

August newsletter

What a summer we're having! I blame St. Swithin – forty days of sunshine, after that was the weather on July 15th. Although we were already getting used to blue skies and yellowing lawns well before then. Doesn't it feel odd to be actually hoping for rain in July?

Our Drop-in this month will be on **Thursday, August 6th**, at 10.00am as usual in the Community Hall. Come and meet your friends, and enjoy a drink and a biscuit with us! We always look forward to meeting and greeting fellow members, and Jean and her team are ever ready with the refreshments.

I'm delighted to say that we are already making plans for a third 'Midwinter Music' event. Lots more details nearer the time, but if you're someone who likes to fill up your diary well in advance, then 'save the date' of Thursday, December 17th. Yes, it's a long way away, but the months do tend to slide away quickly!

You may have seen our stall at Pockdown last week? The Pocklington Rugby in the Community group runs this event every year to make our community aware of all the range of groups and services we have in the area, and to give families a good day out. Stalwart members of the Committee staffed the stall all afternoon dispensing information and cheer. It always seems slightly surprising that there are still people in the community who are unaware of u3a, and this led us to start wondering: how did you first hear about us? What else could we do to inform and attract new members? Do please get in touch if you have any thoughts to share!

And if you do have any helpful ideas about this, or would like to become more involved with our organisation, have you considered coming to join the Committee? I mentioned last month that we have a couple of casual vacancies, due to Les Smith stepping down and Pauline Slater moving away from the area. We are sorry to lose them both, but look forward to welcoming fresh faces at our meetings with new ideas to share. It's not a massive commitment, just one friendly meeting a month, so do please consider it. You can find out more from any member of the Committee (all details are on the website) or talk to us at Drop-in. Every one of our members has unique gifts and ideas to contribute – come and help us by sharing yours.

Many groups are taking a summer hiatus, so there's little news of change or events this month. Congratulations, however, are due to our Pocklington and District Pétanque team, who won the national u3a championship at the u3a Festival in York on July 2nd!

So, with not much news locally, I'll look further afield. Did you know that there will be a total solar eclipse visible over the Arctic Ocean, Greenland, Iceland, Spain and a narrow region of northern Portugal on 12 August? Here we shall only see a partial eclipse, but up to 90% of the sun may be obscured.

I've always found it fascinating to learn the stories that different ancient peoples created to explain natural phenomena. In ancient China it was commonly held that solar eclipses

occurred when a celestial dragon attacked and devoured the Sun. The Incas thought that the Sun God was angry with them, so they had to appease him before he'd reappear. Choctaw Americans believed that it was a black squirrel gnawing at the sun, which had to be frightened away with loud noises, while in Hindu mythology it's the head of a decapitated demon which flies through the sky and blocks out the sun! I'm sure David Hobson and the Astronomy Group could offer a much more sensible and accurate explanation, though.

Flags are out to celebrate Yorkshire Day today, the 1st, and I'm sure it's just coincidence that it's also National Beer Day. Then the 8th is International Cat Day, and the 9th and 20th respectively invite us to celebrate our love of Books and Bacon. Prosecco, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir each get their own day in August as well – what are they trying to tell us?

Enjoy a temperate August, anyway, and let's hope no more weather records are broken!

Rosemary Waugh