

NOVEMBER

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



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

As we grow our membership, we ideally want to see our number of special interest group grow in parallel. The subjects for these groups may centre on specialist knowledge or in some cases may be more socially based. It has been pointed out that some u3a groups have coffee mornings. A request is made for any members who may be interested in organising such events- it is envisaged that the responsibilities for the relevant group leader would not be overly onerous.

On a related subject, could I remind members that the position of Groups Coordinator remains open. Filling this position would mean that we are better able to support Group leaders.

DECEMBER'S MEETING

For our 2nd December, we will be opening the doors early, as the Elastic Band will be playing members into the meeting to get everyone into the Christmas spirit. In addition, The Coughton Choir have asked that everyone is seated by 2.25 pm so that they can start promptly!

MOVING TO MUSIC – FOLK DANCE

This group is now part of Alcester u3a activities under the leadership of Malcolm Hall

When: 4th Wednesday of the month 2.00 – 4.00 pm **Where:** Catholic Church Hall, Alcester

Cost: £3 per session including interval refreshments

A message from Group Leader, Malcom Hall: "Most people have been to a Barn Dance & enjoyed it. This is much the same but drawing on different dances from around the world. The main aim is to have fun (perfection of performance is not sought, just enjoyment!) If you would like to give it a try, you will be made most welcome"

Format: Dances are walked through one or two times & then danced to a call & to live music from local talented musicians. Each session will introduce new dances & also repeat some past favourites. No previous knowledge is required, and nothing needed except flat shoes and casual clothing.

For further details: contact Malcolm Hall on 07747 771210 or email: spectacle@blueyonder.co.uk



Programme for 2025

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
		i Only members can join groups

RSC COSTUME TOUR

Val Hamblin

40 Members on two separate days visited the RSC to go on their costume tour.

This included seeing the workshops where the costumes are made by skilled employees and going down to the "Other Place" to see the hundreds of costumes all set out in periods of time ie medieval, Elizabethan and many more

At the Other Place we also saw hundreds of helmets, swords, belts and many more items used in the various productions. It is the largest collection of costumes and accessories in the UK.

Some dresses, tunics were tried on by some of our group, some were extremely heavy and we couldn't imagine wearing them for several hours

It was an interesting experience which we all enjoyed, given by guides who were very knowledgeable.

DAY TRIP TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

To gauge interest in visiting this iconic site, I will be putting out an Interest Sheet at the November meeting

DETAILS:

Date: 6th May 2026

Departure: 9.30 a.m. (by coach) Return: 3.30 p.m.

Approx. cost (depending on numbers): **£25.00**

Visit to include refreshments on arrival and a trip on the land train to see the key features of this huge site. The rest of the day will be free for you to spend as you wish, including whether you take a picnic lunch or purchase a lunch at their restaurant. Provided there is sufficient interest, bookings & deposits will be taken in the new year.



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

First off, a plea – **please pay when you book and only pay if you have booked**. We put a lot of work into these trips and it is made harder having to chase up payments of return monies.

The trips planned for November, January & February are all fully booked and there is a reserve list for each of them.

We are introducing a new trip in March – see the details below.

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 November meeting.

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** Fully Booked

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 November meeting.

Pay by Tuesday 4 November

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** Fully Booked

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

Payment for this one is required by Tuesday 2 December

NEW SHOW: SATURDAY 21 March 2026 "The Spy Who Came in from the Cold" at Malvern Theatre

£43 per ticket (Ref T19)

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/T19
Or pay the Treasurer with Cash or a cheque.

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

Pay by Tuesday 6 January 2026

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

NEED HELP WITH IT?

Did you know that free advice is available at Alcester Library every Thursday 10.00 – 12.00 noon? You can book a help session in advance by popping into the library or just turn up!!

* * * INTEREST GROUP NEWS * * *



CRAFT GROUP

Lynda Lamb

Our October Craft Group this month spent a relaxing morning **knitting pumpkins!** Some of us knitted while some of us concentrated on the " sewing up & assembly ". What a splendid job they did too! Diane was very brave & knitted her pumpkin from garden twine- it looked great- a really rustic version worthy of any pumpkin patch 😊! **Next month we will be making Christmas crackers, decorations & gift tags.**

CARD MAKING

Lynda Lamb

Our card making this month was a bit of a free for all with our ladies making different cards if their choice. The results were, as ever, were stunning- I'm so proud of the ladies in this relatively new group. They produce some fabulous cards which I'm sure the recipients are delighted to receive. Here's just a sample of the cards made. **Next month we make a start on our Christmas cards!**



CHURCH VISITS

Chris Baker

We began with the G1 listed **St Marys at Haseley**. The village priest was recorded in the Domesday Book, and this charming little church still has evidence of its Norman origins. The 12th, 13th and 15th century interior is topped with an unusual "waggon" style roof but has no lighting other than candles. Vestiges of an early Elizabethan wall painting depicting the Apostles Creed have been uncovered on the nave south wall, while repairs on the north wall have revealed a sealed-up Norman entrance with a rare wooden lintel. Outside, an unusual south chancel extension is finished with a cottage-like mullioned window and cross gable. Inside the chancel, this houses the tomb of Clement, one of the ubiquitous Throckmorton family who with his wife Katherine presented the world with 13 more Throckmortons - 6 sons and 7 daughters!

We moved only a very short distance to **Holy Trinity, Hatton** (G11* listed). Very different to its sister at Haseley, only the 15th century tower remains of the original building. The nave and chancel were completely rebuilt in 1888 by the owner of Haseley Manor, whose Architect was also responsible for Glasgow Town Hall and the War Office in London. Despite this(!), the interior is a pleasant surprise; being nicely balanced and restrained, with some intelligent 20/21st century improvements. Some of us tramped amongst the brambles of the churchyard extremities looking for a headstone credited to the celebrated sculptor and letter designer Eric Gill, but when found this was a severe disappointment compared to his "Prospero and Ariel" at Broadcasting House in London!

HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

October's subject was the Bedford Purlieus, an area of 520 acres with a very long and interesting history, marvellously brought to life by John Douglas's illustrated talk. John explained that "purlieus" is a 16th century word meaning "a piece of land beside the forest" and "Bedford" refers to its sometime owners, the Earls (later Dukes) of Bedford.

There was a Neolithic settlement in about 3000 BCE as evidenced by hand tools. By 1000BCE iron ore had been discovered and the smelting of the ore to make iron had begun, an activity that was to continue for 3000 years. The coincidence of iron ore with trees to make charcoal wasn't lost on the Romans, who developed a town to exploit the industry and the iron products were traded along Ermine Street. After the Romans left Britain the industry may have faltered but by 750 the Angle Saxons were smelting iron here. The Normans, however made the land part of the enormous Rockingham Forest, a royal hunting ground covering 200 square miles. In 1526 the property passed to the Earls of Bedford and iron making continued, but Queen Elizabeth banned the use of trees for iron production temporarily as the timber was required for shipbuilding to counter the threat of a Spanish invasion. In 1639 a cash strapped Charles 1 sold the right to "disforestation" to the Earl of Bedford for £200 and the iron industry prospered. However, in 1904 the

area was sold to a timber merchant who felled the trees. The Forestry Commission purchased it in 1933 and iron production recommenced in 1939. During the war an American Air Force base was set up next to the Bedford Purlieus, the most northerly fighter airfields in Britain. It was here that Glen Miller played his last concert in a military base.

Iron ore quarrying continued until 1970, supplying ore to customers such as Scunthorpe steelworks and Fords at Dagenham. In 2000 the Bedford Purlieus became a National Nature Reserve, home to rare herbaceous plants such as the Silver Wood Fritillary and 190 nest boxes for the Hazel Dormouse, its first quite period in 5000 years.

On 20th November Paul Brenda will talk about "Wellington's Smallest Victory" and there will be an extra meeting on 18th December on Traditional Food" with samples!

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth.

For our October meeting, Val Trim put together a video of a varied and enjoyable selection of songs by a range of jazz vocalists. Personal highlights were Anita O'Day singing "Fly me to the Moon" backed by a Swedish jazz trio, Ella Fitzgerald with Oscar Peterson performing "Baby won't you please come Home", and Julie London's classic "Cry me a River". Seeing all these artistes on video was so much better than simply listening to their recordings. Thanks Val for a great afternoon enjoyed by all.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday November 11th at 2.00pm in Malt Mill Lane Community Centre. Dave King is giving us a presentation entitled "My Life With Jazz". Hope to see you all there.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

We welcomed a new member and then enjoyed John Ruffell's delightful programme of pieces all recorded in the 1920s/30s including Enrico Caruso singing 'Vesti La Giubba', 'Nymphs & Shepherds' sung by the Manchester Children's Choir, Sir Edward Elgar's 'Salut D'Amour, pianist Myra Hess and 'Ol' Man River' sung by Paul Robeson. **Our next meeting is on 26th November at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm when John will present, on screen, the film 'Fantasia'.**

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

Our topic for October was simply '**Wittgenstein**'; however, it was only the title that was 'simple'. Wittgenstein (born 1889) was the author of two major works on philosophy: the *Tractatus Logical-Philosophicus*, published in 1921, and *Philosophical Investigations*, published posthumously in 1953. We were introduced to the philosophical thrust of the *Tractatus* under 4 headings: 'the metaphysics of objects: a world of facts, not things', 'the picture theory of language', 'meaning and meaninglessness', and lastly 'the purpose of philosophy'. We were led to a discussion on 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'. The main thrust of *Philosophical Investigations* centres on the claim that the problems of philosophy arise from misunderstandings about language. Instead of looking for the 'essence or perfect logical form of meaning' (thanks ChatGPT!), Wittgenstein urges us to look at how words are used in ordinary life, 'saving the phenomena' by returning to everyday linguistic practices. **For next month's session we are looking at Antigone by Sophocles** – perhaps not the light relief we might have earned from our engagement with Wittgenstein. [And thanks again to ChatGPT for help polishing my draft]. **Our next meeting is on 25 November 2025.**

POETRY TOO

Ruth Dutton, Rosie Harvey

The theme of **flying** has stalled twice and finally got off the ground (sorry!) today, 31st October, the significance of which did not escape the attention of our members, allowing various bats and witches to make a appearance alongside birds and planes.

DH Lawrence's 'The Bats' depicts the transition from dusk to darkness in Florence. At first swallows fill the air only to be imperceptibly replaced by bats as darkness falls.

There were several poems on the theme of 'No Alarm on the Flight Deck' (Pam Ayres), where the pilot is fast asleep, has changed his mind, or just not turned up. One of our group related an incident when a pilot, on full uniform, descended the plane steps with a guide dog!

There were hags and witches, of 'flying' downhill on a bicycle and of a huge tractor tyre propelled down a hill disappearing never to be seen again, perhaps hurtling along somewhere in the universe.

It was an entertaining afternoon and although few in number we certainly did justice to the theme.

The last session of 2025 is on Friday 28th November when the theme will be 'Sport and pastimes'.

READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

This month's book was **Swimming Lessons by Claire Fuller** - the story of a woman's mysterious disappearance and the complex history of her relationship with her 20 years older husband and their two daughters. This history is related via a series of letters written to husband Gil by wife Ingrid. She does not actually send these letters but hides them within the pages of the many different books in his library. The full text of these letters is listed within the novel, for the reader to share. The last letter is written on the day of her disappearance, but does not hold the solution to the mystery.....

Once again, in the Group, there was a mixture of reviews by members - of the eight members present, two really enjoyed the book, two really disliked it, two were ambivalent and two, for valid reasons, we're unable to read it. A recipe for lively discussion!

Next month's choice is Swing Time by Zadie Smith.



WALKING GROUPS

Bronwen Bunting, Jane & Chris Baker

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

You never know what you might find in Evesham. This month, the amblers repeated the Evesham walk which was first done in January when the route had to be altered because of heavy rain and flooding along the river bank. This time we had good weather and enjoyed a good mix of riverside, footpaths and streets that we didn't know existed. It was in a garden on one of these streets that we came across this amazing display of skeletons participating in their very own Olympics! The collection bucket was raising money for the Midlands Air Ambulance which was quite pertinent following the u3a talk at the October meeting. They certainly deserve to raise a good deal from this very entertaining display. Nine of the 14 amblers went on to Chadbury Farm Shop & Café for lunch.



FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

The weather for our October walk was dry and pleasant. We started in Studley and headed north east from the village, crossing the River Arrow. Our route took us round the edge of the grounds of Studley Castle and then continued in a south easterly direction. A pond containing a flock of extremely noisy ducks was an interesting diversion. We carried on towards Morton Bagot before returning through part of the Heart of England Forest to Studley Parish Church. We recrossed the river and then the pace increased as the 'Little Lark' came into view! The ramble was 5-6 miles. Fourteen people walked and a slightly different group of fourteen enjoyed a sociable lunch. **Our next walk is programmed to be on 21st November.** Details will follow shortly. Jane & Chris Baker 07729104374 or jane.pentlands@gmail.com



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 at The Catholic Church Meeting Room in Alcester.** Contact Group Leader, Linda Salsbury for further details 07872 625006 email: lindasalsbury@hotmail.co.uk

YOGA

Karyl Rees

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



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