

Monthly meetings are held at the Greig Hall, Alcester

at 2.30 pm on the

1st Tuesday of the month



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Now that we have a full committee we have been working hard to both update and formalise some of our processes as befits an organisation with around 430 members.

You will note later on in this newsletter that we have been working on guidelines for arranging day trips/events. In particular, for most events there will only be a booking form. This represents a commitment from us to run the event on the specified date and also a commitment by those who sign up for the event. We do, however, recognise that health problems and other unforeseen issues will occasionally arise which prevent members from participating. However, we ask that members only sign a booking form for themselves and not on behalf of other members. All communications regarding events should be via the event leader. Full details will be communicated to members when we have finalised the guidelines.

Similarly, we are working on updating the member code of conduct which will also be circulated to all members when finalised.

Programme of Meetings for 2026/7 (subject to change)

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
5 January 2027	Keith Edwards	Cave & Potholes from an award-winning caver
2 February 2027	Adam Wood	Meon Hill Witchcraft and Murder
6 April 2027	Kevin Thomas	Top Hats and Tales from Victorian Birmingham
1 June 2027	Dan Szor	Founder of Cotswold Distillery

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

"The Sauce City Jazz Band"

One of our U3A members is putting on a concert in the Greig Hall on Thursday August 20th at 7.30pm, featuring "The Sauce City Jazz Band", a top-class Traditional Jazz Band from Worcester.

If you are a fan of trad jazz do not miss this gig. It is a long time since we had any live jazz in Alcester, so keep this date free in your diary, come along and support. It could be the start of a series of further gigs.

Having seen Sauce City recently, I highly recommend them. You will enjoy an uplifting evening of toe-tapping music! Tickets will be available from next month. Details to follow.

SUSSEX HOLIDAY

FINAL PAYMENT DUE END OF JULY

It's hard to believe that the time has almost arrived for those of you who are booked on this year's holiday to pay the balance! Please refer to the confirmation invoice, sent by Harry Shaw, for the amount you need to pay and follow their instructions on how.

If you have any queries, please contact me. John Pickering johnpickering@gmail.com or Tel. 01789 542589

THE PROGRAMME & EVENTS SUB COMMITTEE

The Programme & Events Sub Committee is made up of volunteers (as are all our Group Leaders). Although our original remit was to organise the Speaker Programme for our monthly meetings, we have diversified into arranging outings (many of which were suggested by members in the Survey which was sent out at the end of 2024.) Organising these events is quite a commitment and entails hours of planning and, as this has been our first year offering these events, we have all been on a steep learning curve!

We have identified that putting out a sheet at the monthly meeting called "Interest Sheet" is misleading and has led to a few problems, so, unless we are indeed trying to gauge interest in an event, we will not use this term from now on. Instead, when we have booked an event, a "**Booking Form**" will be put out at the monthly meeting and will contain all the details about the event, including the Event Leader's contact details. Please ensure that, if you put your name on this form, you include your membership number.

To clarify the booking process, we have produced a set of guidelines for Event Leaders to follow and also Guidelines for Members, which will include the refund policy, and this will be either emailed or posted to members after it has received Committee Approval.

Thank you all for your understanding and support.

On behalf of The Programme & Events Sub-Committee

SYMPHONY HALL TRIP 13th October 2026

Beethoven (Egmont overture & piano con no 4) & Brahms symphony no 2

Payment £38.00 by 4th AUGUST AT THE LATEST reference SH2

Contact Karen Dowman karen.dowman@gmail.com

Due to popular request & success of our last visit, the events committee have arranged the next symphony hall trip.

The concert will commence in Birmingham at 7.30pm

Transport will be available from the Greig Hall at 5.30pm with return to Alcester at approximately 10.30pm

There are **45 tickets available** and the booking form will be available at the July and August meetings

Otherwise contact above email or ring 07970785209. Hopefully it will be as enjoyable as the last event

EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2026

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

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)

We are happy to announce a trip for early next year, the details are shown below. It is an Agatha Christie Hercule Poirot story and is a bit more expensive as the Theatre have not offered a group discount for the show.

Both remaining grips organised for this year are now fully booked, but both have 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**

SATURDAY 20 March 2027 "The Hollow" at Malvern Theatre £52 per ticket (Ref T23)

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/T23

Or pay the Treasurer with cash or a cheque. **Pay by Tuesday 3 November**

The booking and reserve lists for both shows will be at the July 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



The June meeting was sensibly entitled ' **Miscellany**' and that's exactly what it was!! A mixture of all good art things. Jane Lytton carried on the Celebrations theme when comparing the *Statue of Liberty* and Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*. We saw a *Boyar Wedding Feast* and marvelled at Norwegian bonfires. Next came a new way of looking at art --- by seeking out the underlying themes that unite very dissimilar artwork, in this case the almost unnoticed expressions of national identities. A very good video was shown that explored 40,000 years of the development of art, but group members were quick to spot the missing bits that we now regard as essential! So, a miscellany indeed!

Next month is still under consideration-- you'll have to pop along to find out exactly what we're up to!!!

We meet at 10.15 at the Greig on Thursday July 2 (£2). Make sure you drop me an email if you are thinking about joining the group to check availability.

CARD MAKING

Lynda Lamb



Whilst the Craft Group



broke up in May, the card making ladies had a sneaky June meeting to round off the summer term! More beautiful cards made by the brilliant ladies- I'm sure the recipients will be delighted to receive them!

CHURCH VISITS

Chris Baker

We opened the season in May with visits to St Egwin, Norton and All Saints, Church Lench. At **St Egwin**, we discovered a pretty church, much renovated, but with a number of ancient features including a medieval tower, font and lectern – the latter having been discovered on the site of Evesham Abbey. The remains of a medieval "squint" can be seen by

the chancel arch, originally permitting those in the north aisle to see the altar during eucharist. The medieval north transept survives and houses Biggs family tombs, armour and memorials – including one to Christopher Ewart-Biggs who was murdered by the IRA in 1976, 12 days into his posting as British Ambassador to Ireland.

We then moved to **All Saints** which occupies a spectacular site with commanding views. Evidence remains of the 12th, 14th and 15th Century work which added a Norman doorway, the lady chapel and a rebuilt chancel arch and clerestory windows. The remains of a stairway would have led to the “rood loft” which housed the village orchestra before organs became common. A fine 19th century oak reredos proved that fine craftsmanship was not restricted to more ancient churches. We ended the morning with lunch at Hillers.

Our June outing moved to the other side of Stratford, with visits to Loxley and Wellesbourne. At **St Nicholas**, Loxley (when we had tackled the parking!) we found an ancient church, dedicated in 1286, (and looking it from the south) but on entering found it to be largely Georgian in character with a fine selection of 18th century box pews. The chancel arch and pillar piscina are Norman. Unusually, the pulpit is reached by stairs from the vestry, and at the west end stands the village stocks. A frontal cloth for the lectern was designed by Anthony Green and featured St Nicholas presenting gifts to (rather adult looking) children whilst wearing what look like pyjamas! The chancel features Saxon masonry outside and in, whilst the external walls of the vestry are adorned with a selection of old chest tomb pieces and headstones.

At **St Peters** in Wellesbourne we were greeted by the Rector, Greg Bartlem, and serenaded by a team of visiting bellringers - who rang for the whole of our visit in an impressive workout (for a very hot day)! Pevsner describes the (originally chancel?) Norman arch as “extremely impressive” and which now fronts the organ chamber. A musicians gallery overlooks the west end. Some of the party were shown the 1426 brass of Sir Thomas le Straunge, hidden under the chancel carpet. The present building is largely 13th century, with a 14th century tower, but was substantially rebuilt in 1847 for £8000 – about £1 million today. The sanctuary boasts striking mosaics and marble. We repaired to the Red Lion – conveniently next to the church – for lunch.

GARDEN LOVERS

Janet Allely



Predicted rain did not stop our visit to the ancient **Badge Court**. Our host, with the help of a young helpful gardener, took us round the various gardens including the lake whose fish had been raided by otters and whose tadpoles had become froglets in the lawn grass. We saw rescued horses, wooden pigs, an aviary, fruit orchards, vegetables and flowers and then had tea in the garden with musical accompaniment. **Our next visit, starting at the earlier time of 2 pm, is on 9th July to Morton Hall, Holberrow Green, B96 6SJ near Inkberrow.** This garden requires prepayment of £19 each, which can be sent to Alcester u3a bank account with your membership number and reference GV, before 23 June. It is a well organised visit, and entry can be from 1.45 by pressing the buzzer at the gate.

HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

Our meeting in June was given over to short talks by group members inspired by an object they brought with them. During the course of the morning, we learned how to use a truncheon correctly, the story of the Revd, John Morris, the founder of the Eagle, Girl and Robin comics, and all about Susie Cooper one of the most important mid- century ceramists.

A wooden camel led to the story of how one member’s family history was tied up with that of Iraq, while a camel’s saddle cloth told us how to tell a dromedary from a Bactrian and took us from the steppes of Mongolia to the Australian outback.

Copies of the Communist Manifesto and the Little Red book illustrated how the USSR and the Peoples Republic of China attempted to influence and recruit British students. We even learnt how to avoid being recruited/blackmailed by communist countries.

From ceramics to counterespionage – that’s the History Group!

On 20th July more national fervour, derring-do and dirty tricks when Patrick Hanglin talks about the Irish Civil War.

JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth.

We had a good turnout for our June meeting. Bob Applegarth gave a talk on "**Chicago Jazz**", describing how a new variation in jazz style arose in the 1920s led by musicians including Bud Freeman, Bix Beiderbecke, Frank Teschemacher & Gene Krupa. In more recent times Chicago was the birthplace of many more prominent players. We heard records by Nat King Cole, Benny Goodman, Herbie Hancock & Quincy Jones. **In July Val Trim will give an audio-visual presentation featuring lesser-known European jazz musicians.** Anyone wishing to join our thriving group, please get in touch. You will be very welcome.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

The meeting for June 24th was cancelled because of the extreme heat; **the next meeting is on 29th July at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm when we look forward to Tony Ingram's programme.**

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

For our June meeting we looked at '**Game Theory**' from the philosophical point of view. In spite of the meeting being on possibly one of the hottest days of the year, with the media talking about highest temperature records being broken, we managed to cover many of the important issues. Game theory covers major issues such as climate change and voting behaviour, and the really big question: can a society survive if everyone pursues only rational self-interest? Which achieves more – competition or co-operation? In this context we looked at 'the Prisoner's Dilemma', 'the Stag Hunt' and 'the Nash Equilibrium'. We considered the meaning of rationality, self-interest and the part that morality plays. Philosophers such as Hobbes, Hume and Kant cropped up in our discussion – and we ended with a look at the popular reality TV show 'the Traitors'. **Next month the topic will be 'Capital Punishment'.** The next meeting will take place on 28 July 2026.

POETRY TOO

Rosemary Harvey/Ruth Dutton

We managed to find 38 poems about **Mothers**; there was a good deal of nostalgia, as in the poem called 'The Handbag' by Ruth Fairlight. Here the writer remembers the smell of the leather and it was 'crowded with letters she carried through the war. 'Simon Armitage also seemed nostalgic when he remembers his mother through a poem called 'Camera Obscura'.

Dorothy Wordsworth recalls her own childhood in a poem called 'Mother's Return, the children don't seem to have been told why she has gone away, or even if she will return. Pam Ayres brings us firmly down to earth in 'Sling Another Chair On The Fire Mother'; obviously times were hard. Laurie Lee writes in his lovely descriptive style about his mother's roses in 'Moss Roses'. Celebrating past times we had 'Mothering Sunday' by George Leonard who remembers the maids who were given that special day off, and Tennyson recalls the days of 'The May Queen'; Mary Webb in 'To A Mother At Christmas' 1920 seems obsessed about her mother's cherished childhood keepsakes and mementos.

A piece of prose called 'Enough is Enough' takes us back to 1976 when an IRA gunman swerved his car to avoid the army and killed three of Ann Maguire's children. The mothers united in force to form the Peace People and were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Our theme for July is DIY, Buildings and Architecture, and August is Wind and Weather.

READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

The review this month is of a book entitled **Raising Hare by Chloe Dalton**, which was well received by almost every member. It is presented as a personal memoir of the author's experiences after she finds an abandoned leveret outside her isolated cottage. She has no experience of caring for or rearing wild animals, takes advice from every source she can find, and gradually this young hare becomes part of her life. She describes her efforts in allowing the hare both the freedom of her cottage and garden, and of the fields surrounding them. All in all, we found it an enjoyable read.

Next month's book choice is Summer in February by Jonathan Smith.

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Chris Capstick

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

Bronwen Bunting

The planned circular walk from Inkberrow going through Abbots Morton fell on its face during the recce due to numerous stiles, electric fence, over-enthusiastic horse and too much mileage! So, playing very safe, Arrow Valley Lake replaced it, with a walk around the lake and the woodland trail. No chance to go astray you might think, but signage of the woodland trail proved to be a bit of a challenge. We saw some good wildlife, including a muntjak, 2 herons, a tree full of egrets and an engaging gaggle of greylag geese with their offspring. We made it back to the visitors' centre, minus 5 of the original 14 who had peeled off at different stages for a variety of reasons. Seven of us opted for lunch in the café where great hilarity was caused trying to order and achieve something to eat, growing increasingly like a Fawlty Towers script by the minute. Enjoyable when it finally arrived, lunch rounded off a very amusing morning.



FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

This month we did much of the '**Round Evesham Walk**', a waymarked route devised by Evesham Rambling Club which has markers showing a picture of the Abbey tower. We started our walk in the Squires at the top of Greenhill and followed a footpath behind the houses with stunning views over the Vale and beyond. We eventually emerged a good way down the hill and then stayed on the main road until we reached the Abbey precincts. We noticed that the redundant church of St Lawrence was open. It is now in the care of the Church Conservation Trust. Some of us took a few minutes to admire its beautiful interior and find out more about its history. We then continued along the lovely river path passing under the busy road bridge, past the seasonal Hampton Ferry and lastly, the remains of the Midland railway closed in 1963. After leaving the river we climbed uphill across the site of the Battle of Evesham where the army of Simon de Montfort was crushed by Royalist forces in 1265. Twelve of us walked and ten of us ate lunch at the Chadbury farm shop. The weather was warm and sunny and the route was roughly 5.7 miles in length. **Our next walk will be on Friday 17th July, providing we are not in the midst of another heatwave!**



SCRABBLE GROUP

Linda Salsbury

With a good number of players either away or with other commitments, the group will take a break in July and meet again in August. 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.

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

Karyl Rees

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. Classes will be on 13 & 20 July, then there will be a summer break until September. Reminder to those who make direct bank payments monthly to adjust these accordingly.



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
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	
Yoga	Every Monday	10-11 am 11.15–12.15	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees