

MALVERN U3A

Nº 94 AUTUMN 2021

NEWSLETTER



**AGM - Tuesday 30th November at 2pm
(In-person and Zoom)**

U3A Committee (Trustees)

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CHAIR'S NOTES

We have been enjoying the warmest September on record, apparently. As with many things in life there are upsides and downsides in that.

Most of us are now double vaccinated, and despite the lifting by the Government of most of the restrictions associated with COVID, we have not yet emerged from concerns about its ability to affect our lives and the way we go about things. There is no doubt that the enormous and successful vaccination programme has been beneficial in both slowing the spread of the illness and in reducing the seriousness of its symptoms. However, the number of new infections and hospital admissions is high again and we must continue to remain careful and considerate to others, respecting their preferences and their space. We are not yet out of the trees.

Talking of which, we will be holding a tree planting ceremony in Victoria Park (is that the worst link ever?) You may recall that last year was the 25th year since our foundation in Malvern. We were not able to do anything to mark the occasion then, but we are putting that right now.

On 19th October, at 11.30 am we will gather in Victoria Park, in the area known as the Orchard. This was so called as in the past there were Black Worcester Pears growing there. These have all now been lost. The Malvern Town Mayor, Cllr. Houghton will help us "dig in" a new Black Worcester Pear tree donated by u3a to the town, to mark our anniversary.

If you can, please come and support this event.

We held a very successful Groups Fair event on 6th September at the Malvern Theatres and were delighted that so many existing and potential new members attended. Our thanks go to Trustee and Groups Co-ordinator, Peter Corfield for all the work he did in masterminding this.

Membership numbers, although not yet back to pre-covid numbers, are increasing again. Our monthly talks continue and will remain online until January. We have launched a Photographic competition which will provide great opportunities for all members to show their creativity and showcase our versatility, embodying our aims of Learn, Laugh, Live

The following pages of this newsletter will be further evidence of that. My grateful thanks this Autumn season to our guest Editor Richard Owen.

Bill Culshaw
Chair

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Committee of Malvern u3a invite entries for a photographic competition, open to all Malvern u3a members, except Trustees.

The judges are looking for entries of up to five colour photographs that best convey the spirit, enterprise and enjoyment derived from activities involving any of our Groups at Malvern u3a. They should embody our strap line Learn, Laugh, Live.

A maximum of two entries per person will be permitted.

The photos will be judged by a panel formed from Malvern u3a Trustees, an outside Trustee and chaired by an independent person with acknowledged expertise.

A bottle of vintage champagne will go to the winner. There will be a second prize. There will also be public recognition for those entries which are 'highly commended.'

It is envisaged that most of the entries will be used to accompany publicity about u3a activities, both locally, regionally and nationally. The winning photos will be given a special display on our website and in the Newsletter. They may also be sent to Third Age Matters and local media outlets with an accompanying article.

As images will be used for publicity purposes, entrants should ensure that they have the agreement of members in the picture that they can be used for such purposes.

If you would like to make an entry please see our website for a more comprehensive set of the competition rules.

Entries should be sent as jpeg files and not be smaller than 1Mb, to newsletter@malvernu3a.org.uk no later than 10th December 2021.

Malvern u3a Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held as a hybrid meeting on **Tuesday 30 November 2021** at The Cube in Malvern, starting at 2.00 pm. It will be followed at approximately 2.30 pm by the Monthly Speakers Meeting, which will be presented via Zoom (see details at the end of this Newsletter). Members at home will be able to access both meetings on Zoom. The Speakers Meeting will be shown on a large screen at The Cube for those attending in person. Full details will follow but, in the meantime, please put this date on your calendar. Papers for the AGM will be sent to all members in advance.

New Trustees Needed!

At this year's AGM we will be very sad to say farewell to two Trustees who are leaving the Committee:

Brenda Johnson, our Membership Secretary has served on the Committee for four years. During that time she, together with fellow Trustee Linda Scott, have maintained Mu3a membership details and records - which included around 1700 members before the Pandemic struck in 2020. Brenda says, "I am happy to offer help and advice to whoever takes over. The role of Membership Secretary has enabled me to get to know lots of Mu3a members. Also, my fellow Trustees are helpful and supportive and our meetings are enjoyable."

Jeff Thorogood, our Speakers Organiser, has also been a Trustee for four years. Since joining the Committee he has arranged a wonderfully varied and entertaining programme of monthly talks, the majority with capacity audiences. During the Pandemic, with the help of Trustee Roger Hunt, these talks have continued very successfully online via Zoom.

It's crucial that we fill these vacancies so that Malvern u3a can continue to run smoothly. If you are interested in taking on either of these roles, please contact our Chair, Bill Culshaw at chair@malvernu3a.org.uk or on 01684 303684.

There is also room on the Committee for several members 'without portfolio'. If you, or someone you know, might consider becoming a Trustee, please feel free to contact any of the Committee members. Members are also welcome to attend one of our Committee meetings without incurring any obligation.

Contact details for all the current trustees can be found on the inside cover of this Newsletter and also on our website: <https://malvernu3a.org.uk/contact/>

Malvern u3a's 26th Anniversary

As Bill Culshaw mentions in his introduction to this Newsletter, Covid prevented us from celebrating our 25th anniversary last year. However, in association with Malvern Town Council a Black Worcester Pear Tree will be planted in a ceremony at Victoria Park at 11.30 am on Tuesday 19th October in the presence of the Malvern Town Mayor, Cllr. Nick Houghton.

All members are invited to attend.

Black Worcester pears, have a long historical and symbolic association with the county - they are recorded as being grown by monks as early as 1388. As they were a long-keeping fruit they formed an important part of the winter diet, until root crops were introduced. They were part of the provisions for the troops at Agincourt in 1415 where Worcestershire bowmen carried banners depicting a pear tree laden with fruit. This still features in the county's coat of arms and three black pears are depicted on the badge of Worcestershire County Cricket Club.



Mu3a Website

Our Website Manager, John Elkington has been busy updating the Mu3a website.

If you haven't visited recently, take a look. We think this, together with a new group of photographs that will come out of the Photographic Competition, will rejuvenate the site and make it attractive and easy to use, both for all our existing and potential new members.

If this is something that interests you, we are looking for someone who will help to keep the website looking fresh and up to date. This can be as a Trustee or as a separate role on its own. If you think you might be able to do this and would like more information, please get in touch with any of the Trustees (see inside cover for contact details).

Members' Survey 2021

Our recent survey of members views was generally well received. We had 490 responses. These indicated a keenness to return to activities, but with varying degrees of caution. Some members expressed concerns over ventilation in indoor venues, others about vaccination rates and social distancing. Most people were in favour of a cautious re-start to our activities and that is how the

Trustees are proceeding. Advice to Group Leaders has been given which all groups should continue to follow:

- Current Government guidelines
- The current guidelines for any National body relevant to the activity
- The u3a particular guidelines, available now on our website.

Monthly Meetings

Thanks to Trustees Jeff Thorogood and Roger Hunt, our programme of Monthly Meetings have continued online, via Zoom, throughout the periods of lockdown.

The October and November meetings will also be on Zoom, (but see the notice on page 5 about the AGM in November), but we're aiming to start live meetings again in January. At the end of this Newsletter, you'll find details of the speakers up to and including February 2022.

National u3a u3a Growing the Future

To mark the movement's 40th Anniversary in 2022, the Third Age Trust is creating a u3a anniversary woodland situated in the Brecon Beacons.

u3a members' contributions to the woodland will help benefit the environment, wildlife and climate, for future generations. The target is for 5,000 trees to be planted between October 2021 and March 2022.

This project was launched in the September issue of the members' magazine, Third Age Matters. u3a members can buy individual trees or a copse of 100 trees and u3as are also encouraged to plant trees within their own communities.

The money goes towards establishing the woodland and part of the cost for each tree is reserved as future payments for maintenance. Once they are fully established, they will be looked after as part of routine woodland management.

The Trust is fortunate to have secured space for the woodland in an area of outstanding natural beauty and the trees will be expertly looked after by skilled arborists. Visit the National u3a website (u3a.org.uk) to find out how to contribute and to discover what else is planned for next year to celebrate 40 years of the u3a movement.

You can also find lots of other information on the National u3a website, including details of a variety of online learning events and tutorials on a range of topics .

Better still, when you're on the website, sign up for the National u3a online Newsletter which will be delivered straight to your inbox.

West Midlands u3a Newsletter

We have set up a page for the West Midlands newsletter on our Malvern u3a website and you can access the current issue by following the link:

<https://malvernu3a.org.uk/wm-u3a-newsletter/>

From members

Boules

Being an outdoor group we were very lucky to be able to return to play when restrictions were gradually lifted over lockdown. We observed all the mandatory rules, eg. social distancing, wearing masks etc.



It has been very successful , everyone delighted to get out to meet friends and join in an activity which wouldn't have been possible any other way.

We have had between 8 and 15 people attending each week and little disruption due to inclement weather.

We have had a few new members too.

Since July 19th 2021 we have been increasing in attendances and a jolly good time is had by all!

Tiggy Cunningham

Geology Group

During the winter lockdown period, a large proportion of the Group took part in weekly Zoom meetings. This proved to be very successful and helped to fill our time when we weren't allowed to do much else. These Zoom sessions allowed us to carry on with our usual programme of monthly lectures, both internal and external, as well as following a 48-session course on the Origin and Evolution of the Earth. It was a shame that there was a significant number of our members who preferred not to Zoom and we missed them, but we hope to reintroduce them to the subject and the group over the coming months.

Beginning in June, we began our usual summer outdoor programme. We concentrated on relatively local field trips which proved an ideal way to gently reintroduce members to that strange concept of gathering together, albeit in a safe, outdoor setting and following the changing Covid rules!

The photos illustrate some of these trips.



Lord's Wood Quarry - near Monmouth



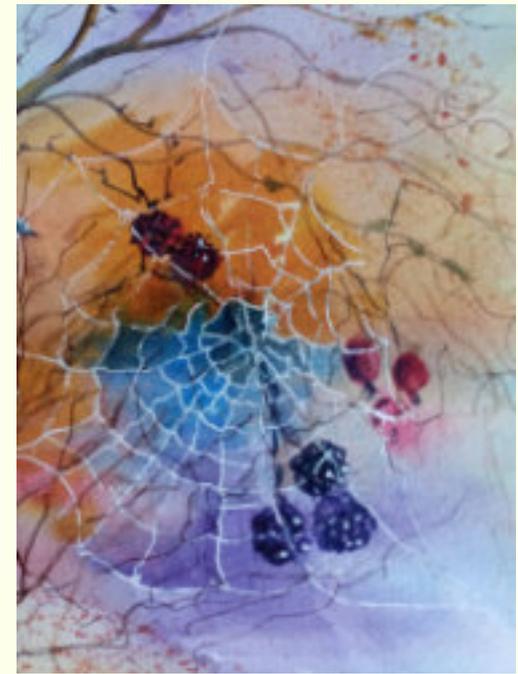
Ivy Scar Rock - North Malvern Hills

Looking ahead, we are about to begin a full programme of monthly lecture meetings. We hope to get back to normal meetings as soon as possible, but for the first one in October we will have a hybrid, half Zoom, half face to face meeting. Let's hope the technology doesn't defeat us! In addition to these normal meetings, we are continuing with fortnightly Zoom sessions, currently following a series of talks called Historical Geology prepared by a US university lecturer for his students.

We had a few new members sign up at the Groups Fair day, but are never full! If you would like to join the group, then do get in touch.

Roger Hunt

Painting 2 Group

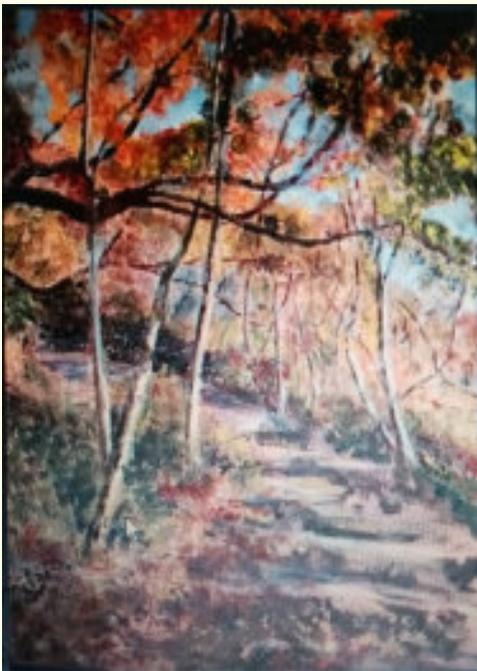


Change of Venue

The Group now meets at Elmslie House, Avenue Road, Malvern WR14 3AG.

Meeting times are unchanged: 14.00 - 16.00, every 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. Group Leader Val Bruton would be grateful to hear from anyone who could offer some time to do occasional tutoring. The Group membership is full at present, but there is a waiting list for anyone who is interested in joining.

For more information, contact Val on 01684 575383 or at vandgbruton@gmail.com



Malvern U3A Table Tennis - Garden Party

As is becoming customary, the Table Tennis group held a summer garden party, kindly hosted by Peter Murphy.

This year was, however, somewhat different:

- We had not met during the Covid pandemic and so there was a lot of refreshing of contacts sharing hopes and expectations for restarting in the new U3A year;
- We belatedly celebrated Rosemary reaching the age of 80 years and enjoyed her cake;
- It rained - well showered on and off mainly whilst we were setting up 😞 ;
- David's over-enthusiastic arrival supervision nearly directed innocent passers-by to the garden party; and
- We won't ask how one male member had a pink bow stuck to his bottom instead of to Dina's gift! 😞



Perhaps more significantly, Dina Murdie, who had led the group since its formation 15 years ago with eight people to around over 100 at last count, is leaving. The pandemic highlighted the need to be nearer to family and so we wished her well in her new home of Harrogate.

Dina had persuaded Peter Murphy to take over the reins and he, in turn, cajoled several other gullible keen members to support him.

One aspect does remain the same: the friendly nature of the group. Other U3A members are welcome to join us - every Wednesday in the Cube

"theatre" (1-3pm or 2-4pm - whichever you prefer). Coaching is provided on the third Tuesday of each month (2-4pm). If you are interested, either just turn up or contact Michael michaellewent@hotmail.com).

David Whitaker

Quiz Group

The Quiz Group kept going through the Pandemic by organising fortnightly challenges online. Thankfully, we're now able to resume our live sessions. We meet from 2.00 - 4.00 pm on the last Friday of every month (except December) at St Andrews Church Hall (Churchdown Road, WR14 3JX). Teams of 4-6 people are decided on arrival so individuals, as well as couples/friends, are all welcome. We have eight rounds of questions on a variety of topics with a coffee/tea break in the middle. We hope that members will support the steering committee by taking turns as quiz masters (singly or in pairs) and in setting up and helping with refreshments etc.

For more information contact Group Leader, Liz Daniel, on 01684-540904 or elizabethdaniel274@gmail.com

Here are some sample questions for you to try - answers on the back page.

1. What are Chinook, Oroshi, Pitera and Williaw?
2. Who composed the opera, "The Pearl Fishers"?
3. What is the acid in a stinging nettle?
4. Which football team plays at Selhurst Park?
5. What is the name of the Druid in the Asterix comics?
6. What is a Sarabande?
7. Which UK city has the nickname, "City of Arcades"?
8. What is the name of a triangle in which all sides are unequal?
9. What do we call the vegetable the Americans call rutabaga?
10. What is a leveret?

Answers on the back page ... no peeking!

Ukulele Groups



The Strum & Sing Group has found a marvelous new home at St Andrew's Church on Poolbrook - and all is harmonious on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday morning of the month! Don't be put off by the dictum that 'a gentleman (or lady) is someone who knows how to play a ukulele ... but doesn't' - just grab a uke and come and join us.

Our Tuesday 'ukulele orchestra' groups are also back in action, picking up some new music, along with some old favourites.

Richard Owen (owen.r@lineone.net)

Good Beer Group

Richard Newton reports, "It was a beautiful afternoon for our annual barbecue in August, good food and a barrel of Malvern Hills bitter."



Photo by Patsy Rowley

Creative Writing

Our first non-zoom meeting took place in a member's open-fronted summer-house after the relaxation of restrictions.

The empty chair was soon claimed by another member who was having her second vaccination.

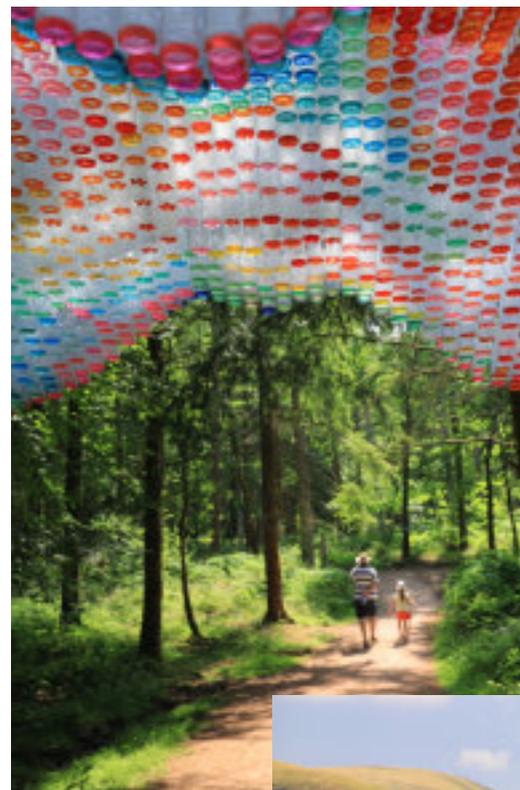
Our 5 minute impromptu 'warm-up' exercise was 'the broken clock' 'Our main subject was 'the Storm'.



Dorothy Meredith

Camera Group

Whatever our problems over the last eighteen months it was still possible for members to get out with their cameras. (However, the rules said we had to keep moving - exercise - and not stop to consider the best photo opportunity!) Despite this members have continued to submit images on our monthly themes and these can all be seen on our Flickr site. (Malvern U3A Camera Group) You can join Flickr for free to get access to the site.



Some of our images from the last year are to be seen in this edition of the Newsletter.

Learning continued with monthly 'Powerpoint' presentations on a range of subjects including 'Free photographic software', Settings for Autumn/Winter photography' and 'Making greetings cards' from our favourite images.

The group is now meeting in-person again, but is retaining the Flickr site and sending out meeting notes for those members that are not yet ready to commit to in-person meetings.

Richard Owen



'Summer of '21' Len Cornish

Travel Group

The Travel Group is on the move

We are no longer able to meet in the Cube, so all future meetings will be held at Malvern Rugby Club. Our first meeting for this year will be held on Tuesday October 12th commencing at 2.00 pm, when we will discuss the future options for the Group.

Peter Dennis

Welsh Culture Group



The Welsh Culture Group is ready to meet again starting on Friday 5th November at the Baptist Church Hall. All members will be contacted before the meeting.

We look forward to hearing Heather Haywood speaking about 'The Snowdon Railway' and John Bentley will entertain us with tales of 'A Holiday in Tenby'.

Hazel, Sue and Sheila

SOLOS - New Group

Group Leader Mary Barrett reports, "We meet on the first Saturday each month from 10.00-12.00 at Manor Park Sports Club. The aim of the group is to offer for 'those who live alone' the opportunity to meet socially for companionship for social activities and interests.

We have quickly become a large group and there is now a waiting list. Solos offers one coffee morning meet-up per month, additional events will be organised whilst members are encouraged to network between themselves.

Our first SOLOS meet-up in September was a lively getting to know each other event with 47 members turning up! Highlighting that we are an overlooked group! Participation was encouraged as to how the group evolves.

A Christmas Party is being organised for the December meeting and looking forward age positively to 2022."

For more information, please contact Mary on 01684 - 566264 or at marybarrettis@sky.com

Bridge

Bridge Duplicate 2

Chris Dyer has taken over as temporary Group Leader.

Meetings take place every Monday at Manor Park, from 2.00 to 5.00 pm.

For more information, please contact Chris at chrisd2010tz@gmail.com

Bridge Improvers

Please note that the entry in the Groups Directory 2021-22 is incorrect. It should read: "Bridge Lessons, absolute beginners to English Bridge Union English Accl, over 30 weeks on Wednesdays (11.00 am - 1.00 pm) at Manor Park. Starting on 29th September.

For more information, please contact Group Leader Andrew Hague on 01905 828249 or at andrwhg@aol.com



Steaming along Poolbrook - Allan Colwill
Camera Group theme 'Summer of '21'
'Doggy paddle' - Angus & Rosemary McCulloch



Astronomy and Astrophysics

The astronomy and astrophysics course has started for this academic year. It is being done virtually through zoom only, as it was last year. It is held every Tuesday at 16:30, lasting about 90 minutes. We have 16 students registered, but in practice five or six are attending each week, so there is plenty of opportunity for anyone else to join. If interested, let me know through my e-mail address and I can send you the joining Zoom code, which is the same each week. It has been successful for many years. Last year the sessions were recorded, so are available on the Malvern U3A site. We will have a Christmas new year break and hopefully finish before Easter. It does not run in the summer.

The course covers the history of astronomy, the Earth and Moon orbital motion, and of other planets, the gravitational law that govern their motions, the basic physics of their atmospheres, particularly concerning the delicate energy balance and climate change crisis on Earth and what has happened on other planets. Then solar system probes and search for life elsewhere, instrumentation to achieve this, imaging equipment for amateurs and professionals, and spectral and interference techniques for the analysis of starlight, the forces of nature and particle physics, the nature of reality, the lifecycle of stars, the structure of galaxies and the universe and the nature of space time, the meaning of here and now, past and future and elsewhere, and finally cosmology and how the universe has evolved. I have added a lot more cutting-edge international research material, with current and future facilities, both ground-based and space-based. It is all in PowerPoint. Many people that have attended this course now have a much better perception models in the mind, of the illusion of what is all around us, and how the universe works.

Chris Baddiley

Camera Group theme - 'Curve'



Alan Parry - Wave cloud curves



Gwen Evans - Rainbow from above



Caroline Grundy

Knife Angel

at Hereford Cathedral



MONTHLY MEETINGS ON ZOOM

All talks take place at 2.30 pm on the last Tuesday of the month. Details of how to join the meetings are sent out at least a week in advance.

Speakers and Topics

Tuesday 26th October

How well do you know your local air ambulance? - with Charley Burke

Charley is Worcestershire fundraising executive for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, and will be presenting a case study of a previous incident, followed by an in depth description of everything the charity does for Malvern and the surrounding regions.

Tuesday 30th November

Annual General Meeting, followed by ...

The History of Cider - with Penny Platts

Penny will describe the history of this ancient alcoholic drink, and explain the process of making cider and perry - from the old stone horse-driven mills to the mechanised methods of today. Many centuries ago it was promoted as a drink that had many benefits: "Preserving in their full strength and vigour the drinkers of it even to very old age " (John Worlidge 1676)

No meeting in December

Tuesday 25th January

My Musical Life in Russia with Gerald Seaman

"How I met Shostakovich and how I nearly became James Bond."

Tuesday 22nd February

Across the Pacific - a Personal Journey with Bill Culshaw

In 1998 Bill saw an advert:

"Fewer than 2000 people had sailed around the world, fewer still had raced. You will endure gruelling conditions, your mental determination will be tested and your stamina strained."

What on earth made him think that this would be something he might actually do? Sure, he'd done a little dinghy sailing at school but since then had only managed to capsize a Mirror Dinghy on Lake Bala

Somehow or other, four months later he was clinging to the deck of a 60 foot Training Clipper, at the end of November, at midnight in the North Atlantic, trying to haul in and fold a foresail, in a force nine gale with huge waves of freezing water crashing over him.

Bill tells the rest of the story and his personal challenges as he crossed the world's greatest ocean under sail, with some stunning photographs and a little humour.



Quiz Group - Answers

1. Winds, 2. Bizet, 3. Formic, 4. Crystal Palace, 5. Getafix,
6. A form of dance, 7. Cardiff, 8. Scalene, 9. Swede, 10. A young hare.

NEWSLETTER

All written contributions should be e-mailed (preferably as Word documents) to
newsletter@malvernu3a.org.uk

Photographs should be sent separately as .jpg files (no smaller than 1Mb)

Please note that contributions may be edited.

The deadline for the Spring edition is

Monday 14th March 2022