



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

June already!! Is it my imagination, or do the years fly by more quickly as we get older? I have a few items to bring to your attention this month, so here goes:

### OUR THANKS ARE DUE!

1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> June is "Volunteers Week", so let's take this opportunity to thank the many people who give up their time voluntarily for Alcester U3A. This not only includes the obvious candidates such as all the Group Leaders and Committee Members, but also our Newsletter editor, our Gift Aid administrator and, of course, all of our members who volunteer to make teas, put out/clear away chairs and other equipment. A big THANK YOU to you all.



### SUMMER SCHOOL BURSARY

A total of £250.00 is available (to be shared amongst attendees) to assist with the expenses of any member(s) of Alcester U3A who would like to attend any of the sessions at this year's Summer School, some of which are at Aston University in Birmingham. For event & booking details please check the National website (<https://www.u3a.org.uk>). If you wish to apply for a share of the bursary, please contact the treasurer, Jan Carr.

### SUNDAY BRUNCH GROUP

Thanks to Trish Wyspianska for setting up a Sunday Brunch Group. Please look out for information at our monthly meetings about the venue and times. I hope as many of you as possible will support this new venture.

### WARWICK UNI SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES PUBLIC SCIENCE EVENING

The final Public Science Evening of the 18/19 academic year is titled 'Exoplanets and life: are we alone?' This event will explore the exciting topic of Astrobiology and how life could theoretically exist on other planets in our universe! Experts from the School of Life Sciences will take you on an exciting journey through time & space to ask the question: could life exist on other planets? & if so, how? Talks will focus on a range of topics, from 'Extreme Environments on Earth' to 'Plant adaptation for growth in Martian soil'. A guest speaker from Physics will also talk about Exoplanet Detection and the work being done at Warwick in the field of Astronomy.

This public science evening will take place in the School of Life Sciences atrium on **Tuesday 18 June 2019 6 – 10 pm**. Please visit [warwick.ac.uk/publicscience](http://warwick.ac.uk/publicscience) for more information and to register for this event.

## Monthly Speakers May Meeting

Gill Stanley

We were pleased to welcome back an old friend. On this occasion Captain William Wells talked to us about the myths and legends associated with the Bermuda Triangle. Like me you have probably all heard stories about ships and planes disappearing in mysterious circumstances. I think we all now have a much clearer idea about exact location and extent of the triangle and it was interesting to hear about the possible scientific and structural explanations of the various 'happenings'.

### June Meeting

Andrew Lound is another old friend. Many of you will remember some of his very theatrical presentations. On this occasion we are going to learn about "The Liner of the Skies." Prepare to be entertained.



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	Richard Dean
Web:	<a href="http://www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk">www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk</a>
	Joe White
	Ruth Dutton
	Annual Sub £15
	Only members can join group

## Annual Lunch

**Lyn Pickering**

We were fortunate again this year to have a lovely sunny day for our annual lunch at Kings Court Hotel on 20 May. Together with the excellent service and tasty food, the general buzz of people chatting and laughing made for a very pleasant lunch. Thank you for all who attended - we hope to see more of our members joining in next year!

**Reminder!**

## New Members/Group Leaders tea

**John Pickering, Chairman**

By now, all members who have joined us in the last few months and all Group Leaders should have received an invitation to tea at Jubilee Court on 20<sup>th</sup> June. If you haven't received your invitation, please contact me. (RSVP required by 1<sup>st</sup> June please.)



## Summer Outing to Llangollen

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> 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 10 reserves.

Any queries, please email Joe White at

[joe\\_patwhite@msn.com](mailto:joe_patwhite@msn.com)

**Reminder!**



## UPCOMING THEATRE TRIPS TO MALVERN

There are still some places available for the 3 trips to Malvern Theatre over the rest of 2019.

- \*\*\* Educating Rita: 10 tickets; Girl on the Train: 9 tickets; Cabaret: 14 tickets \*\*\*

The booking slips and reserve lists will be available at the meeting on Tuesday.

**EDUCATING RITA**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August**

Ticket Price **£31** each

Payment by 4 June

**THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October,**

Ticket Price **£30** each

Payment by 2 July

**CABARET**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November**

Ticket Price **£50** each

Payment by 6 Aug

## INTEREST GROUP NEWS

### Church Visits

**John Cooper**

Our 2019 season began with a double visit, firstly to the church of St Giles in Exhall, a small village church of limited charm, these days having been "renovated" in Victorian times, although this action probably saved the church from lapsing to dereliction. Ironically St Giles had a daughter church, that of St Milburga in nearby Wixford which we visited secondly. This is a magnificent country church with a fine preaching cross and "horse-house" for the itinerant priests to stable their horses during services. The main feature of this early 15th century chapel built to hold the monumental tombs of Thomas and Julianna de Cruce which are truly spectacular and appear to be original and unscathed by "Victorian improvements" leaving them to be amongst the finest in the country. Lunch was enjoyed at the nearby Fish Inn.



### Jazz & Big Band Appreciation

**Tony Badham**

Good turn out again (12) for our session on 8 May when members all bought their own favorites to play, which resulted in a really varied play list ranging from the 20's to the noughties. Time just about allowed for two numbers each.

**Next session will be Wednesday July 10<sup>th</sup>. with presentation by Tony Badham!**



### Music Appreciation

**Jan Rowe**

On a dull wet afternoon Christine Rumsey gave us another delightful programme which included pieces by Schubert, Chopin, Mozart, Brahms & Massenet, Jose Carreras sang "Granada", & Andrea Bocelli sang "Because we Believe", guitarist Milos played "Concierto de Aranjuez" by Rodrigo. We also heard Mendelssohn's beautiful "Violin Concerto in E minor, Shostakovich's "The Gadfly" & finally the lively overture by Arthur Sullivan from "Pineapple Poll". **For our next meeting on 26th June we are all bringing a C.D. to play a favourite track.**





## History

**Paul Brenda**

At our May meeting we were both informed and entertained by John Douglas who took us through the life, work and philanthropy of William Morris, Lord Nuffield. After leaving school at only fifteen, Morris went to work for a bicycle manufacturer. Within a year he had founded his own bicycle business; soon followed by a motorcycle factory and a taxi and bus agency. Then cars! He became Britain's biggest philanthropist donating record sums to medical and educational charities. The talk stimulated many reminiscences of "first cars" and a brief lament on the decline of the British motor industry.

**The June talk will be given by Paul Brenda: The First World War – Curiosities and Contradictions**

## Poetry Too

Necessary absences kept us to a small number of members for our subject theme 'spring'. But it was a lively occasion even so with poems from a wide and sometimes surprising number of sources. We avoided daffodils but still found space for home thoughts (from abroad y'know). Chaucer, Betjemen, Nash, and other British stalwarts kept things moving along. Translation from Ionian (like Greek but then a different country) was the oldest contribution - from 500 BC no less - Anacreon was the author. Wilfred Owen's 'Spring Offensive' was a startling reminder of the horrors of WW1 and the power of words to convey the sheer hell of it. A.E. Housman, Thomas Hardy were equally effective though from easier perspectives. A couple of contrasts in the shape of poems from near family - sister and granddaughter respectively were well received - bringing tears to one pair of old eyes.

**We meet again on 28th June when the subject is 'Diversions - or what you will'**

**Bob Andrews**



## Philosophy

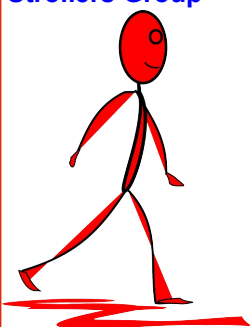
**Peter Tugwell**

The question for May's meeting was: How does Buddhism relate to Western Philosophy? We started with the 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Noble Eightfold Path' as traditionally accepted as part of the teachings of Gautama, the personal name of the Buddha, born in what is now modern Nepal, in 563 BC and who died in 483 BC. These teachings revealed a soteriological ethics, a theory of personal identity, and a metaphysics sharing concepts influencing or espoused by Western philosophers from Pyrrho to Wittgenstein. The Buddha was greatly concerned with the suffering inherent in the human existence; the Noble Truths can be cast in the traditional Western propositional logic form of premises with a conclusion as the fact of suffering, that suffering is the result of causes, that suffering comes to an end, and (therefore) that there is a path to the end of suffering. Schopenhauer was influenced by Buddhist thought contained in the Upanishads, a Vedic writing, with his thoughts on human suffering and how it could be mitigated by an ascetic existence leading to a oneness with the universe. Nietzsche saw himself as the 'Western Buddha' although he changed this to the 'antipode' of Buddha in his idea of the 'superman' – as well portrayed by Bertram Russell in his imaginary debate between Buddha and Nietzsche. Hume's (and later Parfit's) rejection of Cartesian dualism in his theory of the person being a body and brain with a stream of experiences chimes with the Buddhist idea of 'not self'. The Buddha's apparent unwillingness to engage in metaphysics, as not conducive to progress along the Path, as summed up in 'mud nourishes lotuses', did not stop the development of metaphysical thought such as the nature of the world's existence which shares much with Kant's transcendental idealism, the idea that we cannot experience 'things in themselves'. The phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty parallels Buddhist notions of consciousness, and in the existentialism of Sartre we saw a similarity between his 'nothingness' and the Buddhist 'emptiness' and 'not-self'. While ethics after the Western Enlightenment evidences an intrinsicity, Buddhist ethics is closely linked to karmic causation, rebirth and the soteriological (salvation) achievement of Nirvana, but their respective virtues share a commonality including non-violence, right-acting and charity. The Buddhist notion of personal responsibility and self-cultivation chimes with the liberal idea of autonomy. We touched on Buddhism as a religion, but only to acknowledge its status as such, as our focus was on it as a philosophy. We took away from our discussions insight into a different way of looking at things and awareness of shared concepts in the way we interact with and exist in our world.

**The topic for June's meeting is: 'Is there such a thing as a Just War?'**

## Strollers Group

**Jane Sergeant**



This month we went to Arrow Valley Lake again. This time we included a short walk through a wood, which is adjacent to the lake, where there were wild flowers in abundance. Back at the cafe we saw about 24 very young goslings which was a lovely sight.

**Next month at 1.30 pm on Monday 10 June, Margaret Hay is leading our Stroll, in Studley,**

We will meet in the car park at St. Mary's Church (of England) up on the hill. The stroll is approximately 1.4 miles, but is a figure of 8, so half of it could be done for anyone who found all of it too long. Margaret is kindly providing refreshment in the church yard afterwards.



## Pub Ambles

Janet Allely



Friday and Tuesday amblers were both lucky with the weather for their visits round Studley Parish Church and Warner Hotel's Studley Castle, with good views of Studley and Redditch when looking back. Friday amblers tried out a boot wash found on route and Tuesday amblers saw the schoolchildren enjoying an open air lesson in the churchyard. Both groups marvelled at the size of the oak tree in our photo and tried to avoid the sheep droppings. After following a farm track round some fishing lakes we returned through the grounds of Studley Castle to our cars and drove to The Barley Mow for our lunch.

## Pub Walks Trevor Wraight

Our annual ascent of Bredon didn't look good for the weather but our luck held and we enjoyed a chilly but dry morning with reasonable views in all directions. The wildlife was abundant with a Red Kite accompanying us up the hill, a herd of fallow deer on the wilder slopes and an orchestra of larks hovering over the fields at the top. A century of schoolchildren, climbing Bredon to celebrate the completion of their Sats tests, added to the atmosphere and the movement of the deer. A steep descent and a meagre meal at the Star completed our 5.2 mile walk.

**Sorry but no walk in June.**



## Science

This month we discussed "Air Pollution" We found there were a lot of them, besides the usual ones. These included VOCs (volatile organic compounds). toxic metals, radioactivity and particulate matter, or smoke. There is quite a worry about indoor pollution, including pets. In some places the pollution is six times that considered safe. We have not heard the last of atmospheric pollution.

**Our next topic is "Working Animals".**

Bill Bayley

## Reading Group 2

Reading Group 2 met on 14 May, when we discussed 'Vinegar Girl' by Anne Tyler, on a beautifully sunny morning, sitting in the garden. This book was part of the Hogarth Press project, enlisting the talents of well-known authors to present their version of Shakespearean classics. Anne Tyler's commission was a version of The Taming of the Shrew. Enthusiasm for the book was half-hearted, and those who are familiar with Anne Tyler's work were somewhat disappointed, feeling that maybe the ready-made commission dulled the imagination shown so vividly within her own creations.

**New members will be welcomed. If you are interested, ring Linda Jennings on 764164.**

Linda Jennings



## Garden Lovers

Janet Allely



In May we travelled to Admington Hall to see a large garden surrounding the honey coloured stone house. We walked through the stable yard and some of us became acquainted with the horses. We started our tour in the gravel garden, with plant lists kindly supplied, and then passed through the vegetable garden with fountain at the centre. Following the stream garden we saw fruit trees espaliered on the garden wall. The lawns at the front of the house had old trees and good views with two silver coloured metal boxing hares at the edge of the woodland. Walking round the pool we found a boat under the willow tree and admired the flowering primula japonica Millers Crimson. There were mown paths through the meadows and under allees of pleached trees. It was a cold afternoon and the large hot cups of tea and cakes were very welcome. **Our next visit is to Chipping Canpden House on 13th June.**

# 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 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	11.00 am	Various Recommencing May 2017	John Cooper
Computer	Free email Computer Newsletter (Circulation 40 members)			John Ruffell
Crafts	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday September to March	10.00 am	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Linda Bradley
French	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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-ajones
History	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	10.15 am	Jubilee Court Community Room	Paul Brenda
Jazz & Big Band Appreciation	2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Peter Tugwell
Poetry too	Last Friday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Bob Andrews
Pub Ambles	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	10.30 am 10.30 am	Various Various	Linda Bradley
Pub Walks	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.00 am	Various	Trevor Wraight
Rees Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	10.15 am	Various	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)
Reading 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday		Various	Linda Jennings
Science	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	2.00 pm	1 Henley Street	Bill Bayley
Spanish	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> 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 12 noon	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)