



Active Retirement Newsletter July 2020

STREET & GLASTONBURY



Learn! Laugh! Live!

National website: www.u3a.org.uk Locally: Streetu3a.org

The last four months have been a difficult time. All U3A activities have been suspended. Members will be aware of the restrictions currently in place. The committee has been monitoring the changing situation with advice from Government and the Third Age Trust. As this Newsletter has to be prepared well in advance of publication, **this is the current position at the time of writing:**

1. Enrolment Day is cancelled. Details about joining Groups are below.

2. The AGM will be held on Thursday, 13th August, from 10.00 until 12 noon via Zoom.

3. Currently, NO GROUPS have been arranged from September. See below for important information.

4. We have published a PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME. All Groups, dates, venues, Group Leaders are subject to change. Visit the website: streetu3a.org, for latest updates.

5. MEMBERSHIP Renewal will be by post only. See page 2 for details.

6. Coffee Mornings have been cancelled until further notice.

7. Currently, there are no plans to hold the Christmas Party.

We will continue to monitor any change to restrictions for meetings, and update the website when necessary. If there are major changes we will notify members as soon as possible.

Decisions have been made based on advice and restrictions from government, advice from the Third Age Trust, and the views of the membership and Group Leaders. We are also dependent on the availability of venues. Currently, church and village halls are not listed as being usable, although community centres are. When venues are open again, we don't know how each one will implement the rules on distancing then in force.

1 Enrolling for Groups will be different this year. If and when Groups start members **MUST** contact the Group Leader ahead of the first meeting. The GL will know if the Group will run, if there is a restriction on the number attending, and any other information.

2 AGM via Zoom will be on Thursday August 13th from 10am to noon. All Reports for the AGM are on the website and members can read/download them ahead of the meeting. The Reports will not be read at the meeting. Members can submit any questions ahead of the meeting. Members **MUST** register on the website to attend, and they can also submit their questions from the website or by email. Additional questions can be asked at the meeting. Registration and questions must be submitted before August 10. Instructions of how to attend through Zoom will be given on the website and by email nearer the time.

3 Currently we are unable to offer Groups from September due to restrictions on meeting indoors. However, some Group Leaders have offered to run their Group via the internet. These Groups are: Line Dancing, French Conversation 1, Beginners French, Latin. Others may consider this later. **There**

continued

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**Deadline for
the next
edition:
20 October**



LOTTERY FUNDED



will be **NO Group Fee** for these Groups, nor for the outdoor Groups, during the autumn. To join a Group you must be a fully paid-up member and give the GL your new membership number. The committee will continue to monitor the situation and if there are significant changes we will update the website and inform members.

4 Group Programme is Provisional. As stated before members **MUST** contact the Group Leader to get the latest information about their Group.

5 Membership renewal will be by **post only**. Forms are available on the website; by email from Paul; and with this Newsletter. The fee remains at £10 per person. If members wish to receive the TAM magazine, their completed forms must be returned to Paul by 10 August. **NB Members may need to consider their membership in the light of the reduced programme in the autumn.**

6 Due to current indoor meeting restrictions and the need to book guest speakers in advance, it has been decided **not to hold any Coffee Mornings** during the autumn.

7 At this time we are not planning to have a **Christmas Party**.

Finally, some members do not have internet access and cannot check our website. We would ask members who are online to keep any friends they know without the internet up to date with the latest information. Group Leaders may contact group members by phone or by email to let them know about important developments.

Please keep an eye on the website. It is the best way to keep you informed of what is happening.

We do intend to re-start our U3A as soon as it is practicable to do so.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT July 2020

I hope you are all well and bearing up to being locked down and hoping for the time to come back to normality but I am afraid we are all going to wait a few months yet may even be well into next year. Your committee is working on several ideas which are all mentioned in this Newsletter. As there is very little happening at the moment I wish you all a happy summer and hope things will be better in September.

Mike Ellington.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE DOING WHILE SHUT UP AT HOME!

I have received some poetic thoughts on the current situation, including one that refers to the stupid idea that your age alone would preclude you from being allowed to join in the general easing of the lockdown. I am seven months older than my husband and about to pass the limit and get locked up. But he is the one who is vulnerable yet he can roam the county free as a bird if he so wished. AGE alone is *not* the deciding factor: other things have to be taken into account.

FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Another U3A membership year has passed and we are looking hopefully to the time we can resume our chosen activities. With this issue of the Newsletter you will find an enrolment form for your membership of the Street and Glastonbury U3A. This is for the period of September 2020 to August 2021. The instructions for completing and returning the form are included on the enrolment form, please read them fully. There are tick boxes to help you check that you have put together the correct stamped addressed envelope, value of cheque to cover the membership required and Gift Aid declaration, before popping it in the post.

Please fill in your enrolment form as clearly as possible and check it is correct before posting it to me at the address noted on the form. If forms are sent to me that are incomplete, illegible, return envelopes that do not have the correct postage, missing cheques or are unsigned you may not receive your membership card on time. These and other problems cause extra time-consuming work. Your help by avoiding these problems will be much appreciated. I hope you will continue your support for our U3A.

Paul.

THE EDITOR'S SAY

This Newsletter is of necessity brief. People are finding ways to keep in contact with our U3A members while staying within the rules. Other U3As may have ideas which could be useful to us; keep your eyes open for them. We are an interdependent organization so let's do some interdepending.

Ed.

THIRD AGE MATTERS (TAM for short)

Most of you will know that the U3A in the UK has a magazine called *Third Age Matters* (TAM for short) which is written, edited and generally produced in London. Copies are then distributed throughout the country. What you may not realize is that this magazine is NOT FREE. It is *not a perk* of membership; it has to be paid for. Our Treasurer has noted on the accounts the cost of the magazine: it is £3.10 per person per year (from 2020). Now TAM is intended for everyone; it is nationally produced and is meant to keep us all in touch with each other, to exchange views and ideas and generally help to make us feel part of a national organization, though locally independent. The cost comes out of your £10 membership fee of which we have to forward a set amount (capitation fee of £3.50) for every member *plus* £3.10 for every one of our members who elects to receive the magazine. This is your choice and your right but I do ask that, if you want to receive TAM,

you do at least take it out of its wrapper and peruse it. Those of you who simply consign it to the bin unopened are wasting not merely paper but money as well: *your money*. S&G will have paid over £3.10 of *your membership* fee so that you can receive TAM and if you just throw it in the bin, you might as well have chucked three-ten into the bin instead. Please: If you do NOT want to receive the magazine, say so and we will save £3.10. I have elected to receive TAM ever since I joined S&G, not least because, when I became Editor of the NL, there have sometimes been items in it which I judge are of interest to the wider membership. In our U3A, you get the chance every year to say whether you want to receive TAM or not. There is a box on the Enrolment form which needs to be ticked or crossed to indicate your wish. Please make sure it IS your wish and not just a thoughtless same-as-last-year response. I received the new issue of TAM today and I have read it cover to cover but I think I will stick with my first inclination: I will not be renewing my vote to receive TAM in the future. Don't spend my £3.10 all at once.

Ed.

NB Anyone who does want to receive TAM *must* renew their membership before 10th August. Paul must know who wants the magazine by that date to meet the deadline for ordering copies.

GROUP LIAISON

Very sadly, as we all know, the 2019-2020 programme came to an abrupt end suddenly in March. None of the summer groups were able to carry on. We have put together the new 2020-2021 programme to give some structure to our U3A. However, due to the present circumstances, it seems impossible to start in September, due to the restrictions imposed upon us by the Third Age Trust and for the safety of our members. We have to adhere to Government Guidelines. When we are able to start, you will see in the programme that we are looking for group leaders for 4 groups, without them the groups will not run. Any volunteers? There are a few groups who are able to carry on, via Zoom, but these will not be under the U3A. We all look forward to being able to meet up again when it is safe to do so. Keep busy and take care.

Cynthia Rayes



Reiki



SNIPPET

I have lived in Somerset for nearly forty years and have only just discovered something: Wells Cathedral has a Chained Library. I have often been in the Cathedral and seen the sign pointing up some well-worn steps, saying 'LIBRARY' but I have never, I blush to confess, been brave enough to mount the steps and find out what is up there. Well, here is a picture of what they have there: Books chained to the shelves.



photo Richard Kilroy

Considering that most people couldn't read and wouldn't know what to do with such an item; and some are so heavy you'd need two people to shift them – it may seem an unnecessary precaution. We are so lucky to live so close to such a treasure – there is only ONE Cathedral in Somerset – and I would urge you: Next time you are allowed into the Cathedral and the sign is out, ascend the steps worn wonky by twelve hundred years of footfall and see what it is all about. NB Places of worship have been re-opened but check on the exact requirements for visitors.

Ed.

DEPARTURES

Just as we went to press with the last Newsletter I had notification that we have lost another Bright Spark from our U3A. Patience Clatworthy, free spirit and cheerer-upper of all who came into contact with her, was taken quite suddenly in February. She was ill but had been having treatment and both she and her carers were expecting that she would last a little while longer. She was talking of visiting the last session of this term 'just to see everybody'. But it was not to be. Several of us from our U3A attended her funeral in Middlezoy – and the church was absolutely packed: standing room only. The people in the pew in front of us turned out to be from Somerton U3A but none of us was quite sure whether Patience belonged to both U3A's or not! She did her own thing and was a perfect example of Third Agers. She will be much missed.

Ed.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Some of you may remember that we used to have an Opera Group which unfortunately had to close. Wilton Wills is now proposing to start a new Group: Music Appreciation. It was planned to run at the Tor Leisure Centre on the Thursday of Week 2, from 2.00 – 4.00 pm. Obviously, this cannot happen at the moment but please contact Wilton if you are interested in joining this Group when it becomes possible. Plans can still be laid and formulated, even if we have to wait a while to put them into execution. Contact Wilton on wiltonwills@gmail.com to let him know the level of interest.

From LORNA MOWINSKA we have this ode on her great-grandson's birthday, which took place during the Great Shut-Down:

A cake for Jake
They ought to make.
An excellent way
To cheer his birthday.
I enclose some money
But it's really not funny
When shopping you're craving
To just keep on saving.
A cake I should make
For my great-grandson Jake
But to take one so far
I might need my car.
A copper might frown;
Say I'd let the side down---
I'd better stay home
And write you a *pome*.
(Lorna runs the Poetry Group)

And from GILL HALE we have these cheerful thoughts:

Listen. What do you hear?
The sound of birdsong loud and clear.
Look. What do you see?
Wisteria, roses, a beautiful tree.
Smell. What is that scent?
Lavender, herbs when leaves stroked or bent.
Taste. What's in the pan?
Something you've cooked;
You've time, so you can.
Touch. What can you feel?
Something we'd lost on Time's spinning wheel.
It cannot be spoken, or tasted or seen
As each day is embraced – not what's coming
or been.

LATERAL THINKING

Quite a few U3A Groups have managed to find ways to continue their contact one way or another. The LINE DANCERS are investigating the possibilities of live-streaming their sessions. This would be for a single, 1½hour session each week, beginning in September about the date they would normally have started. The way it works is this: The leader sets up the techno-bit and sends group members a password and code. At the time of the session (eg Monday, 10.30), you enter the codes etc, find your leader, tell her by a text message that you are there. Now: it is a bit odd: you can see the leader and you can hear her (and the music). You can send brief messages to her (Can we do it again, please?) but you can't talk to her. You can't see any of the other dancers and the leader cannot see or hear any of the dancers. (You can leave off your make-up, forget the hair, have a glass of wine on the side and NOBODY will know.)

Elaine has asked me to put this bit in the Newsletter to see what sort of interest there might be in setting up this live-streaming. I would suggest that it is probably most suitable for people who are already members of the Group, but if you are up for the challenge, there is no reason why newcomers should not join in. The only thing I would say is that, if you are new to our U3A, it would help if you have done Line Dancing elsewhere in the past. Absolute Beginners might find it a bit challenging because they cannot ask their questions direct. If you are interested in taking part in this live streaming, please contact Elaine

(email danderobertson@hotmail.co.uk) to let her know. PS You must be a member of Street & Glastonbury U3A to take part but there will be no class fees this autumn term.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

We need two people urgently: a new Venues Manager and a Secretary. It is true that there will not be a lot of work to do in the next few weeks, probably months, when it comes to booking venues but if and when things change we need to be ready to get ourselves into gear as quickly as possible. As for the Secretary: we have not had one for some time and Helen is combining minute-taking with her duties as Vice-Chairman. Help will be given to show you what is involved and if you think you can do this for us, please contact any member of the committee.

TREASURER AND CHAIRMAN

Next April, both our Treasurer and our Chairman are obliged to stand down. We need both offices filled or we cannot function as a U3A. If you can help, please contact any member of the committee.

NB In all vacancies, the present holder will help you take over the post smoothly.

GROUP REPORTS

PROPOSED NEW MUSIC

APPRECIATION GROUP

Until recently the Street and Glastonbury U3A organised an Opera group which had benefited from receiving a grant from the National Lottery to purchase a collection of popular opera DVDs. Unfortunately, numbers attending dwindled and the group disappeared from the calendar. I am now proposing with your support to start a new venture – a classical and opera appreciation group – catering for a broad range of tastes. Meetings will be held in the Tor Leisure Centre in Glastonbury which has the large speakers and the necessary equipment.

At this stage it would be helpful to know the level of interest in this proposal as well as offers of support.

wiltonwills@gmail.com

TABLE TENNIS

The table tennis groups all had a very successful year with groups being at full capacity and around 90 members playing. The groups all meet at Ashcott Village Hall where four tables are available. Balls are provided and bats are available. All of the sessions are primarily for fun and the games are not taken too seriously. The games are all played in doubles format with players rotating thereby giving everyone roughly the same playing time and different partners. There is a short break midway through for tea/coffee, biscuit and a chat. Several players attend more than one group.

The Tuesday morning group meets all year from 10am to 12noon and is generally attended by more experienced players, including some league players, although all players are welcome.

The Friday morning group meets all year from 9.30am to 12noon. This group has a more mixed ability and is ideal for members who have played table tennis in the past but are a bit rusty.

The Friday afternoon group meets during the winter and for ten weeks during the early summer, from 2pm to 4pm, and is an ideal starting point for members completely new to table tennis.

New players are welcome at all of the groups and members can turn up at any time for a taster session but please contact the Group Leader prior to attending to check whether or not the group is at full capacity. Guidance can be given on the rules and how to play. Table tennis is good exercise for all ages and a great way of keeping fit whilst having fun and socializing.

STEPHEN WRIGHT

CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING

A couple of new members were welcomed to the group in September. We produced a calendar featuring our work in December & are now working towards an exhibition. Unfortunately this will have to be postponed for now but dates will be advertised when we can go ahead with it. Our summer term has had to be cancelled too but of course it is an ideal hobby to work on at home. Kind regards.

JEANNE jeanne.bradban@virgin.net

FRENCH CONVERSATION WEEK 1

This is a group for fairly fluent French speakers. We all get a chance to chat in French, and discuss recent news, or tell each other about our gardens, holidays, outings and the like. After our tea break (when English is allowed), we listen to a passage in French, and then read and translate it. We are a lively and friendly group.

NB We have to restrict number to a maximum of twelve because that is all the space we have.

JENNY LEWIS

U3A SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP.

I have recently taken over this group from June Kelland. Thanks June for all your sterling work. We now meet once a month, usually the 4th Sunday, and frequent local pubs. There are eight or nine people in the group and we have a lot of chat as well as a tasty meal. There's room for two or three more people if anyone would like to join us, once we are free of the dreaded lurgy!

ANGELA MIDDLETON Tel: 01458 831463

T'AI CHI

We have several groups practising every week. Our most established group will, in the Autumn, have completed 4 years and heading to their 5th. They keep coming back!! We have, until the Virus troubles, run four groups a week. All groups run either Tuesday or Wednesday.

We practice a form of T'ai Chi established at least 3000 years ago, 'Lee Family Style' or 'Yin and Yang' Anybody can undertake the T'ai Chi, no matter what level of fitness, age or capability. Our focus is very much directed at the health benefits. This is achieved by undertaking the T'ai Chi form most recognisable from the scenes in China where it is practised in parks, squares and often workplaces. We also practice the Qi Gong which concentrates on one or more specific parts of the body, internal or external. Although the overall benefits of T'ai Chi will be noticeable very quickly don't expect a quick fix however. Deep and long-term problems can be helped but it may take time. All of this plus we have a laugh, relax and generally have a good time, all part of a balanced lifestyle.

STEVE COUSINS

UKULELE GROUP

The ukulele band has seen tremendous growth this last year and at the last count we were up to 34 with some members participating in both the Improvers group and the Band. Four of us spent last summer putting together a songbook so that each member of both the Improvers group and the Band have the same repertoire, neatly put together in individual folders. This has proved extremely helpful. The actual music playing goes from strength to strength plus we have a whole heap of fun.

WENDY HOWIANTZ

THE HISTORY GROUP

Our group has completed yet another successful year and attendance has remained constant at about twenty members. We have spent our time studying early medieval history from the Anglo-Saxons down to Magna Carta. Next September we intend to continue to study the period 1216 - 1485 covering subjects such as Simon de Montfort, the Conquest of Wales, the Hundred Years War and the Wars of the Roses. Our group is both lively and enthusiastic and is always ready to welcome new members.

WILTON WILLS wiltonwills@gmail.com

LINE DANCING

We have again had a very successful year, with our usual celebrations of St. Patrick's with Irish Whisky cake – I'm glad I made two so that my husband and I could also have some! Due to the ongoing issues, we are trying something new and I am sending dance links with instruction and video for those at home to try out and practise. It will be interesting to see how this goes.

We have room for new members in September for any who are interested. Please call me to discuss on 01458 840252 or danderobertson@hotmail.co.uk and take a look at our Group page on the Street and Glastonbury U3A webpage. Looking forward to being back dancing in September.

ELAINE ROBERTSON

LATIN YEAR SIX

I can't help feeling that some of this group breathed a sigh of relief that we did not complete the end of the term! We have reached the end of Book IV now, all but the last two paragraphs. They wanted something to do while locked up at home so I set them to translate this last half a chapter and they have. The only trouble was that it ended with the cutting off of an actor's head and the banishment of an empress. The Year Three's finished with the eruption of Vesuvius, where everybody dies including the dog. We shall all be very glad to get back to work (whenever that may be) and get on with something more cheerful.

PAT THOMPSON

U3A BADMINTON

According to Wikipedia, the sport of Badminton demands excellent fitness. Players require aerobic stamina, agility, strength, speed and precision. It also requires good motor co-ordination and the development of sophisticated racquet movements. In the real world of U3A – while we can aspire to the above, the Badminton group is a little slower, the stamina is a bit lacking and the precision is not quite what it ought to be....But who is worried? We are there to have fun, socialize (when we are allowed to!) and benefit from the exercise.

The Badminton group meets (used to meet!) at Strode College on Thursday afternoons from 4.30 – 6pm from September, weekly until Easter. It is a rather select group, who would welcome new members for a chunter round the court, get rid of some aggression, meet new friends and enjoy yourself. We do not take it very seriously – but we do like to win occasionally! As and when we return Mo Pickford will be taking charge as I seem to have found myself booked for 3 hours of Trampolining coaching on a Thursday evening, at the other end of the hall!

KAY ELLINGTON

U3A PÉTANQUE GROUP

Well, our fifth year of *pétanque* came to an abrupt halt in March, before we could really enjoy our play in the more appropriate and convivial Spring/Summer weather.....

Pétanque, the most popular variant of the French 'boules' games, has proved easy to pick up and is a nice mix of skill and randomness, and friendly and great fun too especially when the sun shines upon us. Most people seem to have played it at some time, maybe to differing rules. We normally play throughout the whole year, on our home *terrain* at Compton Dundon, fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 4pm, broadly conforming to a Week 2 basis. The group is strong and popular and it is to be expected that most of the nearly forty signed-up members, will stay with it. With only two proper *pistes* available at Compton, and even pressing the gravelled car park into service too, there is only finite space to play comfortably in sides of three or sometimes four. The group is therefore likely to already be at full capacity, once we are able to reconvene, with very little room, if any, to take in any more members at this time. However, if you would like to find out more, and maybe to join a waiting list, then contact the Group Leader Peter Lander (01458-860000 or peter.freeland@gmail.com).

LATIN READING GROUP

This year marked the start of our reading Latin works that had not been simplified - Latin authors in their own words. This was a huge milestone, but our little group of four embraced the challenge with great gusto. We started with passages from Cicero's case against Verres, a very corrupt governor of Sicily; poor Verres, he didn't stand a chance. Cicero's withering attack exposed every instance of debauchery, every theft, every financial impropriety, every act of sacrilege. And he made such a good job of it that Verres fled Rome and went into voluntary exile. After this we tackled Livy and read some of his History of Rome taken from the early part. We read of Romulus and Remus, the founding of Rome, the expulsion of the last king of Rome and the founding of the republic.

Each lesson also has a dose of grammar with homework and a reading in English of something relevant to what we have been reading in Latin. It all sounds pretty serious stuff, but there are plenty of lighter moments too: who would have guessed the number of ways one Latin sentence might be translated? And of course there is always that revivifying cup of coffee in the middle!

JENNIFER WESTCOTT

BOOK GROUP

In the normal way of things the Book Group meets fortnightly through the two U3A terms and monthly over the summer, tackling 17 titles in all, enjoying lively discussion of our ideas and opinions. Of course, this summer those monthly meetings did not take place. For the purposes of this annual report, a very quick review of last year's titles leads me to mention just a few of my personal highs and lows. To deal with the latter first, I have to say I was very disappointed in much-lauded Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*, finding the characters and plot totally unconvincing; and much as I am a fan of other titles by Salman Rushdie, I found *The Satanic Verses* muddled and thereby confusing and unsatisfactory – a view shared unanimously by the group if I remember correctly. On the plus, plus side – I LOVED Kirin Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and David Park's *Travelling in a Strange Land*, very different, but both in their own way heart-wrenching reads; also Penelope Fitzgerald's *The Beginning of Spring* which I looked upon as her *homage* to Russian Literature and a real delight and Francis Spufford's *Golden Hill*, to name but a few. At the time of writing (mid-June) the reading list for the forthcoming autumn term has not yet been decided upon. I will aim to publish details of the six selected titles on our website and circulate to members by mid-August, giving people enough time to obtain their own copies. As with other groups, how and when we will re-convene is very much in question at the moment. Although the group format may lend itself to Zoom meetings quite a number of existing members are not at all keen. In any case we would only follow that course if, come September, Covid-19 restrictions still preclude us from meeting face to face. The size of the group will depend upon circumstances at that time but it is possible there may be spaces. If you would like more information and/or to go on the waiting list please do contact me.

JULIE HILLMAN

READING SHAKESPEARE

Group 1 (Week 1) At the time of writing, due to ill health it seems unlikely that Alan will be able to continue as Group Leader and thus the future of this group is uncertain. On behalf of group members I would like to say a big thank you to Alan for his lead over the last few terms and wish him all the best for a speedy recovery. If there is anyone who would like to take on this role, please contact Group Liaison, Cynthia Rayes.

Group 2 (Week 2) We have the well-established format of watching 20-30 mins of a BBC production of our chosen play on DVD and then we read and discuss the same scenes.

Last autumn we read and enjoyed *Twelfth Night* noting several similarities with elements in other plays, particularly *The Comedy of Errors*, and once again couldn't believe how quickly Shakespeare's characters manage to fall head-over-heels in love or indeed understand why! The Malvolio sub-plot also featured large in our discussion. In the spring we took on *Richard II*. What a contrast! Trying not to let the complicated family history or the historical chronology of specific events dominate discussion we were much moved by the play's many stand-out speeches. I think I am right in saying that the group fell in to Richard and Bolingbroke camps approximately 50:50. Our next chosen text is to be *Troilus and Cressida*. At the time of writing (mid-June) it is uncertain how we will continue. The group as a whole is not keen to hold sessions on Zoom but most are prepared to give it a try if this is our only option. We currently have spare places. If you are interested to join us please contact the Group Leader.

JULIE HILLMAN.

RACKETBALL

The Racketball group meets at the Victoria Club in Street each Wednesday morning from 10.30 to 12.30. We play all through the year. Rackets and balls are provided. The cost is £2 per session on a turn-up-and-play basis. Members do not sign up for a season but just pay for the session when they play so it is easy to come along, try it out and see if it is for you with no commitment. Racketball is played on a squash court with similar rules to squash but is a much slower game due to the large bouncy balls and larger rackets. It can be played by all ages and more people in the UK now play racketball than play squash. We have the use of four squash courts and participants can play as much as they like or sit out and watch and chat as much as they like. It is all very casual and based upon people having fun and light exercise. New players are always welcome. Guidance can be given on the rules and how to play. Just turn up on the day with comfortable clothing, non-marking trainers and a drink. Give it a try. You will be surprised how much fun it is.

STEPHEN WRIGHT

DRESSMAKING SEWING BEE

At the commencement in September we had a discussion regarding what we wanted to achieve. It was decided to all purchase the same paper pattern and so tunic tops, summer trousers and skirts were made. Unfortunately due to cutting short of classes now, we have not been able to finalise and showcase our creations. We have all enjoyed each other's company while sewing and learning techniques.

SUSAN MACKENZIE

GREEK TRAGEDY

It is amazing the laughter that our Greek Tragedy sessions sometimes produce. It arises not from the tragedies themselves but from the discussions that follow each section of the play. A typical exchange might go something like this: "What a sensitive person Deianeira is!" (because she had shown sympathy for a princess who had been made a slave.)

"I don't agree; she is a wimp, always moaning on about her lot." (She had plenty to moan about: her husband, Heracles, was away almost all of the time performing his famous Labours and at the same time managing to fit in many amatory adventures.)

This all sounds very flippant but of course there is a lot of very serious and thoughtful discussion too. How could there not be when the themes of the plays are the basic passions that rule all our actions? In one of the plays we read this year, *The Bacchae*, the refusal of a king to give the gods their due caused his terrible fate – to be ripped apart limb from limb by his daughter, his severed head being triumphantly paraded through the streets of Thebes on a platter, while she was in a god-induced trance.

Why do we still read these plays, full of gods and supernatural events, horror and passion? Because they encapsulate the basic emotions of every human being in an art form which, with Homer's epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey, form the bedrock of all subsequent European literature.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Patience Clatworthy who was a member of our class. Those who went to her funeral heard of her life of selfless service to others, something I think we had all guessed at from her comments and attitude in our class.

JENNIFER WESTCOTT

LATIN YEAR THREE

We were having an excellent year until Corona hit us. (You do all know, I hope, that this is a Latin word that means 'crown' or garland, or circlet, or coronet etc. Something to go round the head, anyway.) Patience Clatworthy was also a member of this class and she managed a last visit to her family in Australia during the autumn term. She was under treatment but rang me to say she was hoping to come and see everybody in the last lesson of the spring term. Well, that didn't happen, not for Patience and not for us. But the little band of dedicated group members is beaver away at home, working on exercises that (fiendishly) I set them to keep the brains working. They are making a magnificent effort and I congratulate them all on their endeavours. One has even managed to compose a poem that is not vastly complimentary to the Group Leader but it has amused everybody else!

PAT THOMPSON

PAINTING FOR PLEASURE

We have had an enjoyable year producing a wide variety of paintings. We are a very enthusiastic and friendly group meeting alternate Tuesdays and Fridays and we paint for pleasure, "doing our own thing". No tuition is given but help is always available if required. Friday seems to be the most popular day but we always have vacancies on Tuesday and anyone who enjoys painting as much as we do will be most welcome to join us.

JILL WEBB

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