



**JUNE 2022**



*Congratulations to HM Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty is the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service.*



### **Chairman's chat:**

Although we are just approaching summer holiday season the committee is already turning its attention to the AGM in October, when several committee members will be stepping down after completing their terms of office. Unfortunately we don't have many people waiting in the wings to take over so I would like all members to think seriously about whether they would be willing and able to spare a few hours each month to ensure the smooth running of our u3a. Obviously some roles require a little more work than others, but roles are not decided until the committee meeting in November, and no-one is forced into a specific post. If you enjoy the benefits membership of our u3a brings, please consider whether it would be appropriate to give something back by helping out and let a committee member know as soon as possible of your willingness to join us. Potential candidates are often invited to attend a committee meeting to see how informal we make things, so there are only a few such opportunities before the deadline.

Thank you.

Jim Morrison



### **Front of House**

Everybody seems to be settling in and we are getting used to the new venue. The bigger tables for Group leaders seem to be working well. It would be good to see more Group leaders at the monthly meeting.

Just a reminder: you can purchase drinks and snacks before or after the talk and you are welcome to stay afterwards for a chat. There are always Committee members around if you need someone to talk to.

Steve Evans 356784



## Turkey & Tinsel:

I am organizing a 4-day/3-night **Turkey & Tinsel** break in Bournemouth from **Friday 2nd to Monday 5th December** for **£215**.

There is no supplement at the moment for single rooms, but these could be limited. The price includes the coach there & back; bed & breakfast; with a 3 course a la carte dinner on each night. We hope to leave Rushden around 10am with a stop on the way down for refreshments.

There will be tea and coffee on arrival at the hotel. There will be entertainment every evening

**Friday** is designated as “*Christmas Eve*” and there will be quizzes and/or entertainment after your evening meal.

**Saturday** is “*Christmas Day*” and following your breakfast you will have the rest of the day to explore Bournemouth. There is a bus stop opposite the hotel, so it’s easy to get to the town centre. Alternatively you can enjoy the hotel’s leisure facilities, which include a good size heated indoor pool, and a sauna, together with a cardio gym. In the evening there will be Christmas dinner to include Turkey, Crackers & a Christmas present for everyone.

**Sunday** is “*New Year’s Eve*” and there will be scones in the afternoon and a glass of fizz to enjoy in the evening.

**Monday** we will be leaving about 10:30am. On the way home on we hope to stop off at Winchester Christmas Market (weather permitting), for a couple of hours, so you can browse the market, get a coffee or have lunch if you wish. We would expect to arrive back home around 5pm.

We only have **33** places still available, so please book early. I will have a booking sheet at the next Flutters meeting on 20th June, but you can register your interest by e-mailing me in advance of the meeting.

**Please reply to my home email:** [peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com](mailto:peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com)

**Wow!** I can't believe how quickly this event sold out. All 53 seats on the coach have now been filled and I already have several names on a reserve list.

Therefore I am now looking to book a second, but smaller coach for all those members currently on the reserve list. Unfortunately, this does work out slightly dearer at £230 per person but is still excellent value. In addition, if anyone would like to drive themselves, I am happy to offer a £50 discount on the above price ~ i.e. the cost per person would be just £180. Please let me know if you would like to take this option.

If you wish to go on this trip, please let me have your deposit of £10 as soon as possible in order to secure your place.

Jean Mole



### Special Events Group:

When day trips are organised, we look at the number of people who have signed up to say they are interested in the trip, and we then divide that number into the cost of the coach, including tours and entry to wherever we are going, in order to get to a final price. We do not look to make a profit, merely to cover all our costs. However, when finalising the trip to Kew Gardens, where we originally had 53 people sign up, (and another 8 on the reserve list), we had 16 people cancel for various reasons. To have this many cancellations is not only extremely frustrating but could result in either the trip being cancelled, or the Special Events Group having to stand a financial loss. It is also very hard work for the organiser to try to fill those spaces.

Therefore, in future, I will be requesting a £10, non-refundable deposit for all Special Events outings. Whilst I am sorry to have to implement this requirement, I feel that I really have no choice.

If you do put your name down for any of our trips, and we hope that you do, please ensure that you enter the date in your diary and don't double book.

Jean Mole

### Important Notice:

***When paying for outings via BACS can you please take care to enter the correct account details as people are paying into the main H&Ru3a bank account rather than the social account. The details you should be using for outings are:***

***Sort Code: 54-41-05 & Account No: 32986742.***

***The main H&Ru3a account details are:***

***Sort Code: 54-41-05 & Account No: 32986734***

**Tuesday 16th August ~ Trentham Gardens £32.50pp** There is something at Trentham to delight everybody. Award winning gardens, including an Italian garden, Rivers of Grass & a Floral Labyrinth. There is also a Shopping Village, a Garden Centre and several cafes and restaurants. Just 4 more spaces available for this trip.

Please contact Jean Mole 01933 626608 if you are interested.



We have reserved 29 seats in the Circle (Rows B & C) at the Curve Theatre, Leicester for the matinee performance of Sister Act on Wednesday 19th October. The cost including coach & driver's gratuity is £47.50.

This heavenly musical is joyous and uplifting in equal measures. Disco diva Deloris' life takes a surprising turn when she witnesses a murder. Placed under protective custody she is hidden in the one place she shouldn't be found ~ a convent! Encouraged to help the struggling choir, she helps her fellow sisters find their true voices as she unexpectedly rediscovers her own.

A musical sent from above, Sister Act is a brilliant, must-see show which raises the spirits and warms the soul time after time.

Contact Jean on 01933 626 608 or 07736445658 or email

peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com to book your place for this theatre trip.

Jean Mole.

## NEWS:

Hi Dear friends

I went down to the Singing For Fun event In Rushton Hall Park. Really good evening well attended. Even the Mayor got up on stage and joined in. u3a was well promoted verbally plus leaflets given out in addition, showing how they all interacted together so well, proof of the value of belonging. Going to wander down while out walking and pop in to see the u3a Photo exhibition at Hall Park.

**Your u3a Roving reporter** (I guess many of us didn't know we had one.)



### Dine at Home

I still have one space on each of the following days for my Home Dining suppers  
~ Monday 27th, Tuesday 28th, Wednesday 29th & Thursday 30th June.

The menu this month is Vegetable Samosa or Tomato Soup/Orange Chicken or Lemon Dusted Plaice/Summer Pudding or Rhubarb & Strawberry Crumble. The cost is £12.50 to include a glass of wine and a cup of tea or coffee. If you are interested in having a meal with good food & good company, please email me on [peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com](mailto:peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com) or phone 01933 626608.

Jean Mole



### Chess Group:

There is an online u3a chess group at [www.chess.com](http://www.chess.com) and I would like to know if there are members of our u3a who would be interested in forming a local group. It could be either a physical group, held in a local free venue like the Waitrose Community Room, or a virtual one online. If you are interested, please let me know.

Alan Nixson.

Mob. 07850789447



### Scrabble:

We play on alternate Tuesdays between 2pm and 4pm in the Waitrose Community Room.

We welcome new members for a friendly contest which keeps the brain cells active. If you wish to join us, contact John Ellingham or Sally

Morton via the u3a website.



**Country Dancing:** Just a reminder. Country Dancing is reverting to 2.0 -3.30, still at the Higham Ferrers Working Men's Club which has lots of room and a good floor. There is also a kitchen. Pre all the lockdowns etc, 24 members attended a party afternoon with live music. Happy days.

To keep running we need a few more members to cover hall cost of £20.00 and to enable us to do more interesting dances. We started way back when our U3A started. It would be sad to have to fold.

I would like to thank all our regular dancers who have kept the group going. All dances are fully explained and walked through, so do come and join us. Contact me on 01933 622827 for more information. George Hearnden.



### MMFC Group:

The group has closed down for the summer break and will meet again on Monday 8th August.

Mike Gibbon



### Ten Pin Bowling:

Alternate Fridays 11am till 1:00pm, (See calendar on HR website)

This group is meeting every other Friday to bowl at AMF

Wellingborough. The membership allows us to continually book at least 4 lanes and anybody wishing to join is always welcomed – we

can add more lanes as required.

The subsidised cost for u3a means we bowl two games for £6.20 total/person.

Tea & Coffee is available for purchase, again subsidised for £1.00/drink.

Each session the scores are published on the HR website for record.

Group Leaders:

Alan Collison, Martin Cromwell & Alan Nixon



### Handicrafts:

Last month's meeting went really well. We were doing Button Art and there were some fabulous pieces done. Here is an example of one.



This month's meeting is on Thursday 23rd June from

2pm until 4pm, at Rushden Bowls Club.

We will be doing prick and stitch. Most materials will be



provided but you will need to bring along a craft mat (or something similar) to work on, some scissors and some needles. We will be making a bookmark and/or a greetings card.



Kathy and Jenny



### Canasta

I have two groups running at the moment. The first group is for those members who already play Canasta, and we meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 10am until 12 noon at my home.

The second group is for beginners and those wishing to learn Canasta. Dates and times are flexible and depend on everyone's availability.

Please contact Jean Mole on 01933 626608 if you are interested in joining either group.



### **Garden Group:**

Our next trip is fully booked when we visit Kew Gardens with Special Events group.

Please feel free to join us on 11th August when we go to Kelmarsh Hall and then for our last garden visit we are off to Boughton House before we embark on our speaker meetings.

Lorraine Brown



### **Computer Group A:**

**1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays 10am till 12pm**

The group next meets on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July at the normal time of 10:00 –12:00 when we will be covering accessing the internet and staying safe online.

We have space for new members. For details contact Jim Morrison using the contact form on the H&R website.

Jim Morrison



### **Computer Group B:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays 11am till 1:00pm - Suspended**

*The situation regarding reduced number of members - it is not currently economically viable to continue at a breakeven situation unless almost all members are attending every session.*

This situation also comes at a point where the better weather will mean more members may be less available to attend for reason of holidays, alternative outings and commitments of family etc.

Following feedback from some group members on alternative arrangements, I have decided rather than finishing the group completely just to suspend sessions until September. At that time indoor activities become more popular, and I can also determine the need for this interest group going forward through autumn and winter.

Alan Nixon Computer Group B Leader.

Mob. 07850789447



### **Wine Appreciation:**

2 lovely Rosé from Wine Society, Both £8.00.

Beyra Rosé from Portugal Grape Tempranillo Onion Skin  
Colour very light and reminiscent of Southern France Rosé

Vina Zoral Grape Granacha from Spain brighter pink colour, but quite dry.

These are lovely tasting wines for summer. We tried cheese, salami and a sweet biscotti with both. Best served lightly chilled.

Steve and Denise 01933 356784

We still have spaces if anyone else want to join.



## Rock & Blues Group: **NEW MEMBERS SOUGHT!**

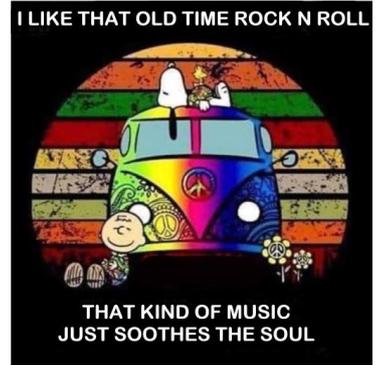
Our next meeting is on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 14:00 hours at the leader's house and the topic is the letter A.

*This is a friendly and relaxed group for those whose musical tastes are firmly rooted in the decades between the 60s*

*and the 80s and who get together to listen to tracks they have chosen for a different topic each month.*

*We have space for new members so if you would be interested please let me know. See me or Maggie (at the newsletter table) at the monthly meeting or come along and see for yourself.*

*Jim Morrison 07403557556*



## **Bookmarks Again:**

We delayed this review so here is our March review of *The Wizard Of Earthsea*.

Ursula Le Guin is an American author whose body of work is mainly in the realm of fantasy and science fiction. Over the years she has won many awards. "A Wizard of Earthsea" is the first book in a series of four, known as the Earthsea Quartet. A further two books complete the series. These books started as a teen fantasy but ended up drawing in a much wider audience. The series is seminal to many works by other authors. It starts with a universal theme: that of a young boy living difficult circumstances, who travels from home to learn, grow, and meet many challenges along the way. It has been observed that without Earthsea there would be no Harry Potter.

Earthsea is a radically different world, where magic is the norm in everyone's life. To know the true name of anything is to have control over it, and all things are held in balance. The language makes no concessions to young readers, it is descriptive and poetic.

The first book starts with a young boy called Sparrowhawk learning about his powers. He travels to Roke, the centre of learning for wizards. But he can be a prickly character. He is hungry for power and knowledge. From arrogance and temper, he makes a mistake that has severe repercussions for him and Earthsea. The book tells how he then tries to set things right and restore the balance.

The response to this book seems to depend on how comfortable the reader is with fantasy. This who are not can find it a difficult read. However, once over this hurdle, the depth of character, the storytelling and the beautiful language can reel you in.

Next month we will be reading *The Little Black Dress* by Deborah Moggach.

We are keen to have new members. If interested please contact Ann Kemp.

Ann Kemp



## **Painting for Pleasure**

Due to the imminent demise of Colemans warehouse, the group is moving to the community room at Waitrose. Still on a Monday 2pm to 4pm.

We will start at the new venue on the 27th of June, then every 2 weeks. I have enjoyed being the group leader for the past year, but I'm heading north soon. Brian Lawrence has agreed to take over and has been instrumental in securing the new venue. We look forward to seeing existing members and new members at the new venue.

Julie Dove



### **W.A.L.T: Would Anyone Like To:**

If you are new to our U3A and maybe looking to make friends and socialise more, why not consider joining the " Would Anyone Like To?" Group. W.A.L.T. for short!

The group offers the opportunity to find people to share an event or activity with. ANYTHING AT ALL - because if you want to do it, then there's a good chance that others also will. What a shame it will be if you decide not to do something you really fancy, just because you don't want to do it alone. Contact us through the website or at the monthly meeting at Flutters.

Janet and Ken. Group Leaders.



### **Cycling Group:**

Our rides are off-road, are very leisurely, on the gravel tracks between Rushden Lakes, Stanwick Lakes and Thrapston although we have yet to venture as far as and cater for all abilities and are a wonderful opportunity for group socialisation.

Thrapston.

Recent rides have taken us to Woodford Lock, returning via the Axe and Compass public house in Ringstead for lunch or The Kiosk at Stanwick Lakes for coffees and snacks. There are currently four

leaders in our group enabling us to split rides and in due course we shall be riding to Thrapston, stopping at the Woolpack public house in Islip or Bennets on Thrapston High Street for a lunch break. The distances from Rushden Lakes to Woodford Lock is a round trip of twelve miles with an extra six miles for the Thrapston circuit.

There is also a great variety of bikes in our group from mountain to hybrid commuter. There is also an increasing proportion of electric bikes within the group.

Several of us more energetic U3A members ride our road bikes on Saturdays all year round and I enclose a photo from the Cambridgeshire Classic Sportive on 26<sup>th</sup> March this year of Bob Eames and myself.

Details of our rides can be found on the Higham and Rushden U3A website and Beacon website. We hope to see all soon.

Michael Wood



**If you know of a u3a member who is celebrating a special anniversary, or who deserves a special vote of thanks please let us know via the contact form on the website. On a more sombre note, if you know of a member who has passed away, please use the same contact form so that we can send a condolence card to the next of kin/family.**



### **A Little Aloud:**

A Little Aloud meets on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month at the leaders' home between 10.15 - 12.15 or on Zoom 10.00 & 10.45 - 11.30. New members welcome..

Please contact leaders for more information.

Linda and Chris Walker



### **Sunday Walk & Lunch Group:**

We walk once a month on Sunday, normally meeting at 10 30, usually walking about 2 miles with Chris Ebden. Linda Walker takes the short walkers, we usually walk until the first person says they wish to return. So if you haven't walked for a while this is a nice safe way to start.

The next meeting will be on Sunday 12th June walking at Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows with lunch after at the Stanwick Hotel. Meet at 10:30 in St Peter's church car park, opposite Co-op, full details will be sent out to group members nearer the date. rk. We welcome those who want to just walk or those who just want to lunch. We lunch whatever the weather. usually at 12 30 or slightly later in the summer. Please remember your u3a card. The leader will have a copy of everyone's contact on the walk/lunch with them.

Members new to u3a are very welcome, particularly if you are new to the area.

**Essential** - please book with Chris Ebden for the walk, Linda for the lunch by emailing [Grpscord@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk](mailto:Grpscord@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk)



### **Sunday Lunch group:**

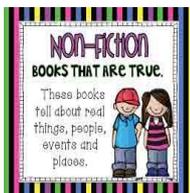
15 of us had a lovely Mother's day lunch at the Priory Wellingborough.

Our next lunch is on 22th May at the Star and Garter in Chelveston. At present we are full.

We know Christmas is a long way off but we would be happy to arrange a Boxing day lunch if there is enough interest. Maybe you need or could offer transport which would be very helpful.

Venues usually require a small non-refundable deposit. Please let us know if you are interested. More details to follow in late Autumn.

[Grpscord@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk](mailto:Grpscord@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk)



### **Non-Fiction Group:**

We have been meeting for about 2 years with members from H&R and Wellingborough u3as.

Our book choices are varied. Recently we have read biographies, travel and history, both newly published and from past years.



We meet at the leaders' home in Rushden on the 3rd Monday of each month 10.00-12.00, to discuss our choice of book and choose another. We use Zoom occasionally.

More information from Linda and Chris Walker: [Grpscord@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk](mailto:Grpscord@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk)

## u3a MONTHLY MEETINGS

Please note there is a small charge for non-members. Details can be found on our website or call 01933 522934 for further information.

### Speakers 2022

If you, or a friend, have had experience as a speaker at other groups on topics which you think would be of interest to our u3a members then please contact the Speaker Secretary. **Note: - The Speakers may be subject to change.**

20 <sup>th</sup> June	Neil Hanson	Ghost Writer for Celebrities
He has led an extraordinary life in his own right, but as a professional ghost-writer of over 60 published books, he has worked with a diverse collection of interesting people, including household names. His hugely entertaining talk gives us privileged glimpses into the hidden worlds of his ghosting clients. It is revelatory, insightful and very, very funny.		
18 <sup>th</sup> July	Paul Robbins	Great British Eccentrics
15 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Rev. Kelvin Woolmer	Nicker to Vicar
19 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Vince Eager	You're Never Too Old to Rock & Roll
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	AGM	
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Dr Michael Leach	Animals behaving badly.
21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Julie Kinnear	Marilyn Munroe
The talk looks at the history and origins of words and phrases, the societies that invented them and how they have become twisted/lost their meaning over time. For example, who originally came up with the phrase "a rolling stone gathers no moss" and did it always mean what it means today? Why do we talk about people receiving benefits to be living "on the dole"? Who is the Bob in "Bob's your uncle"?		
12 <sup>th</sup> Dec		

### 2023

16 <sup>th</sup> Jan		
20 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Malcolm Darrock	Down to Earth. The history of the parachute.
20 <sup>th</sup> March	Phillip Caine	Barrow to Baghdad & Back Again
17 <sup>th</sup> April		
15 <sup>th</sup> May		
19 <sup>th</sup> June	Julie Kinnear	Wonderful Wicked Wallis

## GROUP DETAILS

*Some Group Leaders have tables at the monthly meeting where you can meet them and find more information.*

GROUP	VENUE/DAY	TIME
A Little Aloud	Alternate Wednesdays	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday on Zoom 10.00 & 11.00
Badminton Beginners & Improvers	Pemberton Centre	Wednesday 1400-1500
Badminton for fun	Pemberton Centre	Tuesday 09.00-10.00 & Friday 12.00-13.00
Bookmarks Again	Waitrose Community Room	2nd Wednesday of the month
Canasta	Saxon Hall, Raunds	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday 10.00-12.00
Computing/Technology Grp A	St Peters RC Church Hall Rushden	Mornings 10-12am 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday every month
Computing/Technology Grp B Beginners & Advanced		Mornings 10-12am 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday every month during British Summer Time & 11am -1pm in winter months
Country Dancing	HF WMC	Alternate Mondays 2 00-3.30pm
Country Park Walks	Various Parks	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 10.30
Cycling multi-Groups	Rushden Lakes	Every Monday
Digital Photography A	Rushden Hall	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed 10.00 to 12.00
Driving	On the Rd	
Garden	To be advised	
Golf	Various	Alternate Wed & Fri
Guitar Improvers	ASDA Training room	Tue 17.00-19.00
Handicrafts	Rushden Bowls Club	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday each month 2-4pm.
History	Masonic Hall, Rushden	1 <sup>st</sup> Thu 14.00-16.00
Home Dining	Various	Twice per Month varying days
Knit & Natter	Leader's Home	Alternate Mon 10.00-12.00
Mah-jong for fun	Waitrose Community Room	1st & 3rd Friday 19.00 – 21.00
MMFC	Rushden Golf Club	Closed for summer, recommencing 8 <sup>th</sup> August, Weekly Mondays at 10am
Non-Fiction Books	Leader's Home	3rd Monday 10.00-12.00
Painting for Pleasure	Waitrose Community Room from 27 <sup>th</sup> June	Alternate Mondays 14.00-1600
Play Reading	To be advised	1st Tue 13.15-
Continued...		

GROUP	VENUE	TIME
Rock & Blues Appreciation	Leader's Home	Last Thursday of the month 2-4pm
Scrabble	Waitrose Community Room	2-4pm
Singing for Fun	Rushden Hall, Hall Park	Alternate Thu 14.00-16.00
Special Events	Various	Various
Sunday Lunch	Every two Months	Venue varies
Table Tennis	Pemberton Centre	Wed at 13.00
Ten Pin Bowling	AMF Bowl Wellingborough	Alternate Friday 1100-1300
Ukulele	Rushden Transport Club	13.30-15.30 Every Monday
Video Editing	Leader's Home	2nd & 4th Tues 10.00-12.00
W.A.L.T.	Various	Various
Walking	Various	Various
Wine & Dine	Various	Various
Wine Appreciation	Leader's Home	4th Thurs 14.00-16.00

## GROUP LEADER CONTACT DETAILS

In accordance with GDPR we don't publish contact details for group leaders on a publicly available website or newsletter. There is a contact form on the website which can be used to email group leaders and u3a officers. If you wish to telephone a group leader you will need to log into Beacon at <https://www.u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=118&sc=LUDE>. You don't need a password or username, just your own personal details.



Clicking on the Higham & Rushden u3a groups link opens a page listing all our current groups and gives telephone numbers for each leader.

### **THESE WILL MAKE YOU THINK:**

- Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety-one?
- If 4 out of 5 people SUFFER from diarrhoea, does that mean that one out of five enjoys it?
- Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?
- If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?
- Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist, but a person who drives a race car is not called a racist?
- If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?
- If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?
- Do Tetley Tea employees take 'coffee breaks?'
- What hair colour do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?
- Why do they put pictures of criminals up in the Post Office? What are we supposed to do, write to them? Why don't they just put their pictures on the postage stamps so the mailmen can look for them while they deliver the mail?
- Is it true that you never really learn to swear until you learn to drive?
- Why, Why, Why do we press harder on the remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?
- Why do banks charge a fee due to insufficient funds when they already know you're broke?
- Why is it that when someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe you believe them, but if they tell you there is wet paint you have to touch it to check?
- Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- Whose cruel idea was it to put an "s" in the word "lisp"?
- Why is it that, no matter what colour bubble bath you use, the bubbles are always white?
- Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?
- Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?
- Why do people run over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it and then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
- How do those dead bugs get into the enclosed light fixtures?
- Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?
- Why, in winter, do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about how hot it was?
- Do you ever wonder why you gave me your e-mail address in the first place?
- The statistics on sanity say that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're OK - then it's you!
- REMEMBER, A day without a smile is like a day without sunshine! And a day without sunshine is, like night!!!!



## HEDGEHOGS

May - and so begins the mating season. The male hog finds a female and starts to circle round her. She will give him the cold shoulder, turning her side to him so he can't approach. Whilst at the same time putting him off with plenty of grunting and snorting noises. All this noise quite often attracts the attention of other males who may then approach to try their luck. If this happens the two males will have a bit of a tussle, head butting and jostling each other. Sometimes one or other wins and goes back to the female. Other times the female gets bored and wanders off, leaving the males to it! The mating dance can go on for hours but eventually ends quite suddenly, either with one of the hogs running off or when mating starts.

Mating for hedgehogs is an extremely prickly business – think sharp spines meeting soft underbelly – ouch! So mating can only happen with the full cooperation of both hogs. The female must lie flat to the ground arching her head and shoulders, so she almost looks like she's doing yoga. This way her spines lie flat, and the male can safely climb on board, grasping the spines between her shoulder blades with his teeth and using his paws to get a better grip. At any time during the process, the female can change her position so she “bristles” and throws the male off.

Even after all this mating is not guaranteed to lead to pregnancy. So hedgehogs do lots of mating, with lots of different partners just to be sure. Two a night is not unusual, and a hog may have ten or 12 different partners during the mating season.

Hedgehogs are generally solitary creatures, and mating doesn't change this. After the act, there seems to be no pair bond formed at all. The male goes on his way and takes no part in raising the litter. There is little chance he would ever recognise his offspring.

Female hedgehogs are usually pregnant for around 32 days before giving birth and normally have 4 to 6 babies although up to 10 has been known, albeit rare.





## EDITORIAL

While waiting for my husband in the Waitrose Café the other day I was reading a Daily Mail – not a paper I usually read but I was bored, and it passed some time. However, I was inspired to write

this editorial by a full-page article I read, and which resonated with me.

The gist of the article was about an 80-year-old man who was unexpectedly faced with new parking arrangements when he went to a friend's memorial service. He was shocked to discover he could only pay by an app but decided to leave his car anyway rather than miss the memorial. Back home his son tried to sort out the situation with the parking company and soon a fine arrived on his father's doormat. Sadly, he had passed away in the interim and his son was faced with trying to navigate the labyrinthine administration involved in trying to have the penalty annulled.

This is not an isolated incident.

So many of our precious older generation are struggling in a digitally obsessed age when anything from paying bills to making a doctor's appointment and everything in between needs to be done over a smart phone or the internet.

Last year the Office for National Statistics reported that three million people did not access the internet and more than two million of them are aged 70 plus. The majority of those left behind are elderly or disabled. For a variety of reasons they cannot or do not feel confident enough to embrace digital technology. In fact if you are reading the printed version of this newsletter rather than the digital version, you may be in this category.

Even among mobile phone users ten percent don't own smart phones and as a result a large section of society is left feeling marginalised or completely forgotten.

Organisations trumpet their technological advances in the name of progress and efficiency but, in reality, they are cutting costs to please their shareholders while increasingly disadvantaging digitally excluded groups. This is nothing less than discrimination.

Progress should not be dressed up as improvement if it excludes millions of people. It is heart-breaking how difficult it has become for the elderly to go about their daily business, terrorising them for the crime of not knowing how to download an app,

*Please remember if you would like to learn more about smartphones and apps and how to use them, our Computer Group B will be resuming in September. Computer Group A continues on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month (except September) and you are welcome to come along and get help on accessing the internet from your computer or laptop.*

*June is recovering from surgery, having had a local anaesthetic when a nurse asks her how she's feeling.' I'm O.K. but I didn't like the four-letter-word the doctor used in surgery.*

*'What did he say?' asks the nurse.*

*'OOPS!'*

*Recently I decided to visit my sister who lives in France. I assumed that most French would speak English but I found that many people only spoke French. This included the ticket inspector on the train. He punched my ticket, then chatted cordially for a bit, making several expansive gestures. I simply nodded from time to time to show him that I was interested. When he had gone, an American tourist, also on the train, leaned forward and asked if I spoke French. 'No', I admitted. 'Then that explains', she said, 'why you didn't bat an eyelid when he told you that you were on the wrong train.'*

## **EASY CUCUMBER SOUP RECIPE**

**Just right for hot summer days with no cooking required,**

### **Ingredients**

2 cucumbers (about 675g)

150g Greek yogurt

2 limes, juiced

small handful of parsley, washed & chopped

3 mint sprigs, washed & leaves picked

small bunch of chives, washed & chopped

olive oil, to serve

### **Method**

#### **STEP 1**

Finely chop a third of one of the cucumbers and set aside for when you're ready to serve later. Roughly chop the remaining cucumbers and tip into a blender or food processor along with the yogurt and lime juice. Add the parsley, most of the mint leaves and chives. Blitz until the mixture is smooth.

#### **STEP 2**

Pour the soup into bowls or small cups, scatter over the finely chopped cucumber, remaining mint leaves and the rest of the chives. Drizzle with a little olive oil just before serving.

