

Monthly meetings are at 2.30 pm on the



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



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

For those who have not seen the email, the good news is that the annual membership for 2026 will be reduced to £16. We would ask however that payment is not made until January as the payment will not be registered correctly. We will be informing you how to pay in the New Year.

I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us next Tuesday for our monthly meeting where there will be festive entertainment before and during the meeting. Doors open at 1.45pm.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

DOORS OPEN EARLY ON 2ND DECEMBER!

As The Elastic Band, will be playing from 2.00 until 2.20 p.m. to welcome members to the December meeting and members are asked to be seated by 2.25, so that the Coughton Community Choir can commence their performance at 2.30 p.m., the doors will be open from 1.45 p.m.



2026 RENEWAL INVITATIONS

Lyn Pickering

As advised by our Chairman recently, the subscription for 2026 has been reduced to £16 p.a. (thanks to the high number of new members) but **please do not pay your subscription until January 2026, as our financial year does not end until 31st December!** (Although members without email will receive their Renewal Invitation at the meeting to save postage, I will not be *emailing* the majority of members with Renewal Invitations, which will include payment options, until 1st January!)



MIDLANDS AIR AMBULANCE

The collection after the talk at the October meeting raised £280 83. The Charity has been in touch to express grateful thanks for the generous donation

Programme for 2025

2 December	Coughton Community Choir	Seasonal Musical Entertainment
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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

UKELELE OPPORTUNITY

Tony Renfrey, an Alcester u3a member from the Great Alne Park Retirement Village, is running another ukulele beginners course in 2026. This is Tony's 4th beginners course since moving into the area and a number of our members have already learned to play the ukulele with him.

The 2026 course will start on Thursday, 12th February and will run for 12 weeks. The sessions will be held each Thursday in the Great Alne Park clubhouse conservatory from 10am to 12 noon. Ukuleles will be provided, as will all course documentation. This course is also being offered to residents in Great Alne Park, so may be well subscribed.

If you are interested in learning to play the ukulele please contact Tony on tony.renfrey@outlook.com or on 07768 970325. Tony is away on holiday from 13 Jan to 1 Feb but will have access to emails.



CINEMA EVENINGS AT GREIG HALL



Your ideas of film titles for the Cinema Evenings, which will be starting in the New Year at Greig Hall, are invited. Please send suggestions to: office@greighall.org.uk, or, if not on email, note down your ideas and give to John or Lyn Pickering, who will pass them on!

2026 U3A HOLIDAY

Several of you have asked whether we'll be running another coach holiday in 2026 and I can confirm that I'm trying to organise a 5 day break early September as usual. Our contact at Harry Shaw travel is currently obtaining quotes from hotels in Sussex, so I hope to have more details at the January meeting.

John Pickering



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

Please pay when you book and only pay if you have booked. Also please turn up at the coach; it is upsetting for everyone if you forget the date and costly for you.

The trips planned for January & February are all fully booked and there is a reserve list for each of them. There is just one place left for the trip in March We are introducing a new trip in March and we have reserved seats for a new play at Malvern in April– see the details below.

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

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
Payment by bank transfer to "The Alcester u3a" Sort Code 08-92-99 A/C No. 67268429 Ref XXX/T17
Or pay the treasurer with cash or a cheque. **Payment for this one is required by Tuesday 2 December**

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. **Pay by Tuesday 6 January 2026**

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

NEW SHOW: SATURDAY 18 April 2026 **"The Bee Keeper of Aleppo"** at Malvern Theatre
£38 per ticket (Ref T20)

The coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am; **Best stalls seats in rows D, E, F & G**
Payment by Bank transfer to:- "The Alcester U3A" Sort Code 08 92 99 A/C No. 67268429 Ref XXX/T20
Or pay the Treasurer with Cash or a cheque. **Pay by Tuesday 3 February 2026**

The booking and reserves lists for all the above will be at the December meeting.

*** INTEREST GROUP NEWS ***

Art Appreciation

Val Trim

An excellent talk was given by Lindsay Evans at the November Art Appreciation Group! Her topic was **Animals in Art** and Lindsay traced their appearance in history and in pictures throughout the ages. Starting by looking at cave paintings in France and ending in modern times via the Egyptians, the Middle Ages, the Victorian era and the Twentieth Century, Lindsay amply illustrated the universal appeal of the animal world. From 'concerts of birds' to hunting scenes, from cute cats and faithful dogs, magnificent deer and ferocious wild beasts, Lindsay shared them all with her enthralled and attentive audience! Of course, there was a sting in the tail--- the artwork of Congo the Chimp is certainly comparable to some modern artists' work-- and possibly just as valuable! A fabulous talk!



Next month sees Jane Lytton tackling the subject of **Christmas**! And just like a Christmas present the topic will be unwrapped carefully and will surely be filled with lots of 'goodies'! There will be a quiz too (nothing too difficult!) and, we hope, general good humour!

We meet, as usual, at the RC Room on Priory Road at 10.30am on December 4th (£2). Hope to see you there!

CRAFT GROUP

Lynda Lamb



Our November meeting was a very busy & productive one with a full complement of ladies present. We made Christmas Crackers, Christmas Tags & Christmas Tree decorations. At December's class we'll be making a pretty Christmas Wreath adorned with natural fibres, wooden beads, festive sprigs & pinecones.

Myself & the Craft Ladies would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.



CARD MAKING

Lynda Lamb

We battled our way through Storm Claudia for our November class & a few of us made it to the safety of St Joseph's Hall! We made two Christmas cards to get us in the mood for the festive season with another two cards planned for December. On behalf the Card Making Ladies I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.



HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

At our November meeting the group was treated to Paul Brenda's sideways look at "**Wellington's Smallest Victory**". Smallest in 2 senses since it concerned a model of the Battle of Waterloo and Wellington's victory was short lived. Capt. Siborne was asked to create a panorama model of Waterloo. His extremely painstaking and accurate diorama showed the turning point of the battle – the arrival of the Prussian army. This conflicted with the Duke of Wellington's account, which, by omitting mention of Blucher's forces, made Wellington. The sole victorious commander.

Great pressure was put on Capt Siborne to alter his model, including attempting to ruin him financially. Eventually the model was withdrawn, but only for a short time. Wellington's great enemy (and brother in law) lent £3000 to Siborne allowing him to buy up and exhibit the model, first in Ireland and then more widely. It was seen by over 100,000 people.

Paul's account was much more erudite and amusing than it appears here. Natural justice was done, Capt Siborne became solvent and the bully received his just desserts.

On 18th December there will be a special meeting of the group on the subject of celebratory food in history. Members are each asked to bring a knife, fork and spoon as there will be plenty of dishes to sample

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth.

Dave King gave us an entertaining recital describing how his love for jazz had grown and expanded throughout his life. In the 50s he first enjoyed the music of Chris Barber. As the years passed, he came to enjoy more styles of jazz. We heard some great tracks from Charlie Parker, Bill Evans, Barney Kessel, Zoot Sims & Lester Young and others.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday December 10th. **For those who have booked, we are having a Group Lunch at The Bear at 12.00 midday before meeting in Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2.00pm. Laurence Thatcher is giving his appropriately entitled talk "A Christmas Box"**

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

John Ruffell's programme, on screen, was the delightful Walt Disney's "Fantasia" which included Bach's 'Tocatta & Fugue', 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice', Beethoven's 'Pastoral Symphony', 'Night on Bald Mountain' by Moussorgski, and 'The Dance of the Hours' by Ponchielli which showed the amusing ballet dance by ostriches and hippos. **There is no meeting in December, the next meeting is on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm when Jane Lytton will present her programme**

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

Our topic for November was **Antigone by Sophocles**. Although the play was written around 441 B.C., we found its themes, issues, and characters strikingly contemporary. At its heart lies a fundamental question about the relationship between human law and a claimed higher or moral law, and whether the latter can ever justify breaking the former. Legal positivism asserts the authority of enacted law; natural law theory gives primacy to moral such as destiny, hubris, and gender all feature prominently, giving us plenty to discuss.

We even had time to consider whether Creon is treated unfairly by the playwright. It is hoped that this summary whets the appetite to read (or reread) the play. The plot and ending have not been revealed here, and there are two principle. In *Antigone*, this tension becomes a dramatic conflict between individual conscience (Antigone) and the authority of the state (King Creon).

We explored many related issues and also revisited the events leading up to those portrayed in the play, including the complex family history—and the “curse” generated by it—stemming from Oedipus’s unknowingly killing his father and subsequently marrying his mother, Jocasta. Antigone, as their daughter, carries the weight of this legacy. Themes further plays by Sophocles that we will probably tackle in 2026. [Thanks again to Chat GTP for its assistance in preparing this report]

We are not meeting in December. Our next topic will be **Karl Marx and the 1848 Communist Manifesto, and our next meeting will take place on 27 January 2026.**

READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

November’s book choice was **Swing Time by Zadie Smith** - the story of two mixed-race young London girls, who first meet in a children’s dancing class, and become best friends at that time.

It has been described as ‘a story about friendship, race and class, alongside music and stubborn roots’, and how we are shaped by these things.

This book was not enjoyed by the majority of group members, with only two enthusiasts. A more practical problem was that the library paperback copies were very tightly bound, making it very difficult to hold the book open comfortably.

At next month’s meeting members plan to bring their own recommendations for ‘a good read’ from their own bookshelves.

THEATRE VISITS

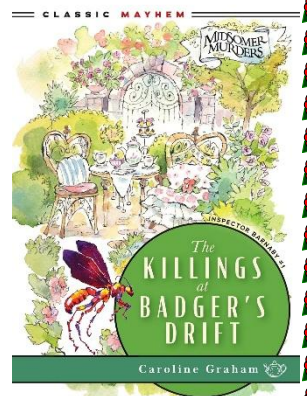
Joe White

“Midsomer Murders – The Killings at Badger’s Drift “provided a riveting afternoon’s entertainment for the November theatre trip to Malvern.

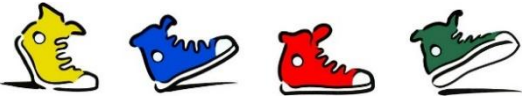
After becoming accustomed to John Nettles and later Neil Dudgeon on ITV, we were treated to seeing Daniel Casey settled into the role of DCI Tom Barnaby in a highly entertaining show despite several gory murders.

Yes, residents of Midsomer are still getting bumped off at an alarming rate! And slightly batty elderly ladies are still spying on their neighbours and gossiping.

Initially a well-loved spinster is found dead in the village where her friend Lucy refuses to accept it was an accident. DCI Barnaby and Sgt. Troy are called to investigate leading to twists and turns, further murders, and finally revealing the unexpected culprits together with long-buried secrets and deadly rivalries. I won’t reveal whodunnit but recommend you make an opportunity to be kept on the edge of your seat by seeing this entertaining and gripping play for yourself.



Once again, a big thankyou to Joe for organising the trip and to our driver, Dave who, as always, ensured us a safe journey both ways, making sure no one ended up on the wrong Royal Motorways coach parked immediately behind.



WALKING GROUPS

Bronwen Bunting, Jane & Chris Baker

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

Who wants to walk when the forecast is 100% rain from 7.00 am – 11.00 pm? Certainly not the Ambling Group, who skipped the planned walk around Bidford Golf Course and went straight to the main event – a very enjoyable and sociable lunch at The Fish at Wixford where we had good food and all thoroughly approved of the recent makeover under new ownership. The bonus is that we have the Bidford walk reced and in hand for another day.



FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

In November we did a **circular walk around Stratford upon Avon**. We started at the Park and Ride and hoped to follow the canal towpath into town. Unfortunately the towpath is awaiting maintenance so we were forced to do the first stretch along Timothy Bridge Road before joining the canal. It was a bright, sunny day. We continued with care along the path until we reached the canal basin. After crossing the River Avon we followed the old Tramway before wending our way back to the river. There were lovely views of Holy Trinity Church and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and we enjoyed watching the

wildlife on the river. After a brief stop we returned to the start via the streets and the towpath. En route we were stopped by members of the Canals and Rivers Trust who explained their vital work to us. It reminded us how many times we walk along stretches of canal and the vast cost of maintaining the canal network.

Ten people walked and eight of us enjoyed lunch at Cobbs of Stratford near Snitterfield.

On December 12th we are joining the amblers for a short walk and Christmas lunch. Our walk in January will be on the 16th. Details to follow in the New Year. 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