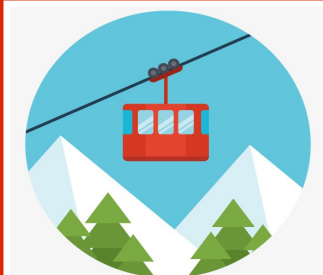




Monthly meetings are held at 2.30 pm on the first Tuesday of the month
at The Jubilee Centre, Conway Fields, St Faith's Road, Alcester



Notes from the Chair

Karyl Rees

Greetings from a snowy Canada! With this newsletter you will receive the papers for our AGM in March. There will be a copy of last year's minutes and an agenda and nomination form. Committee members serve for three years, though they can be re-nominated for another three. We gained two new members last year and always welcome people with fresh ideas. Please consider nomination.

Subscriptions are now due so please pay Jan Carr at the meeting or send your cheque to her at 26 Oversley House, Kinwarton Road, Alcester B49 6PX. Please remember to fill in the groups you belong to so that our insurance information is up to date.

Speaking of groups, if you are a group leader and have not yet given Bob your report for 2018, please do so as soon as possible so that he can collate them before preparing his own report for the AGM. We will, of course, be looking forward to the displays which many groups present at the AGM.

Monthly Speakers

Gill Stanley

February Meeting

Our next speaker is an old friend of Alcester U3A and we look forward to seeing him again. His topic this time sounds a bit morbid but Ron Gallivan assures me it is not and that we will find it very interesting. All Ron's previous talks have been meticulously researched and planned and have provided an unique insight into historical events and I am sure this will be no different.



THEATRE TRIP REMINDERS

Saturday 23 February 2019, Malvern Theatre
"THE HOUSE ON COLD HILL" by Peter James

Please be at the Greig Hall in good time to catch the coach at 11.00 am

Saturday 9 March 2019, Malvern Theatre
"ROUGH CROSSING"

Tom Stoppard's brilliant and hilarious comedy



Both shows are fully booked but members are welcome to sign the reserve lists (available at the February meeting) as places do become available..

Any members who have STILL not paid for 9th March, please submit cheques to Jan Carr right away!

Chairman	Karyl Rees
Vice Chairman	John Pickering
Treasurer	Jan Carr
Secretary	Valerie Hamblin
Membership Secretary	John Ruffell
Programme Organiser	Gill Stanley
Minuting Secretary	Lyn Pickering
Archives	Jan Rowe
Groups Organiser	Bob Andrews

Committee Members	Richard Dean	Lindsay Evans	Joe White	Ruth Dutton
Web:	www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk	Annual Sub £15	Only members can join group	



"Boats and trains of Royal Norfolk"

John

Pickering

I'm pleased to say that I've now finalised the details of the holiday to Norfolk which departs on **2nd September for 4 days/3 nights**, so the brochures and booking forms will be available at the meeting on 5th February. If you will not be at the meeting, but would like a brochure, I have an email version that I can send out (my contact details are below).

Please note that we are limited to only 10 single rooms, so we encourage as many folk as possible to share a twin room. As with the holiday last year, we are also happy to welcome your travelling companions who are not members of U3A.

I look forward to welcoming old friends and new on this trip.

Email: johnpickering@gmail.com or Tel. 01527 453628

SUBSCRIPTIONS - Note from the Treasurer



If you have already paid yours, many thanks, please collect your card and programme at the February meeting. This will save postage, so if you can deliver a friends that would be helpful.

I will accept subs at the February meeting, so you will be able to collect your cards and programme at the March meeting. Please let me know if you do not wish to re-join.

Remember, if you are a member of a Group, you must be a fully paid up Member for insurance purposes.

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

History

In January we had a talk by Paul Brenda entitled "Historical Curiosities". He described several largely unrelated but fascinating strange events in history, a diverse mixture including the surrender of General Lee at the end of the American Civil War, how John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln (from the North) while his brother Edwin Booth saved the life of General Lee (from the South), some Shakespearean anachronisms debunked, how swords made in Toledo became superior to any others, and how a pre-battle agreement on prisoners of war at the Battle of Dettingen (1743) led to the Geneva Convention.

This was in fact our last meeting in Oversley House library. We have enjoyed meeting here for over 13 years, but our numbers have grown, and we really have too many members for the size of room.

From February we will meet in the Community Room of Jubilee Court, on the 3rd Thursday of the month instead of the 3rd Wednesday. The subject in February will be the history of Singapore.

Lastly, I am very pleased to announce that Paul Brenda has taken over the leadership of the group from me. I am sure he will be a great success, and wish him all the very best for future meetings.

Jazz & Big Band Appreciation Presenter Brian King.

Brian treated us first to an excellent film about the life of the great Clarinetist & Straight Soprano player, Sidney Bechet, followed by a full presentation of the music and personalities associated with this terrific musician.

Good turnout and a good laugh!

Next meeting 13th. February 2019. At 2 pm.

Gerry Barker



Tony Badham



Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe



Our first meeting of this year was hosted by Tony Ingram whose rousing programme was entitled "Midlands Connections", all the composers having some connection with this area. The pieces included Gustav Holst's "Mars the bringer of war" from his Planets Suite, George Butterworth's "The Banks of Green Willow", and his "Shropshire Lad", Vaughan Williams's "The Lark Ascending" & "Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis", two choral pieces - "I Was Glad" by Hubert Parry & the Hilliard Ensemble with "Parce mihi domini", it was altogether a lovely programme to start the year.

Our next meeting is on 27th February, after our lunch at The Bear Hotel when Lin Randall will present her programme.

Philosophy

Peter Tugwell

For our first meeting of 2019 we had a philosophy quiz. It consisted of about 4 or 5 questions on each of the 11 topics we had considered and discussed at our monthly meetings in 2018. So, it was rather like a recap on what we had actually done, and we were all pleasantly surprised at the wide range of subjects we had covered during that year. This meant that we had questions involving the philosophies of the mind and education, political philosophy, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics, as well as some important aspects of philosophical discourse and the views of several 19th and 20th Century philosophers. But significantly when the occasion demanded, we had moved out of the arguably comfort zone of theoretical philosophy into the (also arguably) more demanding area of applied philosophy.

The number of questions to get through in the time available meant that we had to canter rather than trot, and some found that this emphasised the key points under each topic, with those key points facilitating greater recall, rather like a mnemonic. It also threw up issues we hadn't considered at the time, showing that we haven't yet exhausted the realm of philosophy.

So, did Ockham's Razor have anything to do with the paradox of the barber who shaves everybody in town except those who shave themselves? [Who shaves the barber?] Or does 'Modernity' clash with a Schopenhauerian view of the 'Will', and does the 'Principle of Sufficient Reason' clash with the 'Principle of Contradiction'? Well, while these were among the answers, the questions were more causally connected to the answers than in the forgoing clauses. It was perhaps rather like the Caucus Race in *Alice in Wonderland*, so there were no winners, except that everyone was a winner – but there were no prizes, just the experience of bathing in the warm glow of epistemological and ontological satisfaction, helped by the usual tea and biscuits.



OCCAM'S RAZOR

"WHEN FACED WITH TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS, THE SIMPLER OF THE TWO IS THE ONE MOST LIKELY TO BE TRUE."

Our topic for February is: Karl Popper (1902-1994).

Pub Ambles

Linda Bradley & Bronwen Bunting

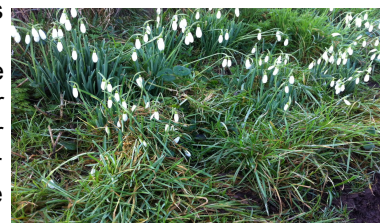


"Snowdrops, sunshine..... and mud"

Lyn Pickering

Our circular walk from Bidford on Avon was blessed with the sunshine peeking through the clouds and no wind. Fourteen of us from Alcester plus two guests from Plymouth U3A, who were visiting one of our members, turned out to stretch our legs. It was the ideal gentle amble to shake off the excesses of the Christmas period, as there were no hills or stiles! The route took us to Marlcliff where the banks of snowdrops were emerging for their beautiful annual display. As our

walk took us mainly across meadow land we all ended the walk 2 inches taller as our boots were laden with mud! The morning ended with excellent service and food at "The Frog" amongst the good company of fellow ambles.



Pub Walks

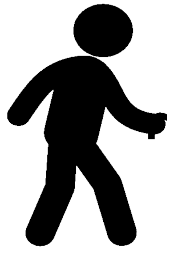
Trevor Wraight



Following a five-month break, keen and raring to go, we gathered at the Throckmorton. The ground was amazingly dry for January and the pace was hot (well, warmish). We walked through the Heart of England Forest following the River Arrow to Studley Church noting the herons stationed at regular intervals along the flood plain. Returning a fraction more slowly, meandering through the forest, we were accompanied by flocks of fieldfares enjoying the berries on the young trees. The return along the busy A345 was noisy but welcomingly downhill. The Throckmorton supplied a filling meal & much-needed pint after a testing 5.5 miles.

Strollers Group

Jane Sergeant



We have had two successful strolls in December and January.

There were 5 of us on our first one, which was round Oversley Green, and started in Bleachfield Street. We crossed the river twice and saw the lovely cottages on the way. Linda Bradley came with us to give me support. A welcome drink in a local cafe ended this walk.

The second Stroll in January was round Arrow Valley Lake. We walked right round the lake and saw the usual wild life on the water. It is 1.3 miles and took us about 45 mins. We looked at the list of birds and creatures that have been seen lately, which is displayed in the foyer. While we were taking our refreshment in the cafe, still with a view of the lake, We saw a grebe diving.

Poetry Too

Bob Andrews



Today saw us convene at our newly designated "poets' corner" otherwise known as Malt Mill Lane Community Centre. And well it turned out too. So with what wordly gems did we regale each other?

Our subject was 'the sea' which produced many old and loved friends of earlier learning. John Masefield's 'Sea Fever' and 'Cargoes' were obvious choices; Tennyson's 'The Kraken', 'The Lotus Eaters' and 'Crossing The Bar' were also recalled. Sir Edward Lear's 'The Owl and The Pussy Cat' soon followed and was of course also cheerfully enjoyed. Longfellow and Emily Dickenson reminded us of America's tradition and were suitably joined by Spike Milligan and Psalm 104 - the muse has no bounds! Lesser known poets in the shape of Ernestine Northover, David Weevil (beware of sharks but soak up the lyricism), Barry Cornwall with appropriately 'The Sea' and an astonishing piece using the channel tunnel in ways unheard of by Patience Agbabi, a British poet, born in London to Nigerian parents in 1965. 'Dover Beach' through which Matthew Arnold shared his honeymoon thoughts and the magical work of the Greek poet Cavafy's 'Ithica' sped us along but we could not finish other than with Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Requiem' (home is the sailor, home from the sea) and Thomson's Rule Britannia which we sang to finish off a most enjoyable afternoon.

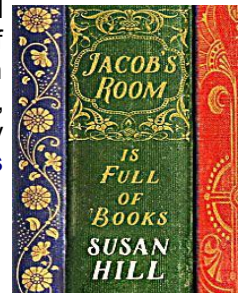
Our next meeting is at 2.00 pm on Friday 22nd February (continuing at Malt Mill Lane naturally) when the subject will be 'Rings'

Rees Reading

Karyl Rees

Susan Hill's book, *Jacobs Room is Full of Books* is not the sort of book designed to be read through at a sitting. It seemed best enjoyed by dipping into it as the author charts a year of her life month by month through the books she has read and re-read and reflects on everything from writing and writers to politics and religion. Wry observations, warm humour, strong opinions. It prompted similar reflections from the group and challenges about many of Hill's opinions. Some considered her rather self-indulgent.

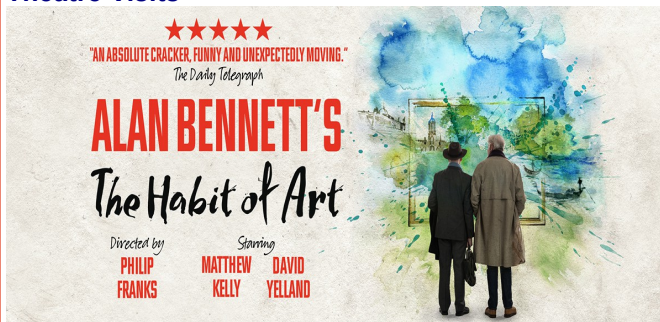
Kath Lloyd-Jones



Our next meeting will be at Henley Street.

Theatre Visits

Linda Cooper



Our recent visit to Malvern to the theatre on 1st December was to see "The Habit of Art" a "play within a play" written by Alan Bennett, in the 21st century.

The setting was a very cluttered rehearsal room and an imagined meeting in 1973 between WH Auden and Benjamin Britten. The stunning cast Matthew Kelly and David Yelland gave full justice to Auden and Britten respectively. Britten is preparing an opera on "Death in Venice" a novella written by Auden's father in law Thomas Mann. The two artists who have not met for 25

years show friendship, sexuality, and rivalry even in "older" age— the reality of life cleverly presented with the inclusion of Humphrey Carpenter (played by John Wark), and a stage manager played by Veronica Roberts holding the "play" together.

Credit to Phillip Franks, director, for an unshowy production of an Alan Bennett play which was both funny and moving.

Alcester U3A Interest Groups

Group Coordinator: Bob Andrews

If you would like to join a group, please contact the group organiser

Group	Meeting	Time	Venue	Organiser
Beginners Family History	Various Monday	2.00 pm	37 Station Road Alcester	Linda Cooper
Church Visits	4 th Tuesday	11.00 am	Various Recommencing May 2017	John Cooper
Computer	Free email Computer Newsletter (Circulation 40 members)			John Ruffell
Crafts	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday September to March	10.00 am	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Linda Bradley
French	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm	The Library, Oversley House	Brian Titterton
Garden Lovers	2nd Thursday April – October To be confirmed	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Alleley Kath Lloyd-Jones
History	3 rd Wednesday	10.15 am	To be confirmed	Paul Brenda
Jazz & Big Band Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday bi-monthly	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Tony Badham
Keep Fit	Every Wednesday	11.45 am	Alcester Baptist Church Hall	Norma Haigh
Music Appreciation	Last Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Jan Rowe
Outings	As Advised		Various	Joe White
Philosophy	3 rd Tuesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Adrian Madge
Poetry too	Last Friday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Bob Andrews
Pub Ambles	2 nd Friday 3 rd Tuesday	10.30 am 10.30 am	Various Various	Linda Bradley Bronwen Bunting
Pub Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00 am	Various	Trevor Wraight
Rees Reading	2 nd Monday	10.15 am	Various	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)
Reading 2	Commencing in March		Various	Linda Jennings
Science	1 st Wednesday	2.00 pm	1 Henley Street	Bill Bayley
Spanish	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday of the month	10 am	Jubilee Court Community Room	John Douglas
Strolling Group				Jane Sergeant
Theatre Visits	As Notified			Joe White
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday 2 groups	10.30 am 1.00 pm	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)