With membership of U3A in Ludlow edging above six hundred, and with 77 Study Groups, we are at an all-time high. The number of groups could increase further with more volunteer coordinators. Arts, crafts and languages are most in demand currently.

U3A Plus, the project for engaging members with impairments such as hearing, sight and mobility issues, is working with other local organisations to find solutions. It isn’t quick or easy but there is a lot of goodwill. The Loneliness in Older People section on the national NHS website has a link to U3A, recognition of the benefits of the enjoyment and friendship membership of U3A brings.

I shall step down, after two years as Chairman, at the AGM, and so I would like to offer my thanks to each of the committee members, who have been so easy to work with. Janet Finney who has been Monthly Meeting Organiser also steps down at the AGM. Janet has worked quietly, effectively and without fuss, sometimes having to arrange speakers at short notice. Thank you, Janet.

Group Coordinators are the lifeblood of any U3A and ours are exceptional, some of them coordinating regular sessions in subjects of which I barely understand the title! Thank you all.

And finally to you, the membership. There would be little point to it all without you. And the benefits are recognised, even by the NHS; spreading a little happiness and a little learning is good for us all.

Stuart McLaren
Chairman
Our U3A Food and Farming group has a membership of over thirty, and the new members we have welcomed this year have been able to suggest fresh ideas for the group to explore. The group meets monthly, and meetings in the earlier months of 2018 were as ever indoors in anticipation of the likely weather, listening to a talk from a farm vet and a presentation about green groups in Ludlow. The more informal and well-attended meeting in March took the form of a frank and thought-provoking debate about the impact of vegetarian and vegan diets, and genetically-modified and organically-produced foods. We were still inside in April and so didn’t exactly get our hands dirty, when our visitor got us involved ‘hands on’ with Magic Compost. This was for me one of our best meetings ever, getting us to think about what was the best destination for our household rubbish and discussing among ourselves what actually could be composted.

Our first outdoor meeting of the year was a thought-provoking visit to Lower Bush Farm at Stoke St Milborough, where two of those who work at the farm showed us what they did with children and young adults with learning difficulties. Among those who have worked at the farm are students from Ludlow School, completing a BTEC qualification obtained through meaningful farm work. This was quite different from a visit to an alpaca farm in 2017 when we were able to go for a walk, enjoyed by all, despite the rain! We were lucky to have Di Smith in our group, as she was able to arrange a visit to Kerry Ingredients factory in Tenbury Wells for our August meeting. It is very difficult nowadays to get companies to host group visits, unless they are directly related to the products they make, but Di could do it. I had worked at Kerry for fifteen years from 1980 to 1995 – gosh, how it has changed! Our four amazing guides made sure we obeyed all the hygiene and safety rules that are a major part of running a food factory in the twenty-first century.
September saw us back indoors for our Harvest Lunch meeting, which was thoroughly enjoyed, though the turnout was rather low. This provided us with the opportunity to have a light-hearted chat with one another, which we sometimes find difficult at meetings where there is a speaker. Our November visitors from the Ludlow & District Beekeepers Association, told us about the different holistic benefits we obtain from bees, and this got us buzzing, thinking about bees in new ways; we shall follow this up with a visit this summer to the new Ludlow Apiary. I really enjoyed last year’s Food and Farming, and value the enthusiastic contributions and support from group members.

Gillian Jones

Answers to Christmas Animals Quiz

I received one response, from Liz Ince, who had Lion for 7, Tick for 11, Elephant for 14, Serpent for 16, Horse for 18 and Red hawk for 20 and suggested there were several answers to 5. You may prefer some of her answers to mine.

Derek Ball
Not infrequently, my husband Derek gets irritated when he thinks I am interrupting him while he is speaking. The trouble is that I do not think I am interrupting. What I think I am doing is joining in the conversation by agreeing - or alternatively disagreeing - with what he is saying, or by adding something relevant to the conversation, which I might forget if I do not say it straightaway. I don’t believe that this problem is unique to Derek and me. My experience suggests that women and men have different styles of conversing with one another. Back in the 1980s, when I was head of mathematics in a comprehensive school, there was a period when the team of half a dozen or so teachers in the mathematics department consisted entirely of women. Visitors to the department often remarked that it was impossible to get a word in edgeways. Looking back, I think we women mathematics teachers had developed a style of conversing with which we were all comfortable. Continually cutting across what each other was saying did not seem to hamper the progress of our conversations. We certainly had many stimulating discussions about how we might encourage the teenagers we taught to be excited about mathematics.

I was reminded of all this at a recent meeting of the U3A novel group I coordinate: Novels of the 19th and 20th Centuries. When the group started four years ago it had more men than women members, but now there is only one man. So I asked the group whether or not they thought that women and men had different styles of conversing. There seemed to be general agreement with my suggestion that men do not like being interrupted when they are speaking, whereas women do not mind. However, they were all women, and men might not agree! So what do other U3A members think? Are group discussions influenced by the gender mix in the group? I would love to know what your view is, so do contact me (barbara@ludlowballs.force9.co.uk).

Barbara Ball
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 The Witch Trials: Our vice-chairman, Robert Hodge will talk about the witch trials in England and Europe, how they came about and ended – whilst challenging some perceptions of ‘witches’ and their fate.

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 20th 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.

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What is the connection?
Find what links all these words: blankets, bonnet, china shop, ear, grass, hell, manger, room?
These are in a way the opposite: bag, hell, water.
Email me and tell me what I have missed.  Derek Ball
Each Wednesday afternoon, U3A members gather to play Scrabble. Here is a game in progress. What is the highest score you can make?

This is the rack of your letters, which include a blank.

If you cannot read the premium squares you can use a Scrabble board. I do not know what the highest score achievable is. Do please email me and tell me yours. I really value getting feedback from readers, which helps me decide what to include in the next Newsletter.

Derek Ball
Tea and Sympathy

A cup of tea would be nice
down by the river.
It’s peaceful. The sun is low
and the water sparkles with
sun-made stars.

On the ocean a ship drifts.
Drifts for weeks
with a cargo of people.
No food or warmth
and the children cry.
Families watch each other die.

As the days pass by
we also watch the people die.
We watch them on TV
after we’ve had tea down by the river.

Leaving, we watch the passing
ducks reflected in the calm water
their fluffy chicks well fed.
Each one leaves a silver trail
as the sun goes down,
and the boat drifts on.

Mary Loewenthal

Love’s Gift

Time is
love’s gift.

Love slows the swing
Of the pendulum

Like a butterfly kiss
On the cheek of a child.

Time is
Love’s gift

Like tea-cup bubbles
That hesitate
And break the surface
With a gentle kiss

Time is
Love’s gift

Like the lark
That seems not to move
In the air

Love suspends time
Somewhere

Like the lingering memory
Of a mistletoe kiss

Time is
Love’s gift

Like the puff of a dandelion
Blown in the wind

Time is
Love’s gift.

Gill Crosby
U3A in Ludlow Committee for 2018/2019

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Stuart McLaren</td>
<td>01299-272837</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@u3ainludlow.org.uk">info@u3ainludlow.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chair &amp; IT</td>
<td>Robert Hodge</td>
<td>01299-270047</td>
<td><a href="mailto:contact@rjhodge.com">contact@rjhodge.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Deborah Gentry</td>
<td>01584-876926</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sphinx@waitrose.com">sphinx@waitrose.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer/Membership</td>
<td>David Hatchell</td>
<td>01584-890664</td>
<td><a href="mailto:david@hatchells.co.uk">david@hatchells.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Groups Adviser</td>
<td>Peony Carpenter</td>
<td>01584-872872</td>
<td><a href="mailto:peonycarpenter@hotmail.co.uk">peonycarpenter@hotmail.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Meetg Organiser</td>
<td>Janet Finney</td>
<td>01584-873052</td>
<td><a href="mailto:solaria4@btinternet.com">solaria4@btinternet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3A Plus</td>
<td>Peter Law</td>
<td>01584-877012</td>
<td><a href="mailto:peter.peterwlaw@gmail.com">peter.peterwlaw@gmail.com</a></td>
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The above will change at the AGM to be held on 25 March 2019.
For up-to-date information see the website: www.u3ainludlow.org.uk

2019 Membership
With this Newsletter comes your 2019 Membership Card if you have paid your subscription. If you have not yet paid there is a Pink Renewal Form which please complete and return to me with your £12. Membership Cards for outstanding subscriptions will be posted once payment is received.
Your group coordinator will be asking to see your Membership Card in the next few weeks.
If you do not intend to continue your membership please let me know and I will stop pestering you.
Remember to complete the Gift Aid Declaration if you are able and fill in the “consent” box. Gift Aid provides about one sixth of our income and is important to us for maintaining our subscription at £12.
David Hatchell
Treasurer/Membership Secretary

e-mail: derek@ludlowballs.force9.co.uk
www.u3ainludlow.org.uk