



u3a in Ludlow May 2021

A message from the Chairman

What a pleasure it was to be able to meet a friend in the sun for coffee and cake though, if truth be told, having honed my own barista skills during lockdown, the coffee was disappointing. Still, I hope the pleasure of meeting doesn't wear off. If all goes well, we should be able to meet indoors in small groups ('rule of six', or two households) from May 17 and I have already planned dinner with my sons whom I haven't seen for six months.

It has been a long, slow process but there are signs that we will get back to some semblance of normality. Many members of u3a in Ludlow are looking forward to being able to meet in their groups in person, free from Zoom, and to come along to monthly talks. The change in rules means that u3a groups, of six or less, will be able to meet indoors from May 17. Of course, some will wish to continue meeting via Zoom, at least for the time being, and others may wish to wait for a while.

The committee has been busy in the background and we are now considering how we might add to, or improve, the offerings from u3a in Ludlow.

We have been joined on the committee by Suzanne Taylor, who is filling the role of communications and marketing coordinator. Suzanne has a background in marketing and has put together a programme to speak to members to seek their views and opinions on u3a in Ludlow – how well we are meeting our charitable purpose, what we offer, including the variety of our groups, how and how frequently we should communicate and overall how satisfied you might be.

We are only as successful as our members want us to be and your views are very important. We shall be selecting members at random who will be contacted by a member of the committee sometime towards the end of the month, or in early June. If you are contacted, I hope you will be happy to help.

As well as getting feedback from members, we will be updating the details of groups in u3a in Ludlow. To get a better idea of what groups are planning to do, I shall be contacting group coordinators during the month for details of group membership, meeting plans and whether they have capacity for new members.

Even though things have been somewhat different for the past year, u3a in Ludlow continues to attract new members and I look forward to being able to meet them in person. For existing members, current membership will expire at the end of June and I shall be writing to everyone towards the end of the month, inviting you to renew your membership for the rest of the year at the reduced rate of £6.

Dr Robert Hodge
Chairman

Committee

The current committee is composed as follows:

Chairman – Dr Robert HODGE (01299 270047 – u3a@rjhodge.com)

Vice Chair – Janice HAINES (01584 878794 – janhaines88@gmail.com)

Secretary – Barbara BALL (01584 879180 – barbara@ludlowballs.forec9.co.uk)

Treasurer – Grace WILKINS (07990 526203 – gracewilkins@aol.com)

Study Group Adviser – (pro tem) Robert HODGE (01299 270047 – u3a@rjhodge.com)

Members' Adviser – Janice HAINES (01584 878794 – janhaines88@gmail.com)

Monthly Meeting Organiser – Sue BILLING (07710 756093 – sueatmill84@yahoo.com)

U3A Network – Stuart McLAREN (01584 874622 – themclarens@me.com)

U3A Plus – Peter LAW (01584 877012 – peter.peterwlaw@gmail.com)

Member – Suzanne TAYLOR (07455 367554 - suzannecaroltaylor@gmail.com)

All the members of the committee are Trustees of the registered charity, u3a in Ludlow. A description of each role, along with a description of the role of Trustee, is available on the Committee page on the website.

The next meeting of the committee is on Monday 24 May. If you have any questions, or points you wish to make to the committee, please get in touch: info@u3ainludlow.org.uk.

Study Group Adviser needed

Since Peony Carpenter has stepped down from this role, we are looking for someone to join the committee and take on the role of Study Group Adviser. The role involves supporting group coordinators with advice and information, encouraging and helping the establishment of new study groups, keeping details of groups up to date and organising the coordinators' annual meeting. If you have some free time and would like to help out on the committee, or for more information, please get in touch with Robert Hodge: info@u3ainludlow.org.uk

Get to know your committee

Grace Wilkins – Treasurer and Membership Secretary

I was elected Treasurer of Ludlow u3a in December 2020.



Following a degree in French and four years spent as a French teacher in Cardiff, I decided to retrain as a chartered accountant. I particularly enjoyed working in industry and spent the last few years of my career as Finance Director of a manufacturing company in Oxfordshire.

My husband and I moved to Ludlow in 2018, giving me time to enjoy my two main interests: languages and music. We are both members of the Ludlow Choral Society and St Laurence's Church choir. I really enjoy the u3a French Literature group and have just joined the committee of Ludlow French Twinning. I was brought up in Wales and now spend many hours a week learning Welsh, both through formal classes and through language-based activities online. I look forward to my time as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. I am pleased to be a member of a group which helps retirees to meet new friends, settle into a new area and make the transition to a new way of life.

Sue Billing – Monthly Meeting Organiser



After an early career in training and personnel management in the steel Industry in Sheffield and the oil industry in the Middle East, I moved to Herefordshire in 1985. In the late eighties I took up teaching and then management in adult and further education. In 2006 I went abroad with my husband for a while, and on my return indulged my passion for history by taking a degree. Part-time work for an exam board then gave me the opportunity to devote more time to my family.

My interest in adult education began when I was a student and in the late seventies I became a volunteer tutor for the Adult Literacy scheme in South Yorkshire. Whilst abroad I became increasingly involved in helping adults improve their English. My love of Shakespeare initially led me to join the u3a group – back in the days of the traditional Ludlow Festival. I am also coordinator of a Spanish group and have been a committee member since 2019, when I was elected Monthly Meetings Secretary.

Time to write that stuff down! Some thoughts on writing autobiography notes for posterity

It's the perfect job for when you are locked away with no company but your bitter thoughts of times past: now would be a perfect time to even up the score. But is it, really? What benefit could accrue to you or to your descendants from the truth? You might like to ask them. Now, I realise that these notes should have a focus: either I talk to you about what you should be thinking about, or comment on my own experience. Not being a historian, archivist or ancestry freak, I am not qualified by study or practice to pronounce on what you should do. I should restrict myself to my own recent experience.

I was persuaded to map out my personal curriculum vitae by a request from my niece, who has been developing a general family history for a long time. It appears that she has been doing some refining and polishing during lockdown. She is an actual historian, and has diligently tracked the family spoor through many generations. However, a full history is framework information, consolidated with remarkable persons and events. What she was looking for me and my siblings to provide was some detail on the everyday recollections of her immediate forebears.

I really don't know what questions would engross my successors, although I think I can depend upon some disinterested curiosity about what happened to all that famous equity, when all they have left for contemplation of my meteoric career is a part set of fin de siècle glassware and a stopperless decanter. I considered asking my family what they would like to know, but two motives gave me pause: the one noble, the other not. Firstly, I imagine that the questions that may come to mind after my demise may be very different to those that pop into conversation with a living and breathing relative, constrained by common politeness and decency. Secondly, the questions they may wish to ask now, if they can't summon such restraint, may make uncomfortable conversations. And I have no illusions about how much interest would be ignited by the world

knowing my feelings on first hearing that Winston Churchill had broken his hip, or why Lady Docker had gilded the bumpers of her Daimler.

In consequence, I decided to restrict my story to ascertainable facts, to the bare bones of my story, and to practical interlocking with the general story of my immediate family. I generally managed to keep away from the story of others, although of course, some events involved others: I am a twin, and the crucial thirty-five minutes of precedence my sister gained has dogged my steps for seventy two years, and counting. Our lives are indeed entwined. It has been a source of smug glee for us both: but primogeniture can't be laid aside. Google tells me that 'primogeniture' involves precedence to the male in a line of succession! The study of history can indeed take surprising turns! I am sure the sexist rule of male precedence remains in force in English Law, despite the mood of the times, and the best efforts of Penny Mordaunt. My twin sister, lawyer though she be, will have to demur! No more need I endure the second strawberry, and I can claim the black fruit gum!

Ed Stourton, the Radio 4 newsman, tells a good story about this exercise. Being a serious and skilled reporter, he went to see his mum in her rest home, bringing tape recorder, notebook, camera ... the lot. His first question, (I paraphrase) 'What is your earliest memory?' attracted the reply 'Sitting on the lawn at Althorp, playing with Diana Spencer.' At this point, Ed realised, he had arrived a little too late...

In my case, I think it has always been a little too late for factual recording. My grip on reality has never been solid, being hedged about by anxieties about the unknown country beyond the shadowy boundaries of the things I do know. An early casualty was the natural world: did those little birds know where their nests were? Could they find their way home? Politics too: I was told not to believe everything I read in the paper: with all the terrible executions going on in Cuba. It was all invented? Such cruelty seems fanciful. Reality must be kinder than that. Cuba has actually remained a question mark for me for quite a long time: to this day I cannot confirm its existence by direct experience. Historians have a job to do, but I think it is not mine. So: I am content to confine myself to bare facts. But it is rather tempting to lay a few trails in areas of uncertainty, for devilment. If they are blatant enough, maybe somebody will actually read the damned thing.

In the event, I was able to summarise the principal events of my life in less than nine hundred words. Perhaps creative embroidery is called for, after all.

John Curry

New u3a group : Creative Piano

Whether you are new to the instrument, played as a child and want to return, or have maintained practice throughout your life, you will be very welcome to join a piano group, which will take place at St Laurence's Church. David Gaukroger, has a lifetime's experience of teaching at all levels and has found group learning to be by far the most productive and enjoyable environment in which to make progress.

The current method of learning an instrument in the classical tradition is counterproductive.

Teaching methods begun at the end of the eighteenth century have been perpetuated to this day, even though they fly in the face of modern understanding of how learning best takes place. In particular, there is an almost total reliance on teaching the repertoire rather than exploring the structure and grammar of music. No other musical culture operates in this way.

Lively discussion and mutual support will be the cornerstones of the group which will meet on Tuesdays or Thursdays (to be decided) fortnightly in St Laurence's church.

If you are interested, please contact: info@u3ainludlow.org.uk

New series of talks - Ancient Greek myths

The ancient Greek myths, as told by Hesiod and Homer amongst others, have inspired countless works of art over the span of 2,500 years or more. One of the joys of wandering an art gallery is realizing that, without looking at the plaque, you can tell what a painting is about from your knowledge of the myths. But what is the enduring power of these tales?

This series of talks, given by Robert Hodge and beautifully illustrated with works of art, will explore the interwoven myths from the creation to the time of heroes. There will be eight talks in all, fortnightly on Wednesdays from 4pm, lasting no more than one and a half hours, including time for questions. The first talk takes place on Wednesday 12 May.

To join, click the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93508662192?pwd=eC9McjVrRkcxc3BETUNjWmtuZlV5dz09>

or go to www.zoom.us/join and enter meeting ID: 935 0866 2192 and passcode: 327034

Music for Pleasure

The Music for Pleasure group is seeking new members. If you are interested contact Geoff Neden (gmeden@googlemail.com)

Did you know? – we have a website!

www.u3ainludlow.org.uk

The website has details of monthly talks, including times and joining details. There is a page with details of the committee, full details of groups and an archive of monthly newsletters, along with a wealth of other interesting and useful information. If you would like to see something added, please get in touch: info@u3ainludlow.org.uk

u3a Learning Events

National Office continues to put together a programme of online talks. For information and to book, go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Creative writing competition

The national creative writing competition returns for a second year: a search for the best short story written by a u3a member on the theme of: UNEXPECTED. Stories must be your own original work, in English, to a maximum of 1500 words and not submitted anywhere else. The winning entry will be published in Third Age Matters magazine. Deadline for entries is 12 noon, 28 May.

For more information, go to:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/creative-writing-2021>

Monday Meetings 2021

24 May at 11am on Zoom Dad's Army: The Nation's Favourite Comedy Charles Garland

This is a change to the previously advertised programme.

What sets Dad's Army apart from the rest of the TV comedy archive? Charles Garland, himself an actor, writer, composer and producer, was, for over 20 years, assistant to the writers of the Dad's Army series, David Croft and Jimmy Perry. Sitcom production at the BBC became a large part of Charles' life and he also re-edited most of the classic comedy archive for the BBC. Charles now presents a fascinating and amusing talk with anecdotes and personal insights about the writers and cast of the series, and even takes us into the studio.

28 June at 11am on Zoom Dark Light Carol and Steve Robson

In 1900 a strange event occurred on a remote island in the Outer Hebrides. Dark Light: The Flannan Island Mystery, unsolved to this day, explores the story of the mysterious disappearance of three lighthouse men. But this is no ordinary storytelling. This musical presentation from Fool's Gold, (musicians and storytellers Carol and Steve Robson), tells the tale of Flannan Island in detail, using original and contemporary songs and through fascinating visuals.

Zoom presentations

To join the meeting click:

<https://zoom.us/j/93508662192?pwd=eC9McjVrRkcxc3BETUNjWmtuZlV5dz09>

Alternatively, go to www.zoom.us/join (or use the Zoom app to join) and enter

Meeting ID: 935 0866 2192

Passcode: 327034

If you are unable to use Zoom, you can listen in by telephone. Call one of the following numbers and enter the meeting ID and passcode above.

0330 088 5830

0131 460 1196

0203 481 5237

0203 481 5240

0203 901 7895

Monday meetings later in the year

28 June **Rolls of Rolls Royce:**

Bruce Lawson, the biographer of Charles Rolls, will speak enthusiastically about Mr Rolls – ‘a brilliant man’; ‘the Richard Branson and James Dyson of the Edwardian Age’.

27 September **Annual General Meeting** followed by **Bessie Blount, of Kinlet**

Bessie was the teenage mistress of Henry VIII and mother of his son Henry. Who was she and what happened to their son? Dr Robert Hodge will reveal all.

25 October **Canals and Crime Fiction**

The backdrop of author Andy Griffiee’s talk is our 2200 miles of canals and how they can be the perfect setting for the crime novel.

29 November **Albania – cut off from the world for 41 years**

John Butterworth will give an illustrated talk on the amazing history of this isolated state and compare life under a dictator to the freedoms of today.

Monday talks in future years

We receive many offers of talks but recommendations from our own members are always welcome too. If you know of a speaker, or you yourself are a speaker who can offer a topic which you think may be of interest to our members, please contact Sue Billing at sueatmill84@yahoo.com

If you change your email address please remember to let us know, so that you can continue to receive the *U3A in Ludlow* monthly news.

Further Information about *U3A in Ludlow* is always available on our website: www.u3ainludlow.org.uk

If you would like to submit an item for the next monthly news please contact us.

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