

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



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

We are continuing to expand our membership and now have 450 members of Alcester u3a. However, the number of special interest groups remains static. Currently there are 20 of these groups. For the number of members we now have, National u3a recommendations state that we should have at least 38 groups. We are in the process of drawing up detailed guidelines for group leaders. These will be supplemented by support from Val Trim, our Groups Coordinator. It would be good to start 2027 with additional groups – I am sure that we have a lot of untapped knowledge and skills amongst our members. If you may be interested in forming a new group, please feel free to have a chat with Val or myself.

SYMPHONY HALL TRIP 4TH DECEMBER 2026 HANDEL'S MESSIAH, CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHOIR & CBSO

Details

Cost: **£55.00** Payment Ref SH3 by 1st October

Event Leader: **Karen Dowman**

Contact details: karen.dowman@gmail.com

(Please note that this is the same day as the visit to Chatsworth House)

Departure from the Greig Hall at 5.30 pm, return by approximately 10.30 pm

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

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
		Only members can join groups

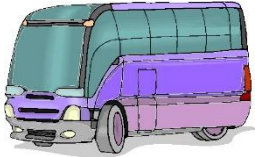
SCAM REMINDER

Beware! The old scam email "Will you do me a favour, but don't ring me because I've lost my voice..blah, blah, blah!" is doing the rounds again, so please ignore it, mark it as SPAM and delete it! One member has also alerted me that she's received a phone call this week purporting to be from her bank, but, having had a previous close shave, knew that banks NEVER ring their customers out of the blue

Another worrying scenario is a call from fraudsters posing as police, sounding very plausible, and warning of apparent fraudulent activity, leading to an attempt to obtain bank details. It's a sad world that we need to be reminded not to trust a person phoning if you don't recognise their number! Stay safe folks!

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SUSSEX HOLIDAY



If you're joining us on the holiday to Sussex, this is a reminder that the coach will **LEAVE** from outside Alcester library at **9.30 prompt on Sunday 13th September**, so please be there by 9.15 at the latest! You will receive the final itinerary from Harry Shaw Travel shortly.

Happy holidays!!

John Pickering

Geoff Male

SAUCE CITY JAZZ

It must have been a part of shaking off the winter blues that in a way I felt the strong need for the lift of live music. I decided that to perk me up I would finance a concert in Alcester – primarily for my own benefit

I had heard Sauce City Jazz on several occasions & knew their quality & also the ability of their leader to hold the attention of a mature audience. The costs involved were all quite realistic and I knew the gamble but, if I could sell about 80 tickets, I would not be much out of pocket.

Having decided the quality and style of the music, it was now important to perform all the other support duties with matching quality. In this I think we succeeded, from the quality of the posters to the general advertising and the Greig Hall dressed up for the night.

I wish to thank everyone for their support of the sell-out event & particularly my two most valued helpers, Bob Applegarth & Ian Greig. I hope that all who attended got the same pleasure that I did and to know that whilst it never was intended as a fundraising event, thanks to you it did show a profit from which some charities will now benefit.



CONCERT AT SYMPHONY HALL, BIRMINGHAM 7.30 pm on 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

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

The booking form will be available at the August meeting

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

update EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2026

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

Tuesday 13 October 2026: Concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham

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

Friday 4 December 2026: Visit to Chatsworth House at Christmas

Friday 4 December 2026: Handel's Messiah at Symphony Hall, Birmingham

End January 2027: King Richard III Visitors Centre Leicester



THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

The trips to see Barnum on 31st October & the Agatha Christie Hercule Poirot story on 20th March next year are now fully booked. There are reserve lists for both so please add your names to the lists if you want to go, there is always a chance that places become available

There are still 10 places available for the show on 6th February next year "The Other side of Murder" by Torben Betts and starring Rufus Hound and Susie Blake details below

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**

Fully paid for

SATURDAY 6 February 2027 "The Other Side of Murder" at Malvern Theatre £38 per ticket (Ref T24)
a wickedly entertaining new thriller with a star cast including **Rufus Hound** (*One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Wind in the Willows*) and the return of national treasure **Susie Blake**

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/T24

Or pay the Treasurer with cash or a cheque. **Pay by Tuesday 6 October**

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

An Agatha Christie Hercule Poirot story

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 the shows will be at the August meeting.

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

*****If you contact Joe by email, please note the underscore between joe and patwhite in the address*****

* * * INTEREST GROUP NEWS * * *



ART APPRECIATION

Val Trim

August saw several new members join the group --- just in time to consider **the Greek notion of the Ideal Form** as expressed through the composed and immaculately executed nude sculptures produced over two thousand years ago. Exploration of the human body and its realisation in bronze and marble was a keystone of Greek philosophy and embodied ideas about harmony, reason and logic. Interest in the Ideal Form was to be revitalised in the Renaissance when Michelangelo, Donatello and others sought to express their own ideas about humanity as society moved towards a more secular future and a beckoning Enlightenment. In his book on the Nude, Ken Clark seeks to give pre-eminence to this kind of thinking, largely ignoring the fact that the sculptures and

paintings of the later Renaissance and beyond reduced the female nude as subject matter to a mere 'body' for consumption by the male viewer. John Berger challenged Clark's patrician view, relying on the tools of historical materialism to deconstruct Clark's traditional and establishment attitudes. As the inventor of the expression the 'male gaze', Berger sought to raise the consciousness of modern viewers about the inequality present in art that is concerned only with the nude and, for the first time, to give voice to the women who were often its passive subject.

There is no meeting in September. **We meet again on October 1st at 10.15am at the Greig.** Group members will be talking about 'Work!' Please contact me if you are interested in joining us! Val Trim

CARD MAKING GROUP

Lynda Lamb

The Card Making Group will resume classes starting on Friday 11 September 2026. We will be making two cards as usual including a stepper card with a garden theme so possibly suitable for a gentleman or any gardener. Please note that this group is now full and has a waiting list in place.

CRAFT GROUP

Lynda Lamb

The Craft Group will resume classes on Wednesday 16 September 2026 when we will be making a hanging ornament on a floral theme! Please note that this group is now full and has a waiting list in place.

GARDEN LOVERS

Janet Allely

The planned August visit to the Alpine Society Garden, Avon Bank, Wick, Pershore was cancelled due to the heatwave.

CHURCH VISITS

Chris Baker

Two very different churches this month.

We began at **St Bartholomew, Tardebigge**. The medieval building was largely destroyed in 1775 when the tower collapsed onto the church. The rebuild, by Francis Hiorn of Warwick, has an unusual post- medieval layout, with a semicircular apse added a century later. The classical tower is topped by a baroque belfry and a needle- like spire supported on two columns in each corner which, with large, unglazed windows, looks impossibly delicate and slender. Much of the interior woodwork originates from craftspeople from the nearby Hewell Grange, one of the properties of the Earls of Plymouth. The church still has a box pew and gallery seating at the west end.

Moving over a short distance to **Alvechurch, St Laurence**, we found a very different church: very largely rebuilt by 1861 by the celebrated Victorian architect William Butterfield, who was also responsible for Keble College Oxford and the Chapel and New Quad at Rugby School. Only the 15th century tower survives of the original building and that was substantially rebuilt in 1676 after yet another collapse! The interior is classic Butterfield - rich use of red brick, lozenge patterns (diapers) and contrasting cream banding on the walls and sandstone arcades. The church enjoys some spectacularly restored stained glass, one "Arts and Crafts" example by Pike singled out for praise by Pevsner. A cross and a memorial outside have an unusual Grade 2 Heritage listing. A wall memorial to Edward Moore inside pleased those of us who enjoy 18 and 19 century OTT tributes: "in Health, he was sober, devout and dispassionate, Inflexibly just and good; in Sickness, of which he had many sore visitations, Remarkably patient & resigned" etc, etc (!!)

Attached to the church is a superb suite of church rooms, known as The Ark, which comprises offices, meeting, catering and entertainment space and won an architectural prize in 2007. This visitor, at least, was most impressed and envious! Overall, a very busy and well used church.

HISTORY

Lynda Matheson

As June's **Object Lesson** overran, part 2 was held in August. Members were able to compare 2 types of children's cartoons - the daily Rupert Bear strip in the Express newspaper contrasted with American weekly superhero comics. The Rupert strip was designed as ongoing stories, with detailed artwork, rhyming couplets and a fuller narrative. the superhero strips were usually complete stories in themselves, with no narration, instead speech bubbles were used to convey the story. The superhero comics had strong, bright colours and plenty of action, enhanced by very short descriptive words and were aimed at an older age group. For several people they had been a guilty treat and were eagerly watched when some characters made the transition to television (not on the BBC!)

We also learned about knife rests, which graced dining tables for nearly 250 years, but which have now completely fallen out of fashion. They were used to keep greasy carving knives and forks off the tablecloth and came in glass, china and silver forms. Makers here included famous names such as Wedgwood, but knife rests were also used throughout Europe and among manufacturers there were Meissen, Lalique and Fabergé. Rests were made up to the Second World War but seem to have been another casualty of that conflict.

On 17th September Lise Evans will be talking about the Gunpowder Plot.



JAZZ & BIG BAND SOUND

Bob Applegarth

Despite the very hot day we had a very good turn out to hear Bob give his recital on **the music of Bix Beiderbecke**. One of the great white pioneers, Bix was exposed to the cornet styles of King Oliver & Louis Armstrong at an early age. The self-taught Bix followed his own path & created a new style. We heard some of his classic recordings - I'm Coming Virginia, Singing the Blues and Royal Garden Blues - as well as pieces by later musicians influenced by Bix including Bunny Berigan Miles Davis and Don Joseph.

Our next meeting is on September 9th at Malt Mill Lane as usual. Members are reminded to bring CDs of their choice. New members always welcome

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Jan Rowe

John Ruffell's programme was called "**Newer Recordings of Old Favourites**" so there were many discussions about members' favourite versions – old or new! We heard Edvard Grieg's "Piano Concerto in A minor" played by Elizabeth Leonskaja, conductor John Wilson's recording of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" by Paul Dukas, "Danse Macabre" by Camille Saint Saens and "Suite from Carmen" by George Bizet, a delightful and informative afternoon. **Our next meeting is on 30 September, 2.00 pm at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre when we all take a cd to play a favourite track.**

PHILOSOPHY

Peter Tugwell

At our August meeting we considered **Max Weber's definition of a state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory"**. Weber was a sociologist, but this definition, from *Politics as a Vocation* (1919), has been highly influential across the humanities, including philosophy.

We examined its various elements – community, territory and legitimate force – and considered not only what a state is, but what it might be and what it should be. We compared Weber's view with that of Thomas Hobbes, as portrayed in *Leviathan* (1651), and explored related concepts including authority, justice, the rule of law and consent.

We also considered the state's position beyond its own borders. What part does recognition by other states play in statehood? What happens when a state is unable to maintain effective control over its territory? And how does the development of international law affect the traditional concept of state sovereignty?

Finally, we considered some challenges to Weber's definition, including the absence of any discussion of checks and balances or the separation of powers. This led us to reflect on the distinction between the state's possession of coercive power and the question of how that power should be constrained and legitimised.

For our next topic we are continuing our occasional forays into Greek drama, this time considering Euripides' *The Bacchae* from a philosophical point of view. [[Thanks to Chat GPT for this 'polished' version.](#)]

Our next meeting will take place on 22 September 2026.

POETRY TOO

Rosemary Harvey/Ruth Dutton

We were pleased that our own Betty Addison, now a centenarian featured twice in a meeting, along with all the famous names like Larkin and Cope, she holds her own with 'Keeping a Weather eye open', and 'Cloud'. Our theme of **wind and weather** seemed to include more poems on rain and snow, rather than sunshine, but maybe newer poets will celebrate the sun! We did, however have a poem by Annette Volting in 'Drought'. "so we can crack the very bones of summer, pick them white and dry".

Brian Bilston, in 'Now for the Weather' cleverly blends weather forecasting and literary devices, "roads are impacted by frozen tautologies and oxymorons". Wendy Cope cynically paints the gloomy realities of the usual British calendar.

Simon Armitage went to the trouble of having his poem 'Dew' carved onto a stone on the Pennines following an old tradition, describing dew as a "thimble of drink to nature before the sun ignites the dew into liquid gems".

Gwendoline Bennett from Texas describes the wind as "a carefree soul that broke the chains of earth".

Larkin, who is so often very cynical, describes in Autumn, "the feeling that all of Summer has settled there and died", however in the poem Spring he senses "nature's indiscriminate generosity which contrasts with human barrenness".

The last word from Spike Milligan, he wrote "there are holes in the sky, that's why the rain is thin".

Our next themes are Memories and Reflections in September, and The Night Sky in October.

READING GROUP 2

Linda Jennings

This month's book was **Old God's Time by Sebastian Barry** - the story of a retired police officer in Ireland -Tom Kettle - wherein the author follows the many and various trains of thought of this man, who constantly reflects on his past life, his treasured wife and children - none of whom are with him. He relates distressingly vivid accounts of child abuse inflicted by nuns and priests of the Catholic Church. Tom lives in solitude, and the reader is often uncertain as to whether these are true events or the vagaries of Tom's obvious dementia. Members' reviews were, as ever, varied - some describing their distress at the details of abuse, some finding the book 'boring', and other's celebrating Barry's vivid and rich descriptive language. The fabric of the book has many strands running through it - some members thought maybe too many strands. **Next month's book is The Lost Man by Jane Harper.**

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Chris Capstick

We are NOT meeting in August & start our 5th year Singing for Pleasure when we are meeting again on 24 September.

THEATRE TRIPS

Joe White

We were all given a really special day out on Saturday 3rd August going to the Malvern Theatre to **see I'm Sorry Prime Minister**. A new comedy by Jonathan Lynn. Dave, our coach driver, was very good helping us on and off the coach dropping us off outside the Theatre entrance, entailing minimum walking. The sunny day gave spectacular views across the Malvern hills and countryside. The theatre restaurant offered a good selection of light meals cake and beverages, including a bar. We all had excellent seats in the stalls. The play was true to form taking off the TV programme Yes

Prime Minister, giving us all many laughs. The ending was all very agreeable, and we out feeling so much better for having witnessed it all. The coach was waiting to drive us back to the Greig Hall, so many thanks to Joe who plans and arranges these Theatre outings for us so well.

Report by Diane Revell



WALKING GROUPS

AMBLERS GROUP

Bronwen Bunting

Oh dear – still in the throes of the heatwave in August, so no ambling – hopefully more success in September.

FRIDAY WALKERS

Jane and Chris Baker

The very hot weather earlier in August made doing a recce for a walk very unappealing. Fortunately, as the day approached the temperature began to cool and we were able to get out to plan a route. It seemed sensible to do a local walk so on 21st August twelve of us met at St Nicholas Church. We set off to the Grieg Hall and followed the path across the Jubilee Fields to Arden Road. After crossing the road, we continued in the same direction along the River Arrow footpath until we reached Coughton Fields Lane. We turned right along the quiet lane and followed it for over a mile until we came to the Heart of England Way. We returned along the waymarked route to Captains Hill and from there headed into the town.

The walk was five miles and the temperature was a pleasant 16-19°C. We hadn't planned a lunch stop afterwards but five of us enjoyed a light meal in the garden of 'Chapter 23'.

Our next walk will be on September 18th, providing we have recovered from the U3A holiday in Sussex!



SCRABBLE GROUP

Linda Salsbury

Monthly meetings are held at 2.00 pm on the 1st Friday in St Joseph's Church Hall, Priory Rd, Alcester B49 5DY. The welcoming and friendly group averages between 8-10 members per session and meets for 2 hours 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

The group took a summer break in August and classes recommence on 7 September



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		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