



WSPu3a Newsletter

December/January
2023/4



What was the pigeon thinking?

Photo by Geoff Noel

The Committee's Briefs

Contact the Committee

You can use this link to send a message to any of our Committee:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/contact>

Chairman's Chat



These pictures* intrigued me. Deborah Wood's art is a response to the increasing invisibility of older people. She was talked over, not served, not replied to, not taken seriously. Such invisibility is dangerous. It leads to exclusion from the workforce, money worries, growing homelessness, bad health outcomes, abuse and silence and inaction in social policy.



She turned this on its head and used it as a cloak of invisibility to do things "inappropriate" for her age. She became a street artist.

The third age is a time when we have the time and opportunity to do those new things.

What inappropriate things would you like to do?

[Continued](#)

Chairman's Chat – Continued

Glenis and I were recalling our first Christmas lunch with the Five Mile Walkers, about 10 years ago. We were struck then by the vitality of these 70 year olds. Now we are 70, and sadly some of those around the table have died or, because of poor health, cannot walk five miles.

Although we have no problem recruiting new members to the u3a it is important that the younger members volunteer to help with its running. They bring new perspectives, new ideas, new enthusiasms.

Happy New Year to You All!

Malcolm Capps – Chairman

**[Deborah Wood – The Guardian](#)*

Groups News

The [Classic Car Group](#) is now moving forward and they will be having their first meeting in January to decide when, where and how this group will be run. If you have an interest in classic cars (you don't have to own one) and want to be part of the initial decision making, then sign up at the next monthly meeting.

A sheet for the [6+ Mile Walking Group](#) has been out for some months now, but with only 8 names it is not viable. If you enjoy a longer walk then please add your name or, I'm afraid, the sheet will be taken out.

I wish you all a very happy 2024 enjoying our Woodhall Spa u3a interest groups.

Val Shurben – Groups' Coordinator

CHANGES AHEAD

You may be aware that our u3a is adopting a generic software program used by many other u3a's. This is already being used by several of our Committee Members who have found that it is decreasing their workload. This will now be rolled out to our Group Leaders with training starting in January, which will enable them to see any membership changes to their groups instantly, and the administration for the Groups' Coordinator will be greatly reduced.

As the January meeting is a social event there will be no groups' sheets on display. However, this will continue thereafter and from February groups' details will be shown on notice boards. Having looked at the groups on offer if you wish to join a group, or groups, or remove your name from a group you will simply complete a slip giving your name and email address, and membership number if you know it, and name the group(s) you wish to join or leave.

That will be the only change with regard to how our groups are run.

Val Shurben – Groups' Coordinator

Groups List

You can use this link to find a current list of the groups we support, and how to join up:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/groups>

Online u3a

Find out more:

You can use these links to search for ways of furthering your interest in specific subjects, or even take part in some competitions:

Our own website

[Woodhall Spa u3a website](#)

u3a – Online Learning Events

[u3a Online Learning](#)

u3a Radio Podcast October 2023

[u3a Radio December 2023](#)



In this festive edition of the u3a radio podcast, the team looks back on some of their best interviews from 2023.

Secrets of the Human Brain

[Reserve a space for Secrets of the Human Brain](#)

This is a series of seven interactive talks which cover many aspects of our amazing brains. The series starts with a simple description of the structure of the brain and subsequent talks include subjects like sleep, dreams, behaviour, pain, the spinal cord, brain scanning and more.

Coming Soon

Upcoming Events list

You can use this link to find more details on all the events in our diary:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/events>

Monthly Meetings

Jan 4th

2:30pm to 4pm
Coronation Hall

Continue to celebrate Christmas with the u3a

There will be a social meeting in January . A chance to get out of the house and meet friends you haven't seen over Christmas. There is no speaker but there will be Christmas entertainment, if you wish to join in. You may bring your own drink and food for the table and there will be the usual tea and coffee. You may also wish to bring some 20ps for small wagers.

Feb 1st

2:30pm to 4pm
Coronation Hall

Fools Gold

Carol and Steve Robson are acoustic musicians playing narrative and chorus songs.

Group Noticeboard

Outings

A reminder for those who are booked to see [Pretty Woman at Hull New Theatre](#) on Thursday 8th February. The coach will leave from the lay-by on Stixwould Road at 10.30am. to give time to have some lunch before the 2.30pm performance. Tickets will be distributed on the coach.

Bookings will be taken at the monthly meeting on 4th January for our trip to Toilethorpe to see [A Midsummer's Night dream](#) on Saturday 27th July. Full details of the timings and cost for the trip will be published on the Outings page of the website towards the end of February and payments will be collected at the April monthly meeting.

[Sue Pollitt – Group Co-Leader](#)

Canasta

Dear players,

The Group Meetings resume on Thursday 11th January 2024, meeting at the Cricket Club and will meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at 2pm.

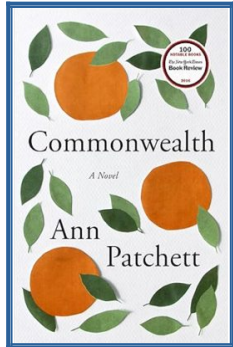
To new and prospective players – come along, its easy to learn to play.

[Alan Wright – Group Leader](#)

Around the Groups in 30 days

Reading

A Happy New Year to Everyone from the Reading Group



Our November book was [Commonwealth](#) by Ann Patchett.

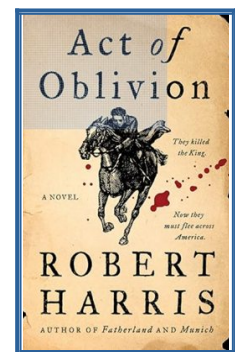
Set in California and Virginia, the novel tells the story of two divided families. Divorce results in the children of both families living together through the summer and the death of one of them has a traumatic effect on all their lives as they grow up. The heroine of the book is Franny and her relationships with her step siblings and divided parents weave through the whole book.

The book is a challenge – a contemporary American novel which appears difficult and rather 'alien' in some ways.

American language and life are uncomfortably strange. But Ann Patchett is a renowned woman author and the reviews for this book are very good.

The plot is convoluted but well-crafted with a large cast of characters and time switches that add to the reader's confusion. Feelings about the book in our group were mixed.

Then in December, the discussion was centred on [Act of Oblivion](#) by Robert Harris. It is 1660 and Colonels Whalley and Goffe sail for the New World. They are among the regicides wanted for complicity in the murder of King Charles the First. Richard Nayler is charged with bringing the traitors to justice and will stop at nothing to find them. The Colonels embark on an epic journey in a strange land, from one community to another as they find sympathisers willing to shelter them. A substantial bounty hangs over their heads.



Robert Harris is a master storyteller, and this book is set predominantly in America. It is a story of religion, fanaticism, vengeance, and power. A great piece of historical fiction of turbulent times. The group thought it was very well written, and very well researched, though somewhat let down by an unimpressive ending however satisfying. A very good read, at times atmospheric, and at other times extremely chilling. Highly recommended.



There is a description in [Act of Oblivion](#) of how the Roundhead army faced the enemy and moved forward with legs locked together. Three members of the group tried it. I feel we would undoubtedly have lost the battle!

Barbara Michaelides –
Group Leader



Home Computing for Fun

Christmas Lunch 2023

Not a computer in sight as the group headed out for a lovely festive lunch at the Teahouse in the Woods. A wonderful time was had by all.



New Year, New Interests

If you have a smart phone, tablet or iPad you may have only made use of the applications (apps) that came pre-installed on it. You might have only used your phone for calls, texts and emails, and maybe taking the odd photo. You may have even used the browser to surf the internet.

However, there is so much more that you can do, and you might even develop a new interest. Here are some ideas for free app downloads that should be available via the Play Store (Android) or Appstore (iPhone/iPad):

Merlin

This app comes in handy on your countryside walks. It can help you to identify birds by sound, appearance, or description.

Footpath Route Planner

Basically, does what it "says on the tin". Shows footpaths wherever you are.

Libby

This app gives you a digital connection to your library membership (you can join if you don't have one). It then gives you access on your device to borrow books, including audiobooks.

BBC Sounds

This app allows you to listen to any BBC radio content including music, sport, drama and podcasts. You do need a BBC login to access the content.

Snapseed

Photo editing software to crop, enhance or edit your photos.

Family Search Tree

A useful genealogy site to help you build your family tree.

[Continued](#)

New Year, New Interests – Continued

More Useful Everyday Apps

My Therapy

This app can be used to scan the barcodes on your medication and then you can set up alarms to remind you when to take them.

Brylaine

Local bus app with times, route planner and bus tracker that shows buses on route.

Trolley.co.uk

You can use this app to check current supermarket prices on your groceries.

Toilet Finder

A useful app when you are out and about, showing the location of the nearest loo.

Please note – All of these apps are free versions and some have the ability to upgrade at a cost for more facilities. There is obviously no obligation to do this.

Heather Maslen – Group Leader

Find out more

If you have any questions about these articles, or have topics you would like me to cover, please contact me by clicking on the bird on the Home Computing for Fun page on the Woodhall Spa U3A website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/page/115109>

Woodhall Wanderers

Unfortunately, there was no walk in December as there was no leader.

Many thanks to all the Group members who have led walks over the past year and a reminder to those who have yet to lead a walk that we are still short of leaders for a couple of months of the year.

We have had some lovely walks this year and whilst it may not have been raining, the ground has always been wet underfoot and there has been, in David's words 'affectionate mud'.



We shall be walking again on Wednesday 24 January 2024.

Happy and healthy new year!

John Cotton – Group Leader

Poetry

There was no December session, so I've delved into our archive to present three of our poems that deserve another showing: The first is a timely reflection on new years and beginnings; the second is a portrait of a loved daughter; the third recalls the changes that happen when life moves its geography.

Tom Sefton – Group Co-leader

Read more:

Use this link to see what else the group has written this year:

[Poetry Group Page](#)

Early Beginnings

*A New Year – a new beginning
Lewis suggested a Poetry Group,
Val agreed and set up a meeting,
Irene agreed to get things moving.*

*A New Year, but for me, a past remembered –
Reading poetry with my Dad.
A small girl, spellbound, lost in time,
He loved all poetry, I needed it to rhyme!*

*Then came Grammar school
With many new subjects for all of us.
Greek, Latin, French and German. Science too!
So much to learn in that huge syllabus.*

*So much homework we had at night –
So little time to spend with Dad.
School was strict, I had to get it right.
A few short hours was all we had.*

*Then came work, marriage, a family.
No time at all for poetry.
So I should love that lost time again.
But don't expect much from my addled brain!*

© Jackie Darling 2023

For Sarah (on her 21st birthday)

*Daughter, daughter, burning bright
Dead by day, alive by night
Now an adult?
No, not quite! is Sarah.*

*Sails serenely through life
Avoiding washing up and strife
Where she goes – amour is rife
With Sarah.*

*Boyfriends, boyfriends, by the score
Sighing, swooning at the door
Spurned, ignored they come for more
To Sarah.*

*(There is a wealthy farmer's son
Rugged features, full of fun
For Sarah's parents he's the one
-but not for Sarah).*

*But darling daughter, truth to tell,
This I know, and know full well
With pride and joy our hearts do swell
For Sarah.*

© Lewis Cole 2023

Growing Up in Soho

*Between the pubs and neon lights
I grew up in Soho's delights
Where streets were wild, and nights were long
And life was one big sing-along
Underneath the street lamps' glow
I'd roam the streets, with nowhere to go
The hustle and bustle, and the noise
Were just a part of life, I had no choice
I look back now, and see the past
The young man I was, and how it would last
Through council work, and designing days
To a quieter life, in Lincolnshire's ways*

*Like a fish out of water, I've flown
From the city, to a small village known
Woodhall Spa, where I now retire
To live my days, by the village mire
The wildness and excitement, now a distant dream
Replaced by birds and the tranquil stream
I've built a life, and found my peace
In this small town, where my troubles cease
But don't get me wrong, I still miss
The streets of Soho, and the London mist
So every now and then, I'll take a trip
And reminisce about my wild Soho days, with a sip.*

© AI Bot curated by Paul Membrey 2023

5 Mile Walkers

Timberland

Sometimes it's not easy to make up a five mile walk from a given location. Footpaths developed to walk from place to place, not to go round in circle and come back to where you started, which is what most walkers want to do. Add the rain, and the desire to get back to the pub for the Christmas meal in a reasonable condition, all made this month's walk quite a challenge.

It was polling day in Timberland and I think we went past the polling station at least four times and from three different directions. You have a different view of villages when you see them from the fields.



We started by walking towards Martin and then turned back to the village, passing along that great thoroughfare that is Main Street, Timberland. Striking out again we walked along the road towards Kirkby Green before turning back to the village.



Then down the jetty by the old school and across the fields to Timberland Drove. It was here that we saw the original route was under water and we had been wise to reroute our walk. We strolled back, diverted to Timberland church, and then on to the Penny Farthing, where we enjoyed a Christmas meal together.



Malcolm Capps
Group Leader



Photos by
Les Wylde



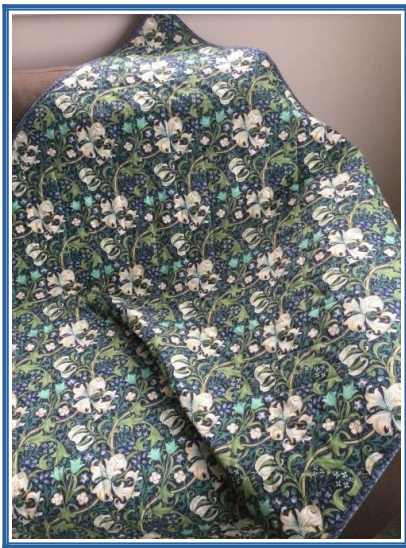
Sew & Sew

We've settled into our new venue – the Cricket Clubhouse at Woodhall Spa. I don't think we'll be cold in the Winter months as the heating works a treat, the fridge is a bonus, and we'll have a good view of the cricket when the season starts.

Bev has completed her first quilt, which is beautifully modelled by her first grandchild, Rafe, who looks very pleased with it. I understand Bev has already started on her next quilt.

I have completed another lap quilt for my sister-in-law's significant birthday. This was well received as she is a big William Morris fan so she loved the Morris-designed fabric.

Looking at the photo makes me wonder whether a lap quilt with built-in-slippers may be the next big thing!



Joan has completed a beautifully bright quilt for Poppy. Often with quilts, the front is the main feature with lots of piecing, and the back (backing) is usually relegated to being a single fabric. Most quilting cotton is only approx. 44" or 112cm wide, so if the quilt is intended to be wider than that, lengths of fabric need to be sewn together to create the required width. There are extra-wide fabrics available but the choice can be limited.



Joan has ingeniously resolved this dilemma by re-purposing a duvet cover as backing, to make a quilt that is as interesting and vibrant on the back as the front. I think Poppy will be delighted.

Continued

Sew & Sew – Continued



Joan has taken a break from her next quilt to make some pouches for Christmas presents.
On behalf of the Sew & Sew group, I wish you all a peaceful ('piece-full') and creative 2024.

Carmel Sefton

The Final Word

Feedback

You can use this link to view past issues of the Newsletter, or to send a note to the Editor:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/page/113917>

If you have any suggestions or comments about the Newsletter I'd be happy to read them. You can email them to me via newsletter@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk, or use the link above.

As another year comes to a close it's impossible not to reflect on the troubles we are seeing around the world, and how the human species struggles to shake off its brutal, greedy DNA. There is a glimmer of hope, it seems: As we all are able to observe the worst of our kind on the TV every day so the best of us tends to shine even brighter. Eventually, the light may chase out the darkness and our existence might one day become harmonious with our precious home and our community of mankind. There is no Planet B.

I wish you all a peaceful and progressive new year.

I am indebted, as always, to those who have taken time to contribute to this edition.
Many thanks.

Tom Sefton – Editor

u3a
learn, laugh, live