

Stratford-upon-Avon u3a Newsletter

January 2024

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

Founded 2000

31 JANUARY 2024

2 p.m. at the Methodist Church Stratford-upon-Avon

PAMELA DEVINE and JANET HALL

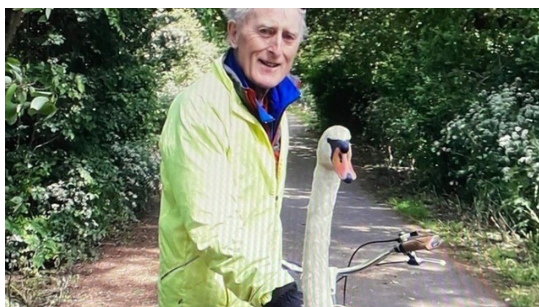
THE PAINTINGS OF THE GUILDHALL CHAPEL

Pamela Devine and Janet Hall will be talking to us about the paintings of the Guildhall Chapel. Most of us are familiar with the outside of this Stratford landmark, but what about the inside?



Everyone is welcome at our monthly meetings. Helen always books an excellent and interesting speaker. Why not come along, listen and even ask questions? Tea and coffee with biscuits served afterwards, a chance to chat and catch up.

28 FEBRUARY 2024 – CYRIL BENNIS - THE SWANS OF STRATFORD



Our speaker in February has cared for the swans since the early 1970s. He will tell us about his experiences and also something of the history of the swans on the Avon.

2 p. m 28th February
The Methodist Church
Stratford on Avon

Report from our Christmas meeting 13 December 2023

We had our Xmas party today in Stratford-upon-Avon. Enormous amounts of seasonal food, including lots of mince pies. There was music from the Ukulele group (they would love some new members, especially if you can play a little. Margaret Dews accompanied us as we sang carols. There was a cryptic quiz requiring lateral thinking, some said it was quite hard. Finally there was a limerick writing competition, which made us all smile. (If anyone still has the limericks I would be happy to publish them. Ed.)



RUMMIKUB GROUP

The Rummikub group meets on the third Friday of the month at:

Huffkins, Bridge St, STRATFORD, at 2 p.m

The next meeting 16 February.

We use the upstairs room at Huffkins, a lovely light airy room, but up a long flight of stairs, with no lift access. You are welcome, but please make sure you can manage the stairs.

If you are not familiar with Rummikub, it is family game easy to learn, and play, as long as you can add up to 30. If you would like to join please contact Juliet Grundy.

Experienced players and new members welcome. We ask that if you are not a u3a member you join Stratford u3a

For details email Group Co-ordinator, Juliet Grundy julietgrundy55@gmail.com

RAFFLE

Now Christmas has gone for another year, what about recycling pre-loved Christmas presents?

Do you really need that Ferrari?

And..... What about the diamond bracelet?

If you feel that is a little extravagant, why not consider something smaller, but please, no alcohol.

Your raffle prize donations are welcome as always to help swell the u3as coffers and continue to help make ends meet. Tickets 50p each, cash only, and entirely voluntary.

TEA AND COFFEE

Please do join us after the meeting for a coffee, tea and a natter (there might even be biscuits). Your totally voluntary donations are welcome to help cover their costs

Committee Business

Thank you so much to all the people who have responded to our appeal to join the committee. It appears we are almost at full strength.

We are still looking for a **Secretary** (a Company Secretary, not someone to take the minutes); the main part of the role is to deal with the Third Age Trust, the committee and our members. Ideally this would be someone who could keep our records up to date, but this is not essential.

Do you enjoy organising outings? We would love someone to take over, identify plan and organise outings members might enjoy. You would need to book coaches and venues. There will probably be 3 outings a year, one arty/theatre, one sporty and one historical, or anything else that may be of interest to members.

Once again thanks to all our volunteers

Maureen Bourniquel (Chair Stratford-on-Avon u3a)

NEWS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS

Chaucer Group

In December the group discussed the difference between real time and fictional time in Troilus and Criseyde. This was prompted by the section of Book V in which Troilus awaits Criseyde's return to Troy within ten days. This month we met on the ninth day of Christmas and enjoyed the usual mediaeval treats (stuffed dates) before discussing the three quite different portraits of Criseyde which occur throughout the narrative. We agreed that these represent different aspects of her personality as they appear to the narrator, Troilus and Diomedes respectively. We also noted the use of metaphors concerning hunting and angling in relation to the wooing of both Criseyde's lovers.

Useful French

At our December meeting we celebrated with our friends from the Terrified group. After learning the story of the Cantique de Noël (*O Holy Night*) we played a game of 'Qui suis-je?', which went down very well, so we'll be using that again: good question practice. Colin, our own prestidigitateur extraordinaire, entertained us with some unfathomable magic tricks, while we tucked into friandises de Noël.



French for the Terrified

We had a great time with the Useful French group in December and this month we learned how the French celebrate la Saint-Sylvestre and la Fête des Rois, which brings the Twelve Days of Christmas to a close.

Stratford History Group



The group met at the Welcombe Hotel for our pre-Christmas session. The meeting was very well attended. The hotel was once a magnificent country house and retains many original features. Margaret supplied us with written information about the history of the building. We introduced ourselves and discussed the subjects of interest to us for future meetings. We also enjoyed three challenging quizzes about local places, events and people. I think that we all had fun and learned a lot. (Helen Elliott)

In January there was a large and appreciative audience for Margaret's presentation based on streets in Stratford named after people who have made a notable contribution to the town. She had done a lot of research so gave us a copy of her slides afterwards for reference.

Kendall Avenue

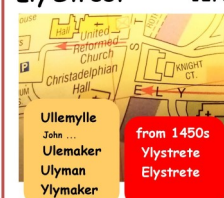
Frederic Kendall 1809-1883
1836 High Street
Preservation of foodstuffs
Bisulphate of lime > brewing
Flower's site 1910
F. Kendall & Son > 1970s



Kendall's Chemicals
canalside by brewery

Ely Street

1270 Swine Street



Ullemylle
John
Ulemaker
Ulyman
Ulymaker

from 1450s
Ylystrete
Elystrete



Piano Group

We met just before Christmas and played lots of Christmas music (thank you, Nikki Iles). One of our members has just left the district, so we could take one or two more into the group. You don't have to be a brilliant pianist, or even a good one - just enjoy playing the piano or keyboard at whatever level (or none) you might be. We come each time to encourage, be motivated, listen and learn. It's all very relaxed and enjoyable.

Brush up your German

We talked about our experiences of Christmas, from pantomime delights to non-stop activity and journeys. Rosel told us of her last wartime Christmas spent in German territory annexed by Poland, and gave a moving account of the freezing winter Trek which followed, fleeing from the advancing Russians, and her family's timely escape before the Dresden bombing. To end, a possible explanation (eine mögliche Bedeutung) of the *Twelve Days of Christmas* led to a lively discussion on religious intolerance over the centuries.

USEFUL FRENCH : change of name to IMPROVE YOUR FRENCH

Useful French has been a victim of its own success. We were a group threatening to become too big and with a very wide range of abilities. When Janet Reid came along, prepared to take on a new Conversation group, it was great to be able to hand over our good conversationalists to a better home. At the other end of the scale I felt able and keen to set up a new group offering those who were struggling a much slower pace with more explanations. They are now doing well and are happy. So Useful French has become rather depleted. Perhaps its name could make it clearer what we are about?

So we'll now call it **Improve your French** in the hope of appealing to members who would like to do just that. It's an intermediate group, ideal for most people who are rusty. Members have quite a good understanding of spoken French but lack the tools and expressions they need to speak with more confidence and with fewer mistakes. As well as lots of oral practice we use readings, French songs and videos. And we have the benefit of a native speaker to help! Do get in touch via km27dews@gmail.com if you'd like to try us out.

AND NOT FROM OUR GROUPS

Some Groans

We hoped to start a Flying Group but it never took off. I gave up the Scuba Diving Group, as deep down I knew it wasn't for me. And I've also left the Rugby Group; I gave it a try but wasn't converted. For Reading Group I ordered a book three months ago about online scams, and it still hasn't come! But someone keeps sending me pages of Agatha Christie through the post - a bit of a mystery. Currently we're reading '*How to be a Cynic*', which is total nonsense. So I'm going to join our popular Anger Management Group instead; it's all the rage.

And a couple for Maureen (and of course, everyone else)

A man in the Cookery Group collapsed while making lentil soup; thankfully the paramedics found a pulse.

A u3a member from Shottery

Went once to a group making pottery.

Her pot was a mess

But she couldn't care less

'Cos the next week she won on the lottery.

I believe the author of these paragraphs wishes to remain anonymous..... I can't think why.

Second Thoughts Theatre Group

This amateur theatre group based in Stratford Upon Avon, .
Second Thoughts is presenting An Evening of Tom Stoppard on February 21st-24th, a double bill of two of Tom Stoppard's most famous and comic one-act plays:

The Real Inspector Hound and A Separate Peace.

In The Real Inspector Hound, two theatre critics are watching a whodunnit before they unwittingly find themselves part of the action.

In A Separate Peace, a man longing for peace and isolation arrives at a nursing home hoping for a luxuriously easy existence- but can money alone buy him the slow-paced life he dreams about?

Performances are at the Bear Pit Theatre in Rother Street

from Wednesday 21st to Saturday 24th February. They start at 7.30 pm, with a Saturday matinee at 2.30 pm. Tickets are available now online at secondthoughts.org.uk/bookings, or on the door from one hour before the performance, for £14 (£12 for concessions).



Ballet Trip

An intrepid group of people spent an enjoyable afternoon, watching the Nutcracker in Birmingham. A traditional production of this perennial Christmas classic.

If you enjoy outings and organising them, please see our Chairman's appeal for someone to join the committee as our Events Organiser.

Stratford u3a Free Time group

Five intrepid members of the Free Time group visited Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire for its light show on 2 December 2023. We also explored Winchcombe beforehand. It was truly very chilly but it did not rain! We thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would recommend it. The theme was The Wizard of Oz, but there were many other great sights in the grounds, including a herd of wooden elephants and other animals. I shall certainly go back to Sudeley Castle in warmer weather to see the gardens. A slightly different group of five also had a Xmas meal the following day!

There are still vacancies in the Free Time group. Please let me know if you would like to join us in varied and exciting activities outside the usual u3a programme schedule.

Helen Elliott (Group Contact)



Month	Group
January	Keep Fit
February	Walking Group (ref Michelle)
March	Latin Intermediate
April	Piano
May	Chaucer (ref Patricia)
June	Portuguese
July	Playreading 1
August	Italian
September	Useful French

TEA ROTA

The tea rota is printed 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

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON VEGGIE FOOD GROUP PROPOSAL



Inspired by my experience of exploring veggie cookery, I propose a new group. Anyone is welcome to join the group, whatever your dietary preferences, but the food cooked and sampled would contain no animal ingredients.

Vegan and vegetarian foods are now gaining considerable interest. However, there are many myths, especially about vegan foods, e.g. that they are expensive, unnatural and inadequate, strange and not tasty. I would like to debunk these myths and, in company with others, explore ideas and options for a plant-based diet.

The group would meet monthly to share food for lunch, either in my home (or any other suitable member's kitchen) or in a local restaurant in which veggie options are offered.

I am not running a formal course in veggie cookery, although I have considerable experience, having been vegetarian then vegan for most of my adult life. I will share my knowledge and also encourage contributions from other members of the group. We will discuss the benefits and difficulties of pursuing a veggie diet and the reasons why these options are now becoming more popular.

Like the group that inspired this, we could pick a theme or an ingredient or everyone could contribute a different dish to share. Flexibility and fun, as well as learning, will be the essence of this group's existence!

Please let me know if you are interested in joining the group.
Helen Elliott

We're all going on a summer holiday—as Cliff Richard once sang—or maybe just to a u3a festival (u3a members that is, not Cliff Richard, as far as I know)

Summer Festival by u3a

York 18-20 July 2024

Are you interested in going, perhaps with other members of our u3a?

Here is the link to find out more

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>

If you are interested the costs are reasonable and York is a lovely place to visit.

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!**

31 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.**