



This is an edited version of our usual newsletter, produced to give prospective members an idea of our activities.

Letter from the Chairman: 'My grandmother was a Canary' is not a common statement to make but I added it to a conversation on Remembrance Sunday. A dozen of us were walking in the glorious golden woods of Burnham Beeches at 11 o'clock and, after standing quiet for two minutes, a lively discussion began of what our relatives had done during WWI. Young girls who worked in ammunition factories often temporarily turned yellow from chemical liver damage earning the 'canary' name. My granny also lost her sense of smell for life. The walk and talk on that Sunday demonstrated how poignant and rewarding it can be to share memories and different points of view. Perhaps you too remembered particular family members?

Despite the autumn colours, winter seems now to have arrived, so our thoughts have to turn to planning for Christmas. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our annual Christmas lunch at the Calcot Hotel on 29 November. The Concert and Tea Party afternoon is always lively and this year is on Thursday 13 December.

So my best wishes for Christmas and for a healthy, fun-filled 2019.

NEW MEMBERS' WELCOME MEETING

On Monday 28 January at 10.30 am ABBEY BAPTIST CHURCH

If you have joined U3A in the last few months, this meeting is for you! Come along and meet other new members and learn more about U3A locally, nationally and internationally.

MEMBERS' MEETING - CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT AND PARTY

OPEN MEETING

Monday 24 December at 2.15 pm ABBEY BAPTIST CHURCH

NO MEETING

MEMBERS' MEETING

Thursday 10 January at 2.15 pm ABBEY BAPTIST CHURCH

'William Marshal, a legend in his own lifetime?'

Described as 'the greatest knight who ever lived' and the power behind five English thrones - who was William Marshal? Why is he important in English history and where was his Caversham home?

OPEN MEETING

Monday 28 January at 2.15 pm ABBEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Carol Wheeler will give us a talk and demonstration on hand bell ringing entitled 'Carol of the Bells' which promises to be very entertaining.

Reminders

Reading U3A Christmas Lunch: Thursday 29 November at the Calcot Hotel, Bath Road, RG31 7QN at 12 for 12.30. **Bookings now closed.**

Reading U3A Christmas Entertainment and Party: Thursday 13 December at Abbey Baptist Church. All are welcome to join us for the Entertainment starting at 1.30 for 2pm but **you must have booked – and had an acknowledgement** - for the Christmas Tea Party which follows in the downstairs hall.

Garden Visits Group

Planning meeting in February

We plan to have a short meeting in the Hexagon café area on **Tuesday 26 February at 11.30**. If you are interested in visiting gardens and want to have a chat about what might be on offer, or what you might be interested in visiting, then please come along and join the discussion.

Welford Park Visit

None of us particularly enjoy traipsing around gardens when it is cold and miserable but have you been to Welford Park when the snowdrops are out? It is a sight to behold. Would you be interested in a group visit – think we would have to car-share to get there but, if enough people wanted to go, we could probably get a small coach.

Canasta – would you like to play?

I have been asked to canvass you all about starting a Canasta Group. Would you like to play and, crucially, could you become its convenor? Contact the Groups Coordinator.

Reading U3A Holiday: Shropshire Highlights, 5-10 April 2019

Want a few days away next Spring? Want them filled with activity and interest? Want to stay in a 4* hotel, with gym and swimming pool? No problem if you plump for our Shropshire Highlights holiday.

Italian Groups Realigned

There is to be a re-alignment in the groups for Italian; this will respond to the increasing popularity for the language at different levels. Level One [for beginners] and Level Two [for improvers]. The previous upper group [called Upper Intermediate Group] is to become 'Italian Level Three'. This group assumes mastery of the basics of Italian and the ability to participate actively in conversation and discussions about Italian life and literature.

Play Reading

Play Reading is one of our so-called 'ghost' groups and, as we don't have any information for Group News each month, you may not have heard of us? We are, however, a small, friendly group that meets twice a month at Abbey Baptist Church. We sit around a table, scripts are handed out, roles allocated and then we read our parts. We tackle comedies, tragedies, and everything in between, from Alan Ayckbourn to Woodrow Wyatt, except Shakespeare (who has too many characters). So if you enjoy reading aloud, with a bit of expression, do come along and join in.

History of Woodley Shared Learning Project

The first meeting of the Project took place in early October, with twenty U3A members from Wokingham and Reading met to discuss our plans for the project and the subjects which we would research - which included Woodley Airfield, Sonning Cutting, census records, oral history, industries, shops, housing and roads, churches, Sandford Manor and Mill, archaeology and early history, and Woodley Carnival.

We discussed what we wanted to achieve in our research. There was a strong feeling that we should record oral history before the stories and memories disappear. We may produce materials for a display or series of displays, talks and possibly a local history book. The town clerk for Woodley Town Council, has been very helpful with publicity, contacts, office space for small groups and archive records. She suggested we might put some of the results of our research on the Woodley Town Council website.

Reading U3A Facebook Group

Just to remind you that Reading U3A has its own Facebook Group. This is a closed group, which means that only our members are able to see its content. We use it to share information, photographs and accounts of our activities, safe in the knowledge that only our fellow U3A members can see them. If you would like to join, go to www.facebook.com/groups/1828450284070410/ (or just type Reading U3A in the Facebook search box) and click on "Join Group". When your membership has been verified, your application will be approved.

Alternative Theatre Group

Wednesday 9 January: 'Blood & Ice' Progress Theatre, Reading

Liz Lohead. is best known as a poet but writes other things as well. This, her first play, is about Mary Shelly and the writing of 'Frankenstein'. £10.35

Monday 18 February: 'Goodnight Mister Tom' Wokingham Theatre £12

Thursday 14 March: 'A Dolls House' Progress Theatre, Reading

This is an English adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's play. £10.35

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Theatre Group

‘Murder for Two’: Thursday 21 February 2.30 pm Watermill Theatre, Bagnor £20

A high-energy musical whodunit, *Murder For Two* is a mystery with a twist. In this loving homage to the canon of murder mystery plays, two actors play thirteen characters... and the piano.

When famous novelist Arthur Whitney is found dead at his birthday party, it's time to call in the detectives. The only problem is, they're out of town. Enter Officer Marcus Moscovicz, a neighbourhood cop who dreams of climbing the ranks. With the clock ticking, it's up to Marcus to prove his super sleuthing skills and solve the crime before the real detective arrives.

A hysterical blend of music, murder and mayhem, *Murder For Two* thrilled audiences in 2017 during its UK premiere at The Watermill, before transferring to London and is now back at The Watermill for a second run. For more details see www.watermill.org.uk/murder_for_two.

We normally have plenty of drivers to get everyone there so if you need a lift or can offer a lift please let me know when you book your ticket.

‘The Verdict’: Wednesday 20 March 2.30 pm Theatre Royal, Winchester £15

Middle Ground Theatre Company Ltd presents ‘The Verdict’ by Barry Reed, adapted by Margaret May Hobbs. Frank Galvin is a washed up veteran lawyer and an alcoholic. He is presented with one last chance to redeem himself when he is given an open-and-shut medical malpractice case that no one thinks he can win. A stunning courtroom thriller made famous by the five times Oscar nominated Sidney Lumet film with Paul Newman and James Mason.

For more details see <https://www.theatreroyalwinchester.co.uk/the-verdict/>

‘Tartuffe’: Wednesday 24 April 2.15 National Theatre (Lyttleton), London £27

Sorry, I got a bit ahead of myself and booked this as well!

Blanche McIntyre directs John Donnelly's ferocious new version of Moliere's comic masterpiece.

Orgon is the man who has everything - money, power, a beautiful home and family, but lately he has been questioning the point of it all. When he invites Tartuffe into his seemingly perfect household, he unleashes a whirlwind of deception and seduction that threatens everything.

With Orgon under Tartuffe's spell, can his family outwit this charismatic trickster? Are Tartuffe's wild claims truth or fiction? This mysterious stranger may not be quite the villain he appears.

See www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/tartuffe for more details.

‘Friendship Matinee – Abbaphonic’: Wednesday 29 May 3 pm Royal Albert Hall £23

This is a specially programmed performance providing people who are part of a charity or community group to see world-class shows at a very reasonable price. Celebrating ABBA's greatest hits, West End stars Abbie Osmon and Emma Kershaw will perform an amazing line-up of ABBA's timeless classics with the amplified Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and sensational backing singers, all with the RPO's signature symphonic twist.

For more details see <https://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/events/2019/friendship-matinee-abbaphonic/>

I am not organising lunch but you can make your own booking at the Royal Albert Hall, take a picnic or eat elsewhere. They are advertising 20% off in Verdi – Italian Kitchen for ticket holders on this day.

U3A National Website - Presentations from the National Conference

If you have access to the internet, you will I am sure find the U3A website of great interest. You will need to register on the site to gain full access, and you will find a great deal of very useful information, including Resources (which is shortly to cease publication in paper copy), and subject advice which could be useful to your group. On this page - conference.u3a.org.uk - you will be able to see presentations from the National Conference, held in Nottingham in August.

Just go to www.u3a.org.uk. scroll down to the bottom of the page, and you will find instructions on how to register - you will then be able to access the members' area of the website.

And while you are there - why not sign up for the U3A National Newsletter, which will come to you every month by email.

Woodley, Shinfield and Earley Lunch Club

On Monday 15 October, eleven members, including one new lady, met at The Carvery near ASDA in Lower Earley for a semi self-service meal. One member had a voucher for a 20% reduction which pleased us all.

Conversation/discussion was lively, Princess Eugenie's wedding (mostly concerning what people had worn) being a main subject.

We meet on the third Monday of each month (12 noon for 12.30 pm) at various venues which are accessible by public transport (details are set out in Group News). So, if you fancy lunching in pleasant company, please give us a try. You don't have to live in the area.

Third Age Matters

What do you do with your copy of the Third Age Matters magazine when you have finished reading it? File it, give it to a friend - or pop it in the recycling? Here's an idea - next time you are at your doctor's surgery, or visiting the dentist, why not leave your copy of TAM on that pile of magazines in the waiting room? It is a free - and green! - way of reaching out to potential new members.

Thames Valley Network (TVN)

Throughout 2018 the TVN has run a range of very informative and hugely successful Study Days (two of which will be repeated in 2019, due to popular demand). Please see list below for confirmed dates so far.

Thames Valley Network Study Days

| Topic | Date | Venue |
|--|---------------|--|
| - **The Drama of Dunkirk** | 5 March | River & Rowing Museum, Henley |
| - Polar Exploration: Arctic Geopolitics (a follow-up to the 2018 Study Day) | 4 April | Parish Hall, Benson |
| - **Medicine and Art** | 30 April | Parish Hall, Benson |
| - History on Film | 28 May | St Helen's & St Kath's School, Abingdon |
| - Visit to Kelmscott Manor | 1 2 September | Kelmscott Manor |
| ** Repeats of 2018 Study Days** | | |

Information about TVN Study Days and any other event can be found in the members' area of our Reading U3A website <http://readingu3a.org.uk/> just login and click on *useful links*. Or look on the TVN website: <http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk/>.

Urban Sketching

The Urban Sketching group is taking a break in the colder months - but keep an eye on the newsletter for future meetings.

Abbey Baptist Church - New Minister

Reading U3A members were among the congregation in Abbey Baptist Church on Saturday 17 November at the Induction Service for their new Minister, Revd Julia Binney, who was given an enthusiastic welcome, with rousing hymns. The service was followed by a splendid tea with much lively conversation. We are pleased to add our welcome to Julia and to wish her well in her new ministry.
The Committee

CAMEO Group

Members of Reading U3A are always very welcome to join in the meetings of the CAMEO (which stands for "Come and Meet Each Other") group which are held in the Lower Hall at Abbey Baptist Church on the first Wednesday of each month, at 2.15 p.m. There is always an interesting speaker and the meetings are preceded by a soup lunch from 12.30 to 1.30.

More details of some of our activities are to be found in a separate section called Group News. In the full newsletter these sections contain contacts, telephone numbers, and further instruction where applicable.

DECEMBER GROUP NEWS

Amble: Thursday 13 December 11 am

A 2.5-mile circular amble round Dinton Pastures. No stiles and good surfaces throughout the walk.

Blanket Project: Monday 3 December 3 pm Primark's café

Please bring your completed blankets, squares to sew up and any donations of wool to share. New members and contributors are very welcome.

Debating: Tuesday 18 December 2.15 pm Abbey Baptist Church

Will the results of the US mid-term elections have any repercussions for Donald Trump?

Enjoying Opera: Thursday 6 December 1.30 pm Abbey Baptist Church

We shall view this 2-disc version of Verdi's 'La Traviata' (The Fallen Woman) across our December and January meetings.

Disc 1 duration is 1 hour 40 minutes. Sung in Italian.

Family History: Friday 14 December 10.30 am Family History Centre, LDS Church, Tilehurst

The meeting this month will be our usual quiz and social event.

Heritage Group: Wednesday 5 December

We will go to the Oceania Exhibition at the Royal Academy, Burlington House, London. The entrance fee is £18 and is best booked online beforehand. There are half-hourly slots. I suggest 1 pm or 1.30 pm would be ideal, and allow time for lunch before going in. Your choice.

Seated Exercise: Thursday 13 December Seated by 10.30 am for Prompt Start. Abbey Baptist Church

Numbers are restricted to 30. If you are new, please contact me. Please also tell me if you no longer wish to attend so that your place can be given to someone else. Many thanks.

Please wear loose clothing (trousers) with bare feet or non-slip socks/soft slippers. The hour-long session of exercises provides a top-to-toe workout with tips for daily-living activities in the home or street.

Theatre Group: 'Moonlight' and 'Night School' Thursday 6 December 2.30 pm Harold Pinter Theatre, London

Travel Talk: Thursday 20 December – NO MEETING but.....

If you're travelling somewhere interesting over Christmas or New Year, or have been somewhere this year, we'd like to hear all about it at one of our meetings next year, so let us know. Have a good break and we'll see you all in January.

Walk: Monday 3 December 10.30 am

An urban walk of about 5 miles including View Island, the Thames Path, Palmer Park and the Kennet. Meet at 10.30 on the east side of Reading Bridge, by the steps. Parking at Hills Meadow. Lunch at The Back of Beyond.

JANUARY 2019 GROUP NEWS

Amble: Wednesday 23 January 11 am

A gentle 3-mile amble in the meadows between the Pang and the Thames, finishing on the Thames Path to Whitchurch for lunch at The Greyhound. It could be muddy in places so boots are advised.

Bird Watching: Thursday 24 January 10 am Dinton Pastures

A return to the bird hides near Dinton Pastures, Winnersh.

Church Buildings Group: Wednesday 16 January 10.30 am Abbey Baptist Church

Today we are holding our annual indoor meeting - an illustrated review of the visits we have made in 2018, and a discussion on our plan for 2019. New members and potential new members are very welcome.

Collectables Group: Bottles, Jars & Pots (glassware): Monday 21 January 2.30 pm

Debating: Tuesday 15 January 2.15 pm Abbey Baptist Church

The rollout of Universal Credit and low wages is causing serious hardship to many, but is this being overridden by the Government's ideology of getting people into work at all costs?

Enjoying Opera: Thursday 3 January 1.30 pm Abbey Baptist Church

Today we view the second part of 'La Traviata' (The Fallen Woman).

Violetta is gravely ill. Her doctor predicts that she will not live much longer. Although she and Alfredo have quarrelled and parted, he is now hurrying to her side. They dream of resuming their life together, but fate intervenes.

Disc 2 duration is about 40 minutes. Sung in Italian.

French Films: Friday 25 January 1.45 pm Abbey Baptist Church

'La Gloire de mon Père' (1990). 'My Father's Glory' is a moving evocation of a French childhood, based on the classic novel by Marcel Pagnol. 106 minutes, French with English subtitles.

Photography: Wednesday 23 January 10.30 am Greyfriars Church Centre, Friar Street

Two different takes on India – Photos from two of our members. Bring your December/January project 'Celebrations', as well as photos and ideas for our March and April meetings.

Science & Technology: Tuesday 22 January 2.15 pm Abbey Baptist Church

Andrew Hutt of the Berkshire Archaeological Society will give a talk on the techniques used to investigate archaeological sites - the 'geophys' so beloved by TV shows. He will describe how each technique has helped investigate areas of Berkshire.

Seated Exercise: Thursday 10 & 24 January Seated by 10.30 am for Prompt Start. Abbey Baptist Church

Numbers are restricted to 30. If you are new, please contact me. Please also tell me if you no longer wish to attend so that your place can be given to someone else. Many thanks.

Please wear loose clothing (trousers) with bare feet or non-slip socks/soft slippers. The hour-long session of exercises provides a top-to-toe workout with tips for daily-living activities in the home or street.

Singing for Pleasure: 2 pm Friends Meeting House, Church Street DATE CHANGE

Theatre Group: 'Caroline, or Change': Thursday 31 January 2.30 pm Playhouse Theatre, London

Town Study: Wednesday 9 January 2.15 pm Abbey Baptist Church

We will hear from those who have been researching in preparation for our first visit of the year which will be to St Albans on Wednesday 13 March.

Travel Talk: Suffolk: Thursday 17 January 2.15 pm Abbey Baptist Church

Suffolk's natural beauty – rolling countryside, glorious coastline, charming villages – made it an attractive destination for the 2018 U3A holiday. An illustrated talk about the trip.

Walk: Monday 7 January 10.45 am

A 6.5-mile linear walk along the Kennet & Avon canal towpath between Aldermaston and Burghfield. Easy walking, mainly flat with a few minor ups and downs for bridges and locks, and one step-through stile.

Walk: Monday 14 January 10.30 am

A circular walk of about 4 miles from opposite The Pack Saddle on the Woodcote Road (A4074) to Mapledurham walking along tracks, fields and country lanes including one steepish incline. Likely to be muddy and wet underfoot.

Walk: Friday 25 January 10.15 am

A 4.5-mile circular walk around Woodcote, Beech Lane, Icknield Road, South Stoke Road, with lovely views. Mostly tarmac surfaces and a steady long incline of about 1 mile on the return to Woodcote.

Woodley, Shinfield and Earley Lunch: Monday 21 January 12 noon Wyevale Garden Centre opposite the Showcase cinema near Loddon Bridge Come and join us for lunch, you don't have to live in the area to come along at 12 noon on the third Monday of the month. We use a number of local restaurants for our meals.

READING U3A GROUPS TIMETABLE

| | | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|--|
| ONE | AM | | BRIDGE CLUB | HERITAGE | LINE DANCING | GERMAN IMPROVER TAI CHI |
| WEEK | PM | BLANKET PROJECT** | FRENCH STORY READING TABLE TENNIS | WRITING FOR PLEASURE | BOOKS ENJOYING OPERA MADRIGALS | SINGING FOR PLEASURE |
| TWO | AM | QUIZ** | MEDITATION POETRY | COMPUTER GROUP | ITALIAN LEVEL 3 SEATED EXERCISE | ART WORKSHOPS FAMILY HISTORY PLAY READING TAI CHI |
| WEEK | PM | | YOGA | TOWN STUDY | MEMBERS' MEETING | CRAFTS |
| THREE | AM | LUNCH CLUB | BRIDGE CLUB BRAIN TEASERS | CHURCH BUILDINGS | LINE DANCING | GERMAN IMPROVER PLAY READING TAI CHI |
| WEEK | PM | CHESS COLLECTABLES FOLK DANCING | DEBATING FRENCH STORY READING TABLE TENNIS | WIT AND HUMOUR | MADRIGALS TRAVEL TALK | A GOOD READ SINGING FOR PLEASURE |
| FOUR | AM | NEW MEMBERS ** | LUNCH CLUB MEDITATION PHILOSOPHY | COMPUTER GROUP PHOTOGRAPHY | BIRD WATCHING ITALIAN LEVEL 1 SEATED EXERCISE | ART WORKSHOPS CIRCLE DANCING TAI CHI |
| WEEK | PM | OPEN MEETING | SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY SPANISH CONVERSATION YOGA | | HISTORY OF ART ITALIAN LEVEL 2 | FRENCH FILMS** |

** alternate months

Some groups have dates, times and locations which vary - see full Newsletter for details: AMBLES/WALKS, GARDENS GROUP, THEATRE VISITS, ALTERNATIVE THEATRE VISITS, URBAN SKETCHING