

Editorial



Well, we've made it to the end of the year! December with its cold and frosty mornings and unseasonal heavy rainfall is among us. I trust you're all starting to send and receive those Christmas cards and spoil those grandchildren and loved ones rotten when you're present buying. I know for many of our members it's also a time for remembering loved ones who have passed on, and some quite recently, and I hope you can find some solace in remembering happier Christmases past. Around 30 years ago, I lost a half-sister on Christmas morning itself, and it somehow felt wrong to celebrate at all, so I know your pain. Here's to happier times to come.

We had the inaugural 'Meet the Committee' coffee afternoon on November 30th, and it was certainly lovely to meet and chat with so many of you that day. Your feedback was warmly welcomed and (hopefully) you'll be receiving Chair Susie's email with the results of the exercise we all took part in at the end of the meeting. I can assure you that – having been to the committee meeting *this* week - the feedback *is* being worked on and taken seriously.

You'll read further on in the newsletter about the Christmas get-together at the end of the speaker meeting on the 21st. If you're coming to that, I hope you have fun. And don't embarrass yourself like I did at last year's Christmas function. I sidled up to Marian and playfully asked "would you kiss me under the mistletoe?". She coolly replied "Mike, I wouldn't even kiss you under an anaesthetic!". So cruel.

Take care of yourselves and I look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Yo ho ho - Mike

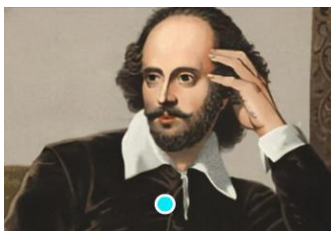
Groups News

We start with the usual rallying cry for reinforcements on behalf of some of our groups.



Snooker and Pool Group

This group meets every Monday evening upstairs at the Methodist church and is looking for new members. Contact Doreen (our Groups Organiser) in the first instance for more information.



Writers Group I

Writers Group I are looking for new members. They meet at 2 pm on the first Wednesday of the month in the Methodist church.



History of Art Group

This group is looking for a new member to join them on the second Tuesday of the month at their meeting place in Bampton.



The **Sewing/Dressmaking**, the **Needlework** and the **Canasta** groups are also currently looking for members. Go on, give it a go! The same applies to **Writers Group 4** and **Table Tennis Group 2** (a fine home win for Writers Groups there!)



**U3A Cotswold Discovery Group
Stow-on-The-Wold, Monday 20 November 2023**

On a dry, bright but chilly Monday morning, 10 of us met and gathered outside St Edwards Hall in the Market Square, and loosely followed a 1 kilometre trail around the town. We started at St Edwards Church, with its beautiful door, flanked by yew trees, then slowly meandered around the town centre. Here we saw the wooden stocks – or what’s left of them – and the lop-sidey window frame above Huffkins, plus a number of other repurposed medieval buildings. We finished our walk at the Porch House on Digbeth Street, alleged to be the site of the oldest pub in England. I know what you’re thinking – doesn’t every town in Oxfordshire claim to have the oldest pub in the land? All I know is that the timbers and beams of the Porch House have been carbon dated back to the 10th century, and Aethelmar – a Cornish Saxon duke – commissioned its building as a hospice for travelling pilgrims. We finished the day with lunch back at Huffkins (well, some of the group finished with shopping at Scotts of Stow, but that wasn’t on the itinerary!).

We’re visiting Bourton on the Water if anyone would care to join us on December 18th.



Speaker Meetings

Thursday, December the 21st, Witney Methodist Church

‘The Wit and Songs of Noel Coward’ with Peter Gill.

Born in Teddington, Middlesex in December 1899, this was a truly multi-talented man – a writer, actor, composer, director, and producer (and – in later life – a painter). As he himself rather demurely and humbly put it, “I am an enormously talented man and there’s no point denying it!”.



Peter's 45-minute talk will remind us of some of those talents and many of those marvellously, witty songs (such as 'The Stately Homes of England', 'A Room With A View', 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen' and an appeal to Mrs Worthington that on no account should she let her daughter anywhere near a stage!).

New Member Meetings



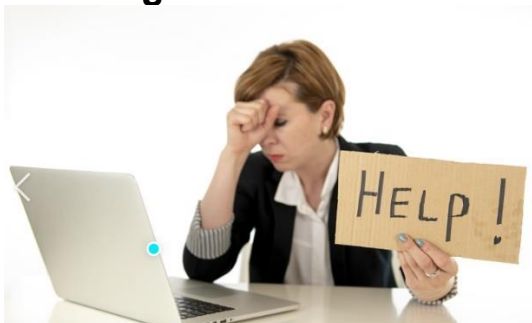
New members have a chance to meet on the 1st Monday of the month at 2pm in the Methodist Church Coffee Bar (except for Bank Holidays).

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.

Editor's Note: welcome to your first Newsletter those that have joined since November! 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/

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:

Wednesday the 13th of December – 'Judith's Laughter Yoga'

Join Judith of the Edinburgh u3a for the latest in her monthly laughter yoga sessions.

Free – online via Zoom at 10 am.

Tuesday the 15th of December – ‘Climate Change and the Oceans’

Ian Hawker of the East Suffolk u3a talks about the climate change’s effects on our oceans.

Free – online via Zoom at 10 am.

Thursday the 21st of December – ‘Mindfulness and Meditation’ Session

This monthly program continues with the latest in the series of practices and techniques to help relax the fevered soul (and doesn’t clash with afternoon Speaker Meeting at the Methodist Church!)

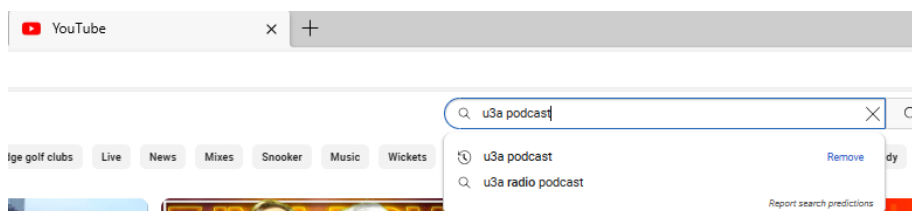
Free – online via Zoom at 10am.

Podcast

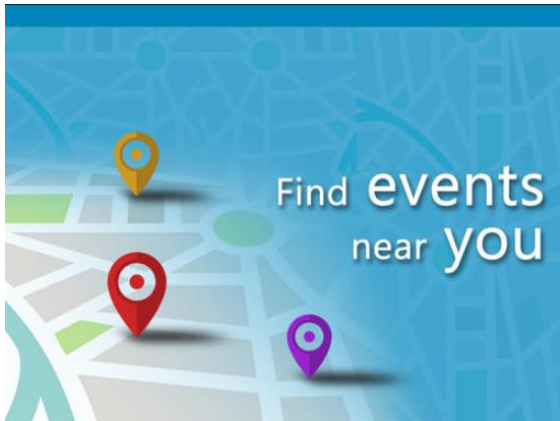


The u3a radio podcasts are back after their autumn break. And what better reason to tune in than to discover that Witney u3a’s very own Peter C is anchoring the November edition with his velvet-like, warm and friendly tones, In this program, you can hear about the u3a short stories and poetry competition, the life of a radio presenter working at the Vatican in Rome and the possibilities of following the Welsh and Northern Ireland devolved governments’ initiative of setting up an *Older People’s Commissioner* for the OK. Oh, and Peter invites us to join in with the singing of some wonderful sea shanties (I do hope he hasn’t been on the sherry – could get messy!)

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



Local Events



December 8th: Witney Music Society present **the Rossetti Ensemble**, playing Mozart, David Matthews and Dvorak. High Street Methodist Church, Witney, 7.30pm. Tickets £15.00. For further information www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

December 8th to 10th: **Witney Christmas Market**, Marriotts Walk. Friday and Saturday 10am to 6pm, Sunday 10am to 4pm.

December 9th: Corn Exchange Witney presents **Lucille & The Lightening Soul Train**. The music of Stevie Wonder, Donna Summer, Chic, Pointer Sisters and more. Doors open 8pm. Tickets £15 (plus booking fee) cornexchangewitney.org.uk. Please note this is a standing event.

December 9th: **Brize Singers perform Christmas music and carols** at St Bartholomew's Church, Ducklington, with guests the Ducklington Handbell Ringers. 7.00pm. Tickets £10.00

December 9th: An evening of Christmas choral music when Lower Windrush Choral Society perform '**A Christmas Journey – from Handel to Vaughan Williams**' at High Street Methodist Church, Witney, beginning at 6pm. Admission is free but there will be a retiring collection.

December 9th: Cineworld Witney are screening **MET Opera Live: Florencia en el Amazonas** at 5.55pm.

December 11th: **BBC Radio Oxford carol concert at St Mary's, Witney**. 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Tickets will go live on BBC Radio Oxford's website up to three weeks prior to the date. Retiring collection will be split between Children in Need and St Mary's Church.

December 12th: Cineworld Witney are screening **2023 Royal Ballet live: The Nutcracker** at 7.15pm

December 13th: Cine Seniors, screenings for the over 60s. Cineworld Witney is screening **A Haunting In Venice** (Hercule Poirot). Tickets £4.50. For time and details and booking visit Cineworld.com/cineseniors

December 14th to 31st, except 25th to 28th: Buttercross Theatre Productions present **Snow White** at the Corn Exchange, Witney. For the dates of matinee performances at 1.45pm and evening performances 7.30pm, see buttercrosstheatreproductions.co.uk. Tickets, adult £14. Child £8 plus booking fee.

December 15th: **Brize Singers perform Christmas music and carols** at High Street Methodist, Witney, together with a children's choir and guest. 7.00pm. Tickets £10.00

December 17th: Kidlington Concert Brass are performing a Christmas concert in the Exeter Hall, Kidlington, beginning at 2pm. Tickets £10.00 available from www.kidlingtonconcertbrass.org.uk

December 20th: Cine Seniors, screenings for the over 60s. Cineworld Witney is screening **It's A Wonderful Life**. Tickets £4.50. For time and details and booking visit Cineworld.com/cineseniors

Christmas Party 2023



If you look on your green membership card, you'll see that the Christmas Party takes place following the Speaker Meeting on the 21st. There will be suitably Christmassy music played through the sound system in the worship hall and broadcast out for you to (hopefully) enjoy as you munch on your mince pies and festive cup cakes (silly hats and/or Christmas jumpers are optional but encouraged!).

Now here's the caveat – after consultation with the team at the Methodist Church, we have been asked to restrict numbers to 100 people (in the lower hall and the coffee area) for Health and Safety reasons. Places will therefore be allocated on a 'first come first served' basis (and we *will* serve – we're dab hands with a teapot!). We can't bring in extra chairs and tables should the numbers exceed that magic 100 number I'm afraid.

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks as ever go to Wendy, Doreen, and everybody who contributed to the production of this newsletter. And for this month only I'd like to mention the following people – [Mayor Dazeby](#), [Mary Ann Bright](#), [Ann Mayall](#), [Your Chris](#) and [Mrs B White](#) (and Bing Crosby of course).

Have a lovely Christmas everyone and may your ding dongs stay merrily on high throughout the festive season. Take care of yourselves.