

Editorial



*Roses are red
Violets are blue
My Mother-in-law has a funny tattoo
In fact she's got three, and d'ya know where she's got 'em?
A rose on each knee
And a mouth on her*

Ah, February is amongst us – and the feast day of St Valentine the martyr is almost here. When I was a young man, being alone on February 14th was always something that troubled me greatly. Now, its those of us who have lost loved ones – our nearest and dearest - who are saddened the most on that day, But we can look back lovingly and with a smile when we remember happier times of yore. I hope whatever that day means to *you* that you have a pleasant Wednesday (and that you haven't over indulged on pancakes the day before!). And let's hope the weather brightens up – I'm recovering from a bout of 'man flu' at the moment following that prolonged spell of Arctic winds and cold, blustery mornings. But I hope this latest newsletter finds *you* feeling chipper and enjoying the rudest of health. And if you don't receive any thorn-stemmed red roses on the 14th, fear not because on the 15th, the speaker meeting talk is about Rose Hill in Oxford, and looks like being yet another good one.

Of course, I mentioned lost loved ones, but you're never too old to *find* love. Who knows, they may be a fellow member of this fine body of men and women. You may be having a cuppa after the speaker meeting when someone you've already met sidles up alongside to ask "how about dinner some time - when are **you free, eh?**"

Mike

Group News

We start as usual with news of Groups with 'vacancies' they'd like to fill;



Book Group 4 – run by Celia, this group meets every 4th Thursday of the month.



Canasta – run by Shirley and meeting every first Tuesday of the month at the Methodist Church



Needlework – Jane runs two groups, both meeting in a member's home on the 2nd Monday and the 3rd Friday of the month. Why not go along?



Non-Fiction Reading – It's a fact; Gill gathers the group at the Methodist Church on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.



Sewing/Dressmaking – on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, Sandra's group meets at the Methodist Church.



Snooker/Pool group – Keith cues off this gathering every Monday evening, upstairs at the Methodist Church.

And congratulations to the new groups that got off the ground during January. These include a **Cribbage** group organised by Elisabeth and two new **Meditation and Mindfulness** groups chaired by Amina. So whether its 'one for his knob' or a release of physical tension exploring the metaphysical that you seek, there truly is something for everyone in our groups – seek out Doreen on speaker day for more information.

Speaker Meetings

Thursday, February the 15th, Witney Methodist Church

'Rose Hill: an Oxford suburb of surprising contrasts and great historical interests' with Liz Woolley

Liz Woolley is a local historian specialising in aspects of the history of Oxfordshire and Oxford. She is particularly interested in the city's "town" (as opposed to "gown") history, and in the everyday lives of rural people across the county, chiefly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Liz has lived in Oxford since 1984. She completed an MSc in English Local History (with Distinction) at the University of Oxford's Department for Continuing Education in 2009, having gained a Diploma (also with Distinction) in the same subject in 2007. She is an experienced speaker, guide, tutor, researcher and writer who is keen to help individuals and groups to enjoy finding out about the history of their local area.



Speakers Day Support Workers – A Call to Arms

I'd like to introduce Kay Green who has kindly taken the reins as our new Volunteers Co-ordinator. Kay makes the following appeal.

For each Speaker Meeting held fortnightly at The Methodist Hall, Witney there are eight volunteer support workers - without their support and that of the committee members, the Speaker Meetings would be unable to take place. So thank you to all of you who currently Volunteer. But we'd like more of you to step forward.

What would my level of commitment be?

Twice a year would be an average commitment. If you were able to do *more* we would be grateful. The majority of volunteers add their names to the Volunteer group and - once the rota is completed and issued - contact the co-ordinator if they are unable to assist on that date and have been unable to swap with another member. The usual practice has been to ask another member to swap and if all else fails make contact with the co-ordinator.

What would I be required to do?

Help out at the Speaker Meetings at the Methodist Church on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 2 p.m. **Please would you arrive at the Church at 1 p.m.**

The current role descriptions are as follows.

(1) Sign in at Front and Rear Entrances to the Church.

- When you arrive, on the table will be:
 - 2 x sign in boards, sheets and pens. One sheet is for Visitors, one for Members.
 - 2 x yellow Volunteers' sashes
 - 2 x 'Reserved Seat' notices' for you to place where you wish to sit during the talk
 - Hand Sanitisers
- Please welcome members as they arrive and sign them in on the appropriate sheet.
- Take any visitors to the Visitors/New Members table just inside the Lower Hall entrance. Remain at the sign in table for 5 minutes after the start of the talk to sign in any latecomers. Take all the materials to the Membership Table in the Lower Hall after signing in has finished.

(2) Steward at the door from the café to the Worship Area.

- When you arrive, on the table to the left of the door will be:
 - 2 x yellow volunteers' sashes for each volunteer
 - 2 x Reserved Seat notices for you to place where you wish to sit during the talk.
- Please welcome members, keeping an open eye for visitors or anyone on their own. Guide them to a seat, and offer to introduce them to other members or committee members. Return the sashes and seat notices to the Membership table after the meeting.

(3) Bookstall

- When you arrive, on the books table will be:
 - 2 x yellow Volunteers' sashes for each volunteer
 - 2 x yellow Volunteers' sashes
 - Crates of second-hand books, DVDs, puzzles, magazines. Please put out for display. As you put them out, check the date on the inside cover. Any over 3 months, put in bags provided for Rota Organiser to take to Charity Shop. Any new contributions to bookstall, write the current month on the inside cover.
 - A float provided by the rota organiser. Each item costs 50p. Take the float into the Worship area during the talk.

(4) Café Volunteers

Self-explanatory – if you're handy with a teapot or coffee urn, we'd like to hear from you!

Thank you for taking time to read this request. I would be very pleased to hear from any members who would like to be added to the Volunteer rota. Best Wishes - Kay

New Member Meetings



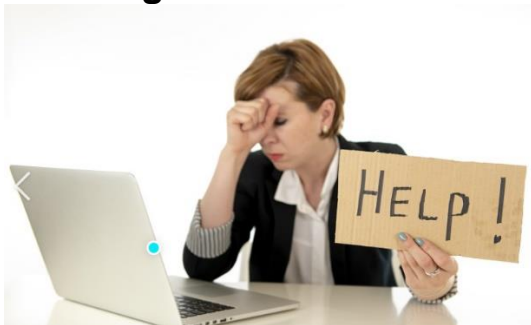
New members have a chance to meet on the 1st Monday of the month at 2pm in the Methodist Church Coffee Bar (except for Bank Holidays). This month – unusually, but for obvious reasons – they met on Monday the 8th.

The get together normally lasts about 1 to 1.5 hours - there is no charge and coffee/tea is available. The New Member's meeting is organised to provide new members with some background information about the u3a organisation and more specific information about Witney u3a.

There is a chance to discuss the interest groups available and to register any group interest.

Editor's Note: welcome to your first Newsletter those that have joined in January and early February. Contributions always welcomed if you have anything to say or promote.

IT Training



Develop your skills on your phone, tablet, or laptop. Mike and (when available) Nick can help you. Free to Witney u3a members. Wednesday mornings in the library at 10am and 11am, Welch Way. If this is unsuitable, please contact us and we will try to be flexible. 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.' Link via www.facebook.com/witneyu3a/

Editorial Note: due to ill health and her many other u3a responsibilities, our regular Facebook administrator is looking to step down from these activities in future. If you can help us fill this void, please contact me by reply to this newsletter – thank you - Mike

Thames Valley Network (TVN)

u3a Thames Valley Network *Learn Laugh Live!*

The TVN is a forum comprising nearly 50 individual u3a groups from across the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Wiltshire. They have their own website which can be found at www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk – take a look at their 'Events' listings some time.

In February, these events include a musical recital by Charles Aronson – a frequent contributor and marvellous virtuoso – who will perform the works of Burt Bacharach. See the advertising 'flyer' attached to the email accompanying this newsletter.

Also, on Monday the 12th of February, the TVN are hosting their u3a Network Link Spring meeting, 10am – 12:30pm. All are welcome, with tickets available via the TicketSource website (<https://www.ticketsouce.co.uk> – enter 'u3a network' in the search box - you'll also find our 'Burt Bacharach' impersonator this way!).

Podcast



Episode 36 – the January edition – can be listened to and watched now. Once again, Witney u3a's very own 'silver fox', the velvet-toned Peter C presents the show. This episode includes a story about breaking into the world of music writing at a more senior age, the devastating medical condition of 'essential tremor', and – a subject which is fast becoming more everyday reality than mere science fiction – an insight into AI (or 'Artificial Intelligence'). There's also an article by the u3a group local to Knutsford about 'talking newspapers', a service which has been a great boon to the blind or particularly sight impaired.

The podcasts are available on Spotify and other podcast platforms but are probably most easily obtained on YouTube by simply searching 'u3a podcast'.

West Oxfordshire Arts Society

I'm grateful to fellow member Frances for bringing to my attention the **Arts Society of West Oxon** who held an event this week on the 8th of February at the Witney Corn Exchange, and have another event coming up on the 14th of March at the same venue: '**Dame Laura Knight**' by Rosalind Whyte - Visitors welcome - £7:00 per person.

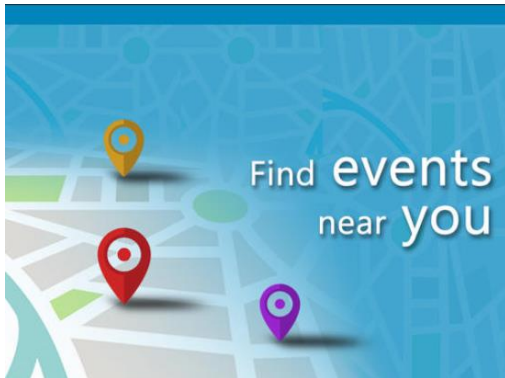
Request for Donations of Knitting Wool



An amazing elderly local lady with limited physical abilities volunteers help to Age UK by knitting colourful hats for needy people. This she started in January of this year and already during that month knitted 11 hats. Previously, she knitted the incredibly huge number of approx. 4,000 - yes, 4,000! - little hats for the top of the Innocent Smoothy bottles, again under the umbrella of Age UK.

Please, if you can kindly help with others in donating knitting wool for this amazing cause all would be most gratefully accepted. Perhaps this idea may inspire an early start to Spring Cleaning! Collection times and dates to be announced shortly.

Local Events



As always, we end with a list of entertainment 'hot tickets' in West Oxfordshire this month, to keep you out of mischief! Now read on...

February 10th : Stayin' Alive – The Best of the Bee Gees at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £18.

www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

February 13th: Pancakes and Prosecco at The Rector's Arms, St Mary's Church, Witney. £10 entry, includes first glass of prosecco and pancakes

Also on February 13th: Corn Exchange Witney Classic Film Club are screening **Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind**, starring Kate Winslet and Jim Carrey. 7.30pm. Tickets £6.00 - £7.50.

February 14th: Cineworld Witney are screening **My Favourite Things**, an 80th Anniversary concert celebrating the music of **Rodgers and Hammerstein**. Filmed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, the concert features original arrangements of iconic songs from Oklahoma!, Carousel, South Pacific, The King and I, The Sound of Music and more. 7.30pm. Tickets are in the region of £18.50

February 15th/16th/17th: Witney Dramatic Society present **Aladdin the Pantomime** at High Street Methodist Church. Performances at 7.30pm on all three days plus a matinee at 2.30pm on 17th. Tickets, Thursday £10, Friday and Saturday £12.

February 18th: **My Favourite Things** at Cineworld Witney. Details as above for 14th This performance is at 3.30pm.

February 22nd: Cineworld Witney are screening **National Theatre Live: Vanya** at 7.00pm

February 23rd: **Thrill Collins**, a skiffle-pop trio, return to The Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 8.00pm, show starts 8.30pm. Tickets £14. **PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A STANDING EVENT**

February 24th: **Young Elton**. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £18.00. www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

February 27th: Corn Exchange Witney Classic Film Club are screening **Predator**, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. 7.30pm. Tickets £7.21 - £8.83.

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks as ever go to Wendy, Frances, Doreen, Kay, Peter and everybody who contributed to the production of this newsletter.