



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

John Pickering

I have now taken over from Karyl Rees as Chairman and would like to thank Karyl for all her hard work over the past 3 years. I am pleased to announce that Lindsay Evans will be your Vice Chairman and that there are no other changes within the committee. Lindsay has already done an excellent job in overhauling our website** and is very enthusiastic, so I look forward to working with her. I have worked in the voluntary sector for many years and am therefore very aware of the importance of networking, of keeping good relations with other U3A groups and of keeping our membership informed. So if you require any information or help, please contact me or any other member of the committee.

**** Take a look by typing "Alcester U3A" into your search engine.**

On the subject of linking with other U3A groups, we have been offered the opportunity for our members to join with Warwick District U3A for a Study Morning on 3rd June entitled "Economics, myths and reality - Everything you wanted to know about economics but were afraid to ask". Please see the attached flier for full details. Chris Forse, our speaker this month, will be running this event and will be pleased to answer any queries about it.

Monthly Speakers

April Meeting

Following the March AGM, we are looking forward to a return visit from Chris Forse. Instead of America or China he is much closer to home this time with a talk on **"The Lake District: a Celebration and a Warning."** There will be a little bit of history and geography but a lot on the environmental challenges and dealing with World Heritage status, concluding with a sound/light show on the Lakes through the seasons.



Lake District
National Park

ANNUAL SPRING LUNCH on Thursday 23 May 2019 Kings Court Hotel, Kings Coughton

If you would like to join us for our annual Spring Lunch, please give your menu choice form (which is attached) and payment to me either at the April or May meeting or by post (my address is on the form).

We look forward to seeing as many of our old friends as possible and of making the acquaintance of new members, all of whom will be made most welcome.

Lyn Pickering.



Sunday Brunch Group

Patricia Wyspianska

**SUNDAY
BRUNCH**

I am offering a Sunday morning group to meet once a month for brunch. The first venue is the Jinney Ring Craft Centre on Sunday 14th April meeting from 10.30 am for breakfast baps or just tea, coffee and cake www.jinneyring.co.uk. There will be a sign-up sheet limited to 12 places, and you do not have to make a regular commitment, just join in whenever you have a free Sunday. Sunday brunch 2nd Sunday each month 10.30 maybe
Contact Patricia Wy on 01789 763597

Chairman	John Pickering
Vice Chairman	Lindsay Evans
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: www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk

Richard Dean

Joe White

Annual Sub £15

Ruth Dutton

Only members can join group

MESSAGE FROM THE GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR **Bob Andrews**

You will see that a new group for **SUNDAY BRUNCH** is now looking for members and is being organised by Trish Wyspianska. Trish will be present on Tues 2nd April meeting and the necessary papers and any comments will be dealt with by her.

How about **BRIDGE** for a possible group? We have tried unsuccessfully in the past but there are a number of new members who have joined since then so maybe it's worth another try. Please let me know if you are interested.

MAH JONG we certainly haven't floated this before! But some interest has been brought to my attention. Please let me know if you would like to explore this ancient Chinese game.



"Boats and trains of Royal Norfolk"

John Pickering

2nd September for 4 days/3 nights

I am delighted to say that 39 people have booked to go on this year's holiday to Norfolk. However, we still have twin rooms available. If you are interested in joining us, please contact John or Lyn Pickering as soon as possible as deposits need to be submitted to the Coach Company at the beginning of April.

Please ensure that your "In case of emergency (I.C.E.)" contact details are on the booking form.

John Pickering (Tel: 01527 453628, Email: johnpickering@gmail.com)



Summer Outing to Llangollen

Saturday 13th July 2019

(Coach to Leave Greig Hall Alcester at 8.00am)

The lure of Llangollen plus a Canal Boat trip across the UNESCO World Heritage Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and a Welsh cream tea, has proved very popular and the trip is now fully booked with around 9 reserves.

The lists will be at the meeting and cheques (£29 each for members/£34 for non-members) are required by the meeting on 2 April..

Any queries, please email Joe White at joe_patwhite@msn.com

An evening of Culture:

Our Friends of Orchestra of the Swan are kindly offering members of Alcester U3A a 50% discount for **Winter Remembered**, their next concert at Stratford Playhouse on **2nd April at 7.30pm**, with Kenneth Wood (conductor) and Carmen Flores (viola).

We shall hear two slow movements for strings by **Mozart** and **Mahler**, book-ended by the works of two of this country's most productive composers, **David Matthews** and **Benjamin Britten**.



To book go online to: www.rsc.org.uk/buy-tickets/items/39851. Enter the promotion code: **22689** at the checkout to get 50% off.



UPCOMING THEATRE TRIPS TO MALVERN

We have booked three trips to Malvern Theatre over the rest of 2019. They have already been well supported, but there are still places available. The booking slips and reserve lists will be available at the meeting on Tuesday.

Please let Jan Carr have your cheques as soon as you can

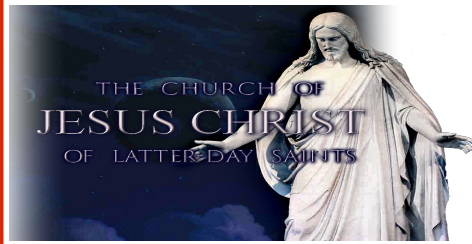
EDUCATING RITA
THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN
CABARET

Saturday 10th August Ticket Price **£31** each (10 seats left))
Saturday 26th October, Ticket Price **£30** each (13 seats left)
Saturday 23rd November Ticket Price **£50** each (16 seats left)

STEPHEN TOMPKINSON
JESSICA JOHNSON
WILLY RUSSELL'S
EDUCATING RITA



INTEREST GROUP NEWS



History

Paul Brenda

We held our March meeting in our usual venue, Jubilee Court, and were entertained by John Puzey who told us of the almost unbelievable genesis of the Mormons. He told us the fascinating history of the discovery of gold plates telling the story of Jesus' visit to the USA, the shooting of the early Mormon leaders, the Mormon's acquisition of land and of his visits to Utah. (John did insist that he had not been converted!) A lively discussion followed.

David Woodrow will give our April talk. His subject is, "A real Indiana Jones (and a crystal skull)".

Jazz & Big Band Appreciation

Tony Badham



A good turn out for our jazz session on 13 March plus two new recruits arising from the AGM table.

John Cooper entertained us with 20 bands most of us had never heard off, and they were all great, ranging from the early 1900's to the 2000's.

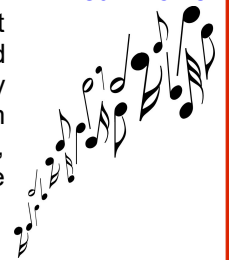
Next session will be April 10th. Presented by Brian King under the heading of 'Women Immortalized in Jazz'.

Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe

It was John Ruffell's turn to present his programme and it contained exciting pieces which most of us had not heard before including Rimsky Korsakov's Symphony no.2 - "Antar" which had ferocity alternating with sensuousness, then the delightful Ballet Suite from "The Fairy Doll" by Joseph Bayer, we then discovered that Patrick Moore the astronomer was a composer from the age of 11 and had 70 compositions in his repertoire, we heard 5 pieces including a march, a nocturne for piano, and 4 orchestral pieces. Finally the fine Bel Canto mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato stunned us with an aria by Giovanni Pacini.

Next month Pam Gough will present her programme on April 24th, come and join us!



Philosophy

Peter Tugwell



Our March meeting considered the polemical question: 'Is the sole purpose of punishment to reinforce society's belief in itself?'. Here 'society' would normally be interpreted as 'the state', because punishment is imposed by state administered institutions. However, 'the state' can be defined by society and even by societies and other natural divisions, including families, and also groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or simply common interest or purpose. One such 'society' which does impose punishment is that of a school. Here both the micro society of a school and the macro society of society itself exist for a purpose; in the case of the former it is the provision of education, in the latter it is the purpose of affording to all its members the ability to pursue what makes for the good of individuals in that society free from the effects of crime. The comparison allowed us to identify and examine the philosophical problems that punishment involves. Any action given as punishment would be morally wrong unless it is 'punishment', that is, justified in some morally acceptable way. One problem identified early on in our discussion was: if the punishment is not effective, can it ever be morally justified? Taking the analogy of punishment in schools, would it ever be effective in aiding the offender to continue or complete his/her education? True, exclusion might prevent disruption affecting other members of the school society, but the conflicting moralities have to be weighed and justified in say a liberal or utilitarian way. Even the more so, punishment by the state raises many moral issues associated with the main penal theories of deterrence, incarceration, retribution, rehabilitation and community / restorative justice orders and schemes. Phrases such as 'making an example of', 'for the good of society' immediately raise moral issues as to whether the offender is in fact only being punished for his/her own actions or to deter others, or in the latter phrase to protect individuals. In looking at the communitarian view of penal theory we discussed the concept of forgiveness, both from the rehabilitative effect it could have on an offender, and on the closure benefit to the victim. This presented difficulties where the state (society) was the victim; in relation to offences such as tax evasion and benefit fraud who would need to 'forgive' in these areas? Although the main thrust of the discussion was based on 'desert' (as in 'just desert') we could not ignore the moral dilemmas posed by a failure by society to act morally in its redistributive justice, leading to a consideration of the causes of crime.

For our April meeting the topic is: Confucianism.

WALKING GROUPS

Strollers Group

Jane Sergeant



Nine of us set off across the park, by the Tennis Club, on a lovely sunny afternoon. After crossing the Birmingham Road, we went down the Priory Tuery towards Allimore Lane. It was pleasant strolling along the lane without many cars and seeing the beginning of Spring, with some violets and lambs in the fields. After climbing onto the Footbridge overlooking the A46, we went back down the lane, then through the Lion Tuery to Evesham Street. We went back to the park via Nelson Tuery, and reached Venue Xpresso by going down Bulls Head Yard Tuery. We enjoyed a drink and a chat in the Cafe.

Pub Walks

Trevor Wraight



March 2019 – Offenham

Well it had to happen sometime! For the first time in ten years it rained, yes, rained on the third Friday of the month. Fortunately, not a lot and though the river was full, the ground was surprisingly dry as we strolled along the riverbank to climb a slippery track to the charming Cleeve Prior with its blue lias stone cottages fronted with bright, spring bulbs. An ancient church to church pathway took us between rich, warm, brown fields to the tythe barn at Middle Littleton. A gentle rise, accompanied by soaring, singing skylarks,

delivered a glorious view across the Vale of Evesham and a steep descent to the Fish and Anchor for an excellent meal.

Pub Ambles

Linda Bradley & Bronwen Bunting

A 3.5 mile walk starting and ending at The Bell, Shottery



Poetry Too

Bob Andrews



Our subject this month was 'Special Occasions' and being that the date for our meeting was March 29th resonated with a few of us! However it didn't spoil things.

Weddings featured beginning with Philip Larkins's Whitsun Wedding reminding; us of what a superb wordsmith he was; Pam Ayres' The Wedding was as always a down to earth or perhaps earthy enjoyment. The Owl and the Pussycat rounded off the funny side of our proceedings.

The brilliance of Thomas Hardy was edged up with Siegfried Sassoon's sharpness and Sir Walter Scott was filtered in with 'Lochinvar' - well it was about a wedding and a bride of course.

The winning poem from the New York Times competition to find a literary celebration of the building of the Statue of Liberty brought forth Emma Lazarus whose poem 'The New Colossus' is quoted on the commemoration 'bring me your homeless etc.' Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi' and a poem about Halley's comet kept us from becoming too exuberant. Shakespeare's 16th sonnet was also sobering in its sheer beauty.

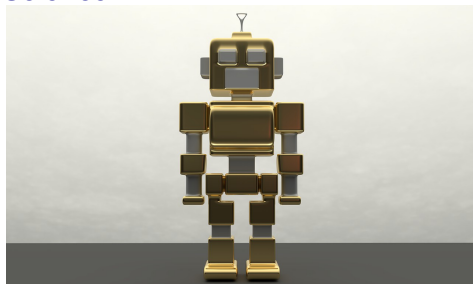
We then were treated to a rare find in 'to a new born child' by...Felix Dennis, of local repute, Imtiaz Darkar gave us '1977' to jolt us closer to home and an astonishing poem by Pat Smith (whose sister Ruth kindly read it to us) called Sfumato The Conquest of Reality – three enthralling poems to end. Save that the group leader finished matters with John of Gaunt's impassioned evocation of England from Richard 2nd - this happy breed and so on to remind us of what was going on 'in another place'.

Stimulating session - and two new members!

We meet next at 2 00pm on 26th April when the subject is 'Epics'

Science

Bill Bayley



We took on Artificial Intelligence (AI) this month, and we found it quite hard to find information about it. Most was either too complex for us, or too over-simplified. However, we came to some kind of conclusion, the best of which was "AI is whatever hasn't been done yet in computing." We realised how large this topic is, and how fast-growing; having only been named as a subject in 1951.

Out next topic will be "Recent Medical Advances."

Theatre Visits

Jane Baker

'Rough Crossing' by Tom Stoppard is a play within a play. It takes place on board the luxury liner 'SS Italian Castle' bound for New York. When we entered the auditorium we were immediately impressed by the Art Deco stage set of the two storey liner.

The plot was many layered. Not only were the actors rehearsing a play but Sandor, one of the playwrights, was attempting to rewrite the play to cover up an illicit relationship between two of the actors.

Some of our U3A group enjoyed the subtleties of the twists and turns but others found it confusing and unengaging. In the blurb about the play, it was described as hilarious. The character of Dvornichek was amusing and we waited with anticipation to see what happened to the next glass of cognac. We also enjoyed the storm scene, but most of the production was only mildly funny.

The play was well acted and directed. Tom Stoppard has a huge following and hopes for this play were high but I think most of us thought it was not one of his best. This could explain why it has not been revived for many years.



Rees Reading



This was one of those occasions when we each talked about a book we had read. As usual there was a wide range of authors and genres. Some were modern and some quite old. Members thought a passage from Hemmingway had been written by Enid Blyton - it shows how tastes change. **Next meeting will be at Fenwick Close.**

Karyl Rees



Garden Lovers

The new season of garden visits will start on 11 April with a visit to the garden of Glenis Dyer at Elm Close, Welford on Avon. Further information and list to sign will be available at the April meeting.

Janet Allely

"Back to the Future: How studying History helps Medical Science"

The above was the title of the second event that Lyn and I have attended at the Department of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick, as a result of our association with the Coventry and Warwickshire Link. The evening was dedicated to highlighting the fascinating research that is currently being carried out into finding alternatives to anti-biotics.

The History of Medicine



2000 BC: "Here, eat this root."

1000 AD: "That root is heathen; say this prayer."

1850 AD: "That prayer is superstition; drink this potion."

1940 AD: "That potion is snake oil; swallow this pill."

1985 AD: "That pill is ineffective; take this antibiotic."

2000 AD: "That antibiotic is artificial; eat this root."

We learned that:

- ◆ Ancient pharmacology texts are being studied for clues on remedies, one of which is the use of Nigella Seeds for the treatment of respiratory congestion (the audience took part in a demonstration of how these seeds, when heated, emit a strong odour.)
- ◆ A tenth century remedy called "Bald's Eyesalve" (used for treating eye sties), the ingredients of which are garlic, onion, wine and bile, has been found to have the same effect on some bacteria as anti-biotics! Experiments have been carried out to determine whether each individual ingredient has the same effect, but it has been found that the potion is only effective when all the ingredients are included.
- ◆ Phage therapy, which was widely used in the Soviet Union in the 1920's and 30's, is now being studied and found to be extremely effective. "Bacteriophages" are described as "bacteria eaters, a virus that infects and replicates within bacterium". They are parasite that only attach to specific bacteria, so, amongst other advantages, there are minimum side effects, they do not interfere with "good bacteria" and are low cost.
- ◆ How the Black Death was spread and what has been learned (thanks to our February speaker, Ron Gallivant, we were already well familiar with this subject.)



During the evening we were able to talk to and question the very approachable and enthusiastic scientists who are carrying out this exciting and fascinating work.

If anyone is interested in attending future events (the next one is called "Exoplanets and life: are we alone?" on Tuesday 18th June at 6.p.m.) please contact me for details on how to book a place. – Maybe members of the History Group would be interested?

John Pickering, Chairman.

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 01789 766383 lecooper46@gmail.com
Church Visits	4 th Tuesday	11.00 am	Various Recommencing May 2017	John Cooper 01789 762404 zannycoop@gmail.com
Computer	Free email Computer Newsletter (Circulation 40 members)			John Ruffell 01789 764788 williamruffell@btinternet.com
Crafts	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday September to March	10.00 am	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Linda Bradley 01789 488568
French	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm	The Library, Oversley House	Brian Titterington 01789 763858
Garden Lovers	2nd Thursday April – October To be confirmed	2.30 pm	Various	Janet Alleley 07749 801200 janetmallely@yahoo.com Kath Lloyd-ajones 01789 766310 kathlj.69@gmail.com
History	3 rd Thursday	10.15 am	Jubilee Court Community Room	Paul Brenda 01789 765077 sallebrenda@hotmail.com
Jazz & Big Band Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday bi-monthly	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Tony Badham 01789 772520 t.v.badham@talk21.com
Keep Fit	Every Wednesday	11.45 am	Alcester Baptist Church Hall	Norma Haigh 01789 400288
Music Appreciation	Last Wednesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Jan Rowe 01789 400051
Outings	As Advised		Various	Joe White 01789 763943 joe_patwhite@msn.com
Philosophy	3 rd Tuesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Peter Tugwell 07718 282710 peter.tugwell@btinternet.com
Poetry too	Last Friday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Bob Andrews 01789 763202
Pub Ambles	2 nd Friday 3 rd Tuesday	10.30 am 10.30 am	Various Various	Linda Bradley 01789 488568 Bronwen Bunting 07900 303134
Pub Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00 am	Various	Trevor Wraight 01789 763279
Rees Reading	2 nd Monday	10.15 am	Various	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)
Reading 2	Commencing in March		Various	Linda Jennings 01789 764164
Science	1 st Wednesday	2.00 pm	1 Henley Street	Bill Bayley 01789 762841
Spanish	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday of the month	10 am	Jubilee Court Community Room	John Douglas 01789 750704
Strolling Group				Jane Sergeant 01789 763027
Theatre Visits	As Notified			Joe White 01789 763943 joe_patwhite@msn.com
Yoga on Monday	Every Monday 2 groups	10.30 am 12 noon	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)