



Weston Turville u3a Newsletter

February 2025

Learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn.

General meetings What a start to the year as we had a superb speaker in Jeff Evans who talked about the history of TV quiz shows from “Take your Pick” and Bob’s Full House (remember them?) to current programmes such as “Eggheads” and “The Chase”.

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 27th February** when veteran broadcaster Bill Hamilton will reflect on his 50 years as a journalist and BBC correspondent. He regularly appeared on our screens as their Home Affairs and then their Foreign Affairs reporter.

As usual, teas and coffees will be available (don’t forget to bring your own cup) and the book swap and group tables will also take place. The date for the following general meeting is **Thursday 27th March**.

Chairman’s Report Further to my note about the excellent work of our group leaders last month, Joy Mantell hosted an **informal lunch for group leaders** recently as a thank you to them. This was also a good opportunity to exchange ideas and was a very worthwhile occasion.

In particular, Joy is planning to have a **Groups Table** at our monthly meetings where we can put on display photographs and examples of what goes on in individual groups for your interest. We would also encourage all members to consider sending in a note or a review for the newsletter – perhaps best done through your group leader.

One thing to add to my note about **paying for trips** in the last newsletter: if you book and pay but subsequently cannot go on a trip for any reason but are able to find a substitute, then a refund will be given. Equally, if a trip is cancelled, then everyone will of course be refunded.

The time is approaching when we will be asking you for **your annual subscription**. Please see the note from Mike Munday, the Membership Secretary, on the next page. In particular this year please note what he says about joint membership.

We are planning to hold **another First Aid training session**, open to all members, later in the year. If you would like to attend, please let me know via email to chairman@wtu3a.org.uk

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Last month, Jeff Evans talk on the history of TV quiz shows held us all spellbound for over an hour. It was an intriguing mixture of new facts and old, and brought back memories of forgotten shows to many of us.

This month we look forward to listening to Bill Hamilton, whose talk is entitled 'Good News, Bad News'. I see that he became Scotland's youngest qualified football referee at the age of 14, before a very varied career as a BBC reporter. See you then! *Simon Evers - Chairman*

Gift Aid Over the years we have successfully claimed large sums of Gift Aid. This has gone a long way to ensuring a robust financial position for the club and enabled us to continue to offer some of the lowest subscriptions for U3A branches in the area.

Recently, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) tightened up the rules applying to Gift Aid, and as a result the club's Executive Committee have reviewed our systems. The main area we have identified is where couples both claim Gift Aid, but they make one joint payment covering both parties.

HMRC are insistent that Gift Aid payments should come from an account under the control of individual or joint members. We as a club are not in a position to validate this and responsibility sits within individual members.

Therefore, we have decided to follow a practice adopted by a lot of major charities (including National Trust, English Heritage, RNLI and other U3A groups) and introduce a new classification of membership. We will now offer joint membership, for parties living under the same address, and the fee for this will be £34 per couple.

Any members who wish to carry on with single membership at £17 per annum, and declare independently for Gift Aid, are free to do so.

If you have a further query, please contact Michael Bennett via email on vicechairman@wtu3a.org.uk

Membership information We are coming to the end of the current membership year. As a result, the Renewal Letter for the next year will be sent out in early April. Please do not pay your subscription until you receive this letter. This will explain how payment is to be made, together with the opportunity to confirm some of your details that are held on file.

Mike Munday Membership Secretary - membership@wtu3a.org.uk

Tea rota Despite the popularity of tea, coffee and biscuits being available at each general meeting, we are desperately in need of volunteers to occasionally help serve these refreshments so if you can help please either fill in the list at the serving hatch or contact Lorraine Tierney on refreshments@wtu3a.org.uk

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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Quiz group Dates for the next afternoon quizzes are **Fridays 28th February** and **28th March** at 2.30 in the Weston Turville Chapel Hall which, as usual, will be nice and warm. If you haven't been before come along and give it a try. Questions are suited to all abilities and you can come on your own, as a couple or as a team. Your £2 entrance also covers tea and biscuits. Details from Joy Mantell at: quizzing@wtu3a.org.uk

Joint Coffee morning with ACu3a The next coffee mornings will be on **Thursday 20th February** and **20th March** at the Five Bells in Weston Turville starting at 10.30am. You can either just turn up, or Marie Jones on coffee@wtu3a.org.uk will let you have further details.

Theatre visits At Milton Keynes Theatre the "Only Fools and Horses Musical" is at 2.30pm on **Wednesday 19th March**. Tickets are £45.50. Performances at the Waterside in Aylesbury are: Giovanni Pernice, (Strictly winner in 2021) in "Last Dance", on **Thursday 1st May** at 7.30pm for £69 stalls. Tim Rice, "My life in Musicals" in which he reflects on his life in musical theatre, is on **Thursday 8th May** at 7.30pm with circle tickets costing £39.50. Fast forward to **Wednesday 8th October** at 2pm and you can step into the magical world of Narnia in "The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe". Stalls tickets are £41. For more details contact Melanie Evans at theatre@wtu3a.org.uk.

Trips The leaders did a brief survey at the last general meeting to find out which places they would like to have a trip to. The most popular suggestions were Savill Park and Gardens in Windsor and Highclere Castle (home of Downton Abbey) near Newbury. Definitely going ahead towards the end of the year is a trip to the Poppy Factory in Richmond followed by a tour of the Christmas lights in London. More details on this will follow. Any thoughts for future trips should be sent to Mandi Simons on trips@wtu3a.org.uk

Card making This new group meets on the second Thursday of each month from 10am in the Chapel Hall so the next one is on **13th March**). More information from Lindsey Beer on cardmaking@wtu3a.org.uk

Chess Geoffrey Howell is currently convalescing so the next scheduled group meeting on **Friday 28th February** has been cancelled. Hopefully the group will be back in action for the two March meetings. In the meantime we wish Geoffrey a speedy recovery.

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Handbell Ringing The group meets on Friday mornings at 10am at John Beer's house in the village and no musical expertise is necessary as it's all done by numbers. New members are welcome. For more information contact John at handbells@wtu3a.org.uk

Craft Group There is a vacancy in the group for someone with crafty skills who would preferably not be averse to passing on their knowledge to the rest of the group. Contact Mandi Simons at crafts@wtu3a.org.uk for information. The group meets from 10am to 12noon on the second Wednesday of each month in the Chapel Hall in Weston Turville.

Pickleball Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports around at the moment because it is suitable for all abilities and ages, does not require a great deal of expensive equipment and also great fun! It is played on a court similar to badminton but with a net about the same height as used for tennis. The bats or 'paddles' are similar to table tennis but a bit larger and the balls are the same size as tennis balls but made of plastic with airflow holes.

The U3a started a group last November to play at Halton tennis club and it has rapidly expanded to 38 members. Fortunately, with holidays, injuries and other activities not everyone can play each week otherwise we would be oversubscribed! We have three courts available so 12 can play at the same time and the original one hour session at 11am on a Thursday has been extended to a second group to play an hour later in order to cater for more players.

If you want to try out Pickleball the U3a have kindly provided us with balls and some paddles for newcomers to try out before they buy their own equipment. Contact Peter Allen at pickleball@wtu3a.org.uk for more information.

Garden Visits Despite pleas in previous newsletters for a replacement group leader, the visit to Hollydyke House could well be the last as no-one has offered to take up the reins. So here we go again and hope someone (or even a couple of you) will take on the leadership of this group which currently has over 60 members on its mailing list. If you are interested please get in touch with Simon Evers at chairman@wtu3a.org.uk who will give you more information and tell you that it is really not too onerous.

"February, when the days of winter seem endless, and no amount of wistful recollecting can bring back any air of summer." Shirley Jackson

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Discussion Group We discussed six topics at our last meeting in quite an animated fashion! They were: Is Trump's plan to turn Gaza into a holiday resort possible? What do you feel about Grenfell Tower being dismantled? Are soaps on the way out? Should we go ahead as soon as possible with the third runway proposal at Heathrow Airport? Is the art of conversation dying in view of all the smart phones in use? Disaffected youth - the role of parents (not only school teachers, police etc....) Sometimes we managed to reach agreement, but at other times it was not possible.

The group meets at 10.30 am on the first Friday of each month at the Five Bells, so the next meeting will be on **7th March**. Everyone is welcome and further details of the group are available from Terry Jones at discussion@wtu3a.org.uk

Mahjong The next meeting of the group is on **Thursday 13th March** between 2pm and 4pm in the Chapel Hall. New members are welcome and Joy Williamson will be delighted to hear from any prospective new players. She can be contacted at mahjong@wtu3a.org.uk

Science and Technology After a quiet winter, group leaders John Beer and Roger Everson are planning a variety of events starting with a trip to Pendon which is a lovely museum (at Long Wittenham near Abingdon) which preserves the idyllic rural scene and transport of the 1920s and 1930s. Other visits in the pipeline include a digester works, The Space Museum in Leicester and later in the year to the Think Tank in Birmingham. More information from John at general meetings or at science@wtu3a.org.uk

Gardening The first meeting of the year was called off for safety reasons due to inclement weather, so the planned activities for that day will now be on **Monday 24th February** Monday in the Chapel Hall from 2pm to 4pm. It will be a social occasion and will include a fairly easy gardening quiz (so bring along a writing implement). The March meeting (**Monday 24th**) will have a speaker. Future meetings will be on the fourth Monday of April, June, July, September, October and November as those missed out are Bank Holidays. More group news from Jenny Hunt on: gardening@wtu3a.org.uk.

“While it is February, one can taste the full joys of anticipation.
Spring stands at the gate with her finger on the latch.”
Patience Strong

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Art & Culture Following the recent trip to the Royal Opera House, the next visit which will be in April to the MK Gallery in Milton Keynes. Part of their 25th Anniversary celebrations is a major Andy Warhol Exhibition, with over 130 of his iconic artworks. We will be accompanied by one of their Curators who will talk about Warhol, the exhibits and Pop Art. Group contacts are John Masters and Chris Bennett on: culture@wtu3a.org.uk.

Rummikub Rummikub takes place on the third Tuesday of each month in the Five Bells in the village so you have probably missed the one on **18th February** with the following one being on **18th March**. Information on the group can be had from Deborah Brown on: rummikub@wtu3a.org.uk

Patchwork & Quilting Meetings are on the first and third Tuesday of each month at Stoke Mandeville Community Centre with sessions from 10am to midday and from 2pm to 4pm. After **Tuesday 18th February**, the following ones will be on **4th March** and **18th March**. There is a little room at both sessions so contact Maureen Reeves on quilting@wtu3a.org.uk if you need more details.

Card making You may well have seen some of the lovely cards made by the group so why not come along and have a go. Meetings are on the second Thursday of each month from 10am in the Chapel Hall so the next ones are on **13th March** and **10th April**. Lindsey Beer on cardmaking@wtu3a.org.uk will let you have more details.

U3a Friends Extra Those of you who have joined the Friends Extra will be getting messages about the various offers and deals that are available. One that caught my eye was the reduction of 40% off the will writing services of WSL Ltd which means a single will would be £105 and £130 for a joint one. They will come to your home to arrange it which saves trips to the solicitor.

Thames Valley u3a Network news On **Friday 7th March** there is an online Spring Quiz at 2.30pm and teams are randomly selected on the day. There is no fee but you need to book at least two days beforehand. On **Tuesday 11th March** at 10.30am they are holding an online talk "Keystone Special and Rewilding" which will cost you £2 and again bookings have to be a couple of days beforehand. You can book through their website www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk or link from our site.

"February is the border between winter and spring" Terri Guillemets

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