

Magazine 59 – Summer 2023

It is with deep regret that we have to announce that this will be the last U3A Magazine to be issued under the present longstanding editorship.

We have been trying to find others to take over for quite a while now without success. It would be a real shame if members were to lose the Magazine for good as it has been produced for many years and the next one would significantly be number 60. Both the present editors will be only too pleased to help with the handover to anyone who is prepared to give it a go. If you are interested and able to help, please contact our Chair or any member of the committee.

A selection the u3a Photography Competition Entries

(See page 5 for the winner)



Chair's Report

Dear members,

Thank you very much for trusting me to chair the management committee. May I commence by thanking our predecessors for their hard work in previous years.

I see my role as to give direction to our u3a with the support of the whole committee and the u3aTrust, their vision and skills. We have all worked very hard in the past years, but we are getting older and our list of medical appointments getting longer...therefore, we need to recruit new members. This is our priority and a daunting task in the present climate where engaging volunteers is increasingly difficult, not only for the whole of u3a but for so many other voluntary organisations.

We are increasing our publicity in the whole of Wolverhampton. In addition, my first practical proposal is to create a working group to explore the possibility of a recruitment campaign in South Staffordshire. South Staffordshire is a long and narrow district that includes Codsall, Penkridge, Brewood, Coven, Essington, Huntington, Bilbrook, Wombourne, Himley, Perton and Featherstone amongst others. I am not aware of any other u3a in the district, and there is no local Network Link with whom to liaise. I think the most feasible recruiting ground would be our neighbouring Perton. We already have active members in Codsall, Bilbrook and Perton who hopefully will help us make links with libraries and other local community groups in the area. Please let me know if you are interested in joining this working group as an "one off"; no need to join the committee.

Interest groups are the core of our activities. Please let us have your views about ways to strengthen the life and variety of interest groups and whether you would like to start up a new group. The role of the co-ordinator is easy: it literally means bringing together the members and facilitating the sharing of your interests and skills.

There are many other ways in which you can help to keep our Wolverhampton u3a going and thriving, from arranging the chairs for the monthly meeting to assisting with the production of our wonderful Magazine. And remember the members' corner in the magazine where you can voice opinions, make suggestions and requests. Please let us know what you like, what you don't like about what we are doing, what else you want from your Wolverhampton u3a and how to achieve it.

We pay particular attention to the needs of our membership as a whole. We encompass different ages, different needs, different expectations, and we aim to cater for them all.

At Trust level, Jean Jackson is our new West Midlands trustee. Jean has a special interest in digital strategies for the future. I welcome that. If we want to attract new, younger members to carry the mantel, we need to update our methods of communication and publicity.

The Trust itself is very committed to enhancing communication with members. We echo that and are working on promoting all forms of listening and responding to your suggestions.

Also, keep an eye on the Third Age Matters magazine for summer schools which have now gone regional for better access.

Let's keep talking! ... Let's all fire up our imagination and creativity to energise ourselves as well as Wolverhampton u3a.

Finally, I recently attended a workshop on recruitment and retention of members and one of the groups described management committees as another interest group, the subject being the development of their own u3a. I like that description. If you are curious to how we know how we run our committee meetings, please come to one to have a look!

Mercedes Fonfria fonfria@virginmedia.com tel. 01902 827357

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE 2023

Mercedes FONFRIA	CHAIR
Mo JOHNSON	VICE CHAIR/GROUPS COORDINATOR
Mary WARWICKER	SECRETARY
Yvonne RICKARD	TREASURER
Julia HOOD	MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
John SHEARD	BEACON COORDINATOR
Josie TURNER	SPEAKERS SECRETARY
Margaret TAYLOR	MAGAZINE EDITOR
David ASHWORTH	COMMITTEE MEMBER

ROUND THE GROUPS

German

The German Group has continued to meet throughout the last year. We currently number six people (over the year one person has left a new one joined).

We meet in each others houses and try to meet on most Tuesdays at 10:00, depending on holidays and availability. Our session lasts 2 hours, with a short coffee break. We are very fortunate that one of our members is a retired languages teacher and she usually leads us. Each session includes fun language games, discussions, a bit of grammar and working through an old text book. Each week we have little bit of homework, in that we do some preparation for the following week.

Graham Tritton

Jazz

The Jazz Group last month celebrated its 14th anniversary, and for the first time we have had over the past year a different “presenter” each month with, as usual, a very varied and eclectic choice of subjects. Four of our meetings have been devoted to a saxophonist – Joe Henderson, Steve Lacy, Joe Harriott and, with his family, John Coltrane; six have taken a theme – Brass instruments, Keith Jarrett in Europe, Detroit musicians, Country Music and Folk in Jazz, Stormy Weather, Up-and-coming artists; and two have been more personal – Thank You for the Music (nothing to do with Abba!) and a Jazz Journey.



The last two presenters, and other members as well, have said that they have listened to more styles of jazz than they would have done formerly (and enjoyed most of it!) so, if you still think that jazz is no more than the three Bs (Barber, Ball and Bilk), do join us to widen your listening and knowledge.

John Sheard

Poetry Appreciation 1

Our group has continued to meet in members homes regularly over the last year on the first Monday afternoon of the month.

Our active membership is 10 but we are still able to welcome new participants. Please phone Marian 01902 765567 for more information.

Regrettably Anne Young and Jean Molineux have retired from U3A membership due to age/health issues. (Jean received her 100 year card from the Queen in May last year). We still maintain informal contact with both and share (by phone or visit) some of the poems read recently in the group.

Also sadly and as many of you will already know, Annie Udden died in March. She was an enthusiastic member of the group, particularly enjoying poems related to the natural world, and often including modern poets (particularly the



current poet laureate Simon Armitage) in her choices to read. She will be much missed in the group.

Over the year members of the group have contributed readings from poets and poems of all era's, nationalities and poetic styles for the enjoyment of all and often sparking discussion, further information and sometimes friendly disagreement relating to the poet, meaning, style, poetic format etc. Occasionally members contribute poems written by themselves (though the group is not a 'poets workshop') and in February longstanding member Martin Murfitt shared this lighthearted overview of our monthly meetings written in Sonnet form. I will end this Newsletter item with it.

Wolverhampton U3A Poetry Appreciation Group by Martin Murfitt

Oh such a sweet delight it is to meet
On the first Monday of each month, we few
Poetic odd-bods, with poems all replete,
To share, some short, some long, some old, some new.

Eclecticism is our golden rule,
And just how broad the mixture no one cares;
The classic mingles with the modern school,
And Wordsworth can rub shoulders with Pam Ayres.

Discussions can be noisily loquacious;
At other times they take place quietly;
And now and then a hush descends upon us,
When we are deeply moved emotionally.

Of course, we gather for the poetry,
But equally the camaraderie.

Marian Graceson

Playreading 1

Our group of 6 have met nearly every month in each other's homes and have read a variety of plays. These included "In the Red" by W. Douglas Hume, "Tiptoe through the Tombstones" and "Wedding of the year" by Norman Robbins. "Sylvia's Wedding" by J Chinn and "The Haunted Bookshop" by Lynn Britanny. These have provided us with humour and discussion.

Sheila Moore

Playreading 2

My thanks go to Margaret Barr and Sheila Moore for making my transition to being the coordinator of Playreading 2 group so smooth. Sheila has been particularly helpful with providing me with plays which suit smaller groups.

We have enjoyed reading plays written from 1947 onwards. Our latest play, though written in 2010, was an adaptation of a 1919 book. It has been interesting to read earlier plays too with their dated language and attitudes and compare them to the later plays. Most of the plays have either been whodunits, comedies or comedy thrillers. One of our recent plays had a large number of stage directions which were integral to the plot. Lots



of visualisation was required and it added to the enjoyment of the play.

Play reading group members comment that, “We always have a laugh.” “We all make mistakes but the others just smile, laugh and then we carry on.” “The varying genres of plays make it different and interesting.” “We enjoy trying to get into the different characters.”

We try to meet around every four weeks or so in one of the member’s homes. We also try to accommodate the regular commitments of fellow members when we can.

Linda Moreland

Playreading 3



As a group, we are pondering the benefits of reading a whole play over two months as opposed to reading a one-act play in one session (and maybe having time to chat about it!).

This is complicated by the fact that, over the winter, we have restricted numbers indoors to six, hence needing two weeks/sittings for everyone to join in. However, we braved the cold in mid April and enjoyed being all together in the garden to read a short comedy “If You Please, Ladies”.

Over the winter we did manage (indoors!) the Arnold Wesker Trilogy: “Chicken Soup with Barley”, “Roots”, and “I’m talking about Jerusalem”, which gave us plenty to discuss. Reading the hilarious “Small Hotel” by Rex Frost gave us light relief! Our current plan is to read an adaptation of Jeanette Winterson’s novel, “Oranges are not the only Fruit” as one group, possibly over two months to give plenty of time for discussion.

Ruth Byrne

Latin

We meet once a fortnight to discuss our previously prepared translations of pieces of Latin poetry and prose from the Classical period. We have recently been working on Julius Caesar's reports of his invasion of Britain, and Vergil's Aeneid, a poetic imagining of how the Trojans escaped from Troy and eventually founded the city of Rome. We debate points of vocabulary, grammar and style, and share insights into life in the Classical world.

Michael Clement



Philosophy

We have had a year of interesting discussions but a loss of members of the group. Now we have only three members who are, however, enthusiastic.

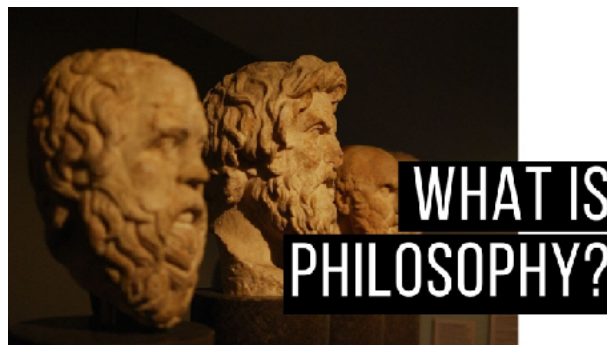
We started the year discussing the three main concerns of the Greek philosophical tradition: ontology, epistemology and ethics.

That is: What exists and the nature of existence? How do we know anything at all?, and How do we live a good life?

One answer is Utilitarianism or we should act in order to

create the maximum happiness. We looked at the the nature of the human mind (psyche, or soul), and the question of free will (“*Man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he wills*” Arthur Schopenhauer), the influence of Greek philosophy on Christianity (“*Christianity is Platonism for the “Masses”*” Friedrich Nietzsche), and have now moved on to political philosophy: (“*States possess a monopoly of legitimate violence*” Max Weber), How do we justify the power of the state?, how did it come about?, Who and how should decisions on policy be made?

Each month I send out notes on the topic to be discussed at the next meeting. If you would like to receive these, let me know. Also, I have received a request from a lady who



would like me to start an afternoon meeting for those who would like to start philosophy from the beginning. I will do this if there is sufficient interest

What is knowledge? Ethics or 'What exists?', 'How do we know anything at all?,' and 'How do we live a good life?'. Utilitarianism arose in the 18th Century: *Whether an action is good or not depends on it increasing happiness or decreasing suffering.* (in the sense ‘relating to perception by the senses’): from Greek *aisthētikos*, from *aisthēta* ‘perceptible things’, from *aisthesthai* ‘perceive’. The sens Greek influences on Christian theosophy.

‘Christianity is Platonism for the “Masses”’ Friedrich Nietzsche. The intellectual or rational faculty in man; the understanding; the intellect; the power that conceives, judges, or reasons; also, the entire spiritual nature; the soul; -- often in distinction from the body.

Mind, Soul, Psyche, nous, mens, res cogitans, consciousness.

DDP, Neural Networks:

DDP means Distributed Data Processing a

“We know our will is free, and there's an end on't”.

Samuel Johnson.

“Man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he wills”.

Arthur Schopenhauer.

“Who gets What? Says who?”.

Tim McNamara

BEACON DATABASE

As you may be aware, over the past few months Wolverhampton u3a has started using the national u3a Beacon database to record all membership information. This provides a more secure method of storing members' contact details and of sending out emails, e.g. from group coordinators.

Julia Hood, Membership Secretary

Forthcoming speakers at general meetings 2023/4

27th June

Summer Party

25th July

Penny Wheat: Dig It! A fun talk, testing the knowledge of the most ardent of gardeners.

22nd August

No Meeting

26th September

David Moylan: Funny Turns: a celebration of the Entertainment of Days Gone By.

24th October

Fran Standham: Doctor Livingstone I presume: the Story behind the Legend.

28th November

Andy Griffiee: Canal Noir: a lighthearted look at the backdrop of Canals in Crime Fiction.

Popmaster Radio2 Music Quiz

I love PopMaster. I do it every day and, since the first lockdown, have been comparing my scores every day with a group of friends - in fact, I compile a spreadsheet of our results, with weekly winners being highlighted in gold and monthly 1st, 2nd and 3rd places highlighted in gold, silver and bronze! (I don't get out much!)

I've only actually rung in to participate live on air twice, and I got through both times!!! *(Since the first lockdown, you haven't been able to ring in. You now have to email some days in advance with information about the music you like etc etc.)*

The first time I was on was in December 2003. I was on my own at home and decided to ring in because my stars for the day said I was going to do something unusual! I won (30 points) and I got 3 in 10 (Bryan Adams) but I was shaking throughout and vowed I'd never do it again.

The second time I rang in was from a taxi on the way to the airport to meet some friends with whom we were due to fly to Barbados for a Caribbean cruise in January 2020. The day before, whilst packing, I'd been listening to PopMaster and Ken Bruce had reminded listeners that the line would be open for would-be contestants at 9am the following day. It occurred to me that I might be selected - if I got through - because I'd be doing it from an airport! Anyway, I happened to be looking at the clock in the taxi as it clicked over to 9.00 and I thought, 'Why not?' So I rang in and on the third go (I was only prepared to try three times) I got through!

I was called back to answer some qualifying questions as we were queueing for security checks, so I was hopping along trying to remove shoes with my phone clasped under my chin, shouting things like 'Lionel Ritchie', 'Cher', much to the bemusement of other people in the queue!

I then got a further call sometime later telling me that I was going to be on and that I should find a 'quiet spot' to take the call. Not easy in an international airport!

Anyway, my husband (John) came with me to find as good a spot as possible. We settled on the rows of seats beside a gate which didn't have an aeroplane at it. I was a bit nervous and John was trying to keep me calm whilst the first contestant was on. John had to go to buy some water for me but couldn't help with the fact that I felt that I urgently needed the loo! There was one other person sitting alone on the seats a few rows in front of us. We didn't realise but he was actually plugged into his radio, listening to the Ken Bruce Show. As I started chatting to Ken and answering questions, he turned around and mouthed to my husband, pointing at me, "Is this her - on PopMaster now???"

I won again (only 21 points this time) but failed with 3 in 10 (Pointer Sisters). I wasn't anywhere near as nervous as on the first occasion - I just treated it as a laugh. Our friends were waiting in a bar (we were planning breakfast, not to get



legless at 10.30 in the morning!) for me to finish and trying to listen to it on their phones. When I won, they bought a bottle of fizz which we had to drink before boarding the plane!

Sometime later on the plane, a member of cabin crew approached me and asked if I'd been on PopMaster that morning. Apparently, the pilot had been listening to it as he drove to the airport - and wanted to meet me!!! Perhaps if I'd given the airline and the cruise company a shout-out after failing spectacularly at 3 in 10, I might have been given free drinks!

Carol Chapple

Members' Corner

....now this is where you can have your say – on any u3a topic you feel needs airing or sharing, or maybe to suggest a new group or activity... Please send us your comments!

- **Remember we are desperately in need of members to come forward to help with the editing of this magazine to enable us to continue with its publication**
- **Ideas for new groups are always welcomed, so contact us also if you would like to help start one up. Lunch Club, Coach Trips, Practical Art, Local History and Singing have all been popular in the past but need a coordinator to get started again. Could that person be you?**

The winner of the photography competition is this lovely, colourful Summer scene of beach huts which has wonderful perspective taken by Tracy Bilboe of the Ukulele Group.

Very well done Tracy!



Editors Margaret Taylor & Di Tordoff