



Painting for Pleasure – inspired by David Hockney

Newsletter Issue 88 June 2024

Registered Charity Number 1101530

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Please...



...make a note in your diaries of our **AGM at the Methodist Church Evesham 2 pm on 5 June 2024**. As every year, a quorum of 10% of the total membership is required, which translates into a minimum of 103 members present. The brief AGM precedes the monthly talk by guest speaker David Shannon – ‘Humour in Court’ and is followed by refreshments and chat.

Thanks to the ever plentiful contributions sent to me by committee and group members this issue is packed with interesting reads. Information on new groups and venues, a new book on a ‘Wild Life in Worcestershire’ and the final round-up of the national project ‘Their Finest Hour’. Read about a meeting with a difference on page 16 which the Book Friends recently experienced and a report on their contribution to ‘International Women’s Day’ by the Wine Tasting Group on page 28. Have you ever wondered about the outcome of the test sampling to establish if the perfect pavement uncovered during works near Evesham really was of Roman origin? Look no further than page 32. Don’t miss the Quiz on page 22 and a tricky question set by the Military History Group on pages 24 & 25.

The deadline for the September Newsletter is on **Saturday 3 August 2024**. Happy reading!

Bärbel Wolstencroft

The photo on the front cover was taken by Mary Simpson and shows members of the Painting for Pleasure group with their work inspired by David Hockney’s ‘The Arrival of Spring’. Read the full story on page 14.

From the Chair

Hello to all our members – for the last time!



After five years on the u3a committee – three of them as Chair – I will be standing down from the committee, along with three other long-standing colleagues, on 5 June at our AGM. It has been huge fun (yes, really!) – working with a great bunch of people and getting to know members and group leaders.

The u3a only works because people step up to the plate to help get groups started and then lead them. I would like to express my gratitude to the committee who work tirelessly to ensure that

Evesham u3a runs smoothly. What an amazing bunch you are! From personal experience, I know what a wonderful job group leaders do – I attend three groups and appreciate hugely the expertise and hard work of those leaders (David Daniels, Sophie Dodds and Derek Arnold – just in case you don't know who you are!).

It is often said that if you want something doing, ask a busy person. The busiest people I know are retired people who have taken on a voluntary role. I have a suspicion that those people who are volunteering within the u3a are busy volunteering in other organisations too. So, busy people, it won't come as a surprise to you that we are asking for volunteers to join the committee again this year. If you would like to give it a go, I promise you, you won't regret it. If you would like to join the committee as a co-opted member, please contact Alan Chambers, Secretary, and let him know. The local u3a associations cannot operate without a committee so it is vital we find some new people to join the new committee this June.

Finally, you are reading this because Bärbel Wolstencroft (a very busy person) works tirelessly to produce these wonderful newsletters. Thank you Bärbel – and this is the last time you have to gently remind me to meet the deadline!

I am looking forward to meeting many of you at the AGM on 5 June.

Deborah

New Groups and New Venues

Evesham u3a never stands still! We are seeing new developments all the time and, in this issue, we can tell you about three new groups and some new venue options that have appeared in the last few weeks, plus an exciting opportunity to meet some of our recently arrived Ukrainian neighbours.



New groups

Pickleball – this group is now set up with Alun Edwards as interim group contact and is currently deciding on their preferred venue and meeting times. For more information see page 25.

Card Games – also now in the set-up phase. Interim group contact is Victoria Nelson.

Meditation – interim group co-contacts Deborah Andrews and Nicky Neill are exploring suitable venues.

All three groups will shortly be added to the website with contact details, but in the meantime, please contact Ros Gowers by email via the website for more information.

New Venues

The new **Evesham Baptist Centre on Offenham Road** is now up and running and has excellent facilities for all types of groups. More information can be found on their website www.eveshambaptistchurch.org/

Waitrose Café are offering cordoned off space for small groups in the area to the side of the serving area. Bookings can be arranged by speaking to the manager there.

Not a new venue, but after a very successful u3a Cotswold Link event there recently, a reminder that **Honeybourne Village Hall** is a great venue, well-resourced with good parking and both a large hall or a smaller meeting room available to hire. www.honeybournevillagehall.org

UK-Ukrainian Culture and Language Exchange

Now for something a bit different! We were recently contacted by the District Council's Homes for Ukraine Liaison Officers who explained that there have been several older Ukrainian people arrive in the area to join their families here after the war in Ukraine has become more intense. These people have arrived in a completely new environment and are looking for ways to get to know people and find out more about their new home.

In the true ethos of the u3a movement - we help each other learn - we are planning to set up a new group, so that we can help them do just that whilst we learn about their traditions and get to speak a bit of Ukrainian too! This will begin with a social event to be organised soon and will be advertised on the website and via our Facebook groups, which will be open to all members and all Ukrainian guests who meet u3a joining criteria. From that we hope a longer-term group will emerge. Watch this space!

Ros Gowers



Events take place throughout the year and are always characterized by a warm welcome and informality. For all Festival details and the full brochure visit:

www.eveshamfestivalofwords.org

Sue Ablett, Festival Chair, can be contacted for more information or with queries at info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org or by phoning 0787 1285606

Monthly Meetings

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

This is my last contribution to the newsletter in my role as Programme Secretary. It seems incredible that over five years have elapsed since I was persuaded to join the committee and try my hand at booking speakers for our monthly meetings.



It goes without saying that when we were told on 23 March 2020 that we had to stay at home, we all had to think creatively about how best to keep each other informed and engaged with what was going on within the u3a. I never dreamt I would be asking speakers to deliver their talks on Zoom, sending out Zoom invitations and trying to get my head around the technical difficulties that arose, not least persuading members to mute themselves before taking phone calls or eating their lunch or, dare I say it, having a disagreement!

The support I have received from my fellow committee members, the website team and the technical team has been immeasurable and I cannot thank them enough.

The programme is in place for the remainder of this year but I will retire from the committee in June. I look forward to handing over to someone with fresh ideas and energy. It has been a lot of fun and a lot of learning!

Nicky Neill

5 June 2024

AGM followed by 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

3 July 2024

Hereford and Worcester Fire Service

A Fire Safety Talk from Service Community Volunteers. The talk leads through Home Fire Safety Advice including cooking, candles, electrical safety and escape plans. Following the delivery of the talk, they will be on hand to take any referrals for a FREE Home Fire Safety Visit.

Refreshments – Concert Group

7 August 2024

Jenny Mallin – My Great-Aunt Constance and the Burma Trek

An account of Jenny's great-aunt, who was born in 1898, her life in Burma and a civilian trek of almost 1,000 miles in 1942, to reach the safety of India.

Refreshments – Country Dancing

4 September 2024

Galen Bartholomew – The SS Suevic and the night the RNLI saved 611 lives

Galen Bartholomew has been a keen family historian for 50 years. When he discovered that his great-grandmother and great-aunt were amongst those rescued from the Suevic, he was keen to find out more about this. Little did he imagine that his relatives had been involved in one of the most famous of RNLI rescues. The traumatic events for all the passengers and crew on the Suevic explain why Galen's family had virtually 'forgotten' that terrible night – 1907 was well before people were encouraged to talk about difficult experiences! This is a remarkable account of shipwreck and survival.

This talk describes an extraordinary story. The number of people rescued, the salvage and rebuilding of the Suevic set records in 1907. The talk is illustrated with fascinating contemporary photographs and accounts from the time. A focus throughout is on the RNLI and its brave crews, as the RNLI celebrated its bi-centenary on 4 March 2024.

Refreshments – Creative Writing

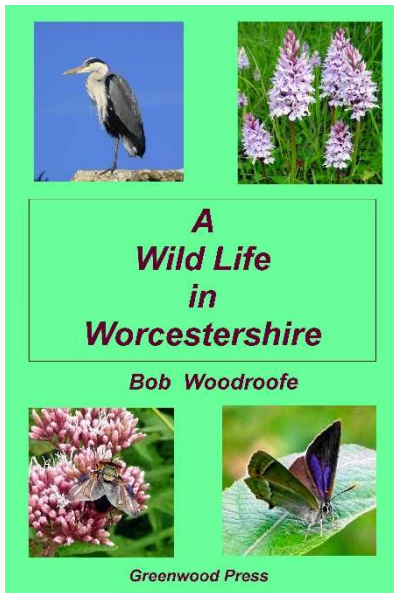
Special Features

A Wild Life in Worcestershire

First

*we wait each year
for those that stay
the first snowdrop
catkins on the hazel
the first butter coloured fly
cherry plum blossom
we wait each year
for those that go
the honk and V of skeins of geese
the grey backed farewell chuckle
the last flash of scarlet underwing
the wing creak and yellow beak of whoopers
we wait each year
for those that come
the first chiffchaff the first cuckoo
that flash and twitter of blue cutting blue
that scream of joy arcing across the sky
and hope for painted ladies and clouds of yellow*

On 21 June 2024, u3a member and Evesham poet Bob Woodroffe is publishing a collection of his nature poetry to celebrate the 'Wildlife of Worcestershire' in all its glory. We are all aware that our wildlife needs plenty of help to survive and flourish, so the proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. The poems have been



inspired by the county's wildlife and cover the natural history, its flora, fauna and bird life.

Bob says: 'This is my attempt to say 'thank you' to Worcestershire and its amazing variety of wildlife and to help it to continue giving pleasure to all for many years to come'.

And how can you enjoy all 50 poems? They are contained in Bob's 78 page paperback book, which can be purchased for £5 plus £2 p&p either from www.greenwoodpress.co.uk or Amazon. For the personal touch and free local delivery or collection contact Bob at bob.woodroffe@outlook.com or 01386 446477.

The u3a and 'Their Finest Hour'

Over the last 18 months, I have helped u3a members around the country to contribute to 'Their Finest Hour', an online digital archive of the everyday stories and objects of the Second World War. It is a Heritage Lottery Funded project based at the University of Oxford.

On 6 June 2024, the free online archive will be launched at <http://theirfinesthour.org/> as part of the commemorations for the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

Members uploaded their own stories online and organised digital collections in their u3as to help their colleagues use the Internet. *'Their Finest Hour exemplifies purposeful, meaningful research and participation by u3a members'*. (Maggy Simms, Research and Shared Learning Projects Coordinator for the u3a)

On the Japanese front line from Mandalay to Rangoon, Burma 1945

Evesham member Peter Aggett submitted a story to 'Their Finest Hour' about his uncle who served in Burma, modern-day Myanmar. In two letters written to his parents in May and June 1945 Lt. Frank Aggett, Royal Engineers, summarised victory over the Japanese in sanitised tones. Some of the fiercest fighting of the whole war in the harshest terrain is dismissed in these detailed if bright and breezy missives as 'the normal jitter party'. Later, Frank described his job after the Japanese had retreated:

My main job just now is running my own private railway line - I've got a ten-mile branch line of which I'm sole lord and overseer - the locomotive power is a jeep fitted with railway wheels which pulls along a couple of ordinary railway wagons - and very successfully too - the only trouble being that if



you want to stop suddenly - well you just can't! So far we've had one fatal accident when we hit the proverbial cow on the line - that not only put paid to the cow but derailed a wagon and rather bent up the front of the jeep but fortunately no one was hurt. I personally left the jeep in rather a hurry! (Frank Aggett)



Images: Top - Jeeps adapted for running on railway tracks head southwards from Mandalay, 1945 IWM SE 3615 © IWM (permitted use under the IWM Non Commercial Licence). **Left** - Peter Aggett aged 3 (front) with his Uncle Frank, 1956. (University of Oxford/ Peter Aggett 2024 CC BY 4.0)

Many of the stories submitted were of life on the home front, people recalling their experiences as children or what life was like for their parents, at home, on the farm, or in occupations like the fire service or the police. I have helped to catalogue the thousands of uploaded photographs via the 'Their Finest Hour' website and this one struck me.

Shocking blast in air-raid-shelter

Linda McLean, u3a Easter Ross and Sutherland, contacted 'Their Finest Hour' to record the detailed and well-researched story of her beloved father, Major Hugh Robertson from Nigg in Scotland of the 5th Battalion of the 51st Highland Division, who had fought gallantly across Northern Africa and Europe and who cared passionately about his men.

What is interesting in this work is asking a contributor to think about the experiences of other members of their family. When prompted, Linda told this story about her family:

My father-in-law was a fireman. He was very highly thought of from what I understand, and was on duty the night of the Clydebank Blitz, March 1941. He was asked to go down into an Anderson Shelter and tell the folk that there was nothing left of their homes. He was heart sore at the devastation, and telling these people that they had no homes to return to was miserable.

He descended... and was completely awestruck. He said it was like Pompeii. Everyone in the shelter was dead, but they had been killed by the blast. They were as they had been. So, there were women sitting knitting, as they had been in life, kids drawing on paper on the floor, frozen in death. Nobody had any sign of injury. It certainly shook him. My mother-in-law said she had never seen him return from duty looking as if he had seen a ghost. You may not know about the Clydebank Blitz, certainly, most Scots are unaware. (Their Finest Hour/Linda McLean)

What if I hadn't asked Linda about the rest of her family, does anyone else know these stories?

Please remember from 6 June 2024 you can see all the stories on 'Their Finest Hour' by visiting <http://theirfinesthour.org/>

Ally Edwards

Walking Cricket

An Evesham u3a and Worcestershire Cricket joint activity



Thanks to the Marylebone Cricket Club Foundation (MCC), we enjoyed a walking cricket festival with Worcestershire Cricket at Lord's on 20 March 2024. Pictured is the Worcestershire team, including u3a members Dave and Ally on the right.

More u3a members attend every Tuesday afternoon in Wallace House, Evesham. All are welcome, and any group should include about 50:50 men and women. But in Evesham, we have not been able to recruit sufficient female players. Please would you spread the word to women who might fancy this slower form of the beautiful game?

We will soon play in Worcestershire Cricket's outdoor walking cricket festival on 19 June against teams from around Worcestershire and the country including u3a teams. This would be a great opportunity to see the Evesham team in action, try your arm, and chat with the other players. It's a friendly and supportive atmosphere, congratulating successes and commiserating when something goes wrong.

Do come along on a Tuesday afternoon from 12.30 to 1.30 pm at Wallace House to try Walking Cricket for yourself. The first session is FREE. Open to people who are not members of u3a.



Dave Williams

Images by Worcestershire Cricket: The MCC Foundation Festival of Walking Cricket (top). Women Playing Walking Cricket (bottom)

Group News

❖ **Painting for Pleasure**

During March, the Painting for Pleasure group considered the work of David Hockney and were particularly impressed by his enormous painting 'The Arrival of Spring'. We decided to use it as inspiration for our own artwork based on a local landscape. We chose the beech copse at Hidcote.

A large photo was cut into sections and these were given out to the group. We each interpreted our photo in a style inspired by Hockney and when our paintings were put together it was more of a patchwork than a 'Bigger Picture'. However, it was a very interesting and enjoyable collaborative exercise and we plan to do a similar one later in the year.

Looking ahead to May, our topic will be 'Spring Flowers' and in June 'Holiday Pictures'. New members are always welcome to the group and if you are interested in giving art a try, please contact Mary. Telephone numbers for all group contacts can be found in the Group List at the end of the Newsletter.

Mary Simpson

❖ **Welsh Language**

Growing a Leek – or perhaps a Daffodil

The Welsh Language group is pleased to report that we have recently welcomed new members and if proof were needed of the effectiveness of our combination of online learning and weekly tutorials on Zoom, one of these new friends is a member of Nottingham u3a! Yes really! We can only think that the warmth of the welcome afforded by the hugely hospitable Evesham members, and certainly not just in the Welsh Group, must be becoming known far and wide throughout the United Kingdom! Surprising? No, not at all!

So what is so attractive about the Welsh language? Well of course it's one of the Celtic languages that formed the bedrock on which our British culture was built, hundreds of years ago. But leaving aside the history, it's a living language, accessible to any holiday traveller without the expense of flights and the hassle of passport control. And maybe it's partly because we are fairly close to the border, so many of us have family and friends based there. Not only that, but the grandchildren living there are learning the language too. What a lovely idea to be able to chat to the young people in Welsh and, at the same time, help them with their learning, don't you think? Well, they can probably also teach us a thing or two!

That is one of the many reasons why our group members started out on the journey and are continuing to enjoy the experience. Why else would they turn up, as they do, week after week at our 'Coffee and Chats' sessions at one of the local farm shops? It's not really where we do the learning as it's more social than scholarly, but it's a great way to bring extra cohesion to our group of like-minded travellers.

And of course there is plenty of room for more, so if you have been thinking about it, our strong advice would be to move from thinking to doing! We would love to have your company – truly. Do get in touch with David Daniels for more information.

David Daniels

❖ Skittles 3

Summer Skittles 3 replaces Skittles 1 and 2 from 12 June. We then play at the Ambassador Club in Evesham on each 2nd and 4th Wednesday morning from 10.30 am until 25 September 2024. Tea and coffee are available from the bar.



Please look out for personal emails or phone calls. Details from Ken Pearce, see Group List on page 35 for phone details.

Image: pub-games.blogspot.com 2024

❖ Book Friends

One of the Evesham u3a Book Clubs



In April, the Book Friends group had an amazingly exciting monthly meeting. We were joined on Zoom by Rory Cellan-Jones!

A few months ago, one of our members saw on X (formerly Twitter) that Rory was offering to join anyone's book club meeting if they had read and wanted to discuss his book, **Ruskin Park**,

Sylvia, me and the BBC. Rory wrote this book when he discovered a box full of letters, left to him by his mother, with the inscription:

'For Rory, to read and think about – in the hope it will help him to understand how it really was.'

Rory knew he was the child of a love affair between two BBC employees. But until his mother died and he found this red box labelled 'For Rory' he knew little of its beginning or ending or why his peculiarly isolated childhood had so tested the bond between him and Sylvia as she single-parented two sons in a one-bedroom flat, while working full time, through the 1950s and 60s.

This book is a compelling account of what Rory uncovered in the papers, letters and diaries of a relationship between two romantics and the restrictive forces of post-war respectability and prejudice that ended it. It also gives a fascinating insight into the BBC itself.

So we did exactly that! We contacted him and he immediately responded, saying he'd love to join us in our April meeting – and what a treat it was! He is an immensely personable gentleman, who kept us entertained with amusing tales as to how he started to make sense of all the correspondence and at long last found out about the real story of his parents. And at the end we were even introduced to Sophie the Rescue Dog from Romania! Regular X (formerly Twitter) visitors may well be familiar with the daily postings

showing the trials, tribulations and joy of living with a quite traumatised rescue dog.

Our thanks go to Rory Cellan-Jones for a wonderfully entertaining meeting.

Chris Spriggs

Photo on p 16 by Chris Spriggs

Follow-up: on 19 April 2024, Rory Cellan-Jones wrote on X (Twitter) - Third [#RuskinPark](#) book club Zoom of the week - and the folks from Evesham asked some great questions.

Image: Rory Cellan-Jones via X

Image below: desicomments.com



...to our retiring committee members Deborah Andrews, Chair, John Boon, Vice-Chair & Membership Secretary, Nicky Neill, Programme Secretary, and Alison Williams, Beacon Administrator, for giving freely of their time to support the growth and success of Evesham u3a.

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	Military History 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	

❖ Concert Band

The highlight of our spring activities was a concert we performed at Holy Redeemer Catholic Primary School in Pershore. This was a return visit – a group of us had been there in 2017 – so as far as the children were concerned we had a completely new audience.

The concert began with a mini performance by school pupils with violins, clarinets and trumpets. Then we played 'O sole mio' together with the pupils. Following this, we performed a lively selection of pieces which delighted the children and the staff, giving our members a real buzz. We have donated a further six instruments to the school which they will use to enable children, who would not otherwise have the opportunity, to learn to play a musical instrument.

In the summer, we shall be playing at two free events. We would be delighted to see fellow u3a members at the **Pershore Riverside Festival** from 2.00 pm on Saturday 20 July, and at **Bands in the Park** in Abbey Park at Evesham from 2.30 to 4.30 pm on Sunday 18 August 2024.

Peter Scott

❖ Concert Group

It has been a truly special Season 2023/2024 and I guess we may feel a bit sad that it is coming to an end. Seven concerts this year, which, to be honest, was a bit of a stretch, but just so memorable music performances at every one, including a visit from the Czech National Symphony Orchestra with a wonderful programme. Merry and I are so grateful to all our members for their solid support throughout the year. We are so glad that you see it, as we do, as a two-way street – you give us your support and you enjoy the performances. We sort out the organisation, and we see the sheer joy that so many of you experience. It makes it all so very worthwhile.

And of course, if proof were needed, for the first time we had to run two coaches to two of the concerts to cope with the demand this year! Just wonderful!

But 'yesterday is past and gone' and guess what? We have the new Symphony Hall season programme due to come through the letter box within the next three or four weeks. We are so looking forward to sorting out a programme for the 2024/2025 season. If the planning team at Symphony Hall get it as 'right' as they did this year, it's going to be amazing! Of course, the main focus will be on performances by the CBSO with our very own fire-brand of a conductor, Kazuki Yamada – what a bundle of joy he is! But we are told that 'five or six' visiting orchestras have been pencilled into the draft programme for the new season, and I promise you, we'll do our best to include something from the touring orchestras list to add a bit of extra excitement to our plans!



What's that you say? You are not on our mailing list yet? Where have you been? We would love to have you with us. The mailing list commits you to nothing except the regular receipt of information. Did you know that one of the key objectives of B:Music – the organisation that runs Symphony Hall – is 'to make great music available to everyone'? That's how we feel too. Please get in touch, so that we can keep you fully informed of what we are up to.

David Daniels

Photo by Grenville Burrows

❖ Quiz

With which literary genres do you mainly associate the following authors?

1. Stephen King
2. Ed McBain
3. Isaac Azimov
4. Zane Grey
5. Danielle Steel
6. Julia Donaldson
7. Len Deighton
8. George RR Martin
9. Philippa Gregory
10. Dick Francis

Please see page 33 for the answers.

❖ Birdwatching

In January, a new venture for the Birdwatching Group was a weekend away in Devon. We visited the Exe Estuary, following it from Topsham to the sea at Dawlish Warren, and on the second day, Broadsands in Torbay. It was a chance for our inland-based group to see birds of the estuary and seabirds. We were not disappointed.

At Topsham we were greeted by flocks of Brent Geese and there were



numerous wader species such as Grey Plover, Turnstone, Avocet and Bar-tailed Godwit. There was also a small group of Red-breasted Mergansers, smart saw-billed ducks.

On the sea at Broadsands there were Great-northern Divers, Shag, a close Razorbill and stiff winged Fulmars,

whilst at the back of the beach car park we were delighted to see Cirl Buntings, birds whose UK distribution is restricted mainly to coastal areas of Devon.

We have also visited Slimbridge, Sandwell Valley and Brandon Marsh.



Photos: Great Northern Diver p 22 and Razorbill (top left) by Geoff Bryant; Shag (top right) by Richard Hunt

❖ Natural History



Our first meeting of the year was to Oversley Wood near Alcester. It was a gentle start to our year of meetings with mainly birds to hear and a few flowers to see. Migrant birds such as Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff were in full song, as well as the 'locals' such as Song Thrush and Blackbird. Plants in flower included Bluebell, Primrose, Greater Stitchwort and Dog Violet.



Among new venues later in the summer are the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust reserve of Coombe Hill Canal and Worcestershire Wildlife's Devil's Spittleful heathland reserve.

Quiz, Birdwatching & Natural History by John Boon

Photos: Greater Stitchwort (top left) and Common Dog Violet by Bob Woodroffe

❖ Military History

The Military History Group is now fully established. Our venue is Charlton and Crophorne Village Hall and we meet on the last Wednesday of the month from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. The fee to cover room hire is £3.00 per person.

We have held several well-attended meetings with some fascinating talks. The first presentation was on 'War Media Manipulation' which took us right from the Crimean War through to today's Gazan conflict. The April talk was on the 'Life of Saladin' and 'The Attack on Vimy Ridge 1917'. The May talk focussed in on the events that led up to the introduction of the tank in WW1. June's meeting topic is a presentation on the 1944 Normandy landing. This will be especially poignant coming shortly after the 80th anniversary of those momentous events.

We are still **open to new members** joining our friendly group, especially as we now have a new larger venue available. If you are interested in coming along, even if it is just a passing interest to learn more about this fascinating area, then please get in touch.

Neil Hoy

'Over the top...'



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

E059888

'Over the top' – image on page 24 – also known as 'A hop over' and 'A raid' by Captain Frank Hurley circa 1918. Hurley was an official war photographer of the Australian Army during the First World War. Our member Ally Edwards included this stunning photo in his talk about the manipulation of images, entitled 'War Media Manipulation'. **So why was it included in Ally's talk?** The answer can be found on page 33.

Image credit: Australian War Memorial. Copyright expired – public domain

❖ Pickleball

What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a fun sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis, played both indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court. Two or four players use solid paddles made of wood or composite materials to hit a perforated polymer ball over a slightly modified tennis net. It's a recreational sport for social play and fun.



How can I try Pickleball?

It couldn't be easier to have a go at Pickleball and find out for yourself just how much fun it is! Special equipment is not required, and any comfortable clothing is fine with trainers or tennis shoes. When you

start, you can borrow one of our paddles, once you play regularly you will need to provide your own. We are looking at eBay and other sites for pre-owned equipment, and we have been offered discounts for buying new from a couple of suppliers.

Image: Pickleball, from Rawpixel id-9657879 original~2 licensed CC-0

Image credit page 26: Pickleball England

Where do you play Pickleball?

We have regular Pickleball sessions in the sports hall at Evesham Leisure Centre.

How to find out more about Pickleball

Just check out the Pickleball group on our website and contact Lesley Roberts to make arrangements to join a session. **WARNING:** you may become addicted!

Ally Edwards



Pickleball ENGLAND

Join the pickleball movement
Easy to learn, fun to play

Benefits

- Exercise made easy
 - Exercise that is fun to play so you want to play as much as you can!
- Easy game to learn
- Low cost to participate
- Socially inclusive
- Easy to learn and play; tough to master at the highest level

Health Benefits

- Heart Health
 - Exercise improves your heart health especially when it is something you enjoy doing
- Improved flexibility and balance over time
- Improved muscle strength. Remember to warm up before playing and cool down afterwards
- Memory development
 - Learning how to score
 - Keeping the score
 - Learning strategies and techniques
 - Improving concentration and focus



Classic Cinema dates:

- 7th June **Saturday Night Sunday Morning** (GB, Karel Reisz 1960)
Albert Finney, Shirley Anne Field, Rachel Roberts
- 21st June **Belleville Rendez-vous** (France, Sylvain Chomet 2015)
French animation
- 5th July **The Man Who Wasn't There** (US, Coen Brothers 2001)

We meet in the basement of the Evesham Methodist Church to show DVDs on the screen, with subtitles. We break for tea or coffee and ask £3 to cover the room.

On Friday 5th July at 10.00 am, one of us (this time, Ally) shall introduce "The Man Who Wasn't There", a Coen brothers' thriller in which Billy Bob Thornton blackmails the boss (and lover) of his wife Frances McDormand to invest in his business but...



THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE

Photo by Alan Smethee via Wikimedia Commons, , CC BY-SA 4.0

❖ Sea Shanties

Though relatively young, having started in November of last year, we have since gone from strength to strength. The group has a large following with the average attendance of around twenty members. And do we make a noise! Singing mainly traditional sailors' work songs, all we need is a rope to pull on or a capstan to trudge around and the atmosphere would be complete. Some of the members like to take a turn at being shanty man, while others blast out the chorus lines. It must be a miracle that the glass windows stay in place!

The emphasis is on having a good time, while keeping alive a part of our heritage. It is astounding to learn of just how popular this interest is, with groups springing up nationwide. But ours will be the best of course! When sailing time draws nigh, the crew are rostered to stations, get the anchor up, and start **singing**. And we intend to keep singing for a long time yet!

John Gardner

❖ Wine Tasting

In April, in recognition of International Women's Day in March, the group looked at the role of women in the wine industry. All the vineyards had a female chief winemaker. As usual, three white wines and three red wines were tasted to consider colour, bouquet, flavour and food pairings.

The first wine was a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc made by Natalie Christensen of Yealands. This vineyard was only established in 2008 but seems to have achieved much in a short time, including being the first vineyard in New Zealand to be certified as carbon neutral. Natalie originally trained as a classical musician, but decided a career in music did not offer a stable future. After helping her brother during a wine harvest, she decided that this was the career she wanted. Some years working at vineyards in several countries followed before she joined Yealands in 2015 and took charge in 2019. Natalie was voted International white wine maker of the year in 2023.

The second white wine was from Martin Códax vineyard in Galicia and was made from the unusual Godello grape. The chief winemaker here is Katia Álvarez and developing this grape is one of her projects. It compliments their main white wine production based on the Albariño grape. To achieve her goal, and due to climate change, a new vineyard had to be created at an altitude three hundred metres higher than their other vineyards.

The third wine was a Chardonnay from the Margaret River area of Western Australia. The Vasse Felix vineyard was the first one established in this area in 1967.



Virginia Willcocks has been the chief winemaker since 2006 and the policy here is minimum intervention so that the wines reflect the growing conditions of the local climate and soils. She has received many 'Winemaker of the Year' awards from the Australian wine industry.

Our first red wine came from the Paul Jaboulet Ainé vineyard in Côte du Rhône, a historic vineyard established in 1834 with a reputation for making highly prized, expensive wines. Fortunately they also make wines which fall within our budget.

Carolina Frey has been the chief winemaker since 2006 and has concentrated on eco-friendly wine production. She oversees three vineyards in France and one in Switzerland.

The second red wine was a Malbec from Argentina. Susana Balbo originally wanted to be a Nuclear Physicist, but this would have meant moving to Patagonia and her parents would not let her do this, due to instability in the country at that time.

Susana was the first woman in Argentina to graduate with a degree in Oenology (winemaking) in 1981. She worked at various vineyards before establishing her own company in 1999. She served as President of the Argentinian wine industry for three terms from 2006. In this role, she was

instrumental in helping to increase wine exports from 5% of production in 2004 to 27% in 2019.

Finally we visited Spain and tasted a Rioja from CVNE Company. This company is 140 years old and has only had five chief winemakers in that time, the current one being Maria Larrea who has been in charge for 28 years. Their top quality 'Imperial' label wine was voted 'Wine of the Year' in 2013 by the Wine Spectator magazine.

All six wines were enjoyed by the group and reflected the dedication and passion of these women to produce quality wines.

Cefn Blundell

Image: ankenfamilydentist.com 2024

❖ German

According to the Ethnologies guide, there are in excess of 7000 officially known languages spoken in the world. The top three are Chinese, English and Spanish. German doesn't seem to be even near the top of the agenda.

Well, I am glad about this, we don't want to compete. In our groups and enjoyable get-togethers we talk about our own ideas; what moves us, what is important to us and why we meet regularly twice a month. Our subjects range from the ridiculous to the sublime. We talk and write about travel, our heritage, music and the arts, poems and literature, daily life experiences, the seasons, joy in our garden, walks and nature, past experiences and our troubled world. A crossword puzzle is sent out prior to the meetings for members to puzzle about.

Members talk and write at their own levels, guided by the leaders, and none are under pressure to compete. We welcomed a new member recently who will bring new ideas, enthusiasm and experience to the group.

Despite the fact that the German language is not at the top of the international spoken world order, we continue in our own small way and learn from each other every time we meet and have fun. For information please get in touch with me via the German webpage.

Sophie Dodds

❖ Archaeology & Heritage

Following the medieval timeline 750 to 1500 AD we started our field visits for the year in Badsey during February. Notwithstanding the fact that there has been substantial development of the village over time, there are pockets of medieval areas and buildings surviving to this day.

We started our investigations in the church and in particular the mass or scratch dial, a primitive type of sun dial, located outside the church on the south wall of the tower. It is quoted as being the largest dial in the world at 1100mm and dated from around the 16th century. Though rather faint, the outline of the dial is still visible.

Badsey was first mentioned in a charter of 709 AD as Baddesia and at the time of the Domesday survey of 1086 consisted of 17 individual households or dwellings. During the recent 'Badsey's Big Dig', the only test pit that produced undisturbed medieval archaeology was located next to St James' Church. Finds from the pit provided confirmation that this area of Badsey has been consistently occupied from the early medieval period.



March found us in the village of Elmley Castle. Elmley means a 'clearing in the elm woodland' and there has been a settlement here from about 600 AD. Stonework on the oldest part of the parish church of St Mary's shows its Saxon origins. 'Castle' was added to the village name when a supporter of William the Conqueror built a 'motte and bailey' castle in the 1080s on a spur of Bredon Hill behind the church. During the following 400 years, the castle was enlarged, changed hands and eventually fell into disrepair.

A lady from the village provided us with a comprehensive history of the church, the castle and surrounding buildings relevant to the medieval period we were examining. Of course we eventually found our way to Bessie's Tea Room located in the Queen Elizabeth Inn, also of medieval interest, to conclude our visit.

Our April meeting diverted us away from our medieval researches, due to either closure or lack of volunteers at the venues. We therefore took up the offer of the 'Alcester Centurions' to attend a lecture by a Worcester archaeologist on the topic 'Who forded the Ford? The Roman/non-Roman ford excavation near Evesham'.

The attendees were eager to learn the outcome of the excavations and resulting test sampling undertaken to establish if this was indeed the site of a Roman ford. The speaker kept the attention of the audience right to the end of his lecture and the result was not what we expected. What looks like a Roman ford is not a ford but has been identified to be a geological feature known as 'nodular bedrock', a perfect geological formation and something of a rarity, created in part by glacial activity. Though disappointed by the fact that we did not have an archaeological outcome, we do have something of geological beauty.

Chris Wolstencroft

Photo: medieval stone carving of a hare in the porch of St Mary's Church by B Wolstencroft

❖ Poetry

The Poetry Group now has a core of eight active members and a couple of 'sleepy heads' who attend occasionally. A number of new members have given us a try, have been welcomed and have apparently enjoyed themselves but seem to think they don't have enough to offer the group to

be a useful participant. Therefore I am using this report to try to put the record straight and reassure those who may be potentially interested that their input will be much appreciated.



The group meets on the last Wednesday of each month except December, when poets take a break for Christmas. Our venue is an upstairs room at Wallace House, Oat Street, Evesham, from 1.30 to 3.30 pm with a current fee

of £4 to cover hire costs. We have a theme, chosen by members, around which we weave a tapestry of poems found in books, on the internet or self-penned, reading each in turn around the table and going round again until we run out of time, anecdotes or poetry. It is a fun occasion, though we do tackle some pretty heavy themes amongst the more light-hearted or comic.

The present group has two new members, both of whom have entered the waters swimmingly with stimulating selections, good repartee and enthusiasm. Coupled with an awesome power of recall, one new member can recite relevant verse from memory and both bring a wide experience of life and reading to the table which they are prepared to share.

If you like poetry and qualify age-wise for the u3a, you can hardly fail to fit the bill, as life experience and a fund of stories, information and anecdote almost inevitably come one's way in fifty – and counting – years of living!

The monthly themed meeting potentially helps some of us to shape our lives and for all of us the last Wednesday is a red letter day out among friends in the flesh as large as life and virtual on the page. We always welcome new members but I am pleased to be able to assert that the group is in good shape just now – beware complacency, the enemy of art and poetry!

Richard Taylor

Image: wordart.com 2024

Answer to the question on 'War Media Manipulation' on pages 24 – 25

Although the image depicting lots of action from the war front is shown as one photograph for the media of the time, Captain Hurley actually combined fragments from **12** separate negatives for dramatic and artistic effect. Charles Bean, official Australian war correspondent, believed that Australia's record during the war was compromised by Hurley's compositions.

Ally Edwards

Answers to the Quiz on page 22

1. Horror 2. Crime 3. Science Fiction 4. Westerns 5. Romance 6. Children's Fiction 7. Spies 8. Fantasy 9. Historical Fiction 10. Horse Racing Related Crime

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	£3.00
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
Pickleball	Lesley Roberts	TBC
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	Varies

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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Members only

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