

Magazine 57 – Autumn 2022

It's Autumn again and almost another year gone - as we get older the years seem to fly by faster! It is hoped that you have all been able to take part in some of our group activities and/or joined us at our general meetings throughout the year. Most groups have now managed to start up again and get back to something like normality after the Covid pandemic.

Chairman's Report

It seems a long hot summer since my last report and in true British fashion some of us are getting the rain we wished for. Not much to report since our last magazine except to say that I am pleased to note the steady increase in our membership and of course the attendance at our monthly meeting.

Our speaker secretary tries hard to give a balance of speakers so do not be put off by the titles of the talks as many are surprised by the quality and interest value of the speakers. The recent 'History of Graveyards' was fascinating. The cost of speakers has increased this year so anything between £75 and £100 seems to be the going rate. We do have sometimes pay travel expenses as well; hence a good attendance by the membership helps to recover these costs. Remember our new venue at Springdale Church on Warstones Road has a large car park and is on a bus route.

Your committee continues to meet every 2/3 months to ensure that our u3a runs well and of course we would welcome any ideas and suggestions from the membership. Some new ideas already in the pipeline regarding new groups are currently under discussion. We still need leaders for Lunch Club/Local History/Opera/Food groups. Please ask advice if you are interested. We are looking to our membership to help us with more publicity to include Social Media especially Facebook' which we do belong to but requires help to run it. All 'Digital' help no matter how small would be appreciated. Contact me on 01902420695 if able to help.

We have recently joined the u3a National Computer system called BEACON to further enhance our ability to run our local u3a. More details to follow.

Please note a **date change** we hope to plant our Memorial Tree in the Church Garden at the NOVEMBER 22nd General Meeting. Please come to celebrate this event.

Christmas already round the corner and we hope to have our usual Christmas Social but note it will **not be on the date on your membership card** as there is a room booking problem. The new **DATE is 16th of December at 2pm**. I hope you can all attend and have a break from the shopping and eat up all the mince pies

My thanks again to our Magazine editors and all the contributors.

Chris Collins



AN AUTUMN HEDGEHOG by Di Tordoff

ROUND THE GROUPS

Ukulele

The ukulele band has been up to its usual tricks with a meeting every two weeks and many gigs. We were privileged to be asked to perform twice for the jubilee celebrations in Codsall with an evening gig when the beacon was lit and then the Sunday afternoon party-very enjoyable.

We have performed for a group at Codsall Village Hall where everyone was up and dancing. We have performed for many small groups. We are performing for Lanesfield Methodist church to raise money for their roof.

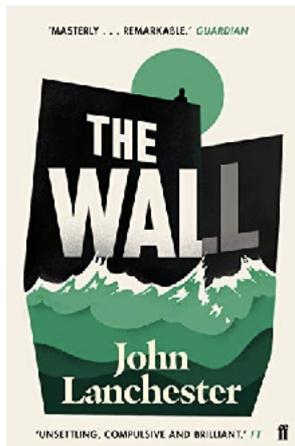
We are booked to perform at the Victorian Market in Penkridge in November and Codsall Christmas fair in December. Each of these bookings raises money for charities, usually Cancer Research and the Air Ambulance but

if a group has a particular request then that is fine. The group numbers are general fairly fixed now whilst we consider people in a room all singing and so we are operating a reserve list.

Gill Stevens Tel 07728292204

Reading 1

Since we had to suspend the book group during the pandemic we have been able to start up again, enjoying the company of the group and discussing a varied choice of books. Our group has become somewhat depleted owing to various health issues. This is only a problem when, for one reason or another, people can't attend. This has meant postponing a meeting on one occasion. However the discussions remain lively which is the most important aspect of the group.



We were affected by the Commonwealth Games which took place at the time of our last meeting with the cycle time trials down the Penn Road. Jenny had to park her car on the far side of the Penn Road the night before in order to drive to our house for the meeting. In fact everyone was early! We have read thought provoking books on race, which stimulated much discussion. John Lanchester's *The Wall* was too close to reality for comfort - a dystopian novel about the end of civilisation as we know it - very

scary. Our most recent book by David Lodge was on the subject of deafness. His book is very humorous in parts, but examines with great empathy the difficulties and stresses of deafness, which afflicts Lodge.

Our next book will be *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens, which was to be presented by Helen Hunt who tragically passed away earlier this year. She is greatly missed, I do so miss her pithy comments. I will be presenting this book.

For a list of our choice of books please see the u3a website. Happy reading to all.

Jeanette Black Tel: 01902 341460

Science and Technology

The Group continues to meet monthly for Zoom based sessions. This format allows members who are not mobile or live further away to still readily access group sessions and it facilitates us having external speakers from other u3a's.



Included in our programme was another external visit, this time to Veolia Materials Recycling Facility at Four Ashes (see full write up in last magazine) and anticipate another location in early 2023.

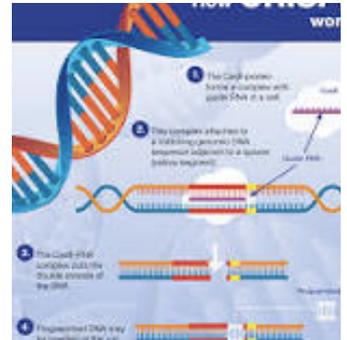
The range of subjects we cover in the Group sessions continues to amaze me. We have ranged through Bird Migration; Effects of Heat on Older People; Noses (human and animal); "What do you do personally to alleviate Climate Change?"; CRISPR and Gene Editing; "Let there be Light"; "Why do people feel hungry and satiated?" plus many more.

Several group members have taken the opportunity to join the (national) Communities Group Zoom sessions, enjoying some excellent and expert presenters from other u3a's. (If interested you can find them on

[u3aCommunities.org](https://www.u3aCommunities.org) and they have interest groups on Art History, Current Affairs, Climate Crisis, History, Rocket Science, Science and Technology and Dickens).

Our Group would welcome new members to come and listen or even to make short presentations.

David Tordoff Tel 01952 986104



Walking

When I start to compile the walking programme, twice a year, I am always a little nervous. Will anyone volunteer to lead a walk? Will any dates have to be abandoned because of lack of offers? And when a walk takes place will anyone turn up! Fortunately, all these worries have been unfounded. Our walk leaders always offer interesting walks and since August 2021 (my last report) leaders have continued to take walkers to new and old areas for walks. Some walks have been repeated and sometimes we are taken the other way around, and it's amazing how different a walk then feels. The dates are always filled but nothing is set in stone. It can be difficult to anticipate conditions some six months before a walk, so flexibility is required. Date



clashes can still occur and since the pandemic planned lunches in pubs are not always possible as a number of pubs have closed or have reduced opening times. Picnic and cafes are always an alternative and eating together is a very sociable experience. Walks have been of varying lengths from short walks of only two or three miles to around eight miles although underestimating one walk

meant it was over nine miles. A long walk with a pub lunch/and with rest meant everyone completed the walk although feeling tired. The majority of walks are around five to six miles.

One aspect of our walks is the time they can take. When you have a group of u3a walkers who enjoy the views, like to chat and have a drink stop a walk will often take longer than when you do it alone or with a partner. The number of walkers on a walk varies too and can impact the time a walk takes. The number of stiles to be climbed with lots of walkers can also extend a walk. We have had a high number of 28 walkers twice with the lowest number



of nine walkers. The average number of walkers is 19. And where have we walked? Our local areas offers many opportunities from Perton to Codsall, Pattingham, Worfield to the annual flower walk, Fens Pool, Brierley Hill, Badger Dingle, Northcote, Lyth Hill, Shropshire and Kinver are amongst the 28 walks done since January 2022. Our annual walking holiday took place in May based in Clapham, North Yorkshire. An account of this was in the last Wolverhampton u3a Magazine by Dave Tordoff. The walking holiday

has been a popular event in the recent past (excluding the pandemic years) and we have enjoyed trips away to Bath, the Cotswolds and Derbyshire. At present, there is no one organising the next holiday. So if you would like to volunteer to organise this please let me know. Assistance will be provided.



If you are not already a member of the Walking Group you can always check out the u3a Wolverhampton website to see where we plan to go between now and December with a further programme out in January 2023. If you are interested in joining the Walking Group please get in touch with me at walkinglinda2017@gmail.com or call or text me on 0776 305 1929.

Linda Moreland

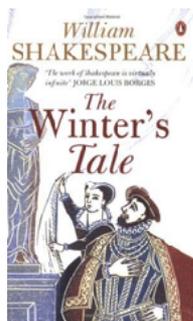
Shakespeare

The Shakespeare group is up to full complement again having lost 2 and gained 2 this summer. We are about to start "The Winters Tale".

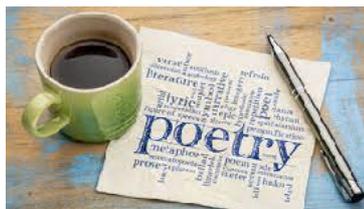
Ben Whitney

Poetry 2

We have 6 regular members. We are a mixed group: we have some very learned members, some are experts in English poetry, others just enjoy poetry and others are inquisitive and want to know about the formal structure of a poem and literary criticism. We spend time discussing the



content and form of the poem, the historical context and some of the biographical details of the author. Sometimes we read translations and, if possible, read the poem in their original language: a very musical experience



e.g. Spanish, Swedish... Our meetings are very relaxed and enjoyable. We learn and enjoy our time together with plenty of nibbles and chocolate... As well as the formal part of the meeting, we have organised walks ending

with tea and cake, and attendance to a concert in Birmingham.

We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at 2pm, but are flexible to change dates to minimize apologies due to holidays etc.

We welcome new members!

Mercedes Fonfria

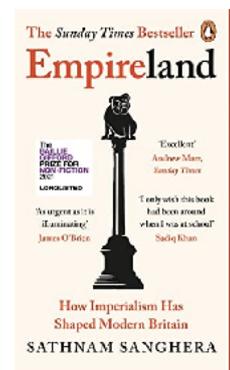
Reading Group 2

We meet on the first Thursday of each month. Books are chosen and presented by group members. Presentation is followed by members contributing their views and opinions. Books chosen are varied in age and genre but must be available in paperback.

Recent reads have included 'Circe' by Madeleine Miller and 'Empireland' by Satnam Sanghera.

Refreshments are offered.

Gerry Mills



Social Issues

The Social Issues group continue to meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month (except August and December) in Room 4 at Tettenhall Wood Institute. We're a very friendly and supportive group, always pleased to welcome any new members and we'd encourage anyone with an interest in exploring a wide range of current social issues to come along and give us a try. Members of the group appreciate the opportunity to discuss topics and express our thoughts and ideas in a respectful and safe environment. Every meeting will probably challenge our thinking in one way or another, but we always come away having learnt something different or new on any given topic.

The room we use at the Institute is large, allowing for social distancing, but we are still able to host good presentations and/or discussions, which do include the occasional guest presenter/speaker. Normally, the programme of topics for the year is developed as we go along so as to appeal to the variety of member's interests, current preoccupations and current significance. Not only is the programme drawn up by members, but is usually led by members, who frequently provide a variety of stimulus materials and/or questions for members to consider beforehand, so that the discussion is informative and focused.



As one might expect, this last year's topics have been varied. The last session (July) before this report was written, for instance, was on Immigration policy and practice.

Immigration, including the proposal to send asylum applicants to Rwanda before their cases have been considered formally, is a current hot topic giving rise to legal challenge, and thus raising a great deal of heat, often with little associated knowledge and understanding. In such circumstances, the leader of this session did a fine job of providing information about the numbers of current migrants, the most recent legislation as well as current connected issues. Data on the number and types of migrants is important, for besides people seeking asylum in fear of their own lives, others might be economic migrants seeking a better life, or people fleeing the impact of climate change, and/or people seeking safer better lives away from warzones (e.g. Ukraine) or away from bankrupt national economies with no or little likelihood of work or state support. All of these have to be considered also. It was the predominant view of the meeting that current government's stance on immigration are morally questionable, and, following Teresa May when she was Prime Minister, more hostile than what currently happens in other European countries.



The past year has also seen two sessions upon the issues surrounding LGBTQ. For those unfamiliar with the initials, LGBT is an initialism that stands

for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. In use since the 1990s, the initialism, as well as some of its common variants, functions as an umbrella term for sexuality and gender identity. In addition, individuals may refer to themselves as non-heterosexual, instead of identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. To recognize this inclusion, a popular variant, LGBTQ, adds the letter Q for those who identify as queer (non-binary gender) as they are questioning and/or opposing their initial sexual or gender identity on their birth certificates. As is often the case, the concern was not to promote any particular viewpoint, but to clarify and discuss the ramifications of this form of identity politics.

In case readers think that all Social Issues sessions may be 'too heavy', other practical topics have been considered, such as the potential and reality of 'Citizen Assemblies'. Citizen Assemblies are deliberate organised attempts aimed at involving local citizens in decision making over local government policies and actions. A local example is the Citizen's Assembly that was created by Dudley Council to see what actions Dudley Council should take over the parlous state of the town centre, which, like many town centres, has been hollowed out by the Covid Pandemic, changing patterns of shopping and wider economic factors, such as unemployment, low incomes and poverty. A 'Citizen's Assembly' is often characterised as 'democracy in action'!

From the examples above, it can be seen that Social Issues is an eclectic, live and interactive Interest Group, with all topics being proposed and led by the group members. As we do not meet in August the next two sessions are on Modern Slavery (September 22nd 2022, and Policing Issues (October 27th 2022). If you have any questions about this short account, or are interested in trying out the Social

Issues Group, or becoming a member, please contact me by my email address, and I will gladly deal with any query and/or welcome you to the group.

Neil Moreland n.moreland@blueyonder.co.uk.

Spanish

Our group continues its learning of the Spanish language with a range of learning activities. Our sessions normally start with 'un juego' (a game) to warm us up. A typical session will include activities such as

- having conversation about a given subject or theme
- reading and translating a 'diálogo (dialogue) or other passage from the textbook
- checking the answers to an exercise we have prepared
- an introduction to or revision of an element of Spanish grammar
- sharing 'noticias' (news) about items in the news or things we have done



An activity we have enjoyed doing (twice) is 'falso o verdadero' (false or true); for this, we prepare in advance two short sentences about ourselves, one of which is false and the other true. The other members of the group then ask questions to help them decide which one is false and which is true. We have learned some interesting facts about things which our colleagues have done or experienced in the past! We have now completed the second book in our study of the Spanish language and have just started on a new book. As our confidence in speaking the language has developed, we have been able to have more conversation and dialogue than we did previously.

Tim Jeavons

MY VISIT TO KINGSWOOD TRUST - 15.7.2022

This most delightful and never to be forgotten occasion all stemmed from **Kingswood Trust's Motto - 'Discover Nature, Learn Outdoors'** and their Family and Friends Calendar advertising an Open Evening to "Take a look at our accommodation and explore our amazing grounds, Visit our archives exhibition and share your memories. Activities will include, crafts, pond dipping and meet the pets."



My history of Kingswood extends back to 1964, when we moved back to Wolverhampton and lived in York Avenue, Finchfield and my late dear wife, Una, taught 'rising fives' at Warstones Infant School, under Dorothy Talbot and headmistress, Netta Owen as deputy and Margaret Cassells to assist with handicapped children. Those were blissfully happy working days for Una and she used to tell me about the occasions (usually twice a year, with the assistance of parents to help with control, dressing and wellington boots etc.) when she had taken sometimes 10 children to Kingswood for the day to wander round and see the animals (such as pig, goat, rabbit and hens) at close quarters and learn all about them from the staff there. Tragically Una passed away in November 1990, from which I will never recover but fond memories will never die. Those days to which I referred above were when Wolverhampton Borough Council were in control of management and finance but in 2014 withdrew their control, meaning that the unique facilities that Kingswood provided for children including residential accommodation,

especially for the handicapped, could be lost for ever. However that same year a Trust was subsequently set up including volunteering groups to forthwith administer the facilities there, supported, maintained and financed purely by voluntary, public plus organisations' contributions and grants.

Then it was at a Wolverhampton u3a meeting before the Covid pandemic, that I met David Tordoff, who handed me a copy of Kingswood Trust Events Calendar and I noticed the Open Evening. My inquisitive nature and past memories, curiosity, plus endeavor to support the cause, led me to arrive at Kingswood Trust at 5pm. Having parked my car, I was greeted cordially at a desk, told them who I was and why I was there, bought some raffle tickets and was given a plan of the site. From the shop I purchased 2 bags of food to feed the sheep in a large fenced area, where I was taken first after meeting up with my guide, David Tordoff. He conducted me on a tour of the site, with his expert knowledge, explaining why a sandstone water feature had been built, pointing out the many recent developments/improvements made in spite of the Covid pandemic, such as slabs laid down and hogging paths (to help wheelchairs in inclement weather); to an orchard walk and purpose built wooden forest school shelter, and the market garden area; past the Kingswood Oak Tree (with its history and how it got there); and to an outdoor table which had 2 rabbits and a guinea pig roaming freely and which I was able to stroke. In another large enclosure were hens and India runner ducks which produced eggs; to a raised water feature in which was a common newt which I was also able to handle and North Woods and picnic fire pit area. Finally at another picnic table we were greeted by Rachel Wells, the Trust Manager, who obviously recognised me from my previous visit (pre Covid), Archivist Julia Pursehouse, who showed me pictures of visiting youth from the mid 60's and David's wife, Diane, who asked me to write this article. Over a mug of tea and a fairy bun, I was shown a copy of the Trust's most attractive and beautifully illustrated Guide Book and made a donation to their excellent work by which time it was 7pm, departure and closure time.

Kingswood Trust

Discover nature. Learn outdoors.

For me it was a most memorable and extremely worthwhile venture - to be highly recommended to anybody sufficiently interested and willing to travel there to support the Kingswood Trust cause.

You certainly would not be disappointed I can assure you.

Eric R Gregory

**We are sad to announce the death of
Len Moore, a founder member of
Wolverhampton u3a who died on the
14th October 2022
in New Cross Hospital aged 89 years.
(Funeral arrangements to follow)**

An Appreciation of Len Moore

by Neil Moreland

I first met Len Moore very soon after I came to Wolverhampton in 1975. I took up a post at Wolverhampton Technical Teacher's College on Compton Park just as the College was merging with Wolverhampton Polytechnic to form a Faculty of Education along with the Wolverhampton Day College. I was active in the NATFHE Trade Union, as was Len, and we both became involved in the merger discussions, though Len's involvement was from the Polytechnic side. Many of Len's personal characteristics were exhibited even then – his attention to detail, capacity to collate and interrogate ideas, realities and, in the process, to 'cut to the chase', which additionally included an impressive ability to track and confront new ideas, propositions and proposals and their implications through to a suitable endpoint. At that stage (1975-77), Len was already working his way up through the different levels of Polytechnic management, so that when he retired in 1992, he was a Dean of a Faculty that incorporated Education, the Arts and Social Sciences, and was highly thought of both as a thinker and senior manager. In fulfilling his management responsibilities, whilst being encouraging, Len could be forceful and decisive, not being one who generally suffered fools gladly!

One of the many interesting and impressive facets of Len Moore was his gradual move into the social sciences, for Len started out working life as an industrial chemist in Derby, where he was born and brought up. It was there that he met, and married Christine (in 1958), who became his life partner and survives Len. Len received his Doctorate in Chemistry from Durham University, and initially lectured at Liverpool University before ending up at Wolverhampton Polytechnic. In Wolverhampton, Christine, like Len, became active in local labour party politics. Indeed, when Len retired from what had become the University of Wolverhampton, he became a local labour councillor for the Graiseley ward for a time, and too served as political agent for Jenny Jones, who was the first Labour MP to take Wolverhampton South West Constituency from the then Conservative Nick Budgeon, who himself had succeeded Enoch Powell.

Len's posts at Wolverhampton were sometimes unusual, in that, as the University was expanding student numbers in the 1980s, he proposed, and became the leader of, a Centre for Curriculum Innovation (CCI). There, the task was to create new routes into Higher Education for people who were able to benefit from a higher education, but did not have the formal qualifications to do so. Many of the students consequently were mature students, who achieved access to higher education on the basis of their life experiences and associated achievements – the so-called experiential learning processes that adults often have without knowing it.

It thus is not surprising that Len became one of the two founders of Wolverhampton U3A in 1996, as he clearly had an abiding interest and experience in lifelong learning, which is the central ethos of the U3A. The worldwide U3A movement had originated in France, but been spreading in the UK from 1983, with Eric Midwinter the only surviving member of the then three people who established the movement overall in the UK. Len and Rudi Herbert – the other founding member of Wolverhampton U3A – called a public meeting in 1996, with the aim of establishing a Wolverhampton branch. The initial meeting was well

attended, and formally voted to become the Wolverhampton U3A, with an initial 30+ members. Len subsequently was



Len Moore with Eric Midwinter at the Wolverhampton u3a 20th Anniversary celebrations in 2016

active in the management of the U3A, both in Wolverhampton and elsewhere, so that, for instance, he lent his experience and expertise to establish the Shropshire Network which still thrives to today, and Wolverhampton U3A remains an active member of that network as I took over from Len as the Wolverhampton delegate to the Network.

Looking back, Len's major personal lifelong learning contribution to Wolverhampton U3A was to establish the Social Issues Interest Group, and be the Coordinator of that group for many years 'till I took over as Coordinator in 2016. Len and I also established, and jointly ran, a Capitalism Interest group that was always small in membership, but ran for 5 years in the 2010s. My final personal meeting with Len was two weeks before he died, when he and I met at my home to discuss a new book on the meaning of money within capitalism as well as reminisce about matters such as cycling which was central to both our interests and leisure pursuits. We were due to meet again soon to take our reading about money further, and I continue to deeply miss his intellectual curiosity and knowledge as well as his general friendliness and demeanour. With love and best wishes to Christine as well as their children and families. Wolverhampton U3A have lost a lifelong learner, innovator, leader, and friend who will be sorely missed. R.I.P.

Forthcoming speakers at General Meetings 2022/23

22nd November, Philip Caine "*Barrow to Baghdad*"

13th December - Christmas/Winter Social

24th January 2023, Niki Bardiner "*Tax, Care and the New Guy*"

28th March - AGM

28th February, Max Keen "*Alfred the Great: a King who Rode Good Fortune?*"

Members' Corner

...now this is where you can have your say – on any u3a topic you feel needs airing or sharing, or maybe to suggest a new group or activity... Please send us your comments!

- **We are still looking for help to edit/sub-edit the Magazine and Bulletin - if you feel you could help in any way please contact us.**
- **Ideas for new groups are always welcomed, so contact us also if you would like to help start one up. Lunch Club, Coach Trips, Practical Art, Local History, Food and Singing have all been popular in the past but need a coordinator to get started again. Could that person be you?**

YOUR COMMITTEE

Shirley BOLAND	COMMITTEE MEMBER
Chris COLLINS	CHAIR
Eleanor DUNNETT	GROUPS COORDINATOR / MEETER & GREETER
Mercedes FONFRIA	SECRETARY
Julia HOOD	MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY/ NEW ENQUIRIES
Mo JOHNSON	COMMITTEE MEMBER
Neil MORELAND	EXTERNAL LINKS
Yvonne RICKARD	TREASURER
John SHEARD	u3a BEACON COORDINATOR
Margaret TAYLOR	MAGAZINE EDITOR
Josie TURNER	SPEAKERS SECRETARY
Diane TORDOFF	VICE CHAIR/MAGAZINE EDITOR
Mary WARWICKER	MINUTES SECRETARY

LIST OF INTEREST GROUPS AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS (If you are interested in joining a new group, please contact the Group Coordinator - see Wolverhampton u3a Website for more information)

Reading 1	Art Appreciation
Reading 2	Craft
Play Reading 1	Board Games
Play Reading 2	Food
Play Reading 3	How to Read Music
Poetry Appreciation 1	Ukulele
Contemporary Poetry 2	Classical Music
Poetry 3	Jazz Appreciation
Shakespeare	Understanding Opera
Creative Writing	Contemporary History
French	Chess
German	Philosophy
Italian	Social Issues
Spanish	Science & Technology
Latin	Computing
Walking	Self-Study Resources
Table Tennis	Gardening

Editors: Margaret Taylor & Di Tordoff

