



Jottings

The Newsletter of Church Stretton U3A

February 2018

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and a good start to 2018.

Your Committee is busy with consideration of matters handed down to us by the U3A Trust following discussions held with the Charity Commissioners. When we have completed our deliberations on the requirements we will share our recommendations for your consideration.

A social event is planned for 10th March at the Parish Centre. I will be running a quiz which I hope, bearing in mind the ethos of U3A, will be "educational" as well as fun.

BREAKING NEWS

We have a new website!! We have joined more than 400 U3As who use the U3A Site Builder hosted by the Third Age Trust. All the sites created have a similar layout and appearance, but the content of each is specific to a particular U3A.

The new web address is <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton>. Please have a look. I welcome any suggestions and updates.

I can be contacted via the CONTACT page on the new website - messages to the Webmaster.

The addition of photographs would make the website look even better! Are there any members out there who could provide these, please? Contact me as above.

You may also be interested in looking at other U3A websites via the link <https://u3asites.org.uk/code/index.php> - Shrewsbury, Much Wenlock, Ledbury and Wellington in our region all use this format.

Webmaster Sylvia Davidson

VACANCY FOR GENERAL MEETINGS ORGANISER

The current General Meetings Organiser, Brian Bradley, will be stepping down from the post in May this year. We are looking for a replacement to take on this role. The new programme starts in October this year and we have already have speakers up to December. Anyone interested in this activity please contact Brian or another committee member for further information.

Role of the General Meetings Organiser - includes:

Locate potential speakers and topics (10 talks per year)

Create a programme for the next year (October to September following year)

Following approval by the committee, confirm bookings with speakers

Provide details for printing the programme and publicity

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

2018

February General Meeting

Wednesday 28 February 2018, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

Guide Dogs, Facts and Fallacies by Meredith Vivian OBE

How guide dogs are trained, what they do and how they change the lives of blind people. It's not quite what you imagine.

U3A Quiz Night

Saturday 10 March 2018, 7:30pm at the Parish Centre. Wine and Cheese refreshments provided. Book via Committee members or email strettonu3a@yahoo.com or phone Grahame Hurst 771622. £1 members, £4 non-members.

March General Meeting

Wednesday 28 March 2018, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

Under the Influence by Andy Smith

Songs and music by the likes of The Beatles, Buddy Holly, Ralph McTell, John Denver etc.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Christmas Celebration – December 2017

The December meeting had the misfortune to fall during the week of very bad weather. After a great deal of correspondence, it was decided not to cancel the event. So much in Church Stretton and beyond had been called off, that we were hoping that our meeting would give some the first chance to venture out from their enforced confinement of the previous few days. The roads and pavements were starting to become useable again, but we urged members to exercise extreme caution.

We were absolutely delighted, then, when 39 brave souls made it to the Silvester Horne Institute to celebrate another successful year for Church Stretton U3A! Margaret Sinden, from Singing for Pleasure, led the singing. Who knew that Baa, Baa, Black Sheep and Three Blind Mice can be sung by two groups at the same time? Apparently, Row, Row, Row the Boat can be added by a third group, but Margaret very wisely thought that a step too far.

After this, and more traditional Christmas offerings, the Scottish Dancers entertained us with two of their dances. Alison Bradley, who led the group, persuaded a member who had only just joined, to fill in a gap! I won't name names, but Charlotte did extremely well!

The Writers' Group was next and Julia Felton read another member's short story which was followed by a sketch from Barbara Walker. Both were enjoyed immensely.

Grahame, our Chair and host for the afternoon, produced a 20-question Christmas quiz. This was very light hearted and was done either in groups or individually. 18 was the highest score and, after a tie breaker, Eric Brown walked away with the prize. I can reveal that Eric is still discussing with Grahame how many presents My True Love REALLY got! He needs to get out more.

Judging from the chatter over the refreshments, I would declare the afternoon to be a great success. **Lesley Brown**

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:

Art Class

The group meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month in the United Reformed Church Hall from 10am until noon. Numbers vary and range from 10 to 12 members.

Group Leaders **Daphne and Stewart Rankine**

Art History Group

The group meet monthly on Monday mornings in members homes and has 8 members. Dates vary depending on commitments. There are no vacancies at present. We continue to be a study group with members carrying out their own research and reporting their findings to the group. We also undertake visits to art galleries.

Group Leader **Sue Toghill**

Book Group 2

We meet in the afternoon on the second Monday each month. We take it in turns to host the meetings in our own homes. After discussing the current book we enjoy a chat over tea/coffee and cake. All good fun!

The book list for 2018:

January - 'Up Close' by Henrietta Gyland

February - 'Caught' by Harlem Coben

March - 'Greek Myths' by Robin Waterfield

April - 'Sense and Sensibility' by Joanna Trollope

May - 'Attenbury Emeralds' by Jill Paton Walsh

June - 'Woman in Black' by Susan Hill

July - 'Nothing but Grass' by Will Cohe

August - 'Death in the Latin Quarter' by Raphael Cardetti

September - 'Documents in the Case' by Dorothy L Sayers

October - 'Girl from Chartreuse' by Pierre Peru

November - 'Soldier's Return' by Melvyn Bragg

December - 'Perfect' by Rachel Joyce

Group Leader **Margaret Haynes**

Bridge

Church Stretton U3A Bridge Group must be the best place to play and improve your bridge. Set in the convivial surroundings of the Bucks Head on a Thursday evening (7pm to 9pm) we play with a drink at our elbow, sharing in the analysis of interesting hands in a supportive environment. New members of any standard would be most welcome.

Group Leader **Eric Brown**

Classical Music 2

The group comprises of 8 members who take turns to host meetings and choose their selection of music. It is understood that not everyone is able to host for practical reasons. The music is normally selected from the "standard classical repertoire", a mixture of symphonies, concertos, chamber, and opera. Meetings occur twice a month and new members could be accommodated.

Group Leader **Ian Templeton**

Family & Social History

In addition to assisting members with research into their own family history the group operates as a discussion group for family history and social history, as it relates to family history research. Discussions cover topics such as Occupations and Salaries, Wars, Travel, Fashions, Orphanages and Workhouses and many more, in addition to hearing members' family history stories.

We meet monthly (except for August and December) in the Library, usually on a Monday afternoon. We currently have 14 registered members and meetings are usually attended by about 12 members. We think we are going along nicely and would welcome anyone else interested in joining us. If you are interested, come along to a meeting to see what we have to offer – or what you have to offer to the group.

For further details please send a message through our Groups Coordinator via the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact> page, quoting Family and Social History Group.

Group Leader **Peter Thorpe**

Handicraft Group

Are any of the following of interest to you - knitting, crochet, embroidery, patchwork etc? If so, come along and join our friendly Handicraft Group. Bring any current project and share ideas while relaxing and enjoying a chat while you work. There are six of us in the group and welcome new members. We have decided that for 2018 we will only meet once a month - on the last Thursday. Meetings are from 2:30pm to 4pm in the Mayfair cafe. No admission fee - just buy refreshments at the start.

Group Leader **Margaret Haynes**

Landscape Archaeology

The Landscape Archaeology Group has not met for over a year. It is, however, my intention to relaunch the group this spring as a community archaeology group with a practical focus. In its former guise there were 12 members in the group. If we pursue the community archaeology route I would see this number rising, possibly to 15 or 20 people.

Group Leader **Ian Dormor**

Philosophy

The Group is progressing well and has 14 members and meet monthly on the second Monday of the month. We have just agreed a programme for 2018 the first year was ad hoc topics evolving as we progressed through the year. The programme is designed to encourage more people to take a lead and get involved and keep the meetings interesting and varied.

Group Leader **Bryan Pryce**

Popular Music Group

The purpose of the group is to listen to various types of popular music from the 1950s to the present day including pop, rock, folk, country, easy listening, musicals, film music etc. in order to broaden our knowledge and enjoyment. Members take it in turns to present the programme by choosing their own theme and bringing CDs, DVDs (any region 1 to 6) or Blue Rays (any region 1 to 3). We ask that every member presents at least one programme per year so that a variety of music is played. Members are encouraged to contribute snippets of information about the various artists, songs etc to add to our overall knowledge and appreciation of what we are listening to.

We usually meet once a month on a Wednesday evening at 7 Helmeth Road. The meetings commence at 7:30pm and finish between 9:30pm and 9:45pm. This includes a short interval for tea/coffee and biscuits for which members contribute 50p per head. A reminder email is sent out a few days before each date.

We have a couple of places available so if you would like to join us or require further details please send a message through our Groups Coordinator via the CONTACT page, quoting Popular Music Group.

Group Leader **Trevor Halsey**

Scottish Dancing

Scottish Dancing has about 15/16 people per week on average and meets each week, apart from the week of the general meeting, from 2pm until 4pm on Wednesday at the United Reformed Church Hall. It can cope with more if people are interested. Many people can't make that commitment, which means that they make less progress and often drop out. However, there is a core of 'regulars' who enable others to take part when they appear. We charge £2 per week to cover the costs involved in the hall and the purchase of necessary refreshment items and music. We try to hold two social dances each year, with refreshments - a Haggis lunch in the winter and a Strawberry Tea in the summer.

University studies have shown that Scottish Country Dancing is one of the best means of maintaining mental and physical 'fitness' as one gets older - a sound mind in a sound body. It is suitable for individuals as well as couples, bringing a significant social aspect to the group as well.

Soft soled shoes and a willingness to learn (by being pushed around the dance if necessary) are the only real requirements.

Group Leader **David Thomas**

Singing for Pleasure

Dates of meetings for 2018: 6 February, 20 February, 6 March, 20 March, 3 April

The Singing for Pleasure Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Parish Centre from 2:15pm to 4:15pm (September – June). The group has a membership list of over 70, and usually between 50 and 60 people attend. It is a mixed group, with a growing male section and open to all whether you think you can sing or not. Some people have sung in choirs before and read music, and others not, but just enjoy singing. Songs vary from Mozart to Abba and much in between, sometimes in easy parts and sometimes in unison. New members are welcome and can always be accommodated.

Group Leader **Margaret Sinden**

Writers Group 2

This group has been operating for nearly a year now. We meet every 2 weeks in the library on Tuesday afternoons. There has been some poetry appreciation with a little bit of writing poetry. Getting to grips with our grammar control, in a lighthearted way, has also been touched on along with learning or reminding ourselves of literary terminology. However, the main activity has been writing our own pieces on different subjects, in different genres and in different voices. At the moment, we are developing a series of characters which involves inventing backstories for each of our characters and generally fleshing them out so that we get to know each person that we have

'invented'. The next stage is that we are going to try and bring these 'people' together in a play, short story, interview or whatever we can successfully develop. It's fun as we learn from each other, find our writing strengths and share some of our favourite books/writers/poems.

Group leader **Jenny O'Shea**

New Groups

At the monthly meetings 'Sign Up Sheets' are on the table to encourage members to start new groups and recently photography and German for beginners have been suggested. Also, would any members be interested in a group that helps people to use and understand small computer devices but only dealing with Android devices. Interest has also been shown in perhaps starting a cycling group and Supper Club. If anyone would like to join or start a new group please contact the Groups Coordinator (Len Bolton) via the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact> for further details.

Church Stretton U3A Groups:

Here is the list of the Church Stretton U3A Groups. Contact the Groups Coordinator (Len Bolton) via the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact> to find out more about any group that you are interested in or may be thinking of joining.

Art – drawing and painting
Art History
Book Group
Book Group 2
Bridge
Classical Music
Classical Music 2
Family & Social History
French

Handicraft
Hill Walking
Landscape Archeology
Philosophy
Popular Music
Scottish Dancing
Singing for Pleasure
Writers' Group
Writers' Group 2

Your Committee:

Chair - Grahame Hurst
Vice Chair - Colin Carson
Treasurer - Ben Hilliard
Business Secretary - Vacant
Minutes Secretary - Jennifer O'Shea
Membership Secretary - Lesley Brown
Groups Coordinator - Len Bolton
General Meetings Organiser - Brian Bradley
Newsletter Editor - Julia Felton
Webmaster – Sylvia Davidson
Publicity Officer - vacant

Updates and news from groups and comments on recent events from members are always welcome, and should be returned to me, **Julia Felton**, via the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact> Your input will be appreciated.

Keep up to date with what's going on in Church Stretton U3A by checking the website at:

<http://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton>

National Events:

Please go to <http://www.u3a.org.uk/> for more details of National Events (You will have to create a login account to access pages for members) or the magazine Third Age Matters. If you have no access to the internet you may contact a committee member to help you.