



Monthly meetings are held at

the Greig Hall, Alcester

at 2.30 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month



**NOTES FROM THE CHAIR**

It is very pleasing that several members have now come forward to offer their services on the committee. This will need to be officially endorsed through their election at the forthcoming AGM. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend the AGM on 3rd March, where there will also be the opportunity to speak to our group leaders. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the AGM as I will be taking a long-arranged holiday. However, I will leave you in the capable hands of my vice chairs and the other committee members.

**Our AGM is Tuesday**

As David has advised, the AGM this year will be Chaired by our Vice Chair double act (no, not Laurel & Hardy, but Karen & Lyn!) This is your opportunity to find out about what's going on at Alcester u3a, as many of our Interest Group Leaders will be either putting on displays and/or be available to chat to you; plus, of course, there will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions of the Committee. We look forward to seeing you there!



**Programme of Meetings for 2026 (subject to change)**

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	<a href="mailto:chair.u3aalcester@gmail.com">chair.u3aalcester@gmail.com</a>
Joint Vice-Chair	Lyn Pickering	
Joint Vice-Chair	Karen Dowman	
Treasurer	Jean Morgan	<a href="mailto:treasurer.u3aalcester@gmail.com">treasurer.u3aalcester@gmail.com</a>
Assistant Treasurer	Linda Randell	
Secretary/Minutes Sec	Miranda Sanders	<a href="mailto:mjanesanders56@gmail.com">mjanesanders56@gmail.com</a>
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering	<a href="mailto:membership.u3aalcester@gmail.com">membership.u3aalcester@gmail.com</a>
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	<a href="http://alcester.u3asite.uk">http://alcester.u3asite.uk</a>	Annual Sub: £16.00
		Only members can join groups

## SAD NEWS!

For those of you who knew John Cooper, we're sad to announce his passing at the end of January. Over many years, John was very active in Alcester u3a, especially in running the very successful Church Visits group until his health forced him to hand over the reins to Chris Baker. John continued to come along to our monthly meetings until late last year, so was a very familiar figure sitting at the back of the room on his mobility scooter. Condolences have been sent to Zanny (John's widow) and his family on behalf of u3a.

## 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 (6<sup>TH</sup> MAY)

Lyn Pickering

If you are already on the list to come on this trip and haven't yet paid, please do so to confirm your place (I'm concerned that if numbers fall below 35, we may have to cancel!) If you are thinking of joining us, places are still available and the list will be available at the meeting! The price is **£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 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH MEETING (Ref NMA).**



## 2026 U3A HOLIDAY – DISCOVERING SUSSEX

John Pickering

For the first time in the 8 years I've been organising these holidays, we are over-subscribed for this trip, so if your name is on the list and I've confirmed you have a place, please send me your booking form/deposit asap. If you are interested in this holiday, we do have a waiting list to which you can add your names. For those already on the list I will have brochures available if you haven't received one and will be available to discuss arrangements with you at the meeting. ([johnpickering@gmail.com](mailto:johnpickering@gmail.com) Tel. 01789 542589)



## THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White ([joe\\_patwhite@msn.com](mailto:joe_patwhite@msn.com))

The trips planned for March, April & August are fully booked and there is a reserve list for March & August. The trip in April does not have a reserve list yet, so put your name down if you fancy it.

**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 Fully booked and paid for

**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 Fully booked and paid for

**SATURDAY 1 August 2026 "I'm Sorry Prime Minister"** at Malvern Theatre £43 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 March 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

February saw the first meeting of the year of the Art Appreciation group at the RC hall. The topic was **Paul Gauguin** whose reputation is contentious. That he is a genius is seldom disputed-- but there is much controversy about his life. He was difficult, inspiring and libidinous. His wonderful paintings (and sculptures) reveal much and conceal much in equal measure. A true eccentric in many ways and an inspiration to those that came after him-- a true pioneer of modern art. But, as the art appreciation group discovered, opinions about his artistic outcomes need to be tempered by an understanding of his individualistic approach to living his life and his sometimes worrying (to many modern eyes) relationships with very young native girls. A flawed genius perhaps.

Val Trim



What makes you think it's a forgery?"

In complete contrast, **March sees a presentation about the life and work of Gwen John** -- a Welsh painter and older sister of Augustus. Her thoughtful and penetrating work is rising in popularity as her genius is recognised. A painter's painter who worked tirelessly at her technique, a summation of her life and work will be presented and discussed by Lynda Matheson. **Next meeting: Thursday March 5th 10.30am** prompt at the RC Meeting Room (£2)

### CRAFT GROUP

Craft Group met in February with a "**Bring your own project**" theme. There was lots of knitting, crocheting & nattering going on as we spent a relaxing morning working on our own ongoing projects. Great work by everyone! **Next meeting is Weds 18<sup>th</sup> March** - project to be confirmed!

Lynda Lamb

### CARD MAKING

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

Lynda Lamb

### HISTORY

February welcomed a guest speaker, Dr Graham Wallace of Birmingham University, who talked 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.

Lynda Matheson

### JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

At our February meeting, Geoff Male gave us an enjoyable talk on the music of **Dave Brubeck**. Geoff's choice of tracks illustrated Brubeck's talents as a composer of memorable melodies, user of unusual time signatures as well as being an original improviser. **Our next meeting is at 2.00pm on Wednesday March 11th** in Malt Mill Lane Community centre as usual. Do not forget to bring a couple of CDs so you can contribute to our topic, "Bring a CD"

Bob Applegarth.

### MUSIC APPRECIATION

I would like to thank Jane Lytton for her lovely presentation of **French composers** in January. In February we had lunch at The Bear, Alcester, then had our meeting when Val Trim presented, on screen, her delightful light hearted look at **having fun with classical music**, including "Make 'em Laugh" from Singing in the rain, "The Major General's Song" from Pirates of Penzance, a very amusing performance by Victor Borge and Marylyn Mulvey, "The Gnu Song" by Flanders & Swan, "The Clog Dance" from La Fille Malle Gardee and Victoria Wood's "The Ballad of Barry & Freda". **Our next meeting is on 25th March at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm**, when Lin Randall will present her programme

Jan Rowe

### National Trust Visits

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

Linda Bradley

### PHILOSOPHY

At our February meeting we looked at '**Social Media and children**'. This allowed a wide-ranging discussion on the issues which are very much in the news at the moment and centring on the calls for a ban on social media for under 16s, similar to that imposed in Australia. We looked at the competing arguments around the claims of significant risk of serious harm to children requiring state intervention, whether if the state intervened it would be paternalistic and a restriction on the right of freedom of expression, and whether the alternatives to an outright ban might be a better

Peter Tugwell

option. We looked at the rights and duties of parents, and the issues that children having rights themselves raised. Education, parental control versus the market position of the 'tech' companies – whether responsibility should follow design power. Our discussion delved into the excessive use of mobile phones and the increasing amount of 'screen time' causing concerns in addition to those arising out of the use of social media.

We will be looking at **Shakespeare's Macbeth** at our next meeting, with its matters of philosophical interest, including personal identity changes, divided consciousness, moral fragmentation and the metaphysics of Time and Fate.

**The next meeting will take place on 24 March 2026.**

## POETRY TOO

Rosemary Harvey/Ruth Dutton

At the meeting on 2 February, the theme was - **THE SEA/SEASIDE**. Not the most obvious theme for February but hopefully it will cheer us up during this cold, wet winter. Beginning with a few Pam Ayres poems, 'The Seagull' relates the theft of 'dad's battered cod' while 'The Annual Holiday' reminds us of childhood boarding house seaside holidays, of sand in the sandwiches, jelly fish in the sea and days of rain! 'Let's all Strut to the Lifeguard's Hut' meanwhile, is the unedifying tale of shameless flirting with a small, muscular lifeguard who can't swim!! By contrast 'Dunkirk' by Robert Nathan describes how 600 amateur small boats sailed en masse to boost the British fleet

*'There was no command, there was no set plan .....*

*They raised Dunkirk by the fall of night.'*

John Masefield's 'Sea Fever' describes the insistent call of the sea and Larkin's 'To the Sea' explores the vastness and power of the sea, while John Betjeman's 'A Bay in Anglesey' is descriptive of the coastal scene using precise detail

*'The sleepy sound of the teatime tide*

*Slaps the rocks the sun has dried'.*

We can recognise ourselves in 'Just in Case' by Charlotte Mitchell, who, by the end of the poem has the entire contents of her wardrobe packed for a weekend at the seaside ... just in case.....'. 'The Lobster Quadrille' ends with far fewer returning than those who set out to walk, just as 'Albert and the Lion' at Blackpool Zoo ends minus Albert..... Stevie Smith's 'My Hat', one of her funnier, happier poems, is a vision of a young woman's liberation. Finally, 'Milly, Molly, Mandy and May' by ee Cummings

*'For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)*

*It's always ourselves we find in the sea'.*

**Poetry Too will meet again on Monday March 3rd at 2pm Our theme on that day will be 'irony and sarcasm'.**

## SPANISH

Lyndsay Evans/Margaret Crabb

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



## WALKING GROUPS

### AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

Well, despite our best hopes, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February **was** jinxed by appalling weather, possibly the worst this year for the amount of rainfall, so once again the amble had to be cancelled. Surely March must be better, and we will hopefully be out and about on **Friday 13 March**, despite it being another Friday 13<sup>th</sup> !!

### FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

Walk planning in January and February was difficult because of the incessant rain and conditions underfoot. To make life easier for ourselves we decided to do an 'out and back' walk on part of the Greenway, a surfaced route which runs from Stratford to Long Marston. We parked in the small car park at **Milcote and walked towards Lucy's Mill in Stratford**. It's a pleasant, easy path, with good views, on the former railway line to Honeybourne. It's shared with cycles, horses and runners but was fairly quiet on the day we walked. After a dry start, there were a few outbreaks of light rain. We stopped at a converted railway carriage for coffee and then continued to the River Avon. The river was high but had not flooded the path. At that point we turned back. Seven of us did the walk of approximately five miles. Eight of us enjoyed a tasty lunch at the Bell at Welford afterwards. **Our next walk will be on 20<sup>th</sup> March**. Fingers crossed for better weather!



### SCRABBLE GROUP

Linda Salsbury

Meetings are held monthly in St Joseph's Church Hall, Priory Rd, Alcester B49 5DY. Our group is very welcoming and friendly, and average between 8-10 members per session, and meet for 2 hours from 2pm; with a break for tea and biscuits.

Our games seem to be of a genial nature but can prove to be quite competitive when new words crop up! We have the use of the official Scrabble dictionary and 'Words Allowed' book, plus a list of 2 letter words that are permitted, and these tend to satisfy most challenges. Any **new enquiries please email U3a Group Leader, [lindsalsbury@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lindsalsbury@hotmail.co.uk)** or call 07872 625006 for further information.

### 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 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	10.30 am	Various	Bronwen Bunting
Art Appreciation	First Thursday	10.30 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Val Trim
Bowls	Fortnightly from 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	10.00 am - 12	Bidford Bowls Club	David Sanders
Bridge Improvers	Weekly on Tuesday (except 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday)	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Paul Brenda
Family History	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	2.00 pm	Alcester Library	Linda Cooper
Card Making	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday Sep-May	10.00 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
Church Visits	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday as advised	11.00 am	Various	Chris Baker
Crafts	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Sept to March	10.00-12.00	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Lamb
The Elastic Band	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	10.00 am	Lounge at the Greig Hall	John Pickering
French	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	2.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Shirley Stout
Garden Lovers	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday April – Oct	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Allely
German Conversation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	2 – 4.00 pm	The Railway Inn, Station Rd Studley B80 7JS	Graham Stout
History	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	10.30am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Matheson
Jazz & Big Band Appreciation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Bob Applegarth
Mah Jong	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	2.00 pm	Various	Bronwen Bunting
Man Talk	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	2–4.00 pm	The Huff Cap, Great Alne	Ian Gregory
Moving to Music – Folk Dance	4 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.00-4.00 pm	Confirm with group leader	Chris Capstick
National Trust Visits	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday		Contact Linda Bradley	<a href="mailto:david.folk@btinternet.com">david.folk@btinternet.com</a>
Philosophy	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Peter Tugwell
Poetry Too	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Ruth Dutton
Walks	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.00 am	Various	Jane & Chris Baker
Reading 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Linda Jennings
Rees Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	10.30 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees
Scrabble	1 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> 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