

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

What a difference a day makes. We left Canada in temperatures of minus 20° and arrived home to a balmy spring weekend with crocuses, anemones and primroses in bloom.

The number of members attending the monthly meeting has risen dramatically in the last few months, so I would urge you again to car-share whenever possible, or use the Greig car park and walk along the footpath to the Jubilee Centre. We may have to limit membership in some way, and this is a discussion which the Committee will take very seriously.

I have now completed my 3-year stint as Chairman and do not intend to re-stand, so these are my final 'notes from the chair'. Thank you all for your support.

Monthly Speakers February Meeting

Gill Stanley

The topic was The Black Death and on the face of it this sounded a bit morbid. In fact, with Ron Gavillan's help, it was fascinating. We learnt how the spread of this devastating disease across Europe and this country altered the tide of history. In England there were so many deaths that day to day life changed for ever as survivors struggled to manage and find new ways to live. Whole communities were decimated and those left had to start from scratch to rebuild their lives and their decisions lead to the structure of farms and villages across the country.

AGM
Annual General Meeting



..... will take place at the March Meeting

ANNUAL SPRING LUNCH

Kings Court Hotel, Kings Coughton
Thursday 23 May 2019

Members are invited to join us again for this very popular event. If you would like to book a place, please complete the menu choice form attached and hand it to me, together with your payment of **£15.50 per person**, by the 7th May meeting.

Lyn Pickering



Jan Carr, Treasurer

LAST CALL

2019 SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS PLEASE

Don't forget if you haven't already paid your subscription - **£15 each**, by the March meeting, we will assume you don't wish to renew.

If you have forgotten, please let me have a cheque, payable to ALCESTER U3A, to the Treasurer, 26 Oversley House, Kinwarton Road, Alcester B49 6PX.

Many thanks.

Treasurer's
CORNER

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
Web:

Richard Dean
www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk

Lindsay Evans
Annual Sub £15

Joe White
Only members can join group

Ruth Dutton



THEATRE TRIP REMINDER

"ROUGH CROSSING"

Saturday 9 March 2019, Malvern Theatre



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



"Boats and trains of Royal Norfolk"

John Pickering

2nd September for 4 days/3 nights

I'm pleased to report an excellent response to the Norfolk Holiday and have sold all the single rooms that were allocated to us. However, we still have some **double and twin rooms available**. If there is anyone who would like to book a single room, please let me know or add your name to the Reserve List which I will have available at the March meeting and I'll do my best to obtain more single rooms.

If you have already booked a place, but not yet completed the booking form, please hand it to me at the end of the AGM, together with your deposit.

Brochures for the holiday

These will be available at the back of the room at the AGM if anyone would like more information. – Remember, you are welcome to bring a travelling companion to share a twin room with you who is not a U3A member.

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

Summer Outing to Llangollen

Saturday 13th July 2019 (Coach to Leave Greig Hall Alcester at 8.00am)



We should reach Llangollen around 11.00 am. And will get back on the coach at 2.00pm to be taken to our boarding site for a 2 hour Canal Boat trip which will take us across the UNESCO World Heritage Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, built by Thomas Telford & William Jessop and completed in 1805

There will be a Welsh Cream Tea served on the barge around 3.15pm which should hold us until we get back to Alcester.

The cost which includes Coach, Barge trip, Welsh Cream Tea, and tips is **£29** each for members.

A maximum of 5 Non-member partners may be included at a cost of £34 each

There is a limit of 46, so please book early if you want to come and let Jan Carr have your cheques by our meeting on 2nd April. A reserves List will be maintained

as experience has shown that "things happen" and reserves are often successful.

A booking sheet will be available at the AGM on 5th March,

Alternatively email Joe White at joe_patwhite@msn.com

UPCOMING THEATRE TRIPS TO MALVERN

Three shows have been booked for Theatre visits through to the end of the year with seats in Rows D and E in the stalls, Prices include Coach etc as usual.



EDUCATING RITA **Saturday 10th August** Ticket Price **£31** each

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN **Saturday 26th October**, Ticket Price **£30** each

CABARET **Saturday 23rd November** Ticket Price **£50** each

(This higher price is because the Theatre will not offer discounts for this show- we will cancel all our tickets if fewer than 30 members choose to go)

Further details/booking lists will be at the meeting on 5 March or book by email to joe_patwhite@msn.com

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

History

"At our first meeting in our new venue, Jubilee Court, we heard a fascinating talk on the history of Singapore given by Gerry Barker. His talk took us from the earliest mention of Singapore – the "Lion City" (without any lions) - through pre-colonial times, Raffles and the East India Company, the Opium Wars, and the Japanese Occupation to present day Independence. Gerry gave some personal insights into modern Singapore (one of the cleanest, wealthiest and safest places to live in the World) and there were some interesting contributions from the many members who have visited the City Republic.

Paul Brenda



Our next talk, on Thursday 21 March, will be given by John Puzey. Subject: The Mormons."

Jazz & Big Band Appreciation

At the latest session presented by Tony Badham on 13/02/19, there was a full turnout with a varied program of Swing, Traditional Jazz, Boogie & even some Modern Jazz.

Next session 13/03/19. To be presented by John Cooper who promises 'Bands we will never have heard of!!'. (Sounds intriguing).

Tony Badham

Music Appreciation

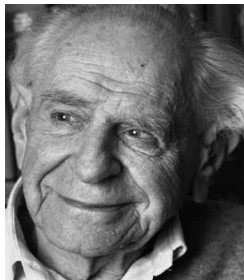
We had our annual lunch at The Bear Hotel then enjoyed Lin Randall's lovely programme entitled 'From Winter through to Spring', among the many delights were Vivaldi's 'Winter' from his Four Seasons Symphony, 'The Snow Maiden' by Rimsky Korsokov, Blake's piano version of 'Walking in the Air' from The 'Snowman' & Beethoven's 'Thunderstorm' from his 'Pastoral Symphony', then along came Spring with Delius's 'On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring', the Ladysmith Black Mambazo Choir singing 'Rain, Rain, Beautiful Rain', Stravinsky's 'Rites of Spring' & finally a Beethoven Sonata called, aptly, 'Spring'.

On March 27th John will present his programme, newcomers are always welcome.

Jan Rowe



Philosophy



Sir Karl Popper (1902 – 1994), the subject for our February meeting, was an Austrian born British philosopher. He taught at the LSE from 1946 until 1949, and then at the University of London (as professor of logic and scientific method) until he retired in 1969. He is chiefly famous for his work in the fields of the philosophy of science and social and political philosophy, through 3 books: *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, and *The Poverty of Historicism*. We discussed his distinction between 'science' and 'pseudo-science', noting the significance of his scepticism of the dependence of science on the inductive method and his promotion of his falsification theory - that a scientific theory cannot be truly scientific if it cannot be falsified, in which case it is 'pseudo-science'. We discussed his critics both as to whether he had successfully argued against

'induction', whether his falsification theory was in fact still 'inductive' but moreover what should be put in its place, and here we looked at the principle of 'inference to the best explanation' and the 'Bayesian Confirmation Theory'. There was also the criticism that while he told us what we could not accept as science, he did not tell us what can show us that a scientific theory is right. Turning from science and the philosophy of science to social and political philosophy, we were also interested in his 'fallibilism' view expressed in his *Open Society* – just as scientific theories need to be tested, so do theories of society and policies of government, that is subjected to critical evaluation by each citizen. He propounded a liberal democracy based on autonomy of individuals with respect for mutual rights, where undesirable governmental policies would be eliminated, in the like manner that failed scientific theories are. Our discussions led us into two further areas – first, the place of philosophy given where an extreme view of received scientific method would take us; and second the enduring differences between the two disciplines of analytic philosophy on the one hand and continental philosophy on the other. Whether analytic philosophy can be reduced to simply the meaning of words or not (controversial), continental philosophy with its understanding of communicative action especially in relation to liberal democracies seems something that would have appealed to Popper.

The topic for our March meeting is: 'Is the sole purpose of punishment to reinforce society's belief in itself?'.

Pub Ambles

Linda Bradley & Bronwen Bunting

The Friday weather proved to be too harsh for the amblers with 40 mph gusts and heavy rain showers. However the 15 amblers were not deterred as the thought of a new venue for lunch, the restaurant in the new retirement housing development, Great Alne Park, proved popular. The Tuesday amblers were lucky with a beautiful day, sun and no wind. The 4 mile amble up into the Alne hills was enjoyed by all once we got past the slippery part of the wood and some needed help up the bank. Race horses, young trees and views featured in most of the walk.





Pub Walks

February wet and dull? Not a bit of it. Light frost, wall to wall sunshine. A sharp, fresh, gin and tonic morning. The trees around Kinwarton Church in artistic mode, as was the old railway track to Great Alne, light filtering through the branches. A bright splash of snowdrops and winter aconites drew the eye before we reached the church to find its walls warming in the winter sun. A lung filling stretch of trackway took us back to Coughton Lane followed by eye filling views of both the Arrow and Alne valleys as we completed our 5.5 miles and returned to a very ample, promptly served meal in the Bear.



Trevor Wraight

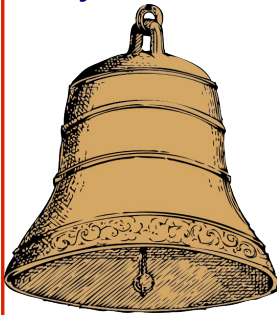
Strollers Group

Our February Stroll was round the Conway Fields. It was a lovely sunny afternoon, when 6 of us set off across Gunnings Bridge and turned onto the path to go along the river path. We went as far as the Weir from the old mill and then through the mini orchard, which was planted a few years ago. We saw a heron in flight as we crossed the field, and then went back by the Jubilee Hall. Refreshment was enjoyed at the Venue Xpresso Cafe.

Jane Sergeant



Poetry Too



Bob Andrews

We met on Friday 22nd February at Malt Mill Lane to show each other the fruits of our month's research on the subject of 'Bells'. Best description would be to advise the few who offered apologies or simply didn't turn up that they missed very little.

An oddly difficult choice. Some excellent poets were presented but oh dear what a mournful cloud hung over us after a short time. Bells = tolling - at weddings and winning wars perhaps but mostly at funerals and attendant gatherings it seems; so Tennyson's epic 'In Memoriam' opus

'Ring of Wild Bells' for his friend who died at the age of 22 was a lovely start.

Tolkien wrote of little else and Andrew Motion - though very much appreciated - didn't bring us round. Leonard Cohen's 'Anthem' took us on a philosophical detour, exquisite but not fun - it was not in the right place this time.

So thanks go to Roger McGough, Gita Ashok (As the School Bell Rings), Jenny Joseph, Seamus Heaney, Moura Dooley (What Every Woman should Carry) et al for lifting our mood as the afternoon progressed..

Lively discussions and lovely company - what's to moan about?

Next meeting on 29 March. Subject: 'Special Occasion(s)' - what might that bring?

Science

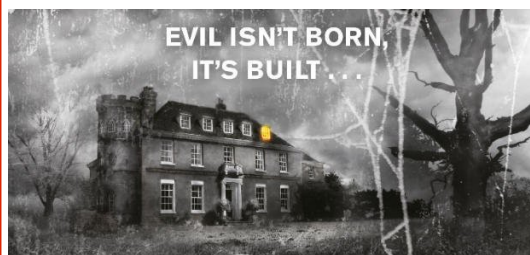
Our last subject was "life in the depths", and was based on reports some of us had read about scientists finding living creatures at great depths. This referred mainly to bacteria, but the depths were astonishing in some cases. It appears there is a huge amount of these subterranean bugs, only recently discovered because of the increased scale of deep drilling all over the world. There are examples at depths up to 12 miles, which is the present limiting depth. We also looked at animals discovered next to thermal vents in the ocean floor, at depths of 8 miles.

Our next topic is "Artificial Intelligence"

Bill Bayley



Theatre Visits



'The House on Cold Hill'

Colin Taylor

When we entered the theatre there was a deep background rumble, a chilling sound, setting the scene for some spine chilling effects. The new owners of the old house had not been told of past events, especially the death of all the previous male owners on their fortieth birthday. The porch had collapsed on one of them. There seemed an inevitability of the outcome of the play, but things could change. A modern twist was that 'Alexa' took on a life of her own and the mobile 'phone camera even picked up ghosts. Doors

banging, lights flashing, electrical equipment in general misbehaving, all added to the suspense. Would the new owner die on his birthday, only few days after their arrival? Well, firstly, as Alexa had predicted, his wife and daughter were killed in a road accident, whilst on the 'phone to him. In a fit of panic he rushed out the front door and slammed it. The newly built porch collapsed and killed him, a similar fate to the past owner. Then the curtain came down...

Again, a big thank you to Joe for arranging the visit To Malvern, a great success."



This isn't the sort of Thing that Happens to Someone Like You by Jon McGregor is a volume of short stories in quite a different vein from the ones the previous month. They involved lots of dramatic incidents, many quite macabre but most were thought-provoking and some were even amusing. The book was not well-received by everyone but a lively discussion ensued nevertheless.

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 Titterington
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)