



WELCOME to the summer edition of our newsletter. The picture shows the blossom on a very large tree spotted in the park on the recent coach trip to Lichfield. It was extremely striking, being a haze of purple flowers, no-one seemed to know its name but Google tells me it's a Foxglove Tree (*Paulownia Tomentosa*). Thank you to all contributors, we have news from the Cribbage and Table-Tennis groups, an interesting idea for butter from the Cookery group and some book reviews for you to consider.

From the Chair

Hello all. The blossoms are blooming, the birds are busy, the sun has shone and once again our AGM is upon us at our next monthly meeting on June 21st.

As chair, may I take this opportunity to thank all members of the Churchdown U3A for their continued support, and in particular those Committee Members, Group Leaders and volunteers who have given their time and commitment to making our U3A such a success over the years.

Having spent five years on the committee I feel that it is now time to step down and allow a new Chair to take the group forward and I look forward to handing over the reins in June.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank Roger Streatfield for his long service both as Chair and our Cotswold Link Coordinator.

Finally, in my role as interim Group Coordinator, I thank all the groups that I was able to visit for their warmth of welcome and for opening my eyes to interests that I would probably have passed by.
Paul Grierson

Membership Matters – Kate Methven

I have now completed almost a year as your Membership Secretary. It has been a privilege to hold the position and a joy to meet so many of you at the monthly meetings. I am slowly getting to know more of your names. Thank you for your patience as I have felt my way into this role.

I am sure we would all like to extend a warm welcome to our new members who have joined since the last UPDATE. They bring our membership up to 263 and it is wonderful to see Churchdown u3a thriving.

William Black	Chris Day
Bevis Oakes	Janet Day
Sheila Oakes	Michael Nadin
Alison Kelly	Colin Boulton
Mark Fleetwood	David Bastin
Barbara Baker	Carole Bastin
John Nind	Julie Forrest
Patrick Miles	Susan Casemore
Jacqueline Ellis	

See the new page on the website, accessed via the tab IT/SECURITY, for some advice around potential scams you may experience and how to deal with them. There are also useful links to other websites

GROUP NEWS



The Cribbage Group continues to meet twice a month in the Methodist Church in Chapel Hay Lane. Over the past 18 months, we have lost a couple of players to the siren call of the bridge group, but our core number has stayed consistent and we enjoy each other's company in our regular meetings. The good thing about cribbage is that two, three or four people can play together and one doesn't need to play with a regular partner – in fact, half the fun is switching around between the various members of the group. We have a break for tea/coffee and biscuits during the afternoon

which gives us a chance to exchange news and have a chat. **Diana Sinden.**

Cookery One of our members introduced us to the 'butter board'. Softened butter feathered out on a wooden board drizzled and sprinkled with various flavours, anything you fancy. For example: Sea salt, Lemon zest, Herbs, Edible flowers, Honey, Garlic, Figs if you're mad! Serve the board with freshly made bread and, of course, some flavours go very well with soup or cheese. The board isn't the point, it's the synergy thing!



We enjoyed celebrating the Coronation with decorations, party food to share along with a delicious trifle. Here are a couple of photos from this meeting. **Eve Anstis**





Our Table Tennis group has two two-hour sessions per week: Wednesdays 13:30 – 15:30 and Fridays 11:30 – 13:30. We play in the Sports Hall at the GL3 Community Hub in Cheltenham Road East (immediately opposite Tesco's) and have four tables that we can use. Currently, there are fourteen of us. Six of us play regularly on both days and the remainder only once a week.

We play for fun – but are very competitive at the same time. We usually - but not always - play doubles matches (best of three games scoring 1 to 11) and continually rotate who plays with whom during the two hour session. So, the best players play alongside those that are weaker. Those that wish to can also have some individual coaching sessions to help further improve their game.

The current age range of those who play is from 60 to 89. You're never too old to play table tennis and Sylvia (aged 89) is a case in point. In the accompanying photo she is the one wearing the striped jumper and is very capable of holding her own in this doubles match. However, if anyone under 60 is thinking of joining us, you would be very welcome, too. The inspiration of youth will always inspire us old-uns!



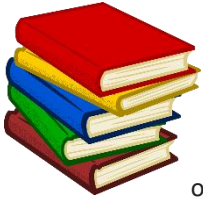
In between matches there are short interludes while we sort out who will play whom in the next match. This gives everyone the opportunity to get to know each other better. We are a very sociable lot and always welcome the arrival of new players.

So, if you are interested in trying us out and have some questions before you do, then please ring or text me on 07862 744630. Or, better still, why not come along to one of our sessions and try it out for yourself? You'll need to wear a pair of trainers in the Sports Hall. We can lend you a bat if you don't have your own and there is no charge for this trial session. We look forward to seeing you and hearing – as we all did when we joined the group – that the last time you played table tennis was 20, 30 or 40 years ago!

Syd Leuillette (Group Leader)

The newly formed **Ambling Group** has had its first outing. This is for those who enjoy a sociable walk around Churchdown without hills and styles. Kate Methven is the contact so do get in touch if you would like to join them. This group will meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 10am at the Parish Council Offices car park.





*My thanks to members of the **Book Group** who have sent the following reviews. I'm sure you'll find them interesting and informative and may even be inspired to try one for yourself. But first **Jenny***

Bowden writes: I joined the Book Group approximately four years ago and have been amazed by the breadth of reading we have covered, authors and titles I've never heard of! It has been a real eye-opener and has meant that we have all read books we would not otherwise have looked at - some enjoyed, others less so! Authors have ranged from Austen to Dean Koontz, Hemingway to Amitav Ghosh and many others. The month's book is rated by us all, with probably an average of 6 - 8 out of 10. This year we branched out a little by reading *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen and then watching the film and doing a comparison. We also looked at books related to *Pride and Prejudice*, with some reading *Mr Darcy's Diary*, *Longbourn* (story from the servants' point of view) *The Forgotten Sister* and *The Other Sister* (both about Mary). This led to an interesting discussion. The book group is very friendly, and although we don't always agree with each other, it is all taken in good part. After our discussions we have a cup of tea and biscuits and then talk about a topic for that month.

***The Penguin Lessons* by Tom Michell - A true Story**

Reviewer: Maggie Thomas

This moving story was published in 2016 and reveals a life-changing period of the writer's life in the seventies. As a young teacher from Sussex working in Argentina, he aims to have adventures, and experience places and people he has only ever dreamt of. He journeys through an undiscovered world, as much of it was in the 1970s by motorbike and train.

He travels all over the Southern part of Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, sleeping with indigenous tribes and accepting their warm hospitality. He describes wild and desolate landscapes and hundreds of miles of coastland full of sea creatures he's only seen in films: Sea elephants, sea lions, birds, whales, dolphins, and windswept beaches as far as the eye could see. All this is told so vividly it is as if I was there to see it and didn't want to stop reading.

He then rescues a penguin from a huge flock lying dead on a beach, choked by a massive oil slick. He takes the penguin back to his friend's flat and comically describes the way the penguin firstly tries to attack him, and eventually becomes his 'friend', wiggling his tail and jumping up and down with excitement when Tom returns with buckets of fresh sprats each day. He tries to return the bird to the sea, but each time it leaps back onto the rocks or beach and follows him, refusing to go back in.

After smuggling the newly named 'Juan Salvador' back to Argentina, and into the school he works in, he allows his pet to 'meet' colleagues and then the children, who are all mad keen to help. One child, an unhappy outsider and a 'mestizo' (mixed race), befriends the penguin and the results are life changing for him too. The presence of the wild creature living among them, radiating such joy and positive energy, is a 'lesson' to all the adults and children alike. The writer draws parallels on how so many of us have a close bond with a dog or other intelligent pet, and how they bring out human kindness in a special way.

The fact that the story is not only true, but also so vivid, poignant and funny, makes this book totally unforgettable.

***The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris**

Reviewer: Andy Puddicombe

Surprisingly our book club members gave a very positive response to this book although one or two members couldn't read it. However, I found it uplifting, even a "feel good" novel, with its love story and how that is resolved.

It's based on the account of Lale Sokolov, who was born into a Jewish family in Slovakia and begins in 1942, when he volunteers to be the one from his family who should go and work for the German Government, in order to avoid the whole family being taken to a concentration camp.

However, as history confirms, he was actually sent to Auschwitz and the rest of the novel describes his experiences there. What came across most strongly to me was Lale's desperation to survive. Initially, by accepting the job of tattooing the prisoners as they arrive, which involves scratching numbers into his fellow victim's arms in indelible ink. His motivation then manifestly increases when he meets Gita, and falls in love with her from the moment it comes to her turn to be tattooed.

His own character played a major part as he comes across as a bit of a "chancer", both before, during and after his time at Auschwitz and is shrewd enough to shape events where he can.

The book contains some horrifying accounts of what took place in Auschwitz up until it is liberated in 1945 but the story of how Lale and Gita spend their time so determined on survival, makes for a very moving tale.

The author's account at the end tells how she met Lale, some sixty years after the events at Auschwitz, and agreed to turn his tale into this novel. Her subsequent account of the research she carried out, including a trip to his home town in Slovakia added a further touch of reality to the novel as a whole.

At our meeting an interesting discussion took place over whether some of the victims were also guilty by their actions, such as collaborating with their captors, to aid their survival. In my view this is another reason for reading this powerful book.

Walking Group - Planned walks from June to August:

TUESDAY JUNE 20 TH	BEECHENHURST TRAIL 8 miles Dogs allowed, picnic lunch	KATE & PAUL METHVEN
TUESDAY JULY 11 TH	WEYMOUTH COACH TRIP 5-6 mile coastal walk with a picnic lunch Limited spaces available	MARY & TONY WHITE
THURSDAY JULY 20 TH	HANLEY SWAN 6 miles with a pub lunch One short incline and several stiles	PAUL GRIERSON
TUESDAY AUG 8TH	SHAW COMMON 8 miles with a picnic lunch	MARY WHITE
TUESDAY AUG 22ND	THE MALVERNS 5- 6 miles with a pub lunch	PAUL GRIERSON

CHURCHDOWN u3a SPEAKER PROGRAMME

June – December 2023

Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2pm
At Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Road, GL3 2JH

Date	Subject	Speaker
June 21st	History of Aviation in Gloucestershire	Simon Barry
July 19th	The Everyman Theatre	Caro Day
September 20th	The Story of Tin Pan Alley	Roger Browne
October 18th	A First-Generation Farmer	Chris North
November 15th	In Search of Bears and Cats	Pam and Frank Bryant
December 20th	A Gloucestershire Christmas	John Putley

As mentioned in March's newsletter to see gardens open under the NGS Exclusive Group Visits By Arrangement in June and July go to:

<https://ngs.org/Gloucestershire-by-arrangement>

Current Group List

Please contact the Group Convenor if you wish to join a group, or for more information go to our web-site: <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchdown>

Note: If you do not have the means to contact a convenor via the web page, please phone the Membership Secretary who will contact them for you.

Group Coordinator: **VACANCY**

Contact: Kate Methven, Membership Secretary on 07814 4933531 in the interim

Group	Convenor	Contact Details
Ambling	Kate Methven	07814 933531
Art History/Appreciation	Martin Bowden	01452 854007
Badminton	Eamonn Doherty	07946 341270
Book Club/Literature	Joyce Winwood	01452 715099
Bridge for All	Dave Bebbington	07587 151191
Cookery	Eve Anstis	01242 235833
Crafts	Wendy Martin	01452 714049
Creative Writing	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Cribbage	Diana Sinden	01452 698713
<i>Exploring Churchdown</i>	<i>Temporarily suspended</i>	
Family History	Di Medland	Contact via web page
Film and Cinema	Norman Davies	07957 994390
Gardening	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Garden Visits	Jane Moore	Contact via web-page
Industrial Heritage	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Italian Appreciation	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Lunch Club	Tom Arnot	01452 498934
Meditation	Sue Grierson	07783 061063
Petanque	Ann Stollery	Contact via web-page
Photography	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Politics	Roger Streatfield	01452 713498
Singing Together	Alan Winwood	01452 715099
Spanish (Language & Culture)	Maggie Thomas	01452 676751
Table Tennis	Syd Leuillette	01452 857039
Walking	Mary White	07817 007706
Wine Appreciation	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Yoga	Sue Grierson	07783 061063

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