paid by Tuesday 10th November so that we can pay Badgemore Park. Bank details as in the attached Membership Renewal form.

For more information contact June Waterson:june.waterson@btinternet.com, mobile:07720547936.

Catering Group - Kitchen Duties

We are sad to announce that Patricia Davies has decided to retire from the Catering Group, Patricia has worked tirelessly alongside others to provide refreshments for all our speaker meetings, and we owe her a huge thank you for her dedication, kindness and hard work. We now need to replace Patricia on a permanant basis to work alongside June Waterson organising and setting up also, we require helpers to join us on a rota basis for serving teas/ coffees at our speaker meetings.
If you can help, even occasionally, please sign up by the notice board or contact June.

Film and Theatre Group.

Our next visit is to Wallingford Corn Exchange to see the film Pressure on Wednesday. 25th November at 2.30pm, seats are £12.
Please register your interest at the next speaker meetings or email peterdollman52@hotmail.com

Annual Membership Subscriptions for 2026/7 are due on 1st November.
Details are on the enclosed Membership Renewal form and the website. There is no reapplication form but if you have changed any of your contact details, please let Judith know as soon as possible.

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Ridgeway u3a will be held at 14.30 on Tuesday 17th November 2026 at St Leonard's Church, Watlington. (The monthly Speaker Meeting will follow.) If you wish to volunteer or nominate a fellow member to serve on the committee, please notify the Chair, Ellen Froggatt.

Editor, Peter Dollman,
Articles for the Newsletter need to be send 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.u3asite.uk
Registered Charity number 120292



Ridgeway u3a

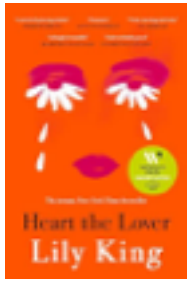
Newsletter October 2026 **Issue No 204**

Coffee and Catch-up



We have tables booked at the Spire & Spoke, Hill Road, Watlington, for Friday 30 October, from 11am. We look forward to seeing you there.

Monday Book Club



At our latest meeting we discussed **'Heart the Lover'** by Lily King which everyone enjoyed once they became accustomed to the time shifts involved in the story. It was noted that the author's earlier novel 'Writers and Lovers' serves as a sequel and a prequel to 'Heart the Lover' and for those who had read it helped in understanding the history and development of the main character.
Barbara Noakes

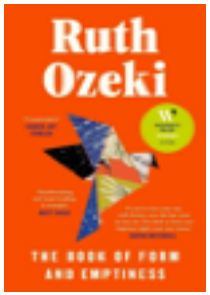
Red Lion Book Group

Hernan Diaz: Trust



This month's book choice was universally disliked. Only one member finished the book. The plot scheme was complicated and made little sense and the end obvious.
Claire Parsons

Tuesday Book Club



The Book of Form and Emptiness by Ruth Ozeki was our book for September.
This is a story of the struggle of boy and his mother grieving over the tragic and sudden death of his father. Both experience grief in very different ways. The teenage boy hears voices and takes refuge in a library, and his mother is driven to hoarding.

The themes and narration are complicated.
One or two of the group abandoned it early on, others who finished it felt swamped and found it difficult to read. But, with brilliant clarification from one member of our group who had enjoyed it, we all learnt to appreciate a compassionate story.
Jane Kilroy

Local History Group
In September we visited the Trenchard Museum at RAF Halton, named after Lord Trenchard, the father of the Royal Air Force. We learnt about the fascinating history of the RAF, the aircraft apprentice scheme, and explored the incredible displays. Those brave enough also had a go on the flight simulator!





On Wednesday 21st October we will have a talk on the history of Lewknor by Peter Gardner, a long-time resident, in the West Room, Watlington, at 2.30 pm, followed by tea. The cost will be £3 per person, payable on entry.

Last Speaker Meeting
The amazing Mr Dickens
Charles Dickens was born into a stable and comfortable family and enjoyed a relatively happy period of early education. Sadly, by the age of twelve, he was forced to leave school and take work in a boot-blacking factory as his father, through a combination of poor financial management, a growing family and a significant cut in pay, became heavily in debt and was arrested and confined in the Marshalsea Debtors' Prison. This descent into poverty and imprisonment was to haunt Dickens for the rest of this life.
Although Dickens returned to school briefly after an improvement in the family's finances, it wasn't long before they were in debt again and the fifteen-year-old Dickens found employment as a solicitor's clerk with a sideline as a journalist. He was to edit a weekly journal for the next twenty years during which time he wrote 15 novels, 5 novellas, hundreds of short stories and a variety of non-fiction articles. His 'Sketches by Boz' were published as articles from 1833-1836 but it was the publication of Pickwick Papers in 1836 which was to prove a publishing phenomenon and launch Dickens as one of the most famous celebrities of his era and an enduring literary genius.



Dickens never forgot his own childhood however and the publication of Oliver Twist in 1838 and Nicholas Nickleby in 1839 enabled him to expose the reality of life for poor, working-class people to the largely impervious upper classes. It was not only in his novels but also in his personal life that Dickens campaigned tirelessly for social justice, highlighting the evils of poor education, bad employers and uncaring governments.
In January 1842, Dickens made his first visit to America and embarked on a series of highly successful and lucrative speaking engagements. His return to England saw the publication of that perennial favourite, A Christmas Carol, and the start of his public readings of his works to raise money and allow him to indulge his passion for amateur theatrics.
By 1865 his health was becoming increasingly frail and doctors urged him to rest but he was offered the equivalent of £1million to tour America again and, the spectre of poverty and debt still haunting him, he agreed to go. He started The Mystery of Edwin Drood on his return but collapsed again at his home in Kent and died at the age of only 58.
We extend many thanks to our splendid speaker, David Allen, for his fascinating romp through the rags to riches life of Charles Dickens.
(An extended version of this article can be found on our website and in Watlington Times and Link)
Join us at St Leonard's Church, Watlington at 2.30pm on Tuesday 17 November when **Giles Oakley** from **Two Spoons Tea, Chesham** will be talking about that quintessential English subject tea as he takes us through the process in **Tea; the journey from bush to cup.** The talk will follow our **annual AGM** which all members are welcome to attend; the AGM will, as usual, be brief!
Ellen Froggatt
http://ridgeway.u3asite.uk

WRITING FOR FUN
At our last meeting everyone had written about 'Freedom' and as is often the case, we had all tackled the subject in different ways. There was a poem, pointing out how lucky we are with the freedom we enjoy in our country. Someone else reminded us about the sudden loss of freedom we experienced during covid. In another piece, the protagonist, who had just discovered that she was pregnant and feared a loss of freedom, wrestled with the possibility of abortion. Giving us food for thought was the article on freedom of the mind, where it was pointed out how preconceived ideas can affect our choices. Then we had freedom of the body and how we no longer need to subscribe to the dictates of fashion. We listened to quite a detailed description of some of the fashionable items that women were subjected to and I, for one, gave silent thanks to the freedom we have today.
Carol Nall, carolmarynall@gmail.com

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

CHRISTMAS LUNCH is on Wednesday, 2nd December at 12.30pm-1pm at Badgemore Park Henley-on-Thames. **This is the final call** - if you would like to join us, pay the £10 deposit and indicate your menu choices on the sign-up sheet by the notice board, or contact June. The final balance must be

