



Chat from the chair

Christmas cheer thanks to our u3a

I am writing this article having just returned from my very first u3a holiday to Thursford, which included excursions to Holt and Norwich. Members from five local u3as enjoyed luxurious travel on a brand new Skills coach, expertly driven by Phil. Refreshments and seasonal treats were served every day, there was free time on all three days and a musical Christmas Spectacular show to equal the West End.

A big 'shout-out' to our Social Group team Denise, Liz and Ann for arranging, planning and hosting a fabulous start to Christmas!

On a serious note, and I appreciate that it might seem a long way off, but at our AGM next June we will need to recruit a number of members to take on vacant Committee posts. Please think seriously about how you could help to keep your u3a open. All members are welcome to attend a Committee meeting to get a taste of what goes on behind the scenes and makes your u3a tick.

We are still looking to recruit a co-opted member to join the Committee immediately; again, if you can help to run your u3a please get in touch with the Committee for more information.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Linda Shutt

Christmas get together

The Christmas event on Friday 3 December proved so popular that ticket sales had to be closed early. (Entry is by pre-purchased ticket only).

Doors will open at 10.00 and tables will be set for 6 people. Don't forget your ticket (which will be exchanged for a free raffle ticket. Extra raffle tickets will be on sale at £1 per strip). Also remember your dobber or marker pen for the bingo (bingo tickets 50p each), your Secret Santa (if you wish to take part) and, most important of all, your Christmas jumper.

Kathryn Cope



At the November General Meeting Mike Hodkins, a retired Fireman, spoke about his *Life as a Firefighter*; a fitting subject for Friday 5 November. His talk included some gruesome stories as well as amusing anecdotes.

Mike is pictured, left, with our speaker seeker (and trainee fire(wo)man), Kathryn Cope. Above, u3a members view some of the memorabilia Mike brought with him.



November's delights

Our first ramble in November set off from Whatstandwell. Seldom walked paths, slippery with mud and awkward stiles, took us steadily uphill onto Wirksworth Moor, regularly pausing for breath to take in the autumn hues of the Derwent Valley below.

We passed Wigwell Grange, an attractive mansion and the scene of a brutal murder in the 19th century where Bessie Goodwin was stabbed to death by her fiancé for breaking off their engagement after she fell in love with a clergyman from Wirksworth.

The old lead mining village of Bolehill afforded good views over Wirksworth before a steep climb out of the village onto Cromford Moor. From then on it was easy walking mainly downhill on good paths giving us ample opportunity to take in the scenery on our way back to our cars.

The second outing, led by Neil, was called 'The Churches of North Nottinghamshire'. It was a miracle that we all found the unmarked and well-hidden Walkingham nature reserve car park at the start of the walk. On a gloriously



West Stockwith's simple Georgian interior

Christmas 1937

The festivities at Mansfield Hospital were so jolly that some patients were heard to say that, apart from their illnesses, it was the best Christmas they had ever had. This in itself was a wholehearted and unofficial vote of thanks to the matron (Miss M H Gammie) and the staff for their untiring efforts to give joy to the people under their charge. They were assisted in this task by donations of gifts, and this added much to the pleasure.

On Christmas Eve the patients were delighted to hear the 'waits'. They were the whole of the staff who toured the wards singing and carrying lighted candles – the only illumination, for the electric lights were put out for the time being. It was a novel idea.

Everyone in the hospital received a gift on Christmas morning and the kiddies were full of excitement and delight when they found the old man in the red cloak and white beard had remembered them with charming presents. With their usual generosity the Duke and Duchess of Portland gave a bountiful dinner. Each ward had an attractively decorated cake and there were also mince pies and other good things, all of which had been made by the staff.

An extract from the Mansfield & Sutton Times 31 December 1937



The group spot autumn cyclamen – see inset picture

sunny day we set out to explore the lovely villages of Walkingham, West Stockwith and Misterton, near Gainsborough.

Between villages we walked down quiet country lanes, along the banks of the River Trent and the towpaths of the Chesterfield canal.

Sadly Walkingham's church is closed following a ceiling collapse in 2018. West Stockwith's small and simply designed Georgian church with its large plain glass windows contrasted greatly to the large 13th century traditionally-built church in Misterton with its dark interior.

The flat countryside on this walk afforded seldom seen big sky views.

Our next rambles:

1 December: Fiskerton area (4.5) miles followed by Christmas meal.

15 December: Hardwick village and Bothamsall.

New members welcome.



Ramblers Group Leader: **Andrew Riby**
Rambles from 7 miles up to 9 miles
Meet on 1st and 3rd Wednesday
Contact Andrew on: 01623 656958
Mobile: 07833 543705
Email: ribya@imcgroup.co.uk

Thank you

My family and I send our sincere thanks to friends from Forest Town u3a for their condolences and support following the sudden death of our beloved John.

We also thank the people who made donations to the *Music for All* charity.

The total raised was £1,195. John would have been amazed.

Gill, Allison and Martin Kirk

Pauline Marples

Turn back time!

Thanks to Anita Adlard for this picture of Turn Back Time in action from the 12 November music group meeting. There was a music quiz put together by Linda. If any member would like to provide a general music quiz, or one on a featured artist, please contact Win or Irene.

Music Group Leaders:
Win Wall & Irene Brooks
Meet on 2nd Fridays



Cryptic crossword puzzle solvers

A small group this month, but enjoyable, and with some clues solved! We welcomed a new member, who made some progress even though she is a complete beginner. I hope we have set her on the path to happy solving in the future!

One member brought mince pies, which we enjoyed during our tea break. Our next meeting will be in the New Year, on 27 January, and in the meantime, I would like to wish all the group a Happy Christmas.



Report by Cryptic Crosswords
Group Leader: **Kay Toy**
Meet on 4th Thursdays

Topical debates continue...

Two new members were warmly welcomed to the group this month.

We discussed a wide range of topics including the following:

What are members doing to reduce their carbon footprint?

This caused much debate with some members saying they could not do without meat. Others commented that they now ate less meat. Some of the group said they walked or cycled more and recycled their waste.

It was generally felt that we would make very little impact on climate change unless China and America were totally committed.

Should MPs have second jobs?

Most of the group said no.

Should Owen Patterson resign?

Majority said Yes, he should resign.

Should vaccination for NHS staff be mandatory?

Most agreed that they should be vaccinated but felt persuasion rather than



force would be preferable.

Should the death penalty be re-introduced for the most heinous crimes?

This subject caused much debate and, in the end, we agreed to differ.

Would it be a good idea to lengthen the school day so pupils could catch up after the pandemic?

Most of the group said it would be a bad idea as children have daily homework and they would lack concentration. Also, who would

supervise the students. If it was to be teachers then their contracts of employment would need to be altered.

The next meeting takes place at Flint Avenue on Wednesday 8 December.

Report by Group member,
Mary Harris.
Current Affairs Group Leader:
Mike King
Meet on 2nd Wednesdays



New name for family history - Trace Your Family Tree group



Hurrah! Our family history group is finally back up and running and we now have new leaders, a new name and a new day to meet. Five of us met up on Tuesday afternoon, a smaller than usual group, but we are hopeful that other members who haven't been able to re-join us yet will do so as their circumstances allow.

New members are also very welcome, whether you've dabbled in family history in the past and would like to take it up again, or are completely new to it but have always wondered about that great aunt who no-one talks about, please come along and we'll help you get started. One word of warning though, it is addictive and you may find yourself losing several hours when you start to find out why said aunt was the black sheep of the family.

The first part of our session on Tuesday was spent doing paperwork due to the prolonged absence and also new stuff made necessary by the

pandemic. Once that was out of the way we had a quick catch up and are looking forward to hearing more from Ann about the connection to royalty she's discovered. Chris had a letter from one of the 'heir hunter' firms claiming that he is the beneficiary of someone's estate who had died intestate and without known relatives. Unfortunately he's had to tell them that their research was wrong and that the gentleman in question is nothing to do with him or his family, so it just goes to prove that even the professionals can get it wrong!

Andy has spent lockdown letting the GRO (General Register Office) know of mistakes he's found on birth, marriage and death entries. We suspect that they may now issue a collective groan when they receive an email from him!

We also looked at some useful hints and tips that Julie and Andy had produced, which have since been emailed to us all, on what to do if you get stuck (breaking down brick walls),

abbreviations you may come across which have you scratching your head, and also a quiz, do you know where your mum and dad went to school, where they were married, or whether there were any problems and tragedies they had to overcome?

We are hoping to meet again on Tuesday, 21 December at Flint Avenue, however as this is quite close to Christmas it will depend on who can make it. If not, it will be in the New Year on 18 January.

In the meantime we wish you all a Merry and Peaceful Christmas enjoyed with family and friends.

Report by Group member,
Jenny Wright

Trace Your Family Tree Group Leaders:

Julie & Andrew Rowbottom

Meet on 3rd Tuesdays

Contact: jsrowbottom@talktalk.net

More about the 'newlook' Trace Your Family Tree group

Do you wonder what your parents, grandparents, great grandparents and wider family members did for a living, where they resided, or how they came to meet each other? Are you connected to famous people, or, even, royalty?

We are a small group of people who share a similar interest in tracing our ancestors. We are not experts but enjoy:

- ◆ Sharing our personal family tree research;
- ◆ Giving tips that we have found helpful;
- ◆ Suggesting ideas to further members' study;
- ◆ Searching internet and archive resources.

You could have great ideas that could help us! We would love you to come and join in our activities.



Strollers go to Brierley Hill

How lucky were we again to meet up on such a beautiful morning. There was however a slight delay to the start of the stroll on Friday 19 November as one of our number went to the wrong park entrance **AGAIN** (namely me). That was despite using my sat nav to double check that I was going to the right entrance!

Anyway I digress, 20 of us finally met up at Brierley Park, Huthwaite (end car park) and had a lovely walk, split into two groups. One group went a longer way round and we all finished at the cafe where coffee and, in some cases, a bacon cob were duly consumed.

As there will be no Stroller meet in

December our next get together will be at Vicar Water on 21 January at 10.30.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Report by Group member, **Jen Lowe**
Strollers Group Leader: **Denise Doud**
Meet on 3rd Fridays

Thursford trip was a treat

We have just arrived back from a three-day short break to Thursford. It has been fabulous to bring five u3as together to share this experience. The show itself was magical and afterwards we travelled to Casey Hall Hotel where the service was excellent throughout.

Day 2 we travelled to Norwich for a free day, where many of us visited the cathedral and, wow, it was so beautiful.

Day 3 en route home we visited Holt. What a beautiful place with small unusual shops for us all to indulge some more.

Back on the bus we all entered into the Christmas spirit with coffees, Baileys, mince pies and stollen cakes.

Finally a big thank you to our driver Phil from Skills Travel who had decorated up our brand new bus and also provided a drinks service!

What's not to like, see you all again on our next venture.



Denise Whitsed



Coincidence!



Pauline Marples with November's speaker, Mike Hodkins

At November's meeting the speaker began by telling us he originated from Rotherham. He explained that he went to Rotherham College of Art and, because she also went there, he suggested that we may have heard of Pollyanna Pickering, the wild life artist.

After his talk I went to tell him that I came from Rotherham and also went to Rotherham College of Art and that Pollyanna Pickering used to lived down the road from me.

Malcolm also went to speak to him and discovered that they both went to the same school in Rotherham, albeit at a different time, as we were slightly older than the speaker!

Pauline Marples

Photography group

A new photography group will be starting on 14 December at Stuart Avenue, 14.00 to 16.00 and on every second Tuesday of the month after that. All welcome

Alan Taylor & Fran Smith

Gardeners get Christmassy

At our last meeting nine of us had fun making Christmas wreaths. Ribbons, evergreens from the garden, berries, baubles and pine cones covered the tables, as we produced our creations (see accompanying photo taken by Angelina Taylor). Refreshments, as usual, helped us along.

Our next meeting will be a Christmas 'fuddle', to be held at the Stuart Avenue venue on Tuesday 14 December at 10.00. Please don't bring any food items, as these will be provided.

Music and a quiz will brighten proceedings.

Report by Group member, **Kay Toy**
Gardening Group Leader:
Angelina Taylor
Meet on 2nd Tuesdays



For Group Leader contact details please email our Group Coordinator
Anita Adlard:
a.adlard@ntlworld.com

2022 diary dates

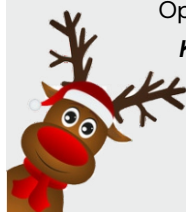
◆ Friday 7 January 2022 *Confessions of a Coach Driver*

Nick Blurton, a retired coach driver, will talk about his days driving coaches for some of the leading operators, with stories of passenger encounters, personalities and unusual tours. All told in a light hearted way.

◆ Friday 4 February 2022 *Oprah Winfrey touched my elbow*

Graham Keale was a Showbiz journalist for nearly 35 years and he loves to share anecdotes and amusing celebrity encounters including with Sir David Attenborough, Liz Hurley, Eric Morecambe, Keith Floyd and, of course, Oprah herself.

Kathryn Cope



What's on and when

Group	Day	Where	Time	Leader
Art Appreciation	3rd Fridays	Various	10.00 Arena car park	Jill Gascoyne
Bird Watching	2nd Thursdays	Various	10.00-12.00	Lynne Cooper
Book Club	1st Mondays	Forest Town Library	10.30-12.00	Ann Stanford
Country Dancing	Various Tuesdays	Forest Town Methodist Church	14.00-16.00	Pamela Lander Ann Stanford
Computers & IT	Any time	Member's home	By arrangement	Robert Hunt
Cryptic Crosswords	4th Thursdays	Sherwood Centre	10.00-12.00	Kay Toy
Current Affairs	2nd Wednesdays	Flint Ave Centre	10.00-12.00	Michael King
Days Out & Holidays	Advertised at general meetings 1st Fridays	Forest Town Arena	10.30 start	Denise Whitsed
Evening Dinner Out	4th Thursdays	Various	18.30	Marilyn Redfern & Jane Atkins
Gardening	2nd Tuesdays	Sherwood Centre	10.00-12.00	Angelina Taylor & Irene Brooks
Music 50s, 60s & 70s	2nd Fridays	Forest Town Arena	14.00-16.00	Win Wall & Irene Brooks
National Trust	Some Saturdays	Meet Forest Town Arena	Various	Ann Stanford
Painting & Drawing	4th Thursdays	Sherwood Centre	14.00-16.00	Christine Cawthorne
Poetry & Play Reading	2nd Mondays	Sherwood Centre	10.00-12.00	Allan Barham
Photography	2nd Tuesdays	Sherwood Centre	14.00-16.00	Alan Taylor & Fran Smith
Rambling 7-9 miles	1st & 3rd Wednesdays	Meet Forest Town Arena	08.40 departure	Andy Riby
Scrabble & Rummikub	3rd Mondays	Sherwood Centre	14.00-16.00	Celia Tassel
Strollers	3rd Fridays	Various	10.30 departure	Denise Doud
Table Tennis	1st Tuesdays	Oak Tree Centre	11.30-13.30	Marilyn Redfern
Trace Your Family Tree	3rd Tuesdays	Flint Ave Centre	14.00-16.00	Andrew & Julie Rowbottom

Your Executive Committee contacts

Forest Town & District U3A relies on the hard work of its Executive Committee. Everyone gives their time freely. All Executive Committee members can be contacted via the website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/forest-town/contact>

For members who don't use email and need help, please contact our Welfare Officer, **Kelvin Foster** by phone on **01623 422251**.

Current members of the Committee are: Linda Shutt (Chair), Allan Barham (Vice-Chair), Andrew Riby (Treasurer), Christine Ward (Business Secretary), Anita Adlard (Groups' Coordinator), Marilyn Redfern (Assistant Groups' Coordinator), Kelvin Foster (Membership Secretary & Welfare Officer), Kathryn Cope (Speaker Seeker & Assistant Membership Secretary), Tina Shirt and Bob Hunt (Website Editor).

Next issue is in Feb

Please send articles or ideas for the next issue to Helen Riby by email: ftu3anews@gmail.com or by post to: 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW
by midnight on Saturday 22 January 2022.

For latest news visit:
<https://u3asites.org.uk/forest-town/>

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