

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

U3A NEWSLETTER

Website: Stratford-upon-Avon U3A.

U3A founded 2000

MAY 2023



MONTHLY MEETINGS

This Month

Wednesday 31 May

2p.m. Methodist Church

Our speaker is **Ken Morgan, a local artist and illustrator,**

“At last, I am an Artist –

my journey from construction professional to professional artist”.

Ken Morgan will talk about his career and his pen and ink watercolour paintings of the historical buildings in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Next Month

Wednesday 28 June

Marilyn Chalmers

Dogs for Good



2 p.m. The Methodist Church

Stratford-upon-Avon

Marilyn will have her dog, Ash with her. I am sure he/she will be very well behaved.

**Stratford-upon-Avon u3a monthly meeting Wednesday 26 April 2023.
 “Merrie England” – Richard Churchley**

We thoroughly enjoyed an informative talk and musical entertainment (with accordion) about the customs and celebrations through the year. Most customs are generally connected with the religious or the agricultural year. January begins with “first footing”. It is considered unlucky for a woman to be the first to cross the threshold and a tall, dark and handsome man bearing a piece of coal is traditional. 6 January is Epiphany, but also the old Christmas day according to the old calendar before 1752. “Plough Monday” (back to work) follows Twelfth Night revels after the Christmas break.

2 February is “Candlemas” (one of the quarter days) and a weather forecast for Spring and Summer was made (like St. Swithin’s day) according to the weather that day!

March has Mothering Sunday (not Mother’s Day) on which one visited the “Mother (principle) church” in the area, rather than the local church. It was also when servants and apprentices were allowed to go home for a visit after being hired in the previous October (e.g. the MOP)! 25 March is Lady Day (9 months before Xmas) and also the beginning of the financial year (switched to 6 April after 1752) when people settled their accounts, when bartering was still common.

Good Friday is a solemn religious day and it was believed that bread baked that day would not go off. This is probably the origin of spiced (as preservatives) buns. It was also the time to plant potatoes. Easter Sunday was the day for “Clipping the Church” when parishioners joined hands around the church. Richard then sang the “Pace Egging Song” (from the French for Easter – Pâques).

May Day heralds the beginning of summer. Welford-on-Avon claims that it has the tallest permanent maypole. Morris Men also come out then. Whitsun, at the end of May, is also “Oak Apple” day, commemorating the future Charles II hiding on the oak tree at Boscobel House. It is also Rogationtide when “Beating the Bounds” of the parish was done. Only young boys did it and they were beaten with nettles and sticks so that they did not forget the boundary!

Summer was a busy time so fewer celebrations happened. Lammas, at the beginning of August, was when cattle were allowed back onto the meadows after the hay was cut, so another excuse for celebration. September/October featured harvest festivals, although those in churches only started in Victorian times. Previously the farmers hosted the revels. Richard sang the “John Barleycorn” song.

November has Halloween and Bonfire night and December Wassailing prior to Christmas. The afternoon ended with “We wish you a Merry Christmas”! The audience was encouraged to join in with singing the various choruses.

Tea Rota—2023

April 26th Portuguese

May 31st Gardening

June 28th Play Reading

July 26th Poetry

August 30th Spanish



September 27th Wine Appreciation

October 25th German Groups

November 29th Latin

December 14th Committee

U3A AND "THE BIG ONE"

On the morning of Friday 21st April I set off for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero near Parliament Square wondering if I would be able to find Brenda Ainsley in the crowd. I had never met this fellow member of the u3a before, but we had been in touch thanks to Frances Halliday, the u3a subject advisor for climate change. I needn't have worried as Brenda's umbrella (in u3a colours) was easy to spot and I met both her and her husband John, who had travelled from their home near Nottingham. Brenda is a joint leader of the U3a's online "Countdown to COP" group and I learned that this group gets together on the last Friday of every month at 10am, on Zoom, and that the members come from all over the UK. The group developed educational activities for the COP summit in Glasgow (COP stands for "Conference of the Parties") and more recently they have been involved in an intergenerational project with Warwick University. Students from Warwick were with the u3a group, along with u3a members from London, Croydon and elsewhere.



Brenda Ainsley, Janet and the U3A umbrella

The protests (called "The Big One" because tens of thousands of people attended) were well organised over four days by Extinction Rebellion, who promoted the event saying that they were changing tactics and did not wish to take part in any disruptive action. There were 1400 stewards looking after the crowd, answering questions and making sure that everyone felt safe and informed. Over 100 organisations attended "The Big One" including Friends of the Earth, many Church groups, trade unions and Greenpeace, spread out on Friday across all the government ministries in Westminster. A coachload of people joined from Stratford-upon-Avon. There were speeches, climate assemblies, parades and music. There were no arrests and no trouble at all over the whole weekend, so of course that led to very little publicity in the national press, as it seems that only unruly protests are newsworthy.

I found it very moving to see so many parents and grandparents who are worried about the future for our children, and who feel that they have to act and make their voice heard. The threat to our way of life and to nature as we currently know it is very clear. The scientific evidence from all around the world shows us that temperatures are still rising, the natural world is changing as a result and there are threats to global food and water supplies. Did you see the recent article by the editor of the Stratford Herald, Andy Veale, bringing these issues even closer to home by writing about the increasing temperatures in Warwickshire? (Stratford Herald, 27th April)

I have decided to join the online "Countdown to COP" group and will report back to you on their activities and campaigns at a later date. I was also impressed by the Bristol Climate Choir who performed in London, and I am thinking that it would be good to create a similar group in Stratford. If anyone would like to join a Climate Choir this summer, just let me know! Similarly, if you think that you would like to join the u3a interest groups online then feel free to email me and we can register for "Countdown to COP" together. (janet.palmer@mac.com)

Ambling Group

On Wednesday 10th May we met up and took the bus to the YHA for a walk in the village of Alveston. There were only four people but we enjoyed the sunny morning and returned to Stratford before the rain started.

The next walk on Wednesday 14th June will be a local walk and we will meet up at the Gower Memorial on the Bancroft gardens at 10:30 am.

On this walk we would like to discuss the future of the group as so few people are coming on the walks is it worthwhile continuing with the group?

Joyce Steckel and Olive Puzey

Church Visiting

The group has met most months during the year and visited two churches per day plus a pub lunch. We have followed our usual policy of staying close to Stratford in the winter months and going further out in better weather. We have discovered gems of churches in all sorts of places often being shown round by local church members. There are about eight of us now.

Graham Wilcox

RAFFLE

It was discussed and agreed at the AGM that we would hold a raffle at monthly meetings in future. Wendy Brain has agreed to run this so please let her have prize donations. As we meet in a Methodist Church no prize can be worth more than £50 and no alcohol. As the well known store says 'every little helps'. In this case your donations will help to keep your U3A going.

JOKE

An esteemed member of the committee has submitted the following for inclusion:

Two Czech men, Vlad and Olaf went out hunting for bears. There were a lot of bears in the area and they were causing a nuisance. Vlad and Olaf set of armed with rifles and all the paraphernalia needed for hunting. It took them several days, then they found a couple of bears lazing in a glade. Olaf and Vlad didn't move fast enough and the bears ran away. As they sat bemoaning their fate, one of the bears sneaked up, picked up Vlad and ran off. Olaf screamed with fright and 2 more hunters ran to the rescue.

Swiftly they killed the first bear when they cut the bear open they found nothing inside, (the new hunters were better at their craft). Even more swiftly they found and killed the second bear, a male, when they cut this one open, there was poor Vlad.

Which just goes to prove that the Czech is always in the male. (Read this bit aloud)

If you like this and have similar jokes, or you think this is awful and you have better, please send them to me at news@stratfordu3a.org.uk

Tea and Coffee donations

Our U3A funds are in need of topping up, so please can we ask that you make a donation to cover the cost of providing tea, coffee and biscuits after our meetings.

If everyone paid 50p or even £1 that would be a really useful contribution, for which your committee thanks you.

Intermediate Spanish

The Spanish Intermediate group meets on the first Thursday of each month at 2.30 p.m. at members' homes. This month our discussion related to the monarchies of Spain and the United Kingdom as well as coronations past and present. Next month we are going to discuss pieces of music that 'move' us.

We are currently looking for a native Spanish speaker to support our group (remuneration may be given) and if any members know of someone who would be willing to help us, please would you let u3a know.

Folk Dance Group May Meeting

We had a most enjoyable meeting on 10th May. The weather was warm and sunny so we were able to open doors and windows.

We danced a range of interesting dances including Strip the Willow, Double Trouble and Shandy Hall. We also learned a Breton dance and a circle dance which involved music from the didgeridoo.

Sadly, our numbers were low following the Coronation Bank Holiday weekend, but we hope to back to a good turnout next time.

If you're interested in joining us please contact Sue Crowley on smcrowley@mail.com.



REPORTS FROM INTEREST GROUPS

BRUSH UP YOUR GERMAN

We enjoy having no prescribed subjects for conversation, as this results in a surprisingly wide range of topics and vocabulary when we meet. Last time these included grandchildren's exploits, the delights of birdwatching, voluntary dog walkers, a trip to Wales, climate change protests and the London Marathon. And Rosel described the day she first came to England 70 years ago. All fascinating.

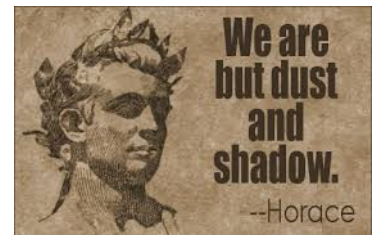
CHAUCCER

O

At our May meeting, in addition to making progress with the poem, we examined Mediaeval ways of measuring time, and considered the frequency and significance of references to natural, astronomical and astrological time in Troilus and Criseyde.

LATIN (ADVANCED)

We made our first foray into Horace for a long time with three popular Odes telling of nature, friendship, the passing of the seasons and life itself. We listened to several readings of the poems in Latin and English on YouTube and particularly enjoyed Samuel Johnson's translation of Diffugere nives. The real treat was listening to Emma Kirby singing the same ode in Latin to a lute accompaniment on a Naxos CD of 17th Century music.



PIANO GROUP

These musical gatherings are such a delight. This month we started with Haydn and Bach, after which we grew nostalgic over Morningtown Ride (the Seekers) and were storm-tossed by Edward McDowell's dramatic piano version of the crossing of the Mayflower to America in 1620. Our duets were Rhapsody in Blue (main theme) and the Berceuse from Fauré's Dolly Suite, which some of us remember from Listen with Mother!

USEFUL FRENCH



We seem now to have a core of half a dozen members who all enjoy refreshing their hazy French using readings, cartoons and songs among other methods. In early some articles on choosing where to live generated useful discussion involving the conditional tense. At our second meeting, after pronunciation practice we looked to Edith Piaf to help us with the conditional and imperfect. Finally we worked on some of the many questions and explanations which might arise when making a complicated train ticket booking.

STRATFORD HISTORY GROUP

Ulrik had done some research into the obelisk on top of the Welcombe Hills and told us of his findings. He talked of the importance of the Combe and Philips families and their ownership of what is now the Welcombe Hotel. The Combes had also once owned the Dower House on the corner of Southern Lane. And its neighbour, Avoncroft, was the lifelong home of Robert Bell Wheler, Stratford's first historian. We have so many Stratfordians to get to know! We were pleased to welcome Matt Goodman to the group. Matt will talk to us next time on aspects of industrial Stratford.



How to use an A.E.D. (Automated External Defibrillator)

(This article is to be read in conjunction with the “How to do CPR” article in the April issue of the Stratford-upon-Avon u3a newsletter).

Reminder from last time

When a person collapses think “DRSABC” (Doctors ABC)

- Is there any **D**anger to me?
- Does the casualty **R**espond?
- **S**hout or **S**end for help
- Is the **A**irway open?
- Is the casualty **B**reathing?
- What is their **C**irculation like (are they bleeding)?

Once you establish a casualty is not breathing it is essential that you get professional help as soon as possible, if alone, dial 999, if you have someone with you, get them to dial 999, if you are alone and have no phone, go as quickly as you can to the nearest house to dial 999.

Do not start Cardio Pulmonary resuscitation unless the ambulance is on its way.

If the ambulance is on its way you can start CPR. If you have an automated external defibrillator handy, start using this at once.

*** NB for us at Stratford-upon-Avon u3a, the nearest AED is on the outside of Holy Trinity Church Hall. ***

Get the AED from the wall by dialling 999 and asking for the release code which you type in to the box. Bring the AED to the casualty. Ask someone else to do this for you if you have a bystander, meanwhile you carry on with CPR.

If you have someone assisting you, get them to open the box, take out the pads and attach them to the ports in the box while you carry on with CPR.

When the AED is set up (a very quick process), open the clothes on the casualty to get to the bare chest, the AED box will have a pair of scissors in it that will cut through cloth and the centre of a bra.

Make sure there is no metal on the casualty’s chest (chain or bra-underwiring). You can just move a metal chain up to the casualty’s neck.

Press the “START” button on the AED. Usually it will give you instructions, place one pad on the top of the casualty’s chest on their right hand side and the other pad on the bottom of the casualty’s chest on the left hand side (you need a good distance between the pads to avoid the electrical charge “arcing”).

Make sure no-one is touching the casualty, perhaps holding their hand. Make sure your knees are not touching the casualty. Any person touching the casualty while the AED is giving its charge will receive a severe electric shock.

Shout "All Clear"

Press the knob on the box that has a sign on it to indicate electricity.

The machine will either give a shock or else say "No shock advised, continue with CPR"

The machine is a de-fibrillator, therefore it needs to detect a rhythm of fibrillation in the heart to work. If the casualty is "flat-lining" the machine cannot work, therefore you need to get the heart working again (even if not very effectively) for the machine to work "against" the rhythm it detects.

The machine will get you to give CPR for two minutes and then tell you to stop and try to shock again.

Make sure you are clear of the casualty and all other people are clear too.

Continue until the paramedics arrive.

The call handlers at 999 will stay on the line with you and help you all the way through the process.

REMEMBER – AEDs ARE USED IN THE MAJOR HOSPITALS IN THE WORLD AND SOMETIMES, PEOPLE STILL DIE. BY TRYING YOU HAVE GIVEN SOMEONE A CHANCE. THANKYOU.

And finally.....

I hope you have enjoyed reading this, the May 2023 edition of Stratford-upon-Avon U3A's newsletter. It is lovely to hear from so many of our groups about what they are doing; photos are even better.

If there is anything you would like to see included then please do send me an email at:

news@stratfordu3a.org.uk

Perhaps there is a group that could be added, please talk to our groups co-ordinator. There is a wealth of support available. You can find him at: groups@stratfordu3a.org.uk

Group reports and photos are always welcome.

Deadline 17th of the month for inclusion in that month's newsletter.

This time it really is finally: did you hear the joke about the blunt pencil?.....

There's no point