

Monthly meetings are at 2.30 pm on the



held at the Greig Hall, Alcester 1st Tuesday of the month



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Redditch u3a have been expanding their membership and their special interest groups. I recently met with their Chair and have accepted her offer for members of Alcester u3a to attend one of their groups without becoming a member of Redditch u3a. Currently they have 26 groups some of which are complementary to our own. Please take a look at the Redditch u3a website at redditch.u3asite.uk

DISCOVERING DEVON & CORNWALL

.....all agog and off we go on our comfortable coach to the first stop on our holiday, Knightshayes Court (NT), enjoying this lavish house showing works by William Burgess. Upon arrival at the Mercure Hotel, on the seafront at Paignton we were allocated comfortable rooms and enjoyed good food.

Day two to the Eden Project in Cornwall- a beautiful global garden created from a clay pit. On day 3, we visited The Royal Britannia Naval College, where we learned fascinating facts whilst enjoying a guided tour. Then on a river cruise to Totnes, seeing cormorants, herons, an osprey and even seals on the way!



Plymouth was day 4's destination, where a superb guide showed us the city and relayed fascinating facts about Plymouth, both whilst on the coach and during a short walking tour. Day 5 saw us travelling homeward, visiting our smallest city of Wells and enjoying a tour of the medieval Bishops Palace and gardens.

We have all enjoyed the trip throughout! The excellent company of our fellow members, lots of laughs and interesting conversations! But our heartfelt thanks go to John and Lyn who, once again, made this a delightful holiday – plenty of giggles, sweets, and games to play a sheer joy!

PS: not forgetting our lovely driver, Russell, who wore the best posh shoes I've ever seen!!

Pat Frankland.



SYMPHONY HALL TRIP 3 DECEMBER 2025

Karen Dowman

Programme for 2025		
7 October	Kay Starkey	The Work of the Air Ambulance (cash collection)
4 November	Graham Short	Life of a Micro Artist
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	Sue Robertson
Web: Manager - Lindsay Evans	http://alcester.u3asite.uk	Annual Sub: £20.00
		Only members can join groups



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

The trip planned for November is fully booked and there are just 10 seats left for the February show. There is a reserve list for each of them.

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

The coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am

Fully booked. The Booking & Reserve lists will be at the October meeting.

SATURDAY 28 February 2026 "Inspector Morse: House of Ghosts" at Malvern Theatre
£40 per ticket (Ref T17)

The coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am; **Best stalls seats in rows D, E, F & G**

There are just 10 seats left. The Booking & Reserve lists will be at the October meeting.

Payment for this one is required by Tuesday 2 December

New Show Saturday 17 January 2027 Sherlock Holmes "The Hunt for Moriarty" at Malvern Theatre £34 (Ref T18)

The coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am **Best stalls seats in rows D, E & F**

Payment by Bank transfer to:- "The Alcester U3A" Sort Code 08 92 99 A/C No. 67268429 Ref XXX/T18

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

Payment for this one is required by Tuesday 4 November

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

* * * INTEREST GROUP NEWS * * *

ART APPRECIATION

Val Trim

I'M TRYING TO EXPLORE MY DARK SIDE.
BUT I'M BEGINNING TO WORRY THAT
I MAY NOT HAVE ONE



Weird Art was the topic this month and all those attending were variously shocked, surprised, delighted and confused by some of the offerings on show at the meeting held on Sept 4th. From Bosch's enigmatic depictions of Hell to Louis Wain's mad cats (produced with increasing elaboration as he sank into madness) to Damien Hurst's Shark, the works on show made attendees wonder at the range and depth of the human imagination. Marcel Duchamp's dismissal of traditional 'correct' approaches to Art and his insistence that Art is constructed in the mind rather than in the studio set artists free to produce works that know no boundaries. Contemporary Art is concerned with ideas rather than taste and often challenges the viewer to reconsider his/her

relationship with it and their expectations of it!

Next month turns to a very different aspect of Art: **The Arts and Craft Movement and the Bauhaus**. Two seemingly different approaches to the business of designing practical objects. But what ideas did they share and how do they impact us today?

We meet on Oct 2 at 10.30am in the RC Meeting room on Priory Road. £2 for room and refreshments



CRAFT GROUP

Lynda Lamb

Our first meeting of the Craft Group was a relaxed meeting with everyone bringing along their own ongoing projects to work on whilst discussing our programme for the coming term. We will be trying our hand at knitting & crocheting projects along with Christmas decorations for the rapidly approaching festive season. A special thank you to Kay Parish for bringing along her exquisite crocheting work to show what can be achieved with practice & for introducing those of us complete beginners to the creative world of crochet.

Oct will find us knitting/ crocheting pumpkins to decorate our homes!



CARD MAKING

Lynda Lamb

The Card Making Group returned refreshed from our Summer Break & we had a choice of two Card designs to make. A relaxing couple of hours were spent designing our creations, lost in colouring sunflowers to remind us of the summer sunshine which seems to have deserted us for the moment! Our finished cards in colours of yellow & gold were beautiful.

Next month its a free for all with a choice of 4 designs! Should be great fun!



GARDEN LOVERS GROUP

Janet Allely

Our September visit started with a sharp downpour which made garden lovers dash indoors to find a wonderful tea spread out before them at The Manor House. Our kind hosts kept us supplied with sandwiches, scones, sausage rolls and tea and cakes, while we exchanged memories of past events at the house, including royal visits. When the weather improved, we went out to see the impressive views to the east and admire the well preserved brick and stone rear of this beautiful house. **Garden Lovers are keen to meet in October so I think we may visit a garden centre such as Stratford Garden Centre at Clifford Chambers, The Valley at Evesham or Webbs of Wychbold on 9th October.**

HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

17 members enjoyed Karyl Rees's account of **Alcester's National Schools**, some even bought her book on the subject! Karyl explained that there were originally 2 schools - boys and girls with an infant's school opening later.

These were formed under the 1870 Education Act, but took over from private schools already in existence, a church school funded by grants and private subscription, dames' schools and a ladies' boarding school.

National schools had to teach an approved list of lessons e.g. under the heading of Animals children learnt about cows, sheep, elephants and worms. This continued well into the 20th century.

The school year ran from November to October. There were no set holidays, each school independently gave days off, in Alcester this would include time for harvesting, fruit-picking, bad weather or local events such as the Mop Fair. The long summer holiday (4 weeks) was introduced in 1940.

The school roll varied, at one time over 100 infants were taught in 1 room. As schools opened in neighbouring villages the number at Alcester's schools would fall. They were taught by a mixture of pupil-teachers, assistant teachers, and qualified teachers. Even today teachers without a specific responsibility such as department head, are classed as assistant teachers.

Karyl gave examples of bad behaviour by staff and parents. Staff were dismissed for incompetence, embezzlement and inappropriate behaviour. Parents sometimes objected vociferously to the punishment of their children; one case ended up in the Magistrates' Court.

In 1903 control of the schools transferred to the Local Education Authority and the schools became the Alcester Infants, Primary and Secondary Schools under the 1944 Education Act.

On 16th October John Douglas will be talking about the history of the Bedford Purlieus, an area of land with a story stretching back to Roman times.

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth.

This month we were treated to an excellent & knowledgeable presentation from Stuart Freed of Worcester. He described how tunes from the Great American Songbook were arranged for superior singers including Anita O'Day, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra & others. Arrangements were tailored to the voices of each individual vocalist. We heard some well-known numbers – "Like Someone in Love" by Nancy Wilson, "You Make Me Feel So Young" by the Four Freshmen. Also, obscure tunes that didn't catch on like "Brother Bill" by Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong and a couple of novelties - "Don't Bring Lulu" by the Andrews Sisters and "Turkey in the Straw" by the HiLo's. A very enjoyable afternoon. Stuart has kindly agreed to give us another talk next year. We look forward to that. Thanks Stuart.

Val Trim will be our presenter at our next meeting (2.00pm at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre on 8th October. Her subject is "Crooners".

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

For our September meeting we all brought a c.d. with our favourite track to play, it was a very lovely eclectic selection ranging from three arias from Puccini's opera "La Boheme to "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" by Henry Hall's Orchestra. **The next meeting is at 2.00 pm on 29th October when John Ruffell will present his programme at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre.**

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

September's meeting saw us getting some important and fundamental concepts and theories under our ethical and political philosophical belts, aided by our internet jaunts. We carried on from where we left off in our August session, looking at **John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, and an introduction to the philosophy of Wittgenstein**. Mill's three important works – *On Liberty*, *The Subjection of Women*, and *Utilitarianism* – gave us much to think about, including freedom of speech, the tyranny of the majority, and his 'harm principle'. Our introduction to Wittgenstein looked at his life and what might have influenced his thinking, especially as philosophical writers refer to 'early' and then 'later' Wittgenstein. We were introduced to the shift from the traditional (metaphysical/epistemological) approach to philosophical problems, towards the significance of language — not just how it influences our knowledge and learning, but how meaning is determined by its use within different 'language games'. In other words, the 'linguistic turn' away from abstract speculation towards an understanding of and engagement with everyday language in dealing with philosophical problems. We felt that we needed to interrogate this initially elusive expression of philosophy further, to really get inside it and see how this justifies his being regarded as one of the greatest and most influential philosophers of the twentieth century. So, **for our next session we are continuing to study Wittgenstein**. [Thanks to ChatGPT for this polished version (minimal edits) of my draft]. **Our next meeting is on 28 October 2025**.

POETRY TOO

Ruth Dutton & Rosemary Harvey

Due to ill health and holidays, the September meeting was cancelled. **The next meeting will be on 31 October when the theme is "Flight"**.

READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

August's book was **"The Tidal Zone" by Sarah Moss**, a novel describing the trauma and aftermath within a young family, when the 15-year-old daughter collapses on the school playing field, stops breathing and suffers cardiac arrest. The narrative is in the voice of her father, Adam, a stay-at-home dad, who graphically describes the waiting, agonising and not knowing the cause or likelihood of recurrence, alongside his highly stressed and overworked GP wife, and their younger daughter, aged 7. Adam is in the process of writing a history guide to the bombing and rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral.

Members voiced a general opinion that this stay-at-home dad really overstated the work/life juggle of that role, and the 'politics' of packed lunches, school runs and loading washing machines and dishwashers. Most managed to finish reading this book, with one member actually enjoying it, but the general consensus was that they would not be searching for further works by this author. **Our September book is Swimming Lessons by Claire Fuller.**)



WALKING GROUPS

Bronwen Bunting, Jane & Chris Baker

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

For the September amble, Angela Bradley led a group on a local walk around Cold Comfort Wood and the surrounding fields of the Ragley Estate. The amble was around 3 miles, depending on which technical device was giving its opinion as to the distance covered and the 11-strong group managed to get only a little damp despite the rather iffy weather forecast.



FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

David G kindly led the walk on the 19th September and wrote this report:

It was a walk of 5.62 miles. I'm calling it a 'three church walk'. We started from the Kings Head pub in Aston Cantlow, walking through the churchyard and across the fields to Aston Grove and Withycombe Wood. From there we turned right and headed across fields to the village of Walcote. At Haselor Church we took a coffee break and admired the views of the surrounding countryside. Our route then crossed the River Alne to reach Great Alne Mill. A second snack break was taken at Great Alne Church.

Then it was homeward bound, firstly walking along a pathway adjacent to Great Alne Park. After negotiating a gully near a disused railway bridge and crossing a couple of fields we walked through a community of small static caravans. We soon found ourselves back in Aston Cantlow churchyard and ready to be greeted by the friendly staff at the Kings Head pub. Seven people completed the walk. **Our next walk will be on 17th October**.

More details to follow. Jane & Chris Baker 07729104374 or jane.pentlands@gmail.com



SCRABBLE GROUP

The next get together will be on the first Friday in October. 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 at The Catholic Church Meeting Room in Alcester**. Contact Group Leader, Linda Salsbury for further details 07872 625006 email: lindasalsbury@hotmail.co.uk

Linda Salsbury

YOGA

Weekly Yoga classes take place on Mondays and are held in the Catholic Parish Hall from 10.00 – 11.00 am.

Karyl Rees



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	Catholic Church Meeting Room	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 Visits	As notified			Joe White
Trips	As notified			Linda Randell
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday	10-11.00 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees