

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON u3a NEWSLETTER

Founded 2000

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

September 2023

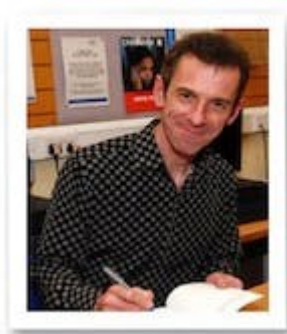
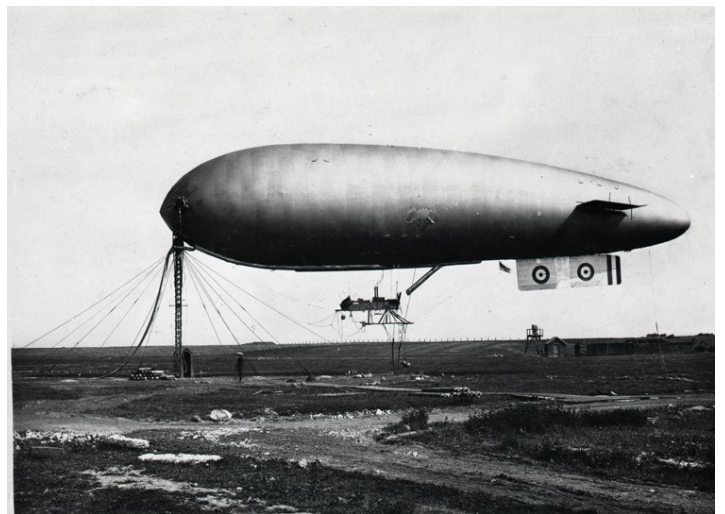
This month

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.



Next Month

Wednesday 25 October

'Dr Livingston I presume'

Fran Sandham will tell us about Stanley's meeting with Dr Livingston.

To find out more, join us at the Methodist Church
at 2 p.m. on Wednesday 25 October 2023

Stratford-upon-Avon u3a monthly meeting report, Wednesday, 30 August 2023
The Woodland Trust – Liz Taylor, Voluntary Speaker.

A good audience of over 50 people attended this very interesting and informative talk about the work of the Woodland Trust. Liz Taylor has been a member since the 1980s when, as a keen birdwatcher, she felt that she needed to know more about trees and later she became a volunteer. On her 25th. anniversary she was given a wooden bowl.

Origins: Kenneth Watkins founded it in 1972 in Devon. It is now the largest conservation charity in the country. Avon Woods was an early acquisition. There are 1,200 woods, 50 million trees. 1,172 woods have been saved in the last decade. There are half a million supporters.

Threats: climate change, pests and diseases (Ash Dieback and Acute Oak Decline, for example, from a long list, many of which are imported from abroad), infrastructure and building development (like HS2), and intensive agriculture are the main threats. Hedgerows have been grubbed up and 788 ancient woods have been lost in the last decade. Wildlife relies on trees, e.g., the Hazel Dormouse, which is very rare, lives in trees and does not move around on the ground. Roads can cut through their territory and stop movement. Creating corridors, e.g., a chicken wire tube covered in moss in Herefordshire, can work. Hedgehogs are also affected and also fungi, which are vital for the decaying process.

Work of the Wildlife Trust: native trees are grown from seeds and planted in woods, but they need protection and management, including removing diseased trees. It is also important to plant the right tree in the right place. For example, some trees, like oak, are more prone to damage from electricity than others. The trust attempts to restore woods to their condition prior to the advent of monoculture (especially of pine) and works with the Forestry Commission to have a mixture Deciduous trees are good for evergreens like pine, as their fallen leaves provide mulch for them!

Trees take a long time to mature, e.g., an oak takes 500 years to grow, 500 years to live as a mature tree and 500 years to die. Trees also thicken as they age to sustain themselves for longer. Ancient trees like oaks and yews are very important and some flowers only grow within this kind of woodland. Also, Bluebell woodlands comprise 95% of Europe's woods!

The trust aims to work with companies, other organisations and local communities and it drew up a Charter for Trees in 2017, the 800th. anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. These are the principles:

- Sustain landscapes rich in wildlife
- Plant for the future
- Celebrate the power of trees to inspire
- Grow forests of opportunity and innovation
- Protect irreplaceable trees and woods
- Plan greener local landscapes
- Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees
- Make trees accessible to all
- Combat the threats to our habitats
- Strengthen our landscapes with trees.



The Future: the trust works with local groups and community volunteers to plant more trees. It does not try to compete with others, e.g., the Heart of England Forest has its own project. The trust needs people to get involved by becoming members, volunteering, campaigning and donating and by visiting the woods.

Helen Elliott (Speaker Secretary)

Sunday Morning Walks (used to be Welcombe Hills walks)

Please let our [Groups](#) Coordinator know if you are interested in joining this group.

Start: 10.00 a.m. on alternate Sundays. Circular walks.

Areas: Welcombe Hills nature reserve, Clifford Chambers, Alscot Park, Preston on Stour, Atherstone on Stour, Bidford upon Avon and other local places.

Length: walks are between 1 to 2 hours.

Pace: reasonable/normal walking pace. Not an amble.

Stay in touch: you will need to join a dedicated WhatsApp group for sharing walk details, dates and any updates

Michele Beames ([leader](#) of the walks)

Editor's note: if you click on the blue underlined words that should take you to the relevant email address

Please do send me your contributions for newsletter. It is lovely to hear all about what the groups are doing, your photos are even better. Copy should be with me by 17th of each month to be included. It doesn't need to be a long article, a paragraph and an image is superb. If you are learning a language, how about a short paragraph in your target language. We could then publish the translation the following month. So we could have French, German, Portuguese, Italian and Latin..... a challenge? Please note, copy received after 17th of the month may be carried over till the following month

Please send your contributions to me at newsed@savu3a.org.uk

Monthly giggle

I tried to sue the airport for misplacing my luggage. I lost my case.

All contributions for jokes corner appreciated, thank for your contributions

FUTURE THINKING IN WALES – u3a “Countdown to COP” summer school ,

11th September – 14th September 2023

I’m not sure how many people know that there are u3a interest groups online? You have to pay a small fee to access these groups, but there are about 90 of them so a wealth of opportunity and a way of meeting other u3a members nationwide. I recently joined the online “Countdown to COP” group (COP stands for Conference of the Parties, the global summit dealing with the climate and nature crises). In addition to monthly online meetings, the “Countdown to COP” group organised a course at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales where we could meet face to face and hear talks from expert speakers on the subject of solutions to the climate and nature crises. There is no point being full of “doom and gloom” in the face of the dangers facing humanity. **We must believe that we can implement solutions to the problems we have.**

During our few days at the Centre for Alternative Technology, near Machynlleth in Wales, I realised that there is cause for optimism. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) is in place to ensure that the people of Wales have a healthy environment and a future quality of life at least as good as that of the current generation. Politicians must think of the long term when decision-making, and this is enshrined into Welsh law.

We heard from a representative from Climate Cymru, www.climate.cymru , a vast network of organisations and individuals across Wales who are working together to ensure that The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act supports a net zero Wales and a nature positive Wales.

We also heard about the global Race to Zero framework, led by the United Nations, rallying support for a decarbonised world and putting pressure on governments to be more ambitious. Thousands of states, companies, cities and investors have signed up and they all have to submit ambitious climate action plans and give regular progress reports. Wales and Scotland are members of this network (but not England!). Three quarters of FTSE companies are also members.

My three top “takeaways” from the summer school are these:

We must carry on telling all our politicians that we demand credible policies on climate and nature if they want to win our vote. We owe it to future generations to be persistent and not allow ourselves to be ignored.

We must talk about the solutions and positive actions that are happening **now**. That will help solutions to spread.

We need to use the tools given to us by organisations such as Climate Emergency UK who have analysed and scored council climate action plans (for more details, see www.climatecouncilscorecards.uk.) These scores show where the gaps are in council climate and nature plans and suggest comparisons with areas where better plans and actions are achieved.

I intend to do all of these things in Stratford-upon-Avon in the coming months!

If you are interested in joining the “Countdown to COP” online group, there is a free taster session for half an hour on 6th October at 11.30am.

Members of the u3a online group “Countdown to COP” at the Centre for Alternative Technology, including Stratford members Janet and Rodger Palmer



U3a Online Groups

Did you know there is a world of u3a online? I have just had a quick look to see what's available. There is more than I can mention here. Here's the link—have a look and see if you find anything you might be interested in

[U3a Online Groups](#) You will need to join, the fee is £12 a year. There are free tasters between 2nd and 6th October

Janet Palmer, see previous page, has asked me to send you the link for the free taster session for the Climate Change online group, this is on Friday 6 October

Interest Groups Online is where Countdown to COP sits within the u3a. As part of a week-long festival of the many and varied online groups, all u3a members are invited to 10 free 'taster sessions'. It is hoped this will bring the u3a online offer to wider attention among the membership.

Please find the Climate Change/ Countdown to COP taster session sign up page here -
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/interest-groups-online-fair-climate-change-tickets-712914234667?aff=oddtcreator>

Stratford-upon-Avon u3a Ukelele Group

Our ukelele group is looking for new members—would you like to join them? They meet twice a month in Holy Trinity Parish Lounge

The second and fourth Tuesday, from 2.45—4 p.m.

Please contact [Mary Lamming Stone](#) (the leader) if you are interested in joining

[News from Dene Valley u3a](#)

Dene Valley are starting two new groups, the first patchwork and quilting, the other a knit and natter group. Members will mostly work on their own projects. Dates and times to be decided.

Another group looking for new members is Dene Valley's Computing Plus group.

They meet quarterly, the next meeting is in January. At the last meeting they discussed changes to Windows and the coming change from analogue to digital landlines. There is no need to be a 'techie', just interested.

If you are interested in any of these groups please email their groups co-ordinator
johnhargis@btinternet.com

The link at the top of this article will take you to Dene Valley's web page.

RAFFLE AND TEA PAYMENTS

A few little birds have told me some members are disconcerted by being asked if they wish to buy raffle tickets and also being asked if they wish to contribute to the cost of teas at the meeting.

Your committee is anxious that members feel their comments are listened to and acted upon.

What we propose to do is buy a prize for a few months to encourage people to buy raffle tickets. Please remember this purchase of tickets , like the tea contributions is purely voluntary. If you don't want to pay you don't need to. Explanations are not necessary

We are still very conscious of our financial position having come out of the "slough of despond" which was Covid, in which we did not request any subscriptions but still had to pay costs like Zoom membership and the capitation fee to the Third Age Trust.

That said, we are making progress and rejoicing in 151 members, the largest number for many years.

From our Treasurer Richard Eden

Tea Rota—2023

September 27th Wine Appreciation

October 25th German Groups

November 29th Latin

December 13th Committee



NEWS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS

Chaucer

At our September meeting we finished reading Book IV of *Troilus and Criseyde*. Our discussion of Troilus' proposal that they should elope and spend the rest of their lives in exile prompted comparisons with Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson. Next month we embark on the fifth and final book.

Latin



Inspired by Horace telling us that time is short, we are pressing on with some of his other poems, this month reading of the delights of farm life, away from the hassle of Rome. His wonderful encomium of idyllic country life ends with an ironic twist as we learn that the words come from the mouth of a notorious loan shark who would love to be a farmer one day - but not yet! At which point he rushes off to collect his debts and do more dodgy deals. The writing and the surprise are both brilliant.

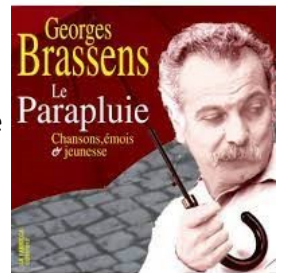
Piano

With some absences through ill-health, it was very good to have Gail back and to welcome Fay, a new member who plays the piano by ear, but does not read music. Interesting! Offerings this month ranged from Grade 3 sight-reading to Brahms, Aaron Copland and Fats Waller, with an Indian tom tom thrown in for good measure.

Useful French

An upsurge of interest in Useful French has seen numbers grow to more than is really comfortable, so we are planning to split into two groups. We are currently sorting out the details, but both groups would meet twice monthly and continue along the same lines, with a mix of grammar and useful constructions, stories and songs. The level is basic to improvers.

Brassens always goes down well!



Spanish

The Spanish group met during the first week of September on a very hot Thursday afternoon. We discussed our recent adventures and future trips away. It was a very enlightening afternoon with members talking about topics that included the Scout Jamboree in South Korea, the pride that citizens of Cordoba take in their city and one member's experiences as a pilot (surprisingly Ryanair have a very good safety record!)

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!

27 SEPTEMBER 2023 - DAVID SKILLEN – “GIANTS IN THE SKY” – ZEPPELINS

25 OCTOBER 2023 - FRAN SANDHAM – “DR. LIVINGSTON, I PRESUME?”

29 NOVEMBER 2023 - DAVID WORNHAM - “TUNEFUL TUBES” -

A light-hearted demonstrated history of world-wide musical wind instruments.

13 DECEMBER 2023 – CHRISTMAS MEETING – Bring & Share Pot Luck tea

24 JANUARY 2024 – PAMELA DEVINE and JANET HALL –

THE PAINTINGS OF THE GUILDHALL CHAPEL

28 FEBRUARY 2024 – CYRIL BENNIS - THE SWANS OF STRATFORD

27 MARCH 2024 –AGM

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.