

learn, laugh, live



Newsletter Issue 87 March 2024

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Vice-Chair &	John Boon	
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Treasurer	Diane Nicholls	email from website
Charity Commission	Ros Gowers	
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Programme Secretary	Nicky Neill	
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Committee Member	Victoria Law	
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<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/contact>

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Welcome...



...to the first Newsletter in 2024. From time to time, unexpected problems spring up in life. A problem, however, is only the precursor to a solution, so when I found out that I would be unable to keep to the usual timetable for this Newsletter, I called up the help of our group leaders and committee. Very many thanks to you all who responded so positively when I had

to ask you for a tighter deadline. Your support was much appreciated and guaranteed the production of the March issue for our members.

And it is a good read! To start with, New Year resolutions with a difference, interesting banking facts from our treasurer, requiring support from half our membership (and that could be you!), news from the committee and two special features. Check out the new groups on pages 14 to 16, don't miss the result of the Short Story Challenge with the winning entry on page 20, the Quiz on page 25 and, as ever, interesting reports and photos from the groups.

Please note your diaries with the deadline for the June Newsletter on **Wednesday 1 May 2024**. Enjoy the read!

Bärbel Wolstencroft

The photo on the front cover was taken by Gerard Kilburn and shows members of the Concert Band with the Channel 5 camera team being filmed and recorded for the programme 'Christmas in the Cotswolds' during the late night pre-Christmas shopping event in Broadway. See full story on page 9.

From the Chair



Dear Members

New Year – new challenges! This year my grandchildren have challenged me to do the following:

‘Learn something new, do more exercise and eat something you’ve never tried before’. As this sounded more promising than my usual New Year resolutions which I have normally broken by the end of January, I agreed (they have to do the same, by the way!). I have started Tai Chi this

January, so I feel I have one under my belt already. My daughter is taking me out for ‘sushami’, first time ever, so that takes care of another one.

The opportunity to do number one on the list presented itself quite unexpectedly. Cath Cox and I were able to extend the hand of welcome to some of our Ukrainian friends, many of whom are grandparents joining their families. We went along to tell them what u3a could do for them and discovered they were keen to do something for us. We are hoping to start a u3a ‘Introduction to Ukrainian’ group and I was delighted how many of our members are keen to participate. Watch this space or look out for emails for further news!

We have started several groups this year and I never cease to be amazed by the skills and interests of our members. Maybe you have set yourselves a challenge or two for 2024. Best of luck – and wish me well with the ‘sushami’!

Deborah



Image from welovejapanesefood.com

From the Committee

The Journey of your Membership Fee

My name is Diane Nicholls and I joined the Evesham u3a Committee at the last AGM. I am now the Treasurer, having taken over in September 2023, just before the busy season of membership renewals! With just over 1000 members, you can imagine it is quite some undertaking to remind, then accept, reconcile payments, and renew memberships.



With this in mind, I thought it might be interesting to explain the journey of two types of payments: cheques and cash.

- Cheques and cash are delivered by post or in person to the Membership Secretary.
- The secretary renews the membership, sends a receipt and adds a transaction to the Ledger of Accounts.
- Cheques and cash are then either delivered to me or I collect from the Secretary.
- I add to a paying in slip for payment at Lloyds Bank Evesham.
- I take to the bank to be added to bank account via cashier system.
- Lloyds only have one cashier at most times, so this can involve queuing – 18 visits; maximum time waited 40 minutes.
- Once paid in, I reconcile bank statement with item on Ledger.

Procedure now complete.

Why am I telling you this now? Well, as you can see it is quite a time-consuming process and also because Lloyds have advised me of their intention to, at some stage, withdraw the cashier facility from the Evesham branch altogether. This will mean that we will immediately be unable to bank any cash. Cheques would only be accepted via the self-service

machine up to a maximum of ten at any one transaction, which will require multiple transactions in view of the number of cheques currently received.

The easiest, alternative method of paying your subscription is **via Beacon**. The system is administered by PayPal but does not have to be paid using a PayPal account. Debit and credit cards can be used, and this is the most favoured type of transaction used by our members.

By using this system of payment, it means that the Ledger and Membership systems are automatically completed, with the Membership Secretary having only a little work to complete the procedure. At the 2023 renewal, 50% of renewals were made on this system.

If you would like to consider payment this way in 2024 and need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Diane Nicholls, Treasurer

Image from swagbucks.com 2024

Our new u3a Website

We would like to thank all our editors who have joined us in editing our new website, <https://evesham.u3asite.uk/>. More than half of our 85 groups are actively being edited by members.

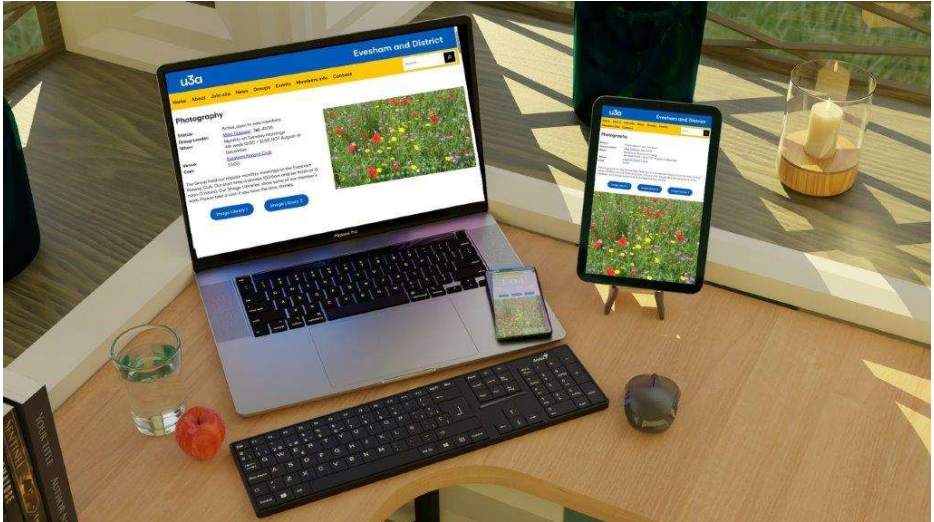
As one of the first u3as in the country to go live on the new platform, Evesham's new website is receiving a lot of attention and praise. If you are a group leader, please browse the site to see how our new editors are getting to grips with effective techniques like:

- **Blogs** – Book Club, Birdwatching, Natural History.
- **Tables** – Architecture, Book Club, Photography 2.
- **Galleries** – Photography, Modelling, Concert Band.
- **Pattern blocks** – Walks over Four Miles.
- **Calendar for group meeting dates** – Croquet, Pétanque.

- **Events for group meeting dates** – Brunch Bunch, Jam Session, Wine Tasting.

Please contact us via [the website editors page](#) if you think your group could benefit from these. We would like to bring all our editors together in person or on Zoom at least. We will be in touch with more details.

Frances Kilburn and Ally Edwards



Our new website is designed to be viewed and even edited on any screen, especially on your mobile phone

New Accessibility Policy



The new Accessibility Policy is now available on the website. It can be viewed under 'Members info', 'Membership Conditions' and also via the Documents link on the same page. In summary, the Policy covers what to look out for when considering venues for a wide range of activities, addressing accessibility issues for disabled members, options available and communication.

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/members-info/>

This Policy sits very nicely with both the Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies, all of which collectively provide a tidy framework and basis for how we should all consider and have regard for each other's needs and try to ensure inclusivity as far as we reasonably can.

Tony Powell, Safeguarding & Accessibility Officer

Monthly Meetings

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/events>

Greetings!

Here we are, with Christmas a long way behind us and Easter almost upon us. I think it is a bit late for New Year good wishes so I will just say that I hope 2024 is going reasonably well for you so far.

We have had two monthly meetings for this year already and I trust that some of you have found the talks interesting and informative. I know that for many of you the catching up over a cuppa and a biscuit or two afterwards is just as important!



The website is still a good source of information about upcoming speakers and I will continue to send out email reminders a couple of days before our meetings.

Looking forward to welcoming you, as always...

Nicky Neill

6 March 2024

Tim Willis – How My Father-in-Law won the war

A presentation by Tim, a u3a member, on the involvement of Jack Lofthouse in the first action of Operation Overlord and the landing of allied troops near Pegasus Bridge not far from Caen.

Refreshments – China: The Country

3 April 2024

Bernard Lockett – The Heritage of G&S

The Heritage of Gilbert and Sullivan – an assessment and overview plus a consideration of the social and political satire within the shows.

Refreshments – Classic Cinema

1 May 2024

Max Keen – The English Civil War in Bewdley, Kidderminster, Stourbridge and Worcester

Refreshments – Computers & Digital Media

5 June 2024

David Shannon – Humour in Court

David used to be a judge in Manchester and now lives locally. He describes his talk as 'light hearted'!

Refreshments – Concert Band

Special Features

Evesham u3a Concert Band on National Television!

Evesham u3a is a bit unusual in having a concert band, brass and woodwind players, bass and drums. It started about twenty years ago in Roger Wyatt's front room. It continued to grow and finally became a u3a group, performing each year under Roger's direction at fêtes and other events under the name of 'Evesham Concert Band'. When Roger moved north in 2021, I drew the short straw and took over, having had no previous experience of conducting. We have now grown to around 20 members, meeting weekly throughout the year at the Lifford Hall in Broadway which has great acoustics.

Our coldest regular gig happens around the beginning of December, when we play in a marquee at Broadway for two late-night Friday shopping evenings. For Christmas 2023, I had prepared a rehearsal programme for the first gig, studiously avoiding the standard carols, as the event took place on 24 November, before the start of Advent, when I received an email from a television company, wanting to film us at rehearsal and on the Green the following Friday for the Channel 5 documentary '**Christmas in the Cotswolds**'. I naturally agreed. This was the weekend before the Monday rehearsal. We had to change the programme a little as they insisted to have a standard carol included.

We then had to negotiate terms of contracts between the television production company and each member of the band, the trustees of the hall, and Roger. He had arranged the carols we were going to play and copyright issues needed to be covered. This was not straightforward at all, as the original drafts were entirely inappropriate. I eventually settled the terms of those during the following week, after a Zoom call with their solicitors and drafting exchanged over email, then visited the trustees to explain the documents. Fortunately, I am a commercial lawyer by trade.



Monday arrived and the rehearsal started as normal. The TV crew arrived, set up as arranged and introduced themselves. They then buzzed around during the second part of the rehearsal, filming from every direction. While I was conducting, the camera was looming up on either side of me and I had some difficulty following my own advice given to band members to

ignore them completely! At the end I had to re-record my 'dismissal' of the band a couple of times, which was a bit of a laugh.

Following the rehearsal, I was asked for a number of short pieces to camera about the band and our playing at Broadway – and even about my conducting style! Again, not a new experience, as I had done a lot of media work for my legal firm in North Devon before coming to the Midlands, so it was nostalgic rather than bothersome.

On Friday, the band gathered on the Green at Broadway in an air temperature of about 1°C. That created serious problems for us. Metal instruments such as brass, saxes and flutes still warm up to some extent, but wooden ones do not, and on this occasion, the clarinets remained stubbornly flat and seemed to get colder rather than warmer. We played



much of our programme as best we could, then, before repeating one standard carol, I asked the whole band in desperation to tune down to A=432 rather than standard A=440 – and it worked! At the end we had a couple of film crews with us and they declared themselves well satisfied. I had suggested they interview our oldest band member, but they told me they didn't need it because of my 'interactions' with the band. I didn't know what they meant at this point.

Then the waiting: the news came through that '**Christmas in the Cotswolds**' would go out on Friday 15 December at 9 pm. The news spread – we had got the confidentiality clause deleted. I sat back to enjoy the programme, suspecting we might get a reasonable amount of coverage. It featured a lot of the preparations for the Christmas seasons from 'Sleeping Beauty' at Blenheim Palace, a reindeer farm, a shop selling premium wreaths and the sweet shop at Broadway. And there we were in our rehearsal, including my daft comments in between, with interview to camera. At the other end of the programme I was surprised to note that we were referred to as the headline act, the 'icing on the cake' as it were. There was a bit of film of us arriving and unpacking, some of us playing, including a piece of a Merritt carol from Cornwall, and a bit of audio from my interview footage.

All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable experience – apart from the extreme cold. It should be available on 'My 5 catch-up' for some time. We can thoroughly recommend the film, despite the commentary wrongly describing Cotswold stone as sandstone – u3a critical thinking immediately triggered!

Peter Scott

Photos: page 10, Helen, Peter & Gareth at Rehearsal by Frances Kilburn; page 11, Broadway Filming by Gerard Kilburn.

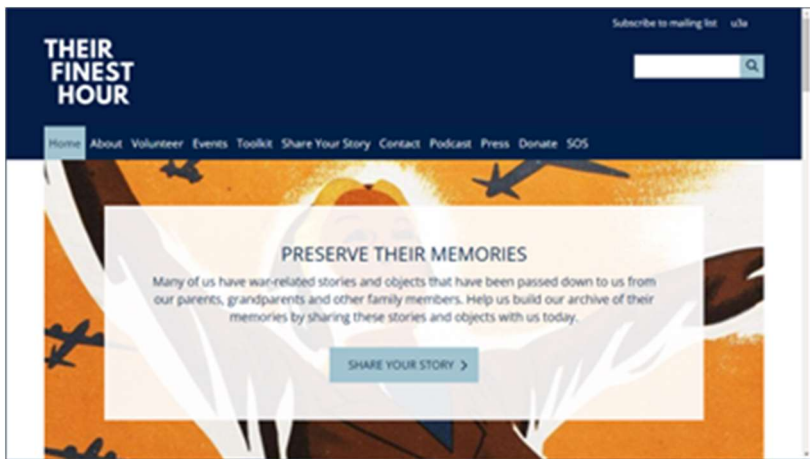
Sharing your family memories of WW2

Over the last 12 months, I have been working for the u3a as a Third Age Trust Volunteer, supporting members wishing to take part in 'Their Finest Hour', a Heritage Lottery-funded nationwide campaign organised by the University of Oxford. The project will come to an end on Friday 5 April 2024, when the submission portal will close.

To share your family stories, upload your Second World War-related stories and materials at <http://theirfinesthour.org/>. Your family memories may be based on military, home or working life, and all are valued. Perhaps you have photos or related objects. As these personal stories are fading fast from living memory, preserving them and the wartime objects that often accompany them is vital.

So how does it work?

Follow the link to SHARE YOUR STORY on the website
<http://theirfinesthour.org/>



- Fill in your contact details
- Type in the story that you would like to add to the archive
- Give some details of the objects that you want to add to the archive
- Upload photos of these objects
- Answer some additional questions about the Second World War
- Read and agree to Terms & Conditions
- SUBMIT

You are welcome to submit more than one contribution. All questions except those marked with an asterisk are optional. For more support, you are welcome to email Ally at hurricaneally.edwards@gmail.com

This is my story

During the Second World War, my Great-Grandmother Lucy Gwen was supported on the farm in Mid-Wales by three of her sons, with another working as a labourer on a farm in southern England. I remember some of Lucy Gwen's children when they were elderly telling stories that included mention of the War. I also have photos, service records and farm day-books which have been passed down. In particular, two sons had emigrated to ease the burden on the family, and they served in their adopted countries' armed forces. Her youngest son flew fighter planes in the RAF and her youngest daughter was a nurse in a hospital in England. Gwynedd, Lucy Gwen's eldest daughter and my Gran, worked as a town clerk during the day and at night volunteered on the switchboard of the fire service.



Lucy Gwen Peirson-Jones (nee Adamson, born 1882) was widowed in 1918, but continued to farm in Mid-Wales until the 1960s.



*Left: my Great-Grandmother Lucy Gwen in 1939 with Wag the dog.
Right: my Grandmother Gwynedd with her brother Sam, her nephew Mark and her daughter Elizabeth, my mother, in 1945, and Wag the dog.*

What I should do next is find all those artefacts from 1939-1945 and add them as further stories.

Ally Edwards, Website Manager

New Groups

Evesham u3a is thriving with many new groups springing up



Following our successful Open Day in November 2023, it has been really encouraging to see how many new groups have come into being or are in the pipeline to increase options for our local members. What a creative lot we are in the Evesham Vale area!

New groups now set up and accessible via the website are for completely new activities such as **Sea Shanties** and **Modelling**. There are also additional groups for existing popular activities so that more people can take part, such as **Yoga** and **Patchwork & Quilting**, or new versions of existing activities, for example **Short River Walks** and **Spanish Beginners**.

We are still in the process of getting the **Pickleball**, **Card Games** and **Meditation** groups up and running, with an introductory meeting for those interested due soon. We will advertise via the website and Facebook page when this will happen. And we have now been offered the opportunity of setting up a group to learn **Ukrainian**!

All the new groups can still take additional members, so do please get in touch if you want to join in. At any time, please also let us know if you have an idea for a group – no need to wait for the next Open Day!

Ros Gowers, Groups Liaison

Short River Walks

3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30am

This group started in January and is for members who wish to go for a short walk but not as long as 3-4 miles. We meet at Hampton Ferry car park, walk along the river and back through the park. This takes approximately one hour and is followed with a coffee at the Ferry Café afterwards. So this group combines a bit of exercise with a social get-together.

Once the group is established, members can suggest one hour walks starting from different venues, for example from the Valley car park. Please get in touch via the group webpage if you would like to join us.

Judy Smith

Sea Shanties

2nd & 4th Wednesdays from 2.00 – 4.00 pm

We are a relatively new group, having been formed in November of last year. As the heading suggests, we sing shanties and songs of the Seven Seas, some of which can be really noisy and boisterous. A good singing voice is not required, as most of these shanties were sailors' work songs to ensure everyone pushed or pulled at precisely the right time.

Anyone who can make a noise is welcome to join us! The emphasis is on having a good time and developing the camaraderie which was once to be found in the fo'cs'l of any cargo ship. To call ourselves a group is hardly appropriate, as we look upon ourselves as a **crew**. And may we continue sailing!

John Gardner

Village Strolls 3

3rd Thursday morning

Members of the Village Strolls Group 3 had an inaugural meeting on 18 January 2024, followed by an interesting stroll around Evesham, led by Terry and Sandra Woodfield who pointed out historical highlights.

The new group meets on the third Thursday of each month and has strolls planned in



Offenham, Wyre Piddle, Chipping Campden and Childswickham over the coming months. New members are very welcome to join us.

Jackie and Gordon Cutter

Photo by Steve Turvey

Military History

The newly formed Evesham u3a Military History group is now up and running and we are taking our first baby steps into this fascinating and ever-relevant aspect of history.

The topics being explored will be wide-ranging, going back throughout history. It is a chance for our members to contribute to and develop their own understanding of military history. We have a 2024 calendar of areas to be covered and some very enthusiastic and knowledgeable members. We will be looking for speakers to come and address the group and are also planning to visit places of interest.



As we are still at the formative stage of the group we are open to ideas and new members. To find out more about our Military History group, including the monthly meeting dates which are still to be decided as I write this, please see the u3a website and contact me through that.

Neil Hoy

Group News

❖ Country Dancing

The country dancers enjoy the physical and mental exercise, and each other's company. We now have two callers after the retirement of our last one in December. Four different bands provide us with a range of dancing music. We meet at Hampton Guide and Scout Hall on the first and third Fridays from 10 am to 12 noon. The cost is £4 per session.



The atmosphere of the group is happy and relaxed with a very welcome mid-session break for refreshments. We have room for new members - no previous dancing experience required! Members are very welcome to come on their own. 'Female' dancers are identified by wearing a ribbon, those not wearing one are assuming the role of the 'male' in the pairing. Please note that the first session is free of charge for anybody wanting to give Country Dancing a try. We occasionally follow the dancing with a meal in a pub.

If you are considering joining our group, or would like more information, please get in touch with Phil and Brenda Morton via email from our webpage.



The Photos show the Country Dancing Group celebrating Wendy Green's 90th birthday!

Images provided by Phil Morton

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 etc Welsh Language	Welsh Language
Mon pm	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Shakespeare Singing for Pleasure	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Spanish Beginners	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Shakespeare Singing for Pleasure
Tue am	Creative Writing 2 Cycling for Pleasure Latin 1 Spanish Intermediate Urban Sketchers	Golf for Fun Listening to Music 2 Social Saunters Spanish Intermediate Village Strolls 1	Bookends Photography 2 Spanish Intermediate Urban Sketchers Walks over 4 m
Tue pm	Creative Writing 1 Latin Reading Modelling Group	Exploring Language Jam Session Patchwork & Quilting 1 Pétanque	Archaeology & Heritage Latin Reading Modelling Group
Wed am	Skittles 1 Table Tennis Tai Chi	French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2 Skittles 3, June – Sept Tai Chi 2	Skittles 1 Table Tennis Tai Chi
Wed pm	Monthly Meeting 2 pm Methodist Church Yoga 3 (term time)	Latin 3 Sea Shanties Yoga 3 (term time)	Philosophy Yoga 3 (term time)
Thu am	Yoga 2 (term time)	Aspects of Modern History German Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 1 Yoga 2 (term time)	Short River Walks Village Strolls 3 Yoga 2 (term time)
Thu pm	Croquet Modern Greek 1 Dressmaking	China: The Country Latin 2 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 Family Research	Badminton 2 Board Games Bridge	Badminton 2 Bridge 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 etc Village Ambles Camera Welsh Language	Welsh Language	<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="text-align: center;">Group leaders can be contacted by email from the group's webpage.</p>	Mon am
Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub Spanish Beginners	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong & Rummikub		Mon pm
Golf for Fun Photography 1 Spanish Intermediate Village Strolls 2	Urban Sketchers Spanish Intermediate		Tue am
Jam Session Patchwork & Quilting 1 Pétanque Quiz Group			Tue pm
French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2 Skittles 3, June – Sept Tai Chi 2	Table Tennis		Wed am
Latin 3 Sea Shanties Yoga 3 (term time)	Poetry Yoga 3 (term time)		Wed pm
Aspects of Modern History German Needlecraft 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 Italian Post-Beginners Modern Greek 2	Modern Greek 2 Science & Engineering		Fri am
Badminton 2 Board Games Bridge	Badminton 2 Bridge		Fri pm
	Brunch Bunch		Sun am

❖ Creative Writing 1 & 2

Short Story Challenge

In December, I set a 300 word story challenge beginning with: 'The door at the top of the staircase was open.' The response was amazing and it was good to read the stories. Many thanks to everyone who entered. The results were as follows:

1st 'Second Time Lucky – For Some' by Katie Batchelor

2nd 'Recital' by Bärbel Wolstencroft

3rd 'In Plain Sight' by T J C Alexander-Head

Enjoy the winning entry below!

Sue Johnson

Second Time Lucky – For Some



The door at the top of the staircase was open. I was getting a sense of *déjà vu*. It was happening again, just like before. Doors we always kept firmly closed, were discovered to be open.

We had returned to the house a few minutes before, after checking briefly on a neighbour, having securely closed our front door, only to find it ajar when we returned. We had cautiously entered the kitchen, looking about us. There was no-one there. All was quiet. But as before, we quickly realised someone had been there when suddenly a cry of anguish went up from baby, who had just noticed his porridge bowl was empty. I shook my head in disbelief. Not again.

I left mother consoling baby, who was now sobbing uncontrollably, and approached the staircase with determined steps. Entering the bedroom at the top, I had already guessed what I would find. I saw that both my bed

and mother's were undisturbed, unlike last time when they had been left in disarray. I looked across to baby's bed and sure enough, there she was. The most beautiful child, with long golden locks, fast asleep. We'd been here before. Imagine being stupid enough to come back a second time.

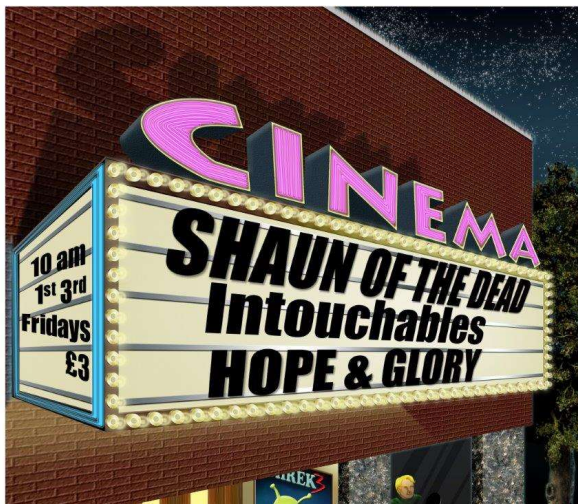
I felt my stomach growl. I had after all missed my breakfast. I let out a roar of anger at this small thief. The child stirred, her eyes flew open, and on seeing me, she screamed. I opened my arms wide as she leapt to her feet. Oh no, I thought, not this time, my beauty. You won't escape this time. And she didn't. Stupid girl. Beautiful, but stupid. And delicious.

Katie Batchelor

Image from pinterest.com 2024

❖ Classic Cinema

Next Screenings



- 1 March: *Shaun of the Dead* – GB, Edgar Wright 2004, 99 mins, with subtitles. 'A rom-com with zombies!'
- 15 March: *Intouchables* – France, Eric Toledano 2011, 112 mins, with subtitles. Based on a true story, this heart-breaking and, at times, very funny film confronts the emotional and physical implications

of paralysis and the way that society makes disabled people invisible or 'untouchable'.

- 19 April: *Hope and Glory* - GB, John Boorman 1987. 113 mins, with subtitles. A semi-autobiographical film about growing up during the Blitz, which for a young boy was more of an adventure, and for the women left behind at liberation.

Come and join us on the 1st and 3rd Friday mornings at 10:00 am in the basement at Evesham Methodist Church. £3 contribution covers room hire, biscuits, tea, and coffee in the intermission. There will be a short introduction to the film of the day and a brief chat about it afterwards. Please see the Classic Cinema webpage.



Pat Ansell

Images: page 21, Ally Edwards from Microsoft Windows; page 22, Omar Sy winning the César Award for Best Actor for 'Intouchables'. **Credit:** Georges Biard, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

❖ Birdwatching



We were unable to visit our destination of Upton Warren planned for October because of ongoing reserve maintenance work and so we headed to Slimbridge instead. A variety of birds is guaranteed there, and once again it did not disappoint. There were wading birds which included Spotted Redshank, Snipe and Ruff as well as the ducks such as Gadwall and the colourful Shovelers. A few of us



visited nearby Frampton Lakes on the way home and were lucky to find a Little Gull.

Heading north in November, we visited a new destination for many, the RSPB reserve of Middleton Lakes near Tamworth. It was certainly cold but the number and variety of

birds made up for that with good numbers of Tufted Ducks, Pochard and Teal, although perhaps the stars were the smart Goldeneyes. At feeding stations around the reserve were tits and finches galore as well as nuthatch.

In our 2024 programme of meetings we will be visiting places near and far, including Ham Wall on the Somerset Levels and Rutland Water.

John Boon



Photos: page 22, Shoveler by Richard Hunt; page 23, Goldeneye by Pam Riggs and Robin by Richard Hunt.

❖ Science & Engineering

We are a group of about ten to twelve individuals with an interest in Science and Engineering topics, meeting at Wallace House Evesham on the last Friday of the month, with summer and Christmas breaks. The cost is currently £2 per meeting.

From time to time we invite speakers or visit museums and interesting sites. We also have discussion sessions on science topics such as climate change, natural history, geology, medical topics and the problems facing the world. Generally, members have a past background in these topics but of course anyone interested is most welcome. If you would like to join us, please get in touch with me via the Science & Engineering webpage.

Alan Eames

❖ Natural History



Our year of meetings concluded in November with a guided fungi walk at Kemerton Nature Reserve led by reserve warden Kate Aubury. Fungi are a challenge to identify so it was a pleasure to have an expert on hand to help and advise.

We start our 2024 programme in April when we visit Oversley Wood to the west of Stratford upon Avon, followed in May by a walk around the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust reserve of Windmill Hill near Offenham.

John Boon



Photos: The group at Kemerton (top left) by John Boon; Common Earthball (bottom right) by Bob Woodroffe; Yellow Stagshorn (bottom left) by Richard Hunt.

❖ Quiz



Here is another set of brain teasers to (hopefully) get you thinking. The theme is Black and White. Good luck!

1. Which band recorded Knights in White Satin?
2. What was Winston Churchill's expression for his bouts of depression?
3. Who had a number two hit in 1984 with Agadoo?
4. What was golfer Greg Norman's nickname?
5. Deborah Kerr starred in which 1947 film about a group of nuns sent to a Himalayan mountain?
6. In which century did the Black Death rage through Europe?
7. Jimmy Shand and his band, and Robin Hall and Jimmy McGregor were stars of which Scottish TV entertainment show?
8. The athlete Roger Black was an Olympic silver medallist at which distance?
9. Whitehaven is a town in which English county?
10. What is the common name of the plant Rudbeckia hirta?

Please see page 32 for the answers.

John Boon, Membership Secretary

❖ Archaeology & Heritage

On 18 November, some members of the group attended the Worcestershire Archaeology Day at the Hive in Worcester. This annual event, organised by the Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service (WAAS), brings together various reports of recent archaeological activity, not only in our county, but from further afield as well.

Reports delivered by the archaeologists involved in the topics included the 'Body on the Bromyard Line' and new discoveries at Hartlebury Castle. The former related to the discovery of human remains in a disused railway embankment and the latter to possible Civil War defences. There was also a report on 8000 years of history at Broadway, building on the flood alleviation scheme excavations a few years ago.

Of great local interest were reports on the Iron Age and Roman settlements at Highfield Road, Hampton and the Roman settlement at Norton near Evesham, also known as 'Roots In Time', for which WAAS received a national archaeological award. Members of the u3a group took part in the latter project as excavation volunteers.

Further topics included recent finds by the Portable Antiquities Scheme in the county, 'Fascinating Finds 2023', and the 'Art of Archaeological Conservation', which was given by one of the conservationist involved with cleaning artefacts from the 'Staffordshire Hoard'.

Following the u3a Open Day, current and new members got together on 21 November 2023. While enjoying tea and cake, a report of activities during 2023 and ideas for a 2024 programme were presented by the group leader, with the opportunity for everyone present to moot their ideas for future explorations.

Some members of the group started the New Year by attending a lecture on 13 January 2024, facilitated by the South Worcestershire Archaeological Group, on 'The Ditches and Hills of 17th century Malvern'. The speaker had scoured the Malvern Hills in search of ditches and walls discovered during hikes and gave an insight into why they had been constructed in relation to the monarchy's land ownership in the 17th century.

Chris Wolstencroft

The u3a...



Adventures together



Chat and Good Company

November walk - Walks under 4 miles 1 by Jill Francis (top)
Christmas get-together - Yoga 3 by Aileen Fairclough (bottom)

❖ Summer Skittles 3

Following the very successful 2023 Summer Skittles, we are again to play at the Ambassadors Club this summer. As usual, members of Skittles 1 and Skittles 2 will be the core players, but any u3a members will be most welcome to join us.

We meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 10.15am for 10.30am. Here are the dates for your diary:

12 and 26 June

10 and 24 July

14 and 28 August

11 and 25 September

For more details please contact Ken Pearce by phone or email from the webpage.

❖ Poetry

I have been reminded by one of the group's stalwarts of the importance of poetry-loving readers to the success of the activity. It should be stressed that writing poetry is not a requirement, though welcome when it happens. The love of interesting poetry, contemporary, classic or obscure, communicated through reading a selected piece aloud to the group, is not only welcome but indeed an essential component of the group's activities, as we work our way round the table.

Group members are invited to suggest themes during September/October for the following year. From these a running order is produced in time for the November meeting, covering the next year from January to November, poets like to have a rest in December! Meetings take place at 1.30 pm for two hours, upstairs in Wallace House, Oat Street, on the last Wednesday of the month. The venue is accessible by lift if required.

Forthcoming themes:

- 'War and Mayhem' in March
- 'Stout heart, sharp sword' in April
- 'Electric' in May
- 'Bring us sunshine' in June

As the above mentioned member observed, it's not all doom and gloom - we live, we learn, we laugh! The conversation, comment, banter and analysis which occur between readings are a vital part of the occasion. The u3a Poetry Group is as good a reason to leave the house as any and a great way of extending one's network of friends. Do join us and give us a try! The table money to cover rent is currently £4 a session, but please note that the first time is free! Hope to see you!

Richard Taylor

❖ Patchwork & Quilting 1

As a new member of the Quilting & Patchwork 1 group, I was given a genuine warm welcome and it did not take long before I felt part of the group. Each member works on their own crafting project but also gets involved in group projects. On the social side, we all go for an afternoon tea during the summer and for Christmas lunch.

In 2023, the group projects included making patchwork squares to create two quilts for a women's refuge and attending a workshop to make a machine-pieced patchwork table runner. Alongside this, some members made items for the 'Give a Duck' charity at the Bristol Children's Hospital.

This year, besides our own projects, we plan to make more quilts for the women's refuge by repurposing a pair of decorative curtains donated to the group and are considering ideas for another workshop.

I especially value the interest everyone shows in each other's projects and the willingness to share knowledge if someone needs help.

Fiona Brown

❖ Concert Group

What exciting times we live in! Almost incredible things are happening with your Concert Group at the moment, with the prospect of TWO coaches being booked for the first time for our Concert on 10 April.

Although bookings will have closed by the time you read this, we will, as usual, be running a waiting list in case of late cancellations. The CBSO will be giving us the beautiful 'Masques et bergamasques' by Gabriel Fauré, the

very lively Piano Concerto No 3 by Sergei Prokofiev, to be played by British international superstar pianist Benjamin Grosvenor, and the magnificent Symphonie Fantastique by Hector Berlioz. But you don't need to rely on the 'maybe, maybe' of cancellations to hear wonderful music! Not at all!

We have two more Concerts on offer before the end of our 2023/24 Season. On 21 May the Czech National Symphony Orchestra will be playing Copland's 'Appalachian Spring', Beethoven's 'Emperor' Piano Concerto No 5, Smetana's inspiring 'Vltava', and the truly wonderful Dvorak Symphony No 8. Irresistible? Oh yes, I think so!

And what about our Season Finale on 19 June? I promise you, you will not be disappointed! French composer Louise Farrenc's Overture No 2 is followed by Mozart's Piano Concerto No 25, Schubert's 'Overture in the Italian Style' and - what a finish! - Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony No 4.

But why rely on 'maybe, maybe' when you can sign up for our mailing list without obligation. It just makes sure that you get all the information first, including your option to reserve tickets, also without obligation, until we are ready to get going with the booking arrangements.

It's all hassle-free, it's all lovely, and we would love to have your company! If great music, played live by wonderful musicians, is your thing, your very own local u3a is offering you an amazing service, providing you with (almost) door-to-door travel, and 'break-even' ticket prices. So do please get in touch!

David Daniels

❖ German

It was great fun to start the New Year in German and all members joined with enthusiasm. Everybody had prepared something to kick off the new term in style. We even had one new member join the Beginners Group.

A suggestion as to what we are going to discuss is always sent out a few days prior to the meetings, so that members can prepare what they want to write or talk about. Christmas was a popular subject this time and everyone who chose it had something interesting to report. In addition, we enjoyed to hear about New Year's resolutions and the prognosis for 2024. That was not an easy subject, but well presented. The poem 'Oh to be

'Young' by Douglas MacArthur (1945) was read out in German by a member of the afternoon group, a message of hope for us all.

For the next session at the end of January, we are going to discuss a variety of topics, such as 'snow', 'a warm pullover', 'chocolate', 'joy of life', 'holiday plans' and what we have done or intend to do. Members can choose a topic or bring suggestions of their own.

It is very interesting to listen to so many different stories, giving us a lot to talk and think about. A Crossword Puzzle is always attached, not too difficult, so that all have the opportunity to solve it. We meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Please get in touch with me via email from the link on our webpage if you would like to join.

Sophie Dodds

❖ Modern Greek 1 & 2

It seems that more people like Greece as a country and want to learn a little of the language. This is good, but it is keeping me very busy as a group leader with two groups now - Modern Greek 1 and 2!

Everyone is so keen that we have been meeting each week now since lockdown, either on Zoom or face to face. The enthusiasm is such that progress is good despite not having a Greek teacher amongst us. We enjoy learning together and talking about our experiences in Greece.



Just before Christmas, most of us descended on a small Greek cafe in Pershore called 'Grab a Greek!' The name refers to Greek delicacies and not Greek people, thank goodness! Here is a photo of us enjoying our snacks and coffee. In mid-January, both groups met at our favourite Greek restaurant for a delicious Greek meal. This has become an annual tradition and nobody minds driving all the way

to Gloucester to eat and socialise at 'Greek on the Docks', which is literally on the dock side. A lovely picturesque setting. We practice our Greek with the owners and staff in both establishments, which is great fun! The music is perfect too and if you look hard enough, you might see someone dancing!



The groups are growing, but there is room for more if anyone fancies learning with us. Don't be frightened of the language! It is a beautiful language and very rewarding when you realise that you can say a few words to the locals while you are on holiday. They will love you for trying and you will find them very friendly.

Καλή χρονιά!

Mike Fraser

Images provided by Mike Fraser

Answers to the Quiz on page 25

1. The Moody Blues
2. Black Dog
3. Black Lace
4. The Great White Shark
5. Black Narcissus
6. Fourteenth
7. The White Heather Club
8. 400 Metres
9. Cumbria
10. Black-eyed Susan

Group Name	Coordinator	Fee
Archaeology & Heritage	Chris Wolstencroft	Varies
Architecture	Caroline Bagshaw	Varies
Art Appreciation	Caroline Bagshaw	£2.00
Aspects of Modern History	Sheila Himsworth	£1.00
Badminton 1	Cefn Blundell	£3-£4
Badminton 2	Teresa Green	£4.00
Birdwatching	John Boon	Free
Board Games	Peter Aggett	Free
Book Club	Sue Griffiths	Varies
Bookends	Barbara Tittensor	50 p
Book Friends	Chris Spriggs	Varies
Bridge	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	B & P Morton	£4.00
Creative Writing 1 & 2	Sue Johnson	Free +
Croquet	Paul Griffin	50 p
Cycling for Pleasure	Chris Davis	Free
Dressmaking	Denise Bailey	TBC
Exploring Language	Caroline Bagshaw	Free
Family Research	Diane Nicholls	£2.50
French Conversation	Lorna Slaughter	Free
German (3 groups)	Sophie Dodds	£2.00
Golf for Fun	David Bentley	Green fee
Italian (post-beginners)	Sue Jerrard	Varies
Jam Sessions	Bob Davies	£2.00
Latin 1	Caroline Bagshaw	£2.00
Latin 2	Caroline Bagshaw	50 p

Latin 3, Beginners	David Battin	Buy drink
Latin Reading	David Battin	Free
Listening to Music	Frances Platman	£1.00
Mah-jong	Carla Auger	£2.50
Military History	Neil Hoy	Free
Modelling Group	John Gowers	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	£4.00
Questions of Belief & Doubt	Jane Couper	Free
Quiz	John Boon	£2.00
Rummikub	Carla Auger	£2.50
Science & Engineering	Alan Eames	£2.00
Sea Shanties	John Gardner	Free
Shakespeare	Nicky Neill	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 1	F & S Copestake	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 2	Muriel Barnett	£3.00
Short River Walks	Judy Smith	Free
Singing for Pleasure	Cath Cox	£2.00
Skittles 1	Mary Greenwood	Free
Skittles 2	Sue Beneke	Free
Skittles 3, June to Sept	Ken Pearce	Free
Social Saunters	Richard Hunt	Free
Spanish Beginners	David Keeling	Free
Spanish Intermediate	Leighton Jones	Varies

Table Tennis	Gary Hewitt	£3.00
Tai Chi	Derek Arnold	£5.00
Tai Chi 2	Derek Arnold	Varies
Urban Sketchers	Mike Bagshaw	Free
Village Ambles & Camera	Sheila Ryder	£1.00
Village Strolls 1	Terry Woodfield	£1.00
Village Strolls 2	Sandra Woodfield	£1.00
Village Strolls 3	G & J Cutter	TBC
Walks Over 4 Miles	J Alexander-Head	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 1	Ruth Webb	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 2	Hazel Marshall	£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://evesham.u3asite.uk>

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