

EDITOR'S LAST NOTE

An apt time to send my last Newsletter. I love the Winter Solstice – the year has turned, days will inch longer, the world start its journey warming toward the fresh greening of Spring.

I came into this role when I first moved to Wallingford six years ago. My intention was to assist Margaret Cone, then Editor – somehow she became a hard act to follow!

Margaret had brought our u3a into the digital age persuading members to take up email addresses to send a PDF to. Malcolm Brooks masterminded the transition to using Charity Digital mail agent to keep us safe from hackers/spammers & other low-life. I took it a step further sending the Newsletter out in this format.

I shall carry on managing the website, and maintaining the Groups Calendar. My email now is

contact@thamesidewallingfordu3a.org

I've enjoyed my time. I've learnt so much. The task has satisfied my inner geek and you've been a wonderful readership.

May the New Year bring you
peace, hope and all things achievable.

Cheers,
Sarah Robinson



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

I have returned from holiday in SE Asia. I communicated with the Committee whilst travelling on a bus from Lao Cai to Hanoi, possibly a first for a chair of your U3a.

I am unable to report on the November speaker but hopefully all went well. It was unfortunate that the title of the talk had to be changed at the last moment but these things do happen from time to time.

The December talk was held on the 11th of December. As always the December Meeting is held on the second Wednesday of the month and not on the usual third Wednesday.

You will have received your invitation to the Celebration lunch, many have booked. Please place your orders in early. Scroll down for the link to Booking.

I thank Sarah Robinson on behalf of the Committee for her work over the last 6 years. During this time she enhanced the newsletter. Producing a monthly document such as ours takes a great deal of time and skill and her contribution to the work of our u3a will be missed.

Sarah will carry on supporting the Groups Co-ordinator & Outings Committee, maintaining the website, and managing emails.

Malcolm Brooks and myself will produce the newsletters January onwards until a replacement is found or comes forward. See further below for the job description.

Finally all the Committee would like to wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Best wishes

Ian Shipton (Chairman)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Groups January Calendar (*see attached*)
- Committee Meeting – Mon 6th Jan 2:30pm
- Coffee Morning – Fri 10th Jan 10:30 (*Note the date change, back to usual in Feb*)
- Speaker Meeting – Wed 15th Jan 2:00
- Celebration Lunch – Fri 24th Jan 12:30 (*Booking deadline midday 6th Jan*)
- Jan – Outing replaced by Celebration Lunch

COFFEE MORNING

Usually first Friday every month – Wallingford Methodist Church St Leonard's Square OX10 0AS
Many thanks to Pam & Ken Johnstone for serving at the December Coffee Morning.

NOTE: Jan Coffee Morning is put back a week from 3rd to 10th Jan

It's now Fri 10th Jan – 10:30am 'til midday.

Pam & Ken Johnstone serving (don't forget to bring some contribution change)

CELEBRATION LUNCH

Friday 24th January at Badgemore Golf Club

Thank you from Jane for all the bookings received so far. She looks forward to seeing you all.

There's still room for a few more. Please be sure to book by midday 6th January

See separate Invitation for more information, what's on the menu and how to book.

SPEAKER MEETING

third Wednesday 2:00 pm every month at St Mary's Church Wallingford

2:00 pm Wednesday 15th Jan – 'Dressing for War'

Julie Summers returns to tell us about the Vogue editor, Audrey Withers, from the Blitz to the Swinging Sixties. Audrey was described as the most powerful woman in wartime London. Sometimes working from a bomb cellar in New Bond Street, she kept Vogue magazine going in the toughest of circumstances.

SPEAKERS 2025 *More description given on our website.*

19 Feb – Jim Holmes: Japan, Bowing to Tradition

19 March – Paul Barwick: Nancy Wake, a Most Remarkable Spy

16 April – John McCormick: Are Computers Really that Smart?

21 May – Peter Walker: Military Surveys Past and Present

18 June – Dr Kathryn Harkup: Death by Shakespeare, Snakebites, Stabbing and Broken Hearts

16 July – Barry Venning: Cartoons and Contraptions

20 Aug: no Speaker, Summer Lunch instead

17 Sept – Brian Greenan: The Brinks-Mat Robbery

15 Oct – Alastair Lack: The BBC World Service - my life as a Foreign Correspondent

19 Nov – Peter Adamson: A Town Called Wallingford

10 Dec – Siobhan Clarke: A Royal Christmas

GROUPS

JANUARY Calendar *(see pages 9-10) for full list of our 67 Groups and their meet-up dates.*

If you want to join or form a group, then please contact

Groups Coordinator Yvonne Griffiths *(her contact details given separately)*

39 GROUPS with SPACES * = 5 New Groups

Antiques, Art & Painting

Birdwatching 1, *Board Games, Book 2, Book 3

Craft, *Cribbage 2, *Current Affairs 3, Cycling

Environment & Climate Change, Film Appreciation 1, *Film Appreciation 2, French 4

Genealogy 1, Genealogy 3

Jazz Appreciation, Latin, *Line Dancing

Mahjong, Music Performance

Pétanque, Photography, Play Reading 2, Ramblers Too, Recorder Consort

Science, Seminar, Spanish, Sunday Lunch 3, Sunday Lunch 4

Ukulele

Walk Longer 2, Walk Moderate 2, Walk Moderate 3, Walk Shorter 2, Walk Shorter 3

Whist, Writing Life History.

5 NEW GROUPS: contact Yvonne Griffiths if you are interested.

***CRIBBAGE 2**

***CURRENT AFFAIRS 3**

***LINE DANCING**

Thank you Penny Legg and Linda Parkin for coming forward as conveners.

Venue: Benson Parish Hall

Every second Thursday 11.30-12.30 from 9th January 2025.

£5 per session - but can members pay £15 non-refundable up front for first session of 3 months (non-refundable if a session is missed) until we see how finances work out.

We need at least 12 committed members each month to cover costs.

***FILM APPRECIATION 2**

Alan Rance is happy to initially be the convener for this Group to get it 'off the ground'.

Members meeting up to discuss a particular film. Meeting in member's homes in the evening.

Alan is proposing meeting the 2nd Wed in the month at 7:30

***BOARD GAMES**

This is a group whereby members can bring along their favourite games to join with others to play and learn new ones at a central venue. Games such as Rummikub, Back gammon, draughts, chess etc and could include card games such as Bridge and Cribbage etc.

A suitable venue will be sourced if we have enough interested members.

GROUP RESOURCES

If any Groups or Conveners are stuck for topics, or need to expand their knowledge base, the u3a Third Age Trust have a huge resource. www.u3a.org.uk/learning

Also there's the Open University free learning Courses www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses Maybe of particular interest & use to the History, Science, Environmental and Current Affairs Groups?

CALLING ALL MATHEMATICIANS.....

A member is studying with the Open University. She has accumulated many Maths degree module study books across all three levels. She says MT365 was the most fun!

She would like to offer them on loan to members in our u3a. If you are interested let me, Sarah, know and I will liaise.

contact@thamesidewallingfordu3a.org

The module titles are:

- Essential Mathematics 1 (MST124)
- Essential Mathematics 2 (MST125)
- Introducing Statistics (M140)
- Engineering the Future (T174)
- Mathematical Methods, Models & Modelling (MST210)
- Pure Mathematics (M208)
- Applications of Probability (M343)
- Computational Applied Mathematics (MST374)
- Complex Analysis (M337)
- Deterministic & Stochastic Dynamics
- Graphs, Networks & Design (MT365)
- The Quantum World (SM358)
- Quantum Physics (SM380)



Only Mathematicians & Physicists can predict what the cat is up to!

OU Maths Degree Courses: www.open.ac.uk/courses/math/degrees
Who knows, maybe this could be the start of a Maths Group?

OUTINGS

Update from Ken Johnstone, Outings Co-ordinator:

No trip in January because of the Celebration Lunch
Outings Committee are having a month off in February

Watch this space for the Outings we've planned for rest of the year.

Looking forward to seeing you on the first 2025 trip in March!



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

So, is there anybody to take over?

Someone who:

- Delights in combining words & images?
- Takes pleasure in keeping everyone up to date?
- Wants to keep their IT publishing skills honed?
- Has good proofreading skills?



Do come forward if this is the perfect role for you.

Contact Ian Shipton (Chair & temp Editor) newsletter@thamesidewallingfordu3a.org

PRINTED NEWSLETTER

This opportunity is still open.

It involves about one hour a month.

Each month we post a printed version of the Newsletter to 15 members who don't have email addresses, .

Can you help out?

You'll need copy/paste & formatting skills, print address labels, purchase 2nd class stamps & envelopes (all expenses refunded to you), stuff them, and walk/drive to a post box.

Simples!

If this is the perfect role for you, please contact

Ian Shipton (Chair & temp Editor) newsletter@thamesidewallingfordu3a.org

CONTACT US

Contact any of the below

via our Contact page www.thamesidewallingfordu3a.org/contact-page

or at any Coffee Morning or Speaker Meeting.

COMMITTEE 2024/25

Chairman – Ian Shipton
Deputy Chairman – Ken Johnstone
Treasurer – Tony Fenner
Secretary – Hilary Bailey
Meeting Minutes – Jane Milne
Membership Secretary – Anna Gordon
Database Administrator – Malcolm Brooks
Thames Valley Network Rep – Neil Kelly
Committee – Bob Ferguson
Newsletter – Ian Shipton & Malcom Brooks
Website & Calendar – Sarah Robinson

COORDINATORS:

Groups Co-ordinator – Yvonne Griffiths
Speakers Co-ordinator – Jane Tuckett
Outings Co-ordinator – Ken Johnstone
Speaker Refreshments – Richard & Ros Steptoe
Coffee Mornings Rota – Pam Johnstone
Accessibility & Inclusivity – Jane Milne

MONTHLY EVENTS:

Coffee Morning - first Fri 10:30
Speaker Meeting - third Wed 2:00
Groups - once a month or more
Outings - once a month

ANNUAL EVENTS:

JAN - Celebration Lunch
FEB - New Members Tea
MAR - Group Conveners Thank You Party
APR - Membership Subscriptions due
MAY - AGM
AUG - Summer Lunch Party
OCT or SEPT - Annual Holiday Outing
DEC - Speaker Meeting with a Xmas theme

The January Newsletter & beyond will be edited by
Ian Shipton & Malcolm Brooks.

They're best contacted
newsletter@thamesidewallingfordu3a.org

I wish them the best of luck.



DID YOU KNOW?

As at December there are now 507 members in our Thameside Wallingford u3a.

Over 60% of us (300+ people) are in one or more Groups.

We are spread across 39 towns & villages.

273 (54%) members live in Wallingford & adjacent locations:

Wallingford (236) Crowmarsh Gifford (36) Winterbrook (1).

234 (46%) members live in thirty-six nearby towns & villages:

Benson (66) Berinsfield (2) Berrick Salome (1) Blewbury (3)
Bramcote (1) Brightwell-cum-Sotwell (23) Britwell Salome (1)
Cholsey (44) Christmas Common (2)
Didcot (3) Dorchester-on-Thames (6)
East Hagbourne (4) Ewelme (6)
Goring-on-Thames (6) Henley-on-Thames (1)
Ipsden (3) Ivybridge (1)
Little Stoke (1) Long Wittenham (5)
Marsh Baldon (2) Mongewell (3) Moulsoford (9)
Newington (2) North Moreton (5) North Stoke (3)
Pangbourne (1)
Sandford on Thames (1) Shillingford (4) Sonning Common (1)
South Moreton (1) Stoke Row (3) Sutton Courteney (1)
Warborough (1) Whitchurch on Thames (1)
Winnersh (2) Woodcote (15).

We are 70% women & 30% men.

Looking at names, 405½ (80%) of you share your first name with at least one other member.

The remaining 101½ of you are unique!

The top six name groups of our shared names league are:

John x 21
(Sue, Susan, Suzanna, Suzie) x 20
(Jan, Jane, Janet, Janice, Janie) x 18
(Ann, Anna, Anne, Annette) x 12
(David, Dave) x 12
(Patricia, Pat) x 11

Top marks to the Dave's & Anna's for being still fairly popular nationally – the rest plummeted!

If you find this somewhat intriguing, then take a look at uk.gov Office for National Statistics & see how the trend for your name has changed over the decades.

TREVOR THE TURKEY

Back in the Lockdown days we expanded the Newsletter pdf to make up for no live sociable contact. Many members contributed photos, stories, quizzes, links to other online initiatives (a gospel choir on Zoom for example). They all proved to be witty, wise and creative. Thank you all of you, you helped pull us through hard times. One member penned a ten articles under the pen name Oxyfauna, featuring different animals such as lined up above. The flea article was both hilarious and itchy!

So, may I offer you two of Oxyfauna's articles from Dec 2020 & Jan 2021 Newsletters.

(other Newsletters can be viewed on our website Archive page)

I will now reveal Oxyfauna's true identity - Mike Sedman!

TREVOR THE TURKEY

Lockdown Christmas 2020

Hello, I am Meleagris Gallopavo or you may prefer to call me Trevor. It won't matter that much because I will not last long. I will really be enjoyed on Christmas Day but after a week of cold meat, turkey soup, risotto, curry, stew, parson's nose and leftovers you will be thoroughly fed up with me; but don't forget to keep the stock!

At the moment I am very happy in my barn with all my friends and nice ladies to whom I can display my impressive parts unaware of my impending doom! (sorry Frazer) I bet you don't know that I have a, a snood, caruncle and a wattle, all useful tools for flirting!

My ancestors were native to North America but how they got their name is unclear. One theory is that when guinea fowl were being imported to America from Turkey via Istanbul they were incorrectly identified and called Turkey coques – and somehow the name has stuck.

Forty five million years ago we split up from our cousins the chickens and ever since have been rivals for the dining table. Not so long ago in 1843 Dickens wrote that Scrooge sent the Cratchit family a turkey for Christmas and then the Americans took over to celebrate Thanksgiving with turkey. Again, in the nineteen hundreds the western world went mad with the Turkey trot which developed in to the more sedate foxtrot in 1914.

By the way turkeys can fly but I have no need to because anyway I am now too fat and the farmer's wife gives me a nice stroke and cuddle every day, which I love. I don't "talk turkey" but I do love music and cluck along with the tunes.

Towards the end of this month you will "gobble" me up.

Do enjoy me because there are a lot of hatchlings waiting in the "wings" and we all must make way for the next generation.

Must we??

Have a very happy and full Christmas!!

Oxyfauna



BORIS THE BORER

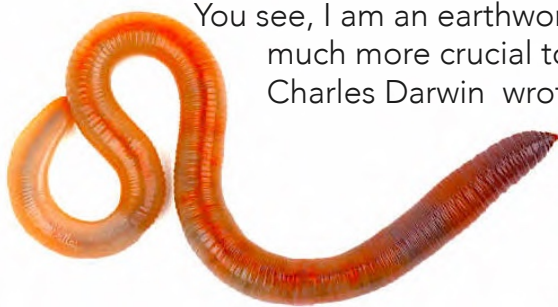
Lockdown New Year 2021

by Oxyfauna

(who also penned last month's "Trevor the Turkey")

Hello! I am the earth's tunneller and my name is Boris the Borer.

The other day, as I was working my way just underneath the soil, I sensed a pitter patter and a bit of squeaking above so I went up to investigate. Lo and behold there was a woodpecker (October) and a tiny bat (November) chatting about their lifestyles. As mine is so much more interesting I thought I would let them get on with it and tell you a bit about me.



You see, I am an earthworm (not a "boring" Brexit politician) and I am much more crucial to the environment than they are.

Charles Darwin wrote

"there are few animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world than the earthworm."

No wonder I am known as the eco system engineer. Due to my constant eating (up to half my bodyweight a day) I provide a natural way of improving soil structure and fertility as it aerates the soil, improves drainage and brings nutrients to the surface. I make natural fertilizer and if there are a typical 500,000 to 1 million of my friends in one acre we make more than fifty tons of extremely valuable castings.

Oh dear! I hope you are not dropping off because I am so "boring"!!!

There's more! As I am very slim and about one foot long, I need five hearts to pump my blood around. I have no lungs, arms, legs or eyes and I breathe through my skin, so it must be kept moist. I am a hermaphrodite but still need a mate. I have muscles that go round me and others that run the length of my body, which enable me to get around. Finally, if you feel so sadistic as to cut me in two, I probably wouldn't survive so please don't try!



You will know that we brought tobacco from America, but what you may not know is that we took worms over to North America with the early settlers during the 1600's and 1700's. Their land lost all its worms, it is thought, during the last ice age some 10,000 to 50,000 years ago.



I wonder who got the better deal courtesy of the ancestors of Boris the Borer???



Oxyfauna

GROUPS CALENDAR JANUARY 2025



67 GROUPS	Time	Date	FREQUENCY	66 MEET-UPS THIS MONTH	64 CONVENERS
+ Antiques	10:30	Wed 22	FOURTH WED	New conveners.	Anne Stammers Jane Franklin
+ Art & Painting	9:45	-	Usually FIRST THU	Not this month. Next meeting Thur 6th Feb.	Angie Thorrington
+ Birdwatching 1	Daytime	Thu 2	FIRST THU		Rosemary Garner
Birdwatching 2	Daytime	Thu 23	FOURTH THU		Pamela Johnstone
+ Board Games		TBA		NEW GROUP Rummikub, backgammon, draughts, chess, cards.	TBA
Book 1	2:30	Tue 14	SECOND TUE		Sue Taylor
+ Book 2	10:30	Thu 23	FOURTH THU		Diana Young
+ Book 3	2:30	Wed 8	SECOND WED	We each read a book of our choice & talk about it to the group.	Sheila Findlay
Book 4	2:00	Thu 16	THIRD THU		Elizabeth Glover
Book 5	2:30	Mon 27	FOURTH MON		Margaret Wiggall
Book 6	2:30	Thu 9	SECOND THU		Penny Legg
Book 7	2:00	Wed 15	THIRD WED		Hilary Major
Broader Music	2:00	Tue 7	FIRST TUE		Yvonne Parks
Classical Music 1	2:00	Tue 28	FOURTH TUE		Mike Sedman
Classical Music 2	2:30	Thu 16	THIRD THU		John Cozens
+ Craft	11:30	Fri 17	THIRD FRI		Pat Darlaston
Cribbage 1		-		On hold until March	Joyce Kent
+ Cribbage 2	2:00	Thu 2	FIRST THU	NEW GROUP - Bean & Brew upstairs.	Teresa Harrison
Current Affairs 1	2:30	Thu 2	FIRST THU		Neil Kelly
Current Affairs 2	2:00	Mon 6	FIRST MON		Val Mowlam
+ Current Affairs 3	11:00	Mon 13	SECOND MON	NEW GROUP - first meeting	Suzanna Rose
+ Cycling	9:30	Fri 10	SECOND FRI	Meet in Wallingford Market Square	Ian Shipton
+ Environment & Climate Change		Tue 14	SECOND TUE		Catherine Somerville
+ Film Appreciation 1	pm	Wed 1	FIRST WED		Jenny Houston
+ Film Appreciation 2	7:30	Wed 8	SECOND WED	NEW GROUP	Alan Rance
French 1	10:30	Thu 16	THIRD THU		Janet Franklin
French 2+3		Tue 7	FIRST TUE		Margaret Husband
		Mon 20	THIRD MON		Marion Shipton
+ French 4	2:30	Mon 27	FOURTH MON		Jill De Beger
+ Genealogy 1		Mon 20	THIRD MON		Linda Matthews
Genealogy 2	10:30	Tue 14	SECOND TUE		Mary Cozens
+ Genealogy 3		Fri 17	THIRD FRI		Chris Woodrow
History 1	10:00-12:00	Wed 1	FIRST WED		Mike Sedman
History 2	2:00	Fri 17	THIRD FRI		Patricia Shields

History 5	2:00	Wed 22	FOURTH WED		Ray Verrall
+ Jazz Appreciation	2:30	Thu 9	SECOND THU		Trevor Cotton
+ Latin	10:30	Wed 15	THIRD WED		Roger Morgan
+ Line Dancing	11:30-12:30	Thu 9	SECOND THU	NEW GROUP Benson Parish Hall First meeting Thu 9 Jan £5 a session.	Penny Legg Linda Parkin
+ Mahjong	11:30-1:30	Tue 14	SECOND TUE		Hilary Major
	11:30-1:30	Tue 28	FOURTH TUE		
+ Music Performance		Thu 23	LAST THU		Alan Rance
+ Pétanque	11:00 7, 14, 21, 28		EVERY TUE	Wallingford Sports Park, £4 session or £60 annual Pétanque Wallingford Club	Alan Rance
+ Photography	10:00	Fri 24	FOURTH FRI		Ken Johnstone
Play Reading 1	9:45	~	USUALLY FIRST WED	Not this month (New Year's Day!) Usually Corn Exchange, Wallingford	Philippa Davies
+ Play Reading 2	pm	Mon 13	SECOND MON		Dorothy Tarrant
Poetry Reading		Wed 8	SECOND WED		Jill Cooney
+ Ramblers Too		Wed 1	FIRST WED	4-6 miles New Year Walk!	Robert Ferguson
Rambling		Thu 9	SECOND THU	5-6 miles	Philip Richardson
+ Recorder Consort		Tue 21	THIRD TUE		Myron Edwards
+ Science		Tue 21	THIRD TUE	More members welcome	Anna Harvey
Scrabble 1	2:00-4:00	Mon 20	THIRD MON		Sarah Masters
Scrabble 2	2:30	Thu 9	SECOND THU		Marion Millard
+ Seminar		Mon 27	FOURTH MON		Gloria Hamilton-Peach
+ Spanish		Wed 15	THIRD WED		Val Mowlam
Sunday Lunch 1		Sun 19	THIRD SUN		Ken Gough
+ Sunday Lunch 3		Sun 26	LAST SUN		Janet Fenner
+ Sunday Lunch 4	1:00	Sun 19	FOURTH SUN	This month is Sun 19th Jan. Feb back to usual fourth Sunday.	Sylvia Castelow-Sturges Robert Castelow-Sturges
+ Ukulele	2:00	Mon 6	FIRST MON		Helen Futcher
Walk Longer 1		Wed 22	FOURTH WED	8-10 miles	Jane Randle Rita Gregory
+ Walk Longer 2		Wed 8	SECOND WED	7-9 miles	Dave MacArthur
Walk Moderate 1		Wed 8	SECOND WED	6-7 miles	Julia West
+ Walk Moderate 2		Tue 7	FIRST TUE	5-7 miles	Carol McKearney
+ Walk Moderate 3		Tue 21	THIRD TUE	5-7 miles	Julia West
Walk Shorter 1	9:30	Wed 1	FIRST WED	3-5 miles New Year Walk! start from Wallingford Market Place	Ken Johnstone Pamela Johnstone
+ Walk Shorter 2		Thu 9	SECOND THU	3-5 miles	Heather Delaney
+ Walk Shorter 3		Thu 23	FOURTH THU	3-5 miles	Julia West
+ Whist	2:00	Thu 16	THIRD THU	Cholsey Pavilion - £5 fee per person	Hilly Bailey
Writing for Pleasure	10:30	Mon 13	SECOND MON	Topic choices agreed by & emailed to members each month	Carolyn Newbert
+ Writing Life History	10:30	Fri 10	SECOND FRI		Margaret Pritchard