



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Web Address:-

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Heart of England

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December 2017 Newsletter



TODAY'S MEETING

Our speaker for December is Mike Watkins and he calls his presentation "Remembering The Swinging Sixties, with audience participation". That should be a good start for the Christmas Season.

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER

Our speaker for January is Alan Cutler talking about "The Imortal Case - Another Notorious Trial".

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Dorothy Jones

Stratford is now looking very festive -always an amazing display of lights. I do hope everyone has a jolly Christmas and we look forward to a Happy & Healthy U3A year in 2018. Many thanks to the hard working committee and all members of Heart of England U3A for your support and friendship in 2017.

WHAT'S ON – MONTHLY MEETINGS AT STRATFORD, SHOTTERY, DENE VALLEY AND ALCESTER U3AS.

Stratford – No information available.

Shottery - No details for 2018.

Dene Valley - 12th December – "Christmas Concert". Heart of England Choir.

Alcester – 2nd January- "The See and Hear Quiz." - Ray Sturdy.

U3A DIARIES

The U3A 2018 Diaries will be on sale at the next meeting until the stock is exhausted. These 2018 Diaries are china blue and the price has increased to £2.50 – still a bargain! They can be found on the Treasurer's table in the Welcome Area.

NEW YEAR LUNCH

2018 will soon be here, so can we remind you that our New Year Lunch will be held on Saturday 20th January at The Sports Club, Swans Nest Lane CV37 7LS. Gathering at 12 noon for a 12.30 start. There is ample parking for £1. Members found the map provided and also the photo of the venue useful and they will be again on the Chairman's Table in our Reception Area. The price this year is extremely good value at £18.00 per person, which includes a tip for staff. There is a bar. As always, there are 3 courses, each with a choice of 3 dishes, including vegetarian and gluten free options. We look forward to celebrating the New Year with you.

COURSES ON-LINE-FROM NATIONAL OFFICE

Robyn Nicoll



There is a vast list of courses available which may be found via the National U3A Web site.

National Web site: www.u3a.org.uk

There are also a large selection of courses offered by **U3A Online** from Australia described as

"A Virtual University of the Third Age". The topics include: World Affairs and History; Nature; Writing and Creativity; Lifestyle; Science. To find out more about these courses : www.u3aonline.org.au

"Kings and Queens of England" is well underway as is the repeat of "**Property to Partner**". Both of these courses were downloaded from U3A Online by Sue Workman and were forwarded to members by email.

To contact Sue Workman for more information: (sueworkman44@gmail.com)

A member is interested in one of the original courses from National Office - "Creative Writing Fiction".

Is anyone interested in joining her? If so, please sign the sheet on the notice board table. This course could begin early in the New Year.

All the courses downloaded so far are **free** to U3A members.

A list of the original courses from National Office may be found on the notice board.

For more details about these courses, please contact Robyn (redbird22@hotmail.co.uk)

[NB: Do look at the National Web site to see all the opportunities and information available to U3A members.]

CHINA DISCUSSION GROUP

Robyn Nicoll

At our November afternoon we discussed "Chinatowns" found in many cities around the world. Binondo in Manila, established in 1594, is recognised as the world's oldest Chinatown. They initially served as ethnic enclaves for migrant workers and featured bakeries, food markets, restaurants, laundry businesses and opium dens plus residential areas. Many Chinatowns now are tourist destinations with shopping centres, grocery and fish stalls, and import-export and wholesale businesses. We were entertained by David's first-hand description of his visit to Vancouver's Chinatown and we had a visual presentation via the monitor of many others around the world.

The final get-together for 2017 will be held in the **New Room on Tuesday afternoon, 12th December**, 2.30 to 4.30. Fun and Games will be enjoyed following some brush painting led by Patricia. Mahjong and Chinese Checkers are on the agenda. (By the way, Chinese Checkers was invented in Germany in 1892)

New members are very welcome to come along to these enjoyable and varied afternoons.

More information from Robyn Nicoll. redbird22@hotmail.co.uk or David Ralph. david.ralph1@icloud.com

ALL SWING & JAZZ GROUP

Mavis Pickett



Ah! October, heralding the season of Mist and Mellow Fruitfulness...However for the Swing and Jazz Group it heralded a far from mellow programme which was prepared and presented for us by member Geoff and enjoyed by all.

He began with Humphrey Lyttleton and "One Man Went to Blow" then it was onto a programme that included tracks by Gene Krupa, Stan Kenton, Bix Beiderbecke, Ziggy Elman and even a shared track of Ella Fitzgerald sharing with the Ink Spots. Bessie Smith sang "Take me for a buggy ride" and Pete Johnson playing "Death Ray Boogie" shared his track with our very own presenter Geoff playing the spoons. Once again the lounge rang out with delighted applause (and didn't I hear a 'whoop and a whistle). After that it was tea and biscuits time before the second half began with Count Basie and "Jazz me Blues". During this afternoons programme we had two versions of "Sweet Georgia Brown" the ability of arrangers to produce such different versions of a tune amazes me. Dropping names again, tracks on the second half included those of Bunk Johnson, Kenny Ball, Glen Miller, Hugh Lawrie, Harry James. It's impossible to comment on each and every track our presenters play for us when you think that Geoff presented us with 23 tracks to enjoy. Our thanks go to him for the sheer hard work he puts in and also to Brian for doing the recording and, whilst were into thanks, to the members who take turns at making our refreshments (and washing up afterwards).

If you would like to join us we meet on the **4th Thursday** of each month in the lounge of the Methodist Church, Old Town starting at 2p.m.

ART APPRECIATION

Sylvia Kentish / Pam Collins



We had our annual quiz in November, which Judith Fogg won. As usual, everyone learned something from the broad range of questions that resulted from all of us contributing questions to the quiz.

We are looking forward to having our Christmas lunch at The Opposition in December.

BRIDGE GROUP

John Yeomans



We meet every Tuesday afternoon for a two hour session starting at 2.00 pm in the Methodist Hall, Side Room 1 next to the kitchen. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, without the strictures of a formal Bridge Club. If you are a Bridge player and would like to "try us out", we would be very happy for you to come as a guest, so that you can decide if you would like to join the Group.

CARD MAKING

Carolyn Leach



The sale of our cards still continues well, especially our Christmas ones. More available at the December meeting when we will be supporting The Dementia Café at Bidford on Avon.

CHINWAGS

Aline Cumming



Please contact Aline on 298357 for details on meeting place and times.

THE CHOIR

Dorothy Jones



We are looking forward to our Concert on Tuesday December 19th at 2pm. We have sold all our tickets but everyone is welcome to come to our repeat concert at Briarcroft, Alcester Rd, Friday 22nd at 2-30pm. We are also the "Main Attraction" at Dene Valley U3A main meeting on Tuesday 12th December at 2.30pm. Many thanks to Jill Dyal & Cyril Willoughby who have taken two Choir sessions in Stewart's absence.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Aline Cumming



For our November meeting we had a Slavonic programme. We began with Dvorak's Slavonic Dance No 8 then the final piece from Sheherazade by Rimsky Korsakov, an amalgam of the various themes. From Smetana's Ma Vlast (My Country) we heard Vltava, the description of a river from being a stream, passing great buildings and growing eventually until it reached the sea. Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody played by Evgeny Kissin was not universally popular, too unpredictable to listen to. Then Brahms' Hungarian Dance brought us to tea.

We had the Polovstian Dance from Borodin's Prince Igor. Then Chopin's Mazurka also played by Evgeny Kissin. Chopin was half Russian although usually associated with France. Film music by Shostakovic followed, the Romance from the Gadfly Suite and finally the Sabre Dance by Khachaturian woke us up.

The December meeting will be joint with Rock and Roll and All Swing and Jazz, as it was a success last year. It will be at the Hall on Thursday 21 December. Hope to see you there.

COMPUTER GROUP

Robyn Nicoll



We will be taking a break over the winter months and aim to offer another course next year if members are interested. We will give general help if required and will also offer a particular topic. The proposed topic for the next course is "**Photo Management**" which will include photo editing, creating folders, sending photos via the internet, visual presentations.

For information about the Computer Group please contact Robyn (redbird22@hotmail.co.uk)

CREATIVE CRAFTS GROUP

Tricia Callaghan



Our November meeting was devoted to assembling all the "goodies" we created for our stall at the Christmas Bazaar. Hopefully there will be something for everyone and we will raise a decent sum of money.

At our December meeting we will be repeating a project we have done before and will make a Christmas wreath using a polystyrene ring and festive pattern fabrics. These proved very popular and some of the group received requests from family to have one, hence the repeated project.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Edwin Lilly for Geoff Bridgewater



The current subject, to be reviewed at the January meeting, is "The Festive Season". Put whatever spin on the subject that you fancy. Could be decorations, parties, wrapped pile of presents, Santa Claus, or something else. The next meeting will be on Monday January 8th. Please bring your photographs on a USB memory stick.

DINAHS

Sylvia Crooks



Here we are with Dinahs penultimate Lunch in 2017!!! Christmas is around the corner. November's lunch was as usual, enjoyed by all. I had to pop out during lunch; when I came back they were chatting about Bus routes and parking in Stratford; a promotion evening at Stratford Garden Centre for Ladies; all the preparations for Christmas in view; Yoga; also email addresses.

We next meet Tuesday 5th December 12.15pm for our Christmas Lunch at the Red Lion.

DINAHS wish all our friends in The U3A "A HAPPY CHRISTMAS" and "A HEALTHY NEW YEAR"

DISCUSSION GROUP

Athena Roderick



David Renfrew provided our topic, which was "Political Correctness", has it gone too far? This gave us all plenty to get our teeth into. He gave us a few 'starters'. We did wonder how we had let it all happen. It does appear to have led to a lowering of standards because discipline seems to be a dirty word in some areas, especially in schools, when some teachers, who aren't naturally gifted in the art of disciplining children, find themselves overwhelmed and then these children feel that they have the right to treat everybody with a lack of respect. We also believe that Job Centre staff also have to put up with insulting behaviour, because you mustn't give offence?? One view is that young people rebel against older people's standards, although we feel that it is not fair to tar all youngsters with the same brush. We also felt that it must be difficult for young people, especially women to travel at night on public transport and nobody should be scared in our country. Undoubtedly, social media has added to the decline in good manners and we wondered if the pendulum would swing back again. Not in our lifetime we felt.

We will be meeting again in December, so it will be December 13th at The Town House 12.30. See you there.

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Edwin Lilly



We are looking at how and why we are researching our family. There are many aspects to the study and we will explore them during the next twelve months and also do some research as well. Bring what you have already been doing in your family history. We have had two very good meetings and I hope you are all getting something useful from them. Please let me know if you are not getting anything out of the meetings.

There is no meeting in December but please look in the January edition for news of meetings in the new year.

FILM GROUP

Mary Fishleigh



In November we watched the biographical drama "Miss Potter". This told the story of Beatrix Potter and how she got her books published when most publishers would not take her seriously. The film starred Renee Zellweger as Beatrix. After October's harrowing film this one was gentle and much easier to watch.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month and watch films that are worthy of an award, cult films, foreign films with subtitles, classic films but not ones that are on general release now. So you will not see films that

are on at a cinema at present. We have room for new members, if you are interested to join us please contact Ma-vis or Mary. We would love to see you at our meetings.

The next meeting is on 12 December at 2pm in the Methodist Hall lounge.

GAMES GROUP—SCRABBLE, DOMINOES AND CARDS

Sue Tringham



The Games Group meet at 2 Guild Cottages, Church Street, opposite the Council Offices on the first and third Mondays of the month from 2 – 4 pm. In December I am suggesting we only meet once on Monday 11 December which will be a bit festive!! For the first hour we have one or two tables playing dominoes while another table plays Scrabble. We stop for a cup of tea/coffee and biscuit and the dominoes players change to a card game, normally partners whist. The Scrabble table continue to play Scrabble!! It's a light hearted fun afternoon. All welcome!

GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUP

Suzy Genge



The meeting in November was postponed due to family problems. We shall be meeting at Stratford Garden Centre on Monday December 4th.

GRUMPY OLD MEN

Graham Mitchell



Human intellect was abundant as the Grumps tackled the emotive topic of "Will artificial intelligence (A.I.), including robotics, doom us all". Far from doom and gloom, the Group were more positive than anticipated while still expressing many reservations. It was recognised that A.I. already has had beneficial affects on many areas of life which will undoubtedly continue, and accelerate, in the future with its vast potential for many more applications. However its impact is uncertain in some areas, in particular in future employment prospects both in the type and amount of work available for the population giving rise to a widening of the gap between "the have and the have not" and possible civil unrest, unless handled imaginatively and sensitively by governments. There was some concern expressed that with the rapid advance of A.I basic knowledge and understanding will be lost and also those currently in higher education and training could find their skills become obsolete very quickly. Perhaps we can take comfort from the experience of the past when we and our ancestors experienced huge changes and learned to live and cope with them mainly to our advantage. On balance, to date, artificial intelligence has had a beneficial affect on society and hopefully will continue to do so. As one Grump observed "the young will be able to adapt to the future as we have in the past".

Next Meeting - Wed. 20th Dec. Venue - Le Bistrot Pierre

Special Notice - As well as the normal seasonal activities, for your entertainment, The Grumpy Thespian Society will (with audience participation) perform a seasonal drama. Also seasonal attire will be permitted on this occasion!

HISTORY GROUP

David Dumper



Our speaker in November Jeromy Hassell gave an illustrated talk on the Lunar Society. It was a dinner club and informal learned society of prominent figures in the Midlands Enlightenment movement, including industrialists, natural philosophers and intellectuals, who met regularly between 1765 and 1813 in Birmingham. At first called the Lunar Circle, "Lunar Society" became the formal name by 1775. The name arose because the society would meet during the full moon, as the extra light made the journey home easier and safer in the absence of street lighting. Jeromy's talk highlighted five of its most prominent members Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles); Matthew Boulton whose Soho factory would employ more than 1000, James Watt of steam engine, Josiah Wedgwood (another grandfather of Charles Darwin), and Joseph Priestley. These were the founding fathers of Birmingham industry.

Our next meeting on Dec 11th is our annual Christmas Party. We begin at the earlier time of 1.30 pm and instead of a speaker we will share party food and refreshments and partake in an informal quiz.

KEEP FIT GROUP

Mary Palmer



The Keep Fit Class is now full to capacity after a bit of a dip in numbers last year. We have a new instructor who keeps us active and we all think we feel much better for our efforts. A waiting list has now been started if anyone is interested. Please phone Mary Palmer on 204707.

PAINTING/DRAWING GROUP

Dorothy Jones



We have had a good year and produced some interesting work. We are designing a small Christmas card to give to one another at our Christmas lunch on Monday 18th December.

PILATES GROUP - MONDAY

Weekly at St. Andrew's Parish Centre, Shottery, 12:15 to 1:15. For more information call Sylvia Kentish on 263794.



PILATES GROUP - WEDNESDAY

Weekly at St Andrew's Parish Centre, Shottery, 10.15 to 11.15 . For more information call Sue Workman on 297061.



PLAY READING GROUP

Sylvia Crooks



Play Readers met 16th November. After coffee, we started reading a play by Philip King "Pools Paradise", a farce. Most enjoyable, as all Readers were great at playing their parts.

We next meet on Thursday 14th December, 10.30am at Sylvia's for coffee and mince pies.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS to all our Friends in the U3A. And A HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

POETRY READING GROUP

Jennifer Davey



This month's subject, 'Inanimate Objects', brought a cascade of items from boats and books to pylons and pearls. Next month the theme is 'Gifts' - and we are not only thinking of consumer goods!

READING GROUP—MONDAY

Phyllis Bailey

This month's read proved far more successful than I imagined! Several members read it all, almost 500 pages and



were full of admiration for a somewhat complex, but deeply moving novel "This Must Be The Place" by Maggie O'Farrell. .Definitely to be recommended! We had a lively discussion with all members in attendance who seemed totally satisfied at the end and not too worried at the heavy rain!

READING GROUP—WEDNESDAY

Judy Jones

Our choice of book for today was "The noise of Time " by Julian Barnes. It describes the life of Shostakovich living in Leningrad during the siege , trying to protect his family while staying true to his creative genius. In spite of the fact that only three of us enjoyed the book it led to a very lively discussion on Russian history ,music and literature. For our next meeting we plan to enjoy " Afternoon Tea" at Bensons and discuss our own choice of Christmas reading.



READING GROUP—FRIDAY

Coral Bradley

Sometimes it happens that a really nasty book comes along and this was one of those times. We read The Automobile Club of Egypt by Alaa Al Aswany. After two very odd chapters the story moved to Egypt but there is no mention of cars in the book so it could have been any club in an unknown period. The plot revolves around the people who work in the club and who are very badly treated by their Egyptian managers (beatings, humiliation and withholding wages) it also includes some very disturbing descriptions of the way women were treated. The writer has a strange attitude to women which we found extremely unpleasant. We would not recommend this book!



ROCK AND ROLL GROUP

Coral Bradley



Another meeting where we had some well known and some newer rock & roll with plenty of discussion. Next month we are joining with Classical music and Jazz for a Christmas meeting - it should be good - on 21 December 2017. Come along and see what you think.

SCIENCE, NATURE & 'ALL THINGS' TECHNICAL GROUP

Geoff Bridgewater



SNATTs met on Friday 10th November for an illustrated talk entitled "The Science of Michelangelo". Ian Roberts gave his talk because he has been interested and fascinated by Michelangelo for many years and has assembled a formidable amount of knowledge and examples. He was born near Florence in Italy, as was Leonardo da Vinci who is often compared to him. He worked with paint, with marble sculptures - most people have seen either a picture of or a copy of his sculpture known as "David". The original is in a museum in Florence and a copy is on display outside the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.

Further meetings:- Friday 8th December—Christmas Social and Quiz.

SCRAPBOOK GROUP

Wendy Crawford & Ruth Bartlett

We met in November and continued with work on our individual projects. Although numbers are somewhat reduced, we have voted to continue in the New Year and review it later.

The December meeting is cancelled as it conflicts with the Choir Concert. Look out in January for information about future meetings as a room booking has been requested but not yet confirmed.

SYMPHONY HALL CONCERTS

Dorothy Jones



Marjorie Fraser, one of our relatively new members, has volunteered to organise these visits. Many thanks Marjorie! We have booked two concerts for 2018. The first concert is Thursday 15th February 2-30pm. The programme includes a short overture by Pax, Grieg's Piano Concerto and Elgar's Symphony No 1. The cost of this visit will be £38. This includes concert ticket, return coach to Symphony Hall & tip for the driver. We will leave the Leisure Centre promptly at 12-15pm and pick up our Henley members at Johnson's depot en-route to Birmingham. Please send Cheque for £38, made out to Heart of England U3A, to Marjorie Fraser 54 Saffron Meadow, Stratford upon Avon CV37 6GD. Tel, 01789 204820. Please pay by December 31st

THEATRE GROUP.

Coral Bradley



Our next theatre outing will be to Malvern Theatre on 27 January 2018 to see the Ruth Rendell play Gal-lowglass. We will leave Henley at 12.00 and the Leisure Centre at 12.30. The cost is £26.00.

PIANO GROUP

Sylvia Crooks

We met on Wednesday 22nd November. A few more members would be encouraging. In turn we played a piece we had been practising. Being in the U3A keeps you very busy, which is very good; so finding time to practice is not easy. However, starting this Piano Group, encourages you to find the time; and it's fun. No Piano Group in December, we will be too busy playing for our Family and friends!! **We next meet Wednesday 17th January 2018 at 10.00am.** Piano Group wish all our U3A friends A HAPPY CHRISTMAS and A HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

WALKING GROUP

Valerie Redfern



The next walk will take place on Wednesday 13th December at 10.00am, starting from Loxley Close, Wellesbourne, there is a lay by just off the A429 adjacent to the Coop we can park there next to the Playing field. This is an easy five mile walk on good surface not too far to travel and hopefully we will have good weather. I recommend good walking shoes and that you bring a drink along with you. Hopefully, Fred will make some mince pies to add a seasonal touch to the walk. Fred and I will lead the walk.

HEART OF ENGLAND U3A ROTA FOR AFTERNOON TEAS

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>GROUP</u>
December 2017	Discussion Group	March 2018	Rock & Roll Group
January 2018	Grumpy Old Men Group	April 2018	Walking Group
February 2018	Computer Group	May 2018	Dinah's Luncheon Group

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>GROUP LEADER</u>	<u>USUAL MEETING DAY (MONTHLY)</u>
All That Swing & Jazz	Brian Bradley	4th Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
AmDram & Supper	Geoff Bridgewater	As Announced
Art Appreciation	Sylvia Kentish Pam Collins	3rd Friday 2.00pm
Bridge	John Yeomans	Every Tuesday 2.00pm
Card Making	Carolyn Leach	As Announced
China Discussion Group	Robyn Nicoll	See Newsletter
Chinwags Lunch	Aline Cumming	4th Monday 12.00 noon
Choir	Ruth Grahame Dorothy Jones	Every Friday 10.30—12.00 noon
Classical Music	Aline Cumming	3rd Monday 2.00pm
Creative Crafts	Tricia Callaghan	3rd Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
Computers	Robyn Nicoll	2nd & 4th Wednesday 2.30—4.00pm
Digital Photography	Geoff Bridgewater	As Announced
Dinah's Luncheon	Sylvia Crooks	1st Tuesday for lunch
Discussion	Athena Roderick	2nd Wednesday
Family History	Edwin Lilly	4th Tuesday 2.30—4.00pm
Film Group	Mary Fishleigh Mavis Pickett	2nd Tuesday 2.00pm
Games –Scrabble, Dominoes and Cards	Sue Tringham	1st & 3rd Monday 2.00—4.00pm
Garden Appreciation Group	Suzy Genge	2nd Tuesday
Grumpy Old Men	Graham Mitchell	3rd Wednesday for lunch
History	David Dumper	2nd Monday 2.00pm
Keep Fit	Mary Palmer	Every Thursday 10.00am
Painting/Drawing	Dorothy Jones Sue Butler	As Announced
Piano Group	Sylvia Crooks	4th Wednesday 10.00—11.00am
Pilates - Monday	Sylvia Kentish	Every Monday 12.15—1.15pm
Pilates - Wednesday	Sue Workman	Every Wednesday 10.15—11.15am
Play Reading	Sylvia Crooks	See Newsletter for dates
Poetry Reading	Jennifer Davey	2nd Wednesday 10.00—12.00noon
Reading - Monday	Phyllis Bailey	3rd Monday 2.30—4.30pm
Reading - Wednesday	Judy Jones	3rd Wednesday 2.30pm
Reading - Friday	Coral Bradley	As Appropriate
Rock & Roll Music	Coral Bradley	2nd Thursday 2.00—4.00pm
Science, Nature & All Things Technical	Geoff Bridgewater	2nd Friday 2.00—4.00pm
Scrapbooking Group	Wendy Crawford Ruth Bartlett	3rd Tuesday 2.00—4.00pm
Sunday Lunch	Brian Bradley	As Appropriate
Symphony Hall Visits	Marjorie Fraser	As Appropriate
Theatre Visits & Outings	Coral Bradley	As Appropriate
Walking	Valerie Redfern	2nd Wednesday 10.00am