

Winchester

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

May 2024

Issued quarterly
February – May – August - November

www.winchesteru3a.co.uk
Winchester U3A Reg Charity No 1026342



Blue Tits – the Cheerful Harbinger of Spring

(Thanks to the Photography Group for this lovely photo)

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Winchester u3a Committee 2024

Chairman Joan Sherrin

Secretary Susan Shannon

Vice Chairman Ann Edwards

Treasurer: Vernon Tottle

Membership: Marion Schiesser

Groups: John Craig

Speakers Secretary: Nicola Giles

Website: Dermot Flaterly/Mike Holt

Newsletter Editors: Sheila Ayling/Judy Smith

We welcome the following new members from:

Winchester

Laurel Bran Geraldine Cronan Lesley Forrest
Patricia and John Elliott Judy and Steve Harbourne
Cathy Foster Susan Hurcom Clare Johnson
Patricia Maier Elizabeth Merricks Katie Mydlarz
Rosemary Pember Melanie and Roger Powell
Ilfra and Julian Carlick

Alresford

Heather Mackenzie Marilyn Weston

Alton

Lynne Askey

South Wonston

Irene McFarlane

Houghton

Christine Smith

Compton

Lyn and Howard Brace

Owslebury

Ian Beaven

Chandler's Ford

David Owen

www.winchesteru3a.co.uk is an information source for members and the general public.

Access to Member only information is available by using the Member option on the menu with the password :-

Please let Barrie Brinkman know on webmaster@winchesteru3a.co.uk if you experience difficulties or have suggestions or need help using our web.

Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the 35th anniversary year for our Winchester u3a. I feel very privileged to be your appointed Chairman for this special year. There have been changes in the organisation since the beginning in 1989 and following that tradition we may well be updating things ready for the future.

One suggestion raised at the Annual Meeting was 'to change the monthly talk time during the winter months to a 2pm start – half an hour earlier – to avoid driving home in the dark'. This is up for discussion at our May Committee meeting and we will keep you aware of our thoughts. Nothing has been decided yet and your opinion matters. There will be a survey sheet on the registration desk at the April and May Meetings.

You are probably aware that the logo changed from U3A to u3a a while ago and whilst we try to keep up to date there are still areas where the old logo has not been changed. A call and challenge to those eagle-eyed members to spot the slips please. Newsletter content / documents or web site – they could be anywhere. Let me know.

Meanwhile – the committee and groups are working hard in their different roles to offer members good meetings with interesting speakers plus a big dose of friendship and social interaction at the Littleton monthly talks and within interest groups.

Good communication with you all is one of our avenues of investigation and although we appreciate that some members wish to remain with the status quo it would be helpful if we could make contact via email and technology. Have we ever explored the idea of a friend / 'email buddy' who receives emails passing on any relevant news? Every member should have the opportunity to attend any meeting they choose. Winchester u3a must always be inclusive to all.

This is going to be a busy year to enable us to move forward ready for our next 35 years

Joan (Sherrin) Chairman

Celebrate 35 years of Winchester u3a - Tuesday, 13th August

We intend celebrating our Winchester u3a 35th anniversary at the usual monthly meeting on Tuesday 13th August. Although we are still working on the finer details we know it should be a special meeting for us all.

However Littleton Hall has a limit on numbers of people on site therefore you need to reserve your place.

If you would like to be at the Celebration, please email me with your name or if this is not possible leave a message on my phone as soon as possible.

We need final numbers by the beginning of July please.

First come first served !

I will confirm to you when I have received your reservation.

Joan

Chairman

Notes for Contributors to the Newsletter.

The deadline for inclusion in the **February** newsletter is
Friday, 12th July 2024.

Please send contributions as a **Word document (not pdf)** by email attachment in **Arial font, type size 10, single line spacing** to the editors, (Sheila Ayling and Judy Smith), at ***u3aletter@gmail.com***.

You will receive an automatically generated reply acknowledging receipt. If you do not receive this reply, we have not received your contribution!

Reports of visits should not be longer than one page (about 400 words): the editor retains the right to edit items if necessary.

Health and Well-being Event



Five Committee members attended the Health and Well-being event at Winchester Sport and Leisure Park, Bar End Road on the 15th March to talk to people about Winchester u3a and the many groups and activities that are on offer.

Although the event was not widely advertised, we made some very useful contacts and are hoping to attend other similar events this year. If you hear of any local fairs this summer in your area that you think might want to promote Winchester u3a, please contact one of the Committee members. Thank-you.

Here's one I made earlier

I am not an artist and certainly not an accomplished painter. However, earlier today I created the work of art shown here. Nobody helped me and it wasn't done with a Painting by Numbers set.

Aren't I clever?

No. I used a Chatbot linked to a very powerful computer somewhere on the internet. I was inspired to do this by attending a u3a Zoom talk on Chatbots. *(Yes, I didn't know what they were either until today!)* I learnt that I could ask the Chatbot to do all sorts of things, like drawing a sketch of a red owl on a blue mushroom surrounded by flowers.



Tomorrow I'm zooming in on a lecture about Pleasure Gardens and Theme Parks. Amazing what one can learn, isn't it?

For those members with internet access, all these talks are available free of charge from the national u3a website. Go to u3a.org.uk, click on *Learn* and then scroll down to *Online learning events*. Push the *Browse events* button and look at the wide range of talks available over the next few weeks. Click on one that interests you and reserve your place using Eventbrite; they send you the zoom link a few days before the event.

Go on, have a look. You might find something just up your street. You might even get your picture hung at the Royal Academy !

Vernon Tottle

Monthly Talks

All Reports by Vernon Tottle

Who would want to be a queen?

Lots of women apparently, even centuries ago when stability and security were at a premium. Katia Wright, from Winchester University, took us on a whistle-stop tour of medieval queens for our **February talk** and showed that life was not a bed of roses for wannabe royal wives.

They were expected to be good ladies, pious and charitable as well as ably greeting court visitors and giving a lead on fashion and behaviour. But to do this a queen needed an income to defray the expenses of her required life style. And this was all in the hands of her kingly husband.





For many queens, a selection of estates was settled on her upon marriage. This dowry was usually around a thousand pounds in the eleventh century, rising to £4,500 two hundred years later (about seven million pounds in today's money). It was then up to the queen, or more likely her advisers, to manage her properties to produce a steady income.

Alas, the estates a queen held weren't inviolate and kings could chop and change the holdings to suit their own current political or financial requirements.

The privileges and pleasures of a queen were certainly not without risk.

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Well, by jingo that was different!

The two Johns from King John's Morris Men of Southampton, Messrs Connell and Miller, took us through a whistle stop tour of the history of Folk Songs in Times of War for our **March 2024** talk.

From the earliest collected sea shanty, an energetic rendering of the fifteenth century *Pass the Good Old Bumper Round* to the sarcastic words of the WW2 *D-Day Dodgers*, they showed that folk songs were the backbone of English social history.



The early examples were intended to encourage men to sign up to the armed forces in whatever war was currently being fought. *With Cannons Roaring* from the English Civil War through *The Rochester Recruiting Song* of the Spanish Succession, we could see why they had been successful in that aim.

Many songs were used in more than one conflict; for example, *The Pompaleerie Jig*, written for the Napoleonic wars, could be equally well enjoyed many decades if not centuries after.

The last century's two world wars produced more in the way of sentimental songs, when sweethearts pined for their loved ones and those on the battlefield remembered their fallen comrades. Renditions of *Home Lads*, *Home* and *The Shores of Normandy* showed that even now, such songs can be very moving.

As many members said to me afterwards, "Well, that was different!"

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The hall was alive, with the sound of musings

The Mother Abbess got it right. "How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?"

We didn't have the cast of *The Sound of Music* joining us for our **April talk** but Colin Scott-Morton was a good substitute. Those expecting a discussion on the merits of the VAT margin scheme for Second Hand Vehicles (notice 718/1) or help with Partial Exemption Notice 706 would, however, have been sorely disappointed.

Instead, Colin, a former HM Customs and Excise Officer, gave us an amusing talk about the pleasures and perils of VAT debt collection. For reason of confidentiality, all the names of the defaulters were changed and the locations of the events he described were never disclosed. It was a bit like someone lecturing us about the English Civil War and declaring that it was fought in Wales between Prince Charlemagne and Olivia Crombadly; almost there but not quite.

There is no point putting his anecdotes down on paper; they wouldn't survive the retelling. You had to be there to enjoy the afternoon. As the Mother Abbess herself sang, "How do you keep a wave upon the sand?"



ENTRIES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monthly talks at Littleton Memorial Hall

2nd Tuesday of each month, doors open at 2pm for 2.30pm start.
Tea/coffee and biscuits to follow.

If a lift is required please contact Freda Bates preferably by email on fabguidefreda@gmail.com or if that isn't possible by phone on 01962 855707.

Tuesday 14th May - Avril Robinson.

Emmaus is more than a homeless charity. Ever wondered what goes on in that building next to Winchester Recycling Centre, now is the time to find out!

Tuesday 11th June – David Bailey (not the one famous for fashion work and celebrity portraiture).

Photographic Wildlife Wanderings. A photographer of UK wildlife, hares being a favourite. You may have already seen him on television in wildlife programs or read his articles in wildlife magazines. There will be an opportunity to admire/buy his prints and book.

Tuesday 9th July -Judith Edison.

Tea – Worth its weight in silver. One of our own U3A members will enlighten us on the history of tea, once a very expensive item and now probably taken much for granted. Tea after the talk may taste very different with the new knowledge 😊.

Tuesday 13th August – Annual Tea, 35th Anniversary celebration

See more details on Page 5

News from Groups

Art Explorers Group

By the time you receive this Art Explorers should have visited the ARC to see one of Grayson.

Perry's two tapestries documenting the life and times of Julie Cope, a fictitious person. We are looking forward to this remembering how interesting the previous display of his work was at the ARC.

We started the New Year with another of one of our members delightful and informative talks with slides on Mosaic in Art. This was followed by an enjoyable lunch at the Kind Alfred pub.

We have also visited an exhibition of paintings of the Solent by Hampshire artist Sarah Butterfield at Petersfield Museum. Another recent outing was to Southampton City Art Gallery's new exhibition of highlights from their collection, From the Renaissance to the Present Day. This exhibition included 18th and 19th century British paintings, 17th Century Dutch, French, and Italian paintings and 20th century British Art.

The group meets every third Friday visiting mainly local exhibitions. We are a friendly group and welcome new members.

Jackie Little

New Debating Group

Our first debates have been challenging to prepare for as well as interesting and very thought provoking. The motion for February that 'Euthanasia should be legalized in the UK' was passed – by a small majority, as was March's motion that 'Climate change is the greatest threat to humanity today'.

The motion for our third debate on the 24th of April : 'Artificial intelligence is more harmful than beneficial' promises to be even more challenging and we are each looking forward to finding out more about its uses and applications as well as its potential dangers and advantages.

New members would be very welcome. If you would like to join the group, please contact the group leader Ann.

Latin Group

'Classics in the Community' – how our U3A Latin group came to collaborate with Winchester College. *Three U3A members are about to sit their Latin GCSE after two years of tuition from sixth formers at Winchester College. New members are invited to join in September.*

Our Latin U3A group initially had 5 members, three of whom had studied Latin at school and two who were new to the language when they joined the course. Originally we met in one another's houses and were following the Oxford Latin Course. We put out an appeal for assistance from Classics teachers and were delighted to receive an offer from Winchester College Classics Department which included us in a new programme called 'Classics in the Community'. Under the supervision of Edmund Lewis, Head of Classics, we meet for an hour on Wednesdays in one of the college's Classics classrooms and have 1:1 tuition from sixth formers who are studying A-Level Latin. All of us agree that the course is both challenging and stimulating, and our 'teachers' seem to enjoy the experience as much as we do. Three of us were eager to work towards a Latin GCSE, and we have particularly enjoyed preparing for the set text papers, where we have read, enjoyed, and learnt to comment on extracts of Apuleius, Cicero, Ovid and Catullus. If anyone would like more information about the classes or any other aspect of the course feel free to contact Terry Madden or Edmund direct.

Edmund Lewis would love to hear from anyone from the U3A in the Winchester area who would like to participate in the next 'intake' of Classics in the Community. It is planned as a two-year course, with hour-long sessions on Wednesday afternoons from 2.30-3.30pm during term time (4.30-5.30pm in the summer) and some homework to be done between sessions. Sitting a GCSE exam at the end is optional. If you are interested, please email Edmund as soon as you can, as places are limited.

Railway Group

Just over 10 years ago Dale Greenwood, having given up various activities, confessed to his wife, Ann that he was now short of something to do. Knowing of Dale's interest in steam engines Ann suggested that he start a u3a railway interest group. This Dale duly did, and it has been running very successfully ever since. To commemorate this milestone a 10-year anniversary lunch was held earlier this month.

Over the 10 years the Group has been extremely active with talks, visits, and even short holidays to places of railway interest. Talks have been given both by members themselves as well as outside speakers, a memorable example of the latter being by a South West Trains driver who told us what was involved before being allowed to drive a real train. Members were impressed by the amount of training and learning that was required. Other talks have covered not only railway interest in the UK, but also abroad, to the far ends of the earth, including Southeast Asia, Australia, South America and the United States. Visits have included several preserved steam railways as well as museums and railway exhibitions.

The Anniversary lunch was held at the Winchester Racquets and Fitness Club where an excellent meal was provided by the friendly staff there thus ensuring a most enjoyable occasion for members and their wives, husbands, partners and friends.

It is a measure of the time and dedication of Dale that he has been succeeded by a group of five led by John Richbell under whose auspices we now look forward to the next 10 years of this most successful u3a group.

QUESTER 3

VISIT TO CHILCOMB DOWN HOUSE,
(WINCHESTER MASONIC LODGE) ALRESFORD ROAD
14 FEBRUARY 2024
organised by Sonia Phillips.

(Chilcomb Down House was formerly the home of the Headmistress of St Swithun's School, opposite.)

16 members of Queter 3 group were met by Andy, a Lodge member, who guided us to the lounge where coffee, tea and biscuits were served. While enjoying our drinks, we admired the wonderful views across to Chilcomb Down.

Andy then told us that organised Freemasonry, as we know it today, began with the founding of the First Grand Lodge on 24 June 1717 at the 'Goose & Gridiron' ale house in St Paul's Churchyard. It was formed by the agreement of four London Lodges, the oldest of which existed in 1691.

Winchester Lodge members used to meet in the building that is now W H Smith – their emblem can still be seen on the outside wall of the building.

Andy said that there are several theories regarding the origins of Freemasonry, but it is generally agreed by historians that Freemasonry developed from medieval Stonemasons, otherwise known as Operative Masons who built the great cathedrals and castles. They developed initiation ceremonies for new apprentices and travelled all over the country. They also developed a secret word to prove that they were skilled.

One surprising piece of information that Andy mentioned, was that Freemasonry was not secretive until during the Second World War when the Nazis persecuted and killed Freemasons as they did others. In recent years the Lodges are much more open.

Most people can become Freemasons – they will only be excluded if they have been convicted of a serious crime.

Freemasons are very generous and nationally give many millions of pounds to charities every year.



Following his talk Andy guided us to a tour of the Lodge which comprises of several lounges, a dining room and the Temple which was built below ground level as the planners did not want to add to the building's prominence. The Temple is very grand with a 'throne' and padded banquette-type seating around the sides. The carpet is black and white squares which denote life and death. As a Chapter meeting was scheduled for the evening of 14 February, the room was prepared with symbolic articles, including a bible, spade, pickaxe, rope etc.

Jan Reynolds

GROUP VISIT TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT – 5 MARCH 2024

Arranged through Winchester and Chandler's Ford MP, Steve Brine's office, Quester 3 also had a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament (Palace of Westminster) at 12 noon on 5 March.

The 14 members of the group who attended, met their guide in Westminster Hall. The tour included Central Lobby with its own post office and standing in the House of Lords, as the Lords were not sitting.

On the conclusion of the guided tour, the group were met by their MP for a Q&A session. The group met Steve in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association room, which he sits on the executive committee of.

Steve opened the session by saying that in addition to his parliamentary and constituency duties, he is Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee.

The group asked the MP's views on a number of local issues including:

- The proposed closure of Andover Road which would lead to traffic being diverted through the Kings Barton estate.
- The future of Royal Hampshire County Hospital with the group raising their concerns regarding the Emergency Department and maternity services.
- The proposed improvement plan for M3 Junction 9 ahead of the Secretary of State for Transport's final decision in the coming months.

Steve Brine has been the Member of Parliament for Winchester and Chandler's Ford for 14 years and shared his experiences of that time with Winchester u3a group. Many attendees asked what he will or will not miss most.

Steve Brine said: "It was a genuine pleasure to host Winchester U3A in the Houses of Parliament. It is clear they are all incredibly passionate about local issues in and around Winchester and I'm glad they appreciated the Q&A as much as I did. It was especially nice to go through the issues around Winchester Hospital and deal in the complex facts of what is really happening here."

To conclude the session, a group photograph was taken, and Steve Brine was thanked for giving his time to the group.



Ukulele Group

Hi, All, especially aspiring Strummers. The Ukulele group {hereafter referred to as WUGs} is off and running.

Just 7 or 8 of us at the minute, but everyone seems to be having a good time and it is a joy to see the progress all seem to be making. The local dog & cat populations have stopped objecting and we are up to a dozen or so songs, played pretty well.



We are still open to new strummers. We meet from 11.00 to 12.30 at Weeke Community Centre Taplins Road Weeke SO22 6HG

The next dates are: May 13, May 20, June 10, June 24.

The cost, to cover hall hire, is £3 per session, though as the hall costs have risen, it may rise to £4.

Please email Taff Powell, if interested in joining