

Editorial



I'm pulling this month's Newsletter together on the eve of the AGM. Sadly, we lose such an industrious and dedicated leader, as Clare is stepping down from her role as Chair, and we'll all miss her steady hand on the tiller. While we await the traces of white smoke that will rise from the Methodist Church to signal the election of the *new* Chair, I thought I'd fill the breach. I trust this journal finds you all happy and well, and – after an April and most of May when we were fearful that we hadn't taken the right coat with us as we left the house – isn't it lovely just to be able to leave the coat at home for a change? Still take a good cardy with you, mind! As we move into the month that many a two-bit, hackneyed lyricist has rhymed with 'moon' and 'spoon' in his or her time, let's hope the warm weather continues (at least until Wimbledon starts on July the 3rd; then we *know* it will rain!).

Writing an editorial also gives me the opportunity to put out a plea if I may (it's okay, this doesn't involve the handing over of money!). I don't intend to radically alter this Newsletter in style, content or appearance, but rather for it to evolve slowly. And I'd like that evolution to be dictated by YOU, dear reader. At the risk of sounding cheesy, it is YOUR Newsletter, not *my* 'plaything'. If there are features you don't like, please let me know. Equally, if you have any new ideas that you think we could incorporate, I'd like to hear from you. Even if you'd like to submit a piece for publication, send it to me – my contact details are on the U3A website (or you can find me at the Methodist Church most speaker days). I draw the line at 'free gifts' but – otherwise – I'm open to suggestion!

Thank you from reading and very best wishes,

Mike

The Coronation Tea (May 18th)



Before we move forward, let's take a look back. Following a very entertaining talk by Valerie Taylor in the Worship Hall on May 18th, we all retired to the back room for 'tea and tiffin', and a very passable glass of non-alcoholic fizz ('Nosecco') with which to toast His Majesty King Charles the Third. We were led in this venture by the inspirational words of Peter (pictured, left), attired suitably for such an auspicious occasion!

They used to say that our dear, departed Queen Elizabeth II thought that the whole world smelled of fresh paint...because when she went on her countless walkabouts meeting the public, there was usually someone in overalls, brush in hand and but 50 paces ahead of her applying the finishing strokes to a tidy-up coat! In similar vein, our grateful thanks go to the army of members and helpers whose hard work meant that the rest of us merely had to sit down and enjoy the fare.



I think I can safely say that a jolly good time was had by all, and the buffet food 'spread' was delightful and gratefully received. God Save The King,

Groups



Group Leaders

38 Group Leader's attended a Group Leader meeting, held in the Upper Hall on Monday 22nd May.

Group Leaders were introduced to the new Group Support team who had been formed because of the growing member numbers and increased workload in Witney U3A. The New Member's contact, Newsletter contact and other Committee members were also present and were introduced.

There was a demonstration of the Beacon computer system, now used by the majority of U3A affiliations across the country.

Updated Group Leader Guidelines were handed out to all the leaders present. These guidelines covered Group Membership, Responsibility, Planning, Finance and where to get Support.

The meeting closed with a discussion about the future open day on Thursday 21st September, how this might increase membership and how we could accommodate and support these new members.

Bridge Groups News

From the 21st to 26th May, Nationally, U3A organised a Bridge competition called the Spring Charity Bridge Festival.

On Thursday 25th May, 32 Witney U3A Bridge players took part in this competition. Each Bridge group paid an entrance fee and the Witney Bridge group fee of £100 will go to Alzheimer's Research and Age UK.

Thanks to the Witney leader - Don - for all the work involved in organising this event for Witney Bridge players. Results will be out soon.

Groups looking for Members.

Bridge Group 1

Canasta

Cotswold Discovery

Croquet

History of Art 2

Nature Study

Needle Work

Pop Music

Recorders

Table Tennis 2

Longer Walks Group

May walks among the Antiquities

May 9 - Minster Lovell in the Mud



After heavy rain earlier in the month, conditions for this walk would best be described as 'ideal for mudlarks.' Around 20 of us set off from the Windrush Inn car park on Burford Road, led by David B. The walk took us through Crawley and on to Minster Lovell where we had our coffee break in the ruins of the ancient Hall. The return route roughly followed the course of the Windrush river on a very slippery footpath. Happily, no-one had an early bath! We returned to the Windrush Inn where some of the group enjoyed a well-deserved lunch with good food and excellent service. Despite the conditions it was an excellent walk.

May 23 - Blenheim in the Sun



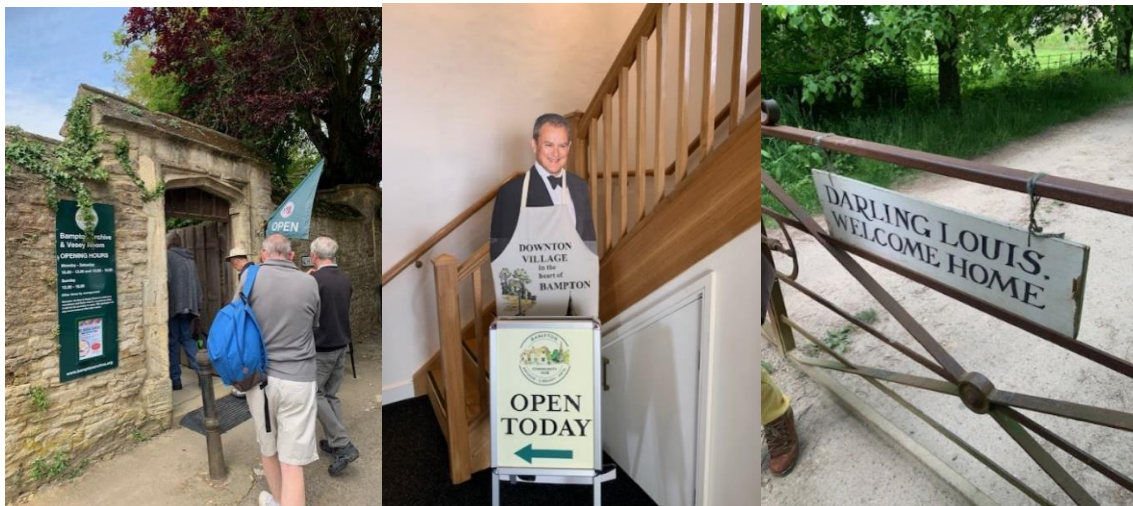
On a beautiful spring day, Hillary led a group of 15 walkers on an 8km circular walk through the Blenheim Estate starting out at the Combe Gate. We followed estate roads and grassy tracks counter clockwise around the Palace. The estate is undertaking a major project dredging The Lake and Queens Pool of years of accumulated silt. The information board indicated that the amount of silt they plan to remove would fill Wembley Stadium 10 times over - some of us hope they don't do it before the end of the football season! The dredgers were certainly hard at work as we crossed Grand Bridge after which we turned left to view the tree used in the Harry Potter film 'The Order of the Phoenix.' The film makers must have taken poetic

license as the Blenheim tree is a cedar and the tree described in the book was a beach! We continued uphill along a track to meet another estate road where we further ascended to head back to Combe Gate. Some members of the group took the opportunity to get their breath back on a seat made from a 500-year-old oak tree. This was another very enjoyable walk.

Editor's Footnote: it seems somehow fitting to have such a challenging expedition led by someone called 'Hillary' – well done Longer Walkers!

Cotswolds Discovery Group

This group is still in an embryonic state, deciding on what its focus and format should be, but – having sampled all the delights that Burford could offer in March and April – around a dozen of us ventured out to Bampton on May 23rd. We first of all walked from our meeting point (the market square) down to Ham Court – the site of the 14th century Bampton Castle that was. We then strode on to the church, calling in at the old grammar school, now the Bampton Archive and Vesey Room – or Downton Hospital for fans of that long-running ITV program! After a very brief visit to the art centre back in the market square, we then took lunch at Bampton Garden Centre. All in all, a varied and enjoyable day with a little something for everyone.



Contact Doreen via the Contact page on the website or at any Speaker meeting on all matters concerning Groups and their activities.

Speaker Meetings

Thursday June the 1st

Immediately following the AGM:

“The Legend of the White Mouse Nancy Wake” with Paul Barwick.

Australian Nancy Wake left home at 19 years old seeking adventure. Not even she could envisage the life she would lead as one of World War 2's most decorated agents of espionage, leading thousands of men into battle against Nazi Germany and earning the nickname from the Gestapo of 'The White Mouse'. Her heroic efforts and those of her female contemporary spies helped the Allies defeat Hitler and today we pay tribute to her bravery.

Paul Barwick was born and still lives in Watford, Hertfordshire. He spent a whole career in the Police Service in London and ended his career in the field of National security. Upon retiring Paul set up his own business offering espionage themed walking tours of the capital, focused on the famous incidents and locations that make London one of the espionage capitals of the world. He also speaks to many bodies of people interested in the murky world of spying.

Thursday June the 15th

“The Glass Rainbow” with Avis Furness

The story of Henry Thomas Bosdet, a maker of stained glass who started and ended his life in Jersey, and whose work may be found in many churches in England.

Avis Furness retired in 2007 and immediately joined Reading U3A. Before that she had been working for the London Office of the European Parliament and had given talks to U3A affiliations (including Witney!). She has been Chair of Reading U3A, and of the Thames Valley Network, and is still very active in both. In addition, she is on the U3A Network Link team, helping to organise the Zoom meetings three times a year, and also on the U3A South East Region Support Team. She runs Facebook groups for Reading, the TVN, and is also a moderator for the national U3A Week FB group.

Christine writes: "A graphic designer by trade, I have had a life-long fascination with letters in all their infinite forms, especially hand drawn. I am also interested in cut out art forms, playing with negative and positive shapes so paper cutting seemed a perfect fit for me. I began paper cutting about 14 years ago and it has improved and become refined over the years. I am self-taught and have built up a small business selling my typographic designs as printed cards and bags. The talk covers international aspects of paper cutting, a bit of history, techniques, popularity and my own take on it and where it has taken me. A couple of years ago I was featured on BBC4's 'Make! Craft Britain' demonstrating and teaching paper cutting to a group of novices."

Drop in Café



2 pm on the first Monday of every month in the Wesley Room at the Methodist Church. The café 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?

The Drop in café will resume on **June 5**. 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

Study Event: On Tuesday the 27th of June at 10:30am, Rear Admiral Dr Chris Parry CBE PhD will review the Ukrainian and Russian military campaigns in Ukraine, highlight some of the salient lessons and forecast how the conflict might 'play out'.

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 June 5th: Driving Tips To Save Money and the Planet from IAM RoadSmart

Online: 2-3 pm

Thursday June 8th: Expedition Cruising – an Antarctic Adventure

Online: 2-3 pm

Wednesday June 14th: Laughter Yoga for 2023

Online: 10 am

Thursday June 22nd: Into the Mind of an Artist – Van Gogh, Part 1

Online: 10 am

Podcast



The May episode of the U3A podcast (episode 30) is now available on-line. They have the result of May's 'Cook For A King' competition (spoiler alert: there's a tandoori theme to be had here!), an article on how to win at quizzes (*without* cheating!) – ultimately becoming a quiz master and setter of questions yourself - and some advice

on how to record our ancestry from the tales and family stories passed on down from our relatives and loved ones (who *themselves* were told the stories by *their* loved ones and ancestors). Genetic genealogy is also discussed – the type of ‘DNA testing’ that many of us have taken part in before now helping to grow and build a family tree.

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

Cineworld, Witney have special screenings for the over 60's every Wednesday at 11.30am (excluding school holidays). Tickets are £4.50 and include free tea or coffee and biscuits before the film.

June 2nd / 3rd: - Buttercross Quilters Exhibition. Witney High Street Methodist Church, 10.00am to 4.00pm. Admission £3.00.

June 3rd - Cineworld, Witney is screening *Die Zauberflote* from MET Opera Live at 5.55pm.

June 8th - The Art Society presents *Cathedrals: Stone on Stone* - the men who built the cathedrals. A talk by Imogen Corrigan. Corn Exchange, Witney at 7.30pm. Tickets £6.50 at the door.

June 9th and 10th - Witney Music Festival, The Leys. 9th 5pm to 11pm £5.00. 10th 12 noon to 11pm £10.00. VIP weekend ticket £40.00

June 10th - Eynsham Choral Society will be performing Haydn's *Creation* at St Leonard's Church, Eynsham at 7.30pm. Tickets can be purchased in advance from Evenlode DIY Eynsham, or via the contact form on www.eynshamchoral.org. Tickets may be available at the door, but not guaranteed.

June 10th - Lower Windrush Choral Society present Brahms' *German Requiem*. The work will be sung in English. 6.00pm at Witney High Street Methodist Church. Advance tickets £12.00 available from St Andrew's Bookshop or Truck Witney. £14.00 on the door.

June 10th - Holy Trinity Church, Witney have another event where proceeds will go to the roof appeal. Juliet Curry will be giving a talk and launching her new book about Woodgreen and its history. Plus plants, cakes, chocolate and refreshments. 2.30pm at Holy Trinity Woodgreen, Witney. Guided tours of Woodgreen at 2.30pm and 4.00pm.

June 11th - Brize Norton open gardens. 1.00pm to 6.00pm. Combined admission £7.50. Tickets and maps available at Elderbank Hall. Home-made teas available. A flower festival will take place in the Brize Norton St Britius Church.

June 13th - Cineworld, Witney is screening *// Travatore* from Royal Opera House live opera at 7.15pm

June 17th - Brize Singers' Summer Concert, with special guests Oxford string quartet OXUS, and a children's choir. Witney Congregational Church, 4 Welch Way. Doors open 6.30pm, Concert 7.00pm. Tickets £12, includes interval refreshments. Tickets can be ordered via brizesingers50@gmail.com or on the door (cash only).

June 17th and 18th - Cogges Manor Farm Summer Fete. 9.30am to 5.00pm. For tickets see www.cogges.org.uk

June 17th - Step onto the red carpet for an Awards Murder Mystery Gala at St Mary's Church, Witney. Begins at 6.30pm. Tickets from Church Office. Participant 'actors' £25/£40 for two, observers £15/£25 for two. Free glass of prosecco on arrival. Buffet. Dress to impress.

June 18th - Combe Mill Steaming Event, plus Wheels Past and Present. Market stalls, refreshments. 10.30am to 5.00pm. Tickets, adults £9 (60+ concession £7.50). Combe Mill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe, Near Long Hanborough.

June 18th - Open gardens at The Priory, Charlbury 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Admission £6. One and a half acre of formal terraced topiary gardens with Italianate features. Formal vegetable and herb garden. Arboretum of over three acres borders the River Evenlode.

June 22nd - Lunchtime recital at High Street Methodist Church 12.30 to 1.30pm. A *Concert For Fathers Day*. Admission free.

June 23rd to 25th - Blenheim Palace Flower Show. Gates open 10.00am to 5.00pm. For details see www.blenheimpalace.com

June 24th - Cogges presents *Big Band In The Barn*. An evening of music, dance and vintage glamour with Bristol's 16-piece swing band, Big R Big Band. Vintage dress encouraged. 7pm to 11pm. Tickets £24 includes BBQ supper. Summer Bar. Tickets from www.cogges.org.uk

June 25th - The Burford Singers present *The Magic of Mozart* at The Church of St John the Baptist, Burford at 7.30pm. Performing *Regina Coeli*, *Horn Concerto No.3* and *Requiem*. Tickets reserved at £25, £20 and £15, unreserved £10. Online booking www.burfordsingers.org.uk/buy-tickets or from The Madhatter Bookshop, Burford, and on the door.

June 27th - Corn Exchange Film Club screening *Labyrinth*, the 1986 musical fantasy film. Doors open 7.00pm, film starts 7.30pm. Tickets available from cornexchangewitney.org.uk

June 28th - Cineworld Witney is screening Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* at 7.30pm.

Advance Notice Events

1st July - Blenheim Palace Battle Proms, open-air picnic concert. Classical favourites, fireworks, Spitfire, cannons. For further information and tickets see blenheimpalace.com

1st July - Witney Horticultural Society Summer Flower and Vegetable Show at High Street Methodist Church. Public viewing 1.30-m to 3.00pm

1st July - Eynsham Carnival. 11.00am to 6.00pm. Parade, outside stalls and craft fair, arena acts, fun fair. Entry tickets £5.00, cash only.

2nd July - Cineworld Witney is screening Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* at 3.00pm.

7th July - 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

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, available from www.cogges.org.uk

9th July - 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 and a wide variety of rural craft displays. Foxburrow Wood, Hailey. See www.wychwoodforesttrust.co.uk

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

...and, God willing:

23rd September - Corn Exchange Witney presents *The Denotones 60's Experience*. The music of Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, Neil Diamond, Roy Orbison, The Beatles, plus many more. Tickets £12 from Witney Town Council Admin Office.

Wootton Village Hall Talks

The next speaker at 7.30 pm on **Friday June 9th is: Tim Birkhead**

Tim is one of the world's leading ornithologists and makes a welcome return to Wootton seven years after his last appearance. On this occasion, he will be talking about his latest bestseller, *Birds and Us*, which traces the relationship between humans and birds.

Tim, a professor at Sheffield University, explains that since the dawn of human history birds have stirred people's imagination - inspiring and challenging our ideas about science, faith, art, and philosophy. People have worshipped birds as gods, hunted them for sustenance, adorned themselves with their feathers, studied their wings to engineer flight, and, more recently, attempted to protect them. In *Birds and Us*, Tim takes an epic journey through our mutual history with birds, from the ibises mummified and deified by Ancient Egyptians to the Renaissance fascination with woodpecker anatomy - and from the Victorian obsession with egg-collecting to today's fight to save endangered species and restore their habitats. Tim's previous award-winning books include *The Wisdom of Birds*, *Bird Sense* and *The Most Perfect Thing*, an examination of the unique qualities of birds' eggs. David Attenborough, who made a documentary with Tim based on the book, described it as "magnificent - science without any high falutin' technology"

Entry is £10 in cash - and includes free food featuring sumptuous rocky roads. Wine and soft drinks are available for a modest donation.

To reserve seats, please contact us through our website www.woottontalks.co.uk (Children over 16 welcome)

ALL PROCEEDS TO THE UKRAINE HUMANITARIAN APPEAL

Name Quiz



Last month, on Wednesday the 24th, the world lost Anna Mae Bullock – best known, of course as, simply the best, miss Tina Turner. See if you know which of these other lesser known 'real' named people went on to be recognised by a more famous, stage name.

We want to know what became of;

1. Harry Roger Webb?
2. Maurice Joseph Micklewhite?
3. Reginald Kenneth Dwight?
4. Marion Robert Morrison?
5. Joseph Yule Junior? (hint: no relation to Wayne)
6. John Eric Bartholomew?

7. Frances Ethel Gumm?
8. Audrey Kathleen Ruston?
9. Thomas Hicks?
10. Marvin Lee Aday? (hint: his stage name is also a meal)
11. Betty Joan Perske? (hint: 'To Have And Have Not')
12. Norma Jean Baker

Answers at the end.

Recipe For June



Blackcurrant and Mint Pie

Ingredients

- 1 lb blackcurrants
- 1 heaped dessertspoon of chopped mint
- 4 oz caster sugar
- 8 oz shortcrust pastry

Method

Set oven at 200 degrees C.

Top and tail the blackcurrants and wash them in a colander. Drain thoroughly and put them in a shallow, 7 inch wide pie dish. Mix the finely chopped mint with the sugar and sprinkle it evenly over the fruit.

Cover the pie dish with pastry and decorate with pastry leaves. Make a slit in the centre of the pastry for steam to escape.

Bake the pie on the middle shelf of the oven for 35 - 40 minutes, or until golden.

Serve cold, with fresh cream.

Thoughts for the Month

Why isn't the word 'phonetic' spelt anything *like* the way it sounds?

And why do the idioms '*fat chance*' and '*slim chance*' mean exactly the same thing?

And last weekend, I was joining the M25 from the Chertsey direction and – on the slip road – and noticed a sign that said 'Part Time Traffic Lights'. And I couldn't help but wonder "what do they do when they're *not* being traffic lights?"

Acknowledgements

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

Quiz Answers

1. Cliff Richard
2. Michael Caine (I hope you were one of the not many people who knew that!)
3. Elton John
4. John Wayne
5. Mickey Rooney
6. Eric Morecambe
7. Judy Garland
8. Audrey Hepburn
9. Tommy Steele
10. Meat Loaf
11. Lauren Bacall
12. Marilyn Monroe (sung about by the answer to number 3, of course!)