



*Learn, laugh, live*

## Newsletter – Spring 2023

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

Dear Members

On 23 May we will be having our Annual General Meeting and I am asking every one of you to seriously consider how you might be able to contribute to your u3a by putting your name forward to assist with the running of Woodspring u3a either on the Committee or in another role. Whilst I understand your reluctance to be involved in such work after a lifetime of employment the fact remains that if we cannot get volunteers to relieve some of the burden imposed on the long-serving current Committee there is a possibility that Woodspring will cease to function as has recently happened at two other u3a groups which simply could not find members to replace some of their key Committee posts holders. We have already functioned for a year without an official Chairperson but this is far from ideal and is possibly questionable if we try to register as a charitable organisation in order to benefit from tax concessions and keep your annual fee as low as possible.

Woodspring u3a currently has nearly 500 members so, surely, we can find 5 people willing to relieve some of the burden carried by the current long-standing Committee members either by replacing them or at least sharing their workload. Of course, sharing the workload does not mean you will be obliged to join the Committee although we certainly need to find members willing to take on Committee roles as the current holders inevitably stand down. Please give it serious thought as the loss of Woodspring u3a would be a great shame

### PROGRAMME FOR MONTHLY OPEN MEETINGS – MARCH to NOVEMBER 2023

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

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|---------------------|---|
| <b>28.03.2023</b>   | <b>Jenny Bowen</b> "The Trials and Tribulations of working in Africa." The title says it all as Jenny describes the problems of helping in Africa.  |
| <b>25 Apr. 2023</b> | <b>Terry Merrett-Smith.</b> CHANGE OF PROGRAMME. "Dance Bands" A sashay through some of the most famous dance bands   |
| <b>23.05.2023</b>   | <b>AGM</b> The speaker after the AGM will be Lucie Perryman of Children's Hospice South West to update us on Charlton Farm and seek donations.  |
| <b>27.06.2023</b>   | <b>Richard Hamlyn</b> "Africa on a shoestring" The story of a six-month trip in the 1980s driving a VW Camper Van from Torquay to Nairobi.  |
| <b>25.07.2023</b>   | <b>Roy Ackrill</b> "From Brunel to HST and beyond" The history of Backwell (and Nailsea) Railway Station and the linked railways from Brunel to today.  |
| <b>22.08.2023</b>   | <b>Dr Helen Frisby</b> "Traditions of Death and Burials" Helen of the University of the West of England is an expert on the past funereal customs.  |
| <b>26.09.2023</b>   | <b>Gina Merrett-Smith</b> "An Actors Voice for me" Voices of actors and music stars from stage, screen and literature, with their stories   |
| <b>24.10.2023</b>   | <b>Samantha Ball</b> Sam's talk touches upon the history of the Weston-Super-Mare Playhouse and covers information about it, but the main subject of her talk is how and why she came to write her book about the Playhouse and the process of how she did it. Copies of her book will be on sale at the end of the presentation. |
| <b>28.11.2023</b>   | <b>Yvonne Bell</b> "Fashionable Edwardian Shopping." Shopping in all those London stores that were the epitome of luxury – Fortnum & Masons, Hamleys, Selfridges, Liberty's, etc. Those places that were worth visiting in Oxford St/Piccadilly to purchase the perfect gift!   |

## GROUPS UPDATE

We're currently running 47 interest groups at Woodspring, covering a broad range of subjects – we lost a couple but have gained a couple of new ones. For our last issue I conducted a straw poll to see what other subjects might be of interest; I repeated the exercise and, with thanks to those who responded, the details are below. I know I must sometimes sound like a stuck record when I ask for volunteers to run new groups or take over established ones, but without volunteers we would be nothing, and I cannot emphasise sufficiently that running an interest group can be very straightforward and will add so much value to its members. If you'd like to try, I'm here to help, as are many current group leaders who would be happy to support you, so please get in touch – and if you're new to the area, what better opportunity to meet people!

Firstly – a sample of our groups, especially ones that can still accommodate new attendees, and including an eye-catching flyer from Maggie (thank you!) who runs the very successful Music for Fun group. 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

Meets 2nd Thursday 10am in Portishead

We are a small but committed group, we enjoy our meetings and would very much welcome new members. We look at art in any form and hope to be open to a wide variety of works. Our meetings depend on group participation, one month looking at examples around a theme, alternating with a presentation by a group member.

This year's programme includes:

- as general topics - Abstract Art, Working Women
- as presentations- Black and White Photography, Artemesia Gentileschi

Contact 01275 845206 / 07422 972103

### Greek for Holidaymakers

The GfH group meets fortnightly to practice conversational Greek. Everyone has a basic grasp of the language (the alphabet and common phrases, such as hello and thank you). Most important is a willingness to have a go and have a laugh.

We have vacancies – please get in touch if you're interested 07989816208

### Literature Group

We meet on the first Thursday of the month at 2pm at 65 The High Street Nailsea. We've been at this venue for a few months now and find it very comfortable and convenient to car parks. We chat about the books and enjoy refreshments. We all decide which books we will read, and they range from modern ones to the old classics.

We are a friendly group and aim to enjoy a couple of social events during the year such as a cream tea and a lunch out. Please email me if you wish to join, the waiting list is presently empty and although the group is full at the moment, spaces do crop up.

[janebaggley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janebaggley@hotmail.co.uk)

### Lunch Group 2

Lunch Group 2 has space for new members. We are a sociable and friendly group which meets approximately once a month on a Monday or Tuesday. I try to vary the venues as not all the members of the group live in Nailsea. Not all members can make every meeting, because of holidays or other commitments so some new faces would be welcome. If you think you might like to join, please email me, June Slater, on [junevslater@live.co.uk](mailto:junevslater@live.co.uk)."

### Lunch Group 3

Also has vacancies.

Contact 01275 880172

### Music for Fun



**We meet every fortnight:**

**31/01; 14/02; 28/02; 14/03; 28/03**

**Tuesday afternoon from 2pm until 4pm**

**At 65, High St, Nailsea**

**Contact Maggie. Mob. 07939090148**

Everyone is welcome to join our group. We aim to have fun, lift the spirits through singing and playing musical



instruments. If you play a musical instrument, please bring it along with you . We have ukeleles, electric guitar, banjo, tin whistle, keyboard plus lots of percussion instruments which we provide (No drum yet!) All instruments are welcome, we love variety.

You don't have to play an instrument to join us. The instrumentalists play the music and everyone sings along. The words and chords (Sorry no music) are projected onto the wall, so there is no need to print anything out.

The songs are very varied, pop (50's, 60's, 70's with a couple of more modern ones!) Folk songs, songs from the musicals, jazz and anything else people want to sing!

Cost is £10 for 5 sessions unless you want to pay as you come, then it is £3 as we still have to pay for the hire of the room. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided (free) at half time.

The photos show fun at our Christmas party and the group coming together again after Christmas.

All concentration! Task at our Christmas party. We did lots of singing too!



Winners of the Rudolph Competition  
Erica, Christine, Helen and John.  
Well done!



Do pop in and give us a try, we'd love to see you!

Contact 07939 090148 /wayheimargaret@yahoo.co.uk

### Music – Opera, groups 2 and 3

I have room for 1 member in each of my opera groups.

MUSIC - OPERA 2nd Wednesday Nailsea

MUSIC - OPERA 3rd Monday Nailsea

I usually email opera synopsis, and we watch a whole opera.

Contact 01275 858304

## Solo Group 2

Unfortunately this group will cease to exist unless someone will volunteer to take it over, since the current leader has had to step down. Please get in touch with me (Chriss, 01275 878927) if you feel you could help. The Solo Groups we run are an excellent way to meet new people, make friends and have a chance to visit local points of interest with like-minded people.

## Wonderful Women in History

We are a small friendly group who meet in each other's homes on the morning of the third Tuesday of the month for a lively discussion on a diverse assortment of women who have made a name for themselves one way or another. We occasionally make a visit to a place connected to our research and discussions. At present we could welcome one or two new members to our group. If interested, please contact Jennifer on 01179 964496.

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

"I would love some **Italian conversation practice and/or lessons** (I'm not a beginner though).  
But more especially – **drawing or painting lessons** – or any type of **practical art**"

"I wonder about a **Sunday lunch group**? Weekends can feel very long if you're on your own as there are not many things on. Maybe someone might be persuaded to hold a chat over coffee with interested participants about how it might work?" (Volunteer available to help facilitate an initial discussion)

"If someone or a group of people wanted assistance to set up a group I don't mind helping till they get it going. Suggestions":

- **Breakfast / Brunch club**
- **Clevedon Cinema** with option of a meal before / after
- **Senior Rail Card trips**
- **Bus pass days out**
- **Mah-jong**
- **Quilting**

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  
01275 878927  
Chrisspickles@email.com

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We now have 471 members, including 114 new members during the past year, which is fantastic – welcome to all of you. All memberships are due for annual renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April – please do not take any action yet, but look out for an email or letter from me at the beginning of March with information on how to renew. Due to rising costs the Committee has decided we need to increase the fee, but the good news is that it is only by £1 for the whole year, so less than 10 pence/month.

We stopped issuing membership cards several years ago, which does not seem to have caused any difficulties – as far as we are aware nobody was being asked to show them anywhere, and the cost (including printing and postage) is around £1 per member and therefore hard to justify. When I send your confirmation of renewal/payment I always include your personal membership number in the email or letter. If by any chance you have mislaid it then feel free to contact me on the details below if you ever need to provide your number.

Did you know that one of your u3a membership benefits is that you can attend one interest group in another local u3a without having to pay to become a full member of that u3a? We have a reciprocal agreement covering all the local u3a groups such as Woodspring, Bristol, Cheddar, Wells, or Weston. For example if you find that one u3a has a sky-diving group (!) that you would really like to join and the leader has a space and is happy to accept a member from a local u3a then let their membership secretary know you are a paid up Woodspring u3a member. They will need your details for their records and may ask for your membership number. The arrangement does only cover one group, so if you wanted to join (for example) their white-water rafting group as well you would need to pay a membership fee to join their u3a.

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