

### Bridge Group

This group meets on the second Wednesday of each month from 10.30 to 12.30. If you are interested in joining, please contact the group convenor: Berly Brown at [bkb@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:bkb@tinyworld.co.uk) or 01491 613251



### Lunch Group

The next lunch will be on Wednesday 22nd October 2025 at the Shepherd's Hut, Ewelme, OX10 6HQ, organised by Ann McDevitt. Meeting at 12 noon for 12.30pm. If you would like to join us, all details can be found on the notice board. Sign up and please select your choice from the menus.

**The Second Art Group** that used to meet at Pryton Village Hall on Thursday afternoons has moved to the West Room Watlington. Meeting on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 10.30 am till 12.30pm

**There are spaces available for this group**

### WRITING FOR FUN

Our present topic is 'Wild Swimming.' However, while pondering what to write, we have just heard that Oxfordshire Libraries are relaunching their Short Story Competition. This seems to have galvanised us into action, with some of us looking through past stories in the hope of finding an appropriate piece of writing and others tackling something new. Of course, the competition isn't restricted to Writing Group members, but any non-member who enters will be badgered into joining our group!

**Carol Nail**

**Editor, Peter Dollman,**

**Articles for the Newsletter need to be sent to [peterdollman52@hotmail.com](mailto:peterdollman52@hotmail.com) by the 2nd Wednesday of the month**

**Please visit our new website for news of Ridgeway u3a and TVN events <http://ridgeway.u3asite.uk> Registered Charity number 120292**



# Ridgeway u3a

## Newsletter September 2025

**Issue No 191**

### Coffee and Catch-up

We have tables booked at the Spire & Spoke, Hill Road, Watlington, for Friday 26th September, from 11am. We look forward to seeing you there.



### Tuesday Reading Group

#### 'Wavewalker' by Suzanne Heywood

This is a memoir of the author's childhood spent from the age of 7 with her brother and parents on a 70ft schooner sailing round the world in an attempt to follow Cook's third journey in 1776.



A three year journey becomes ten years. It is an account of the conflicts of this life Sue is living, the confinement of the children yet freedom for the parents.

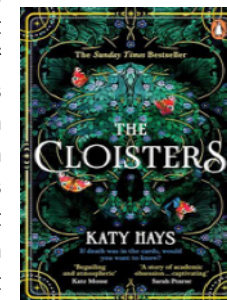
Some of us were disappointed that we did not learn anything about the beautiful places visited. We found it a harrowing but compelling read which took us through violent storms, near death experiences and parental neglect together with lack of education which she struggles to achieve and finally overcomes.

**Jane Kilroy**

### Red Lion Book Group

#### The Cloisters by Katy Hays

This book was set in a part of the New York metropolitan art museum. It tells the story of Ann who moves from Washington State to work in The Cloisters. It is a story about artefacts and in particular Tarot cards. It is a strange Gothic tale of love, greed, wealth and murder. There are four main characters, it weaves to a very tight climax and left me feeling quite



disturbed by the outcome. I was glad I read it, but it was quite hard work.

**Claire Parsons**

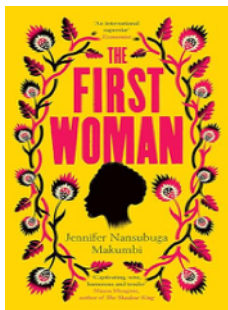
### Monday reading Group

"We enjoyed a good and wide-ranging discussion but unfortunately it was a thumbs down from the majority of us for our latest book 'The First Woman' by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi. Comments were that it was too long and it was difficult to distinguish the different characters due to similar sounding names being used. The book did however give us some insight into the culture and socio-economic influences in Uganda during and after the Idi Amin period.

**Barbara Noakes**

### Local History Group

On Tuesday 23rd September we will visit Combe Mill, a historic sawmill which once served the Blenheim estate. The rare beam engine and waterwheel have been preserved together with craftsmen's tools. There is also a historic tower clocks collection. A history talk will be given by volunteers, followed by a guided tour of the mill and tea (with cake!). The talk will begin at 1.30 p.m., and in view of this we plan to meet at the George & Dragon, Long Hanborough, for a light lunch at 12.30; alternatively, you can just meet the group at the mill at 1.30. The cost will be £12 to cover



admission, history talk, tour and tea, payable to Judith or by bank transfer. If you are interested in coming, please let David Parker (davidwilliamparker@outlook.com, 07855 944372) or Judith (judith.pernette@btinternet.com, 01844 281270) know ASAP. On Wednesday 15th October we are planning a guided tour of Rotherfield Greys church, near Henley.

### Thinking of booking a holiday or cruise?

Book any holiday or cruise with Riviera Travel and mention your u3a (at the time of booking) to have 10% of the basic holiday cost donated to the Third Age Trust for the benefit of your local u3a. **Check out the website: Riviera Travel-Award Winning River Cruises, Escorted Tours and Solo Holidays**

### Last Speakers Meeting Curiouser and Curiouser

Since Alice had her adventures in Wonderland, Curiouser and Curiouser has become a popular idiom for describing something puzzling, strange or just plain odd and it aptly describes the subject matter of Alan Copeland's recent talk to Ridgeway u3a on Curiosities in the Chilterns.

Alan began his fascinating and graphically illustrated odyssey in the Marlow area with an



*Maharajah's Well, Stoke Row, Photo: Alan Copeland*

old-fashioned black and white milestone which, for some apparently odd reason, shows the distance from Marlow to Hatfield as well as more obvious destinations such as London. Not so odd when you know that the route from Hatfield to Marlow, and onward to Bath, was constructed by the wealthy and influential Cecil family who lived at Hatfield House and travelled to Bath to take the waters; they could well afford to install milestones showing the distances along the route which indeed came to be known as 'The Government Track'.

We continued around the Chilterns with Buddhist stupas in woodland near Marlow Bottom, past an underpass for Toads on the Marlow to Henley road and on to St Bride's Church spire, originally on St Bride's Church in London, but bought by the owner of Park Place Estate and moved to Remenham in 1837 to celebrate Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. Alan paused in Nettlebed to show us the Brick Drying Kiln, built in the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century and said to be the only one of its kind in the country, before moving past Watlington's tin plate shop signs and building offering the services of a Tallow Chandler, to the infamous 'Shark in the Roof' in Headington, courtesy of the late BBC Oxford presenter, Bill Heine.

The end of our journey took us to Stoke Row and the Maharajah's Well, completed in 1864 and a gift to the poor people of Stoke Row from the Maharajah of Benares. The gift originated from the friendship between the Maharajah and the local squire, and East India Company official, Edward Reade. The Maharajah

was fascinated by Reade's tales of the Chilterns and the difficulties for the poor people of Stoke Row in obtaining clean water. The grand canopy, based on a pavilion at the Maharajah's palace, was added in 1865 and the splendid golden elephant followed in 1871.

Join us at St Leonard's Church, Watlington at 2.30pm on Tuesday 21 October when Hayley Scott will be filling us in on 'A day in the life of a Metropolitan Crime Scene Investigator'. Non-members (£4 fee) and members (free) are welcome. Refreshments will be served following the talk.

**Ellen Froggatt**

**(froggattellen@gmail.com)**



### Trip to BMW

In July a small group of ladies enjoyed a visit to the BMW factory in Oxford (Cowley). Here they produce 800 to 1000 cars a day. Steel parts from Swindon and engines from Plant Hams Hall Birmingham together with parts from all over the world. During our guided tour we were told there are 3500 people and 1200 robots + 100 robots in the paint shop. We were transported in a minibus between buildings so just walking in the various buildings. It is easy to book ticket online.

**Berly Brown**