

September 2026 NEWSLETTER



Committee Members

Chairperson: Jackie Mirehouse
Vice Chair: Enid Smith
Treasurer: David Newell
Business Secretary: Kate Turner
Minutes Secretary: Kate Turner
Membership Secretary: Eirwen Williams
Groups Coordinator: Audrey Moseley/
Kate Turner
Publicity: Kate Turner
Speaker Coordinator: Paul Young
Web Site Coordinator: Glynis Nicholls
ExO Members: Michael Bendall,
Patrick Blundred, Audrey Moseley,
Rosalind Hamson, Elizabeth (Liz)
Dawes.

There is something about autumn that always feels like the beginning of a new year. Perhaps it is a hangover from our schooldays. Do you remember being asked that question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Depending on our generation, the answers might have included engine driver, nurse, teacher, farmer, pilot, footballer or perhaps, for the particularly ambitious, Prime Minister.

I suspect rather fewer of us replied, "I'd like to spend forty years working, paying bills and wondering where I left my glasses."

Some of us may have followed those childhood dreams. Most probably didn't. Life has an inconvenient habit of intervening. Opportunities arise, plans change, families come along and careers sometimes choose us rather than the other way round. But perhaps the more interesting question now is when exactly are we supposed to have finished growing up?

One of the great pleasures of reaching this stage of life is discovering that we are still curious. There are subjects we have always meant to know more about, places we have never visited, skills we never quite got around to learning and questions we've been carrying around for years.

The accountant can become an artist. The teacher can discover archaeology. Someone who spent a lifetime insisting they "weren't musical" can join a singing group. And the person who hasn't picked up a paintbrush since school can discover that they're rather good at it.

One of the things I particularly like about u3a is that nobody asks for your CV. Nobody minds whether you are an expert or a complete beginner. What you did for a living matters far less than what you might like to discover next. And within our own Wem & District u3a, there must be hundreds of ambitions, interests and talents; some well-established and others perhaps still waiting to be discovered. So perhaps this autumn we could all ask ourselves a slightly different version of that childhood question, not "What would you like to be?" but "What would I still like to have a go at?" Join a group you've been thinking about. Learn something completely impractical. Rediscover an old interest or try something you once thought wasn't for you.

Because one of the advantages of getting older is surely that we no longer have to decide what we're going to be when we grow up. We can simply keep growing, and above all, stay curious.

Peta Smith, Editor editornews@btinternet.com Next Newsletter is due out in December 2026

Closing date for submissions for next publication **15 November 2026**

Wem & District U3A Groups and Group Leaders

Groups and Group Leaders

Art and Literature – Peter Thompson
 Chess and Go – Geoff Glover
 Computer & Mobile Devices - Glynis Nicholls
 Crafts – Liz Parish
 Cycling - Bob Millington
 Discussion/Current Affairs – Richard Cheeseman
 Family History - Ralph Tracy / Sue Young
 Fifth Friday Yompers – Clive
 Smewing/Paul Silson
 Films - Julie Bushell
 Gardening – Kate Turner
 Geocaching – Mary Sparkes
 Literature /Humanities – Margaret Parson
 Local History (1) - Kathy Coombs
 Local History (2) - Jackie Mirehouse
 Mahjong – Hazel Adkins
 Photography – Peter Thompson
 Pub Lunch Groups – Kathy Coombs
 Rummikub - Hazel Adkins

Groups and Group Leaders

Singing for Fun – Barbara Longhurst
 Social Group – Chris Fraser
 Stitchers - Sue Young
 Strollers/ Dog Walking – Joyce Parr /Clive Smewing
 Table Tennis – Angela Launchbury
 Ukulele – Roger Howarth
 Walking – Derek Sparkes
 Walking Tennis – Angela Launchbury
 Members One Off – Chris Fraser

For details of the groups, meeting times and venues, planned activities and contact details please see the Wem and District U3A webpage.

<https://wem.u3asite.uk/>

If you require any formation about the Groups, could you please contact the group Leaders directly by contacting **Audrey Moseley**, our groups coordinator by email and she will pass on your message to the relevant Group Leader.

You can send an email directly from the Wem and District U3A webpage by following the link below

[Contact Us - Wem & District](#)

Most groups meet monthly unless otherwise specified. Please bear in mind that this list is by no means definitive, as we are always interested in forming new groups that are not covered elsewhere. Please let us know if your interest area is not covered and we can ask others if they would also be interested in forming a group around your topic

If you wish to start a new group or test an activity, also contact

Audrey Moseley or Kate Turner



Upcoming Events

**September 1 2026: General Meeting Wem
Town Hall ALL ARE WELCOME 10am for
10.30am start.**

Guest Speaker: Clyde Alin

“My Father’s War”



Clyde Alin
is an experienced U3A speaker known for
his talks on historical subjects such as
World War 11, the Inner German Border,
and the Berlin Wall

Upcoming Events

October 1 2026: 10am for 10.30am start.

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**

MEMBERS ONLY

Upcoming Events

**November 3 2026: General Meeting Wem
Town Hall ALL ARE WELCOME 10am for
10.30am start.**

Guest Speaker: Jonathan Morris

“Kingfishers and Photography ”

Upcoming Events

**December 1 2026: General Meeting Wem
Town Hall ALL ARE WELCOME 10am for
10.30am start.**

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

HOSTED BY

Paul and Sue Young



More info nearer
the date

News from the Groups

UKULELE GROUP

We have had a busy few months at Ukulele Group.

On top of our regular weekly meetings at the Youth Club we have ventured once again into the realms of entertaining the general public. It was a pleasure to be invited to play for the Wem Carers Group who meet once a month upstairs in Wem Town Hall.

August can be challenging for many groups, juggling members holidays and family visits with group attendance results in low turnouts for group meetings. This year we opted to join forces with Whitchurch u3a Ukulele Group. We had one joint meeting with them in Whitchurch and then later in the month they came and joined our social pub lunch in Wem. Having 20+ ukulele players all in one room was quite an experience. We are still trying to find the appropriate collective noun for a group of ukulele players - a pluck is the current favourite.

We continue to add to our repertoire with songs old and new-ish. These last few months we have been learning songs by Elvis, and, dare I say, more up to date songs by Abba and Rod Stewart. I must point out the song we learned was his first UK number one from 1971!

Roger Howarth

Wem U3A Ukulele Group

Thanks to Roger for submitting the photograph below and the article



SOCIAL GROUP

July Social Event

Eight lovely ladies spent a wonderful afternoon having Afternoon Teas on the patio terrace at Goldstone Hall Hotel, a Georgian Manor house hotel and restaurant.

Chris Fraser. *Thanks to Chris for sending this in*



Walking Group

Friday 7th August the walking group turned out in force for a lovely five-mile walk from Willey Moor Lock Tavern car park just outside Whitchurch. A steady climb up Wirswall Hill was rewarded by spectacular views across the rolling countryside towards North Wales and Cheshire then back into Shropshire. A mix of country lanes, passing Marbury Mere and through Marbury village, along tracks, grassy fields and finally along the canal towpath to finish up back at the pub for a welcome lunch and libation. Thanks to Derek for the experience.





CRAFT GROUP

July saw a group of us gathering to make air dry clay flower frogs.

"Frogs" I hear you say....why on earth would we want to make frogs.

Sue Cornish lead the group and showed us what can be made using air dry clay, paper napkins, pastry cutters and a variety of other items you may have lying around the house. Plus making something useful and that isn't going to be taken home.....never to be seen again!

As always, it was a great success.

My grandson also joined us and joined in the crafting. No prizes for guessing which are his! He also proved to be useful showing those who needed comfort breaks where the lights were and holding doors open.

If you have hidden talents and would like to share them with others then come along to Wem Town Hall on the last Thursday of the month between 2-4pm. Cost is £2 to cover room hire.

If you would like more information, please email meparish@hotmail.co.uk

Happy crafting

Liz Parish





YOMPERS

The Yompers had an enjoyable walk at the end of May. We started at Llanymynech Heritage Centre which included the old lime workings, through a tunnel to the English Inclined Plane which was originally used to lower quarried limestone. It is still flat but rather steep. We then walked through the nature reserve and spotted many butterflies. We then walked next to the golf course, to the end of the outcrop and then returned back to the start next to the Montgomery Canal near Pant. A lovely 8 mile walk

On the 31st of July had a really enjoyable walk in the countryside around Much Wenlock. The area was beautiful with many different things to note and see. Wenlock for example had an active railway, the station is now a private home. Of much more significance the town was responsible for the establishment of the modern Olympics. We even passed the field that hosted the first games.

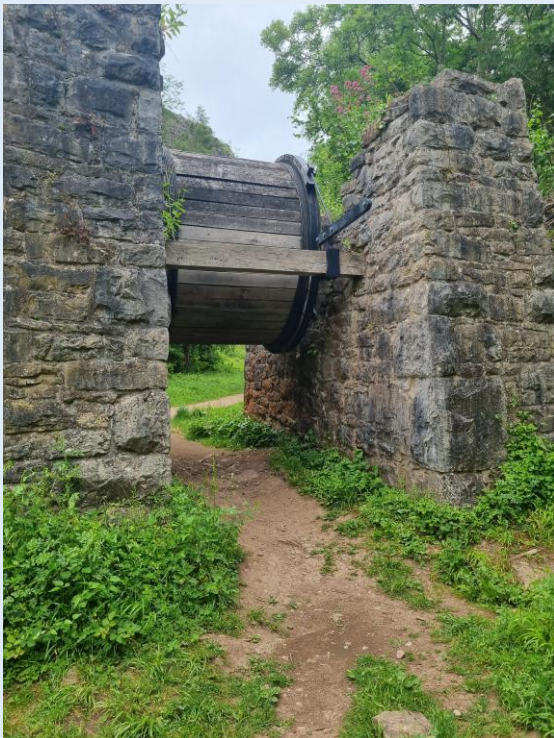
As normal for the Yompers we had a packed lunch break just after 4 miles. And then only because of the heat you understand, we were forced to try the local brew.

The May walk was led by Marin on 29th May around Pant, a few photographs below.

Our next Yomp will be led by Paul and backed by Steve on 30th October.

Any member wishing to join the Yompers please contact Clive Smewing or Paul Silson (co-leaders)

Thanks to Clive for submitting their news. Much appreciated





Gardening Group Update

On Friday 19th June the Gardening Group had a day trip to the NEC to visit Gardeners World Live. A very interesting event, with lots to see. We spotted a few BBC presenters, mainly from a distance. No chance to get in shot when they were filming.



Many thanks to the Group for sending this in

Local History Group 2

Local History 2 visited Boscobel House, Bishops Wood on 23 July. This was a follow on from the speaker talk we had earlier this year on Charles II escape during the Civil War. He was only there for 2 days, but the house became a tourist attraction from then on. We saw priest holes and we viewed the famous oak tree (not original).

The guide was very informative. House is lovely with superb Jacobean gardens.

Thanks to Kate Turner for sending in this report and photograph. Much appreciated



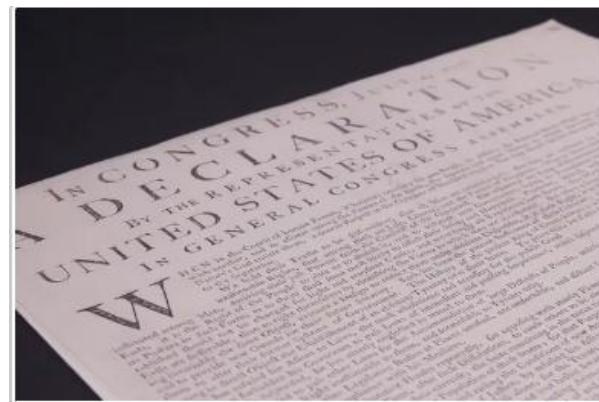
WEM u3a COACH TRIP TO KEW GARDENS AND THE NATIONAL ARCHIVE TUESDAY 14TH JULY

Our coach containing 57 early risers left Wem at 6.30am for the trip to London. After dropping off those members visiting Kew Gardens for the day the remaining 10 of us arrived at the National Archives building intent on Family History research.

On the way into the building, we were greeted by several swans and also saw some very large fish in the lake. On entry we had to go through the process of getting a Readers ticket and then pass through security before researching in earnest.

As always with Family History research we all had different levels of success. Some of the group stuck at it all day, whilst others took advantage of the café and shop facilities on site. There are always exhibitions showing on the site. The one we saw was a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence. It contained original documents, and contemporary commentary of events. Inevitably time ran out and we returned to the coach to leave to collect the rest of the group from Kew Gardens.





Paul Young

Thanks Paul for submitting this article

The rest of the group spent the day exploring the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, World Heritage site. The gardens were founded in 1759 and house the largest and most diverse botanical and mycological collections in the world.

A visit to Kew Gardens is normally associated with a gentle stroll through beautiful gardens, pausing to admire rare plants and magnificent trees. We, however, managed to choose one of the hottest days of the recent heatwave – a decision that seemed perfectly reasonable when we made. Kew covers more than 300 acres, although by lunchtime it felt considerably larger. The glorious sunshine showed the gardens at somewhat their best, although some were looking sadly as dry and dying as in my own borders back home, but it also meant that our carefully planned exploration gradually developed into a determined search for the next patch of shade.

The wonderful old trees of the Arboretum suddenly became far more interesting than their labels suggested. We weren't particularly concerned about their botanical names – we simply rated them according to the size and quality of the shadow they provided. The visit started with a guided tour of the Arboretum and the Princess of Wales Conservatory, a modern angular glass structure which contains ten different climatic zones from desert to tropical rain forest. It was opened by Diana, Princess of Wales in 1987. Here our extremely informative guide introduced us to extraordinary cacti, succulents and carnivorous plants! Little Shop of Horrors eat your heart out! We were then left to explore for ourselves for the rest of the day.

There was the magnificent Palm House, one of Kew's great Victorian glasshouses. Entering a tropical glasshouse in the middle of a heatwave may not have been our most inspired decision. It was rather like stepping from an oven into a sauna. The tropical plants looked wonderfully at home. We looked considerably less so. The enormous Temperate House, the largest surviving Victorian glasshouse in the world, was equally impressive, filled with rare and threatened plants from around the globe. Once again, though, our appreciation of Victorian engineering was accompanied by an increasing appreciation of cold drinks and ice cream!

If you are looking for inspiration this autumn, Kew Gardens is currently hosting Henry Moore's work *Monumental Nature*, the largest ever outdoor ever presentation of 30 of his works. These sculptures certainly gave us something to talk about! Some were instantly recognisable; others prompted thoughtful study, lively interpretation and the occasional admission that none of us had the faintest idea what we were looking at!

There was, however, something fascinating about seeing Kew during such unusually hot weather. The contrast between lush exotic planting and areas beginning to show the effects of prolonged heat and drought brought home just how important Kew's research into plants, conservation and climate change has become. Despite the temperature, it was a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable visit. We may not have covered quite as much of Kew as intended, but we became experts in locating benches, drinking water and shady trees.

And, as always with u3a outings, the real achievement was managing to admire the art, appreciate the horticulture, find the café and return with roughly the same number of people we started out with!

A great day out! Thanks to Paul and Sue Young for organising it all.

Peta

A great day out!



A Taste of Kew Gardens





Shropshire u3a Network celebrate their 30th Anniversary

Our Shropshire u3a Network traces its origin back to 1996 when members from four u3as (Wrekin, Whitchurch, Shrewsbury and Oswestry) had their first collective 'Away Day' in Shifnal. Today we have 13-member u3a's * spread across the whole of our county and, with so many years of collaboration and friendship behind us, it seemed only right to celebrate our 30 years of success. So, on 10th June in Shrewsbury, we organized a day of both fun and learning for Committee members, with representatives from almost all of our member u3as being present, including 5 from our own Committee. We were also delighted to welcome some VIP visitors: Allan Walmsley (Chair of the Third Age Trust), Sue Russell (Chair of the u3a Council), Karen Green (Chair of Network Link) and Alan Russell of the u3a Board of Trustees.

In the morning we worked on our future plans for the Network, listening and interacting with our visitors from National Office. There were many ideas on how the u3a as a whole will operate in future years, from highlighting the key areas of IT, administration and flexibility through to the remit of the new u3a Council as the 'voice of the members'. We were also given a quick overview of the role of Network Link. We then split up into small groups for a bit of 'brainstorming' on how we can take our Network forward and meet the challenges posed by the changing world around us. No mean task! It also gave us an opportunity to exchange ideas with people from different u3as who were in similar committee roles, and many friends and contacts (old and new) were made or expanded upon.

The event in the afternoon then focused on fun and celebration. We enjoyed a light-hearted and lively quiz from our very own Paul and Sue Young, with both general knowledge and u3a-specific questions (and chocolate treats!), followed by some great musical entertainment from Shrewsbury u3a's ukulele group. There was, of course, lots of cake too. Our inter-u3a baking competition was judged by Sue Russell, who has a hidden talent as a National Cookery Judge, with our retiring Network Chair, Glynis Nicholls winning the 'Bake Off' and the 'Star Baker' apron. Local press recorded the cutting of our 30th Anniversary cake and with more slices than people, the day finished on a sugar high!

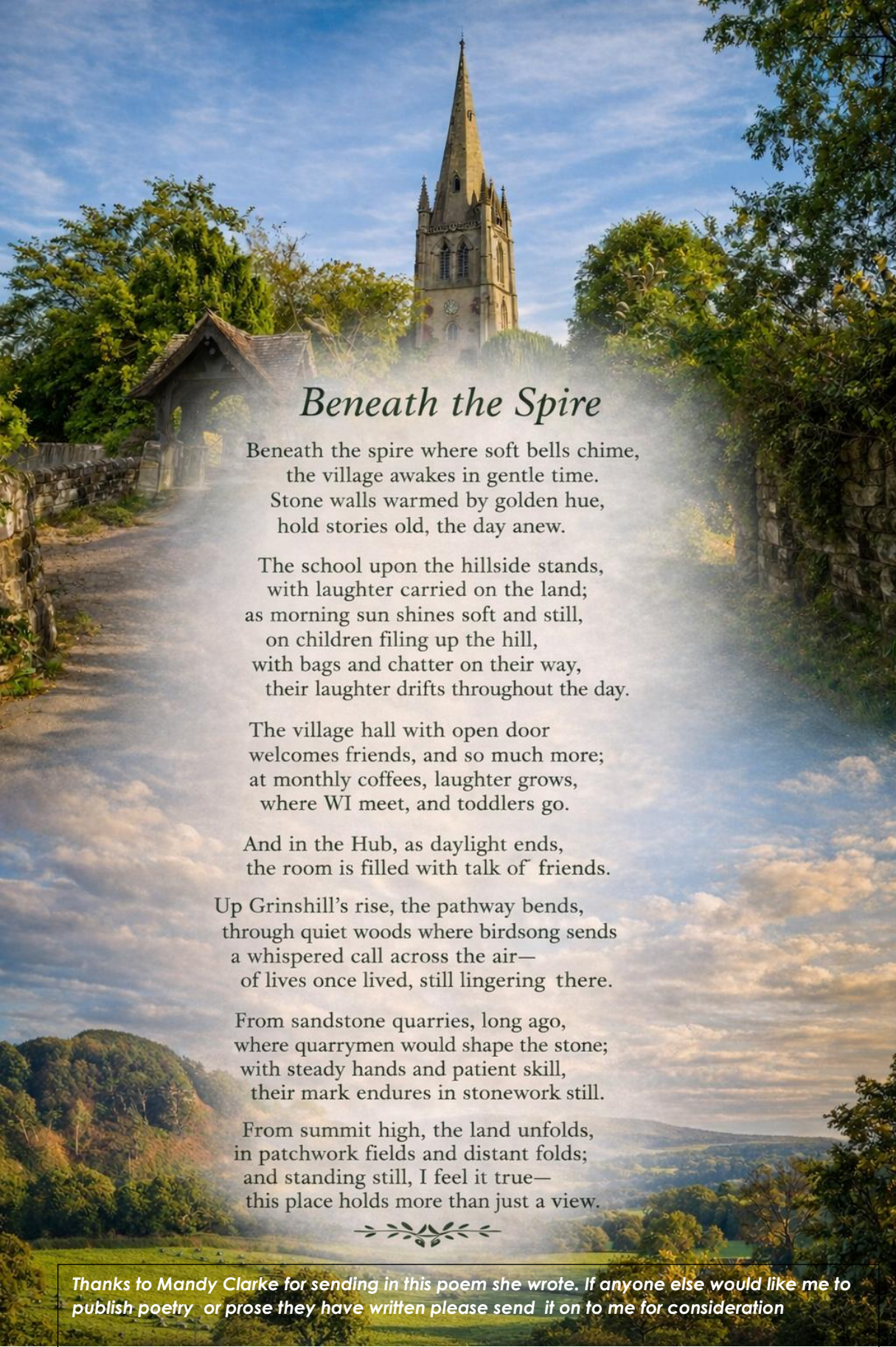
Glynis Nicholls

** Bridgnorth, Church Stretton, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock & Broseley, Newport, Oswestry, Oswestry Borders, Pontesbury & Rea Valley, Shrewsbury, Wellington, Wem & District, Whitchurch and Wrekin.*





Thanks to Glynis for submitting this article and photographs



Beneath the Spire

Beneath the spire where soft bells chime,
the village awakes in gentle time.
Stone walls warmed by golden hue,
hold stories old, the day anew.

The school upon the hillside stands,
with laughter carried on the land;
as morning sun shines soft and still,
on children filing up the hill,
with bags and chatter on their way,
their laughter drifts throughout the day.

The village hall with open door
welcomes friends, and so much more;
at monthly coffees, laughter grows,
where WI meet, and toddlers go.

And in the Hub, as daylight ends,
the room is filled with talk of friends.

Up Grinshill's rise, the pathway bends,
through quiet woods where birdsong sends
a whispered call across the air—
of lives once lived, still lingering there.

From sandstone quarries, long ago,
where quarrymen would shape the stone;
with steady hands and patient skill,
their mark endures in stonework still.

From summit high, the land unfolds,
in patchwork fields and distant folds;
and standing still, I feel it true—
this place holds more than just a view.



Thanks to Mandy Clarke for sending in this poem she wrote. If anyone else would like me to publish poetry or prose they have written please send it on to me for consideration

Please Submit Articles and News Items of Interest

This newsletter is totally dependent on its content by you the membership. I can only publish what is submitted to me. Thanks to all those who took the time and effort to submit the content of this current edition. It is very much appreciated

I am always eagerly awaiting reports, articles, and photographs for this section of the Newsletter from individuals and Group Leaders. Such as details of when, how often and where your Groups meet. What have you been up to? Descriptive reports and photographs (with verbal consent) are always welcome and may attract newcomers to join you. Submissions can also include such items as events /meetings for your groups for the next few months ahead or letting us know what you have done recently? This can be written by the Group leader or any member of the group.

Individual members may also submit poetry or prose for inclusion. We must have some budding writers and reporters amongst us!

Committee members could introduce yourselves to the membership and tell us a bit about yourselves and your interests.

Have a think and see what you come up with!

A very sincere thanks to all who have sent me contributions to this edition. It is very much appreciated.

Please submit to editornews@btinternet.com

[NOT TO MY PERSONAL email Account PLEASE](#)

The newsletter is published every 3 months, March, June, September and December.

Deadlines for submission are

15 February, 15 May, 15 August and 15 November.

Kind regards, Peta

Peta Smith Editor

Disclaimer The articles in this newsletter are written by our members and are not necessarily the views of the committee or the national U3A.