



Monthly meetings are held at the Greig Hall, Gunnings Road, Alcester at 2.30 pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month



Notes from the Chair

David West

Brian Titterington is looking to move out of the area and thus we need someone to take on his role as Groups Coordinator. If you feel you able to step into Brian's shoes please contact myself or Brian for a chat. Could I also remind members that we continue to look for a vice/deputy chairperson.

SPRING LUNCH, THE GOLDEN CROSS, ARDENS GRAFTON 24/5/24 Lyn Pickering



Thank you to all of you who have booked your place at the above event!

If you haven't yet booked, there are very few places left, so please contact me asap.

Payments and menu choices need to be with me no later than the 7th May general meeting please (if you haven't seen the menu, I will have some printed versions available). The cost is £26 for two courses, including tea/coffee, which is only £1 more expensive than last year.

Please be at the Golden Cross from 12.30 p.m., as lunch is booked for 1.00 p.m.

Please note that seats aren't allocated so you may sit with whomever you choose!

MUSICIANS GROUP

John Pickering

Following a meeting of interested members this week we have made lots of progress and the Group will be starting to meet on the second and fourth Wednesday at 10.00 a.m. at the Catholic Church Hall from **22nd May**. If you play an instrument (any standard) and would like to join us, there will be a list out at the May general meeting, or you can contact either Chrissie Capstick or me. (johnpickering@gmail.com)

Programme for 2024		
7 May	Roy Smart	Amy, Wonderful Amy
4 June	Hilary Daly	A Pain in the Class
2 July	Cat Weatherill	A Feather in My Wallet
6 August	Patrick Hanglin	3 Years along the Zambezi
3 September	Karyl Rees	Me and Dylan Thomas
1 October	Chris Hanson	Fire Safety in the Home
5 November	Caroline Faulkner	Recycling in Warwickshire
3 December	Ian Boskett	The Great Train Robbery

Chairman	David West	
Vice-Chairman	John Pickering (temporary)	
Treasurer	Jean Morgan	
Secretary/Minutes Sec	Sue Robertson	
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering	
Groups Coordinator	Brian Titterington	
Programme Co-ordinator	Marilyn Brannon	
Accessibility Officer	Ruth Dutton	
Archives	Jan Rowe (Coopted member)	
Committee Members	Val Hamblin	Karyl Rees
Newsletter Editor	Bronwen Bunting	
Web	http://u3asites.org.uk/alcester	Annual Sub: £20.00 Only members can join groups

THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

SATUDAY 1 JUNE 2024 “The Kite Runner” at Malvern Theatre £40 per ticket (Ref: T8)

The list is full

The Coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am (Careful where you park)

SATUDAY 13 JULY 2024 “What the Butler Saw” at Malvern Theatre £34 per ticket (Ref: T9)

Described as Joe Orton’s most ambitious play, manic farce and masterclass in fearless comic writing.

(Age 14+, Strong Language)

We have had to confirm the booking, but will accept reserves with a possibility of asking the Theatre for more tickets in July.

SATUDAY 19 October 2024 “The History Boys” at Malvern Theatre £44 per ticket (Ref: T10)

The 20th anniversary production of Alan Bennett’s brilliant modern classic.

Just 11 places left. Please book as soon as you can and pay no later than 5th August

SATUDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2024 “Birdsong” at Malvern Theatre £40 per ticket (Ref: T11)

Sebastian Faulk’ epic story of love and loss returns to the stage (Age 14 plus)

Over half the places have been booked already. Please book as soon as you can and pay no later than 5th August

There will be lists at the May meeting for all of the shows or email me if you cannot be there

Reserves are welcome and often end up with tickets, add your name to the list if you wish.

Payment by Bank Transfer to:- “The Alcester u3a”; Sort Code: 08-92-99, Account No: 67268429)

Quoting your membership number and the appropriate reference (Ref: XXX T10 or XXX T11

Alternatively, payment by cheque or in cash can be made to the Treasurer

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Garden Lovers

Janet Allely

Hiding on a quiet road in Southam is a large 1 acre newly developing garden with large old and new trees, shrubs and borders and including a Japanese inspired garden with raked gravel. The spring time bulbs and recently mown lawn gave wonderful views and the fine weather allowed us to have tea and cake outside. I wish I had thought to take a photo.

We are planning to go to Cotswold Garden Flowers at Sands Lane, Badsey, WR11 7EZ on our next visit, which will be on May 16 instead of May 9 if possible, as they are providing a tea and extra guides on May 16th.

History

Lynda Matheson

Val Hamblin gave a thought-provoking talk about the influence of the media - books, magazines and newspapers - in the treatment of social injustices over the last 200 years. The Court of Criminal Appeal was set up in 1908 in response to the cases of Adolf Beck and George Edalji who were wrongly imprisoned, despite clear evidence of their innocence. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes) was a leading light in the campaigns to clear their names and set up the Court of Criminal Appeal. Other authors fighting social injustice included Harriet Beecher Stowe (Uncle Tom’s Cabin) and Charles Dickens. And then we discussed the current Post Office scandal.....

Jazz & Big Band Sound

Bob Applegarth

Another good attendance on yet another wet afternoon. We heard some interesting stories about how members became interested in jazz. Whiling away time listening to other colleagues records in Cyprus when on National Service, attending early concerts in Birmingham in the 1950s, and winning a jive competition dancing to "The Saints" were among some of the surprising accounts. Music selected was very varied. We heard numbers by Kenny Ball, Chris Barber, Stan Kenton, Andre Previn, George Shearing, Ronnie Scott, Glenn Miller, Fats Waller & Tony Bennett - a very varied selection. Next month, on May 8th Bob Applegarth will give a presentation entitled " Jazz Arrangers - the Overlooked" We meet in the Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2.00pm. All U3A members are invited to join us.

Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe

For our April meeting Tony Ingram took us to Italy for his presentation with an exciting selection of music by Italian composers. We heard Rossini's overture "La Scala Seta" or "The Silken Ladder", Corelli's violin concerto in D, an aria from "Tosca" by Puccini and Allegri's beautiful "Miserere mei, Deus" sung by the choir 'The Sixteen', we then tried to guess the birds in Respighi's "The Birds" and the last piece was Ennio Morricone's "Gabriel's Oboe" from the film "The Mission. **Our next meeting is on 29th May at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm when John Wall will present is selection.**

Piano, Keyboard and Theory Tuition

Chrissie Capstick

This group only has one available space left! Members of this group are really enjoying learning to play piano or keyboard, learn the theory behind the instrument they do play or music that they composing. There are, apparently, only about 15 piano groups in the U3A nationwide. I am fairly sure that many of these do not give individual tuition to members like the Alcester Group, so we remain a 'niche' group. Please put your name down if you would like to try a new skill!



Beginners Bridge

Paul Brenda

The Beginners Bridge group restarted in 2024 on Tuesday 16th January at the Malt Mill Lane Community Centre and meets weekly at the usual time of 2.00pm.

National Trust Visits

Linda & David Bradley



Charlecote park and house were our destination in April. The weather was fine with lots of walkers taking advantage of the relatively dry paths around the park. Most of us started with a coffee before going into the house. I was particularly interested in the woodcarving, the inlaid marble table and intricate inlaid ivory on the ebony chairs. The Jacob sheep had been collected together ready for lambing and the deer had to be searched out at the far end of the park.

We are off to Croome Park on 15th May where there was once a secret wartime airbase, now a museum.

Philosophy

Peter Tugwell

Our April meeting was cancelled. So, that session's topic will be carried over to **our next meeting on 21 May 2024 when we will be looking at matters of philosophical interest in Aristophanes' *The Acharnians*.**

Photography Group

Roger Harris

. Instead of a specific competition with a single theme, I intend to select the "**Best View Photo of the Month**" at the close of each month's entries. Naturally, I will exclude my own work. The selection will be based on photographic merit and artistic interpretation. As they will all be "view photos", there will be no judges comments or suggestions. We can review the situation in a month or two..

Poetry Too

Ruth Dutton & Rosie Harvey

Plenty of humour, but also regret and sadness in the selection of poems read and listened to this afternoon. 'The Diary of a Church Mouse' by John Betjeman relates the outrage and complaints of a resident church mouse against the imposters who only visit his Church to hear the organ or 'to munch through Harvest Evensong'.

While the mouse in Elizabeth Coatsworth's poem laments that
'...there are very few crumbs in the world anymore.'

These rodent poems would be incomplete without Burns' 'Wee, sleekit, cowran, tim'rous beastie..' read for us as it should be. And 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' by Robert Browning.

We heard several 'dog' poems, the first being 'The Collie' by Georgesse McHargue, which was followed by Kipling's 'The Power of The Dog', expressing the sorrow of loss

'When the spirit....is gone

You will discover how much you care

When you give your heart to a dog to tear.

T.S Eliot's 'A Dog is a Dog', is a light hearted view..

'The usual dog-about-Town Is much inclined to play the clown',

and Byron's 'Epitaph to a Dog' regrets that dogs are 'unhonoured' and 'unnoticed' despite their worth. Here, Byron mourns his beloved Newfoundland Bosun whom he refers to as his 'only friend'. 'Circle of Day Circle of Night' and 'Blond' by Joe Cottonwood, refer to the same much lamented friend, '

Sitting all day, with Dakota,

my sick, old dog, comforted by touch'.

I shall move into a cheerier mood with the wickedly funny 'Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf' by Ronald Dahl.

Towards the end when she comes to visit 'grandmama '

'I'm going to eat this child.

Compared to Grandmamma

She's going to taste like caviar.....

' then-

'Have you forgot

To tell me what BIG TEETH I've got?

Still, no matter what you say

I'm going to eat you anyway'.

The small girl smiles, an eyelid flickers,

She whips a pistol from her knickers....!!

Alas — wolfie is no more!!

And later in the woods she says to passers by —

'please note

My lovely furry WOLFSKIN COAT'.

'The Hedgehog' by Pam Ayres regrets the loss of this shy, gentle creature from the environment, while 'Worms for Pets' wrong foots a parent trying to influence a child's desire for a pet. 'For a five year old' by Fleur Adcock is a life lesson in what is important — or an insight into the hypocrisy of parenting

'That is how things are:

I am your mother, and we are kind to snails.'

Two pig poems, one by Ronald Dahl and the other Anon. The Dahl poem is the unlikely scenario of the pig planning to eat the farmer before the farmer can turn him into chops and sausages and eat him —

'I had a powerful hunch

that he would eat me for his lunch.

and so, because I feared the worst,

I thought I'd better eat him first.'

T S Eliot's 'Naming of Cats' concludes that the cat alone knows his own

'deep and inscrutable, singular name.'

We read, and listened to, in two hours, 32 poems. To do them all justice would be impossible. but I will conclude with 'McCavity' by T S Eliot - a clever and inscrutable crook who can always mastermind and commit the perfect crime. As a mere human I am unable to emulate McCavity's cunning and guile and produce a faultless report. Hence my usual apology for poems not mentioned. Suffice to say we spent an entertaining and amusing afternoon, which passed all too quickly. Thank you everyone for your rich variety of verse.

IMPORTANT. Our May session of 'Poetry Too' will not be quite as announced at the end of the April meeting. After consultation we have slightly changed it to 'love and unrequited love' which will broaden our scope and give us more options! **We will meet on Friday May 31st, same time, same place.** See you then.

Singing for Pleasure

Chrissie Capstick

We sang, as usual, a huge variety of songs using words on an overhead projector. Members are treated to items that they haven't song since their childhood and they bring back a lots of memories, mostly happy but some poignant. I thank Cath Tomlinson for her selfless patience in putting the words onto Powerpoint. Without her expertise I would really struggle.

As usual, we had lots of fun and members left having aerated their lungs a little bit more than they would have done sitting at home. There is no conductor, just myself doing a valiant 'Les Dawson' act at times, and therefore it is not a normal choir and I know of no other singing group set up like this one. It is possible to have many more members as membership numbers are only restricted by the capacity of the Hall, so please just turn up at 10.30 on the last Thursday of the month at the Catholic Church Hall and try it.

There will be meetings on Thursday May 30th and June 27th There will be no meetings in July and August, due to many people either taking holidays, or looking after family members during school holidays, and we will start again on 26th September.



Walking Groups

Amblers Group

Linda Bradley/Bronwen Bunting

15 turned out for a circular walk based on Tardebigge, taking in lanes, footpaths, Tardebigge reservoir and canal towpath alongside a section of the Tardebigge flight of locks (the longest flight in Britain), providing splendid views as far as the Clent, Clee and Malvern Hills. The canal path took us past the Engine House, a former canal-pumping engine house pumping water from the reservoir, now tastefully converted into apartments, but evoking memories for many of its period as a nightclub in the 1980s when was one of "the places to go". Lunch was enjoyed at the interesting Tardebigge Pub where the interior definitely belies the exterior. Originally built in 1911 as a village hall for a scattered community, with additional facilities such as a library and bath facilities, it now offers a good range of food and drink in spacious surroundings. **The next amble will be on Friday 10 May.**



Friday Walkers

Jane and Chris Baker

Perhaps not surprisingly the U3A Friday Walkers are an active group with a wide range of interests. Unfortunately, in April, so many members were involved with other activities or were on holiday that very few people signed up for the walk. Heavy rain on the evening before and a poor weather forecast for the Friday resulted in us cancelling. **The planned walk from Clifford Chambers will now take place on May 17th.** We hope more people will be able to come and the weather will have improved.

Scrabble Group

Linda Salsbury

The Alcester U3a Scrabble Group has been going for nearly two years, and meetings are very sociable events, usually with hot drinks and biscuits available. So no matter how well you do, you are guaranteed to have an enjoyable time with a friendly bunch of people, and maybe pick up some Scrabble hints and tips to help you beat your friends and family too! **The U3a Scrabble Group meets on the first Friday of each month from 2pm** at a member's home in Alcester. If you're interested in knowing



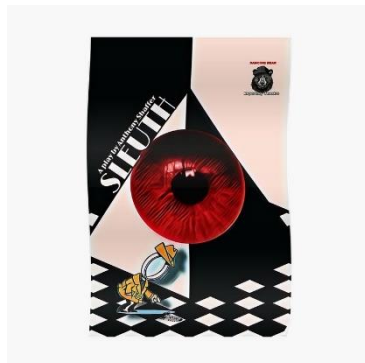
more about joining the U3a Scrabble Group please call Group Leader, Linda Salsbury 07872 625006 or email lindasalsbury@hotmail.co.uk

U3a Scrabble members will offer any guidance when together each month and cater for all levels of expertise to ensure a good time is had by all.

We look forward to welcoming interested members in the very near future.

Theatre Visits

Joe White



Trip to see 'SLEUTH' at Malvern Theatre 13 April

37 of us went to see this play by Anthony Shaffer. It was a fine day, and on arrival we had plenty of time to have lunch if we wanted, and a pleasant walk round the park in the spring sunshine.

The play all takes place on one set, with just two players, at the house of the owner (Todd Boyce). He has invited a guest (Neil McDermott). The subject is Todd's wife (in the play only!) who is having an affair with Neil's character. It is quickly apparent that all will not be well in the end - but I will not tell you here how it gets to the dramatic finale, via various twists and turns!

Incidentally, the play was made into a film in 1972 with Sir Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine - well worth seeing - if you can find it! Thanks from all who went to Joe and Pat for their organisation once more. **(Report by Malcolm Graham)**

ALCESTER u3a INTEREST GROUPS: Group Coordinator: Brian Titterington

If you would like to join a group, please contact the group organiser

Group	Meeting	Time	Venue	Organiser
Bowls	Fortnightly from 27 June	10 am	Bidford Bowls Club	David Sanders
Beginners Family History	2 nd Monday	2.00 pm	Contact group organiser for details	Linda Cooper
Beginners Bridge	Commencing November: every Tuesday except the first.	2 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Paul Brenda
Church Visits	4 th Tuesday as advised	11.00 am	Various	Chris Baker
Crafts	3 rd Wednesday Sept to March	10.30-12.00	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
Creative Writing	1 st Friday	10.30-11.30	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Pat Oliver
Cycling	Various dates and venues		Tracey Wyatt	
French	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Brian Titterington
Garden Lovers	2 nd Thursday April – Oct	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Allely
History	3 rd Thursday	10.45 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Matheson
Italian Conversation	Fortnightly on Wednesday	2 – 4.00 pm	The Huff Cap, Great Alne	Chris Brain
Jazz & Big Band Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Bob Applegarth
Mah Jong	4 th Thursday	2.00 pm	Various	Bronwen Bunting
Man Talk	3 rd Tuesday	2–4.00 pm	Huff Cap, Great Alne	Ian Gregory
Music Appreciation	Last Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Jan Rowe 01789 400051
Piano, Keyboard & Theory Tuition	1 st Wednesday 3 rd Wednesday	10.00-4.00 pm	Confirm with group leader	Chris Capstick
National Trust Visits	3 rd Wednesday		Various	David/Linda Bradley
Philosophy	3 rd Tuesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Peter Tugwell
Photo Group	On-line Group		Roger Harris	
Poetry Too	Last Friday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Ruth Dutton Rosemary Harvey
Ambles	2 nd Friday	10.30 am	Various	Linda Bradley Bronwen Bunting
Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00 am	Various	Jane & Chris Baker
Reading 2	2 nd Tuesday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Linda Jennings
Rees Reading	2 nd Monday	10.30 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees
Scrabble	1 st Friday	2.00 pm	Contact group organiser for details	Linda Salsbury
Singing for Pleasure	Last Thursday	10.30-12 noon	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Chris Capstick
Spanish	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday	10.00 am	Malt Mill Lane Community Centre	John Douglas
Theatre & Outings	As notified			Joe White
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday	10.30 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees