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Newsletter



Photograph by
Alex Cranswick

June 2018

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Management Committee

March and April 2018, and April Awayday

Yes, we have been busy! The March meeting saw the formal adoption of the new Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy, copies of which are available on the website. The Committee is satisfied that these offer a robust framework for the protection of members and the fulfilment of our obligations to the Information Commissioner's Office. Group Organisers will be offered a choice of dates for training sessions on the new regulations, together with the rolling out of new U3A Trust/Charity Commission requirements regarding the holding of monies by groups and the payment of tutors. It is planned to hold these in June.

Most Group Organisers returned the Enquiry Forms regarding the holding of monies promptly, and the Committee is very grateful for their co-operation. An analysis of the responses was presented to Committee and further work will be done on this ahead of the training sessions.

Gill McKinnon, Groups Co-ordinator, attended a Third Age Trust Legal Study Day in Birmingham and was able to report to the Committee's Awayday on 14th April. The Study Day covered Trustee responsibilities, the new General Data Protection Regulations, Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding Adults.

We have set up a small Working Party to review and amend the Complaints and Grievances Procedure, which was found to be wanting in dealing with an issue facing one of our larger groups.

All of which sounds weighty and serious, which it is. Management Committee members are giving generously of their time and energy and I would like to place on record my thanks for all their efforts during a quite stressful period. Let's look forward together – we now have 2,114 members at the last count, and nearly 170 groups!

John Williams
Chairman

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Monthly Meetings

The Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard

Monthly Meeting on 12th March 2018

Shaun McCormack, a member of this venerable body, entertained us with a very professional talk on the history, the duties and the customs of the Queen's Bodyguard. Members are part time and ex forces. They have recently opened their ranks to women.

The Yeomen of the Guard or Yeomen Archers were created in 1485 to guard the new King, Henry VII and have been protecting the monarch ever since; although nowadays only in a ceremonial capacity. This was the Guard that discovered the gunpowder plot and still search the Palace of Westminster to this day. He stressed that they are not to be confused with the Beefeaters at the Tower of London who wear a similar uniform but without the cross belt. The Beefeaters are a guard who work full time and live at the Tower. The cross belt is worn with pride because it was

once used for supporting the Harquebus, a breech loading gun that looked fearsome but had a range of only 200 yards. This weapon superseded the original equipment of Pike and Longbow. Nowadays the Yeomen carry a splendid sword, made by Wilkinson's, but this is only ever unsheathed for cleaning.

The uniform has remained virtually unchanged for over 500 years and wouldn't look out of place at the Tudor Court. It comprises doublet, breeches, hat, sword belt, hose, shoes and ruff. Shaun had these with him and were passed around for our inspection. We were most surprised by the weight of the uniform and the beautiful embroidery.

Although the embroidery has changed over the centuries, it now consists of the Crown, the superimposed York (white) and Lancaster (red) Roses, the Thistle and the Shamrock, underneath being the motto "Dieu et mon droit" (God and My Right) with initials ER (Elizabeth Regina) on either side.

Whilst in the past the Corp has provided real protection for the Monarch, they now only perform ceremonial duties. They are present at most occasions of State and can be seen at Royal Weddings, Funerals and Investitures as well as the State Opening of Parliament. Life is still busy for these volunteers with duties at the distribution of Maundy Money, the Service of Epiphany, State Visits by Foreign Heads of State and Buckingham Palace Garden Parties. This latter is particularly popular as the food there is excellent and plentiful!

Bob Carvey





The Life and Songs of George Formby

Monthly Meeting on 9th April

Matthew Sproston gave this most interesting talk, interspersed with a selection of songs. Matthew has always loved funny songs and about 10 years ago heard the lyrics "... you can't tell if she's a brunette or a blonde". Typing this into Google he found they came from a George Formby song "Fanlight Fanny". He was hooked.

George Formby was born George Hoy Booth in Wigan on 26 May 1904, the son of a successful Music Hall Artist. George Formby Snr changed the family name to Formby thinking it to be a more appealing stage name. The family were wealthy and George Snr said, "no one in the family will follow in his footsteps", so George Jnr was sent to Ireland to train as a jockey.

At birth George was blind but a violent coughing fit on a seaside trip to New Brighton when he was a few months old restored his sight. However, his career was nearly over before it began. His father died when George was 16, but his mother let him carry on in the family tradition, learning his Dad's routines, performing in his Dad's cut-down suits. George was not immediately successful, but in 1924 he met and married Beryl Ingham, who became his manager, and remained so for all his career. It was Beryl who suggested he learn the ukulele, but this instrument couldn't be heard at the back of the halls so he changed to the banjolele. At his first gig in Barnsley he brought the house down.

Many of George's well-known songs were daring in the 1930's and were banned by the BBC, including 'With my little Ukulele in my hand' (until Queen Mary insisted that she wanted to hear the original when he went to the Palace. The ban was subsequently lifted!!). George didn't write the songs but tampered a little with the lyrics to get credit on song sheets alongside writers Harry Gifford and Fred Cliff.

In the 1930's, Beryl suggested George make films. He was now earning around £100K a year, £3M in today's money. He loved his Rolls Royce cars, owning 26 in his lifetime. But Beryl only gave George five shillings (25p) a week pocket money. The only large outlay was their home in Lytham St Annes near Blackpool, named Beryldene.

Beryl was extremely possessive and jealous, and insisted on being on sets during filming. George only had one kiss on film, Google Withers in "Trouble Brewing". Beryl was not present!!.

George entertained an estimated 3 million troops during WW2, earning him an OBE (which he said meant Owe Beryl Everything). However, after the war his films fell out of fashion, and with Income Tax troubles, George took a few years off. He returned in 1951 with the review "Zip goes a Million".

George had his first heart attack in 1952. He smoked heavily, put on a lot of weight, and appeared occasionally as a guest on chat shows and in pantomime. He made his final appearance on the BBC "Friday Show" in 1960, during which he credited Beryl with his success, but admitted his marriage had been hell.

Beryl died from Leukaemia on Christmas Day in 1960. Very soon after George became engaged to Pat Howson, but he died from a second heart attack on 6 March 1961, two days before they were due to be married. He was only 56.

There were 100,000 mourners at his funeral. But the George Formby show descended into a circus when it was revealed he'd cut most of his family out of the will, overlooking his mother and three sisters. Instead nearly all his fortune, the equivalent of £3 million, went to Pat. His private possessions were auctioned off, and his ukuleles distributed to various buyers throughout the UK.

These were the songs performed by Matthew Sproston:

Chinese Laundry Blues

I wish I was back on the farm

With my little ukulele in my hand

When I'm cleaning windows

Bless `em all

With my little stick of Blackpool rock

Leaning on a lamppost

Fanlight Fanny

Drusilla Attwood

Monthly Meetings

Ellendune Centre, Wroughton
on the 2nd Monday of the month at 2.15pm

Monday 11 June 2018

Sevington Victorian School, with Dinah Starkey and Celia Jennings

Sevington Victorian School is a perfectly preserved Victorian School room near Chippenham. Dinah and Celia will bring to life the story of the redoubtable Miss Squire, who ruled there for more than 60 years, and describe the experiences and reactions of the children who visit the school today.

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Group News

Uke n'sing

We are starting a new 'intermediate' ukulele group, Uke n'sing! We're open to any players who know the main chords and have some experience of playing.

We are planning to play and sing mostly as a whole acoustic group, but with solos and small groups sometimes, if members want these. We'll have the use of an extensive songbook, covering many genres, and will play any other songs members suggest.

We'd like to try new things so are very open to members' ideas about how the group can develop. Some of the things we are planning so far are to arrange masterclasses (with visiting guests) to improve our skills, have input from Tutor Gerry on different strumming patterns etc. and use a backing track occasionally to help with tempo, something other uke groups we know of enjoy

doing.

We will be meeting on alternate Wednesday afternoons, beginning on 2nd May, 3 to 5pm in the small hall at Eastcott Community Centre, Savernake St.,SN1 3LZ

So, if you'd like to be in at the start of a new uke group and help to shape it, and/or want any further information do please get in touch by clicking on the names. [Gerry and Adele Merrison](#)

U3A Scrabble Group

On Sunday 11th March nine members of the group took part in the Rotary Open Scrabble Championship of Wiltshire organised by Swindon Thamesdown Rotary Club held in the HQ of Nationwide at Pipers Way Swindon. Those present, some of whom had travelled from distant parts of the country, were organised into different leagues according to their rating by the Scrabble Association. We played in the section for recreational players with just one of our members, Ellie Charleston, playing in the league. We stretched ourselves by not using the two and three letter word sheets or dictionaries that we normally use in our Friday games.

It was an enjoyable and interesting day. We first noticed that the real enthusiasts play with round boards which means you don't knock tile racks off the table whilst turning the board. We played with the more traditional square ones and of varying shapes and sizes. They played against the clock and checked words challenged on computers set around the room rather than a dictionary. We too checked our challenged words on the computers and used the professional score sheets, but we still had to add the scores up manually.



There was a fish and chip lunch, afternoon tea and cake and unlimited tea and coffee included in the entry price of £20.

The photo shows our two star players. Beryl FitzGerald came first and Michael Barnes second. Both received trophies and a cash prize.

Sylvia Blacklock

Help!

Flower Arranging

Our Flower class is blooming well
With buds and leaves and sticks
Alas, we have no teacher
So we're really in a fix

We have organisers on our team
Who gladly take the lead
'tis only a lovely flower teacher
Who is our greatest need

Every other Tuesday
10 am until noon
Is all we'll ever ask of you
Please answer us real soon?

Tel: 01793 887413 mob:07742442236

The Concert Goers Group needs a new Organiser!

As organiser you get to plan the programme of concerts for the year and also to sit in the front of the coach! There's a bit of admin involved but not a problem if you share the work around. I would suggest 2-4 people as an organising group. I would be happy to support.

Over the last few years we have travelled to London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Basingstoke, Bristol, Cheltenham and Bradford on Avon. We attend symphony concerts, ballet, opera, choral works – the only criteria being that it involves music!

Looking forward to hearing from you. Please click on the name to make contact [Nina Simpson](#).

New Motorcycle Group

Is anyone interested in forming a motorcycle group with the aim of having regular ride-outs in a circular route if possible to events or places to visit. We would look to travel around 100 miles round trips setting off in the morning, stopping for lunch/coffee etc then returning by a different route. Please get in touch with me:

[Andrew Jarvis](#)

Chair Yoga

If your mobility is restricted, maybe up and down, or to and fro the floor is very difficult, you might be interested in being part of a Chair Yoga group. If so, please get in touch with me:

[Virginia Griffin](#)

Harmonica Group

The new Harmonica group will be meeting fortnightly from now on, between 6 and 8pm at the Immanuel Church, Upham Road. Future dates are:

6th & 20th of June.

You don't have to read music, just enjoy playing it. Buy a cheap harmonica if you haven't already got one in a drawer at home or ask around and see what friends and family can produce. Please contact me:

[Kaitlin Gabriel](#)

Thursday Trekkers

The group has 16 members. We started the fortnightly walks on Thursday 1st Feb (around Lydiard Park) then we missed the next 3 walks due to adverse weather conditions. Our last walk was on 29th March (Coate Water).

On the 12th April we managed a good turnout (10) at Stanton Park and enjoyed, laughed and walked about 3.5+ miles in, at times, some pretty muddy conditions, hence taking nearly an extra hour to complete the walk but allowing us to jump into puddles to clean off our foot-ware; well that's my excuse. The rain held off and a few of us retired to the Wyevale Garden Centre for a well earned coffee and light lunch.

The 26th April 2018 was a fine day for a walk if a little cool. Walk led by Lynn Cobbett her first for the group. We started from the Pinetrees community centre in Pinehurst doing a circular walk that passed through housing estates and green areas in equal parts. We sheltered once due to a short shower. We followed a 3.75 mile route through Greenmeadow and Rodbourne. Everyone who attended the walk (6) enjoyed the mixed walking all on hard dry paths. We (5) retired for a coffee at the café in the community centre after completing the walk.

The 10th May was a good day for a walk ably led by Ned around a circular route starting and finishing from the Waterhay car park. We welcomed 3 new walkers today David, Julie and Margaret who really enjoyed the walk, talk and in Margaret's case a coffee afterwards in Cricklade. We discussed why the group was originally set up, our aims and the need for everyone to volunteer to lead a walk but the understanding was that there was support from the group at all times for those who had not led a walk before.



The walk was mostly dry with the odd patch of shallow mud which was easily avoided and I managed not to slip this time. At the coffee shop Margaret offered to lead a walk around Blunsdon and Maggie agreed to pre-walk it with Margaret. A date will be decided once Margaret has reviewed the current group diary.

Andrew Jarvis

Use it or lose it - living longer, living well

The content of the programme includes the latest thinking on memory and how it is linked to good health and well being and what science is currently saying about diseases like dementia, including Alzheimer's. It aims to give information on memory and health, reassurance on ageing and practical advice that can help everyone make the best of the Third Age. The evaluations of participants are taken into account each time and the contents reviewed to keep it fresh.

Another successful programme finished on 14th March and was reviewed by the delivery team on 21st March.

There were 11 participants. Evaluations were received and, as always, the presenters reviewed the comments and have made changes to delivery in light of these.

The programmes run on 3 Wednesday afternoons at the Monsignor Richard Twomey Centre. SN3 1AR on Queen's Drive by Holy Cross School from 2-4pm The next bookable programme runs on September 26th, 3rd October and 10th October.

Dates have not been confirmed for 2019 but, should there be demand, it is anticipated the programme will run in 2019.

If you are interested in booking onto a programme in September or beyond please contact the administrator, Marla Carroll, on the email address below.

If you have already been in touch with Marla, she will keep you updated on your application so you need do nothing further.

Administrator: [Marla Carroll](#) Please click on the name.

Claire Smith

Images and Dreams in Bristol

The Concert Goers' Group were invited to enjoy colour and to dream at a fine concert in the Colston Hall, Bristol, on 13th April, where the acclaimed American conductor Robert Trevino got the best from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

As an opener, Claude Debussy's 'Rondes des Printemps' set the scene, with an impressionist-like poem and a wash of colour from the orchestral instruments. This was one of the composer's Images, a title valid in English too.

The Dutch violinist Simone Lamsma gave a lovely reading of Felix Mendelssohn's Concerto, a likeable and tuneful work with opportunity for the soloist to show virtuosity, for example in the cadenzas. We the audience loved it, and persuaded Lamsma to give an encore, a virtuoso piece by Ysaye. In an excellent concert pre-talk, the BSO's 'Community Musician' Jonathan James had interviewed Simone who described her time at the Yehudi Menuhin Music School in the UK. James also showed us various musical descriptions of 'Hell' and the Devil over the centuries.

Now Trevino and the BSO really came to the fore, with a superb reading of Hector Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique (Fantasy). For 19th Century music, Berlioz was an early revolutionary and Brahms was late - our symphony was composed in 1830, only just after Beethoven's death - while Brahms composed his first symphony in 1876. The Fantastique follows a programme: dreams of his unattainable lover, the countryside, a ball, a march to the scaffold and the terrific Witches' Sabbath with its devilish orgies. I've heard this work many times, but this was the best ever, especially as Trevino took us on a roller-coaster ride in the last movement.

Members I spoke to really enjoyed the concert, and we all thanked Nina Stimson for organising - flawlessly as ever - the trip to Bristol.

Robin Clegg



Friday Walking Group Coach Trip To Ebbor Gorge

The weather did not look promising. There was a thick mist as 34 of us set off for our Spring Coach Walk to pastures new in deepest Somerset. We had been promised fantastic views on this walk, but so far, from the coach windows, we could only just see foggy fields and the dimmest outline of low hills. Should we have brought waterproofs after all? At least the motorway was clear.



We reached Wookey Hole as visibility was slowly improving. The car park was empty apart from some hot shot racers who were gathering for a rally. We noticed the ice cream parlour in passing, which reminded some of us that breakfast was a long time ago so we had a quick snack. We started walking at about 11.00am. It was a gentle climb through damp grass and wild garlic until we split into 2 groups, one taking a series of steps up the wooded hillside full of flowers, and the more intrepid scrambling up the wet rocky incline of Ebbor Gorge, slick with moss, to the grassy viewpoint where we regrouped. By now the sun was warm. We could make out Wells Cathedral in the distance, and glimpsed Glastonbury Tor, ethereal in the lingering white mist.

Rested, we continued to climb up to the ridge, enjoying views across the Somerset Levels at our lunch stop. It was here that one of the group, ex-Army, produced a large water container to top-up the bottles of anyone who needed it. He'd carried it all that way! The grass was still wet from the heavy dew, and it would have been lovely to stay for the afternoon on that lush hillside in the warm sunshine, but we needed to move on. The descent was hard on the knees, but, encouraged by the idea of ice cream, or a cup of tea, we were soon back at the car park. There were no refreshments to be had as the shop was not open, but we enjoyed a free view of the dinosaur animatronics at the entrance to the cave.

It had been a strenuous hike on what turned out to be a beautiful day. Thanks go to Tony and David for organising the trip – and pre-walking it twice to make sure we followed the best route.

Jackie Hewitt

Ukulele Group U3A; "From Beginners to Improvers"

Led by Stan and Peggy Byers, the ukulele group meet fortnightly. We all started as beginners, but after two years Stan decided we could not still call ourselves that. We are now officially improvers: most of us have; improved! Still all at variable rates!

Stan set us off by lending a Uke; now most have gone on to buy bigger and better instruments. Our first tunes were classics like "How much is the doggy in the window?" which had two chords. Now we are onto the pop songs of our day like "Mull of Kintyre, "Do Ron, Ron" or "Que Sera, Sera". We even taught "Waltzing Matilda" to the two, who have gone to Australia,

As beginners, we sang along for the melody, playing cords behind the tune. This means we need our tuneful singers and those who can remember the words from the day back when....

We moved out of the Tesco Community Room, which they needed for team meetings. We played Christmas Carols there to collect for Charity, first inside the store, but then we were asked to stand outside. Was it something we said: or sang? We are now comfortable in Immanuel Church Hall, Old Walcot, where luncheon club diners can enjoy our music before their meal.

Research into keeping your brain young suggests learning a musical instrument. And for Dementia, keep singing the old songs is recommended. So we are doing both; and enjoying it.

Peggy does the tea and sympathy and dispenses new music with the chords marked in. Stan gives out words of wisdom that we should "Practise, practise, practise!" He is right; he has been playing for thirty years.

We end with "Show me the way to go home" so we do, go, happily.

Irene Cooke



The Spring And The Fall

In the spring of the year, in the spring of the year,
I walked the road beside my dear.
The trees were black where the bark was wet.
I see them yet, in the spring of the year.
He broke me a bough of the blossoming peach
That was out of the way and hard to reach.

In the fall of the year, in the fall of the year,
I walked the road beside my dear.
The rooks went up with a raucous trill.
I hear them still, in the fall of the year.
He laughed at all I dared to praise,
And broke my heart, in little ways.

Year be springing or year be falling,
The bark will drip and the birds be calling.
There's much that's fine to see and hear
In the spring of a year, in the fall of a year.
'Tis not love's going hurt my days.
But that it went in little ways.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (February 22, 1892 – October 19, 1950) was an American poet and playwright. She received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1923, and was also known for her feminist activism. During the first world war Millay had been a dedicated and active pacifist; however, from 1940 she supported the Allied Forces by writing in celebration of the war effort and her reputation suffered as a result. On her death, The New York Times described her as “an idol of the younger generation” during the glorious early days of Greenwich Village. She was undoubtedly one of the greatest American poets of her time. Thomas Hardy said that America had two great attractions: the skyscraper and the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay !!

submitted by Lesley Basu

An afternoon with the U3A Dance Orchestra

Saturday 9th June 2.30pm – 4:30pm

St Peter's Hall (Penhill Drive)

Tickets £4 (to include refreshments)

Available from the Hall on Monday morning

or by phoning 07759 699434

Everyone welcome!

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Travel Study Group C & G

Visit to Swanage

Monday 18th June 2018

A ride on the Swanage railway and free time in Swanage

Departure times and pick-up points:-

7.30am Ashington Way, West Swindon

7.50am Ellendune Centre, Wroughton

8.10am Outside Matalan, Greenbridge

4.30pm (approx.) Depart for Swindon

Approx Cost £21 pp includes: rail fare, coach & driver's gratuity.

All members welcome

Refunds are not made after 7 days prior to trip.

Please contact [Bill Mead](#) by clicking on his name.

Travel Group C

Holiday to Jersey and the Battle of Flowers 2019

The group are organising a six day holiday to Jersey and the Battle of Flowers commencing on Tuesday 6th August 2019 staying at the Mayfair Hotel, St Helier.

Approximate cost will be £550.

If you are interested and would like more details when available please contact [Mary Morgan](#) by clicking on her name.

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Walking Netball

Inspired by England's recent Gold medal triumph at the Commonwealth games? Want to try out a new sport that has taken Swindon by storm? Walking netball is a slowed down version of the game of netball, designed for anyone looking to exercise in a relaxed, supportive and friendly environment. A game of walking netball is for all ages and abilities. There are sessions for £3 a go running 6 days a week. For more details contact Mo Squires on 01793 423134 or email Maureen.Squires@gll.org

Chris Thackray

Copy Dates

Items for the July 'What's On' must be received by

11th June 2018

Items for the August 'What's On' must be received by

16th July 2018

Items for the September 'What's On' must be received by

13th August 2018

Items for the October Newsletter must be received by

5th September 2018

Items for the October 'What's On' must be received by

10th September 2018

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address shown opposite.

Geoff Bryan

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Portable appliance testing (PAT)	pat@swindonu3a.org.uk

The Editor reserves the right to amend or abbreviate any entries submitted.

We should also like to point out that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the organisation or of the Editor.

Life President Norman Richards

Management Committee

Chairman	John Williams	644104
Vice-chairman	Avril Muirhead	525315
Treasurer	John Edgerton	642965
Secretary	Margaret Goldie	790546
Minutes Secretary	Victoria Fisher	320658
Assistant treasurer	Viv Dipper	322421
Office manager	Sylvia Alexander	614629
New members	Adele Merrison	480364
Accommodation	Viv Dipper	322421
Webmaster	Alex Cranswick	539529
Newsletter team	Bob Carvey	526746
Groups co-ordinator	Gill McKinnon	07990 507979
Health and Safety	Dave Maggs	344614
Publicity and media liaison	Martin Preston	694148

Key Tasks (Non committee)

Equipment and resources	Tony Bettley	525523
Office manager (Assistant)	Glenys Bettley	525523
Newsletter distribution	David and Jackie Hewitt	976525
Administration adviser	Tony Hill	534148
E-news distribution	Bob Carvey	526746
Speakers organiser	Cheryll Yeowell	812708
assisted by	Beth Bailey	849898

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(entry is by middle door on right hand side of building)

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