

# FARINGDON & DISTRICT



**Winter 2023**



<https://faringdondistrictu3a.com/>

## MEETINGS CALENDAR

Our main meeting is held at **2.30 pm** in **Faringdon Corn Exchange** on the **second Thursday** of the month. Meetings begin with a warm welcome from our Chairman, Peter Hoole and any notices from the groups. The talk, from a visiting speaker then follows. After the talk there are free refreshments and a chance to talk to Group Leaders and socialise.

If you would like to give a talk to our members or you have heard of a good speaker, do please contact me. I am always on the look-out for new topics and interesting speakers.

We look forward to seeing you in the Corn Exchange.

Shela Rowan

### Thursday 11th January 2024

#### January Japes Meal

Our entertainment this month will follow the meal and begin at 2.30pm. Any member is welcome to come along to the Corn Exchange for the entertainment even if they have not had the meal.

Peter Orton is a performer and he describes himself as a folk based, musical comedian. He plays lots of instruments, guitar, ukelele, didgeridoo, floral whistle and harmonica to name just a few. He chats about rhubarb crumble, vegetables, Beethoven and sometimes train spotters! He is from Wallingford and is known as the zany, guitar playing troubadour who changes hats with each song. We'll see what this minstrel brings to Faringdon.

### Thursday 8th February 2024

#### Food for the Gods

Chocolate is the title of this talk and Melanie King will talk about the history of chocolate from when it was first brought back from Mesoamerica where the Aztecs had used it in their rituals for human sacrifices. Since then, chocolate has been used as a murder weapon, in a plot against the British monarchy, as a hangover cure. Apparently, the English were at first distrustful of chocolate, thinking that drinking it hot would boil the blood however, the Italians enthusiastically embraced this new-fangled food creating weird and wonderful dishes. Melanie King is a British author and social historian who enjoys exploring the oddities of little-known byways of history. She lives at Woodstock and has given talks at The Blenheim Palace Literary Festival and around the country.

**Thursday 14th March 2024****A Family's Journey in the Shadow of the Holocaust.**

Our talks are usually informative, members learn something new or have the time to consider topics that are quite serious. This afternoon our speaker, Dr Vivien Sieber will give a talk entitled, Kino and Kinder: A Family's Journey in the Shadow of the Holocaust. This is the story of a European family's struggle to survive in the face of Nazi antisemitism and the Holocaust. Dr Sieber describes the terrible history of twentieth-century genocide through the lives and writings of the survivors. She has written a book, the title of the talk, which provides wonderful details about life in Vienna, Austria and Central Europe before World War Two and in post-war London. Dr Sieber worked in biosciences research at several Universities before retirement.

**Thursday 11th April 2024****Castles in the Air**

This month we welcome to our meeting Nick Brazil who is a film maker, photographer and public speaker. He has chosen the intriguing title for his talk, Castles in the Air- The Story of Bizarre Early Inventions. A journey through the extraordinary world of early, mostly Victorian inventors with their bizarre ideas for improving the lot of their fellow human beings. Health was a major preoccupation with the Victorians with their suspicion that fresh air brought all sorts of illnesses so kept their homes hot and stuffy with their windows firmly closed. Nick has lived in many countries and promises to provide a new view of many previous discoveries.

**COVID GUIDELINES**

Mindful of the continuing need for all Members to keep themselves and others safe, and protected from Covid-19, your Committee expect and trust that all those wishing to attend any General or Group meetings - either in Public buildings (Corn Exchange, Sheldonian, Town Hall, etc.) or in Group Leaders' private homes - will ensure that they are vaccinated to the recommended level. This is currently three vaccinations, and in some cases soon to be - or already - four jobs, including Boosters.

However, irrespective of the number of vaccinations received, in the event of feeling unwell, please do not attend meetings.



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



As I write, I am pleased to tell you that at 508 members we are climbing back towards pre-plague levels. Generally, Saturday for the open day was thought to be a worthwhile experiment but sad to say footfall in the town centre goes ever downwards so we have ideas to take the message out to where the shoppers are these days and once the better weather comes we will be asking for volunteers to help with that.

If you read your Advertiser you will have seen that we now have a monthly  $\frac{1}{2}$  page to spread our message, so far we have highlighted the talk on Tolkein, the Pickleball Group and the Open Day. If anyone of you has an idea for the column, perhaps about a Group you belong to or run or a particular experience you have had with u3a please contact [chairman@faringdonu3a.org.uk](mailto:chairman@faringdonu3a.org.uk) with your idea. The editor particularly wants an illustrative photo as well. Maybe you could offer an overview of what u3a has been for you?

You should have had an invitation to connect with your personal page within the Beacon system, I hope you have done it and if you did then did you put in an emergency contact number? If you did not, please go back and do so and remember your spouse/partner's number may not be the most useful if you are both in hospital!

There is an idea for a regular weekly Coffee Morning or Afternoon tea in the centre of Faringdon, so you can use a bus, just for an hour to meet and chat about anything. If that appeals to you let me know on [Chairman@](mailto:Chairman@) as above and we will see what we can do.

Meanwhile enjoy your Christmas wherever that may be and I hope you can enjoy whatever your Groups or our u3a has to offer, like January Japes, over the next month.

**Peter Hoole**

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP** **2024**

For our u3a purposes, your renewal is due by 1st January and payment must be received before the end of January 2024 or your u3a membership will lapse at the end of January and you will not be eligible to attend General Meetings or to participate in any Interest Groups.

This year we will again be using our Beacon Administration system to do self-renewals. This proved a great success last year with over 300 members using it. This is a quick & streamlined process for you as well as saving the Membership Secretary a lot of work. You will be able to pay your renewal subscription either by credit/debit card or by using PayPal if you already have an account with them. After you have paid, your renewal will be automatically processed by the Beacon system and you will immediately receive an email with your membership card attached. We hope this will also appeal to people who currently don't do internet banking. You should have received an email in mid-November telling you how to setup your Portal account on our Beacon Administration system, and another email at the end of November inviting you to renew your membership.

If you do not have an email address, we will post you a form at the beginning of January which you can return with a cheque.

With regret, the membership fee needs to be increased for 2024 to £18 for Single membership and £36 for Joint membership. We have now run down our reserves to a level that is just about comfortable. In the meantime, it can hardly have escaped your notice that there has been a substantial amount of inflation. We have taken some measures to reduce costs and the committee feels that this level of subscription will just about cover our annual costs for the year ahead - but it will be reviewed in September 2024, by which time we will have a good idea whether that is so or not.

We are returning the subscription to about the level that it was some years ago but as there will be those who are not aware of the history, and in order to forestall some cries of anguish, here is the history and the reasoning for the committee's decision:

2018 : £18 or £30 couple

2019 : £15 or £24 couple because it was felt we were carrying forward too much money

2020 : £15 or £24 couple still reducing reserves

2021 /2 /3 : £12 or £18 couple still reducing reserves AND reduced costs due to Covid

2024 : £18 per member.

We hope you feel that to have our subscription at almost the level of seven years ago is competent stewardship.

## FARINGDON & DISTRICT U3A COMMITTEE 2024

<b>Peter Hoole</b>	Chairman	07385 297 571 <a href="mailto:chairman@faringdonu3a.org.uk">chairman@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Rita Higazi</b>	Events & Venue Team	01367 244 494 <a href="mailto:events@faringdonu3a.org.uk">events@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Peter Robinson</b>	Events & Venue Team	01367 718 566 <a href="mailto:events@faringdonu3a.org.uk">events@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Sue Cain</b>	Groups Co-ordinator & Newsletter	07731 675 729 <a href="mailto:groupscoordinator@faringdonu3a.org.uk">groupscoordinator@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Ricky Cunningham</b>	IT/Website Coordinator	01367 242 626 <a href="mailto:itcoordinator@faringdonu3a.org.uk">itcoordinator@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Carol Jones</b>	Membership Secretary	07955 443 529 <a href="mailto:membershipsecretary@faringdonu3a.org.uk">membershipsecretary@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Tessa Timms</b>	Programme Team & Newsletter	01367 358 613 <a href="mailto:newslettereditor@faringdonu3a.org.uk">newslettereditor@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Roger Wilkins</b>	Secretary	01793 782 498 <a href="mailto:secretary@faringdonu3a.org.uk">secretary@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Shela Rowan</b>	Speakers' Coordinator	07812 751 165 <a href="mailto:speakers@faringdonu3a.org.uk">speakers@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Peter Foot</b>	Thames Valley Representative	01367 358 046 <a href="mailto:tvnrep@faringdonu3a.org.uk">tvnrep@faringdonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Christopher Langham</b>	Treasurer	
Vacant	Vice Chairman	
Vacant	Publicity	



## January Japes



All Members, including those without access to e-mails should, by now, have received details of the 2024 "January Japes" Lunch and Light Entertainment, being held at the Corn Exchange in

Faringdon on Thursday 11 January, including the requirement to register your interest - if wishing to attend - by Sunday 26 November. **If you have not registered your interest yet, please try now - but you may find that all the places have been booked.**

Outline details are:-

- Two course lunch with choice of menu, pre-booked in advance. Including a glass of wine or a soft drink, and concluded with tea or coffee. Times, 12:30 for 1:00pm, until approximately 4:00pm
- No meeting following lunch, but live, light entertainment
- Price £25 per person
- Limited number of places, on a strictly first-come-first-served basis
- Members who have been awarded a place will be advised - together with details on making payment and menu choices - by Tuesday 28 November

For further details, or questions/queries, please telephone **Peter Robinson - 01367 718566**

### **DEADLINE FOR SPRING NEWSLETTER**

Please send news of group activities, articles, photographs, etc to the

Editor: [newslettereditor@Fringdonu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@Fringdonu3a.org.uk)

by **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

The Spring Newsletter will cover **March, April, May, June**

It will be posted to all members in **late February.**

## ACTIVITIES REPORTS

Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> September

“Linking Tolkein to The Folly Tower”

*Sjoerd Vogt*

If you're a J.R.R. Tolkien fan then you probably already know of the worldwide interest and research by millions of fans on the works of Tolkien – an extensive new study of the author's work reveals the likely sources of key scenes. Was the idea for Saruman's nightmarish Tower prompted by Faringdon Folly.

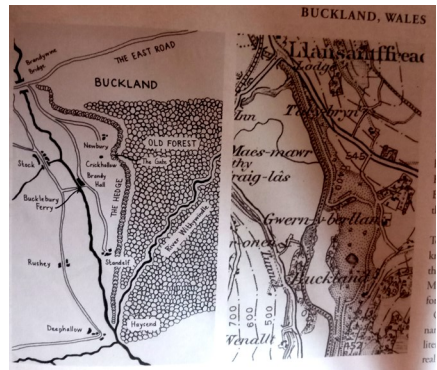
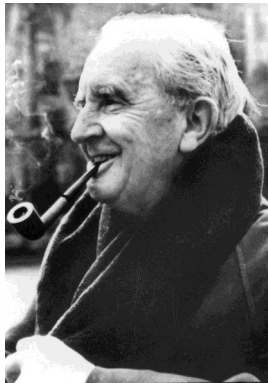
Our speaker today, Sjoerd Vogt, went further and indicated that our Folly Tower was the likely inspiration.

In 2014 Sjoerd met with Jack Fox, an 89 year old retired Estate Worker, who, as a child in 1934, recalls playing on the Folly Tower building site; he recalls the construction as the most exciting time of their lives.

There was a gentleman who the children called 'The Prof' who visited the Tower site regularly, he

sat on a log, smoking a pipe with his sketching book Jack told Sjoerd. It seems 'The Prof' became quite obsessed with The Tower building and told the children the log was a sleeping dragon and he lit his pipe from the dragon's breath – is it likely 'The Prof' was Tolkien compiling ide-

as for The Lord of the Rings trilogy? FACT: In 1934 when Lord Berners planned to build his folly Jack recalls endless arguments between him and the town planners who objected to the build. There is compelling evidence that the Folly Tower is Tolkien's Saruman's





Tower in Lord of the Rings. In 2020 John Garth published 'The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien' which explores the real-life locations that inspired Middle-Earth's rich landscapes. Sjoerd displayed an Ordnance Survey Map showing the area around Buckland and Hatford and Tolkien's Middle-Earth map. FACT: There are amazing coincidental similarities between the two maps which cannot be ignored.

In the little village of Hatford in 1930 a little bothy was built and was named Rivendell. Sjoerd told us that Tolkien had a weekend bolthole in Hatford in 1934 and spent some time in the bothy. It cannot be such a coincidence that the author's valley of Middle-earth



in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings is named Rivendell. Years

later drawings were found on the walls of the bothy under the wallpaper which could have been made by Tolkien sketching out his ideas –sadly the drawings have been painted over and no record of them was kept.

As Tolkien stood in Hatford and looked out towards the Faringdon Folly Tower could he have imagined and created his image of Hobbiton Hill from this standpoint. What is interesting is that in 1938 Lord Berners designed the cover for the Wiltshire Shell country guide which is remarkably similar to Tolkien's Hobbiton Hill picture.!



There are five Tolkien trails in the UK that are frequented by Tolkien fans – What are your thoughts about Faringdon becoming Tolkien Trail No. 6 ?

## Meeting - 12<sup>th</sup> October

### “ The Great Stink ”

*Dr. Tom Crook*

We all need it at least once a day—our Loo! —we are the flush and forget society Dr. Tom Crook tells us.

Dr. Tom Crook is a lecturer at Oxford Brooks University in Modern History and his interesting talk was about our Victorian sewage system, which lately is receiving much publicity.

By 1900 all the key elements of our sewage system were in place—water closets, sewers but it was a very different picture in 1830.

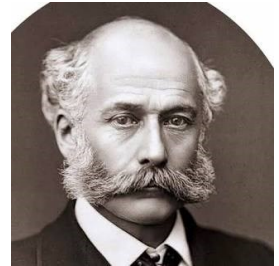
Pre 1800 there were cesspits, chamber pots and the sewage system was little more than trenches draining into rivers. From 1780 there were brick built sewers but they also drained into rivers and if you lived in a City Centre and had money you might even have a water closet and piped water but that also drained directly into the rivers. We can see this was completely unsustainable.

In 1801 we were 8,893,000 with 20% of us living in towns; 1831-3,877,000; 1851–17,928,000 with 54% living in towns; 1901-32,528,000 and by 1911 we were 36,070,000 with 80% of us living in towns. Consequently the rivers were highly pollut-



ed with a rise in diseases such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery and bacterial infections. Due to the increasing illnesses, social assistance was in high demand causing a country wide financial problem.

In 1842 a visionary, Edwin Chadwick developed a radical reform to the sewage question in an effort to 'heal the country'. However, the innovator behind the concept was a man called Joseph Bazalgette. An official organisation was formed and named the General Board of Health (GBH) which subsequently became the Institute of Civil Engineers.

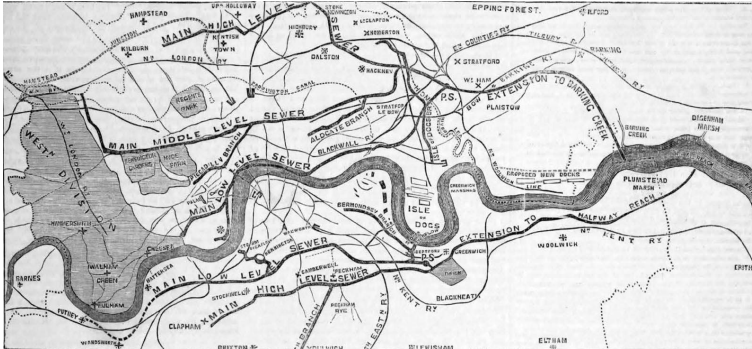


Chadwick's concept was to bury small round pipes throughout the towns but these blocked and the subsequent design—an egg-shaped brick sewer was built.

By 1858 the London population had grown and in the summer of that year,

Parliament was closed because the River Thames was so polluted. The Metropolitan Board of Works (the forerunner to the London County Council) was formed to deal with the problem. Joseph Bazalgette was ap-

Street towards Covent Garden. One of the two outfall systems into the Thames— Crossness Pumping House—still exists as a museum.



The complete infrastructure cost £4.2million and with some modifications still exists.

In 1860 the rain and household waste sys-

pointed Chief Engineer and he designed a scheme for London on a gigantic scale called London's Intercepting System. Simultaneously work had begun on the London Underground and so the two systems needed to be coordinated. Bazalgette spent **9 years** digging up London to create 6 'interceptor' sewers, which were around 100 miles long altogether. Another 450 miles of sewer fed into them. Some of London's 'lost' rivers were used for the network. These included the river Fleet, running under Fleet

tems were combined and in 1871 the Local Government Board Reform Act was adopted which adopted Bazalgette's system locally.

Our own local Oxfordshire sewage system was designed and constructed from 1872 to 1880 by Robert Rawlinson, a prominent Civil Engineer of the day who was later knighted for his contribution.

The Northern working class towns followed on much later and it wasn't until the 1920/30's they were put on mains sewage systems.

Our water utility companies tell us their capital expenditure is £123.2billion per annum. However, £57billion was paid in dividends last year— we are left to wonder how much is being spent on necessary maintenance ?



## Meeting - 9<sup>th</sup> November

### "A Day in the Life of a Magistrate "

*Tony Hersch JP*

Today we enjoyed a very interesting talk by Tony Hersch, a Magistrate sitting in Swindon, Aldershot and Basingstoke.

Tony explained that Magistrates (also known as Justices of the Peace) are volunteers from the community aged between 24 and 74. There is no requirement for any legal experience but certain criteria such as good character, understanding and communication, social awareness, maturity and sound temperament, sound judgement, commitment and reliability are welcome. Magistrates are expected to have personal integrity, enjoy the respect and trust of others, and be able to maintain confidences. Training is provided and you would be required to give the equivalent of 13 whole days annually.

Established over 650 years ago, the magistracy is a key part of the judiciary of England and Wales and it is a role underpinned by the principles of 'local justice' and 'justice by one's peers'. Magistrates typically sit as a bench of three, mixed in gender, age and ethnicity where possible to bring a broad experience of life to the bench. All members of the bench have equal deci-

sion-making powers,

There are presently 330 Magistrates Courts with over 12,000 magistrates; there are 92 Crown Courts; approximately 60% of magistrates are female with 13% of Asian, black and minority ethnic.

Magistrates preside over cases such as common assault, minor theft, criminal damage, public disorder and motoring offences. The maximum power of a magistrate is a six months' prison sentence. If magistrates decide a longer prison term is necessary for an offence or a repeat offender it is referred to a Crown Court; an unlimited fine can be given. There are guideline sentencing rules provided to magistrates which assist in awarding the appropriate punishment for a specific crime.

Tony showed four separate cases and asked us to decide on the punishments for the offenders. What would your punishment be for these cases ?. The Bench results can be found on the back page.

#### **SHOPLIFTING**

35 year old Female. On State Benefits. Alcohol-

ic. 170 previous convictions. Lots of Fines. Previous Rehabilitation. Previous Community Service. Current Crime: Stolen £55.00 worth of goods from Tesco.

### **FRAUD**

50 year old Male. On State Benefits. No previous convictions. Current Crime: Fake Police ID. Asked members of the public if he could inspect any £20 in their possession as could be fake. Would run off with note.

### **ASSAULT**

65 Male of No Fixed Abode (NFA). Alcoholic. 65 previous convictions for shop lifting, 12 for burglary, 12 for drunk and disorderly. Previous fines. Community Service. Never been in prison. Current Crime: Fell asleep in McDonalds and was approached by a waitress who woke him and asked him to leave. He held her against a wall; asked for sex and licked her face. Waitress suffered serious trauma as a result.

### **NO CAR INSURANCE**

35 year old Male. Self employed electrician. Has children living with estranged wife. Has 6 points

for using mobile phone while driving. Current Crime: Driving with No Car Insurance. He thought that his domestic car insurance covered him for driving with third party cover in his business van.

If any offender pleads Not Guilty, the case is sent for trial at a future date; however if the offender has committed a serious repeat offence such as domestic assault should he/she be granted bail if there is a risk to the victim or should he/she be remanded in jail pending the future trial. The trial date could be 6 months; 9 months in the future – should a perpetrator, who could be innocent, now spend time in jail? This is a dilemma often facing a magistrate.

### **DOMESTIC ASSAULT**

35 yearold male with one previous conviction of assaulting his girlfriend. Pleads Not Guilty at hearing. What would your decision be? Bail or Bail Denied?

If you are interested in becoming a magistrates google <https://magistrates.judiciary.uk/>

## FARINGDON GROUPS

Accessible Ukuleles	Jenny Braithwaite	01367 240929
Art	Sally Bull	07808 136919
Ashmolean	Shela Rowan	01367 243636
Books	Kay Chamberlain	01367 242647
Boules/Petanque	Peter Hoole	wolfitha@hotmail.com
Bridge-Beginners	Jill Ridley/Kim Townsend	07464 626188
Bridge-Intermediate	Steve Braithwaite	01367 240929
Bridge-Advanced	Steve Braithwaite	01367 240929
Cryptic Crosswords	Peter Smith	pdes_smith@hotmail.com
Current Affairs	Joy Jermy	joyhjermy@outlook.com
Embroidery	Suellen Pedley	01367 710680
Family History	Marion Turner	01793 710302
Folk Dancing	Val Hudspeth	01367 241035
Foreign Language Films	Julie Forth	01367 242472
French Advanced	Carolyn Williams	01367 241208
French Conversation	Francoise Stacey	01367 241813
Fun Language Tasters	Jenny Braithwaite	01367 240929
Gardeners	Christina Field	01367 241265
Golf Croquet-Summer	Steve Braithwaite	01367 240929
History	Mike Iremonger	01367 241361
History of Art	Sue Thrower	01367 240848
Italian Improvers	Marion Turner	01793 710302
Jazz	Patrick Wheare	01367 241927
Lunch Group	Tessa Timms	01367 358613
History	Mike Iremonger	01367 241361
Military History	Bjorn Watson	01793 782748
Opera	Tessa Timms	01367 358613
Patchwork/Quilting	Sue Cain	sue.cain2@gmail.com
Photography	Anthony Burdall	01367 240713

Pickelball	Peter Hoole	wolfitha@hotmail.com
Poetry	Dave Dalton	01367 241874
Quiz	Danielle Mills	01367 718625
Ramblers	Mike Griffiths	01367 242714
Recorder Consort	Peter Smith	pdes_smith@hotmail.com
Science & Technology	Ron Colyer	01793 782363
Scrabble	Dusty Miller	01367 240397
Scrapbooking	Sue Horton	07990 010051
Sewing Beginners	Tessa Timms	01367 358613
Sewing Garments	Elaine Gathercole	elaineg173@gmail.com
Singing for Pleasure	Jenny Braithwaite	01367 240929
Social History Walks	Stewart Smith	01793 710800
Spanish Intermediate	Carolyn Taylor	01367 242490
Wine Appreciation	Peter Robinson	01367 718566

## MEMBERS NEWS

We welcome the following new members—

**From Buckland :** Julie Skipworth

**From Faringdon :** Margaret Barker, Alistair & Karen Cameron, Michael Cartwright, Joanna Cave, Caroline Lacey, Christine Mott, Carol Nightingale, Mary Plant, Daniel Reade, Julie Silver, Anita van Eijndhovn

**From Fernham :** Teresa Lee

**From Highworth :** Christine Slade, Margaret Watkins

**From Longworth:** Gwyneth Goss

**From Stanford-in-the-Vale :** Adrian & Kath Vann

**From Uffington :** Susan Oldnall

**From Watchfield :** Kasie Nanowska-Allsopp, James Allsopp

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### *Notes for Members*

*If you have any questions about groups contact the Groups Co-ordinator **Sue Cain** or email: [groupscoordinator@faringdonu3a.org.uk](mailto:groupscoordinator@faringdonu3a.org.uk)*

*Not all groups submit a news item for each Newsletter - a full list of groups is provided on pages 14 & 15.*

*Groups are open to all U3A members but you should check with the Group Leader beforehand about the level of the Group and that it has room for new members. All U3A members are encouraged to start new interest groups, but before taking the matter too far please contact the Groups Co-ordinator to discuss the idea and for a copy of "Guidelines for Interest Groups", and to check the proposed meeting day(s) and time(s).*

### **ART**

As always, the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in the month from 10am to 12 noon. Future dates are **January 11th and 25th; February 8th and 22nd; March 14th and 28th.**

Do come and join our friendly group. All abilities welcomed.

Contact: **Sally Bull 07808 136919**

### **ASHMOLEAN**

These visits always take place on the first Thursday in the month. Members make their own way to the Ashmolean Museum. The meeting starts with the group gathering at 10.55 for 11am start in the Greek & Roman Sculpture Gallery. Each meeting lasts for one hour. There is a non-returnable fee of £10 per person attending, which is required at least a week before each visit. If for any reason members are unable to attend there will be no refund as we notify the museum in advance of our group numbers.

There is no limit to the number of members in this group as if the number for a particular visit is high then there are two groups. The visit would be on the same day and is at about 12noon. New members are always welcome to attend and should email me for further information and payment details. Members usually travel to Oxford by bus or use the park and ride. The walk from the S6 bus is about 20 minutes during the Botley



Road works.

Recent talks have been: **Textiles in the Museum** and the **Aegean World Gallery**.

Talks for future visits include: **The Jewish Journey** and **Christmas at the Ashmolean**.

For details: **Shela Rowan** [smr280652@gmail.com](mailto:smr280652@gmail.com) or 078 1275 1165

## BEGINNER'S BRIDGE

A new course is starting in January. This is aimed at those wanting to learn to play bridge. We are teaching Basic Acol. The Beginners' Bridge course covers all the basics of bidding and will take around 4 terms, so about 30 lessons – there's a lot to learn!

No knowledge of bridge is necessary, however some experience of card playing (Whist in particular) is definitely desirable. The course is also suitable for those who haven't played in a long while and feel they are in need of a refresher.

**Dates:** Lesson will generally run on the first and third Monday of the month (with occasional changes due to Bank holidays).

**Venue:** The Blessed Hugh Church Hall in Faringdon

**Time:** 10.00-12.00

**Cost:** Approx £20.00 per term (adjusted depending on final numbers)

We have a few places remaining, so if you are interested or for more information, please contact:

**Jill Ridley:** 07464 626188 or [jill.ridley.22@hotmail.com](mailto:jill.ridley.22@hotmail.com)

**Kim Townsend:** 07765 460174 or [kimmaa@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:kimmaa@tiscali.co.uk)

## BOULES/PETANQUE

If you are interested contact **Peter Hoole** [woftha@hotmail.com](mailto:woftha@hotmail.com)

## BRIDGE : INTERMEDIATE AND EXPERIENCED

All Intermediate and Experienced lessons take place in Faringdon Catholic Church Hall (rear entrance from Portway behind Southampton Street car park) from 9.50am to 12 noon.

**Provisional dates** are given below. Members will be notified of any changes.

There will be no lessons in December. Details of the Christmas Party on Thursday Dec 7th in the Corn Exchange have already been distributed.

**Intermediate**

Mon Jan 15th    Wed Jan 17th  
 Mon Feb 12th    Wed Feb 14th

**Experienced**

Wed Jan 24th  
 Wed Feb 28th

For further details contact **Steve Braithwaite** on:  
[steve.bridge1@gmail.com](mailto:steve.bridge1@gmail.com) or **077 40 30 60 55**

**CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS**

We usually meet on the third Friday of the month in Faringdon, starting at 2.00pm. Sessions are about two hours long and include a break for refreshments.

The focus of the meetings is a game involving the competitive solving of a cryptic crossword of 'The Times', 'Sunday Times' or 'Observer' standard. We have recently developed a quick variant of the game with which to start our sessions. We also run a monthly clue-writing competition, discuss matters of interest to cruciverbalists that have caught our eye during the month and occasionally compile our own crosswords.

If you would like to know more, contact the group leader, **Peter Smith** (**01367 241 241** or [pdes\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:pdes_smith@hotmail.com)).

**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

takes place on the second Thursday of the month from 10.30 to 12.00. The venue is Faringdon Coffee House in the market square, where participants can enjoy a coffee and cake or similar. This is a deliberately informal and convivial setting for what is in essence a friendly chat about what's going on in the world - and inevitably attempting to put things to rights at the same time! The discussion topics are put forward by participants, with a request for suggestions in advance, or more likely and because of the fast-changing nature of world events, are raised *spontaneously* at the meet-up. This serves to keep the chat completely current, based on what is of particular interest on the day itself. Any kind of local, national or global subject is great and topics don't *necessarily* have to be of the serious kind, although these are clearly going to be the ones that spark most debate. Views inevitably vary, but the intention of this group is very much to let everyone have their say, within a framework of interest, tolerance and understanding. For more information contact: **Joy Jermy** on [joyhjermy@outlook.com](mailto:joyhjermy@outlook.com)

## EMBROIDERY

This is a small but enthusiastic group of embroiderers, exploring different facets of this ancient art form. New members are always welcome, whether absolute beginners or more experienced practitioners. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 2.00 pm until 4.00 pm. at 44, Hunters Field, Stanford-in-the-Vale. SN7 8LX. For more information contact **Suellen Pedley** tel **01367 710 680**.

## FAMILY HISTORY

Our meetings have been a mix of introductory tips for newcomers to family history research, some real-time web searches and short presentations illustrating the way in which these can flesh out or corroborate family stories. Please phone **Marion Turner** on **01793 710 302** if you are interested in coming.

## FOLK DANCING

We meet on the FIRST Thursday of every month at the Catholic Church Hall, starting at 2.30 p.m. to approximately 4.00 p.m.  
Dates : December 7th : January 4th : February 1st : March 7th

We look forward to seeing you. A warm welcome awaits. Contact: **Val Hudspeth** (**01367 241 035** or [valhud@gmx.com](mailto:valhud@gmx.com)).

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILMS

The group continues to meet on a regular basis with films chosen from a variety of countries and in a number of different languages. Recently enjoyed films: The Tunnel from Norway and To the End of the Tracks from rural Mexico.

After the film, we share some light refreshments and discuss the film; its themes ; what we enjoyed about the film and any points which we thought were contrived. Group members who have travelled widely often share their own experiences of those countries/ cultures. Nuances of language and translation are shared by those with that expertise.

We are a small venue with a dedicated core group of attendees. New members are welcome but please check with the host before attending. Dates and films for 2024 have yet to be decided. Film requests will always be considered by the host and current group members.

The group takes place on Wednesday afternoons, starting at 2pm. We meet about 7 times a year with breaks in December and over the Summer.

**Julie Forth**, 6 The Pines, SN7 8AU ; **01367242472** : [Juliekaren-forth@gmail.com](mailto:Juliekaren-forth@gmail.com)

## GARDENERS

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023** : Tea Party to meet other members of the Group and wish them the compliments of the season including one of our famous quizzes. Please bring a little refreshment to share. Venue: The Jubilee Room, The Pump House, Faringdon.  
Time 2.30pm. There will be a small charge to cover costs.

**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024** : Planning Meeting where members of the Group decide what to do for the coming year. The meeting will be held in the Jubilee Room at the Pump House commencing at 2.30pm. Please bring your ideas and a little refreshment to share. There will be a small charge to cover costs.

**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2024** : To be decided at the January meeting. For further information contact **Christina Field** on **01367 241265** or [christinafield04@aol.com](mailto:christinafield04@aol.com)

## HISTORY OF ART

We shall be meeting as usual in the Old Town Hall Faringdon on the third Thursday of each month at 2.30pm. The dates are as follows:

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December:** We shall have an informal meeting with a Christmas theme and suitable refreshments.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January:** Mike Iremonger will give a presentation on "Renaissance Sculpture".

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February:** A presentation on "The Bloomsbury Set" will be given by Sue Thrower.

New members are always welcome. Please contact **Sue Thrower** on **01367 240 848** or [smthrower@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:smthrower@tiscali.co.uk) for more information.

## ITALIAN IMPROVERS

We are of a level something above beginners and trying to improve. We meet on roughly alternate Wednesdays at 10am. Please phone **Marion Turner** on **01793 710 302** if you are interested in coming.

## JAZZ

Our final meeting of 2023 will be the Jazz Group's annual Christmas party on Monday December 11 at 11am in the Old Town Hall, Market Place, Faringdon. The format will be much as before, with lots of Christmas spirit, music, nibbles and snacks, and plenty of time to talk. Plus two amazing quizzes. Then our normal meetings will start again when David North takes a look at Italian jazz on Monday January 8 at 10.30 in the Library, Gloucester Street.

The January meeting will be the last one I shall organise as I am giving up running the jazz group then. If anyone, a member of the group or not, thinks they might be interested in taking over from me, please get in touch and I will tell you what's involved. It's not too much work, which is how I've managed it for about 10 years!

**Pat Wheare**, [patwheare@gmail.com](mailto:patwheare@gmail.com) or **01367 241927**

## LANGUAGE TASTER

**Thursday January 18th** : Graham Turner will introduce 'Irish' which I know is a language several people have asked for and

**Thursday February 29th** : Mark Dibben will give us a taste of Japanese.

For details please phone **Jenny** on **01367 240929**. Venue 19 Coxwell Road, Faringdon, at 10.30am.

Parking on front drive, and we are close to S6 bus stops in each direction.

## LUNCH CLUB

We are now a thriving group who welcome all to our outings. Pre-ordering our meal is usually required so please always book your attendance with Tessa. We meet at 12.30 at a different restaurant or pub each month on the third Wednesday. Please contact **Tessa Timms** on **01367 358 613** for further details. [tessaatimms@gmail.com](mailto:tessaatimms@gmail.com)

## MILITARY HISTORY

The Military History Group normally meets on the first Thursday of the month and we consider an eclectic range of topics related sometimes loosely to military history.

Following the very successful meeting this month with a talk by David Rhys-Jones on Vauban and Military Fortifications, our next meeting will be on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December when John Varney will be talking about “Railways in support of the Army” which will appeal to both the military historian and railway buffs! As usual it will be at 10.30am at Walnut Tree Cottage, 9A Stainswick Lane, Shrivenham SN6 8DU

We will be starting the New Year with a series of talks on “The Hundred Years War” then in April David Rhys-Jones will be back to tell us about “The Swordfishes and Taranto” which promises to be intriguing!

You are welcome to join us and if you would like any more information, please contact Bjorn Watson at [bjornwatson@btinternet.com](mailto:bjornwatson@btinternet.com)

## OPERA GROUP

The Opera Group is now meeting in The Old Town Hall on the third Monday of every month. We screen a different Opera each month which is shown ‘On The Big Screen’ by DVD. We each bring a plate of snacks to share and break mid-evening to socialise with a glass of your own choosing. The evening starts at 5pm and finishes around 9pm depending on the length of the opera. All are welcome. Please contact **Tessa Timms 01367 358613** or [tessaatimms@gmail.com](mailto:tessaatimms@gmail.com) for further details.

**Dates for Viewings** : 18 December; 15 January; 19 February; 18 March.

## PATCHWORK & QUILTING

The group held their first meeting at a member’s house in October, where members brought along their own projects to work on. November’s meeting will be run similarly.

The intention for January is to meet in a local hall, thus allowing more members to attend.

The group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday each month, 2pm – 4pm.

Please contact [groupscoordinator@faringdonu3a.org](mailto:groupscoordinator@faringdonu3a.org) for more information if you are interested in joining the group.

## **\*NEW GROUP\***

### **PHOTOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS**

*Learning more about photography to produce better images.*

As an adjunct to the Photography Group, a new Group 'Photography for beginners'. This is a course over 10 sessions covering the basics of digital photography from types of camera through exposure and composition to post processing.

The hope would be that it would give members the confidence to use their cameras more, improve the images they produce and also to join the main Photographic Group.

The first meeting was on Monday 6 November. Subsequent meetings will be every two weeks on Monday afternoons at 2:30 pm at the home of Anthony Burdall; the December meeting will be on Monday 4 and 18 December 2023 at 2:30 pm at the home of **Anthony Burdall** (2 Fernham Road, Faringdon; **Tel: 01367 240713**; Email: [anthony.burdall@burdall.net](mailto:anthony.burdall@burdall.net)). Please come along and bring your camera.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

*Learning more about photography to produce better images*

The November meeting was a Photo Review of images from the past months, including an indoors pic nic lunch. This review included voting for the Photograph of the Year for 2022-2023; one image was selected for U3A activities and one for other activities. The winners were Phillip Parsons 'Winter at Basildon Park' and Anthony Burdall 'Sky over the Ridge-way at Sparsholt'

At present the Group is engaged in Wildlife Photography Month with expeditions to various locations where we can photograph wildlife; this will include expeditions to Batsford Arboretum Falconry, Slimbridge, Cotswold Wildlife Park, Hawke Conservancy Trust and Appleton Christmas Barn (for reindeer).

The December meeting, on Wednesday 13 December, will be a photographic expedition to Christmas Market(s) maybe Bath, Oxford, Birmingham, or others. In January there will be a Photographic Expedition to SS Great Britain and Bristol Docks followed in February by a Photo review plus talk by group member.

Anyone who wishes to learn more about photography to produce better

images and would enjoy expeditions with like minded U3A members, would be most welcome to join us.

The Group normally has met on the second Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm at the home of **Anthony Burdall** (2 Fernham Road, Faringdon; **Tel: 01367 240 713**; Email: [anthony.burdall@burdall.net](mailto:anthony.burdall@burdall.net) ).

## PICKELBALL

If you are interested contact Peter Hoole [wolfitha@hotmail.com](mailto:wolfitha@hotmail.com)

## POETRY

Poetry and rhyme, poetry and rhyme,  
In the library in Faringdon.  
What's the time, what's the time?  
10.30 first Monday of the month.  
December 4th theme Passion  
January 8th Ne'rday disnae count Shadows  
February 5th Beauty  
March 4th Sunshine

All at 10.30 in the Faringdon Library  
Contact - **Dave Dalton : 01367 241 874**

## QUIZ

We meet in the **SMALL HALL** at the **FARINGDON UNITED CHURCH**.

Do you like to find out all sorts of interesting facts and, maybe tell us some more? Our quizzes are very varied (devised by different quizmasters) and we try not to have too many about celebrities! There is a small charge to cover rental and refreshments.

We meet on the second Friday of the Month, other than August. Doors open at 10.15 for the quiz to start at 10.30.

There is free car parking available for us, behind the Hall!

Contact **Danielle Mills** for details **01367 718625** or email [danielle.mills1948@gmail.com](mailto:danielle.mills1948@gmail.com)

## RECORDER CONSORT

The Recorder Consort usually meets on the third and fourth Thursday of the month in Faringdon Library starting at 2.00pm. Sessions are about two hours long and include a break for refreshments.



The Consort - which started in 2013 - plays interesting music in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere on instruments ranging from sopranino to great bass, which allows access to a wide range of music.

If you would like to know more, contact the group leader, Peter Smith: 01367 241 241 or [pdes\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:pdes_smith@hotmail.com)

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Tuesday 5th December** - Talk by Robin Clegg entitled "Other Solar Systems: Exoplanets and New Results from the James Webb Space Telescope".

**Tuesday 6th February** - Talk entitled "The How and Why of Scientific Vacuum".

Further details can be obtained from **Ron Colyer** on **01793 782 363**

Email: [roncolyersandt@gmail.com](mailto:roncolyersandt@gmail.com) or from the website.

## SCRABBLE

Due to several requests we are reintroducing our pre-COVID afternoon monthly Scrabble sessions from July 7.

On the first Thursday of each month, we'll meet at Faringdon Library from 2.30pm with games planned to end around 4.30pm. Refreshments will be available on a cost recovery basis. Shouldn't be more than £1 a head. For early risers and Scrabble addicts, we will continue with our weekly Scrabble games at the Pump House Project on Swan Lane (opposite GPO) in Faringdon **EVERY** Tuesday from 0930 until +/-11.30pm. Beautiful home baked cakes, pastries, biscuits and freshly brewed hot drinks are on sale at £1 per item No other fees are payable. Suitable for most degrees of proficiency, good company and lots of fun. Further details from **Dusty Miller 01367 240 397** or **07780 210 543**. (All welcome, but it would be useful to have an idea of likely numbers for afternoon sessions for first few meetings).

## SCRAPBOOKING

Following the recent u3a Open Day in October, we had two newcomers join our group's November session. They were made very welcome and two school friends were reunited.

In October we made a wallet style folder and in the November session

made boxes, some the 'exploding boxes' and others tried the more complicated 'impossible box' both of which just fit 4 Lindt chocolates comfortably. One of the group mentioned that she will be making these for the Christmas table, instead of crackers. It was mooted by another member that it would be nice to hold an all-day session perhaps in the spring. Something to think about for next year.

If you think this group might be of interest to you, please contact **Sue Horton** at [alice\\_maud@yahoo.com](mailto:alice_maud@yahoo.com) or on **07990010051**

## SEWING

The Sewing Group has been split into two—Beginners and Garments. Contact **Tessa Timms** at [tessaatimms@gmail.com](mailto:tessaatimms@gmail.com) or **01367 358 613** to add your name to the beginners waiting list. Contact **Elaine Gathercole** at [elaineg173@gmail.com](mailto:elaineg173@gmail.com) or **01367 248013** for Garment Sewing.

### \*NEW GROUP\*

## SINGING FOR PLEASURE

We got off to a good start with a good number coming to our first session.

### Alternate Monday afternoons at 2.30pm at the Friends Meeting House

This is intended for anyone who likes to sing, especially those who say they can't sing! If you would like to join us please email [jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk)

## SPANISH - INTERMEDIATE

The Spanish group is delighted to be able to meet again face to face in each other's houses. We meet every **Tuesday** afternoon but the group is in fact at maximum numbers for the moment. However, if anyone wishes to start a new/beginners Spanish Group we have quite a few resources belonging to the U3A: books, DVDs etc., which could be used. Please contact **Carolyn Taylor** if this would be of interest. [carolyn.taylor2@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:carolyn.taylor2@tiscali.co.uk) or **01367 242 490**

## WALKERS

Any lapsed or potentially new members of the Ramblers' Groups interested in joining a new, medium-level Walkers' Group are invited to contact **Mike Griffiths**—**01367 242 714** or [Michael@ukfsn.org](mailto:Michael@ukfsn.org) to discuss

options.

## WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

At the time of going to press it is anticipated that all available places for our very popular and hugely anticipated Festive Lunch, in the Corn Exchange, Faringdon, on Friday 15 December, will have been booked. However, if you have not yet secured a place, but would still like to attend, please call **Peter Robinson – 01367 718566** – to enquire about availability.



Other forthcoming events are:-

**Tuesday 20 February** – Speaker or Members’ Presentation, TBA

**Tuesday 16 April** – Speaker or Members’ Presentation, TBA.

The Wine Appreciation Group (WAGs) is a group of like-minded people who enjoy wine and have a broad range of experience of the subject, from the “I know what I like” beginners, to the “fairly knowledgeable but by no means expert”.

Our meetings are held roughly every two months, mainly in Faringdon at the Barber Room, All Saints’ Church, from 2:00 to 4:00pm, but with occasional trips to interesting venues. Charges vary by meeting, but are set just to cover the cost of the wines we taste and talk about. More details on the Faringdon u3a website.

We look forward to seeing all of our existing, and future, members over the next couple of events, and beyond.



## THAMES VALLEY NETWORK NEWS



The Events Team at Thames Valley Network continues to work over-time to provide online events of a wide variety. The Zoom method continues to prove very popular as part of individual’s u3a experience with their local u3a as well as the wider movement.

On offer for the next couple of months are:

**Thursday 30th November** at 2.30pm, “**My Falklands War**”. A talk by Rear Admiral (rtd) Dr Chris Parry CBE.

**Friday 8th December** at 2.30pm, “**Winter Quiz**”. Questions set by

TVN's Quizzing Ace, Avis Furness.

**Monday 15th January at 2.30pm, "Genetics of Ancient Populations in Britain".** A talk by Dr Tom Booth

As is usual, additional Christmas events will take place, the details of which will be sent immediately they become available to all of the Faringdon & District u3a Beacon mailing list. In addition, you can keep up to date with TVN activities through this link: <http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk/>. If you would like to receive information directly from TVN with details of Study Days and Workshops, please email [events\\_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk](mailto:events_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk) with your request to be put on the list. You can, of course, use the same address to 'unsubscribe' at any time.



**Gardeners Group Outing during the summer**

### **BENCH DECISION RESULTS from page 13**

**SHOPLIFTER** : 8 weeks prison sentence suspended for 12 months. 50 Additional Community Service hours. £128 Surcharge. Compensation to Tesco for stolen goods. £85.00 Prosecution costs.

**FRAUD** : 200 Hours of Community Service. 20 Rehabilitation days. Fine of £300.00. Ordered to pay back the notes stolen.

**ASSAULT**: 3 Month Prison Sentence. Mandatory surcharge of £125.00. Prosecution Costs.

**NO CAR INSURANCE**: Magistrates were 2 to 1. (One JP was mindful of the ban on driving which affected job/income and being able to visit children). Irrespective of this, the offender was given 6 Additional points making a total of 12 points which resulted in a 6 month driving ban. £440.00 Fine. £44.00 surcharge. £85.00 Prosecution Costs.

**DOMESTIC ASSAULT** : Bench denied bail and offender was jailed pending trial.