



*Learn, laugh, live*

## **Newsletter – Autumn 2022**

### **REMARKS FROM A COMMITTEE MEMBER (EX-CHAIR)**

Normally, these notes would have been produced by the Chair of Woodspring u3a to reflect some of the more notable events that our u3a has achieved since the last report. However, we are currently running without a Chair and will continue to do so until our Annual General Meeting which is presently scheduled for 23 May next year. At that event you will have the opportunity to elect a new Chair or, because our rules have enforced a one-year interregnum on me, you may be stuck with my return as Chair for up to five more years! Whilst I am happy to return for a short period, I would urge each of you to consider whether a further five years of me is to the benefit of our u3a. Of course, I'm very happy to continue in my other roles of Speaker Secretary, Beacon Administrator and even as the Woodspring Representative at the Northern Somerset Association of U3A's (NSA). But change is often good, and I can think of nothing more beneficial than bringing in a new Chair who is able and willing to give a new impetus to the direction and work of your Committee. Have you ever thought that we should be moving in a different direction or perhaps shaping a long-term plan for improvement? Do you have any ideas that you think could help your Committee to deliver a better product? You may be just the person best fitted to develop these types of ideas and I would urge you to put your name forward firstly to join the Committee and, later, as a candidate for a specific role when you're happy to do so.

I ought to say something about what the Committee has been doing on your behalf.

1. Since last autumn we have been operating a separate seating area at our monthly meetings for those who wish to observe social distancing and continue with wearing masks. However, the demand is now fading and even those opting to use this seating area either have to be reminded of the restrictions or are simply ignoring them. Now there is no legal imperative for public mask wearing or providing spaced-out seating so the last occasion this was done was 25 Oct. 2022. Thereafter the chairs will be set out in the normal manner. Of course, if either the demand for returning to the provision of social distancing or a new covid outbreaks forces us to revert then that is what we will do.

2. Many of you will have noticed a number of new Interest Groups have been formed and these were clearly needed as the take up has been most gratifying. It is equally clear that the demand to join existing Interest Groups exceeds their ability to cope with additional members and the answer is surely to form satellite groups operating in the same subject area but at a different location and run by a different Group Leader. If you are currently waiting for a place in one of our Interest Groups why don't you consider starting your own satellite Group.

3. My aim for 2022/23 was to get Woodspring u3a registered with the Charities Commission but, to do so, we need to have a full set of Committee Officers and as we currently run without a Chair that is a little difficult. Hopefully, this can proceed after our AGM next year and would allow us to benefit from tax refunds.

4. This year, the NSA's general knowledge quiz took place in Wells. Seven teams took part including two teams from Woodspring one of which came equal first but then lost the tie-break to finish second.

5. We have managed to run a full speaker programme for this year apart from one month when a predicted heatwave caused us to cancel, and a couple of late changes were made due to illness. I'm happy to say that the speakers we missed have either since presented to you or are scheduled for 2023. A full programme of 11 speakers for 2023 is being filled but do please send me details of any speaker you've heard who would provide an interesting talk to our members.

Regards Simon Beck  
Speaker Secretary, Beacon Administrator and Committee Member

## PROGRAMME FOR MONTHLY OPEN MEETINGS - NOVEMBER 2022 to AUGUST 2023 (as so far arranged)

Each Talk takes place at the Nailsea Methodist Church Hall, Silver Street and is scheduled to start at 2.15pm

- 22.11.2022.** Yvonne Bell presenting "Fashionable Edwardian Shopping". If travelling to Paris of the Belle Epoque wasn't possible where could a lady or gent shop for fashion in London?
- 24 Jan. 2023** Paul Barnett. "Christmas in Easter" A seasonal visit to Easter Island.
- 28 Feb. 2023** Lottie Dale. "Treading the Wards" From Carry on Nurse to Oooh Matron, you'll hear about Lottie's experiences and adventures in the early 1970s at Bart's Hospital in London.
- 28 Mar. 2023** Jenny Bowen. "The Trials and Tribulations of working in Africa". Jenny Bowen of SenseAfrica will tell us all about working in Africa. When I contacted her earlier this year, she was sitting near a waterhole watching hippos and warthogs so the work does have its positive side!
- 25 Apr. 2023** Terry Merrett-Smith. "The story of Ivor Novello." Ivor was a Welsh actor, dramatist, singer and composer who became one of the most popular British entertainers of the first half of the 20th century.
- 22 Aug 2023** Helen Frisby. Dr Helen Frisby of University of West of England will present her talk "Traditions of Death and Burials" which looks at those customs in England from the Norman Conquest onwards.

### North Somerset Association of u3as – Quiz



On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October a quiz was held at the Wells and Mendip Museum. In total there were nine teams from the North Somerset u3as. Woodspring u3a entered two teams. When all points had been added up Woodspring came joint 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. The decision as to which team came in first place was determined by a tie break question. Brean u3a won the tie break which meant that Woodspring u3a came in second place.

There was then a shield presented to the winners and prizes to the first three teams.

This was followed by a very nice afternoon tea and all those who took part agreed that it was a very enjoyable afternoon.

It will be Brean u3a who have to organise next year's quiz.

Pat Pellow  
Treasurer

### MEMBERSHIP

I'm delighted to say our numbers keep growing - in the last Newsletter on 16<sup>th</sup> May we reported 375 members and hoped we would reach 400. In this Newsletter I was therefore intending to welcome by name the members who have joined since then but as there have been 81 new members I would run out of space! Therefore, can I offer all new members a warm welcome to Woodspring u3a, I hope you find something to enjoy amongst our various activities. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries. Membership currently stands at 456.

Introducing a new, joint membership fee, which is reduced for two people living at the same address, has been very popular. A number of existing members were able to convert to joint membership, some persuaded their 'other half' to join us, and some new members enquiring about joining themselves then persuaded their other halves to sign up as well. This reduction is possible because only one copy of the Third Age Trust magazine is sent to an address by the distributors, even if there are two members living there.

I appreciated your quick response at renewal time, just as I am sure you appreciated not having to complete another membership form. Almost 60% of you paid by bank transfer, about 30% by cheque and 10% in cash at a meeting. Renewal date is not until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, and I will be in touch with details a few weeks beforehand.

Sarah Hewlett (Membership Secretary) [s.hewlett103@gmail.com](mailto:s.hewlett103@gmail.com) 01275 876199

### INTEREST GROUPS

I'm pleased to say we're now running nearly 50 interest groups at Woodspring, covering a broad range of subjects. I'd love to say there's something for everyone, but a quick straw poll showed what else we might offer – more of that later.

Firstly – a sample of our groups, especially ones that can still accommodate new attendees. If you would like to join a group that currently has no vacancies, talk to the leader and ask to be put on the waiting list. You can access preliminary information and contact details for all our active groups on [u3asites.org.uk/woodspring/groups](http://u3asites.org.uk/woodspring/groups).

### Art Studies

We cover a wide range of art works from earliest times to the present. Each session consists of a presentation by a member or sometimes contributions by all on a given topic or the work of an individual artist, allowing time for group participation. We do have a couple of vacancies so get in touch if you're interested. Contact 01275 845206

### Creative Writing

Currently we meet at The Salthouse, Clevedon, on the first Tuesday in the month at 10am until noon. New members are welcome. Our aim is to improve the quality of our writing, whatever the genre, e.g. short story, poetry, play, or novel, via constructive feedback in a supportive and encouraging environment. Contact 01275 342238 / [artawilson@outlook.com](mailto:artawilson@outlook.com)

### Family History

As always, this very friendly and sociable group welcomes new members whether they are experienced researchers or complete beginners. There is always something interesting at our meetings that suit most people including explorations of social history, improving techniques, using new technology and discovering the advantages of DNA for genealogy purposes. During the summer months we had two outings to the Somerset Archives & Heritage Centre in Taunton. We had guided tours of the work done behind the scenes to restore and preserve artefacts. It was much appreciated by those on return visits and many on their first visit. Contact 01275 794646

### Garden Visits

This group has come to the end of its outings for 2022 and will start up again in the spring. Thank you to all the group members who've been on visits and helped make them so enjoyable. The many offers of help and support I've received are greatly valued as are the suggestions and ideas for future visits. Many of the group attended a review meeting at The Farmhouse Pub in Nailsea and your ideas for 2023 have all been noted. People can ask to have their names added to the group list and they'll receive information emails about the visits next year. Contact 01275 880172

### Lunch Group 2

We've room now for another member or two as the members like their holidays so not everyone can make every lunch. We tend to meet on a Monday or Tuesday, approximately once a month at a local hostelry. Contact 01275 852550

### Music for Fun



This wonderful friendly group believes in the old saying 'the more the merrier!' So do come and join us. We now meet weekly, every Tuesday afternoon from 2pm until 4pm with a half time tea/coffee break. Singers and musicians – the musicians play the music and sing along, the singers sing. Percussion instruments are provided for anyone who would like to play them.

Our venue is The Community Hub, 65 High Street, Nailsea. BS48 1AW. Subs are £10 for 5 weeks, or £3 if you prefer to pay when you are able to come. This includes tea/coffee and biscuits and if we have a lot of people we will have a free week, and maybe even reduce the subs!

Chords and words are projected onto the wall for all to see – so no need for photocopies! We would particularly welcome keyboard players and an electric guitar! Some special sessions are planned:

**8th November** – a musical trip around the UK. You are welcome to dress up to represent an area of the UK.

**22nd November** – Bring your brollies, sunglasses and snow-boots – We're singing about the weather into December and we will be singing Christmas songs each week.

Contact 07939 090148 /[wayheymargaret@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wayheymargaret@yahoo.co.uk)

### Opera

We run 2 small Opera Appreciation Groups where the leader provides a synopsis and shows a DVD of an opera. There are 1 or 2 vacancies for sessions which are usually held on the 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Monday of the month at 1.45pm. Contact 01275 858304

### Poetry Appreciation

The Wednesday Poetry Group will have a few vacancies in the New Year if Covid numbers go down. We enjoy poets ancient and modern, taking it in turn to choose the poet and lead. We enjoy an occasional tea party and Pub lunch and have been to Literary Festivals. Contact 01275 875316

### **Portishead Book Group**

We are a new group, starting in November on the morning of the 3rd Monday of the month and meeting at the Windmill in Portishead. The group will be open to all genres of fiction, with an emphasis, perhaps, on modern writers, but without excluding the choices of the group members. This group will be small, to enable everyone to participate in the discussion, so if you'd be interested in joining, please contact [j.kern@btopenworld.com](mailto:j.kern@btopenworld.com) or 07887 947118.

### **Rummikub**

The Rummikub group is continuing to grow but would still welcome any new members. Even if you have never played before but think you might be interested, do come along to meet us and "give it a go". Contact 01934 833751

### **Scrabble**

We meet on the second Tuesday afternoon of each month at the Consti club in Clevedon for a game or two. We do not attempt to be of competitive league level and welcome all players - even beginners. It has been a difficult time to get started and we would love to have more players. Contact 01275 876160

### **Solo Group 2**

We meet on the 1st Thursday of the month at the Walton Park Hotel Clevedon at 10am for coffee. This is an informal chat and an opportunity to plan future events and outings. This is a member participation group and once new members are settled in, they are expected to take turns in arranging outings/events.

Over the last few months, we have visited the Clevedon Gin Distillery, met for Sunday lunch, The Rural Life Museum at Glastonbury. For November we are going for afternoon tea at Dunelm and in December going to Cardiff with Bakers Dolphin. Contact 01275 343301

### **Wonderful Women in History**

We are a small group meeting in each other's homes once a month for a friendly discussion on a diverse assortment of women who have made a name for themselves one way or another. At present we have a small waiting list, but when we make the occasional visit to somewhere related to our subject, we are happy to open up the visit to all Woodspring u3a members, as in our recent visit to Arnos Vale Cemetery. Contact 07900 964496

### **World Literature**

The World Literature book club has a few vacancies. We're avid readers who enjoy substantive fiction from around the world, often Booker nominees, and meet once a month to share our takes on the book. Discussions have been excellent so far, with no one leaving with the same view they came in with. Meetings are relaxed, at a member's home, and include potluck snacks, a hot drink, and chat. Contact [awayatpost@gmail.com](mailto:awayatpost@gmail.com)

### **And a potential new group:**

'I know this is a longshot, but I would be interested to host an **Early Music** group (medieval through Baroque, especially polyphony), either for voice or recorder -- not mixed together, but a group for each. Ideally, this would not be for beginners, but for those who can read music, are capable of conductor-less singing/playing, have some experience with motets and madrigals, and are interested in working on pieces up to a performance standard, with a focus on blend and musicality.' If you'd be interested in joining either of these groups, **contact [awayatpost@gmail.com](mailto:awayatpost@gmail.com)**

### **And finally, comments from the straw poll ....**

'I would love a **quilting and patchwork group**. It wouldn't be teaching but a group where people can bring their projects and get help and support from each other, whilst quilting and having tea or coffee. Perhaps visit Quilt exhibitions from time to time. Somewhere like a church or village hall (e.g., Quakers Hall in Clevedon, or the Folk Hall in Portishead) where there are trestle tables so that we could bring our sewing machines, and a kitchen for making drinks. We would need to pay room hire of course. I'm happy to help investigate some venues but I'm already involved in managing other groups so not able to lead this one'

'I also belong to Cheddar Valley u3a and get all their newsletters. They also run a "**Day Trippers**" group which plans to hold at least 2 outings a year. Recent trips have included Exeter, Cardiff and Windsor. I do not feel in a position to undertake this on my own as I am already managing a group, but if there was enough demand for something like this, I could share the responsibility with someone.'

'If anyone started a **Mah Jong** group, I would be interested '

If you're interested in running any of these suggested groups, or sharing responsibility for one of them or for any other interest groups that you would like to see on the list, please get in touch with me

Chriss Pickles

Groups Organiser

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