

ART – ANGELA THOMAS

Members enjoy doing work of their own choice and help to improve drawing and painting is given by Angela. A few new beginners have started this year and they are already achieving pleasing results under the guidance of our tutor. In July a number of members from the group accompanied by Angela spent the day sketching in Market Bosworth. We all appreciate the efforts put in by Angela on a monthly basis and thank her for accompanying us on our day in Market Bosworth and giving us tuition on drawing buildings.

BRIDGE - PAUL WEBB

The group meets weekly with attendance varying between 20 and 28. The total group regular attendees are about 46. We now have three potential session leaders: Paul Webb, Alan Fairall, and Jean Leach thus ensuring continuity throughout the year. Each session is scored and the results posted on the Hinckley U3A website. Thanks go to Ron Munday who manages 'Dial a Partner' for members without a partner. Thanks go to Alan Fairall who does most of the scoring, Andrea Shires who regularly collects the attendance money, all group members who assist in setting/clearing up and finally Alan and Jean for organising sessions. Two friendly teams' matches with Nuneaton U3A have taken place this year. Hinckley won both sessions with the help of Nuneaton players!. A separate group for beginners has been set up and meets on a Monday morning at the George Ward Centre.

CHURCH VISITING – MARY HILL

Once again we have visited 12 churches during the summer. We started at Earl Shilton and we ended at St Peter's at Aston Flamville which was the smallest church visited this year. We even ventured into the city and visited St Nicholas and the Cathedral. We have received a warm welcome at all of the churches and usually enjoy coffee and biscuits (sometimes home made cake) at one of the churches. The group has increased in size, in September we had 29 members present. We will start our visits again in April 2018.

CRAFT – PAULINE HODGSON

This year the Craft Group have been busy producing woven bags, rope baskets, greeting cards and sewing gift boxes and scissor holders. For Christmas we made angels by folding paperback books and rag wreaths. In December another hand sewn quilt will be made for the charity Project Linus. A big thank you to our crafty members who lead these sessions and manage to introduce us to new projects each month. Unfortunately the group is over subscribed and closed to new members but if anyone would like to be added to our waiting list please contact Pauline on 01455 888433. There may be vacancies in the New Year.

CREATIVE WRITING – JOHN WHITEHEAD

The group has developed into a very flexible and enjoyable unit, welcoming and absorbing three or four new writers to add to the mix of gnarled old hacks and thrusting young scribes. You may offer your opinion as to who is in which subset. We have really entertaining discussions and plenty of imagination. If you would like to express yourself on a range of topics, by short story, press article, poem or novel, please join us on second Thursdays 2-4pm each month at George Ward Centre. John Whitehead (Group Leader)

CROQUET (IN ASSOCIATION WITH SAPCOTE CROQUET CLUB) – STEWART NEWMAN

Croquet can be played by people of all ages, both male and female, with equal ease and opportunity. Strength and speed are not requirements, although planning and strategy are useful attributes. It provides both mental stimulation and physical exercise, can be highly competitive and a source of lasting friendships. This year the weather has been very kind to us and the group has gone from strength to strength. We play both Association and Golf Croquet, doubles and singles. Both very different games. Association Croquet is a cross between Chess and Snooker played on grass. Very good for the brain. We are looking for new members to join us next year. All of whom will be fully trained by a Croquet Association qualified coach/referee. All the equipment is supplied by Sapcote Croquet Club which was established in 1988 for which we are very grateful. At present we have the use of three courts. The season runs from April to Mid-October (weather permitting). We play Wednesday, Friday and Sunday afternoons at the Sapcote Recreation Ground. So keep an eye on the newsletter next year for information on the start of the new season. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Stewart Newman (U3A Group Leader, Sapcote Croquet Club President & Croquet Association Club Coach for both Association and Golf Croquet) on 01455 444144 or stewart.newman1@ntlworld.com.

DISCUSSION – GEOFF OLIVER

"Variety is the spice of life", Our swelling numbers in the Discussion Group provide us with wider, even wilder, views and greater knowledge. Opportunity to give voice to opinions, have them discussed, possibly with a spice of wit, make the time more enjoyable. Perhaps you may prefer to listen and hear, rather than expound. The main aims can still be attained, namely joy in company, socialisation and, most certainly, more confidence to speedily air your views; for the word is mightier than the sword.

Over the past year, we have covered more political issues, such as BREXIT or not, referenda, elections and possible consequences. Time was also given to undue media time on sport and earnings. These matters led onto, "What if.....?", celebrities and whether society has become more self-centred.

Come; join us. You don't have to bring the "catted faff" with you, or allow me to "sew you to your sheet, or even to "drink to the queer old Dean". Classical Spoonerisms are delightful, but so is a good sense of humour and enjoyment for all.

1st Tuesday of each month, 2pm. See you. Geoff Oliver. 0116 2599055, or geoffjoliver@googlemail.com

FAMILY HISTORY – SANDRA BATES

Approximately 25 people attended the first two Family History Group meetings in April and May 2016 but the number dropped dramatically the following month possibly the result of there not being a permanent group leader in place.

Having been away during this period I returned in September 2016 and assumed the role of group leader (on a pro tem basis) and there is now a membership of 13 with an average attendance per meeting of 8. The meeting format is either a discussion on a pre-arranged subject followed by a free-for-all or a general look at resources and problems. So far we have covered Bigamy, Record Keeping, Web Resources, and reports of the talks at Who Do You Think You Are Live. September 2017 saw a talk on DNA and Genealogy by Geoff Swinfield a professional geneticist / genealogist from London – this was a very well attended meeting with 15 visitors making a total audience of 23. Geoff waived his fee and we were able to make a donation to the RNLI at his request. The group does not meet during the summer and the meeting day clashes with the closure of the George Ward centre at Christmas meaning that we only manage 8 meetings a year. By the time you read this report we will have had our October meeting at which we will have discussed how to take the group forward – the options under consideration will have included the format of the meetings, the venue (internet connection speeds and band width at GWC at are somewhat restrictive), the possibility of holding additional sessions at Hinckley or Earl Shilton library (block booking their computers). We would love to see some new members and if you are interested in finding out our plans for the future please contact me via the U3A Website Contact Us page (select General Enquiries) or by phone 01455 842706. Sandra Bates - Group Leader.

FILM – MARY ALLEN

The film group meet once a month on the first Wednesday in the George Ward Centre at 2.00 pm. We are a relaxed and friendly lot and if you have an interest in films I think you may enjoy it. We watch a mixed variety of challenging and more mainstream films which are debated with enthusiasm at the end!

HISTORY - MARGARET PICKERING

The theme this year was "Abbeys" with talks on "Abbeys and Priors of Leics. & Rutland, Dissolution, Medieval Pilgrimages, the other Monasticisms, Polesworth Abbey and a Monastery Garden. Visits to Lacock Abbey, Newstead Abbey with Southwell Minster, Byland and Rievaulx Abbeys and Abbey Park. There was an extra talk on Lord Byron as a follow up to the visit to Newstead Abbey and a splendid visit to the Tithe Barn at Sheepy Magna and Polesworth Abbey with lunch at Orton –on –the Hill.

KURLING 1 - ROGER AND MAVIS CHAPMAN

We meet at the Green Towers Centre in Hinckley, on the first Monday of the month. We usually have time to play 3 games, and are able to enjoy a drink and socialise in the cafe afterwards. Unfortunately we can only accommodate 24 players, and as we already have 30 members on the register, we are unable to accept any newcomers at the moment.

KURLING 2 - MARION GILLETTE

It is held in the GWC which is an ideal location for those who do not drive, but live in Barwell . The group has grown to the point where we are now running 2 lanes. The timing seems to be good as well, 2nd Monday 10 - 11, and then coffee after. We can still fit in more people if anyone would like to join us.

LUNCHEON GROUP – LES PRATT

Another great year of fine repast. Our local area never fails us with plenty of good eating houses. Over the year we have visited ten different restaurants and none have disappointed. The group is just the right number to enable lively fresh discussion without seeming to be talking to strangers. Good to see our friends month after month. A number of local hostelrys have recently been taken on by enthusiastic chefs seeking to make their mark, so we have some new to us which we look forward to checking out during 2018.

MAH JONG - PAUL AND SUSAN WEBB

The group has gone from strength to strength and we have 29 members who attend regularly with typically 18 to 22 attending each session. We have a core of competent players and tuition has been given to five beginners this year. As in previous years, we have found the game great fun whilst keeping our brains active. Thanks go to members who help to set up the room and help clear away after the meeting. The group meets on the first and third Fridays of the month from 2-4 pm. If any U3A member wishes to learn Mah Jong, they should first contact the Group Leaders since new members cannot always be accommodated immediately.

MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD - SUSAN WEBB

This year the group has continued discussing entrepreneurs. Topics have included Sir Simon Marks, Donald Trump, Jo Malone, Sochiro Honda, Coco Chanel and Howard Hughes. A small group of members will be travelling by car in November to the JCB works in Staffordshire. Thanks to members who have spent a great deal of time researching topics for their presentations and thus contributing to the success of the group.

MUSIC APPRECIATION – MICK BIRCHALL

The group still functions largely as a music circle, with contributions from each member in turn. The meetings are very informal, although structured to some extent by the adoption of a theme, which is emphatically not mandatory, We have a gradually increasing core of very loyal members, and occasional newcomers tend to stay with us. A few new members would be made most welcome.

PETANQUE A.M.– STEWART NEWMAN

Due to the popularity of the Petanque Group it became unsafe to continue in its present form. The Committee decided to split the groups with a maximum number of 12 players in each group. Both groups are still held at the Nags Head at Stapleton and the a.m. Group runs on the 4th Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. However, the a.m. group is up to its capacity of 12 members with a reserves list. If you are interested in playing Petanque please contact Gareth Twitchett to ascertain if places are available in the afternoon session.

PETANQUE P.M. – GARETH TWITCHETT

The Petanque Group meets on the 4th Friday of the month at the Nags Head Public House, Stapleton between 2 – 3.30pm. We have been meeting regularly (weather permitting) and have an average attendance of approximately 10 people, although there have been 18 recently which resulted in us splitting the sessions. This summer some of our players have played for the Nag's Head A team in the Leicestershire & Rutland Summer League Division 4. All players played well and enjoyed themselves, but unfortunately they were relegated to Division 5. Better luck next year. Petanque (sometimes called Boules) is a social sport similar to Lawn Bowls in that you throw boules to get close to a small jack (cochonnet) but played with small heavy metal boules on a gravel surface. You may well have watched a game while on your holidays in France or Spain. It may be played by both sexes, all ages and abilities. If you would like to learn how to play, or refresh your skills, please come along – boules are provided for those who do not have their

own. There is of course food and drink available over lunchtime, and some of our members enjoy a lunch before the game. If you have any queries please get in touch with the group Leader – Gareth Twitchett

PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP - BRETT LAWRENCE

Only one meeting was held before our summer break. That was in June when a party of four members went to Foxton Locks. Our first meeting after the break was on 4th September, when eleven attended including two new members. It was noted that the projector was difficult to focus. This was to be reported to the Committee for any suggested reaction. The following meeting was on 2nd October when eight members attended including the previous two new members. Two of the members would not be attending due to involvement in other U3A activities but may attend later when the weather could intervene. Our next meeting is on 6th November. At present, we have 15 members registered. With respect to the projector the committee have requested that I look into the possibility of sourcing a new projector which will be kept at the Mary Forryan Centre and a company to service the existing one.

PLAY READING - DAVID BLOODWORTH

The Group has continued with its policy, begun two years ago, of reading 'more substantial' plays, as this has proved very successful and popular - not only with existing members but also newcomers to the Group.

To date (August) in 2017 we have read:

- *The Admirable Chrichton* (J M Barrie)
- *The Glass Menagerie* (Tennessee Williams)
- *Brassed Off* (a stage adaptation of the successful film)
- Two one act plays written by U3A authors from a collection published by Third Age Press

In addition to this we have watched the 1950s film version of *The Admirable Chrichton* and joined a trip to Birmingham to see *Billy Elliott*. We hope next to read *Cause Célèbre* by Terence Rattigan, a play with strong local connections since its pre-London run was staged at Leicester's Haymarket. As I have commented in previous reports, our activities may sound rather dull and boring but in fact the opposite is true. We have learned a great deal and have had lots of excellent discussions but we've done so in a very relaxed atmosphere and whilst sharing many laughs. New members are always welcome and I would reiterate that the Group exists to read plays not to perform them. Hence acting experience is not necessary.

POETRY READING – ELLEN KNIGHTS

The poems which we have read this year have been based on a different theme each month. For example: works by nineteenth and twentieth century poets; growing older and looking back; magic and mystery; home and family. The theme for October is 'colours'. As many of us have been adding to our personal stock of anthologies we usually manage to find far more poems on each subject than there is time to read them all. As a result next year we are intending to re-visit some of our previous themes. All told we have covered over 60 different themes since the inception of the group.

READING FOR PLEASURE – MARY MUNDAY

The group meets at the George Ward Centre every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 200 p.m. We receive the majority of our books from the Hinckley Library approximately every 3 to 4 months of the year. As a sample this year we read and discussed, *Past Imperfect*, *Five Boys*, *The Card*, and many more. This is a lively and friendly group where some very interesting interpretations of the various books come to light. We have a total at present of 17 members.

RECORDER GROUP - JULIE HOULTON

Group membership remains at 23 regular members. This year we have welcomed 4 new members. The summer months do see a drop in attendance with players undertaking lengthy vacations. Sadly at the end of 2016 Len Harrison, one of our members died. Len was inspirational. He brought with him a fund of musical experience as a brass player and as a flautist. He quickly took to the recorder and greatly enhanced our Treble section. Always enthusiastic and keen to explore new music Len also ensured things were “done properly.” He provided the group leader with a baton to use, in place of the stubby pencil previously used to beat time! The group continues to develop. More players are taking up the challenge of learning the various instruments of the recorder family. Our Bass section now numbers three! We have increased our repertoire with some challenging pieces in a range of styles. Performance continues to be a focus and we continually look for opportunities to promote the group and the instrument.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY - WENDY BARKER

The group has been running just over a year now covering a wide range of topics. Such as the history of science & notable discoveries, Lasers, Aviation, Medical scanners, Bridge construction & automotive research (MIRA). Trips have been run to visit the Royal Armouries in Leeds & an Isambard Kingdom Brunel themed trip to Bristol visiting the Clifton suspension bridge & SS Great Britain. The programme for the group is on our website & everyone is most welcome. I would like to think our group encapsulates the ethos of the U3A as all that is required is a lively enquiring mind.

SCRABBLE – MARY HILL

Nothing new to report about the Scrabble Group. No new members during the year but still the same enthusiastic “Scrabblers”. We all enjoy the challenge of trying to make a word from six vowels and one consonant or even seven consonants and no vowel. We are told that we should keep our brains active and playing Scrabble must help to do this.

SINGING FOR FUN – HILDA BUTLER

Our membership continues to grow, and we are now approaching 40 people who sing with us. During the past year we have learned some new songs, while continuing to sing favourites we enjoyed from other years. We have been invited to perform at the Baptist Church in Hinckley, at the beginning of December, so we shall be practising Christmas songs and carols between now and then. We are a friendly and welcoming group, with people making suggestions as to our repertoire, which we try to incorporate if possible. We meet at the George Ward Centre on the 2nd & 4th Monday of the month, and everyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join us.

SOLOS SUNDAY LUNCHEON GROUP – MARION JONES

We meet on the first Sunday of the month, from February to November, in the Parklands Restaurant at Hinckley Golf Club. There are no longer monthly variations to the menu which is quite disappointing. Another venue is being considered. If it proves satisfactory no change will be made without the democratic agreement of the group. Sunday can be a difficult day when you are on your own. Join us to enjoy good company and good food in welcoming surroundings. If further information is required please telephone Marion on 01455 635587

STROLERS – JANET BERRIE

Since we began we have been on a number of interesting walks of about 2 to 2 1/2 miles and average about 8 walkers. We enjoy a gentle walk chatting, looking at scenery and having exercise which is followed by a nice cup of coffee or tea and light lunch afterwards for those who want it. It hasn't always been dry but the damp has not put us off on the odd occasion it rained. We established the strollers a few months ago and it seems a popular walk for those unable to do longer rambles and who like to have some exercise. Janet Berrie and Tom Berrie

THEATRE VISITS - MARGARET PICKERING

“Billy Elliot” at Birmingham Hippodrome, “Kiss me Kate” and “Top Hat” at Kilworth House Theatre, “Antony and Cleopatra” at Stratford, “Pirates of Penzance” at Malvern and “The Nutcracker” at Birmingham Hippodrome. All these theatre visits are by coach.

WALKING AND LUNCH GROUP – PAULINE HODGSON

The Walking Group have visited three counties this year. In Warwickshire, Monks Kirby, Draycott Water, Hartshill Hayes and Shustoke Reservoir. Derbyshire found us at Melbourne. Nearer to home in Leicestershire we explored Mount St Bernards Abbey, Bradgate Park, Newton Burgoland and we end the year along the Great Central Way and Aylestone Meadows. If you would like to join us our next outing will be in January from Market Bosworth. On your own? Not a problem, most of us are. Come along and make new U3A friends. Taking between 2 - 2 1/2 hours most walks are flat and stiles seem to be dying out so no climbing skills required. Further details please call Pauline on 01455 888433.

WINE APPRECIATION – JOHN WHITEHEAD

This new group has around 30 regulars attending meetings every two months, second Monday of the month, 12:30-2pm at Dadlington Village Hall. Our format is to begin with an introduction about the wines of one country or region, tasting two whites, two reds, a light lunch, finishing with a desert wine. Cost is £6. There is a lot of laughter and plenty of opinions expressed about each tasting. To date we have sampled wines from Australia, New Zealand, Spain, France, Italy, South America, Champagne and Portugal. For 2018 meetings are planned for March, May, July, September and November. Why not join us for happy hour and a half!