



Newsletter

Monthly meetings are held at the
at 2.30 pm on the 1st

Greig Hall, Alcester
Tuesday of the month



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Important-please read

It is disappointing that I have had no responses at all following my recent email regarding the vacancy for a secretary. Similarly, there have been no responses to repeated calls for a Groups Co-ordinator. Despite many volunteers continuing to offer their services on an ongoing basis, it would seem that a position on our committee is largely viewed as too onerous. With respect to the Secretary role the commitment consists of attendance at the monthly committee meetings (on the morning of the second Thursday of the month) and perhaps 2-3 hours of work per month outside this.

The committee would welcome feedback from members as to the reasons why it is proving so difficult to recruit committee members. We may be able to address some concerns and possible misconceptions.

If replacement committee members are not found, inevitably this means that the workload for existing members increases. While this is sustainable in the short term, it is not sustainable in the longer term. Other u3a groups have encountered the same issue and this has led to their demise.

I believe we have something valuable here at Alcester- please do not let it go the same way.

Programme of Meetings for 2026 (subject to change)

3 February	John Kinroy	"Life and Times of a Film Extra"
3 March		AGM (plus Interest Group Displays)
7 April	Sue LeResche	"The Life of an Air Hostess"
5 May	Matthew Morris (Archaeologist)	"Finding Richard III in a Leicester Car Park"
2 June	Carole Zambonini	"All About Alcester Dementia Day Care"
7 July	Reuben Lynch	"The Life of a Toastmaster"
4 August	Fiona Conn (Shelter)	"Why People Become Homeless"
1 September	Andrew Lound	"The Lunar Society – Lunatic Astronomy"
6 October	Speaker TBA	"The History and Work of the Lord Leycester Hospital"
3 November	Kal Gravatt	"Charlecote – History of the Mill & the Craft of Milling" <i>There will be an opportunity to buy products</i>
1 December		Christmas 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



2026 SUBS

Lyn Pickering

Many thanks to those of you who have paid to renew your membership for 2026. For those yet to pay, please remember that **the deadline for payments is 28th February**, after which date membership is automatically lapsed. This does not, however, mean you cannot come back to us at a later date, as we realise that life does have a tendency to get in the way on occasions.

When you do pay, please always include your Membership Number either by including it in the reference if paying by BACS, or by writing it on the back of cheques! *Also, please don't forget to let me know if there are any changes to your details! Thanks!*

EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2026

All dates subject to possible change. More events to be added during the year.

Monday 27 April 2026: Afternoon Tea Studley Castle

Wednesday 6 May 2026: National Memorial Arboretum

Tuesday 23 June 2026: Bletchley Park

End September/October 2026: King Richard III Visitors Centre Leicester

TRIP TO NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (6TH MAY)

Lyn Pickering

Providing all members who added their names to Interest Sheet confirm they wish to be included in this trip, it will be going ahead, even though it hasn't been as popular as we had hoped. The price will be £26 per person and includes coach travel, tea or coffee/biscuits on arrival and a site tour on the Land Train. The coach will leave from outside Greig Hall at 9.30 a.m. and is expected to return by 5.00 pm.

Please note that PAYMENT WILL BE REQUIRED BY 3rd MARCH MEETING (Ref NMA).

ELASTIC BAND NEWS

If you play an instrument (any level) or enjoy singing, we would love to welcome you to our friendly group! Many of our musicians have only recently learned to play, so we don't seek perfection, but we do seek to have fun and enjoy making music in the company of like-minded people! We meet in the smaller room at Greig Hall on the second and fourth Wednesday morning, so why not come along to our next session and join in?

For more information contact [John Pickering](#).



2026 U3A HOLIDAY – DISCOVERING SUSSEX

John Pickering

I have now received the brochures for the above holiday, which will be available at the February general meeting and I do hope the itinerary we've put together will meet everyone's approval. The cost will be £565.00 per person (*ie £50 cheaper than last year's starting price*) and the single room supplement is £120.00 (*the same as last year*). This cost

includes coach travel, 4 nights in the 4* Avisford Park Hotel, Arundel and all the visits listed in the itinerary, except the NT property on the last day, which is an additional £17.10 for those without NT membership. Please note that the number of places available depends upon two separate factors, i.e. room allocations and coach seating capacity, so places will initially be offered to the first 50 names on the current Interest list and the remainder of members will be held on the reserve list.

(johntpickering@gmail.com Tel. 01789 542589)



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

The trips planned for February, March & April are fully booked and there is a reserve list for each of them. **We need you to pay for the April trip no later than 3rd February.**

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; Fully Booked

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

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**

New Show SATURDAY 1 August 2026 "I'm Sorry Prime Minister" at Malvern Theatre £38 per ticket (Ref T21)
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/T21
Or pay the Treasurer with Cash or a cheque. **Pay by Tuesday 7 April 2026**

The booking and reserve lists for all the above will be at the February meeting.

When you pay for a Theatre Trip by bacs, please include your membership number and T number

Remember you need to book the trip before making any payment, and it helps us if you pay when you book and not forget to pay by the due date.

*** INTEREST GROUP NEWS ***

ART APPRECIATION

Although there was no January meeting (which would have been on Jan 1st--- too many hangovers!) the Art Appreciation group made up for it by going for a post-Christmas meal at the Arrow Mill. Happily, it seemed like a very good luncheon party and was much enjoyed by all. But, normal service resumes on Feb 5th at 10.30am in the RC meeting room on Priory Road (£2 for teas etc.).

This month's topic is the increasingly controversial artist, **Paul Gauguin**. We're all familiar with his wonderful paintings of the idyllic Tahitian way of life --- luminous girls and luscious flora. But is what we see all that it seems to be? And what of his life and work before his self-imposed exile to the remote Polynesian islands? And how did he influence the artists that came after him? There's an easy way to find out.....!

Val Trim



CRAFT GROUP

Our project this month was to make **coffee mug coasters**. Quilted on the front, the coasters were hand finished & looked really lovely when finished.
Next month will be a "**Bring your own project**" giving us all a chance to finish off some of those Un - Finished Objects which we all seem to have in our Craft Stashes.

Lynda Lamb



CARD MAKING

Unfortunately, our original class had to be cancelled due to the snow & ice, we rearranged another date & made cards with a **Spring theme**. Snowdrops

Lynda Lamb

& hyacinths featured in our designs. Thanks to all the ladies who juggled their diaries to fit this class in & a special well done to the four of us who did back to back classes with craft in the morning & card making in the afternoon! Phew- it was quite a craft marathon!

No class in Feb- we reconvene in March for Easter Cards.



HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

John Ruffell gave the group a film show comprising several specially selected short films from his collection all beautifully made with informative commentaries and well-chosen background music.

Subjects varied from Stanway Court to the Talylyn Railway in North Wales and Birmingham's Canal quarter. There was a clever film which told the history of Scotland through the beautiful area of Dumfries and Galloway. John used not only his own photographs but also material from other sources, such as portrait paintings, to illustrate the story. In the sequence about Alcester, comparing 1985 with earlier times, his intermixing of his own photographs with others from John Bunting's collection was particularly admired. Other localities featured included Warwick- (St Mary's Church and Lord Leicester's Hospital) and Coventry's Cash's silk pictures which showed the history of the firm and the intricacies of the production process. All in all, a fascinating morning.

Next month we welcome a guest speaker, Dr Graham Wallace of Birmingham University, who will talk about the history of the spread of infections amongst humans, especially along the Silk Road, and the role of our immune systems in combating them, a very current topic in the light of Covid 19 and Avian 'flu.

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth.

Our January meeting is on the 14th at Malt Mill Lane at 2.00pm. John Ruffell is our presenter.

Hope to see you all there.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

The group took a break in December, with the next meeting on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm when Jane Lytton will present her programme

National Trust Visits

Linda Bradley

We will start back in March, third Wednesday as usual.

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

For our first meeting of 2026, we turned to **Karl Marx and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)**. For some members this was a first encounter with the text, despite general familiarity with Marx's name and the strong reactions often provoked by the word "communism", commonly associated with revolution, the abolition of personal property, and the collapse of the class system.

An early focus of discussion was the need to distinguish between communism, Marxism, and totalitarianism, terms that are frequently blurred in popular debate. We considered the influence of Hegel on Marx, particularly how Marx transformed Hegel's dialectical idealism into his own theory of dialectical materialism. Marx's emphasis on labour, the position of the worker, and control of the means of production proved unexpectedly relevant to present-day concerns about artificial intelligence and the potential loss of employment across industry, commerce, and even education.

The topic allowed us to explore a range of philosophical and political "isms" and to place Marx's ideas within their historical context, tracing the evolution of society from feudalism through to liberal democracy. We also looked ahead to the year's programme, which will again include plays of philosophical interest. These will begin with Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in March, followed later in the year by Euripides' *The Bacchae*. [Thanks ChatGTP for this 'polished' version]

Our next meeting will address a pressing contemporary issue, ranging across ethics, parental rights, and the responsibilities of governments in protecting citizens: **"Social Media and Children."**

The next meeting will take place on 24 February 2026.

POETRY TOO

Rosemary Harvey/Ruth Dutton

The theme for January was **"Moods"**, the meaning of which is to induce, or suggest a particular feeling of the state of mind. With this definition we felt that choosing a suitable poem was fairly easy as most poetry fits into this category.

Each poet was a contrast to another from the lively Pam Ayres with her real-life anxiety poems, 'Did I turn off the tongs', and 'Round and Round the car park', to the melancholic Philip Larkin in 'Toads revisited'. In his sharp observations of humanity he rejects the idea of leisure for people in the park, who to him appear to be drifters; he sees the necessity of work as an anchor to life of work, as a structure to his existence! 'Millenium Bug' by John Agard explores the anxiety of chaos as we feared everything would stop at the start of the millenium.

A poem of resilience was written by Siegfried Sassoon in 'Everyone Sang' in 1919 in celebration of the end of the war. We all remember the power of the poem by Auden, 'Stop all the Clocks', used to great effect in the film Four Weddings and A Funeral. We were pleased to hear favourites like 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' by Yeats, and W H Davis poem 'What is this life if full of Care', however, 'Smiling is Infectious' by Spike Milligan is memorable, "A single smile could travel round the earth, start an epidemic, and get the whole world infected".

In preparation for the summer, the theme is The Seaside! We meet on February 2nd.

SPANISH

Lyndsey Evans/Margaret Crabb

NB: from January the group will be at the new venue – Our Lady & St Joseph Parish Hall, Alcester

THEATRE TRIPS

"Sherlock Holmes: The Hunt for Moriarty": Whilst many people have read Sherlock Holmes books or seen film and TV adaptations and easily understood the story, I found you had to concentrate to follow this particular plot. Perhaps I should have "Googled" the story beforehand? The six actors played at least two parts each which added to the slight confusion, but this did not diminish their fine performances. The scene changes were slick, and the projected waterfall effect and written clues were most impressive. As always this was a very enjoyable day out so many thanks to Joe for organising this trip

Report by Shirley Emmerson

Joe White



WALKING GROUPS

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

The planned urban walk around the environs of Stratford planned for January unfortunately fell foul of the weather once again and as there were no plans laid for lunch, everyone free to arrange their own venue in the town or do a bit of shopping if that was the preferred option, there was no social get together. Fingers crossed for better luck on our next attempt (hopefully not jinxed by the date) on Friday 13 February.

FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

January had proved a difficult month to plan for. The cold and wet weather meant many routes were muddy and possibly slippery. Anticipating problems on country paths we planned a circular walk from Arrow Mill. Instead of a rural ramble, it turned out to be more of a sightseeing tour around Arrow and Alcester. It included tueries, St Nicholas Church, Butter St, Malt Mill Lane, Centenary Park and the historic bridge at Oversley Green. Finally, as we returned through Arrow we made a brief visit to Holy Trinity Church. Surprisingly, it was a pleasant sunny day. Eleven people took part and ten of us enjoyed a sociable lunch at Arrow Mill. Our next walk is on February 20th. Hopefully the weather will be benign and more suitable for country walking.



SCRABBLE GROUP

Following a Christmas break, the Scrabble Group will be enjoying a post-Christmas lunch instead of the first New Year session on 9th January, but 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

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
Ambles	2 nd Friday	10.30 am	Various	Bronwen Bunting
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
Card Making	2 nd Friday Sep-May	10.00 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
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
The Elastic Band	2 nd & 4 th Wednesday	10.00 am	Lounge at the Greig Hall	John Pickering
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
German Conversation	2 nd Monday	2 – 4.00 pm	The Railway Inn, Station Rd Studley B80 7JS	Graham Stout
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
Moving to Music – Folk Dance	4 th Wednesday	2-4.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Malcolm Hall
Music Appreciation	Last Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Jan Rowe
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		Contact Linda Bradley	david.folk@btinternet.com
Philosophy	4 th Tuesday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Peter Tugwell
Poetry Too	1 st Monday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Ruth Dutton
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	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Margaret Crabb/Lindsay Evans
Theatre Visits	As notified		Contact Joe White	
Trips	As notified		Contact Linda Randell	
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday	10-11.00 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees