



Spring is the time for renewal and growth as we look forward to the summer ahead. At Melbourne Area Derby (MAD) u3a, with over 20 interest groups, we are planning engaging meetings and activities.

This is also the time to renew our membership and refresh our organising committee.

You may know that your MADu3a Chair and Secretary must step down this year to make way for new role holders. Additionally, two longstanding members are leaving the committee.

Now is the ideal time to join the committee, get involved and help ensure that MADu3a continues to thrive. For more information about what is involved, or about other ways to give a hand please contact Margaret on [madu3achair@gmail.com](mailto:madu3achair@gmail.com)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### (NON-GROUP ACTIVITIES)

Guests are welcome to try two meetings, activities or groups before deciding to join.

Check group meeting dates on our website or the members portal or with the group leader.

Monthly General Meetings or outings are usually held on the first Thursday of every month.

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 10.30 - 11am**, Weston Village Hall, DE72 2BL. COFFEE MORNING; renew your membership, introduce a friend or just pop along for refreshments and board games (no booking required).

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April**. Visit to the White Peak Distillery. Booked in advance.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2pm** Melbourne Assembly Rooms, monthly general meeting, with former Wimbledon umpire Alan Grey MBE.

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 3pm** Swarkestone Nursery. Tour, talk and demonstration on making beautiful garden containers. Free to book. Contact Sue at [madu3agroups@gmail.com](mailto:madu3agroups@gmail.com)

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2pm**, Melbourne Assembly Rooms ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING plus a talk on being a Magistrate.

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 10.15am**, Repton Murder Mystery walk, with optional pub lunch. Register your interest at [madu3aevents@gmail.com](mailto:madu3aevents@gmail.com)

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July**, picnic lunch at Melbourne Sports Park instead of a general meeting. With optional games including walking cricket.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August**, lunch in Breedon instead of a meeting. With optional walk and tour of historical church. Details to follow. Register your interest at [madu3aevents@gmail.com](mailto:madu3aevents@gmail.com)

Online learning is available free at the National u3a website <https://www.u3a.org.uk>

## GROUP NEWS



**The Garden Visiting Group** began its 2024 programme with a visit to Hopton Hall, an 18<sup>th</sup> century house with a renowned snowdrop walk. Unfortunately the snowdrops hadn't enjoyed the excessive rain!

Nevertheless fifteen members enjoyed the winter sunshine strolling around the gardens. The enclosed walled garden has 2000 roses surrounded by neatly trimmed box hedges and the avenue of pencil pines made it look like an Italian garden.

New members are always welcome to this seasonal group. Contact Alison the group leader via the website, at a monthly meeting or via [madu3agroup@gmail.com](mailto:madu3agroup@gmail.com)

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**Art Appreciation has been** focussing on the study of women artists from the 17th to the 20th century. Members researched and presented a wide variety of artists, included Georgia O'Keefe (artwork above) Katsushika Oi, daughter of Hokusai and Natalia Goncharova. from Russia, Yet to come are presentations on Frida Kahlo and Evelyn de Morgan and May Morris from the Art Nouveau period.

In June some of the group are visiting Cambridge with an overnight stay at Murray Edwards (formerly New Hall) College. The highlight of the visit will be a tour of the unique collection of modern women's art which is on display around the college as well as a visit to Kettle's Yard gallery.

**Photography step by step** group members learn at their own pace with phones, compact cameras and DSLR's. They meet on the first Wednesday of the month at fairly local locations with timings varying according to the time of the year. And a monthly theme gives members the chance to bring out their creative side between meetings.

Group members say you know it's the first Wednesday of the month as it always rains. But don't let that put you off as there is always a way around it; plastic bags and umbrellas come to mind. Recent outings include Bradgate Park, Shardlow Canal, Calke Gardens to name but a few. Even Melbourne Pool can have a lot to offer. In February the group visited Hopton Hall for the Snowdrop Walk. The programme for the year is planned and available on the website.



The **Family History Group** meets on the second Wednesday afternoon of the month at the Royal British Legion in Melbourne. Every family has a story to tell. Most of us will have nothing exciting in our past but without our forebears we would not be here.

Exploring how our ancestors lived is not just about names and dates but about what impacted their lives; employment, disease, living conditions, world events etc.

Lorraine runs both the photography and family history groups and can be contacted via the website.

## Rolls Royce Visit



MAD u3a was privileged to be guests of the Rolls Royce Heritage Trust museum in Derby, where members got up close to some magnificent examples of British engineering. We were expertly guided through the evolution of the engine by one of the Trust's volunteers. Many thanks to Melbourne member, David, for facilitating the visit.

## New groups



Three new groups have already launched this year. **Wine Appreciation** held a meeting in February (pictured) and **Pickleball** is due to have its first meeting in April. And up on Melbourne Allotments, a new **Grow you Own Group** will be gardening from April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are interested in starting a new group on something you would like to do, contact Sue, our Groups' Coordinator at [madu3agroup@gmail.com](mailto:madu3agroup@gmail.com)

## COMMITTEE NEWS

The **AGM on June 6<sup>th</sup>** will see a number of Committee Members step down from key posts. The MADu3a Constitution limits the terms of office of the Chair, Secretary and Vice-Chair to three years to ensure that nobody becomes stale in the role and that new members are continually stepping up to ensure that our vibrant organisation continues to innovate and meet new challenges. For instance, we will soon be launching a new website and are moving towards paperless membership renewal.

By becoming a Committee Member you can help in so many ways, for instance improving our communications with members and the public, supporting our group leaders, liaising with other u3as, helping to keep our records, accounts and website updated or having fun coming up with interesting events/activities.

Of course you don't need to be on the Committee to suggest ideas or facilitate groups and activities. And any member can join our '**Small Tasks as Required**' pool of members who volunteer to help out. But without a Committee there would be no u3a, and without a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer there would be no Committee.

This September MADu3a will have been active for just seven years. The growth in membership and the number of groups on offer is testament to the work of numerous groups leaders and committee members past and present, as well as the support of the hundreds of local residents who have joined.

Melbourne Area Derby u3a is something that Melbourne and surrounding villages can be very proud of. May it continue to thrive for many years ahead with your help.

*Did you know that we have a **reciprocal arrangement with our friends in Derby u3a**? This means that you might be able to join one of their groups without becoming a member of Derby u3a. See <https://u3asites.org.uk/derby/groups>*



<b>MADu3a CURRENT GROUPS (as at March 2024)</b> <b>subject to change, see website for up-to-date details and availability</b> <b>(please note that some groups are full)</b>	
<b>Art Appreciation.</b> Currently focussing on women artists.	Monthly, <b>Wednesday</b> (pm), Melbourne Assembly Rooms (MARS)
<b>Book groups.</b> Currently three book groups; numbers are kept small.	Monthly. <b>Tuesday, Thursday, Friday.</b> Various times and venues.
<b>Bowls.</b> Seasonal Crown Green Bowling (April - September).	Monthly, last <b>Wednesday</b> (am) Kings Norton Bowling Club
<b>Bridge.</b> A friendly group for players of all abilities.	Weekly, <b>Monday</b> (pm) Melbourne Sports Park (MSP)
<b>Crafting.</b> Numbers limited.	Monthly, second <b>Thursday</b> (pm), Melbourne
<b>Current Affairs.</b> Discussions on topical issues, held at various local pubs.	Monthly, third <b>Friday</b> (pm) Various venues
<b>Family History.</b> Supported research with access to Ancestry and Find My Past websites.	Monthly, second <b>Wednesday</b> (pm), Melbourne British Legion
<b>French Dancing</b> to live music. Beginners welcome.	Monthly, last <b>Thursday</b> (pm) Thomas Cook Hall, Melbourne
<b>Garden Visits.</b> Spring/summer within 30 - 40 minutes' drive of Melbourne.	Various days, times, places
<b>German Conversation.</b> For people who speak some German and wish to practice and improve.	Weekly, <b>Wednesday</b> (am) Online via Zoom or in members' homes
<b>Grow your Own.</b> A collaborative gardening group growing fruit and veg on an allotment. New Group.	As weather and enthusiasm permits Melbourne Allotments
<b>History.</b> The current topic is the Romans in Britain.	Monthly, second <b>Friday</b> (pm). Melbourne Assembly Rooms
<b>Photography.</b> All abilities welcome. The group visits locations and learn from each other.	Monthly, first <b>Wednesday</b> (pm). Various locations
<b>Pickleball.</b> Played in pairs on a badminton court, with a tennis net and paddle bats. A new group.	Monthly, second <b>Thursday</b> (pm). Melbourne
<b>Poetry Appreciation.</b> Reading poetry and learning about poets. Two groups. Numbers kept small.	Monthly, first <b>Monday or Wednesday</b> (pm). Members' homes
<b>Road Cycling.</b> For experienced road cyclers. 2 hours @ 12mph, including a break.	Weekly <b>Tuesday</b> (am), Starting at Melbourne or Breedon
<b>Scrabble.</b> All abilities welcome to this friendly group.	Monthly, fourth <b>Tuesday</b> (pm) Thomas Cook Hall, Melbourne
<b>Short Breaks.</b> Coordinates day trips and at least one holiday each year to Europe or within the UK.	Various dates & places
<b>Walking Groups.</b> Members arrange walks of varying length and difficulty to suit all needs.	Ad hoc, 2/3 times a month Various starting points
<b>Walking Netball.</b> Beginners welcome. No running allowed. Played outside.	Second and fourth <b>Monday</b> (am) Melbourne Sports Park (MSP)
<b>Whist.</b> All abilities. Beginners welcome.	Monthly, third <b>Tuesday</b> , 7-9pm, Thomas Cook Hall, Melbourne
<b>Wine Appreciation.</b> Learning and comparing wines from around the world. New Group	Occasional meetings.

Contact the Groups' Coordinator on [madu3agroup@gmail.com](mailto:madu3agroup@gmail.com) for information on Groups