

Newsletter No.36 – Autumn 2015

Well ... that was the summer, that was! However, greetings again to all our members as the mists and fruitfulness season begins and our usual programme of activities and events beckons. Next year marks the twentieth anniversary of Wolverhampton U3A so brace yourselves for some sort of a celebration!

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP

Don't you feel sorry for us,
Standing in the rain and sleet,
Nothing to eat except grass
And the occasional patch of clover?

On the whole, we have a tedious existence.
Until, frightened by whistles,
We're chased and bullied by officious dogs.
Trying to outwit them, we don't succeed.
So, fearful and protesting, we're herded into pens.

And then the shearing.
The indignity!
Seized and rolled on one's back
Roughly straddled by a sweating man
All our private parts revealed -
Leaving us shuddering, bewildered.

Winter and pregnancy again.
A moment's respite,
Blissful moments in the warm
Before the tearing
And demanding newborn lambs to suckle.

All too soon
Put out into a cold wet field
And all the cares of motherhood,
Dogs and crows and foxes,
And irresponsible youngsters to look after.

But many days are dreamy,
Free on the airy hillsides,
Bursts of blossom covering the twisted hawthorns
That gave us shelter in the winter.

Those are days you envy us,
You, fuming in traffic jams
Or crouched in sunless rooms
Faces lit up by cold grey screens.
Far better to be a sheep ...



Margaret Crofts

Louise Henly

Round the groups

Nothing stays in the way of U3A Science and Technology

The Science and Technology group has been looking at various aspects of *LIGHT* over the last couple of months, such as *The physical nature of light; Chemical effects of light; Vision; Photography; Computer; Art and light effects.*

Our mystery picture in the last newsletter refers to a series of experiments done by Trev Howarth linked to chemistry and the identification of elements by the colours created when they are heated - *Spectroscopy*, a technique with uses in steel production, fireworks and investigations into light from outer space.

Lacking in-house laboratory facilities, for this experiment we had to adjourn to the garden table, camping gas stove and assorted sprayers with chemicals for the demo. As we set up down came the rain, hence the photo of the intrepid scientist and his 'roadie' (umbrella holder).



The members of the group decided to view from indoors! showing their appreciation of flames of red from lithium, orange from sulphur, and lilac from potassium plus others, mixed of course with raindrops, giving the garden a very festive atmosphere.

We have lots going on in the group and we meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 2pm - come along and give us a try!

Chris Collins

Luncheon Group

Christmas is coming rapidly! ugh. I know we do not want to think that our summer has already passed and thoughts are going to the next season but I have to book several months in advance to make sure of an appropriate venue for our Christmas Luncheon as we are such a large group now. The Christmas Luncheon is returning to The Academy, Metro One, Wolverhampton on Wednesday 2nd December at NOON. There are only a few places left and booking is essential. If you would like to come and join us, please let me know as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Menus and deposits will be sorted out nearer the time, probably at the October Lunch on 19th or the October monthly meeting. All future Lunches are on the website in the groups section and also in Dates For Your Diary. If you do not have internet access please telephone me on 01902 700151 for all information regarding these events. I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Linda Briscoe

Playreading Groups

Wolverhampton U3A now runs three play reading groups, coordinated by Sheila Moore, Margaret Barr and Ruth Byrne, and meet on once a month on Fridays (Groups 1 and 2) and Mondays (Group 3). For the majority of attendees, the enjoyment is provided by the actual reading of the plays, which are many and varied, covering everything from comedies to more serious plays, up to, and including (on occasion) Shakespeare. Enjoyment arises, moreover, not just from reading the plays, but often also how they are read aloud by group members. Depending upon the numbers of people at each session, and the number of parts in a play, it is often necessary for group members to share parts, but also for individuals to play several parts – which at times can lead to people talking to themselves within acts or scenes as they take two parts that talk to each other! At the moment, on the basis of hearsay, Group 3 appears to have a more analytical approach to reading the plays, with discussions, whilst the other groups tend to obtain their enjoyment from simply reading the plays, with some comment afterwards. This may not sound like fun, but it usually is! Recent plays have included plays by Noel Coward and Oscar Wilde, though half the fun is not knowing what the play is till you get there! Why not give the interest groups a go, and see how you like playreading?

Neil Moreland (Member of Play Reading Group 2)

Crafts Group

The Craft Group had a gentle start in May by joining the existing Arts Group at the Tettenhall Institute. In spite of the small number of members, we had a fun session making and repairing jewellery on 26 June.



I would love to continue the group and try new crafts that appeal to members. I am interested in collage, card making and altering and transforming clothes. Did you know that the buzz word is now *up-cycling*, rather than *re-cycling*? I love to transform found objects into new creations, and also make costume jewellery

However, to make the group viable we need more members to join us! Please let me know if you are interested. If you have a particular skill, such as knitting, crocheting, embroidering – or any other – and are happy to demonstrate and facilitate others, that would be a great asset to the group. We will meet for 2 hours on the second or fourth Friday of the month, to coincide with the Arts Group and share the cost of hiring the room. We pay £2 per session. Our next meeting will take place at

the Tettenhall Institute on 23 October at 10:30am when we will be making Christmas cards. Come along and have fun! I look forward to hearing from you.

Mercedes Fonfria

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Understanding Opera Group

When I was asked to set up an opera appreciation group way back in 2007, I decided that the most useful approach for our members would be to concentrate on operas being performed locally, either live in the theatre or live streamings to the Lighthouse cinema. This is still the core of our work and to date we have studied over 45 operas! Inevitably this has now covered a significant proportion of the operatic repertoire and so, very occasionally, we branch out to study other works or general subjects such as Bayreuth or Glyndebourne.

At the start of this season we have looked at Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, a work rarely performed in this country. The rest of the season covers operas being performed either by Welsh National Opera at the Birmingham Hippodrome or by the Royal Opera at Covent Garden streamed live into the cinema. We are keeping our fingers crossed that the threatened savage cuts by the City Council will not adversely affect the Lighthouse! The first of these is Bellini's *I Puritani* which WNO is bringing to the Hippodrome in the Autumn. In the New Year we study *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a work which the Royal Opera is also streaming to cinemas. Other streamings which we shall study are Massenet's *Werther* and Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*.

Finally, since 2016 marks the 70th anniversary of Welsh National Opera, the company is performing 'Cav+Pag' (*Cavalleria Rusticana* by Mascagni and Leon Cavallo's *Pagliacci*), a double bill which WNO first performed in 1946. To celebrate this milestone we shall be studying these operas in the context of the history of WNO.

We meet once a month on a Tuesday (usually the 2nd Tuesday) at 2:30pm in members' homes. All members of the U3a are welcome.

Andrew Milligan

Classical Music Group



The group offers a monthly chance to listen to a wide range of Classical Music in the comfort of members' living-rooms. Programmes can be devoted to a particular composer (this year Brahms, Sibelius,

Poulenc, Messiaen and Mendelssohn), music from a country (Spain, Wales and Russia) or an umbrella topic such as BBC Young Musicians of the Year. Once or twice a year members bring along favourite pieces to introduce and play. No musical knowledge is required, just a willingness to listen to (and hopefully enjoy!) the variety of music played. Anyone is welcome to lead a session and we obviously rely on there being enough volunteers, but there is no pressure to do so.

We meet on the third Tuesday afternoon of the month, and new members would be most welcome. So if you fancy trying us out, or want further details, please contact me by e-mail (sheard56@talktalk.net) or telephone (593392).

John Sheard

New! Spanish Group

A Beginners Spanish language group has formed and had its first session on 6th August. It meets for two hours on Thursday mornings at the Tettenhall Wood Institute with Christine Smith as leader. In the initial sessions, we have practised greetings (Ola,), introductions, farewells (Adios,), asking for something and saying 'thanks' (Gracias), as well as learning some Spanish numbers. The Group Coordinator is Tim Jevons (tim.jevons@yahoo.co.uk).

Thoughts ...

Just to be with	All of us
Other friends –	Are bucking trends.
Three score years	Is it the water
And ten, plus five,	Do you think?
Makes me glad	Or knowing how
To be alive	To write with ink?
	Solving crosswords,
	Walking miles,
	Or giving people
	Cheery smiles?

I think that
Wolverhampton's way
Was giving us our U3A.
Busy each day without a lapse –
(Though secretly we could collapse!)

Creating seems to
Have a part –
Music making,
IT, Art,
Gardening, reading,
Cooking, sewing

All help to keep
The heart-blood flowing.

Quality not quantity
For me,
Thankfully enjoy each day,
Don't you agree?

Margaret Richmond

... STOP PRESS ... Psychology Group

Bob Evans started a new and expanded course on Sept 9th. You can find brief details on the Psychology page of the website (www.u3asites.org.uk/wolverhampton) or give Bob a ring on 01902 341539.

Miscellany

Becoming a Committee Member

As we all know, the U3A is a cooperative learning organisation that also places an important emphasis upon meeting and mixing with other members as well as enjoyment. Ideally, any activity that goes under the auspices of U3A meets all three of the aims (learning, sharing and pleasure). To ensure that the U3A functions, things need managing, such as getting speakers for monthly meetings, keeping finance records and organising interest groups so that they do not all fall on the same days. Such functions emphasise the need for each U3A to have a committee. Currently, our own Committee has a membership of 12, and we are lucky in that many of those twelve people undertake vital tasks (eg membership records; to ensure that everyone receives their Third Age Matters Journals; chairing monthly meetings; and so on), though not all committee members have such roles. The Constitution of the U3A allows a person to be elected at each AGM for a maximum of three years in any one role, and for six years in any one period of time. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to recruit new members of the Committee, which is normally done at each AGM in September. The Committee meets about every 6-8 weeks for a morning or afternoon for about 2 hours, and while being managed in a business-like manner, the meetings rarely go without laughter and enjoyable interaction. *[and nice biscuits – ed]*

To sum up, a minimum term of membership of the committee is one year, and the maximum six years. In each year, attending committees will take about 14 hours of your time spread over the meetings, though additional time may be required if you take on one of the tasks that are needed to ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

It is not a lot to ask, is it, to ensure your U3A works effectively? So why not join us, and contribute to the continued success of the U3A? All are welcome at the Committee, so come and chat to me or to one of its members, or come to a meeting to see what it is all about.

Neil Moreland: Chair, Wolverhampton U3A

This year's Walking Group Treasure Hunt was devised and run by David and Di Tordoff.

On a warm, bright afternoon 25 intrepid hopefuls set out in groups of two or three from the Littleton Arms in Penkridge, clutching answer sheets and pens. Their aim was to navigate a 1½ mile route around the village answering clues and collecting treasures along the way. Their powers of observation were tested to the hilt as they endeavoured to decipher David's cryptic clues and scour their surroundings, looking high and low for Priors, dreadnoughts, galleons and suns whilst collecting feathers, ring pulls, holly and ivy leaves etc.

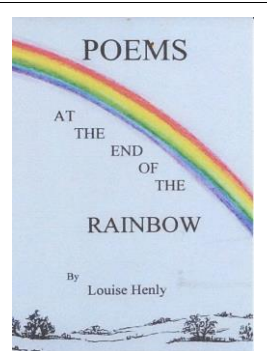
A couple of hours later, we were thankful we hadn't lost anyone as they all returned to hand in their precious treasures before venturing inside for tea and cake or something a little stronger. Whilst everyone enjoyed their well-earned refreshment the answers were read out and papers marked, after which could be heard a crescendo of mutterings "We didn't see that", "That one was easy", "It was where?".



Results couldn't have been closer, the winners, "Ludwig" aka Ruth Byrne and co., clinching first place only by finding the largest fir cone. And it was a whopper!

A second edition of Louise Henly's book has now been printed. It has 80 pages of poems, illustrated with Louise's drawings, some of which you may have seen in the U3A Newsletters.

If you would like a copy, (price £5), please phone on 01902 762208 or ask her at one of the meetings.



and finally

