, you may remember that Janet also told us about the **new Climate Hub** that is about to be opened in the town centre. The **Net Zero Stratford Climate Hub** aims to promote a low carbon culture locally and provide a space for discussion and education. Janet reports that preparations are coming along well and she will let us know the launch date and opening hours for the Hub as soon as she can. In the meantime, look out for this logo above the shop at 30 Meer Street! If you are interested in volunteering as a Welcome Host in the Hub, or if you just want to know more about the initiative, please email Janet directly:

I love it when you send me jokes—it saves me having to trawl the internet..... Your editor

annefostersavu3a@gmail.com

Jokes

Q: Is Google male or female? A: Female, because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making a suggestion.

Q. What happens to a frog's car when it breaks down? A. It gets toad away

Stratford upon Avon u3a monthly meeting report. Wednesday 27 March 2024.

The AGM was followed by an informative and amusing talk by **Bill Cowley** on **SCAMS** and how to avoid them.

Bill works with 3 organisations:

Home Instead (care services)

This is a world-wide organisation providing care in people's homes. Bill works in Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Think Jessica

This old lady was the victim of many postal and telephone scams for many years. She did not understand that she was being defrauded of monies she thought were going to charities. When she died (after a lot of stress) 30,000 pieces of correspondence were found.

Take 5

This is a corporate campaign to lobby the government to do something to protect people. A Hand symbol indicates "take 5 minutes" to consider whether this communication is legitimate.

Bill is Communities Manager with Home Instead after a career with Vodaphone and BT, specialising in cyber security. One person in 17 has been a victim of a scam, and this is worth £7.5bn. a year. The average age of the victim is 75. Children are also victims and young people using social media are very trusting.

There are 4 main categories of scams:

Post – some create a feel-good factor, e.g., giving to charity or saying that you are owed some money (often from HMRC) but others deliver threats, e.g., non-payment of a bill. 21,000 people fell for a scam which asks for money to claim some sort of benefit.

Telephone – This is a massive problem and the pressure tends to be urgent, e.g., to make a bank transfer from one's hacked account to a "safe" account.

Online – Some pretend to be BT or another provider and then place "trojan" malware on the computer. Another common scam is the text to mum or dad saying that the child has lost his/her mobile phone and they need money urgently. Again the recipient is pressurised to act quickly. The "Voucher" fraud is another common one asking people to purchase these for their work or friends.

Face to face – these are rarer, e.g., fake workmen cold calling and doing bad jobs, and rogue traders.

Telephone callers are often poor workers who do not know that they are doing something fraudulent, often from abroad, or they are under pressure.

Regarding messages online – always look at the real URL at the top before clicking on it.

The "lost pet" fraud on Facebook is quite common as it is hacked all the time! Scammers often pretend to be the RSPCA or similar.

USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT SCAMS

Below are some websites you might find useful. Any of us might come in contact with scammers and there are a few basics to remember. Not everyone on the phone is who they say they are, so even if they say they are from your bank don't give them any personal information. I have even heard of people called allegedly by the police, but it is someone trying to get your bank details. If in doubt put the phone down. Scammers will also try to use email, texts and Whatsapp, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is so ignore or delete the messages.

There will be a sheet at the meeting with some information about who you might contact if you suspect you have been scammed, but meanwhile below are some details:

ACTION FRAUD— contact them if you have been scammed or have identified a scam

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

Phone: 0300 123 2040

VICTIM SUPPORT Help and support for victims of crime

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

Phone: 080801689111

TAKE 5

Take Five—to stop fraud (takefive-stopfraud.org.uk)

THINK JESSICA

Think Jessica Protecting elderly and vulnerable people from scams

Email: advice@thinkjessica.com or follow the link <https://www.thinkjessica.com/>

'WHO CALLED ME?'

<https://who-called.co.uk/>

FINANCIAL CONDUCT AUTHORITY

<https://www.fca.org.uk/>

Bill Cowley talked to us about scams, he is the Relationship Manager for Home Instead, his email address: bill.cowley@solihull.homeinstead.co.uk

Sunday morning walkers

A group of intrepid walkers, including Jean Barker, Norman Leece, Sarah Wrights and Simon Yoell. I know 4 names and 3 people, can you identify yourselves?



Maybe a walk on the Recreation Ground was not a good idea



Enjoying a walk on more solid ground at Lenches Meadow

A sunnier day in the Welcombe Hills



Month	Group
April	Piano
May	Chaucer (ref Patricia)
June	Portuguese
July	Playreading 1
August	Italian
September	Useful French (ref Margaret)

TEA ROTA

The tea rota is printed in this newsletter every month. Please check to see when your group is down to help.

If there are any problems, please talk to a member of the committee

Chatty Table

Do you come to meetings on your own? Would you like to come but want someone to talk to?

When we have tea/coffee after the meeting come and join the Chatty Table—exactly what it says— a table to sit and chat. New members especially welcome.

RAFFLE, TEA AND COFFEE

We really appreciate your voluntary donations of gifts for the raffle (they were lovely prizes last month)

Tickets are 50 p each all proceeds to our u3a.

Please remember we also value your voluntary donations for tea and biscuits as well.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON u3a - SPEAKERS FOR 2023-4

**We have an interesting and varied programme of talks and entertainment for you.
Please come along, and tell your friends!**

24 APRIL 2024 – NICK MARTIN - STORIES OF OUR BRITISH MAMMALS

29 MAY 2024 – KATY BELLAMY – “SLEEP, PERCHANCE TO DREAM” – The Neuroscience of Snoozing.

**26 JUNE 2024 – JANICE FISHER - CHARLES ROBERT ASHBEE – ARTS & CRAFTS
MOVEMENT**

31 JULY 2024 – RICHARD CHURCHLEY - LOCAL PLACENAMES IN WORCESTERSHIRE AND WARWICKSHIRE

**28 AUGUST 2024 - ABBY WATSON – DOGS TRUST SUPPORTER RELATIONS OFFICER - DOGS TRUST AND
ITS WORK**

25 SEPTEMBER 2024 – ERIC LAWLEY – CHEDHAM’S YARD

30 OCTOBER 2024 – CATS PROTECTION AND ITS WORK

**27 NOVEMBER 2024 – SUSAN DRAGE – RECYCLING WITH A DIFFERENCE. UPCYCLING AND CRAFTING
OPPORTUNITIES.**