

# PARK NOTTINGHAM u3a

## NEWSLETTER

### MARCH 2023

#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Another month gone by already, and although it has remained quite cool, the lighter, brighter Spring days are on their way.

Meanwhile, as you can see from this newsletter, our members are refusing to be restricted by the weather, and are continuing to enjoy both indoor and outdoor pursuits.

In particular, I should mention the outing to Felley Priory to see the snowdrops, and the short walk which crossed the Bennerley Viaduct. Both are magnificent sights, albeit on different scales, one natural and one man-made.

The absence of much going on in the garden has not curtailed Plants and Picnics, which managed two meetings in the month, with indoor picnics and perhaps some plants.

The talk at our coffee morning this month was very topical, 'The NHS – Is it healthy?', which John Todd, a u3a member, presented. The answer seems to be a resounding 'No!' This of course poses the question, 'What do we do about it?' This provided much discussion at the meeting and will no doubt continue to be the source of debate for many more years yet. If anyone would like to present a talk to us on this subject, I for one would be very interested to hear it.

The Book Club continues to read, review and discuss a wide range of literature, and is very well supported.

For those braving the outdoors, there were a variety of walks. Also a photography excursion around the City centre resulting in a gallery of pictures on the theme "Patterns". Supporting the Film Club also required trips out to the cinema and the meeting for a lively discussion, and made a welcome change from watching television.

Jackie Fisher continues to seek recruits to help set up a Music Enjoyment Group which would be a valuable addition to the range of Groups we have on offer.

The coming month sees a trip to Lincoln with a guided tour, walks of various lengths, a talk on growing produce for a Michelin star restaurant, another film and book to review as well as all the usual meetings for MahJong, Canasta etc.

This newsletter gives lots of details of these activities, and importantly how and when and where to join in.

Lastly I must again thank Ravi for putting this newsletter together.

On behalf of all the contributors I hope you enjoy reading it

*Graham Edwards – Chair*

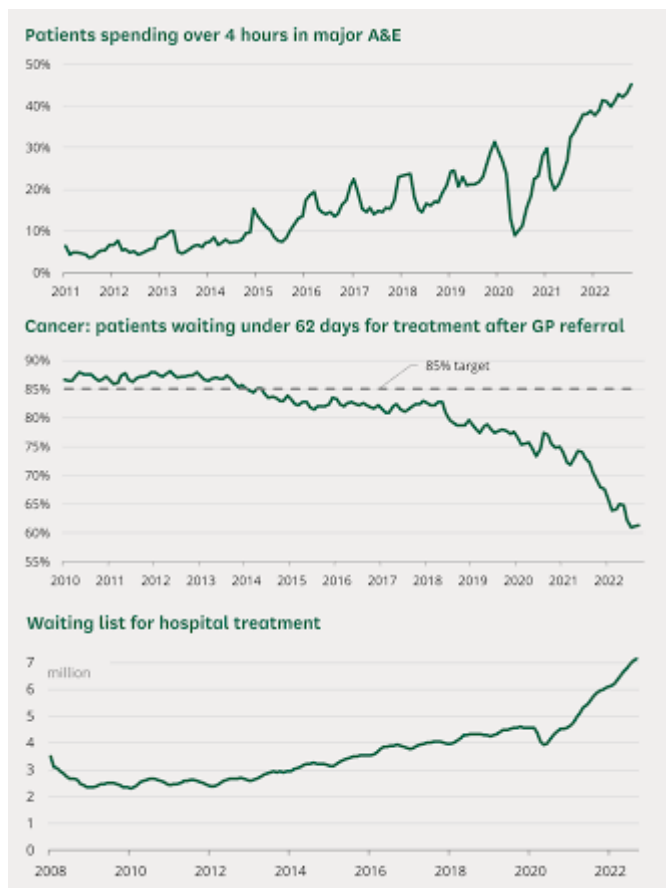
## February Monthly Meeting – Sarah Waites

The Monthly talk on **Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February**, was entitled: **The NHS – Is it Healthy?**

The answer unfortunately seems to be a rather unequivocal 'No'.

Our speaker, John Todd, became concerned in 2017 about the claims of politicians that our NHS was "the best in the world". As a former hospital director in Leicester and subsequent management consultant in the health sector for 10 years, John felt this did not reflect the actual state of the NHS. It is a massive institution with 1 million people attending a GP appointment daily, 250,000 attending out patient appointments, 45,000 attending A&E. John came armed with graphs, tables and statistics showing the cold hard truth about our NHS, using comparisons with the EU and OECD.

Before Covid, we had some of the poorest cancer survival rates in Europe; the fewest number of CT scanners per head of population; a shortage of 50,000 nurses; GPs were retiring faster than we were training them. The number of hospital beds had halved over the last 30 years. We were bottom of the league on numbers of beds per population. In maternity care we ranked 33 out of 35.



[House of Commons Library–NHS Key Stats](#)

Chief Executives were extremely worried in 2019 about missing targets, lack of investment in local services, lack of political discussion of the issues. Then came Covid. In March 2022 there was a record breaking backlog of people waiting for elective treatment, a record number of trolley waits, waiting in A&E for ambulances, waiting for GP appointments and so on. Since 2021 there have been some minor improvements in some areas.

The speaker used data published in January 2023, to show the trend from 2010, the impact of Covid, the ever-increasing concentration of care on A&E departments and the impact of not being able to discharge many patients at the appropriate time. The audience was surprised by the reliance on staff trained overseas, the low number of medical school places available in the UK and how funding varied between governing parties. However no government seems willing to grapple with its problems. The Health and Social Care Act of

2012 has never been implemented. We still have no integration between Health and Social Care.

The talk prompted many questions and much discussion about how to fund the NHS in the future. There is a need for strong political will in order to effect the changes.

## March Monthly Meeting and Talk

The March Monthly talk on **Tuesday, 21st March, "Growing for a Michelin chef – tips, tricks and getting flavour into your gardens"** will be by **Bethan MacIlroy**.

Bethan lives in the park and was the head gardener for Sat Bains, the Michelin starred restaurant in Nottingham. She now runs her own private consultancy.

I'm sure Bethan is a fund of knowledge about growing plants and maybe we will also learn some really interesting behind-the-scenes information from her experiences in this job.

The Monthly Meeting and talk will be at the **Castle Lawn Tennis Club** on Tennis Drive once again. We will meet at 10.30 for coffee, with the speaker at 11.00.

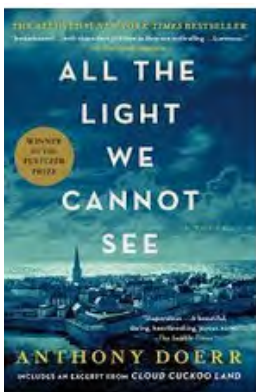
## Computer Help! – from Graham Edwards

Some members may feel that their computer skills are not sufficient to do all the things they want to on their laptops, tablets etc. Age UK is offering FREE local Digital Skill Training on a one-to-one basis. Full details are available on the website, under their Digital Inclusion Programme. Alternatively you can contact them by phone (0115 841 4470) or email [digitalinclusion@ageuknotts.org.uk](mailto:digitalinclusion@ageuknotts.org.uk).

For those of you who have a specific problem with your technology (computers, tablets, emails, WhatsApp, etc.), or know a member who does, we may be able to help internally. Please contact Graham Edwards at [chair3.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair3.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com) in the first instance, and we will try to help.

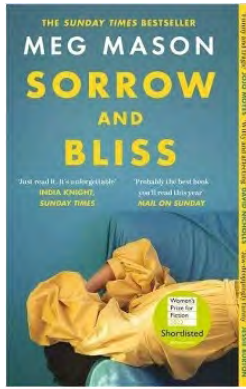
## NEWS FROM THE INTEREST GROUPS

### **Book Club** – *Convenor, Liz Gilder*



Park Nottingham u3a book club met on **Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> February** to review **All the Light We Cannot See** by Anthony Doerr. For Marie-Laure, blind since the age of six, the world is full of mazes; the miniature of a Paris neighbourhood, made by her father to teach her the way home; the microscopic layers within the invaluable diamond that her father guards in the Museum of Natural History; the walled city by the sea, where father and daughter take refuge when the Nazis invade Paris; and a future which draws her ever closer to Werner, a German orphan, destined to labour in the mines until a broken radio fills his life with possibility and brings him to the notice of the Hitler Youth.

The book group gave their opinions and largely enjoyed the book with the two main characters written into very short chapters running parallel with their lives. I think the book gained the best marks given so far!!



Our next read is **Sorrow and Bliss** by **Meg Mason**. The Guardian says it is impossible to read this novel and not be moved. It is also impossible not to laugh out loud! Extraordinary.

Everyone tells Martha Friel she is clever and beautiful, a brilliant writer who has been loved every day of her adult life by one man, her husband Patrick. So why is everything broken? Maybe Martha is just someone who finds it harder to be alive than most people. Or maybe – as she has long believed – there is something wrong with her. Forced to return to her childhood home to live with her dysfunctional, bohemian parents (but with the help of her devoted, foul-mouthed sister Ingrid), Martha has one last chance to find out whether a life is ever too broken to fix or whether, maybe, by starting over, she will get to write a better one for herself...

Our next book club meeting will be on **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 3.45 p.m.** and will be at Gillian Short's house in Clare Valley. Please let me know if you are attending so that I can let Gillian know how many coffees and teas are needed!! Gillian will also lead the discussion on the author Meg Mason.

To join the Book Club, contact [e.gilder@peoplemarketing.co.uk](mailto:e.gilder@peoplemarketing.co.uk).

### **Canasta Club** – *Convenor, Jane Ellis*

The Canasta group will meet to play on **Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>**, and once again if anyone would like to join the group and learn the ropes, we would be delighted to see you – please get in touch with Jane Ellis [ellisjane215@gmail.com](mailto:ellisjane215@gmail.com). The games will be played between **3.00pm – 5.30pm**.

## English Language Group – Convenor, Margaret Wiedemann

We're still cheering the great coup of the past month when our recently retired former chair, no doubt with a lot of extra time on his hands, scored a massive victory over no less than the Guardian newspaper. The "Grauniad" nickname is only too often well-deserved, but we'd have thought being able to spell would at least be written into the job descriptions of the crossword team. Apparently not.

The clue was "Fawlty or Thorndike?", to which the answer has to be "Sybil". It didn't fit the grid, though, where the required word was "Sibyl". Spelled like that it's a fortune-teller from the classical world, the sort of slippery type who tells you that if you go to war you'll destroy a great army and you don't realise it's going to be your own. (It's possible that Sibyl doesn't know either.) Ian's urbanely worded letter of correction was published in the correspondence columns, but did they admit the spelling mistake? No, they covered it up by revising the clue instead, announcing next day that it should have read "Female Roman oracle believed to utter prophecies from a god".



Actually, Grauniad, Sibyls were Greek, the most famous being at Delphi, but life is short and you choose your battles. The episode prompted a trip down memory lane as we reminisced about the approximate anagrams of "Fawlty Towers" displayed on the name-board of the notorious B&B, where they should have acted as a warning to the unwary guest. "Watery Fowls", "Farty Towels", "Fatty Owls" and "Flowery Twats" all featured, but which of those is the only genuine anagram? If your

English language skills are as good as Manuel's, or even if you "know nothing", join us by emailing [mjwh57@gmail.com](mailto:mjwh57@gmail.com).

## Film Group – Convenor, Ian Henderson

Our film in January was *'Tar'*, starring Cate Blanchett as a world-renowned classical conductor whose life begins to unravel after her sexual predations and bullying behaviour (or was she just being forceful? Do male conductors get more leeway?) catch up with her. She was certainly not portrayed as a particularly likeable character. One member noted that neither was anyone else.



It was a subtle film which did not show in detail her alleged past misdemeanours, rather it hinted. Most felt Blanchett, who was rarely off-screen, was remarkable in the lead role (she won a Golden Globe and is Oscar nominated), although one member felt she was rather 'actorly', in a stage sense.

We had a very stimulating session debating the film which was far from a straightforward narrative and demanded close attention to details not all of us picked up. It was here that the collective group views gave us more insight. One member quoted from a website which had a very radical interpretation of the story which tied up some loose ends but posed others.

Group members seemed to like different parts of the work (some remarked on a slow opening 20 minutes whereas others enjoyed that). Some felt it bore a rewatch to better appreciate the subtleties and the issues raised in our discussion, although it is a lengthy film at 157 minutes which gave others pause for thought! It got an average score of 7.5/10.



Next time (**Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 4pm**) we will discuss '**Broker**', a South Korean film with an intriguing premise. A young mother abandons her new-born but then helps the couple who illicitly take her, to find appropriate replacement parents. Poignant and funny, apparently. We'll see! Contact me at [ianhenderson73@gmail.com](mailto:ianhenderson73@gmail.com) if you want to join us.

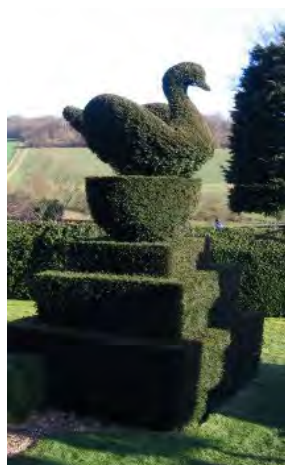
### **Fine Dining Group** – *Convenor, Adrienne Lee*

Our next trip is to **The Olive Branch** at Clipsham, a gastro-pub/restaurant with a good reputation and lower prices. We have booked for **Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March at 12.30**. If you want to join us contact Adrienne at [adriennesuperade@gmail.com](mailto:adriennesuperade@gmail.com)

*Report by Ian Henderson*

### **Local History Group** – *Convenor, Stephen Hyde*

On a bright and fresh morning on **Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> February** the Local History group ventured out to **Felley Priory**, a delightful sixteenth century building and wonderful gardens close to Nottingham – Junction 27 M1.



Our focus was the snowdrops which featured throughout the gardens. I counted 7 varieties and they were good for the soul. There were many other plant varieties in bloom: hellebores, crocuses, miniature iris and so much more, with great promise of more to come. A striking feature of the gardens is the very extensive and beautifully designed and cut topiary based on yew trees and bushes

Those of us who could stay for lunch were fortunate enough to share one large table with appetising food.

The gardens are lovely throughout the year—a **place worth visiting**

Our next visit will be to **Lincoln City** on **Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> March**. We have booked a tour of the upper part of Lincoln, in and around the Cathedral with an experienced guide. There will be coffee at the Castle, followed at 11am by the tour. In terms of travel, I will explore the rail situation and let you know this and other information about the visit in due course

If you are interested in the activities of this group, please reach out on [stephen@hydemail.co.uk](mailto:stephen@hydemail.co.uk) or 01159415598.

### **MahJong Group** – *Convenor Graham Edwards*



The Mahjong group continues to enjoy growing support, with an enthusiastic band meeting in members' homes.

Our next meeting is on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 3.30 pm**

If you are interested in joining us, and have yet to let me know, please drop me a note at [grahamedwards542@gmail.com](mailto:grahamedwards542@gmail.com).

Previous experience is not necessary.

## **Photography Group** – *Convenor, Rod Mitchell*

The Photography Group met on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> February to review a total of 32 images with the theme of "Patterns." It did not take too long to agree on a selection to be published in the newsletter. The best 12 are set out below. Full fat versions of these, together with those which did not make the cut, can be found on our Flickr page. Our next theme is "Bridge", which we hope will inspire some intriguing images.

Members of the group remain involved with the Artspeak Photography Club. This meets fortnightly, alternating between an outdoor visit and an editing/sharing session at Cafe Sobar. The next visit is to Southwell on 23rd. March. Artspeak has lost some funding and from April the two workers who run the project will no longer be employed. The Photography Club and other Artspeak activities will therefore require volunteers to step in and run them.

Photography Group Flickr Page: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/192581147@N03/albums>



## PATTERNS:



*Persicaria runcinata*  
'Purple Fantasy' at RHS  
Wisley



King's Cross Station Roof



Park Window



Ravenna: Basilica of San Vitale



Stephansdom, Vienna



Patterns



Initiation Well, Sintra, Portugal





Frost



Pallet/Palette



Main Square, Cascais, Portugal



Adder



Ceramics Museum, Geneva



## Plants and Picnics – Convenor, Marion Martin

As we meet approximately every 3 weeks, some months we get two meetings in, and February has been one of those months.

Having had a 'nearly Fine Dining' experience in January (see previous newsletter), this month started with a trip to Gillian's vintage tea shop! This proved to be very popular, with 14 attendees, making it the joint biggest meeting ever (the previous occasion being Liz's garden in high summer).



Gillian excelled herself with the catering again (I think the rumours had spread beforehand), and we all enjoyed a delicious sit-down 'picnic' of soup and bread, with teas and coffee served in vintage teapots – quite an occasion! Given the fact that so many of us were round the table, conversations tended to be between near neighbours, so any fly on the wall would have heard a whole range of gardening (and other) issues discussed.



Later in the month, a smaller group gathered at Angela Parmar's. Smaller meetings lend themselves to more discussion round the group, and that was what happened at this meeting. Whilst many are finding it too cold still for much practical activity, there is much pleasure in swapping observations of spring emerging, from the bulbs arriving to the swelling of the buds on the camellias. For those who know Angela's garden, the perennial challenges of an absolutely enormous hedge also lead to interesting conversations.

There is no obligation for hosts to offer any catering at all, and this should have been a 'back-to-basics, bring your own' picnic, but we obviously have too much fun with this, and the group also enjoyed Angela's perfect hosting, with scones provided!

As I write, we are having a few cooler days again, but we have already had the first taste of the warmth to come, bulbs are starting to put on a show, and the first solitary bee has been spotted. Although it's slightly hard to imagine, we will very soon be able to consume our picnics outside, and have the opportunity to be inspired by each other's gardens again. If you're interested in joining this group please contact Marion Martin at [PNu3aPandP@gmail.com](mailto:PNu3aPandP@gmail.com).

## Walking Groups

### Short Walks – Convenor, Andrew Martin

Our February Short Walk followed a 3.5-mile circular route in Ilkeston. We started at Ilkeston railway station and headed out along the Nottingham Canal to the newly-restored and



reopened **Bennerley Viaduct**. There was mist across the Erewash valley and the views from the canal were atmospheric (see photos taken by Rod). We returned along the Erewash Canal to the station and had a leisurely break in the friendly Junction Café. The spicy tomato soup, made fresh that morning, was very tasty. We also had time to pop into the antiques centre at Armstrong Mill before catching the train back to Nottingham.



The next Short Walk will be on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March** (note this is the first Tuesday, not the usual day). We will follow a circular 4-mile route visiting the **Arboretum and the Rock Cemetery** before returning through The Forest. Full details will be sent out to those on the Walks email list (see bottom of page) about a week in advance.

### Long Walks – Convenor, Graham Edwards

#### Long Walk Wednesday, 1 March 2023. Sandiacre to Ilkeston

The February walk was slightly delayed until 1<sup>st</sup> March (Group Leader double booked!). Thus it was too late to allow the report to appear in this newsletter.

There will, of course, be a full report in the newsletter next month, when you can read about our exploration of the Erewash Valley.

The next Long Walk is scheduled for **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March**. With the weather improving, I am planning a walk which will hopefully involve spring flowers. This outing will be by car or public transport, with a walk of about 6 miles, and lunch at a cafe. I will send details to all those on the Long Walk mailing list.

If you are not on the list and would like to join, please let me know at:

[grahamedwards542@gmail.com](mailto:grahamedwards542@gmail.com).



### **Longer Walks – Convenor, Andrew Martin**

On **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February**, a group of 8 Longer Walkers met at Southwell on a chilly morning with a threat of rain. We threaded an intricate path out of Southwell rising slowly to the hills above Halam. We walked through the Starkey fruit fields with their dormant strawberry and



Approaching Southwell Minster

raspberry beds inside the skeletons of polytunnels. Down into Halam and then up again onto the ridge above Farnsfield, we had extensive views to the north west across Nottinghamshire. On the outskirts of Farnsfield, we stopped for lunch during the only prolonged period of rain during our walk. The sky turned blue and the sun came out as we got ready to walk again. There followed a long stretch of the Southwell Trail along a disused railway track. At Maythorne, we left the railway line to see the Old Silk Mill and to follow the river back into Southwell. We

all agreed it was an interesting and varied route and, at just under 12 miles, certainly long enough for a winter's day. The last couple of miles, along Church Street and through the grounds of the Minster, provided a memorable finish.

For our March Longer Walk, we will keep to a Monday, and, on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**, we will attempt a 14-mile route starting and finishing in **Blidworth Woods**. We will walk through Blidworth and Papplewick before returning through Burnt Stump Country Park. Travel will be by car. Full details will be sent out to those on the email contact list about a week beforehand

If you would like to be added to the email contact list for Short or Longer Walks, please email [u3aparkwalks@gmail.com](mailto:u3aparkwalks@gmail.com)

### **IS ANYONE INTERESTED IN STARTING A MUSIC ENJOYMENT GROUP?**

It seems sad to me that our u3a does not do anything relating to music, so I wonder if anything can be done about this? I know there are many talented musicians in The Park, and also those who simply enjoy listening to music. It should be possible to come up with some ideas of how we could develop a group in which we could work together to share, spread and enhance the pleasure of music. My main interest is classical music, but it would not need to be restricted to this.

I think there are many things which such a group could encompass. Possibilities include listening and studying a piece of music and then attending a performance of it, comparing recordings of pieces, arranging recitals, a member presenting a favourite composition, etc, etc.

I would really like to be involved in such a group, but do not feel able to tackle this alone. Would anyone be interested in taking this further? If so, please contact me by phone or email and we could discuss whether there would be any future in this.

Jacky Fisher

23 Lenton Ave

[gandjfisher23@gmail.com](mailto:gandjfisher23@gmail.com)

078669 88405

## Park Nottingham u3a Calendar for March 2023

One way to contact group leaders is to visit our u3a website (link at the top of this newsletter) and clicking on the bluebird at the top of the relevant group page. You can then type a message that will go straight to the inbox of the convenor.

Date and Time	Event	"Venue"	Contact
Wednesday, 1 <sup>st</sup> March	Fine Dining	The Olive Branch, Clipsham	Adrienne Lee
Wednesday, 1 <sup>st</sup> March	Long Walk	Sandiacre to Ilkeston	Graham Edwards
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 4PM	Film Club	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
Monday, 6 <sup>th</sup> March	MahJong Group	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
Tuesday, 7 <sup>th</sup> March	Short Walk	Arboretum and the Rock Cemetery	Andrew Martin
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> and 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 3:00PM	Canasta Club	Member's home	Jane Ellis
Monday, 13 <sup>th</sup> March	Committee Meeting	Nottingham Castle Lawn Tennis Club, 35 Tennis Drive	Graham Edwards
Friday, 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Plants and Picnics	Member's Garden	Marion Martin
Friday, 17 <sup>th</sup> March 3:45PM	Book Club	Gillian Short's home, Clare Valley	Liz Gilder
Tuesday, 21 <sup>st</sup> March	Monthly Coffee Morning and Talk	Nottingham Castle Lawn Tennis Club, 35 Tennis Drive	Sarah Waites
Friday, 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Newsletter Deadline	<a href="mailto:parku3anewsletter@gmail.com">parku3anewsletter@gmail.com</a>	Ravi Sankaran
Tuesday, 28 <sup>th</sup> March	Long Walk	TBA	Graham Edwards
Friday, 31 <sup>st</sup> March	History Group	Lincoln City	Stephen Hyde
Monday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Longer Walk	Blidworth Woods	Andrew Martin

In addition to these meetings, the following groups are also "meeting" on-line:

Group	Activity	Contact
English Language Group	Discussion using WhatsApp	Margaret Wiedemann
Film Club	Discussion using WhatsApp	Ian Henderson
Photography Group	Discussion using WhatsApp	Rod Mitchell
Plants and Picnics	Discussion using WhatsApp plus visits and picnics	Marion Martin

## USEFUL EMAIL ADDRESSES

Graham Edwards, Chair:

[chair3.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair3.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com)

Ian Henderson, Deputy Chair:

[ianhenderson73@gmail.com](mailto:ianhenderson73@gmail.com)

Ian Henderson, Membership Secretary:

[membersecparku3a@gmail.com](mailto:membersecparku3a@gmail.com)

Jean Henderson, Business Secretary:

[bizsecjean@gmail.com](mailto:bizsecjean@gmail.com)

Ravi Sankaran, Newsletter Editor:

[parku3anewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:parku3anewsletter@gmail.com)

**Editor's note:** If you are reading the newsletter on your computer, tablet or phone, you will find that all email addresses in blue *italics* are live and can be clicked to send a message. For example, the email addresses above are live, but the one in the box below is not. Similarly, where a link to an internet web page is offered, the blue italics indicate that this is a live link and will take you straight to the page.

Contributions for the **April Newsletter** should be sent to the editor,  
Ravi Sankaran, by **Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> March**, preferably by email to:

[parku3anewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:parku3anewsletter@gmail.com)