

*T'IS THE SEASON TO BE
JOLLY...*



Message from the Chair



There are changes in the air:

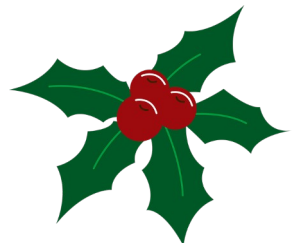
We are amending our constitution to bring it closely in line with the Third Age Trusts' Model Constitution. At present we are awaiting confirmation from them and from the Charity Commission that our proposed changes to the model are acceptable. In particular, we want to keep our aim as a charity focussed not only on education (as in the model) but also the social aspects which we regard as an equally important part of our U3A.

Overall; the changes are very largely about the words but not the meaning. The exception is the introduction of stricter limits on how long each of the Committee can hold each position. The future will therefore bring a more rapid turnover of Committee members. I have already overstayed the existing limit on being Chair, so the AGM in February will see me replaced as Chair and I will also give up being Membership Secretary.

We will let you know when we get approval of our revised constitution, and hopefully we can share the details in time for it to be voted on at our AGM.

Much closer though is the festive season, and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year., and I look forward to seeing you all in 2026.

PS: the fee for attending our monthly meeting will revert to £2 from January – the costs of hiring the Rufus Centre and using their projection system are rising and the meetings currently run at a loss.



Nick Rose

Your Committee Members

Chairman	Nicholas Rose	01462 713897
Vice Chair	Ann O'Brien	
Secretary	Lyn Fairweather	07927364286
Treasurer	Maureen Gates	01525 715793
Membership Secretary	Nicholas Rose	01462 713897
Groups coordinator	Lynda Lees	07986539390
Away Days	Carol Smithers	07721030203
Speaker Secretary	Lynda Lees	07986539390
Newsletter	Philip Nichols	07552206495
Committee Member	Richard Bowsher	01525 630335
Committee Member	Barry Walden	07804 767404

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FROM THE EDITOR

Season's greetings!

Welcome to the winter edition of the newsletter. Remember it is your newsletter so I would really like more of you, especially group leaders, to contact me and let me know what is going on in your groups and perhaps send in a few photos as well.

Also, if any of you have anything or any ideas as to what you would like to see in future editions do not hesitate to let me know



2026 General Monthly Meetings and Speakers.

08 Jan Andy Smith
Dogs and Holidays— performance poet

12 Feb AGM

12 Mar Amanda Sutherland
My Creative Journey—an exciting career journey through Film, Television and Theatrical costume design with an insight into running a successful accessories business.

09 Apr Graham Short
Micro-Artist—producing art on items as small as a pinhead and the eye of a needle.

14 May Andrew Baker
Charles Dickens—novelist, humanitarian and critic of mid-Victorian English society.

11 Jun Bill Hamilton
Good News, Bad News—reflections of my 60 years as a journalist, broadcaster and BBC TV News Correspondent covering major events at home and abroad.
Lynda Lees

What you have missed will give you a brief synopsis of past talks but it is no substitute for going along and enjoying the talks themselves at the monthly meetings.

U3A Notices

If you have moved or changed your address, please let us know, so we can keep in touch with you. Equally, if you know any other member whose details have changed do prompt them to get in touch with us

Nick Rose (membership secretary)
Contact Details: phone: 01462 713897 or email: memsecu3afd@outlook.com or write to;

2 Wilson Close,
Shillington
SG5 3PN

To join any of our groups you need to be a full member of Flitwick and District U3A.

Please send all your editorials to
our new email address:

Phil Nichols
fdnewsletter@outlook.com

Our U3A Website address:

www.flitwickanddistrict.u3asite.uk

[Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

Let us know of future local events and activities

If you have any comments on the newsletter or other matters do let us know.

WHAT YOU HAVE MISSED

Life as a TV/film extra by Rob Brewer July 10th.

Rob is a retired Police Officer with Thames Valley police. He was in a library in MK when he saw an advert for a tv/ film extra. He applied and was invited to an audition in Cambridge along with about 100 other people. He was then invited to Pinewood studios for a makeup & costume try out. Rob was then chosen to appear as an extra in Big Ears, a film set in NY. He then went on to appear in 'The Diplomat', 'Batman', 'Holby City', 'Grantchester', 'Ladhood', 'Eastenders'. He also appeared in 'Blinded by the Light' shot mainly in Luton and also in 'No time to Die' where he was shot so couldn't appear again.

As an extra appearing in the background and sometimes having to appear to be speaking usually ending up saying 'rhubarb and custard'. A tv/ film extra needed an agent and lots of luck to be able to find work and as a supporting actor he brought many scenes to life.

His talk ended with a small scenario with two members of the audience playing the main part with two more walking past posing as supporting extras. A tv/film extra was usually paid about £120 a day but had to pay their agent. RB

Lusitania – a tale of loss, deception and conspiracy by Jim Stebbings August 14th

Jim told us about the building of the ship and its immense size. He then went on to talk about the fateful voyage in May 1915, illustrating the passage by talking about specific people who travelled in the different classes of the ship and what fate befell them, during and after the voyage. He talked about the American composer Jerome Kern who was supposed to be on the Lusitania but overslept and missed the sailing, thereby having a lucky escape!

Jim also touched on various theories as to why the Lusitania was sunk by the Germans. Was it carrying ammunition and troops and so was a legitimate war target for the Germans? Did the British allow it to be sunk in the hope that the USA would enter the war against Germany? PN



WHAT YOU HAVE MISSED

Fred Astaire – his story with singing and dancing by Howard Slater 11th September

Howard gave us a brief run through of the life and career of Fred Astaire from his young performances on the stage to his film work with the likes of Syd Charisse and Ginger Rogers. This was accompanied by extracts from some of his films. PN



Humour during World War II by Steve Dimmer 9th October

Steve gave us a very entertaining account of how humour was used to emphasise propaganda during the War. He pointed out that the British Government soon realised that the population reacted better to messages that they wanted to get across if they were done in a humorous fashion. He showed examples of posters telling people not to say anything that could help the enemy – “Be like Dad and keep Mum!” He then went on and talked about comedians such as Will Hay and Charlie Chaplain made films that poked fun at Hitler and the Germans. He also showed how, once the USA entered the war, Walt Disney became involved and Steve then showed us a clip of Donald Duck lampooning the Nazis. PN



WHAT YOU HAVE MISSED

My Ancestral connection to Australia

Talk by Margaret Butt. Thursday Nov. 13th.

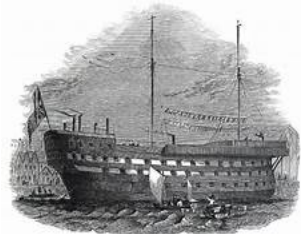
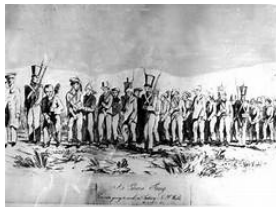
Margaret started her talk saying about her ancestors who lived in Maulden & Flitwick, mainly in the Denel End area. The subject of her talk was her great great great uncle Richard Dillingham who was born in 1810 and one of nine children born to Thomas & Mary Dillingham. He was illiterate, having only attended Sunday school as his father was a lay preacher as well as being a carpenter. There was not enough work as a carpenter so Richard obtained work as a farm labourer. The family lived in great poverty, no electricity, no running water etc.

In 1831 Richard & his friend Daniel Deacon went to Ampthill, got drunk and on the way back broke into a house in Steppingley and stole items to the value of 17s 6d (75p). They were caught and spent the night in the lock-up in Flitwick (whereabouts not known) and then sent to Bedford Prison. There they were sentenced to be hanged but a petition signed by eminent people of Flitwick (including John Brooks of Flitwick Manor) pleaded for leniency so he was spared hanging but was sentenced to be deported to Australia.

He was sent to Chatham docks and put on the prison hulk ship 'Justitia' whilst there he sent and received letters from family and girlfriends. Eventually on 10th. Feb. 1832 he set sail on the 'Katherine Stewart Forbes'. However, due to an outbreak of Cholera on board, the ship returned to Chatham. It set sail again at the end of March with 222 convicts on board. Conditions on board were horrendous with overcrowding, illness, bad sanitation and awful food.

It arrived in Van Diemen land (now Tasmania) in July. He wrote to his Mother and Father in 1836 saying that he is working in a Market Garden and is quite well off and doing ok. It also transpired that he had a son back in England by one of his former girlfriends! Also in 1838 he writes to say he is going to marry a black girl, and also that he was going to get a conditional pardon but will not be able to come back home. In 1842 the census shows that he is living alone in Hobart and also that his pardon has come through. In 1854 he moves to Melbourne in Australia but dies in 1873 of a lung disease in Bendigo where he is buried.

Richard Bowsher



MEET YOUR COMMITTEE

PART TWO



ANN O'BRIEN

I moved to Silsoe nearly five years ago, when I retired as a G.P. in East London. I am now close to my two daughters and four grandchildren living locally, and can visit my son and his two daughters in Jersey, flying from Luton. I enjoy travel and swimming and have a smattering of Spanish from regular trips to "mi casa en Espana".

U3A

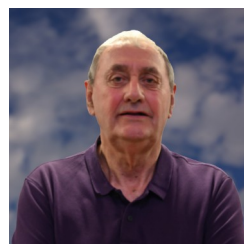
U3A

I'm a retired Chartered Quantity Surveyor and have lived in Westoning for over 30 years. My hobbies are; Amateur Dramatics and Walking.



RICHARD BOWSHER

Resident in Flitwick since 2011
Was Building industry draughtsman/clerk of works/project management.
Joined Flitwick u3a. 2012.Group leader Church history & Architecture group 2015 - 2020.
Committee member 2016 - present
Speaker secretary 2017 - 2025.Group leader Painting group 2022 - present.Member of Table Tennis & Petanque groups
Main interests. Motorsport & Bowling.



BARRY WALDEN



CAROL SMITHERS

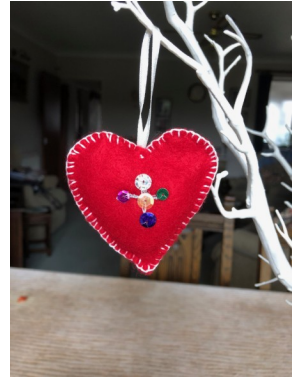
I worked for Sellotape for many years. I have travelled the world extensively, my favourite place being Antarctica. I now look after Awaydays.



PHIL NICHOLS

I'm a retired History teacher and I have lived in Flitwick for over 40 years and my children and grandchildren were brought up here. I regret that I only joined u3a a couple of years back as I erroneously thought it was only for "Old " people. How wrong I was!

Craft Group News



The past few meetings have been very seasonal for the Craft Group. We crocheted pumpkins with Lyn. Gwen gave us ideas to make embroidered Christmas Tree decorations on felt. She recently taught us how to use old books and make Christmas Trees by folding them. You need lots of patience for this activity. Some of us have also been knitting chocolate orange covers for TIBBS again. So far this year they have raised £950 by selling these popular items.

Gwen Halsey and Lyn Fairweather

Eric Midwinter and the origins of u3a



In August of this year, Eric Midwinter, one of the co founders of u3a died at the age of 93. I had the pleasure of meeting with him a number of times when I was a young and very new History teacher and found myself teaching his children. At that point he had already published a number of Social History books and so I already was in awe of him. I always found him to be knowledgeable, tolerant and kind and I hope that he was satisfied with the way that I taught History to his children .

His death got me to thinking about the origins of the u3a.

The “University of the Third Age” was founded in 1982 by Peter Laslett, Michael Young and Eric Midwinter. The Nuffield Foundation put up most of the money - a grant of £9,000. . They wanted groups of people to get together to learn what interested them, and they would have, not a teacher, but a group leader or convenor, who could co-ordinate and help guide their efforts.

U3A was a response to the idea that human life is divided into three periods. The term “third age” means “no longer in full-time employment”. It does not refer to a specific numerical age, though most members are in the senior age bracket. It is during retirement that we are able to do these things for which we had neither the time nor the opportunity earlier in life. The third age is seen as an important opportunity for listening, learning, understanding and sharing.

A collaborative approach was adopted with peers learning from each other.

There are now 1,000 u3a groups in Britain with a combined total of 400,000 members.

Phil Nichols

Christmas Chocolate Quiz



Each clue represents a well known chocolate, chocolate bar or biscuit

1. Thousands of stars.
2. Planetary lawyers
3. Feline tavern
4. Bonus for a coconut
5. Dark occult
6. High end neighbourhood
7. Party!, Party!, Party!
8. David Bowie
9. Richard III
10. Build your own pet
11. Show off your dress
12. Sly laughs
13. Play golf
14. Have some rest
15. Book from southern hemisphere
16. Not clockwork
17. Lactose platter
18. Eat al fresco
19. Shed layers
20. Inhabitants of Valletta



Answers

- | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Galaxy | 2. Mars Bar | 3. Lion Bar | 4. Bounty | 5. Black Magic |
| 6. Quality Street | 7. Celebrations | 8. Heroes | 9. Yorkie | 10. Kit Kat |
| 11. Twirl | 12. Snickers | 13. Club | 14. Take a Break | 15. Penguin |
| 16. Chocolate Orange | 17. Milk Tray | 18. Picnic | 19. Flake | 20. Maltesers |

Cards made by members of the Papercraft Group are on sale at the monthly u3a meetings. On alternative months there will also be Jewellery available for sale. A percentage of the sales are donated to the Air Ambulance.

Personalised cards can be made to order.

Jewellery orders can also be taken.

Contact Colleen at the Monthly meeting or

Email: uk.whitehouse@ntlworld.com

Phone: 01525 752040

**HANDMADE CARDS AND JEWELLERY
BY COLLEEN**



Where on Earth...?

(Or at least in Flitwick and District)

How well do you know the local area?
 Can you identify the following pictures?
 Hint—there is a common theme to them all.



1



2



3



4



5



6



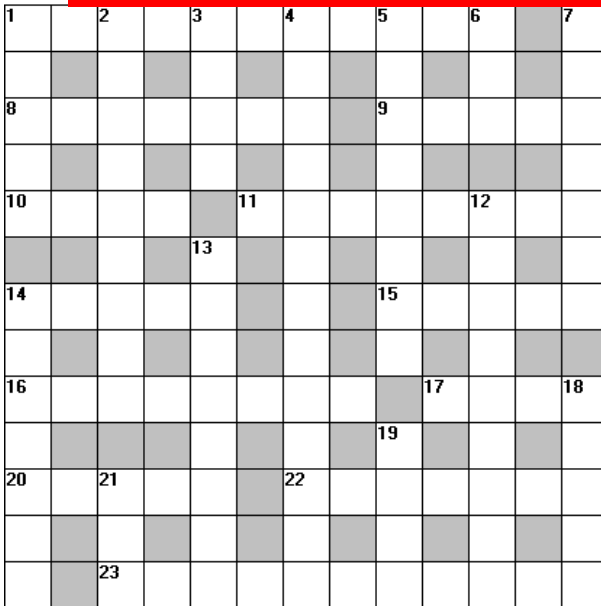
7



8

Answers

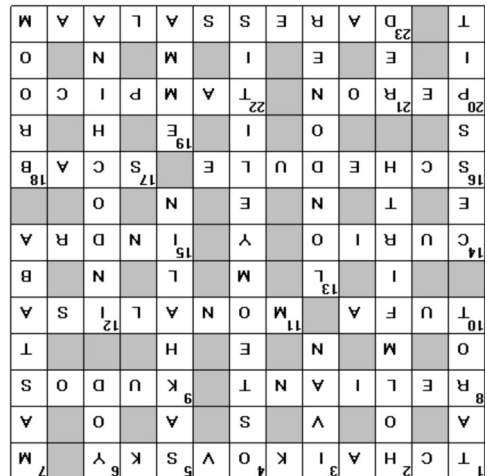
1. Amptihill (Alameda) 2. Flitwick 3. Harlington 4. Barton-Le-Clay 5. Flitton
6. Silsoe 7. Maulden 8. Amptihill (St. Andrew's)

**Across**

- 1 Pyotr Ilyich ____, Russian composer (11)
 8 Old British car maker, famed for its Scimitar (7)
 9 Ancient Greek word meaning 'prestige' or 'glory' (5)
 10 A type of limestone (4)
 11 A painting by Leonardo da Vinci now in the Louvre (4,4)
 14 Roman orator, soldier and statesman who supported Julius Caesar (5)
 15 King of the gods in Hindu mythology (5)
 16 A programme or form (8)
 17 A blackleg (4)
 20 Surname of the stateswoman commonly known as Evita (5)
 22 A state capital of Mexico (7)
 23 The largest city in Tanzania (3,2,6)

Down

- 1 A card used in fortune-telling (5)
 2 Small W. Yorkshire town on the edge of the Peak District (9)
 3 ____ the Terrible, the first tsar of Russia (4)
 4 An infection of the bone or bone marrow (13)
 5 N. Pacific island belonging to Russia (8)
 6 Tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (3)
 7 Precursor of the pyramid in Egypt (7)
 12 Region of the Far East including Vietnam, Cambodia among others (9)
 13 An inhabitant of England's capital (8)
 14 A hole dug to collect sewage (7)
 18 A shrub closely related to gorse (5)
 19 Comic novel by Jane Austen (4)



Learning with the u3a

Did you know that the u3a provides plenty of resources to help you fulfil part of the u3a motto – learn!

Learning Activities

- Competitions – Essay and short story • Paint or draw • u3a eye • Find a u3a speaker • Found in nature • Walkers' Exchange • Maths challenge • Quiz Library

Link: www.u3a.org.uk/learning/learning-activities

Online Learning Events

- free for u3a members Monthly events via Zoom sharing knowledge and skills. Book these for free on the events page of the u3a website (www.u3a.org.uk/events)

Interest Groups Online

- Online u3a community that provides the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses from home. • Activities are run by members and are a great way to meet people from all across the u3a movement. • £12 membership (or £6 if joining between October to March)

Link: www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online

Leaflet and newsletter

- Online learning events newsletter Sign up: www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-event • u3a Learning leaflet

Available to download from: www.u3a.org.uk/learning

Some facts about Autumn and Winter Festivals

Although the seasons of Autumn and Winter may seem to be dreary and bleak, they do contain a number of festivals and holidays which break up the gloom.

One of these is the Hindu festival of Diwali which happens in October or November, depending on the Hindu lunar calendar. It symbolizes the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance". a big part of the celebration revolves around light. On the evening of Diwali, celebrants light dozens of candles and clay lamps (called diyas), placing them throughout their homes and in the streets to light up the night. There is also a lot of firework displays.

Similarly, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah also involves lights. Eight days of worship (taking place sometime between late November and late December according to the Jewish lunar calendar). The central feature of the observance is the nightly lighting of the Chanukiah or menorah, an eight-branched candelabra with a place for a ninth candle, the shammes, used to light the others.

One candle is lit on the first night of Hanukkah, and an additional candle is lit on each successive night until, on the eighth night, the Chanukiah is fully illuminated.

Another Jewish festival of the Autumn is Rosh Hashanah or the Jewish New Year which occurs between September and October. It is marked by the blowing of the Shofar (ram's horn) 100 times each day and the eating of **apples dipped in honey** to symbolize a sweet start to the new year.

One uniquely British festival is Bonfire Night when the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Parliament of James I and Guy Fawkes was destined to be the fall guy (pun intended) and to be burned in effigy ever since, usually accompanied by fireworks.



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