

Dear u3a member

Our Open Event in August was an enjoyable afternoon with entertainment and information to hand about our groups, future speaker programme, as well as fruit punch, tea and cakes – so thank you again to everyone who gave during the afternoon.

Our next speaker meeting is on **Thursday 3 September**; we have Angie Bolton coming to tell us about the ***Social History and Collection Practices at the Oxford Museum***. An insider look at our lovely local museum which is an attraction to so many Oxfordshire folk and beyond. Do join us at 2.15 for 2.30 at St Hugh's centre, Woodstock. Visitors fee for non-members is £3 to include tea and biscuits for all, with thanks as always to Jackie and Suzanne.

INTEREST GROUPS' NEWS – all contact for all information is through our website <https://woodstock.u3asite.uk/contact/> – the Group Co-ordinator.

Saturday Morning Social will be held on Saturday **5th September** at St Mary's Magdalene Church, Woodstock from 10am to 12noon hosted by Denise. No need to book as there is plenty of room and all are welcome. This is a fund raising event by the church with monies raised supporting the North Oxford Food Bank. The date as always coincides with the Woodstock Farmers market in the square. The next and final **Sunday Lunch** will be held on Sunday the **20th September** at 1 p.m. at The Duke, formally known as The Duke of Marlborough. Please book with Denise, if you wish to be included. Since last October, the lunch group has explored the eateries in Woodstock mostly enjoying a Sunday roast. From January we will be offering a mid-week meet-up probably in Woodstock for a lunch where a fuller range of meals will be on offer, alternating Tuesday and Wednesday each month.

The **Mah Jong** group are looking for new members to join their Friday sessions. Absolute beginners, novices and experienced players are all welcome. The game is easy to pick up and lots of fun to play. We meet every Friday, 11:00 - 1pm at The White House Pub, Grove Road, Bladon.

Welsh group: At our August meeting we played some games to learn new Welsh vocabulary and practice Welsh grammar. This then led onto further conversion in Welsh around the words on the cards.

Table Tennis continues to keep up strong numbers as we organise six minute gentle singles play aiming to keep the table rallies going for as long as possible with improving hand-eye co-ordination.. After tea-break we may set up doubles – with the aim of some competition and winners declared with the first duo to get to 21, without losing track of the score (due to laughter). Anyone interested in joining please contact Shirley.

Calligraphy - began in Kidlington this summer with thanks to Liz who has kindly agreed to lead the group. Please do get in touch if you would like more information. If you have any calligraphy materials that are no longer required – please know that we can find them a good home, or maybe join us.

Scrabble currently has a couple of places – please let Pat know your interest, or contact through website.

The immense heat this summer has somewhat hampered the (longer) **Walking group** but eleven members of the group were able to meetup on Friday and enjoy a circular route around Woodstock taking in the wooded area above Green Lane open fields and the water meadows – four and half miles – well done all.

u3a POETRY GROUP - Have you ever written any poetry or do you love reading poetry? The idea is that this new group will meet once a month in Woodstock. Some of the time will be devoted to members reading aloud their original poetry and sharing what prompted the writing. These poems may have been written in the past or more recently. The rest of the meeting will be spent reading and discussing poems by members' favourite poets. We would all get together initially to discuss the best day, time and place. If you might be interested please send a message via the contact page.

Please email Janet at groups@woodstocku3a.uk to be put in contact with any of the group leaders. Contributions and suggestion for the website <https://woodstock.u3asite.uk> are always welcome by Andy, myself, or Janet and is the best place to get updated information.

Results of the photo competition held at our Summer Event were as follows:-

1. The winner of the "Best of" Blenheim photos was Ros Buck. Her photo showed Bladon Bridge on an early afternoon in January.
2. The winner of the "Worst of" Blenheim photos was Judith Passant. Most of the land around this part of Oxfordshire is owned by the University or by Blenheim. Farmers have no security as the land can be taken and used to build the largest photovoltaic power station in Europe.
3. The winner of Favourite Photo was Ros Buck with her photo of sheep grazing fields on the Blenheim estate. This photo was taken early one misty morning in December. The enfolding mistiness helps create a dreamlike and peaceful pastoral scene.



Congratulations to all participants.

As a result of the appeal for **Medicines for Ukraine** – a large bundle of requested items was taken to the organiser in Shipton who was very grateful for our members contributions. Pat Holding has agreed to continue collecting items at the Saturday Socials and Speaker meetings – or do get in touch with her direct. A reminder of items being asked for is attached; the items go on regular runs to Ukraine. The organiser may be in attendance at St Hughs on Thursday.

AND.....Beyond our branch

The **Thames Valley Network** (TVN) zoom talk this month is ***China: The Red Dragon Awakes*** on Wednesday 16th September at 10.30. Andrew Baker, a specialist in contemporary history, politics world affairs and cultural change, will be giving the TVN a talk on the rise of China – global, political and how it affects us in the West. Book by 13th £2.00 per device; booking required - see attached flyer. www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk -

The u3a Trust has launched its own specialist UK holiday programme. *u3a Getaways* are taking learning on tour with exclusive holidays open to members and their friends. The themed trips venture across the UK - the mid-October trip is to Stratford – ***Appreciating Shakespeare***, and ***Yorkshire Festive Treats*** is in November. [See the full programme of holidays.](#)

At <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events> you will find a raft of zoom talks/lectures – most with no charge to members.

The national magazine (known to us as **TAM – Third Age Matters**) is produced five times a year and posted to home addresses; it is excellent value at £4 for the year and has just won Silver in the Association Excellence Awards 2025. Many interesting articles (and advertising – but relevant) – just get in touch with Susan or Penny.

Finally a request for help with a research project at **Nottingham University** who are looking for people who find it hard to hear speech in noisy places, including hearing aid users, to join an online training study. The University will be testing two new listening and thinking games in a programme called PLUS (Practice Listening and Understanding Speech). These training games were developed with people with hearing loss and are designed to support everyday listening, including listening in noise. This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Nottingham Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, further information is attached – please make contact yourself if you feel able to help.

Sue Blackshaw – Chair of Woodstock & District u3a - chair@woodstocku3a.uk