

MALVERN **U3A**

N° 80 SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER



*April sunset over Aberystwyth pier ...
... as seen from the Welsh Culture Group's hotel*

U3A Committee (Trustees)

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CHAIR'S NOTES

Earlier this year my husband and I held a small celebration of our first decade living in Malvern, enjoying the company of some of the friends we have made, and answered a number of times the question, "Why did you come to live in Malvern?" One of our answers has always been: because of the U3A (along with motorway access, the theatre, a swimming pool and a railway station!)

The reason the U3A was an important factor in our choice is because we already knew from looking at the website, the range of different groups that could be available to us and knew that through the U3A we could meet congenial people who shared our interests. The website provided us with an early contact with Malvern U3A although we were living some 120 miles away.

The website has developed hugely since I was looking at it more than ten years ago. Through the work of a number of people it has become increasingly detailed with more accessible information, about groups and their activities, the venues, and the contact details of group leaders. The site has important documentation, which offers advice and guidance on a number of matters; it has past copies of this newsletter, minutes of Trustee meetings, photographs of activities, and links to some groups' own websites. There is a Forum to exchange views and share concerns.

In addition, there is a calendar which can remind members about which groups meet when, which can also help users of the site plan their attendance at even more activities.

At the moment the Trustees are working in small working parties – on top of their usual meeting commitments – to update the content of the site so that it is even more useful, alongside the existing technology working group which has overseen the structure of the site itself.

All this is to help members: there are some who are reluctant to use the internet, or who don't have a computer, although of course there are computers freely available at the public library. However this is a very small number of our members and it is likely that we will make increasing use of the webpage as a way of providing information to members, as well as using email to contact them.

At one time, communication between people was only possible through direct conversation, or by sending messengers; after the development of the "Penny Post" and printing, there were easier ways of reaching individuals and groups of people. The future though, is increasingly electronic and Malvern U3A is part of that. So, please, let the Trustees know what you would like to see on the site, and make use of it yourself.

Pam Stanier

Malvern U3A's First Quiz night



The first Malvern U3A quiz night was held on Wednesday 24th February. It was a great success and a most enjoyable evening was had by all. 66 tickets were sold and the night saw almost 70 people packed into the United Reform Church hall in Malvern Link.

I'd been having nightmares for weeks, worrying that there wouldn't be enough room for the tables, the chairs and all the people! However, although I'd worked out the seating arrangements, it didn't occur to me to count the chairs until the afternoon of the quiz, when – you've guessed it - I found that there weren't enough. Jon White at the Cube very kindly allowed us to borrow some for the evening – saving us from having to use a motley assortment of garden chairs!

The question setter and esteemed quizmaster was fellow U3A committee member, Brian Chesney. He was runner up - by only one pass - in the Mastermind Grand Final of 2014, and many were afraid that the questions he set would be too difficult. This proved not to be the case with the higher scoring teams, gaining over 75% of the points available. He devised a very interesting and quite challenging quiz comprising six rounds of ten questions over a range of traditional subjects including science and nature, geography and art and literature.

The most important questions I had to deal with, however, were "How many bags of peanuts are needed for 70 people?" and "Will there be enough juice for all who want it?" I also had to ask myself "Have I added the scores correctly?" as I'm definitely no Carol Vorderman!

Midway through the quiz was a break to give teams a chance to top up their glasses and cups, and to work on the Celebrity Anagrams and the picture round.

I did learn through the course of the evening that a whale's tail is a fluke (well it's not actually a fluke, that's just what it's called), and that there are 225 squares on a Scrabble board – an answer which required both knowledge of the game and mathematical skill!

Round after round, from history and current affairs to sport and leisure, jokers were played (not always wisely), Brian patiently repeated questions, heads were scratched and the scores at the top of the scoreboard drew closer and closer together.

As wine bottles were drained (well done everyone for remembering to take your empties home) and the final question was repeated for the umpteenth time, the winning team finally emerged.

Birthday Girl – a team of six who'd joined together as a team only on the night – pipped the Warblers to the post – beating them by a mere half a point!

Birthday Girl's team shared out the prize of six assorted bottles of wine. What a lovely birthday present for Joy!

Congratulations to the winning team and real commiserations to the Warblers – so near and yet so far away!

Thank you again to all those who helped out on the night with serving refreshments, moving tables and chairs, washing up etc. You all helped to make the evening such a successful event.

Annette Maxted



Recent work from the Needlework and Patchwork Skills group

News from Groups

Welsh Culture Trip to Aberystwyth

On Monday 11th April thirty-one people set off for Aberystwyth in driving rain which got steadily worse as the day progressed. A stop was made at the Elan Valley Visitor Centre. The dams are operated by Dwr Cymru (Welsh Water) and the centre overlooks the Victorian stone dam which holds the domestic water for Birmingham. The party then continued on to the university town of Aberystwyth where they booked into the Belle Vue Royal Hotel, with the rest of the day free to explore the town.



The Elan Valley Dam



Aberystwyth and the old university from the castle

Tuesday was a much better day with wall-to-wall sunshine and the group travelled south to the pretty seaport of Aberaeron where most of the group watched as a crane lowered boats into the harbour ready for the summer season. Then there was a short drive from Aberaeron to Llanerchaeron House which is a villa designed by John Nash in the late eighteenth century for Colonel William Lewis. This has survived virtually unaltered and is now run by the National Trust. It consists of a minor gentry estate with a self-sufficient farm complex and kitchen garden.



Aberaeron harbour

Wednesday was another glorious morning when the group took a trip on the "Prince of Wales" steam train on the Vale of Rheidol railway, the only narrow-gauge railway to have been owned by British Rail, but is now in private ownership. It



Vale of Rheidol

was opened in 1902 to carry iron ore, timber and passengers. It runs between Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge. It climbs nearly 200m in the twelve miles travelled, and passes through stunning scenery, often with red kites and buzzards circulating overhead, which indeed they did on the group's visit. Having spent some time in Devil's Bridge looking at the three-layered bridge and climbing down to the waterfalls, we returned to Aberystwyth to visit the National Library of Wales. The visit started with a short introductory film followed by a tour of some of the Library's oldest acquisitions, such as The Black Book of Carmarthen, a compilation of myths and legends of early Wales. Everyone was amazed at the amount of information stored in the Library, which includes a copy of every publication in the UK.



The group outside the National Library of Wales

On the way back to the hotel several members of the group went up Constitution Hill on the funicular railway. As it was such a clear day the views were spectacular.

On Thursday the group left the hotel and travelled to Lampeter for a guided tour of The Welsh Quilt Centre. This was a follow-on visit after the talk given by Jen Jones, the owner of the centre, to the U3A Welsh group in Malvern. The flannel quilts are all amazing, especially considering their intricacies and the fact that they were all hand-stitched. Jen Jones is very knowledgeable about the Welsh woollen industry and the visit was very interesting. The group then travelled to Llanybydder to visit Jen Jones' cottage/shop to view her impressive range of Welsh blankets and quilts. From there it was a return to Malvern.

This was a very well-organised tour and our thanks are due to Sandy Williams and Sheila Owen for organising it.

Sue Price



Aberystwyth from Constitution Hill, and ...
... looking towards the Hill and the 'bar'.



Welsh Culture Trip to Aberystwyth

Freda remembers ...

"I am well known for losing myself wherever I go! But, after a few hours in Aberystwyth, my long term memory must have kicked in and after 70 years I automatically walked to the end of the promenade and 'kicked the bar'.* Aberystwyth hadn't changed a bit."

Freda Rutherford

* Aberystwyth promenade ends with a railing or 'bar' at the base of Constitution Hill and there is a tradition of 'kicking the bar' at the end of the prom when taking a walk. The origins of this are obscure, but theories include trying to attract female students in the nearby hall, or as a way of ensuring good luck, or even a good degree pass for undergraduates!

Images from John Price, Richard Shenton and Richard Owen

Astronomy

A note for all those wanting to be part of the Astronomy group next year.

I cannot be at the registration morning in September so suggest that any interested members should contact me by e-mail or telephone well in advance, even now. This also applies to those wanting to do it again. The course itself will be as detailed in the 2015 Groups Directory.

Regards Chris

cjbaddiley@gmail.com or 01886 - 880 047

Theatre Studies programme

May 25th History of the Theatre

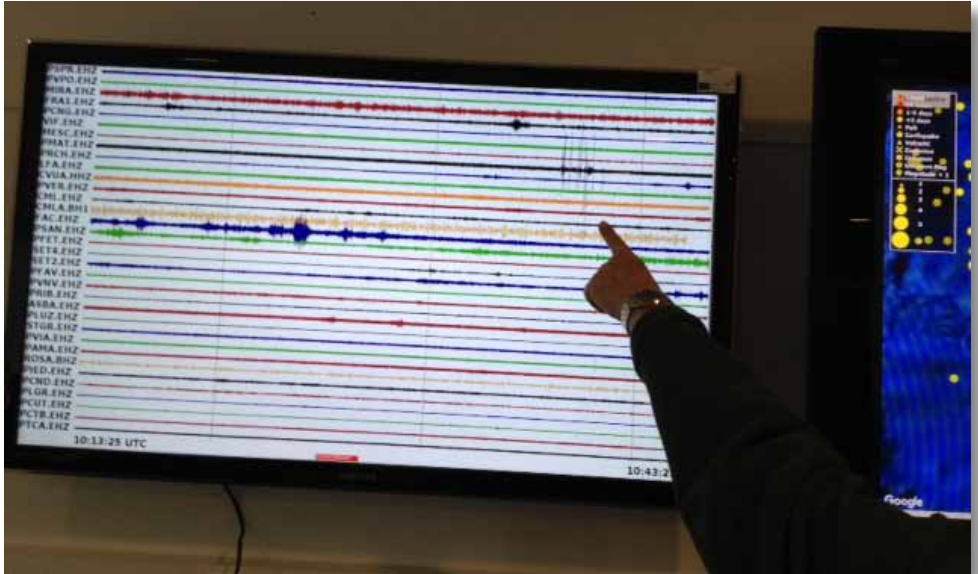
June 29th The Redgraves - part 1 (talk by Alan Starkey)

August 3rd The Redgraves - part 2 (talk by Alan Starkey) - Please note change of date.

Alan

Geology

About 20 members of the Geology Group recently returned from a trip to the Azorean island of Sao Miguel. It seems that they had a fascinating visit to this volcanic archipelago in the middle of the Atlantic. Those of us who did not go are looking forward to a feedback session at our next meeting on 11th May. However, early indications are of a visit not without its moments of drama! This picture shows one of our members pointing to a seismic trace showing evidence of an earthquake actually taking place while they were visiting the monitoring station!



In addition, the weather during the first 24 hours on the islands was nothing if not exciting. They experienced thunder, sunshine, rain, hail and then this



... and to fill the space! Layered metamorphic rock at Ardchiavaig, Mull, by Alan Parry



Photo: (The intrepid) Caroline Carver

Ukulele Strum and Sing sessions ARE NOW HELD TWICE A MONTH

From the beginning of May, Strum and Sing sessions will be held at the Malvern Cube on the first **and** third Wednesday each month in the Main Hall. For those who are relatively new to the ukulele, the first half hour (from 10.00 a.m.) will be spent practising basic chords and strumming. The Strum and Sing session will then run from 10.30 a.m. till midday.

The group's songbooks, (and advice about buying a ukulele), can be found on the Malvern Ukes website.



All levels of player are welcome to attend these sessions. Complete beginners are welcome - but you will need to bring a ukulele!

Derek Measure



Painting 2

Painting 2 group have continued to meet and enjoy our sessions together on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month, and have been joined by a few new members over this last term. We now have membership of 20 regular members, and expect to have another two in September. Anyone interested in joining can call me on Malvern 575383 to find out more. We would also like to hear about anyone who can offer the occasional demonstrations on any aspect of painting in any medium.

Val Bruton



Recent work from the Painting 2 group

Monday Garden Group - Programme for 2016

May 16th 2.30 p.m.
Nafford House/Mantoft - Eckington Gardens

June 20th 2.30 p.m.
David's Garden
Badgers Way, Ash Lane, Martin Hussingtree,
WR3 8TB

July 18th 2.30 p.m.
Pear Tree Cottage
Witton Hill, Wichenford, WR6 6YX

August 15th 2 p.m.
Morton Hall
Morton Hall Lane, Holberrow Green, Redditch,
B96 6SJ

September 19th 2.30 p.m.
Hellens,
Much Marcle, Ledbury, HR8 2LY

November 6th Sunday 2.30 p.m.
Highnam Court
Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DP

December 19th 2.30 p.m.
Christmas Social Meeting and ideas for 2017
at Janet Green's home.

Enquiries to Janet Green 01684 - 567 974
or Pam Baker - 01886 - 832 983

Lesley Taylor - Green



Camera Group

Over the Spring the camera group has looked at close-up photography and the intricacies of the histogram in interpreting images on the camera, or the computer in post-processing.

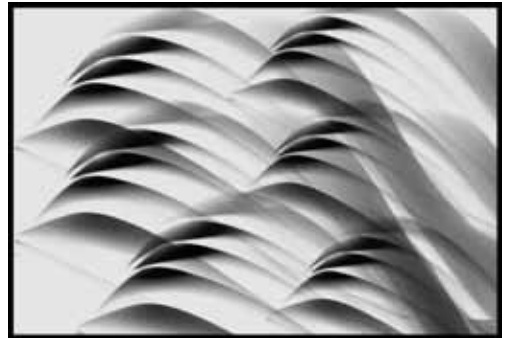
In April we were lucky to have a session led by Ian Thompson, who is Chair of the Beacon Camera Club. Ian talked to us about entering images for competitions and showed a range of his own (prize-winning) images. It was interesting to hear from a judge of photographic competitions about how the judges go about making their decisions. You've got just five seconds to initially impress them! Ian talked about common mistakes when taking pictures and encouraged us to 'look around the edges' of our pictures to avoid extraneous clutter. An excellent session that was appreciated by all present. We hope that Ian can come back in the future to talk to us about 'fakery' in photography.

Themes for members pictures this year have included Green, Wave, Relax and The Old & the New. The theme for May is 'Pattern'. In May we will look at 'Landscape Photography', (with a particular look at stacked and stitched images), and in June it will be 'Some projects for the Summer'.



Lorna Blackwell - Green

Have a look at some of our member's images.



Janet Farnes - Wave



Neil Storey - Wave

Morris Portsmouth - Relax



Contact: Richard Owen
camera@malvernu3a.org.uk

Why not ...

Get involved with a new group

CALLING ALL READERS

U3A READING GROUP



Who would like to meet once a month to share their reading by giving a review of a book and a reading from it?

I mean any old book, not just fiction.

My own pleasure comes from books about history, people, religion, politics, philosophy, exploration of the world and learning new things. I enjoy comedy and fantasy and can always read Pratchett and Thurber. Short stories by Pratchett, Monroe, Lawrence, O'Brien, Colette, Hardy, Kipling and Primo Levi are always worth reading; likewise rereading the classics. Recently I have reread War and Peace, Barnaby Rudge and Pilgrims Progress. Other books I have read and enjoyed this past year have been The Old Ways a Journey on Foot by Robert Macfarlane about walking; A Line in the Sand The Anglo French Struggle for the Middle East, 1914 -1948 by James Barr; Lawrence in Arabia - War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East by Scott Anderson; On Palestine by Noam Chomsky and Ilan Pappé a contemporary view of the situation in Palestine; and The Wolf Wilder by Katherine Rundell, a children's book set in Tsarist Russia.

At the moment I am reading a five shilling Penguin from 1960 called The White Nile by Alan Moorehead, and learning about the 19th century explorers Burton, Speke, Baker, Livingstone, Gordon and Kitchener.

Of course there are too many books to read in one lifetime but it could be worthwhile to hear about books that other people have enjoyed.

Interested?

Contact Gill Holt

Phone: 01684 - 568 055

Zest4Life

The Group will be called ‘Zest4Life Lunches Countering Lonliness’

Zest4Life will offer weekly lunches every Wednesday at the Octagon Community Centre, Brook Farm Drive, to promote:

1. Conversation, primarily (but certainly not exclusively) where residents have become involuntarily isolated through illness or bereavement.
2. Discussion of topics relating to social activities in Malvern and what is on offer at U3A and Age UK; networking to maximize opportunities for social engagement.
3. A love of food and attention to nutritional needs with all surplus food boxed and gifted to those present or delivered to those known to be in need.
4. Opportunities for regulars to be Chef for the day and make meals, cakes and complementary sauces.
5. Invitations to performers wishing to entertain the group.
6. Invitations to groups and individuals offering beauty treatments without charge.
7. Encouragement to take up some form of art or crafts in order to fulfill the spirit (and time) when not at Zest4Life.

Interested members can initially contact Martin Lawrence or come to lunch any Wednesday 11.30am for 12 noon service.

Martin can be contacted on 07505 - 053 175 or at martinlawrence4chase@gmail.com

This group meets at the Octagon Community Centre, Brook Farm Drive, Malvern every Wednesday at 11.30am.

Martin Lawrence

Zest4Life Zest4Life Zest4Life Zest4Life Zest4Life

French

There seems to be an insatiable thirst for French groups in our U3A and luckily we have a new group being offered for **French Improvers**.

The group will be led by **Susan Amos** and will be held at Susan's home.

Meetings will be every Monday (excluding bank holidays) from 10.30 - 12.30.

Susan can be contacted on 01684 - 565 529 or at susan_amos@hotmail.com

Arline Gaskell



Sue Kershaw - Camera Group theme 'Green'

Speaker's topics for our Monthly Meeting - 2pm at The Cube

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 31 st May | The Lusitania - Wilful Murder? |
| 28 th June | Theatre Production - Warts and All |
| 26 th July | Looe Island in the 70's |
| August | No monthly meeting |
| 27 th September | Breaking the Code at Bletchley Park |

Come along for inspiration, and a chat and a drink with friends old and new.

NEWSLETTER

We are always looking for contributions from groups or individual members for the Newsletters which are published in October, February and May.

All contributions should be e-mailed, (preferably as a Word document), to

newsletter@malvernu3a.org.uk

Photographs should be sent as .jpg files

Please note the deadline for the October edition is

Friday 23rd September 2016