**ADVENTURE IN LEARNING NEWSLETTER November 2024**

**The Committee of Add-venture in Learning would like to wish all our members a very happy and healthy 2025. We look forward to seeing many of you during the year.**

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Welcome everybody to this very full newsletter. Firstly I’m afraid I have two obituaries of two valued members.

***Obituary for Mary Goodlad:*** It is with great sadness we have to announce the death of committee member Mary Goodlad.  Mary has been a member of Add-venture in Learning for many years and has been an active committee member until her recent illness.  She organised interesting study breaks in both York and Sheffield and has acted as a guide and helper on many others.

Isobell Phillips writes .... I have known Mary Goodlad since 1959 at the start of student nurse training.  We went our different ways after qualifying, never out of touch.  We attended each others wedding, followed the lives of our children, camped with them, had foreign holidays with them.  Born the same year we related well, understood one another.  A good friend who is missed.

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***Obituary for Lyn Oliver:*** Rosslind (Lyn) Bristow was born on 8 June 1944. She died on Tuesday 12 November after a spell of poor health following a fall around Christmas 2023.

Rosslind attended schools in her local area and enrolled in an agricultural course after which she found a job working in a local nursery in Warfield Berkshire.

It was some time later that Rosslind sensed a serious decrease in her sight and at the same time her marriage failed. Her grandmother died around this time and after the culmination of all these events, Lyn moved to Farringdon in Wiltshire.

Around this time the Extramural Department of Bristol University started running courses for visually impaired people. Lyn’s sight had deteriorated markedly by this time and she enthusiastically joined in on many of the Bristol University courses.

However, few things last forever and when the funding was pulled for these courses Add-Venture in Learning was born.

Lyn played an active role in the charity by attending many courses, joining the Committee (on which she served until the time of her death) and also contributing financially in no small measure.

Lyn also played an active part in her local church’s life and I’m sure will be missed by all her friends.

I will miss Lyn personally as well. We met pretty frequently on courses and had many good telephone chats in between.

Rest in peace Lyn, - From all who knew you, and even those who didn’t…… *DOREEN TYLER.*

I am afraid I also have to report the death of ***Jacky Griffin***. She has been my guide on several Adventure courses and we have become very good friends. I shall miss her enormously…. *JENNY MITCHINSON*

Now we have information on the next Adventure study break:

**MUSIC INSPIRED BY SHAKESPEARE**

Monday 24th to Friday 28th March 2025

Leader - *Barbara Rickitt*

Tutor *- Ian Lowes*

Venue - The Greenhouse Christian Retreat Centre, Poole

Price: VI £465 Guide: £365 Price is per person. No reduction for sharing.

Five rooms have a wash basin and a shared bathroom with a £50 reduction

To ensure we have the whole house to ourselves we need to have 22 people book.

Station Bournemouth - Taxi rank available for a 20 minute ride approx £13 at your own expense but could be shared if arriving at the same time as others.

Included - Ensuite rooms (except 5) with your own tea making facilities, breakfast, morning coffee, light lunch, tea & cake, 2 course dinner, and an evening concert with the Bournemouth Symphony orchestra. An extra contribution towards transport to the concert may be payable at the time, depending on numbers.

PLEASE NOTE – Bookings must be confirmed and paid 6 weeks in advance, which is 10th February to ensure a seat at the concert. Extra seats are reserved for guide dogs. Please say at the time of booking if you do **not** want to go to the concert.

Enjoy a relaxed study break with a house party atmosphere at this comfortable venue with a conservatory and garden. There will be time to socialise, maybe bring your own instrument, favourite CD or Poem to share during some down time. A free half day will give you chance to walk to local shops or to the sea- a mile away, or through the woods. There is no bar but you are welcome to bring your own alcohol. Our Tutor is Ian Lowes who ran our last enjoyable music study break.

MUSIC CONTENT - The plays of William Shakespeare have served as the inspiration for a host of pieces of music ranging across a variety of genres: opera, incidental music, chamber music, song cycles, film scores and suites, covering from the Baroque through to the present day.

The course will examine that breadth of creation, seeing how the musical results of that inspiration sit alongside those original plays.

Music to be considered will include Mendelssohn’s incidental music for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Verdi’s opera *Othello*, Bernstein’s opera *West Side Story*, Elgar’s Symphonic Study *Falstaff*, Prokoviev’s ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, Tchaikovsky’s Overture *Hamlet*, Walton’s film music to Henry V and Berlioz Concert Overture *King Lear*, to name but a few.

THE CONCERT by Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra - Fairytales and Folklore conducted by Kiril Karabits. Music includes Mozart The Magic Flute, de Hartmann Fairy Tales, Trojan Fair Tales, a Concerto for Accordion, Tchaikovsky Francesca da Rimini

 ABOUT IAN LOWES - Ian studied music at Durham University and then horn-playing and composition at Janacek Academy in Brno. He has a varied portfolio of musical activities with composition and conducting the main-stays of his life. He spent many years playing the horn professionally in various orchestras, then moved to teaching composition and academic music, punctuated by conducting and adult education lecturing. He now continues with music appreciation groups near to his home in Dorset.

**To book** on this Study Break please phone or text Isobell Phillips on 07731 867931 or email phillipsisobell@yahoo.ie.

A £50 non-refundable deposit is required at the time of booking and full payment must be made 6 weeks prior to the Study Break.

Cheques should be made to Add-venture in Learning and sent to Isobell Phillips at

2 Holly Drive

Pen-y-ffordd

CHESTER CH4 0NE

Or, by BACS to Lloyds Bank sort code 30-00-01 account number 02904643 with a reference stating name and reason for payment.

Please let Isobell know that you are paying by BACS.

Reports on Recent Study Breaks

**AddVenture to Dinas Powys**

We arrived at Hebron Hall on Monday 9th September. It’s run by a Christian group. There was a short steep walk up a leafy hill to the hall but we were told of an easier way for tired folk. We were very comfortable there and certainly well fed!

Our first trip was to the Museum Warehouse to hear about a medieval ship at Newport found whilst digging foundations for a theatre. On arrival, we were treated royally with coffee and cake then a wonderful explanation of what they have gleaned so far.  This was about how this huge ship was constructed and even where and when precisely the wood was hewn. We didn’t expect to be so impressed by a pile of wood!!

We relaxed back on the coach for another really interesting trip to the Roman Fortress & Baths Museum, Caerleon, complete with arena, bathhouse and 'object talk.’ There was a lovely gentle walk round the site of the arena clearly defined in the grassy field outside. The display of the old Roman Bath was brilliant. It was such a pleasure to describe the bath to Sim (my V.I partner) with the ghostly swimmers accompanied by dripping and splashing sound. Then there was the sound of Roman soldiers chatting in groups down below in the ‘tepidarian’ (or whatever it is called.)

Wednesday was ‘Big Pit’ day. Some folk went straight down to the pit bottom and were glad they did. It was fascinating to hear of its long history of mining coal in the area and to see where the ponies were stabled.

I enjoyed describing the many old photographs on show all around the site. A short description of what I saw would have been really helpful. We walked up steps to the miner’s bathhouse which arrived quite late in the pit's history. Once again Sim could hear recordings of people talking laughing and singing as we walked around the lockers and showers. There were also actual recorded interviews with miners together with a small image of each man.

The last day was great with a visit to the Museum of Welsh life. Having the whole day was good because apart from 2 ‘object talks’ given, we could stroll round to the various buildings collected from all over Wales. I would definitely want to go back there!

This was a well-run and thoroughly enjoyable few days. Last but not least we had a 60 minute session each evening from a family called “The Scotts.” Mother was first, then Father on Wednesday. The highlight was a group sixteen-year-olds (brought by the son,) performing Welsh songs. I suddenly understood the culture of Eisteddfod. The Welsh people are so ready to show off their music and artistry. Sim and I would like to express our thanks to all who put together this special week.

*Mary & Simmie Gould*

**My very first adventure with Add Venture in Learning**

I first learned about Add Venture in Learning in 2019 when I met a lovely lady called Mary Goodlad and she mentioned it could be something I’d enjoy. So I signed up for a newsletter and details of upcoming “ study breaks”.

Due to Covid and other commitments, it took a few years for me to be able to sign up for a break but I found one that sounded really interesting and to an area I knew little about and had never been to, the South Wales Study Break in Sept 2024. There were clear instructions in the newsletter of who to contact if you wanted to attend the break, you paid your deposit and your balance was due a few weeks before departure. You do have to make your own travel arrangements to get to the destination, but all these details are given to you so you know which train station to book your ticket to and what accommodation you will be staying in. A couple of weeks before departure Barbara had sent a list of all the activities that would be taking place and also a list with the name of your guide who would be there to assist you. This was something new for me as I have never had a one-on-one guide before and I was unsure what that would be like, but believe me it was wonderful.

On the Monday I started off on my travels from the north-west of England to Dinas Powys in Wales. The journey turned out to be a little longer than expected because of train disruption, but I knew there was somebody to meet me at the train station at my destination and take me to my accommodation, so that was a big weight off my mind, that I wouldn’t have to try and find the accommodation myself.
Upon arrival I met my guide Christine and we were given a short talk on what to do in emergency and what room numbers we would be in and a list of meal times etc. I loved the fact that Christine would be with me all holiday to help me navigate the accommodation and sit with me at dinner and breakfast and assist me in any way she could whilst on the break, getting me drinks of tea, explaining to me what was on the dinner menu, all things that people with sight loss struggle with.

On the Tuesday. We were all up bright and early because we were all excited. This was our first full day and today’s adventure was going to take us to a shipyard in Newport that had excavated a wooden ship from the 1500s so exciting. Upon arrival in our private coach that we had for our use during the full few days, we were greeted by tea and cake and had a lovely talk about the ship and how it was found, but the highlight was the fact we got to touch the timbers that were hundreds of years old and had been preserved and other relics that had been found, what a great opportunity this was.

In the afternoon after a packed lunch which was provided we went to a Roman camp. This was of great interest as the museum had many artefacts that had been unearthed. Again the guides helped us navigate our way around helping us to touch many of the displays and read the many information panels that were around, this was something I struggle with and it enriched my visit very much. The site had a Roman baths and amphitheatre, so much to see and do.

On Wednesday after Christine came to collect me from my room to go to breakfast , we collected our packed lunch and headed to the coach for our drive  to BIG PIT a working coal mine were we got the opportunity to go underground and see how the mine used to work when it produced coal. We had to wear safety helmets and had proper equipment issued to us for light and gas masks. The staff who guided us on the tour were fabulous and gave us all an insight to how life must have been down the pits for many a person mostly families who worked there.

There was a nice gift shop and other attractions at big pit, such as a shower block. It really was a lovely morning. In the afternoon we went to the Royal Mint in Llantrisant to see where all the coins were made not just for England but for over 80 countries worldwide. It was so interesting and again our guides were happy to read everything out that was on the notices, and were happy to explain what some people were doing in the background as we couldn’t see them.

Thursday was a big day we were having a full day at St Fagans. This is a reconstructed village that houses many original buildings from different time periods in Welsh history. I especially remember the terraced houses which started from the earliest in the eighteen hundreds to possibly 1960 all decorated with original furniture  from that time in history. Christine patiently explained everything that was in the rooms from the crocheted doilies on the furniture to decorative features on furniture. There was a grocery shop, a butchers, a bakers , a clockmaker and a few churches from different time periods all in the most magnificent grounds. It was such a pleasure to see and was a very tiring day but I wouldn’t have missed it for the world.

Friday was time to go home and once again after breakfast helped by a lovely Christine we packed our suitcases and made our way to the local train station. All arrangements had to be made for guides to take people to the unmanned train station to ensure they were on the train to their destinations. You have no reason to be concerned, you are really well looked after very well. All the guides were extremely friendly and I really wouldn’t hesitate to recommend Add-venture in learning to anyone with sight loss.

In the evenings: There had been arrangements made for people to come in and give talks after dinner. Yvonne Scott talked about her time as a teacher in Cardiff Bay. The next night her husband Glyn talked about helping with the Paralympics, he even came in his uniform, and it still fits! On the last night we had the most beautiful Welsh choir come to sing songs, even though they were sung in Welsh and not many others understood, the pure emotion and beautiful melody reduced most of us to tears.

I can truthfully say my first adventure will not be my last, and I can’t wait to see what 2025 will bring. Thank you to everyone who organises these breaks and take it upon themselves to make sure we enjoy ourselves. You are all wonderful and caring and it means so much to know there is an organisation like yourselves out there.

*Lynne Rennison*

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**REPORT FROM THE SNETTISHAM BIRD EXPERIENCE:**

Seven of us convened at the Heacham Manor Hotel in North Norfolk close to the coast. Three of us had sight loss and the guides were all experienced. Our leader, Karen Colbourn is an Add-venture-in-Learning veteran of nearly thirty years. Her knowledge is wide-ranging and her enthusiasm for the environment and wildlife is contagious. The hotel was comfortable and our short stay was educational.

So many birds lodge in this fairly remote area. The Wash, a wide, shallow inlet stretching from Snettisham in Norfolk up to Lincolnshire, is a hive of activity. Over eighty thousand Knot, small, grey, dumpy waders, are feeding on the mud flats. They summer in Iceland and Scandinavia and migrate to the UK in our autumn. When they took off en masse, their feeding disturbed by the incoming tide, all those wings made quite a sound. This is the Snettisham Spectacular, a wild life event which enthusiasts gather in their hundreds to witness. The shrill calls of Oyster Catchers and the ubiquitous geese ensured we had plenty to hear.

We visited two other reserves, Holme Dunes and RSPB Titchwell Marsh, where there were large flocks of golden plovers who chatted away, glowing gold in the setting sun. The distinctive calls of lapwings were evocative. Although some of us were unable to see the murmurations of Starlings our guides described them and other views skilfully, and alerted us to the ever-present Red Kites and occasional Marsh Harrier. We heard a variety of ducks, screeching black-headed gulls, at least four species of noisy geese flying in formation and flocks of jackdaws; not to mention the familiar Robin who sings all winter.

Sincere thanks to Karen ably assisted by Jean, they made arrangements, drove us around the Norfolk countryside and ensured that everything went smoothly to make a trip to remember. Staff and volunteers at the reserves shared their extensive knowledge with us. Thanks also to all members of the party for their company on a convivial weekend of birding. And if you’re wondering what the collective noun is for Knot – of course, it’s a tangle!

*Chris Copeman*

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Finally, we have a report from our secretary Barbara Rickitt on the **AGM held by Zoom** on Monday 18th November 2024:

Our chairman Janet Whapples welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked all those who sent their apologies. It is heartening for the committee to know there is so much interest in the ‘study breaks’ we endeavour to organise.

The present committee members were re-elected with the welcome addition of Lynne Rennison and Doreen Tyler. Thanks were extended to Jenny Mitchinson who has admirably mastered managing the membership list and producing the Newsletters. Also to Doreen Tyler who makes the Braille

copies, Jacqui Hemming who reads onto the memory sticks and Martin Rickitt who produces the printed copies.

We have been encouraged to have ideas and offers of help for future study breaks. If you have a feasible idea, would like to help or join the committee please contact Janet on 01664 668841. We would also like to hear from anyone who knows of a means of obtaining any grants or who could help with publicity for new members, particularly guides.

2025 is looking promising with 3 study breaks planned. In March there will be a music appreciation break in Poole. In July from 7-11th a stay in Hereford to explore what the city and surrounds have to offer. Then in September a trip to Great Yarmouth where this popular seaside town has a rich heritage in the fishing industry with visits to places of interest nearby being researched.

Barbara Rickitt, Secretary

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COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

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