



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



I hope everyone is enjoying the summer at long last.

Marilyn Brannon has decided to call time on her position on the Committee and also on her role as Programme Coordinator. I would like to thank Marilyn for her work: we have had some excellent speakers during her tenure. I am pleased to say that we now have a number of volunteers working on next year's speaker programme.

A U3A SUCCESS STORY!

Lyn Pickering

The first u3a Festival was held at York University 18th – 20th July and it was a very successful event where we met many members from u3as around the country. The organisational team did a brilliant job putting it all together and Alan Walmsley, who has since been promoted as Chair of the u3a Trust was very welcoming and “visible” throughout the event. (Alan was our Regional Trustee when John was Chairman and he was always helpful and approachable!) There were many enjoyable and informative workshops and talks, a superb mini concert from the Barnsley u3a Choir and much more (including a popular country dancing session organised by our own Maureen & Graham Knight! Of, course there were a few teething problems, but nothing insurmountable, so we're looking forward to next year's event!

REMINDER!

NEW ART GROUP

The new art group will be starting on **13 September 2024** and will meet twice monthly thereafter on the **2nd and 4th Fridays of the month from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm** in the small room at Our Ladies & St Joseph RC Church, Priory Road, Alcester. For further details, contact Kay Parish on 01789 766162



Programme for 2024

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 HomeT
5 November	Caroline Faulkner	Recycling in Warwickshire
3 December	Ian Boskett	The Great Train Robbery

Chairman	David West		
Vice-Chairman	vacancy		
Treasurer	Jean Morgan		
Assistant Treasurer	Linda Randall		
Secretary/Minutes Sec	Sue Robertson		
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering		
Groups Coordinator	Brian Titterington		
Programme Co-ordinator	Marilyn Brannon		
Accessibility Officer	Vacancy		
Archives	Jan Rowe (Coopted member)		
Committee Members	Val Hamblin	Karyl Rees	Karen Dowman
Newsletter Editor	Bronwen Bunting		
Web Manager	Lindsay Evans		
		http://u3asites.org.uk/alcester	
Annual Sub: £20			



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

Our last 2 trips to the Theatre this year have been popular and we have been able to increase the booking to accommodate those members who have added their names to the reserves list. We can't guarantee that additional reserves will get places, but there is always a chance.

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.

Please pay no later than 5th August

SATURDAY 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)

Please pay no later than 5th August

There will be lists at the August meeting for both shows

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

Garden lovers had a successful visit to **Salford Priors** & I wish I could have joined in but was on holiday, which was enjoyable but resulted in 2 weeks at home with flu. **Our next visit on 8th August will be to my garden at Station Road in Studley**, B80 7JS. Sensible shoes needed as my paths are not very good. It is possible to arrive in Studley by bus, the X19 comes up Station Road and the 247 stops on the main road in Studley but I haven't made detailed enquiries. There is usually space in The Railway Inn car park and some parking on the street. I hope to be at the monthly meeting on the Tuesday.

Janet Allely



CHURCH VISITS



The group visited churches in **Cherington and Barcheston** in July. At St John the Baptist in Cherington we enjoyed a largely 13th century nave, chancel and tower with a quirky collection of stained glass from the UK and abroad, put together by a former rector in the 18th century. Like previous experts, we pondered the “shoe-horned” nature of the Franklins tomb, squeezed into the arcade in the nave. St Martins Barcheston charmed with its significantly leaning tower and a location in the middle of a vanished village. Resting in a splendid table tomb in a south aisle built specially to accommodate it, is the local squire who enclosed the neighbouring fields and cleared the village! One imagines his fellow citizens

Chris Baker

were not fully appreciative of his efforts. We returned for an excellent lunch to our old favourite, the Lion in Tredington.

Cycling

“A Pleasant Afternoon”: A saunter through very pretty and quiet country lanes in the sunshine, starting from Inkberrow, was the latest e-bike ride jaunt with lunch at The Fir Tree Cafe in Dunhampstead. Wild flower meadows, horses grazing in fields, canal bridges and views of woodland the ride took in Stock Green, Himbleton, Crowle and Oddingley. Please contact Tracey Wyatt (tcwyattuk@gmail.com) if you would like to join her on the next ride.

Tracey Wyatt



History Group

Lynda Matheson

In July the History Group meeting was “**Object Lesson**” when members brought interesting objects from home and told their stories. From the sublime- Michelangelo’s David, to the ridiculous - a 3 inch contraption which turned out to be a working sewing machine, we heard tales both ancient and modern. We were taken to World War 1 by a bayonet, then to the Belgian resistance in WW2, and visited Glasgow, the London Olympics, the Mary Rose, Birmingham Cathedral and Shakespeare’s Stratford on Avon. And then came the black market in chicken stock cubes...

Jazz & Big Band Sound

Bob Applegarth

John Cooper was our speaker this month. He presented us in his characteristically humorous way with a selection of his choice of great jazz solos. He covered a wide range of jazz genres. Among the music played were Handful of Keys (Fats Waller), Body & Soul (Coleman Hawkins), I Get a Kick out of You (Charlie Parker), St. Philip Street Breakdown (George Lewis) & Nobody Knows You (Bessie Smith). Thanks John.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday August 14th at 2pm in Malt Mill Lane Community Centre when Bob Applegarth will give a talk on "Ladies in Jazz". New members are always welcome to this very friendly group.

The Elastic Band

John Pickering

This fairly new group is living up to its name and has stretched to include musicians and singers of all standards! So, if you would like to spend a couple of fun-filled hours on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month at the Catholic Church Hall, please come along and join in! (**Please note that there will be no meetings on 28th August or 11th September owing to holidays**)
(Contacts: John Pickering or Chris Capstick)

Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe On

On a very hot July afternoon John Ruffell presented his programme entitled "**Visual Concert in Venice**", we saw the Orchestra of Venice perform a delightful selection of well-known pieces from Mozart's 'Figaro', Bizet's 'Carmen', Verdi's 'La Traviata', Puccini's 'Nabucco' and Mendelssohn's 'Symphony no. 4'. **Our next meeting, presented by Pam Gough, is on 28th August at 2pm at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre.**



Singing for Pleasure

Chrissie Capstick

There will be no meeting in August, as many people are either on holidays, or looking after family members during school holidays, and we will start again on 26th September.

Philosophy

Peter Tugwell

Our July meeting saw the second of our planned sessions dipping into *Philosophy Now* back issues. Again we had a mix of varied philosophical subjects to explore and extend our journey into the vast subject that is philosophy. From paradoxes through the meaning of language, from ‘reviewing a review’ to Socratic enquiry and the wisdom of children, there was more than enough to fuel our discussions. The format of these sessions allows us to cover a wide range of topics admittedly not in the depth of a single one, but it does bring us into contact with disparate areas, especially contemporary ones, and provides scope for further sessions in the future. Some of us were able to take the opportunity to read (and think) about a philosopher we had heard about, but didn’t really know much about, others took the opportunity to critique an argument advanced in the particular item. Not everything was taken at face value, and the conclusions advanced were subjected to (constructive) criticism. The important thing was that we were all ‘doing philosophy’. Thanks to a further donation of more back issues, we now have an even greater resource to delve into.

Our next meeting is on 20 August and it will be Members’ Choices from *Philosophy Now*.

Poetry Too

Ruth Dutton & Rosie Harvey

Our theme **reflections on youth**, proved to be a nostalgic trip down memory lane, so much so that it included an impromptu recitation by two of the group on Albert and the Lion, from memory of course !

There then followed a discussion on how memorising pieces of verse helps on a sleepless night. Eventually, we reached the poetry. A.A.Milne was reinvented by Christopher Matthews with a modern following of Now we are Six, with Now we are Sixty. The poems often reflected family relationships, particularly fathers, in Father’s Hand by Paul Cookson, the boy remembers his father’s large working hands that enclosed his small one. In Follower, Seamus Heaney describes a change of roles, as a boy he follows his father as he ploughs by hand ‘dipping and rising to the plod’, the roles reverse with age, and then the father is trailing behind his son. Sadly, Roger McGough tells us about an absent father in The Railings, the boy is aware of his father watching him play cricket for the school, but he always, however, just happened

to be passing. We were treated to wonderfully descriptive poems by Dylan Thomas, in *Forever Young*, and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Of course Pam Ayres provided some humour with *I Don't Want To Go To School*, *Loss of Lego*, and *Once I Was A Looker* !

We don't meet in August. Our next theme is Seasons which will be on Friday 27 September.

Photography Group: Competition Results July 2024

Roger Harris



Hidcote
by Ruth Dutton (1)



Limes
by Jan Robertson (2)



Oversley Green Scarecrow Competition
by Margaret Noyce (3)

As you might expect in the middle of summer, there was high level of "botanic" influence in this month's daily submissions. Full marks to Ruth Dutton for her continuing prolific contributions from the exotic gardens of the Natural Trust etc. These places re always a rich hunting ground for interesting subjects and Ruth knows how to seek them out. Staying with the subject of botany, Jan Robertson submitted a delightful study of the lime trees in Bidford on Avon park, including scenic shots right through to detailed studies of the flowers. We were able to close the month with a smile with the images of Oversley Green Scarecrow Competition taken by Margaret Noyce. These included a very topical and amusing depiction of the Olympic Games.

Congratulations to all contributors, and if you think you have something better then why aren't you sending it in?



Walking Groups

Amblers Group

Following 2 frustrating recces which were thwarted by either blocked paths or paths which had totally disappeared, we settled on a tried and tested walk from **Coughton** which we last did and enjoyed a couple of years ago. The 4-mile circular took us across Coughton Ford to Sernal, taking in parts of the Heart of England Forest and the Arden Way. It was interesting to see how the HofE Forest has grown and thrived during that time, although not so the glamping accommodation at Middle Sernal Farm where the Shepherds huts seem to have fallen out of use. The return route took us past Coughton Court, currently undergoing a big 2-year conservation project to preserve, repair & improve the building's façade & roof. A scaffolding experience is on offer, allowing those with a head for heights & the stamina for the ascent, to see behind the scenes action & spectacular views across the surrounding area. 13 walkers turned out with 10 going on for lunch at the nearby Throckmorton Arms.

Bronwen Bunting



Friday Walkers

Jane and Chris Baker

In July we planned to do a local walk from Alcester to Exhall skirting each side of Oversley Wood. It's a pleasant country walk. Unfortunately the weather was very warm & parts of the route are quite exposed to the sun so we modified our plans & walked through the wood. There we benefitted from the shade of the trees. At 4-5 miles it was slightly shorter than usual but long enough for that particular day. Afterwards ten of us ate at the Turks Head in Alcester High St.

Reading 2

Linda Jennings

This month's book was **'A Spark of Light' by Jodie Picoult**, a popular American author with some 28 novels and short stories to her name. The storyline of this novel is set in a women's health centre in Mississippi, where a gunman is holding hostage staff and patients at the abortion clinic being run there, and the police negotiator finds that his daughter and sister are among the hostages. Picoult's novels regularly examine moral issues, such as abortion, assisted suicide, the Holocaust, race relations, LGBT rights, the death penalty, setting them in a fictional context, often with graphic descriptions of the processes involved. Members enjoyed a good discussion, and agreed that the author's research was thorough, and provided a balanced view of the issues involved, although not everyone actually enjoyed the book. **Next month's choice is 'Somebody I used to Know' by Wendy Mitchell.**

Scrabble Group

Linda Salsbury

Come and have fun and meet new friends at our Scrabble Group which takes place **first Friday each month from 2pm**. Meet like minded people who have a passion to multiply their brain cells; or just have a laugh and enjoy a game! Have fun meeting U3a friendly locals and share a conversation over a cuppa! **Contact Group Leader, Linda Salsbury for location of where we meet 07872 625006 email: lindasalsbury@hotmail.co.uk**



Theatre Trips

Joe White

We didn't actually get to see the Butler but what we did see were six very talented actors deliver an absolute farce of a comedy in which John Cleese (remembering his style of acting from his various T.V. performances) would have been in his element.

Written by Joe Orton the story begins with a psychiatrist doctor attempting to seduce his prospective new secretary Geraldine only to be interrupted by his wife. The plot then rapidly disintegrates into mayhem as the doctor then attempts to cover up his dastardly deed, digging himself into further trouble.

Just when things couldn't get any worse for the psychiatrist doctor the inspector of the establishment arrives to assess the practice. However, the inspector another highly qualified doctor, bordering on the brink of genius and lunatic, throws the whole situation into yet deeper bedlam.

The hilarious chaos which transpires beggars' belief. You really have to see it to believe it!

All ends well though with a twist in the story that nobody saw coming.

Special thanks go out to Joe and Pat White for organising the trip and also to Dave the driver of Royal Motorway Coaches for his safe driving and also his impressive skills in manoeuvring the coach around the back roads of Malven so as to avoid the traffic jam.

In all an excellent day out and highly recommended.

(Report by Lindsay Howes)

Yoga Group

Karyl Rees

The yoga group is now enjoying a summer break during August and will reconvene in September.



ALCESTER u3a INTEREST GROUPS: Contact Group Coordinator, Brian Titterington, for further information

Group	Meeting	Time	Venue	Organiser
Art	2 nd & 4 th Friday Starting Sept 2024	10.00 am – 12.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Kay Parish
Bowls	Fortnightly from 24 June	10.00 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 1 st .	2.00 pm	MalAat 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	10.00-12.00	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
Creative Writing	1 st Friday	10.30-11.30	Contact group leader for details	Pat Oliver
Cycling	Various dates and venues			Tracey Wyatt
French	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	
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
The Elastic Band	2 nd & 4 th Wednesday	10.00 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	John Pickering
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	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