



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

The members of the Programme Sub-Committee would like to all who responded to our survey by offering a wide variety of ideas for consideration. We had such a good response that we can't guarantee all ideas will be acted upon immediately, but please rest assured that all will be discussed at our next meeting and we will endeavour to include a varied programme of events in future months! Please rest assured that, when all your ideas are finally, the results will be published.

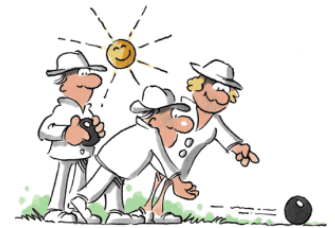
SPRING LUNCH

If you didn't attend this year's Spring Lunch at Kings Court Hotel, you missed a treat! Those who did attend enjoyed the chance to make new friends, eat good food, efficiently served in pleasant surroundings! What's not to like?? Many thanks to Karyl Rees for organising this event.



WHY NOT TRY LAWN BOWLS?

This summer's Lawn Bowls sessions commence on Tuesday 3rd June, 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon at Bidford Lawn Bowls Club, where new members will be assured of a warm welcome! The sessions are open to all abilities, as coaching will be given and bowls sets provided. Soft soled, flat shoes must be worn on the green and it is recommended that you wear comfortable clothing, not forgetting a hat if it's sunny. The sessions run fortnightly during the summer months, so why not come along and have a go?



For more information, please contact David Sanders: [davidjohnsanders@aol.com](mailto: davidjohnsanders@aol.com) Or Tel. 07810 805393.

Programme for 2025

3 June	Clive Owen	Bermuda Police Murders
1 July	Andrew Lound	Shackleton, Antarctic Explorer
5 August	Fiona Conn	Why People Become Homeless (cash collection for Shelter)
2 September	Jenny Stone	Comic Monologues
7 October	Kay Starkey	The Work of the Air Ambulance (cash collection)
4 November	Eddie Smallwood	Richard III – Villain to Hero
2 December	Coughton Community Choir	Seasonal Musical Entertainment

Chairman	David West	chair.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Joint Vice-Chair	Lyn Pickering	
Joint Vice-Chair	Karen Dowman	
Treasurer	Jean Morgan	treasurer.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Assistant Treasurer	Linda Randell	
Secretary/Minutes Sec	Miranda Sanders	mjanesanders56@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering	membership.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Groups Coordinator	Vacancy	
Speaker Team Co-ordinator	Linda Randell	
Committee Members	Val Hamblin	Karyl Rees
Coopted Members	Christine Dyer	Clive Owen
Newsletter	Bronwen Bunting	
Web: Manager - Lindsay Evans	http://alcester.u3asite.uk	Annual Sub: £20.00
		Sue Robertson
		Only members can join groups

A big thank you from the Shakespeare Hospice Friends for all those u3a members who supported the Coffee Morning on Friday 30 May when just over **£1200 was raised for The Shakespeare Hospice.**



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

Our next visits are already fully booked with a reserves list open for both. Please remember to pay before 4th July for Midsomer Murders.

SATURDAY 5 July 2025 "By Royal Appointment" at Malvern Theatre £38 per ticket (Ref: T14)

The coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11,00 am

Best Stalls Seats in Rows D, E & F. Already fully booked and paid for

The Booking & Reserve lists will be at the June meeting.

Saturday 8 November 2025 "Midsomer Murders: The Killings at Badgers Drift" at Malvern Theatre £38 each Ref T15)

"a classic whodunnit – this gripping and thrilling new show is set to delight audiences"

Best stall seats in rows D, E & F. Already fully booked. Please pay no later than 4 July

Payment by Bank transfer to:- "The Alcester U3A" Sort Code 08 92 99 A/C No. 67268429 Ref XXX/T15

Or pay the Treasurer with Cash or a cheque. The Booking & Reserve lists will be at the May meeting.

When you pay for a Theatre Trip by BACS Please include your membership No and T No

*** INTEREST GROUP NEWS ***

ART APPRECIATION

Our May meeting saw a revised talk on **The Panorama**, first given to the History group early in the year. From its inception in 1782, the panorama proved to be not only a highly popular artistic phenomenon that gave ordinary people access to great works of art that were not only educated but entertained. Popular versions of the panorama included great battles (Trafalgar, Waterloo, Borodino, Gettysburg), sea voyages to exotic destinations and expeditions to the alps and train journeys. Now considered the I-max of its day, the panorama was immersive and thrilling! Yet these huge pieces (often as long as a football pitch and as high as a three-storey house) were executed by teams of highly skilled and accredited artists. The cinema largely killed the panorama off in the early twentieth century, but recent revivals have seen modern technology used to great effect to thrill viewers once more! **June's meeting considers the work of the 17thC baroque artist Artemisia Gentileschi** -- one of the very few female artists that managed to forge an independent career at a time when women had so few opportunities. We meet on June 5th for a 10.30am start at the RC Meeting Room.

Val Trim



Art Appreciation: First Thursday of the Month!

CHURCH VISITS



We began our May visits with the 11* listed church of **All Saints, Preston Bagot**. A wonderfully simple small church of Norman origin and unusually sympathetically restored (by JA Chatwin) in the 19th century. We enjoyed the finger sundial in the south wall and the impressively restored and raised timber barrel roof and the wooden tower. The windows were adorned with stained glass by Burne-Jones, which miraculously survived the WW2 bombing of a methodist meeting house in Birmingham and were moved to All Saints in the 60s.

Moving on to the even older church of St Peter in Wootton Wawen, we found much to intrigue us in the oldest church in Warwickshire - and indeed one of the oldest in the country! Inside the church, under the tower, are the substantial remains of the Saxon structures which form the core of the present church. Exposed roof timbers are visible throughout the building, a testament to craftsmanship over the centuries, together with some magnificent (and eye-wateringly expensive) woodwork from more recent times. A curious (especially from the outside) extension on the SE side is reminiscent of a tithe barn but now contains the Lady Chapel and an impressive exhibition describing the evolution of Wootton and its church over the centuries. The church offers guided tours every third Saturday - recommended!

Chris Baker





CARD MAKING

Lynda Lamb

We had a full house for our last meeting of the Card Making Group before we break up for our summer recess. We will resume our classes in September- 2nd Friday of the month. Everyone made beautiful cards as you can see in the photos. Wonderful work Ladies! I look forward to seeing everyone again in September.

CRAFT GROUP

Lynda Lamb

The Craft Ladies spent a relaxing morning making & embroidering our new name badges. I'm sure you will soon see them being worn at various Group meetings in the future!

We are now on our Summer break & will meet again on the 3rd Wednesday in September.

Have a great summer!

GARDEN LOVERS GROUP

Janet Allely

Some of our fitter members walked to this interesting garden that had been created from the old railway line and contained many unusual and interesting plants and trees. Tea was served in the dining room and we sat on chairs and walls to have tea with scrumptious cakes. Our host enjoyed talking to members and thanked us for our contributions to charity. **Our next visit on June 12th is to Homestall, Coughton Hill, Coughton, B49 5HX.** This is on the right hand side of the Throckmorton Arms on the A435 road to Studley.

HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

Our May meeting saw 20 people crammed surprisingly comfortably in the meeting room of the Catholic Church Hall where we were treated to an excellent talk from Lynne Yates, this time about Joseph Paxton, a self-made Victorian who was a gardener, engineer, close friend of the Duke of Bridgewater and an MP.

Born 1 of 9 children to a yeoman farmer and his wife in 1803, Joseph was fortunate to be able to attend a free school. At 15 he became a gardener's boy and rose, or rocketed, through his profession. The RHS put him in charge of its gardens at Chiswick House, London, where he came to the attention of the Duke of Bridgewater. At 22 he was head gardener at Chatsworth House where amongst other achievements he successfully moved mature trees to landscape the grounds, built the famous Chatsworth rock gardens, designed greenhouses, glasshouses and hothouses and built a reputation for nurturing rare and exotic plants.

His greatest architectural success was the Crystal Palace, which he designed at very short notice on a sheet of blotting paper. The enormous building, 6 times the size of St Paul's, was constructed in 10 months.

In addition, he was a newspaper proprietor who built up the circulation to outsell the Times and designed gardens for other great houses. In 1854 he became a Liberal MP and was tasked with setting up a Board to develop road and facilities for the troops in the Crimea, which he managed with his usual flair.

Paxton was a lucky man and had the knack of being in the right place at the right time. He died, burned out, at the age of 62, and was buried on the Chatsworth Estate.

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth

Ian Greig entertained us with his second instalment of "**Jazz from Surprising Sources**". Ian treated us to music from a range of unexpected musicians including the 12/19th Lancers Military Band, Rod Stewart, Nigel Kennedy as well as established jazz musicians Stan Getz, Thelonius Monk & Ella Fitzgerald. Some tracks were played from 78rpm discs on a vintage 1950s Collaro record player. They sounded surprisingly good! Other music was played from much more up-to-date audio-visual sources. Ian was extremely grateful to his friend Steve Godfrey for setting up the modern equipment. Ian had no trouble with the Collaro player! Our next meeting is on Wednesday June 11th at 2.00pm in the Malt Mill Lane Community Centre. Bob Applegarth will give a programme entitled "**These are a Few of My Favourite Things**". New members are always welcome. Hope to see you all there.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

Tony's programme for May was exciting and dramatic, he chose Vivaldi's Concerto for three Violins, Satie's piano piece "Je te Veux", a piano concerto by Ravel composed for the left hand which amazed us all, Wagner's magnificent finale for his "Gotterdammerung" cycle, Symphony No.5 by Sibelius and Ravel's piano piece "Pavane for a Dead Princess". **Our next meeting is on 25th June at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm**, Jane Lytton will present her programme.

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

For our May session we looked at **The Frankfurt School and 'Critical Theory'**. Establishing the history of the Frankfurt School was relatively easy but as to 'Critical Theory' well, that took a bit of thinking about the best way to tackle it, because there have been a number of well-known philosophers (and still are) who have taken slightly different views and positions, whereas what we wanted was to establish its main points and how it differed from other philosophical theories such as Phenomenology and Hermeneutics. It is an interdisciplinary approach (holistic) across sociology, economics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy, and it is this approach that gives rise to its ability to look at ways to transform society rather than simply to undertake analysis. It is a 'call to action' to recognise social injustice, human domination and exploitation, and to promote change. It challenges how institutions, laws and everyday norms perpetuate the status quo, and pursues the removal of barriers which limit an individual's ability to flourish as an autonomous and authentic person. In passing, it is not to be confused with 'critical thinking' which is about raising the quality of thinking; 'critical theory' critiques things like capitalism, patriarchy, the mass media, and asks of an institution or system: why is it like this, who benefits, and might it be exploitative?

Our next meeting is on 24 June 2025, and the topic is William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

POETRY TOO

Ruth Dutton & Rosemary Harvey

This month's theme of **colour** sounded promising but turned out to be surprisingly difficult. There was a very enjoyable contribution from a member's seven year old granddaughter, Claudia, who is very interested in poetry and the poems we read in our group. We heard "A Slash of Blue" by Emily Dickinson and "What is Pink?" by Christina Rossetti.

"The Liquorice Fields of Pontefract" led us into reminiscences about various liquorice confections we ate as children such as Catherine wheels and pipes.

A must for this theme, Jenny Joseph's "When I am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple" outlines the pleasure of doing outrageous things and not caring. Several of us liked the idea of dragging a walking stick along a fence, of picking flowers from private gardens and sitting on the pavement! Two offerings from Pam Aures, "Ayres Rock" and "I Fell for a Black and White Minstrel" were both received with gales of laughter.

"For Heidi with Blue Hair by Fleur Adcock has humour and sadness in equal measure. A girl who dyes her hair in the school holidays "not in school colours" is sent home. A victory of a kind at the end when her black friend dyes her hair in school colours which now has to be acceptable! We closed with "Titch Miller" by Wendy Cope, about school friendships which can suddenly end.

The session was a little different from usual. Betty Addison, a former very long-standing member, a published poet herself, was invited to join us in celebration of her 99th birthday (1st June). There were cads, cakes and flowers as well as the compulsory rendition of "Happy Birthday to You" and the blowing out of candles! Safe to say, she really enjoyed herself. **Our next Poetry Too will be on Friday 26 June and the theme will be "Friends"**. Same time, same place,



READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

Narrow Door by Joanne Harris was our book for the month. The story is set around the pupils and staff of two rival schools and an attempt to discover what happened when a boy disappeared many years ago. Will we find out whodunnit? Are we being told the truth by either of the two story tellers? Read it to find out!

Whilst most of the group enjoyed the book, one definitely didn't and another two had some reservations. **Next month's choice is *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi.**



WALKING GROUPS

Bronwen Bunting, Jane & Chris Baker

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

Encouraged by a beautiful sunny day and the promise of a flat walk with no stiles, there was a bumper turnout of 25 for the May amble which took us along the riverbank and around the many delightful footpaths in **Welford**, plus a short extension suggested by one of the group into Weston where we saw some talented thatching trademarks including a pair of boxing hares and a fox. An additional bonus was the delightful little honesty farm shop at Weston Farm where some of us took the advantage of purchasing some very fresh veg. Lunch followed at the Four Alls which unfortunately didn't match up to the standard of the walk as staffing problems caused some interminable delays but overall, a very enjoyable morning.



FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

Our May ramble was a circular walk from **Claverdon**. After a worrying journey to the start, on which we passed many 'Road Closed' signs, we finally reached the Red Lion which was fortunately located just at the spot where the road was blocked!

We headed off past Claverdon Church and out into the countryside where there were wonderful westerly views towards Preston Bagot and Henley. After negotiating some rather overgrown woodland we arrived in the village of Langley. We climbed a steep incline to the next village of Wolverton, again with lovely views of the surrounding area.

We stopped briefly to look around the small village church. Our return route took us through a farmyard and across open fields with Claverdon always in view on the skyline. The only stiles on the route were on either side of the railway line.

We had first done this walk in February 2024 after a period of exceptionally wet weather so we decided to repeat it in a warmer, drier month. Eleven of us walked and six of us enjoyed a pub meal afterwards. The walk was just under six miles. **Our next walk is on Friday June 20th.**



SCRABBLE GROUP

Linda Salsbury

If you would like to come and have fun and meet new friends at our Scrabble Group, it 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

YOGA

Karyl Rees

With 2 Bank Holidays falling on Mondays in May, the yoga group only met twice this month but, weather permitting, Alex is running outdoor courses in the relaxing surroundings of the amphitheatre at Great Alne Park throughout the summer for anyone who would like to attend.



ALCESTER u3a INTEREST GROUPS: Contact Group Coordinator for further information

Group	Meeting	Time	Venue	Organiser
Art Appreciation	First Thursday	10.30 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Val Trim
Bowls	Fortnightly from 3 rd June	10.00 am - 12	Bidford Bowls Club	David Sanders
Bridge Improvers	Weekly on Tuesday (except 1 st Tuesday)	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Paul Brenda
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
Card Making	2 nd Friday Sep-May	10.00 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
Crafts	3 rd Wednesday Sept to March	10.00-12.00	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
German Conversation	2 nd Monday	2 – 4.00 pm	The Railway Inn, Station Rd Studley B80 7JS	Graham Stout
French	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Shirley Stout
Garden Lovers	2 nd Thursday April – Oct	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Allely
History	3 rd Thursday	10.30am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Matheson
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	The 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	Lounge at the Greig Hall	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	Linda Bradley
Philosophy	4 th Tuesday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Peter Tugwell
Poetry Too	Last Friday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Ruth Dutton
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