



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our previous monthly meeting took place on 27th July when we had an attendance of thirty members. Our guest speaker was Diane Leopard, who presented a talk titled "Letting photographs tell their stories." The presentation was so very different to the norm, with non-clinical photos being used to depict Diane's journey during her cancer treatment and recovery. It was very well presented and well received by the audience. Our vice-chairman, Keith Ward, who is one of the branch founder members, considered it to be the best talk he had heard at a u3a monthly meeting since the branch commenced.

31st August: Roger Browne is our guest speaker, and he will present an illustrative talk with live piano playing, titled "The Great American Songbook."

In addition to Roger Browne, the branch welcomes another guest to the meeting. Newly appointed u3a Regional Trustee for the West Midlands, Jean Jackson, has accepted our invitation to be in attendance. Jean will meet the committee prior to the meeting, and will mingle with members after the entertainment.

28th Sept: Trevor Bevan will present "A Dickens of a Tale." Trevor is a Member of The Pickwick Bicycle Club, which is the oldest cycle club in the world, and the oldest Dickensian society still in existence.

Please encourage other members to attend, what is always a good afternoon out.

MEMBERSHIP

At the branch committee meeting held on 10th August, it was reported that the count of members was 375. This was a very acceptable increase of 15 relative to the previous month. Many thanks to those who have persuaded family and friends to join us, and please encourage new membership whenever the opportunity arises. Likewise, if you have a Facebook Page, please publicise whenever you are able.

Should you know anyone who would like to join, application forms can be obtained from our website, or from membership officer, Alan Stevenson, Tel. 01782 395760: or by emailing: a.stevenson09@btinternet.com

You can also find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/StokeSouthU3A/>

Tributes

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of two u3a members in July.

Firstly, Michelle Tittle-Wang, who joined the branch during 2014/15, some nine years ago. Michelle was a regular member of the walking group, and was the badminton group leader for a time. She arranged the very popular Ten Pin Bowling nights which were enjoyed by many. Additionally, Michelle regularly attended branch monthly meetings; the occasion of a “bring and share buffet” was always enhanced by one of her special dishes.

Michelle will be greatly missed by her many friends in the u3a, her smile was as bright as her personality. Her funeral on 10th August was a wonderful reflection of a life well lived, and of a person well loved.

Secondly, Richard Durose passed away early in July. Richard, along with his wife Edna, were stalwarts of the local history group until Richard became too ill for them to attend. He too, was well liked and respected by all of his u3a colleagues, and will be sorely missed.

May they rest in peace.

U3a TRUST MATTERS

U3a Trust

A nationally co-ordinated event is to take place on Friday 22nd September, titled “Alfresco in Autumn.” The Trust is encouraging any event that takes the fun of learning within a u3a branch, outdoors. Please inform a committee member if your group has any plans.

A new Facebook group has been set up titled “u3a fit for the future.” It is a forum for u3a members, and committees to discuss governance, finance and strategy of the u3a movement, and its vision for the future.

FOCUS ON GROUPS

Computer Group

A reminder to members who are interested in learning computer skills that group leader, Joe Neilson, has reluctantly decided to suspend the group for a couple of months due to a lack of attendance. Please note that Joe will reconsider if an acceptable number of members show renewed interest.

Anyone wishing to contact Joe, may do so via telephone 01782 852042 or by email to: joeneilson6@gmail.com

Discussion Group

The next group meeting is confirmed for Tuesday 12th September 2023, 10.00am to 11.15am. It will take place in Stoke Library, which is located in the Council Hub close to the Market. Unfortunately, due to the constraint of the room size, the group is now fully subscribed.

The subject under discussion will be:

Protest for change!

Group leader Bob Jones can be contacted on 01785 817743.

Family History Group

The next meeting will be held at the Tollgate Hotel, Blurton, at 2pm on Friday 8th September 2023. The group normally meets in the restaurant. New members are welcome.

Group leader is Les Waller, who may be contacted on 01782 394431.

Gardening and Nature Lovers

The next meeting will take place at Garners Garden Centre, Cemetery Road, Silverdale, ST5 6SH, on Friday 8th September 2023 at 10.30am.

Christine Whitfield also operates a "WhatsApp" Page in support of the group.

New group contact is Josie Peirson whose telephone details are: Mob: 07775 974876 or Landline: 01782 399711.

Indoor Kurling

We are still encouraging members to join this small group. The enjoyment of the group very much relies on there being a good number of participants. We are sure that you will enjoy the friendly competition. The group meets on alternate Wednesdays.

The next meeting will take place, 10am to 12 noon, at Longton Central Hall on Wednesday 13th September 2023.

If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Trish Rowley on 07939 209054.

Lunch Group

The lunch group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at The Hem Heath pub (on the corner of Stanley Matthews Way).

The next meeting will be at 12.30pm on 12th September 2023, and the group leader is Maureen Cumming, who may be contacted on 01782 331797.

Table Tennis

The table tennis group meets fortnightly on the top floor at Longton Central Hall. Their next meeting is scheduled for 10am on Wednesday 6th September 2023. You are welcome to give it a try, even if you've not played before. It's good fun and provides plenty of gentle exercise.

For enquiries, please contact Ken Thorley 07912 987385.

Ukulele Group

The group has now agreed to share leadership responsibilities. Meetings are held every Monday at Longton Central Hall, commencing at 1.15 pm. Additionally, it has been agreed that the new group contact will be Derek Lloyd mob: 07880 821727.

Walking Group

The next two planned walks during the month of September are:

Monday 4th September:

Tittesworth Reservoir, near Leek. Circular walk with some easy slopes.

Meet for 10.30am start on the lane (Gun Hill Road) opposite the "Lazy Trout" pub, Meerbrook, ST13 8SN.

Monday 18th September:

Ford Green Nature Reserve. Circular walk with the option of gentle or steep slopes.

Meet for 10.30am start at Ford Green car park, Ford Green Road, Smallthorne, ST6 1NG.

If you have ideas for future walks, or could lead one, or if you require further information, please contact Ali Townsend on 07450 791153.

Branch Publicity

(i) Branch Publicity Officer Phil Rowley was recently invited by Rob Rose from Radio Stoke to talk about the u3a on his Friday evening programme. Phil agreed, and the conversation was aired on 4th August.

(ii) The Lung Cancer Administrator at the Royal Stoke Hospital, has invited Phil Rowley to speak to a support group for departmental patients. The session will involve explaining what the u3a has to offer. Accordingly, Phil has accepted the invitation and will attend the meeting on 27th September, which will be held at London Road Bowling Club.

Should anyone have any good ideas to publicise the branch, please speak to any member of the committee.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

CPR / Defibrillator

At the committee meeting held on 10th August, Entertainments Co-ordinator, Beverley Maher, considered that it would be beneficial for the branch to have a level of expertise in CPR and the use of a defibrillator. The committee were in full agreement with this suggestion. Beverley explained that she did have a contact to provide a hands-on presentation, however the presenter was available during evenings only. Before proceeding, Beverley wishes to determine the level of interest from members and the committee. Therefore, if anyone would like to attend, please register your interest with Andrew Devin, whose contact details are at the end of this Newsletter.

Staffordshire Archives

Ray Johnson is offering a free presentation at the Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, titled "Knotty 100." The screening will take place on Tuesday 5th September at 11am.

When the major railways from London to the North were built, they by-passed Staffordshire to the East and West, so we had to build a railway of our own. It was a successful railway, and the presentation includes films of trains travelling on lines closed long ago. Footage includes the Potteries Loop Line, and the Leek & Manifold Valley Railway.



Student research

A request has been received from a student at Staffordshire University, named Rosemary Sibley. She is carrying out research, as part of her training, into the experience of adults over 65 in relation to loneliness. Since the research has been authorised as ethically acceptable, the committee agreed to publicise her request for participants to complete her questionnaire.

Should any member wish to complete a questionnaire, please contact Rosemary:

By email: sr910968@student.staffs.ac.uk or Mob: 07774 679268.

Heritage Open Days 2023

Every year during September, places across the country throw open their doors to celebrate their heritage, community and history. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences, and it's all **FREE**. This year, within North Staffordshire, Heritage Open Days return with a 10-day festival taking place from Friday 8th to Sunday 17th September. You can have access to events and properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission.

In Stoke-on-Trent, you can discover fantastic architecture and enjoy a wide range of events and activities that bring local history and culture to life. This year the national theme is "Creativity Unwrapped", providing another opportunity to highlight the incredible artistic talent and architecture of The Potteries! There will also be a focus on the area's unique industrial heritage with events that feature iconic bottle ovens.

You may access the three PDFs to view the activities offered within: Stoke-on-Trent; Newcastle-under-Lyme; and Staffordshire Moorlands via the u3a website at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/stoke/page/75813>

Day Trips

The Branch has a number of members who are also members of the "Closer to Home" walking group. The group arranges a day trip by coach each month to a variety of interesting locations. The group has kindly offered vacant seats to u3a members at a cost of £25 per trip, and there is no obligation to join the walking group. Any bookings made by u3a members will of course be private transactions, and not related to u3a membership.

The group's next trip is to Birmingham on September 21st. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871231767 for further details.

This Newsletter is also accessible on our website (via the News Button). Please try to share information with fellow members who do not have access to the internet.

Items for publication in the next newsletter will need to reach Andrew Devin by Monday, 18th September. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: a.devin2@gmail.com