

Chair's notes



Can you guess the number of members of Witney u3a? It's well up on pre-Covid days. We currently have six hundred and thirty members with an average of another ten joining every month.

Great news and welcome to everyone. Our groups are expanding, and our new members are bringing skills and enthusiasm from which we all benefit.

How can we continue to be 'the best that we can be' and meet our members' expectations? At the AGM in June this year, no fewer than six of the eleven Committee members will have to stand down either because they are at the end of their three-year service or for professional or personal reasons. That's a lot of gaps to fill! Can you help? Perhaps you have experience of being on the Committee with another u3a, or you would like to help but feel diffident about putting yourself forward? Maybe you would like to be involved but have a dread of committees – fear not, this Committee subscribes to 'Learn, Laugh, Live' and we do manage to enjoy ourselves too. You might be interested in being part of the Support Team – volunteers who support Committee members in their roles without being on the Committee.

We have to remind ourselves that all u3a's are 'By the members for the members' – we all contribute and that's how we keep going and growing.

To discuss how you could contribute now or in the future, please come and talk to me, or any Committee member – there's absolutely no obligation! You can find us at Speaker Meetings or email any of us through the Contact page on the website. Better still, come and observe and take part in a Committee meeting on the first Tuesday of every month.

We look forward to talking with you.

Groups

Groups looking for members:

- | | |
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| Snooker/Pool | 7 p.m. Every Monday evening. |
| Recorders | a.m. 1 st and 3 rd Tuesdays. |
| Table Tennis | 2 p.m. 1 st and 2 nd Wednesdays, 4 th Thursdays. |

Canasta (experienced) 2 p.m. 1st Tuesday.
Sewing/dressmaking 10 a.m. 3rd Tuesday.
Moral and Ethical Dilemmas 10.00 a.m. 4th Friday
Nature Study

New Groups in the Making.

New Play Reading Group

New Scrabble Group

Contact: Doreen via the Contact page on the website or at any Speaker meeting.

Outings

April 12. Kensington Palace. Cost of entry and coach: £25.10 but if you are a member of Historic Royal Palaces (www.hrp.org.uk) it's £13.10.

Contact Marian on: mfhannaford@hotmail.co.uk or telephone her on 07831 231375

The organisers of the Outings for many years have stepped down. Thank you to all of them on behalf of all Witney u3a members for the superb planning, organisation and delivery of a wide range of trips which have been hugely enjoyed by many members. You will be much missed.

A new Outings team is being formed – this will consist of the former Outings, Stately Homes and Theatre trips – all under one 'umbrella' title of Outings. The new team are drawing up plans for the future and would welcome requests from members for trips to add to their growing list. So if you have ideas and recommendations, contact Marian on: mfhannaford@hotmail.com or at any Speaker Meeting.

Speaker Meetings

Feb. 16th 'Bed Absolute from 1960s – TB Diaries' by Barbara Phillips

March 2nd 'A Photographer's Tale' – the adventures of a female photographer and videographer by Janine Kilroe.

March 16th 'Wartime and Romance' – poetry, humour and a smattering of history, by Andy Smith.

Meet a Member: Judith Hawkins, Co-Treasurer, with responsibility for the Social Fund.

Judith and her husband, Mark, moved from Leighton Buzzard to Witney in 2021 to be closer to their family, who live locally. Like many of us, Judith joined Witney u3a to meet people – and, in her case, to learn more about Bridge. She appreciates the welcome she has received from Witney u3a members and particularly enjoys being part of the Bridge group. She likes the wide range of activities on offer and appreciates the lack of pressure to take on responsibilities. Yet, in spite of that, she became Co-Treasurer in the space of one year!

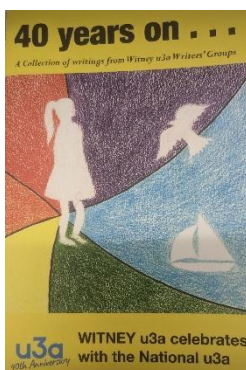
Judith met Mark when she was serving in the WRENS. Later in her working life, she worked for a U.S. satellite communications company and was responsible for reporting the monthly accounts and explaining these to the auditors.

In her spare time, Judith enjoys quilting and knitting. She and Mark own a Mazda MX5 sports car and are enjoying exploring the local area and further afield, as well as taking trips to the seaside for fish and chips. They also have a son and family in Budapest so visit Hungary twice a year.

Welcome aboard, Judith!

Peter Blackman. With sadness, we report that Peter died on January 11. Peter was a much-valued member of Witney u3a, known for his charm and inimitable style. He was also our Publicity officer for several years. He will be much missed. The family ask that if you would like to do something in Peter's memory, please visit his tribute site at peterblackman.muchloved.com to donate to Katharine House Hospice, and/or contribute by adding messages, memories or photographs for others to see.

'40 years on...'



A collection of stories, memoirs, travel and poetry. All written, edited and published in 2022 by our talented Creative Writers, some of whom are published authors. Find out what your fellow members are thinking and writing. 'It contains a varied range of writing, taking the reader to places across the globe from Kashgar Market to Mount Rushmore; from a glimpse of student life in the '60s to a view of the future; it delves into a world of political intrigue and also places of fantasy.' Only £3.99.

Treat yourself to a copy – and maybe give to friends and family. 'A really good mix of stories.' 'A great piece of work.'

Available at all Speaker Meetings and from lynne.patrick05@gmail.com

u3a Quilt continues to be a draw.

As many of us know, the national u3a quilt was produced in 2022 to celebrate the u3a's 40th anniversary. It shows the many and varied skills and interests of u3a members across the country. Three of its squares were made by our own Sewing Group. The quilt is hanging in the Great Room at the Witney Blanket Hall in High Street and looks magnificent. Richard, Manager at the Witney Blanket Hall, has been so impressed with the numbers of visitors, including from other u3as, that he has offered to keep the quilt in the Blanket Hall in perpetuity. If you haven't already seen it, it's well worth a visit – an exceptional piece of work which honours the u3a and our quilters. The Blanket Hall is open Wednesday – Saturday, 10 – 5. And don't forget the Pie Shop downstairs!



Drop in café.

Ann, New Member Contact writes:



A super enthusiastic group of new and potential members at today's New Members Meeting in the Methodist Church café area. 16 invitations sent out, 12 replies and 13 attendees (including one gent with instructions from his wife as to the groups she was interested in !!).

It's really gratifying to see how many people have done their homework and have searched the Witney u3a website to aid their decision making. It's also very interesting to note how many instances we are now seeing of newly retired and/or newly moved to the area, where both wife and husband are joining at the same time with a view to attending our bi-monthly Speaker Meetings together, but joining a different selection of our 60+ group choices, four such couples today.

There was a great buzz of chatter with the coming together of ideas, thoughts and desires over a cup of tea or coffee, with Doreen, John and myself signing people up as members, helping with group choices and washing up!!

IT Support

Until now, over forty members have been helped to upgrade their skills by our team of Nick, Gill and Mike. Congratulations to the members on their progress and very many thanks to our tutors.

- 1:1 help across all devices.
- Up to 6 sessions of 1 hour each.
- Complete beginners to competent users.

- Free to all Witney u3a members.
- Booking essential.

Contact: Wendy: infowitneyu3a@gmail.com or 07732 597087

Thames Valley Network. Talks by Zoom.

February 21. 10.30. 'Agatha Christie – the Wallingford and Cholsey connection ' by Judy Dewy. Apply by February 19.

March 3. 2.30. Spring Quiz. Apply by March 1

Apply via u3atvnetwork.org.uk. On the Welcome page there is a list of forthcoming events.

National u3a

The u3a's 400,000+ members are ideally placed to influence ideas and policies to the benefit of our age group. One of u3a's aims is to push back ageism in all its forms under the umbrella title of 'Future Lives.' One recent project, run by u3a members across the country, was an investigation into how housing can be improved for older people and what steps we ourselves can take. Future Lives is now looking for its next project. If you'd like to find out more and maybe become involved, try the national Future Lives Workshop on February 28, 2.00 – 3.30. Details and enrolment on: www.u3a.org.uk/FutureLives

Opportunities with online u3a.

Currently, among others, these include a 'Walkers' Exchange'. That means if you are keen on walking and are visiting another part of the country, contact u3a Walkers Exchange who will put you in touch with a u3a who knows interesting walks in that area. Alternatively register with Walkers Exchange to add walks in our local area for other u3a members to enjoy.

Or maybe you'd like to explore your own and others' memories of the 50s and 60s. 'All our Yesterdays' aims to collect members' stories of that era with a view to publication.

Take a look at: www.u3a.org.uk/Learning/Subjects for these and other projects.

Podcast- u3a Radio Reaches New Milestone. PIC of pc

Peter Clift, former Witney u3a Chair and now a mainstay interviewer on the u3a podcast writes:

u3a Radio is now into its third year of the podcast and the YouTube channel has already garnered almost **100,000 views**. There are also several thousands more listening on different podcast platforms including **Apple, Spotify and Google**. Created by a team of u3a members with radio experience, our u3a radio podcast comes out on the 17th of each month. It showcases the amazing things happening across the



u3a movement. The podcast has covered a wealth of subjects from u3a members nationally, including disco dancing, working as a maid at Buckingham Palace, u3a in Australia, juggling and tight rope walking, a member who travelled across America on a Greyhound bus as a young man and then repeated the journey, again by Greyhound bus, 50 years later, and a group who make musical instruments out of vegetables! Many of the members interviewed nearly always say 'Oh, people won't be interested in me!' and then go on to tell fascinating stories of what they did whilst working or what they are doing now.

Could you take part in one of our future podcasts? Maybe you've recently fulfilled a long-held ambition, or you've started an unusual u3a group? Or perhaps you'd like to nominate someone from u3a who you know has a story to tell? We'd love to hear from you. Our email address is communications@u3a.org.uk

We are also looking to expand our production team. If you have a background in broadcasting or journalism and would like to join us, then please email us at the above address, or if you would like an informal chat then please contact Peter Clift on peter.clift@ntlworld.com.

You can also listen to the latest edition and catch up on all previous editions of the podcast by following this link:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsB2t41TNozHSJ4fvod_yjxrUJDzqbDD

Local Events and Information in February

10th Witney Music Society presents Ensemble Moliere at Witney High Street Methodist Church at 7.30pm. Tickets £15. For information see

www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

10th February to 30th July 'Labyrinth' – a major exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Over 100 objects which have never left Crete and Greece before. Full price tickets £15.30, 65s and over £14.30. For details see

www.ashmolean.org/exhibit.

10th 7.30. 'The English Job.' Wootton Village Hall. Jack Straw will speak about Iran.

Jack Straw served in the Cabinet from 1997 to 2010 under Labour governments and was Foreign Secretary from 2001. Entry: £10 in cash – includes free food. Wine and soft drinks are available for a modest donation.

To reserve seats: www.woottontalks.co.uk Those attending are encouraged to wear a face-covering. All proceeds to the Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal.

11th 8 p.m. 'Abbamagic', the Abba tribute. Corn Exchange, Witney. Tickets £12 available from Truck Witney (formerly called Rapture)

12th 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Open gardens at Hollyhocks. North Street, Islip. Admission £3.50. Edwardian garden designed to give maximum colour throughout the year. www.ngs.org.uk

15th 7.0 p.m. 'The Barber of Seville'. Royal Opera House 2023 Live Opera. Cineworld, Witney.

16th, 17th, 18th .7.30 plus matinee at 2.30 p.m. on 18th.. 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears.' Witney Dramatic Society, High Street Methodist Church. Tickets, adults £12, children £10.

22nd 7.30pm. Lenthall Concert at Burford School. Music from South America, together with classics from Europe. Tickets £16.

23rd 7.00 p.m. 'Othello.' Live production by the National Theatre. Cineworld, Witney

25th 7.30pm with pre-concert talk at 6.45pm 'Let's Face The Music. Celebrating Irving Berlin.' JdP Music Building, St Hilda's College, Cowley Place, Oxford. Tickets £25 stalls, £30 gallery. For information see jdp.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk

25th 8.00 p.m. Thrill Collins, a UK skiffle-pop trio. Corn Exchange, Witney. Tickets £12 available from Eventbright or at Truck Witney.

ADVANCE NOTICE

3rd March. 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Witney Jazz presents Freddie Gavita 'Choice Standards@ at the Corn Exchange, Witney. A talented trumpet prodigy. Row seat £15, table seat £17. Contact: witneyjazz.co.uk

10th March . 7.30 p.m. Witney Music Society presents Ensemble Mirage. Programme includes music by Prokofiev, Mozart, Copland and Zdenek Fibich. High Street Methodist Church. For information visit www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

11th, 15th March. 'Hunting the Higgs Boson' by Prof. Frank Close, 'How to live a Rational Life' by Professor Jim Al-Kalili. Also, a Science Market in Abingdon Market Square on March 11. Further information: atomfestival.org.uk

ADVANCE, ADVANCE, NOTICE

May 12th 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Corn Exchange, Witney. 'West End Magic.' A family friendly evening of magic and comedy. Corn Exchange, Witney. Tickets £10. Call 01993 704379.

Recipe of the month

Tiramisu

Ingredients

400ml double cream
250g mascarpone
75ml marsala
5 tbsp golden caster sugar
300ml coffee, made with 2 tbsp coffee granules and
300ml boiling water
175g sponge fingers
25g dark chocolate
2 tsp cocoa powder



Method

Put the double cream, mascarpone, marsala and golden caster sugar in a large bowl.

Whisk until the cream and mascarpone have completely combined and have the consistency of thickly whipped cream.

Pour the coffee into a shallow dish. Dip in a few of the sponge fingers at a time, turning for a few seconds until they are nicely soaked, but not soggy. Layer these in a dish until you've used half the sponge fingers, then spread over half of the creamy mixture.

Using the coarse side of the grater, grate over most of the dark chocolate. Then repeat the layers (you should use up all the coffee), finishing with the creamy layer.

Cover and chill for a few hours or overnight. *Will keep in the fridge for up to two days.*

To serve, dust with the cocoa powder and grate over the remainder of the chocolate.

Quiz Focus on Italy

1. Name Italy's longest river.
2. In which city is the Uffizi Gallery?
3. Which straits separate Italy and Sicily?
4. Marco Polo airport is the airport for which city?
5. Name the famous fountain in Rome.
6. What is the only active volcano on mainland Europe?
7. Which artist, together with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, forms the trinity of the great masters of the High Renaissance?

8. The name of which Italian pudding means 'pick me up'?
9. In which Italian city was Christopher Columbus born?
10. Name the monumental stairway in Rome.
11. Which is the largest lake in Italy?
12. Which family sponsored Florentine art during the Renaissance?



Answers

1. The River Po.
2. Florence.
3. The Straits of Messina.
4. Venice.
5. The Trevi Fountain.
6. Vesuvius.
7. Raphael.
8. Tiramisu.
9. Genoa.
10. The Spanish Steps.
11. Lake Garda.
12. The Medici family.

Acknowledgements. Thank you to Judith, Ann, Wendy, Marny and Ralph for their contributions.