

SPIRE U3A



THE NINTH IRREGULAR NEWSHEET



Our SPIRE PICTURE this month is by
Terry Waldron, member of the
Photography Group.

The zoom link for
the May meeting
is at the end of
this news sheet.
There will be no
email reminder
this month.

Message from the Chairman

WELCOME to our May newsletter and thank you, Maureen, for compiling it.

I hope you are all keeping well and continuing keeping in touch with one another. Our Speaker this month is a lady who was our speaker a couple of years ago and it is a pleasure to have Janet Diamond back with us to talk about **Ancient Egypt, a history in ten objects** so please, as many of you who can, log in and enjoy the talk.

The use of zoom to facilitate our meetings over the past few months has been a real asset and I know many of you have really benefited from the contact with others.

I am pleased to tell you that as from July 12th we will be back at the Memorial Hall to enjoy once again our live meetings, and I must tell you that we have a great programme of speakers lined up for you.

I look forward to seeing you again then.

John Holt.

Editorial

THANKS to everyone who has contributed to this edition. It is always good to hear from you. It can be somewhat disheartening when we ask for your responses to the Occasional Book Club recommended reading, or issue a creative writing challenge, and nothing comes in.

But the April talk on crop circles elicited more feedback than usual. A typical one said: "Many thanks for the Zoom meeting today, it was the first 'Zoom' I have ever tried, fortunately I had a large degree of help from my wife. The talk by Andy Thomas was excellent, and very thought provoking."

Others suspected pseudo-science and enhanced photos. They were, at any rate, striking illustrations and the whole presentation was super-slick.

Some members of the committee have been out pounding the streets delivering copies of *Stories to Make you Smile*. Approaching front doors during the pre-election period meant we were sometimes greeted with mild suspicion but it was lovely to have a chat with those of you busy in your front gardens. I do hope you enjoy the stories. Please don't forget to vote for your favourite and if you know a paid-up member who has not had a copy please pass yours on when you have finished.

We have a rich mix of news, reports, notices and things to get stuck in to, so read on, and please remember to send us the results of your labours.

Maureen E Frost

From the Membership Secretary

THANK you to all who have paid their membership fees for 2021-2022.

In March 2020 we had 157 members.

Since then some have passed away, some have resigned.

In May 2021 we have 129 paid up members and 22 who have not yet paid or informed us that they have left Spire.

There are some people who have been paying their membership by standing order for a number of years but do not attend the monthly meetings and are not actually known by any committee members.

Currently we do not have a Group Co-ordinator. It would be very helpful if all group leaders could regularly inform the membership secretary of names and numbers attending their groups (as is protocol in all U3As). We need an up to date list of active groups for our web page.

Thank you

Mary Robson

mfrobson@btinternet.com

SIGN

On a Septic Tank lorry.....
"Caution - This Truck is full of
Political Promises."

U3A DAY

INITIAL plans for a joint presence with neighbouring u3a's in Market Square, on June 2, had to be cancelled. Instead we have been co-operating with Salisbury & District, Sarum and Wilton on raising the profile of u3a locally in covid secure ways.

Articles have been prepared for print media and a promotional film, showcasing what we do, is in preparation. (A test trailer was posted on our Facebook Group a few weeks ago and can still be seen.) The film will be circulated widely to support a membership drive.



Membership in some u3a's has gone down significantly in the last year; Spire has held up remarkably well but we need each and everyone of us to sing the praises of the movement and persuade our friends and neighbours to come and join us.

Eric Midwinter, u3a founder, reminds us that u3a is not a service charity delivering knowledge to a passive audience. It is more, "a self-mobilising outfit of learning circles."

If you come across someone who is no longer working full-time just tell them: *Now is the time to make the most of life. U3a gives you the chance to develop your interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself. Join Spire u3a now.*

PHYLLIS BABB



Read Phyllis's story and her connection with Spire u3a here

<https://hersalisburystory.com/news/phyllis-babb/?fbclid=IwAR10uCo35TvVLhjrYoCFjVnL1CazWYQJNRe5qd6zU1dTEVMVlsgwfWaX-f0>

LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE

AS we plan for the future, for **u3a day** in June and relaunching existing interest groups we can also review provision & contemplate setting up new Interest Groups. There are over 70 Subject Advisers ready to provide advice on both the setting up of a group in their particular speciality or the sustainability of ones already in existence.

If you are interested in a particular subject or activity, as a Learner, as a Group Leader or as a topic for a monthly meeting, please let **Jackie** know and we will see what can be done.
2j.hankinson@gmail.com

THE INTEREST GROUPS

Coronavirus restrictions remain in place across the country. We still have to wear masks & keep two metres apart until well into June, for those that remember when blackboards were black, that is 6 feet and 6 inches!



Individuals and Group Leaders are advised to read official advice and carry out risk assessments before resuming any group activity.

Some subject advisers offer help on following covid rules. You can contact them through the u3a website.

What we can, and cannot, do is set out on the government website. Guidance changes frequently.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary?priority-taxonomy=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>

Rapid Lateral Flow Test Kits are available from pharmacies or online (free)

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Meanwhile, many of Spire's Groups have discovered the magic of zoom. If you run, or belong to, an Interest Group that has not tried this yet please contact the License Holder to arrange.

maureenefrost@icloud.com

WALKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The walking group meeting on the 14 April was attended by 6 members on Zoom. In the absence of recent walks there was a lot of discussion on environmental matters and rewilding schemes which are matters dear to our hearts. We all walk through our fantastic local countryside and observe the changes which are taking place. Some of these changes do not bode well for the future of Wiltshire. There are some activities which are now starting to make a difference as people become more aware of the situation.

It is hoped that we will be able to walk this month and Colin has a plan for one of his excellent outings using a bus connection each way. This is a most convenient way to connect with the start and finish of a walk as it does not require the use of cars or entail a circular route. It is also environmentally and people friendly.

It is hoped that the Covid situation is favourable and we can meet up again very soon. The Ramblers Association are starting up some of their walks if anyone is interested in joining them. They supply maps of walks which can be done alone or in company. Hope to see you all soon.

Ken Carley

- For information on the May meeting contact Colin Seago.

PLAYING SIMPLE MUSIC

I've not quite given up dreams of restarting the Playing Simple Music Group but it has been suggested that we must find another venue with more space than my living room. We have tried this before but found the moving about of instruments and players somewhat onerous.

One suggestion has been to split the duties such as providing refreshments and accounting between the group members. Such a big room we are now seeking; any suggestions? It would need to be in excess of 4 X 5 metres, not too much clutter, a number of chairs, facilities for a brew-up and, ideally, a lockable cupboard to store instruments such as key board and drums. Responses to Malcolm please.

Malcolm

P.S. there are a couple of tunes that were already prepared (friendly key, not too fast, limited pitch range) before the lock-down but were never played.

malcolmsimmons7@gmail.com

RECORDERS

The **Recorder session will be held via Zoom on Wednesday 19th May at 14.00.** (We chose the pieces at April's session.) I would like to discuss with the participants the possibility of re-commencing "live" sessions - i.e. when and how!

Stuart

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81822250908?pwd=YTRWVGp3cHBXTHNIWS9DL3V4UkR2dz09>

Meeting ID: 818 2225 0908

Passcode: 473269

APPLE USERS GROUP

This months Zoom Meeting is on Thursday 13th May commencing at 11 am. Mick will give a presentation on filming wildlife in your garden using motion triggered cameras (not your iPhone!) and cameras in bird boxes. Please let Mike Talbot know if you would like to join the session.
mjtalbot@hotmail.co.uk

CANASTA

Subject Adviser, Margaret Thompson, from Plymouth, kindly accepted the invitation to join the April meeting.

What she said was very interesting. There are several different rules for Canasta games depending where you learn but these rules can be established at the start of a game. Margaret told us about *Canasta Palace* where you can meet people to play on line. There is an app on Ipad where Jo and Christine could play together. After Margaret left we agreed to meet in Jo's garden on a date when the non-zoomers can come.

- Further information from ingridwrap@aol.com

CROQUET 2021

The Croquet season this year will hopefully run until 29th September. I will contact all members who joined us during 2019 to see who would like to play this year. We do have to be a paid up member of the U3A to join the group. It is open to all Sarum, Salisbury and Spire U3A members.

We meet every Wednesday at 1.30 pm at the Salisbury and South Wilts Sports Club on Wilton Road. The Sports Club Membership fee is £10 per season, plus £1 each time we play.

At present we will have to comply with any current Covid restrictions but as it is an outdoor activity I don't expect any problems.

Marilyn Beattie Tel: 01722 320216

Email: mjbt68@gmail.com

SCI-Tech

For our Sci-Tech treat this month please watch this [short video](#) about symmetry and music [Music + Math: Symmetry, on youtube.com]

Having done that please look out for other examples of symmetry in your home or on the internet.

Then on **Monday May 24th** we will get together at **10 am** to talk about the video and share what we have found.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87656719333?pwd=WVBoa290OGlEeStGWnk3QTRPeTl1UT09>

Meeting ID: 876 5671 9333

Passcode: 967286

ALL WELCOME

POETRY READING

“Only the very weak-minded refuse to be influenced by literature and poetry.” — Cassandra Clare, *Clockwork Angel*

This group will come together again on Thursday May 20 at 2.30pm.

The more the merrier.

The focus this time will be on work by Pam Ayres and Rudyard Kipling.

The zoom details are

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81375819443?pwd=OHZnR3JmZmE3NjFwVTBvMGdpYXU0dz09>

Meeting ID: 813 7581 9443

Passcode: 433769

DI PLUS



In my DI PLUS class, I have been trying to teach members how to use various digital filters. This involves downloading items and installing them before use. A company called Flaming Pear generously allow you to have free filters with glorious names such as Flexify, Lunar Cell and Flood. When these are combined with other techniques in digital imaging they can make some surreal, strange and impossible results. I just hope that members find this fun to do. Fotosketcher has been my favourite free image editor. This can produce images that look like paintings and can be works of art. I took this photograph from Queen Elizabeth Gardens of a house opposite and applied the Fotosketcher Painting 10 filter.

Peter

- Class details from bluerram@gmail.com



GEOLOGY

April's meeting concentrated on the life and achievements of Mary Anning, the pioneering nineteenth century palaeontologist, amateur anatomist and fossil collector from Lyme Regis.

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on 18th May at 10.00 when the main subject will be "Iron and Steel and the West Somerset Mining Syndicate".

Members are looking forward to the first outdoor meeting. Meanwhile there is no shortage of topics to talk and learn about on zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81044357233?pwd=YWpYYUU3MG1pWUhROWNHYXNqa3Y1dz09>

Meeting ID: 810 4435 7233

Passcode: 201872

SIGN

In a cobbler's
We will heel you
We will save your sole
We will even dye for you.

ALL YOUR OWN WORK



House with Wisteria - a digital image by Peter Read.

Awful, Thrilling, Topping

REVIEW

This is a novel by Jean Lunnon (Salisbury and District u3a) and concerns the early life of May Wesson. May was an orphan and in 1916 we find her in the workhouse in Bristol. She is clearly a girl who knows her own mind and is steadfast.

This extract reveals her character:

"Teacher'sPet!" hisses Lizzie Bean.

Don't kick her on the shin. Count to ten and take deep breaths, that's what Miss Gorey says, to keep out of the Punishment book.

Might pinch Lizzie hard later under the dinner table, though.

This strength of mind carries her through many trials such as the concern over German spies and having to pick a new name in order that certain people do not recognise her.

She gets a job as a servant in a gentleman's home. May sees odd things going on and suspects he is a spy. When he is taken by the police she is certain. She is a quick learner and is soon good at figures and accounts. This gets her some boring jobs later on.

One job she has is on a local newspaper trying to report on local events with little success. At one point when helping on a stall in the market a customer sees her as the long lost daughter of her sister. She is like her in looks at least. So the family take her in and adopt her. This is a great blessing for May. This story has many twists and turns and Jean has woven a wonderful and intricate tale.

Peter Read Spire u3a, Vice Chairman



CREATIVE WRITING

A Soliloquy

Don't think I need the headlights, right, off we go.

This lane is filthy; mud off the fields, windblown leaf-litter, squashed rabbits.

Get out the way - stupid pheasant!

Turn left here, nothing coming, that's the beauty of starting early.

Spoke too soon. There's a gateway just behind you, you could reverse into that, Mr Milk Tanker.

Off we go again. Decision time coming up. Shall I take the coast road and risk the mist coming off the sea or follow the ridgeway and catch the fog on the hilltops?

Satnav indicates the ridgeway but I like the sea views; all the way to Start Point on a good day. Maybe it is not a good day. OK, Satnav, you win, Satnav, Satnav. Actually this road is quite good; must have been resurfaced.

And the sun is coming out; looks lovely on the lake. Whoops, must keep my eyes on the road.

Funny place to have a lake though. Some eighteenth century landowner's idea, I suppose.

Cannot be far off the motorway, there is more traffic about now, in both directions.

Oh yuck, what a horrid coloured vehicle. Glad I haven't got to follow that. It would be easy to find in a big car park though, not like this one, tarmac coloured like 80% of everyone else's.

Oh bum, a landrover pulling out and it is listing to one side and now the other. Is it a pack of dogs or livestock milling around in there?

Ah, looks as if he is going to pull off the road and he is waving us through. Nice man. From what I can see in the mirror there must be ten vehicles that have built up behind us in the last mile or so.

And they all seem to be going the same way as me, to the dual carriageway - have some patience mate, I am not driving that slowly and I am not going to exceed the speed limit for you.

Green signs turning to blue, down the slip road, I hate this bit, looking over my shoulder, trying to spot a slot to fit into - and speeding up at the same time. Phew, managed it.

Lot of big trucks today. And there is always one gets between me and the illuminated sign. Probably said there are animals in the road, when there never are.

Fifty limit. OK slow down a bit. Coming off at the next junction anyway. Indicate/change lane, off here, first at the roundabout.

I'll be at mum's in time for morning coffee.

Damn! I'll be in big trouble. Forgot the cake. Ho hum.

MEF

- a u3a Winter School 2021 writing exercise.

SOMETHING TO DO



OBC - open to all

We have a real gem for you this month; a recently published piece that incorporates some unusual vocabulary.

When you have read it please don't forget to send your response, (a paragraph or two, a sketch or some bullet points) to townpump@hotmail.co.uk

Dietrologia by Paul Theroux

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/12/07/dietrologia?utm_source=onsite-share&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=the-new-yorker

SWAP A BOOK - SWAP A GAME

The Britford Lane Rabbit Hutch has been joined by a vast wooden treasure chest. The chest has puzzles, board games, computer games and jigsaws. The hutch is packed with an ever-changing array of books of every kind. Passers-by are invited to help themselves, donate their unwanted books and games, or effect a swap.

CREATIVE WRITING

The chapter begins: "The flat perched at the top of the house, little more than a lean-to riveted to Mrs P's ceiling. The stairwell exuded sticky, airless September heat; the roof was as thin as corrugated iron.

"Inside"

Your task is to describe inside - the interior of the flat. When you have done that please send your efforts to townpump@hotmail.co.uk and we will tell you where to find the original.

ZOOM LINKS

MONTHLY MEETING

Janet Diamond, our guest speaker says: “The more I studied the world of Ancient Egypt, the more I encountered incredible, fascinating antiquities and artefacts, all with interesting stories behind them. Eventually I thought a collection of objects would make an interesting talk. It was quite a challenge, trying to reduce 5000 years of culture down to a small, choice selection. However, it was worth the effort – as this presentation really is ‘A Few of my Favourite Things’.



Monday May 10th from 10am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89280275252?pwd=ejNzd2dFOXl0WnZOSXVicU5tK3Rxdz09>

Meeting ID: 892 8027 5252

Passcode: 992811

TIPPLE TIME

‘What are you reading?’ Come armed with your drink and *Stories to Make You Smile* or perhaps you have found something funny to share with us in a newspaper or magazine, a how-to book, a new favourite novelist, a poem or memoir. Tipple Time - the sociable way to end the week - open to all.

Friday May 21st at 6pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86725675768?pwd=RjMxRGhvQ0pzYUd4NjhHT1hYNmV6UT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2567 5768

Passcode: 430899

