

Leicester Newsletter
January 2024



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Anonymous photo from Margaret Potter

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

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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>

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 will be dealt with. Please **do not** email Karen or Margaret personally with newsletter articles.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: - Angie Barnes, Membership Secretary

Our membership stood at 387 at the November meeting. So far of these 192 have renewed, 189 to renew and 6 resigned. We hope the January meeting will attract the majority of the rest.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR – Neil Taylor

I hope you all had a very enjoyable Christmas, and met with dear friends and family – it may be a memory now, but I do hope, as Charles Dickens said, that you “will honour Christmas in your heart and try to keep it all the year” .

Welcome to 2024! And always remember:

“...Hope

Smiles from the threshold of the year to come

Whispering “it will be happier”

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year

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.

November 2023 MEETING REPORT

Welcome to our new ‘critic’ Glyn Bray who has taken over from Neil, who frankly had too much to do! Thank you Glyn.

Glyn reports - . “I have had a sneak preview of the speakers for the year and it certainly looks good to me. Those with good memories will remember the last speaker in November 2023 was Dr Jonathan

Goddard who gave an entertaining talk on Dark Age medicine as practised by the Anglo-Saxons. Most of the remedies involved plants and animals of the time. Such gems as artichokes simmered in something to cure smelly armpits and liquorice root to soothe a chest, liver or bladder pain - and who hasn't got some ox bile in their medicine cabinet? (Very good for foot pain apparently). You will be pleased to know the good doctor will be returning later in the year. Happy New Year to you all. "

Christmas Lunch

This took place on Wednesday November 22nd at the Leicester College "Taste" restaurant. As you can see it was well attended despite being earlier than usual. Next year we will return to our 2nd Tuesday in December slot. Venue to be confirmed.

Member Tony Locke writes – "Thank you for the excellent arrangements for the Leicester u3a Christmas Lunch. The meal and the opportunity to chat to members made it a most enjoyable occasion.

The Leicester College seems an appropriate and admirable venue. The idea of students preparing and serving the meal to life-long learners is so apposite."



December 2023 Meeting Report

It does seem a while since we all had a chance to get together but, hopefully, those of you who managed to get to the December 12th pre-Christmas social event will have enjoyed a nice cup of tea and some delicious cakes. The meeting also benefited from some excellent music from the Great Glen ukulele band and our own guitar group who cleverly combined a good mix of popular songs and carols. A special mention goes to the soloist and the very talented guitarist! Happy New Year to all.

JANUARY 2024 MEETING Tuesday January 9th 2024

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

Renewals for 2024 can be paid 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 were 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

As last year, Veronica Matthew will be bringing her photographic quiz, "**Who are these personalities of 2023?**" You are asked to identify the person in 40 photographs. You can either do this quiz as part of a team or on your own. You can arrange your team before the meeting or join up with other members on the day. There will be a prize for the winner or the winning team and for the runners up. Please bring a pen, we'll provide the answer sheets to complete. Good luck!

FEBRUARY MEETING Tuesday February 13th 2024

Mike Storr, Masters of Mirth. An affectionate look at some of his favourite Music Hall laughter makers

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

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR NEIL TAYLOR

New year, new start, and I am afraid I have had to be ruthless with the groups advertised this month. Unfortunately some suggested groups' Sign Up Sheets had lain empty over the usual three adverts on the Groups Table at the Monthly Meetings, so I have had a clear out this month. Do still suggest possible groups at meetings and Coffee Mornings, but be ready to be told if they have been suggested before and there has been no interest.

Therefore we have this month only four possibles to sign up for:

- Book Club 2
- Bridge Beginners
- Mah Jong Beginners
- Guitar Starters

Wanting new members are Classic Film Club, Petanque, Backgammon, Cryptic Crosswords 1, Cryptic Crosswords 2, Orienteering, Ten Pin Bowling.

Looking forward to you signing up to any of these groups, through the contact details on our Website, at the Groups Table at the Monthly Meeting and the Coffee Morning.

Contact me on groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk to put your name down, and of course to suggest more. Best wishes, Neil

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 Paul McCann shares another three of his favourite: Thank you Paul.

'What a nice sinecure Roy Plumley created for himself and his subsequent program hosts. The program always annoyed me because the chosen music was always cut too short. MP David Mellor hosted a similar program on Classic FM which played more complete excerpts.

I admit that selecting classical music will provide longer pieces to listen to. Despite a large and varied CD collection, which I hardly play now, I am a fan of YouTube. I recommend opera fans search for "Neue Stimmen" (New Voices but opera not pop). This is an annual international competition run by Suddeutsche Rundfunk and YouTube shows a back catalogue of each year this century.'

However, here are my three choices:

"Lay Lady Lay" by Bob Dylan. I remember this on my college canteen juke box in 1970;

"Different Drum" by Linda Ronstadt and the Stone Poneys (1970s) - a brilliant way to tell a boy to go away;

"Mad about the boy" by Esther Ofarim. I would usually choose the version by Dinah Washington but this is a brilliant tango

REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Synagogue Visit Architecture & Design group *by Sue Howard*

Following a successful National Lottery bid Leicester's Jewish community welcomes people of all faiths and none to its newly built Heritage Centre, now part of the prominent Orthodox Synagogue which stands on the corner of Highfields and Upper Tichbourne Streets.

There are traces of a Jewish community in Leicester as far back as the middle ages but by the early 13th century no evidence remains. A misconception is that the 'Jewry Wall' refers to Jews but in fact it refers to 'Jurats' (aldermen) of the borough.

By the mid-19th century Jewish traders, often associated with clothing or tailoring were evident and the successful partnership of Israel Hart & Joseph Levy contributed to the congregation flourishing. Israel Hart was very prominent in Leicester's civic life, we have the town hall square fountain because of him and he was four times Mayor of Leicester. A notice in the Jewish Chronicle reported that the majority of the congregation at this time 'was of the working class'. Immigration in the first half of the 20th century, predominantly Eastern European Jews fleeing from persecution, swelled the congregation.

We were shown around the synagogue, Mikvah and Heritage Centre. The fully restored Mikvah (bath) in the basement is used for full immersion and is filled by rainwater alongside a private preparation room which includes a bath. It is used by both men and women for different rituals.

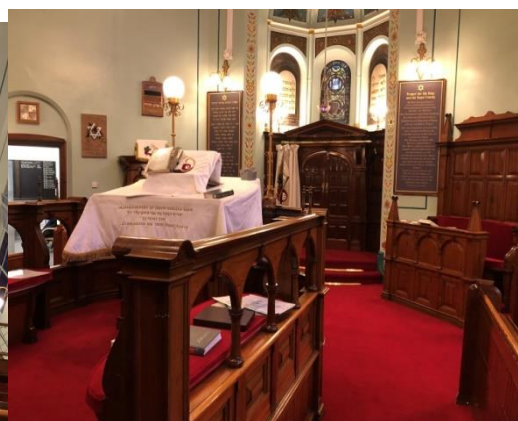
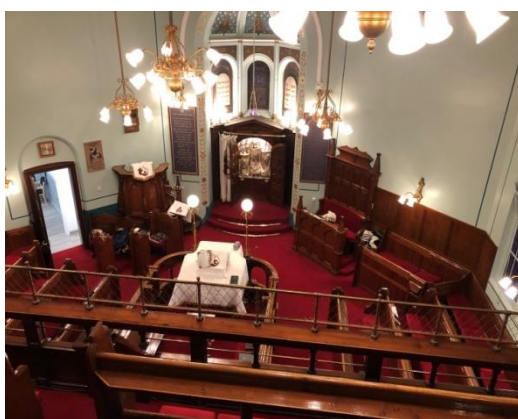
The synagogue, built in richly carved with wood, has separate seating areas for men and women, standard in Orthodox Judaism. It is dominated by the eastern facing *Ark* which protects the Torah scrolls – handwritten in Hebrew by scribes and used for reading at services. Consisting of 5 books and forming the basis of Jewish teaching and law they can also be read in the Bible Old Testament i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They are protected and decorated with finials at the top, often carved using a pomegranate shape and must be handled with the utmost care. They are routinely read 4 times a week and the scroll is placed

on a covered table on the *bimah* – raised platform facing the Ark. Above the Ark hangs the *ner tamid*, eternal light, traditionally an oil lamp but now electric.

The Heritage Centre has an easily accessible history of the Leicester Jewish Congregation which is now much smaller as the demographic has changed but is welcoming many groups, particularly school children from the local area - testament to our wonderful city.

[About Our Synagogue | Leicester Hebrew Congregation \(jewish-leicester.co.uk\)](http://jewish-leicester.co.uk)

View from the women's gallery *Matt Matthew* General View



The Menorah *Bob Hall*

The memorial *Bob Hall*



The exhibition *Matt Matthew*



The visit also included St Peters Church. Look out for a report in next month's newsletter by Veronica Matthew

Update from Art Appreciation *by Paul McCann – Convenor*

The Art Appreciation Group's monthly meetings at the Knighton and Clarendon Park Club on the corner of Queens Road and Clarendon Park Road, have moved to the first Thursday of the month (11am to 1pm) to suit the club's business arrangements.

We don't hold a January meeting the date being too close to the celebrations. However, the Leicester Open Art Exhibition runs Saturday 16th December 2023 to Friday 19th January 2024 at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, New Walk and we are going to visit it on Friday 12 January at 2pm - all Leicester U3A members are welcome to meet us there.

Whereas we previously didn't meet at the club during the summer meetings but sallied forth to find art, we now meet monthly at the club throughout the year because some of our group members have mobility problems. Instead those group members who wish to now make additional ad hoc forays between May and September.

Our plans are fluid and get reviewed, confirmed or amended from time to time. Our plan for 2024 so far is as follows:

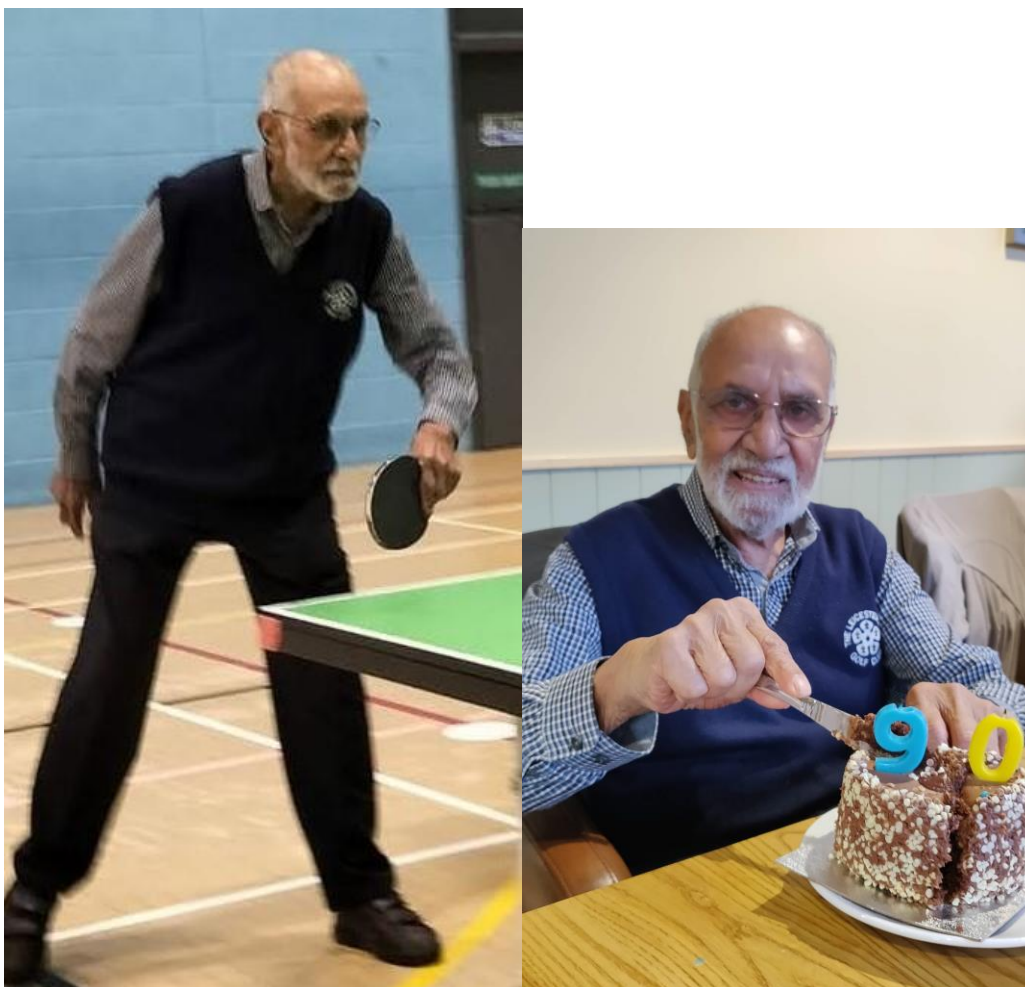
12/01/2024 Friday 2pm New Walk Museum
01/02/2024 Thursday 11 am Animals
07/03/2024 Thursday 11 am Birth and Death
04/04/2024 Thursday 11 am Pot Luck

Our method is to research the subject and each member brings illustrations and tells the group about the subject. For example: Art Deco can be split into industrial, commercial, interior design, Australian artists, Japanese art periods. Pot Luck means there is no given subject and members talk about anything they wish.

Table tennis group

The table tennis group helped one of our members, Aftab Khan, celebrate his 90th birthday. After our usual Wednesday afternoon session at Parklands, we went to Jenno's café in Brockshill Country Park for tea, coffee and birthday cake.

Aftab started playing the beautiful game in Trinidad when he was 7 years old. Like many of us, he had a break from playing for many years before coming back to the game when he had a little more time on his hands. Aftab is proof that playing table tennis is a great way to keep active and have fun.



Bookworms 'Guess what I've been reading...' *Nick Arlett*

In February of last year I was in Scotland. I remember a journey in a taxi driven by a balding philanderer as he pursued his extramarital affairs. His wife was an alcoholic and lived with their son, a lonely boy who was struggling to survive on the sink estate that was home. I got to like his wife. When she managed to stay off alcohol for a

few months and met a bloke who seemed decent I was full of hope for her. I won't tell you how it ended; you might want to go there yourself.

Before that, in January, I sat in on a creative writing course in the USA. I was with a teacher who had had some success as a writer but who was reduced to teaching when his books failed to sell. A strange thing happened, though. One of his students told him of a plot, a plot for a story that couldn't fail to bring success. The teacher thought no more of it until he discovered that the student had died. Could he now steal the plot? It was too tempting to resist, but the consequences were beyond his worst nightmares.

I could tell you of many more places I've been, people I've met. One time I was in Prague shortly before the outbreak of WW2 and saw the disintegrating life of a professional opera singer. After that I was in a squat in London living with amateur terrorists plotting to destabilise Margaret Thatcher's Britain. I've travelled to America with a black African woman, been in Norway with an old man on the run from gangsters, in a 19th century sailing ship crossing the Atlantic with Irish migrants fleeing poverty.

“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies... The man who never reads lives only one.” —George R. R. Martin.

Bookworms meets on the first Wednesday of each month, at 10.30, at The Exchange Bar (opposite Curve), 50 Rutland Street. More information, and a full list of novels read, can be found on the Bookworms page of the Leicester u3a website. To join, and new members are welcome, please contact Nick Arlett, the convenor.

Answers: on page 15

SUMMER CROQUET Janet Connolly, the convenor is looking for new members. They are due to commence the 2024 season in April and play at the Leicester Croquet Club, Monks Rest Gardens, Vicarage Lane, Humberstone, Leicester, LE5 1EE, on 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings during the summer. For more details contact Janet at croquet@leicesteru3a.org.uk

The detective theme continued in our last 2023 meeting, with a presentation of the works of Francis Durbridge, whose most famous creation was Paul Temple.

Approaching Christmas it was appropriate to hear an extract from Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas" followed by a selection of mince pies! This year's prize for the most valuable contribution to the Group went to Keith Pyne, who received a pair of classic copies of the *Magnet* comic featuring Billy Bunter.

The afternoon was rounded off with *The Life and Times of Ian Fleming*, in course of which we discovered the author used to call his mother *M* in his letters home from school!

Future topics will include Lord Peter Wimsey, Stanley Holloway, and Rupert the Bear.

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>

What about your favourite seasonal recipe?



PUZZLE CORNER

A Sudoku (created by Cliff Ault – Member Cryptic Crossword Group) **Solution on page 17**

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

POETRY CORNER A seasonal suggestion for you all, and a poem I re-read every Christmas. King John's Christmas from 'Now We Are Six' by A.A. Milne. A salutary tale which starts...

King John was not a good man, He had his little ways.... Too long to reproduce here, but look it up and I defy you not to smile.

CARTOON CORNER – MEMBER TONY LOCKE



Bookworms answers

Shuggie Bain, Douglas Stuart

The Plot, Jean Hanff Korelitz

Austerlitz, W.G. Sebald

The Good Terrorist, Doris Lessing

Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Norwegian by Night, Derek B. Miller

Star of the Sea, Joseph O'Connor

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Delivery

The newsletter is normally printed for those who prefer a hard copy; however, the printing facility at Beauchamp College is currently closed so this edition is only being circulated as a pdf version by email. When printed, 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 26th January 2024.

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.

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

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