

Stroud u3a July news

Welcome

To all those who have joined this month. If you need any assistance, please contact our new member liaison, [Dilys Warren](#). Otherwise, it would be great to see you at the coffee morning at the Old Nelson hotel on Stratford Road, or one of the monthly talks at Lansdown Hall, Lansdown Rd, in the centre of Stroud. Both are excellent opportunities to meet other members, including members of the committee. Hope to see you there.

Dates for your diary

July 28th: coffee morning at the Old Nelson, Stratford Road

July 30th, 2.30: Lansdown talk: Liam Fleet 'Historic musical instruments'.

NO LANSDOWN MEETING IN AUGUST

August 13th, 2.30: Stroud Congregational Church Hall, Social quiz

August 15th: deadline for submission of copy to the newsletter editor

August 21st: publication of the newsletter

August 25th: 10.30 Coffee morning at the Old Nelson, Stratford Road

September 3rd, 2.30: Women in the Arts & Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds: Monthly meeting at Lansdown Hall.

Membership renewals

Please keep a lookout for membership renewal emails dropping into your mailbox from mid August. There is no increase in fees this year but, as you may recall, at last year's AGM it was agreed that *u3a Matters* magazine - which is produced by the Third Age Trust - will no longer be included in the membership fee. There will be a separate fee for this (five issues a year), currently £4.20, which we will ask for early in 2027. If you no longer wish to receive the magazine then please email me at membership@stroudu3a.org.uk so you will not then be asked for payment.

Sylvia Pearse, Membership Secretary

Lansdown Talks

July 30th - Liam Fleet on "Historic Musical Instruments"

Liam Fleet's presentation will focus on what are known as double-reed instruments, which produce sound when two pieces of shaved cane vibrate against one another. This family includes the oboe, the English horn (cor anglais), the bassoon, and the contrabassoon. Liam will take us on a journey from some of the very earliest woodwind instruments and demonstrates the evolution from these primitive ancestors to their modern counterparts.

Liam is a professional bassoonist and oboist and is a fanatic of all things double-reed. He plays with some of the UK's leading Early Music ensembles including *the Musical and Amicable Society and Instruments of Time & Truth*.

He also sings bass with the Llandaff Cathedral Choir.

Liam is a passionate educator, and an active teacher of bassoon, oboe, recorder and singing across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

September 3rd: Kirsty Hartsiotis on Women in the Arts & Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds

Kirsty Hartsiotis is a Stroud-based author, storyteller, and former curator of the Arts and Crafts collection at Cheltenham's [Wilson Art Gallery and Museum](#). She is a regular lecturer on the often-overlooked female designers and makers of the Cotswolds Arts and Crafts movement who worked alongside their better-known male counterparts. Amongst them was May Morris, an embroidery

and jewellery designer and maker. Born in 1862, she was the younger daughter of William Morris, and her accomplishments have tended to be obscured by her father's fame, and her devotion to him and his memory.

Can you help?

As with many other u3as, we have members with many varied interests, skills and a vast amount of knowledge, some of which has been shared with us over the years via a presentation at our monthly meetings. Would you be interested in joining them by turning some of your knowledge and skills into a presentation? If so, please do get in touch (we will always help with any necessary IT needs).

Alternatively, if you have a topic which has always piqued your curiosity, please let me know and we'll see if we can source a speaker.

[Jocelyn Hayes](#), *Speaker Organiser*

Social quiz

Our next social quiz takes on the afternoon of Thursday 13th August at 2pm. The venue is once again Stroud Congregational Church Hall (next to Stroud Subscription Rooms) on Bedford Street, with Nick Brunger acting as our Quizmaster.

Members divide off into teams of four to six to take part. Some of those teams come fully formed but if you are not already a member of one of them then you can still be involved - we will simply find you a place when you arrive.

To help us plan for the event please let us know if you plan to attend either via www.stroud.u3asite.uk or email bookings@stroudu3a.org.uk.

Stroud Show - July 18th

WOW – what a weekend. England's men's football team beat France for the third place in the World Cup, England's men's Rugby team beat Argentina, England's men's cricketers won the ODI series against India but ... best of all was our attendance at the 2026 Stroud Show.

The sun and a gentle breeze gave us a great backdrop for setting up our gazebo and spending a busy day talking about Stroud u3a and what we have to offer those retired or semi-retired.

We were able to sign up some members on the day whilst others went away and signed up online. More than 80 group lists were taken away, with several more having to be taken away as an image on their phone as we ran out of paper copies.

Queries were raised about a range of groups including Recorders, Birding, Music Appreciation, Patchwork and Quilting, Walking, Paddlers, to name just a few. There were also questions asked as to whether there could be beginners' language groups in Welsh and Spanish, as we said all things might be possible with enough interest.

We explained about the Monthly Members Meeting, the range of topics, the use of Lansdown Hall as an excellent venue and the opportunity to meet more people and extend their local knowledge.

Possibly the best reason given for wanting to join our u3a, was that they could decline requests from their children to agree to no more than 2 days of child minding, as they would have somewhere to go and some exciting activities to attend!

At the end of a busy day the Uley Brewery supplied a tasty glass of beer, though sadly there was no cider on tap (had to buy a can).... do we have any local cider brewers?

Still, a very nice end to a busy day sharing a drink with actual and prospective u3a friends.

CHEERS!

Getting to know you

Jenny Dunford is one of our group leaders. She co-ordinates the gentle Yoga Group and the History Book Club. She formerly worked in education and then in historical and genealogical research. At the AGM this November she will give a presentation about historical re-enactment based on her long involvement with the English Civil War Society.

1. How long have you lived in Stroud district?

Nearly three years. We moved here so that I could see more of my grandson (I now have two grandsons.)

2. What was your most enjoyable job before retirement?

Probably when I was working as an independent researcher. I was my own boss; I enjoyed the historical context of the work; I enjoyed developing my skills to become proficient in specialist areas. What I had not anticipated was the extent to which finding answers for people could make them happy. Some clients became life-long friends.

3. What is your dream holiday activity?

If I have to pick one, exploring prehistoric sites in Shetland, preferably without rain or midges.

4. What is your favourite piece of music?

I don't have one favourite piece or even one favourite type of music. I have a fondness for folk songs that evoke happy memories: "Matty Groves" because we danced to it at our wedding; "The Wild Mountain Thyme" because friends used to sing it around the campfire.

5. When were/are the best days of your life?

It is only in looking back that we see periods of time as wholly good or bad. In reality life is a mixture of highs and lows. It would be very pessimistic to assume that there are no more good times to come.

6. What is the next exciting thing you are planning?

As a child I was admonished for "getting excited". I do not get "excited". Rather than planning grand events, I think it is more important to find joy in small things every day.

Fancy having a go at answering these questions in a future newsletter? Get in touch with [Peter](#) today!

Big Summer Picnic

Would any groups like to support this event being staged by the SDC, with the aim of using this excellent opportunity to showcase the u3a, engage with new and diverse audiences and raise our profile within the local community. We are looking at being there 7th and 21st August from 10am to 4pm.

So, would you enjoy sharing a typical Group meeting with three or four group members and also members of the public, for 30-45 minutes, thus demonstrating the range, enthusiasm, humour and camaraderie which regularly take place within your Group, and showing onlookers what you're doing and letting them ask questions or even take part.

Some possibilities could include:

- Planning a walk – who will do the what/where; Planning a cycle ride; Discussing a book, poem, film or play; Sketching an area in the park, painting in a variety of mediums the various treasures in the park, photographing and discussing the results of your endeavours; Discussing some aspect of art, an artist or a particular genre; Discussing some aspect of current affairs, or a notion in philosophy; Playing Backgammon or Bridge; Playing the recorder and discussing the repertoire; Sharing enthusiasm for music; Struggling with the intricacies of speaking Spanish, Italian, French or Welsh; Discussing our enjoyment of food; Spotting birds we've not seen before; Discussing the finer points of badminton, croquet, paddling on canals, perhaps arranging demos; Showing some yoga, keep fit, Tai Chi; Writing on a given topic and discussing it; Demonstrating the range of goods which can be produced using needles, hooks and yarn; etc etc.

Just some of our activities could be showcased with the aim of demystifying and promoting Stroud u3a as the 'go-to' place for those with extra recreation time.

If so, declare your willingness to your group leader so that plans can be put in place.

Sit vac

I'm sorry to say we still need to find our next newsletter editor as I shall be laying down this pleasant task in November. Honestly it's fun, but I've been doing it long enough and it's time for a change of voice and style.

All you need is to enjoy writing and editing short snippets, to be a bit nosy and find out what's going on in our u3a, and to have minimal technical skills to present it adequately in whatever format you choose. Anyone who aspires to be a bit creative but can't quite find the focus to sit down and write that novel you've been planning would be perfect for the role. Please contact [Peter Furtado](#) in the first instance for a no-strings chat.

GROUPS

Guitar group?

Are there any guitarists out there in u3a interested in a group to strum a few songs ? Not classical or Spanish, just pop/rock/soul/punk. Please let [Kate Golten](#) know if you might be interested.

Climate emergency group

How have you coped with the last three heatwaves? There may be more to come before the summer is out.

As climate change, and its implications for our health, food security and general future-planning comes more and more to the fore, it feels essential properly to understand what is happening, and what's predicted. That means separating truth from fiction, understanding the evolving science and how to interpret it.

If you would like to join a group addressing these questions, and sharing whatever emotions come up for us in the face of these overwhelming issues, please contact [Peter Furtado](#).

Book club

We are four linked book groups which meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at 2.30pm in Uplands, Bowbridge, Paganhill and Ebley. The meetings are normally the 2nd Monday of each month but Paganhill group have changed to meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

We read a very wide range of fiction and non-fiction and members are encouraged to nominate books which they have enjoyed for inclusion in the reading list.

We welcome new members including those who may find reading print difficult – our book choices are all available on Kindle and also as Audio books.

The groups continue to receive enquiries from members wishing to join but Bowbridge is full at present. If you are interested, please contact [June Blackmore](#).

Backgammon for Fun group

Ever thought of trying backgammon? Then this is your opportunity...

The 'Backgammon for Fun' Group has been going for several months and would be delighted to welcome new members

Despite its somewhat elitist reputation it is actually a fun game where you test your strategy against another player with, or in some cases despite, the roll of the dice.

Never played before? – we can teach you

Don't have a board? – we have several

Long time since you played? – resurrect that instinct and join us.

We play in a very friendly and supportive spirit since we are learning together.

So why not join our Group? We welcome knowledgeable players and beginners, both to re-awaken their interest in the game or to start from scratch on a very rewarding process.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at a member's home, 1.30-3.30pm, and the price is an occasional donation to the refreshments.

If you are interested please contact the [Group Leader at this email address](#).

Art appreciation

On June 15th Sue presented "Drawing on the Walls" . Wall painting has been a favourite with humanity for thousands of years and we looked at some examples, including:-

- The Wild pig – from Leang Tedongnge Cave, Indonesia, some 45,500 years ago.
- The Black Bulls - Lascaux, approx. 17,000 years ago, where the wall art included horses, stags, aurochs. The Great Black Bull is over five meters long.
- The Temple of Isis-Philae, circa. 250BC, Dedicated to Isis and Osiris. Hieroglyphs, using pictorial symbols to represent objects, ideas or sounds.
- St Mark's Basilica - Venice, 12-13 century. Emphasis on gold, 8,000 metres of mosaics. Not graffiti as such, but a different medium depicting the Hand of God, prophets with scrolls and other religious scenes.
- And the current artwork by Banksy and the unknown artists working on Leake Street, as shown above. (Leake Street, just behind Waterloo Station, is often known as the Leake Street Arches or even the Banksy Tunnel).

As Wendy commented, this is way more than just graffiti. Pam also added a similar comment, since, whilst in Sicily, she saw murals called “the wall of legality” which commemorate those who lost their lives due to the Sicilian Mafia.

A great learning experience for us all.

Contacts

To contact any of the groups and others mentioned here, follow the blue links to email, or contact Peter Furtado or others on the committee, using the details below:

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