

Leicester Newsletter

March 2023



Turkey Tail, a small bracket fungus that grows on dead logs.

Picture by Steph Smith

<https://u3asites.org.uk/leicester/home>

If this link does not open, just copy, and paste it into your browser.

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For news from the Third Age Trust, you can sign up for your own Trust newsletter at:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter#signup>

Membership Information:

Membership now stands at 359. Of those that are no longer members, 40 have yet to renew or make contact. If you know of anyone who may wish to continue please put them in touch with the membership secretary as soon as possible as they can no longer attend any u3a events.

It has been a pleasure to act in that position for a number of years but I now hand over the baton to a worthy successor, Angie Barnes. I'm sure you will help her as you have helped me over the years. Good Luck Angie.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR - Tony Davison

This will be the last newsletter before the AGM on March 14th. As usual, the AGM will mark a few changes of personnel. Our constitution limits the length of time that any member can hold an office or stay on the Committee. That is a very healthy rule because it keeps us democratic and encourages members to take an active part in running the u3a. In particular it helps avoid a situation in which any individual or clique can dominate the way the u3a is run. This year there are four of us who have reached our sell-by dates and are stepping down from the Committee. I am one of them and the others are Henry Paulinski (Vice Chair), Margaret Potter (Membership Secretary) and Bob Holness (Treasurer). I would like to thank Henry, Margaret and Bob for the valuable service they have given to Leicester u3a over the past years, particularly during the very difficult Covid period. One of the problems we had during that period was the fact that the Committee was seriously under strength and I am glad to say that things have improved greatly over the past year. Not only have we been able to bring the Committee up to strength but we have enough candidates to fill the vacancies caused by those of us who are leaving. This is one of the signs that the u3a is in a healthy situation. I am writing this before nominations have closed so it is possible that there might even be more candidates than vacancies. Now that would be exciting. So do

please make sure that you come to the AGM to cast your vote (should that be necessary) and to enjoy meeting other members and chatting over tea, coffee, and refreshments.

PROGRAMME

General meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and start at 2:30 p.m. The doors open to members at 2:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT: Neil Taylor - Groups Co-ordinator

Medical Detection Dogs

"We can do something with a dog, in training it, that other people can't" said Harold Palmer of the charity Medical Detection Dogs. It takes eighteen months to two years to train a medical detection dog, at a cost of £29,000 each. Volunteers foster the dogs while they train, and the animals work from 9 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. every weekday, including bank holidays. They work in short intervals of 20 minutes and are rewarded with treats and a chance rest in between sessions.

A dog has 300 million sense receptors in its nose and can detect aromas that human beings cannot, including cancer. Dogs are trained as bio detection dogs to detect diseases and also as medical assistance dogs to raise the alarm and stand by when someone collapses.

Research into dogs' ability to detect human illness is around 85 – 90% accurate. In the case of covid the percentage is 94%. No aid is received from Government, and the charity survives purely on donations and bequests. Research has been taking place over four years and costs are upwards of £500,000. The current focus is on Parkinson's disease. The only place in the world where this research takes place is at the charity's base in Milton Keynes.

Afterwards during refreshments Cliff and Irene Ault's wonderful video of last September's 40th Anniversary Celebration was shown. Leicester u3a's three events: the exhibition, the garden party, and 40@40. The video will be shown again after our AGM in March, so do please join us then.

MARCH MEETING: Tuesday 14th March 2023

Leicester u3a AGM. It is especially important that members attend the AGM. The meeting will be followed by refreshments, including cakes, courtesy of the committee, and there will be another chance to see the 40th anniversary video.

APRIL MEETING: Tuesday 11th March 2023

The speaker will be Paul Adey talking about the life and times of Rudyard Kipling.

ALL MEMBERS COFFEE MORNINGS: Sandra Barker – Hospitality and Wellbeing

Coffee mornings continue to be well attended and enjoyable. They are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10.00 am onwards at the Quaker Meeting House, Queen's Road. Why not join us for refreshments, friendship and chat.

WELFARE

Just a reminder that if you know of a member who is ill or bereaved to let Elizabeth Hassall know at: cards@leicesteru3a.org.uk

OBITUARIES

We are sorry to announce the deaths of members Joyce Brown, Ron Ellis, Margaret Reichebach and Richard Thompson. They will be sadly missed by their friends at Leicester u3a.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR NEIL TAYLOR

Thanks once more for all your help and enthusiasm in signing up to and suggesting new groups and activities. It is most gratifying to see that all our ideas and advertising have paid off! I will continue spreading the word at the Monthly Meetings and Coffee Mornings,

and of course this, our Leicester u3a Newsletter. And do get in touch with me at any time at groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk to put your name down and, of course, to suggest more.

New Groups:

1. Duplicate Bridge, (played on Zoom).

This has had a successful beginning but is still advertising for members. Contact Convenor Chris Brain at:

dupbridge@leicesteru3a.org.uk

2. 20th Century Popular Culture

This will be a quarterly, meeting on Zoom and in members' homes. The initial discussion will be about Just William, Jennings, Derbyshire and other great children's literature. The first meeting is 23rd March. Contact Convenor Henry Paulinski initially at: 20cpopculture@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Groups ready to start:

French Intermediate Conversation 2

Italian

Tai Chi

Bowls

Current Affairs 3

Social History

I will be contacting members who have signed up to these to invite them to an Initial Meeting to decide date, time, venue, and Convenor.

Possible New Groups:

- Welsh Beginners
- Guitar Starters
- Bowls: near to starting
- Creative Writing
- Ukulele

- German: near to starting.
- Italian
- Whist
- Tai Chi: I am looking into the possibility of booking sessions with a tutor. The more interest we have the less expensive the sessions become to each member.

Social Events Groups

- Real Ale (And Wine) Club
- Afternoon Tea

Groups Advertising for New Members

- Backgammon,
- Cryptic Crosswords 1,
- Cryptic Crosswords 2,
- Gardening,
- Orienteering,
- Discovering Architecture and
- Ten Pin Bowling

Looking forward to you signing up to any of these groups.

u3a ISLAND DISCS (Formerly alright pop pickers?)

We have changed the title of this article for the purpose of diversification. Any member is invited to share their top three playlist, together with background stories. As well as **pop** and **rock** it would be interesting to get some **classical music, hymns, arias, country, folk, jazz, punk or any other genre.**

This Month Carmel Davison shares her favourite three songs:

1. Morningtown Ride, a lullaby written by Malvina Reynolds. The definitive version is by the Seekers. Their lead singer, Judith Durham's, voice is perfect & the lyrics are enchanting.
2. Mountains of Mourne lyrics by Percy French to a traditional Irish air. The song is about an Irish immigrant in London who is missing his home & sweetheart. The words fit the tune

perfectly. He sings: "They don't grow potatoes nor barley nor wheat

But there's gangs of them diggin' for gold in the street."

We feel his loneliness when people make fun of him.

3. Lady Lynda the Beach Boys tune by JS Bach.

The rhythms & harmonies of the Beach Boys match the lilting tune.

Many thanks, Carmel. I am sure these will feature in lots of members' favourites. If anyone would like to share your top three with fellow members please email: newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk

REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Orienteering – Convenor Dave Barnes

The u3a Orienteering group is restarting its activities on Friday March 17th. We are a small and friendly group who welcome new members. We meet on the 3rd Friday afternoon during the summer months usually in local parks that have a permanent course set up.

Orienteering is an exciting outdoor adventure sport that exercises mind and body. The aim is to navigate between checkpoints or controls marked on a special orienteering map. There is no set route so the skill and fun come from trying to find the best way to go.

Orienteering can be competitive, but we are not as we usually try to navigate between controls together, our challenge usually is whether the controls are still there and visible.

If you feel that this could interest you please contact me for further details via the groups page on the Leicesteru3a website.

If you want to have a look please follow the link to the local club where you can find out more:

[Introduction to Orienteering – Leicestershire Orienteering Club \(leioc.org.uk\)](http://leioc.org.uk)

SWANNS – Convenor Dave Barnes

The SWANNS group aim to restart their short walks in March. There has not yet been a date set as we try to coordinate with the Rambling group so as not to clash.

We aim to meet every 3 or 4 weeks and would welcome new members, especially if you are willing to lead a walk.

We normally walk 2 to 3 miles over easy terrain on easily accessible routes, preferably near public transport for those who don't drive, although it might be possible that lifts could be arranged.

Please contact me via the Groups page on the Leicester u3a website if you might be interested.

There are also other groups walking:

Rambling - approximately 5 miles.

Parks and Tearoom Strollers - 1 mile followed by tea and cake.

Orienteering - walking and map-reading.

You can also contact these groups via the website.

Bus Pass Tours – Convenor Denise Buchan

The first trip of 2023 will take place on 29th March when we will be going to Nuneaton. Details will follow and be available to any member of Leicester U3A. If you think you might like to join us, please contact me and I will be pleased to send details.

This will be a real treat for me as I have never been there and I'm looking forward to visiting the George Eliot Museum. The local hospital is also named after her but I don't think we'll be taking time out to go and look at that building!"

The initial meeting place will be the Haymarket Bus Station but members who live enroute out of town can, of course, catch the bus at any stop along the way. We look forward to seeing you.

Luncheon Club – is the second Sunday of each month. Numbers are limited so book early. Contact Ros Devine on:

lunch@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Polish up your Rusty Latin – Convenor Bob Holness

We have reached a point where we are considering what we do as a group. As our name suggests, we aim for members who have done some Latin and would like to refresh and extend their knowledge. Our aim is to read original texts: but our remit also includes all aspects of classical civilizations, responding to the interests of our members. An example would be traces of the empire we can see locally. There is a wide range of subjects we can touch upon, ranging from Ancient Astronomy to Modern Linguistics. If you are interested in joining us, please contact the convenor:-
latin@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Natural History Group – Convenor Steph Smith

On the last day of winter the Natural History group ventured out into the real world for the first time in 2023, instead of chatting on Zoom.

We had a very successful 'signs of spring' walk around the new Lakeside Walk at Stoughton Grange, just next to the Cow and Plough on Gartree Road. Initially it didn't look very promising, but if you look carefully, the signs are there. Here are some of the photos.





I COULD BE ALONE..... – by member Keith Pyne

I would suggest that most people like to be alone sometimes. Having that head-space to reflect on your life, the day to day trials, tasks and intentions. Having no interruptions to your thoughts, your dreams and aspirations. Where have my choices led me, what plans do I have for the future and accepting the past – these are the most important things on which you will deliberate.

This time is important, nobody else occupies that space in your mind, you could describe it as being selfish and indulgent, but that would be wrong.

From time to time you will be lonely, it may be that in-surmountable task, the news you don't want to deliver and the task that remains un-done yet is front centre in your minute by minute deliberations. You feel trapped inside your own mind and at this point we turn to our loved ones, our family, an old friend. We reach out to our nearest and dearest to share the burden, or celebrate the inspiration or confirm the choice may be flawed in some way. All of this shared interaction pulls you back into the societal mix and the loneliness goes away. Humans delight in social interaction, a shared idea, that affirmation from your friends or partner that your idea is solid, well thought out and bound to succeed! Not everything will of course, but the process of sharing means the burden is less debilitating. If you add isolation to the mix, the implications for being lonely and isolated means you have lost your entire support network. Many of us travel through life enjoying great victories and suffering great losses, yet the most important loss will be that of friends, relatives, partners – all of your shared interaction. How would it be to wake every morning, the sun is shining and you feel good, yet there is no-one there to appreciate the small things we take for granted every day

It is a travesty that we let this happen. As you continue on your journey through this life, you will notice that your outlook and perspectives don't change. It is probably too late to win Strictly, or hoist the FA cup, but you still have dreams and whilst the body starts to creak and groan, the spirit remains young, inquisitive, hopeful and yes, still dreams about the future.

This is a road we are all on and we do not see this isolation coming, it just creeps up on us. Imagine being that person and how exciting it would feel to make new friends, to share a shopping trip with a kindred spirit, or just indulge in a cup of tea and a biscuit once a week. Our elders have so much life experience, so many stories and they want to live life.

Loneliness is not a disease, but it is surely an affliction and any of us can make a difference. How “really busy” are you? How crucial is that soap opera or football match on the TV?

Time is our most valuable commodity and when you choose to share it with someone, you give the greatest of gifts.

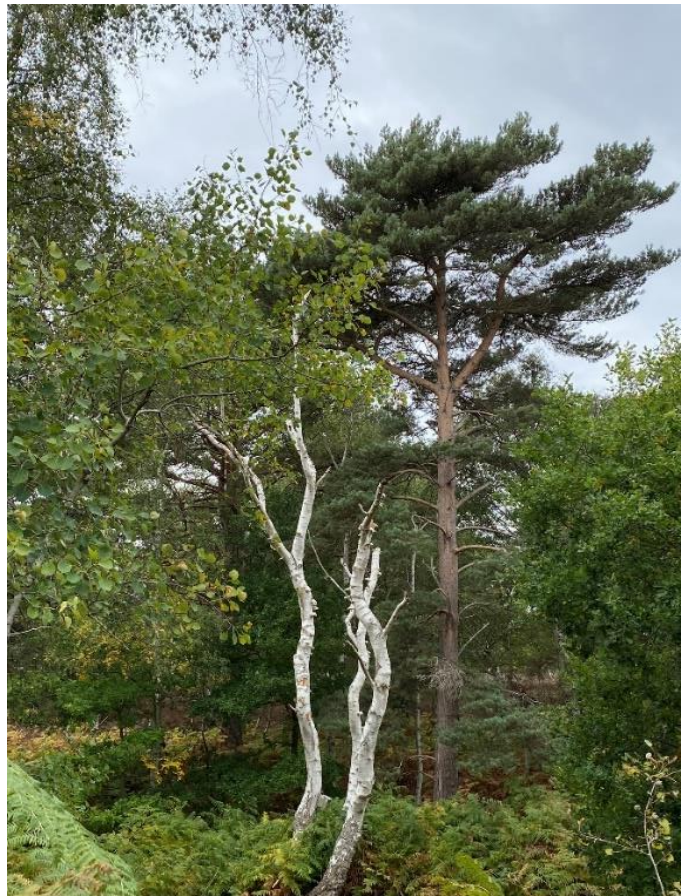
Note from the Editor

This piece of writing brought tears to my eyes and a tingle down my spine. Who on my street or yours could do with a friendly face, a helping hand, a cuppa, and a chat? Leicester u3a could do so much to help prevent loneliness and I hope this gives the new committee as well as individual members food for thought. It is a theme I would love to continue in future newsletters – over to you.

CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE & NATURAL HISTORY

The trees were in Dunwich Heath Suffolk. This is a wonderful area to walk, with red deer, muntjacs and adders to see as you stroll through ferns and shimmering heathers.

Tree picture by member Tony Locke





Meanwhile spring has already Sprung at The Natural Burial Ground in Scraptoft.



COOKERY CORNER – HENRY PAULINSKI

Fed up with spuds, pasta, and rice? Try this familiar sounding recipe with a Polish twist!

BUCKWHEAT RISOTTO

Buckwheat was introduced into Europe by the Chinese and has become a staple of Polish cuisine, often substituting for rice. It has a slightly nutty flavour, like brown rice, and is available in many supermarkets and Eastern European shops. It is either beige in colour in its untoasted form, or dark brown when toasted.

INGREDIENTS

4 oz dried mushrooms, soaked for 30 mins in boiling water and drained and cut into small strips; 2 pieces frozen spinach; 250 grams of buckwheat; 800 ml stock (vegetable or mushroom); 2 pats of butter; 1 small onion; 100 ml. vermouth (optional). Parmesan cheese, grated.

METHOD

Brown the onion in the butter and add the buckwheat until absorbed. Gradually add the stock and mushrooms plus the spinach, ensuring that the mixture is never dry. Add the vermouth when about half the stock has been used. Cook on a medium to low heat, stirring the pan regularly. It should take about 45 minutes to absorb all the stock and vermouth. Serve with grated parmesan.

We would love to hear from other members who would like to share a favourite recipe.

PUZZLE CORNER - A Sudoku (created by Cliff Ault – Member Cryptic Crossword Group) [Solution on page 19.](#)

				6				9
					3		8	6
					5			
8						9		
	1	6		8		7		4
2					7			3
	5	4	3	1				
	9			4			1	
		2						

CARTOON CORNER – MEMBER TONY LOCKE



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Delivery

The newsletter is printed for those who prefer a hard copy. It is available on a first come first served basis at the monthly meeting and coffee morning. If you would like a hard copy but can't make these events the secretary is happy to send a copy by post to anyone who sends her a supply of stamps and their full address. It will, also, continue to be delivered to members by email as a pdf file before each monthly meeting.

Contributions

Thank you to all those who have submitted articles, please do keep them coming. Write and tell us about a group or activity that you have enjoyed. We would love to see more members contributing. If you prefer, we can publish it anonymously as "member." It doesn't matter whether it is a short paragraph or longer article, with or without photographs.

PHOTOS – Please remember to get permission from any people in your photos for us to publish them. This permission will be assumed if you send them to the editor.

The deadline for items to be included in the April newsletter is Friday 24th March 2023. Contributions should be sent to the Editor at: newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk

If you want to submit your entry as hard copy, please contact the Editor or Membership Secretary for the postal address.

Karen Closs – Newsletter Editor

Group Details in the Newsletter

Four members have requested that details of the next meetings of every group be published in the newsletter as it was some years ago. Your committee discussed this fully at a committee meeting and it was decided not to reinstate this, instead of which the membership secretary has compiled and circulated to all members a

comprehensive list of all groups, their venues and meeting times. The rationale behind this decision was as follows:

1. The previous editor had a bespoke software program, (which is no longer available), which enabled him to automatically compile the precise date of the next meeting of each group. Without the software the only way to do this would be by hand. With 60 plus groups this would be far too time consuming. As convenors sometimes notify their groups, but not the committee, of schedule changes it may also provide inaccurate information.
2. The cost of printing newsletter would increase substantially at a time when printing costs have just risen in line with inflation.
3. All members have access to convenors though the contacts list with which they are issued. The groups co-ordinator has spare copies of a comprehensive list of groups available at coffee mornings & monthly meetings and is also willing to answer questions between email: groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk.
4. Details of all groups are on the website.

It was felt therefore unnecessary to repeat the program every month when a standard document can be updated when changes are notified by convenors and recirculated to members. If you have mislaid your groups list or contacts list please contact membership secretary & she will be happy to send you a copy. The lists will anyway be updated and reissued immediately after AGM.

We are sorry that we cannot grant the request but the newsletter already takes a lot of time and effort in the busy schedule of the editor.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

5	8	7	4	6	1	2	3	9
4	2	1	9	7	3	5	8	6
9	6	3	8	2	5	1	4	7
8	7	5	6	3	4	9	2	1
3	1	6	2	8	9	7	5	4
2	4	9	1	5	7	8	6	3
7	5	4	3	1	8	6	9	2
6	9	8	7	4	2	3	1	5
1	3	2	5	9	6	4	7	8