

SPIRE u3a



THE EIGHTH IRREGULAR NEWSHEET



Our SPIRE
PICTURE this
month is by
ANN SMITH
member of the
Photography
Group.

**Monthly meeting:
Monday April 12
at 10am**

**- GUEST SPEAKER
ANDY THOMAS**

"U3A shows the value of communities of interest and learning which are not defined by age, or by past experience, but instead are defined by the experiences still to be explored".

Message from the Chairman

WELL done, Everybody. It is so good to hear that many of you have been keeping in touch with one another and keeping the interest groups going.

It has been an odd twelve months but, with these news sheets now coming at monthly intervals I am sure you will agree with me that Spire u3a provides fantastic value.

April is always a busy month for our Membership Secretary and Treasurer. We can all help them by making sure our membership fees are paid on time. Thank you, Mary and Stuart.

If you are wondering about joining an Interest Group now is an ideal time to try it out as numbers for zoom meetings are not restricted by the size of the meeting place. Just click on the link provided, at the given time, and introduce yourself to the Group Leader.

Our monthly meetings are going well, allowing us to give out notices and see one another just as we would in the hall. I know I wasn't the only one who thoroughly enjoyed the talk in March about Lucy Houston. Our guest speaker this month will be Andy Thomas presenting, "The Crop Circle Mystery".

The zoom link is on the last page. I look forward to seeing you on **April 12** when we can catch up with one another again.

John Holt

Editorial

I KNOW exactly where I first came across that poem. It was pinned up in the lavatory at The Rectory. I must have been old enough to read; I am guessing it was roughly 70 years after Browning died. It seemed particularly odd because the Rector and his wife were Australian.

The last I heard was that Bill Oddy had bought the Rectory so I wonder how the loo is decorated now.

Reminiscing is one of those things that actually get easier as we get older. And reminiscing was what you did at Tipple Time last month - it was a privilege to listen to such amazing memories.

Tipple Time in April will be on the theme of gardens and gardening - your own garden, your favourite garden, your grandad's garden, the weed you hate the most, a garden verse....whatever comes to mind.

For those of you who have not joined Tipple Time yet, please do, it is proving to be a lovely way to begin the weekend.

So returning to Browning let's look forward now. With the warmer weather blowing up from the south it cannot be long before we see the first swallows of 2021 feeding over the Avon or the Ebbles.

Maureen E Frost

*Oh, to be in England now
that April's there
And after April when May
follows,
And the white-throat
builds and all the
swallows!*

- Robert Browning
(1812-1889) Home

From the Membership Secretary.....

MEMBERSHIP FEES REMINDER

Subscriptions remain at £10 per person per annum, due on 1st April 2021.

THANK you to those who pay by standing order or bank transfer.

Otherwise:

Cash or cheques payable to **Spire U3A** to be posted, or hand delivered, to Mary Robson, Membership Secretary, 20 St Clair Road Salisbury SP2 8AE.

We hope our Monday meetings will return to the Memorial Hall in the summer, meanwhile we are having our regular Coffee Mornings with Talks on Zoom. Some of our groups are also meeting on Zoom. We have a regular e newsletter, Spire U3A Facebook Group and TAM magazine from head office.

Mary Robson

- In addition, paid-up Spire Members are entitled to join Trust U3A for a mere £5 per year. Trust U3A is a rapidly-growing, online facility which provides talks twice a month and enables you to join Interest Groups with people from all over the country. Find out more here - <https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/groups>

MOVING HOUSE? OR changing your email address? Please let Mary Robson or Jackie Hankinson know how to contact you.

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.

If you are interested in any of the following, 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:

Architecture, Birdwatching, Bridge, Games - such as Chess, scrabble, mahjong, Crafts/ knitting, Puzzles and Crosswords, Dance, Historic research, Food/Cooking, Picnics in the garden, Sports such as badminton, bowls or table tennis, Gardening, Historic houses, Industrial history and railways, foreign languages, Creative Writing, Reading short stories, Travellers Tales, Sci Tech and the Environment.....

2j.hankinson@gmail.com

Spotted on the internet.

Was Cilla Black? Was Barry White? Was Marvin Gay?
It's just that Stevie Wonders.

MATHS, Yoga, Woodcarving, the Palaeozoic era, & Motown are among the one-off learning events offered FREE, online, to all u3a members. But these sessions do get booked up early so do not delay if there is something you are interested in.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

THE INTEREST GROUPS

Advice for Group Leaders remains the same as set out in the last News sheet. In addition you may find this link useful, as we begin to contemplate getting together. It covers risk assessments, virtual health checks, record keeping etc

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/whos-who/news-and-events/coronavirus/wiltshire-council-community-toolkit-march-2021/>

Meanwhile, many of Spire's Groups are making use of the zoom facility. 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

In March we watched two short films of walks in the Lake District and Hadrians Wall. The Group will meet again on **Wednesday April 14** at 10.30am for more outdoor views and countryside chat. Look for a reminder email from Colin or use this link.....

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87536071389?pwd=Q2lRdG9yNmM3ejhuaThEQkFPTVZTZz09>

Meeting ID: 875 3607 1389

Passcode: 269973

RECORDERS

The Recorder players are really enjoying getting together and playing along to the accompaniment, provided.

Stuart has some really lovely melodies lined up for the next meeting on **Wednesday April 21** at 2pm.

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

Meeting ID: 818 2225 0908

Passcode: 473269



APPLE USERS GROUP

NEXT ZOOM MEETING - **Thursday 8th APRIL** at 11 am - for iPad and iMac users.

This month Mick Burrell will explain "How to show a Keynote Presentation over Zoom" as well as being prepared to answer any queries or problems you may have encountered using "Zoom".

Please let Mike Talbot know if you would like to join the session.

mjtalbot@hotmail.co.uk

CANASTA

Subject Adviser, Margaret Thompson, from Plymouth, has kindly accepted the invitation to join our meeting this month. Discussion will focus on the various rules and systems for playing Canasta and then how to play online.

This will be an ideal opportunity for any Spire member to find out more about playing Canasta.

The meeting will be at 2.30 on **Monday 19 April**.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82814129110?pwd=RlBMaForT3BLNGE4UUJBU2NVU2FMQT09>

Meeting ID: 828 1412 9110

Passcode: 689748

FINE WEATHER GOLF



POST LOCKDOWN FINE WEATHER GOLF – ADDITIONAL SECTION

This Golf Group is open to all four u3as in Salisbury,

It is likely that certain outdoor pursuits can be resumed shortly with strict Covid guidelines in place.

It is hoped that the Fine Weather Golf Group, running, at present, as an independent society rather than under the auspices of Sarum u3a, will be starting up again in April.

An additional group for beginners with some '**Come & Try It**' sessions is being proposed for the coming months and anyone interested in this idea should contact Roger Neill (jargambits@gmail.com OR [tel:01980 504660](tel:01980504660))

The venue would be Salisbury Golf Centre in Wilton Road, equipment would be provided and costs will be kept to a minimum.

Fresh air, exercise and fun together with some social interaction is the aim – getting better at golf will be a bonus!

SCI-Tech

From the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's website:

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure ... than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat."

- Theodore Roosevelt

You are asked to first watch this lecture by Professor Richard Harvey at a time to suit you -

Computers: A History

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/computer-history>

Then on **Monday April 26** join other Spire members on zoom at 10am to hear what others thought of it and have your say. ALL WELCOME

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87656719333?pwd=WVBoa290OGIEeStGWnk3QTRPeTI1UT09>

Meeting ID: 876 5671 9333

Passcode: 967286

POETRY READING

"You can find poetry in your everyday life, your memory, in what people say on the bus, in the news, or just what's in your heart." — Carol Ann Duffy

This group is thriving again with two new faces joining in last month. The topic for the next meeting, on **Thursday 15 April** at 2.30pm, will be the WEATHER.

More new members welcome.

The zoom details are

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

Meeting ID: 813 7581 9443

Passcode: 433769

GEOLOGY

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

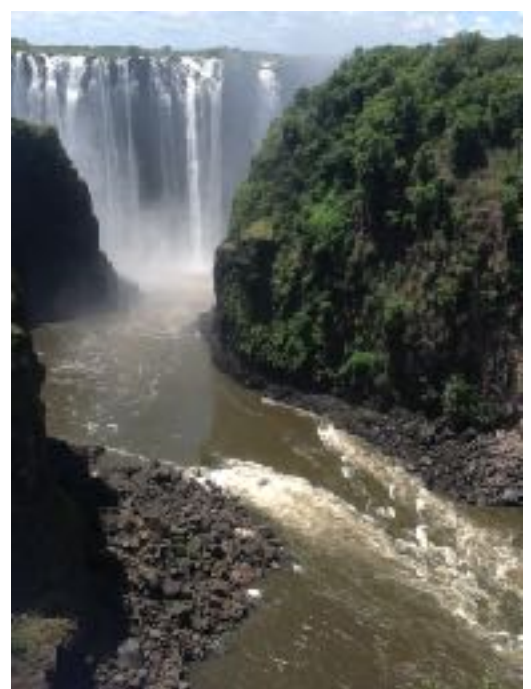
The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 20 April** from 10am.

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

Meeting ID: 810 4435 7233

Passcode: 201872

Pictured - Victoria Falls



ALL YOUR OWN WORK

RESPONSES

THE SPRING CREATIVE WRITING CHALLENGE

- focussed on the senses.

A work of imagination, from Mary Mitchell:

Almost there. Just round the next corner and across the road. Never did like those garish revolving doors. Much too ostentatious for my taste. Concentrate. You've got it all worked out. Stick to the plan and it'll be a piece of cake. You'll have them eating out of your hand. (Good pun that)! Seriously, you'll be OK. You know your stuff-you should do, the number of times you've been through it. It will be fine. Of course it will. Take a deep breath. Was it a good idea though to wear the purple suit? Isn't it a bit over the top? Purple for kings. And the Queen always wears in-your-face colours. Helps her stand out in a crowd. And no, the skirt's not too short either. What's the point of having good legs if you don't show them off occasionally. Don't want to detract from my spiel though...Cmon, deep breaths, shoulders back and down. Relax. Just watch those heels crossing the road.....

Something's touching me. I can feel a hand on my shoulder. Voices. Jumbled, hazy, a long way off. Now louder, much louder. Shouting. What are they shouting? Are they shouting at me? A siren's wailing, piercing. Coming closer. Brakes screeching. What can I smell? Not my perfume. More like oil? Petrol? Acrid, pungent. Cmon, open your eyes. A circle of yellow sunflowers silhouetted against a pale blue sky. Don't be silly. Focus. Grey rocks? Concentrate. You can't get rocks in the sky. I screw up my eyes and peer again. Why are all those faces staring at me? I haven't done my presentation yet. I lick my lips. What's that weird taste in my mouth? Tastes like blood. My blood? My head throbs. Why are they lifting me? Where are they taking me? Those doors aren't the hideous revolving office block doors. This isn't reception. Concentrate. Breathe-it hurts. Relax-it hurts. Sleep.

& from MEF:

I felt a bit giddy. Did someone shake me? Let me sleep.

"Open your eyes," they said. No, let me sleep.

"Is she coming round?" someone asked. Did they mean me?

Someone was speaking loudly down the phone: "She can't stay here. We close at six."

I drifted off again but opened one eye just enough to see I was being wheeled along a corridor. A passing whiff of cigarette smoke, the smell of cleaning fluid, a draught of fresh air, the odour of bodies and medication....I was fading away again.

'Ping' went the lift. A crashing of doors, shake, jerk and bump. Someone told me I had arrived so I made an effort to sit up.

"There's a horrid taste in my mouth," I said.

"It's the anaesthetic, love," they said, "We'll bring you a cup of tea. Any sugar?"

The tea came with a bag of crisps. The tea was welcome. The crisps were salty.

"I don't know what we are going to do with you. We have got children coming out of theatre any minute to look after. They should have kept you in the recovery room where you were."

I settled back down again, trying to hide under the blanket and the shouting down the phone began once more.

"Just find a bed for her. Somewhere. In this hospital. There must be one."



YOUR RESPONSES

to the OBC short story for March written by Katherine Mansfield

The Stranger

Some thoughts from Janet Pengelly - It was very engaging from the outset, the suspense was strong and consistent to the very last word and left the reader wondering what came next.

The picture created was detailed and precise.

Thoroughly enjoyable.

And a reflective summary from Mary Robson - Set in Auckland NZ (1920), John Hammond waits at the quayside for his wife, Janey, to return from a ten month trip to Europe. He is a vivacious, charismatic character sharing his excitement with the crowd: 'They knew every man-jack of them that Mrs. Hammond was on that boat'

Mrs. Hammond is slow to leave the ship - "We can't go quite so fast, I've got people to say goodbye to."

Hammond feels something is different and at the hotel, he begins to show his vulnerability: 'But just as he embraced her, he felt she would fly away, so Hammond never knew, never knew for dead certain that she was as glad as he was. Would he ever know?'

Mrs. Hammond tells her husband about the trip and he realises their relationship has changed. This short story could be a middle chapter of a longer novel; it raises questions. Why did Mrs. Hammond go away for almost a year? What happened when the couple returned home?

Hammond needed to own his wife by infantilizing her: 'How small she looked on that huge ship',

Whereas without his presence Mrs. Hammond appeared confident popular and well respected: 'It was as plain as a pikestaff that she was by far the most popular woman on board.'

Was Katherine Mansfield attempting to confirm how single events can change relationships for better or for worse? And was she demonstrating that women value independence and adventure and most do not need to be dependent on men?

SOMETHING TO DO

u3a Podcast

Don't forget to listen to the latest podcast. All episodes are available on YouTube so don't forget to **subscribe** so that you don't miss an episode.

Episode 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePUwjsF11jw>

CITIZEN SCIENCE



Plantlife is a British conservation charity working nationally and internationally to save threatened wild flowers, plants and fungi . We own nearly 4,500 acres of nature reserve across England, Scotland and Wales. **Plantlife** is based in Milford Street, in our city. Doing the Hunt should increase our confidence in identifying wild flowers. Over this spring and summer, Plantlife will have four different Hunts with over 70 different flowers to get to know. Starting with spring favourites, from the first yellows of celandines and primroses, through to bluebells and cuckooflower – and from the humble speedwell to glamorous wild orchids.

Register here to join in.....

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/wildflowerhunt/>

CREATIVE WRITING

FLASH FICTION is a very short story that uses few describing words and omits anything that is not necessary. Flash fiction is a complete story in which every word is absolutely essential, peeling away the frills and lace until you're left with nothing but the hard, clean core of a story.

Writing a story in 300 words was one of the exercises in the recent u3a Winter School Creative Writing class. Why not have a go? Write a story that takes place over breakfast, for example. OR retell a tale from Shakespeare or a classic novel - but stick to the word limit.

Send your flash fiction to townpump@hotmail.co.uk and I will share my effort with you.



OBC - open to all

The offering from the Occasional Book Club this month is a bit of a curiosity sparked by a visit to a Wiltshire churchyard. Described as a masterful blend of fiction, memoir, reminiscence and oral history, *A Shepherd's Life: Impressions of the South Wiltshire Downs* by W. H. Hudson - is now available as a free ebook that can be downloaded and read on a PC, Kindle, iPad, tablet etc. OR bought quite cheaply from abebooks.co.uk. It describes Salisbury as it once was and the village of Martin, known as Winterbourne Bishop, where the writer met the shepherd in question. The gravestone that marks the resting place of the shepherd is one of the first you see when entering the burial ground at Martin.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7415>

Please send your responses to the book, your thoughts, a sketch perhaps or a photograph of Martin, to townpump@hotmail.co.uk - as soon as you can, thank you.



u3a Podcast

Don't forget to listen to the latest podcast. All episodes are available on YouTube so don't forget to **subscribe** so that you don't miss an episode.

Episode 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePUwjsF11jw>

Just for fun

How many poems are referenced here?

I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree
 I'll sanitise the doorknob and make a cup of tea.
 I won't go down to the sea again, I won't go out at all,
 I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.
 There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of Kathmandu
 But I shan't be seeing him just yet and nor, I think will you.
 While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay
 I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.
 I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye
 Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.
 About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go
 To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow
 And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold.
 Or get to Milford Haven. All that's been put on hold.
 Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends
 Nor come within a mile of you, until this shit show ends.



ZOOM LINKS

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday April 12th from 10am

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

Meeting ID: 892 8027 5252

Passcode: 992811

TIPPLE TIME

Friday April 16th at 6pm

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

Meeting ID: 867 2567 5768

Passcode: 430899

COMING SOON

