

To: All Members of Stroud u3a

Stroud u3a September Newsletter

Top tasks for September

Even if you don't read the rest, do these four simple things:

1. Pay your subs if you haven't already!
2. Book your place at the AGM
3. Read the AGM papers, which are being circulated separately
4. Volunteer to be our new Chair or Secretary!

Vacancies – Stroud u3a Chairman and Secretary

We are still waiting for all you shy, retiring types to diffidently step forward to volunteer for one of these two roles. And to help you take that fateful – sorry, I mean joyful – step, please note that it would be very possible to consider a job-share arrangement. It's true that the role of Chairman, in particular, may appear to be a daunting one that demands loads of time, and this may be putting off some of you. But it would be possible to break it down into separate elements, to make it easier to take on. Of course, if you and a friend (or partner!) could jointly put your names forward, that would be great; but even if not, this could be the start of something beautiful! If you are at all interested in stepping up, whether to offer to take on one or other job yourself or to share it with someone else, please contact Clive Edgington at chair@stroudu3a.org.uk.

Subscriptions 21/22

Your sub became due on 1st September, so please can you attend to this as soon as possible. It is just £12 per year, and don't need to fill in another application form if your details haven't changed. You can pay by cheque to Stroud & District University of the Third Age and send to Simon Wright, Hillside, Upper Springfield Road, Stroud GL5 1TF, membership@stroudu3a.org.uk or by BACS Sort Code: 77 27 22 Account No: 18772260 Account Name: University of the Third Age. If you pay by BACS, please let Simon know, again at membership@stroudu3a.org.uk.

Some people have had trouble paying by BACS, since they have got a message from their bank that this account does not exist. It does, though! For once, this is a banking glitch, not a scam. So if you get that message, double-check you have input the codes correctly, take a deep breath, take a leap of faith, say a silent prayer or whatever, and press the Proceed Anyway button. Your persistence will be rewarded. (You may also be reassured to know that, once all the subs are in, we are hoping to close this bank account and start a new one, so hopefully this problem won't recur next year.)

If your details have changed, please complete and return the membership form that is attached to this newsletter.

Monthly meetings

Just a reminder that future monthly meetings will be held at the Subs Room in Stroud. For now, we are limiting attendance to just 50, to maintain social distancing. That makes it

important that you book your place with Joan Toon on 01453 757720 or speaker@stroudu3a.org.uk. If you don't, you may be disappointed when we turn you away at the door. Meetings are free for members. You are welcome to book a place for guests, who will be charged £2 on the door (unless they indicate a wish to join, in which case they can attend for free).

The October meeting is on Thursday 7th October at 2.30, and is the AGM, which will be followed by some light relief from the Creative Writing groups.

The speaker who was booked for the November meeting has had to withdraw. An alternative plan will be announced in the October newsletter.

Social meetup

A very successful meetup was held on August 20th at Los Galgos in Stroud. There were eight of us, which filled just two tables and we could keep moving around so that everybody got to meet everybody else. The place was good - central, bright, clean, friendly, with good service. Everybody turned up just after 5:30pm and stayed until around 7:30pm.

So we will continue with regular meetups, every three-months, so watch out for announcements about the November social in future newsletters. The aim is to change the venue each time we meet.

Updates – groups

Current Affairs group

The Current Affairs group will now meet in person at the Curio Lounge in Stroud 10.30 till 12 first and third Tuesday of each month starting 7 September. New members welcome. Ken Burns on 07821 171505.

History book group

The history book group met for the first time on September 8th. The meeting went even better than I had hoped, and we agreed to meet monthly, on a Wednesday afternoon. We'll limit the group to ten people for now, which means there is room for one or two more; but if a lot more people come forward, we can always set up a second group.

The general agreement was to stick, for now at least, with factual not fictional accounts of the past; pretty much any country, period, topic (though some expressed prejudices against Henry VIII - that was me actually, as I find there's just too much of him at the moment), Bismarck's foreign policy (too reminiscent of school), and local history (other u3a groups already cater for this). We would be up for social history, histories of different countries, histories that trace connections, events that continue to impact on our lives today, biographies, and histories of small subjects that open out into much bigger topics.

Anyone interested in joining should contact Peter Furtado pfurtado1543@gmail.com or 07967 396 984.

Future meetings

October Monthly Meeting - AGM

This is advance notice that Stroud u3a will hold the **AGM on Thursday 7th October 2:30pm** in the George Room of the Stroud Subscription Rooms (see above). If you would like to attend, please contact speaker@stroudu3a.org.uk or phone Joan Toon on **01453 757720**. Please book your place as we are limited to 50 places to maintain social distancing.

For this reason we shall be repeating last year's AGM process which involved a separate voting arrangement - by email or post. The agenda and minutes of last year's AGM and a voting form will be sent to you by September 16th. After the AGM, our Creative Writers will present some of their work – very many thanks to them.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 7th October (2:30pm) **Stroud u3a AGM** – Subscription Rooms, Stroud.

Wednesday 17th November (10:00am) **Group Leaders Meeting & Lunch**, Stroud Bowls Club (NOTE: this was previously advertised as November 10th, but has had to be moved).

For your entertainment – the Creative Writing Group

Stroud u3a has four Creative Writing groups, meeting on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tuesday of the month, at various venues, but always 10-midday. There is no formal tuition or unkind criticism. We learn from each other's contributions, which may be an original story, a poem, a personal recollection or a strident opinion, and then we share our ideas. If time permits we join in a short writing exercise, mainly for fun.

As well as our regular meetings, usually 6-8 people, we distribute our pieces around all the four groups, meaning that you have an audience of thirty people, (224 stories went out last year), which helps those who can't get to a meeting but still wants to join in. We periodically collect our best pieces and arrange to have them printed in an anthology. All our Creative Writers get a copy. The next one is due in 2022.

You can write as much or as little as you like, but contributions are usually 500-1,000 words. Anyone who is very new to creative writing can have their work edited and corrected, but only if they want to.

Have you considered writing? Do you have a great novel inside you bursting to get out, or do you want to make a record of something before it gets forgotten? The grandchildren might appreciate it one day.

Do you remember that old school exercise, 'What I did on my Summer Holiday' – if you can turn out one of those then you're ready to join us - and we want to hear what you did on your summer holiday! We enjoy writing for its own sake, but there is nothing to beat presenting your latest effort to a group. You don't need to own a computer. You can bring contributions in longhand and we will copy them.

I am never happier than when I'm in the company of fellow writers, you learn so much! I have listened to a writer who was brought up in India, another who was a mining engineer in Africa, members who have come close to death but made it through, and one lady who, as a tiny baby in a poor Asian village, was left in the chicken house to die. Her parents simply had no use for her. And yes, that is totally true. She made her way to England, studied, achieved a degree, married and led a successful professional life.

Meetings can be rewarding in so many ways. They often raise a laugh, but they can also be very moving.

We have been privileged to hear the words of writers who have been of service to others, in many walks of life, without any thought of reward. I consider myself privileged to have been part of such a group.

Creative Writing is an ideal way to make use of dull winter days. If you would like a preview of what we do, you can read samples of what we are producing before you come to a meeting. Why not join us?

Contact Robert Smith: rgsmith@btinternet.com or phone 07848 829780. I will help to select the most convenient group for you, where they currently have spaces and parking.

Here are a few lines I keep on my desk:-

- If you want to be comfortable, adjust the central heating. If you want to be healthy, go out for a stroll.
- To be replete, eat well. To be content, read a book. To mourn, be still. To find solace, offer a prayer.
- If you would meet a stranger, who might turn out to be yourself, then summon up your courage, and write!

Contacts

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