

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to members who have joined since our last newsletter

Sue Kaplan Lindsay Steele Doreen & Maurice Timms

Christine Collins Michael Sessarego Carole & Peter Flowers

Philip Logan Vi Beasley Josslyn Lampitt Judith Foster

David Hudson Dave Wicks Paul & Sylvia Smith

Julie Pitts & Norman Timms Michael & Karen Hawcutt

Gwen & Ken Pomfret Margaret Thomson Lesley & Stephen Dibb

Linda & Colin Woodman Patricia Coombs Susan Bullard

Judy & Cefn Blundell Glenys & Michael Orton Patricia Fair

Ann Wood- Griffiths Clova Jenkins Sheila Winnett Brenda Jones

Marilyn & David Grubb Louise Smith Joan & Paul Eggington

Marilyn Grove Margaret Stephen Patricia & John Fox

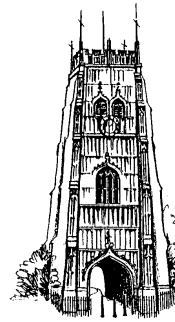
C.J Wolstencroft Angela & Frank Dalley Margaret & Ian Peacock

Helen Andrews Eileen Rampke Angela Fowler Edna Parr

Maria & Jim Mitchell Orlando Leslie Ruth & Jim Aitkenhead

Keep in touch online via our website: www.u3a-evesham.org.uk

and don't forget that all groups have their own web page. John Scotland is anxious to keep your information up to date. Either email him at js@u3a-evesham.org.uk or phone him on 881594



U3A

EVESHAM & DISTRICT
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A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

A belated, happy (and hopefully healthy) *New Year* to all members!

Our Open Day at the Town Hall in November was very busy and many new members were enrolled, thanks I am sure, in large part to the recent promotional efforts of the Committee. This is obviously a sure sign that our organisation is gaining even greater popularity in the Evesham area.

Our *Christmas Celebration* held at the Town Hall in early December was, as ever, a great success and my thanks go to all participating members. With no members' meeting held in January, as usual, the latest event was our annual lunch at the Three Ways Hotel in Mickleton. Some 75 members were present and it proved to be a very pleasant gathering, as in previous years.

A full speakers' programme has already been arranged for our monthly Town Hall meetings throughout 2011, with the next venue date being Wednesday, 6th April.

A number of new interest groups have been formed in the past few months, taking the total to nearly 60 (something for everybody)! A new members' tea party was held on 7th February, and some 30 people were there.

Whilst the economic outlook for this year is rather bleak, I hope that members find some solace via participation in the ever-growing number of activities that we now offer!

IAN SIMPSON

COMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

April 6th Betty Hudson *Farmers Overseas Action Group*
A Worcestershire charity supporting projects in Uganda

May 4th Mandy Davies *Tales from a Lady Thatcher,*
followed by AGM

June 1st Vicky Cody, Deputy Head Gardener
Hidcote Manor Gardens [creation and design]

Meetings are held at Evesham Town Hall from 2pm to 4pm . They are open to all members of Evesham and District U3A and visitors are welcome.

Coffee and tea are served after the meetings.

All members must show their current membership card.

COTSWOLD LINK STUDY DAY

Last year's Study Day organised by Cotswold Link (the network of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire U3As of which Evesham is a prominent member) was considered a great success, and a number of our members enjoyed the day's four speakers on 'Aspects of History'.

This year's theme will be 'The Cotswolds Then and Now', with talks covering a range of subjects as diverse as Cheese-Rolling and Cider-Making, the Cotswold Wardens and the day-to-day life of a local GP.

The Study Day will be held on Wednesday July 6th at a venue near Cheltenham town centre from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and will cost no more than £12.00 per person, including tea or coffee on arrival and a buffet lunch. It is open to all U3A members.

If you are interested please inform, in the first instance, Evesham U3A's Link Contact John Scotland (01386 881954, js@u3a-evesham.org.uk). Full details will be available in early spring.

OUTINGS

Monday 4th April LONDON £13

Monday 16th May ANDERTON BOAT LIFT AND RIVER TRIP
£19.50 including a stop at the Stapeley Water Gardens Centre on the return journey.

Wed. 8th June ERDDIG HOUSE AND GARDENS with guided garden tour by head gardener Price £22 (reductions for NT members)

Wednesday 20th July WINCHESTER with a guided tour of the city
Price £13.50

Thursday 1st Sept. HIGHCLERE CASTLE [where Downton Abbey was filmed] Price £19.50 which includes Castle, gardens, grounds and Egyptian exhibition

Monday 17th October LONDON £13 (optional extra Elizabethan experience £17)

Sue Beneke 49496, Jennie Sutton 4430267

and did you know?

.....that U3A now has more than a quarter million members

Kathy Venus from Oldham has been given a giant membership card, because she's the quarter-millionth U3A member. She has not come alone; her husband and mother have also joined. Her mother is 95, which shows it's never too late to start learning. Oldham U3A itself has only been going a few months, but has around 200 members and 8 groups. It shows yet again how well the U3A formula works.

Have you renewed your membership? Subscriptions for the current year were due in November anyone who hasn't paid by the end of January will have been deleted from our membership list, but it doesn't cost anything to re-join, so if you've forgotten and want to remain a member send your cheque off to John Halford now.

BOOK CLUB

An excellent service for book groups is available through local libraries via the 'Group Sets' scheme. Each year we choose the books we wish to read from a very comprehensive and diverse list of some 100 books and place our order with Redditch Library. Our choice for each month is then delivered to Evesham Library – 12 books in a box which of course alleviates the expense of purchasing the book.

Certainly the books we had either chosen (or had allocated to us) during the past three months have been somewhat dark to say the least. We reminded ourselves at our last meeting that next month we will go from the sublime to the (some may say) ridiculous in that we recently read 'The Brethren' and next month will read Paul O'Grady's 'At my Mother's Knee'.

Robyn Young's epic novel of the Knights Templar, "Brethren," is the first part of a trilogy, spanning the years from 1260 to 1272 AD. The central figure is Will Campbell, an apprentice in the Knights Templar. Although their initial mission was to protect Christians visiting the Holy Land, the Knights Templar evolved into "one of the wealthiest and most powerful organizations of their day," wielding great political, economic, and religious influence. "Brethren" is a thoroughly researched and sweeping tale about an era that eerily resembles ours. Islamic fundamentalists declare Jihad against their Western enemies. Not much has changed since the thirteenth century, it seems. For fans of historical fiction, "Brethren" is a primer about knighthood, royalty, and Christianity in the years before the Last Crusade.

Over time we cover many themes. February's book was a 1000-pager called "Jonathan Strange and Mr Norell" by Susanna Clarke. It follows the careers of two magicians from 1806 to 1817. Their relationship shifts from distrust, to harmony, to hostility, to grudging respect. Magic is considered a respectable profession, with a lot of reservations. It's handy for Wellington to have rivers shifted around to thwart Napoleon, but a nuisance when maps don't match.

Certainly our group members consider that belonging to a book group means that they read books that they would never have chosen individually – widening the reading experience which generally is a good thing.

Carole Vizor (41397)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN	Ian Simpson	41667
VICE CHAIRMAN, WEBSITE & COTSWOLD LINK	John Scotland	881594
TREASURER	Paul Griffin 01527	821319
SECRETARY	Jane Couper	424167
MINUTES SECRETARY/PUBLICITY	Joyce Davey	443755
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	John Halford	834648
GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR	Caroline Bagshaw	41384
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	David Way	442753
PROGRAMME SECRETARY & HALL LIAISON	Una Wassell	765105
PASTORAL & REFRESHMENTS	Judy Knight	429434

NB. Tea rota for Public Hall meetings: April-Short mat bowls
May- Village Strolls

I think I have done my stint as newsletter editor and I am pleased to have found someone to carry on and, hopefully, introduces new ideas. Please send your contributions for the June newsletter to George Oxley (newsletter@u3a-evesham.org.uk) by 30th April. His telephone number is 442378 and don't forget to copy your e-mails to John Scotland for the website.

*Signing off,
David Way*



JAZZ AND BIG BAND GROUP

I run the above group at Worcester U3A to which, being a member of the Cotswold Group, any of your members may attend. I will be grateful if you would look at the details on our website and promulgate the information to your members,

Fred Stone (fred @jazz.myzen.co.uk)

INTEREST GROUPS

Open Day seems a long time ago now, but I'm still catching up on the new groups that started their formation on that day. There were six of these, and four have now either started or are about to start. **Table Tennis** is another, which I hope will have made progress by the time this newsletter comes out. **Memory** unfortunately has had to be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, but it is not forgotten.

Pottery – Tony Young (832120) has the twin skills of making pots and teaching others how. I've joined this group, and despite being the most ham-fisted person in the world, I have made a bowl and a box, and aspire to making a cup one day. The top-of-the-class lady makes highly artistic pots one after another without help, so it really is for all levels.

Poetry – John Gardener (47240) has been writing poetry for years. Some of the group are content to read existing poems, and some want to write their own. The first hour is for reading whatever poet takes the group's fancy. The second hour has a smaller group who want to write as well.

Patchwork 2 – Karen Hawcutt (830829) is leading this second patchwork group. At the time of writing it's a fortnight away from its first meeting.

Portraits – Mike Bagshaw (41384) is set for six sessions between February and April. It was originally called Portrait Painting, but several people asked if it had to be painting, and it doesn't. It can be any medium that has the aim of creating portraits.

Caroline Bagshaw (41384 – cb@u3a-evesham.org.uk)

CROSS STITCH AND EMBROIDERY

The standard of members' work displayed at the November open day was much admired resulting in a few more members joining the group. This does mean, however, that we are unable to take any new recruits for the foreseeable future.

Brenda Armitage (871211)

PUTTING THE WOPRLD TO RIGHTS

We have two groups putting the world to rights, and there really is no limit to the topics to discuss, nor to the solutions that we can suggest. Unfortunately there is a limit to the number the groups can take, and both groups are full. If anyone would like to become part of a third group, please let me know. Maybe you can lead it. Nobody really knows how to solve the world's problems, so if you don't feel expert, you're not alone. So if you feel roused by issues like prison policy, banker performance, litter, or anything else, and would like to thrash it out, please get in touch and I'll try to get you all together in a new group.

Caroline Bagshaw (41384)

PORTRAITS

I have just held the first session of the new Portrait Group. There are nine artists in the group, using different media to create portraits. I want to help them to look, really look, as much as to draw. When people say they can't draw, it's more accurate to say they can't look, and that makes it difficult to represent faces on paper, despite seeing dozens of faces every day. The brain summarises, rather than studies, the human face. We think of lips as red, but it's more complex than that, and dipping the brush into red paint won't get you very far. Depending on the light, and the person, you might have almost any colour in your palette, and certainly blues and yellows and browns. We need to explore, colour shape and form. I am in the early days of my second career as a portrait artist, and this group helps me as well as me helping them, as it makes me think about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it.

Mike Bagshaw - 01386 41384, portraits@u3a-evesham.org.uk

CLASSIC CINEMA

With four meetings left before the end of our current season, we are looking forward to films – all prime examples of their type – as diverse as Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*, Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds in *Singin' in the Rain*, and two widely contrasting Hitchcock classics: *The Thirty-Nine Steps* from his burgeoning British period in the mid-1930s and his American thriller *Rear Window* from the 1950s, starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly.

We meet on the first and third Friday mornings of the month at Evesham Methodist Church (cost: usually £1.50, occasionally £2.00) to watch and discuss movies from the great era of the Thirties, Forties and Fifties.

Our Spring/Summer season, with an equally varied collection of classics, will begin after the Easter holiday on May 6th. We still have room for a few more members, both for this season and the next. Please contact me if you are interested.

Nick Mason (01386 442187 or njmason@talktalk.net)

QUIZ GROUP

The Quiz Group meets once a month to answer 40 questions devised by two of us, a different two each time so that everyone gets a chance. The questions range from Domesday Book to the upcoming Royal Wedding. We chop and change the teams because we don't want it to get too competitive. It's not a ferocious contest, but a friendly get-together for a quiz.

Eileen Hann (47535)

FAMILY HISTORY

The Family History group continues to delve into the past, partly online, and now we have the help of U3A laptops. Sometimes we get back a long way, like the rector who in 1665 lost 200 eels to a thief. It's just as fascinating to discover living cousins, down the road, or as far afield as South Africa, or a strong Jamaican link. We search records like censuses, apprenticeship indentures, workhouse accounts, and much much more. Some ancestors are hard to track down, like the bell hanger whose mother may be Mary, or maybe not. If it turns out she is, there will be a new search to find out about her. It's a hobby that can never end.

Judith Smart - familyhistory@u3a-evesham.org.uk (765284)

ASPECTS OF MODERN HISTORY

The Group now has 13 members and just manages to fit the dining room of 22 Broadway Road comfortably on the second and fourth Thursday mornings at 10.30am. For most of the Autumn session we studied the First World War covering various aspects of this popular subject. The Worcestershire Library catalogue listed some 600 volumes we could have used. We were able to get a long loan of two books and supplemented these from the collective past reading of learned members! There was much sharing of anecdotes and details.

For a change we are about to study *The Age of Wonder* by Richard Holmes which gives an account of the scientific discoveries and researches of a number of eighteenth and nineteenth century worthies among them Charles Babbage, who invented the first computer, Joseph Banks, the botanist who sailed with Cook to the Pacific, the poets Byron, Coleridge and Cowper; Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles; Edward Jenner, who discovered the smallpox vaccine; and representing the women: Fanny Burney, who survived a mastectomy without anaesthetic; Jane Marcet, a chemist who inspired Michael Faraday; Mary Shelley of *Frankenstein* fame; and many others of both sexes. It promises rich pickings!

Sheila Himsworth (47146)

HOME CINEMA

After having to cancel a session or two for various reasons, I have decided to move our meetings to the first Tuesday evening of the month, though still only from September to April. This should make the date easier to remember too. At our January gathering we watched 'Great Expectations', the Dickens classic directed by David Lean. This is obviously a slimmed down version of the book containing fewer characters and some major differences to the storyline. Despite its age (made in 1946) it held our interest and gripped us at times. At the end of it one of our members said she wished they made films like that nowadays. We certainly all enjoyed it.

Jenny Salcedo (443429)

WALKING GROUPS

Over 4 miles

We have gained quite a few new walkers recently so I have started a waiting list for anyone else wishing to join us: over 30 people on a walk is more than it is practicable to handle comfortably.

Since my last report in 2010 the weather has been very much against us, but that has not deterred a very hardy bunch of walkers.

In December when we started to walk around Bretforton the temperature was minus 5 degs, but a lovely bright morning with lovely scenery as can be seen on the website. 25 members completed the walk and then 36 of us had a Christmas meal at The Round of Gras.

We have recently visited Ardens Grafton and Exhall, Bourton on the Hill and Church Lench.

In the coming months we have walks planned for Snowhill and Buckland Wood, Blockley and Draycott and Stanton which was cancelled owing to the snow in December.

Members help by leading walks in the Evesham and Cotswold areas. Anyone wishing to go on the waiting list can contact me.

John Halford. (834648)

SHORT MAT BOWLS

Since the Open Day in November our numbers have increased quite considerably, therefore I will have to start a waiting list for anyone else wishing to join us.

We play at Norton and Lenchwick Village hall, off Kings Road in Norton.

In December we had our usual Christmas party when the morning and afternoon groups got together, so about 30 of us had a good afternoon.

We are now into our 7th year and it is a well attended group, with two sessions of bowls ; 10am and 2pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday each month.

We supply the bowls so all members need is to wear flat shoes for walking on the mats.

Anyone wishing to go on the waiting list can contact me.

John Halford (834648)

LOCAL HISTORY

Our speaker at the November meeting was Deborah Overton of the Worcestershire Historic Environment & Archaeology Service. The very interesting illustrated talk took us from the foot of Bredon Hill to the summit.

Our December meeting was a miscellany of talks from three of our members. Lionel Young took us for a Walk down Bridge Street in which he nostalgically reminisced about the businesses which used to ply their trades there, Jeanne Pearce took us through a talk on a visit to Toddington Manor & Estate, and lastly Neville & Glenys Cole took us through a history of bottles, some of which were sourced locally; it is surprising just how many breweries there were in Evesham.

Special thanks were offered to Colin and Joan Campbell for all their sterling work over the past four years in leading the Local History Group, definitely a hard act to follow. With some 50 members in the local history group it is clearly a subject which people are interested in and therefore, together with Jeanne Pearce and myself, we are hoping to continue with interesting speakers and outings during the coming year. If any of our members have any ideas or suggestions as to speakers etc. we would be pleased to hear from you.

Our next booking is on 5th April, when Anne Fox will speak about the Throckmorton family of Coughton Court

Georgie McArdle (861004 e-mail georgie.mcardle@gmail.com)
Jeanne Pearce (830621)

POETRY

Poetry is but an expression of what lies within the heart

It was by sheer chance that I dropped into U3A Open Day and discovered to my great joy that a number of people were looking to form a Poetry group. This is an opening I had been looking for for some considerable time, and I am glad to be leading this group. I have had a lifelong interest in poetry, mainly in writing my own, and also in appreciating the work of others. I'm looking forward to the challenges and ultimate rewards of associating with others of like mind.

John Gardener 47240

GERMAN CONVERSATION

A new year, new enthusiasm and new ideas. That is the result when 30 likeminded people meet each month to have a social get-together with one aim in mind, to stretch their brain and don't they make me stretch mine!! The members in the beginners group are so eager to learn and are making great progress.

The intermediate group continue to write, tell stories about a variety of anecdotes and are improving all the time. It is enjoyable to see how they have advanced over the years. The proof is in the writing!!

The advanced group is really leaping ahead. We are now trying to read a play by Dürrenmatt, 'Der Besuch der alten Dame' a well known German author, who has tantalised many a German students in the past and we are now going to stretch our brain and hopefully enjoy his writing.

It is fun to meet each other every other Thursday. For information, please contact Sophie Dodds 01386 870421 or email

sophie.dodds@mypostoffice.co.uk

POTTERY

The new pottery making course has got off to a great start with seven people attending whose experience of pottery varies from absolute beginner to (one) accomplished potter. Most people have either never done pottery before or last worked with clay many years ago.

The surprise for them (but not me) is that they all have managed to achieve a lot in a short time. In the first three weeks, most have finished making two little pots that cover two basic methods of building something in clay, namely coiling and slabbing (there are lots of odd names for equipment and processes to learn in pottery - part of the fascination).

The six week initial course will finish with lessons in some of the many and varied ways to decorate a pot. What is marvellous is that everyone will have something to show for their efforts in a few weeks and can look forward to using the basic techniques learned so far to produce bigger and possibly better pots in the next six week session.

Tony Young (832120)



No need to caption these - just two colourful photos taken during the snows to remind us what it was like

Focus on Art Appreciation



The Art Appreciation group had a go at being Constructivists at the January meeting. This was inspired by the work of the Russian Constructivists around the time of the Revolution.



They wanted to get away from the idea that art is for an elite few and is hidden in galleries, which they called 'mausoleums for dead art.' Instead they went for simple shapes and straight forward messages, such as "Read more books." U3A tried it out on the message "Join U3A."

Caroline Bagshaw

