



Blackwater Valley Newsletter

Volume 16 Edition 11

November 2023



California Dreamin’

Story Page 8

Chat from the Chair

Hello again, as we must all be saying, time is flying by!

Making a welcome return for our November meeting will be guest speaker David Allen.

Many may remember his previous and lively presentation. This time, David will regale us with 'MERRY CHRISTMAS MR DICKENS'. So, on 16TH NOVEMBER come but be prepared for a special fun afternoon!

Diary Date for December: Don't forget our Christmas Party on 21ST DECEMBER! Chat with friends, buffet table, the famous Punch, quizzes, 'musical variety' and a Christmas raffle!

Looking forward to meeting up with you all.

Regards
BARBARA



BOOKS...BOOKS...BOOKS

On asking around, it seems that a book table maybe a good idea.

On a trial basis, at our November meeting, a book exchange table will be in action. To start us off there'll be a variety of books (if not exchanging, a small donation per book would be appreciated –all for group funds). The idea is to swap not dump so can you Initially limit your offering to two books in good condition.

Forthcoming Meetings

This month November 16th

Return visit of the ever-popular **David Allen** presenting his unique brand of entertainment with ***"Merry Christmas Mr Dickens"***

December 21st

The Christmas Party: *"Carols and Entertainment"*

2004

January 18th

Chris Davis: *Ascot Brewery Today*

February 15th

Paul Whittle: *The Venetian Connection*

March 21st

Mel Rees: *[Further thoughts].*

April 18th

Sarah M. Slater: *The Ghosts of Hampton Court*

May 16th

Paul Barwick: *'White Mouse' Nancy Wake*

June 20th

Malcolm Wells: *'So Far So Good [2]*

Our last speaker

October's speaker Bobbie Darbyshire, entertained with **"A beginning, a muddle and an end: where do novelists get their ideas from?"**. She illustrated her points with quotes from a range of authors: Philip Roth, Robert Harris, Peter Carey, Ian Rankin, to name but a few.

Bobbie did Saturday book signings in Waterstones, introducing herself as a visiting author. She recounted a time when a man bellowed, 'No!' at her and later apologised for mishearing that she was a visiting orphan!

She said that writers often get initial inspiration from something problematic, so the story takes reader and writer on a journey of discovery. Most good novels are fiction, she emphasised, not thinly disguised autobiography, because for a novel you need structure, a narrative journey, suspense and surprise, character growth, and an author seeing beyond their own point of view.

She explained how questions and answers are the key to getting from the initial idea and a first tentative sentence to a whole complex, detailed novel. Anything you write raises questions and the ideas come gradually from trying to answer them. Her writers' group is a valuable source of questions she hasn't thought of or has been dodging.

Some writers write a first draft without planning. Others plan in detail before writing a word. Both methods have drawbacks, so instead she and many novelists form a rough idea of characters and story, notions of a few key scenes, and a sense of how the story will end, but then they start writing, guided by the sketch but not pushing the characters to follow it, observing how they act naturally, and continually asking questions about them. Stimulated by the invention, more invention follows. Bobbie recommended having a notebook for when inspiration strikes in the supermarket queue or at three in the morning.

She briefly described her five novels, and read short extracts from two of them. In her latest 'The Third Bus', an unappreciated man walks out of his dispiriting 42-year marriage with no destination in mind and, at Victoria coach station, boards a coach to Norwich in search of a new start. Her earlier novels are 'The Posthumous Adventures of Harry Whittaker', 'Truth Games', 'Love, Revenge & Buttered Scones', and 'OZ'. Bobbie brought along copies of her books, and several members bought copies.



Catching up with the Groups

MOTO

In October 10 of us enjoyed a Sunday lunch and a chat at The Cricketers, Cricket Hill.

In November our Sunday lunch will be at The Dog & Partridge in Yateley. Our Christmas Lunch will take place at The Crown & Cushion, Minley in December.

(It looks as if the dieting will have to begin in January!)

JUDITH SHAW (Phone: 0118 973 2724 Mobile: 07508 724876
e-mail: jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk)

THE PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The next meeting will be in the Gallery of the Tythings on Tuesday 28th November starting at **14.30 hrs.**

The subject matter is: Barriers

Contact: Philip Rowling 01252 870879
rowlingphilip@gmail.com

The Book Group

As we wander through the world of reading books together, we come across the good, the bad and the ugly. Plus in this month's book choice, the weird.

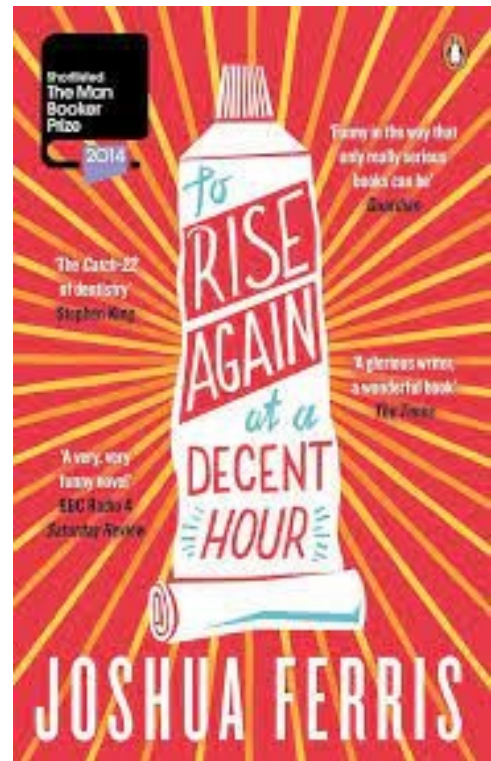
Joshua Ferris is the writer of *To Rise Again at a Decent Hour*, that is in my opinion a very weird book.

Running through it is quite a good little story line, and has a certain amount of comedy which made me laugh. However, and it is a big however, there are large sections of the book which are completely against my brain to understand exactly what is going on.

Paul O'Rourke is a New York dentist and an atheist. Someone steals his identity on line and that begins months of impersonating him. Paul commences a journey into finding out exactly who is taking over his life. The story goes down a very odd route where the real Paul begins to quite admire the on line Paul. On line Paul follows a very obscure religion, but seems happier in life than the real Paul. In the books defence there were some quite funny moments as real Paul records some hilarious confrontations with his patients.

Maybe one of the book club ladies will be able to explain the story to the rest of us. Also, I have no idea how the title of the book is anything to do with the actual story!

Our next meeting is Thursday 23rd November at 2 p.m.



WENDY DAUVEN



On a Musical Note

As previously mentioned, we'll be at the Tythings **WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON 29TH NOVEMBER** for our Songsters' Pre-Christmas Soiree! This has been brought forward from December as a large number will be at a Carol Concert in London.

Wednesday afternoon 6th December at 7 Sandhurst Lane.

Wednesday afternoon 3rd January 2024 at the Tythings.

During this time, we'll have a review of next year with diary dates and information from YTC etc.

See you soon.

BARBARA

Sorry to hear

We were extremely sorry to hear the news of the death of one of our Photography Group members Mel Nicholson and we extend our sincere condolences to Susan and her family.



Walking Together

Thank you to the six valiant walkers who defied the weather forecast and came along on our October walk from Finchampstead Church and back; with a stop at California County Park Café for lunch and along the way viewing the Autumn harvest and abundant fungi.

Luckily the weather was mostly dry and we all got back without getting too wet.

I led that one because Tony Buckle had swapped — he will now lead the November 9th walk, hopefully there will be fungus to find still.

MIN GARDINER



*For everyone with
memories of the 60's
All the leaves are brown
And the sky is gray
I've been for a walk
On a winter's day
I'd be safe and warm
If I was in L.A.
[not London Airport]*



The Art Group

The Art group meets at the Darby Green and Frogmore Social Hall Mondays between 11am and 1pm.

Suggested subjects for November is a montage made up from 8 separate sections from one master image, followed by the opportunity to paint your own bespoke Christmas card, and finally, to produce a piece based on fish.

We are open to all BVu3a members.

Contact; Martin Brooks 01252 871333 or thebrooksies73@gmail.com

u3a Lip-Reading Class – Online using Zoom

Hi,

I'm Tony Edens – currently running an online lip-reading class using Zoom.

It's free and its offered to U3A members.

We meet (virtually) every Friday morning from 10 am to 10:40 am.

If any of your members wish to join they should contact me on: ajedens@btinternet.com

An information sheet is attached for anyone interested.

Tony Edens

Zoom Lip Reading Group – free to U3A members - 2023-2024

Time and Dates: Every Friday Morning 10 am to 10:40 – starting 6 October, 2023

As we get older many people experience hearing loss. Its not that we can't hear other people talking, it's more the case that we CAN HEAR but we CANNOT UNDERSTAND what people are saying. This is because hearing loss tends to affect the high notes rather than the low notes and speech sounds muffled. Lip-reading helps to turn muffled sounds into meaningful dialogue.

The ZOOM Lip Reading Group is essentially a lip reading class but includes other related topics relevant to people experiencing hearing loss, including the structure and function of the ear, hearing charts and how to interpret them, techniques for coping in noisy situations etc.

For the lip reading work I plan to work through the recommended textbook :

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lip-Reading-self-help-textbook/dp/1530276853/>

Having your own copy will enable you to continue learning and practising between sessions by carrying out activities detailed in the chapters. It will also enable you to “catch-up” if you have to miss a session.

It is essential that participants are able to clearly see the teacher's face and lips. In a classroom about two metres distance is recommended. Now that we have moved to online we find that people can see and read lips better than in the classroom. Even those using hand-held computers. So most personal computers are suitable.

A link to the Zoom meeting will be emailed to you along with a password.

Click on this link a little before the start time and be prepared to wait, just as you would when going to a physical meeting. You will be put into the “virtual” waiting room and told to wait for the meeting to start.

I will start the meeting at 10 o'clock so that we get our full 40 minutes before Zoom cuts us off.

If you haven't used Zoom before clicking on the link will start the process of installing the Zoom app on your computer it doesn't take more than a few seconds – and you will then be able to join the meetings.

Online Lip Reading Meetings have the advantage that:

- Everyone has a front row view so you can hear and see the teacher better.
- Verbal contributions by members are more measured and easier to follow.
- No-one needs to travel
- No parking problems
- No need to go out in the cold or rain.

To join the group and receive the Zoom link to the weekly meetings email your name and the U3A branch to which you belong to Tony Edens (ajedens@btinternet.com)

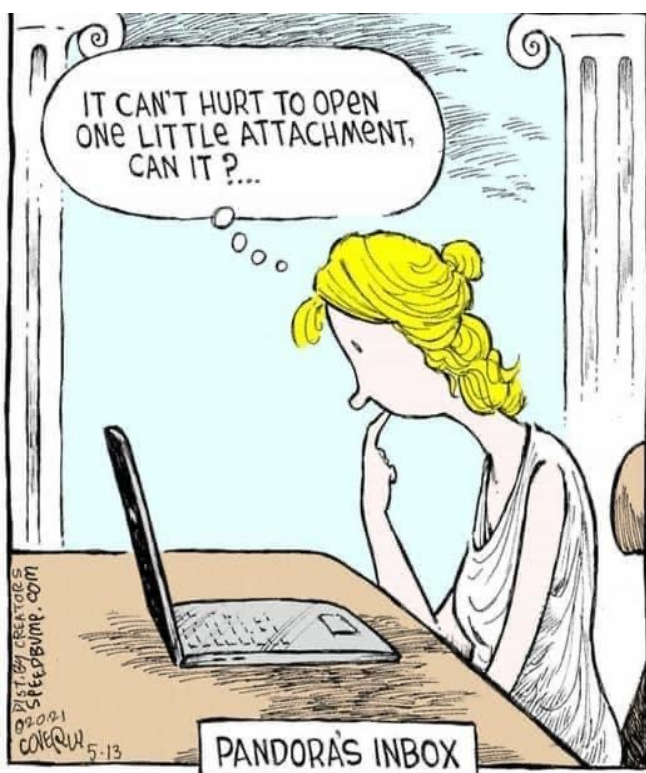
About time for some laughs

Nominees for the Idiot of the World Award Part 3

Number Five Idiot

A guy walked into a little corner store with a shotgun and demanded all the cash from the cash drawer.

After the cashier put the cash in a bag, the robber saw a bottle of Scotch that he wanted behind the counter on the shelf. He told the cashier to put it in the bag as well, but the cashier refused and said, "Because I don't believe you are over 21." The robber said he was, but the clerk still refused to give it to him because she didn't believe him. At this point, the robber took his driver's license out of his wallet and gave it to the clerk. The clerk looked it over and agreed that the man was in fact over 21 and she put the Scotch in the bag. The robber then ran from the store with his loot. The cashier promptly called the police and gave the name and address of the robber that she got off the license. They arrested the robber two hours later.



As I get older, all I need in life is a Specsavers, a Boots and a Greggs

Yep, life is all specs and drugs and sausage rolls!



Diane and Ken entertain

I have a Satnav; it sits there in my car.

A Satnav is a driver's friend, it tells you where you are.

I have a Satnav; I've had it all my married life.

It's better than the normal ones...this Satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive.

"It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty-five".

It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake,

And tells me that it's never, ever, safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green!

It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.

It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear.

And taking this into account, it specifies which gear.

I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device.

For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.

It fills me with counselling, each journey is pretty fraught.

So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?

Well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed.

It washes all my shirts and things and keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,

I only wish that now and then, I could turn it off!

We have a Winner!

*When did the Middleton's last win a draw?
The answer last month when Diane scooped
the Prize Draw but we doubt this will change
their nomadic summer travels.*



How about a Quiz?

November's here, winters near, the answers should be clear.

- 1) What is the most common disease in pirate ships?
- 2) When was the United Nations established?
- 3) How many faces does a dodecahedron have?
- 4) How many bones in a human ear?
- 5) What is a group of cows called?
- 6) What is the only human body parts fully grown from birth?
- 7) What is the largest known land animal?
- 8) In Fahrenheit at what temperature does water boil at sea level?
- 9) What is the largest organ in the human body?
- 10) The average human takes how many breaths per day?
- 11) What is the chemical symbol for salt?
- 12) In miles, how far away is the moon?
- 13) What colour is a giraffe's tongue?
- 14) How many bones does a shark have?
- 15) What was the first country to use paper money?

Questions set by Annie Cede

Next! Answers to last month's quiz

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1) What is the most common name in the USA? | Smith |
| 2) Where is the world's largest desert? | Antarctica |
| 3) How many teeth does an adult human have? | 32 |
| 4) What are animals that eat meat and plants called? | Omnivores |
| 5) Which country has won the most world cups? | Brazil |
| 6) In what year did the Titanic sink? | 1912 |
| 7) Which person inspired a Disney Princess? | Pocohontas |
| 8) What colour is a hippo's sweat? | Pink |
| 9) What is a "Bottle-O" in Australia? | Off Licence |
| 10) Who was the last Czar of Russia? | Nicholas II |
| 11) How many minutes in one week? | 10,080 |
| 12) Which continent is in all 4 hemispheres? | Africa |
| 13) What company was originally called Cadabra? | Amazon |
| 14) Which planet has the most gravity? | Jupiter |
| 15) What is the state capital of New York? | Albany |

Answers by Ellie Vait

More from Martin

Our sunflowers have finished,
But the runner beans have not.
Autumn is here,
But what a crop we got.

Next door's apples are dropping,
We've had delicious crumbles galore.
But we cannot use the plums -
They're rotting on the floor.

Loads of tomatoes we have eaten,
Grown by neighbours all around.
But everyone's have ripened,
At the same time is what we found.

Winter is now approaching,
It's getting quite cold at night.
So, wrap up warm from now on,
'til spring comes back in sight.

Cleverness is a quality I lack.
What is this skill we bring to task?
So simple.
I strive, to harness its benefit.
To no avail.
It can't be seen, it can't be touched,
Others possess it.
Why not me?

More random thoughts

Where there's a will, I want to be in it.

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

If I agreed with you, we would both be wrong.

We never really grow up. We only learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right – only who is left.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

In filling out an application, where it says, “In case of emergency – Notify:” I always put ‘DOCTOR’.

Women can never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still believe they are sexy.

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You need a parachute to skydive twice.

A good speech should be like a woman's skirt; long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest.

Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car,

You are never too old to learn something stupid.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Meg Thomson	01276 33727	megtho@ntlworld.com

Group Meetings

Art

Meetings: Darby Green and Frogmore Social Hall

11:00 – 13:00 on Mondays

Group Leader: Martin Brooks 01252 871333

thebrooksies73@gmail.com

Books

Meetings: Private House at 14.00 on the last Thursday of the Month

Group Leader: Wendy Dauven 01276 513984

wendyandpaul53@gmail.com

Bowls (Summer)

Meeting: Hawley Bowls Club, Blackwater & Hawley Leisure Complex

10:30 to 12:00 every Wednesday between April and September

Group Leader: Dave Dickinson 01252 879056

daviddickinson9@btinternet.com

Canasta

Meeting: Private House

14:00 2nd and 4th Wednesdays

Group Leader: Clive Singer 07901568126

clive.singer1@gmail.com

Gardening

Meeting: Private House

t.b.a.

Group Leader: Catharine Airey 07518745736

catharineairey@hotmail.co.uk

MOTO A group for 'members on their own'.

Meetings: Arranged monthly times various

Group Leader: Judith Shaw 0118 9732724

jmshaw17@hotmail.com

Photography

Meetings: The Tythings, Yateley

14:30 on every 4th Tuesday of the month

Group Leader: Phil Rowling 01252 870879

rowlingphilip@gmail.com

Rummikub

Meeting: Private House

To be arranged

Group Leader: Lyn Sado 01252 872221

sadlyn@ntlworld.com

Singing Group

Meetings: The Tythings Yateley

14:00 to 15:30 on the first Wednesdays of the month

Group Leader: Barbara Brooks 01252 871333

thebrooksies73@gmail.com

Various Sports

Table tennis, indoor curling, etc.

Meetings: Frogmore Leisure Centre

13:00 on Fridays

Group Leader: Val Green 07990 584571

greenvalley2043@gmail.com

Walking Together

A guided walk of about 5 miles

09.30 Meeting in the car park of Potley Hill Campus

Mornings Second Thursday of the month

Group Leaders: Min Gardiner 07450256948 xansamaz@aol.com

Rosemary White 01276 503813 romyandjohn@hotmail.com