

Editorial



Hello everyone. Well, we're into October now, the 10th month of the year. Little fun fact for you – October takes its name from the Latin word 'Octo' meaning 'eight', as it was the eighth month of the Roman calendar. And as I type this, we're certainly enjoying a short spell of weather that's more like August than it is Autumn. Talking of unexpected weather, I had the very great pleasure of joining the Longer Walks group for a walk you can read about in this edition at the end of September, and for which – on our drive to the meeting place that morning – I was wondering just how soaked I would end up being that day. But organiser and administrator Pauline had clearly made a pact with a higher being that day, and the clouds parted and the sun appeared as we pulled into the car park. If you're fit and able bodied, I heartily recommend that group to you – if there is a finer, happier, and more friendly group in the whole of our u3a, I want to meet them.

As promised, Local Events makes a comeback in this edition, and I hope you find something suitable to mark in your diaries. Thank-you once again to Wendy for her sterling work in compiling this. As always, do get in touch if there's anything else you'd like to see in this Newsletter, and also if you would like to contribute a written article.

I wish you continued good health and prosperity, and I hope you enjoy this month's edition. And please look after yourselves; I've returned from a short break in Spain with only my second bout of Covid (my last was at Easter in 2022 and I thought I'd seen the end of that rotten ailment) – Stay safe, Mike



Situations Vacant

We are still looking for help in filling a number of vacancies. These include;

IT Support and Website Management (Committee Level roles)

Group Co-Ordination Support (Non-Committee Level role)

Programme Organiser* (Committee Level role)

Membership Secretary (Committee Level role)

As always, if you would like to know more about what these roles entail, get in touch with me by reply and I will ensure that your questions get answered. On a personal level, could I also ask for volunteers to help the **Audio-Visual team** – we are the people who support the speakers at the twice-monthly Speaker Meetings (organised, of course by the Programme Organiser*). We are 4 in number, but my illness – coupled with rather pressing appointments for the 2 Grahams in our team – put a lot of rather undue pressure on Roger on the day.

Groups News



Groups Looking for Members/Other

The **History of Art group** are looking for a member to join their group on the 2nd Tuesday of the Month at 10.30am. The group meet in Bampton so they would need to travel by bus or car.

The **Sewing/Dressmaking Group** are also looking for members. They meet in the Methodist Church on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10am.

The **Needlework Groups** who meet in Witney on the 2nd Monday at 2pm and 3rd Friday at 10am.also seek new members.

The **Canasta Group** who meet in the Church on the 1st Tuesday at 2pm.similarly would like to hear from anyone wishing to join them.

Temporary Cessation

The Nature Group is currently on hold until after Christmas.

U3A Longer Walks Group Walk Bourton on the Water, 26 September 2023

Many of our group must have had the same thoughts as we drove towards Bourton-on-the-Water for the start of our walk - it was raining stair-rods and the temptation to turn around and go home was overwhelming. However, the Witney Group is a hardy bunch and sixteen of us were rewarded with an excellent walk mostly in bright sunshine. The walk, led by Pauline and Andrew, started from the Rissington Road Car Park. We walked west through Bourton, crossing the A429 onto the Windrush Way and then followed the Gloucestershire Way and Macmillan Way into Lower Slaughter where we had our coffee break by the church. The return leg saw us going east along a minor road and then on to a series of footpaths until we joined the Oxfordshire Way. As we approached Bourton, we passed through Greystones Farm Nature Reserve whose wildflower meadows are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Rivers Dikler and Eye both pass through the farm and their banks support a variety of species including otter and water vole. Old farm buildings are used by migratory birds such as swallows and house martins, along with owls and bats. It is also the site of Salmonsbury Camp, an important meeting place during Neolithic and Iron Age periods. On site there is a replica Iron Age Roundhouse. We were pleased to welcome Claire and Mike for their first walk with the group. As Mike is the editor of this newsletter, I hope our report passes muster! (**Editor's Note** – as ever thanks for your report, John and to the group for making both myself and my long-suffering wife so welcome on the day)



Speaker Meetings



Thursday, October the 19th, Witney Methodist Church

'Mary Rose' with Bob Foster

Bob will entertain us with tales of Henry VIII's favourite ship, from its launch in July 1511 to its current mooring at Number 3 dock in Portsmouth. Bob is a volunteer Presenter for the Mary Rose Trust, and he will bring a collecting box with him on the day, so – if you can – please give generously (the u3a certainly will be!).

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).

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.

IT Support



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.' The link to the public Facebook page is:

www.facebook.com/witneyu3a/

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. This month, they are running:

Monday the 9th of October – 'The Commonwealth War Graves Commission'

Learn about the history of the War Graves Commission and how to use their extensive archives in your own research.

Free – online via Zoom at 2pm on the 9th.

Thursday the 12th of October – ‘Odd Numbers and There And Back Again’ by Dr Ron Knott

Described as “tales of two beautiful number patterns” – how odd numbers can liven up fractions.

Free – online via Zoom at 2pm

Wednesday the 18th of October – ‘Family History: Why The Whole Family Matters’ by Julie of Syston and District u3a

Insights, tips, and examples for family historians.

Free – online via Zoom at 2pm.

And if you can't make the Speaker Meeting that afternoon...

Thursday the 19th of October – ‘The Story of Britain told through Coins’ with Diana of Guilford u3a

Free – online via Zoom at 2pm.

Free To A Good Home



One of our members has been in touch to say he has a pair of glove puppets of that iconic children's television duo, Sooty and Sweep. Over the years, Sooty has lost an eye and Sweep's ear repeatedly came loose, but - with the aid of Super Glue - he's managed to repair them. He doesn't want anything for them, he'll just be happy for someone to take them off his hands!

Local Events



Back by popular demand...

October 7th - Hometown Girl, a tribute to Adele by Natalie Black at the Langdale Hall, Witney. Doors open 7.30pm, show 8.30pm. Tickets £15 available from www.eventbrite.co.uk

October 12th - Cineworld, Witney is screening **An Evening with Jonas Kaufmann. Joseph**, an operatic tenor, who will be performing arias and classic songs from opera and film

October 12th - The Arts Society West Oxfordshire present **'The Wild Men of the North'** - an illustrated talk on Tom Thomson and the group of seven. 7.30pm at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Non-members welcome. Admission £7 (cash only).

October 13th - Witney Music Society presents a programme of **music by Janacek, Brahms, Joachim and Beethoven**. Concert starts at 7.30pm at the High Street Methodist Church. Tickets £15.00, available at the door or in advance from witneymusicsociety.org.uk

October 14th - Witney Vegan Fiesta 10.00am to 3.00pm in Marriotts Walk Shopping Centre. Artisan gifts, street food, eco products and more

October 15th - Combe Mill, Combe, Long Hanborough (the original sawmill and workshop of the Blenheim Palace Estate) is holding a steaming event day, plus wood crafts and an autumn market. Tea Room open. Dogs welcome. 10.30am to 5.00pm. Tickets £9.00, concessions £7.50

October 17th - Witney Corn Exchange Film Club will be screening the classic film **The Lost Boys** at 7.30pm. For bookings and more information visit www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

October 20th - The Music of Elvis – a celebration of the King, featuring Paul Thorpe. With his own 9-piece band, Paul has entertained audiences for over 30 years. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7.00pm show starts 8.00pm. Tickets £16.50 from www.cornexchangewitney.org.uk

October 21st - Craft and gift workshop at St Mary's Church, Witney, in aid of parish funds. Christmas decorations, decorative bags, cake decorations can all be made and much more. Each session will last two and a half hours. Materials will be provided and are included in the ticket price of £15. To enrol contact Josie on 01993 705215 or at keithandjosie@btinternet.com

October 22nd - Enjoy a heritage walk to raise funds for Witney Museum. Assemble at the Town Hall at 2.00pm. £5.00 per person. To book a place or for more information call the museum on 01993 775915.

October 26th - Lunchtime recital at High Street Methodist Church. 12.30 to 1.30pm. **Celtic and Gypsy Music**. Admission free.

October 26th, 27th, 28th - Witney Dramatic Society presents an evening of horror and comedy. **The 39 Steps**. 7.30pm at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Tickets £12 available from Truck music store, or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/witney-dramatic-society, or on the door.

The Springline Radio Players



I am indebted to Ralph, our Publicity Officer, for this piece.

Do you like listening to radio plays? If you *do* then why not check out what Springline Radio Players have on offer? Their latest play - '**Séance for a Spy**' - is now available on a podcast. Have a listen and enjoy.

Springline Radio Players feature local talented voice actors from Oxfordshire and their audience is growing daily. They have listeners all around the world including in the US, Italy, India, Germany, New Zealand, China, Canada and Turkey to name a few. Listeners across North America in particular are quite expansive, in New York, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Charlotte, Morrisville, South Carolina, Indiana, Nebraska and

The Springline Radio Players podcast is available on Apple Podcast, Spotify and Amazon Music - just search for "Springline Radio Players", or use the following links:

Apple Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/springline-radio-players/id1700260464>

Spotify: <https://spotify.link/rvKvHVWGUBb>

Amazon Music: https://music.amazon.co.uk/podcasts/4649747c-9411-4443-9398-bd8e0f5f9841/springline-radio-players?ref=dm_sh_zQ0LpNz0JJN0OmO8qdoxJEIXM

And keep an eye out for their fourth radio play - "**In the Shadow of the Noose**" - by Karen McKivitt, which is currently in rehearsals and set for recording this month.

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks as ever go to John W, Gill, Doreen, Wendy, Ralph and everybody who contributed in any way to the production of this newsletter.

And Finally, Esther...

Good luck to those going to the u3a cinema outing on the 18th, organised by Marion, our Outings guru. See the Witney u3a website for more details.