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NEWSLETTER for OUNDLE & DISTRICT

Edition Number 202
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If you would like to find out more about Oundle & District u3a,
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Registered Charity Number 1183800

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

According to recent research, 94% of British people admitted to having talked about the weather in the last six hours. Apparently 'weather talk' can be an icebreaker or an excuse for a good grumble, as invariably we find it too hot/too cold/too wet etc. Such talk can also help us gauge other people's moods so, depending on the response to your weather greeting, you can tell whether someone is in the mood for a chat – or not.

Of course, we all know that we are an obsessive nation when it comes to the weather, although Oscar Wilde observed that discussing the weather 'is the last resort of the unimaginative'! The recent heatwaves, which many of us enjoyed, gave an excuse for doing very little or for topping up a tan, while some people found the heat far too oppressive and uncomfortable – so we can never please everyone! Perhaps your u3a Group has carried on regardless, or decided to do something slightly differently or even cancelled a meeting or an outing because of the heat. Please let us know – your modus operandi might inspire others.

There have been many local events taking place in and around Oundle during the past few weeks (and still are) and most organisers measure success by the number of people attending. Dry weather is very important for outdoor events but the heat does pose its own problems. Last month the Met Office announced that extreme weather is now the new norm, so we will all need to adjust in the future.

I enjoyed reading Sue Hales' 'Unexpected u3a consequences' in the July Newsletter, which came out of a 5-minute starter exercise from the Creative Writing Group. Perhaps some of you, not necessarily from such a group, might like to write a short piece based on the weather, possible using phrases such as 'snowed under, on cloud nine, under the weather or raining cats and dogs'? If you do get inspired, please send them to me.

Remember it was St Swithin's Day on 15th July and we did have a little rain so gardeners will no doubt be hoping for more rain, even if not for 40 days.

Personally I returned from holiday, where the weather was very hot and humid, to similar weather here, which suited me very well. As the Gershwin songs says, 'Summertime and the livin' is easy'.

Enjoy yourself, whatever the weather!

Gill

MONDAY 11TH AUGUST

A Performance by
Paul Rogers and
Yasmin Bradley of
Frumenty

Doors open at 2.00pm
for tea/coffee and biscuits

MONDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER

Pandora Kenyon

From

Age UK
Northamptonshire

Queen Victoria Hall, Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm
for tea/coffee and biscuits

MONTHLY MEETINGS



At our July meeting, our speaker was **Philip Caine**, who spoke about his international working life and his recent career as an author and raconteur, having settled back home in Barrow-in-Furness. His fast moving talk took us from his first job as an apprentice chef in a hotel to his last one, project managing accommodation bases for the American Coalition in Iraq, taking in several other fascinating postings on the way. Writing in the genre of adventure fiction with his Jack Castle and Shackleton Blister series, Philip has just completed his tenth novel, revealing to us that one of his books is to be screened as a four part television series in 2026! Philip can be found at www.philipcaine.com

Continuing with the tradition of changing our Monthly Meeting format in August, we are very pleased to be welcoming the duo, **Paul Rogers and Yasmin Bradley** of the folk band **Frumenty** on **Monday 11th August**. Their performance will be of traditional music with the emphasis on Northamptonshire, incorporating a summary of the origins of the songs. Paul says he grew up in Irthlingborough at a time of great social change. The poet, John Clare, who was a collector of folk song and a commentator on Helpston life, flora and fauna in the 19th century is another of Frumenty's inspirations. Paul and Yasmin say that their songs will charm, draw a smile – even a tear – and bring an insight into the extraordinary place in which we live. Not to be missed!



On **Monday 8th September**, we are very fortunate to have **Pandora Kenyon** of **Age UK Northamptonshire** speaking to us at our Monthly Meeting. This is a local independent charity which aims to improve later life in Northamptonshire. Pandora will give a brief history of the charity, explaining why it was set up, its aims and the services and support it currently provides. We are looking forward to this interesting and useful talk.

Please remember to bring your membership card to the meeting as it makes signing in a lot quicker.

QVH Monthly Meetings

I asked Members at the July monthly meeting for feedback about the layout of QVH for our meetings. The vast majority of attendees said that they prefer the present layout – sideways on. Reasons given were that it is less formal than facing the stage, you can see each other and access to seating is easier. So, that is how we will continue for the foreseeable future. Thank you to all those who commented.

December Monthly Meeting

If you attended our AGM, you will have heard me announce that there will not be a Christmas Extravaganza this year. It has been a very successful event for three consecutive years but the Committee felt that it was time for a change and so this December our entertainment will be provided by Sweet FA, with the usual festive refreshments, so put the date, Monday 8th December, in your diary now! More details to follow in the autumn.



Crime Fiction Book Group: This is a new group which will meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.00pm. The initial meeting will take place on 13th August at the leader's home in Oundle. Members of the group will decide books they would like to read and discuss. Please contact Lidia Douglas, Groups Co-ordinator on the email address above in the first instance, who will pass on your interest to the Group Leader.



Social Bridge Group: We have spaces for some new members in our Group which is scheduled to start up again in September for the autumn and winter months. We meet weekly in the Glaphorn Room in Fletton House every Thursday afternoon starting at 2.00pm for two hours.

This is a great way to meet with other players in a friendly social way with nothing too competitive. All that is required is a basic knowledge of how to play the game of Bridge. You do not need a partner as someone will be found on the afternoon to play with you and offer support if required.

There is a cost for the room hire to which all the members contribute on the day.

If you are interested, please get in touch with Gloria Pearson via the link on the Group pages tab.



Do you ever go into a card shop and can't find anything suitable? Then why not make your own? The **Card Making Group** will have two vacancies when it restarts on 1st September. We are a very friendly group and welcome absolute beginners to those with experience who would be prepared to share their knowledge with others - no artistic flair required. We regularly use a die cutting machine, stamping with different inks and stencils and sometimes use more unusual materials such as Washi Tape or vellum - all are provided. We meet at the Methodist Church in Drummingwell Lane on the first Monday of the month (except August) at 2.00pm. The cost is £1.50 per session plus a share of the room hire which works out at £10 for 11 sessions. For further information please contact Sue Wilkinson via the website.



Podcasts: It was great to hear Madeleine Sewter as 'Gladys' in the Maltings Matters podcast, as recommended in July's newsletter. We are both members of the Oundle u3a Creative Writing Group. I've featured in two podcasts, talking about my unusual hobby of collecting postcards with messages written in Pitman Shorthand. The first one is part of the series Postcard from the Past, in which Natalie Haynes (stand-up classicist and novelist) and I are interviewed by Tom Jackson. The second is entitled Life Stories - Postcards in Shorthand and is one of a series called *JP's Podcast - with J P Devlin*. Both these podcasts are easily found online.

Kathryn Baird

Spotlight on Shakespeare Group 2's visits to Tolethorpe

Jane Morris

Yes, I did mean to write visits not visit as it proved impossible to find a date we could all go together to Tolethorpe's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. So we split into groups and have exchanged our views on this new take on a Shakespeare classic. The first members of the group set off early in June, hoping to enjoy a picnic before the show but they listened to the weather forecast and decided against it. The second and third groups went later in June and in late July. The July group enjoyed their picnic in the lovely grounds, despite rather grey skies. Every year, as we look around at everyone enjoying themselves, we say how lucky we are to have such a location on our doorstep.

As we know, Shakespeare plays can be presented in different interpretations and one recent article in a local magazine described this as a "bold makeover". Director Steph Thompson-Collins had transposed the scene from Padua to 1980s Camden Town. The majority of the group thoroughly enjoyed this 1980s theme, with both Sandy Thompson as Petruchio and Emily Carroll as Katharina excellent in their roles. They were from the world of Punk rock with wonderful costumes – chains, safety pins, fish nets and Doc Martens, contrasting well with the other more conventional characters. The music from that era reminded us of those heady times.

Not everyone likes modern productions of Shakespeare but we generally thought this one worked very well. We're sure the Bard himself would have approved of it – after all he wrote to entertain his audience and this production undoubtedly succeeded.

u3a Groups entertain at Abbott House

Jean Fisher

In June two u3a groups had rewarding sessions providing interactive entertainment at the local Residential home on Glaphorn Rd.

Firstly, approximately ten singers from the Gospel Group gave a half hour programme of familiar songs with which the residents were encouraged to join in. We were surprised and delighted that some people were willing to do so. Others naturally preferred to listen and so showed their appreciation in particular when some of our members sang a medley of solos, duets and ensembles. We were then all rewarded with tea and biscuits whilst circulating among the residents who had attended.

The following week, the Recorder Group presented a programme. Again, most of our music was familiar and therefore greeted with smiles of recognition.

We were amused when we announced we were going to play "*Spring*" from Vivaldi's Four Seasons. This was met with a loud groan from a resident who declared he couldn't stand classical music but who then whistled his way through the whole piece as, of course, he recognised it! Refreshments and chat followed as with the Gospel group.

I know the Ukelele Group have also visited the home and been made most welcome on several occasions.

Are there any other performing groups who might like to do something similar?

The Events Manager Genevieve would be most grateful if any group could offer a session. Half an hour is really quite long enough and therefore not too demanding of time or organisation



AUGUST'S QUIZ

Part One: It's all about summer.

1. *In the Summertime* was a big hit for which British band?
2. The 'dog days of summer' are named after the Dog Star; what is the better known name of this star?
3. The characters of which Australian soap live in *Summer Bay*?
4. Which feast falls on 15th July every year?
5. At 1.34 miles, where is the longest pleasure pier in the UK?
6. The month of August is named after which famous person?
7. What was the name of the ITV holiday show presented by Judith Chalmers which ran from 1994 to 2003?
8. What is the first line of '*Summer Nights*' in the film *Grease*?
9. Who met and fell in love with Marge Bouvier at a 1974 summer camp?
10. The summer solstice occurs in the southern hemisphere during which month?

Part Two: It happened in August:

1. Which Caribbean island gained independence from Britain in August 1962?
2. Born in August 1901 this American became arguably the most famous jazz trumpeter, and also famous for his rendition of *Hello Dolly*. What was his nickname?
3. When Winston Churchill said, in August 1940, "*Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few*", to whom was he referring?
4. The eruption of which volcano, in 79 AD, destroyed the cities of Stabiae and Herculaneum?
5. In August 1896, gold was discovered at Rabbit Creek, a tributary of which Alaskan river?
6. Born on 27th August 1910 as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, she founded a religious order known as the Missionaries of Charity and spent her life working in India. How is she better known?
7. Born on August 30th 1797, which author wrote the novel *Frankenstein*?
8. In what year during Henry Hudson's search for the Northwest Passage, did he sail into what is now known as Hudson Bay?
9. Following the surrender of Germany, a meeting was held between Russia, USA and GB to agree how to administer it. What is the meeting known as (taking its name from the city it was held in)?
10. Born in 1921, Alan Whicker had a successful television career and presented his documentary programme for over 30 years. What was it called?
11. Who was murdered in August 1876 while playing poker and holding cards of Aces and eights, now known as 'dead man's hand'?
12. In which city was the theatre La Scala inaugurated in August 1778,?

Answers to July's Quiz

Part One: 1. Simply Red; 2. Pink; 3. House of Orange-Nassau; 4. Hyacinth, Daisy, Violet and Rose; 5. Bluey; 6. Inigo Jones; 7. Mellow Yellow; 8. Green room ; 9. Charlie Brown; 10. The link is the 7 colours of the rainbow. Pink and Brown are the odd ones out.

Part Two:

1. Josiah Wedgwood; 2. Canada; 3. The Salvation Army; 4. Entebbe, Uganda; 5. Jacqueline Lee Bouvier; 6. 1776; 7. Louis Pasteur; 8. Amelia Earhart; 9. The storming of the Bastille; 10. Rembrandt van Rijn.