



Happy New Year!

As we welcome 2024 I'd like us to all think about our health and what we can do to keep ourselves healthier.

On Facebook I've been seeing a lot of easy exercises that can be done when sitting down. These are not putting any strain on our bodies and just a few minutes a day could make a great difference. For those who are able, a ten minute walk a day could keep you mobile. We are hoping to get our gentle Strollers walking group up and running again soon. We just need a leader to step up. Alternatively, why not get a few friends together and form your own group.

Mental health is always being talked about. If any of you are feeling alone, we have plenty of interest groups that you could join. Take a look at the *Interest Group* list on page 7 of this newsletter and get in touch with the relevant group leader. We have great fun, no one need feel alone.

We are always looking for volunteers to help set up the room, to take money for the events we are doing, or to be a greeter at our meetings. Everyone has something they are good at, just get in touch and let us know.

We have a full year ahead of us, keep an eye on the meetings and newsletter to see what's going on.

The soup and roll event on 12 January was a great success. Next on the list is our fish and chip quiz on 14 February. Every month we are trying to come up with an event or outing that will keep our u3a up there with the best. The *Event Diary* on page 6 lists the upcoming activities.

We have often been told we are a friendly u3a and that no one gets left behind. I feel that this is true. If you have any ideas we are here to listen.

At our next meeting in February we will be taking 2024 membership fees, there will be a form for gift aid which, if you are a UK taxpayer, I encourage you to complete (see page 3 for more on gift aid). Please ask if you have any questions.

I am excited about our new year plans but for now I will say: See you at the meeting on 2 February!

Irene Brooks

February's speaker



Friday 2 February 2024

Barry Harper – Crossing the Great Slave Lake in Arctic Canada

Barry is a retired police inspector who enjoys extreme sports.

He has climbed some of the world's highest mountains: Mount Kilimanjaro (2016), Mont Blanc (1997), trekked to the Everest Base Camp (2018), been to the North Pole twice (2005/6), and to the South Pole once (2008), as well as being a member of the first team to cross the Great Slave Lake on foot in winter and unsupported, back in 2003. All his expeditions have been for charitable causes.

It's time to renew your membership

Your committee has agreed the annual fee for membership will remain at £19 for the 2024/25 year. Associate membership, for those who are already a member at another u3a, will be £15.50.

There are three ways of paying your membership fee:

- ◆ **Bank transfer.** Account name FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT U3A, sort code 30-90-89, account number 53978960. This is classed as a business bank account. **Note, it is a different bank account to the one you pay your trip money into. PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME AND/OR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER AS THE REFERENCE.**
- ◆ **Cheque.** These should be made out to **FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT U3A**, with **your membership number on the reverse**. Bring your cheque along to the meetings in February/March or post to K Cope, 97 Lingforest Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 3NQ.
- ◆ If you are unable to pay by bank transfer or cheque then **you can pay in cash** at the next two monthly meetings on 2nd February 2024 and 1st March 2024 **PLEASE AVOID CASH PAYMENTS IF YOU CAN.**

Kathryn Cope

Breakfast club gets going

The young lads had a hearty breakfast at Rumbles, Vicar Water. It was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We had a laugh and a good chat followed by a stroll around the lake. Our next breakfast will be on Tuesday 30 January again at Rumbles at 10 o'clock. New members welcome to come and join us.

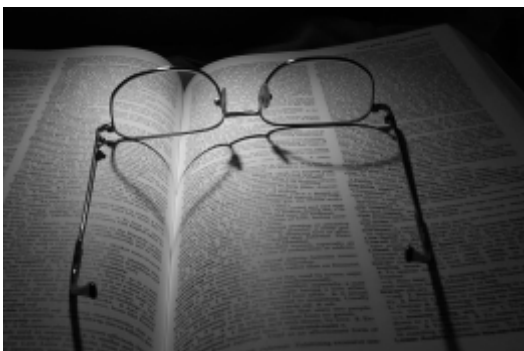


Breakfast Club Group Leader: **Kevin Cope**
Meet 4th Tuesdays Contact Kevin on 07902 579299

Happy New Year from Snap & Chat

We had a good turn out in January, welcoming back Fran, Ian and Cindy to the group.

We had a good discussion for the first hour then we displayed our photos. The theme for this month was black and



white. There were 13 photos displayed and the winner was Bob with the photo above which he named heart shadow

Our theme for February will be Valentine's Day. Hopefully we should get a variety of photos as there are lots of different ideas for us to explore.

Report by: **Steve Edis** Photography Group Leader:
Alan Taylor Meet 2nd Tuesdays

Lunch group change

There was no lunch group in January. Yan Kerr and Olive Moore are organising the February outing, then, going forward, different members of the group will each take a month and organise where we are going. **Irene Brooks**

Good fun if a bit sticky

Our December meeting was a festive affair, with a buffet and tea/coffee and a non-alcoholic glass of something pleasant, provided by Olive. We sat and hand-sewed small Christmassy items for decoration at home. The ideas and felt, etc, were kindly provided by Angelina. A cosy and convivial morning.

Our most recent meeting in January was a decoupage bonanza! Pretty paper serviettes were cut up and pasted onto plant pots or wooden spoons/other items with PVA glue. The writer of this piece produced a rather sticky mess, being new to the craft, but got the work home in one piece and doctored it so that it looked fairly respectable! All good fun!



Report by: **Kay Toy**
Gardening Craft Group Leader: **Angelina Taylor**
Meet 2nd Tuesdays

Card craft

Come along to the Card Craft group and get creative.

The group meets on the 4th Monday in the month at The Sherwood Centre at 10am. Next session is 25 February See you there!



Card Craft Group Leader:
Sue Buchanan Meet 4th Mondays

Christmas celebrations

Our Christmas Party at the Forest Town Arena on 22 December went with a swing. Starting with *Turn Back Time* singing two sets of old time favourites and then a sing-a-long to Christmas songs. The Country Dancing Group once again went totally wrong, (honestly, it went right at rehearsals) with members joining in the last dance; and our German Group sang a moving rendition of *Silent Night* in German. We finished the afternoon by all singing *White Christmas*. A good time was had by all.

Earlier, on 15 December, the Christmas lunch at the Hostess was another most enjoyable outing. The food was excellent and we were entertained by Mr Scrimshaw singing some classics and some Christmas songs for us to work off some of the calories on the dance floor. The quiz was won by Sue, Jenny and Margaret.

Report by Kathryn Cope. Photos by Kathryn Cope & Bob Hunt



A thank you to Penny from Forest Town Arena for looking after us well



Silent Night sung in German



Mary won the hamper



Thanks Kathryn for organising



Left: Quiz winners at The Hostess: Sue, Margaret & Jenny. Above: Country dancing went down well

Are you a taxpayer? Please sign up to Gift Aid

If you pay income or capital gains tax please read on.

Have you heard of Gift Aid? This is a government scheme where registered charities can benefit from tax back. It's worth 25p in every £1 to the charity (Forest Town u3a is a registered charity).

In simple terms – if you pay more than £19 (your current membership subscription) in income or capital gains tax in any tax year, our u3a could reclaim £4.75 back. This is because your subscription is seen as a donation to charity. You will need to sign a declaration to confirm that

you pay tax in the UK. These declarations will be available at the meetings.

The extra revenue will really benefit Forest Town & District u3a and could go towards a new P.A. system – as you know we often have problems with our microphone.

It could also support our many ongoing events which are open to all members (e.g. we are currently working on an Easter extravaganza).

You can get further help or explanation on 08453 020302 or charities@hmrc.gov.uk.
Marilyn Redfern

Legal eagles



Lauren Griffiths and her team from Bryan and Armstrong solicitors, gave a Q&A talk on the 'Lasting Powers of Attorney' at the January meeting.

Thursford spectacular

What an amazing trip. Our hotel, Heacham Manor was built in 1582 and is a grade 2 listed building. Turned into a hotel in 2009 it is located near the seaside town of Hunstanton in Norfolk and there are 52 stylish bedrooms.

On arrival we were met by Lynne the manager who showed us to the dining room where we enjoyed a wonderful three course meal. We then had an hour to rest and get changed, ready for the show,

This began with a breathtaking winter wonderland; absolutely amazing, you could see the lights shining miles before we got there. Everywhere you looked there were stunning displays.



NT preliminary plans

Enquiries have been made for visiting the following National Trust properties in 2024, May to October, excluding August.

- ◆ Wentworth Castle Gardens – a weekday.
- ◆ Nostell – Saturday 18 May. £5 deposit please at February and March meetings. Full payment will be collected at the April and May meetings.
- ◆ East Riddlestone Hall and Hardcastle Crag – a weekday
- ◆ Upton House and Farnborough Hall – a weekday
- ◆ Woolthorpe Manor and Belton House

At the February, March and April meetings please put your name down for any visits that interest you. Depending on the numbers a small coach or minibus will be hired. Cost, very approximately will be between £11 and £20.

National Trust Group Leader:

Ann Stanford



The show itself started with bagpipes. The compère Lloyd Hollett, amazed us with his masterful comedy, wordplay and vocal wizardry. There are no photos of the performance. We weren't allowed to take them.

The Thursford Christmas Spectacular is an extravaganza of non-stop singing, dancing, music, humour, and variety. With a cast of 130 people, it is the biggest Christmas show of its kind in Europe.

We were absolutely mesmerised from start to finish.

If you haven't been please go. It's a fabulous experience.

Irene Brooks

Ramblers battle with floods and road closures

Our first outing in December was a shorter walk from Newstead & Annesley Country Park to work up an appetite for the group's Christmas lunch at *The Countryman* in Kirkby.

It was a gloriously sunny and cold winter's day, perfect for walking. Three deer ran across our path. All was well as we walked along a wide farm track toward the Newstead estate when a man in a pick-up told us politely, but firmly, that we were trespassing. He turned out to be the cousin of Jackie, one of our walkers, so, after a friendly chat, we were allowed to continue with a warning.

A quick detour to the Fort gave us great views across the lake towards the Abbey. We then lingered over hot drinks in the Abbey café before walking through the Abbey gardens.

Deep flood water blocked the estate road out to Newstead village to cars and walkers alike, so we had to scramble up a steep wooded bank to work our way round the obstacle. It was a relief when we made it to *The Countryman* in time for our meal. A good time was had by all.

Our next walk in December was supposed to take us to Bothamsall via a farm with a herd of reindeer. However, the recce revealed that paths were flooded and impassable so the route had to be changed. Instead, Steve led us into Hardwick Village and around the lake at Clumber Park. Unusually, Clumber chapel was open to visitors, so we took the opportunity to have a good look round. Thankfully, we found a room in the stable block at Clumber with tables and seats where we could eat our sandwiches out of the biting cold wind.

Our first walk in the New Year was programmed to take in Froggatt, Curbar, Baslow and White Edges near Baslow. However, the A617 between the M1 and Chesterfield was closed and so the walk was abandoned before anyone set off. Instead, Julie led us on a gentle 9 mile walk from Whaley Thorns. First, we went into the Poulter Country Park and climbed up to the *Top of the World*; a sculpture inspired by the area's Stone Age past with views across the surrounding countryside.

After walking through Langwith, woodland paths eventually brought us to the Mill at Cuckney. We found some picnic benches for our lunch stop and managed to eat most of it before it began to drizzle. A path alongside Cuckney Dam and then by the River Poulter took us to Langwith Mill House before farm tracks led back to Whaley Thorns.

Our second walk in January was cancelled as most of the walking group were booked into a hotel in Weymouth to do some walking on the South Coast.

Our next rambles:

7 February: Langold Lakes and Hodsock Priory.

21 February: Breadsall and Darley Abbey. New members welcome..

Ramblers Group Leader:

Andrew Riby.

Rambles from 7 miles up to 9 miles.

Meet 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.

Contact Andrew on: 01623 656958

Mobile: 07833 543705 Email:

ribya@imcgroup.co.uk



Christmas lunch at The Countryman



On Top of the World in Poulter Country Park



With members of Ashfield u3a walking group on the Weymouth holiday



Steve & I of the Shaun the Sheep flock in Clumber Park

At a Glance Event Diary

February

GENERAL MEETING

**Friday 2 February 10.30,
Forest Town Arena**

Barry Harper, *Crossing the Great
Slave Lake in Arctic Canada*

FISH & CHIP QUIZ

**Wednesday 14 February
12.00 to 14.00**

St Lawrence Church Hall

March

GENERAL MEETING

**Friday 1 March 10.30,
Forest Town Arena**

Ian Morgan
Footpads, Kings & Highwaymen

KINKY BOOTS

**Saturday 9 or Sunday 10 March
Mansfield Palace Theatre
Tickets £19**

MURDER MYSTERY

**18 & 19 March
The Old Barn Hotel, Marston in
Lincolnshire **SOLD OUT****

EASTER EXTRAVAGANZA

**Friday 22 March 10.00 to 12.00
Forest Town Arena**

April

GENERAL MEETING

**Friday 5 April 10.30,
Forest Town Arena**

Vince Eager
Life in the Entertainment Business

NIGHT AT THE DOGS

**Monday 15 April 17.30 to 10.30
Nottingham**

£36 per person including transport,
race card and meal

CALENDAR GIRLS

**Saturday 20 April 14.30
Mansfield Palace Theatre
£18.50**

A Night at the Dogs

Tickets for our *Night At The Dogs* in Nottingham on Monday 15 April will be on sale at the February and March general meetings. The price, £36 per person, includes a wonderful three course meal (with a choice of starter, main and dessert), your race card and transport to and from Forest Town Arena. Please make cheques payable to Forest Town & District u3a.



Coach pick up at 17.30. Return coach leaving Nottingham at 22.00.

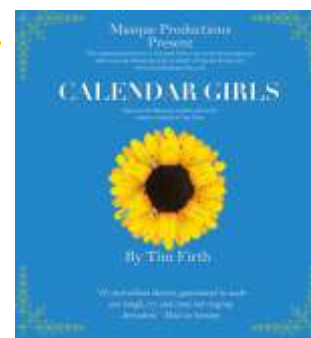
Easter Extravaganza

Come along and enjoy a cream tea and entertainment at our *Easter Extravaganza* 10.00 -12.00 on Friday 22 March at The Forest Town Arena. Tickets will be available at our February and March meetings.

Calendar Girls

Tickets available for Masque Production's *Calendar Girls* at Mansfield's Palace Theatre on Saturday 20 April at 14.30, priced £18.50. If you would like to support one of Mansfield's few theatre groups left, please book your seat at the February main meeting.

Ann Stanford



Rhine in Flames final payment due

The trip to see *Rhine in Flames* 2-8 May in Germany is sold out. We will be taking 51 members to see this excellent festival as well as visiting local towns and villages plus an afternoon gentle cruise along the Rhine from our hotel base in Kamp-Bornhofen.

For those coming on the trip, the final balance is now due. £430 per person and £480 for those of you with a single room.

Also I need your passport number, passport expiry date, full name on passport, date of birth and country of origin please. Plus a name and contact number of someone back home and whether you need travel insurance through Skills, cheques to be made out to Skills.

Kevin will be taking these at the February meeting.

Kathryn Cope

Social Group outing

Pictured is our u3a social group outing. It was our Christmas get together. We went to Larch Farm in Ravenshead.

They do a three-course meal for £11.99. Small portions but very enjoyable. I had a passion fruit cocktail. Some ladies had a glass of red wine.

We talked about the coming year's social activities and agreed that we were all very much looking forward to all the things we have got planned for this coming year.



Which interest groups will you join?

Just pick up the phone or turn up on the day

| Group | When | Where | Time | Leader |
|------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Book Club | 1st Mondays | Forest Town Library | 10.30–12.00 | Ann Stanford 01623 641864 |
| Breakfast Club | 4th Tuesdays | various | 10.00 | Kevin Cope 07902 579299. |
| Card Craft | 4th Mondays | Sherwood Centre | 10.00–12.00 | Sue Buchanan |
| Computers & IT | Any time | Member's home | By arrangement | Robert Hunt 07588 047885 |
| Country Dancing | 2nd Tuesdays | Flint Avenue Centre | 14.00–16.00 | Ann Stanford 01623 641864 |
| Cryptic Crosswords | 4th Thursdays | Sherwood Centre | 10.00–12.00 | Kay Toy 01623 652245 |
| Current Affairs | 2nd Wednesdays | Flint Ave Centre | 10.00–12.00 | Michael King 01623 470629 |
| Days Out & Holidays | Advertised at general meetings 1st Fridays | Forest Town Arena | 10.30 start | Angelina Taylor 01623 622871 |
| Evening Dinner Out | 4th Thursdays | Various | 18.30 | Marilyn Redfern 01623 845731 |
| Garden Crafts | 2nd Tuesdays | Sherwood Centre | 10.00–12.00 | Angelina Taylor 01623 622871 |
| German language | 3rd Tuesdays | Forest Town Arena | 16.30–17.30 | Marilyn Redfern 01623 845731 |
| Litter Pick | 4th Tuesdays | Meet at Forest Town Arena | 10.00 | Mike Lyall 07752 878619 |
| Luncheon club | Various | Various | Lunchtime | Irene Brooks 07765 970751 |
| Music 50s, 60s & 70s | 2nd Fridays | Forest Town Arena | 14.00–16.00 | Win Wall & Irene Brooks 07765 970751 |
| National Trust | Various | Meet at Forest Town Arena | Various | Ann Stanford 01623 641864 |
| Painting & Drawing | 4th Thursdays | Sherwood Centre | 14.00–16.00 | Mike Lyall 07752 878619 |
| Photos Snap & Chat | 2nd Tuesdays | Sherwood Centre | 14.00–16.00 | Angelina Taylor 01623 622871 |
| Rambling 7–9 miles | 1st & 3rd Wednesdays | Various | Various | Andy Riby 01623 656958 |
| Strollers | suspended | | | New leader needed |
| Table Tennis | 1st Tuesdays | Oak Tree Centre | 11.30–13.30 | Marilyn Redfern 01623 845731 |
| Tabletop Games | 4th Mondays | Flint Avenue | 14.00–16.00 | Jane Vernon 07947 958850 |
| Trace Your Family Tree | 3rd Tuesdays | Flint Avenue Centre | 14.00–16.00 | Andrew & Julie Rowbottom 01623 636223 |

All members are invited to General Meetings – first Friday in the month at Forest Town Arena 10.00 for 10.30 start.

Your Committee contacts

Forest Town & District u3a relies on the hard work of its Executive Committee. Everyone gives their time freely. All members can be contacted via the website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/forest-town/contact>

Current members of the Committee are:

Irene Brooks (Chair), Mike Lyall (Vice–Chair), Sue Robinson (Treasurer), Jenny Vernalls (Assistant Treasurer) Janis Bye & Kay Toy (joint Business Secretaries), Kathryn Cope (Membership Secretary), Halina Gaskell (Assistant Membership Secretary & joint Speaker Seeker), Marilyn Redfern (Groups' Coordinator), Sue Buchanan (Assistant Groups' Coordinator & joint Speaker Seeker), and Winston Wall. **Winston Wall** is the Welfare Officer. If you have any concerns then please call him on 01623 640037. Bob Hunt is the Website Editor, email: webftu3a@gmail.com

Next issue

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 Sunday 18 February 2024.**

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

Forest Town & District u3a is a Registered Charity Number 1186417