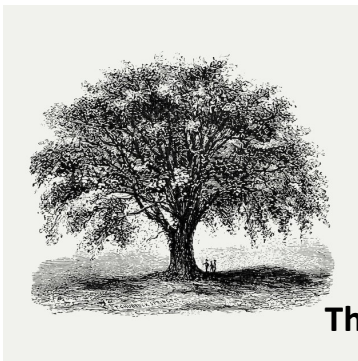


# STRATFORD-UPON-AVON u3a NEWSLETTER

Founded 2000

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

August 2023



## **This Month**

**Wednesday 30th August 2023**

**LIZ TAYLOR**

### **The WOODLAND TRUST including Warwickshire**

Liz will talk about the work of the Woodland Trust in Warwickshire. There are several sites nearby, managed by the Woodland Trust, where there is a wealth of wildlife

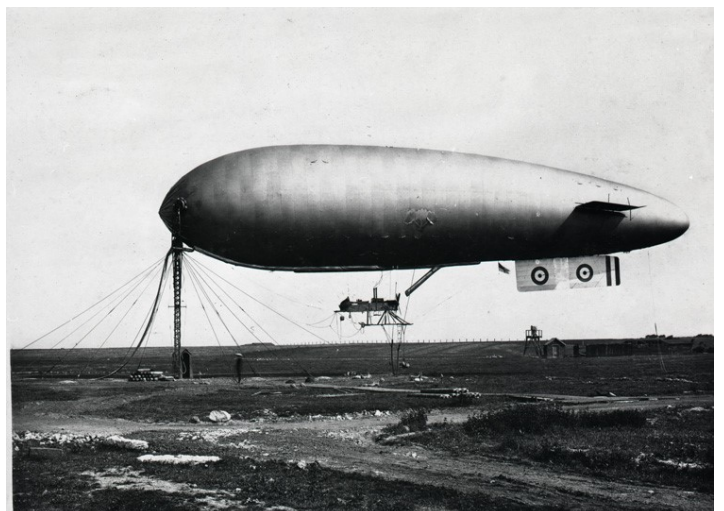
## **Next month**

**Wednesday 27 September**

**David Skillen**

### **GIANTS IN THE SKY**

David will speak about the Zeppelins of World War I, and what the British people thought of them.



## 2) COME TO THE BALLET

We have secured 25 seats for Birmingham Royal Ballet's matinee performance of "The Nutcracker" Thursday 23rd November at 2pm. We have two rows towards the rear of the stalls.

Tickets will cost £80 to include coach travel by Johnsons from the Stratford Leisure Centre.

Absolute priority will be for members of Stratford-upon-Avon u3a, if there are spare seats after our members have booked we will offer them to members of other u3as and to guests our members might wish to bring with them.

If you want to buy a ticket you **must** get your payment to us by 18th September.

You **must** also sign a form accepting that, if you cancel the place, for whatever reason,

Stratford-upon-Avon u3a cannot refund the money. We can publicise it to people on the waiting list but we cannot guarantee this will get your money back.

*Join Clara on her Christmas Eve adventure to an enchanting winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, magical Christmas trees and a Sugar Plum Fairy...  
... not to mention the glorious music by Tchaikovsky!*

For further details, please contact Maureen [maureenbsavu3a@gmail.com](mailto:maureenbsavu3a@gmail.com)

## Would you like to learn about baking bread?

The Breadmaking Group within Dene Valley u3a is looking for new members. A summary of what they do is shown below along with contact details for anyone that might be interested to know more.



The group meets in Wellesbourne Village Hall where we produce varieties of bread ranging from good honest tin loaves through focaccia, fruit loaves, pizzas and cheese and pesto whirls, to mention just some of what we do.

As well as lots of hard work connected with kneading dough, adding interesting ingredients and hoping that the proving and baking stages deliver, we find plenty of time for sharing experiences and good old fashioned chatting over a cup of tea.

We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Wellesbourne Village Hall starting at 1:00pm. The cost is £5 per session.



## THE MAN WHO INVENTED EUROPE

Maureen received this message from Jonathan Baker at the Holy Trinity Church Parish Centre inviting us to attend the talk mentioned below:

There is to be a free talk at Holy Trinity Parish Centre, Stratford, at 7.00 pm on the 14th September entitled THE MAN WHO INVENTED EUROPE. The talk is being given by the former BBC correspondent and diplomat, Martyn Bond and is being organised by the local group, Stratford4Europe.

There are full details on the Eventbrite site <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brexit-talk-with-martyn-bond-tickets-677519167067?aff=oddtcreator>

Your members would be very welcome to join us for what looks set to be a fascinating insight into the origins of the European Union and what the past can tell us about today.

## REPORTS FROM INTEREST GROUPS

### Chaucer

We read the passage in which Criseyde outlines her plan to return to Troy within ten days. Her optimism is particularly poignant in the context of Troilus's previous meditation on 'necessitee' and readers' foreknowledge of how the story ends.

### Conversational French

Janet Reid, a new member, is offering to set up a second Conversational French group meeting twice a month initially at her home in Alderminster. As a number of you were looking for exactly that when we started our more basic Useful French group, then this is what you have been waiting for. To express an interest and/or find out more, contact Janet on [janetcv378pe@hotmail.com](mailto:janetcv378pe@hotmail.com) or chat to her at the Wednesday meeting.



### Stratford History Group

Our second outing of the summer found us at Holy Trinity where two guides took us around the church looking into many of its features. Myths about the Shakespeare tombs were dispelled, and we will surely do more research now into the Combes, Thomas Balsall, James Kendall and others with major monuments. The Becket Chapel was interesting for its discoveries, including the original mediaeval altar slab dug up from beneath its floor where it had been hidden during the Reformation. It is now in place on the High Altar. And one piece of trivia: Some believe that Shakespeare may have translated Psalm 46 - on his 46th birthday even: the 46th word of the psalm just happens to be *shake*, and the 46th word from the end is *spear*. Make of that what you will!

### Useful French

We were very depleted because of holidays and sickness but spent much of the time working through another Michel Jonasz song, *Je voulais te dire que je t'attends*, revising various tenses and grammar points as we went.

### Melodies Pure and True: u3a Choir

The u3a Choir, organised by Heart of England, includes many of our own members. Our next concert will take place in the Methodist Church Hall at 2.30pm on Friday 22nd September. Tickets @ £6 (incl. tea and biscuits etc afterwards) will be available soon. Reserve yours via Margaret Dews if you don't know any other member. We shall be singing a mix of standards, with some songs you may recognize from shows and films. Our title this time '*Melodies Pure and True*' is taken from *Three Little Birds*, by Bob Marley, and we aim to deliver on it!



### Spanish Intermediate

The Spanish group met at the beginning of August and all members of the group gave presentations on things that made them laugh. These ranged from antics by family members and pets to situation comedies, with 'Fawlty Towers' being one of the most popular, and films. One member talked about some present-day comedians who do not make her laugh. Next month we shall be joined by a native Spanish speaker who has kindly agreed to support the group.

Brush up your German

Thank you Rosel, we really enjoy your hospitality. The group discussed various family events and travels. There was also an article from Das Bild discussing whether we should keep our tomato ketchup in the fridge, and should it be der, die or das Nutella..... Of which more next month

Welcombe Hills Sunday Walks

We headed off to Clifford Chambers on our last walk. Did a 1.5 hour circular route around Alscot Park, including Preston and Atherstone on Stour. Beautiful sunny day and gorgeous countryside.

Our next walk is the morning of Sunday 3 September and we are meeting in Bidford so that we can avoid traffic problems due to the 10K Run.

If you would like to join us on any of our walks, please visit the U3A website for more information. Or simply contact the Groups Coordinator on the Contacts Page who can point you in the right direction

Here is this month's joke:

Never trust atoms, they make up everything.

(Please do send me your favourites, that way at least I know someone is reading the newsletter

### Tea Rota—2023

August 30th Spanish

September 27th Wine Appreciation

October 25th German Groups

November 29th Latin



**Please** do check the rota to see when your group is scheduled to help. it should happen about once every 18 months—2 years. The task is not arduous and is a good opportunity to chat to other members whilst you are serving the teas. Please do encourage other members of your group to come along and help



## Monthly meeting report – Wednesday 26 July 2023 - Barry Watson – The Agony & Ecstasy of a Canal Hotel Boater.

Barry Watson entertained and informed the audience with amusing tales of his time running a hotel canal boat from 1997-2002. He started with a bit of history, pointing out that the first canal was built by the Romans – the Fossdyke Navigation. The first canal of modern times was built in 1761 by James Brindley for the Duke of Bridgewater, from his coal mines in Worsley to Manchester. The second was for Wedgwood – the Trent and Mersey canal. In the 1790s there was canal mania. According to Barry, Birmingham has more canals than anywhere else in the world.

The railways and improved road transport led to the decline of the canals and the last commercial canal closed in 1970. Luckily some enterprising people waged a campaign to save them and the Inland Waterways Association was started to look after them, mainly for leisure purposes.

However, there were hotel boats before this, in the 1920s on the Norfolk Broads, and from the 1950s on canals. Business declined in the 1990s as more comfort was required. Barry and his wife Pam's boat had ensuite bathrooms in the 4 single cabins and 2 doubles, plus wardrobe and vanity unit and pleasant common areas.

**The Agony** – they worked for 31 weeks a year, 6 days a week. They cooked several meals a day – early morning tea plus a newspaper (which Barry went out to buy), breakfast, elevenses, lunch, tea and cake and 4 course dinner, plus a hot drink before bedtime! On one night there was entertainment. Barry sang a couple of songs for us. There was also a "butty", an extra boat towed by the barge, with a lounge and bar. Some of the canals and locks were very awkward, especially with the butty in tow. The service was rated 5 stars, of which Barry is very proud.

The worst jobs were emptying the toilet and clearing the jams in the mechanism; shopping for 12 guests and crew, 3 shopping trolleys were needed, and doing the laundry. Barry became very unpopular in the launderettes as he took over all of the machines!

**The Ecstasy** – the guests became a sort of family. Many returned over again, and he is in touch with some even now, with Christmas cards and a newsletter. People were also very helpful and kind, and amusing at times. Most guests were over 60 and the oldest was 94. It was also good and safe for singles. One elderly lady surprised him by getting married and then consummating their union on the boat!

It was an entertaining meeting and we learned a lot. I bought a card with a painting of Barry's boats, Conwy & Caernarfon, moored in Stratford, by Gareth Allan.

Helen Elliott, Speaker Secretary.



## Free Time Group

Four members of the Stratford-upon-Avon u3a **Free Time** group embarked on its first major outing on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>. July 2023, and we could not have chosen a worse day! It rained all day, until we



went home! However, we had a good time and got to know one another, and we learned a lot about steam trains, thanks to one of the members. I am keen on steam trains but am not a techie! We went to the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway, which was new to me. Here are a few pictures to prove that u3a people are not daunted by a bit of rain! It was certainly nostalgic for those who used these sorts of trains as a normal mode of transport when young!

Members of the Free Time group have also been to the theatre, the Bear Pit, and to the jazz club at the Stratford Playhouse. We are still welcoming new members and keen to do more interesting activities. Please get in touch with Helen Elliott, Group Contact.



I hope you have enjoyed this month's newsletter. If you would like to contribute please email me:

[news@stratfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:news@stratfordu3a.org.uk)