
U3A in Ludlow

Newsletter 95

October 2018

There was a time, not long ago, when July to September meant another disappointing summer, but was cheered by what the newspapers called 'the silly season'. A scaffolder in Truro, following a bump on the head, might find he could speak Welsh; a dog in Carlisle could play the piano. Not this year, because the weather has been positively continental, and the papers have instead been full of the new Cold War, President Trump's tweets and the seemingly endless Brexit negotiations, which apparently mean either an exciting new dawn or a catastrophe. You choose.

I am going to continue with the 'serious in the summer' model, because the nearly six hundred members of U3A in Ludlow continue to deal with matters rather closer to home and probably more knowledgeably and effectively than politicians. I was invited to attend a study group whose members intended to talk about dementia in its various forms, its effect on sufferers and carers, and how U3A might help. The group was joined by the wife, now carer, of a group member who is no longer able to join in discussions as a result of advancing Alzheimer's. Personal experience suggests that the NHS is struggling with the increasing number of sufferers, especially since occupational therapists are in short supply. There is a long waiting time for assessments, during which the sufferer's condition continues its worrying and relentless deterioration. The main lesson for us appears to be that sufferers should continue to interact socially for as long as possible, even if their input is not the same as it used to be. And, in our concern for the patient, it is good not to forget the carer, whose burden is heavy and increases. U3A members can, and already do, help carers get social contact, by providing them with a short break from their responsibilities. And for both sufferers and carers we can provide contact and friendship - things at which U3A excels. The League of Friends of Ludlow Hospital, in partnership with the Assembly Rooms, will soon begin to hold special film performances for people with dementia and memory loss. Peter Law writes elsewhere in this Newsletter about how U3A Plus can support members confronting other issues as they get older.

I want to turn briefly now to an absolutely unrelated subject which is raised, perhaps a couple of times a year, in the Café Society group of which I am a member. It is euthanasia. This gets much more coverage in books and newspapers than once it did, but our law makers appear unmoved. 'Save up and go to Zurich' seems to be the policy. Each time the matter is discussed by the dozen or so members of our group there is unanimous agreement that the issue needs to be dealt with properly and in our own country. And this appears to be the considered view of most people who could be described as close to the sharp end. I wonder if this is a widely-held response in U3A. I'll leave that one with you.

Stuart McLaren
Chairman

Shropshire Network Study Day - Saturday 1 September 2018

Perhaps the overheard chatter during the coffee session about hearing aids, Senior Railcards and new hips might have given the game away, but, on the face of it, a programme offering everything from the arts ('How to read a painting', 'Investigating Dylan Thomas', 'The Brother Cadfael trail') to the sciences ('Ornithology', 'Zoonoses') and much in between, could have been worthy of the (somewhat younger) undergraduates who usually frequent the hallowed halls of Chester University's Building in the Guildhall Centre in Shrewsbury on the banks of the River Severn. As it was, the U3A Study Day was one for an organisation which prides itself on third-age learning. Over eighty members attended from thirteen U3As throughout and around the county. I didn't meet any other Ludlow members, though I am sure some must have been there. We were able to choose just two (of ten) two-hour sessions, a shame really, since inevitably there were several I could happily have attended. However, having had dogs all my life, and having lived in Australia for seven years, I opted for the temptingly titled 'Birds, beasts and bugs - why sharing might not be a good idea' and the more prosaic 'Some birds of Australia' which was presented by a very knowledgeable birder who is a member of the local U3A.

Fascinating facts abounded in 'Birds, beast and bugs' - an excellent session from a lecturer at Harper Adams University. For example, did you know that the adult tapeworm can measure more than 80 feet (25m) and can survive as long as 30 years in your gut, or that some Victorian women (rarely men) embraced the bizarre tapeworm diet? The idea was simple - if nauseating: the woman took a pill containing a tapeworm egg. Once hatched, the parasite grew inside the host, ingesting part of whatever she ate. In theory, this enabled the dieter to simultaneously lose weight and eat without worrying about calorie intake. Thank heavens that fad went out of favour.

Another gem I gathered in this very entertaining and informative session was that the common tick (which abounds in the Mortimer Forest, where I walk my dogs regularly) has a life cycle which consists of surviving for up to three years, enjoying just three (blood) meals, and having one sexual encounter after which the female lays up to 18000 eggs, then dying. Too much information for you? Probably.

In all, this was a worthwhile day, and many thanks should go to U3A Shrewsbury and the Shropshire Network coordinators for going to the trouble of organising it.

Ann Wittering

Solution to Numbers in U3A Ludlow's Europe in the February 2018 Newsletter

Derek received no solutions to this puzzle. In case you are interested, forty, deux, cinq, dix, cent, ein and acht are each spelt with letters in alphabetical order.

For the first seventy-four years of my life I lived in Surrey, until my husband passed away in 2000. After two years I moved to Ludlow to be near my daughter. As I did not know anyone in this area I immediately became a member of U3A. The groups I had intended to join were Music, Novels or Garden Visits, but at that time they were full; so it was suggested that I form a group of my own and I chose Music. As I do not play an instrument, it would have to be listening to CDs, of which I have a significant collection, mainly classical, but sometimes we strayed into jazz or lighter compositions and so Music for Pleasure was born. Various options were tried on the amount of music each person could play and it was agreed that three quarters of an hour before the tea break and three quarters of an hour after was the most popular. The members take turns to host the sessions on a rota system and the numbers are limited to about eight so as to be able to sit comfortably. Three of the original members are still with the Group, but of course over the years some have retired, left the district or, indeed,



passed away. We have never had a summer break, but there is no December meeting. However, I always gave a party in November where, instead of listening to CDs I brought a DVD, always connected with music in some way, followed by sherry and 'party fare' to which we all contributed.

I ran this Group for thirteen years and then, unfortunately, I fell and broke my hip. At this point I decided to resign. Coincidentally,

it was then that Geoff Neden joined the Group and I thought he was the ideal person to take over, which he has done very successfully.

I am now ninety years of age and happy to remain just a member, but I think I can conclude by saying it has always been a very happy group, and now, under Geoff's leadership, I am sure this will continue to be the case.

I think U3A is a wonderful organisation and I am so grateful to the inspired people who originated the whole idea.

Mavis Wilson

Music for Pleasure helped Mavis celebrate her ninetieth birthday.



Having recently assumed the role of Study Groups Adviser I was asked to contribute a piece for the Newsletter which would be of interest to U3A members. Despite the editor's excellent suggestions I must admit this seemed a daunting task as, four months in, I still have much to learn about the organisation and its members. Nevertheless, writing this piece gives me the opportunity to reflect on my experience of Ludlow U3A. I came to U3A having retired from a career in Further Education. U3A in Ludlow was commended to me by an acquaintance in Birmingham as the place to go to make friends when new to the area. I was immediately impressed. U3A is a unique organisation in that it offers and promotes adult learning without the constraints and burdens of regulation and bureaucracy experienced in public sector education. Coordinators can operate their groups as they see fit, without interference, to suit the needs and interests of their members and the subject they are studying. Members agree on a diverse range of subjects and learning methods to be employed. Some of the evidence of learning and skills development will be on display at the Study Group Fair in March 2019. The role of the coordinator, always a volunteer, varies and is often more than simply convenor of the meetings; some coordinators actively guide the learning of their groups to develop their knowledge. In other study groups, however, this is inappropriate and the onus is on the members to provide for their own learning, supported by each other. Members of study groups also form friendships, an equally important benefit which contributes to good mental health. In short, U3A seems to me to be a genuine community of learning which should be recognised for the treasure that it is. Without it, many people would find a noticeable hole in their lives.

If this is the case, it is important to ensure that we can provide opportunities for those who want to join a group. This means that new coordinators need to come forward who are willing to form new groups when there are waiting lists or if they have an idea for a new group. It is easy to feel isolated in a place like Ludlow, particularly if you are older and new to the area. U3A is uniquely placed to help and it is a pity if we have to turn people away. So, please do contact me to discuss your ideas for a new group. You will be given full support to carry out the role. Anyone for Old English?

Peony Carpenter

Christmas Animals Quiz (not just mammals)

Which animals are these? Send solutions to derek@ludlowballs.force9.co.uk

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Calculator | 2. Queue | 3. Bend and avoid | 4. Phlegm in throat |
| 5. Car | 6. Chocolate bar | 7. Quick | 8. Giant may cross here |
| 9. Carry | 10. Work hard | 11. Anxiety | 12. Boast |
| 13. Untidy garden | 14. Memory | 15. Plunged | 16. Tempter telling tales |
| 17. Fruit of loins | 18. Trade | 19. Secure | 20. Surprising when dark |

The title of the Ludlow U3A Shakespeare study group comes from *Hamlet*. The study group was formed some ten years ago. Four of today's students enrolled on the very first day, but we have also lost good friends through illness or death.

Shakespeare's plays come alive when performed, and so once we have agreed on the play for the current course, group members will see as many interpretations as possible - on stage, video, or live screening from our great theatres. In class, students work in small groups on short extracts from the play, which they then perform for their colleagues. The overall course plan comes from the coordinator, but group members research different topics, and very detailed and original talks have been given.

This year the chosen play was *Richard II* and we worked from videos, both of the RSC production, with David Tennant in the lead, and also the BBC production with Ben Wishaw. This proved absolutely fascinating, with the BBC exploiting the opportunity of outside filming to emphasise Richard's sensitive response to the natural beauty of the English countryside - though in order to do this, a key scene was omitted, which made the reason for Henry's quarrel with Richard obscure.

The RSC, conversely, was truer to the plot, emphasising Richard's petulance and the corruption of the court; so there was little sympathy for Tennant's Richard when he was murdered. The play this year is *Henry V*.

Margaet Watkins

Thoughts about U3A Plus

U3A Plus is about ensuring that members can continue enjoying monthly meetings and attending study groups despite declining health and its associated problems. On page 1 Stuart has discussed some of the problems and issues associated with dementia, and so I will concentrate on physical problems and what we, as U3A members, can do to help.

- *Hearing Loss* - at our monthly meetings we offer a hearing loop, but this is not practical for study groups. It is helpful if we speak clearly, but the most important thing we can do is be tolerant if someone is having hearing problems.
- *Sight loss* - this can also cause difficulty in keeping up with discussion in study groups, and again needs tolerance. Loss of a driving licence may make it difficult to get to meetings; other members can help by offering lifts.
- *Physical Limitations* - these may make it difficult to access meetings which involve climbing stairs. Holding meetings in ground floor rooms where this is practicable is helpful, as is offering lifts to meetings.
- *The wider community* - as reported in the May newsletter, we were in contact with Hands Together Ludlow to see if U3A membership might be beneficial for some of their clients. They have not so far made any referrals.

Peter Law

In late June of this year, four members of the Ludlow U3A Table Tennis group took part in a U3A tournament in Cardiff. This is David Lubman's account of the day.

We had an uneventful drive down, arriving in good time, although the traffic in Cardiff was heavy.. The hall filled up with typical U3A members, with some coming from as far as Porthmadog.

We were allocated to two of seven groups of five pairs for the morning session. We



played each of the other pairs in our respective groups. Joy and I were lucky to win all our games, although in one we only just scraped a win. Meryl and Ben won one of their games but came close to winning others.

For the afternoon session we were again split into groups, the first group being the winners of each morning group, the second group the second placed from the morning, and so on. So for Joy and me the afternoon games were, as you would expect, much tougher; however we did okay and came third overall. Meryl and Ben won several of their games and we all enjoyed ourselves. We arrived back in Ludlow at the end of a very hot day, tired but happy.

Meryl's photograph of the trophy presentation

Solution to the crossword in the February 2018 Newsletter

Across: 9 youngster 10 enema 11 pulls 12 Broad Bean 13 new age 15 Georgian
18 Millennium Green 21 unfetter 22 trepan 24 substance 27 Dunne 28 tacit
29 wholeness

Down: 1 tympanum 2 Ludlow 3 Ego's 4 stab 5 erroneous 6 mead 7 Temeside 8 cannon
14 great 16 Roger 17 unknown 19 left back 20 nonsense 21 upsets
23 pander 25 tutu 26 Eton 27 deed

Monthly Monday morning meetings

29.10.2018	The Mayflower Children , to be described by Phil Revell, were four children from the More family, a long-established land-owning family living in Shipton in South Shropshire, transported in the early seventeenth century to America. Why? Phil will unravel the mystery.
26.11.2018	A Career in Antiques : Philip Duckworth will share his personal journey, which demonstrates the training, daily routines and workings within the world of auction houses such as Christies.
28.01.2019	Heroes and Villains : a stunning new audio-visual presentation by U3A members Hilary and Ian Templeton.
25.02.2019	Micro artist Graham Short will describe how he engraved The Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin and produced similar works.
25.03.2019	AGM and Study Groups Fair
29.4.2019	Red Flowers and a Box of Old Bones : Barry Picken will describe the moving story of the selection and burial of the Unknown Warrior and the choice of poppies for remembrance.
20.5.2019	Estate Planning : James Hughes, an independent financial adviser, will ensure we are fully up to date with the making of Wills and Enduring Powers of Attorney and the setting up of Trusts.
24,6,2019	The Last Laugh of the Railway King : Geoff Scargill presents his popular talk about Edward Watkin, who, seventy years after his death, caused the greatest art sensation of the 20 th century.
30.9.2019	Ancient Egypt - A History in ten Objects : Janet Desmond will give a fascinating talk, taking us from pre-dynastic times to the end of the Ptolemys.
28.10.2019	A Guided Tour of the 1851 Exhibition : David De Haan, past curator of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, is our tour guide. He will recreate the experience from contemporary documents.
25.11.2019	A 3000 mile Solo Walk across Africa was undertaken and will be presented by Fran Sandham, acclaimed author and freelance writer.

If you want to contribute to the February 2019 Newsletter, or to comment on anything in this one, contact Derek at derek@ludlowballs.force9.co.uk

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Subscriptions for 2019

Your **U3A in Ludlow** subscription for 2019 is £12 and is due by 2nd January. A pink renewal slip is included with this newsletter which should be completed and returned to the Treasurer together with a cheque or cash. Alternatively you can download the Renewal form from the website (see 'documents'), complete it on line, e-mail it to the Treasurer and make a direct bank transfer.

Following the new requirements under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect in the UK last May, it is necessary that I have your consent before sending you the Third Age Trust magazine - Third Age Matters. **Please therefore tick the box on the front of the Renewal Slip.**

In addition, if you are in a position to complete the Gift Aid Declaration I would be grateful if you would do so **even if you have done it before**. Gift Aid is an important part of our income; so do please complete the gift aid section if you are able. If you are not able to Gift Aid your subscription please cross through this section.

If you pay by direct payment to our bank, do please return the pink slip electronically or by post so that I know your response to the Third Age Trust magazine and Gift Aid.

Your subscription which is still £12, gives you access not only to all our study groups, but also to the monthly meetings usually held on the last Monday of each month in the Assembly Rooms.

2019 Membership Cards will be posted to members during February.

David Hatchell
Membership Secretary and Treasurer

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