



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



Notes from the Chair

David West

As a result of a lot of hard work put in by Lindsay Evans, we now have a new website. This can be found at <https://alcester.u3asite.uk> (a Google search for 'Alcester' & 'u3a' will generally find it as the first entry). The website includes a lot of useful information presented in a very clear manner including details of all our special interest groups & events, monthly speaker programme & group policies.

Membership Cards – an important development

Now that the Beacon system is fully embedded and members keep the same membership number for the life of their membership, it has been decided that *Membership Cards will, in future, only be issued to new members.* (Group Leaders are able to check on their Beacon Group Membership list whether members are current, so they won't need to see your new membership cards).

Your current card, that was issued at the beginning of this year, is still very useful to carry in your purse or wallet, as it has space on the reverse for your "In case of emergency" contact.

Lyn Pickering, Membership Secretary

THE ELASTIC BAND CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE

To welcome members to the 3rd December general meeting, The Elastic Band (formerly known as the Musicians group) will be performing a selection of Christmas & other popular songs from 2.00 p.m. prior to the Chairman's announcements and Richard Churchley's entertainment. So, if you'd like to come along early and start the season's celebrations by singing along with us, you will be very welcome!

John Pickering, Group Leader (admin)

HAPPY SECOND "RETIREMENT" TO ROGER



I'm sure everyone in the Photography Group who has benefited from Roger Harris' help and advice will join me in thanking him for dedicating so much time and effort to the group! Producing and distributing a set of view photographs EVERY DAY of the year is no mean feat, plus, of course choosing a monthly winner! We hope Roger and Jackie will enjoy the extra time gained each day!

Programme for 2024		
5 November	Nick Martin WWT	10-year transformation of a garden to a wildlife haven
3 December	Richard Churchley	Christmas Songs Through the Ages

Chairman	David West	chair.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Vice-Chairman	Vacancy	vicechair.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Treasurer	Jean Morgan	treasurer.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Assistant Treasurer	Linda Randell	
Secretary/Minutes Sec	Sue Robertson	
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering	membership.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Groups Coordinator	Vacancy	
Speaker Team Co-ordinator	Linda Randell	
Committee Members	Val Hamblin	Karyl Rees
Newsletter	Bronwen Bunting	Karen Dowman
Web: Manager - Lindsay Evans	http://u3asites.org.uk/alcester	Only members can join groups
	Annual Sub: £20.00	



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

Reminder

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

Please remember the date, the coach leaves the Greig Hall at 11.00 am

Hoping to bring a lift in spirits late in January & to start 2025 with a fun visit to the theatre, we have booked

SATUDAY 25 JANUARY 2025 “Pride & Prejudice* (*sort of)” at Malvern Theatre £42 per ticket (Ref: T12)

This play won Best Comedy in the Olivier Awards in 2022 and is described as “a unique & audacious retelling of Jane Austen’s most iconic love story” & features “a string of pop classics”. Best stall seats in rows E, F & G.

We need to confirm numbers so **please book & pay no later than the meeting on 2 December.**

Payment by bank transfer to “The Alcester u3a”, sort code 08-92-99, A/C No 67268429 Ref xxxT12

Followed by

SATUDAY 22 MARCH 2025 “Just Between Ourselves” at Malvern Theatre £33 per ticket (Ref: T13)

Perhaps Alan Ayckbourn’s most emotionally charged play & navigating the tightrope between comedy & tragedy.

Best stall seats in rows D, E, F & G (a bit dotted about). **Please book & pay no later than 7 January.**

Payment by bank transfer to “The Alcester u3a”, sort code 08-92-99, A/C No 67268429 Ref xxxT13

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

Reserves are welcome and often end up with tickets, add you name to any or all of the lists if you wish.

Payment by bank transfer to “The Alcester u3a”, sort code 08-92-99, A/C No 67268429

Quoting your membership number & the reference for the particular trip in the reference box

Eg Ref xxT12 or xxxT13. **Alternatively, payment by cash or cheque can be made to the Treasurer**

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

CHURCH VISITS

Chris Baker

The October church visits began at the **Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart in Droitwich**. It is renowned for its extraordinary interior decorated in Venetian glass mosaics. Created as a memorial by a man for his wife in the 1920s, the mosaics show Bible stories and also tell about the life of St Richard, the patron saint of Droitwich. When lit up the mosaic pictures are amazing. Recently a lottery grant has been obtained for the cleaning and repair of the mosaics. It is hoped it may become a World Heritage Site in the future.

The second visit of the day was to the **Parish Church of St Augustine in Dodderhill**. It is in a spectacular position, formerly the site of a Roman Fort, with commanding views of Droitwich. It is a huge stone building with a strange layout because the Royalist Army destroyed the Nave in 1642 whilst trying to dislodge the occupying Parliamentarian forces. We were welcomed by the Church Warden who gave us a brief introduction to the life of the church today.

After these two interesting visits we ate lunch at the Nevill Arms. This was the last visit of 2024.

Our next visit will be in April 2025. Hope to see you all then.



CRAFTS

Lynda Lamb

At our October meeting we produced **Christmas gift bags** in the shape of a handbag for a special someone in our lives. As always, our super talented Group Leader, Lynda Lamb, had spent hours producing pre-prepared packs for each of us (the results are in the photo)! Everyone in the group is so appreciative of the time and effort she puts into the group on our behalf!

(Report by Lyn Pickering)

HISTORY GROUP

Lynda Matheson

The group’s October meeting saw a tour de force from David Woodrow on **the history of interactions with West Africa** beginning in the 6th century BCE when the Egyptians employed Phoenician sailors to explore the coasts of Africa, via

the Carthaginians to the Persian expedition, all before the birth of Christ. Exploration became land based with trade routes across the Sahara until Prince Henry the Navigator, seeking a sea route to the Spice Islands of Asia, founded re-fuelling stops along Africa's west coast in 1480.

These stops evolved into trading posts, the hugely wealthy African empires of Mali, Ghana and Asante exported gold and gems to Europe and imported metals, beads, cloth and dishes. Warehouses were built and the holding prisons for slaves who were sold to the Americas to work on the coffee, sugar and cotton plantations. In turn the New World exported cotton, sugar and coffee to Europe which in turn exported manufactured goods to west Africa - the Atlantic trading triangle. The American slave trade gradually ended in the 19th century, but the trade with North Africa continued until 1900.

The trading posts became colonies with settlements for Europeans developing as disease control improved. The Dutch colonies were sold to the British, who, with the French, maintained their colonies until after the second World War.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, 21 November.



JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth

Returning from his annual visit to France, Lawrence entertained us with a selection of jazz played by French musicians as well as Americans recorded in Paris. Some of Lawrence's favourites featured were pianist Claude Bolling, Tenor saxist Guy Lafitte & bass player Pierre Michelot. He also played pieces by bands that were new to the rest of us - Bushmills Papa's,

Docteur Swing & the Orchestra du Hot Club de Nante. Our presenter in November is John Evans who will talk about composing & he will also play some piano. **Hope to see you all there at the Malt Mill Community Centre on Wednesday 12th November at 2.00pm**

THE ELASTIC BAND

John Pickering

The group has had a lot of fun practising the pieces for the December meeting, the music for which, thanks to Chrissie Capstick, Frank Edgar and George Hodkin, has been produced in different forms for the various instruments and vocalists. We are fortunate to have so many talented musicians in the group who benefit those of us who are in the early stages of learning, so a huge thank you to all three of them for their time and efforts!!



MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe.

For our October meeting John Ruffell presented a delightful concert on screen from The Schonbrunn Palace, Vienna, Gustavo Dudamel conducted the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and we enjoyed George Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' the pianist was Yuga Wang, Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for Strings', John Sousa's 'Stars & Stripes Forever', Leonard Bernstein's 'Candide Overture' and Aaron Copland's 'Hoe Down'. **Our next meeting is on 27th November at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm when John Ruffell will present an on screen concert for Christmas**

National Trust Visits

David & Linda Bradley

If you thought our visits were only going to be in the summer, you are wrong. November's (Wednesday 20th) visit will be to **Greyfriars Tudor house in Worcester**. The house is only available for booked tours so please sign in or email us asap please. If you fancy joining us we will be at the meeting on Tuesday 5 November. **Our trips out are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.**



SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Chrissie Capstick

Well, the last singing for pleasure was indeed a pleasure (for me at least) as there was much laughter and chatter in the room, together with fantastic enthusiastic, melodious singing!

I brought out some toy bells for each member to play which caused great hilarity. They played them beautifully but it did remind me though, of Joyce Grenfell's nursery school sketch in many respects....

The next meeting is on Thursday 28th November and this will be the last in 2024, the December meeting would have been on Boxing Day and I know you will all be shopping....

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

For our October meeting we had one of our by now regular '**Members' Choices**' sessions from our stock of back issues of *Philosophy Now* magazines. The topics selected were again varied and diverse, ranging from **Rawls's Distributive**

Justice, Hybridity in film and life, an article on a review of the reliability of the Bible and 'Long live Literature'. This again showed the different areas of member's interests, and allowed us to look at many philosophical theories, concepts and trends in a relatively short space of time. In fact we had 5 such sessions, and covered about 20 topics. We realised that it might be worthwhile expanding 'member's choices' based on topics in *Philosophy Now* to including other sources that had caught a member's eye, and so we will try this for one or two sessions early next year.

Our next meeting is on 19 November and we will be looking at Tom Stoppard's play *the Hard Problem*, which several members have already started to read, and found it full of philosophical concepts and questions right from the start.

POETRY TOO

Ruth Dutton & Rosie Harvey

The October meeting of the Poetry Group was cancelled. **The next meeting will be on Friday 29th November when the theme will be Holidays.**

READING GROUP 2

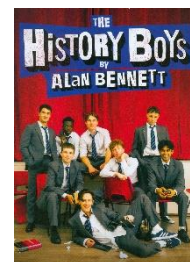
Linda Jennings

At our October meeting, we varied the usual agenda, by bringing along **recommendations from our own bookshelves** rather than all reviewing the same library loan. Titles included *The Lost Man* by Jane Harper, *The Dream Home* by T. M. Logan, *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver, *The Wisdom of Sheep* by Rosalind Young, *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stewart, *My Father's House* by Joseph O'Connor, *Night Swimmers* by Roisin Maguire and *Saturday* by Ian McEwan. As always, there was enthusiastic discussion, and most of us came away with a new title in their 'must read' list. **Next month's book for all to review is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.**

Theatre Visits

Joe White

On a sunny Saturday morning we caught the coach to Malvern, it was a lovely journey. Having time for lunch and a bit of window shopping we entered the lovely theatre to watch *The History Boys*, Alan Bennett's brilliant modern classic. What a treat and a very enjoyable day. (Report by Lynn Ingram)



PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP:

Roger Harris

As this is the last competition that I will judge as Group Leader, I have been looking for a special result. However, I soon realised that every member who presents their work for viewing is a "winner". It's a simple equation - no photos = no group. So many congratulations to you all. If you are a member who has a camera, but has not submitted any photos recently, then please do so. Hopefully a new Group Leader will step forward shortly and he or she will require as much material as possible to see us through the dark days of winter ahead. Thanks once again for your past support to me, and for the very kind comments I have received. I hope we can all stay in touch through the medium of photography.



WALKING GROUPS

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

Following an amble recce from Inkberrow which failed miserably due to innumerable stiles, feisty horses and boggy bridleways, the group went for a very safe Option B – a hard path walk from Shottery around Stratford in beautiful weather which was a real bonus after all the recent rain. We even managed a coffee stop halfway round beside the river, sitting outside in the sunshine. Lunch was at The Bell where everyone opted for the Seniors 2-course menu – perhaps on the small side for some appetites but certainly no quibble about the £7.99 price tag. Even the addition of a 3rd course to top up came in at only £1 extra! The venue for November will depend on a successful recce and weather conditions, both of which have been a bit problematic of late.

FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

The planning of the October walk proved more challenging than originally anticipated. A recce of a route around Earlswood Lakes was so difficult to follow due to blocked paths and lack of signage that it had to be abandoned. Hopefully a different route for that area can be planned in the future.

Therefore, because of lack of time, our new walk had to be a familiar one. We started at Arrow Mill and walked across the fields to Oversley Green. We went up Primrose Hill and into Oversley Wood. Now that there are gates across the routes into the woods it is a much quieter path than it once was. Our only danger was the possibility of tree felling!

After walking the length of the wood, we returned across farmland to the village of Oversley before taking the route back to Arrow Mill.

It was a pleasant, dry day for this walk of almost six miles. We had to increase our pace towards the end to get back in time for lunch but we all made it and a dozen of us enjoyed a sociable meal.



SCRABBLE GROUP

Come and have fun and meet new friends at our Scrabble Group which takes place **first Friday** each month from 2pm. Contact Group Leader, Linda Salsbury for location of where we meet 07872 625006 email: lindasalsbury@hotmail.co.uk

Linda Salsbury

YOGA GROUP

The yoga group will take a half-term break on 28 October and recommence on Monday 4 November.

Karyl Rees



ALCESTER u3a INTEREST GROUPS: Contact Group Coordinator 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
Family History	3 rd Monday	2.00 pm	Alcester Library	Linda Cooper
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
Cycling	Various dates and venues	Tracey Wyatt		
French	3 rd Tuesday			2.30 pm
Garden Lovers 2 nd Thursday April – Oct	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Allely	
History		3 rd Thursday	10.45 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room
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	
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
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday 2 groups	10-11.00 am 11.15-12.15	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees
Art	2 nd & 4 th Friday Starting Sept 2024	10.00 am – 12.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Kay Parish