

Editorial



And so we start the second half of the year (where did THAT six months go?!). If you're sportily inclined, there will be Wimbledon for the next fortnight, the British Grand Prix next weekend in Formula One and – if you prefer two wheels to four – the Tour De France cycling. There's Ashes cricket throughout July and then – near the end of the month – the British Golf Open Championships at the Royal Liverpool. If you're NOT sporty...read Wendy's magnificent 'Events' section in this newsletter; lots of fun for all the family!

The new month brings with it a new Witney U3A Committee, though there are still one or two important vacancies to be filled. For more information on those 'gaps' we need to plug, read on. But for now, I would like to welcome Susie, our magnificent new Chair. I've already had the pleasure of seeing her in action at meetings this past two weeks, and hopefully you all saw her at the Speaker Meeting on Thursday, Susie is passionate about our U3A group and anxious to make it more accountable to *you*, our members. To that end, I would ask you to put the date of **Thursday the 21st of September 2023** in your diaries and on your calendars – for that is the date of our Witney U3A Open Day (coinciding with the National U3A's Open Week). This event is for new and prospective U3A members, as well as for yourselves, so please feel free to share the date with friends and family.

In future editions of this newsletter, I should like to share with you what your elected committee is doing, what new (member-led) initiatives we might be exploring and where **you** can help if you are minded so to do. It doesn't matter if that 'help' is merely 'at the fringes' – as Tesco's would have it, "every little helps"!

Thank you from reading and very best wishes - Mike

U3A Committee – A Call To Arms



As I mentioned in the Editorial, we have a small number of vacant slots on the new committee. This is mainly where existing committee members are 'soldiering on' (often not enjoying the best of health) and would like to pass the baton on. Can you help with any of the following?

- **Programme Organiser:** for many years. Corinna has done a marvellous job of both advance booking and organising our many and varied speakers at the twice-monthly Thursday events at the Methodist Church. She also 'meets and greets' them on their arrival. Is this something you've had a yen to be involved in or – better still – some equivalent experience of in your working life? Support in the early days and weeks will be provided but – please be aware – it would be very much a single role, and you would be answerable only to the committee.
- **Publicity:** how did YOU get to know about the U3A? For many of us, of course, it's by word of mouth – we have a friend who's a member. But there's also a variety of work that goes largely unnoticed spreading the gospel in local newspapers, and also via leaflets and flyers. If this sounds like something you'd like to be involved in or have prior experience of, please let us know.

We are also looking to appoint one or two **non-committee** roles in our U3A. To both improve our channels of communication, and to continue to attract a newer generation of members, we would like to 'beef up' our social media offerings, Could you be – or do you know someone who would fit the bill – our **Social Media Officer**? Gill, our Facebook administrator, would like to step back from the role, so if you like to add to your 'Public Newsfeed', you 'Tweet' or can be found regularly on 'Insta', please let us know.

Groups



The following pages are dedicated to the adventures and exploits of some of our many Groups – here's what a few of them got up to in the month of June.

Longer Walking Group - Tuesday 27 June

Nineteen walkers gathered at Kirtlington Village Hall and completed a 6.1 miles circular walk to the neighbouring village of Bletchingdon and back. The route took us via the edge of Kirtlington quarry, now a nature reserve, to Pigeon's Lock on the Oxford Canal. We backtracked along a narrow, uphill path by the side of Kirtlington Golf Club observing many orchids, butterflies and bees, until we came to the A4095. Having crossed the road, we walked across Duchy of Cornwall land passing through a new housing development. The houses are being built along the lines of Poundbury using traditional materials and methods and the royal influence was much in evidence. Unfortunately, King Charles was not there to greet us. We had a much-needed drinks stop on Bletchingdon Village Green before we returned to Kirtlington through beautiful parkland along the Oxford Way. We passed by Kirtlington House; a Palladian mansion built by Sir James Dashwood in 1743 with gardens designed by Capability Brown. To cap it all we were treated to a military 'cabaret' as trainee paratroopers descended from planes, having taken off from the airstrip at nearby Weston on the Green. At the end of the walk a hardy few picnicked in the grounds of Kirtlington Village Hall.



Local History and Gardening Groups

Julie writes...

The Local History Group and Gardening Groups joined up last month to visit Sudeley Castle, which has the benefit of being of interest to both groups. I last visited Sudeley when my girls were both toddlers, and all I can remember was spending most of the day in the playground!

So I was really impressed to go to 'modern day' Sudeley, with its vast array of exhibitions covering the entire history of the Castle. What an amazing place! To this day, Sudeley remains the only private castle to have a Queen buried within its grounds – Queen Katherine Parr, the last and surviving wife of Henry VIII.



Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, Queen Elizabeth I and Richard III have all played a part in the history of Sudeley. Unfortunately, after the English Civil War, the castle was neglected and lay derelict for 200 years, until it was rescued in 1837 by the wealthy Dent family.

The Castle and gardens are now the home of Elizabeth, Lady Ashcombe, and her son, daughter and their families, and they're committed to the preservation of the castle and its treasures.

We spent the day exploring the Castle and the 10 beautiful gardens which surround it. Also new this summer is the Animal Ark, to raise awareness of the work being undertaken to conserve wildlife across the world. It honours the work of the late Mark Shand, brother of Queen Camilla, who was a regular visitor to Sudeley. There are over 50 handmade sculptures including lions, yaks, pandas, leopards and elephants, all made with natural materials.

I think you'll agree there's plenty to keep you occupied all day, and we thoroughly enjoyed it.



Thank-you to fellow attendee Francis for the photographs.

Speaker Meetings

Thursday July the 6th

“The Shrunken Garden” with Timothy Walker

There are many different choices when creating a new and much smaller garden. You will instantly have ideas about which plants you want to grow, and the site will have an influence, but do you have just herbaceous plants, just shrubs, or a mixture? Do you need a lawn or a pond? Do you care about colour or one particular group of plants such as ferns? What about growing British native species, and encouraging wildlife? This talk looks at the options when making a new garden from scratch; it is based on the creation our tiny new garden.

Timothy Walker joined the staff of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden 1980 as a trainee gardener and in 1988 became the Horti Praefectus (director). He is now a lecturer in Plant Sciences at Somerville College Oxford.

Thursday July the 20th

“Oxford Preservation Trust” with Emma Nickson.

For more than 95 years, OPT has been looking after Oxford's heritage and green spaces, guiding change to ensure we keep the best of the old and encourage the best of the new. Discover more of how they achieve this and why their work remains crucial to the future of the city and its green setting and world-famous views of the dreaming spires.

Emma Nickson has been working with Oxford Preservation Trust since 2016 assisting us with marketing and communications.

Advanced Notice – Important News

Please be aware to impending changes to the Speaker Events listed on your (green) membership cards;

- The event scheduled for August 3rd (‘Imaging Cancer – X rays, MRI and Petscans’) has been **cancelled**. This is due to work being carried out by the Church in upgrading their Audio-Visual equipment, meaning we will not, sadly, be holding any Speaker Meeting that day.
- We are also having to **cancel** the Speaker Meeting on the 21st of September (‘Odd Men and Necessary Women Servants of a Great Palace’) as this has now been set aside to be our ‘Open Day’.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused by these cancellations.

New Member Meetings



2 pm on the first Monday of every month in the Wesley Room at the Methodist Church. This meeting is for all new members to meet each other, the Membership Secretary, Groups' Co-Ordinator, and the New Member Contact. It's also for any relatively new or existing member who would like a cuppa and a chat, to meet more members and to find out more about the u3a. If you know of anyone who is wondering about joining the u3a and is hesitant, why not encourage them to come along and discover more in a small, informal group?

Contact Ann through New Members Contact on the contacts page of the website.

IT Support



Develop your skills on your phone, tablet, or laptop. From 'how do I switch it on?' beginners, 'you'll never get me back up in one of *those!*' restarters all the way up to advanced user levels, Mike and Nick can help you. Free to Witney u3a members. Mondays and Wednesdays in the Library, Welch Way. Booking essential via Wendy on: **07732 597087** or email: **infoawitney@gmail**

Witney u3a Facebook.

Are you a user of Facebook? Did you know we have a private Facebook page for Witney u3a members where members can stay in touch and exchange news and views? You can find it on: www.facebook.com/groups/1705574986327778/ (best to copy and paste this link into your browser). There is also a link from our website to our private members' page. Go to the Links page and scroll down to near the end of the

section called Witney u3a information. Click on the wording that says 'Witney u3a Group Facebook page' and it should take you to it. How about posting to our private members page? We also have a public page which can be accessed by anyone, be they members or non-members. This carries news of forthcoming and recent events and acts as our 'shop window.' The link to the public Facebook page is:

www.facebook.com/witneyu3a/

Thames Valley Network



On Friday the 21st of July, there will be a Reps meeting at Benson Parish Hall (from 10:30 a.m.). It will be a chance to meet **Liz Thackray**, Chair of The Third Age Trust.

This event is free of charge and a free lunch is included, if required.

For other TVN events, follow the U3A website, or go directly to <http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk> (copy this link into your browser).

National U3A On-line Learning

The National U3A website (www.u3a.org.uk) hosts a variety of educational and self-help learning events which you may find of great use. These include:

Monday July 17th: Exploring World Faiths – Faith and the Environment

Online: Starts 10 a.m.

Tuesday July 18th: Into the Mind of an Artist – Van Gogh, Part 2

Online: Starts 10 a.m.

Thursday July 20th: Mindfulness and Meditation (sessions run until November)

Online: Starts 10 a.m.

Thursday July 20th: Philosophy and Travel

Online: Starts 2 p.m.

Podcast



The June episode of the U3A podcast (episode 31) is now available on-line. And one of the interviewers on that broadcast is our very own **Peter Clift** who talks with Allan Walmesley about his work on the 'Off The Wall' project which began on May 10th (a study of that most historic of British landmarks, Hadrian's Wall). There is also a fascinating insight by Neville Lyons into his antecedents' marvellous gift to the fabric of our society – the Lyons Tea Shops. And the Podcast catches up with the two winners of the national U3A poetry competition, with such diverse topics in their winning entries as "Rooks" (the large, feathered variety, not the chess pieces!) and a "letter from Ukraine".

As ever, your host on this podcast is the genial Nick Bailey.

The National u3a podcast celebrates and showcases the wide range of activities taking place across the movement. It comes out every month on podcasting platforms, including Apple and Spotify and as a captioned video on YouTube. Go to your internet browser, search www.youtube.com and – within YouTube – search for u3a.

Local Events and Information

Until 16th July - **Oxford Festival of the Arts**. Visit artsfestivaloxford.org for the programme of speakers and events.

Until September 10th - **Women & War Exhibition at The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock**. From the fringes to the front line. Open Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm, Sunday 2pm to 5pm. Admission prices apply.

Cineworld, Witney has special screenings for the over 60's every Wednesday at 11.30am (excluding school holidays). Tickets £4.50 including a tea or coffee before the film.

Editor's Note: please support this initiative in you can – I went along recently and its not advertised extensively by Cineworld, so isn't always well attended.

10th June to 15th July - **Useful and Beautiful 23**: An exhibition showcasing new work from West Ox Arts members at the WOA Gallery, Market Square, Bampton. Entry free. Open Tuesday to Saturday 11.30am to 4.30pm, Sunday 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Closed on Mondays.

July 7th - **The San Marco Chamber Music Group**, from Jacksonville, Florida, perform Beethoven, Elgar, Hanson and others at St Mary's Church, Witney at 7.00pm. Free admission, retiring collection for parish funds.

July 7th - Witney Jazz presents the **Kim Cypher Quintet**. Saxophonist/vocalist. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7.30pm, show starts 8.00pm. Row seat £16, table seat £18. Tickets booked via witneyjazz.co.uk

July 8th - **Witney Carnival. The Leys 12.00 noon to 5.00pm**. Funfair, live music, food and drink, craft and trade stalls.

July 8th - **Burford Orchestra** will be performing English music for a summer's evening at Burford School, beginning at 7.30pm. Tickets £9.00 available on the door or in advance from Ticketsource.

July 9th - July Cogges presents Summer Theatre in the Barn: **Wind in the Willows**. 2.30pm. Tickets £15 adult, £12 child. Family (2adults and 2 children) £42.00.

July 9th - **Wychwood Forest Fair**, a family-friendly country fair celebrating rural crafts, community and conservation in the historic Wychwood area. Wood carving, archery, falconry, etc, plus food, local beer, live music. Taking place at Foxburrow Wood, Hailey, OX29 9XL. See www.wychwoodforesttrus.co.uk

July 9th - **Kidlington Concert Brass presents A Summer Holiday**, featuring music from around the world. Takes place in Exeter Hall, Kidlington at 2pm. Tickets £10 from kidlingtonconcertbrass.org.uk. Reserve a seat before someone puts a towel on them all.

July 11th - **Cogges presents Outdoor Theatre on the Lawn: Pride and Prejudice**. Gates open 6.30pm, show starts 7.00pm. Tickets £18.50 from cogges.org.uk

July 14th - Join operatic trio **Sorelle** for a comedy concert of opera and musical theatre favourites at Witney Corn Exchange. Doors open 7.00pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £10 available from www.sorellesingers.com

July 15th - **Voicebox Choir** will be performing their 19th Anniversary Concert at St Mary's Church, Witney at 7.30pm. Raising money for Sobell House Hospice. Includes excerpts from Haydn's Creation, popular Gospel numbers and a touch of Broadway. Tickets £15 (£12 over 65) from Truck, Witney or reserve via voiceboxwitney@gmail.com

July 15th and 16th - **West Oxfordshire Steam and Vintage Show**. Ducklington Show Ground. 10.00am to 5.00pm. Adult tickets £10.00. Dogs welcome but must be kept on a lead.

July 15th As part of Oxford Festival of the Arts, the BBC Big Band presents Divas: The Story of Swing, featuring Claire Martin. 7.30pm, Festival Marquee, The Plain OX4 1DS. Tickets £23.50, over 60s £20.00. artsfestivaloxford.org

July 16th - Bridewell, the mental health charity that offers social and therapeutic horticulture to adults, have an open day at their walled garden. Plant sale and pop-up café, 11am to 4pm. Suggested donation £5 per person. The Walled Garden, Wilcote, North Leith, Chipping Norton OX7 3DT.

July 16th - Combe Mill, Combe, Long Hanborough, (the original sawmill and workshop of the Blenheim Palace Estate) is holding a steaming event day, plus Wildlife by the Evenlode. Market stalls. Tea room open. Dogs welcome. 10.30am to 5.00pm. Tickets £9.00, concessions £7.50

July 16th - Open Gardens at 113 Brize Norton Road, Minster Lovell. 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Admission £5.00. Mixed variety garden of over one acre. This garden will feature in a new series of Love Your Garden, with Alan Titchmarsh. Home-made teas.

July 18th - Corn Exchange Film Club are screening **Taxi Driver (1976)**. Doors open 7.00pm, film starts 7.30pm. Tickets £6.00 - £7.50 available from www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

July 21st Witney - Jazz presents **Chris Cobbson's African Jazz Quartet**. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7.30pm, show starts 8.00pm. Row seat £20. Limited front of stage table seats £22. Tickets booked via witneyjazz.co.uk

July 21st/22nd - Bampton Classical Opera present **Salieri At The Venice Fair** (sung in English). The Deanery Garden, Bampton at 7.00pm. Tickets £42 available from 01993 851142 or www.bamptonopera.org.

July 23rd - Merton College Oxford Fellows' Garden open as part of the National Open Gardens Scheme. Merton Street, Oxford. Open 10am to 5pm. Admission £6.50. Ancient mulberry, said to have associations with James I. Long mixed border, herbaceous bed. View of Christ Church meadow.

July 25th - Corn Exchange Film Club are screening **The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)**. Doors open 7.00pm, film starts 7.30pm. Tickets £6.00 - £7.50 available from www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

July 29th - At the Corn Exchange, Witney, **West End Jerseys** takes you back to the slick routines, tight harmonies and unmistakable sound of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. Doors open 7.00pm. show starts 7.45pm. Tickets £19.50. www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

Editor's note – is it me, or do 'West End Jerseys' sound like a breed of potato?

ADVANCE NOTICE

2nd/3rd August - Corn Exchange, Witney presents Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet. Two of Shakespeare's tragedies transformed into comedies, each lasting 40 minutes. Both shows performed by only 4 actors. Doors open 7.00pm, show starts at 7.30pm. Tickets from £11.55 www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

4th August - Witney Jazz presents the Ben Holder Gypsy Quartet. Celebrating Stephane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7.30pm, show starts 8.00pm. Row seat £16, table seat £18. Tickets booked via witneyjazz.co.uk

5th August - Cogges Beer & Cider Festival. Over 40 different craft beers and ciders. Live music. Summer bar and BBQ. £13.50 early bird tickets until 30th July, £15 after/on the day.

Recipe For July



Salade Nicoise

Ingredients for 2

Little Gem lettuce
A few green beans
2 hard-boiled eggs
4 new potatoes
A few black olives
A few baby tomatoes.
A couple of anchovy fillets
Small tin tuna

Wash the lettuce. Cook the potatoes, the eggs, and the green beans.
Arrange all the ingredients in two bowls.
Add French dressing.

Thoughts for the Month

Perhaps our volunteer-in-chief Nicky can answer this one – why are actors IN films but ON television?

And if the former ‘Generation Game’ hostess – Isla St. Clair – had met and married 70s soul singer, Barry White, then divorced him so that she marry 70s heartthrob and Roxy Music front man, Bryan Ferry...would she now be Isla White-Ferry?

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks as ever go to John W, Julie and Frances, Marny, Wendy and all those who contributed to the production of this newsletter.

...and of course, thanks to each and every one of YOU who reads this. I hope you enjoy these words, and the rest of this glorious month of July.