

This month join us at our Open Meeting
on

Tuesday 7th May
10.00 am at The Arena
Ilkeston

We will be welcoming our speaker:

Debbie Phipps

**On the History and Products
of Weleda**

Doors open at 9.45 am
Refreshments available

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Coming soon to our Open Meetings

4th June: Volunteers Week plus
Liz Woledge speaking about Royal Crown
Derby

2nd July: Andy Williams from Tean Valley
Meadows—Talk & DVD showing the develop-
ment and success of the nature reserve in
attracting varied birds and wildlife

6th August: Gerald Price—an illustrated talk
on the Woodland Trust and the importance
of woodlands

3rd September: Peter Stubbs—speaking
about The History of Crime in England over
1000 years.

*** IMPORTANT ***

Please note: All those attending the monthly meetings must sign in at either of the two desks at the entrance to the meeting hall of The Arena. This is necessary so that we know how many have attended and, even more important, **it is required to comply with fire regulations.** If you arrive early, before the signing-in sheet is available, please make sure you return to the desk later to sign in.

Find us on
Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1226535837801301>

April Round Up



Hello Members!

Now the days are growing longer it's tempting to look forward to lazy summer days, I only wish the weather would catch up with the clock, but hey ho, central heating back on!

On the morning of the **Garden Group's day trip to Springfields Festival Gardens** there was a mild frost, but that didn't put people off, and 32 members enjoyed a fabulous day out on Friday 26th, with a guided tour of the gardens and some retail therapy in the adjacent Outlet Centre. You'll find more news from interest groups further in this newsletter.

Committee-wise, the new team is gelling well and has now met twice with a full agenda each time! Because of the changes on the committee the Policy Sub-Committee took a month off in March but has recently resumed—more on that next month after the rest of the Committee have reviewed the work they did. May's Committee Meeting will be hosted by our Mayor and includes a tour of the Civic Trophy Room—that should be very interesting.

Ilkeston u3a had a fantastic feature in Ilkeston Life April edition, which is a tremendous promotional boost for us in the local community. In addition Steven and Jacky spent 11th April afternoon at Ilkeston Hospital with a promo table in the foyer and another is planned for the morning of 17th June.

Nationally things are very busy too. **The Fit for the Future** consultation has now concluded and we await the outcome to see whether the u3a movement is supportive of Third Age Trust's proposals to change their structure or not.

We finally have more news about the **u3a Festival in York 18th-20th July**. It is a full and varied programme and, although not yet finalised, has something of interest for all. If you are interested in going please refer to u3a website for all the latest information and booking options. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>

u3a Friends Extra, a discount and benefits scheme, has been launched and more information can be found at https://u3afriends-extra.org.uk/a_/. Please note this scheme is not exclusive to u3a members, but open to anyone who wishes to register.

The u3a magazine Third Age Matters has been revamped. Now called **u3a Matters** it has been brightened up to 'put a spring in your step'. Let us know what you think . . .

And finally, we have a last minute change of speaker for our May Open Meeting. We now look forward to welcoming Debbie Phipps from Weleda who will be coming to talk to us about the history and products of Weleda and will be bringing samples.

Take care everyone, and hope to see you at May Open Meeting.

Christine Keighley, Chair

u3a Festival 24 Programme 18th-20th July



This is a taster and a guide to the various activities taking place each day, full details, and options to book into each of the sessions will be published on the website in the coming weeks. The full music and sports programme will be available shortly.

Thursday 18th July - Afternoon and Evening - Registration from 2pm in the Galleria Restaurant

Fun with Maths - Fun mathematical puzzling for all abilities, getting to know the Platonic solids that have been an important part of our history for thousands of years.

Sew on the Go - Get caught up in a hobby that is extremely addictive.

Slow stitching 'Van Gogh' - A practical introduction to the mindful craft of slow stitching. Participants will each create a Van Gogh inspired fabric collage.

Environment and Climate Change - Learn more about climate change and flooding and rising temperatures.

Hey Up! Card Game - A noisy and highly sociable card game.

The Art of Family History - Take inspiration from your precious family memories and memorabilia to make a unique creative piece that you and yours can enjoy for years to come.

Gardening & Wildlife with the RHS - A talk by Andrew Willocks from the RHS.

Secrets of the Human Brain - This talk provides a simple description of the structure of the brain, how nerves work and how different parts of the brain do different things.

Brushstrokes of History - Join us for a fascinating journey through York's rich artistic history, including a closer look at a national treasure from the National Gallery, Monet's 'Water Lily Pond'.

Yoga Flow Laughter - Yoga You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

Spanish Board Games & Conversation Games can be an excellent way to develop language skills and they can be played with people at different levels of knowledge of the language.

Country Dancing Quiz - A fun quiz. Participants will be allocated teams on arrival. Come along and bring your own pencil.

Juke Box Jury - Be transported back to the 1960s Saturday tea-times in front of the black & white television.

That Band

Friday 19th July - morning

Jewellery Making - An Introduction to jewellery making session to learn basic techniques using necessary tools.

Painting for Beginners - So, you think that you can't paint? Come along and see that you can.

Writing Short Stories - Join Lynne Carroll, magazine fiction short story writer and winner of the U3a National Short Story Competition 2021, to learn some tips and tricks to help you become a winner, too.

Talk on the History of Medicine

u3a Festival 24 Programme (continued)

Life Drawing

Awake Asleep & Dreams - This talk explains how different parts of our brain are responsible for keeping us awake and making us go to sleep.

TaiChi/QiDong - Tai Chi and Qi Gong are closely related oriental practices for the health of body, heart, and mind. They incorporate simple, slow movements or held postures with an awareness of the breath.

STEM Centre Tour - Tour of the National STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Learning Centre which will provide the opportunity to explore their many online teaching resources.

In the Footsteps of the Georgians - Walk - Sightseeing in the period 1714 – 1830.

Games Room - Come to a Games Room to play a variety of board/card games with easy-to-pick-up rules, including (optionally) any games that you bring (with their rules!).

Minesweeping in WWII - Nick - a mine warfare and diving specialist - will give an overview of the Royal Navy's minesweeping operations in the Second World War.

Plato - is He Relevant? - Why is Plato so endlessly fascinating?

Walking Cricket - Walking Football

Pickleball

Music Entertainment

Friday 19th - Afternoon and Evening

Your Deeper Self - An invitation to peel away the layers which hide the full brilliance and potential of your true self.

Sew on the Go - Get caught up in a hobby that is extremely addictive.

Environment & Climate Change - Interested in climate issues? Do you have a group or would like to start one? Join us for lots of ideas and support.

Richard III - A talk on Richard III, Lord of the North - Richard ruled Northern England justly and successfully for a decade before being elected to the throne.

Astronomy - A talk about the Solar System, plus a little of what is beyond. Suitable for anyone curious about astronomy.

Boundary Spanning for Happiness - Kersten England will talk about the positive personal impact of 'boundary spanning' on mental health and wellbeing and part of her route to a longer, happier life.

Dance Exercise - This session will focus on posture, strength in the feet and legs, flexibility in the torso, balance, and movement memory.

Knit & Natter Room including Tatting drop in. - Bring your knitting or crocheting to natter or listen to a discussion on the well-being benefits of knitting and crocheting. Tatting is a form of knotted lace – challenging at first, then surprisingly simple!

Floral Crown Workshop - Using fresh flowers and foliage make your own festival crown and wear it with pride.

Walking Netball

u3a Festival 24 Programme (continued)

Play Reading - Imagine there's a radio play and you're performing in it. Join us for a script or two to enjoy the plot and the acting.

Games Room - Come to a Games Room to play a variety of board / card games with easy-to-pick-up rules, including (optionally) any games that you bring.

The Mortimer Affair - A talk on why Edward II was never likely to have been murdered in Berkeley Castle in 1327.

Music Entertainment

Brushstrokes of History - Join us for a fascinating journey through York's rich artistic history, including a closer look at a national treasure from the National Gallery, Monet's 'Water Lily Pond'.

Summing up the 19th Century - British History adviser Ian McCannah and Maths and Stats adviser David Martin will lead this interactive session summing up the 19th Century.

AI in the Back Garden - This talk describes my attempts to find out what's going on in our back garden when we aren't around. Includes training and using AI (Artificial Neural Network) to identify the visitors and send messages to our phones.

Yoga Flow - Yoga for the Beginner or Intermediate.

Snickleways of York - A guided walk tour of the snickets, gunnels, and alleyways of the Historic Centre of York

In the Footsteps of the Georgians Guided walk - Sightseeing in the period 1714 – 1830

Yoga - Join us for a one-hour yoga session covering asanas, pranayama, and a short meditation. Suitable for all levels of fitness.

Plato et al - Why is Plato so endlessly fascinating?

Croquet

Egyptology - A talk from Professor Joann Fletcher from the Department of Archaeology at University of York.

Juke Box Jury - Be transported back to the 1960s Saturday tea-times in front of the black and white television.

Hatha Yoga - The session will incorporate tuning to your mind and body.

Pétanque

Poetry Greats - Recitations by heart and contextual discussion of poems by some of the 20th century's greatest poets - Yeats, Thomas, Auden, MacNiece, Frost, Eliot etc.

AI for Beginners - Art, Aviation, Languages, research using AI Life Drawing.

Laughter Yoga - You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

The Mysterious Death of Christopher Marlowe - This talk will give an account of the great playwright's life and death and attempt to answer the many puzzles surrounding the murder. Who did it? how? Above all why did he meet such an untimely end?

The Night Sky – stargazing.

u3a Festival 24 Programme (continued)

Saturday 20th July - Morning

Portrait Class - Our model will be announced nearer the time. Bring your phone or camera to record the pose. Bring your choice of materials.

Painting for Beginners - So, you think that you can't paint? Come along and see that you can.

Doodle Art - You will be amazed at what you can produce and maybe even find a new outlet for your new-found creativity.

AI - Generating poems, stories, draft documents, images, video using AI.

Slow Stitching - A practical introduction to the mindful craft of slow stitching. Participants will each create a Van Gogh inspired fabric collage.

Mindfulness & Meditation - Discover the benefits of mindfulness and meditation as we age.

Memory Perception and Thought - The focus will be on introducing some of the key areas of cognitive psychology. We will look at fascinating topics such as human memory, perception and problem solving.

Hypnotherapy - Find out how hypnotherapy works to benefit mind and body.

The Development of Seaside Resorts - A talk featuring case studies from Blackpool and Littlehampton.

Vaccinations through History - A talk of the history from Smallpox to COVID.

Guitar workshop - A chance to try some of the skills at a range of levels with some useful resources.

TaiChi/QiDong - Tai Chi and Qi Gong are closely related oriental practices for the health of body, heart, and mind. They incorporate simple, slow movements or held postures with an awareness of the breath.

Yoga - A restorative practice with gentle movement, breathing and meditation. Chair options.

Walking the Solar System – outdoors - This gentle and flat walk will start from the Astro campus and follow the scale model of the Solar System within the University's campus grounds from the Sun out to the depths of Pluto. Expected finish time around 1pm

***Please note that the programme is subject to change.**



New Members Coffee Morning

The last Coffee Morning we held was a real success – lots of members mingling and discussing various topics.

We are holding another one on Wednesday 19 June from 10am onwards at the Observatory where you can partake of whatever you like: coffee, tea, breakfast and lunch if so desired. Come along and meet Group Leaders and other members and perhaps sign up to a new group. It's good to mingle!



**Jacky
Membership Secretary**

Online Learning Events

u3a Members can enjoy a diverse range of talks, workshops and courses on Zoom at no extra cost. These events are a great opportunity to try something new, led by members with a passion or talent to share or specialist guest speakers.

There are lots of subjects to enjoy during April. You can learn to chat with your AI Bot; discuss climate change and some solutions; or enjoy live cookery demonstrations, to name just three, so why not have a browse of all the events at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning>



Help Required!

I was wondering if any members have an Apple Mac computer. I've just acquired one and desperately need some help! My family are always busy and don't have time to help me. If you can help, please email me at: ensom1@btinternet.com or see me at the open meeting on 7th May.

**Thank you,
Wendy Wesley**

Interest Groups Round-up

Flat Green Hi Bowlers,

Bowling

The Bowling season is here! The first u3a Flat Green Bowling session is on **Monday, 6 May (May Bank Holiday) 1pm to 3pm** at Stanton Clubhouse Bowling Club, Lows Lane, Stanton.

Because of ongoing redevelopment at Stanton, you may have to contend with traffic lights.

Don't forget to wear flat soled shoes and if you own bowls, please bring them with you.

I look forward to seeing you for another enjoyable Bowling Season.

Best wishes
Kevin McKay
Bowling Group Leader

Craft

Once again the groups have been busy using the die cutting machine and producing some beautiful cards.



Barbara, Val and Deb

Interest Groups Round-up

Patchwork and Quilting

The submission from Patchwork!

The first two pictures are of sewing bags made by Marion and Barbara. This pattern has always been very popular as the bag itself can be used for many things not just sewing accessories. The ladies have done really well and they look so lovely it makes me feel like making another myself.



The next photo is of a summer wall hanging made in the technique of bargello, with the addition of some little wooden butterflies. It has been expertly made by Christine who has also made four complementary cushions.

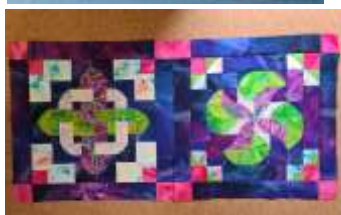
The Pink elephants on Parade quilt has been made by myself.

We have continued making our blocks of the month, and some members of the group are rapidly getting up to date! The blocks are challenging, but we are all determined to succeed.



From left to right, the latest blocks made by Marion, Anne, Elaine, Val, and Jenny.

Lastly, Christine and Barbara who have so very nearly caught up.



I am so very proud that we are taking on this challenge, not only the fact that the blocks are being completed but of the very high standard of the work.

Jenny Whittaker

Interest Groups Round-up

Garden Group *For the March* meeting we had invited Beverley along to speak on Wildlife Gardening with bees. Beverley is an Ecologist and has worked for various organisations in this capacity. She also leads 'fungi' walks locally (if anyone is interested, I have copies of her programme). She is passionate about preserving wildlife and introducing it into our gardens and was encouraging us to record insects, flowers etc that appear in our gardens. We were also asked to welcome hedgehogs. She mentioned that a friend has a sanctuary (locally) for 3- legged hedgehogs but if they are adopted by anyone they do need a secure garden due to their lack of mobility.

Otters were present at Morley Hayes and Stanley last year and otter cubs were seen on the golf course. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust have a reserve of beavers which are 'boxed' at Willington. She only touched on badgers as it is a controversial topic but did stress that they are a protected species.

She presented slides of various species of bees (the cuckoo bee is not a true bee – hence the name), flowers (the Bulbous buttercup is the earliest variety and is identified by the sepals running down the stem rather than up), and insects.

The session was rounded off by the members taking advantage of the plants and shrub cuttings she had brought along to emphasise her passion for having trees, shrubs and plants to encourage the wildlife into our gardens.

For the April meeting a visit had been arranged to the Springfields Festival Gardens and Retail Outlet at Spalding. The Gardens are run by a Charity and board of Trustees. On our arrival, refreshments were provided and a talk had been arranged by one of the Trustees - Johnny Walkers - on the History of the tulip growing and the development of the tulip gardens at Spalding. We learned that tulips actually originated from a band of countries from Turkey to China. Istanbul has held an annual Tulip Fair since 1955.



Tulips need moist retentive soil and should not be planted in the same area of ground each year. Until the 1700's the Fenland was marshy but, with the help of Dutch engineers, the fens were drained by creating a network of dykes and ditches. The result is the flat, fertile landscape we saw today in Lincolnshire today and region bears the name of Little Holland. Tulips have been grown in The Netherlands for several centuries. When the introduction of tulips began here in 1905 the Dutch gave advice. By 1933 there were 150 growers and 2,800 acres of bulbs. Female labour was prevalent in the industry as the majority of ladies did not have full time jobs and could start work at 8.30a.m., when the children had gone to school, and finish at 3p.m. to collect the children from school. On May 6th 1935 for George V and Queen Mary's Jubilee red, white and blue tulips were produced which invited numerous visitors for the display.

The industry decreased at the onset of the war as the bulbs were not available. Interest increased again after the war and grew enormously in the area but growers weren't allowed to import the number of bulbs required as they were limited with how much money they could spend abroad. Therefore, the Dutch tulip growers came here and the hotels in February each year were occupied by Dutchmen selling bulbs to nurserymen.

Interest Groups Round-up

For several decades visitors to see the tulips would have seen fields with blocks of different coloured flowers but it was discovered that if the tulip heads were removed, bigger and better bulbs were produced. To use the detached flowers the Spalding Flower Parade was begun. A resident Dutchman decided on a theme for each year's Parade, and he began drawing the designs to convert into the floats. Each design had to be built around a tractor. Then throughout



the winter months a blacksmith built the frameworks for the designs, ready for the Festival in May. During the 1970s/80s/90s the Parade was at its height of popularity. Tulip heads were collected 72 hours before the Parade and pinned onto the displays 48 hours prior to Parade. Routes were signposted by the RAC and there was also a police presence. Eventually sponsorship monies were withdrawn which made it too expensive to run, the public were not attending as much as they previously had and more Health and Safety issues had to be adhered to. Consequently in 2013 the decision was made to discontinue it.

It was decided that a reinvention was needed and the Retail Outlet was developed at a cost of £30 million. The gardens had been formed in 1966 and had well-established trees, so some of them were included in the landscaping.



The Springfield Gardens occupy 15 acres and each year the Head Gardener is tasked with coming up with a theme for planting. 130,000 bulbs were planted for this year but unfortunately due to the weather and wildlife damage that number is not representative of the number of flowers in the garden. Inga, who guided us round the gardens, has been working there for 10 years and it has been the fastest tulip season she has seen. There are

22 flower beds and a National Collection of 385 narcissus. The Kim Wilde garden is for plants suited to hot climates. The Japanese garden represents a story through stones (monoliths) of a couple with no children and out of a peach stone came a little boy to complete their family. The different stones in the pathway show respect for the garden.



Although the gardens have suffered due to the wet weather and invasion by wildlife (squirrels and muntjacs) there was still a lovely assortment of tulips and spring planting. There is a Wetland area and



Nostalgia Garden for relaxing in, complete with beach hut and telephone box. The Wetland Area has a Hide overlooking the reedbeds, much frequented by wildlife. A kingfisher house has been installed near the Hide (at a cost of £200) as they have frequent sightings of kingfishers. They also have live "view as it happens" set up at the nature reserves, Wildlife Trust Lincolnshire, RSPB Frampton Marsh and at Gibraltar Point. The cameras are set up so that wildlife can be seen as it is from the cameras in situ. Seals on the beach at Gibraltar Point are often seen. They have close ties with RSPB to record bird activity in the gardens, in line with their "What Can You See?" sheets and many other educational sheets that they provide.

We were blessed with a lovely sunny day which made the visit all the more enjoyable.

Barbara Bailey & Janis Henshaw

Interest Groups Round-up

History 1 For our April meeting our speaker was Alan Judd who gave us a talk on "Old Money". Now you may think, as I did, that this may be a somewhat dry subject, but the way Alan put the subject over, he held us enthralled.

As he described it, money existed before written history began, consequently, how it first developed is based on conjecture, but historical evidence points to the "medium of exchange" using cattle, shells, going on to hand made items such as beads, combs etc.

Later on "money of account" came into play. This depended on the ability to record a count with notches on sticks, tally sticks, also on animal bones, many of which have been unearthed on archaeological digs all around the world. This led on to the written records and the monetary system. Alan described many of the coinage types used, of which he had an in depth knowledge, and worked right up to the present day with our debit and credit cards, bank transfers and mobile phones etc. Who knows what the next moves will be on this subject?

Whatever, Alan left us better informed, having enjoyed a thoroughly enjoyable and amusing subject, delivered in an amusing manner. The subject was followed with Mike, our group leader paying the speaker not in cash for his efforts, but in custard creams, proving that the barter system still stands.

Many thanks Alan,

Alwyn Holmes

Rambling After having to cancel the previous two walks owing to the inclement weather and the waterlogged ground, it was with great pleasure that the group members were able to meet once more for our April ramble. Our leader, Ian, had inspected certain areas that he knew were difficult when he first tried out the walk, and was able to make a few changes to avoid them. One such area was under water, so we were thankful for Ian's extra effort.



We set out from the Excavator pub near Ripley for a 5 mile walk to Heage and the surrounding countryside.

We had a good turnout and, having had some relatively dry weather for a few days, the route, although still quite muddy in places, was better



than expected. Added to that was the beautiful sunny day that we had, which showed off the Heage Windmill quite spectacularly against the glorious blue sky. It was so good to be out in the fresh air and sunshine, with a group of good friends. We returned to the Excavator for a well earned meal.



The next ramble will be on Wednesday 15th May (with a fair wind blowing!) and will be led by Dennis.

Dennis Henshaw

What you Wanted to Share



Lavender longings by Janet Reeve

Lavender, ringing the old stone, circular birdbath,
Solemn, slender stems clothed in ethereal purple fairy
costumes
Dancing hauntingly in the gentle breeze emanating all
around,
Dancing through the dawning mists of this moist summer
morn,
Circling one way, then the other, whispering, sighing,
Sighing through the silence,
The silence of this magical misty morning,
Evoking images of a mythical, mysterious, fairy kingdom.

Carved stone inanimate woodland animals,
Foxes, rabbits, badgers, deer and a sole snuffling hedgehog.
Animals, leaping from the sides of the birdbath,
Coming alive in our imaginations,
Alive to interweave between the fronds and intermingle
With the swaying lavender fairies,
Camouflaged, plunging into a sea of purple,
Swishing and scuttering joining whispering and sighing
In a cacophony of tiny, shivering sounds.

A crack rent in the mist, a curtain drawn back,
Lone blackbird, suddenly, splashing shockingly
Into the water
Emitting his shrill persistent call.

The spell is broken.
Normality returns?

