



# SHERWOOD U3A

## Learn Laugh Live NEWSLETTER November 2020

*Hello to all U3A members,*

*The November issue includes Sherwood U3A "AGM 2020" minutes and the list of committee members with their roles for the coming year. The theme this time is "Holidays in 2020", definitely a different experience. December means Christmas. Anecdotes from past Christmas's, thoughts and plans about this year, recipes, gift/craft ideas, anything you think might interest or amuse the membership. Please play your part in continuing this newsletter by contributing.*

*Sue Robb (Editor)*

*Contributions by Wednesday 25th November at latest please.*

If you have any questions about specific things please contact the following who will find out the answers to your concerns and try to come back to you with the answers:

Membership	Rita Foulkes
Groups and Postal Members	Terry Dillon
Welfare	Sandra Rogers
Holidays	Contact the holiday organizer
Financial/General	Margaret Taylor
Newsletter/General	Sue Robb

### **U3A** NOTICES



It is with deep sorrow that I have to inform every one of the death of Elaine Lane on the morning of 20th October. Elaine was the leader of Scrabble and Strollers Groups, and will, I am sure, be missed by them all.

Angela Forster

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT –Liz Wilson**

I must start by saying how devastated I felt at hearing of Elaine Lane's death. She was a wonderful lady, full of fun, chuckles and laughter. She supported most of our Social Events not only by attending them but by entering into the spirit and thoroughly enjoying them. When I was speaking from the front in our Meetings, I often found myself talking to her because she sat near the front, listened intently and reacted to what was being said, either with a smile, nod of the head, shake of the head or outright laugh. She will be missed!!

On a more uplifting note, I know that several of the groups are interacting, either by Zoom, internet, telephone or in person in small groups of six. In fact the Committee have been meeting at my house in sixes but as we can no longer do that indoors we are going to have a Zoom Meeting (heaven help us!). The Rambling Group have met in person because I completed a Rambling Organisation and U3A risk assessment form and kept a list of names and numbers for each one we did. We have now done four local walks, can't travel far because not all have cars and we can't car share (one of the risk assessment stipulations), and have four more planned from now until Christmas.

The Website Update working party has had two more meetings and the new format is beginning to emerge --- watch this space for the launch in the New Year!!!

I have had several £50 deposits for the Holiday to Kent in 2021 and it looks as though it will happen (Covid willing) so if anyone else wants to take a chance with us, give me a ring and I will collect your cheque. I am sending off the deposits to "Just For Groups" the second week in November. Something to look forward to --- we need it to keep us going!!!

<b>SHERWOOD U3A COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020/2021</b>	
<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	LIZ WILSON
<b>DEPUTY CHAIRMAN/MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</b>	RITA FOULKES
<b>BUSINESS SECRETARY/Temp. HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>	CLAIRE WILKIE
<b>MINUTES SECRETARY</b>	ANN MADDEN
<b>TREASURER</b>	MARGARET TAYLOR
<b>INTEREST GROUPS' CO-ORDINATORS</b>	TERRY DILLON/JENNY WEAVER
<b>GOVERNANCE (shared role)</b>	ANN MADDEN/ MARGARET TAYLOR/CLAIRE WILKIE
<b>GREETER &amp; REFRESHMENTS CO-ORDINATOR</b>	JANE LOWE
<b>POSTAL MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</b>	TERRY DILLON
<b>JOINT SPEAKER/SEEKER &amp; SOCIAL SUB- COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN</b>	JEREMY LLOYD
<b>JOINT SPEAKER SEEKER/PUBLICITY OFFICER</b>	DAVE CLARKE
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>	SUE HAYWOOD
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>	DENISE WHITSED

### **SHERWOOD U3A MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020**

1	<p>In the light of the Covid19 Pandemic a full Annual General Meeting could not be held in May 2020. Therefore the Committee made a decision that the membership would meet in smaller groups at a local venue in October or would submit their approval to the previous AGM Minutes, reports, accounts and nominations of David Clarke, Ann Madden, Margaret Taylor, Jenny Weaver and Denise Whitsed by email, post or telephone. <b>247</b> members were sent the AGM paperwork 30 days prior to the return date of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. However on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 due to further Covid19 problems the Committee made the decision that the meetings could not take place and that all responses would be emailed, posted or telephoned. In agreement with our Constitution, a quorum of 20% (50 members) of the membership had to respond by the return date</p> <p><b>126</b> members did not reply, <b>31</b> members sent apologies and <b>90</b> members agreed to the AGM documents. (Lists of members are attached to the Minutes on file).</p>
2	<p><b>MINUTES</b> of the last AGM dated 13.06.19. were approved and signed by the Chairman, Liz Wilson.</p>
3	<p><b>CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT</b></p> <p>This year's Report deals with the period May 2019 to May 2020 and the Theme is "Do You Remember When?"</p> <p>Last May we started the year with a wonderful walking/sightseeing holiday in the Yorkshire Dales. Thanks Irene! We joined with Forest Town and had a fascinating two days in Oxford and Windsor. Thanks Denise!</p> <p>In June we revisited Sand Bay and enjoyed it all over again. Thanks Rita and Pat! We also had a day out to Saltaire arranged for us by Denim and Co – or Jean and Jean. It was brilliant so thanks you two!!</p> <p>In July we had London; August Mansfield U3A's 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party; September Bletchley Park and the Cruise around Ireland; October Sheila's 80<sup>th</sup> Party and the amazing bring and buy Coffee Morning; November the Neil Hurst Afternoon Tea,</p> <p>In December we had lots of Group Christmas lunches, Carol Concert, School Choir at our Meeting and finally the Christmas Dinner at Portland which was an amazing success – thanks Jeremy! Little did we know that, though we had lots more holidays, social events and Trips out planned, 2020 would be null and void! We would be "Locked Down"!</p> <p>Thanks to everyone who made 2019 memorable. Now thanks to all those who are trying to raise the phoenix from the ashes in 2020. Our Sherwood U3A is still alive and ready for action when the fetters of Covid 19 have been vanquished and I, for one, cannot wait to meet up with you all again!</p>

4	<p><b>TREASURER'S REPORT</b></p> <p>I did publish the Annual Accounts for 2019/2020 in the September 2020 Newsletter which had been approved by the Committee. I also listed the recommendations which had been highlighted by the "Examiner" C. Thomson which have now been reviewed by the Finance Sub-Committee and updated as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfortunately the training cannot take place until an appropriate appointment has been made when restrictions have eased.</li> <li>• The Expenses Form has been amended with an appropriate signature counter-signing all claims. A full list of monthly expenses is given to the Committee.</li> <li>• The cost of ink cartridges unfortunately is still increasing from the 2019/2020 figures due to more people using them for home printing and lack of cartridges being obtained from external UK sources. <i>This may have an impact on the Admin. Figures for the 2020/2021 Accounts.</i></li> </ul> <p>May I now take this opportunity to publically thank C. Thomson for "examining" our accounts over recent years and I will be arranging a suitably qualified person to "examine" our accounts for the future.</p> <p>I trust that members will accept the 2019/2020 accounts. However, If anyone wishes to discuss these accounts in more detail please contact me email <a href="mailto:treasurersherwoodU3a@gmail.com">treasurersherwoodU3a@gmail.com</a></p> <p>In the newsletter I did state that the Finance Sub-Committee will be reviewing the expenditure budget up to March 2021 and further information on any decisions taken will be published in the newsletter.</p> <p>I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the Finance Sub-Committee who have supported me in my role as Treasurer during the past year and those who are continuing to guide the future finances of Sherwood U3A.</p> <p><b>Margaret Taylor</b></p>
5	<p><b>GROUP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT</b> AGM GROUP CO-ORDINATORS REPORT</p> <p>New Groups opening: Poetry Keep Fit</p> <p>Closures: Heritage Poetry (after nearly a year)</p> <p>After several attempts to try and get Singing in the Afternoon up and running failed through lack of interest.</p> <p>Very difficult time for us all over the last 6 months where the priority has been to keep safe and protect ourselves from Covid 19. Group Leaders have chosen a variety of ways to keep in touch with their particular group including WhatsApp, email, informal meetings and phone. Many of the Groups have set tasks to complete during this time in order to keep people motivated and alleviate isolation. Despite efforts to try to get some Groups open the recent restrictions have put those in abeyance apart from the Walking Group which is due to formally start again this month.</p> <p>Moving forward:</p> <p>National Trust Trips have always been a highlight in the monthly newsletter and very popular with all our membership and many thanks go out to Irene for all the hard work and organisation she has put into arranging these events over the last 9 years. It is essential this valuable and much supported activity continues once we get back to something like normal and anyone interested in taking this forward can always talk to either Terry or myself.</p> <p>IT has been a boon over these last 6 months and has highlighted our need for this knowledge as our environments have changed, and we will be looking to develop some courses based on needs of individuals in our next operational year.</p> <p>Anyone interested in developing any other activities can of course put their interest down in the red book and hopefully when we get sufficient numbers can try to start a new activity.</p> <p>Jenny Weaver/Terry Dillon</p>
6	<p><b>SOCIAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT</b></p> <p>Jeremy Lloyd thanked the Social Committee members and the many other helpers for all their hard work and for the range of enjoyable events organised throughout the year. Particular thanks to Sue Cox for hosting the Committee Meetings and Chris Robb for music and projection at social events. Between March and December 2019, the social committee held a range of evening and afternoon activities including Sing-Along Mama Mia 2, Games Galore, Quiz Evening, Bowling, Afternoon Tea with Neil Hurst and Christmas at Portland with an amazing singer. The afternoon events and Bowling proved particularly popular with members. Unfortunately, COVID 19 overtook us in early 2020 and all subsequent events had to be cancelled. The Social Subcommittee are still working behind the scenes and will rebook events when it is safe to do so.</p>
7	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b> – None</p>
8	<p><b>PROPOSED NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Nominations have been received as follows:- David Clarke, Ann Madden, Margaret Taylor, Jenny Weaver and Denise Whitsed. These nominations were unanimously voted onto the committee by the membership.</p>
9	<p><b>DATE OF THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b> – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021</p>

Chair.....Date.....

# GROUP NEWS

## BOOK GROUP

October saw the restart of the Book Group. Now the library is open again and able to provide our books, even though the meeting rooms are not available. So we started a virtual Book Group on line where we discussed this month's book. For those members without internet access we have had phone discussions about the book. This month's book was a psychological thriller called "Lie with Me". This is about Paul Morris, a bestselling author who now has fallen on hard times. However, he uses lies to improve his status and position. Then on a Greek holiday everything comes to a head with devastating consequences. For just like the boy who cried wolf, if you are in the business of lying, who is going to believe you when you tell the truth.

Jenny Sadler

### My Review...Phil Wright

I have just finished "Lie with Me" by Sabine Durrant.

It was an easy read, quite a 'page turner'. It held my attention from the start and I fairly quickly took a dislike to Paul, the main character. So much so I felt little, if any mercy for him, even though he was being elaborately and wrongly framed for a murder.

I thought his continuous lying grew more and more excruciating to read, and his sexual exploits just reinforced his selfishness and deceitfulness, despite him describing himself as affectionate and respectful of women. But these facets are what make the story for us as readers; all part of the fantasy, the author has cleverly woven.

I thought the retrospective view worked well. I don't mind looking back and re reading parts of the beginning of the book to ascertain any motives and links.

The character, Alice, seems to come across as someone quite devious and maybe psychopathic in the end, whereas I was originally accepting her as a poor widow, working hard to bring up her children and happy to find new love in Paul.

I would like to have known what actually becomes of him.

## WALKING GROUP

Six walk leaders from the Sherwood U3A Walking Group, came together for the first time since March. Our little gathering ambled into Pleasley Vale, stopping at the bacon butty cabin for a while, near the old mills. It was so nice to see and laugh with one another, we cannot wait till next year when hopefully we can all start up again.

RogerWood



## HOLIDAYS 2020 STYLE Somerset ...

Please cast your minds back to Christmas 2019! Picture the scene. We are all sharing presents amid the usual chaos and excitement. My daughter Nat and her husband Pete gave us a card all wrapped up in red ribbon. Inside was one of those gift idea packages. It was a voucher for a steam train trip for two. I was thrilled. I love train trips, staying in hotels and seeing new places. So I studied where we could go, where we could stay nearby and where could visit in an area we did not know at all. The plan came together.

Stay in Wells and see the Cathedral, go on the train, pop into Glastonbury, try to get to the coast and call at Cheddar Gorge on the way home. Sorted.

Then along came our friend COVID! Everything was put on hold. Time passed, things changed and I wanted to use the voucher before it expired and while things were as settled as they could be. As it happened the company extended the expiry date anyway.



At last, we were able to get away on our steam train trip. The weather was glorious, everything was done to protect us including limiting numbers on each train. I loved Wells. We stayed in a hotel looking straight at the Cathedral where Winston Churchill stayed among others! We only glimpsed Glastonbury as it was so busy. I wanted to see the sea so we went to Burnham on Sea to blow the cobwebs away. Finally we drove through Cheddar Gorge just before they closed the caves.

As they say, a wonderful time was had by all. And it all began with an envelope wrapped in red ribbon!

Des and Pat Collins

## Yorkshire Wolds...

After spending 6 months locked up in Lockdown Ann and I thought blow it, let's walk the Yorkshire Wolds Way. Lovely open spaces, beauty all around, we could not be in a better place. Staying in pretty Pocklington, we picked two nice six mile sections of the long distance walk to ramble. With the walk being so popular, it was nice talking to other ramblers who seem to share the same interests, walking and keeping healthy. The weather was fantastic so we ended our little break by having two days in Scarborough, which was extremely busy and mad. We could still social distance and felt very safe, we had a really nice trip.

Roger Wood



## Dordogne...

Having missed our annual visit to Carlux in the Dordogne in June we rebooked for September. We have been to this complex of gites for twenty years now and we were sure that we could be as safe as in Mansfield, if not more so. We crossed by the tunnel and stayed in our usual hotel. It was well organised re COVID with regard to checking in and out. We brought a picnic with us as we had decided we wouldn't eat in the restaurant. As it happens it was closed but you could have two or three meals delivered to your room. We normally spend a few days on the journey but made a decision not to stop, especially around Paris, and did the journey of seven hours in one day.

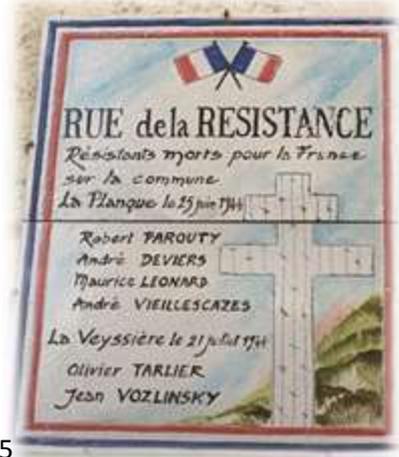
When we arrived at the gites not much was different, there have only ever been two to three gites occupied. None of our friends were there. We didn't mind as lockdown had been a good preparation for a less social holiday. We were allocated sanitised loungers at the pool but in practise we

often had it to ourselves during the fabulous weather we had for four of the weeks.

When going out and about we used more local shops and only went to the supermarkets at lunchtime when it was quiet. The big difference to Mansfield was that everyone, staff and customers, was wearing a mask in supermarkets, shops, restaurants (except at the table) etc. It has been law in France since the Spring and all seemed to comply. French social distance is 1m in contrast to our 2m. During the good weather we ate out at carefully chosen restaurants three or four times and sat on the terrace. When the weather became wet we ate out a couple of times but chose restaurants we knew, were fairly rural and had spacious restaurants.



The department of the Dordogne is very rural and we didn't go into the two small local towns very much but toured the villages and discovered new places. Our phones hooked into the French track and trace and every week we got the comprehensive figures (in a table) for all departments in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region. I could see at a glance how many had been tested in each department, how many new cases, how many had had the virus since March, how many had been to hospital, recovered and how many had died. In the last week, first week of October, the Dordogne department had 152 new cases, a drop from the previous week. The Dordogne



is about the area of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire together but is very rural.

All in all we enjoyed our time walking in the countryside, exploring villages, visiting abbeys, Resistance memorials and, back at the gite, relaxing in the pool and reading a book. We missed the social side of gathering with our friends in the evening, but all in all we really enjoyed a level of freedom we have not had for some months.

It is the first year that we have not had the double kiss when you meet from locals that we have got to know over the years.

Sandra and Brian Cross

## *Travel Lodge Tour.....*

What do we, in a land locked county, crave the most in a hot summer? Why the sea! Smell sea air, feel the sea just to be by the sea is all we ask and at last we could travel. Where to go? Camp sites were our first port of call but many were booked up, with no facilities and at peak prices. Then the Travelodge email appeared magically! Seemed like a good proposition being self-contained in a bit of a box but with all mod cons! So we booked a few days in North Wales, Scarborough and Norfolk. Armed with anything that stated 99.9% of bacteria etc. was killed (.1% was probably Covid) we set off.

North Wales was the most challenging. There was no eating or drinking whatever inside and many such places closed around 4pm. There were one or two takeaways open in the evening. If you were lucky the food came on a plate! On the plus side there were wide, uncrowded beautifully maintained miles of walking esplanades in less popular areas, beautiful vistas of hills, mountains and glimpses of wild inaccessible areas. Attractions like Betws-y-Coed, Conwy and the whole of Anglesey had roads that were long car parks. Even on a Bank Holiday I don't think I've ever seen so many people and cars.

Scarborough was busy but there were still parts that were less populated, though keeping two metres apart on South Bay seafront was difficult. The seagulls did not obey any Covid rules. I can't ever remember there being so many gulls and pigeons especially at roosting time - mostly on the Grand Hotel! Norfolk was hot! And busy! But again there were places to breathe in a safe distance from others. The cool of the trees in Sandringham, Hunstanton was heaving but we did stake a bit of beach at Heacham in two metre isolation. All these breaks had the sea, sand, sun, paddling, collecting seashells and interesting bits of rock, ice creams, fish and chips plus a bit of rain thrown in and were a wonderful reminder how beautiful and varied the UK landscape is.

Ann Stanford

## *To Cornwall and back...*

Last year was very much a stay at home year because of Jim's golf club commitments and we said, "Next year we'll make up for it!" So four holidays plus a couple of weekends away were booked for 2020, all cancelled.

When Covid restrictions were lessened we decided to visit family in Devon who we hadn't seen since January! Saturday September 12th was departure day. Now Jim does a 5k run (part jog part fast walk) very early every Saturday morning and decided he was still going to do this before setting off for Devon. It took him his usual 37-38 minutes but he returned home dripping blood all over the floor having tripped up the kerb. He had shredded one knee and both hands and only avoided broken bones by doing what he called a parachute landing roll onto the pavement! Not too difficult you might think but he is 82. Eventually, all patched up, we set off and arrived in Bovey

Tracey six hours later having encountered very heavy traffic.

Having checked into the pub I hot-footed it to a nearby pharmacy before they closed to buy more wound dressings! My stepson in law picked us up in a Landrover to take us to their house. As I had hurt my leg the week before I was very wary getting down from the vehicle. Simon provided a small step stool but unfortunately it slipped on the tarmac and I ended up with a black and blue arm. Jim and I were a very pretty sight! Nevertheless we had a lovely weekend with the family and enjoyed a walk on Dartmoor in glorious sunshine after Sunday lunch together in the pub. The little ones enjoyed climbing on the rocks but we just watched!!

On Monday we travelled to Falmouth for two days. We stayed in a very nice small hotel with lovely rooms and brilliant breakfasts. Unfortunately they didn't do evening meals so we spent quite a bit of time walking trying to book somewhere for dinner. Falmouth was busy with visitors and returning students but we managed to book a table in a fish and chip restaurant overlooking the harbour on the first night and a lovely fine dining restaurant the second night. We had been on the ferry to St Mawes that afternoon and walked up to the castle only to find we weren't allowed in



without pre-booking. We had also been unable to book two NT properties nearby as they had to be booked before 3pm the previous day and we hadn't found this out in time. More planning needed.

Newquay on Wednesday, leaving sunshine in Falmouth to find thick mist and a cooler temperature. This too was very busy and quite scruffy looking. We tried in vain to find somewhere for a coffee where we didn't have to stand outside and wait for a table so we went across to Mevagissey where it was warm and cloudless. It was very picturesque and we were entertained by a band and choir in the harbour. Then onto the park and ride into Truro to visit the beautiful cathedral. I wasn't disappointed. The museum we'd planned to visit closed just as we arrived at 3pm! We did manage a cup of tea in the museum café garden sitting near a woman with a parrot on her shoulder which she then carried off in an adapted backpack!

We had booked Wednesday night in a pub/hotel in the village of Mitchell near Truro and had an amazing suite and good dinner there. Most unusual accommodation, ultra modern and quite luxurious. Pity we were only there for one night.

On Thursday we travelled up to the Cotswolds for two nights. We stayed just out of Burford and visited Stowe the first day. On the second day we went to Sudeley Castle and gardens near Winchcombe, recommended by our waitress on the first evening. We had been able to book a timed entry. After a talk outside about the castle we then were allowed in, six at a time, to look round at our leisure. Not all of the castle was open but there was still plenty to see and the gardens were beautiful. Not far from Sudeley was the Cotswold Farm Park belonging to Adam Henson (Countryfile) so we went hoping for a late lunch but pre booking required! It all looked very interesting so maybe another time?

Back home on Saturday. Not such a long journey and plenty to look back on with a smile and a few grimaces!

Wendy Sterland



*And plane (pre 2020).....*

## **Plain, Crazy, Part 1: Getting There**

I am a writer, not famous or anything. And friends have often hinted I should consider another hobby. We will see. I was drifting; a literary lull had enveloped me, so I was really looking forward to my upcoming holiday. But, it's fair to say, I don't interact well with the average, bored traveller with poor conversation skills. And, by the way, this is a story about *getting there*, but, more to the point: *getting back*. You'll see!

I had booked a holiday to Majorca. Hubby was enthusiastic, ready and willing to wait on me hand and foot. Well anyway, that was the plan as we boarded our flight.

It was a late booking, so it was no surprise to find we were seated just behind the wing, but it was only a short flight. Norm chose the window seat which left me in the middle, fretting about who would take the aisle seat, picturing the usual no-mates, boring-life passenger. Fingers crossed, the seat would remain empty.

Suddenly, a fortyish woman dropped down next to me, shooing her husband and kids across the aisle. She shoved her expensive carry-on under the seat in front, and introduced herself as Debs. My radar buzzed sensing trouble. And I wasn't wrong!

Debs fiddled with her seatbelt, examined her intricately patterned nails, casting nervous glances at the cabin-crew as they checked our readiness for departure, or not. I watched her gulp down two little pills, and it didn't take a genius to work out she had issues with flying. I know these things. Not because I'm sensitive, in fact the opposite --- I have sociopathic tendencies, and budget airlines don't cater for my peculiarities, or Debs.' She began to mutter her insecurities into a magazine that isn't worthy of the name: I'm not letting on which one, so they can't sue.

Debs was a colourful character. We had a lot in common. She liked to control everything in her life, was quick witted and acid tongued. Okay! Hands up; we shared some less desirable traits, but nice people are boring. We'd just got onto the subject of her holiday, when the captain announced an unwanted delay that added to Debs' anxiety. Two passengers' details hadn't registered at baggage check! Unwisely, I said:

'There are always at least two idiots on board every plane.' That remark came back to haunt me, when Norm and I were asked for our tickets. Debs' eyes nearly popped out of their sockets, and several unrepeatable words escaped her lips, turning the heads of people in front. Minutes later when it was discovered to be the fault of baggage check-in, Debs sheepishly apologised, which didn't enhance my mood.

We were ready to taxi down the runway. I hoped the pills Debs had swallowed were working. In the event, I wished we'd taken any other flight, or, been abducted by sympathetic aliens. I sneaked a side-ways glance at Debs. Her eyes were tightly shut, and she was raking the exotic nails through newly blonde- streaked hair. And then, as we lifted off, she grabbed my hand.

One of my more useful hobbies is Tai Chi; I find it helps me calm my wilder side. And Debs was in desperate need of calming. Self-preservation kicked in, because Debs' husband simply ignored his wife's phobia.

I took a deep breath, not being 'touchy-feely' I had (in the interests of my sanity), decided to get Debs through the flight, and help her rationalize her fears. I caught her husband's eye: he mouthed: 'good luck.' I turned back to Norm; 'tuned-in' to the situation. He squeezed my hand, and indicated my quaking 'patient' whom I was sorely tempted to squeeze in the neck region. Instead, I kept my voice even, talking Debs through 'removing' herself and her thoughts from the plane. We went through visualization to a calmer place, and another time, I kept my voice soothingly even, ordering drinks from cabin staff, to 'boost' my therapy! As we landed, I reclaimed my wrist; and finally, Debs' relaxed, before gripping me in a bear-hug.

Everyone around us applauded, including Debs' husband who gave me a relieved 'thumbs-up'. I was absolutely drained, and when Debs rushed to my side at baggage claim, I could only smile weakly in response to her enthusiastic thanks. We departed, thankful to be on our way in an air-conditioned taxi, alone at last; luxury! Debs was consigned to the back of our minds. A nightmare memory, I had no wish to recall; not ever.

Our two weeks on holiday passed too quickly. It had been absolute bliss. We were already talking of our next break! I had even jotted down a few writing ideas. So, we relaxed as the cab sped toward the airport, and our homeward journey!

I was deep in thought as we joined the queue edging forward to check-in. I joked with the clerk as she handed me our boarding-cards; but the smile soon froze on my face.

"It's row nineteen, again." I said, nudging my husband. He just blinked at me, furtively scanning the queues.

"Really love, it couldn't happen twice; could it?" Norm had followed my eyes which were fixated on a figure in front of us in a bright orange mini-dress, clinging like a vine to a deeply-tanned Debs. She was waving madly in our direction. I immediately cursed, loudly. Fate must surely have it in for me! I gave a nod of recognition, and waved as we ran up the escalator. Debs and her family had side-stepped to duty free. I mumbled something unprintable as we shouldered our flight-bags through passport control. Norm said:

"You don't think she's --- I cut him off.

"I'm trying NOT to think! I'm really not! And, *don't* say what I *know you're* thinking,"

"At least we'll leave on time." He saved this until we had ascended the stairs to the aircraft, and row nineteen. I didn't wait for the cabin-steward to point the way to our seats. We knew *exactly* where we were sitting.

"Isn't this great?!" Debs squealed. "I asked if we could sit next to you." Should I feel flattered? I just felt flattened. Max, husband of control-freak Debs, welcomed us like family. Even the boys offered us sweets.

"You were so fantastic on the way out. Whatever you said it worked!" I tried a little sarcasm, but softly:

"I think the diazepam helped, eh?" Debs gave me a sideways look.

"Oh! Yes; very effective... But you *explained* things. It all made *sense*. I really think I won't need the pills." I felt otherwise, and said so.

"Just in case, yeah?" She hesitated: "You really think---?"

"I do." I wasn't going to waste words. Naturally, she jumped on my brief reply.

"I'm glad you're here; my personal therapist, right?" Deb's husband tuned in for my answer.

"I'm sure you've got this, Debs." I sounded smug. She giggled nervously. I noticed her nails had been changed to a shocking orange to match the mini. We got chatting again, and I suggested a couple of books she could read.

"Don't read much." Came her offhand reply. I wasn't surprised, but she didn't want to disappoint me. She said enthusiastically:

"You actually got into my head with all that visualization stuff."

"I'm glad it helped." And I was. Then it crossed my mind that I should give up writing and try acting. But, then again-- I hate audiences, and suddenly, I felt my meagre, social-skills retreating.

Max glanced across at me as we buckled-up for departure. We exchanged a friendly smile, but I got the distinct impression his look was saying: 'over to you!'

Then my husband squeezed my left hand, and Debs held on to my right. When the cabin steward checked that we were secure for take-off he apologized for the luggage mess-up, outbound.

"I'm so sorry about the little mistake on the way out!"

"I don't hold a grudge." I said, tongue in cheek. Debs had to butt in of course.

"I'd want compensation." She said, wiping the smile off the steward's face. I prayed she maintained this perky, combative mood throughout the flight.

"I've taken my pills." Debs had suddenly gone quiet. The moment of our elevation had arrived. My husband whispered a sympathetic word into my ear.

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**To be continued.....**

