



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# Jottings

**The Newsletter of Church Stretton U3A**

**March 2019**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:**

Although the AGM is some way off, I would ask you to consider the matter of a replacement for our long serving Treasurer, Ben Hilliard, who is standing down after seven years in that role. Please give it some thought.

On a lighter note, at the January General Meeting we were entertained and educated, by Roger Browne, with a musical programme, illustrating through his playing and singing, about the connection between New Orleans Jazz and the New York theatre. He mentioned that he is directing a production of *Guys and Dolls* by the Stockport Operatic Society at The Plaza Theatre, Stockport in October. Some of those attending expressed an interest in going along to the Saturday Matinee. I have contacted Caradoc Coaches and for a party of 19, the cost, including entry, would be approximately £33 or £31 for a party of 25. The show is on the 26th October. If anyone interested please contact me (01694 771622) and I will try to organise a trip.

**Grahame Hurst**

## **VERY URGENT VACANCY**

### **GENERAL MEETINGS ORGANISER**

We are looking for a replacement to take on this role. The new programme started in October last year and we have already have speakers through September 2019. Anyone interested in this activity please contact the Chair in the first instance 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

## **Renewal subscriptions**

Subscriptions for the Church Stretton Branch for 2019-2020 will be due on 31st March 2019. The annual cost per member will be £10. If you are a fully paid up member of another Branch this is reduced to £4.

The Membership Secretary can usually be found at the General meetings, Singing for Pleasure and Bridge. Otherwise, please download the renewal form at

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/c/churchstretton/docs/membershiprenewalform.pdf>

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

**2019**

### **March General Meeting**

Wednesday, 27 March 2019, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

### **Tax, Care and Toy Boys by Glyn Williams**

A look into some very real issues that can affect individuals and their families later in their life.

### **April General Meeting**

Wednesday, 24 April 2019, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

### **Captain Flora Sandes by Mike Watkins & Wilma Hayes**

The only British woman combat soldier of the First World War. A fascinating story of an extraordinary woman.

### **May (AGM) General Meeting**

Wednesday, 22 May 2019, 2pm at United Reformed Church Hall, on the High Street.

### **Shrewsbury Drapers Company 1462-2017 by Nigel Hopkins**

The history of The Shrewsbury Drapers Company.

## **PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

### **December General Meeting**

#### **"History of Music at Christmas" by Cecil Hayward**

This was Cecil and Ruth's third visit to Church Stretton U3A and their focus this time was on music at Christmas. Cecil told us the history behind some of our well known Carols and then he and Ruth played a verse or two on their "brass, tubes and pipes".

My particular favourite was the Coventry Carol played on a Cornett (yes, two t's!) and a Baroque Flute. The Cornett is played like a Recorder, but has a brass mouthpiece. The sound they made was very much in keeping with the Carol's origins in the 16th century.

The Twelve Days of Christmas has a fascinating history. On the surface it comes across as a jolly seasonal song, but it has another hidden meaning. For nearly 300 years, Roman Catholics were not permitted to practice their faith openly, so each element of the Carol was given a religious meaning which children could remember. For example, the four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The following link will give you the meaning of the other eleven. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/advent/customs-and-traditions/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmas>

And we were encouraged to sing! Great fun. **Lesley Brown**

## **January General Meeting**

### **"New Orleans to New York" by Roger Browne.**

Roger's musical interests stretch beyond Jazz. His love for Musical Theatre and Grand Opera have seen him on stage, for over 40 years in many different acting roles and directorial appointments including singing a principal bass role in Wagner's "Tannhauser" for Manchester Opera Group.

Roger, as a child, entered talent competitions as a singer where the age range was from 8 years old to 80.

He commenced by playing the theme tunes from Family Favourites and Housewives Choice, which I think most of us remembered. He continued with a selection of tunes composed by George Gershwin who Roger said was the bridge between jazz and theatre. There were also tunes made famous by Winifred Atwell who entered the music scene playing the piano in the boogie-woogie style of ragtime.

One of the stories was from New Orleans during the 19-20th century where organisers held a Rent A Party Piano. A hall would be rented and a hat was placed on the piano for the audience to give money to cover the hire of the hall. The pianist would be plied with bourbon which as the night went on it encouraged him to play faster and led to more money being put in the hat. Roger played one of the songs which got faster and faster and his fingers just raced expertly over the keys.

Roger is a very talented and jolly man and played many tunes from various musicals and in between there were many very interesting stories. He referred to Art Tatum, who was visually impaired, as being the greatest jazz pianist of all time and played one of the tunes recorded by Art Tatum, Tea for Two.

He entertained us with history, stories and songs in relation to the influence of jazz on the musical theatre. Roger has written and directed plays and at present directing Guys and Dolls at The Plaza in Stockport which will take place in October.

Roger is an excellent pianist and also very good singer. A very enjoyable afternoon. **Julia Felton**

## **February General Meeting**

### **"Botswana" by David Maddocks.**

David Maddocks presented a fascinating picture of the diverse scenery and wildlife in Botswana. Botswana, at the heart of southern Africa, has long been a model for conservation, attracting tourists to the game-rich Okavango Delta and the adjacent landscapes of the salt pans and Kalahari Desert. Troops were deployed to protect the wildlife. Elephant herds (totalling 130,000 elephants) thrived and rhinos, endangered all over Africa, have been imported from South Africa for their safety.

Sadly in the last few months there has been a change of government policy. The troops have been redeployed and the future of the area is now in the hands of rangers who face a serious threat from poachers. Extensive slaughters have already taken place. David is saddened by this turn in policy and regrets he has little optimism for the future.

Anecdotes of camp life, the use of old termite hills as vantage points in a flat environment and the ubiquity of light aircraft as taxis punctuated a series of magnificent photos of the wildlife and scenery. The shots of elephants and the big cats, many in the glow of African sunsets were stunning.

The wet season produces flowers and vegetation that attracts smaller creatures, birds and insects in large numbers. David, as a seasoned traveller in Africa, also showed shots of less well-known creatures in their natural environment. It is clear that, no matter what the future holds for the area, the Okavango Delta is a magical place. **Eric Brown**

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS:**

### **Singing for Pleasure – dates of meetings 2019**

15 January, 5 and 19 February, 5 and 19 March, 2 and 16 April

The group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Parish Centre from 2:15pm to 4:15pm and is open to all.

### **New Groups**

Interest has been shown in starting a **Cribbage Group**. If you are interested, please contact the Groups Coordinator.

If anyone would like to join or start a new group please contact the Groups Coordinator via the website [u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact](http://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact) for further details.

Contact a coordinator through the Church Stretton U3A website via the website link [u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/groups](http://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/groups), then select the group page.

Select the link next to the text send a message and complete the form. This information will only be seen by your choice of message receiver.

If you do not have an email address you can still get in touch by typing none@none.com in the email line and some contact details in the message section.

| <b>Group</b>               | <b>Coordinator</b>         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Art – drawing and painting | Daphne and Stewart Rankine |
| Art History                | Sue Toghill                |
| Book Group                 | Susan Lees                 |
| Book Group 2               | Margaret Haynes            |
| Bridge                     | Eric Brown                 |
| Classical Music            | Ian Templeton              |
| Family & Social History    | Peter Thorpe               |
| Hill Walking               | Dick Ward                  |
| Landscape Archaeology      | Ian Dormor                 |
| Philosophy                 | Bryan Pryce                |
| Popular Music              | Trevor Halsey              |
| Scottish Country Dancing   | Alison Bradley             |
| Singing for Pleasure       | Margaret Sinden            |
| Writers' Group             | Lesley Dench               |
| Writers' Group 2           | Jenny O'Shea               |

## **Your Committee:**

Chair - Grahame Hurst  
Vice Chair - Colin Carson  
Treasurer - Ben Hilliard  
Secretary - Jennifer O'Shea  
Membership Secretary - Lesley Brown (01694 724330)  
Groups Coordinator – Lesley Dench  
General Meetings Organiser - Vacant  
Newsletter Editor - Julia Felton  
Webmaster – Sylvia Davidson

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 [u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact](http://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact). Your input will be appreciated. The next Jottings is scheduled for June.

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

[u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton](http://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton)

## **National Events:**

Please go to [u3a.org.uk](http://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.