

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 or 01491 613251



WRITING FOR FUN

We meet on the third Monday of each month at 2.30 in a member's house. Our topic for November is 'A Sense of Loss.' If at all interested, you are very welcome to attend a meeting to give you an idea of how we operate. The name of the group might inspire one or two of you to take up your pen, or more likely, start tapping on your iPads.

For further information, please contact **Carol Nall**, carolmarynall@gmail.com

Christmas lunch

Will be on Wednesday 3rd December 2025, at 12.30pm, at the Peacock Country Inn, Henton, Chinnor, OX39 4AH.

2 courses £37.50, 3 courses £44.00, including 10% service charge (see additional pdf for the menu). Add your menu selection to the list at the Speaker Meeting or email it to Peter Dollman. **Please ensure you have paid in full by the November Speaker Meeting.**



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: www.rivieratravel.co.uk Riviera Travel—Award Winning River Cruises, Escorted Tours and Solo Holidays.**

Subscriptions for 2025/6 were due on 1st November.

Many thanks to all those who have already paid. Judith will be pleased to accept payment at the Speakers meeting if you wish to pay by cheque or cash but the easiest way for most members will be by bank transfer.

Details are on the website or on a flyer available at meetings.

There is no re-application form but if you have changed any of your contact details, please let Judith know as soon as possible.

Editor, Peter Dollman,

Articles for the Newsletter need to be sent to peterdollman52@hotmail.com by the 2nd Wednesday of the month

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



Ridgeway u3a

Newsletter November 2025

Coffee and Catch-up

We have tables booked at the Spire & Spoke, Hill Road, Watlington, for Friday 28th November, from 11am. We look forward to seeing you there.



Tuesday Reading Group

The Safekeep by Yael van der Wouden was our book for October.

This is a novel set in The Netherlands in 1961. It is a story about an old house and the families that have lived there. It is full of atmosphere, memories, secret past and possessiveness.

This is a much acclaimed book that was shortlisted for last year's Booker Prize so we all had high hopes but none of us really enjoyed it. Nevertheless it gave rise to much discussion and we all agreed that the



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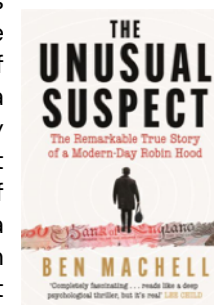
historical background was very interesting.

Jane Kilroy

Monday Book Club

The book discussed this month was **'The unusual suspect'** by journalist **Ben Machell**. This

was based on the true-life story of Stephen Jackley, a university geography student who thought of himself as a modern-day Robin Hood. He carried out a number of, mainly unsuccessful, bank robberies with the intention of using the money to help the poor and the deprived, and environmental causes. He was eventually captured in the USA when attempting to buy a firearm and served time in prison there. He was eventually returned to the UK before being tried. He served a prison sentence before being released and rebuilding his life.



Most of the members present had either read the book completely or enough to form an opinion and comment. Although it stimulated discussion, the overall view was not very enthusiastic. It was felt that the story was marred by the way it was written, and that the multiple flash backs and flash forwards made it very messy and difficult to follow. There was sympathy for Stephen and surprise that he didn't receive his Aspergers diagnosis earlier and that more help was not provided. His amateurish attempts were often ridiculous, and it was surprising he was able to persist for so long without detection, especially as he kept detailed records of all his actions. We noted that the book is based on a true story so presumably the facts are correct.

The book includes a long, in-depth analysis of the economic crisis which was used by Stephen to justify his actions. We were also given long sections on his terrible treatment in the USA prison where he was often held in solitary confinement in very distressing conditions. And of course, descriptions of numerous bodged attempts at robbing banks or building societies.

The book seems to have received generally enthusiastic reviews but sadly it didn't work for us.

Ann Sible

**Red Lion Book Group
Claire Alexander-
Meredith Alone**

This is a story of Meredith who hasn't been outside her house for over 3



years. She works from home and has a cat to keep her company. She cleans obsessively and bakes cakes. It slowly emerges that she is damaged and traumatised by events in her earlier years. Gradually she accepts some new people into her life and finds the courage to take steps to make her life more adjusted. It is a very sad book, but with a believable and satisfying ending.

Claire Parsons

Local History Group

On Wednesday 19th November Sally Prentice has very kindly offered to give a talk on "The History of those listed on the War Memorial in Shirburn together with some information on the village". This will be held in the West Room, Watlington, at 2.30 p.m., followed by tea. There will be a charge of £3 per head to cover room hire, etc. payable at the door. Many thanks to all those who have already replied.



Sue Carlyle

**Last Speakers Meeting
The Scene of the Crime**

Over the years many television dramas, both British and American, have attempted to depict the reality of working life for crime scene investigators (CSIs) but it is doubtful that any of them painted as accurate a picture as Hayley Scott did at her recent talk to members of Ridgeway u3a. Hayley worked as a Forensic Practitioner for the Metropolitan Police for 14 years before leaving to

set up her own successful company, Forensic Experience, which offers groups the opportunity to learn about the real world of the CSI.

During her time with the Met, Hayley covered all of London for serious crime and attended over fifteen thousand crime scenes. Her work, and that of her colleagues, was responsible for the arrest and conviction of murderers, arsonists, burglars and rapists. As she pointed out, CSIs are civilians, not police, and are only responsible for collecting forensic evidence at a crime scene which is then passed to scientists for analysis. They may subsequently be required to assist pathologists in collecting evidence at post mortems and to give evidence in court of their findings.

The first priority of the CSI is to preserve the crime scene, whether indoor or outside. They will wear protective clothing to avoid cross-contamination of the scene, carry out a risk assessment to ensure their safety, and then



keep a meticulous log of all the forensic evidence collected. This may include photographs and/or videos of the crime scene, ballistics, fingerprints/ fingermarks etc. which will be collected in evidence bags and submitted to the police. Ultimately the Crown Prosecution Service will decide if there is sufficient evidence to prosecute.

Bagging the evidence - Hayley Scott, Forensic Experience

Hayley illustrated her talk with photographs of various crime scenes she has attended showing some of the techniques which CSIs use, for instance to detect fingermarks and determine bullet trajectories. She also related some more humorous aspects of her CSI career such as ending the day 'high' after investigating a crime scene at a cannabis factory because no-one thought of the necessity for fresh air breaks.

Hayley ended her talk by recounting one of her experiences as the sole CSI at Heathrow airport where her work enabled the arrest of a serial arsonist who had caused chaos on 3 occasions by setting fires which led to the closure of the terminal, with resulting delays to flights/passengers, and the unnecessary call-out of the fire brigade each time.

The talk was much enjoyed by the many members present and we may well consider asking her back to present one of her company's 'CSI Experience and Murder Mystery Events' which give attendees the chance to try being a CSI themselves – watch this space!

Join us at St Leonard's Church, Watlington at 2.30pm on Tuesday 16 December when the highly-entertaining Bob Sinfield will be returning to talk on The Great Unwatched as he affectionately nibbles at the hand that fed him for 35 years: the radio.

Non-members (£4 fee) and members (free) are welcome. Refreshments will be served following the talk.

Ellen Froggatt
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