

## Leicester Newsletter

November 2023



*Lichen in Bradgate Park – Anthony (Matt) Matthew*

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## **CONTENTS**

Page

Message from the Editor	3
Membership Information	3
Message from the Chair – Neil Taylor	3
Programme – Monthly meetings	3
October report	4
November	5
December	5
January	5
All members Coffee Morning	5
Welfare	6
News from the Groups Coordinator - Neil Taylor	6
u3a Island Discs	7
Reports from Groups and from Individuals	8
Cookery Corner	14
Puzzle Corner	14
Comedy Corner	15
Poetry Corner	15
Cartoon Corner	18
About the newsletter	19
Puzzle Solution	20

**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>**

**MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR** – Unfortunately due to ongoing family illness Karen is currently unable to respond personally but all messages to [newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk) will be dealt with. Please **do not** email Karen or Margaret personally with newsletter articles.

## **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: - Angie Barnes, Membership Secretary**

Our membership stands at 387 an increase of 2 since last month.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR – Neil Taylor**

As I write this, I am bathed in low autumn sunshine and just about starting to balance the choice between cap and woolly hat when I step out. But... the shops are setting space aside for the inevitable Christmas pressure to buy, coffee shops are offering “seasonal drinks” and Christmas films (well, films with Christmas in the title) are being shown.

When we do Christmas though, we do it better and our deadline for 22<sup>nd</sup> November’s Christmas lunch at Taste passed with nearly 80 places, or eight tables, booked. I do hope everybody enjoys the meal.

Upcoming we have our Christmas party, on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2.30 at Christchurch, with Christmas food and refreshments and to coin a phrase – one or two surprises.

You’ve hopefully ordered your diaries for 2024, and of course we have Membership renewal in January. Look forward also to Veronica Matthew’s wonderful Annual Picture Quiz.

I hope you enjoy all we have on offer, and of course all our great interest groups and activities. And – From the Committee and me... Compliments of the Season! Best wishes, Neil

## **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.**

## **OCTOBER MEETING REPORT: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023**

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October at Christchurch Clarendon Park a record attendance of 75 members listened to Malcolm Riddle's talk on Leicester's Trams 1870 - 1949.

The first licensed Horse drawn Omnibuses in Leicester started on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1863, four times a day between Haymarket and Oadby, costing the equivalent of £3.60 today. Soon Leicester's earliest traffic jams occurred, with 2960 vehicles and 54300 pedestrians, horses, cattle and pigs. The first traffic island was built, where the Clock tower is now. Something was needed, and the Leicester Tramway Company came into being, with today's equivalent of £4.3 million of investment.

On Christmas Eve 1874 the first tram, from the Clock Tower to Folly Road, with three single deck trams, furnished to a high standard, drove over the cobbles. It ran every 15 minutes with no tickets and no stops, passengers jumping on and off as they passed. The operators worked seven days a week 15 hours a day for 25/- a week. By 1901 Leicester Corporation had control, of 39 horse drawn trams, and 375 horses.

In 1903 an Electric Tram service was introduced with slotted tracks costing the equivalent of £124 million, and overhead systems the equivalent of £81 million. It began on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1904, continuing with women operators through the First World War.

But by the Second World War trams had closed - but Art Deco Bus Shelters came into being, as in 1934 Trams were swapped for Trolley buses with in 1939 the first bus stand appearing outside John Lewis'.

A fascinating tram ride, jumping on and off through a series of snapshots and grainy film showing Leicester's proud history.

The following day I was stuck in a modern day city traffic jam, with a complaining taxi driver. I mentioned our talk the previous day about our trams. I found a fervent supporter of their return –

apparently the old train lines are still there, buried under tarmac to make today's road surfaces. Food for thought!

## NOVEMBER METING

The return of Jonathan Goddard - Through a Glass Darkly - some Saxon Urology

**DECEMBER.** There is normally no meeting in December as the Christmas lunch is usually scheduled then. However, this year it is being held earlier on Wednesday November 22<sup>nd</sup>. We hope to be back to the usual slot next year. Meanwhile the committee has arranged a Christmas get together for the Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup>. Come along for a chat, some nibbles and the usual tea and coffee. Entertainment c/o the guitar group and Great Glen Ukulele Group.

## JANUARY 2024 MEETING

**This is our renewal meeting. You should by now have received a request to renew your membership, but if not, please contact Angie Barnes our Membership Secretary.** Just come along with your cheque or cash and enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat. [membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

## MEMBERSHIP CARDS – A CHANGE FOR 2024

Renewals for 2024 can be paid from 1st November either by bank transfer or by cheque/cash at the monthly meeting or by post. Membership fees for 2024 are £20 or £16 if you are a full member of another U3a (membership proof required).

As there are a lot of uncollected 2023 membership cards in my possession we are offering you a choice when you renew of either: - A printed card to be collected at a monthly meeting or an Email containing a pdf which can be printed at home or downloaded onto your phone. Please indicate your choice when renewing

*Angie Barnes membership secretary*

**ALL MEMBERS COFFEE MORNINGS:** *Sandra Barker – Hospitality and Wellbeing*

Coffee mornings continue to be well attended and enjoyable.

They are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:cards@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR NEIL TAYLOR**

Thank you once more for all your interest – it is great to have continued enthusiasm for established and newer groups. Keep a look out over the following months for the initial meetings of groups ready to start, Whist, Pickleball and Current Affairs 3.

Do keep signing up and suggesting groups!

*Possible New Groups:* Many of these are ready for an Initial Meeting, so do put your name down if you are interested.

- Scrabble 2
- Welsh Beginners
- Guitar Starters
- Whist
- Mah Jong Beginners
- Book Club 2

### *Wanting New Members*

- Guitar Starters
- Pop Up Ukulele
- Classic Film Club
- Petanque
- Backgammon
- Cryptic Crosswords 1 and 2
- Orienteering,
- Discovering Architecture
- Ten Pin Bowling

Sign up to any of these groups, through the contact details on our website, at the groups table, at the Monthly Meeting and at the Coffee Morning.

Contact me on [groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk) to put your name down and of course to suggest more.

### u3a ISLAND DISCS

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 Peter Kilty shares another three of his favourite:

I have always loved musicals and these are my three favourite songs from musicals.

1. "Any Dream will do" from "Joseph". I remember in the Michaelmas term of 1965 my school friend Colin at Magdalen College Oxford complaining about a neighbour on his staircase who was playing the piano all the time and thinking about writing a musical on Dr Barnado. "He's got History Prelims this term like you Peter. I think he's going to get the push." I don't think it mattered to Andrew Lloyd Webber. He left after one term.

2. I was introduced to Victor Hugo when doing French "A" level and loved his poetry. I managed to get about half way through "Les Miserables" and then gave up. But what a musical that book made. From "Les Mis". I love "I dreamed a dream."

3. Unlike Andrew Lloyd Webber I continued studying History and found Weimar Germany fascinating. "Cabaret" is a firm favourite of mine. The film is brilliant and I have seen at least half a dozen stage versions including one with Judy Dench as Sally Bowles. From "Cabaret" I would chose "Maybe this time."

Of course I have left out "Fiddler on the Roof," "West Side Story" and " Evita." which I saw with Elaine Paige, Joss Ackland and David Essex as Che Guevara. Perhaps another three another time. I will leave with one intriguing fact about Che. His surname was actually Lynch, and his family were part of that Irish diaspora that went to South America.

Many thanks again Peter. If anyone would like to share your top three with fellow members please email:

[newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

## **REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

### **20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY POPULAR CULTURE GROUP**

Super sleuths were afoot at our third quarterly meeting, during which we analysed those famous detectives, Jules Maigret and Sherlock Holmes. Apart from contrasting the different approaches to solving crimes, we looked into the interesting lives of their creators, George Simenon and Arthur Conan Doyle. The session also included poetry readings about the golden age of the railways, with works by Philip Larkin, Robert Louis Stevenson and T.S. Eliot.

Future topics will include Lord Peter Wimsey, pop festivals, fashions, food and cars.  
*Henry Paulinski, Convenor.*

### **PATS (Parks and Tearoom Strolls)**

2023 has not been a great year for the PATS group. What with rain in April and July and heat in early September, several strolls had to be called off and, with members having other commitments on stroll days; we were sometimes down to four or five.

Nevertheless we did have some enjoyable strolls particularly at the University Botanic Garden, Foxton Locks, Bradgate Park, King's Lock, Victoria Park and Welland Park (in Market Harborough).

Tearooms that can be especially recommended for cakes include the Black Horse in Foxton (excellent scones), the Lock Keeper's Cottage at Kings Lock in Aylestone, the Old Post Office in Newtown Linford and Browns in Allandale Road. Zeph's in Oadby is also acceptable but the cake selection did not suit everyone in the group.

We are now considering whether to continue the group next year. More members would be very welcome. This is a very sociable group with a gentle stroll followed by tea/coffee and cake.

*Cliff Ault (Convenor)*





Knighton Park



Botanic Garden



Welland Park  
Market Harborough

## Images from PATS meetings in 2023

## MEDIEVAL PEOPLE

At our recent October meeting, we met to dip into medieval humour. From the Norse Sagas, through medieval jokes, a couple of stories from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales to the marginalia in the Macclesfield Psalter it seems our medieval forebears liked to laugh, the subjects of their laughter being mainly sex, bodily functions and cuckolded husbands. We managed a weak laugh at some of them, while recognising that much of it would not be acceptable for jokes today.

I would say it was an enjoyable meeting.

*Barbara Russell, member*

## Disappearing Skills

*Tony Locke - member*

Highly skilled specialist repairs are increasingly rare and yet so valuable. This is particularly true in the servicing and restoring of musical instruments. Repairers are hard to track down. I eventually found an outstanding one - Paul Windridge. His workshop is a mixture of a bygone era and, though tools and technical aids appear scattered, they are readily to hand.

I felt embarrassed that I was asking this expert to service my beginner's instruments. But, they and I received attention as if we were the finest.

An indication of changing times and the demise of courses and practises in, not just our region, but nationwide is epitomised by Paul's experience. He studied woodwind making and repairing at Newark College. Courses now are rare and distant. Paul's diploma with distinction enabled him to work with the best: Rudal Carte flutes and Boosey and Hawkes and then as woodwind repairer at Sheehan's Music Services, Leicester for 15 years. He now



has his own workshop in Syston. The tools are as vintage as some of the instruments he services and repairs, but there is modern efficiency, with everything at hand and adapted by Paul to be the exact piece for the job,

Heating - a fluted boiler, like those in 19th century schools - and ventilation have ingenious Gerald Scarfe-like adaptations done by Paul to maximise efficiency. The workshop merits a future place in a museum.

There is a consultation, prior to any work. The repairs are followed by detailed instructions and future care.

The visit was a unique experience. The quality of the explanations and servicing was excellent. It was a joy to see a rare craft being practiced locally by a gifted enthusiast with life-long experience. So, the next time we listen to the players in an orchestra, the quality of the sound will be due as much to the skills of people like Paul as to the musician.

### **Digital Photography Group in Bradgate Park** *Anthony Matthew*

A few of the Digital Photography group went to Bradgate Park on 12<sup>th</sup> October in search of inspiration. It turned out to be a dry though dull day. A herd of fallow deer allowed us to approach quite close before the stag signalled to his bevy of hinds that it was time to move off. It was easier to focus on the ancient oaks with their contorted shapes with trunks largely hollowed out but still supporting live branches. Some of those now have steel props where the trunks are barely sufficient to hold them up. Old John is also getting some support and for the time being was wrapped in scaffolding. This is the time of year for fungi to emerge from underground, pale rounded shapes. A little colour though was provided by lichen on the stone walls. We ended our expedition with tea at the Deer Barn where jackdaws boldly raided nearby tables for any crumbs.



*A photo from Irene Ault of autumn colour in the Botanic Gardens*



## HHCIB (How hard can it be?)

*Julie Fish member*

Escaping Reality may be something we all consider from time to time: going for a walk, turning off the news or popping down to the pub. Six of us from How Hard Can it Be attempted ***Escape Reality Leicester*** which is an immersive gaming experience.

It was a bit like being in your own video game! We were locked in a room and worked together to solve clues, work out puzzles and use infrared to reveal a hidden message in order to unlock the doors and then escape the game. We did really well with some games, not so much with



others, but we pooled our skills and worked together to escape the room. It's a fun thing to do in a group or to celebrate a birthday. It's a bit more challenging than the usual family activities such as ten pin bowling or crazy golf.

It's in the name: our members of How Hard Can it Be embrace new activities and challenges. And this was one of them!

We have many more exciting challenges planned!

## COOKERY CORNER

Please do let us know if you have a favourite recipe that you would be happy to share <mailto:newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk>

## PUZZLE CORNER

**A Sudoku** (created by Cliff Ault – Member Cryptic Crossword Group) **Solution on page 20**

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

## COMEDY CORNER



I've had a letter from Mrs Smith, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks

She Says:

Dusting my husband's dressing-tabletop this morning, I decided to make list of the things on it. Here is the list. Two collar bones, one cork, talc powder, one golf ball, one lipstick, several badges, six loose studs, one bottle cleaning fluid (empty), one aspirin bottle (empty), one stud-box full, but of everything except studs, four half-empty medicine bottles, one shoehorn, one box evening studs, two old visiting cards, one ashtray with over 50 bits etc, scissors golf tees, indiarubber, cigar-cutter, small brush, matches, penknife, Irish money, French money, ashtray, containing, screws, buttons, cigarette stubs, box of pills, more matches, razor, shaving lotion, photo of grandsons, mixing instructions for waterproof cement, clothes brush, two more ashtrays, bottle for collecting sixpences, wine list, two early morning tea mugs, miscellaneous papers, unused petrol coupons, and a tin of sticking plasters.

B.B.C. Today July 19 1961

*Submitted by Keith Pyne – member*

## POETRY CORNER

***From a member who wishes to remain anonymous!***

67! The Club A'Gogo! Such a cool and trendy scene!  
On the dim and crowded dance floor see me strut, a dancing Queen!  
To the strains of Wilson Pickett or the beat of Sam and Dave,  
Never stopping, never tiring, on the crescent of a wave.  
With some mod in skin-tight trousers-(Shall I let him walk me  
home?)  
I am young; it seems forever, in this fun-filled pleasure dome.  
BUT my dancing days are over, and my miniskirts no more,  
Watch me gasp for breath and tremble after one turn round the  
floor.

Now I trip the light fantastic with the emphasis on "trip",

See me stumble; hear me mumble, "Oh my back! My Knee! My hip!  
All the music's died and faded, no more disco lights I see.  
Still, Anne Widdecombe once did it-Is there some faint hope for me?  
*PS The A'Gogo was THE place to be seen in 60's Newcastle.*

***From the Chinese:      From member Peter Kilty***

When the moon lights the trees near the hills,  
her clear eyes discover a bird on its nest.  
Leaning forward in the shadows, with open lips,  
she reads her fate in the ashes.

From Catullus... sort of:

Weep loves and little cupids, my bird's pet bird is dead.  
She cherished the little sparrow, fed it from her lips and kept it in a  
cage.  
But still it died.  
Was it from rage?

From Sappho:

It looks like Epos but it's wild demanding love  
that shook my heart  
like a mountain wind  
fells a mighty oak.

These are not exact translations but more in the way of inspirations.



***The Weaving Sheds by Kate Howey member of the gardening group after their visit to the Framework Knitters museum.***

A globe of glass, suspended  
filled with Recketts Blue  
throws light upon the weavers  
upright at their looms

Isabella had sat there  
nigh on sixteen hours  
her blind sister Louie weaves  
cloth as good as hers.

The shuttles fly, the weaving  
frames click and groan, send  
out a thunderous roar. Faster!  
Faster! they intone.

Isabella makes the cloth  
at piece-rate, and when  
the machines grind to a halt  
with snapping threads then

splintered needles cascading  
to the floor, is not  
paid a penny but tutts with  
tightened jaw, unknots

the threads then fixes the loom  
herself. Solders cracked  
needles on the fire, finding  
respite from arms wracked

with ache and pain snatches a  
breath of air, tastes  
freedom on the way out to  
the freezing privy.

**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 cannot 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.

### **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 next newsletter which will be in February is Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024. We are unable to produce a newsletter this January due to the closure of Beauchamp College.** Contributions should be sent to the Editor at: [newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto: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.

**A big thank you** to all of you who contributed to our plea for entries. It was an amazing response and we hope you can keep it up for the future.

## SUDOKU SOLUTION

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