

## Leicester Newsletter

February 2024



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<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>**

**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**

Membership stands at 376. We have had a few resign though ill health but we are having a steady flow of new members joining. Hopefully this will continue though out the year.

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

Well established in 2024 now, and hopefully past grey, depressing January bringing slightly lighter evenings and thoughts of spring. Time flies, and looking back to 2023, we had some good times in the Leicester u3a. I remember the Coronation Celebrations – led by the memories of a very funny country vicar, with wonderful food, and entertainment by our own Guitar Players. The Summer Garden Party, brought holidays to us, even if they are too expensive in August. Our Christmas Party saw us getting together over suitably seasonal food, and entertainment from our Guitar Players, and special guests Great Glen u3a Ukulele group. Lastly the return, after the pandemic, of our Christmas Lunch, at Taste Leicester College, was very welcome. We hope to repeat all of these events and more in 2024.

Our membership continues to grow, and we can put lockdowns, if not COVID, behind us. We are amongst the biggest u3as in the East Midlands, and we are developing our contacts with our friends in all our neighbouring u3as. We have 65 interest groups and activities to choose from. A big thanks to you all for making everything possible. In 2024 we look forward to an ever increasing number of groups, activities and trips. We are changing our website, as part of national plans to update the service, and we are in the first 50 u3as in the country to create the new one, leading the way for 700 other u3as in the UK.

The great Monthly Meetings, Coffee Mornings, and the Newsletter will continue, and develop thanks to all your ideas and suggestions. The Committee and I are always pleased to hear from you.

## **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.**

### **January MEETING REPORT**

by Glyn Bray

It was good to see many of you at the January get together on a cold afternoon when we all enjoyed tea and biscuits whilst doing a picture quiz composed by Veronica Matthews. All the pictures were of people who had been in the news during 2023 but it is amazing how often you recognise the face but can't place the name! The winning table enjoyed their prize, and everybody had a good time.

### **FEBRUARY MEETING Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2024**

Today's talk will be all about the good old days of the music hall and some of the performers that appeared in them so should prove to be very entertaining. "Mike Storr, Masters of Mirth" takes an affectionate look at some of his favourite Music Hall laughter makers.

### **MARCH AGM MEETING Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March**

Please make every effort to attend as this is YOUR u3a and you can have your say about who runs it for you.

Nomination forms and draft agendas were circulated at the beginning of February. Final papers will be sent out on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Afterwards you are invited to coffee and cake with the compliments of the committee, with time for a good 'natter'.

## **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**

Firstly, a big thanks to all our Convenors for replying so promptly and efficiently to our Groups Audit 2024. We have a fine and growing number of varied, interesting, and friendly interest groups and activities. Thank you to you all.

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

These continue to be advertised on the sign-up sheets in the hall. All groups are open to new Members.

New member Alan Ross has suggested a new group, Jazz Appreciation. Alan has a massive collection of jazz records and books and hopes everyone will be interested in a group which would explore all the different types of jazz, its history, its background, and the stories and lives of the musicians connected with it. No previous knowledge is necessary so do get in contact with me or Dave Barnes to express interest, at [groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk) You can also sign up to any of these groups through the contact details on our Website, and at the Groups Table at the Monthly Meeting and the Coffee Morning. And, of course, to suggest more!

Best wishes, Neil and Dave

## 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.**

## REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

### **Architecture & Design group visit to St Peters Church**

*by Gill Thompson*

On Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup> we visited St Peter's Church in Highfields. Jonathan Surrige, the vicar, greeted us with a welcome drink and told us about its early history. Leicester in the latter half of the 19th century was expanding rapidly, particularly in the Highfields area, with the revival of the established hosiery industry and the growth of the manufacture of boots and shoes. The Church of England decided Leicester needed a number of new churches. After the death of Earl Howe of Gopsall Hall near Twycross, a local benefactor, it was decided to build a memorial church in his honour to be known as the Earl Howe Memorial Church. Later the name was changed to St Peter's Church. The original plans submitted by the prestigious architect G.E. Street RA (best known for the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand) were designed in the Gothic Revival style and included a tower and a spire but there was insufficient money for these. The church was consecrated in 1874 with the tower and spire added five years later.

The Church is wide and spacious. Above the altar is a stained glass window presented by the Freemasons in memory of Earl Howe, who had been a Provisional Grand Master, containing masonic symbols. The windows on either side are of stained glass. The memorial window to the north was "put in by the Offerings and Effort of many Scholars and Children of St Peter's Parish". They depict scenes in the lives of Christ and St Peter. All three are the work of Clayton and Bell of London. Soon all the other windows were replaced with stained glass. In 1882 the reredos behind the altar with gilded panels was installed and the Chancel ceiling and walls were painted.

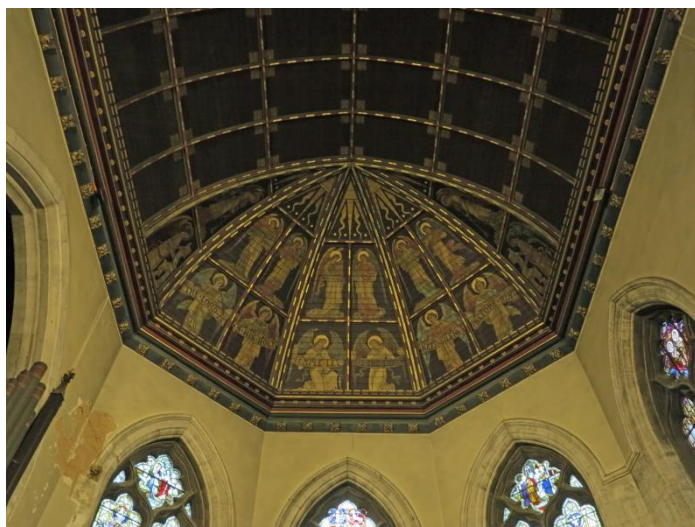
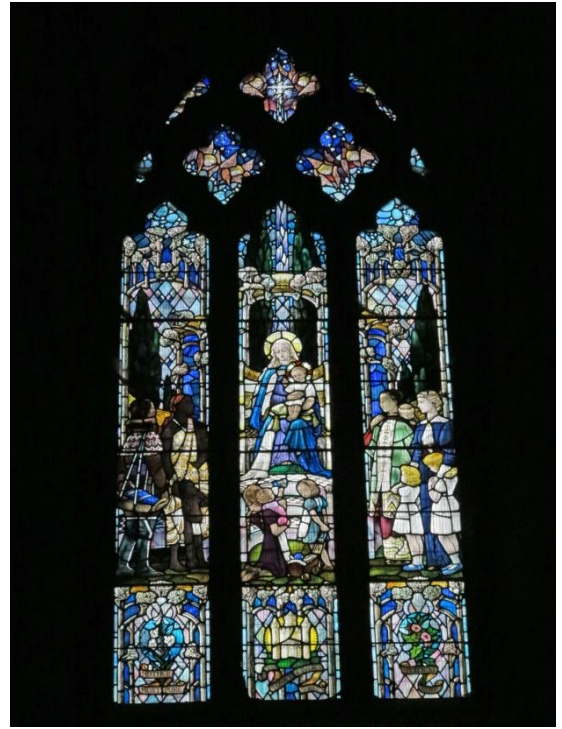
The wall painting has not survived, and the ceiling decoration is hard to see. Some pipes of the first organ built by Joshua Porritt of Leicester can still be seen. It was pumped by two small boys. A new organ was installed in 1910 and used much of the pipework from the original Porritt instrument. The organ blower was powered by electricity from the tramway system so that Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve had to be unaccompanied once the trams had ceased to run! There are attractive oak choir stalls and a carved oak pulpit. In 1940 Leicester was the target of a six hour bombing raid mainly affecting Highfields. More than 70 people were killed. The blast shook St Peter's damaging the roof and blowing out the west window. We saw the hole made by shrapnel in the high altar. The west window was replaced by a window designed by Veronica Whall, an artist in the Arts and Crafts tradition known for her brilliant colouring. It depicts mothers and children of different races, prophetic for the change of the future population of Highfields. Post war Highfields became poorer financially. In the mid-1960s major repairs became necessary on the spire. An appeal beyond the parish for funds to restore the spire was unsuccessful and the spire was dismantled in 1968 and a parapet was built to cap the tower. Two years later a government grant, as part of the Inner Area Programme, enabled the nave to be divided into two by inserting a glass partition providing a hall at the west end. The oak carved chancel screen was removed and used to decorate it. The scheme was designed by local architect Douglas Smith. Jonathan was an excellent guide, and I found the visit enjoyable and interesting. I was grateful to him for his time and informative talk and to Veronica for arranging it. Thanks too to Paul Griffiths, author of 'St Peter's and Highfields', 2014, for his help.

*Photos from the visit on the next page.*

## **Canasta**

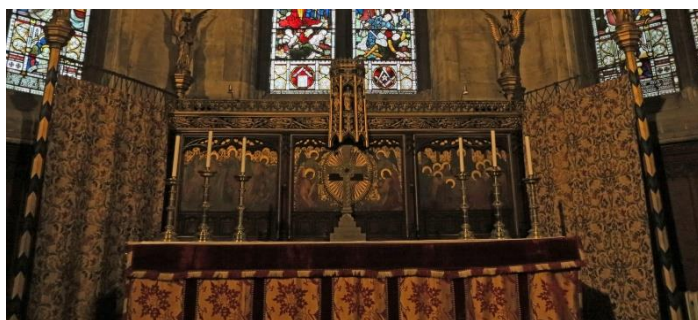
*Barbara Sheppard - Convenor*

The Canasta group has now moved to the second & fourth Thursdays at 2pm. Beginners welcome as well as people who can already play. Anyone who wants to join this friendly group contact [canasta@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:canasta@leicesteru3a.org.uk)



Photos clockwise

from top left



*Introduction by the Vicar  
 'Womens' window  
 The Organ  
 The Altar  
 The Ceiling*

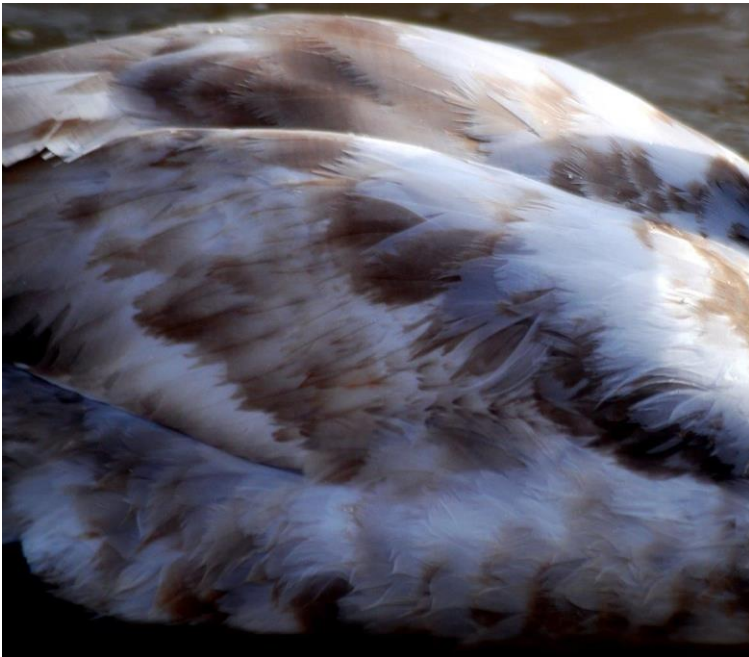
*Jean Burbridge  
 Jean Burbridge  
 Bob Hall  
 Jean Burbridge  
 Jean Burbfidge*



## Digital Photography

*By Richard Taylor - Convenor*

What is the definition of 'animal'? For the January meeting, the Digital Photography Group tackled this question with a series of images that ranged from insects to swans and from deer to dinosaurs (models thereof, at any rate). Inevitably, we had a number of dogs but, surprisingly, no cats or cute kittens. Approaches were varied and inventive: close-ups of bird plumage created evocative abstract patterns, while sheep in a variety of sunny landscapes reminded us that the winter will end eventually. Owners of dogs (themselves 'animal' of course) gave human interest, while discussions on how the images were made gave food for thought for future photographic adventures. Next month we will be looking at 'something blue': surely, the sky's the limit for that one.....



*Plumage of a cygnet by  
Matt Matthew*



*Heron by Irene Ault*



*Red Squirrel by Richard Taylor – Convenor*



*Seagull by Cliff Ault*



*Crocodile by Bob Hall*

*NB – The 'child' is now an adult as the picture was taken in Australia around 15 years ago!*



*A picture by member Tony Locke*

**Bridge 2** A message from the convenor – Chris Brain

I have been contacted by Steve Carter from the national U3A bridge group (see [here](#) for details) about helping out with a U3A national initiative to run a bridge beginners course for U3A members using the online bridge platform RealBridge. I have booked up to attend the teachers' course and will initially act as a helper on these courses with a view to becoming one of the teachers sometime in the future. I will mention the course to the members of my beginners' group but wondered if anyone else would be interested. If you are please contact Chris via [bridge2@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:bridge2@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

Looking to the future Steve is hoping to offer courses for returners and improvers and I will pass on the details as and when they come through. Longer term Steve hopes to facilitate national online bridge sessions using RealBridge and this might be an alternative to the duplicate bridge sessions I am currently running on Pianola.

## **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?

This contribution from your editor, Karen Closs

### **Mediterranean Vegetables**

#### Ingredients

1 red onion peeled, quartered and layers separated.

1 red pepper sliced.

1 yellow pepper sliced.

1 courgette sliced.

Baby tomatoes halved.

Olive oil

Balsamic vinegar

Feta cheese crumbled.

Few fresh basil leaves torn.

#### Method

1. Place vegetables on baking tray, drizzle with olive, and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
2. Cook for desired length of time (I find 15-20 minutes at 200 degrees is more than sufficient).
3. Stir in torn basil, crumble over the feta and drizzle with balsamic vinegar.

Delicious served with pan fried tuna loin or baked salmon fillet and minted baby new potatoes.

**PUZZLE CORNER A moderate Sudoku** (created by Cliff Ault – Member Cryptic Crossword Group)

**Solution on page 16**

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

# CARTOON CORNER – Member Tony Locke



## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

### **Delivery**

The newsletter is normally 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 March is Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024.**

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.

### **NEW IDEAS WANTED**

#### **Have you any ideas for regular features that might attract more members to contribute?**

We have a small number of members who keep us going month after month, but what about the rest of you? Is there something you would find of more interest and/or to which you might contribute?

Perhaps we could highlight a new group and/or convenor each month who haven't contributed before; or, one that is trying to attract more members.

Have your say. By emailing [newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk) or telephoning Karen Closs or Margaret Potter – telephone numbers in your contacts sheet.

## SUDOKU SOLUTION

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