



**Village Amblers enjoying lunch at a local hostelry**

**Newsletter Issue 90 December 2024**

Registered Charity Number 1101530

## Committee Members

|   |                 |                    |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| Chair, Open Day &<br>Data Protection                            | Ros Gowers      |                    |
| Vice Chair &<br>Safeguarding & Accessibility Officer            | Tony Powell     |                    |
| Secretary, Beacon<br>Administrator & Charity Commission Liaison | Alan Chambers   |                    |
| Membership Secretary<br>(Temporary from 23 September 2024)      | Helen Hutt      |                    |
| Treasurer   | Diane Nicholls  | email from website |
| Groups Liaison  | Amarjit Marwaha | email from website |
| Programme Secretary<br>(Temporary)                              | Catherine Cox   |                    |
| Minute Secretary  | Graham Smith    | email from website |

## Non-Committee Volunteers

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Website Manager &<br>Third Age Trust Volunteer | Alun Edwards                           |  |
| Technical Support                              | Richard Hunt                           |  |
| Newsletter Editor                              | Bärbel Wolstencroft                    |  |
| Cotswold Link                                  | Ros Gowers &<br>Alan Chambers          |  |
| Shared Learning Project                        | Chris Wolstencroft                     |  |
| Welfare Officer                                | Joyce Davey                            |  |
| All Group Coordinators                         | see the Group List for contact details |  |
| Membership Enquiries                           | contact a Committee member by email    |  |

*The above can be reached by email from the website Contact page  
<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/contact>*

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## Welcome...



...to the December 2024 Newsletter. As our minds are turning to Christmas preparations, let's start the festive season by joining u3a friends for a 'Showcase Concert', presented by the 'Singing for Pleasure' group, on 4 December at the final monthly meeting of the year.

We have had another successful Open Day at the end of October, with new members joining and existing members on the look-out for fresh interests. Hopefully, reading the 'Notes from the Committee' on page 4, the invitation of joining the Committee will be considered by some of our members in the New Year.

'Cotswold Link' has not featured much in recent Newsletters, so the article from their committee on page 7 may serve as inspiration to find out what is on offer by other u3as a little further afield.

Snapshots of the latest endeavours of our groups, including a report from a special event of the Tai Chi group on page 18, can be found under 'Group News'. Wishing all readers

***A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!***

Bärbel Wolstencroft

**The photo on the front cover** was submitted by Sheila Ryder and shows 'Village Ambles with Camera' group members enjoying a convivial lunch at 'The College Arms' in Lower Quinton. See page 25 for more photos.

## Notes from the Committee

We write these notes fresh from another successful Evesham u3a Open Day. This year we were able to offer 64 'activity tables' for people to visit, representing the 92 current groups (several activities having more than one group currently running) as well as the finance section for new members to join up and existing members to renew their membership, a 'new groups/new ideas' stand and a demonstration of our digital presence, thanks to our IT guru Frances. Not bad for a small market town on the edge of the Cotswolds! Thank you to everyone who took part and made the event such a success.

Our Finance Team signed up 35 new members and renewed over 60 memberships, an enormous challenge for our Treasurer and her team to get these all registered and the finance sorted in a mere three hours. They will now spend rather more time doing the 'behind the scenes' work to get all those memberships into Beacon and reconciled against our very busy bank account. The rest of the Committee are only too aware of how much Diane and Helen do to keep this u3a running smoothly.

Our Vice Chair, Tony Powell, did an admirable job seeking out brave souls who might consider joining our rather-too-small committee of seven and encouraging them to **join us at our next meeting on 18 November** to see what we do and what help we need, but sadly with little success, so that the invitation remains open, if anyone reading this would be willing to offer their time. We really need another five people for the committee to be viable in the long term. Our meetings are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday morning of the month and take place at Richmond Villages Wood Norton – we can even arrange a lift! Please email our secretary, Alan Chambers, to enquire. We need both full committee members and volunteers to support officers in their various roles. [beacon.eveshamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:beacon.eveshamu3a@gmail.com)

In early 2025, the Committee will meet to plan some improvements to the support we offer and the advice we give to Group Coordinators. We would love to have your ideas about what would assist to make the job easier.

Please email our Chair, Ros, [chair.eveshamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair.eveshamu3a@gmail.com) with your suggestions! Group Coordinators, sometimes known as Group Leaders or Group Contacts, are a vital part of the u3a organisation and a key communication conduit between the u3a Committee and all our members, so we are really keen to hear from you, including about which job title you think works best.

Our monthly meeting on Wednesday 4 December – complete with a multitude of mince pies and a full-length Showcase Concert from our very own ‘Singing for Pleasure’ group – will soon be upon us, so your whole Committee want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year period. Hope you all have a great time and come back to your u3a activities in January with renewed enthusiasm!

Ros, Tony, Alan, Diane, Helen, Amarjit and Cath



Image credit: jfb-levage.com

# Monthly Meetings

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

**4 December 2024**

**The 'Singing for Pleasure' Group – Showcase Concert**

**Refreshments** – Cycling for pleasure

**As usual, there will be no monthly meeting in January 2025**

**5 February 2025**

**Bill Cowley – Scams: postal, telephone and internet fraud**

With so many incidences of fraud, Bill gives us ways to discern the fraudsters from the bona fide contact.

**Refreshments** – Dressmaking

## The Role of the Welfare Officer

Evesham u3a are lucky to have the services of a Welfare Officer – a post held for many years now by Joyce Davey.

Joyce is happy to send suitable cards to u3a members when they are unwell, or to their families, if a member sadly passes away. She is reliant on contact from Group Leaders to keep her updated on any circumstances where such a card would be appropriate. Group Leaders and fellow group members may of course, and often do, send joint or personal cards themselves, but the u3a is pleased to also support members in this way.

Any other welfare need should be addressed to our Safeguarding Officer, Tony Powell. Joyce and Tony can be contacted via email from the 'Contact' page of the website.

# Cotswold Link

## What is Cotswold Link?

It is a network of 27 u3as covering Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.



## **Do you know about the Cotswold Link reciprocal arrangement?**

In the interests of sharing and perpetuating the aims of the u3a movement, Cotswold Link has set up a reciprocal arrangement between its member u3as. Any member of a Cotswold Link u3a may attend one group activity in another Cotswold Link u3a, without having to become a member of that u3a. Session fees for the group activity will still apply. Attending monthly meetings of the u3a do not count as a group activity. This is an entirely voluntary agreement between Cotswold Link u3as, but most participate.

## **So what can Cotswold Link do for me?**

Cotswold Link organises an annual Special Interest Day, which is open to members of all u3as affiliated to the network. The subject earlier this year was 'Our Brave New World'. Three expert speakers spoke about Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security and our interface with computers using Human Factors. The event was held at The Pavilion, Cheltenham on 4 June 2024. For a report on the meeting by an attendee see the Cotswold Link website <https://u3asites.org.uk/cotswold-link/events> If you want to tell other u3as about events your u3a is organising, our webmaster will be happy to add them to the website.

## **And what can Cotswold Link do for your u3a Committee?**

The whole ethos of the Network is to share knowledge and best practice between members. Cotswold Link has Zoom peer support groups for Treasurers, Business Secretaries, Group Co-ordinators and Membership Secretaries at which they can share their knowledge with others in the same positions elsewhere. Cotswold Link puts on two very informative meetings a year, which two delegates from each Cotswold Link u3a can attend.

Your u3a is already a member of Cotswold Link so ask your committee about how they communicate any news to members or go to the website and find out more about us <https://u3asites.org.uk/cotswold-link/home>

The Cotswold Link Committee

# Group News

## ❖ Wine Tasting

### Wines of New Zealand



It does not seem that long since New Zealand wines hit the UK market. Their antipodean Sauvignon Blanc, with its full stone-fruit flavours and floral nose, took by surprise everyone who was used to the more citrusy and mineral examples from Europe. Since those early days, the range of New Zealand wines on offer has expanded considerably, so it seemed an obvious subject for investigation by the Wine Tasting group.

It is approximately 1000 miles from the southern to the northern tip of the two islands, so there are varied climates across a variety of locations. Much of the total production comes from

Marlborough on the South Island, which explains why that is what we see most often on NZ wine labels. The next largest area is Hawkes Bay on the North Island, which has a warmer, Mediterranean-style climate, suitable for the growing of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. NZ Pinot Noir has been around in the UK now for a number of years with some of the best examples coming from the world's southernmost vineyards of Central Otago.

Image credit: vinmaps.com

About 80% of the wine produced in NZ is white, of which about 60% is Sauvignon Blanc, but other varieties, including Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Albariño are beginning to find favour with producers and customers. NZ produces only 1% of the world's wine – compare this with Bordeaux, for example, which produces 2% on its own. The history of wine-growing on the islands is relatively short. Although vines were grown from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, increases in production only really began in the 1920s and 1930s. It took legislation, which paved the way for more retail outlets and restaurant sales in the 1950s and 1960s, and then investment from Australian and American companies in the 1970s, to improve both output and quality. The value of exports had reached \$2 billion by the end of the last decade, a huge leap from the paltry sales of the 1960s when only 400 hectares were under vines. The industry is barely 60 years old, but the NZ story is rich and evolving.

New Zealand wines are good and, consequently, in demand but relatively expensive on account of the remote location of the country. However, Christmas is just around the corner, so you may be willing to splash out a little more than usual. Pinot noir is a good match for turkey as are most of the luscious whites. All the wines are fragrant, full of flavour and complement food beautifully.

Grahame Percival

## ❖ Poetry

The Poetry Group is in good health just now, with an active core managing regular attendance. However, with a new season beckoning in January and a call for prospective themes having been voiced, now might be a good time to enter the arena and take up the cudgels in the cause of keeping poetry and camaraderie alive and kicking in these challenging times.

Poetry is potentially a broad church and the group is home to a vastly varied pool of experience and literary tastes. Some like rhyme and others find themselves gulping it down for the good of the team. We go round the table,

one item at a time, and do our level best to fill the two hours from 1.30 to 3.30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month (except December) upstairs at Wallace House, Oat Street, Evesham. Hope to see anyone interested at the venue.

Richard Taylor

## ❖ Card Games

Card Games is a relatively new group, held every 1st and 3rd Tuesday afternoon in Waitrose Cafe. We are a friendly 'pack' who are willing to try our 'hand' at whatever card game an attendee suggests. So far we have been 'dealt' Canasta, Five Crowns and a 2 pack card game that has no official name. If this fun 'club' - that includes a heart, diamond & spade - interests you, please contact Victoria Nelson via the u3a website.



Photo submitted by Victoria Nelson

## ❖ Book Club

We are now definitely into Autumn – ‘season of mists and mellow fruitfulness’ (John Keats). A season of countryside walks and falling leaves, log fires and cosiness. In fact, it is the perfect season to snuggle into your favourite chair with a hot drink and a good book.

### **‘I can feel infinitely alive curled up on the sofa reading a book’ – Benedict Cumberbatch**

But what is a good book? That is a question we ask at every Book Club meeting. At the end of the session, we are asked to rate that month’s book on a scale of 1 – 10. Sometimes there is a consensus, but often our tastes vary widely, as you will see if you look at our webpage. We are listed as ‘Book Club’ in the Groups section and meet monthly at Hampton Guide and Scout Hall.

Each month, our group leader Sue posts a brief synopsis of the book we have read, along with some of our comments from the meeting. In addition to the chosen list, members are invited to share their other reading and two of our meetings during the year are set aside for our own choice. At those we bring along reading that we have particularly enjoyed to share with the group. This often prompts other members to read the recommendations or we might add them to the list for the following year’s book of the month, although we must be selective as our list could quickly run into several years of reading!

Our books for the last three months of this year are: **Legacy** by Nora Roberts; **Music and Silence** by Rose Tremain and **The Murder of Roger Ackroyd** by Agatha Christie.

We read novels from all genres and any nationality, which gives us plenty of scope. Some are Booker Prize winners or writers we have read and enjoyed in the past. Most are recommendations from the group, friends, other book

groups or chance finds from book shop and media suggestions. It can be difficult to decide on the list as there is so much choice, as you will know if you have visited a bookshop lately. This is why having recommendations from other book club members is so useful and opens avenues of reading we might not have found on our own.

**'A book lying idle on a shelf is wasted ammunition. Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation... A book is not only a friend, it makes friends for you. When you have possessed a book with mind and spirit, you are enriched. But when you pass it on, you are enriched threefold.'** – Henry Miller, 'The Books in My Life'

So, if like us, you like to read, do look at our lists for ideas; borrow a book from a friend, even if it's not your normal reading; browse the library shelves; maybe join a book club – you will be surprised at what treasure you come across and before you realise it, Spring will be here! Happy reading.

Aileen Fairclough

## ❖ Archaeology & Heritage

Our August adventure took us to Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings, our local open air museum on the outskirts of Bromsgrove. The museum, initially founded in 1964 and opened to the public in 1967, exhibits 25 historic buildings and structures. These not only provide us with an archaeological and heritage aspect but also give us an insight into social history, covering many generations over a 700 year period.

The buildings include traditional agricultural buildings, industrial workshops and furnished houses. There is a working windmill, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian Mission Church



and a 1946 Prefab. The Church is also an example of prefabrication: manufactured to order off-site and assembled at low cost in sometimes remote rural areas. One of the most outstanding buildings is the Guesten Hall. Whilst being a modern building, it has a spectacular 1330's timber roof, originally built as the Guest's Hall of Worcester Cathedral.



Our next meeting was a lecture given by Wayne Perkins, courtesy of the South Worcestershire Archaeology Group, on 12<sup>th</sup> October. The topic was 'Witchcraft in Worcestershire: The Archaeological Evidence'. Wayne is an enthusiastic speaker and covered all aspects of witchcraft backed up by his extensive research. As well as being an archaeologist, he has studied much of the ritual practices found in medieval history, before and after. It was an entertaining lecture as well as informative and it provided us with an insight into the truths and misinformation relating to witchcraft. More details on his website at <https://ritualprotectionmarks.com/author/waynep Perkins/>

Our second lecture in October was courtesy of the Alcester Centurions. The speaker was from the Mancetter Roman museum and provided us with an insight on Mancetter's claims to be the site of Boudica's last battle. There are over ten locations that claim the battle was fought in their area, but written evidence and physical artefacts appear to back up Mancetter's claim. The terrain and location tie in with the reports of the scribe Tacitus (Roman Britain: Salway 1981) of the battle between Boudica and the Roman General Suetonius. The speaker not only provided us with a detailed account of the battle and the background to Boudica's campaign of revolt which ended in this battle, but also the museum's ongoing research into this period of history to substantiate their claims.

Chris Wolstencroft

Images credit: Bärbel Wolstencroft – page 13, roof of the Guesten Hall; page 14, chain making workshop

## ❖ Military History

As the year draws to a close, I am pleased to say the Military History Group, which was set up in February this year, is growing and thriving. We meet once a month, usually on the last Wednesday of the month between 10.30 and 12.30pm at Crophorne & Charlton Village Hall. We have had a great series of topics presented, ranging from World War 1 in Africa to an overview of the Vietnam War, which all provoked a lot of interest and discussion.



Images, David Niven, portrait by Alan Warren licensed CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. DVD cover from Amazon.

Why not join us for our side-mission on 18 December: a fun quiz including a chance for everyone to answer the question: 'If you could be anyone from history, who would you choose?' Group member Ally

Edwards' immediate answer was surprisingly 'David Niven', not only because of his gentlemanly demeanour, but also for the fact that Niven went above and beyond to get back to Britain to join the army when the Second World War commenced. He served in the Highland Infantry, then the Commandos, and after D-Day he roamed the frontline doing vital and dangerous intelligence work. His involvement in counter-espionage had begun in London, and his small role in Operation Copperhead (1944) was recreated by his fellow actor John Mills in the wonderful movie 'I Was Monty's Double'.

Next year we are going to look to be more ambitious including, if there is sufficient uptake, visits to places of military interest and booking guest speakers. We are still open to new members joining the Group, so if the military aspect of history interests you, then please do come and join us.

Neil Hoy

## Group Timetable

***To join any group you must be a member of u3a***

|               | First Week   | Second Week   | Third Week  |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Mon am</b> | Architecture<br>Natural History<br>Welsh Language  | Art Appreciation<br>Questions of Belief etc<br>Welsh Language   | Welsh Language  |
| <b>Mon pm</b> | Badminton 1<br>Concert Band<br>Mah-jong & Rummikub<br>Shakespeare<br>Singing for Pleasure        | Badminton 1<br>Concert Band<br>Mah-jong & Rummikub<br>Spanish Beginners<br>Patchwork & Quilting 3                                     | Badminton 1<br>Concert Band<br>Mah-jong & Rummikub<br>Shakespeare<br>Singing for Pleasure |
| <b>Tue am</b> | Creative Writing 2<br>Cycling for Pleasure<br>Latin 1<br>Spanish Intermediate<br>Urban Sketchers | Golf for Fun<br>Listening to Music 2<br>Social Saunters<br>Spanish Intermediate<br>Village Strolls 1                                  | Bookends<br>Photography 2<br>Spanish Intermediate<br>Urban Sketchers<br>Walks over 4 m    |
| <b>Tue pm</b> | Card Games<br>Creative Writing 1<br>Latin Reading<br>Modelling Group                             | Exploring Language<br>Jam Session<br>Patchwork & Quilting 1<br>Pétanque   | Archaeology/Heritage<br>Card Games<br>Latin Reading<br>Modelling Group                    |
| <b>Wed am</b> | Skittles 1<br>Table Tennis<br>Tai Chi  | French Conversation<br>Painting for Pleasure<br>Skittles 2<br>Skittles 3, June – Sept<br>Tai Chi 2                                    | Skittles 1<br>Table Tennis<br>Tai Chi   |
| <b>Wed pm</b> | <b>Monthly Meeting 2 pm</b><br><b>Methodist Church</b><br>Yoga 3 (term time)                     | Latin 3<br>Sea Shanties<br>Yoga 3 (term time)   | Philosophy<br>Yoga 3 (term time)  |
| <b>Thu am</b> | Pickleball<br>Yoga 2 (term time)   | Aspects of Modern<br>History; German<br>Needlecraft<br>Pickleball<br>Short Mat Bowls 1<br>Walks under 4 miles 1<br>Yoga 2 (term time) | Pickleball<br>Short River Walks<br>Village Strolls 3<br>Yoga 2 (term time)                |
| <b>Thu pm</b> | Croquet<br>Modern Greek 1<br>Dressmaking   | China: The Country<br>Latin 2<br>Modern Greek 1<br>Needlecraft<br>Short Mat Bowls 2   | Croquet<br>Modern Greek 1   |
| <b>Fri am</b> | Classic Cinema<br>Country Dancing<br>Modern Greek 2<br>Pickleball                                | Computers & Digital<br>Italian; Military History<br>Modern Greek 2<br>Pickleball<br>Play Reading                                      | Book Friends<br>Classic Cinema<br>Country Dancing<br>Modern Greek 2<br>Pickleball         |
| <b>Fri pm</b> | Badminton 2<br>Bridge<br>Family Research   | Badminton 2<br>Board Games<br>Bridge  | Badminton 2<br>Bridge<br>Family Research  |
| <b>Sun am</b> | 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<br>Village Ambles Camera<br>Welsh Language   | Welsh Language  | <p><b>Patchwork and Quilting 2</b> alternate Wednesdays – Linda Dunbar</p> <p><b>Concert Group</b> – David Daniels</p> <p><b>Website Editors</b> – meet as required – Alun Edwards</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Group leaders can be contacted by email from the group's webpage.</b></p> | <b>Mon am</b> |
| Badminton 1<br>Concert Band<br>Mah-jong & Rummikub<br>Spanish Beginners  | Badminton 1<br>Concert Band<br>Mah-jong & Rummikub    |  | <b>Mon pm</b> |
| Golf for Fun<br>Photography 1<br>Spanish Intermediate<br>Village Strolls 2   | Urban Sketchers<br>Spanish Intermediate               |  | <b>Tue am</b> |
| Jam Session<br>Patchwork & Quilting 1<br>Pétanque<br>Quiz Group  |   |  | <b>Tue pm</b> |
| French Conversation<br>Painting for Pleasure<br>Skittles 2<br>Skittles 3, June – Sept<br>Tai Chi 2                                 | Military History<br>Table Tennis                      |  | <b>Wed am</b> |
| Latin 3<br>Sea Shanties<br>Yoga 3 (term time)  | Poetry<br>Yoga 3 (term time)                          |  | <b>Wed pm</b> |
| Aspects of Modern History; German<br>Needlecraft<br>Pickleball<br>Short Mat Bowls 1<br>Walks under 4 miles 2<br>Yoga 2 (term time) | Pickleball<br>Yoga 2 (term time)                      |  | <b>Thu am</b> |
| Book Club<br>German advanced<br>Modern Greek 1<br>Needlecraft<br>Short Mat Bowls 2<br>Wine Tasting                                 | Modern Greek 1  |  | <b>Thu pm</b> |
| Birdwatching<br>Italian Post-Beginners<br>Modern Greek 2<br>Pickleball   | Modern Greek 2<br>Pickleball<br>Science & Engineering |  | <b>Fri am</b> |
| Badminton 2<br>Board Games<br>Bridge   | Badminton 2<br>Bridge                                 |  | <b>Fri pm</b> |
|  | Brunch Bunch  | <b>Sun am</b>  |               |

## ❖ Tai Chi

At the end of October, several members of our group took the opportunity to practise with a Chen Tai Chi Master. Ying Jun, a 20th generation Master of the Chen family, led the masterclass which was hosted by the Three Counties Chen Taijiquan Association during one of their usual Thursday night practices at Beckford Village Hall. As part of his annual world tour, Ying Jun spent a few days in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, teaching and demonstrating Tai Chi.



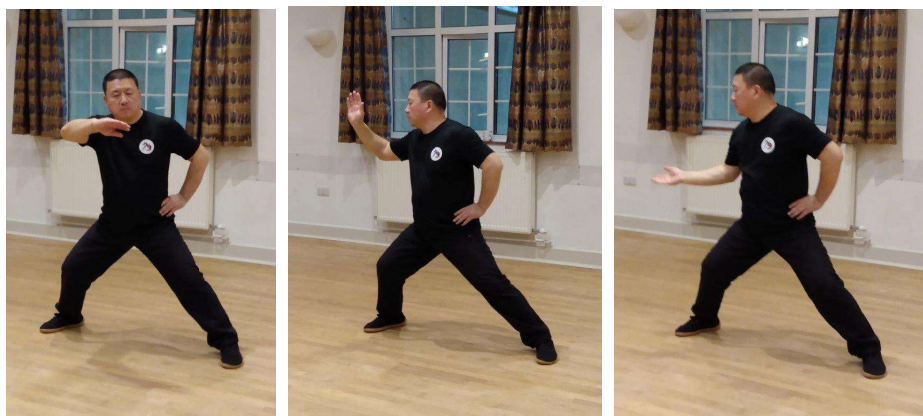
Warming up and individual corrections by the Master were followed by a fantastic demonstration of high level Tai Chi. Participants could then ask questions, with responses supported by further practical corrections of movements.

Some of our members' comments were: 'It was worth coming just for watching the demonstration alone!' 'What an interesting and uplifting experience!' 'I very much enjoyed that!' There will hopefully be another chance to practise again with Master Chen Ying Jun next year.

Until then, the group continues to meet on first and third Wednesdays at the Scout and Guide Hall in Hampton – full details can be found on the website.

Derek Arnold & Bärbel Wolstencroft

Images credit page 18 & 19: Bärbel Wolstencroft, with kind permission of Master Chen Ying Jun



**'Silk Reeling' demonstration by Master Chen Ying Jun**

## ❖ **Classic Cinema**

Classic Cinema meets at 10.30 am every 1st and 3rd Friday morning in the Evesham Methodist Church basement. Each time one of us introduces a movie we love. It's great for us to share the experience of watching together on a large screen, discussing it at the tea break and afterwards.

**What is your favourite film?** That's the question actors on the red carpet are asked by people from the 'Letterboxd.com' social media platform. What would you say? When listening to their replies, Ally was struck by how many actors said 'Ratatouille'.

This is the 2007 American animated comedy-drama produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures. So, on 17 January 2025, we will see for ourselves what the film is all about, when Ally introduces this tale set mostly in Paris. Remy, a resident of this city, appreciates good



food and has quite a sophisticated palate. He would love to become a chef, so he can create and enjoy culinary masterpieces to his heart's delight. The only problem is, Remy is a rat. When he winds up in the sewer beneath one of Paris' finest restaurants, the gourmet rodent finds himself ideally placed to realize his dream.

Before Christmas, on 6 December, we will watch 'Driving Miss Daisy' (1989, USA). In this movie, an elderly Jewish widow (Jessica Tandy) resists any change in her life. As she can no longer drive, her son hires a chauffeur for her, which in Atlanta in the 1950s means a black man (Morgan Freeman). The Oscar-winning movie is directly taken from a stage play. It covers over twenty years of the pair's life together, as they slowly build a relationship that transcends their differences.

Image credit: Amazon.co.uk

Pat Ansell

## ❖ Quiz

We have a musical themed quiz this time. Who recorded the following songs containing girls' names?

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Peggy Sue       | 2. Maggie May             |
| 3. Jennifer Eccles | 4. Diana                  |
| 5. Clair           | 6. Sheila                 |
| 7. Oh Carol        | 8. Billie Jean            |
| 9. Sweet Caroline  | 10. Tell Laura I Love Her |

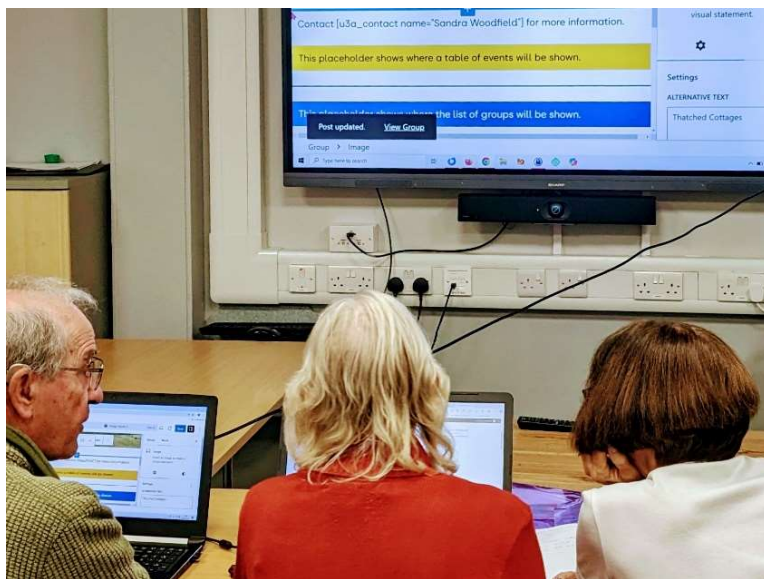
The quiz group meets at Wallace House on the fourth Tuesday afternoon of the month.

Please see page 29 for the answers.

John Boon

## ❖ Website Editors

During October, Frances coached a few of our group leaders and editors how to keep their u3a website up-to-date. We are always willing to help you, either in person or over Zoom, please contact us via the website [https://evesham.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/website-editors/](https://evesham.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/website-editors/)



### **Village Strolls group leaders Terry and Sandra working with Frances during an editor coaching session held at Evesham Library**

Frances continues to be a lynchpin to the national project to migrate all the old u3a websites to the WordPress platform called u3a SiteWorks. This is only possible because of the dedication and large number of hours expended every day by Frances and the other u3a volunteers who are supporting over 700 u3as.

Frances Kilburn & Ally Edwards

Image credit: Ally Edwards

## ❖ Birdwatching



We have recently visited some of our favourite birding sites. We travelled to Rutland Water for the nesting ospreys and were not disappointed seeing two adults and a juvenile both perched and in flight. Well worth the journey! WWT Slimbridge is usually a winter venue for swans and geese, but this time we went at the end of August, hoping to catch up with some migratory species, and were lucky enough to find three

garganey, as well as spotted redshanks, ruff and green sandpipers.

We stayed in Worcestershire for our September meeting at Camp Lane Pits, Grimley, where on a cold and windy day we saw dozens of swallows over the water, feeding up before heading south for the winter. There were also black-tailed godwit, snipe and ducks including good numbers of shoveler and wigeon, plus a great white egret.



Images credit: top left, Garganey by Alan Chambers; Great White Egret by Richard Hunt

## ❖ Natural History

It is ironic that the best weather we had enjoyed all year on our monthly nature walks was actually in October when we visited Eoves Wood at Hampton. Despite it being quite late in the year, we encountered many bees and butterflies feeding, particularly on ivy flowers. We look at all aspects of nature and that day there was everything from birds to plant galls to keep us occupied.

In the past few months we have also walked around the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust reserve of the Devil's Spittleful near Bewdley and the private John Bennett reserve at Birlingham. At the former there were good numbers of gatekeeper butterflies and a splendid fan-bristled robberfly, while at John Bennett we observed grey herons and great white egrets together on the marsh.

Birdwatching and Natural History by John Boon



Images credit: far left, Ashy Mining Bee by Bob Woodrooffe; right, Fan-bristled Robberfly by Olga Allen

## ❖ Country Dancing

**'In till it, noo! wit a diddle-dum-diddle,  
Dod! that's the tune to pit springs in your heel.' W D Cocker**

Meeting on the first and third – and sometimes the fifth – Friday morning at Hampton Scout and Guide Hall, Country Dancing provides music, a spring in the heel and smiles. We have the benefit of very competent musicians and the assistance of our two callers, Malcolm and Graham. They are aware that there are physical limitations to what we can achieve and avoid moves that are too difficult for us – or avoid them another time if they have been tried once.

So we cast and turn single and star and circle and do-si-do and chassé and dip and dive and balance and honour. We have also included in some dances a poussette, a ladies' chain, a three-hand reel (or hey) and have stripped the willow. All in all, we dance most of the standard moves. And

most of the time we do it in time to the music and manage to end up where we are supposed to be. (Though from a recent group meeting, some of us have difficulty counting to five.) The dances can mostly be done with a simple walking step. The caller may mention that another step, e.g. a skip, a hop or a rant, would usually be used and the more energetic among us may give it a go. Galloping and swinging are optional. We have also learned that a 'longways set duple minor with the first couples improper' is the starting formation for a dance and not a comment on the dancers' conduct.



Images credit: Rosy Bennington

The group is popular and, taking into account the size of the hall, it is close to maximum numbers. But it's not full yet and, if you would like to give it a go or would like more information, please email Phil and Brenda Morton from the webpage.

Graham Smith

## ❖ German

We resumed the autumn term in September and, to our delight, the enthusiasm continues. **The Beginners Group** is led by Reg Pritchard, whose teaching skills and empathy for the members is excellent! We have welcomed a new member to the group. They work through the well proven book 'Heute Abend' which provides basic German grammar and offers easy to follow exercises.

**The Lower and Upper Intermediate Groups** are making great progress. The subjects for discussion are always announced prior to the meetings or members can chose their own. The conversations are varied and interesting. Frequently, the two hour sessions are too short to discuss all the topics we want to talk about. It gives individual members a lot of scope to learn and gather information during the meetings. **The Advanced Group** follows a similar pattern, with the exception that most of the members speak fluent German. One new member has recently joined us and has given the group a new impetus. There is never a dull moment and we wonder sometimes where the ideas come from. When like-minded people meet, the scope is endless.

### **We all learn from each other and that is the u3a for you!**

Our annual December Christmas Party has been postponed to the end of January 2025, re-naming this popular social get-together 'Spring Awakening'. For further information contact Sophie Dodds by email via the German webpage.

### **❖ Village Ambles with Camera**



Some intrepid Village Amblers in Harvington, sticking it out for their lunch, come rain or shine! Sam Ryder and Brian Dorricott sharing a moment in Lower Quinton Church.

Images credit and words: Sheila Ryder

## ❖ Painting for Pleasure



In October, Painting for Pleasure was delighted to welcome two new group leaders – Marjorie Arthurs (left) and Brenda Kendry. Their enthusiasm and skills will certainly give the group new vitality and focus. Many thanks to you both for taking on the task and I am sure you will enjoy the role.



The art group held two portrait sessions in October, both led by members and much enjoyed by everyone.

Images credit: Mary Simpson

Mary Simpson, outgoing Group Leader

## ❖ Creative Writing

We have had some fun and inspirational meetings this year – most of them at Jellypicklejam Café, Vine Mews, Evesham. Group 1 meets from 2.00 – 3.30 pm and Group 2 from 10.30 – 12.00 noon. Each workshop comprises three short writing exercises that can be interpreted in any way the writer likes. Not everybody is aiming for publication – this is entirely optional.

However, three of our members have successfully published books this year. Helen Idris-Jones has created a page-turning psychological thriller called 'Missing Ella' set in England and Thailand. It raises awareness of issues surrounding family trauma, giving hope that healing can take place. For further details, contact Helen: [www.helenidris-jones.com](http://www.helenidris-jones.com) or email [hbjonesauthor@gmail.com](mailto:hbjonesauthor@gmail.com)

Martin Hussingtree recently published his ground-breaking 'How-To' reference manual 'THE Home Studio AUDIOBOOK HANDBOOK', a book about talking that will set you thinking, in hardcover and ebook formats. It is aimed at independent and self-publishing writers, authors and their narrators. It is heavily illustrated in colour and covers the whole process in detail, spotlighting amongst many topics the potential problems and pitfalls to be avoided. For further details contact: [narratorsuk@gmail.com](mailto:narratorsuk@gmail.com)



Local poet and environmentalist Bob Woodroffe has published his latest collection of poetry entitled 'A Wild Life in Worcestershire' with the aim of raising money for the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (Reg. Charity Number 256618). The book costs £5. For further details see: <http://www.greenwoodpress.co.uk> or email [bob.woodroffe@outlook.com](mailto:bob.woodroffe@outlook.com)

Look out for my mini writing competition – more info in the next newsletter.

Image credit: Sue Johnson

Sue Johnson

## ❖ Concert Group

It is sometimes said that too much excitement isn't good for you. We don't subscribe to that point of view. In fact, the Concert Group's experiences combine excitement (even at our age??) with unbridled joy and even a teaspoonful of exhilaration! Now I know what you are thinking. This guy is totally 'over the top' and should probably be persuaded to lie down in a darkened room for a while. But forgive us, if you will, because this is being written the day after our visit to Symphony Hall for the Spanish Magic Concert and if you ask any of the 99 of us who attended, I wouldn't mind betting that you might well hear words like 'joy', 'excitement' and even 'exhilarating'.

So what made it so brilliant? Well, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra was in the topmost of top form, playing with, by turns, sensitivity, flair and 'blow-your-socks-off' power. And what can we say about the pocket-rocket that is Principal Conductor Kazuki Yamada – who is the very embodiment of 'joy'! All added, of course, to the programme of Spanish inspired music, which finished with a performance of Ravel's Bolero the like of which many of us had never heard before. It's so easy to overdo the superlatives, but words can hardly express just how good it all was.

So that's it for this season, is it? You must be joking! We've hardly started, looking forward with barely concealed impatience to our next outing on 19 December for Christmas Merriment – with the CBSO and its four associated choirs performing a wonderful programme of seasonal music, hosted this year by classical saxophonist Jess Gillam, fresh from her recent stint presenting the BBC Young Musician series. We are running a waiting list for this concert, in case of late cancellations, so if you are interested, please get in touch.



There are three more concerts in the programme for the New Year – Russian Romance on 8 February 2025, a visit by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on 29 March, to be conducted by international superstar conductor Vasily Petrenko, and our Season Finale on 19 June, featuring Sheku Kanneh Mason playing the Elgar cello concerto.

If you would like to join our membership/ mailing list, please get in touch. It commits you to nothing more than receiving information on the basis of which you will be able to choose to join us for any of our hassle-free coach trips to Symphony Hall to enjoy an afternoon or evening of peerless music. We would love to have your company! Please contact David for more information or, better still, to sign up for our mailing list. We are certain that you will be able to cope with the excitement!

Image credit: [ar.inspiredpencil.com](http://ar.inspiredpencil.com)

David Daniels

## ❖ Welsh Language

The Welsh Group is continuing to flourish, with each of us proceeding at our own pace, under the watchful care of our tutor, Neil, to whom we are so grateful for sparing time from his heavy University responsibilities to support us. New members joining us in a trickle rather than a flood! But we are so glad to have them with us. We have two weekly activities, both of which are voluntary. First, we have a Zoom session with Neil every Monday morning at 9.00 am, where those who wish to do so take turns to give a short 'presentation' about some aspect of the Welsh language that interests or challenges them. Neil will help us as we discuss these issues together.

Then on Friday mornings at 10.00 am, those of us who are able, meet up at a local coffee shop for what we call 'Coffee and Chats' – which in Welsh is '*Coffi a Sgwrs*'. This is a very civilised and enjoyable get-together for socialising and a bit of discussion about Welsh language issues – but mostly socialising.

So have you always wanted to be able to sing 'Land of My Fathers' in Welsh at the beginning of an international rugby match? Perhaps you were raised in Wales and you would like to rekindle the language that you may have learned back then? There may be young people in your life, living in Wales and learning Welsh at school, with whom it would be fun to be able to communicate. Or would you like a new challenge, a new interest, sharing the experience with a sympathetic and supportive group of friends? If so, we would love to have your company. A sense of humour helps! We are very far from 'stiff and starchy' in the Welsh Language Group! Do get in touch with David Daniels for more information.

### Answers to the Quiz on page 20

1. Buddy Holly 2. Rod Stewart 3. The Hollies 4. Paul Anka 5. Gilbert O'Sullivan 6. Tommy Roe 7. Neil Sedaka 8. Michael Jackson 9. Neil Diamond 10. Ricky Valance

| <b>Group Name</b>                    | <b>Coordinator</b> | <b>Fee</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Archaeology &amp; Heritage</b>    | Chris Wolstencroft | Varies     |
| <b>Architecture</b>                  | Caroline Bagshaw   | Varies     |
| <b>Art Appreciation</b>              | Caroline Bagshaw   | £2.00      |
| <b>Aspects of Modern History</b>     | Sheila Himsworth   | £1.00      |
| <b>Badminton 1</b>                   | Cefn Blundell      | £3-£4      |
| <b>Badminton 2</b>                   | Teresa Green       | £4.00      |
| <b>Birdwatching</b>                  | John Boon          | Free       |
| <b>Board Games</b>                   | Peter Aggett       | Free       |
| <b>Book Club</b>                     | Sue Griffiths      | Varies     |
| <b>Bookends</b>                      | Barbara Tittensor  | 50 p       |
| <b>Book Friends</b>                  | Chris Spriggs      | Varies     |
| <b>Bridge</b>                        | Liz Rodway         | £2.00      |
| <b>Brunch Bunch (Sundays)</b>        | Sue Beneke         | Brunch     |
| <b>Card Games</b>                    | Victoria Nelson    | Buy drink  |
| <b>China: The Country</b>            | David Ralph        | £3.00      |
| <b>Classic Cinema</b>                | Pat Ansell         | £3.00      |
| <b>Computers &amp; Digital Media</b> | John Scotland      | £3.00      |
| <b>Concert Band (playing)</b>        | Peter Scott        | £2.00      |
| <b>Concert Group</b>                 | David Daniels      | Varies     |
| <b>Country Dancing</b>               | B & P Morton       | £4.00      |
| <b>Creative Writing 1 &amp; 2</b>    | Sue Johnson        | Buy drink  |
| <b>Croquet</b>                       | Paul Griffin       | £5.00      |
| <b>Cycling for Pleasure</b>          | Chris Davis        | Free       |
| <b>Dressmaking</b>                   | Denise Bailey      | Varies     |
| <b>Exploring Language</b>            | Caroline Bagshaw   | Free       |
| <b>Family Research</b>               | Diane Nicholls     | £2.50      |
| <b>French Conversation</b>           | Lorna Slaughter    | Free       |
| <b>German (3 groups)</b>             | Sophie Dodds       | £2.00      |
| <b>Golf for Fun</b>                  | David Bentley      | Green fee  |
| <b>Italian (post-beginners)</b>      | Sue Jerrard        | Varies     |
| <b>Jam Session</b>                   | Bob Davies         | £2.00      |
| <b>Latin 1</b>                       | Caroline Bagshaw   | £2.00      |
| <b>Latin 2</b>                       | Caroline Bagshaw   | 50 p       |
| <b>Latin 3, Beginners</b>            | David Battin       | Buy drink  |

|                                      |                  |           |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| <b>Latin Reading</b>                 | David Battin     | Free      |
| <b>Listening to Music</b>            | Frances Platman  | £1.00     |
| <b>Mah-jong</b>                      | Carla Auger      | £2.50     |
| <b>Military History</b>              | Neil Hoy         | £3.00     |
| <b>Modelling Group</b>               | John Gowers      | Varies    |
| <b>Modern Greek 1</b>                | Mike Fraser      | 50 p      |
| <b>Modern Greek 2</b>                | Mike Fraser      | 50 p      |
| <b>Natural History</b>               | John Boon        | Free      |
| <b>Needlecraft</b>                   | Helen Barlow     | Free      |
| <b>Painting for Pleasure</b>         | Marjorie Arthurs | £3.00     |
| <b>Patchwork &amp; Quilting 1</b>    | Fran Battin      | £2.00     |
| <b>Patchwork &amp; Quilting 2</b>    | Linda Dunbar     | £2.00     |
| <b>Patchwork &amp; Quilting 3</b>    | Katy Watson      | Buy drink |
| <b>Pétanque</b>                      | Paul Griffin     | £1.00     |
| <b>Philosophy</b>                    | Mike Bagshaw     | £3.00     |
| <b>Photography 1</b>                 | Mike Tittensor   | £3.00     |
| <b>Photography 2</b>                 | Sandra Woodfield | £2.00     |
| <b>Pickleball</b>                    | Lesley Roberts   | £5.00     |
| <b>Play Reading</b>                  | Margaret Fuller  | £3.00     |
| <b>Poetry</b>                        | Richard Taylor   | £4.00     |
| <b>Questions of Belief&amp;Doubt</b> | Jane Couper      | Free      |
| <b>Quiz</b>                          | John Boon        | £2.00     |
| <b>Rummikub</b>                      | Carla Auger      | £2.50     |
| <b>Science &amp; Engineering</b>     | Alan Eames       | £2.00     |
| <b>Sea Shanties</b>                  | John Gardner     | Free      |
| <b>Shakespeare</b>                   | Nicky Neill      | £3.00     |
| <b>Short Mat Bowls 1</b>             | F & S Copestake  | £3.00     |
| <b>Short Mat Bowls 2</b>             | Muriel Barnett   | £3.00     |
| <b>Short River Walks</b>             | Judy Smith       | Free      |
| <b>Singing for Pleasure</b>          | Cath Cox         | £2.00     |
| <b>Skittles 1</b>                    | Mary Greenwood   | Free      |
| <b>Skittles 2</b>                    | S & C Anderson   | Free      |
| <b>Skittles 3, June to Sept</b>      | Ken Pearce       | Free      |
| <b>Social Saunters</b>               | Richard Hunt     | Free      |
| <b>Spanish Beginners</b>             | David Keeling    | Varies    |
| <b>Spanish Intermediate</b>          | Leighton Jones   | Varies    |

|                                    |                  |        |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--------|
| <b>Table Tennis</b>                | Gary Hewitt      | £3.00  |
| <b>Tai Chi</b>                     | Derek Arnold     | £5.00  |
| <b>Tai Chi 2</b>                   | Derek Arnold     | Varies |
| <b>Urban Sketchers</b>             | Mike Bagshaw     | Free   |
| <b>Village Ambles &amp; Camera</b> | Sheila Ryder     | £1.00  |
| <b>Village Strolls 1</b>           | Terry Woodfield  | £1.00  |
| <b>Village Strolls 2</b>           | Sandra Woodfield | £1.00  |
| <b>Village Strolls 3</b>           | G & J Cutter     | £1.00  |
| <b>Walks Over 4 Miles</b>          | J Alexander-Head | £1.00  |
| <b>Walks Under 4 Miles 1</b>       | Ruth Webb        | £1.00  |
| <b>Walks Under 4 Miles 2</b>       | Hazel Marshall   | £1.00  |
| <b>Website Editors</b>             | Alun Edwards     | Free   |
| <b>Welsh Language</b>              | David Daniels    | Varies |
| <b>Wine Tasting</b>                | Grahame Percival | £7.50  |
| <b>Yoga 2</b>                      | Lyn Heaney       | Varies |
| <b>Yoga 3</b>                      | Lesley Clarke    | Varies |

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