

# u3a

Bridgnorth  
& District

# learn, laugh, live

## Members Together—Newsletter

### Winter/Spring Issue 2024

#### OPEN SPEAKER MEETINGS

Members and visiting non-members are welcome to enjoy a variety of Guest Speakers.

Held every 4th Wednesday (exc Dec) in  
Bridgnorth Community Hall, Severn Street, Low Town  
**1.30pm doors open £2.00 entry Tea/Coffee**  
**Prompt start at 2.00pm Activity Notices**

##### Wed 24th January



Pam Sanderson

**'History of 'The Old Bailey'** by the  
Former Clerk to the Recorder of London

##### Wed 28th February



Ray Sturdy

**'The Rise and Fall of Witley Court'**  
A Manor House extensively expanded in  
the early 19th Century by the Architect  
John Nash for Thomas, 3rd Baron Foley

##### Wed 27th March



tba

**Cuan Wildlife Centre** sharing stories of  
the animals they have cared for over  
many years.

##### Wed 24th April



**AGM**

An important annual event followed  
by a short contribution from a member  
**My Personal Experience ...**

##### Wed 22nd May



Ian & Hilary Templeton

**'Pictures in Harmony'** A unique  
presentation with music and narration

##### Wed 26th June



Natalie Cumming

**'The Fiddle'**  
A family story of war and terror told  
through an inherited violin

#### A message from the Chair ...

As I look forward to 2024, I am remembering back to this time last year and 'what a difference a year makes'!



Last November, many of us were still very cautious about even gathering together and anxious to get our winter top-up vaccines! With uncertainty, your Committee met to plan 2023. Which Groups want to, or are even able to, restart? Could we encourage some new groups? How do we publicise u3a to the community? Could we fill a coach for an outing? How do we organise car sharing? Could we attract more members to volunteer on the Committee? But look at us a year on! Nearly 30 activities are up and running, membership is very healthy at 346. Your Hosting Team welcomed over fifty Visitors during the year, many of whom joined. There is a definite 'buzz' as, with confidence, we gather together one way or another to continue to **'learn, laugh & live!'**.

Do I need to add anything? The energy amongst our membership looks set fair for an interesting 2024! **Happy New Year Everyone!**

**Chris Wright, Chair 2023-24**



Last October, Thomas, 2nd Lord Berwick of Attingham entertained us ... on how he proposed (three times!) to his future (spendthrift!) wife.

# The Princes in the Tower : The New Evidence



Channel 4, Saturday 18 November

At our Speaker Meeting in July, we were privileged to be entertained by Matt Lewis, historian and Chair of the Richard III Society. Matt, a leading expert, questioned the veracity of the popular story that the Princes in the Tower were killed by, or by the order of, King Richard III, and gave us compelling arguments to question this 500-year-old theory.

If you are also fascinated by this period in history, you may be interested in the latest documentary about the Princes which aired on Channel 4 on Saturday 18 November. *(You can find it on catch-up)*

Having revealed the location of the body of Richard III in a Leicester car park, Philippa Langley turned her attention to the fate of the Princes in the Tower. Assisted by the forensic legal brain of Rob Rinder, with contributions from Matt and from other eminent historians, she explores new discoveries and examines the truth about the fate of the Princes.

So many documents of this era were destroyed in order to maintain the Tudor story that the princes had died ... but Philippa's determined band of researchers has unearthed documents in remote European archives that were beyond the reach of the 15<sup>th</sup> century censor. Fascinating, amazing new evidence and documents have come to light. It looks like history may be rewritten, after all!

**Editor**

## NEW LOOK u3a Website ...



We have updated our website to make it more accessible and readable on smartphones ... a device that we are all increasingly coming to depend upon!

**[www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk](http://www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk)**

Put the App on your Home Screen for convenience at your fingertips!

All the information you need on u3a Activities, Interest Groups and Speakers Meetings is regularly updated.

## GREET & MEET

### u3a in Town on 'Market Day'

*Have you recently joined u3a?*

*Do you want to introduce someone to u3a?*



*Come along to informal coffee time on every 1st Friday in the month.*

*Tables reserved in the Coffee Area.*

**10.30am to 12 noon**

**in The Crown Inn, High Street NB New Venue**

Fridays: 5th Jan : 2nd Feb : 1st Mar

5th Apr : 3rd May : 7th June



## GOVERNMENT NOTICE !!!

To help save the economy in this economic crisis, the Government has announced that the Home Office and Immigration Department will start deporting Pensioners instead of Asylum Seekers to lower welfare and NHS costs.

Older people are easier to catch, and will not remember how to get back home!

Be sure to send this notice to all your relatives and friends so that they will know what happened to you. I'll see you on the bus!

**Anon**

## BRIDGE FOR BEGINNERS



They say that regret comes not from having tried something and failed, but from not having tried something in the first place.

So, given the tremendous response to the new group, 'Bridge for Beginners' where, each week we have a minimum of 20 players, we can assume that there are many amongst us who regret not having had the opportunity to learn bridge sooner!

A recent US study has concluded that learning new skills – and the emphasis is on 'new' – can significantly improve cognitive scores in older adults. Such activities include learning a new language, or a physical activity such as singing or juggling, or something more cerebral like music composition or playing bridge.

And there is no doubt that learning to play bridge is challenging. Taxing those brain cells and stretching those cognitive abilities!

You need to be **a codebreaker**, knowing that, if your partner bids 2 spades for example in their contract, then they are telling you how many points, how many tricks, how many spades they have in their hand of thirteen cards.

You need to be **a wily, sly, clever tactician**, figuring out how to assess the cards and the possibilities to win tricks.

You need to have **a good memory**, remembering who played what and when, and which cards remain to be played.



You need to understand **a new language**, adapting familiar words to an unfamiliar environment eg contract, vulnerability, overcall, balanced or unbalanced hands, trumps or no trumps.

And you need to have **a head for figures**, totting up the values of tricks and the success of the contracts in order to maximise your points.

But it **IS** fun ... so persevere my fellow beginners, we will prevail!

Thanks to the teachers and those members amongst us who are revising their knowledge of the game, and passing it on to us beginners!

**Janet Hardy – a very bemused bridge beginner**



## CREATIVE WRITING

Creative Writing is a newly formed u3a Group. Led by the spirited Helen Herritty, we began by producing a group story

"consequences" style. Our task for the November meeting was to use a beginning, ***"I've never told anyone this before, but ..."*** The results proved both inventive and entertaining and produced a range of short stories including the reincarnation of a nurse from Florence Nightingale's time; the observations of a lonely tree; the tribulations of a would-be civil service telephonist; an alien corporeal invasion and the pre-Christmas experience of Mrs Claus.

Not allowing the grass to grow, Helen asked us to draw a character from a set of cards and flesh out



the character using a range of headings. Next to be drawn was a setting and then an object. Most had no obvious connection to one another but in little more than ten minutes the group were set to produce brief stories. And we did! They were entertaining and clever. We even had one entirely verbal one.

Moving on, we were given December's challenge – to produce a story interspersing all the words of the first line of a Christmas Carol in the text, though not necessarily in the same order.

I can't wait! But which one?

**Val Johns-Member**

### u3a Contact Information ...

E: [activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk](mailto:activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk)

W: [www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk](http://www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk)

F: Bridgnorth u3a—Members Together



## A Picture tells a thousand words!



learn,  
laugh,  
live

learn,  
laugh,  
live



## My Role as Speaker Secretary ...

"The Speaker should be asked to present for no longer than 50 mins, leaving about 10 mins for Q&As". When I volunteered to take on the role of Speaker Secretary, I was unaware of the parameters needed when booking a Speaker.



Other 'guidelines' included the amount to be paid to the speaker or donated to a charity of their choice. Most important was to confirm bookings for 10 months in advance and that the last meeting of the year had to be light entertainment, perhaps musical with audience participation!



As I began to flick through a box of past and possible speakers, several voices echoed in my head. "Remember", said one, "you can't please all the people all the time". Another trilled away "variety is the spice of life" reminding me to find a good cross section of topics and speakers.

So for 2023, we had talks about 'Pop Art' from the Wolverhampton Art Gallery; 'The Princes in the Tower', a 500 year old mystery which may now be resolved (see p2); '2000 years of Shropshire History' which helped us to understand our own county better; and 'The World of Beatrix Potter', a childhood favourite for many.

I was fortunate to receive some good recommendations. I also 'poached' some speakers from other societies and was able to use my own sources for the rest.

But, on the fourth Wednesday of each month, I always heaved a sigh of relief when the Speaker arrived, when their equipment was compatible with our system, and an even bigger sigh when it all went well, their timing was good, and response was enthusiastic! This job has presented its fair share of challenges but it has also been very satisfying to make a contribution towards our monthly meetings, opening up new ideas and new topics of interest for the members. *I now hand over to Jane Jasper. Good luck!*

**Jo Hammond—Speaker Secretary**

## OUT & ABOUT GROUP ...



The Out and About Group have enjoyed a variety of visits this year. In May we had a guided tour of Stokesay Court, Onibury, its interesting interior having been influenced by the décor installed for the film 'Atonement'. The excellent afternoon tea was served in the panelled dining room before we wandered round the garden.

Our popular train trip took us to Charlie's for refreshments, before boarding the train at Llanfair for the scenic ride on the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway.



Halfpenny Green Wine Estate was our next visit where we learnt about the whole process of winemaking, viewed the grapes growing on the vines and then enjoyed sampling the end results. Several bottles were purchased before or after our ploughman's lunch.

Our last visit was to the World of Wedgwood at Stoke on Trent. The factory tour highlighted the small, extremely skilled workforce producing intricate and expensive items for a worldwide market. Needless to say, the afternoon tea was served in style using beautiful pieces of Wedgwood china.



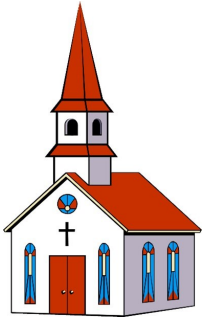
**So where shall we go in 2024?** As the December cold bites, it is hard to look ahead to brighter sunnier days out! Always popular, we hope to venture off on a nostalgic steam train ride somewhere in the country. Another favourite is

visiting a private Historic House for a guided tour by the owners ... maybe Acton Scott Hall or Longnor Hall near Atcham? Following the talk earlier this year about the 'Princes in the Tower', we could go and discover more about Richard III at Leicester Cathedral (where he is now buried). But where else?

Ideas are always welcome from members.

**Jenny Green & Tricia Bennett—Group Leaders**

## EXPLORING CHURCHES ...



We know that our keen church explorers are looking forward to visiting more local churches in the coming year. Hopefully we can arrange the following:

**St Laurence's in Ludlow** known as the Cathedral of the Marches. Established by the Normans with Memorials for Prince Arthur and A E Housman.

**St Mary the Virgin in Cleobury Mortimer.** Another Church restored by Sir Gilbert Scott. It has a twisted spire due to unseasoned timber.



**St Mary's in Acton Burnell.** Built about 1280 for Robert Burnell, latterly Lord Chancellor of England.

**St Mary the Virgin in Enville.** The Nave built about 1100 AD with an Aisle in the 14th/15th Century and restored and enlarged by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Recently discovered gravestones indicate it may have been a Templar Church.

Arrangements and details for each visit are sent out to interested members. Each visit is usually followed by light refreshments in a local café or hostelry. Hope you can join us. **Tessa Holden—Group Leader**

## GARDEN VISITS ...



*Susan and I have been delighted with the support given by Garden Group members this year with good numbers coming on the four outings that we organised. We are now looking at 2024, and with nothing set in stone, we are considering the following:*

**RHS Garden Bridgewater, Worsley, Salford** which is the fifth RHS garden and one of the largest gardening projects undertaken in Europe in recent years. There is so much to see including the Weston Walled Garden containing multiple garden rooms

with colourful themed borders, complementary sub-gardens exploring a different horticultural style and characterful listed buildings. [www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater](http://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater)

**Stockton Bury Gardens, Leominster.** We didn't manage to fit this garden in to our 2023 programme, so we will see if it will make the cut in 2024 where we could enjoy the kitchen garden, the water garden and borders. Family run with local and garden produce all in a country setting. [www.stocktonbury.co.uk](http://www.stocktonbury.co.uk)

**Batsford Arboretum, Moreton-in-March** is home to a unique collection of some of the world's most beautiful and rare trees, shrubs and bamboos spread across 60 acres. This garden can be enjoyed all year round but we are probably looking at going later in the year for the amazing autumn colour. [www.batsarb.co.uk](http://www.batsarb.co.uk)

**John's Garden, Ashwood Nursery, Kingswinford.** We had an excellent visit to this garden in September 2023 with a guided tour by the Head Gardener. Many members expressed an interest in revisiting at a different time of the year. This is certainly a garden for all seasons with an abundance of rare plants as well as many familiar favourites. Now we just need to decide when to return there. [www.ashwoodnurseries.com](http://www.ashwoodnurseries.com)

*If response is good, then travel arrangements in 2024 may well be by coach, otherwise by shared own transport..*



*Make sure you are on the Gardens Group list of interested members to receive details by email as arrangements are confirmed over the year.*

**Susan Powell & Pamela Oakley—Group Leaders**





## BUS PASS—DAY OUT ...

Having experimented during 2023 with this new activity ... those of us with bus passes will again be 'venturing' forth during 2024 to visit ...

**Shrewsbury Flower Show**  
(Friday 9th August on 436 Bus)

Dates to be confirmed for:  
**Much Wenlock and Lunch**  
**Bewdley Town & Museum**  
**Telford Shopping Trip**

Don't forget to sign up on the 'Bus Pass-Day Out' interest list to receive a reminder email with details and join us at the Sainsbury's Bus Stop.

**Linda Ruston—Group Leader**

## Registering your u3a M'Ship Account

We are aware that many members are having difficulty in **Registering** their **u3a Membership Account** with a unique password ... allowing renewal of membership online.

This is a **one-time security procedure** and once completed, it gives you access to your personal details that we keep on our **u3a Beacon Admin System**.

Help is available for your Smartphone, Tablet, or iPad either over the phone (01746 766955) or in person at any u3a gathering. Please just ask. **Once done ... it is done!**  
[beacon@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk](mailto:beacon@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk)

## u3a LEARNING ONLINE

**Did you know that you can explore a huge variety of u3a Interest Groups on line?**

More than 90 varied interests are on offer from Cryptic Crosswords, Fun with Maths, Jazz Hour and Film Reviews,. Social History & Military History.

Not all of us can get out and about so easily and some of us won't want to do so during the colder winter months. So why not investigate further—there may be something that interests you.

**IGO** is a standalone u3a membership at £12 pa

Obviously sessions are on Zoom

Look out for their free taster sessions

[www.u3a/org/u/igo](http://www.u3a/org/u/igo)

## IMPORTANT NOTICE!

As the year comes to an end I urge you to take care of yourself and avoid accidents, because spare parts for old models like you and I are no longer in stock. Please forward to other old models you care about.

**Editor**

## NEW GROUPS FOR THE SPRING?

### TABLE TENNIS & BADMINTON



Highley Sports Centre offers an opportunity for a one/two hour session to play badminton and/or table tennis.

If there is sufficient interest, an exclusive time for u3a members to play will be arranged.



[activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk](mailto:activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk)

### CRAFT GROUP ...



Do you enjoy the challenge of crafting?

We have a member willing to share copper crafting.

[activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk](mailto:activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk)

### CINEMA GOERS



This year, our 'Cinema

Goers' enjoyed several films at our local Majestic Cinema including Andre Rieu's Concerts, Downton Abbey. Oppenheimer and recently the battles of Napoleon.

Check you are on the list to ensure you receive weekly email reminder of films and 'live events'.

**Tessa Holden—Group Leader**

### NOT EVERYONE CAN READ THIS!

fi you can raed this, you have a sgtrane mnid too. I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacity uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mind, aoccdnrig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy. It dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitil raed it whotuit a pboerlm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! If you can raed tihs **SHARE IT**.

**Can you raed this?**

**Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can!**

## SOCIAL

## Monthly Speaker Meetings

Wednesdays (pm) 4th monthly  
Community Hall, Low Town  
Chair—Chris Wright

## Greet & Meet In Town

Fridays (am) 1st monthly  
The Crown Pub (Coffee Area)  
Welcome Host—Chris Wright

## VISITS/DAYS OUT

## Out & About

Day Trips organised with a Guide  
Leaders—  
Tricia Bennett & Jenny Green

## Garden Visits

Half day Visits to local Gardens  
Leaders—  
Susan Powell & Pamela Oakley

## Exploring Churches

Shropshire Churches with Guide  
Leader—Tessa Holden

## Bus Pass—Day Out

Venturing forth by bus for the day!  
Leader—Linda Ruston

# GAMES

## Games Together ...

Canasta Mahjong Rummikub  
Scrabble Backgammon Chess

Mondays (pm) Weekly  
Community Hall, Low Town  
Leaders—  
Jo Hammond & Tony Pritchard

## Table Tennis for Fun

Fridays (am) weekly  
Member's Home—The Paddock  
Leader—Maureen Mumford

## Cribbage

Tuesdays (pm) (2nd & 4th)  
The Fosters Arms  
Leader—Allan Clayton

## Bridge 1 & 2

Fridays (am) weekly  
Tasley Village Hall  
Leader—Mary Galloway

Fridays (pm) weekly  
Tasley Village Hall  
Leader—Susan Powell

## Bridge for Beginners

Thursdays (pm) Weekly  
Community Hall, Low Town  
Leader—Mary Salter

# LANGUAGES

## German Conversation

Mondays (am) 1st monthly  
Member's Home  
Leader—Val Seabright

## Spanish—Let's Learn

Thursdays (am) weekly  
Zoom  
Leader—Marion Low

## French Conversation 1 & 2

Weds or Fridays (am) fortnightly  
Leaders—  
Angela Treble or Janet Hardy  
Member's Homes

## OUTDOORS

## Walking

Fridays (1st) (monthly)  
6-8 mile day walks  
Leaders—  
Jane Freshney & Jenny Green

## Walks - Short Local

Weds 1st, 3rd & 5th (am)  
Maximum 2 miles  
Leaders—  
Trevor Padget & Ina Roberts

