

Editorial



Hello everyone! Well September is here, and we are relieved of baby-sitting duties at long last, now they've gone back to their studies! *My* grandchildren kept cajoling me over the past 6 weeks to do my Kermit impression, which completely befuddled and bemused me. Turned out, their parents had promised them a trip to Disneyland "when grandad croaks"!

On the 17th of August, those of you who came to the Speaker Meeting ("Marylebone – More Than A Station" with Colin Oakes) will recall that I left a questionnaire on 100 of the seats in the hall to gain your feedback on this Newsletter. Thank-you to the 55 of you who completed that form, 54 of whom confirmed that you DO read it. Now with a circulation of over 600, this represents only 9% of our membership in its entirety, so may not be seen as 'binding' as such. But it DOES provide me with some interesting feedback, and I promise to act on that. From next month, I will bring back the local events listings, albeit in a more condensed format than before, 51 of the 55 responses we received said they value having this (and – for the record – I *myself* have found it useful in the past). A number of you also completed the optional 'Comments' section on the form and said some very nice things, and I truly thank-you for that. As editor, I merely pull together the contributions of a number of fellow members and – in that regard – I'd like to pay tribute to the lovely Wendy who has hitherto compiled the event listings for me each month and has confirmed that she is happy to do so again.

I wish you continued good health and prosperity, and I hope you enjoy this month's edition - Mike



Situations Vacant

In line with the experiences of a number of other, local u3a groups. We are *still* struggling to fill a number of committee and non-committee roles', including

IT Support and Website Management

Gill and Roger are looking to step back from their duties after many years' service and we are still asking the 'tech savvy' amongst you to step forward if you will. Duties include;

- keeping the U3A website up to date
- assisting with data transfer to the new development platform

You must have basic computer skills and enjoy the challenge of technology. Ideally, you would have experience in web design, but training *will* be provided.

Come and talk to us at the next Speaker Meeting or contact us via the website.

Group Co-Ordination Support

Doreen continues to get through a veritable mountain of work each month, supported by a number of non-committee members (it's an impressive team, believe me). But the 62 groups we have require a great deal of support and assistance in their organisation. Could *you* help by joining this team?

Programme Organiser

Corinna is *still* looking to step back from her role. We are in the process of discussing this role with another member, but – if organising the guest speakers is something you feel you could help with – please step forward.

Membership Secretary

John will be leaving our group *and* the Oxfordshire area. If you have any experience in administering a 600-plus membership for a similar-sized group or society, we'd like to hear from you.

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 August

Longer Walking Group - Tuesday 8 August

Circular walk around the North and West of Witney

You might expect the second Tuesday in the balmy month of August to provide the ideal conditions for a U3A summer walk. Afraid not! Linda and David organised an interesting 6 mile walk around the outskirts of Witney, joined by 15 gallant souls who braved the persistent rain. The start was outside Cafe Rouge and we headed out of town to follow the Windrush as far as New Mill, home of Audley Travel. From there we walked into Crawley and along Foxborough Lane to Highcroft Farm. Our route then took us to Poffley End encountering 5 styles and a bull en route! Happily, the bull was peaceful as the prospect of walkers of a certain age hurdling the styles was too much to contemplate. We observed Giant Puffball fungi, some as big as 15 inches in diameter. According to Wikipedia, Puffballs are edible when fresh but they rot quickly and become poisonous - nobody was brave enough to take one home for tea. The return journey to Witney routed us via Hailey, and the Foxborough Nature reserve. Eight sodden walkers descended upon Cafe Rouge for 'déjeuner'. Many thanks to Linda and David for organising us.



Cotswold Discovery Group – Monday 21 August

A Stroll around Cheltenham

A small group (none of us is over 5 foot 7!) boarded the S2 service that leave the market square at around 9:45am each day and made our way to the pride of the Cotswolds, Cheltenham. We began by visiting some of the beautiful gardens of the town (the Imperial and the Montpellier, with its on-site Art gallery), before venturing off to take in the architecture of the town and its many, varied European influences (from the Trevi fountain in Rome to the alabaster, white columns and statuettes of Athens). After lunch, we strolled towards the museum which was (unfortunately) closed on Mondays, and briefly poked our heads around the door at an Auction house, who were preparing for an upcoming sale. We finally caught the 3:05pm return bus, with talks about where we might flex our senior bus passes next!



Group News

A new, **Non-Fiction Reading** group has started – see the U3A website for details.

Groups looking for new members:

Canasta
Needlework
Pop Music
Recorders
Sewing/Dressmaking
Spanish

Please see the group calendar attached with the email for more details.

Speaker Meetings



16th to the 24th of
September

PLEASE NOTE – there is **NO** speaker meeting on the third Thursday of this month. September 21st is the **WITNEY U3A OPEN DAY**.

Please come along between 1pm and 4pm to find out more about what the various Groups are doing. There will be representatives of over 20 groups ready to talk to you about their activities, some of them providing a demonstration of what they do. Please bring your friends, family members and acquaintances who might be interested in joining in the fun – the Membership Secretary will be there to unburden them of their joining fees should they like what they see and hear!

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.

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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:

Tuesday 12th, 19th and 26th September: Electing the (US) President in 2024 – a 3-part series

Each session online: Starts 2 pm.

Wednesday September 20th: Trees, woods, climate and nature – what’s all the fuss about?

Online 10 am

Friday September 22nd: History of the British Secret Intelligence Services

Online 2 pm

Wednesday September 27th: The Scottish Colourists, 1900 – 1930

Online 2pm

Free To A Good Home



I've got a lot of old and used batteries just taking u room in my garage if anybody wants them? No charge.

Also, thank-you to whoever it was that – in dead of night last Thursday – tipped a whole heap of topsoil onto my garden. I've no idea who did this – the plot thickens!

One of our readers has been in touch to say that he has a 40" Sony Bravia television set which he is willing to give away to whoever would like it. In full working order but (unfortunately) the volume control is stuck on full volume. It certainly sounds hard to turn down on offer like this.

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks as ever go to John W, Gill, the indefatigable Doreen, and everybody who contributed in any way to the production of this newsletter. Oh and thanks to my old friend Peter from Gloucester who told me the joke about the used batteries last month over a coffee at Cogges Farm (and who consented when I asked “can I use that in my Newsletter?”).

And Finally, Esther...

13 may be unlucky for some but – as I type this – there are just 13 sleeps until the u3a Open Day at the Methodist Church (and it may be unlucky for *you* if you miss out). So get it marked on that calendar in the kitchen!

Oh and please stay safe during this unseasonably hot spell of weather – as they say in Australia. “Slip, Slap, Slop” – slip on something light and airy, slop on the sunblock, slap on a hat.