



# Weston Turville u3a Newsletter

**March 2025**

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

**Last meeting** Veteran broadcaster Bill Hamilton gave us a poignant yet humorous account of his life in journalism going from a reporter for the Fife Herald in Scotland to Foreign Affairs correspondent for the BBC which saw him travel the world and report on some horrific happenings in Albania and Uganda.

**Next meeting** On **Thursday 27th March** our talk is entitled “The Kennedys – Saints or Sinners” by Peter Hague. Much has been written about the Kennedy clan particularly JFK and Jackie, and this presentation highlights the influence their father (Joe Sr) and their mother Rose had on the Kennedy boys and girls. Was there a curse on them? After hearing the talk you can decide! 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 24<sup>th</sup> April**.

**Chairman’s Report** Bill Hamilton’s talk last month kept us all spellbound as we ranged round the world with him in his job as a BBC correspondent. This month we are off to the USA to learn from Peter Hague about the extraordinary Kennedy family and their place – still continuing – in American history. Our thanks to Joy Mantell and Susan Horwood for organising the Games morning in the Village Hall. Despite the small number attending, those who did were able to enjoy a wide variety of games with refreshments provided by the Council.

Two major dates in our calendar to remind you of: **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May** is the date of our **AGM**. We will shortly be sending out details of this, which will include news of an updating to our Constitution. The other date is **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July** which is the date of our **Summer Lunch** when we will be joined by Ian Cassidy, who is the recently appointed new CEO of the Third Age Trust (which is in effect the Governing Body of all u3a’s.)

Thank you to those of you who volunteered last month to help with providing tea and coffee at our monthly meetings – and also a big thank you to all other members who help behind the scenes, in particular those who bring in and afterwards collect the books and jigsaws each month: their help is, I know,

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much appreciated by the many (including myself) who borrow books or puzzles. Others cheerfully help at group meetings, almost always without being asked, with trivial tasks such as setting out and clearing away tables and chairs. We are well served by all such helpers and, on behalf of us all, I pass on our gratitude.

*Simon Evers - Chairman*

**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](mailto:membership@wtu3a.org.uk)

**Gift Aid & Joint Membership** 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 our u3a and enabled us to continue to keep the annual subscription low. Recently, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have tightened up the rules applying to Gift Aid, and as a result, the Committee has 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's) 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 any further queries, please contact Mike Munday, the Membership Secretary, on [membership@wtu3.org.uk](mailto:membership@wtu3.org.uk).

**Thames Valley u3a Network news** Three events booked for the forthcoming months are: **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April** – 10.30am, a talk on A.I. by Alun Morgan, **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May** 10.30am, talk on Photography also by Alun Morgan and **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June** – 10.30am an illustrated talk on Petra the Rose City by Dr Jill Evers. As yet there are no more details but they will soon be found on their website [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk) or link from our site.

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## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

**Quiz group** Dates for the next afternoon quizzes are **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March** and **25<sup>th</sup> April** 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](mailto:quizzing@wtu3a.org.uk)

**Joint Coffee morning with ACu3a** The next coffee mornings will be on **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March** and **17<sup>th</sup> April** 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](mailto:coffee@wtu3a.org.uk) will let you have further details.

**Theatre visits** There is something a little different on **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April** at the Waterside Theatre with "Sing Out for Mental Health". Starting at 7.30pm this will be the largest group of singers ever to grace the Waterside's stage. It is an uplifting show filled with music and the stories of singers whose lives have been transformed by the joy and camaraderie of singing together. Tickets are £24.50. Other performances coming up are: **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May** at 7.30pm for £69 in the stalls "Last Dance" with Giovanni Pernice from Strictly Come Dancing. Tim Rice, "My life in Musicals" in which he reflects on his life in musical theatre, is on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May** at 7.30pm with circle tickets costing £39.50. Fast forward to **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:theatre@wtu3a.org.uk).

**Trips** As requested at the January meeting, a trip has been arranged to see the azaleas, rhododendron etc in Saville Gardens, Windsor on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April**. The cost will be in the region of £15 to £20 depending on numbers. This includes entry and a guided tour for around an hour about the history of the gardens and royal connections. To keep costs down we will be driving ourselves and car sharing. The car parking is free if you travel in our group. The plan is to arrive about 11.30, have refreshments or lunch, check out the shops, take the tour about 1.30 then roam around as you please and go home in your own time. Mandi Simons will be collecting names at this time and money will be due at the monthly meeting in March. More details from Mandi on [trips@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:trips@wtu3a.org.uk)

*"March: Where winter throws its last tantrum before spring takes over." Anon*

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**Science and Technology** Some visits have been booked starting on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April** with a visit to Pendon Museum at Long Wittenham near Abingdon. This is an afternoon visit to this unique museum which houses scale dioramas, principally of the English countryside of the 1920s and 30's. The standard of modelling is the best there is and we will be guided through the different sections of the museum. Cost will be £6 with you providing your own transport. On **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May** a visit has been arranged to H.G. Matthews Brickworks in Bellingdon near Chesham. This is a guided tour of the manufacturing process for the handmade bricks that they make. There is no charge although a charity donation would be welcome. There is a limit of 20 for this morning visit but if there is sufficient demand another trip will be made. Again, this is using your own transport.

Two further visits by coach are planned with **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June** to the National Space Centre in Leicester and on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October** to the Think Tank at Birmingham Science Museum. Costs will be dependent on numbers but if you are interested please let John Beer know on [science@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:science@wtu3a.org.uk)

**Card making** The group meets on the second Thursday of each month from 10am in the Chapel Hall with the next one being on **10<sup>th</sup> April**). More information from Lindsey Beer on [cardmaking@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:cardmaking@wtu3a.org.uk)

**Patchwork & Quilting** The group are record breakers! Stoke Mandeville Stadium well known for outstanding sporting endeavours saw another record broken this month when ten WTU3a members of the Patchwork & Quilting Group were amongst 130 "sewists" making patchwork quilts for Project Linus. With their "pedals to the metal" 100 quilts were made with materials part funded from the proceeds of the Patchwork Quilt raffle back in 2022. These quilts will be donated to disadvantaged babies and children in our area. Congratulations to WTU3a member Susan Munro as one of the organisers of this mega event.

A reminder that the group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month with two separate sessions, from 10am until 12.00 and from 2pm to 4pm. The venue is Stoke Mandeville Community Centre and prospective new members are welcome. More details from Maureen Reeves on [quilting@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:quilting@wtu3a.org.uk)

**Rummikub** Rummikub takes place on the third Tuesday of each month in the Five Bells in the village so the next one will be at 2pm on **15<sup>th</sup> April**. Information on the group can be had from Deborah Brown on: [rummikub@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:rummikub@wtu3a.org.uk)

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**Art & Culture** In February over 40 of us visited the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden for a behind the scenes tour. We were two groups led by knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides. The ROH is much more than the familiar Greek like columns above the main entrance, it's a huge complex. Storerooms, workshops, rehearsal studios, restaurant/bars and souvenir shop, it's an excellent stop if you ever needed a break whilst in this part of London. The auditorium is massive with four tiers of seats and boxes, room for an audience of over 2200 people. We were lucky, we sat at the very top of the theatre and watched the full orchestra together with dancers, rehearsing the evening performance of a new modern ballet. Later, through windows to a studio, we watched one of the principal dancers rehearsing their latest production of Romeo and Juliet. This was an excellent visit enjoyed by everyone, I'm sure like me, most came away with the thought, I must come and see something here! But I can't afford ROH ticket prices I hear you say and for instance, best seats for Romeo and Juliet are indeed £180. But at the same time I found seats available for under £20! Food for thought?

Our next visit is on the **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May** and is to the MK Gallery in Milton Keynes. As part of their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations they have, Andy Warhol – Portrait of America. The exhibition will have over 130 pieces of his work covering the 50s - 80s and will include the famous Marilyn Monroe set. I need to explain a couple of things. With all Art & Culture visits we include a guide. The MK Gallery is small, it does not arrange guided tours but we will have a 20-30 minute presentation from one of their curators that will cover off all things Warhol! We are limited to a group of 25 only, we already have expressions of interest from more than 25! The plan is to continue to take names; we are very hopeful that we will be able to have two groups visiting the Exhibition. The cost will depend on these numbers and will be announced in early April.

Group contacts are John Masters and Chris Bennett on: [culture@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:culture@wtu3a.org.uk).

**Garden Visits** We are still in desperate need of a group leader for this popular group. If you would like more information please let Simon Evers at [chairman@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:chairman@wtu3a.org.uk) know and he will give you more information and tell you that it is really not too onerous.

**Chess** Next meetings for the group are on **Fridays 28<sup>th</sup> March** and **11<sup>th</sup> April** at 12.30pm in the Chandos. Chess, chips (and fish) and chat are all available. More news from Geoffrey Howell on [chess@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:chess@wtu3a.org.uk)

*"Welcome March—the month of fresh starts and bold moves." Anon*

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**Gardening** Having cancelled the meeting planned for the end of January due to bad weather the programme was moved to the February meeting. This was a social meeting with a general discussion about the work of the group during the past year and with its increasing membership. The draft programme for events including talks, demonstrations and visits for the year ahead was agreed.

The meeting finished with a gardening quiz kindly compiled by Mike Wise. The successful team were Maureen Reeves, Jackie Aggett and Doreen Day who only missed one correct answer and won a large box of cream filled chocolates which was shared between the rest of us. The next meeting of the Gardening Group is to take place on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March** at 2pm in the Chapel Room, School Lane when we are pleased to welcome Edwin Rye who is returning to talk to us about planting for smaller gardens. Edwin will also be bringing suitable plants for sale so please bring change if interested.

The meeting planned for Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April has been moved to **Thursday afternoon 1<sup>st</sup> May** during the same week, as we are visiting the gardens at Lindengate which closes on Mondays.

If you are interested in joining the Gardening Group which is for “hands on” gardeners, whether it be house plants, patio pots, small or a large garden please look at the website or ring Jenny Hunt 07831 241877 or Rosemary Williams 07949 171652 for further details. The Group meets at 2pm on the fourth Monday of the month except bank holidays, December and January in the Chapel Room.

**Discussion Group** We meet at the Five Bells, Weston Turville at 10.30 am on the first Friday of each month. Our talks are based on topics introduced by our members and examples are: How to stop immigrants crossing the Channel, who is the most famous person in the world, earthquakes, and in the future who will own the moon? If you are interested, come to the Five Bells at 10.30 am on **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April**. Details from Terry Jones at [discussion@wtu3a.org.uk](mailto:discussion@wtu3a.org.uk)

**Mahjong** The next meeting of the group is on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April** 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](mailto:mahjong@wtu3a.org.uk)

**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](mailto:handbells@wtu3a.org.uk)

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