

**Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year to All Our Readers**



Meet at Community Centre  
Prebendal Avenue  
1.30 p.m. for Notices at 2.00 p.m.  
Refreshments available  
**Free Christmas Mince Pies**  
Speaker booked for 2.45 p.m.

Date	Speaker	Title
21 <sup>st</sup> December 23	Sun Jester	Christmas Entertainment
!8 <sup>th</sup> January 24	Graham Horne	To the roof of Africa – Climbing Kilimanjaro

**What is it like to do the walk and stand on the top? Graham will show the pictures and tell the stories.**

**Dave Rogers – Acting Chair**

Christmas Time is a time for celebration with family and friends through the giving of gifts and presents to one another. Like all good families, our u3a will celebrate on 21<sup>st</sup> December with Christmas Entertainment and help people less fortunate than ourselves by members purchasing tickets for our Christmas Raffle. Please bring any remaining raffle prizes that you would like to contribute direct to the monthly meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> December where Sandra Choudhry and her team of helpers will gladly receive them to suppliant the major prize of a hamper. Tickets will cost £1.00 per strip as usual so bring all your odd £1.00 coins to the meeting -**CASH ONLY**. There will be no Quiz at the meeting as the Raffle will take up most of the spare time.

Good News abounds at Christmas Time and we must thank the Transport Team for their prompt response to the collapse of Heyfordian Travel half-way through our Visits Season. Motts Travel came to our rescue by accepting the original quotes of Heyfordian Travel. Our Transport Team is working hard to produce a program of visits for next February onwards. Our Treasurer Sandra Choudhry informed the committee that we settled our debts with the liquidators of Heyfordian Travel through help from the William Harding Trust so that our u3a is on the way to break even on 31<sup>st</sup> Match 2024.

Allan Horne has accepted the post of Groups Co-ordinator. We only have a few active groups which means we are having difficulty in recruiting new members. Many of these groups like our Transport Team are busy planning next year’s programme of events. All this work may be in vain as the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is a very important date for us. If we don’t have a nominated Chair by that date then the committee will have to start closure proceedings with the Third Age Trust. I am physically incapable of attending monthly meetings and I admire Simon Reeks for answering my cry of help in agreeing to chair our monthly meetings for November, December and January. The Third Age Trust agreed that

Simon Reeks could continue for a fourth year as our Chair due to Corvid. They are unlikely to agree this extension for two consecutive sessions even if Geoff Short is well enough.

## Our u3a is dying- do YOU want that to happen?

I have been a volunteer since I became an adult. It started in a simple manner by wheeling a coster barrow through streets broad and narrow to collect/deliver large items of furniture for the church's jumble sales. Volunteering provides you with a sense of purpose; a sense of community; helps you meet new friends; increases your social skills; improves self-esteem; teaches you valuable skills and brings fun into your life.

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## Remember the Date, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 – No Chair; No u3a

Dave Rogers – Editor

### Tree Dressing Day

### Content from Woodland Trust & Common Ground



Obviously, December is associated with decorating and bejewelling Christmas trees in the front room. This festival, however, specifically focuses on living trees and the fact that they are vital to life on earth. Trees are essential weapons in our battle against climate change. According to Earthday.org, trees absorb one-third of global emissions every year. Here in the UK, if we planted more native trees, we could encourage woodland that is genetically diverse and resilient against pests, diseases and the effects of climate change. Depending on the species, trees can live for thousands of years. It's no wonder then that they've long been celebrated in folklore around the world. Think of the scenes that ancient trees might have witnessed!

Trees have long been celebrated for their spiritual significance. The simplicity of tying ribbons, strips of cloth or yarn to a tree is universal and timeless. The old Celtic custom of tying cloth dipped in water from a holy well to a "cootie tree" echoes the practice in Japan of decorating trees with strips of paper (tanazaku) bearing wishes and poems.

A trend which has recently come about is that of 'yarn bombing' where people decorate trees with bright fabrics and yarns. This echoes the Buddhist tradition of tying ribbons around the trunk of the Bodhi tree in homage to Buddha. Similarly, during the annual Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan, coloured strings are tied onto trees and plants to call upon the power of nature to protect loved ones.



In Hong Kong two banyan trees are visited during the Lunar New Year, and burnt joss sticks attached to a wish and an orange is thrown up into the trees believing that if the paper successfully hangs onto a branch, the wish will come true. In Glasgow, a number of trees have been planted onto which people can tie white labels which feature their wishes.



Tree Dressing Day falls on the first weekend of December. It was initiated by Common Ground in 1990. This weekend was deliberately chosen as it is an extension of National Tree week (end of November/ start of December) and occurs prior to the Christmas school holidays so that schools may participate in community activities as an alternative to Nativity Plays. It has grown to become much more than an expression of love for trees. It is a chance for communities to reflect on the cultural and social history of their local area.

We risk losing trees from our lives unless we express how important they are and how much we appreciate them. That's why the Woodland Trust launched their campaign to create a Charter of Trees, Woods and People which joins over 50 organisations, including City of Trees forming hundreds of local communities into a national movement for trees, speaking out for them and ensuring their value in society is recognized and protected for the future.

So, next year, don't limit your tree decorating skills to your front room. Your children or grandchildren will really enjoy making meaningful decorations to display on their living tree. Encourage them to get creative and use their imaginations. Here are some ideas to get them started:

- Make paper leaves to hang from your tree. Children could colour them in and write messages or poems on them.
- Cut lengths of colourful ribbons and tie them to branches so they ripple in the breeze or tie them around your tree.
- Make your own bunting by cutting out paper triangles and attaching them to ribbon. Use the bunting to tell a story – children could draw pictures showing the wildlife that lives in the tree or how people enjoy it. When it's finished, wrap the bunting around the trunk.
- Use fallen leaves and seeds to make natural garlands and decorations.



**1**  
**Do not damage the tree by using nails to fasten your decorations onto the tree. Remember to remove all your dressings at the end of the weekend so that no damage is due to the wild life that live in trees.**

## Holiday u3a 2024

**Belfast and a Beautiful Rail Journey BN10609 - June 9th to 15th 2024.**

The complete itinerary is in the Crusader brochure on page 73. Cost £929 basic - £41 travel insurance - £200 single room supplement (sorry!) If you would like to join us on this holiday please self-book at Motts Crusader, 4 Buckingham St , Aylesbury or telephone : 01296 336666 .

**Julie Leach. Telephone 01296 488282**

## Jasmine & Simon Reeks – Local History Group

**A Happy Christmas to our Group**

**Thursday 25th January Planning Meeting. Methodist Church Rooms 4 & 5 upstairs. 10.30 for 11.00.**

Volunteers for setting up and refreshments, please. There will be biscuits! We are hoping to arrange a sandwich lunch at the Temple Café (Coffee Shop), on the corner of Temple Street and Bourbon Street, opposite Jordan's the Jewellers after the meeting. Menus choices and money must be returned by the December Meeting, please. Depending on numbers, some may need to be seated downstairs so we need to know who cannot manage the stairs. Please have exact money. If you need change this may take some time and will be available sometime in 2024!

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February A welcome return by Julian Hunt on Aylesbury: Hillfort to Fred's Fort. Southcourt Community Centre. 14.00 for refreshments. Talk at 14.30.**

**All Members of the u3a are welcome, please sign up so we have a rough idea of numbers. Cost £3.00  
Volunteers for setting up and refreshments, please.**

# Ann Burman – Quiz Group



There is no Quiz meeting in December because of its proximity to Christmas. The next meeting will be announced in the January Newsletter.

Any problems please contact Ann Burman on 01296 422084 or Chris Blaik on 01296 425964

## Jim Wilding – Group Leader

### History Of Transport

Our next meeting will be at 9, Mill Mead, Wendover at 2.30 on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December for those who receive tis prior to the monthly U3a meeting and January 17<sup>th</sup> in the New Year.



### Musical Appreciation

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024, 2.30, at 9 Mill Mead, Wendover.

## Simon Reeks – Gadget Group

Scams are particularly rife at this time of the year, especially by email, text and phone. The best advice is to be extremely cautious of responding directly to contacts requesting personal information or (even worse!) money. Current examples doing the rounds at the moment include "missed" deliveries, "failed" TV licence renewals and "renewal" of antivirus software. Rather than simply clicking on a link, look at the relevant website or phone the company (or whoever) by using a phone number from your own records. ANY doubt, don't respond but have a word with family members / friends or even myself for advice - it's better to be safe than sorry.



If you need a (free!) PC, advice about the new Windows 11 (highly recommended) or indeed any other (non-Apple) "gadget" subject, please contact me and I'll see what I can do, by phone/email on 01296 482735 or [reeks@fangio.co.uk](mailto:reeks@fangio.co.uk)

**Next Contribution Date Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

# Third Age Trust

## u3a Poetry Competition Open Now

The u3a poetry competition is now open for entries. We are looking for poems that fit the theme, 'What If'. Members have until Friday 26 January to enter, which they can do on [the u3a website](#).

We know there is so much poetry talent across the u3a movement and would love to hear from as many members as possible - please share this with your u3a poetry groups.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion and your u3a

There is a new presentation which supports u3as to think about their legal responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. This is delivered by Trust Volunteer presenters.

You can request a presentation for your u3a or network, to take place from January 2024. This is also being run as a national online workshop on 20 February 2024.

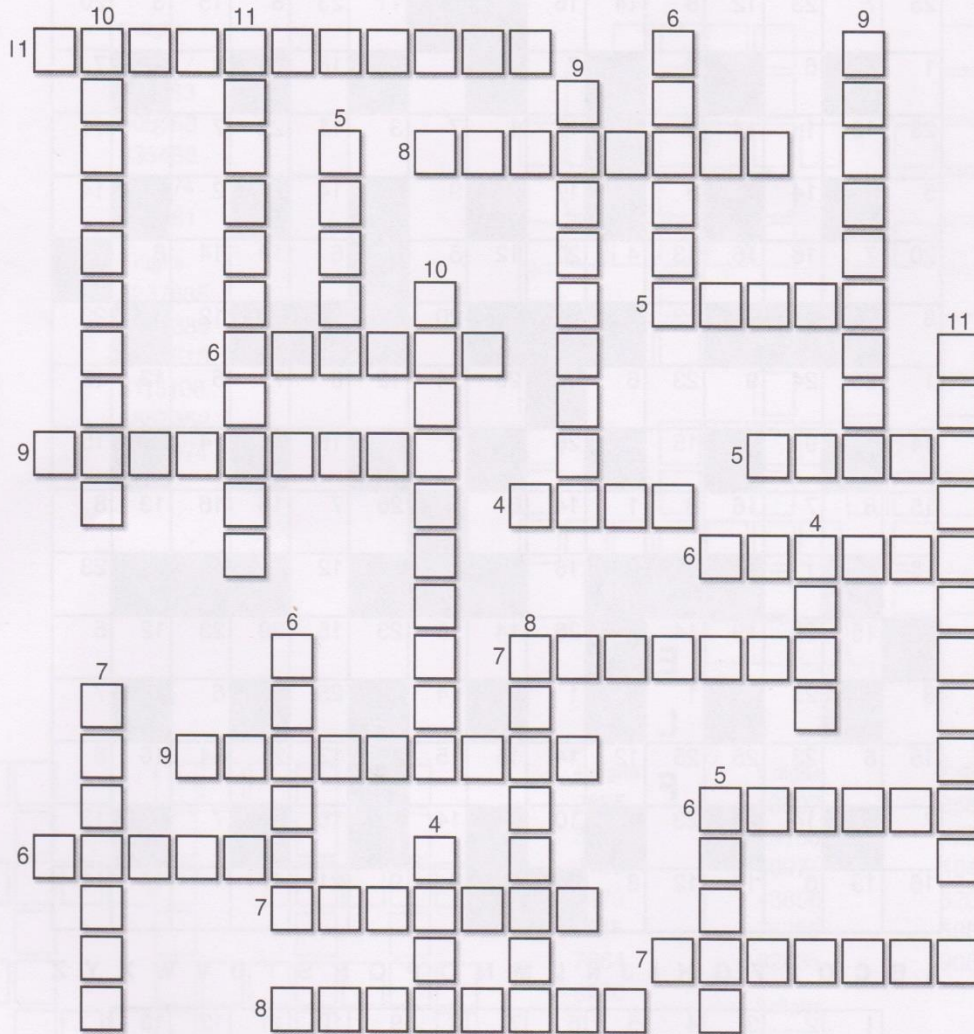
The presentation request form, and the booking link for all upcoming workshops, can be booked [on the u3a workshops page](#). All workshops are open to all u3a members.



People love singing carols. Singing is good for the body, mind and soul and carols can unlock emotions, tell stories and connect us to others, past and present. Join in singing Carols this Christmas on TV.

# A Christmas Carol

Fit all these words relating to Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* into the grid.



**4 letters**

DEBT  
LOAN  
PAST

**5 letters**

GHOST  
MISER  
PETER  
VISIT

**6 letters**

CHAINS  
HUMBUG  
LESSON

NEPHEW

TURKEY  
VISION

**7 letters**

POVERTY  
SAVINGS  
SCROOGE  
TINY TIM

**8 letters**

MEANNESS  
REFORMED  
STRUGGLE

**9 letters**

CHRISTMAS  
GRAVEYARD  
TOMBSTONE  
WORKHOUSE

**10 letters**

APPARITION  
GENEROSITY

**11 letters**

BOB CRATCHIT  
HARD-WORKING  
JACOB MARLEY