



Wilmslow u3a Newsletter

December 2021 & January 2022

BOWLED OVER BY SUCCESS

Come rain or shine Wilmslow u3a Bowling Group meet once a week either on the bowling green in the summer on Alderley Edge Park or Alderley Edge's Festival Hall for short mat bowling during the winter months.

Graham Beech was the first convenor of the group about ten years ago. There were initially about 30 members and even now, ten years later, they still have 32. Graham had previously been a member of Wilmslow Private Bowling Club and some pub groups affiliated to locals such as the Drum and Monkey. He told us that it was very important that people actually joined the group to get their names on the list for insurance purposes. So, he already had the experience, he had the knowledge and he felt that if people liked exercise and socialising, it could be successful. And apparently the chocolate biscuits have gone down well!

Many of the founder members hadn't bowled before and were helped very much by those who were also members of Wilmslow Bowling Club. Later they benefited from some

coaching by experienced trainers from both Bramhall and Holmes Chapel u3as.

Peter Scurfield had previously briefly been a member at Wilmslow Bowling Club, and he and Anna Bainbrigg joined the group at the very beginning. When Graham decided to step down, they both took over as Joint Convenors. They quickly fell into having their own roles; Anna excellent at the day-to-day detail of the running of the group with Peter taking a wider, longer term approach. He is good at building significant, local relationships. These include those with other u3as and Cheshire East Council and is on first name terms with Craig Browne, its Deputy Leader.

The group was invited by the Parish Council to participate in discussions about the development of the green and the park, and to adopt the flower garden at the side of the bowling green. All this 'oils the wheels' in making sure Wilmslow u3a Bowling Group has a high profile and is a well-respected part of the community.

Peter has created another dimension for a minority of members who like more of a challenge, by setting up regular outdoor matches (home and away) against Macclesfield u3a for the u3a Jubilee Challenge Cup; recently re-named the Terry Riley Cup, in memory of Terry (a member of Macclesfield u3a who proposed these matches) and in more recent years, against Bramhall u3a, and Alderley Edge Ladies. As well as providing keen competition, these matches give an opportunity to renew friendships and celebrate victories!

Indoors, the group has enjoyed matches (home and away) against the bowling group that meets at the United Reformed Church and one year against the Chelford Village Hall bowling group. Socialising with all these groups on match days is another very important aspect.

Peter holds the harmony of the group very dear. He is keen to make sure that everyone is getting on, because he knows that, for

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everyone, being a part of this happy group is key to its success.

Anna Bainbrigge, like so many others joined the group at the start with 4 years' experience. She believes that working as Joint Convenor with Peter is successful because she enjoys the day-to-day running of the club and is very comfortable with how this fits with Peter's wider perspective.

Anna is happy taking on admin, organisation, collecting money or anything to make things run smoothly. She has built strong relationships with Alderley Edge Parish Council and the Festival Hall, and with Alderley Edge Union Club, where the group has its annual end of season competition for the 'Bowls in the Park' cup.

She too takes pride in an easy-going atmosphere, with no hard and fast rules which seems to suit this very popular club. Anna gets on well with everyone there and hopes it will go from strength to strength because, for her,



it's the people who make it such a great group

it has been a lifeline. She has gained so much companionship, thus filling a big void in her life, and putting her own skills to good use has helped her to thrive.

What some members told us:

Pat has been a member since it began. She had no previous experience but had a friend who bowled. "I enjoy bowling" she told us, "but it's the people who make it such a great group".

Steve hasn't been a member for long - he only started in July. He is in a walking group with Anna and it was she who introduced him to the Bowling Group, although he isn't entirely without experience as he did bowl about 40 years ago.

Steve joined the u3a because of the Bowling Group, although it is the social side that matters most to him. "We have fun" he said, "and a good laugh".

Anne too has been in the group since it started. She was completely new to it and played outside at first and then indoors. She



really enjoys the competitions. "For me," she told us, "socialising is the most important part".

Roger didn't have any experience when he joined, but found it was an interesting indoor activity which is what he was looking for in the winter months. He cycles with u3a and plays golf when weather permits. He thinks the group is "very sociable and there are some really nice people".

All members contribute to the cost of hiring the Alderley Edge Park bowling green and the Festival Hall. And the group is grateful for financial support from Wilmslow u3a. There are currently no vacancies, but you can ask to be added to the waiting list. – **Beryl Pearce**

Free ink!

Due to the purchase of a new printer Anna Bainbrigge has available for disposal a multi-pack of 5 inks suitable for the Canon Pixma MG 5750 printer. The reference numbers are 570 black, plus 4 colours each referenced 571. This would normally cost around £55.00 as it is unopened. They are free of charge to the first person to contact Anna by email: b.a.bainbrigge@gmail.com

New Convenors

Kate Bryant, the current Cycling Group Convenor, is handing over the role at the end of the year. From 1 January 2022, the joint convenors will be David Lederer and Chris Wigley. Their contact details are on the website.

Table Tennis

Table tennis continues to play on Monday and Friday mornings, 10:15-11:15, usually in the main hall at the Leisure Centre. However, as the charge for the hire of the space has increased significantly, though to be fair, the cost has stayed roughly the same for 4-5 years), the cost of each session is now £1.50 to be paid on the day. Why not join the group – you will be most welcome.

It's at times like this that I wish I'd listened to what my mother said when I was young.

**What did your mother say?
I don't know. I didn't listen.**

Vacancies in Wilmslow u3a

Vice-Chairman

Enquiries to Chairman Martin Cook: chairman@wilmslowu3a.org.uk

Interest Group Co-ordinator

Enquiries to Beryl Pearce: beryl.pearce@waitrose.com

Social Secretary

Enquiries to Christine Roberts: strebormcm2004@yahoo.co.uk

Your u3a needs YOU

I once met Swami Shivananda



The girl in the photograph is me, aged about ten. The picture was taken at Shivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India, with the founder of the ashram, Swami Shivananda after I had recited a poem in English in his honour. He rewarded me with a book called Japa Yoga, along with a big bag of cashew nuts and sweets which I am proudly clutching.

Swamiji is smiling serenely. There was always an inner glow about him. The picture was taken by one of the many swamis who lived in the ashram. They were all very good to us and spoilt us with extra helpings of fruit and vegetables.

Swamiji started the ashram in 1936 on the banks of the river Ganges. It is still there and is leading the world in the study and practice of yoga, the Vedas meditation and all things spiritual. The place also has a publishing concern, The Divine Life Society, a hospital and many outreach clinics. It attracts devotees from all over the world.

I was extremely lucky to have spent a whole month in the ashram in the summer of 1954, thanks to the spirituality of my elder sister, also in the picture. Our mother had died leaving behind a family of ten children and my sister stepped into her role. She was like a mother to us all.

She never married, concentrating on her job as a college lecturer in geography and bringing up all of us with the inner strength of her spirituality. It was through this quest

that she had the support of Swami Shivananda who treated her like a daughter and gave her his full support, guidance and encouragement. She was a lifetime devotee in regular contact with the ashram, receiving various publications from the Divine Life Society.

The boy in the picture is my brother who is four years older than me. He became a mining engineer and worked in a coal mine in Orissa until his retirement.

I grew up in Amritsar and went to the local medical college. I qualified as a doctor and later attended the Post Graduate Institute in Chandigarh to do my doctorate (MD). In 1973 I came to Britain and took a further qualification, MRCOG. Later I was awarded the fellowship. My sister was present at all the convocation ceremonies – in Chandigarh as well as London. She was very proud to see me working as a hospital consultant in the NHS and to see me happily married. She visited us regularly and so did we until her death in 2011.

I have inherited some of my sister's spirituality in that I do yoga and meditation every morning and prayers during the day. My spiritual experiences of childhood have sustained me in good times as well as bad. –

Penny Chandiok

Tip of the week: Cut some small holes in your clothes to fool the moths that the best bits have already been eaten.

The strangest holiday:
to Berlin and back

BEFORE THE WALL CAME DOWN

In March 1987 we were living in Holland and I joined the British Society of Amsterdam who chartered a coach to Berlin. We booked and asked The British School in the Netherlands whether we could take our two children aged ten and sixteen with us. The Deputy Head said "Of course, they will learn more in those few days in Berlin than at school," which proved to be the case.

The journey took about 10-12 hours with comfort stops along the way. One chap on the coach was a university lecturer on botany and he gave a commentary on the flora and fauna as we drove further into Germany. The change between West Germany and East Germany was particularly noticeable as the East suffered Siberian winds and the trees all leaned a different way. On the last leg we went down the autobahn corridor through East Germany to Berlin where there were speed cameras camouflaged under netting emplacements to ensure we didn't slow down and pick up anybody. We arrived at our hotel on the Kurfürstendamm, had a meal and went to bed.

The next morning we explored the ruined church and the local stores. Young 'ladies' in thigh-high boots and fur coats lurked outside looking for clients. The coach driver then picked us up and took us for a lovely lunch in the Grunewald Forest. Afterwards we went on a tour of West Berlin, visiting The Wall and looking over into no man's land. We saw where Hitler's bunker had been and The Reichstag. We drove past Spandau Prison where Rudolf Hess had been incarcerated and on to Spandau Citadel a very imposing building. We visited the Glienicke Bridge, heavily wrapped in barbed wire, often referred to as the 'Bridge of Spies'. This was a restricted border crossing between East and West Berlin where in 1962 Gary Powers, the pilot of a US U-2 spy plane shot down in 1960 was exchanged for Rudolf Abel the Soviet spy.

Jan our Dutch driver had lived in Berlin, so he knew what we should see. He took us to a village/hamlet, which was accessed by a mile

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long road with the wall on both sides and just a few houses at the end all backing on to The Wall. As we went down the road there were guards with guns pointing at us watching us from their watchtowers; they didn't expect coaches like ours and it was a very scary feeling. To see the messages painted on The Wall in the middle of Berlin especially the one 'If you love someone set them free' was very poignant but there in that village there were no messages just an eerie silence.

That evening we all went to a restaurant with a beer-fest and an oompah band with lots of singing in English and of course, beer.

The next morning we went through Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin. A foreign coach going over the border meant extreme checks, the coach was searched completely – mirrors underneath, all the luggage and overhead lockers, etc. and really scrutinising checks of ever passport photo. We drove down Unter den Linden through the Brandenburg Gate to the Pergamon Museum. The outside was quite memorable with bullet holes in the walls and a car park full of Trabant cars. Inside we saw the Pergamon Altar and the most wonderful, colourful Babylonian reliefs.

We have seen nothing like them since.

We had picked up a lady guide and she was obviously very nervous about keeping to a schedule. So when we persuaded Jan to let us off the coach to take photographs by the French church where a group of musicians were playing she went ballistic shouting about her schedule. We then realised that she was being monitored and petrified of the consequences. She showed us the 'wonderful' new tower blocks for residents which now had 'inside toilets and heating'. As it was bitterly cold outside one wondered how they had fared before but they were free and happy Berliners then. We went for a very unmemorable lunch where if you asked for a Coke you were given a litre bottle each and I collected pieces of toilet paper with woodchips in to show to a friend who was driving to Poland suggesting she take her own supply in the car. Then we went further in to see the Russian Memorial which was quite impressive, a gigantic tribute to those Russian soldiers who had died in the last war.

Driving back was rather sombre going past all those grey tower blocks. There is a greyness about Communism and we were reminded of this when we were in the beautiful country of Montenegro where the Soviets had erected similar grey blocks. We dropped off our guide

and went through Checkpoint Charlie again. At every checkpoint especially on the way home next day the soldiers came onto the coach checking passports and lockers to see if we were smuggling babies out! One guard made us take off your glasses and our hair was pulled to see if we were wearing a wig. Mirrors were always slid under the coach. At the last checkpoint a young soldier came on to the coach to check passports. We had two Italian couples with us who had brought a quantity of drink for the journey home. They offered the young soldier a glass of vodka. He looked to see if anyone outside was watching him then went down into the coach toilet to drink it. We didn't have any trouble after that.

On the autobahn back through East Germany there was a duty free service station, where Jan filled up with diesel and we were expected to buy souvenirs, just like an airport duty free area, very weird. After which we continued our high speed travel along the autobahn to West Germany so the authorities were sure we hadn't picked up any extra people.

We were still in Holland in November 1989 when The Wall was torn down and the people were free again. A lot of tears were shed that night. – **Heather and David Robinson**

FREE CRICKET

A case of mistaken identity

In the seventies and eighties I served on the chemistry, pharmacy and standards sub-committee of the DHS Committee on Safety of Medicines. The sub-committee met monthly on Fridays in London on the top floor of a high rise building next to The Oval underground station.

The situation of the building was such that the entire Oval Cricket Ground could be viewed through a picture window comprising one wall of the room where the sub-committee met.

During August 1983, the ICC 50 Over Cricket World Cup was held in England using a number of different grounds. The Oval was chosen to host one of the two semi-final matches on the day that the sub-committee meeting was to take place; the match pitted the West Indies, with its fearsome fast bowling attack, against an Australian team well stocked with hardened batsmen. The game promised to be a 'corker'.

Being a dedicated follower of international cricket, I was naturally extremely keen to attend this semi-final between the titans of the short form of cricket. But, I had failed to secure a ticket for the match.

Nonetheless, with the conclusion of the sub-committee's business around 12.45 and with the game at the Oval nicely underway in front of a noisy full house, I decided to proceed purposefully a short distance to The Oval in the hope that I might encounter a ticket tout who was left with an excess of tickets and could satisfy ticket needs at a fair price.

I approached the Oval ground at its main entrance, the Hobbs Gate, where an immaculately uniformed member of the security team stood guard. Coming directly from the subcommittee meeting, I was wearing the normal NHS committee dress, a dark suit, a collared white shirt and sober tie, and carrying a shiny briefcase containing the morning's subcommittee papers. The security guard looked me up and down, gave

me a smart military salute, opened the gates to allow me to enter the pedestrian area surrounding the ground and greeted me with "Good morning sir".

Clearly a case of mistaken identity. I was inside the Oval cricket ground together with 20 or so thousand spectators but I was behind the pavilion with no view of the match, without a seat and ticketless.

At this point, I spotted another member of the security team, this one guarding a side entrance to the pavilion. I walked towards him and again as I approached him was greeted with a military style salute and "Good morning sir" and waved into the pavilion enclosure where a flight of stairs led to the pavilion balcony. There I found an empty seat that provided a free panoramic view of all the on and off field action taking place at this superb semi-final of the World Cup.

Perhaps, I need not add that I remained on my perch at The Oval until the very end of the game. – **Alan Tallentire**

A standoffish creature, your everyday cat. There really is no way of gainsaying that. And if you approach him with something to say, the chances are that he'll just wander away. So if you encounter him, sat on his mat, ignore him completely. He may not like that. And then, if you're lucky, he may approach you. But only if he's nothing better to do!

– **Dave Mangnall**

Arachnophobia Averted

A short story by Dave Mangnall

Day 1

"How scary is this?" Dr Platt asked.

He removed the cover. The spider on the plate was very pale and very, very small. It lay there, inert. It looked dead. Was it dead?

"That's not scary at all", I answered, untruthfully. How ridiculous of me to be ashamed of my condition when my condition was the only reason for being there. In fairness, I wasn't very scared. There was only a bit of nausea, only a little shaking, only small heart palpitations.

"Here, why don't you hold it for a while?" asked Dr Platt, scooping up the spider suddenly and handing it towards me. I gasped loudly and flinched so hard that I nearly toppled backwards out of my chair. Well, I say "gasped", but if you'd been there you might have said "screamed like a girl!". "Don't you ever do that again!" I snarled, thirty seconds later, when I'd regained my composure at least to the extent of being capable of speech. "I nearly wet myself!"

Dr Platt laughed. "What a fuss!" he chortled. "This spider's not just dead. It's not a spider at all. It's made of plastic."

I was starting to think that this aversion therapy wasn't going to work, any more than the hypnotherapy had.

Several weeks later.

"How scary is this?" Dr Platt asked.

He removed the cover. The spider on the



plate was quite large, black and hairy, and very much alive. Guided by some bizarre instinct, or perhaps some hidden remote control, it made its way towards me.

"Would you like to hold it for a while?" asked Dr Platt? I considered. I certainly felt some fear. But was it fear of the spider? Or was it fear of the return of the fear? I wasn't sure. "Let's give it a try", I replied.

Dr Platt handed me the spider, which quickly scuttled onto my arm, which was bare. I was wearing a short-sleeved shirt as instructed. "Spiders are very trusting." I mused. "Some little boys, not the sort of little boy that I was, obviously, but some little boys would pull all its legs off, just for fun!"

A few more weeks later.

"How scary is this?" Dr Platt asked.

He removed the cover. The tarantula, guided by some bizarre instinct, or perhaps some hidden remote control, turned to face me. I laughed at it. "You looking at me?" I asked, in my best Robert de Niro voice. "Consider the disparity in our sizes and IQs!" I continued. "What you have to ask yourself, tarantula", I said, morphing effortlessly from Robert de Niro into Clint Eastwood, "is 'Do I feel lucky?'" "I think you're cured", said Dr Platt.

Dates for your DIARY

Information correct at press time

DECEMBER 2021

8 Monthly meeting at the United Reformed Church. Steve Price: Comedy & Magic.

JANUARY 2022

26 Monthly meeting at the United Reformed Church. Steve Shakeshaft: Chester Uncovered.

FEBRUARY 2022

23 Monthly meeting at the United Reformed Church. Roger Devonside: The Aeroplane Wing-walker.

MARCH 2022

23 Monthly meeting at the United Reformed Church. Details to be confirmed.

APRIL 2022

27 Monthly meeting at the United Reformed Church. Details to be confirmed.

MAY 2022

25 Monthly meeting at the United Reformed Church. Details to be confirmed.

Middle age is when a narrow waist and a broad mind start to change places.

About the time a man gets his temper under control he goes out and plays golf again.

Someone has worked out that the peak years of mental activity must be between the ages of four and eighteen. At four we know all the questions. At eighteen we know all the answers.

PLEASE NOTE Due to the current financial constraints, the light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off.

Ultimate health advice

The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The French eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

Conclusion: eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

**We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year**

The Newsletter depends on what you send us

Please email contributions for the next issue not later than Friday 14 January to newsletter@wilmslowu3a.org.uk

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For general queries about Wilmslow U3A, please contact
Chairman Martin Cook at chairman@wilmslowu3a.org.uk