



**Seasonal Greetings  
to all Ilkeston u3a members  
from your  
Committee**



# Letter from the Chair

Hello Members

*Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way!*

As I write this letter members of your Committee are busy preparing for our Christmas Open Meeting, sorting raffle prizes, ordering mince pies, choosing nibbles, and gluing decorations for the tables. Our Quiz Group Leader has kindly prepared a Pantomime Quiz, oh yes she did, and the Ilkeston Community Choir are lined up to entertain and sing with us. All this is really getting us into the Christmas Spirit and we look forward to seeing as many of you who can make it to **The Arena on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December from 10a.m. onwards.**



Entrance will be our usual 50p for members or £2.50 for visitors. Please remember to sign in at either Reception table for an added little bonus. Instead of our usual single prize cash raffle there will be a generous selection of Christmas themed prizes instead, so more than one lucky winner this month!

Before I go on to mention more about what's coming up I wanted to say a massive **Thank You** to everyone who participated, and to those who put their names forward during our "**Speed Date your VIV**" initiative at the November Open Meeting. It was a truly fun event and 25 members offered to help when and where needed. Yes, 25! We were absolutely blown away with that result and thank you so much, everyone, for your support. It is highly appreciated.

So much happens at Ilkeston u3a. We may only be a small organisation but we certainly pack a lot in! But it couldn't happen without the time, effort and enthusiasm of our many volunteers. As this is the last newsletter of 2023 it is time for a **SHOUT OUT** to all those that make Ilkeston u3a such a fun, friendly, and fulfilling place to be . . . your Committee, Group Leaders and Acting Group Leaders, Meet & Greet Team, the Newsletter Editor, Reception Team, Refreshments Team, the new 25-strong STARs Team, the Webmaster, and every other member who helps in some way, whether that's making the tea at group, or putting extra chairs out. **THANK YOU!**

So, as we turn our attention back towards Christmas there are many events to look forward. Several interest groups are holding fuddles or having a more social than usual meeting, there's the Open Meeting on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>, the Ilkeston u3a Christmas meal at The Newdigate on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>, and I believe Dining Out and MOTO+ have arranged meals out too. Whatever you are doing I wish you joy and friendship and, on behalf of Your Committee, I would like to wish all members a **Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

Kindest regards

Christine Keighley

Chair



## Ilkeston u3a Participates in Remembrance Sunday

Ilkeston u3a supported the town's Remembrance Sunday ceremonies this year by joining the parade to and from the Cenotaph at the Marketplace, and laying a wreath in honour of those individuals who had paid the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of all of us. Whilst Remembrance Sunday is a sad and sobering affair, we were uplifted by the sheer numbers of people who turned out to participate on the day. 'Thank you', Ilkeston! Members of the u3a participating included Christine Keighley, Jacky Wilding, Graham Peel, Steven Schmidt and Bob Prati, who laid the wreath.



StevenSchmidt

## Membership Matters

If you have changed any of your details (e.g. address, email address, phone number) please fill in the form at the Membership desk so that we can keep your details current.

We now have a reciprocal agreement with Derby u3a. Have a look at their website to see if you would like to attend any of their Interest Groups, and contact the Group Leader to check if there is a space for you. We still are clustered with Beeston, Long Eaton and Stapleford so you can check their Interest Groups too.

**NOTE TO ALL GROUP LEADERS:** If you have any members in your group from any of the above four u3as then from now on you will need to get them to fill in a form and return it to me so we can actually know how many are using our groups. I will be issuing the forms to the group leaders as appropriate. Any Derby member in our groups will now not have to join as an Associate.

This checking will enable us to verify cluster or reciprocal members are in no more than 3 Interest Groups – if in more then they will have to join as an Associate.

We will, of course, be renewing our own Ilkeston membership from January. I will be doing the same as last year: giving out the forms in December for you to fill in over Christmas which you bring back in January to help speed up the process.

**Jacky Wilding**  
**Membership Secretary**

# Online Learning Events

Here's a taster of some of the events you can enjoy online from Third Age Trust this month. For the full programme and to book [www.u3a.org.uk/events](http://www.u3a.org.uk/events)



## **The Art of William Morris**

Wednesday 6 December, 2pm

A journey into the incredible work and beautiful art of William Morris.



## **Live Cookery Demonstration - Christmas special**

Thursday 7 December, 10.30am

Chef Alex from 'Vegetarian for Life' demos his delicious festive recipes live from his kitchen.



## **Exploring World Faiths: Christmas**

Monday 11 December, 10am

Although Christmas is regarded as a Christian Festival celebrating the birth of Jesus, we will explore how other faiths celebrate Christmas.

## Poetry Competition Open Now



The u3a national poetry competition has been launched for its fourth year, with the theme of **'What If'**. The judges are looking forward to seeing what talents members have to offer.

Your poem should be a maximum of 16 lines and the deadline for submission is 12pm on Friday 26 January 2024. Submit your entry online at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/poetry-competition>

### How it works:

- In summary, your story must be your own, individual, original work, in English, a maximum of 16 lines, and not submitted anywhere else.
- Your submission must be on the theme of: **What If**.
- You must read the rules of the competition before entering. The link for these can be found at the bottom of this webpage.
- Any submission which does not meet these rules will not be considered.
- All submissions will be judged by group judging panels and the best story from each group will be compared to decide on an overall winner.

**The deadline for submission is 12pm on Friday 26 January 2024.**

**Good Luck!**



## Reciprocal Agreement with Derby u3a

Ilkeston u3a has entered into a Reciprocal Agreement with Derby u3a and we are now good to go from December 1<sup>st</sup>. This will work very similarly to the set up with our Cluster partners, Beeston, Long Eaton and Stapleford.

This Reciprocal Agreement allows Ilkeston u3a members to attend up to 3 Derby u3a interest groups without the need to join as an Associate Member. Visiting members would still be expected to pay an individual meeting fee where one applies, and show evidence of Ilkeston u3a membership i.e. your current membership badge. You will need to complete a Reciprocal Membership Form which is on Derby u3a website.

In return Derby u3a members can attend up to 3 Ilkeston u3a groups, again, given that there is space available on the group. Ilkeston u3a is introducing a Reciprocal Membership Form similar to Derby which will soon be posted on our website. Group Leaders are asked to send completed forms to our Membership Secretary so that we can monitor take-up and proper use of the arrangement.

Derby u3a currently has over 40 interest groups and meets in various locations around the City. For more information about the interest groups they operate and the Reciprocal Agreement please see their website <https://u3asites.org.uk/derby/home>

**Christine Keighley**

# What you wanted to share



## A Special Donkey's First Christmas

By Janet Reeve

A donkey's life is hard,  
A donkey's life is sad,  
All day and every day  
People treat me really bad.

They make me carry heavy loads,  
Firewood, goods and chattels,  
All day and every day  
No-one to fight *my* battles.

I sleep all on my own-some  
In a tiny battered wooden shed,  
All night and every night  
This shed's my lonely bed.

BUT THEN . . .  
On one chilly winter's eve  
I was woken from my sleep  
By banging on the wooden door,  
So through the slats I peep.

Outside there stands a weary man  
With a young lady by his side.  
"Little donkey, come out and help us  
So she on your back may ride".

I opened up the rickety door  
And slowly stepped outside,  
The lady there was large with child  
So, of course . . . on my back I'd let her ride.

The man said his name was Joseph,  
His wife Mary leant on the door,  
On their way to old Bethlehem town,  
To be taxed, as was stated by law.

I plodded along through the dark starry night,  
Stopping when Mary got tired,  
A kindly voice was all that I heard,  
No shouting, no whipping, I was inspired.

Inspired to worship these people so kind,  
To go where so ever they led me,  
To carry Mary to a safe place for the birth,  
Mary, so special, 'twas easy to see.

Arriving in Bethlehem with nowhere to stay,  
People bustling, jostling, scaring me so,  
Knocking on doors, much shaking of heads,  
My precious load, pregnant and no place to go.

Joseph knocked on the door of the last possible inn,  
"You can sleep in the stable", they said,  
Thankful to rest, the baby was due,  
In the straw Mary found a soft bed.

The baby was born in a heavenly glow,  
Wrapped, and laid in a manger,  
Swaddled and cuddled by Mary His mother  
And protected by Joseph from danger.

Contented I stood by with the cattle  
As lowly shepherds and magnificent kings,  
Led by a star to this special manger  
Brought gifts for this *heavenly* king.

SO . . .  
From now on I'll frolic out in the fields,  
And eat the luscious pasture grass,  
All day and every day  
As the different seasons pass.

**No more toil and trial for me  
'Cos  
This donkey's *real special* . . . See!!**



## What you wanted to share

This has got to be one of the cleverest  
E-mails I've received in awhile.



Someone out there  
Must be "deadly" at *Scrabble*.

**PRESBYTERIAN:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**BEST IN PRAYER**

**ANIMOSITY:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**IS NO AMITY**

**ASTRONOMER:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**MOON STARER**

**ELECTION RESULTS :**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**LIES - LET'S RECOUNT**

**DESPERATION:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**A ROPE ENDS IT**

**SNOOZE ALARMS :**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**ALAS! NO MORE Z'S**

**THE EYES:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**THEY SEE**

**A DECIMAL POINT :**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**I'M A DOT IN PLACE**

**GEORGE BUSH:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**HE BUGS GORE**

**THE EARTHQUAKES:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**THAT QUEER SHAKE**

**THE MORSE CODE :**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**HERE COME DOTS**

**ELEVEN PLUS TWO:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**TWELVE PLUS ONE**

**DORMITORY:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**DIRTY ROOM**

**AND FOR THE GRAND FINALE:**

**MOTHER-IN-LAW:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**WOMAN HITLER**

**SLOT MACHINES:**

When you rearrange the letters:  
**CASH LOST IN ME**

**Bet your friends haven't seen this one!  
DON'T FORGET TO SHARE THIS**

*Supplied by John Smart*



## Interest Groups Round-up



TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE

Dining Out

Discussion

Games

MOTO+

Quiz

GROUPS

My sincerest **Thank you** for all the help and support given to me during the past year.



Best Wishes for a Very Merry  
Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Ann Riley

New members always welcome.

# Interest Groups Round-up

## History 2

History Group 2 asked each of its members to share their own personal remembrances at their November monthly meeting. People reached into their family 'archives' to reveal personal stories, awards, medals, certificates, accounts written about relatives, war-related photographs and anything about family and friends that could be remembered. This proved to be a fascinating experience, sobering yes, but cathartic as well. One member brought in the Queen's and the King's South Africa Medals awarded to a maternal grandparent in 1901/1902 from the Boer Wars.



Another member offered a 'Dead Man's Penny' – a WW I bronze medallion awarded posthumously to a relative in the family.

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Ilkeston u3a meets at The Arena, first Tuesday of every month at 10am. u3a is a place where skills, past learning and life experiences are shared between people who are retired or in part-time employment. Please come along and join us!

**Steven Schmidt**

## Family History

We welcomed 4 new members to the group in November, as well as enjoying a talk by Long Eaton u3a member, John Hassell.

John gave an interesting rendition of his own research into his maternal ancestral line, the Bestwick family, who have roots in Heanor. He came with samples of Nottingham Lace and a Pick Axe!

In December, in true festive spirit, we will be holding a Christmas Fuddle at a member's home during which we'll be discussing ideas for our 2024 group programme.

Our Very Best Wishes to All.



**Christine Keighley**

## Interest Groups Round-up

### Knit & Stitch

#### Pom Poms for Derbyshire Sight Support



Members who attended our monthly Knit & Stitch Group in October pulled out the stops, at very short notice, when asked to help make woollen pom-poms for Sight Support Derbyshire.

This charity is dedicated to improving the lives of people with sight loss in Derbyshire and provides services, support, advice and information to adults and children across the county who are blind or partially sighted.

Victoria Gallimore, a Social Activities Project Worker with the charity, was planning to hold two wreath-making sessions in November for her partially sighted and blind clients and needed between 50 and 100 more pom-poms to use in these Christmas wreaths.

Twelve ladies from the Knit & Stitch Group rose to the challenge and between them created 141 beautiful and colourful pom-poms that have been handed over to a very grateful Victoria. She now has plenty of pom-poms for her sessions and she plans to use any leftovers to make more wreaths to raise funds for the charity.



So, it is thanks to the ladies from Ilkeston u3a who made this happen either by creating pom-poms, teaching others how to make them, donating knitting wool, or loaning out their pom-pom making gadgets to other members. Their names, in no specific order, are Susan Titterton, Anne Smith, Jenny Whittaker, Christine Keighley, Barbara Green, Marian Stopper, Wanda Labuda, Barbara Bailey, Deidre Bailey, Carolanne Mason, Elaine Barratt & Val Buxton. Well done everyone. A great effort all round.

**Valerie Buxton**

# Interest Groups Round-up

## Canasta



The Canasta group has had several new members joining us over the last few months and they are gradually learning the rules of the 4 handed and 3 handed games. As you can see from the picture we are now completely filling the area that the Rutland Cottage agreed that we can use to play so unfortunately I have decided that I will have to introduce a waiting list. If you would like your name to be added to the list, please let me know.

**Marian Stopper**

## History 1

On 17th November History Group 2 welcomed Judith Foxton from Beeston U3A history group. Judith proceeded to present a first class talk, well researched, on Alfred the Great, born 849—died 899.

Judith outlined all the tribal movements and activities which took place between the Roman occupation and the times of Alfred. When Alfred was born the likelihood of him becoming King lay at zero, for he had four elder brothers, also a scholar's life was apparently what he desired. His mother had aroused his interest in English poetry. After visits to Rome in 853 and 855 he yearned for Latin learning, however, he was also required to study the military arts, normal for a young man of rank. His first appearance on active service was in 868, when he and his brother Aethelred went to the rescue of Mercia, the Kingdom between the Humber and the Thames, against a great Danish army in 867. The Danes refused to fight and peace was made, the same year Alfred married Ealhswith. Late in 871 Aethelred and Alfred fought several battles with the Danes. Aethelred died in 871 and Alfred succeeded him.



Over the next few years, Alfred continued to face many battles with the Danes, and it was not until 896 that they gave up the struggle. The failure of the Danes to make any advances against Alfred was largely a result of the defensive measures he undertook during the wars. Old forts were strengthened and new ones built. Alfred reorganised his army and developed the use of ships against invaders. Alfred succeeded in government as well. He took steps to ensure the protection of the weak from oppression, promoted learning, he translated Latin books into English, and provided a manual for priests in the instruction of their flocks. In short Alfred left a fantastic legacy behind him, much of which remains in place to this day. Alfred died in 899, leaving England in a much better state than he found it.

Many thanks to Judith for a very enlightening morning.

**Alwyn Holmes**

## Interest Groups Round-up

### Definitely Not Rocket—or any other supersonic method of transport—Science



So . . . er . . . um . . . do any of us weight-watch over the Christmas period?

Well, for 70 per cent of us, how much we consume simply isn't a concern: over half of those surveyed by Wren Kitchens (<https://www.wrenkitchens.com/>) - a company owned by a small bird with a big appetite? - admitted that Christmas is their 'get out of jail free' card to indulge in whatever they want.

In the pre-Covid survey, the average Brit was found to have eaten nearly a day's worth of calories before even pulling a cracker and sitting down to the lunchtime festive feast, if you have it at midday. More than a third of us will also have had our first festive tippie before then, and 37 per cent crack open a bottle every day of the festive week. Devil take the budget must be a common theme?

On average, us Brits will put away 5,905 calories over the course of Christmas Day. And if you don't fancy traditional Christmas food but still want to join in that feeling of uncomfortable fullness, try eating these equivalent sources of calories: 118 chicken nuggets, or 26 doughnuts, or 12 Big Macs, 22 pork pies, 55 two-finger Kit-Kats, 32 slices of pizza, 53 bags of Quavers or 131 Jaffa Cakes, etc. 32 slices of pizza? Depends on the topping! Alka Seltzer please.

Sorry, how many calories in an Alka Seltzer? What, minus 4500 calories? Not bad! That settles it.

### Some KWIKI Kwestions for Kristmas.

- 1: In 1882 Edward Johnson (who was not a member of u3a) invented the first electric what?
- 2: HOH OHO is Santa's official postcode in which country?
- 3: In the song "12 Days of Christmas" if you added up all the gifts how many would you have?
- 4: What was the first Christmas song ever to be broadcast from space?
- 5: .... and on radio
- 6: In what Christmassy context would you find a moon of Uranus, a rocky celestial body, a vulpine female, a computer accessibility tool, a waggling honeybee, thunder and lightning, and three others?
- 7: [For the rockety-scientifically minded] What is the only element that has no letters in common with "The three wise men"? And how about the only other element that has no letters in common with just "wise men"?
- 8: What law would you associate with a very famous scientist who was born on Christmas Day?
- 9: [For the mathematically minded among us . . . anyone?]

Santa's sack has 15 presents in it—5 green ones, 5 red ones, and 5 white ones. If the Chair of Ilkeston u3a, the Membership Secretary, and the Newsletter Editor each pull out one present at random, what are the chances of them all having different colours? And the chances of them all having the same colour?

### Answers overleaf



# Interest Groups Round-up

## Answers to DNRS quiz on previous page

- 1: Christmas tree lights
- 2: Canada
- 3: 364
- 4: Jingle Bells
- 5: Holy Night
- 6: They are Santa's reindeer. (Cupid, Comet, Vixen, Dasher, Dancer, Donner and Blitzen, respectively)
- 7: Pleasingly and appropriately, the only element to have no letters in common with 'THREE WISE MEN' is GOLD.
- 8: The Laws of Motion (the scientist being Isaac Newton). [This is *not* a universal law relating to excess food consumption. Honestly, truly.]
- 9: In each case, the first present pulled out can be anything, so our calculations start from the draw of the second.

In the first case (three different colours), the second present drawn can be any of ten from the remaining fourteen (it just needs to be a different colour from the one already drawn), and the third present can be any of five from thirteen. So the calculation is  $10/14 \times 5/13 = 27.5\%$

In the second case (all the same colour), the second present drawn can be any four from fourteen, and then any three from the remaining thirteen, so it's  $4/14 \times 3/13 = 6.5\%$

Hmm... got that?

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## Santa's superindulgence

If Santa were to eat one mince pie, [say 220 calories) and drink one small glass of milk, 135 calories, (well, we gotta keep him sober, otherwise he'll be falling out of the sledge by the time he got to the Isle of Wight) laid out for him at each household visited, he'd be consuming in the region of 10 billion calories. Before even crossing the Channel! Pretty excessive for just one evening.

Okay, so he uses the energy from 10% of that in digestion. And heaving . . . apologies, bad choice of word, *lifting* all those heavy sacks of pressies around must also burn up a lot.

Us researchers have no choice but to conclude that Santa's "stable weight and apparent good health" are the result of a Christmas miracle.

It's a no-brainer about the magic. He has to travel some 10 million miles, to visit more than 200 million children, in 800 million households, in only 34 hours . . . at 0.5% of the speed of light. (He laughed himself silly at the film titles "Around the World in 80 Days" and "The Longest Day"). Good thing Santa has magic on his side, he'd get vaporised by the air resistance otherwise.

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**[The DNRS - Definitely Not Rocket Science - group meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12.00, at the Fire Station]**

If you've ever wondered what subject areas we cover in the Science group, it's—to put it briefly—life, the universe, everything. Or, to put it another way, anything. This past year we've looked at whether trees "talk" to each other (via the Wood Wide Web, *not* using mobile phones), the circulation of the ocean currents, El Niño and La Niña, the Periodic Table of the Elements (yes, there's more than four!), whether spiders don't like conkers, the immune system, the James Webb telescope, how hurricanes form, why the earth is seriously cracking in Arizona ('cos Saudi-owned farms pump out water from the water table; all to feed their livestock back home; sheesh!), as well as news and subjects brought to the group by attendees. And lots more. Plus we have a bit of fun, and explore the calorific value of biscuits.

**Malcolm Muckle**

# Interest Groups Round-up

## Craft

Christmas has arrived already! We have been making Christmas Angels this month. This was another design that Val found and then practiced, before making up the kits so that the rest of us could construct them. The angels were made up of a circle and a heart shaped piece of double sided paper, a doily and polystyrene ball. They looked quite simple to do, but no. It took a while to get into, deciding where the folds went to complete the Angel. But as you can see final results were great. As usual no two are the same. Well done ladies!



Barbara, Val and Deb

## Golf and Table Tennis

Due to the state of the ground no golf was played. It was just a drink and a chat.

Table Tennis goes from strength to strength. I think we have now reached the limit on players. We will have to see now how many turn up each week.

Peter Winfield

## Bridge

Do you think bridge is too difficult or only for certain people? Why not come along to see what we do and ask those playing what they think?

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at the Rutland Cottage pub on Heanor Road, between 2 and 4pm.

Give it a try; you never know . . .



Andrew Wright

## Interest Groups Round-up

### Patchwork & Quilting

Over the next 12 months we will all be taking part in a 'BOM' - block of the month exercise. We do not know exactly what the blocks will look like, they will all be based on a type of block called 'Cathedral windows' and published each month in 'Today's Quilter'. Some of us will make large quilts, some lap quilts and some just cushions but they will all be based on the same patterns.

The accompanying picture shows the first instalment by some of us (the others are still deciding on their fabrics). In the first picture, these early blocks were made by Anne Wood, Elaine Barrett, Val Buxton and Jenny Whittaker. These are all exactly the same block but look so very different.



In addition the cushion has been made by Elaine to enhance her Christmas celebrations. It has been made partially by machine and partially by hand. The photo doesn't really do it justice. Well done, Elaine!

The small lap quilt is made in a twisted windmill pattern and made mainly from a fabric pack bought in America a number of years ago, made by Jenny.

**Jenny Whittaker**

### Garden Group

The November meeting was the last of the year and also until we meet again in February 2024. We concluded the year with a fuddle, quiz and discussion on visits, speakers etc for 2024. Hilde and Anne Wood won the quiz on a joint effort, winning a 'chocolate' cash prize! The meeting was well attended and hopefully an interesting programme can be put together for 2024 from the ideas taken from the meeting. Thanks to the members for ideas put forward for the programme.

**Barbara Bailey**