

February 2023

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Welcome to our February Interest Groups Online News Extra.

This month, read updates from the literary and creative writing groups, plus new groups on offer and those with spaces available.

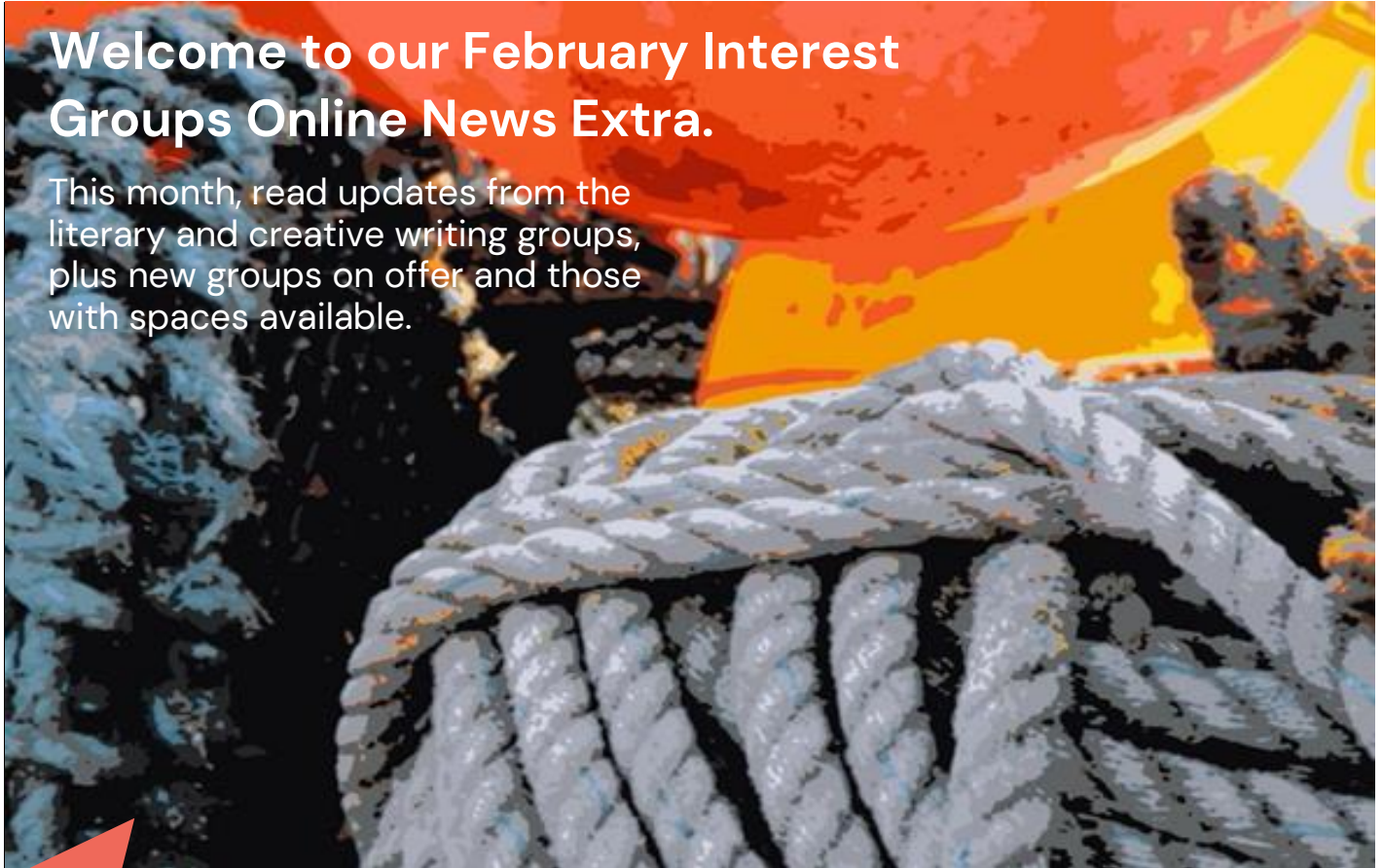


Photo: by Smartphone Art Group member Ann

Dear members

Last month I was able to attend the meeting of the IGO group leaders and it was great to meet everyone and swap new ideas. One idea I hope we can deliver is an online 'festival' event with different elements through the day, visiting speakers and taster sessions. Stay tuned!

I hope you are enjoying reading about what the various groups have been doing recently. I would also welcome any news you have regarding forthcoming themes for your meetings – something to celebrate St David's or St. Patrick's day? Or maybe you will be swapping recipes during the British Pie Week – who knew there was such a thing! Get in touch at interestgroupsonline@u3a.org.uk

Best Wishes,

Helen, Editor of the Interest Groups Online News Extra

Group News

Do any of these groups interest you? You can join any of these groups by following the instructions on the [Interest Groups Online website](#)

Book Club

We are a small group of avid book readers seeking to expand our membership. We meet monthly on a Monday afternoon on zoom to discuss a book we have all read that month.

Our choice of book is strictly democratic; we nominate a book to read and decide by voting. What I like most about the group is its friendliness and inclusiveness.

The group for me has been interesting, educational but above all else enjoyable. I do hope you will join us; we don't bite, and our sessions are very rewarding and positive.

Group Member, Bob



A photograph of some of Bob's books.



A photograph of Newtown Road Cemetery In Newbury, taken by group leader Carol.

British Cemeteries

We are busy putting together a varied online programme for 2023. Among others, we already have confirmed speakers from the Commonwealth Graves Commission, Calderstones Cemetery and a lichen monitoring group.

We have u3a members who have volunteered to present their own stories/research about cemeteries near where they live – each member can join in, either by bringing along a photo of a grave that interests them, or by researching a name on a war memorial local to them.

There is no pressure to present or talk – every group needs listeners as well. So, if you have ever been fascinated by a cemetery, or found yourself wondering about the stories and social history behind the headstones, then please come along and join us on the first Wednesday of every month at 3pm. Every story we uncover will be treated with empathy, compassion and respect.

Group Leader, Carol

Other News

Where I Write...

The shed at the bottom of the garden, in silence, in a cosy corner of the kitchen; the IGO Read, Write and Discuss group have shared their favourite places to read and write.

Read the full article from the group members [on the u3a website](#). And tell us where do you like to do your u3a activity? Let us know by emailing interestgroupsonline@u3a.org.uk



The comfy armchair which is group member Vivien's preferred spot to write.

New Groups Questionnaire

As we've mentioned previously, we want to get new groups started as part of IGO and Improve the groups we have on offer.

We want to find out which groups have the most Interest so that we can get them up and running, and we need your help!

Fill out our online questionnaire on wufoo by clicking [here](#). to let us know what groups you want to see. **It only takes around 4 minutes.**

Read longer versions of some of these articles [on the Interest Groups Online noticeboard](#) where you will also find **cryptic crossword puzzles**

The News Extra Quiz – Famous Cemeteries

Question 1

Whose grave in Atlanta reads 'Free at last, free at last, Thank God Almighty I'm free at last'?

Question 2

Which opera singer died in 1931, and has a grave in Lilydale Lawn Cemetery, Australia?

Question 3

Who died in 1962 of barbiturate overdose and is buried at Brothers Westwood Village Mem Park, LA?

Question 4

Which film star died in 2015 and is buried in El Sayeda Nafisa Cemetery in Egypt?

Question 5

Who died in a car crash aged 37 in 1997, and is buried in Althorp, Northamptonshire?

See all the answers on [the Interest Groups Online noticeboard](#)

Notice Board

Stay up to date always with the [IGO Online Noticeboard](#)

If you are a member of a group on Beacon which you no longer attend, please do **remove yourself from the group**. This will free up places for others who can attend.

New Groups

- **3D Printing** – a forum for sharing interesting applications, problems, solutions and technology of 3D printing. All welcome.
- **Explorers and Travel Writers** – A historical perspective on the Intrepid adventurers who opened up the world, and the books they created for us to read.
- **Forty Question Quiz** – General knowledge with lots of pictures to give you clues.
- **Improv** – Acting out light-hearted little sketches, made up on the spot. This group offers the chance to improve your self-confidence and have a good laugh!

You can join these by [logging into Beacon](#).

Existing Groups with Space

- **Modern Greek Conversation** – Join us every other Wednesday if you want to be able to communicate simply in Greek. This is NOT a grammar course – we learn communicatively. Topics covered include ordering food and drink, talking about family and discussing past holidays. You will learn to read too! [Sheila Fox, Group Leader](#)
- **Pop Up Poetry** – Every fortnight, members receive 3 or 4 poems on a related theme. Join us every other Tuesday at 11am to share your thoughts on the poems, and sometimes mystification! [Pauline Buckland, Group Leader](#)

You can join by [logging into Beacon](#).

Existing Help and Support for Group Leaders

The IGO Volunteer Team are here to help you – whether that's in facilitating your group, providing zoom support, help with Beacon, with emails, with other ways of facilitating group contact, even accessing more resources for your group – any question, big or small, get in touch at interestgroupsonline@u3a.org.uk



Why I Love Interest Groups Online

"It is really lovely to have a couple of very interesting 'appointments' in the diary every month. That was the initial 'main aim' of the u3a – learning something new. With the onset of online learning, we are now able to have this in our own homes, which is a tremendous asset. When the weather is inclement or we have cold germs that we don't want to pass on, settle in a comfy chair and socialise in the warm... nothing like it, EXCELLENT."

Sonia, Interest Groups Online Member

Conversations with: George, a member of the Interest Groups Online Writing Compelling Non- Fiction Group



A photograph of George, member of the
Writing Compelling Non-Fiction Group

Each news extra we will be highlighting an Interest Groups Online member. We would love to hear about your experience – share it with us by emailing interestgroupsonline@u3a.org.uk

"When Covid arrived, I spotted an online activity called "Writing Compelling Non-Fiction" and pondered whether it might improve my style and scope of expression. I took the plunge and joined the Group. At school, I had been good at Maths and Science, but I dreaded the essays I was compelled to produce for English and History. The English master tried hard, but eventually he gave up! Thenceforth, I was 'raised' as a scientist and allowed to neglect the humanities.

That all began a slow change when I found myself in the Civil Service, having to draft technical reports and briefs for busy people. I was made Secretary of a senior committee, and had to learn – on the job – how to capture what the top-men meant to say, rather than what they did say. The online group has between four and eight, meeting monthly to present and discuss an exercise proposed by Group Leader Sandra. I have made new acquaintances and, under Sandra's expert eye, improved my word power and confidence."

What would you like to see in the next news extra?

Get in touch by emailing Helen at interestgroupsonline@u3a.org.uk

