

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



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Recently we have lost two special interest groups. This is unfortunate bearing in mind that in light of our increasing membership we should be increasing the number of groups. I am sure that amongst our 400+ members we have people with special knowledge and skills. Now we have a dedicated Groups Coordinator, we are better able to support group leaders. A quick look at the offerings of some of neighbouring u3a's reveals the following interest groups - Architecture, Transport, Badminton, Swimming, Bird Watching, Pilates, Computers, Gardening, Dressmaking, Flower Arranging, Golf, Baking, Natural History, Play Reading, Quizzing, Current Affairs, Science and Technology, Wine Tasting, Shakespeare, Table Tennis, Skittles.
(I hope I haven't caused any of our members to consider defecting!).

A SAD LOSS TO MANY!

Lyn Pickering

Bob Andrews (a former Trustee and Group Co-ordinator) has asked me to let those of you who have known him and his wife, Sue, for a long time, that Sue sadly passed away on 15th May. Sue's health had deteriorated for some time and she didn't recover from surgery following a fall. She was much loved, not only as a wife and mother, but also during her 38 years as a midwife and in their Church community!

A funeral service will be held at Our Lady & St Josephs Catholic Church, Priory Rd, Alcester at 1.00 p.m. on 4th June.

BLETCHLEY PARK VISIT 23RD JUNE – A GENTLE REMINDER.

For those members going on the Bletchley Park trip, please be advised that you should
be at the Greig Hall at 09.15 ready for departure at 09.30 am prompt

Programme of Meetings for 2026 (subject to change)		
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	Belinda Widdop	
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering	membership.u3aalcester@gmail.com
Groups Coordinator	Val Trim	
Speaker Team Co-ordinator	Linda Randell	
Committee Members	Val Hamblin	Karyl Rees
	Christine Dyer	Clive Owen
	Bronwen Bunting	Linda Beck
Newsletter		Anne Gladstone
Web: Manager - Lindsay Evans	http://alcester.u3asite.uk	

Annual Sub: £16.00 Only members can join groups

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM – A GREAT DAY OUT!

Lyn Pickering



Our trip to this beautiful, moving venue on 6th May was blessed by a dry, sometimes sunny, but breezy, weather and was well received by all who attended. Memorials take many different forms, are constantly being added and the latest one in the pipeline for the near future is a 25-acre wood in remembrance of Covid victims.



EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2026

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

Tuesday 23 June 2026: Bletchley Park

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

Thursday 5 November 2026: "As You Like It" at the RSC

Friday 4 December 2026: Visit to Chatsworth House at Christmas

THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)



Both remaining trips organised for this year are now fully booked, but both have very short reserve lists, so if you fancy the show put your name on the reserve list and there is always the chance that you will be offered a place.

If you have booked a place for Barnum, please remember to pay by 7th July.

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; **Fully booked and paid for.**

SATURDAY 31 October 2026 "Barnum" The Circus Musical at Malvern Theatre £47 per ticket (Ref T22)

The coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am; **Stalls Seats in rows P, Q & R**

Payment by Bank transfer to:- "The Alcester U3A" Sort Code 08 92 99 A/C No. 67268429 Ref XXX/T22

Or pay the Treasurer with cash or a cheque. **Pay by Tuesday 7 July**

The booking and reserve lists will be at the June meeting.

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

* * * INTEREST GROUP NEWS * * *

ART APPRECIATION

Val Trim

It was members' choices on the topic of 'Celebrations' this time around--- and what an eclectic mix of imagery, styles and approaches this produced! We saw Wellington enjoying his dinner in the Tunnel under the Thames, and Lowry's take on the VE celebrations, Breughel's peasants at a wedding and the world-famous opera singer Chaliapin swaggering in his fur coat -- in fact, a great variety of beautifully executed artworks! Well done everybody!!

Next month sees a short continuation of the theme (as we ran out of time) as well as a miscellany of other artistic works and ideas. One topic will be 'isms' as we wrestle with the overlapping chronology of 19th and 20th century art movements. Wish us luck!

Please note change of time and place: We meet at 10.15am at the Greig Hall (£2) on Thursday 4th June.

Any u3a member wanting to join the group should contact me by email (trimvalerie@gmail.com) to check on the availability of places. Thank you.



CRAFT GROUP

Lynda Lamb

We rounded off our current term by making some classy gift bags beautifully embellished with matching gift tags & floral sprays. I'm sure anyone would be delighted to receive a gift in these gift bags. The group will be taking a summer break & will restart in September with some more crafty projects! May I remind you that the group is currently full. Please contact me to register an interest in joining & I will add you to the waiting list.





CARD MAKING

Lynda Lamb

A very busy morning in May making two delightful &



technically challenging cards. Our lovely ladies once again rose to the challenge & produced some beautiful cards. Well done, Ladies!

GARDEN LOVERS

Janet Allely

Garden lovers coped with some difficulty in finding the garden, and some rain when walking round the gardens at **Rashwood Lodge near Droitwich**. However, we enjoyed the benefit of a very knowledgeable and interesting guide around the large and old established lawns and trees. When retiring into the house we found a splendid tea awaiting which was very much enjoyed. **Our next visit on 11th June is to Badge Court, Elmbridge, Nr Droitwich WR9 0NJ at a cost of £12 each.**

HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

Lynne Yates has been interested in genealogy for more than 50 years. A family photograph taken in Stratford on Avon in 1863 (the same year as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address) led to many fascinating discoveries about members of her family, a great, great, great uncle who trained as an organ builder but changed to carpentry, perhaps because organ building was too niche a trade. There was a young mother who taught her children to read, write and play the piano, very unusual for a family from the labouring classes in those days. Her mother had run a dame's school and then emigrated to Australia. Another ancestor, Frederick Clark, was also well travelled. He worked in armaments and became an expert in percussion caps, essential for small arms. He took his family to Constantinople where he taught the Turks to manufacture the caps and lived in that exotic city for 2 years. On his return he moved to Birmingham to work for BSA (now better known for motorcycles) to produce percussion caps and develop new explosives but was unfortunately killed in an explosion.

In the early days Lynne and her late husband had to visit parish churches, record offices and newspaper archives in order to research their ancestors. The internet has made researching more accessible, but also more open to error. She uses a recognised site – Ancestry- which constantly adds new sources to its archive and makes exploring family trees far more accessible. Go on, give it a go, you don't know what you will find!

Next month will be "**Object Lesson**" when members bring in an interesting object and talk about it for no more than 5 minutes. We have had objects ranging from a WW1 bayonet to a miniature sewing machine and an African's headman's stool, so this is also a surprising meeting.

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth.

Laurence Thatcher gave us an entertaining & informative talk on the role of the guitar & its predecessor, the banjo in jazz. The banjo showed up better on early pre-electric recordings but when recording techniques improved, the guitar began to take over. Vital both as a rhythm & a melodic instrument, the guitar became even more prominent when musicians such as Eddie Durham, Les Paul & Charlie Christian started to use amplification. Others we heard included Eddie Lang, Django Reinhardt, Slim Gaillard, Mary Osborne & Herb Ellis. Thanks, Laurence, for a very enjoyable afternoon.

A note for the future. Geoff Male is arranging a concert at the Greig Hall on **August 20th**. It features The Sauce City Jazz Band from Worcester. This is a top class Trad Jazz and Blues band - don't miss this. More details later.

Our next group meeting is on Wednesday June 10th, 2.00pm at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre. Bob Applegarth will give a presentation on Jazz from Chicago.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

Pat Pillinger created a cool air of calm on a very hot afternoon with her beautiful well known pieces which included J.S. Bach's "Air on a G String", Patrick Hawes "Towards the Light", "The Gad Fly" played by Andre Rieu's orchestra, "Greensleeves", and "Cavatina" from 'The Deer Hunter'. After our tea break we heard The James Last orchestra with "Lara's Theme" from 'Dr Zhivago', "The Flight of the Bumble Bee" and many other relaxing pieces. **Our next meeting is on 24th June at 2pm at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre, Alcester when Tony Ingram will present his musical choices.**

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

This month the philosophy group tackled the contentious topic of **surrogacy**. Whilst the practical concerns of this activity are difficult enough to resolve (involving consideration of the different types of surrogacies: gestational versus traditional, the determination of the point at which the intending parents actually achieve legal parenthood, and value of altruistic practice versus commercialisation etc) the moral and ethical issues remain even more profound. Questions surrounding the agency of the pregnant mother, possible unregulated and exploitative practices involving the commodification of the bodies of women, and the long-term welfare of the child were raised and discussed. As in society at large, responses to these and many other questions varied almost to the point of polarisation. Some felt that surrogacy was never permissible under any circumstance whilst others felt that altruistic surrogacy by a family member could bring joy to a childless couple.

This thought-provoking topic reflects some of the difficulties in resolving issues where technical advances have outstripped existing moral frameworks and demand new ways of thinking about a fast-changing world and our place in it to ensure the welfare of all. **Next month's topic is Game Theory, (Me neither!)** (Val Trim for Peter Tugwell)

POETRY TOO

Rosemary Harvey/Ruth Dutton

The Natural World tended towards the more serious than is usual for us.

'The Seasons in North Cornwall' celebrates seasonal differences by the sea, while 'Drey' by Simon Armitage provides a visual image of the never still squirrel always in 'scavenge and forage' mode. Robert MacFarlane, a champion and wordsmith of the natural world gives us a mnemonic in praise of the bluebell. 'Under branch, below leaf, billows blue, so deep, sea deep'.

'The Hedgerow' by Pam Ayres is a departure from her usual humour, 'which in in pollution ever rife, breathes oxygen to give us life'.

'The Glory of The Garden' by Kipling was written in an era of manicured lawns and rows of perfect blooms whereas present day preferences lean towards wild gardens and the encouragement of bees and butterflies.

John Betjamen enjoyed the combined power of wind and waves in winter from the shelter of an overhanging cliff, 'I stand exultant neutral, free behind a huge consoling sea'.

'Epitaph on a Hare' in different mood, expresses sadness at the loss of a pet hare, 'surliest of his kind', a creature notoriously difficult to domesticate, yet they learned to give each other space.

'Kisses and Blows', a departure by Roger McGough from his usual humour describes how a tree, a cave and a mother combine to destroy a child.

Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Floating Island' 'does not see nature as comforting and beautiful, but foresees a time when the island disappears and nature may 'cease to give'.

Please ring if you are interested in joining us.

READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

May's book was **The Frequency of Us by Keith Stuart**, a novel set within two time zones - present day and mid WW2 - in the city of Bath, where Clare, a young social worker, is assigned to assess the mental health state of an elderly man, Will, who was a radio operator at the time Bath was bombed. Will is adamant that he was married at that time to an Austrian refugee, but there is no official record of her existence. The author weaves a tale of some sort of time travel, where Will and his wife each live in parallel existences.

As always, there was a mix of reviews, with some members thoroughly enjoying their reading, while others found the plot difficult to understand and believe, which once more led to a good discussion.

Next month's book choice is Raising Hare by Chloe Dalton.



SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Chris Capstick

The May meeting of Singing for Pleasure was a very happy session, mainly doing 1960's items, but singing other pieces ranging from the 1880's to 1993. Thanks to Meg Griffin for assisting me and playing the guitar so ably. Meg runs folk tea dances and contras at the Greig Hall. Thank you Cath Tomlinson for her hard work in sorting the words out onto Powerpoint. A miracle happened today Cath, I didn't make any word mistakes!

We are meeting in June when I will be doing music from shows, stage and screen. We are NOT meeting in July and August and we are meeting again on September 24th to start our 5th year Singing for Pleasure.



WALKING GROUPS

AMBLERS GROUP

May's amble, which was kindly recce-ed and led by Angela, took us from The Fish Inn at **Wixford** along good footpaths with beautiful views over to Exhall and through the picturesque village cricket ground before getting back to Wixford where 10 out of the 14 amblers enjoyed lunch. The weather was perfect for walking and provided good going underfoot with 2 stiles and a few inclines not causing any problems. **The next amble will be on Friday 12 June.**

Bronwen Bunting



FRIDAY WALKERS

Our May walk was a circular route from **Henley in Arden station to Preston Bagot Church**. It is a pretty walk through undulating Warwickshire countryside. The scenery is lovely and in places there are far reaching views. It was a pleasant day for walking and the group stopped at the church for a snack and confectionary sweet break. There were five people in the group including David who kindly planned and led the walk. Despite a few inclines and some stiles, it was a fairly easy walk and enjoyed by those who participated. A sociable lunch was taken afterwards at the Nags Head in Henley. **The next walk will be on Friday 19th June.**

Jane and Chris Baker



SCRABBLE GROUP

Meetings are held monthly at 2.00 pm on the 1st Friday 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.

Linda Salsbury

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** or call 07872 625006 for further information.

YOGA

Weekly Yoga classes take place on Mondays and are held in the Catholic Parish Hall from 10.00 – 11.00 am and 11.15 am – 12.15 pm
There will not be a yoga class on 6 July.

Karyl Rees



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
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	Railway Inn, Station Rd, Studley	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 01789
National Trust Visits	3 rd Wednesday		Contact Linda Bradley	
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 & Rosemary Harvey
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	r