

System and District



Vitality!

March
2019

Official newsletter of the System and District University of the Third Age

Renewing your Membership

Your annual membership fee is still only £15

Please renew by 31st March by:

Completing the form and sending it to the Treasurer along with your cheque. Please put the members name (names) on the back of the cheque.

Bring the form and your cheque to the monthly meeting.

By bank transfer, as per the renewal form.

Your membership must be up to date after 31st March to be able to participate in the activities.

Margaret King

Your £15 is great value for money with access to all these activity and interest groups

APPLIQUE **book club** BRIDGE **british history** **CANASTA** card craft CREATIVE WRITING

crochet CURRENT AFFAIRS **days of interest** FAMILY HISTORY feeling crafty

GARDENING French YOGA **knitting** KURLING line dancing **LOCAL HISTORY** mah jong

MUSICAL APPRECIATION **ornithology/wildlife** PAINTING/DRAWING **parchment**

PHILOSOPHY **photo/digital imaging** PLAY READING quizzing **SINGING** **snooker** SUNDAY

FOR SOLOS **supper group** TABLE TENNIS **theatre** WALKING GROUP **wildlife**

photography WORLD DINING **ukulele**

(most groups will have a small weekly charge to cover room hire and materials)

Go to the System and District U3A website for more information and contacts.

News from February

Committee News

From the Chair

It's that time of year when the clock starts ticking in the countdown to the Annual General Meeting. Preliminary notices will be issued to each Member towards the end of April. This notice will tell you the date of the AGM (12th June) and offer an invitation to each and every one to consider volunteering to serve on the Executive Committee.

This year, that invitation takes on a special significance, because it was insisted upon by the Trust as a pre-condition of their acceptance of our original registration as a U3A back in 2015 that all executive committee members (except Treasurer) should step down at the end of three years. Strictly speaking, therefore, we need to find between 9 and 12 new volunteers to form a new committee.

We now realise that our constitution needs changing to allow existing committee members to continue to serve, if they so desire, and we will be asking you all to vote on the revised constitution at our AGM. In the meantime, we are fortunate that several of the existing committee members are willing to serve to ensure the continued smooth operation of SAD U3A. However, we do need to have someone in place to fill the posts of Business secretary and vice chair by the time of the AGM.

Should you be interested in joining the Executive Committee in any capacity, job descriptions for every post are available from (retiring) Business Secretary, Cynthia Baker. Nominations will close on 15th May. Non-Officer posts to be vacated under the current constitutional provisions are: Assistant Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Assistant Membership Secretary, Group Co-ordinators (x2), Speaker Finder, Refreshments Organiser, webmaster and Minuting Secretary. A Vice-Chairman and Business Secretary, as Officers, are also required.

Annual General Meeting 12th June 2019.

24th April: Preliminary notice to be issued

15th May: closing date for receipt of nominations and resolutions.

22nd May: final notice will be issued

Participating in U3A activities

Due to insurance and to comply with U3A National Guidance, the following will apply to Syston and District U3A as from March 1st 2019:

1. All trips and visits are restricted to members only (a member from another U3A may fill an empty space on one occasion)
2. A non member may attend 2 monthly meetings as a taster.
3. A non member may attend 3 different Interest groups as a taster. These will need to be booked through one of the Group Coordinators:

sheiladriver@hotmail.com or jandow70@aol.com

Membership

We have 420 active members, 147 attended the latest talk on Wednesday 13th February.

If your membership expires on 31st March 2019 (that's most of us) you should by now have received your renewal notice. The fee remains at £15 per year, a bargain! If you haven't received your letter, please contact the membership secretary Norma Grimes at norma.grimes@btinternet.com

The committee agreed last year to revisit the issue of membership fees for multiple memberships in 2019. Due to a delay at national level in the implementation of a new administrative system the committee has agreed a delay until April 2020 at the earliest.

A Remarkable Man

William Coltman VC : A Story of Two Crosses – by Tim Coltman, Great Grandson

The talk at the U3A's February meeting was felt by many who had the privilege to hear it to be the best talk yet. The remarkable story of a selfless and determined man who served during World War 1 and was awarded the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal and Bar, and Military Medal and Bar without ever lifting a rifle. The story of one of the bravest men people have never heard of. This was William Coltman, the most decorated non-commissioned soldier in WW1.

Born in 1891 near Burton on Trent, the youngest of 9 children. After school he became a gardener and, like many others, volunteered after war broke out to join the North Staffs Regiment. A deeply religious man, his faith prevented him from carrying arms; he served as a Stretcher Bearer and spent the war on the front line, saving many lives.

What's remarkable about Bill Coltman is that he worked alone. He believed that working with another man would put two lives in danger, not just his own. Unable to use a stretcher to carry the wounded he carried them over his shoulders. This was some achievement as he was slightly built, only 5'4" tall. What's also remarkable is that he was never injured, and gassed only once.

In 1917 he was awarded the Military Medal and Distinguished Conduct Medal for bravery. In 1918 he was awarded a Bar for each medal – in effect winning both again. He displayed a remarkable indifference to danger and put other men's lives before his own. In October 1918, during the final assault on the Hindenburg Line, for two days he treated and rescued many injured men, carrying them back to safety. For this he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Conditions were grim, he worked in mud, on open ground, bringing back men who had been left behind when troops retreated or attempts to secure ground failed. Trench warfare meant unbearable heat in the summer and freezing cold in the winter. There was the constant fear of being buried alive or drowning in the mud. Shell and machine gun fire, gas, Cholera, Trench Foot, Lice, and rats were a constant threat.

He frequently disobeyed orders to collect name tags from dead colleagues in No Man's Land; this was so they could be returned to their families who could then claim a Death in Service grant from the Government. Without proof no grant would be given.

At the end of the war he deliberately missed a reception party thrown in his honour by leaving his train at an earlier stop. After the war ended he returned to Burton on Trent and worked as a Groundsman; he retired in 1963 and died in 1974 at the age of 82. A modest man by all accounts, he put his medals in a drawer and never talked about them.

For information on this remarkable man go to <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/911644>



William Coltman VC, DCM and Bar, MM and Bar, seated front row second right. © The Staffordshire Regiment Museum

“At Mannequin Hill” – a poem by Peter Noone

At Mannequin Hill where boys are sent to die,
Where bombs explode and blow them all to bits,
Limbless bodies scatter and surround
The gunless man inching towards the cries
Of barely breathing bodies screaming “Mum”.
Trenches filled with Tommies yet to die
Shout “Don’t worry lads, our Bill’ll bring you back”.
Deaf to bombs and bullets, blind to barbed wire,
Through mud he crawls to save the not quite dead,
To patch them up and send them out again.
For courage in the face of carnage
On Bill they pinned a Victoria Cross
For bringing back our boys at Mannequin Hill.

Brian King

News from the Groups

British History Group

We started on a new century at our first meeting of 2019. Now into the 1800s and a significant reshaping of Europe following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo.

We looked at the different forms of Treaties, what they mean, and how we interpret them. The Congress of Vienna was said to have kept the peace on the Continent for almost a hundred years, so we also looked at the end of the first World War in 1918 to see why that may not have had the same result. Lessons perhaps for the BREXIT negotiators?

John introduced us to Humphrey Davey of lamp fame and we now know that he was an accomplished poet as well.

Moving on to March, we'll have a good mix of foreign policy, domestic policy, scientific developments, religion, and evolution theory in the 19th century as we'll have presentations about:

- Robert Peel and the establishment of the London Police
- The British in South Africa
- Stephenson's Rocket and the Stockton to Darlington Railway
- Catholic emancipation
- Darwin and the Beagle journeys

I look forward to seeing you all again on March 11th at the Town Council Offices at 2pm.

Pat Wherton

PS The recipe for Napoleonic Dessert has been found! Any keen bakers fancy trying it out????

" The Napoleon cake is a Franco-Russian cake. It was, according to legend, the favourite cake of Napoleon. Napoleon was the first Emperor of the French. In 1812, he went to war against Russia and we assume that he brought with him the recipe for this cake. It is thus, according to legend, that Russia has known this cake.

3 or 4 Puff Pastries

1 or 2 cans of sweetened milk (presumably condensed milk)

250 grams of butter

1 sachet of vanilla sugar

Icing sugar

The preparation:

Unroll the puff pastry, cut the edge a bit and put in the oven at 180 ° for about 5 minutes. After, you have to make the cream: mix the butter and add little by little the concentrated sweet milk and then a packet of vanilla sugar. Then, take the pastry out of the oven. You have to put a first pastry on a plate, cover it with the cream, do the same with the two other pastries and the rest of the cream. To finish, crumble the rest of the dough on the cake and put the icing sugar. Wait 20 minutes before feasting.

Editors note: let me know if you successfully bake this.

Line Dancing

I am pleased to report line the dancing group is doing very well with an ever- increasing group of members. Although daunting at first for the newbies they soon show their expertise in picking up the steps and strutting their stuff. We meet every Monday afternoon at the Methodist Hall from 2 to 3.30. It is good for the brain and the body so come and give it a go.

Chris Ringrose

Discussion Group Report - meeting on 20 February 2019

The group is steadily increasing numbers, there being 10 members at the February meeting. It was agreed that we live in interesting times !

The meeting covered some serious subjects, but had some light-hearted moments. The opening theme was assisted suicide, followed by how the UK should treat ISIS supporters. Other topics included ticket prices for Operas; Bitcoin Registries; Passport forms; the split in the 2 major political parties; Lake District sheep farmers; Prince Philip; the clothes of the Duchess of Sussex; UK employment and unemployment compared with the Bank of England forecasts; vegan sausages and tripe sausages; the Sicilian Mafia and EU subsidies; the Financial Conduct Authority being forced to re-file its accounts and BREXIT.

The Group meets at the Hub, on High Street, Syston at 2pm on the third Wednesday of each month, the next meeting being on 20 March 2019. If you would like more details, please contact Harold Betts on 0116 260 8671

Brian Austin

Play Reading

The play reading group has been running now for just over 2 years, meeting once a month on a Tuesday morning. We started with 8 members and now have 12. We have reached capacity as there are very few plays with more than 6 or 8 speaking parts. We have therefore started a waiting list.

We read mostly farces and it sure is a farce trying to remember who is who and what is what! We have read : 'One man two Guvnors' by Richard Bean, a couple of Ben Travers plays, 'Noises off' by Michael Frayne and many others all in our own way. We have had a couple of Christmas meetings with a murder mystery game wearing costumes and trying to guess 'Who Done It'?!



In this picture it wasn't the Chinese Triad with a lampshade on her head or the 'young' police sergeant with cap and tie, it was Lady Goody Two Shoes! Who would have guessed?

This month we are reading 'Lady Killers'. Some many remember the old black and white film, we attempt accents (Romanian sounds a bit Chinese) and sound effects....if the parrot forgets where we are a loud squawk does the trick! We have a lovely friendly funny time once a month and if anyone wants to go on the waiting list let us know.

Barbara Sargent

French

The French Beginner's group meet in Rearsby Village Hall on Tuesdays from 10am to 12 in the upstairs room.

The group formed about a year ago and started by working through the Michel Thomas CD course and then moved on to the BBC multimedia course The French Experience 1.

This course is made up of 19 sections covering different aspects of French life starting simply and introducing new vocabulary and grammar as it progresses. Each unit is supported by an audio recording and a short film. There are also two books, a course book and an activity book. We also make frequent use of internet resources to clarify difficult areas using a projector and a laptop.

French is a difficult language, made so by its requirement for gender and a sentence construction which is very alien to English speakers. We are constantly looking for ways to circumvent difficulties looking for the easiest ways to be understood. We work through a subject first by translation then by listening to the script in French, sometimes several times until we have a consensus of understanding. Listening is very important. Some subjects introduce new grammar, and all use new vocabulary. Thanks to William the Conqueror many words in French are the same as in English, just pronounced differently.

The course policy is never to ask a question to an individual (to avoid embarrassment), but whenever we encounter a problem, to encourage discussion and observations from the group to agree a solution. None of the group are fluent in French but most have an interest in France including having a second home there, family connections, holidays, twin towns, or perhaps a GCE in the distant past.

We are a small group with a regular half a dozen and would welcome any new members.

Much mention is made nowadays of the benefits of learning a language to exercise the brain, so why not give it a try?

Ralph Clingan

Music Appreciation Group

This group looks at all types of music in a relaxed environment. Each month a subject is chosen to discuss the next month. Members are encouraged to bring a CD so that they can play a piece which can be discussed by the group. This often leads to group members discovering new artistes and styles of music which they may not have come across before. We meet on the third Monday of the month at the upstairs room at The Hub, High Street at 10.00 a.m.

The subjects have been set already for the next three months and they are

18th March Film Music (bring a piece from your favourite film)

15th April Musical Pictures (when you hear a piece of music what 'picture' do you see in your mind's eye. It will be interesting to see what each person 'sees')

20th May Mood Music (how does a piece of music make you feel - happy or sad or perhaps another emotion. Did the composer set out to convey this?)

There's lots to discuss here. Why not give it a try and come along and join our friendly group.

Sue Smith

Sew'n sew

Our Sew 'n Sew (old Applique Group) is doing very well in our new venue. It is now held in the Residents Lounge of Rearsby Gardens in Primrose Way Queniborough. Its warm there and very cosy and friendly. Every other Friday starting February 22nd. It costs £1 for tea or coffee and biscuits.

Ros. Marriott.

FEELING CRAFTY?

Then join our small friendly craft group, no experience required. We meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month 10 to 12am at my house in Syston. We have been running since June 2018 and so far have tried Mosaics, needle felting and glass painting. We plan to try collage and peg dolls. The group decide what we try we usually have about 4 to 6 sessions for each craft.



I charge £1 for tea and biscuits and a percentage towards any supplies required. It works out as a very cost effective way of trying new skills and can be good fun too! If you are interested please contact me: Helen Disley on 07810015047 or e mail helendidley105@msn.com (yes the e mail IS didley)

Helen Disley

"Sundays for Solos"

The Lazy Sundays Group has a new name. We are a small group of "solos" who meet up once a month - usually the second Sunday - to go out together. We take it in turn (either singly or in pairs) to arrange our activities.

Here are some of the things we have done so far: visits to Lincoln, Newark - with a boat trip, Bosworth Battlefield, Foxton Locks, Melton Victorian Christmas Market and the Phoenix Cinema where we've enjoyed a cooked Sunday breakfast and a film. We've seen "Finest Hour", "Peterloo" and "Stan and Ollie".



We like pub lunches, cream teas and we laugh a lot!

Here is our outline programme for the rest of this year:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| March | Oakham Castle and a pub lunch |
| April | Either Stamford or a steam train ride |
| May | The Windmill at Wymondham |
| June | Rutland Water with a boat trip on the Rutland Belle |
| July | Brickyard Tea Room at Scalford |
| August | “Old Dalby Day” (Bank Holiday Monday) |
| September | A garden centre visit: to be decided – Gates, Wistow, East Bridgford |
| October | Staunton Harold |
| November | A film at the Phoenix |
| December | Melton Victorian Christmas Market (1 st Sunday in December) |

If you would like to join us, please contact Jackie Henson: jph124904@gmail.com

We would particularly welcome car drivers.

Ukulele

49 people are now playing the Ukulele, the band meets every Friday at The Brookside Club, next to the Brookside Café, near the blue bridge, otherwise known as the Millennium Bridge, Syston, at 1.45pm to commence at 2pm and finish at 3.30pm.

We have performed at numerous local venues and although our performances are free, a voluntary contribution can be paid directly to a charity by those we play for if so wished. One of the most recent shows was at the Sunday Sing-along at Melton Mowbray Baptist Church on Sunday 10th February. The church raised £66.50 for Macmillan Nurses.



The audience were fantastic and heartily joined in the singing. One of them Mrs Maisie Greaves said she had never enjoyed herself so much in all of her life and she was really disappointed that the show had to end.

Len, or Dave, offer personal one to one tuition in a member's home or elsewhere to enable brand new members to catch up. If you would like to have an enjoyable weekly sing-along and lots of laughs why not pop in on a Friday afternoon.

Any existing Syston U3A member is more than welcome to attend before they purchase a ukulele, as well as those that are considering becoming U3A members. No prior musical knowledge or prior musical ability whatsoever is required due to the innovative teaching methods used.

Dave Houseman

Gardening Group visit to Ashwoods Nursery and John's Garden

Yet again, we lived up to our reputation as the Group that the sun shines on! For our winter coach trip, we ventured to the West Midlands and were blessed with an almost perfect late winter day!

Ashwoods Nursery, at Kingswinford not far from Dudley, is a traditional nursery and garden centre with an international reputation for their hellebores and other specialist plants. Started 50 years ago by owner, John Massey, they moved away from the traditional method of propagating hellebores which was by growing them in open ground and dividing them. Starting from seed and, using a sophisticated method of cross pollination, they produce hellebores in an amazing and beautiful range of soft yellows, pinks, reds and white. Some were double, some single, and with stunning markings on the petals. We had a "behind the scenes" tour of the nursery to see how it all happened. This was fascinating (though I had to dig around in my memory banks for school botany lessons!)

After this, there was plenty of time for lunch (delicious!) and retail therapy before we met up again for a private tour of John Massey's own garden. We were fortunate to be taken round by John himself, who is a Chelsea Gold medalist and has been awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour, the RHS's highest award.



The three acre garden - very much a plantsman's garden - is set against the backdrop of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. It is a garden for all seasons with a magnificent collection of trees, shrubs, perennials and conifers. John explained to us his approach to pruning and the importance of respecting a tree's natural shape and form. There were lot of beautiful artefacts, metal sculptures and artwork. It was unlike any other garden that I have previously visited (and I've been to a lot!)

The standard of maintenance was immaculate: filming is shortly going to take place for a TV series presented by Carol Klein, though I am sure that the garden always looks good. They do have regular open days, so if you are in that area, I can strongly recommend a visit.

Just time for tea and then back on the coach for our return journey which was a long crawl in motorway traffic. (The boot of the coach was, of course, stuffed with plants!) But nothing could take the gloss off what had been a lovely day.

Sue Blaxland

Quizzing

The quiz group meeting on 5th March is cancelled whilst we seek a new venue and group organiser. Please contact Sue Howell at sleepydumpling@outlook.com or call 07929646610 if you are willing to take it on or just want more information.

Sue Howell

COMING UP

March Monthly Meeting

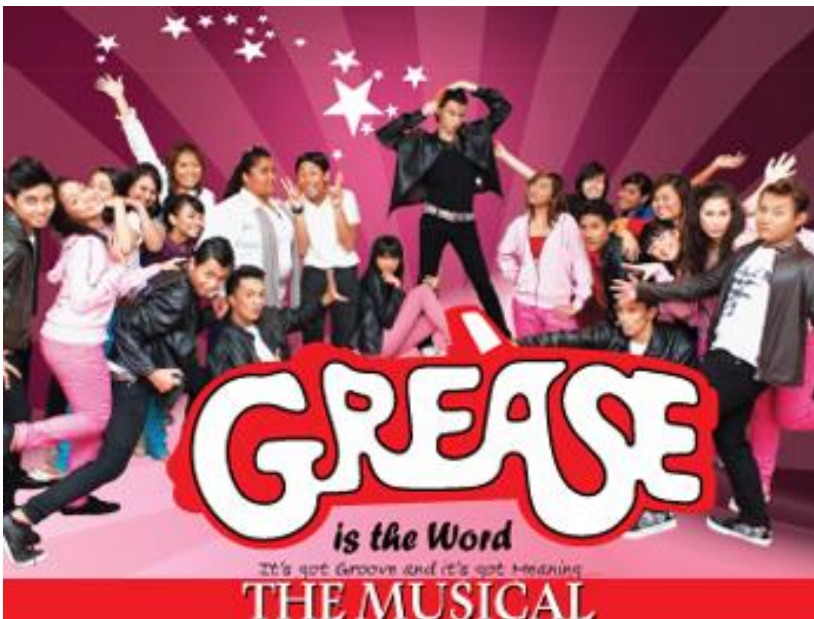
The next meeting is 13th March with a talk from Roy Smart entitled “Amy, wonderful Amy”, Tales of an aviatrix.

Refreshments are available from 10.00, the meeting starts at 10.30a.m at Syston Conservative Club.

GREASE

STILL A FEW TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR THIS POPULAR MUSICAL. Book now!

The matinee performance at Curve on September 11th 2019, costs £34



Bookings to Sheila Driver, 9 Fosseway , Syston , Leics LE7 1NF

New Events

UKULELE CONCERT

Glenfield U3A Ukuleles along with Newbold are staging a concert on behalf of a homeless charity.

WHEN: 15th March at 7.30p.m.

WHERE: St Peters Church Rooms, Glenfield

COST: ONLY £5

CONTACT: Carol Knill at: wfbycarolanne@yahoo.co.uk