

NEWSLETTER



u3a
Wells Somerset

Wells u3a Registered Charity No. 1023275

The u3a is a learning co-operative of older people, enabling members to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Wells u3a is a Registered Charity. Its Trustees are the Committee, elected annually by the membership.

Committee Members

		Retires	
Chairman	Donald Branch	2026	07904 044496
Administration Secretary	Vacant		
Minutes Secretary	Caroline Lowndes-Northcott	2027	01749 676314
Treasurer	John Laycock	2030	07518 286182
Membership Secretary	Alan Sanderson	2026	01749 673101
Groups Coordinator	Sue Revell	2026	01749 676904
Holiday Coordinator	Jeanne Evans	2025	01749 671545
Events Coordinator	Marian Harding	2025	01749 870564
Talks Coordinator	Barbara Jones	2027	07958 990618
Publicity Coordinator	Ann Brown	2025	01749 670557
Newsletter Editor	Jeanne Evans	2025	01749 671545
Beacon Lead	Mike Lee	2027	07977 113850
Newsletter Distribution	Mike Lee	2027	07977 113850

Sub Committees

Events	Marian Harding; Chris Lowe
Trips	Val Leith; Liz Lee
Holidays	Jeanne Evans; Dinah Beaton
Website	Tony Dent
IT Support	Mike Lee

Website: <https://wells.u3asite.uk/>

Current information on our organisation and on our activities can be found on the Wells u3a website. Please send any items for inclusion to: webmaster.wellsu3a@gmail.com

Newsletter: Next issue deadline is 1 December 2025

Please send items for inclusion in the next Newsletter by e-mail to: news.wellsu3a@gmail.com (NOT to my personal email address please)

Chairman's Report

I'm delighted to tell you that our recent Group Leaders' Event was a great success. It was fantastic to see so many of our group leaders getting together, sharing ideas, celebrating what we've achieved and chatting about what's next. The committee were particularly pleased to receive so much feedback, and so many questions and suggestions. We'll be writing to all group leaders in response to all the points that we were able to record. It just shows how strong and welcoming our community is.

We are always looking to welcome new members. So are many of our groups. If you, or someone you know is interested, we'd love you to come along to one or two of our group sessions as a taster. It's a great way to get a feel for what we do—no obligation, no pressure, just come and see if it's for you. Get in touch with the group leader to check that there are vacancies. You and any person you refer (member or not) will be covered by our insurance for up to two taster sessions.

Included with this newsletter will be the notice of our 2025 AGM. Do give some thought about joining the committee, or to talking to any friends who might be interested in putting their name forward - with just a little encouragement. I'm very happy to meet to discuss committee membership.

Donald Branch

COFFEE MORNINGS

Our weekly coffee mornings are held from 10.30 until 11.30am every Thursday in the Chamberlain Room at the Portway Annexe, Portway Avenue, Wells BA5 2QF.

It's now only £2.00 for coffee and biscuits!

Why not come along, meet with friends and put the world to rights!

For more information, contact Donald Branch, 07904 044496

Membership Report

Wells u3a now has 686 members, with a further 41 people enjoying reciprocal membership. 74 people have joined since 1st January.

New members often mention that the organisation has been recommended by their friends, as offering a variety of interest groups that can provide intellectual and physical stimulation in a friendly and supportive setting.

The committee recognises the importance of integrating new members into their chosen group or groups, as well as ensuring they are welcomed when they attend social events, or decide to take part in one of our trips or holidays. In pursuing this aim, we recently held a special event for Group Leaders, an Away Day, with the objective of improving the experience of joining and participating in the wide range of activities on offer.

On a personal note, at present, I attend four different groups, all of which increase my knowledge and understanding of this challenging world and offer rewarding opportunities to explore topics with other group members. Therefore, I can strongly recommend trying out one or more of the available interest group meetings.

Dr Alan Sanderson

Group Leaders' Awayday

Friday 20th June, held at North Wootton Village Hall



More than half of Wells u3a Group Leaders attended an Away Day in a village Hall not far from Wells. It proved to be very successful, and the group leaders attending were able to discuss the problems they encounter when running their group. After introductions, everyone was convened into tables of four, where they were given topics to discuss.

The first session comprised what they liked about their role, any difficulties encountered, such as finance, and finally, how they managed new members enquiries and waiting lists. A representative from each table gave feedback on the key points and these were collated for further

discussion, and to try and resolve any problems.

After coffee, the second session discussed the group leader's role, how it could be improved and how the main committee might be able to help. Succession was a key feature of this discussion, and the need for a deputy who might cover for holidays, illness etc. Another problem area is the ability to use the website. Many group leaders decided that they will require training to update their pages - and so will not have to leave it all to the web master.



The chairman summarised all the key points raised, which will be discussed by the main committee at their next meeting, with their conclusions sent to all group leaders.

Everyone was given a copy of **Wells u3a Group Leaders Guide**, which covers how to run a group, from communicating with group members, finance, equipment and resources, to health and safety. It also includes Wells u3a policies, such as Data Protection through to Disciplinary Procedures.

Afterwards, a delicious buffet lunch was provided, with a choice of cold dishes, including quiches, ham, beef, salmon and a wide variety of salads. This was followed by desserts of strawberries and cream or homemade trifle, fruit crumble and cheese and biscuits. Wine and soft drinks were also available. After lunch, we enjoyed an amusing and informative talk by Edgar Phillips, the stained-glass artist who is artist in residence at the Bishop's Palace. We caught him in transit to the Glastonbury Festival, where he was installing a giant glass dragon, which will be set up at every festival in the future. His work, including the famous glass wings, is available to see at the Bishop's Palace and Wells Cathedral.



Dragon photos by Edgar Phillips

Report by Ann Brown

Events Report

Paella & Pud – Wednesday 2 July

Who doesn't enjoy a lovely fresh paella? Last July, 68 members turned up on a beautiful afternoon at the Wells Football Ground to savour just that.

Angus and his team did us proud this year, buying gamba prawns for this very enjoyable paella, which was accompanied by salad and ciabatta bread. Those who wished to, were able to take some home with them too! The meal was completed with a lovely array of desserts and, of course, the bar was open for many of us to enjoy our favourite lunchtime tipple. Thank you to all who came and supported this event, it was lovely to see you.

Marian Harding



Group Coordinator Report

Groups flourish, members happy, all is well - although there is always the opportunity to gild the lily!

The **introduction of additional groups** is always something to consider. Currently, Appreciating Literature has a waiting list and a solution could be to start another group, with the idea of offering places to newbies. As you know, we do have duplicate groups: Current Affairs, Petanque, Walking and the Lunch Groups. If you want to learn more about running a group, do contact me. Support and guidance are always available. Also, grateful thanks to the members who decided to help their group by replacing retiring leaders in the **En Francais, Cards for Pleasure** and **Walking 1** groups. Volunteering to take over has meant these groups can continue.

The **Away Day for Group Leaders** in June was a resounding success. If you couldn't come, read the article on page 4, and it will also feature in Wells Voice.

I'm delighted to hear everyone enjoyed themselves, and by popular request, a germ of an idea for another one to be held next year is in the pipeline! It would be really good if more leaders could spare the time to come along in 2026. You certainly missed something!

Following one of the suggestions on the day, was the need to refresh our skills regarding **First Aid**. Look out for notices about teaching sessions from St. John Ambulance in the near future. Last time we offered this, it was so well supported, and simple skills learnt about first aid proved to be life enhancing.

We plan to be involved again with **Wells Community Day** in Winter '25. A great opportunity for Wells u3a to mix with other organisations and be part of the community. More details about this event later.

With **67 new members joining us this year**, a welcome for them in the Autumn is being arranged, and as a vital strand of our organization, the group leaders will also be invited to join us. Details to follow.

Sue Revell

Talks Report

We have had a varied programme of speakers for spring, starting with Jeremy Hellier in April, who spoke of **Seafarers and their Maritime Welfare**. Some members made woolly hats for them following the talk. In May, Ian and Carole Spencer returned with **More Fun of the Opera** and entertained us with arias from when he performed with the Dutch National Opera. Again, we were treated to his very, very low voice. June had us riveted to our seats as Andrew Hopper spoke of **The Battle of Denmark Strait**. A super presentation commentary, with film excerpts of the battle, to make it come to life.

In July, Susan Richardson spoke passionately about **Museum to You**. It was a pity that the weather was so very hot and the audience was not as large as usual, but those who attended were amazed at the difference her company was making, visiting people in care homes, helping and educating them by talking to them and offering hands on-events.

Babs Jones

Trips Report



On 6th June, our group visited the Broadlands Garden Show at Romsey. As well as a wide variety of plants, there were stalls selling ceramics, jewellery, pottery and crafts. We were well catered for at lunchtime with a selection of street-foods, salads, sandwiches and drinks and we were able to listen to songs of yesteryear, watch a Punch & Judy show, or enjoy a birds of prey display. Talks varied from a history of Broadlands, to what to do with your courtyard garden. A most enjoyable day in lovely sunshine.

Val Leith and Liz Lee

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COFFEE MORNINGS

These are held weekly at **10.30 until 11.30 every Thursday morning** in the Chamberlain Room at Portway Annexe, Portway Ave, Wells, BA5 2QF.

And it's now only £2.00 for coffee and biscuits!

Why not come along, meet your friends – or make new ones - and put the world to rights! For more information contact **Donald Branch, 07904044496**

MONTHLY TALKS

Talks are held in Wells Museum on the second Wednesday of the month at 11.00 preceded by coffee from 10.15, at an inclusive price of £3.00. (Group members providing coffee attend free). We start at 10.45. Numbers are limited by room size, so come early to avoid disappointment! **Babs Jones**

No meeting in August

10th Sept: From Gout to Heart Disease

Dorian Haskard presents the surprising story of a secret medicine. The front page of 18th century newspapers usually advertised a wide range of propriety panaceas. One such medicine turned out to be an almost miraculous treatment for gout, a painful arthritis that was a scourge of the Georgian era, which most doctors considered untreatable. The talk will track this medicine's long chequered career - from treating gout to genetically modifying plants, to attempting to cure cancer and now to preventing heart attacks.

Coffee by Visiting Somerset Churches

8th October: The Women Who Went Round the World

Sally Smith, a journalist and author, will present the extraordinary stories of true pioneers in global circumnavigation. Appropriately, this year is the 250th anniversary of the very first women to go round the world.

Coffee by Book Group 2

12th November: A Long-distance Walk from Florence to Rome

Paul James likes to walk; very long walks! The retired headteacher will tell us how he tramped 162 miles to raise money for Winston's Wish, a charity supporting children after the death of a parent or sibling.

Coffee by Making Music Group

10th December: Falling with Style Lottie Dale has been on many adventures, and this month she will entertain us with another amusing story.

Coffee by Sunday Lunch Group

TRIPS

KILLERTON HOUSE

Wednesday 15th October

Depart: Wells Bus Station 9.00

Cost: £23 (for NT members)

(additional £13 for non-members)

Killerton house is home to the National Trust's biggest fashion collection, with more than 20,000 items of historic clothing and accessories. The core collection, which includes pieces from as far back as the 17th century, was begun by Paulise de Bush, before it was first shown at Killerton in 1978.



Emerald green 20's-style shoes from the Killerton fashion collection

Here is the Beech Walk in autumn at Killerton: one of the many garden walks, which should be spectacular in October.

As for refreshments, the **Stables Coffee Shop**, previously home to the many horses used on the estate for work and leisure, serves a range of snacks and drinks. **Killerton Kitchen Café** at the rear of the house, also serves a large selection of hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks.

This exhibition features a selection of elegant 1920s fashions, including bead-embroidered evening gowns, a gold brocade tea gown, dresses inspired by Egyptian designs, and sports attire. Visitors can expect to see garments that reflect the fashion of the time, including drop-waisted dresses, cloche hats, beaded bags and shoes.



Liz Lee & Val Leith

EVENTS

HARVEST CELEBRATION

Thursday 2nd October

Wells Football Club

When we celebrate harvest it's certainly a time for thanksgiving - and also the days are shortening, bringing to an end the magnificent summer we have enjoyed, despite the fact at times it was proving too hot for many of us!

Last year the Lawrence Centre was so appreciative of the wonderful fruit and vegetables that we gave them in celebration of Harvest, that this year I think it would be a nice gesture to do the same again.

You were all so generous with your contributions last year and it would be lovely if you can bring a piece of fruit, or some vegetables again this time round. Flowers would be welcome too, which I am sure their members would get great pleasure from in their lounge.



Marian Harding

CHRISTMAS MEAL

Saturday 13th December

Henton Village Hall

It's hard to believe that Christmas is only a few months away and we will soon be celebrating the festive season again. Finding a different venue this year was a bit of a task, and so I have come up with something completely different...

I have booked the lovely **Village Hall at Henton**, a few miles outside Wells and well known to many of our members. We have a first-class caterer, who has put together a fantastic menu of **three courses of festive food** at an all-inclusive price of **£31.00 per person**. Please bring along your own favourite drink to accompany the meal, as there is no bar in the Hall - and enjoy getting into the festive spirit.

Book early, as there are a limited number of places this year.

Please make your meal selection from the menu, and send it to me, together with your application form by **28th November** to ensure a place.

Marian Harding

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

If you belong to one of our many Interest Groups – then please read on...

There are many factors that make it imperative to let your Group Leader know if you are planning to attend your next meeting. This could be because of the size of the venue, the number of people required to make a meeting viable, catering, or financial considerations.

It would be much appreciated if you could let your Group Leader know in advance, if you are attending a meeting or not, allowing them to manage their Group efficiently and effectively. Thanks so much.

Time for a Revival?

We were recently looking at groups that no longer meet, with a view to finding out whether there was interest in re-establishing them. There may be other groups you can think of, but here's a list of discontinued groups:

Beginners Watercolours	Croquet
French Intermediate	Garden Visits
Life Sciences	Open Minds
Singing for Pleasure	Wildflower Walks
You the Jury	

Currently, we also have no **Craft Groups**, and we would be very keen to support anyone with an interest in starting one. Would you be prepared to get involved, helping to get any of these groups going again? If so, please contact me.

Sue Revell

APPRECIATING LITERATURE

We are a book group for people who enjoy reading and discussing an eclectic range of books. A really good session is when we find our views differ, as this encourages us to consider another point of view. Most months there is a set book to read, but once or twice a year we bring our own choices to the meeting. We find this is a wonderful way of exploring a range of different books.

Books we have read recently include ***The Queen of Dirt Island*** by Donal Ryan, ***The Absolutist*** by John Boyne and ***The Lost Daughter*** by Elena Ferrante.

At present we are full and have a waiting list, but if you are interested in more information, please contact me – or perhaps someone would consider setting up another book group?

Pamela

ART APPRECIATION

We meet on the first Monday in the month at 2.30 in the Seager Hall in Union Street, when we watch videos on art history. We have a short break for refreshments, when we informally discuss what we have been watching.



The Standard of Ur – peace side

In September we will be watching a **Great Courses DVD: Masterpieces of the Ancient World**, which offers a broad and comprehensive survey of art in the ancient world. Over the course of 36 lectures, the lecturer takes you “on a grand journey around the world to see some of the greatest works of art ever created and to explore the cultures that made them.”

Then we will go on to watch another great **Courses DVD: Art across the Ages**. A course in Western visual art “that serves as both a mind-broadening survey and an essential introduction.” If you are interested in art history, and in joining us, please contact me.

Jenny

ASTRONOMY & COSMOLOGY

We continue to meet at Wells Museum on the first Monday of every month and have been delighted to welcome several new members recently, all of whom bring new knowledge, experience and perspectives to our discussions.

The format of our meetings is quite informal. We look at articles collected by members from magazines and the internet, and try to make sense of what is going on in the world of professional astronomy.

Topics covered recently include:

Could the Sun Unleash Dangerous Superflares toward Earth?,

First images from the new Vera C. Rubin Observatory,

What would Aliens see if they pointed their telescopes at us?



A small section of the Vera C. Rubin Observatory's total view of the Virgo Cluster shows two prominent spiral galaxies (*lower right*), three merging galaxies (*upper right*), several groups of distant galaxies, many stars in the Milky Way galaxy, and more.
NSF-DOE Vera C. Rubin Observatory

We still have room for a few more members, so hurry along if you would like to join us.

Stephen

CANASTA

We have had a good start to this new group: very enthusiastic learners, who have tried hard and gained experience in this enjoyable card game.

With room hire and various interventions of life, we have now moved to Wednesdays only for this group, who from September onwards will be known as the IMPROVERS group. It is still not open to new members, as I wish to get them up to speed on playing, enjoying the game and extending the strategies that they are learning, as they attend. Amalgamating the two groups has made the sessions more enjoyable, with a good mix of personalities.

Julia (Jules)

CHEMISTRY

This group considers chemistry and how it influences many aspects of everyday life. Some members have a broad knowledge of chemistry, and this is shared with others in the group, who benefit from carrying out research into associated topics. The aim of the group is to broaden everyone's understanding of the subject, and presentations are prepared by those members who wish to do so. The rest of each meeting is taken up with discussion and socializing with like-minded members. We meet in members' homes around Wells, in the afternoon on the second Tuesday of each month, so if you think that you would like to join us and widen your interests, please call me for a preliminary chat, when I can give you more information about the group's activities.

Bob

CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH

We meet in Pilton on the second and fourth Friday afternoon of the month for a chat – but entirely in French – in order to prevent us getting too rusty in the use of this language. Our topics are varied and ideally, we will have prepared some thoughts on a subject which could attract input from all members.

Amongst our group we have members who have spent a long time in France and are therefore able to guide those with less knowledge of the language. Currently we have space for new members, so why not come along and see if it is right for you?

John

CREATIVE WRITING

We are a busy group and now have three spaces for any new and enthusiastic writers out there. We are people who write stories, poems, autobiographies, descriptive observations and one act plays. We have a rest after our first hour, with tea, coffee, biscuits and sometimes cakes. We are friends who enjoy writing and meeting every two weeks to share our work - and would make you welcome if you care to join us.

Elizabeth

CURRENT AFFAIRS 2

We are pleased to continue as Group Leaders for the stimulating and thought-provoking discussions that take place in this group. The rise of social media platforms has sometimes resulted in misinformation, so discussions among peers can address inaccuracies and reveal contesting legitimate points of view, thereby increasing awareness for all participating members of the group.

During the last few months, we have discussed:

- The rise of 'the right' in European Politics
- Britain's failed attempts to eradicate child poverty
- The dangers posed by Trump's American Imperialism
- The tensions arising from van dwellers living on Bristol Downs
- Keir Starmer's reaction to Kneecap performing at Glastonbury Festival
- Israel: international law and its political assassinations
- Rutte and his Nato Colleagues' obsequiousness towards Trump

Our meetings take place from 2.00 to 4.00 on the first Tuesday of the month at Wells Library. Whilst the subjects are circulated in advance, members are always invited to suggest topics(s) for discussion during the meeting. Thus, everybody can contribute to an in-depth analysis, resulting in each session being a valuable learning process for everyone.

We extend our thanks to all our members for making this group such an enjoyable and worthwhile experience. Our group is now full, however we have a waiting list and encourage interested members to start a new Current Affairs 3 group.

Alan & Linda

CYCLING

Riding as Equals

I want to take a moment to talk about something that means a lot to me. Being one of only three women who ride regularly in this cycling group, you might think that that would make us feel out of place, but the truth is, we feel nothing but respect and camaraderie every time we ride. From the very first day, we weren't treated as 'the women in the group', we were simply cyclists. We take our turns to lead, push through the tough climbs, and enjoy the thrill of the descent, just like everyone else. There's no special treatment, no hesitation, just mutual respect for the effort, the endurance, and the love of the ride.



Lunch Stop



Cafe 33, Brean

We know that in some sports, and in some groups, women still have to prove that they belong. But here, we don't have to prove anything. We are welcomed, encouraged, and most importantly, treated as equals. That's what makes this group so special.

Thank you to our fellow riders, to the ones who push us, challenge us, and celebrate the miles with us, because when we ride together, we all move forward. Now, let's get back on the road and enjoy the ride.

Linda

Don't be put off riding with the Cycling Group if you're a woman: ladies are welcome. There are only a few of us and it would be nice if more could join. We go out for led rides on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (just once a month during the winter) and usually ride for around 25 to 30 miles. We normally start the ride within a 20-mile radius of Wells and don't avoid hills. Some of the group ride e-bikes, but there are also several on 'old fashioned' mechanical bikes. We stop for coffee during the morning and then have a lunch break at a convenient cafe or pub.

We now also have 'cafe rides.' We started these during the winter, as a way of the group meeting up when the weather was not necessarily conducive to day long rides. Cafe rides are a very informal arrangement, where we can meet up at a predesignated coffee stop (within an hour's ride from Wells) at 10.30 and then we can cycle off and do our own thing, or groups of riders can decide themselves to go on elsewhere. There is no designated leader for these rides - and anyone who is also not riding at that time can drive to the coffee stop too. These have been so well attended over the winter months that we have decided to extend them to run throughout the year. They run on the Thursdays, when we do not have a 'Leader Led Ride.'

We've been on rides where we are the only females amongst several men - but have never been made to feel unwelcome. We are a friendly bunch, so come along and give it a go! The advantage of cycling with several male riders is that they have a wealth of mechanical knowledge and more muscle power - so come in very handy should there be an issue whilst out on a ride.

Jane and Denise

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

We meet monthly at the Portway Annexe, dividing our time between monthly projects and photography outings. Each month, the group chooses a simple theme for its project, most recently **Wells without Cliché, Square Aspect Ratio** and **100 metres**. Members select relevant photos taken during the month and share them with the group at the next meeting.

The group also organizes outings to various locations to take pictures. Recent visits have included Litton Reservoirs, Hauser and Wirth, Beacon Hill Wood, the East Somerset Railway, Burnham-on-Sea, Berrow and Brean Down. Photos taken on outings are also shared at the monthly meetings.

We're always open to recruiting new members. You don't need an expensive camera or extensive knowledge to join—several of our members capture excellent images using their phones! Our main aim is to encourage each other to get out and take photos. We also pride ourselves on being friendly and supportive. Members are encouraged to share their work and receive constructive feedback. There is no competition within the group; the emphasis is on learning and enjoyment. Please contact me if you are interested.



The Wreck by Denise Bailey

Donald

EASY CYCLING RIDES

Our rides are held on the first Wednesday of every month (weather permitting) and are at a fairly gentle pace over a distance of around twenty miles. We occasionally do a local ride from Wells, but more often than not, we go a little further afield with car assistance. The photo shows members of the group ready to start the ride – this time from West Lydford. As much as possible we choose the country lanes while, at the same time, avoiding most of the hills!

John



GEOLOGY



After three summer cancellations due to wet and windy weather, we eventually made it to **Portishead** in June, with a group of 16 keen geologists and a four-legged recruit! The very complicated geology didn't disappoint and the site is always worth a repeat visit. We have had a full programme of field trips close to home and further afield, including a return visit to **Charterhouse** to explore more of the geology and

industrial archaeology - and a chance to examine the building stones of Glastonbury.

One of the highlights of the last year was a return to **Kilve** to see the unusual mud volcanoes which are some of the best examples in Europe. They were formed 250 million years ago when sediment-laden water was forced to the surface, driven by pressure and methane.

The mud volcanoes on the low tide line are part of this spectacular and accessible coast, which also includes a truly magnificent wave cut platform.

We travelled further west in April to meet up with Barnstable u3a Geology group. They hosted us at



Mud Volcanoes

Fremington Quay on the Tarka Trail. It was great to meet up with another group of amateur geologists and explore a different part of the coastline which they are familiar with. There was some impressive folding and faulting. An added bonus was two Barrel Jellyfish in the estuary, which are a direct relic of life 500 million years ago. We plan to reciprocate next year with a field trip in our area.

At the end of July, we had a return to **Gully Cave in Ebbor Gorge**. Professor Danielle Shreve has been excavating there since 2006 and the remains of over 6,000 mammals and birds have been found at this unique site. The record of life on Mendip over 70,000 years shows the adaptation of wildlife during the last Ice Age and the warmer periods within that. Her team has found the remains of woolly mammoth, arctic fox, brown bears and very large hyenas! The fossil evidence is playing an important role in tackling modern conservation challenges, including nature restoration and species reintroduction. Danielle will be guest speaker for the local history group on 20th May next year.



Etches Collection, Kimmeridge

The highlight of the year was a trip to the **Etches Collection at Kimmeridge**. Steve Etches has been collecting fossils in this part of the Jurassic Coast for over 40 years. These include the magnificent pliosaur featured on the BBC documentary 'Attenborough and the Giant Sea Monster'. We were hosted by the team there, which included a talk on the Jurassic Coast, workshops, a guided tour of this special museum and a question-and-answer session with Steve Etches himself. We have had some great field trips this year, but the trip to Kimmeridge was very special and the Etches Collection is definitely worth a visit.

We also have a programme of talks given by members of the group, which have been varied, informative and entertaining. There was a **volcanic theme** to a number of the talks; we visited David Rowley at Wells Cathedral School for an explosive demonstration on volcanoes, Dr Peter Hardy talked to us about living with the volcano on the island of Santorini, Hilary looked at lava lakes, Cherrie took us to the Giant's Causeway and we looked at volcanicity in Sicily. Jane's history of plate tectonics gave us a context for the reasons behind these events.



Walford's talk about the last Ice Age was a useful background for our visit to Gully Cave, Stephen kept us local with Mercian Mudstones, Cathy explored Mysterious Megaliths and some of the logistics of how they were constructed. This was the talk which got the prize for the most amazing visual aids!



1 Amazing Visual Aids

We have plenty planned for the next year, so come and join us for talks on the first Friday of the month and field trips on a middle Monday. No previous knowledge is necessary. We are a totally mixed ability and friendly group.

Susan



GERMAN CONVERSATION

After sustained informal conversation (and refreshments) our meetings generally focus on a prepared study piece. By chance the most recent articles, which can be accessed at https://wells.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/german-conversation/ have had a more up-to-date focus than usual.



One exception was the meeting when we scrutinised **Albert Schweitzer** from a modern perspective. He's been a popular role model, due to his humanitarian work in Gabon (where he died in 1965). His reluctance to criticise the Nazi regime – after WW2, as well as previously – seems surprising, since his own Jewish wife was just one of his African hospital workers who'd been forced to leave Germany. Schweitzer's views may have been typical for Europeans born in 1875, but they seem patronising now. He wanted to civilise his African patients, as well as healing them. "I'm your brother, but I'm your big brother" is claimed to be a representative sentiment.

Although the **German electoral system** strives to be politically representative, one recent article shows that a Parliament that is dominated by older men can't be considered diverse! German women are more reluctant to join political parties than men and they are less likely to be elected, even for parties that prepare a representative list of candidates. Those with a migration background are also under-represented. About 30% of the population apparently belong to this surprisingly large group (which isn't clearly defined, e.g. linked to arrivals since 1950).

Other articles have included dealing with post-migration trauma, and wishing to attract US scientists disadvantaged by Trump's academic funding cuts. An Austrian newspaper covered the recent selection of Blaise Metreweli as the first female head of MI6. This confirms that the **British Secret Service** is inextricably linked to James Bond across the globe! Her appointment is given as an example of reality catching up with fiction, because 'the cool Judi Dench played M between 1995 and 2015.' Note that 'cool' has become one of the many English words used in modern German!



Our meetings continue to be well attended, so new group members still seem impractical.

Richard

ITALIAN CONVERSATION

Italian Conversation continues to flow on the first and third Thursday of each month. Summer always sees a dip in attendance, but with an average of seven

people, we are never short of things to discuss in our two hours! The last two months have been spent exploring the heel and toe of Italy, from Trulli in La Puglia to Parco Naturale di Nebrodi in Sicilia. Some of our offerings to the group provide facts and information, which help us learn more about the various regions, and others can provide insight from past trips and holidays.

One member has been walking the Via Francigena, a pilgrimage route from the Middle Ages, and was able to give us a wonderful account of his very solitary, but fascinating walk through La Puglia.

Now we are moving northward again - Friuli in August maybe hot, but there looks to be a lot of variation and maybe the climate of the Friulian plain is mainly humid subtropical. The climate in this area is suitable for growing white wine grapes and 2.5% of wine produced in Italy comes from this region. The hills however have a continental climate, and the mountainous regions have an alpine climate.

We meet at the Old Pumhouse, Rowdens Road. For more information, please contact me.



Denise

JAZZ, SWING & CROONERS

As I write, we are in the middle of our summer break, and what a hot one it is too! There are jazz festivals going on around the country but, speaking for myself, the prospect of traipsing around from venue to venue in this heat does not really appeal.

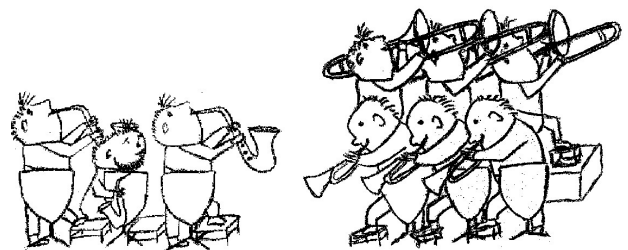
However, preparations for our next season are beginning; we have applied to book the room in the Museum and our play lists will start with our continuing haphazard way through the alphabet. When October comes around (Thursday 16th 2.00 to 4.00) we will begin with the horrible letter 'Q'! Curiously enough I can find enough in modern jazz to make up a play list, but when you look at older jazz, Qs are in very short supply!

Last year I emailed details of a few jazz programmes on TV that I had noticed, but this summer there don't seem to be any - and I'm sure we aren't the only people who would enjoy more.

We are a fairly small group and new members are welcome. We play tracks on CDs and cover the whole of jazz, from its start in New Orleans up to contemporary bands, with a few crooners from the '30s to '50s, plus more modern jazz singers too.

As ever I must thank my co-presenter Bob, and also Pete who actually drives the sound equipment, not forgetting our wives for all their help and tolerance.

Nick



well.....most of the boys play together.

HISTORY (INDIA)

We enjoy finding out about various historical developments worldwide - most of our members have no specific background in history and anyone can join. We watch DVDs presented by an academic and then engage in a group discussion on those aspects we found most interesting.



The current topic is **A History of India** in 36 half-hour lectures on DVD. "India is home to some of the world's oldest, greatest, and most successful civilizations. Today the South Asian subcontinent contains 20% of the world's population and is a thriving centre for global business. Over the past 5,000

Armies built around elephants years, the subcontinent has

been home to a rich tapestry of peoples and cultures. With its strategic location and unique geography, the lands east of the Indus River have long been a central hub for trade, migration, and cultural exchange. Roughly the size of continental Europe, India (along with its neighbours Pakistan and Bangladesh) contains a myriad of ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes, religions, and cultural mores. The lectures survey South Asia, from its earliest societies along the Indus and Ganges rivers, through to the modern challenges of the 21st century."

So, if you have an interest in history, and would like to find out more about our group, please contact me.

Tim

LOCAL HISTORY

We have continued to have a varied range of speakers and visits with a local theme. In April we visited **Burcott Water Mill** just outside Wells, which dates back to the Domesday Book of 1086 and is only one of a very few working mills in the country today. We had an extensive demonstration of the milling process to the finished result

Amy Frost gave us an excellent talk in May about the **Bombing of Bath**. Her PhD research compared parts of Bath, which were bombed during the Second World War, how they are now, and the change that bombing brought about.

June saw us once again leaving the Museum to visit **Coates Willow**

Farm near Taunton. The numbers on the visit were disappointing, but those who did come had an excellent insight into the treatment of willow, from being cut to the final basket ware. A labour-intensive occupation, but a wonderful finished product which deserves to be treasured. Willow was used in the past for so many articles, and their current production includes willow coffins. And we ended with a delicious lunch in the cafe!

Back to the museum in July for a talk by Roger Halse, who spoke about the **Somersetshire Coal Canal**. Roger has a collection of photographs linked to the canal, many of which took one back to a different era. He has researched this canal for many years and gave us a very interesting explanation of its building and eventual demise.

We meet in Wells Museum on the third Wednesday of the month, coffee being served at 10.15 and the talk starting at 11.00. We charge £3.00 to cover hall hire, speaker fees and coffee.



Burcott Water Mill



Coates Willow Farm

Jane

LOCAL HISTORY APPEAL

We have been organising this group since 2018, finding interesting speakers and arranging visits.

I think I can say that we have enjoyed the process most of the time,
but we are at a stage where we need extra people on our small committee, to help with the
organisation.

One youthful 90-year-old threatens to abandon us if help is not forthcoming!

We have over 100 members in this group, so there must be someone out there who is prepared to
give a little of their time to help?

We would be very disappointed if the group had to close, so if you feel you would like to help,
please make yourself known to Maureen,
or myself to discuss this further.

Jane ,



MOTO

Members On Their Own continues with its programme of visiting speakers and home-grown entertainment. From within the group various members are sharing fascinating stories of their own personal histories. Forthcoming examples include anecdotes of life in India during the 20th Century



and those of a WW2 evacuee who stayed on after the war. The memories of a retired policeman from the Traffic Division finished with a session inviting members to try some of the artefacts for size!

Summer outings have included a trip to the fresh produce market, followed by lunch at Rocky Mountain at Masbury. During our August break, we gathered for a Cream Tea in The Loft Café in the Cathedral.

We welcome new members and are pleased to receive new ideas for future activities.

Christine

MUSIC APPRECIATION

We are looking forward to meeting in September after our summer break, at 2.00 on the first and third Wednesday of each month, at Wellfield Barn. The first meeting of the new season will be on 3rd September.

We are a relaxed and friendly group of like-minded people, some of whom take turns in choosing the afternoon's programme. The subject may be a composer, an instrument, or a musical theme - or even our version of 'Desert Island Discs' or 'Private Passions.'

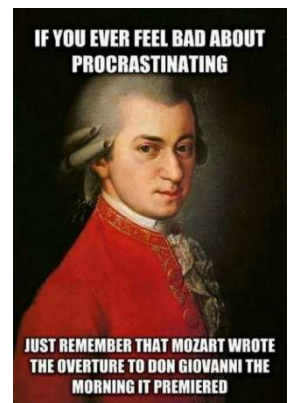
On occasions, we have an afternoon of members' choices, when we bring our selection to share with others. This is done with the help of CDs, websites and books. We listen to the music for a couple of hours, followed by tea and chat (not always about the music!)

From the beginning of this year, we have explored, inter alia, *The Four Seasons*, contrasting Vivaldi with *Piazzolla* (a 20th Century Argentinian tango), *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, a different aspect of Tchaikovsky's music (inspired by a Christmas present), CD makeweights, music from the 16th Century, an introduction to a 19th Century double bass virtuoso - and also our own version of music for the anniversary of VE day - which also doubled as a birthday celebration of two of our members!

The music is usually classical, though as the themes may be suggested by the members, you never know - we have a varied diet! If you like and appreciate classical music, please get in touch with Virginia.

New members are very welcome.

Virginia & Jane

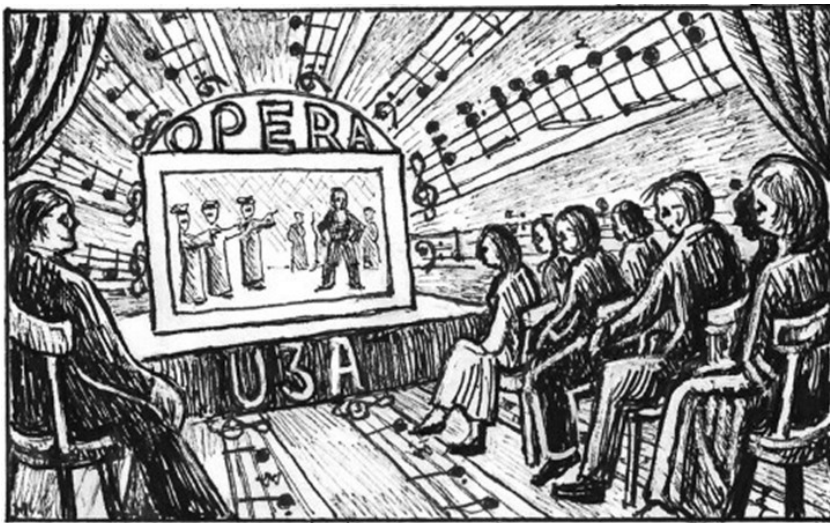


OPERA

Within our annually chosen playlist, we've just watched a very varied selection from the Late Romantic era. We started with Johann Strauss' popular *Die Fledermaus* from 1874, watching a production with Brigitte Fassbaender as Orlofsky. I'm sure that nothing we've watched during the last twelve months competes with the exceptional ballroom scene in the middle of this Bavarian production, conducted by Carlos Kleiber. He was an eccentric genius, characterised by a demand that he should be remunerated for one undertaking, with a custom-built Audi!

Mussorgsky's 1874 *Boris Godunov* is a longer opera that we had to split across two sessions. Apart from this work, this Russian composer is best remembered for one or two orchestral tone poems. It was interesting to watch this very individual piece (which – similar to his friend Borodin's *Prince Igor* – is a sequence of musical tableau, rather than a more orthodox drama). *Boris Godunov* was affected by Tsarist censors, and it's difficult to imagine what would have materialised if Mussorgsky had been allowed more freedom.

We concluded this sequence by watching *Falstaff*, Verdi's final masterpiece in an entertaining Covent Garden production. He returned to comedy after a 53-year gap, and attended the La Scala première at the age of 79 (which puts him around the middle of our u3a age range)! Verdi deftly described this piece as a depiction of character, rather than a conventional opera buffa. Many attractive ensembles are sung by a large cast of Shakespearean characters. Compared with the passionate arias (and smaller ensembles) of the composer's many fine tragedies, the subtler nuances of Verdi's *Falstaff* have proved an acquired taste for some from 1893 onwards.



Details of each performance (see https://wells.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/opera-group/) are sent out in advance. Plenty of room is available for new members to join our Town Hall meetings! Many thanks to Cathy Adeane for illustrating one of our sessions.

Richard

OUT & ABOUT

This is a group of great variety: from visits to places within an hour's drive of Wells, to lunches and skittles at a local pub or hotel. Our outings often include food of some sort, when we get together and socialise. We make a small charge of £3.00 to join the group (to cover room hire, gratuities or prizes etc.). All our visits require members to get themselves there, but if you do not drive, we always offer lifts (a donation towards fuel for the driver is appreciated) or you can car share with a friend when possible.



In May we visited **Brown & Forrest Smokery**, at Hambridge near Langport, where we went into the smokery and were given a detailed description of the process of smoking different meats, fish and cheeses. This was followed by a delicious lunch of the goodies produced there - and many of us took advantage of their shop to buy more!

We were lucky with a glorious sunny day in June to visit **The Somerset Lavender Farm** at Faulkland, when the lavender was at its best. We were given a detailed talk about the many varieties of lavender and how to look after them. This was followed by a cream tea, and many of us enjoyed home-made lavender scones, after which we wandered around the fields and were tempted by the plants and lavender products for sale in the shop.





At the beginning of July, we had a guided backstage tour at the **Bristol Old Vic** by a very enthusiastic guide. We learnt the entire history of the theatre from 1766 to the present day, including interesting anecdotes of the life of the actors. We also went up into the roof to see the 'thunder roll', invented in 1780s, to give the effect of thunder during performance

In July, we visited **Batcombe House Gardens**, with a guided tour around the magnificent gardens, including romantic roses, the wildflower meadow, kitchen garden and much more, by the head gardener Tom. This was followed by tea and cake sitting beside the swimming pool.



In the autumn, following our visit to Taunton Museum last March, we are arranging a trip to the **Somerset Heritage Centre**, where many local treasures are stored. This should be followed by a visit to Charlie Bigham's kitchens at Dulcote. Our year will end with a **skittles match, held at the Crossways**, along with their delicious buffet lunch. We are already making plans for 2026, but we always ask members to suggest new places they would like to visit and to do some of the ground work, then our committee can take over the administration for the visit.

Ann

PAINTING FOR PLEASURE



We have continued to grow, with some new members joining recently. All are made welcome, whatever the medium and whatever the standard. No judging! Just helpful and supportive advice where requested. Here are a couple of examples of our work.

Chris

PETANQUE 1 & 2

Imagine this: in a sun-drenched corner of a village in France, a peaceful game is underway. It's the end of 'an end,' and now, huddled together on the piste the elderly gentlemen debate, "*Qui est le plus proche?*" Now picture this: in a shady corner of Wells Football Ground, a peaceful game is underway. u3a members huddle together to determine, "*Who's the nearest?*" Yes, it's PÉTANQUE, or BOULES!

The game, deeply rooted in French culture, is played on Mondays and Thursdays. It's easy to learn, can be competitive, but above all, provides fresh air, fun and fellowship for its members. The game was originally created in Provence in 1907. Today's game has been slightly adapted. The story goes that in the village of Ciotat one elderly man, Jules Lenoir, who loved playing, was no longer able to run because of his rheumatism, so his friend, a local cafe owner, adapted the game so that it is now played from a standing position with feet together. The word pétanque actually derives from the French phrase 'pieds tonqués' which means 'feet together.' Ideal for u3a members! Interested?

Contact for the Monday group, **Peter**

Contact for the Thursday group, **Mike**

PLAY READING

We continue to read with enthusiasm and determination, and find time to discuss the play, its success or otherwise. Some did not enjoy **A Taste of Honey**, but it did promote discussion of our memories of the 'swinging sixties'! We then tried an old favourite Alan Ayckbourn's **Living Together**, which we found a light relief. Our summer season finished with **Heatstroke** by Eric Chapple - he of Rising Damp fame.

We meet again on 10th September, in the library at 2.00 for 2.30. We currently have some spaces, but there comes a point at about 14 members when it becomes difficult to manage a successful play reading, to ensure everyone gets a fair crack of the whip.

Jenny

POETRY APPRECIATION

*Which poet was also well-known for writing regular jazz record reviews for the Daily Telegraph between 1961 and 1971. **



We meet every two weeks to read poems by a selected poet, or poems on a particular subject, all chosen by our members. This year we explored poetry as diverse as The Brontë sisters and James Joyce (I for one never knew he wrote poetry) as well as modern poets such as Caroline Bird and Jo Shapcott.

Each summer, before our August break, we enjoy the hospitality of one of our members in Wilton. This time the subject was **War and Peace**: most appropriate, as in the past, Wilton suffered two important battles, one in 871 between King Alfred and the Vikings, and the other in 1143, during an early civil war known as the Anarchy, between Stephen and Maude/Matilda. There was also a literary connection, as in Tudor times the then Countess of Pembroke in Wilton House presided over an 'Arcadia' of artists, writers and poets, including Shakespeare, and the likely first production of **As You Like It!**

If you would like to join us, please contact the group leader.

* *The poet was Philip Larkin*

Norman

READING FOR PLEASURE

Do you like reading? Are you interested in studying fiction, from the classics to recent novels, which deserve to become classics? If so, why not consider joining our group, whose members choose what we read?

We are a small friendly group who meet in Wells Library on the last Thursday of the month from 12.00 till 2.00. Please contact me for further information.

Rob

SATURDAY LUNCH GROUP

Our group continues to be healthy and we very much enjoy our lunches together. We've had good and not so good experiences, but I don't like to give an opinion on where we have visited, as it is a matter of personal taste - but I do have to say service, and particularly speed of service, is almost as important as the standard of the food. As we usually pre-order, we do not expect to wait long for our food but, sometimes do!

Since my last report we have been to the **Pheasant** in Wookey, the **Bear Inn** in Street and **Bills** in Clark's Village. We have visits planned to the **Sheppey Inn** at Godney and **Sadlers Wine Bar** (which was the Courtyard Restaurant) in Wells.

Although most of us know each other well and come every time, new members are always welcomed and become valued members of the group. We congratulate one of our members on their 90th birthday **Sadlers Wine Bar** in August.

If you fancy having lunch once a month with people who will become friends, please contact me. Thinking about 'people who will become friends,' it reminds me of a friend who lives in Glasgow and was feeling isolated: I suggested she contact her local u3a. She did and has already made a number of new friends!



Liz

SHAKESPEARE

Due to various extended holidays and other unavoidable postponements, this has been a rather sparse spring/summer session for the group.

However, we have managed to view, examine and discuss in detail, two plays which we have not visited for some time: ***A Winter's Tale***, not seen since 2018, and ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, last viewed in 2015. Refreshing to see these two again. We also had some discussion on the film version of ***Anthony and Cleopatra***, deciding that, actors apart, it was to say the least, something of a travesty in comparison with Shakespeare's original.

One or two members have left this summer, so I will contact those on the reserve list before we start the next session in September, to see if they are still interested in joining us.

Graham

THEATRE GROUP

This summer members enjoyed a new production by Matthew Bourne of ***Midnight Bell***, set in a bar of that name during the First World War. We also saw a production of ***By Royal Appointment*** by Daisy Goodwin at Theatre Royal Bath - a two hander about the late Queen and her dresser.

There was also a Ralph Fiennes season of three plays at the Theatre Royal. The first of which was a new play by David Hare, ***Grace Pervades***, about Henry Irving and Ellen Terry when they reigned supreme over the London stage: 23 members went in July. The second play was also a new one, ***Small Hotel***, starring Ralph Fiennes - and finally his first time producing Shakespeare: ***As You Like It***. Ralph Fiennes says the Theatre Royal is his favourite theatre and throughout the season he was the actor/manager. Very exciting!

In November, 22 of our members are going to ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** in Bath and in March we will see a musical, ***Operation Mincemeat***. Finally, also next March, the Tobacco Factory are putting on another of their excellent Shakespeare productions, ***Macbeth***, for which I shall soon be reserving tickets. I don't like the current trend of having to book seats so far ahead, but the shows get booked up so quickly that I have no alternative.

We now have over 90 members, which is great, but increasingly we travel by coach rather than minibus and everything, including transport, gets more expensive.

Anthea

VISITING SOMERSET CHURCHES

We have toured three particularly interesting and beautiful churches this summer. In May we visited the small and lovely **Cameley Church**. Wickham, in his *Churches of Somerset*, says that “One forgotten little church in the Mendip country, though structurally medieval of various dates, has been left intact in its 18th century condition. As such, Cameley must be one of the best period pieces in England.” We loved its simplicity and authenticity.

In June, we were guided around **St Michael's in Compton Martin**. This is one of just three Norman churches in Somerset and its Norman heritage is beautifully preserved, including a 12th century dovecote built into the church and a breathtakingly lovely Chancel. In addition to our tour, we were treated to an illustrated history of the church, village and community by our knowledgeable guides.



July's visit was to **St Andrew's church in Mells**. This lovely church's history is interwoven with that of the Horner family. We were very privileged in being guided by a member of the family, the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, who generously gave us much of his time and extensive knowledge of the church and his family history. This made the visit especially enjoyable and memorable for those of us present.

Carolyn



WALKING 1

There is much more to walking than putting one foot in front of the other, although that is pretty necessary. If anyone thought we only looked and admired the landscape: nature in all its moods, the topography, the animals and birds, insects and fish too, please think on. There is a whole syllabus of mini, very mini tutorials, from our expert companions in archaeology, botany, history, geography, geology and what have you. It is a senior college of enlightenment!

All this and more we have absorbed these past few months, developing a very calm and placid outlook on life. Not yet on to cosmology or particle physics, but we have plenty of home spun philosophers.

Walking is character forming. The leaders are always welcoming, friendly and, as befits their roles, commanding and intrepid, invariably full of local history and knowledgeable. They lead us through muddy lanes and rocky paths in sunshine, rain, sleet and snow. These are sometimes a little demanding, rarely challenging: the occasional ploughed field, the odd awkward stile, always ending up with uplifting warm cheer and camaraderie and a great sense of 'one for all and all for one.' To regain then the welcome pub at the walk's end:

"O frabjous joy!"

Thus traversed the walkers these past few months around **Chilcompton, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Croscombe, Yardley Hill, Glastonbury Tor and Chew Valley Lake.**

Leaders delight in planning and leading the walks to which they volunteer. The walkers are always eager to find out what is beyond the next step along their walks of five miles or so. And they do so with good humour, sometimes of absurd quality – one walker bringing two left boots and another her husband's big over-trousers! Walking is an adventure on many planes. To absurdly paraphrase 'he who is tired of walking is tired of life!'

Stan



WINE APPRECIATION

We have been running since January 2017 and currently have 35 members. Several founder members still attend and I welcome their support. Sadly, we lost our dear friend Brian Clarke earlier this year, and he will be greatly missed.

In August we held our **Annual Garden Party**, for members and friends. Richard and Sue Leworthy hosted it again, for which we are very grateful: an evening of fizz, food and fun! We've also been busy tasting wines, every second Friday of the month, at St. Thomas Church Hall. New members are very welcome, no previous experience necessary!

In May, our guest speaker was unable to come, but fortunately I had the wines in my possession, so I took over the **Pinot Noir** presentation myself. We tasted examples from around the world, not forgetting where the grape's fame and fortune was made, in Burgundy. Elegance comes at a price and examples from Central Otago, New Zealand and The Sonoma Valley, California, prove how good they can be.

In June, I presented an evening of **Hidden Gems**: wines that could easily pass you by, as they are less known to your average Pinot Grigio wine drinker. I chose wines that had good reviews from my favourite wine correspondents, Tim Atkin, Victoria Moore and Jane MacQuitty. Two Greek wines went down particularly well, a white and a rosé, both from The Wine Society. We chilled down a Waitrose Beaujolais Villages (Gamay) and a Chinon (Cabernet Franc), from Morrison's, as the weather was so hot. Great wines with charcuterie, on a summer's day. Once a year I encourage members to bring a bottle along to share at the meeting and give us an insight into why they like it. We've come a long way since we were once presented with five Sauvignon Blancs, from New Zealand!

Peter Evans presented a Saint-Bris Sauvignon, but interestingly it was from the Chablis region of France; both unusual and delicious. Rob Parnell gave us a treat with a Penfold's Bin 128 Shiraz, a big oakywine, that will age beautifully for years, from Tesco £32.50. At a more modest level, the classy Sangiovese, from Emilia Romagna, at £10.00 Waitrose, was presented by Diane Stanton; French Rosés selected by Sue Revell and Ann Brown; from The Côtes Catalanes, a spicy red, Cabalie, presented by Jeanne Evans, a Pinot Noir, Kimbao, from Chile, by Tony Lane and an excellent value for money, vintage Cava, from The Wine Society, (under £10.00) courtesy of Sue Isherwood; all lovely wines.

John

A belated happy birthday to a long standing u3a member!

Bill and Jean Mackay have been stalwart supporters of Wells u3a for a long time and are always willing to give a helping hand when needed. For many years Bill has been Group Leader of the Walking Group, planning and testing out walks and completing all paperwork required for this role. After a very hot day last July, family and friends joined together to celebrate **Bill's 97th birthday** in their garden.

I am sure all of us who know Bill will be amazed that he is such a venerable age. His mental acuity is impressive and to add to this, he has just completed a ten mile walk to raise funds for the RUH Bath. His daughter, Katrina, arranged a training programme before the event and Bill rose to the challenge. They both completed the walk with flying colours, raising much needed funds for the hospital.



That July evening, in Jean's lovely garden, was a delightful combination of a birthday celebration and a happy reunion of friends, with delicious food, concluding with a birthday cake plus a dazzling firework, instead of all those candles. Many of us have enjoyed their generous hospitality and loyal friendship over the years. From the first day we joined a u3a coffee morning, they took Bruce and me under their wing. When I was widowed, they continued to give me friendly support at a time when it was desperately needed - and remains so to this day.



They just keep doing what they have always done. They are an example to us all to live our lives with grace and courage.

Ginny

Riviera Travel Offer



Did you know that the Third Age Trust has an arrangement with Riviera Travel to make a donation to any u3a when holiday bookings are made directly through them?

Riviera Travel will donate up to 10% of the total basic cost of your holiday as a charitable donation to your designated u3a. Any holiday booked with Riviera Travel is eligible and the commission covers holidays, tours, cruises and packages sold through Riviera Travel.

How it works:

- Make a booking by contacting Riviera Travel directly, simply mention you want to claim Affinity Commission for Wells u3a.
- At the end of your holiday, Riviera Travel will pay the commission to the Third Age Trust.
- After deducting a handling fee, the Trust will pass the commission on to Wells u3a. It can take a couple of months for the donation to be processed and then transferred to the nominated u3a.

For information on holidays with Riviera Travel interested members should call 01283 248304 or visit www.u3ariviera.co.uk to find out more about holidays and offers available.

N.B. It is important to mention u3a at the time of booking and to provide the name of the u3a you wish to nominate to receive the donation.

Since the start of the u3a in Wells successive Chairmen have been:

1993/95	Rosie Lean
1995/96	Michael Bradley
1996/98	Peter Lean
1998/2001	David Nasmyth
2004/07	Anne Walsh-Waring
2007/10	Tony Palmer
2010/12	Hazel Willmott
2012/15	Ray Bennett
2015	Roland Clark
2015/18	Bruce Bourquin
2018/19	Mike Lee
2019/23	Sue Revell
2023/25	Donald Branch

Life Members:

Rosie Lean

Virginia Naysmyth

Maureen Lofthouse

We are non-religious and non-political - and have three main principles:

The Third Age Principle

- Membership of u3a is open to all in their third age, defined not by a particular age, but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join u3a can do so.

The Self-help Learning Principle

- Members form interest groups covering a wide a range of topics and activities, by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. The prime motive is learning for its own sake, for enjoyment, not qualifications.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers, all are u3a members.

The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent within The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a, each is self-funded, with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.