

learn, laugh, live



Board Games in action!

Newsletter Issue 83 March 2023

Registered Charity Number 1101530

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Welcome...



...to the March 2023 Newsletter. Hopefully, you have settled well into the New Year and are looking forward to lighter days and Spring!

We are an active bunch at Evesham & District u3a, which is reflected in the many contributions received. Inside this issue you will find excellent reports and photos from many of our groups' activities. Some groups send me their news on a regular basis, but there are many more who are quietly equally active and adventurous.

Please note the 'News about our Website' on page 7, enjoy the Special Feature on 'Wines from Bordeaux' and don't miss the 70s Quiz on page 15. Our very popular Christmas Concert last December and the February monthly meeting brought together more of our members again, making it almost feel like pre-Covid days. So, please, check out the 'Monthly Meetings' on page 5 – there is sure to be something for everybody!

And last not least, please note your diaries with the deadline for the June issue, which is on **Sunday 30 April 2023**. Enjoy the read!

Bärbel Wolstencroft

The photo on the title page was taken by Ally Edwards and shows members of the Board Games Group enjoying a Friday afternoon session.

From the Chair

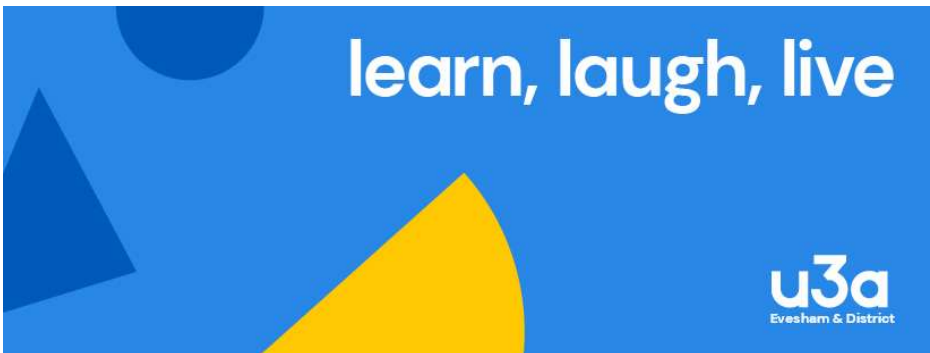


Greetings to all our members!

Thank goodness Spring appears to be just around the corner – although I suspect we may have a few bumps along the road to warmer weather. This winter will have been very hard for many people and although a few rays of sunshine won't heal all our ills, it seems to bring out a smile on everyone's faces.

One of the most important aspects of the u3a movement is the power of social engagement. Getting out there and meeting others who share your passions and interests is so beneficial to our mental health – and whilst it was wonderful to be able to continue in some way during the pandemic, nothing compares with meeting up in person and having some good old-fashioned fun!

Although I am evangelical about the benefits of belonging to the u3a, it still surprises me how many people have never heard of the u3a or don't understand how it works. So, I'll continue banging the drum this Spring and make sure everyone knows our strap line:



Deborah

Monthly Meetings

<https://u3asites.org.uk/evesham/events>



By the time you read this, I think it will be a bit late to be wishing you a 'Happy New Year', so I will just say that I hope 2023 is going well for you and that you are continuing to find lots to interest you in the u3a!

I have put together a programme for the coming year which I hope will have something that might interest you and encourage you to come and join us at the monthly meetings. As well as hearing some fascinating speakers, there is an opportunity to join us afterwards for refreshments and possibly meet some new people and also members of the committee.

I know that some of you have requested talks on more local topics so John Butterworth's talk, which we listened to in February, and Gill Pawson's in June might be of particular interest to you. Paul Barwick, Peter Gill and Dr Gillian White have all visited us before and we are very pleased to have them back later in the year. Looking forward to welcoming you at Evesham Methodist Church...

Nicky Neill

1 March 2023

Fran Sandham – A solo walk across Africa

An account of a 3,500 mile solo walk coast to coast from the Atlantic on Namibia's Skeleton Coast to the Indian Ocean near Zanzibar – the first time on record anyone has crossed Africa solo entirely on foot by this route or at least solo apart from a disastrous donkey!



Fran Sandham is a critically acclaimed author and public speaker and a former editor of Rough Guides. Fran has written freelance for many newspapers and magazines, including the Daily Telegraph, the Observer and the Financial Times. His book 'Traversa: A solo walk across Africa' received terrific reviews on both sides of the Atlantic and was serialised in the Sunday Times.

Image supplied by Fran Sandham

Refreshments – Badminton 1

5 April 2023: no meeting as the date it is so close to Easter.

3 May 2023

Paul Barwick – Alexander Litvinenko: The Spy who solved his own Murder.



On the 16th October 2006, two Russian secret agents flew into London's Heathrow airport. Their mission had one objective: to kill Alexander Litvinenko. Paul looks at Litvinenko's life and death and the attempts to assassinate him. We hear about the deadly

poison polonium and the reasons why a vengeful president finally said 'enough...' Conclusions are drawn from the public enquiry into his death and the question is raised as to whether his family will ever see justice.

Image supplied by Paul Barwick

Refreshments – Badminton 2

7 June 2023

AGM – followed by a talk from Gill Pawson on the 'Evesham Civic Society'

Gill is an active member of our u3a and will tell us about the purpose and activities of the Society, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022.

Refreshments – Birdwatching

News about our Website

Volunteer members of the Website Team, who include Alison, John, Frances, and Ally, are trialling a replacement website for Evesham, which is being developed by national u3a.

Watch this space!

Help with updating your groups on the u3a website

Our website is the public face we show the world. Everyone can help the website editors to keep it up to date. Whether you are a group leader, a page editor or a group member, please take a moment to review your group web page and advise your group leader or the website team of any changes required, see <https://u3asites.org.uk/evesham/groups>



It's just not enough to write
"Image from Pinterest.com"!

Here's a recent extreme example from a u3a in SW Region:

"[WE WERE] CAUGHT OUT BECAUSE WE INADVERTENTLY USED A PICTURE ON OUR WEBSITE THAT WAS OWNED BY SOMEBODY ELSE AND WE HAD TO PAY A FEE. IT SEEMS THERE ARE COMPANIES OUT THERE WHO MAKE THEIR MONEY FROM ANALYSING WEBSITES LOOKING FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENTS, SO WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL THAT WE ALWAYS KNOW THE OWNERSHIP OF PICTURES AND OTHER MATERIAL USED ON OUR WEBSITES."



Chairpersons' network for the u3a COTSWOLD LINK

If you are responsible for your group web page, would you like to meet with a website team member? **We can help with anything from simple text editing to finding images which do not infringe copyright.**

Copyright is concerning and it is therefore best to use your own photos. Please ensure you have the permission of the people appearing in the photographs. You can always ask for our advice on displaying images on the u3a website, Instagram, Facebook and more.

Images: public domain via Microsoft Office clip art

Frances Kilburn

Cotswold Link

Advance notice of a **Special Interest Day** to be held at the Pavilion in Cheltenham on Thursday 29 June 2023. For more details nearer the time please keep an eye on the Cotswold Link website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/cotswold-link/events>

Did you know...?

...that the local charity **Evesham Talking Newspaper**, which was established in 1980, provides digital audio recordings to benefit anyone who is blind, visually impaired or has an incapacity which makes reading a strain? The recordings, which are based on news and stories from local newspapers and magazines, are delivered to people living in and around the Evesham area.

To find out more or to get involved, call Fran Webb on 07801 983112 or visit:

www.eveshamtalkingnewspaper.co.uk

Special Feature

By Grahame Percival

Wines from Bordeaux

To what extent, I am often asked, does the Wine Tasting Group fit in with the u3a's ethos of Learn, Laugh and Live? You might imagine that after a couple of glasses, members will be laughing and living, but what about learning? Well, here is what we discovered at the January meeting when we set out to investigate the wines of Bordeaux.

Bordeaux is the largest producer of wine in the world, 5% of which is high class, top of the range, with wines up to 100 years old and prices to match! But beneath this price range is a huge variety at different price points. The city



stands on the Garonne which later merges with the Dordogne to form the estuary known as the Gironde. It has maintained its reputation since the classification of its châteaux in 1855, but Bordeaux is not just about fine wines; it is about wines for every budget, products that can compete with wines from around the world in terms of both quality and price.

Bordeaux is divided geographically into three areas – the left bank, with its gravelly soils and good drainage, the right bank of clay and sand and the Entre-Deux-Mers, the land which lies to the south-east of the city between the two rivers. **Terroir** is the key to the wide variety of wines – not just the

soils, but the weather, the exposure to sun or breeze, drainage and geographical location.

The main grapes used to make the white wines are the ubiquitous sauvignon blanc and semillon. Our tasting began with a varietal sauvignon blanc; it was fine, but once we moved on to the next two which had semillon as the main component of the blend, we began to appreciate the wine-makers art.

The vast majority of Bordeaux reds are blends, and the varieties grown are limited to cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc and, to a much lesser extent, petit verdot and malbec. Faced in the recent past with competition from the New World, big companies and individual growers have worked very hard at developing what they have in Bordeaux rather than trying to imitate wines from other parts of the world. They have explored in depth the potential of the varieties grown in varying proportions throughout the region. Cabernet sauvignon brings acidity, tannins, structure, spiciness and ageing potential; merlot brings floral notes and fruitiness, so the two complement each other well. Depending on the harvest, these grapes can be blended in different proportions and, if need be, enriched with small quantities of the less widely grown varieties. To help us understand better what is in the bottle, we learnt that cheaper wines come under the label of Bordeaux, whilst Bordeaux Supérieur is allocated to wines that have more consistency, having been made from lower yields, have had slightly longer in barrel and have a slightly higher alcohol content. The next level up is the Cru Bourgeois. It is also worth looking out for wines with Côtes in the label e.g. Côtes de Blaye, as these are developing fast. The governing principles in Bordeaux winemaking are balance and harmony with food.

Médoc, on the left bank of the Gironde, is the home of cabernet sauvignon. Small grapes mean more skin and therefore more tannins and therefore some ageing potential. The best vintages can be kept for 100 years, but you are taking a chance! To the south of the Médoc lies Graves where both red and white wines are produced. The whites are generally acknowledged as the best of Bordeaux. The dominant grape on the Right Bank, with its totally different soils, is Merlot. Vintage is still quite important in Bordeaux, and we

learnt that both 2019 and 2016, examples of which we tasted, are considered very promising.

It has to be said that the wines of Bordeaux are so much more impressive when accompanying food. The whites, as you might imagine, are excellent with fish and seafood but also, surprisingly perhaps, with crumbly cheeses such as Lancashire and Caerphilly. The reds go well with roast or casseroled red meats but also with a flavoursome mature cheddar.

We rounded off the evening with a 2003 Sauternes, which had been lying in my cupboard for goodness knows how long. Sauternes are made from grapes which have been allowed to rot on the vine. As the grapes shrivel, the sugar content increases, hence the production of a sweet wine which accompanies not only desserts but also blue cheeses such as Roquefort.

All the wines, apart from the Sauternes, were purchased through the Wine Society. The undoubted star of the evening was the merlot-rich Château Lary-Tagot which retails at just £7.95. The best white was the A de Château d'Arche, but at £14.50, is probably not a wine for everyday drinking.



Did we laugh and live? Of course we did. Did we learn? Undoubtedly. We now know so much more about the geography and geology of an important wine-growing area. We know about which grapes are grown, how they are blended and how they can enhance the food we eat every day or what we could choose for a special occasion. I should also mention that homework was set prior to the meeting! YouTube has an excellent half-hour-long video introducing the Bordeaux area and its wines which helped us gain a better understanding of what we were to experience at the tasting.

Map from <https://snippetsofparis.com/wines-from-bordeaux/>

Photo source www.thewinesociety.com/buy/wines/france/bordeaux

Group News

❖ Military History

Who Will Grasp the Nettle?

Military History needs someone to direct the group.

Volunteers run the website and Beacon so this is very much an Officer's commission.

Contact Ally Edwards via the u3a website



Image by Josef Geis, 1918 reproduced with permission © IWM Art.IWM PST 7691
'Collect nettles! If you want clothing and thread! Bavarian Nettle office, München'

❖ Science and Engineering

Our group continues to have excellent discussions and presentations by its members. The latest one was an in-depth analysis of the potentials and problems of green energy with special reference to the use of metals, especially those in short supply or in the control of a few states. This was an excellent presentation by two of our members and it is available as a PowerPoint for u3a members who wish to access it – please contact me.

We have also listened to presentations concerning aircraft disasters and one about the way weather systems circulate. Some members have given us an insight into their careers at meetings. And of course we continue to have lively interchanges about anything!

Alan Eames

❖ Birdwatching

In October we were at Camp Lane Pits, Grimley, which is always good for wildfowl and we had excellent views of Gadwall, Teal, Wigeon and Shoveler. There were also Grey Herons, Little Egrets and both male and female Stonechat. Despite the fact that it was late October there were still dragonflies on the wing.

We went further afield for our November meeting, travelling south of Bristol to Chew Valley Lake. We stopped at three different points around the lake and each gave us a different selection of birds. The highlights included close male and female Goldeneye, Kingfisher, Bewick's Swans and 29 roosting Cattle Egrets.



The 2023 calendar of meetings is available to view on the group's webpage.

Photo: Kingfisher by Richard Hunt

❖ Natural History

For our October meeting we went to Grafton Wood. As there were very few flowering plants and no insects, the main focus of the meeting was on autumn fungi, and what a challenge that proved to be! It's such a specialised subject but great fun too.

Eoves Wood, planted by the Woodland Trust to mark the Millennium, is on the outskirts of Hampton and was our November venue. There was fungi fun again, but plenty else to see as well. Bees were still on the wing and plants such as Yarrow and Red Clover were in flower. There were also a very obliging Marmalade Hoverfly and winter visiting thrushes, including Redwings.



A new calendar of 2023 meetings can be found on the group's webpage.

Photo: Marmalade Hoverfly by Bärbel Wolstencroft

❖ Travellers' Tales

The first 2023 meetings are as follows:



January – Chile from Top to Bottom (and the Bit in Between) – John Boon

February – Mkushi to Madrid – A Working Life Abroad – David Keeling

March – Four Weeks of Adventure in the Far East – David & Alison Williams

There is no meeting in April as it is Easter Monday.

In May we will start our summer programme of visits to local places of interest.

Photo: Reflections in Chile by John Boon

❖ Quiz

Do you remember the seventies? Here is a test of memory for you:

1. In 1978 what was the name of Britain's first test tube baby?
2. Who played Sybil in Fawlty Towers?
3. What was the name of Prime Minister Edward Heath's yacht?
4. In which year of the seventies did the government deem it necessary to appoint a Minister of Drought?
5. What is the name of the male tennis player who won Wimbledon in 1975? (Hint: to this day, he is the only black male player ever to have won the title.)
6. Which actor played the Six Million Dollar Man?
7. Which Austrian became UN Secretary General in 1972?
8. Who directed and starred in the 1971 film 'Play Misty for Me'?
9. Who became US President on the resignation of Richard Nixon?
10. In which city was the Eurovision Song Contest held when ABBA won it with Waterloo?

Please see page 33 for the answers.

Birdwatching, Natural History, Travellers' Tales and Quiz by John Boon, Membership Secretary



❖ Board Games

We are a growing group, equally made up of male and female players. We meet fortnightly in a member's house on Friday afternoons to play strategy games of different genres, styles, themes, and settings, dice games, card games, tile-laying games, and dexterity games. No formality, no experience required – we just play, socialise, and have fun. Writing this in January, so soon after Christmas, it is easy to remember how much we have enjoyed playing many new games with our families. That is the key for us, there are so many different games to play. Here is one of our new ones:

Obsession



In 'Obsession' we play the head of a respected but troubled family estate in Victorian Derbyshire. Each player's goal is to improve their country house to be in better standing with the truly influential families of the county. Successfully hosting prestigious music recitals, billiards, political debates, and Grand Balls increase

wealth, reputation, and connections among the gentry. Mary Countess Coventry, the beloved wife of the Earl, is an influential guest. However, to attract her to our estate, we must have the proper staff available to support her – in this case a lady's maid and a housekeeper.

Please see our Web page for our next meetings: <https://u3asites.org.uk/evesham/page/100683>

Image by Ally Edwards

Peter Aggett

❖ Art Appreciation

In our Art Appreciation meetings, one of us usually gives a talk about some aspect of art, but there is no pressure on anyone to do this. Occasionally, we have a demonstration by a local artist. In January we had both – Mike Bagshaw gave a talk about portraiture through the ages and rounded it off by sketching a volunteer.

Our planned talks are: 'Ben Shahn' in **April**, 'London through the Ages' in **May**, a trip in **June** with the destination yet to be decided, and




Group Timetable

To join any group you must be a member of u3a

	First Week	Second Week	Third Week
Mon am	Architecture Natural History Welsh Language	Art Appreciation Questions of Belief & Doubt (term time) Welsh Language	Welsh Language
Mon pm	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Shakespeare – Zoom Singing for Pleasure	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Travellers' Tales	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Shakespeare – live Singing for Pleasure
Tue am	Creative Writing 2 Cycling for Pleasure Latin Spanish Improvers Urban Sketchers Walks over 4 m	Golf for Fun Listening to Music 2 Social Saunters Village Strolls 1	Bookends Photography 2 Spanish Improvers Urban Sketchers Walks over 4 m
Tue pm	Creative Writing 1 Local History Latin Reading	Exploring Language Jam Session Patchwork & Quilting 1 Pétanque	Archaeology & Heritage Latin Reading
Wed am	Skittles 1 Table Tennis Tai Chi	French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2 Skittles 3, June – Sept	Skittles 1 Table Tennis Tai Chi
Wed pm	Monthly Meeting 2 pm Yoga 3 (term time)	Gardens and Country Yoga 3 (term time)	Philosophy Yoga 3 (term time)
Thu am	Media Yoga 2 (term time)	Aspects of Modern History German Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 1 Yoga 2 (term time)	Media Yoga 2 (term time)
Thu pm	Croquet Modern Greek 1	China: The Country Latin Beginners Modern Greek 1 Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 2	Croquet Modern Greek 1
Fri am	Classic Cinema Country Dancing Modern Greek 2	Computers & Digital Italian Post-Beginners Military History Modern Greek 2 Play Reading	Book Friends Classic Cinema Country Dancing Modern Greek 2
Fri pm	Badminton 2 Bridge for Fun Family Research	Badminton 2 Board Games Bridge for Fun	Badminton 2 Bridge for Fun Family Research
Sun am	Brunch Bunch		Brunch Bunch

Group Timetable

To join any group you must be a member of u3a

Fourth Week	Final Week	Ad - Hoc	
Questions of Belief & Doubt / Village Ambles with Camera Welsh Language	Welsh Language	<p>Local Theatre (viewing) – Betty Ballard</p> <p>Amateur (viewing) –</p> <p>Patchwork and Quilting 2 alternate Wednesdays – Linda Dunbar</p> <p>Concert Group – David Daniels</p> <p>Website Editors – meet as required – Alun Edwards</p> <p style="color: red; text-align: center;">To contact group leaders by email from the group's webpage, click on the envelope and a page will come up to write your message.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	Mon am
Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub		Mon pm
Golf for Fun Photography 1 Village Strolls 2			Tue am
Jam Session Patchwork & Quilting 1 Pétanque Quiz Group			Tue pm
French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2 Skittles 3, June – Sept			Wed am
Yoga 3 (term time)	Poetry Yoga 3 (term time)		Wed pm
Aspects of Modern History German Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 2 Yoga 2 (term time)	Yoga 2 (term time)		Thu am
Book Club German advanced Modern Greek 1 Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 2 Wine Tasting	Modern Greek 1		Thu pm
Birdwatching Computers & Digital Italian Post-Beginners Modern Greek 2	Modern Greek 2 Science & Engineering		Fri am
Badminton 2 Board Games Bridge for Fun	Badminton 2 Bridge for Fun		Fri pm
	Brunch Bunch	Sun am	

❖ Book Club

A fresh year's reading list awaits us, with books nominated by our members, giving a selection that I would not necessarily have chosen for myself, but which I'm really looking forward to diving into. During the last quarter of 2022, we read the following books:

Machines Like Me by Ian McEwan

This book provoked an interesting discussion. It raises the possibility of a robot, which can pass as human, being available to buy, and whether the robot can have human feelings and emotions. The book is set in the 1980s, but history is reimagined and changed – some of us found this difficult, while others found it interesting. Mobile phones and self-driving cars were part of life in the book. We pondered whether, as science fiction, it would have been more acceptable had it been set in the future. Adam the Robot is very clear about right and wrong, and the end sees justice done all round. Questions were raised whether destroying the robot could be considered murder, and could Adam really have feelings?

Zennor in Darkness by Helen Dunmore

A book set in and around Zennor in St Ives in Cornwall in 1917 during WW1. The principal character is Clare Coyne, a young artist. The story is about her life in the village community and her relationship with her cousin John William, who spends a few days home on leave from the trenches. The uncertainty of the times, not knowing whether menfolk were alive or dead, comes over strongly. Men didn't talk about the horror of their experiences at the front when they came home. Some of us liked this book more than others, but all the same, the discussion was lively.

Later this month we will discuss the book we are currently reading, which is **Shuggie Bain** by Douglas Stuart, about a boy and his mother in 1980s Glasgow. More about this to follow in the next edition.

Sue Griffiths

❖ Photography 2

On 15 November 2022, the Photography 2 Group organised an outing to Tewkesbury. We walked around in the rain and took photos. After that we had a meal at the Bell hotel.

The building of Tewkesbury Abbey began in 1102. It was consecrated in 1121 and was saved from destruction by Henry VIII when the townsfolk paid £453 to keep it as their Parish Church.



The **Abbey Mill** was rebuilt in 1793 with additions since. A mill has been on this site for over a thousand years, using an undershot water wheel. The building has been converted into apartments. The Abbey tower is visible to the right of the mill.

Further up the river is a later flour mill built in 1865 for Samuel Healing and Son. It was operated by steam and electricity and is now a Grade 2 listed building, sadly in disrepair. The council hope it can be re-used in the future.

The timber-framed **Abbey Lawn cottages** on Church Street were built in 1410 for the Benedictine Monks of Tewkesbury. They were rented by local merchants to live in and sell their goods onto the street. One of them has been restored to show the original shop and home construction as it would have been.



The **Old Baptist Chapel Court** on Church Street is the entrance to burial grounds where descendants of William Shakespeare are buried. William's sister Joan married into the Hart family and William often visited Tewkesbury to call on his new extended family.



Terry Woodfield

Photos by Terry Woodfield

❖ Country Dancing

In September, our caller Pat had a fall and broke some ribs and a wrist and was therefore unable to drive. He very kindly organized the music groups for us for the rest of the term and they arranged alternative callers. The group very much enjoyed having different callers, who all brought a different selection of dances from the thousands available. They also told us the origins of some moves and dances. It was a very interesting experience. We even managed to have a session during the week of the snow!

We have just had our first session in January and were pleased to have Pat back with us, together with several new faces. We also had our highest attendance since last February, in spite of the cold and the roadworks in Hampton! We had planned to go for a late 'Christmas meal' that day, but as the pub was already fully booked we will go out together in February.

There is plenty of room for new members, as not everyone can attend every week. So do get in touch if you are interested in trying us out!

Brenda and Phil Morton

❖ Classic Cinema

<https://u3asites.org.uk/evesham/page/30525>

At Classic Cinema, on a big screen, we watch movies that are over 50 years old - many are superb movies, some utterly surprising and some disappointing. All are worth watching. Please come and try Classic Cinema to see if you enjoy our company.



Photo by Ally Edwards

Ann introduced 'Midnight Cowboy' at our first showing of 2023. This movie starred Jon Voight and Dusty Hoffman as 'country cousin meets city cousin', respectively. This unlikely pair progress from partners in shady business to becoming comrades. Each has found his first real friend. Ann explained that this was the first X-rated film to be nominated for an Oscar. It won three, including Best Picture in 1970.

Here are our next screenings:

- Friday 3rd March: **One-Eyed Jacks**, US, Marlon Brando, 1961
- Friday 17th March: **The Heiress**, US, William Wyler, 1949
- Friday 31st March: **A Shot in the Dark**, UK, Blake Edwards, 1969
- Friday 21st April: **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, US, Rouben Mamoulian, 1931

There is no queueing. Love-seats in the balcony and the circle are available for no extra charge*.

We meet every 1st and 3rd Friday morning at 10.00 am in the basement of the Evesham Methodist Church. The cost is £3 each to cover room charges. Biscuits, tea, and coffee are served in the intermission. One of us delivers a very short lecture about what we are watching and leads an equally short discussion afterwards.

*OK, love-seats are not available and we don't have a balcony or a circle either. We can try to prepare something for you in the back row! But there isn't any queueing.



Pat Ansell, Phil Logan and Ally Edwards

Image: An object from the Cinema Museum, London, edited by Ally Edwards. Credit: EdwardX via Wikimedia Commons, licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

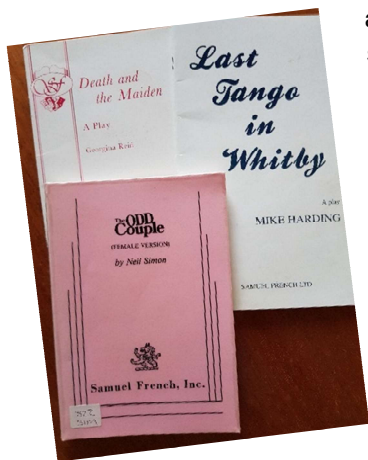
❖ Play Reading

It's a year since we wrote a report of our group for the Newsletter and you may have wondered if we still exist! The answer to that is emphatically YES! Our numbers vary from seven to thirteen each month, and everyone enjoys taking part and reading or listening to some very different plays. Some only have one act, which we can finish in a session, and others are longer and require us to remember the plot from one month to the next.



That happened in our January meeting, as we had started 'Last tango in Whitby' in November and in between we had read the pantomime 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in December. So trying to remember in January what we had read back in November was a bit of an ask! But the summary came to our rescue, and we managed to get back on track. Now we are reading a mild thriller and we have stopped at the end of Act 1, at a crucial moment in the plot. Was there a ghost? Has the old lady been frightened to death? Will there be a happy ending? Who knows – come along and find out!

It is not easy to make exciting photos of people sitting in a circle reading plays, so here is a photo of our recent ones. We try to enter into the spirit of the play and imagine ourselves as one of the actors or as part of the audience. In our discussions, we think that some plays might be difficult for amateur groups to stage, and so reading them, as in radio plays, allows the imagination to take flight. If you would like to visit our group, or join the waiting list, please contact me. We meet at Evesham Methodist Church on the 2nd Friday morning in the month. In the summer, we sit out on the terrace if the weather is warm enough, but otherwise we are in the hall beneath the church. We look forward to welcoming you!



Margaret Fuller

❖ Gardens & Country

<https://u3asites.org.uk/evesham/page/30614>

Following a successful Open Day, the group for 2023 now stands at over 50 members. Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate any more new members for this year. Thanks to everybody who paid the 2023 fee, which gives free entry to the indoor talks arranged for this year.

A new group leader or a small team of coordinators need to be found to continue the Gardens & Country Group after November 2023, when I will be retiring from the role of group leader. Speakers are usually booked 12+ months in advance, so new volunteers need to come forward now! If you are interested in helping to lead this friendly group, please contact me by email as soon as possible to guarantee the continuation of the group beyond November 2023.

The last event for 2022 was in November, when the RHS advisor, Robin Pearce, gave a talk in the Rowing Club about 'Ferns and Grasses'. Robin owned and ran the Worlds End Nursery near Worcester, and now runs trials at RHS Wisley. Robin demonstrated how these plant types could be used in various settings and with great effect at certain times of the year. The event concluded with tea, coffee and cake and a quick chat about the group plans for 2023.



The first event of 2023 began with the screening of a pre-recorded talk at the Rowing Club. This talk was originally screened live by Tender Shoots on Zoom. The replay of the talk allowed those who could not participate at the time to enjoy the talk. It described the privately owned Eythrope Walled

Garden which is part of the Rothschild's Waddesdon estate. The walled garden at Eythrope was originally created by Alice de Rothschild in the late 19th century. When Lord and Lady Rothschild inherited the estate in 1988, they initiated a redesign of the walled garden by Lady Mary Keen and Sue Dickinson, who was Head Gardener at the time. This programme restored the walled garden to its former glory, complete with glasshouses, fruit trees, a topiary garden, herbaceous borders and vegetable gardens. The speaker, Francesca Paige-Smith, detailed every aspect of the garden and the work of the current Head Gardener, Suzie Hanson, and her small staff. The produce is used in the Waddesdon Manor restaurant and the private kitchen as well as being sold in local markets. If you would like to see brief highlights of the walled garden, visit

<https://waddesdon.org.uk/your-visit/grounds/eythrope-gardens/>



A second pre-recorded talk is due in February. This was originally shown live 12 months ago on Zoom. This talk presents views of the Botanic Gardens in Sheffield as photographed during each month of year by Hilary Hutson. Hilary is a resident of Sheffield with a degree in Botany who

regularly visits and photographs these gardens, which are publicly owned and free to visit. The gardens cover 19 acres and are registered by English Heritage as a Grade II site of special historic interest. Winding paths connect over 18 different garden areas based on geographical or botanical themes. The gardens provide interest and variety throughout the year.

The traditionally laid out Victorian-style Rose Garden, the rock and water gardens, the Mediterranean garden, the Asia garden, the long borders and the Prairie-style area, designed by Professor Hitchmough from the

University of Sheffield, are just some of the different themes on show. Among the other highlights are the Grade II listed range of glass Pavilions, the imposing gatehouse entrance, the modest South Lodge – also Grade II listed – and the Victorian Curator’s House, which is now a café.



If you would like to know more about the layout of the garden, visit <https://www.sbg.org.uk/gardens-within-the-gardens>. In March and April there will be two in-person talks, and then the summer garden visit programme will begin.

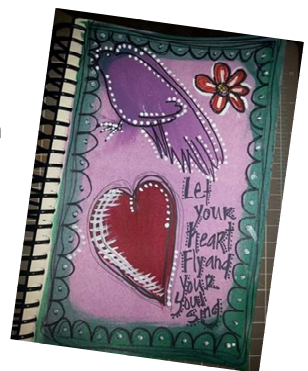
Thank you to the many people who have helped the group continue this year. Please take care, enjoy your garden, and best wishes for the rest of the year.

Chas Bryer

Photos: Eythrope Walled Garden reproduced with permission under Waddesdon Manor (Rothschild Foundation) copyright. Sheffield Botanic Garden title slide reproduced with permission from Hilary Hutson. Sheffield Botanic Garden Map reproduced from SBG website.

❖ Creative Writing

Our meetings take place downstairs in Jellypicklejam Café. All levels of ability are welcome. Bring a notebook and pen and come and have fun! We do three short exercises, aimed at generating ideas for stories, poems and memoir.



I was very pleased to be able to start a second Creative Writing Group in December 2022. This meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 10.30 a.m. There are still a few places available. Please let me know if you would like to join us. The membership to Group 1 in the afternoon is currently full. There is no charge for attending either group – apart from buying your own tea or coffee.



Photos by Sue Johnson

Group 2 meet on the first Tuesday of the month from 10.30 am to 12.00 o'clock at Jellypicklejam Café, Vine Mews, Evesham. Group 1 also meet on the first Tuesday from 2.00 to 3.30 pm at the same venue.

Sue Johnson

Bryony - finding inspiration in nature...

❖ Sunday Brunch Bunch

This year, we have more members than ever wanting to come out for Sunday Brunch. So many, that I am struggling to find venues that can accommodate us all. It's nice to spread our custom around town and to have slightly different menus wherever we go. However, all are very welcome, so if you are interested, please let me know if you would like to join us. Thankfully, not everyone can come each time, though some members do try!



We meet up on the first and third Sundays of the month and, if there is one, also on the fifth Sunday. We meet at about 10.00 am and leave before 11.30 am, so that we are out of the way for the lunch time customers.

Photo: 'Brunch Bunch' by Aydin Gur from Butlers

Sue Beneke

❖ Skittles



The three Skittles groups would like to thank Ken Pearce for ordering and paying for a new set of pins. Our old ones had got a tad battered over the years. Happily, he also bought some which were just a little wider, but not, I am sad to say, wide enough – I was still able to get the ball right through the gap without removing any pins! That takes precision!

At the end of January, we combined the groups to enjoy a much delayed Christmas buffet. Thanks to Mary Hammond for arranging this. A good time was had by all, even though it was somewhat cosy with us all packed in there.



Photos by Sue Beneke

Sue Beneke

❖ Tai Chi

Tai Chi Groups 1 and 2 will be combining into one group from 1 March as numbers have fallen. The time will now be 10.30 am to 11.30 am on the first and third Wednesdays. As a bonus however, we will be adding an optional additional half hour to include parts of the 19 Form. There will be a small additional charge for this. We meet at the Scout & Guide Hall in Hampton and still have space for a few more people to join. If you would like to know more, please contact **Derek Arnold** through the group's webpage.

❖ Archaeology & Heritage



As we were unable to get together in November, we decided on a pre-Christmas meeting at Croome Court, Croome D'Abitot.

The Court and its surrounding parkland was the vision of the 6th earl of Coventry. He commissioned Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to remodel the Court and eventually the surrounding parkland. The current house was built between 1751 and 1752 and was constructed around the existing Jacobean building. The foundations and core of the present neo-Palladian house, including the central chimney stack structure, date back to the early 1640's. There are 'look-through' points in the cellars where the original house can still be seen. In addition to the work undertaken by Brown, Robert Adam was involved in designing the interior from 1760 onwards.

The house has a long and chequered history. The Coventry family sold the estate in 1948 and it fell into gradual decline. In 1996, the National Trust purchased 670 acres of the surrounding parkland, acquiring a lease of the Court in 2007 when it was purchased by the Croome Heritage Trust. It opened to the public in September 2009.



At our January meeting we were the guests of SWAG, South Worcestershire Archaeology Group, at the village hall in Callow End near Worcester. We were treated to an enlightening lecture on the archaeology and history of Ludlow Castle by Leon Bracelin, the resident archaeologist at the castle. Leon packed over 1000 years of information about the castle and its environs, into a breathless 90 minute lecture. Over the centuries, the castle and its

inhabitants had a massive impact on this part of England and into Wales. It was the meeting place of the Marcher Lords who wielded unlimited power over the population.



Archaeology was at the forefront of the talk and investigated the construction and development of the castle, together with a report on Leon's recent archaeological excavations within and outside the castle walls. A visit to Ludlow is on the list, hopefully in the not too distance future.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact me via the email link on the group webpage.

Chris Wolstencroft, Vice-Chair

Photos: the group at Croome and Ludlow Castle by B Wolstencroft

❖ Concert Group

Can't really ask for anything more than great music played by world-class musicians in a location that combines perfect sound and comfortable seating! And that is still our on-going experience with the Concert Group. We had a wonderful time at the 'CBSO Choral Christmas' in December, hosted by Alan Titchmarsh, with the usual combination of great Christmas music and lots of festive fun. What is it about trumpet players? There seems to be a clown hidden inside each of them, striving to escape! And before this Newsletter is published, we will have heard the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra playing a wonderful Concert including the Khachaturian Violin Concerto played by our British superstar violinist Jennifer Pike, and the Tchaikovsky Symphony No 4.

The best news is that you are not too late to join the Waiting List for our 19 April Concert, with the CBSO playing a programme including Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. And you are certainly not too late to join us for our Season Finale on 7 June with Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 4, and the most beautiful Symphony No 2 by Rachmaninov. Please do contact us and place yourself on our mailing list. We would love to have your company, and we'll keep you fully informed of all our plans for future concerts.

David Daniels

❖ Shakespeare

'Having a lovely time. Wish you were here!' You would be so very welcome to join us, because we have a vacancy in our group. They don't arise very often. Unfortunately there are constraints placed on us by our venue, but more so by the viability of the group for play reading and discussion, so we do have to limit our numbers. If you have thoughts about joining us, now is a great time!

Having completed the 'Tempest', we are already well into 'Macbeth', which is proving to be stimulating and thoroughly enjoyable. By the time you read this, we will probably have moved on again – but there is so much to choose from, and of course that is part of the joy of delving into our Hero's writings.

Our meetings are still twice monthly, by Zoom on the first Monday afternoon of each month, and face-to-face on the third Monday afternoon at the Rowing Club. We are now very close to the end of our 'Sonnet of the Week' feature, having covered almost all of the 154 Sonnets. But it's not too late to join the weekly mailing list for a copy of those, week by week. And of course, all of the back numbers are still available. Please contact David Daniels either to join the group or to receive the Sonnets.

❖ Welsh Language

It's pleasing to report that we continue to receive a steady flow of new enquiries about membership of our Welsh Language Group. We used to call it 'Welsh for Beginners' – and indeed we still attract 'starters' which our learning methods can easily accommodate. But most of us have now taken tentative steps into a deeper understanding of the language. And, by golly, we are having some stimulating fun!

Our Monday morning Zoom sessions with our tutor Neil are continuing, and we have recently begun a series where members of the Group can, if they wish, introduce a topic about some aspect of the language which we have found interesting or challenging! Most of us are using the online Duolingo learning system as the basis for our study, but other programmes are available, and are used as well as, or instead of, Duolingo. It's fair to say that our Friday face-to-face coffee mornings at a local Farm Shop café are still a highlight for us, providing an opportunity for informal chat about how we are getting on.

We would really be delighted to have your company if you fancy having a go at the Welsh language in a friendly and supportive setting. The online systems we use make it possible for anyone to join at any time – from raw beginners to more experienced Welsh speakers. If you would like to have a preliminary chat about learning Welsh before you commit to joining the group, that's fine. We would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact David Daniels.

Cofion gorau- Best Wishes

Answers to the Quiz on page 15

1. Louise Brown
2. Prunella Scales
3. Morning Cloud
4. 1976
5. Arthur Ashe
6. Lee Majors
7. Kurt Waldheim
8. Clint Eastwood
9. Gerald Ford
10. London

Group Name	Coordinator	Fee
Archaeology & Heritage	Chris Wolstencroft	Varies
Architecture	Caroline Bagshaw	TBC
Art Appreciation	Caroline Bagshaw	£2.00
Aspects of Modern History	Sheila Himsworth	£1.00
Badminton 1	Cefn Blundell	£2.00
Badminton 2	Teresa Green	£2–£3
Birdwatching	John Boon	Free
Board Games	Peter Aggett	Free
Book Club	Sue Griffiths	Varies
Bookends	Barbara Tittensor	50 p
Book Friends	Mary Kyte	Varies
Bridge for Fun	Liz Rodway	£2.00
Brunch Bunch (Sundays)	Sue Beneke	Brunch
China: The Country	David Ralph	£3.00
Classic Cinema	Pat Ansell	£3.00
Computers & Digital Media	John Scotland	£3.00
Concert Band (playing)	Peter Scott	£2.00
Concert Group	David Daniels	Varies
Country Dancing	Brenda & Phil Morton	£4.00
Creative Writing 1 & 2	Sue Johnson	Free+
Croquet	Paul Griffin	50 p
Cycling for Pleasure	Chris Davis	Free
Exploring Language	Caroline Bagshaw	Varies
Family Research	Diane Nicholls	£2.50
French Conversation	Lorna Slaughter	Free
Gardens & Country	Chas Bryer	Varies
German (3 groups)	Sophie Dodds	£2.00
Golf for Fun	David Bentley	Green fee
Italian (post–beginners)	Sue Jerrard	Varies
Jam Sessions – Pop, Rock etc	Bob Davies	£2.00
Latin Improvers	Caroline Bagshaw	Varies
Latin Beginners	Caroline Bagshaw	50 p
Latin Reading	David Battin	Free
Listening to Music	Frances Platman	£1.00

Local Amateur Theatre	Betty Ballard	£2 +tickets
Local History	Margaret King	£3.00
Mah-jong	Carla Auger	£3.50
Military History	Alun Edwards	TBC
Modern Greek 1	Mike Fraser	50 p
Modern Greek 2	Mike Fraser	50 p
Natural History	John Boon	Free
Needlecraft	Helen Barlow	Free
Painting for Pleasure	Mary Simpson	£2.00
Patchwork & Quilting 1	Fran Battin	£2.00
Patchwork & Quilting 2	Linda Dunbar	£2.00
Pétanque	Paul Griffin	£1.00
Philosophy	Mike Bagshaw	£3.00
Photography 1	Mike Tittensor	£3.00
Photography 2	Sandra Woodfield	£2.00
Play Reading	Margaret Fuller	£3.00
Poetry	Richard Taylor	£3.00
Questions of Belief & Doubt	Jane Couper	Free
Quiz	John Boon	£2.00
Rummikub	Carla Auger	£3.50
Science & Engineering	Alan Eames	£2.00
Shakespeare	David Daniels	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 1	Fred/Sue Copestake	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 2	Muriel Barnett	£3.00
Singing for Pleasure	Cath Cox	£2.00
Skittles 1	Mary Greenwood	Free
Skittles 2	Sue Beneke	Free
Skittles 3, June to September	Ken Pearce	Free
Social Saunters	Ken Pearce	Free
Spanish Improvers	Glenn Davies	Varies
Table Tennis	Ken Maden	£2.00
Tai Chi	Derek Arnold	£5.00
Travellers' Tales	John Boon	£2.00
Urban Sketchers	Mike Bagshaw	Free
Village Ambles with Camera	Sheila Ryder	£1.00
Village Strolls 1	Terry Woodfield	£1.00

Village Strolls 2	Sandra Woodfield	£1.00
Walks Over 4 Miles	J/M Alexander- Head	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 1	Judy Smith	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 2	Judy Smith	£1.00
Website Editors	Alun Edwards	Free
Welsh Language	David Daniels	Varies
Wine Tasting	Grahame Percival	£7.50
Yoga 2	Lyn Heaney	Varies
Yoga 3	Lesley Clarke	Varies

Website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/evesham/home>

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Public Group