



THE CRYER!

u3a learn,
laugh
live

The voice of Dronfield and District u3a

Issue 118 September 2023

EDITORIAL

Morning and welcome to issue 118 of the Dronfield u3a newsletter. Today is the 1st of September which means it's the start of the academic year at Hogwarts. At 11am this morning, Harry Potter fans gathered at Kings Cross Station to hear the announcement that the Hogwarts Express was due to leave from Platform 9¾ for Hogsmeade Station and Hogwarts. It's an annual event! On the opposite side of the coin, Thursday 21st is 'Telegraph Pole Appreciation Day'. A day to appreciate the functionality and design of the humble telegraph pole that will slip by unnoticed by practically everyone. But for now here is another enthralling chapter in the life and thoughts of the Dronfield u3a members. Read on and enjoy. Jd (Editor)

WHAT THE NEIGHBOURS DO.

We obviously have a lot of groups in our u3a but could we be doing more or something different? There are seventeen u3as that are part of the Derbyshire Network. I have been taking a look at the groups they run to see if there are some subjects we possibly could try out ourselves.

Over the summer there have been several 'Taster Sessions' that have led to new groups. We now have a Ten pin bowling, Outdoor bowls and Croquet groups. A Pickleball taster session is also arranged for September 12th at the Sports Centre. (I am assured that it has nothing to do with vinegar.) We are expanding, but what groups do the other u3a's have that we don't?

There are striking similarities in the groups that are run but some quirky and interesting ideas are also available, and we might learn a little from our neighbours. For instance, several u3as have Boule or Petanque groups as it also called. This is a game often played in the market squares in France and there is a Boule pitch down the road at Holmebrook Valley Park. Should we give it a try?



Several u3a groups run quizzes. Is this something we could try more often? Ashborne have a choir, a guitar group and even do Yoga. Alfreton get stuck into Real Ale and several others have Beer and Wine Tasting groups. Alfreton also practice Calligraphy and have fun with an active Ukelele music group.

Bakewell are more highbrow with Real Latin,

Poetry and Writing for Pleasure. Bolsover do something similar with Creative Writing, but also have a Murder Mystery group and even try a little Complementary Therapy. Belper do a little Gin Tasting, get involved in Tai Chi and have a group studying Astrology.



As you move into the bigger towns, you might notice that there is a Motorcycle group and another studying Psychology. Chesterfield do Philosophy, Theology, Geology, Classical Music, Racketball (which is similar to squash) and play Snooker. Buxton do some flower arranging, they also read Shakespeare and have a Model Railway group.

Ilkeston has an interesting u3a, running a Cluedo group alongside Handbells and Golf. Glossop have an emphasis on eating with a Posh Nosh and Food group! They also do Sacred Geometry—which is a study of geometric shapes in religious art and buildings. Matlock do Tap Dancing and Mah Jong, with Wirksworth looking at Ancient Greek, plus it has a Weight Loss group and an LP group playing their own vinyl collections.



Like us, many of the u3as have Trips and Visit groups. They run day trips similar to ours along with popular theatre trips. Where would you like to go?

Which group would you join if we ran them here in Dronfield? Would you be prepared to run one?

Answers please. I want to know. *Doug Emery*
Groups secretary

MONTHLY MEETINGS



Don't forget that details of all the monthly meetings from now until next March are available on the [Members](#) page of the website on -

(<https://u3asites.org.uk/dronfield/pages/69472>).

MEETING - 13th SEPTEMBER (10 - 12)

The Speaker will be

Pat Hall

"A Good Laugh"

Pat is a standup comedian who has the ability to see the funny side of anything.

The meeting will be in the Civic Hall as usual.



AGM - 11th OCTOBER (10 - 12)

The Annual General Meeting of Dronfield and District U3A will be held at 10 am on 11th October 2023 in Dronfield Civic Hall. A formal notice of the AGM will be issued on 21st September 2023.

The formal u3a business will be followed by a talk.

The Speaker will be

Peter Gray

on 'The Isles of Scilly'

We look forward to welcoming everyone in person this year, and apologise for not being able to offer online attendance.



Request for Committee Members

Hopefully you have all received my letter concerning the AGM and will realise that once again we need new members for the committee.



I myself recently made the decision to become Involved, after attending an executive meeting as an observer and realising that new members were crucial to it continuing. I now would urge others to do the same. It obviously does involve some work, as well as attending monthly executive meetings, but the more of us involved the less work for us all and generous support is always available.

We all know how much the u3a means to us, so please consider joining us, by contacting myself or any committee member for further information.

The online form for nominations needs completing by **Friday September 15th** using the link on the pre-notification letter. The deadline for the postal forms is the same date.

Karen Grad
secretary@dronfieldu3a.org.uk

NATIONAL U3A LEARNING EVENTS

Free Online Events in SEPTEMBER

Why not sign up for free online talks this month:

Fri 1st 2pm: Heritage Open Days
What and Where during September

Tues 19th 10am: Climate Modelling
a talk by Ian Hawker

Wed 20th 10am:
Trees, Woods, Climate and Nature:
What's all the fuss about?
John Tucker from the Woodland Trust

And many more on various topics

Visit www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events

to register



60s Music Evening



Friday 20th October at Coal Aston
Village Hall 7.30 till 10pm

**Tickets are selling fast for this
poptastic event**

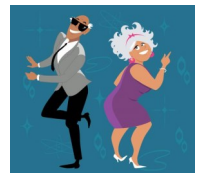
*Come along, let your hair down and be taken back
to your younger days!*

Tickets are £5 each which includes
a free raffle. There will be prizes for
the best dressed Guy and Gal and
a 60s themed quiz.

Bring your own food and drink

*Buy your tickets at the September and October
monthly meetings or contact me at*
steve.pyke@dronfieldu3a.org.uk

Sorry but it is for Dronfield u3a members only.



RIDDLE-ME-REE

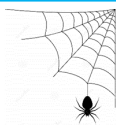
1) A man at a charity stall challenged a passer-by. He said, "If I write your exact weight on this bit of paper, you must donate £5 to my charity. If I fail, I will donate £10 to a charity of your choice". Knowing that he could say he weighed more or less than the figure the stall holder wrote down the passer-by accepted the challenge. Soon after he handed over £5. Why?

2) Two fathers and two sons go fishing. Between them they manage to catch twelve fish. "That's good," said a father. "That's four fish each." How?



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We are looking to set up a rota to cover our First aid/Fire responsibilities during the monthly meetings.



This would just require being the nominated person for that meeting in case of an emergency. If you have any experience in either of these areas, usually attend these meetings and would be willing to help, please let myself or any member of the committee know. The more volunteers we have the easier it will be!

Training will be made available when we know what our requirements are.

Thank you

Karen Grad (Acting Secretary)
secretary@dronfieldu3a.org

GROUP NEWS - SEPTEMBER

Art Activities will be sketching and painting as usual on the 11th.



The outdoor **Bowls** group will meet at the 'Green' near Coal Aston Village Hall on 13th.

Climate Matters are going to look at Littering and Fly Tipping.

Computing will be puzzling over their tablets in the meeting on the 12th.

Croquet have a session on the 4th in the afternoon, at Coal Aston Cricket Club.

Cycling are going over to Hardwick and will take in the Teversal Trail on the 11th.



The **Dry Stone Wallers** are busy building as usual!

Garden Growers meetings are flourishing.

Garden Visits are off to the Bridgewater Gardens.

The **Geography** Group this month will consider the joys of Prague.

The **History** group is having a talk on the 'History of Weather Forecasting' and they intend to begin a project on witches.



Maths for Fun will look into the activities of Leonard Euler, the Swiss mathematician who made pioneering discoveries in the subject.

A **Pickleball** taster session is arranged for the 12th September at the Sports Centre. Julia Harris has organised it so please contact her if interested.

The **Spanish** groups are meeting, as usual. They are led by Brian Healy.

The **Strollers** have a full programme of slowly meandering along with trips to the Monsal Trail, a park in Sheffield and the Linacre Reservoir.

Tenpin Bowling starts up this month. Meetings are on the first and third Mondays of the month starting at 2 pm for a couple of hours. Jed Stone is running this, sessions to be held at Chesterfield Bowl.

The **Trip to Lincoln** is organised for September 8th. Just a few places left & Glenys Sharman is the person to talk with if you would like a seat on the coach.



The **Walking** groups have a full Monday and Friday programme, details are on their part of the website [HERE](#).

Whatever you are interested in, please make an effort to find out about it. To start take a visit to the [u3a website, groups section](#).

*Doug Emery
Groups' secretary*

LINE DANCING TASTER

Have you ever fancied having a go at Line Dancing but worried about going wrong? Well, here's your chance to give it a go with other beginners and have FUN!



We're having a Taster on Tuesday 10th October, 2 - 4pm in the Edward Lucas Hall at the Peel Centre. The cost will be £2 - £3 depending how many people take part.

If you're interested, please contact

Celia Southern on 01246 416322 to book yourself in. If you cannot get to the Taster, do get in touch and we will keep you posted re future developments.

Julia Harris

NOT AN ADVERTISEMENT



I was offered a great amount of money to put an advert for some new bathroom cleaner in the Cryer. I, of course, refused because it would not be ethical to do so, and because I am a person of high moral standard and strong will power. Just as strong as Banjax, the incredibly strong bathroom cleaner. Now available in lemon scent and vanilla.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP—SINGAPORE

The Geography group's "visit" to Singapore definitely showed the two halves of this global city which is just one degree north of the equator. As a short "stopover" on the way to visit more distant shores Singapore certainly has a lot to offer.

After one of the most pleasant long-haul flights ever, the Bradburys' first impression of Singapore was of a lot of concrete blocks. This 'public housing' is very necessary to accommodate a population of six million in a relatively small space. It is, however, a very, very clean city, (you will be fined if found in possession of chewing gum) full of helpful, friendly people and deluged by buckets of rain! Three days of unrelenting and prodigious outpourings of the wet stuff marked the Bradbury's visit. This limited their experience of the 'lion city'. The name is derived from Singa Pura when a Prince from Palembang saw a large feline when he first arrived.



A visit to the National Museum of Singapore was the most conducive plan, given the weather. It proved to be fascinating and provided a great insight into this city, beloved of Europeans (especially Portuguese, Dutch, and, of course, English). Sir Stamford Raffles is inexorably linked to Singapore. He was a British Colonial Official In the early 1800's who helped establish the settlement as a free port though he only spent about 9 months there. He would probably be proud of the fact that his vision for the city has helped turn it into a global phenomenon.



Many cultures, primarily south-east and east Asian, have contributed to this melting pot. Amongst them Indians, originally imported as convicts of

the then British empire, provided the manual labour necessary to generate Singapore's transformation into a modern and flourishing city on the world stage. Of course there have been many challenges to negotiate on the way such as poverty, unemployment, affordable housing, inter-cultural clashes, not to mention world wars which includes the famous British surrender of the city to the Japanese in World War II.

Of course, we visited the Long Bar at the world famous Raffles hotel and actually sat at said bar and indulged in a 'Singapore Sling', a cocktail concocted in 1915 by a canny Chinese, who realised there was a niche in the market as ladies who consumed alcohol in public were regarded as unseemly. It was very subtle and pleasant, but not if you don't like fruit juice or gin! Have afternoon tea instead and perhaps a friendly harpist will serenade you for the princely sum of nothing! (And we added our peanut shells to the already well-covered floor....it had to be done!)



In addition, we managed to wander through India Town, China Town, and the Arab quarter relatively unmolested by the incessant rain. We also visited the "must see" Botanic Gardens which, in spite of the weather, were spectacular. Overall, they had a peaceful ambience, with lakes, bridges, Oriental structures, and amazing orchid gardens,all for free (apart from the orchids). We desperately wanted to try the highly-recommended Gardens by the Bay but-though we got there, the weather put paid to that idea (we really couldn't see a thing). However, another duo was more fortunate with the weather on their visit (although they admit to not seeing a blue sky) and provided a splendid "other half" of the delights Singapore has to offer.



The Marina Bay area is an extravaganza of sensory engagement. Jennifer and Graham treated us to a tour which suggests Singapore is successful in its aspirations to be a garden city. The Singapore Flyer is twice the size of the London Eye and is clearly a wonderful place from where to



view Singapore in its entirety.

The Marina Bay Hotel has a massive infinity pool, copious plants, 2,500 rooms over fifty five floors,

the largest casino on Earth, a 40K seating capacity conference centre....and it sways. It is really only for the super-rich but it is possible to get a 'pass' simply for the views.

The stunning Gardens have beautiful and colourful plants, abundant waterfalls, linked aerial walkways,



free shows, and something similar to the Eden Project but on a grander scale, and, at dusk, an amazing light

show accompanied by appropriately atmospheric music. We all agreed it was just fabulous....thank you both.

Overall, my experience was badly tainted by the weather (outrageous!), but we enjoyed what we did. And perhaps we may go back and enjoy the pieces we missed as Graham and Jennifer's "half" demonstrated the Garden City has much to offer.

Jan Bradbury

GARDEN VISIT GROUP

This month's visit was to Felley Priory which is situated just off junction 27 of the M1. It must be the nearest of all the gardens we visit. The Priory, which was founded in 1156, but rebuilt since. It is privately owned



but the surrounding beautiful gardens are open to the public. The garden is specially designed so that it is interesting throughout the year, with some of it covering the site of the old Priory Church and the high garden wall is believed to be part of the original Priory boundary wall. Last time we visited was when the Bluebells were in full bloom but this time the flowers and their colours were much more varied.

The lake at the bottom of the sloping gardens contained water lilies, some were breaking into bloom and nearby was a tree about to burst into



flower. This I later learnt from one of the gardeners, was a Tulip tree (bearing the horticultural name of Liriodendrum Tulipifera). The large

squarish leaves were currently dark green but apparently, they turn to golden yellow colours later

in the year. Walking upwards towards the house we passed a riot of colour in the wide mixed borders with tall swaying grasses interspersed with Alliums, Agapanthus and multi headed Daisies. Then around the corner a complete contrast – an arrangement with nothing but pure white blooms set off against varied shades of green foliage.

Between them all we admired the many manicured hedges cut into various shapes, some geometric and others taking on the form of birds.



These hedges and bushes are clipped just once a year and one of the gardeners was up a ladder giving a bush its annual trim as we passed. Further on a novice gardener was being taught the tricks of the trade of getting beautifully neat striped lawns as she was shown how to lift the side wheels as she turned the corners.

On the day we visited there were so many visitors that we were unable to lunch in their garden but managed to find a nearby hostelry for refreshment. As a group we were advised to book in advance for any further visit to ensure our space and we plan to do so but at another time of the year.

Ramsey Hertzog

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



PEEK - A - BOO

Seen from the Chapel Steps Dronfield.
(Yes it is a doll's head. Ed)

MISUNDERSTANDING HISTORY AND WHY IT MATTERS

If a BBC journalist said on air that David Beckham is famous because one day, as he walked past the Manchester United ground, he noticed a football game going on, had not played before, but joined in and scored the winning goal in a cup final, you would know it was an attempt at some sort of comedy. But a week or two back I heard something equally nonsensical on Radio 4. There is currently a project underway: "Darwin200" to commemorate the life and works of Charles Darwin. Reporting on it, a journalist trotted out a story about Darwin visiting the Galapagos Islands, seeing some finches and conceiving the idea of evolution.

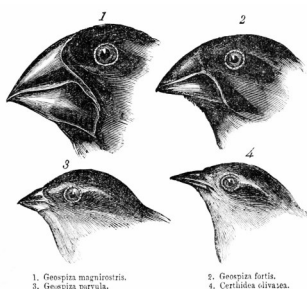


A young Darwin

I am a fan of Charles Darwin. His moral courage and clarity of thought changed our understanding of the world as much as the great discoveries in physics and chemistry. However, wilful mis-interpretations of evolution have caused great confusion and great cruelty when people have used the idea of evolution to mask projects whose real purpose is to acquire influence and power.

So – some facts about evolution. First – it was not an original idea. At least a dozen people had come up with something similar previously, including Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus.

Second – Darwin did not want to be a kind of atheist prophet. In fact he had planned that his book on evolution would only be published after his death, as he was aware of the pain his idea would cause his wife, who believed in the creation story given in the Bible. He only published, (23 years after the voyage of the Beagle), when prompted by a letter from Alfred Wallace, asking his opinion about an idea he had developed whilst collecting specimens in the tropics: which was effectively evolution.



Third, Darwin only noticed that the finches collected (okay, shot, in the Galapagos Islands) had a beak specific to each island they lived on, well after getting back to London. The term

"Darwin's finches" only became current in the academic world in the 20th century.

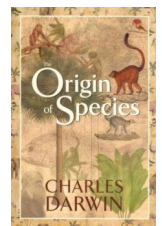
So what did Darwin do?

1. He collected data. Not just the plants and animals of distant places; he also corresponded with animal breeders, especially pigeon fanciers and dog breeders in Britain. He spent years precisely dissecting and describing species of barnacle. He spent an extraordinary amount of time watching the activities of earthworms. He carefully documented the development of his children. I could go on...

2. Darwin was open to new ideas, especially the discoveries of geologists, who were establishing that the earth had existed much longer than the Bible indicated.

3. He thought through evolution thoroughly and nailed the process much more precisely than any predecessor.

The result of all this is that when he published "The Origin of Species" every serious scientific and religious leader recognised a major challenge to the world views they had previously held.



No one has ever seriously challenged what Darwin actually wrote about evolution, although the discovery and understanding of DNA has added many nuances to the basic idea. What happened almost from day one, however, is that there were refutations of what he MIGHT have said. He never claimed his ancestors were monkeys, for example. He never claimed a blind animal woke up one morning and found it had eyes. He never claimed that every intermediate stage in evolution was preserved in the fossil record. Worse, distorted versions of evolution in the 20th century underlay eugenics and the Holocaust.

So why am I so annoyed by the BBC getting Darwin wrong? Because if the story of Darwin & evolution is trivialised, it makes it easier to the Flat Earthers, Creationists and Fascists etc to refute biological evolution as one person's opinion about a few birds. Claiming to have spotted a "flaw" in "Darwin's Evolution" is used to dismiss facts and proclaim the truth of some social or religious notion, mostly in the USA, but we are not immune from nonsense here.

Steve Wood

HIDDEN HISTORY

The August meeting of the History group was a field trip to the part of Dronfield known as "Dronny Bottom" and followed on from last year's exploration of the 'upper town'. Our guide was once again, John Harvey, a local historian. He traced the impact that the coming of the railway in 1872-73 had on Dronfield though the changes that occurred to the buildings on Sheffield Road.



This historical tour started at the Lucas Archway. This marks the site where once there was a Tudor dye works that was developed into a foundry and cutlery works before becoming an iron works that among other things made cannon balls during the Napoleonic wars. It closed on Christmas Eve 1971, was demolished and then converted into the peaceful garden we have today.

From the Archway to the station and on to Mill Lane our guide indicated the significant buildings that still



exist and their hidden clues, such as bricked up entrances and fireplaces, that are all that remain of buildings long demolished. The changes in Dronfield were caused by the development of the local

iron forges up until the Wilson Cammell Iron works relocated to Workington in 1883 (to be nearer their American Market). This latter event was disastrous and brought extensive changes to Dronfield as the town edged towards becoming the town we know today.



John Harvey's input also demonstrated the vast amount of local knowledge that is accessible to us in booklet form in "The Barn" and other local outlets as well as the internet. If history is to be defined as



Chiverton House (1712)

(Note the two towers with 'powdering your wig' rooms.)

"a study of past events, particularly in human affairs," then this tour demonstrated this admirably.

Previous to this event, a trip to Newark also used local guides, who proved to be very knowledgeable as regards an explanation to the causes of change when looking at Newark through the prism of the English Civil War.

Our history group also uses the local knowledge and strengths of its members to inform and entertain the group members. By using such contributors we have learned of local ladies who made a mark and impact on the lives of others. We also followed the path of education reforms and then funnelled down to education in England and thus to Dronfield. This was opened up to audience members to articulate/identify significant events for them personally and to make comment on their primary evidence experiences.

We are fortunate to have those who steer the activities of the history group being alive to be seeking out opportunities for further experiences not too far from S18. Whilst seeking out the opportunities for exploration of change and its causes, both for room based and outside visits. They are to be complimented on widening the history group's horizons.

Rob Barron



LOGIC PUZZLE



A farmer wants to cross a river with a wolf, a goat and a cabbage. He has a boat but it will only fit himself plus either the wolf, the goat or the cabbage. If the wolf and the goat are alone on one shore, the wolf will eat the goat. If the goat and the cabbage are alone on the shore the goat will eat the cabbage. How can the farmer take the wolf, the goat and the cabbage across the river without anything being eaten?

DID YOU KNOW?

America's most famous conservationist was James Audubon. He earned his living by painting pictures of birds which he shot before sketching them!

PICKLE BALL



Pickleball was invented in 1965 in the US by congressman Joel Pritchard and businessman Bill Bell. They lived in Seattle and returning one Saturday afternoon from a round of golf, they found their bored children lounging around. In the garden of one house there was an old, abandoned asphalt badminton court, so they challenged them to a game of badminton.

Unfortunately they couldn't find a full set of rackets or a shuttlecock so they supplemented the equipment with table tennis bats and a perforated plastic ball. They started with the net at the normal badminton height and enthusiastically volleyed the ball over the net. Realising the ball bounced well on the hard asphalt they then lowered the net and spent an enjoyable afternoon playing the improvised game.

Though the children soon found other interests the fathers didn't and the following weekend they introduced a friend, Barney McCallum, to the game. Between them they devised new rules based on badminton but never forgetting that originally it was a game for the whole family.

It's now well established in America with clubs in many retirement villages. (A few have even filled in their swimming pools to provide the space to build Pickleball courts.) It is also spreading in England where several u3a's have formed their own Pickleball groups.

The game is a combination of tennis, table tennis and badminton. The net is lower than normal, the bats bigger and the plastic ball full of holes - so it moves through the air more slowly. That is the magic of the game. As the ball doesn't move as fast or bounce like a tennis ball or ping pong ball it is easier to see and hit. The game is played indoors on a badminton court or out doors on a smaller court. You can play doubles or singles and the first to 11 points wins. The serve is underarm, so no tennis style over arm serves.

It was said that it was called Pickleball after Joel's dog Pickles. However, according to his wife it's called Pickleball because it was first played with left over equipment, and in the Seattle boating community a 'pickle boat' is manned by the 'left over' rowers when the crews for a boat race have been picked.

Editor



CLIMATE MATTERS



At the August meeting we looked at Air Quality and Pollution. The quality of the air we breathe has a direct effect on our health and action to improve the atmosphere is needed across the world. In the UK clean air zones are being set up in many cities limiting access to older vehicles, but there are other sources of pollution - including wood burning stoves, domestic boilers and wildfires, as well as the contrails from high flying aircraft.

We discovered that air pollutants include Ozone, Nitrogen, Carbon Dioxide and microscopic particles known as PM2.5 (that's less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter - a human hair is about 40 micrometres). These pollutants, can cause serious health outcomes, especially for people with heart and breathing problems.

The air quality is measured in many places and data taken every 15 minutes is available, including on the uk-air.defra.gov.uk website. There are local measuring stations near the centre of Chesterfield, and on the hills above Ladybower. Air in the UK is relatively clean compared to many countries with lots of industry but we thought we can all make a small contribution. The change to electric cars may bring different problems which some scientists say will have adverse effects on the environment.

Future topics we next plan to discuss are Littering and Fly tipping, and Repair, Re-use, Recycle - Upcycling.

There are free National u3a online talks on Climate Change and the Environment most months.

Steve Pyke

PUZZLE ANSWERS

RIDDLE-ME

- 1) The stall holder wrote, 'Your exact weight'. On the piece of paper.
- 2) Three people went fishing. A grandfather, his son and his grandson.

LOGIC PUZZLE

The farmer takes across the goat. He returns and takes the wolf across. He returns with the goat. He leaves the goat and takes the cabbage across to the wolf. He then rows back across and gets the goat once more.



TYPICALLY ENGLISH



The most British thing I've ever heard?
A lady who said 'Well I'm sorry, but I don't apologise'

Steve Bradbury