



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

Notes from the Chair

David West

The committee would like to wish all members a happy and healthy new year. Whilst on one hand we have a thriving u3a group with plenty to look forward to in 2024, there are dark clouds on the horizon. As yet, no members have answered my recent call for new committee members. Of particular concern, we do not have a replacement for Lindsay Evans as secretary who will be stepping down in March. It is a legal requirement for us to have a minimum quota of officers, including a secretary. Ultimately, this situation could threaten the very existence of Alcester u3a. As a committee we are determined to do everything we can to prevent this happening. However, it is essential that we have a minimum number of members who are willing to serve on the committee.

2024 Subscription payment

If you're paying your subs by Bank Transfer (Sort Code 08 92 99 Account No. 67268429 Ref: your membership no./2024subs), please don't forget to do so before our meeting on 9th January so that I can prepare your new Membership pack. If paying by cheque, please remember to make it payable to "The Alcester u3a" then write your Membership No. on the reverse. If paying by cash, please put the cash in an envelope with your name and Membership No. written on the outside. (Please don't forget to check your details that are stored on our database, which were sent out either by email or letter in December, and let me know if any changes are required!) Many thanks.
Lyn Pickering Tel: 01527 453628
Membership.u3aalcester@gmail.com

Thank you to our volunteer posties

If you're unable to attend the general meeting and receive your new Membership Pack through your door, it's thanks to the lovely members who have volunteered to be "posties"! With a second class stamp now costing 75p and our Membership nearing 300, you don't need to be a mathematical genius to work out that they save us a considerable amount, so many thanks posties, you're all stars!
Lyn Pickering

Thanks to Tony Renfrey

On behalf of the 7 members of Alcester u3a who have attended the Beginners' Ukulele Sessions run by Tony at Great Alne Park for the last 6 months, I would like to say a big thank you for his superb teaching skills, patience, support, enthusiasm and encouragement! We all enjoyed the sessions enormously!
John Pickering

2024 Coach Holiday news

John Pickering

I can now confirm that next year's 5 day/4 night coach holiday will be based in Cardiff from 9th – 13th September. The full itinerary is still being worked upon, **but we now know that the price will be £475 (+ single room supplement of £100, and £12 for non-NT members).** Brochures will be available at the February meeting. There will be a "no obligation" interest list at the January meeting if you would like me to reserve you a place (the single rooms tend to be booked very quickly). Places are not confirmed until I receive completed booking forms/deposits, so it's no problem if you change your mind, but do please let me know!!

Chairman	David West	Chairman
Vice-Chairman	John Pickering (temporary)	Vice-Chairman
Treasurer	Jean Morgan	Treasurer
Secretary/Minutes Sec	Lindsay Evans	Secretary/Minutes Sec
Membership Secretary	Lyn Pickering	Membership Secretary
Groups Coordinator	Brian Titterington	Groups Coordinator
Programme Co-ordinator	Marilyn Brannon	Programme Co-ordinator
Accessibility Officer	Ruth Dutton	Accessibility Officer
Archives	Jan Rowe (Coopted member)	Archives
Committee Members	Val Hamblin Karyl Rees	Committee Members
Newsletter Editor	Bronwen Bunting	Newsletter Editor
Web	http://u3asites.org.uk/alcester	Web
	Jan Carr (Coopted)	Bob Andrews (Coopted)
	Annual Sub: £20.00	Only members can join groups

Programme for 2024

9 January	Ray Sturdy	Remembering the Swinging 60s
6 February	Eric Lawley	The Story of the Yard
5 March		AGM & Group Displays
2 April	Abbey Watson	The Dogs Trust
7 May	Roy Smart	Amy, Wonderful Amy
4 June	Hilary Daly	A Pain in the Class
2 July	Cat Weatherill	A Feather in My Wallet
6 August	Patrick Hanglin	3 Years along the Zambezi
3 September	Karyl Rees	Me and Dylan Thomas
1 October	Chris Hanson	Fire Safety in the Home
5 November	Caroline Faulkner	Recycling in Warwickshire
3 December	Ian Boskett	The Great Train Robbery



THEATRE TRIPS

SATURDAY 20 JANUARY 2024

"Noises Off" at Malvern Theatre

***** Reminder: the coach will leave the Greig Hall at 11.00 am *****

We are fully booked and have just 2 reserves in the event of a cancellation

SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2024

"Murder in the Dark" at Malvern Theatre

"A thrilling new Ghost Story", starring Tom Chambers, Susie Blake & Laura White
There are still 3 seats available at £39 per ticket (Ref T6) – payment required by 9 January 2024

In addition, we are now taking bookings for the following two shows

SATURDAY 13 APRIL 2024

"Sleuth" at Malvern Theatre £41 per ticket

Described as one of the greatest ever stage thrillers

Best stalls seats in rows E & F. Please sign up & pay no later than the meeting on 5 March 2024 (Ref: T7)

SATURDAY 1 JUNE 2024

"The Kite Runner" at Malvern Theatre £40 per ticket

"The best page to stage show since War Horse ... a spellbinding production" (The Stage)
Best stalls seats in rows D, E & F. Please sign up & pay no later than the meeting in April 2024 (Ref: T8)

There will be lists at the meeting for all of the shows or email me if you cannot be there

Payment by Bank Transfer is the preferred payment method

("The Alcester u3a"; Sort Code: 08-92-99, Account No: 67268429)

In each case quoting your membership number and the reference for the particular trip in the reference box, eg

Ref: XXX T6 or XXX T7 or XXX T8

Alternatively payment by cheque or in cash can be made to the Treasurer

Joe White (joe_patwhite@msn.com)

SCAM ALERT

Please be aware that there is a scam doing the rounds that is so convincing that one of our members, who is very IT savvy, has been caught out!

The scam is that you receive a text message on your mobile phone purporting to be from a delivery company (usually Evri/DHL/Royal Mail) saying they are unable to deliver your parcel, so you need to follow a link to pay a small fee.

THIS IS A SCAM.

If you receive one of these messages and you're expecting a parcel, check with the supplier of your goods - they usually supply you with a link to track your parcel.

Our member has kindly asked me to share their story, in the hope that no other members get caught out, so here is our member's account of what happened:

"Last month I was at first scammed after malware was imported to my mobile phone, and subsequently have spent over six hours on two personal visits to HSBC Redditch, plus bus and car trips there, to sort out the removal by fraud of monies from my accounts. It is still not resolved and is very worrying.

"It all started by sending a small amount to EVRI for a parcel which I was told they could not deliver, and had to take back to their centre and they wanted funds for re-delivery. As I was expecting two parcels I was taken in and used my credit card to send the small sum. Once the fraudster had got my credit card number he somehow got into my accounts. It is a nightmare, so do be warned. I thought I was careful but have been caught out so easily. To add insult to injury, I have also been fined for parking my car illegally in Redditch so I am using the bus in future."

I have, of course, sent the member good wishes for a happier 2024 and thanked them for being willing to share their story with all of our members. I understand that the Bank's fraud department is dealing with this incident, so have no doubt that it will be sorted, but not without a huge amount of inconvenience and worry for the person concerned!

Interest Group News



Reading 2

Linda Jennings

At our December meeting, we firstly finished the personal book choices remaining at the end of our November session.

These were **"Last Remains"** by Ellie Griffiths - one of the Ruth Galloway mysteries, along with **"A Foreign Country"** by Charles Cummings - three stories about a new generation of spy writers.

We then discussed the November book – **"Everything Under"** by Daisy Johnson, 'A story of family and identity, of fate, language, love and belonging' that leaves you unsettled and unstrung (to quote one of its published reviewers). This book provoked a lively discussion between those who enjoyed and those who certainly did not, but members yet again agreed that discussions like these are the essence and lifeblood of our group.

There is no January book, as we are unable to meet on our regular Tuesday, but we will reconvene in February, and look forward to resuming our busy book-reading.

Jazz Big Band Sound

Bob Applegarth

A full gathering of members enjoyed an entertaining presentation by Laurence Thatcher of his **Desert Island Discs**. This was combined with a light-hearted quiz for which Laurence offered many clues. No winners but we all enjoyed some Christmas chocolates!



We will follow up with a members' selection at our meeting on 14 February. All are asked to bring **"Two records I can't live without"**.

Our January meeting is on the 10th when Bob Applegarth will give a presentation entitled **"Up Jumped Spring"**. New members are always welcome at our venue in Malt Mill Lane meeting room starting at 2.00pm.

Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe

No meeting took place in December, **the next meeting is on 31st January** 2024 and we will each bring a cd with our favourite tracks to play. we meet at Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at 2pm.



Beginners Bridge

Paul Brenda

The Beginners Bridge group will restart in 2024 on Tuesday 16th January at the Malt Mill Lane Community Centre at the usual time of 2.00pm.

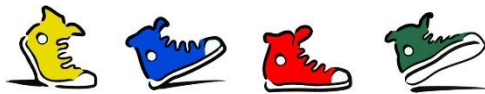
Philosophy

Peter Tugwell

The question for our December meeting was: 'Do we need the concept of evil?'. The idea for this topic came about because of several instances in the press reporting of various terrorist incidents and murder trials where the actions of the perpetrators and indeed the perpetrators themselves were described as 'evil'. We wondered what 'evil' added where the actions were regarded as repugnant, heinous, and morally indefensible by any reasonable and reasoning person or society. The suggestion implicit in the question was that there is a tendency to regard modern society as being secular, whereas 'evil' has strong historical connotations in a religious context, so its continued use seemed perverse. However, it appeared that a secular society still regarded its usage as appropriate or even necessary to express its abhorrence of certain acts, to indicate something more than profoundly morally reprehensible and repugnant. We looked at cultural and societal influences on morality – relativism, objectivism, subjectivism, and changes over time, and at philosophers from Plato through St Augustine to Kant, noting that their views on ethical standards were current today. Free will, or personal autonomy, also raised issues in this context – whether the existence of evil carried with it the possibility of malign or malevolent influences mitigating or aggravating sanctions for profoundly abhorrent behaviour. As usual the question raised many more areas to consider in future sessions.

For our January meeting we will be having a quiz on the topics in 2023.

Walking Groups



Amblers Group

Linda Bradley/Bronwen Bunting

Yet again thwarted by the prolonged wet weather making most footpaths almost impassable in places, a hard surface walk was once again the order of the day. Setting out from the Bleachfield Street car park, the group enjoyed a good stroll along Alcester's good network of hard paths through Oversley Green, Abbey Field (one of the few grass paths not underwater), the cemetery, through the Eclipse and Bloor Homes estates, along the old railway line to the Jubilee Fields and back into town where we enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Turks Head

Friday Walkers

Jane and Chris Baker

After a very wet autumn we decided to do a circuit around Stratford for our December walk. Our first plan was to do a stretch of the canal towpath but unfortunately part of it had collapsed into the canal so that route had to be abandoned!

We started at the Bell in Shottonery and continued via local footpaths over the bridge at Lucy's Mill and past the new marina to the Shipston Road. We returned along the Tramway before proceeding along the riverbank and back past the RSC. We continued along a selection of lanes and footpaths to return to the Bell. The pub was fully booked for lunch so we ate an enjoyable meal at the Piston Club. It was a pleasant walk of about 5.5 miles and the weather stayed dry.



... The photo shows a vehicle we believe used to run along the tramway from Stratford to Shipston. It is in the Railway Museum in York and we saw it when we visited the museum on our U3A Yorkshire trip in September.

Scrabble Group

Linda Salisbury

The Scrabble Group opted for a Christmas meal instead of scrabbling in December and enjoyed excellent catering at The Roebuck Inn in Alcester. The sessions will reconvene in January.



ALCESTER u3a INTEREST GROUPS: Group Coordinator: Brian Titterington

If you would like to join a group, please contact the group organiser

Group	Meeting	Time	Venue	Organiser
Bowls	Fortnightly from 27 June	10 am	Bidford Bowls Club	David Sanders
Beginners Family History	2 nd Monday	2.00 pm	Contact group organiser for details	Linda Cooper
Beginners Bridge	Commencing November: every Tuesday except the first.	2 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Paul Brenda
Church Visits	4 th Tuesday as advised	11.00 am	Various	John Cooper
Crafts	3 rd Wednesday Sept to March	10.30-12.00	Various – to be confirmed each month	Diane King
Cycling	Various dates and venues		Tracey Wyatt	
French	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Brian Titterington
Garden Lovers	2 nd Thursday April – October	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Allely
History	3 rd Thursday	10.45 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Lynda Matheson
Italian	Fortnightly		To be confirmed each month	Chris Brain
Jazz & Big Band Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Bob Applegarth
Mah Jong	4 th Thursday	2.00 pm	Various	Bronwen Bunting
Man Talk	1 st meeting Tuesday 19/09 Thereafter tbc	2–4.00 pm	Huff Cap, Great Alne	Ian Gregory
Music Appreciation	Last Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Jan Rowe
Music Theory Practical Piano/Keyboard	1 st Wednesday 3 rd Wednesday	10.30-3.30 pm	Confirm with group leader	Chris Capstick
Philosophy	3 rd Tuesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Peter Tugwell
Photo Group	On-line Group		Roger Harris	
Poetry Too	Last Friday	2.00 pm	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Ruth Dutton Rosie Harvey
Ambles	2 nd Friday	10.30 am	Various	Linda Bradley
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 (from January 2024)	Karyl Rees
Scrabble	1 st Friday	2.00 pm	Contact group organiser for details	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	Malt Mill Lane Community Centre	John Douglas
Theatre & Outings	As notified			Joe White
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday	10.30 am	Catholic Church Meeting Room	Karyl Rees