



From Our Chairman...

Getting even more from your membership

Whether it is going on an outing, listening to fascinating speakers at general meetings, coming to a party or joining one of the interest groups, there is a lot going on in our u3a.

As you will see later in this newsletter, we have a huge range of interest groups available to Soar Valley members. Did you know that there are also interest groups online?

There are lots of topics not currently on the Soar Valley agenda. When I counted the number of options there were 89! Whilst many of the online groups have waiting lists, I do recommend browsing the options if you have not already done so, there may be something that strikes a chord. Click this link to see for yourself.

<https://u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups>

As well as the party on 1st December please also make a note in your diary for the Singing Group's Christmas Carol Concert (with audience participation), Kingston on Soar Village Hall, 7.00 pm Tuesday 12th December.

Chris

November 2023

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We may be enjoying some unseasonably mild weather, but the calendar keeps creeping forward. And before you know it, it'll be time for our..

Christmas Party!

7-11pm, Friday 1st December, Rushcliffe Golf Club,
Stocking Lane, East Leake, LE12 5RL

A two course carvery meal (with all the trimmings of course)

Entertainment - A reenactment by the Workhouse Storytellers
from Southwell of a typical workhouse Christmas

Dancing, and maybe a bit of singing until close

Tickets - members £18, non member partners £26

Click this link to book now: <http://ticketsource.co.uk/soar-valley-u3a>
(there's a small booking fee)

Or, if you don't have internet access, call Alison Lloyd (after 14th October)
01509 673782. Or post her a cheque: 3 College Road, Sutton Bonington, LE12 5RA
**Book early to secure your place. Tickets will not be available at the next
General Meeting.**

Coach Outing to Shugborough Hall and Estate

7th September



Shugborough Hall in Staffordshire was the home of the Anson family from 1645 but 100 years later their finances took a turn for the better thanks to George Anson (*below*).



George Anson is sometimes called the father of the British Navy. George was a captain in the British Navy and at the age of 25, in 1737, he took command of the *Centurion*, a 60 gun ship and he sailed to plunder the Pacific coast of South America

and rob the Spanish. In 1743, Anson achieved his most notable victory, attacking a Spanish galleon loaded with silver. Anson captured the ship, which he later sold to the Dutch but he kept the silver, valued at £35 million in today's money. Anson's share of the booty amounted to about £13 million, the 18th century version of winning the lottery.

However George had an elder brother called Thomas who was 'a man of intellectual refinement and taste' which meant that he was better at spending money than 'acquiring' it. Thomas used his brother's ill-

gotten gains to renovate the estate and he built much of what we see today.

Fast forward over two centuries and the estate was inherited in 1960, by Patrick Lichfield, the famous photographer to royalty and pop stars. Patrick Lichfield was not his real name. He was really Thomas Patrick John Anson, 5th Earl of Lichfield, but he thought that Patrick Lichfield was a bit more catchy, especially when you're trying to make a living in photography! Unfortunately, along with the title came an eye-watering bill for death duties, so he gave Shugborough to the National Trust who leased it to Staffordshire County Council. Lichfield then rented an apartment at Shugborough, and it is alleged that he called it 'the biggest council house in England'.

So you can see that Shugborough is a beautiful place with a long and dubious history and we spent a fascinating day there. The weather was hot, but the hall was cool and the gardens were breathtaking. My thanks go to all the u3a members who joined me on the trip, and to Skills Coaches who whisked us there and back in comfort.

Roger Golds and Jan Chapman
(*The Outings Team*)



50th Anniversary Spectacular!

7.30pm, Saturday 25th November, Emmanuel Church, Forest Road, Loughborough

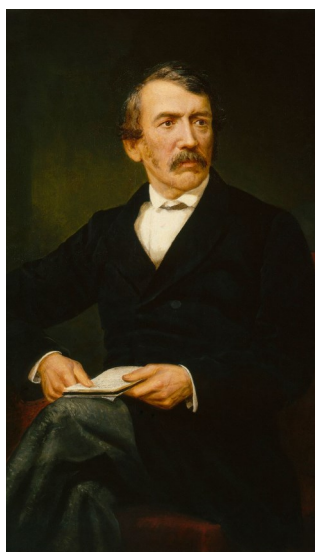
Bernstein *Candide* Overture, **Ravel** *Sheherazade*, **Tchaikovsky** *Nutcracker* Suite, **Wagner** *Lohengrin*: Preludes to Acts 1 and 3, **Sarasate** *Carmen* Fantasy, **Ravel** *Bolero*

Tickets will be available online and for reservations please email:
tickets@charnwoodorchestra.org.uk

Doctor Livingstone I Presume

Four legendary words, so familiar to us all. But were they actually said during that momentous occasion when Henry Morton Stanley discovered the famous Victorian explorer in darkest Africa? And why did the meeting happen in the first place?

Our speaker at the September general meeting was **Fran Sandham**. He'd talked to us five years ago about his amazing solo trek across Africa: now he returned to unravel this fascinating story.



Dr Livingstone (*left*) had been a failed missionary but had led previous African explorations before embarking on a quest to discover the source of the river Nile in 1866. Earlier explorers claimed it to be Lake Victoria or Lake Albert, but Livingstone believed it to be further south. So he set off westwards from

Zanzibar on his long and arduous quest in 1866. But he was to lose contact with the outside world for six years, and it wasn't known if he was alive or dead.

Enter Henry Morton Stanley (*right*). Born out of wedlock in Wales as John Rowlands, he grew up in a workhouse, and emigrated to America at 18. Here he took on a new American persona and changed his name. He fought on both sides during the civil war and later became a war journalist, eventually working for the New York Herald.

The paper's owner, Gordon Bennett (yes, the very same), dreamed of the great scoop to be had if his newspaper could locate the missing hero.



So he sent Stanley on an expedition with over 100 porters to Zanzibar and then on a 700 miles trek through the tropical forest. Many of his crew deserted or were decimated by disease, but eventually Stanley caught up with Livingstone near Lake Tanganyika in 1871.



The two got on remarkably well and remained in camp together for some while. But when the time came for Stanley to head back east, Livingstone decided to continue his search in the opposite direction. He never did discover the source of the Nile and he died two years later from malaria and dysentery. But, on a later expedition, Stanley found that elusive source. He confirmed it was Lake Victoria.

In fact, Stanley continued in a career as a great explorer. But he was quite outspoken in his criticism of the British establishment's lack of support for Livingstone and became a controversial figure. And he was haunted by the continual mockery he received for supposedly having uttered that iconic, but quaintly out of place, greeting;

'Doctor Livingstone *I presume*'.

Yet, towards the end of his life, Stanley was asked if he really did say those exact words, or were they just a fabrication to preserve his legend. He maintained that he did. But he was a newspaper man, wasn't he.

Brian Hanners

Wentworth Woodhouse

There's a magnificent country pile in South Yorkshire that boasts one of the longest facades in the UK and houses well over 300 rooms. It was built on the proceeds of huge aristocratic wealth, and it holds a turbulent story of rise and fall, and a recent rebirth. This is the relatively little known **Wentworth Woodhouse**, our venue for a **History Group** visit back in July.

In fact, our guide told us that three great houses were built here. In 1725 work began by a Thomas

Watson-Wentworth, replaced an original Jacobean structure with a new Baroque style edifice. But the family were deeply entrenched in the Whig political party at the time which considered

the architecture too 'Tory oriented' and, before the building was completed, Wentworth's grandson built a much larger house with a different orientation. The older, Baroque building still exists however, and is attached to the current house. The photo shows this new, grand East Front

Various themed house tours are available. Ours, the 'Wentworth Tour', took us round the formal state rooms and covered the broad history from the 1600s to the present day. Our guide, Jo, has a serious passion for the place, and had actually spent some time living in the house. Between the 1950s and the 1980s it was a physical education teacher training college where she was a student. She told us how the wonderful marble flooring of the magnificent salon was then covered in wooden planking so students could practise specialised dance training, and



how they admired the Stubbs painting on the wall of a famous racehorse of the past, 'Whistlejacket'. Her delivery was full of amusing anecdotal stories that brought the place alive.

But there's far more history to Wentworth and of those who lived in it than this particular tour was able to cover. The book

'Black Diamonds' written in 2007 by Catherine Bailey, tells the story of the changing fortunes of the Fitzwilliam dynasty that owned the property in its heyday.

A large coal seam, discovered in the late 19th century, ran directly below the estate, and it

made the Fitzwilliams immensely rich. But from the 1940s onwards, death duties and nationalisation of the Fitzwilliam coal mines greatly reduced the family's wealth. Much of the house contents were auctioned off (there's no original furniture on view now) and the building fell into a poor state of repair. In 1989 it was sold.

The house passed through various hands and is currently owned by a preservation trust. It was opened to the public five years ago.

There was too much to absorb in one trip so I'm sure some of us will want to go back. And there's a discount for National Trust members!

Our thanks to Sue Davidson for arranging the visit.

Brian Hinnners



Visit to SureScreen Diagnostics



Our host was Jim Campbell (*left*), who introduced us to this facility, which was set up in record time at the start of the Covid 19 pandemic to produce

the millions of Lateral Flow Devices per day, which would be needed for us to monitor our progress as we all tried to get back to some sort of normality after lockdown but reduce our risk of transmitting the virus.

At SureScreen, there are plenty of work stations with computer terminals and comfortable seating but no worker has their own desk: they are each free to sit and work where they please or discuss work with one or more colleagues. Happy workers are more productive and desks do not get cluttered with junk. The whole site has a very tranquil ambience with a definite Sherwood Forest feel.

We heard about those lateral flow devices (LFDs.) Before Covid 19, the most familiar example of an LFD was the pregnancy test, but other tests are available in the format.

It turns out that very few people have antibodies to goats, so these are used as the 'control' in the Covid LFD: it will not, however, show up if you do have goat-sensitivity.

Producing a few thousand tests per week is not too much of a challenge but in 2020 we needed millions of Covid 19 tests per week.



Jennifer Chambers, Head of Operations (*left*) showed us around the vast factory area and

explained how this was converted from the empty shell of a potential distribution hub to a

SureScreen is one of the companies that manufactures the familiar Covid test kit. In September the Science and Technology Group paid a visit to their factory at Sherwood Business Park. Group member Andrew Davidson reports.

fully operational LFD factory in about 2 weeks. At this time, most of the UK's workforce was in lockdown, which meant that a huge team of fitters could be sourced and deployed to install the services and machinery needed to mass-produce those tests.

Jennifer Chambers explained how the factory was fitted out in record time.

Each cabinet in the picture (*right*) is capable of rapidly picking 7 cassettes and packing them into the boxes of LFDs which we will all have used during the pandemic. There were about 20 of these 'robots' and ear plugs were needed when they were running

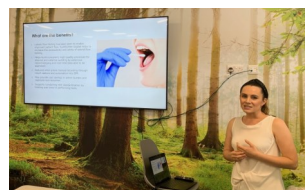


Once produced, the test kits had to be stored, prior to distribution. *Below*, we can see the scale of the operation.

After our factory tour, Susie Moules, Marketing Manager (*below*), gave a presentation on some of the other SureScreen LFD tests available.



These include influenza, streptococcus A and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), a virus capable of causing distressing and, occasionally, fatal wheezing in young children and infants.



There is a smart-phone app available to clinicians for photographing and recording test results and electronically recording these in the patient record, reducing clinical error and saving time.

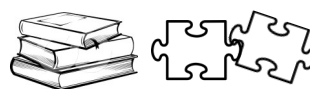
My thanks, as ever, go to Jim for hosting this fascinating visit and Diana Plant for organising it.

Andrew Davidson

Book Swap and Jigsaw Swap

If you've recently joined our u3a, you may not be aware that at General Meetings we hold a Book Swap and a Jigsaw Swap. Books and jigsaws, donated by members, are displayed in the small room off to the right at the Normanton on Soar village hall where the meetings are held.

The service is free: you can bring unwanted books and jigsaws and collect any that appeal to



you. They're not stored in the hall and books have to be kept at the homes of volunteers, so please be a little understanding and don't bring in large quantities. Sorry, we can't accept magazines.

Our General Meetings are normally held at 2pm on the last Tuesday of the alternate months of January, March, May, July, September and November. Our volunteers are **Chris Hinners** (Book Swap) and **Carol Offer** (Jigsaw Swap).

Current Interest Groups

There have been some changes in our groups. Below is the current list. To find contact details of Group Contacts go to our website. Just google Soar Valley u3a, open 'Groups' and select your group. Or you can use the link to the website on the back page. If you don't have Internet access, please call Groups Coordinator Ian Lloyd on 07471 940691.

Some groups may have vacancies whilst others have waiting lists, but a new group can always be started. If you would like to do this we're happy to advise on starting a group and will promote it via our general meetings, newsletter and general emails to members.

Group Name	Group Contact	Venue	Meeting Day	Time	Frequency of meetings
Barn Dancing	Joe Hemstock	Sutton Bonington Village Hall	Friday	14.00	2nd & 4th in the month Sep-Jun
Bird Watching 1	Fred Ing	Varies	Monday	09.15	3rd in the month
Bird Watching 2	Janet Fileman	Varies	Friday	10.00	1st in the month
Book Group	Michael Webb-Ingall	Swan Court Lounge	Tuesday	14.00	3rd in the month
Bowles	Colin Blackshaw	Bowles Club Sutton Bonington	Wednesday	10.00	Weekly May-Sep
Croquet	Ruth Friday	Normanton Village Hall	Thursday	14.00	Weekly Apr-Oct
Cycling	Arnold Goodwin	Varies	Monday	10.00	Weekly
Derbyshire Dales Walking	Andrew Davidson	Varies	Thursday	10.00	3rd in the month
Diners	Martyn Luczka	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varied day in 1st week of each month
Dog Owners	Rosemarie Alltree	Varies	Varies	Varies	Monthly during 1st week
Sewing	Rosemarie Alltree	Rosemarie's Home	Thursday	14.00	Alternate weeks
Engineering and Innovation	Paul Fileman	Varies	Thursday	10.00	1st in the month
Gardens Group	Glenis Norris	Varies	Varies	Varies	Monthly
General Crafts	Fran Dimelow	Normanton Village Hall	Wednesday	14.00	Alternate weeks
Hill Walking	David Howdle	Varies	Thursday		Last in the month
History Group 2	Maggie Ingram	Varies	Wednesday		Last in the month
History Study	David Drury	Members' Homes	Tuesday	10.00	1st in the month
Line Dancing	Christine Taylor	Sutton Bonington Village Hall	Wednesday	10.00	Weekly Sep-Jun

Current Interest Groups Continued..

Group Name	Group Contact	Venue	Meeting Day	Time	Frequency of meetings
Natural History	Brian Hill	Varies	Thursday		2nd in the month
Papercrafts	Fran Dimelow	Members' Homes	Thursday	14.00	Alternate weeks
Photography	Mary Tisserand	Barton in Fabis Village Hall	Tuesday	14.00	2nd in the month
Science and Technology	Diana Plant	Barton in Fabis Village Hall	Monday	10.00	2nd in the month
Scrabble	Frances Aston	Members' Homes	Thursday	13.30	Alternate Weeks
Sequence/Ballroom Dancing	Gill Howdle/ Marilyn Wood	Sutton Bonington Village Hall	Friday	14.00	1st, 3rd and 5th in the month
Snooker	Colin Blackshaw	'Spot On', Loughborough	Wednesday	10.00	Weekly Oct- Apr
Soar Valley Singers	Sue Miles	Kingston Village Hall	Tuesday	19.00	Weekly Sep- June
Strollers	Frances Aston	Varies	Wednesday	11.00	1st in the month
Table Tennis	Mike Lister	Kingston Village Hall	Friday	14.30	Weekly
Tuesday Morning French	Mary Lowden	Members' Homes	Tuesday	09.45	Weekly Sep- June
Walking 1	Arnold Goodwin	Varies	Tuesday	10.00	1st & 3rd in the month
Walking 2	Peter Hickling	Varies	Friday	10.00	2nd & 4th in the month
Walking 3	Bonnie Holland	Varies	Thursday	10.00	Alternate weeks
Wednesday French	Elaine Gibbs	Members' Homes	Wednesday	14.00	Weekly

Proposed New Groups

Cribbage/Crib

Would you like to learn to play this popular pub card game? Do you already play and would like to have the occasional game? We are a small but enthusiastic group who meet fortnightly on a Friday, 2pm at 3 Far Lane Normanton LE12 5HA.

Contact Heather Herrington for details and possible dates - heather.herrington@live.com, 01509 646240 or 07976 229056

Scottish Country Dancing

This group successfully ran for a number of years but, following Covid lockdown, has since ceased. Brian Hill, the previous leader, is keen to restart the group and has received some interest from members but needs more to make it viable.

The group in the past met twice monthly on a Wednesday afternoon at Sutton Bonington village hall. You don't have to be experienced and traditional costume is not necessary.

Please contact Brian for more information. Tel: 07879 423574, Email: arcanum27@mac.com

Here are video clips of two styles of dancing: <https://shorturl.at/ivxC2> <https://shorturl.at/fktIV>

Contacts

Chairman:

Chris Bowerman
01159 830510
chris.bowerman@btinternet.com

Vice Chairman:

Brian Kirk
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beekay13@sky.com

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Gill Howdle
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[Click here](#)

If you no longer wish to receive this Newsletter or email communications from us, please contact the Membership Secretary.

General Meeting Guest Speakers 2pm, Normanton on Soar Village Hall

21st November - **Meccano, A Hobby for Life**

(date changed due to Christmas party)

SVu3a members **Wendy & Rob Miller** became a 'Meccano family' in 1993 and it has since become a lifelong hobby and way of life involving meetings, exhibitions and making friends around the world.

Their biggest contribution to the hobby has been to make Meccano accessible to all ages and members of families, at exhibitions, family and school workshops and local shows.

They'll cover the history of and contribution of Meccano to inventions that have changed the world and how Meccano itself has changed with the modern world.

At the meeting there'll be a chance to see and have a go on some models.



30th January - **Coping With Visual Impairment**

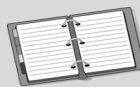


Amanda Harris has been visually impaired since birth and at 17 was classed as 'unemployable'. However, she gained a law degree, became Departmental Head of HR for her local council, and set up her own will writing business in 2011. Amanda is married to Martyn, who is totally blind, and they have a teenage son.

Amanda's talk is based on her book 'She Will Never..' a funny, honest and moving story of a life with visual impairment, and a family with differing abilities.

Click the link below to see the latest edition of the u3a National Newsletter

[Your u3a National Newsletter - September ☐ \(mailchi.mp\)](#)



Diary Dates Reminder

General Meeting - Tuesday 21st November, NoS Hall

Christmas Dinner - Friday 1st December, East Leake Golf Club

Christmas Carol Concert - Tuesday 12th December, Kingston on Soar Village Hall

General Meeting - Tuesday 30th January, NoS Hall

Subscription renewal - 1st March 2024

With sad regret we announce the sudden death of long term member Janet Ruddy in August.