



A very familiar scene!



A warm welcome to the following new members:

Julia Bailey, Julia Sinclair, Fiona Morris, Nick Morris, Linda Lamb, Robert Walker, Malcolm Bevan, Kathy Fotheringham, Kenneth Bartlett, Brenda Bartlett, Marylin Ward, Stephen Grubb, Lynda Grubb

Message from Mike Bracey – Chair

Learn Laugh and Live through 2024

While it is often a time for reflection as we end one year it is also a time to look forward and our u3a has much to look forward to as we go through 2024. Monthly meetings, get togethers, group meetings and much much more.

While the programme of events for 2024 is yet to be confirmed, I am sure some of the members' favourites like the Strawberry Tea and Christmas Dinner will return.

It has been decided that we will not hold another Open Day in 2024 and in line with the National u3a programme our aim this year is to consolidate our membership and at the same time raise our profile within the town. This will inevitably attract new members but as an organisation we have to recognise the challenge of balancing group membership availability against our present and future membership, so everyone can pursue their interests. However, if we are going to develop, we need new ideas, new groups and these often come from new members.

In line with our constitution several of our present committee members will be completing their term as committee members in June 2024 and the committee have an open-door invitation so members can attend the monthly committee meetings to find out more of what is involved without any commitment. There is a saying 'many hands make light work' and the more new and enthusiastic committee

members we have the better our u3a will be. As an organisation we cannot stand still and therefore members offering a little of their time to serve is our lifeblood. It is a sad fact that this will be a recurring plea because without a fully functioning committee there will be no Droitwich u3a and none of us want to see that because I know what we do collectively brings joy to us all. So, let's make 2024 the best ever year for our u3a.



Cycling
Group
Christmas
lunch

Happy New Year to you all
Mike Bracey

Report by Carole Smallwood, Social Secretary:

Group Leaders & Committee Members' Meal, 6th November 2023

Droitwich u3a would not be able to operate without the co-operation of its Group Leaders and Committee Members, so it was decided by Committee to invite these members to a 3-course meal at Droitwich Golf Club, as a thank you.

Normally, we hold a Cheese & Wine event twice a year for Group Leaders; one of these meetings will be for "business" issues and one more of a social occasion for Group Leaders to

meet, but this year we decided to do something a little more special. Some of the Group Leaders run 2 and 3 groups and have done so for some time – for years in some cases and we really needed to show our appreciation.

Other u3as have always taken their Group Leaders for a thank you meal and we thought it an excellent idea. As you will know, if one of our members books a holiday with Riviera Travel, Droitwich u3a receives 10% of the holiday cost from the company as commission. This is an option from Riviera Travel, but not automatic – you need to state that you are one of our members of the time of booking. Holidays are expensive things these days and so this commission builds up to a considerable sum, as quite a few of our Members now take advantage Of this Option. It was decided to spend some of this commission on the Group Leaders and Committee Members as a thank you for all they do. An excellent meal was provided by SS Catering on Monday 6th November at Droitwich Golf Club which was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

Christmas Meal, 11th December, Crown & Sandys, Ombersley

The Orangery at the Crown & Sandys was resplendent with Christmas decorations and everyone thought the room looked splendid. The meal was delicious and everyone was pleased with their choice. Some of our newer members were present and made very welcome by those at their table so no-one felt left out or awkward.

The room was quickly buzzing with

The room was quickly buzzing with conversation. It was good to hear people socialising and getting to know one another or catching up with old friends. We had 10 bottles of wine in the raffle, which had been left over from other recent u3a events, so 10 lucky members had a Christmas drink on us!

Spotlight on the Groups



Wine Appreciation Group by Roy Thurston

Fifteen of the group met for a Christmas get-together in Rotary House on 13th December. Everyone brought some wonderful snacks and a bottle of something for all to taste. The wines varied very widely and were most interesting:

A white from Moldova – good for a summer lunch-time

A Chardonnay from Australia – fairly run of the mill but pleasant drinking

A red wine from China – drinkable but not worth the money

A German pinot noir – very pleasant

A French fitou – very nice indeed

A South African red from Meerlust estate – great with beef

A port from Portugal – very pleasant change

A Welsh mead to round things off

A good time was had by all and we shall meet again in February.

Gallivanters by Jan Skan

A rock & roll day out

Well, on the coldest day of the year so far the intrepid Gallivanters boarded a train to University of Birmingham. It all started well as we all got a seat. Our first stop was The Lapworth Museum of Geology.....a real GEM of a place.

Besides seeing the gems we saw lots of rocks, trilobites and ammonites.



The museum is in one of the most beautiful buildings on Birmingham University Campus, The

Aston Webb building and light poured through the marvellous windows illuminating the artefacts. We were lucky to have a guided tour from the Museum Director who also took us behind the scenes.

The museum dates back to 1880 and is named after Charles Lapworth one of the most important and influential geologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was originally in the Mason Building near the Town Hall in the town centre. It moved to the University in 1920s & remained largely unchanged until it was upgraded in 2016. We had planned to visit a few years ago but there was that unfortunate interlude of COVID. We were all pleased that we finally made it. But it didn't end there. After a quick snack we headed to The Elgar Concert Hall....our celebrity musician from Worcestershire was the first Professor of music at Birmingham Uni. We enjoyed a performance from The Adelphi

Quartet of Stravinsky and Beethoven (so we were quite pleased that he hadn't Rolled Over) We headed back to the station and were blessed as the train was on time & we all got a seat. A marvellous day out & many thanks to Peter & Jenny for organising the occasion.

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/lapworth-museum/index.aspx>

Droitwich Wind Instrument Group (DWIG) by Ron Hawkins

DWIG had a busy time leading up to Christmas. We had two Saturday busking sessions in Victoria Square, Droitwich where we played Christmas carols to an appreciative audience of Christmas shoppers. We collected a very respectable £135.30 for the Air Ambulance charity, thanks to their generosity.

On Monday 11th instead of our usual "2nd and 4th Monday" rehearsal meeting, we threw our doors open for other musicians to join us in an afternoon of playing carols.

It was a fun afternoon, and we were joined by musicians from several other local brass and wind bands. We played a wide range of carols and Christmas tunes, from *Jingle Bells* and *Rudolph*, through *Stop the Cavalry* to the beautiful *Coventry Carol*.

The following Monday, a small group of DWIG members visited the Corbett House Care Home in Droitwich and played a section of Christmas carols for the residents and staff, which was warmly received.



We are always on the lookout for new members, so dust off that old trumpet, saxophone or flugelhorn, and come join in the fun.

For more information please contact group leader David Wornham, Tel. 01905 775840 or flexicase@gmail.com

Walking Group by Jan Skan



Something to raise a smile or two!

Maths, Science & Technology Group

Details of talks over the next few months are on the website.

Local History Group

Join us for talks at the Emmanuel Church, Blake Avenue. Doors open 10.00 for refreshments, talks start 10.30. Cost £2.50

Friday January 12th - Doug Smith "To Murder a Priest. The Popish Plot, and Worcestershire 1678-1681".

Friday February 9th - Lyn Blewitt "Droitwich's Oldest Buildings".

Friday March 8th - Sue Helps "My approach to genealogy".

The Digital Photography Group

by Derek Oakley

The group recently visited Bodenham Arboretum on a rather damp Tuesday.

Bodenham Arboretum is situated in a protected valley, away from traffic noise and visual intrusions. Its 170 acres contain mature woodland, specimen trees and shrubs – over 3000 species in total which include important collections such as Acers, North American Oaks and Alders, and two chains of pools and lakes, integrated within a working farm. The plantings and water combined cover 54 acres. And visitors can explore over 5 miles of wonderful woodland walks.

Our 15 pools have their own constant supply of water. Bridges provide access to the islands in the big pool – such as "Giants Island" which children love to explore. *photos on next page*



To join our group contact Alan Meyrick at ameyrick54@gmail.com



For the final visit of the year the Digital Photography Group visited Hanbury Church.

The church of St. Mary the Virgin is an Anglican Church in the village of Hanbury, Worcestershire. Its earliest parts date from about 1210 and it is a Grade 1 listed building.

Occupying a hilltop, once the site of an Iron Age fort, there was a monastery here in Saxon times. The present church retains fabric of most centuries from Norman onwards, with many changes in the 18th century, when the tower was rebuilt: this now houses a fine ring of eight bells. The box pews were installed then: the Bearcroft family pew showing their original height, also the gallery at the west end of the nave which bears the arms of Queen Elizabeth II, carved in 1953 by Pancheri of Bromsgrove. The organ case and the ceilings above it and the chancel are splendidly decorated; these date from the restoration by G.E. Street in 1861.



There are several interesting memorials, mostly to members of the Vernon family, who



built and lived at nearby Hanbury Hall (now owned by the National Trust).

Following the visit to the church we continued to the Jinney Ring Craft Centre for coffee and cake, then on to the glass workshop to see the glass ornaments being made.



**Monthly Meetings 2024 – Norbury Theatre
Monday 2:30pm**

Don't forget our monthly meetings held at the Norbury theatre and covering a wide range of topics. Speakers for the next six months are already agreed and you will all be told in due course, but here are the next three so please ensure the dates are in your diaries: -

Monday 15th January

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gary Broad, who is based in Worcester, is coming to talk to us about his work with the commission who receive £65 million every year to care for the 23,000 war memorials and war cemeteries around the world commemorating 1.7 million Commonwealth casualties. This work covers provision of distinctive headstones, the buildings and monuments associated with them and the detailed horticultural work to the grounds they stand in. The extent of the work is to provide and care for the graves around the world, and the bodies still being found within old battlegrounds.

Monday 19th February

Causes of the First World War - Alternative Views

John Donnelly from Droitwich will be talking to us to about the War in Europe. Ten years ago, was the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War, later known as the First World War. This talk is not about what happened during the war but rather discusses the reasons why so many countries on the continent of Europe declared war on each other in August of 1914 and several factors which caused us to become involved. Were all countries which were involved at least partly to blame? Or, was Germany solely to blame?

Monday 18th March

Councils of Voluntary Services - Droitwich CVS

Lucy Bird will be telling us all about the work she does within Droitwich CVS as a Community Builder. Set up in 1985 as part of the national network for Councils of Voluntary Services they work to support, promote, and develop local voluntary action and have been working closely with the community ever since. As she says, "To be working out in the community and all the villages is a joy".

Geoff Stollard – Speaker Organiser

Happy New Year!

Once again another year has absolutely whizzed by! Unfortunately 2024 has started in a very wet fashion with obviously lots of flooding. The photo on the first page was taken last week with, once again, the swans floating towards the car park!

Thank you to all who have contributed articles and updates plus some amazing photos for this edition.

*The next newsletter will be published in March so please submit any articles/photos including any interesting stories you may have to the editor via the website or email dorothy_colman@yahoo.co.uk by **Monday 4th March***

Editor

And finally.....a message from one of our members:

LADIES PROBUS DROITWICH SPA

Ladies Probus is a social group of retired **PRO**fessional and **BUS**iness ladies who meet to hear a talk by a guest speaker followed by refreshments and a chat. The club meets every 4th Wednesday afternoon January to November, December being the Christmas lunch. Last year's topics by guest speakers ranged from the thought provoking The 1950's - The Age of Optimism to the fun topic of milk bottles. The group is a thriving club which always welcomes new members.

Meetings are held in Rotary House, Corbett Ave, Droitwich WR9 7BD. Please arrive by 1:50 as talks start at 2:00. Annual subs are £20. There is a charge of £1 per meeting for refreshments.

If you require further information please contact the Admin Secretary Janet Elsworth by email at janda.elsworth@btinternet.com or by telephone 01905 772256.

