



# Whitchurch and District Newsletter July 1999

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## SPECIAL MEETING

As you are all aware we had a special meeting on Monday, 14th June, to restate the Aims of the U3A, to discuss the revised Application form and what difference this would make when accepting new members. There is a rumour we intend to get rid of some of the present members, this is not so. Anyone who is a member is welcome to stay.

All members were to fill in the new form. There are gaps in the information we have on some members, ie no telephone numbers etc. The meeting was called so we could have your comments on the restatement of the U3A and the new forms. We needed everyone to accept or otherwise on the way forward.

The main points on the agenda were:-

U3A - University originally stood for 'a gathering of like-minded people'. And that is what we hope we are.

**We are a learning organisation and we share what knowledge and skills we have with one another.**

There is a need for more people to come forward to share their skills to help expand our knowledge in new areas.

**We are interested in you.**

It is proposed to have a training session for new leaders next year.

In future, when sponsoring people who wish to join, please look at their reasons for joining. We need enthusiastic members who will join and if possible, lead new groups.

The Study and Special Interest part of the form was/is to see what subjects you are seriously attending or intend to join. Not just interested in.

The question of insurance was raised.

The U3A insurance covers all activities undertaken by U3A groups. But not any accidents we may have, these should be covered by our own insurance.

It was suggested that outings and similar activities should be better advertised. A monthly activity list would be very useful. A 'What's On' would be possible, but only if members made sure the secretary had the necessary information.

It is always possible to check with other members or group leaders.

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Was it possible to hold other meetings besides the Coffee mornings on Monday mornings? No reason why not. At present we have a Speaker on the 2nd Monday, and the Group Presentations on the 4th Monday. It is hoped that members will continue to attend these two events.

The other two Mondays are just coffee mornings at present. It is thought that the Monday morning meeting is important. One, to keep the venue going, two, to pick up information on activities for the following week. It also gives us time to talk together.

It should be remembered that buying tea or coffee, also staying for lunch on Speakers Day is our way of saying 'Thank you,' to the Dodington for allowing us to use the venue.

There is a Group leader list and copies can be had by request. It is usually included in the Newsletter.

Betty Beard put forward a motion of 'Thanks to Leaders'. This was seconded by Chairman who added his thanks for the time leaders spend researching and leading groups. Leaders are unsung heroes and need to have the pressure taken off them.

Overall, the meeting went very well and it was agreed we proceed along the path that was discussed.

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## SKARA BRAE

We came in heated coaches to this place  
And there, in fitful sun or driving rain,  
We see a little honeycomb of rooms  
Stone built, with furniture of stone,  
Stone beds and cupboards also made of stone.

Long years before the Pyramids were built  
Our ancestors dwelt near this stormy shore;  
Perhaps contented in their short hard lives  
Until disaster struck - some unknown cataclysm  
As alive to them as Pompeii, or the Fall of Rome.

Millennia later, and in our day, a mountainous wave  
Rolled back the sand, and centuries of time,  
Revealing, once again, the ancient settlement  
Abandoned by those distant ancestors of ours  
Who fled in fear the fury of the storm.

When men with spades had cleared the ever invading soil  
They found a few reminders of those folk,  
Some sherds of pot, detritus of a stone-age feast,  
And, dropped in terror in their headlong flight,  
A scattering of blue beads in disarray -  
Perhaps the precious necklace of a pretty girl?

**Margaret James**

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### SPANISH

The Spanish beginner's group meets every Wednesday morning at the home of Rhoda Brooker at Wem.

We enter into the spirit of Spain on our arrival when Rhoda has refreshments waiting for us which consist of various tapas, traditional Spanish snacks. The class is so interesting as Rhoda always brings into the lesson something of the culture and history of Spain.

We are encouraged to speak as much as possible rather than just textbook learning, and although our accents are far from correct we struggle and have many laughs. This is a most enjoyable class.

**Joan Letchford**

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The 'other' group is doing nicely, still very enthusiastic; progressing more slowly, of course, but it all becomes quite involved doesn't it! We haven't started to dream in Spanish yet (the moment when the language is deep inside the brain-box). However, we are learning about the history of Spain, it's people, the way of life there, and of course, about the food and wine. We are accumulating a collection of tapes, books and videos and our own photographs and momentos. I think the whole process is called 'rounded experience', and it's fun.

**Dot Chamberlain**

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### Recipe for a Happy Marriage

- A Good Wedding Cake
- 1lb butter of youth
- 4lbs of love
- 1/4lb of good looks
- 1lb of sweet temper
- 3lb of self forgetfulness
- 1lb of pounded wit
- 1lb of blindness of faults
- 1lb of good humour
- 1 tablespoon of sweet argument
- 1 pint of rippling laughter
- 1 wine glass of common sense
- 1oz of modesty

Put the love, good looks and sweet temper into a well furnished house.

Beat the butter of youth to a cream, and mix well together with the blindness of faults.

Stir the pounded wit and good humour into the sweet argument, then add the rippling laughter and common sense.

Work the whole together until everything is well mixed, and bake gently for ever.

*Found in a church booklet of recipes at the turn of the century.*

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### Thoughts of an Older Person

Remember we old folks are worth a fortune, with silver in our hair, gold in our teeth, stones in our kidneys and gas in our stomachs.

Since becoming a little older, I have become quite a frivolous old gal, having two gentlemen with me all the time.

Will Power helps me get out of bed and Arthur Ritis never leaves me alone.

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The Preacher came to call the other day, he said at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter.

I told him that I do that all the time, no matter where I am. In the living room, the study, in the kitchen or upstairs, I always ask myself - "What am I here after?"

**The above contributed by Betty Thom**

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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday, July 12th, there will be a **Speaker** on 'Building Society Investments'.

As this speaker is coming all the way from Birmingham, it is hoped that as many members as possible will stay. This is a subject I am sure many of us are interested in..

Wednesday, 14th July, **BBQ** at Tony and Pauline Podesta's. Any offers of help will be gratefully received.

Thursday, 22nd July, **Tatton Hall-RHS** visit.

Monday, 26th July, **History Group** presentation.

Monday, 2nd August, **Bowling Open Day** at Tilstock.

All are invited. Even if you are not into bowling, come and try your hand, you could be surprised!

### Creative Writing Regional Day

Saturday, 21st August

This is open to all U3A members including ourselves. Anyone involved in the last Creative Writing Day will remember how successful it was. See separate item for more details.

Monday, 23rd August, **Craft/Taster** presentation.

If any other groups are interested in giving a presentation, could they speak to one of the committee members.

**French Conversation**, those interested should get together.

June Norris is quite happy for members to join the **Art Appreciation Group** on their outings, but must expect to supply their own transport if necessary. Please ask her about their programme

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## CREATIVE WRITING DAY

21st August at Sir John Talbots School - 10.00am - 4.00pm

*A one day workshop, organised by the Whitchurch U3A Creative Writing group, exploring the techniques of creative writing, practical short story and play writing skills.*

*Tutors for the individual workshops:*

Natalie Woodhead (*MA in Creative Writing, Leeds*) will conduct the morning session on **'Writing Short Stories'**. Natalie is a keen fiction writer and has been awarded numerous prizes for her student publications.

The second workshop, **'How to Write a Play'**, will be held by Donna Taylor, (*currently undertaking MPhil, Birmingham and MA, Edge Hill*), who is a keen playwright and has recently worked with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and 'Fierce-Earth dramatic productions in Birmingham. She will examine the techniques of play writing and the skills essential to successful production. This workshop will develop the skills used in the first session and will encourage the participants to create their own outlines for plays and various techniques for monologue and dialogue.

Fee for the day, £3.00.

If you are interested, please contact Mary Sheriff, All applications must be in by 31st July.

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## Vegetable Soup

Serves 4 - 6

- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 oz frozen peas
- 2 tbsps tomato puree or ketchup
- 1 1/2 pts stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 7 3/4 oz baked beans
- Grated parmesan or cheddar
- Salt and pepper

1. Put the onion, carrots, celery, peas, tomato puree and stock in a large pan. Add bay leaves, salt and pepper.
2. Bring to boil, cover and simmer for 30 - 40 mins until vegetables are tender.
3. Remove bay leaves, stir in the peas and cook for 10 mins.
4. Serve in warm bowls sprinkled with cheese. Can be frozen.

**Margaret Gerty**

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## PLAY READING

We are delighted to welcome three new gentlemen to our group, Mr James Miller, Mr Bob Hawkins and Mr David Gerty.

For weeks - 'midst much amusement', I have said that I was 'looking for a man'. Well! Now I've have five!

Norman Baker and Doug Ritchie have been stalwarts in the group. Norman after reading two or more parts - last week he was a Squadron Leader and a Pakistani doctor, both on at the same time, with convincing change of voice - a valiant effort. We are considering incorporating the occasional book reading, followed by discussion, but Play Reading is still our main concern.

My thanks to all my group, not forgetting the ladies who read very well.

We all have most enjoyable and often hilarious meetings.

**Edna Skidmore**

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## Readers Digest

Q. Which Egyptian King used to lose his temper on the roads?

A. Toot - in - car - man.

A man walked into a hardware shop and asked the assistant for some nails. "Certainly" came the reply, 'how long do you want them?'. "I'd like to keep them", replied the customer.

"Doctor, I can't sleep at night" complained the accountant to his GP. "Have you tried counting sheep?" Asked the doctor. "That's the problem" the patient replied, 'I make a mistake and then spend three hours trying to find it.'

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## ART APPRECIATION

The group started in February this year, and we aim to meet on the first Monday of the month, from 2 - 4 pm, at Wem.

The title encompasses all the visual arts, eg. Ceramics, photography, design, paintings, architecture etc.

It is hoped that some members will share their particular interests and enthusiasms by giving a talk.

To date, we have heard talks on William Morris, Sir Laurence Alma-Tadem and "Techniques of painting, etching and lithography", as well as a visit to the Wedgewood Visitors Centre where there was an extensive exhibition of Clarice Cliff's work and then on to the Potteries Museum.

On Monday the 5th July, we are visiting the Lady Lever Gallery and in August there will be a talk on Walter Sickel.

Future plans will be posted on the notice board.

Please contact me if you would like to join us.

**June Norris**

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## GARDEN GROUP NEWS

The year began with a meeting at Hawthorn Cottage ( Jo Hamill ) where the subject was propagation by seeds. To think of the coming spring on a cold winter's afternoon was quite cheering.

For the February meeting, Norman Baker devised a Quiz. A lot of thought and work went into it, so we had an informative and fun afternoon as well as enjoying Pat's hospitality.

Richard and Rita Green hosted the March meeting where our speaker was Mr H. George from Malpas, who encouraged everyone by showing how a beautiful garden can be developed from scratch - and a bit of excavating, digging, planting, mowing.....

In April we visited Geoff Tither's garden. Many members had seen Geoff's garden when he began to cultivate it, so it was most interesting to see the progress made. Thanks to Geoff, we were also invited to see his neighbour's garden, one which made everyone green with envy.

'Twas a cold day in May when we visited the Dorothy Clive Garden, the rhododendrons and azaleas were beautiful. We went on to Bridgemere to empty our pockets. No matter how determined one is not to spend, there is always something irresistible to buy.

When the U3A garden group was first formed, it began with members visiting each other's gardens swapping information as well as seeds and cuttings. On three occasions this year we are returning to this formula.

Having already visited Geoff's garden, in June we visited those of Audrey and Owen Darlington at Coton and Rhoda Brooker's and Meriel Hudson's in Wem.

In September, we visit four different style Whitchurch gardens, those of Margaret Gerty, Leila Baynes, Doreen White and Nora Mullock.

July 22nd ( Thursday ) is the big day - the RHS Show at Tatton Park. We are told it is to be the 'Chelsea of the North'. Let's hope summer arrives by then.

In August, week commencing 16th, we intend to go to the Ness Gardens, the details for this have still to be finalised.



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In October, we are planning a visit to Westonbirt Arboretum, details to be finalised; the November meeting will be at Hawthorn Cottage ( Jo Hamill ). No December meeting. Normally, meetings are on the third Monday in the month.

**Jo Hamill**

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## SCRABBLE

The Scrabble group continues to meet on the 3rd Thursday, at 2.00. A good time is enjoyed by all who attend amid a background of "I wanted to go there", or 'is there such a word as.....' We shall all miss Rita Green who was so enthusiastic, having attended every meeting bar one since we started last October. Since October we have collected £12, and this will be sent to the Hospice.

**Margaret Gerty**

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## Committee Members

Chairman -	Tony Podesta
Vice Chairman -	David Chamberlain
Treasurer -	David Gerty
Secretary -	Rosa Ford

Owen Darlington, Audrey Darlington  
Margaret Gerty, Margaret Morgan  
Brian Roberts, Mary Tither, Mary Sheriff  
Pauline Podesta

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Group	Day	Group Leader
Speaker & Lunch Club	Monday 11.00 week 2	
Group Demonstrations	Monday 11.00 week 4	
Needlecraft	Monday 2.30 alternate weeks	Betty Thom
Gardening	Monday 2.30 week 2	Jo Hamill
Computer Skills	Monday 4.00 weeks 2 & 4	Ian Priddy
Indoor Bowls	Monday 1-4 & 7-10 weekly	Richard Green
Art Appreciation	Monday week 1 ****	June Norris
French Conversation		
Painting & Calligraphy	Tuesday 10.00 weekly	Margaret Cooke
Music Appreciation	Tuesday 7.30 weeks 1 & 3	Pat Baker
Spanish-beginners	Wednesday 10.00 weekly	Rhoda Brooker
Spanish-advanced	Wednesday 11.00 weekly	" "
Play Reading	Wednesday 10.30 weeks 2 & 4	Edna Skidmore
History & Family History	Wednesday 10.30 week 3	Mary Tither
Decoupage	Wednesday 2.30 weeks 2 & 4	Alex Tait
Walking and Lunch Club	Thursday 10.15 weeks 2 & 4	Brian and Irene Roberts
Scrabble	Thursday 2.00 week 3	Margaret Gerty
Creative Writing	Friday 10.00 every other week	Mary Sheriff
Meditation	Friday 10.30 week 3	Maeve Draper
Chess	Friday 2.00 weekly	Bill Cambridge
Photography	Friday 7.30 last Friday in month	Peter Howells
Visits to Theatres - Concerts National Trust etc	See notice board - organised by various individuals	

Check notice for any changes - visits \*\*\*

2 STURLING  
 2 B THOM/EDNA  
 2 PRIDDY  
 2 TITHER  
 2 BAKERS  
 1 GREEN  
 1 NORRIS  
 2 COOKE  
 1 RHODA  
 1 TAIT  
 2 ROBERTS  
 2 GERTY  
 2 SHERIFF  
 1 DRAPER  
 3 CAMBRIDGE  
 2 HOWELLS  
 201 IN MORGAN