



PARK NOTTINGHAM u3a

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023



www.parknottinghamu3a.org.uk

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to December's newsletter. It does seem surprising that the Festive Season and the end of the year are almost here already. However, before that we have a lot to report on November's activities, and to look forward to in December.

Dr Mark Gillott, our speaker at the monthly meeting, provided a huge amount of data. This was to encourage us to support better insulation of our homes and the developments necessary for us to use electricity in place of fossil fuels for our transport and space heating. It is good to know that Nottingham is in the forefront of the quest for carbon neutrality. Sarah has also tempted us with a list of talk subjects for 2024.

Rod Mitchell again offers pertinent travel advice on avoiding scams and the availability of public transport over the festive period.

Local History visits continue, although we will have to wait until next month to see the report on the visit to Papplewick. There is also a visit to the Chapel in the Woods to look forward to in December.

Long and Longer walks continue where we seem to have been lucky with choosing rare, dry, sunny days for our events. The Short Walks are sadly still in abeyance, so anyone interested in helping in their reinstatement is urged to put themselves forward.

On the subject of visits and walks, the Committee has discussed the subject of charging for providing lifts to our events. Some u3a have a policy of compulsory payment by the passenger to the driver. However, as the current set-up seems to be working, we have decided that payment should remain on a voluntary basis agreed by the individuals. We will review this periodically.

Plants and Picnics seems to have found its stride with an enthusiastic band of gardeners and cooks learning from each other in the true spirit of u3a.

The Music Appreciation Group and the Film Club continue to provide engagement, in areas of topical interest, to a growing group of followers. I am sure Science Seekers will develop too once we get over the flu and Covid season. The Photography Group has introduced a new film title quiz which should provide some puzzlement and groans. The English Language Group continues its mission to keep us all (and our politicians and media) grammatically correct. The onset of the winter weather has helped propel members indoors to play Canasta and MahJong which continue to attract growing numbers.

Talking of which, our overall membership continues to grow so welcome to our new members - I hope you find plenty of the activities to be of interest.

And lastly there is our Christmas Activity to look forward to. Jo Martin and her team have arranged a festive morning on Tuesday December 18th, with seasonal refreshment and entertainment.

I look forward to seeing you all there. Meanwhile have a wonderful December.

Graham Edwards – Chair

November Monthly Meeting – Sarah Waites

The speaker for the monthly meeting on **21st November** was Mark Gillott, formerly Professor of Sustainable Building Design and now Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Engineering at Nottingham. Prof Gillot talked to us about Energising Communities with Active Buildings. Buildings cause 40% of direct and indirect carbon emissions in their impact on the environment. Space heating is the single biggest contribution to climate change in the UK which has some of the oldest building stock in Europe. Two key challenges face the UK: the decarbonisation of heating caused by our dependence on petrol and gas; and transitioning from petrol to electric vehicles.

The show houses on campus have been a playground for trialling energy technology, a collaboration of academia and industry. Government targets for 'net zero' have come and gone and now the issue is more urgent than ever. In 2008, invited to enter a competition on heating homes, they produced a building dependent totally on solar energy, the most energy efficient building in the country. Despite reduced costs, the building industry is not rolling out these houses because costs are too high for good profits.

Mark project manages the multi award winning £8 million UK Energy Research Accelerator Community Energy Demonstrator at the £180 million Nottingham Trent Basin sustainable housing development of low carbon homes. This scheme operates under a new community energy business model and incorporates what was Europe's largest community energy battery with onsite solar photovoltaic (PV) cells. This project in the Trent Basin, on what was once derelict land, allows building houses with super smart meters and highly sophisticated monitoring devices to monitor energy use in fine detail. Moreover, the community sells electricity to the national grid and makes money for itself. They even have their own energy substation. Three out of the four stages are complete.

Information collected, along with the Digital Twins (a twin of the real-world environment in a digital form – they've 'twinned' Nottingham University Campus and East Midlands Airport) can lead to recommendations on what can be done to achieve energy 'net zero'. The project is enhanced by PhD student studies leading to real world solutions. The project has a 'derogation' which means it can work outside the law on innovative ways to deliver energy. He was quite clear that in the future, electric vehicles will form part of the low-carbon energy system. People with electric cars are using large amounts of electricity as they charge during the night.

Mark is clearly working at the cutting edge of energy use in buildings. We have to return to the present and our often draughty, hard to heat homes in The Park. Heat pumps will be part of the future. The research, the experiments and the evidence are collected in our city. Let us hope that this can be translated into a roll-out into broader society, a net zero future and beyond.

There is no formal speaker for our December meeting but here is a taster of some of the possible speakers for 2024:

16th January: David Young – Mediaeval Histories about the Castle

20th February: Cathy MacAteer – Russia

19th March: Nancy Appleyard – Body Language

16th April: Adrian Hyde – Japan

Travel Notes, December 2023: by Rod Mitchell

Alert! Booking.com scam (and how I escaped disaster)

For some years now, I have been using Booking. com to book hotels in the UK and abroad. Previously, I made reservations by phone and then online, often paying in advance to get a cheap rate. COVID put an end to all that. Nowadays I log onto Booking.com to make a reservation. I always choose the “free cancellation” option and pay on arrival. The gap in price between this and advance payment has narrowed in my experience, allowing more flexibility if travel plans must be changed. The reservation is confirmed by email and the hotel send an acknowledgment in a message via Booking. com’s website.

In September this year I booked one night at the Gatwick Airport Hilton Hotel for August next year. At the same time, I booked a hotel in Bergen, Norway, and another at Bergen Airport for the return flight. On 10th November, the Gatwick Hilton sent me a message via Booking.com. This stated that the credit card I had used to secure the booking had not passed a security check. I was asked to follow a link to input my card details again or my booking would be cancelled.

I hate to admit, dear reader, that I fell for it. Fortunately, my existing card details were rejected. An error message requested details of a different bank, at which point I began to smell a rat. I examined the page and found it was clearly a fake, and a poor one. United Kingdom in the hotel address was ‘Regno Unito’ and price was in Euros not sterling. I contacted customer service at Booking. com. The assistant did not appear to recognise the scam but promised to investigate further and let me know the outcome. In the meantime, I had messaged the Gatwick Hilton and later received a reply confirming I had been the victim of a scam.

I discussed this episode with a close friend who had also spotted a scam involving Booking. com. “Phishing” bots are particularly rife during Black Friday week. These bots embed themselves in the enquiry forms of sites like Booking. com. No matter the time of year, if you get a message from a hotel via a booking website requesting you re-supply your credit card details, then IT IS A SCAM. Delete the email, but also forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk, perhaps with a screen shot of the fake page. I was lucky and suffered no loss. I followed my friend’s advice and contacted my bank’s 24-hour fraud line to stop my credit card and order a replacement.

Travel at Christmas

I have rarely travelled abroad at Christmas or New Year. Wall to wall sunshine in Tenerife and a blizzard in Leipzig are about the sum of it. Nonetheless, it is my impression the UK is unique in having a 2-day Bank Holiday at Christmas when all public transport is shut down. Providing the weather is mild, car owners should encounter no problems, because all roadworks have been suspended. On the other hand, rail passengers will experience disruption, not least because Network Rail takes advantage of the festive break to shut down whole stretches of the railway for engineering works.

Here is a summary of Nottingham public transport over the festive season. There are no trains out of Nottingham on Christmas Day or Boxing Day, and services on other days may be altered due to the above-mentioned engineering works. There should be trains on New Year’s Day, but they are likely to start later. As always, check before booking or else try National Express or Flixbus.

Christmas Eve

Sunday service on NCT and Trent Barton buses, but early finish with last buses about 8 pm.

Trams: normal Sunday service.

Christmas Day.

No buses. No trams.

Boxing Day.

No buses except Sunday service on the Skylink bus via Long Eaton to East Midlands Airport.

Trams: a Sunday service will operate.

27th to 30th December.

Saturday service on NCT and Trent Barton buses, with some variations.

Trams: normal weekday service.

New Year's Eve.

Same as Christmas Eve.

NCT are not running any late night or early morning buses.

Trent Barton is running late night/early morning buses on routes which normally have this provision on Friday & Saturday nights. Check their website for details.

Trams: normal Sunday service.

New Year's Day.

No buses.

Trams: a Sunday service will operate.

2nd. January.

Normal service resumes.

Bon Voyage.

Rod Mitchell roderic.mitchell56@gmail.com.

NEWS FROM THE INTEREST GROUPS

Book Club – *Convenor, Liz Gilder*

The Book Club met on **Friday 17th November** to discuss "**In Black and White**" by **Alexandra Wilson**, a young barrister's story of race and class in a broken justice system. Alexandra was a



teenager when her dear family friend Ayo was stabbed on his way home from football. Ayo's death changed Alexandra. She felt compelled to enter the legal profession in search of answers. As a junior criminal and family law barrister, she finds herself navigating a world and a set of rules designed by a privileged few. Alexandra's account of what she has witnessed as a young mixed-race barrister is in equal parts shocking, compelling, confounding, and powerful.

Some book club members found the book too simplistic in the writing, but others felt whilst it may have been aimed at A-level students, it was a comprehensive and enjoyable read. Anyone interested in seeing how the law really works should read this book!

Our next read is "**The Rainbow**" by **DH Lawrence**. It tells the story of three generations of the Brangwen family, a dynasty of farmers and craftsmen who live in the East Midlands of England, on the borders of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The book spans a period of roughly 65 years from the 1840s to 1905 and shows how the love relationships of the Brangwens change against the backdrop of the increasing industrialisation of Britain. The first central character, Tom Brangwen, is a farmer whose experience of the world does not stretch beyond these two



counties; while the last, Ursula, his granddaughter, studies at university and becomes a teacher in the progressively urbanised, capitalist, and industrial world. This is vintage DH Lawrence.

We meet on **Friday 15th December** at **4PM** hosted by one of our members. Happy reading!

To join the Book Club, contact e.gilder@peoplemarketing.co.uk.

Canasta Club – *Convenor, Jane Ellis*

We have been meeting at the Castle Tennis Club for three months, and this venue has proved very popular – particularly for new players. When the Group resumed play, about 18 months ago, there were on average six players meeting for games on a fortnightly basis. Since our move to the Castle Tennis Club, and with interest growing, we now have twenty regular players and are averaging twelve at each meeting – which is between 3 and 4 tables.

Thanks go to the Committee for purchasing two new card shuffling machines and more packs of cards to enable the Group to grow and move from members' homes to the Castle Tennis Club.

A number of us have played Canasta a long time ago, and whilst this is a good grounding for the 'Hand and Foot' version that we now play, it is not essential to know anything about the game to participate. At each meeting we are able to shuffle around and do not have regular playing partners. This makes each meeting different and enjoyable, as everyone has the opportunity to play with other players and get to know new faces.

We welcome anyone who would like to "have a go" – previous experience not essential, and we offer taster sessions for £5/session. Regular subscription for 2024 will be £20 every three/four months – which equates to £2.50/£3 per session.

Our dates for December are **Thursday 7th and Thursday 21st**, starting play at **4.00pm** (setting up from 3.45pm) and finishing at 6.00 pm. Moving into the New Year, we will keep the frequency of meetings as they are, meeting on the first and third Thursday afternoons of each month.

Once again, if you are interested in joining the group or would like to come along for a taster session, please contact Jane Ellis at jane.ellis21@outlook.com. Tea/coffee and excellent biscuits are included in the fee and served at the beginning of the meeting.

Dining Group – *Convenor, Adrienne Lee*

Our next trip is to **The Plough Inn**, Normanton-on-Soar on **Thursday 7th December at 12.30pm**. If you want to join us, contact Adrienne at adriennesuperade@gmail.com

English Language Group – *Convenor, Margaret Wiedemann*

It isn't often that English grammar makes the headlines, but when the MP Dame Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood, Conservative) published an open letter of no confidence in the Prime Minister, the shock waves that rippled through Fleet Street were not so much caused by her vigorous political views as by her startlingly verbless prose, not to mention sheer verbosity, compounded by the fact that she had briefly been Parliamentary Under-

Secretary for Further and Higher Education. (Incidentally, Outwood is where your ELG convenor used to get the best fish and chips in Yorkshire on Saturday nights in the sixties.)

Still in the political sphere, the appointment of former PM David Cameron was described in the press as “a marmalade-dropper”, which apparently means you’re so stunned that you drop marmalade on your breakfast newsprint or iPad. For any of our readers who think that dropping marmalade – on your toast – is what you are actually supposed to do at breakfast, there’s a colourful alternative in the American expression “muffin-choker”.

It wouldn’t be an authentic ELG report if we hadn’t been grappling with the apostrophe, and sure enough there’s encouraging news from Twyford, Hants, where residents of St Mary’s Terrace have won a year-long campaign to reinstate the apostrophe in their road sign. The Council claimed that punctuation makes road signs more difficult to read, citing the erratic apostrophes of local celebrity Jane Austen in support of their case, but protestors brought in counterevidence from the Land Registry and Ordnance Survey, clinching the matter by fishing out the old, discarded sign, with apostrophe, from the local tip. If you too would be prepared to excavate the neighbourhood rubbish for the sake of purity in punctuation, you may be setting a standard we can’t live up to but contact us anyway at mjwh57@gmail.com.

Film Group – Convenor, Ian Henderson

The timing of the release of our chosen film for November could have been better. ‘**Golda**’ is set during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 between Israel and an Arab coalition led by Egypt and Syria and was screened shortly after the start of the current conflict. The film did not make it into a second week, so only half of the twelve attenders at our meeting had managed to see it.



However, that did not stop us having a lively discussion on the merits of the film and, particularly, Helen Mirren’s portrayal of Golda Meir. Many critics had pointed to the film’s slow pace and setting in smoky rooms with little depiction of the wider conflict, but our viewers found it an enjoyable insight into an intriguing personality. Mirren won praise for a believable portrayal although there was some difference in the categorisation of her character – was she ruthless or decisive? Or both? Would we query this if she were a man?

Comparisons were drawn with the other obvious war leader subject of a biopic, in 2017, with a similarly prosthetic-heavy central performance – Churchill. Both characters excelled in wartime but had less success in general politics.

Overall, it was well-received, and Mirren was commended for her transformation into, and interpretation of, an iconic politician grappling with an existential threat to her country. The average score was **7.5/10**



We next meet on **Friday 1st December** to discuss ‘**The Anatomy of a Fall**’, a French mystery about a female novelist accused of killing her husband at their remote Alpine chalet. It explores the nature of their family relationships as the trial progresses. It won the Palme d’Or at this year’s Cannes Film Festival.

If you want to join in contact me using the email address at the end of this newsletter.

Local History Group – *Convenor, Anne Hardy*

Our last visit was on 26th October to Upton Hall. Many of our group expressed their enjoyment after the occasion and I managed to write a report immediately after returning home, so it was included in The Park's previous u3a newsletter.

I am pleased however to remind people of our next activities. These promise to be well supported. There is no upward limit of numbers, so do contact me if you are interested in joining us.

Our next visit is on **Wednesday 29th November** to **Papplewick Pumping Station**, meeting there at 10.00a.m for morning coffee. Our last visit of the year is to **"The Chapel in the Woods", North Nottingham** on **Thursday 14th December**. We start with morning coffee, but at a later time of 10.30a.m. I reiterate, please do contact me for more details if you are interested in joining us and I would be delighted to supply them.

Looking ahead to 2024, the first event will be the **Friday 12th January** meeting at the Lawn Tennis Club for coffee at 10.00a.m to have a discussion concerning all the interesting places we might visit next year. Thinking caps on!

May I wish you all a very happy Christmas time, whatever you are doing, and thank you for all your support and encouragement since I agreed to follow in Stephen's footsteps. Special thanks to Jane Morrell for her help and support.

If you are interested in the activities of this group, please reach out on annehardy18@icloud.com.

MahJong Group – *Convenor Graham Edwards*

Our MahJong group now regularly attracts enough players for us to run a couple of tables. We are all gradually learning more about the rules of the game and are now able to tot up the score in a rudimentary way!

The next meeting will be in the afternoon of **Tuesday 19th December**, the day of the Christmas get-together. Members on the MahJong mailing list will receive an email nearer the time, detailing the arrangements for the meeting.

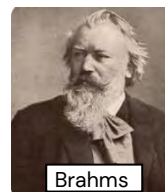
If you are interested in joining us, and have not added your name to the list, please drop me a note at grahamedwards542@gmail.com.

Previous experience is not necessary – we were all beginners once (and some of us still are!).

Music Appreciation Group *Convenor, Jacky Fisher*

The music appreciation group met on **Thursday 23rd November** to look at the music due to be played at the concert hall on 25th November. Liz Gilder did an interesting introduction, with several pieces which were new to the group. It started with Bizet's "Jeux d'Enfants" which is a delightful work based on children's games. She then looked at Brahms' Concerto for Violin and Cello. This is a powerful work with a great combination of the violin and cello and lush melodies for the orchestra as well. The piece by Debussy was not known to any of the group, so it was good to get a foretaste of this strong orchestral piece. The final composition was Rimsky Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol which is full of Spanish themes and is a very stirring work!

Most of us then attended the concert on 25th November, feeling well prepared by having had our meeting two days earlier. It was an impressive performance by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with lots of percussion and two harps adding great atmosphere to it. My personal favourite was the Brahms which I had never heard live before, and the Bizet which came alive when the full orchestra played it.



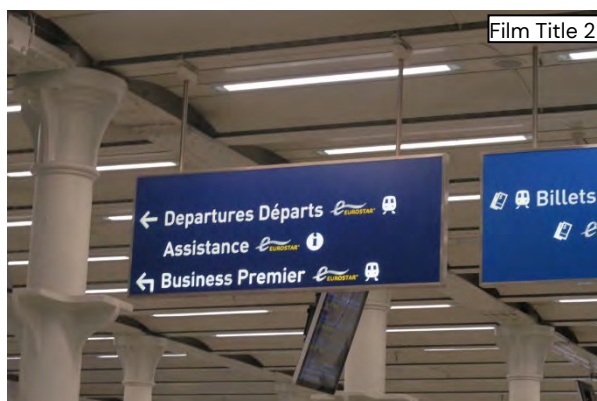
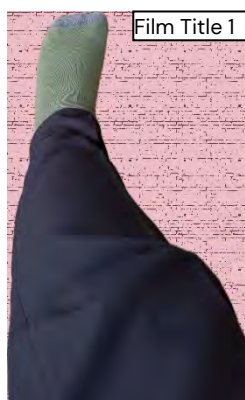
We are not planning a meeting in December and will reconvene in January. If anyone is interested in joining this group, please contact: Jacky Fisher (gandjfisher23@gmail.com).

Photography Group – *Convenor, Rod Mitchell*

The Photography Group has devised a regular new feature for the Newsletter: the Film Title quiz. Every couple of months we will publish two images which contain a subtle, or not so subtle allusion to a cinema film title, or if you must 'movie'. The first two images in the series are set out below. Click on either image to be taken to the answers, found at the end of the newsletter. A similar quiz, based on Nottingham landmarks, is also in the works.

Our next photographic theme is 'Household Objects', whether in or out of context. Did you know a pepper pot inspired the design of the Daleks in Dr. Who? That is one example amongst many of mundane objects being used for an artistic purpose. So, watch out for bits of cutlery in strange locations, or indeed pepper pots in disguise.

The Group meets again on **Monday 18th December** to consider our best photos of 2023 and to agree upon a design for Park u3a's e-Christmas Card. If you have an interest in photography, you are very welcome to join us. Possession of any sort of camera equipment (e.g., your mobile phone) makes you eligible to join the Photography Group. Contact Rod Mitchell at roderic.mitchell56@gmail.com.



Plants and Picnics – Convenor, Marion Martin

This was one of those months we managed to get two meetings in, firstly at Gillian's, and then at Angela's.

The end of October saw storms and widespread flooding, but on the day, we met at Gillian's, we had one of those glorious autumn mornings where the sun shone brightly, to the extent we started off lapping it up on her terrace, basking in the warmth.

The conditions showed off the autumn flowering nerines perfectly, and there was some discussion around these and other autumn flowerers. We also identified self-seeders, which just seem to move themselves round the garden when you are not looking. We bemoaned the futility of leaf-blowers, and discussed the finer points of leaf-mould, (I understand the Park Estate are trying to get rid of loads, if you need any). We also swapped experience of what to do with unripened figs. Having not had 40C heat this year, fig trees are still carrying a lot of unripe fruit, so recipes for green fig jam were welcomed.



After this, we decamped inside, where, making the most of the season, Gillian had prepared a veritable feast of all things pumpkin – delicious soup, followed by a wonderful pumpkin pie. Pumpkins are so under-rated, and, despite the rising popularity of 'pick your own pumpkin', it is such a waste that most of them just get thrown away after Halloween. Gillian outdid herself however, and anyone who left hungry had only themselves to blame.

Our second meeting saw a smaller gathering at Angela's. As frequently happens, when fewer attend, the discussion become rather more plant-focussed, and included topics such as the unusual amount of berries on sarcococca (a lot of trees and shrubs seem to have a lot of berries this year), the pros and cons of feeding birds (and/or squirrels) and what low maintenance plants would grow well in very poor, stoney soil, no matter the weather (we generated quite a list!). However, the discussion did then take a more educational turn, on the back of the following anecdote.

L had been given some plants to sell at the Park Garden Trail by A. There had been three left over, which L has been growing under cover. She had recently had a gardener in to do some shrub pruning, and the exchange went along the following lines:

"Errm, L, where did you get these plants."

"A friend gave them to me, for the Garden Trail, why? And why are you whispering?"

"Well . ." in hushed tones "because they're cannabis".

As we all knew the provenance of these plants, this was hilarious – A had a sheltered upbringing! But she could not actually remember what she had given L.

Later in the day this led to some interesting 'googling' of "what looks like cannabis but isn't? UK". It turns out there are quite a lot of plants that fall into this category, including Japanese Maple, and types of hibiscus. Crown fritillaries are famous for smelling like cannabis (to the extent that a while back a nursery made national news, having been raided by the Police). In this case, it was cleome, otherwise known as Spider Flower, which A has been growing from self-collected seeds for the past 3 years. Apparently, they look like, and can smell like cannabis. We thought a gardener should perhaps know this, but we had to look it up, so you live and learn!



Cleome – Spider Flower

Angela also did us proud with soup and bread, followed by fruit pies made from produce from Liz's allotment. It is one of the joys of this group to share knowledge, plants, produce and joyful discussion.

We are now looking forward to the Winter Festival of Plants (trees, holly, ivy, sage, onion, Brussel sprouts . . .), so if you are interested in the plants that feed you, or those that are trying to kill you, or get you into trouble, contact Marion Martin at PNu3aPandP@gmail.com.

Science Reading and Discussion Group – *Convenor, Dr. Adrian Hyde*

The group meeting scheduled for Wednesday 22nd November to delve into the **Microbiome** has been postponed and will now be on **Wednesday 20th December**.

If you suspect that you'd enjoy dipping a toe into diverse matters scientific or indeed dive head-first, then please email Adrian Hyde at a.f.l.hyde@sheffield.ac.uk for details.

Walking Groups

Short Walks

After six years as convenor of the Short Walks, Andrew Martin has decided to step down. As yet, we have not heard from anyone who wants to take over. The role would suit a small group of two or three members who could share the responsibility of organising and setting up the Short Walks. If you would be interested in being part of this small group, please contact either Andrew, Jane Ellis (Groups Coordinator) or Graham Edwards (Chair).

Long Walks – *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

The Long Walk on **Tuesday 28th November** was planned to be the walk from East Bridgford out to Kneeton, high above the Trent, and then back along the river at lower level to Gunthorpe, in time for (late) lunch. This walk was carried over from October when Storm Babet flooded part of the route. This month, continued rain made the route very muddy across the fields, so we again deferred the walk.

Instead, we rapidly created a walk in keeping with the state of the ground and walked towpaths and a park. The bus to Long Eaton dropped the six of us near to the Erewash Canal, on an astonishingly bright and sunny morning. We walked along the canal to its junction with the river at Trent Lock, pausing only for coffee, and to admire the narrow boats and the swans. We then took the path alongside the Trent for a few miles, and into the Attenborough Nature Reserve. The paths, although surfaced, were very wet, proving the wisdom of postponing our cross-country walk. Although the lakes at Attenborough looked splendid in the sunshine, and there were hoards of birds to admire, the siren call of the café lured us in for a well-deserved lunch. Suitably refreshed, it was only a short walk into Chilwell for the bus home.

Although disappointed to again have not walked the East Bridgford route, we do have that to look forward to in the Spring. Meanwhile, we had a good six mile walk in fine weather with excellent company without getting too muddy.

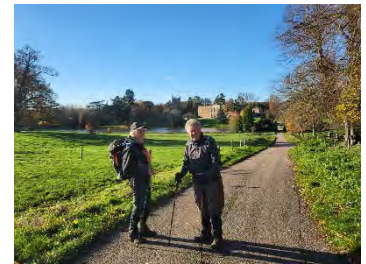
Although we normally walk on the fourth Tuesday of the month, it has been our practice in recent years not to have a walk in December, in view of its proximity to Christmas – in fact, this year it falls on Boxing Day. We will resume our Long Walks at the end of January. I plan for us to walk on Tuesday 25th January with a walk appropriate for the weather.

Meanwhile for those in need of bit of gentle exercise, fresh air and/or company, I am planning our usual informal NYD walk in Wollaton Park and the University on New Year's Day. This is about six miles and may include a stop at the cafe if it opens this year.

I will provide full details nearer the time to those on the Long Walk list, but anyone else is welcome to join if they let me know. If you are not on the list and would like to join to receive update on our walks, please let me know: grahamedwards542@gmail.com.

Longer Walks – Convenor, Andrew Martin

We had fine weather at the end of November for the Longer Walk. Clear blue skies and bright sunshine meant that the views from our high start point on **Breedon Hill** were breath-taking. The same could be said for the cold north wind, so we donned gloves and warm layers and headed down into the shelter of the woodland in this attractive landscape on the border of Leicestershire and Derbyshire. Our first stop was at **Staunton Harold** where we sat by the lake in front of the Hall. Having served as a Cheshire Home and then a Sue Ryder Care Home in the second half of the last century, the Hall is now privately owned and has been beautifully restored.



We walked north out of the estate and joined the Tramway, the line of an old horse-drawn rail track. This was used to move lime and bricks from near Ticknall to the canal at Ashby between 1802 and the early 1900s. The National Trust have restored the Tramway as a walking and cycling route. This took us to **Calke Abbey** where we stopped for lunch in the courtyard of this National Trust property. Continuing north we arrived at the **Staunton Harold Reservoir**, providing water for Leicester and North Leicestershire. We made rapid progress along a good path around the reservoir to arrive at the village of Melbourne and paused in front of **Melbourne Hall**. This still belongs to the descendants of the 2nd Lord Melbourne, Prime Minister for Queen Victoria from 1835 and 1841.

From here, we had only about a mile to walk to return to our start point on Breedon Hill. The church on the hill can be seen for miles around, standing on what was once an iron age hill fort. Although it looked like a stiff climb, the gradual ascent was soon completed, and we returned to Nottingham after a fine day out. As several group members were not able to join this walk, we will probably repeat it in a few months' time. At just over nine miles, it would be a good introduction for anyone thinking of joining the Longer Walks group.

The next Longer Walk will be on **Friday 15th December**. With the Book Club meeting on the same day to discuss 'The Rainbow' by D.H. Lawrence, our walk will focus on the area between **Eastwood and Ilkeston** where the novel is set. The route will be shorter than usual and include canal towpaths and, with sunset at 3.47pm, we will aim to be back in plenty of time for the Book Club meeting.

If you would like to be included on the Longer Walks email list, please contact me on u3aparkwalks@gmail.com.

Croquet Experience

Members who would like to play regularly should contact the Club via their website for details. The website will also provide details of open days and other playing opportunities.

Graham Edwards

u3a Christmas Gathering 2023

Just a quick reminder that we will be replacing our usual monthly coffee morning with a Christmas Party on **Tuesday 19th December**.

Come along for mulled wine, mince pies and Christmas cake but mostly for a good old chat and catch up with everybody prior to the full-on days to come!

Feel free to bring a raffle prize and dress for the occasion if you feel that fancy dress is your thing.

We will be sending another reminder closer to the date, but it is never too soon to get excited about Christmas!!

Regards from the Social Committee

Learning Opportunities available to Members

If you look on the national u3a website, u3a.org.uk, you will be able to see many online talks, workshops and courses which come free with your membership. There is a wide range of talks on offer from well-known speakers and organisations, plus in-person events at venues like the Royal Institution. All on-line courses are hosted on Zoom.

Take a look [here](#) to see what is on offer. 

Jean Henderson

u3a Podcast

You may not be aware but u3a has its own national podcast. That is, a radio programme on the internet.

Aimed at publicising our organisation at first, it has developed into a way of sharing knowledge and activities between u3as and is well worth seeking out.

It is in a radio magazine format with thirty-six episodes so far with a wide range of topics covered so far including Hadrian's Wall, The Vatican, Creative Writing and Maths for Fun. Click on this [this link](#) to take you to them.

You can also find them by searching YouTube or a podcast app for 'u3a podcast'. Developed and run by members with BBC experience it is always on the lookout for stories to tell via interviews and presentations. Give it a go!

Ian Henderson

Answers to the Film Title Quiz:

- My Left Foot
- French Connection

Park Nottingham u3a Calendar for December 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
Friday 1 st December	Film Club	'Anatomy of a Fall'	Ian Henderson
Thursday 7 th and 21 st December 4pm	Canasta Club	Nottingham Castle Lawn Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
Thursday 7 th December 12:30pm	Dining	The Plough Inn, Normanton	Adrienne Lee
Monday 11 th December 2pm	Committee Meeting	Nottingham Castle Lawn Tennis Club	Graham Edwards
Wednesday 13 th December	Plants and Picnics	Member's Garden	Marion Martin
Thursday 14 th December	Local History	The Chapel in the Woods	Anne Hardy
Friday 15 th December	Longer Walk	Eastwood and Ilkeston	Andrew Martin
Friday 15 th December 4pm	Book Club	Member's home	Liz Gilder
Monday 18 th December	Photography	Member's Home	Rod Mitchell
Tuesday 19 th December	MahJong Group	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
Wednesday 20 th December	Science Group	Members Home	Adrian Hyde
Thursday 28 th December	Newsletter Deadline	parku3anewsletter@gmail.com	Ravi Sankaran
January	Monthly Coffee Morning and Talk	Nottingham Castle Lawn Tennis Club	Sarah Waites
January	Long Walk	TBA	Graham Edwards
TBA	Music Appreciation	Members Home	Jacky Fisher
TBA	Short Walk	TBA	TBA

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

Ian Henderson, Deputy Chair:

ianhenderson73@gmail.com

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Jean Henderson, Business Secretary:

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Ravi Sankaran, Newsletter Editor:

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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 **January Newsletter** should be sent to the editor,
Ravi Sankaran, by **Thursday 28th December**, preferably by emailing:

parku3anewsletter@gmail.com