

System and District



# Vitality!

Feb

2019

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

## VALUE FOR MONEY !!!!!!!

Do you always look at value for money in your purchases? We are continually advised to switch utility providers, bank accounts, credit cards etc to get the best buy available. What about how we use our time?

Membership of System and District U3A is excellent value for money. The membership fee includes:

A monthly talk by a variety of speakers

A monthly newsletter giving you information about activities and events

A friendly atmosphere and plenty of opportunity to meet new friends

An opportunity to share your knowledge and learn from others

People open to new ideas

Access to all these 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**

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

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

# News from January

## Raking up the past at Syston U3A

The sayings are old - “*raking up the past*” and “*going over old ground*” – and you’d be forgiven for thinking we’re talking about past gripes, grumbles and goings-on. No, this is Archaeology in the Wreake Valley, discovering who lived where and what they left behind when they’d all scarpered or died out. Syston, Rearsby, Brooksby, Cossington and Queniborough.

Archaeology was the U3A’s monthly talk and local archaeologist Peter Liddle informed, enlightened, and engaged 140 members in equal measure.

Lots of us think discovering the past is a bit “*Traders of the Lost Ark*” – hairy blokes wearing crumpled hats sweating and digging away with picks and shovels underground. But there’s less to it than that, and all it needs is a bit of subtle scraping and scratching just under the surface to discover how our ancestors lived and what they left behind.

Of course it’s important to have a good idea of where to scrape and scratch looking for old settlements, burial grounds and the like, or we’d be digging up every field between here and Timbuktu. That’s done by using techniques like aerial photography, geo-physics, metal detection, x-ray, and something sounding very complicated called seismic reflection. That way the archaeologists pin down where to look. So just what has been found hereabouts in these parts?

Rotherby has been a rich source of Anglo-Saxon metal artefacts from burial grounds (they liked to bury their dead “tooled up” with their weapons so to speak) and aerial photography during a quarry excavation at Cossington revealed the site of a Bronze Age settlement. Land around Brooksby was farmed by the Romans – what did they ever do for us? – and long before them there’s evidence of Neolithic activity dating back 5,000 years. Queniborough has houses dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, and Hamilton village - originally called Hambleton – is the site of one of the best preserved deserted villages in the county

Not wanting to leave Rearsby out of it, Wreake Valley’s answer to Stonehenge – okay, not quite so grand – was located near to where the rivers Wreake and Soar meet. And at Rothley there have been finds of Neolithic pottery and flints, plus pits and ditches dating from Roman times, and evidence of a large Roman villa with coins, pottery, pots, and brooches.

Much of this work is done by volunteers of the Leicestershire Fieldworkers’ Group; if you’d like more information or are interested in joining, go to <http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk> or write to: Leicestershire Fieldworkers, c/o ULAS, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH.

## News from the Groups

### TEDDY BEARS PICNIC: dry felting workshop

Thirteen U3A members arrived at 10 am on the 22nd January at Rearsby Village Hall on a cold and frosty morning to join the Teddy Bears Picnic.



The tables and chairs were set out, in the kitchen the kettle was boiling and snacks were available....but where were the bears? However by one o'clock we had 10 bears in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours.

Yes it was the dry felting workshop!



Within three hours the participants had each made a lovely little bear using the 'needle felting' method. This uses carded wool and a sharp felting needle to sculpt the wool into the shapes required to make small animals. It does take a bit of time and patience but the results can be lovely. Everyone said they really enjoyed it and they were very proud of their bears which were all sat together at the end for a photo session.

Many thanks to Liz for organising the workshop and Carol and Sue for their assistance.

*Helen Disley*

### **Days of Interest**

Following our visit to Liverpool last year to see the Terracotta Warriors, a number of members asked if we could visit the city again with more time to explore so I have arranged the following-----

I have 24 places, leaving for Liverpool on 24th. April, with a one night stay at the Ibis Hotel on a B&B basis

The cost for this trip will be £ 78.00, and there are three options for a theatre visit, which may be booked independently. More information available at the next monthly meeting.

There are many things to see and do in Liverpool and a list will also be available at the next meeting  
A deposit of £30 per person is required by Monday 18th. February, with a further payment of £48 due by March 11th.

Liverpool is a vibrant and interesting city to visit, so I look forward to hearing from you. If you need further info. prior to the meeting give me a call on 0116-2417481.

*Ann Winter*

## **COMING UP**

### **February Monthly Meeting**

“A world War One Hero – meet my Grandfather, a talk by Tim Coltman

At Syston Conservative Club on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

Refreshments available from 10.00 a.m. – just 50p for a cuppa and biscuit.

Business and notices begin at 10.30.

**Check out the Displays in the entrance and the hall for current information on whats happening.**

### **Groups**

#### **British History**

Our first meeting in 2019 is on 15<sup>th</sup> February. We start with an overview and introduction to Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

*Pat Wherton*

#### **Knitting Group**

Our meeting place is changing from the library to Syston Community Centre. Meetings are on the afternoons of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month. The next meeting is at 2.00p.m. on 12<sup>th</sup> February.

*Chris Iliffe*

## Family History

This is the third article on researching your family tree. It's not just looking up lists of names, dates etc., it's much more, it's a spring board to finding out more about individuals - grandparents, great grandparents, or great great-grandparents.

### **This is what I found out about my wife's great grandfather, James Shelley, by Bob Stanley**

My wife's Great Grandfather, James Shelley, was born in 1856. He didn't follow his father's footsteps to work in local factories but served in the Coventry police from 1881 to 1907. He rose through the ranks and retired with the rank of Inspector and Chief Clerk.



Inspector James Shelley in Police uniform, the gold watch presented to him on his retirement in 1907 and his handcuffs and whistles

Although he served in the Coventry Police, James had lifelong Staffordshire connections; he had been a pupil at Sir Robert Peel's School in Tamworth, was a chorister at the local church, and sang "The Messiah" in Lichfield Cathedral. His church connections also led him to become a bell ringer at St Editha's Church, also in Tamworth.

He married twice and had five sons. His eldest son, also James, was Sir James Shelley K.B.E. who was Director of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service from 1937 to 1949.

James died suddenly on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1941 in Tamworth, his home town, aged 85. His death was reported in the Tamworth Herald.

**For more information about the Family History Group contact Jane Vale.**

## Supper Group

The Supper Club enjoyed our meetings last year and we have increased our numbers again. Fortunately some people are away for each meeting as the numbers may be difficult to find venues for. We had two very memorable evenings not in a restaurant, one at Val's in the garden and the weather had just started to get warmer. This was an extensive buffet and enjoyed by 20 members. The other was a fish and chips supper at the Malt Shovel followed by dessert and tea and coffee in Pam's garden. We could not meet in December as was too close to Christmas.

*Val and Pam.*

## Syston Happy Ukulele Band

Just before Christmas we held our first birthday party as the U3A Syston Happy Ukulele Band started just over 12 months ago. Presently we have 49 members. The overwhelming majority had never played any musical instruments before they joined the Band.



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 3.30.

Over the last year we have performed at numerous local venues, the most recent being the Friendship Club at Queniborough Village Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> December. The audience were fantastic and heartily joined in the singing. Several of them said that they didn't know what to expect, however, they were pleasantly surprised at how good the entertainment was and were really sorry 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.

*Len Abraham and Dave Houseman*

## New Events

### Quizzing

The annual regional quiz will be held in Market Harborough on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

## SUNDAYS FOR SOLOS

(Previously know and Lazy Days on Sundays, the group is open to single people who would enjoy outings with others on a Sunday).

Each member (or with another member) plans each monthly visit. The programme for the coming year has already been planned and d a river cruise, pub lunches, Oakham Castle and The Windmill at Wymeswold. If you are interested in joining this group please contact Jackie Henson at [jph1249@gmail.com](mailto:jph1249@gmail.com)

*Janet*

## THEATRE TRIPS

### Cats at Kilworth

Tickets still available for 27<sup>th</sup> July at £55 including transport. We need your deposit of £10 by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you would like one, please contact Janet Downes, jandow70@aol.co.uk

### Archery

Although some members were keen on an Archery taster the numbers were not enough to make a workshop viable. We will try again in the summer when it can be an outdoor activity.

Janet Downes

### Buxton Opera House

WELCOME to the very best of G&S this summer!

The 26th International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival takes place this summer at:  
Buxton Opera House from 24 to 29 July 2019, and at  
Harrogate Royal Hall from 7 to 18 August 2019.

Full programme details see our website - [www.gsfestivals.org](http://www.gsfestivals.org)

Box Office Now Open: Tel;01422323252.

Group Discounts available

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### MARCH VITALITY

**The next issue will be published on 1<sup>st</sup> March. The copy deadline is Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February for your group reports and articles.**