



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



As I write, the sun is shining and I've just been doing battle with the numerous ants' nests in my garden – (I think I must have everyone's share!!) I hope all of you have been able to take advantage of the lovely Summer weather too.

Those of you who came on the day trip to Llangollen will, I'm sure, join me in thanking Joe and Pat White for organising another very enjoyable day out. The trip in the narrow boat across the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct was very memorable, both because of the fantastic views and also the delicious (and filling) cream tea!

As was proved by the number of people who were able to join us for the New Members' tea, we have been fortunate enough to welcome many new members recently. I hope you're all enjoying being members of Alcester U3A and urge any member, however long you've been with us, to talk to Bob Andrews (or any of us on the Committee) if you have an idea for a new interest group.

And finally Would you please all ensure that you keep us up to date about any changes in your contact details, especially your email address as, due to high postage costs, this is now the preferred way we contact you.

Monthly Speakers

Gill Stanley

July Meeting

Paul Hirons is passionate about Art History and came to talk to us about **Stanley Spencer**, one of the greatest figure painters of the 20th century. We learnt a great deal about Spencer and where we can go to see examples of his work. There was a lot of detail in Paul's talk and it was unfortunate that technology let him down as we were unable to see the detail in the pictures he showed us.



August Meeting

Roger Harris is our speaker in August. His talk is entitled "**Snapshots of Japanese Gardens**". He will tell us some basic details about Japan and the different types of Japanese Gardens and show us lots of lovely pictures.

THEATRE VISITS

Educating Rita at Malvern Theatre on Saturday 10 August

final reminder

***** The coach will leave the Greig hall at 11.00 am *****

There are spaces on the coach which can be purchased for £7 / head, & we have established with the Theatre that if additional members would like to see the play, there are seats available which can be purchased at our group discount rate, bringing the total cost up to £31

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:

Richard Dean
www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk

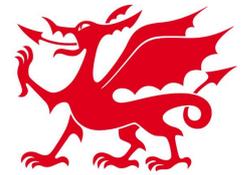
Karyl Rees
Annual Sub £15

Joe White

Ruth Dutton

Only members can join group

Summer Outing to Llangollen



As usual Joe's organization and timing worked well, with everyone turning up at the Greig Hall more or less on time for an 0800hrs. start.

The Coach took us by a partly motorway/partly scenic route to our coffee/comfort stop at Dobbie's Garden Centre & then on to the Town Centre of Llangollen which is crammed full of interesting, independent shops and eateries, including a bakery specialising in the Traditional Welsh 'Oggie', loved apparently by all Welsh Rugby supporters!! (some as big as dinner plates, the Oggies not the supporters!)

The town also boasts a steam railway & station complete with a railway carriage converted into an interesting Café. We then transferred by coach to the starting point of the trips 'main event', a Narrow Boat trip over the World Famous Pontcysyllite Aqueduct which takes the Llangollen Canal over the River Dee. Its 18 arched stone and cast iron construction is the highest Canal Aqueduct in the world, completed in 1805.

After the crossing, we floated on at a 'hair raising' 4 miles per hour to complete the 2 hour trip to the Centre of Llangollen, during which time we successfully demolished an excellent cream tea served by Andrea, the sole cabin staff, who must have walked miles, up and down the length of our 72 foot Narrow Boat whilst the Skipper negotiated the surprisingly 'bendy' and, at times, very narrow waterway, without spilling our tea/coffee.

Once again we boarded our coach for the return journey in the excellent care of our driver, John!

In conclusion its safe to say that a good time was had by all.

Tony Badham

UPCOMING THEATRE TRIPS TO MALVERN



THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN Saturday 26th October,

We asked the Theatre for an extension to allow further bookings, so if anyone would like to join the party it is still possible, but we would need you to confirm and pay **£30**, preferably by cheque, at the meeting on 6 August.

CABARET Saturday 23rd November

To get the best seats we booked this very early, even before the cast was finalised. We can now report that John Partridge is EMCEE and Sally Bowles is played by Kara Lily Hayworth. They are joined by Anita Harris as Fraulein Schneider.

We have to close the booking on Tuesday 6 August due to holidays. The cost, to include coach, is **£50** and we need you to book and pay by 6 August. There are currently 15 places left for a play described as "Stunning" "Sensational" "Overwhelming" and "Superb", so treat someone to an early Christmas prese

Norfolk – here we come!



By the time this newsletter goes out it will be only a month until our holiday in Norfolk! I hope that those who have booked to join us are looking forward to the trip! – Just a gentle reminder if you haven't paid the balance to Harry Shaw (as per the confirmation letter from them), you need to do so immediately! Lyn and I will be at the August meeting, so if you have any queries, come and have a chat then.

Don't miss out!!

If you wished you'd booked to join us on our holiday to Norfolk, you have another opportunity to do so, as, due to a cancellation, we have a twin room available on a first come first served basis. (Just in case you're interested, a copy of the brochure is attached). There's more good news the cost is now £305 each!! Please note that you may bring a travelling companion to share the room with you who is not a U3A member. If you would like to take up this opportunity to join us and make new friends, please contact me as soon as possible by email (johnpickering@gmail.com) or telephone 07718 557578.

John Pickering

British Science Festival

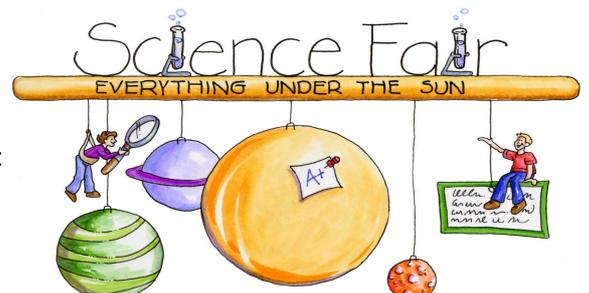
U3A members are invited to take part in the above, most of which is being held at **Warwick University**.

The event runs from **10th – 13th September**, and workshops include:

- ◆ Are we alone in the Universe?
- ◆ Inclusive robotics
- ◆ Breast Cancer break-throughs
- ◆ Climate rebellion
- ◆ Women's science and feminism.

..... and much more!

For more details follow this link: www.britishsciencefestival.org/whats-on



INTEREST GROUP NEWS



Church Visits

John Cooper

Our July visit was to see the church of St. Mary the Virgin at Stoneleigh, hard by Stoneleigh Abbey, the ancestral home of the distinguished Leigh family for over seven hundred years, who were great benefactors of the church.

We were most fortunate to benefit from the services of the Chairman of the local history society who proved to be a mine of information not only of the church but also the village. Her vivid verbal illustration of the church's history and its contents added a great deal to our satisfaction with the visit, particularly with regard to the tapestry work which is of the very highest quality. Even those of you with minimal interest in ecclesiastical matters would find much to admire, from the Georgian box pews, a monument to a duchess and the immaculate churchyard. Lunch was enjoyed at the nearby Warwickshire show ground.

Jazz & Big Band Appreciation

Tony Badham

Our July meeting went well, with a good attendance (14) and a welcome visit from our chairman John Pickering!

The theme was the development of the genre over 4 decades (20,s to 50,s) and ranged from Jelly Roll Morton to Glenn Miller!

Next session will be presented by Maurice Thatcher on Sept.11th.



Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe

Our July meeting was another enjoyable on screen open air concert by The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra by courtesy of John Ruffell. The theme was "Dances & Rhapsodies" and included Smetana's overture to "The Bartered Bride", Enescu's "Romanian Rhapsody", the overture from "Die Fledermaus" & "The Radetsky March", both by Johann Strauss, & Brahms' "Hungarian Dance" No. 5.

David Woodrow will present our next programme on 28 August.



History

Paul Brenda

Our July talk was given by David Woodrow who entertained us with a talk on Coughton Court and the Throckmorton family. He took us from a Saxon moated wooden hall to a Tudor manor house (part built with stone from local monasteries closed by Henry VIII). And from a family of only local importance to one playing a role in national and international events. He also told of the family's misfortune in a succession of childless marriages (despite hinting that marrying a thirteen year old bride may bring better results).



We were also invited to look into the "head in a bag" bag when we next visit Coughton Court!

Our Autumn talk will be given by Val Hamblin whose subject is the life and times of Charles Dickens.



Poetry Too

Bob Andrews

A dedicated number came together for this month's subject 'Diversions...or what you will' - what you will won the day.

John Betjeman's church mouse was an early delight, Patrick Cavanagh's wry poems got a look in and a quirky poem about computers using the common IT parlance brought a few laughs.

Ogden Nash's problems with his dentist were a cause of painful memories for some which coupled quite well with Elisabeth Jennings's wistful observations about her parents in old age.

Carol Ann Duffy and her identification with a war photographer brought Christina Rossetti's 'Remember Me' into sharp focus also.

Thackeray's 'Tragic Story' was a surprise to many of us, not an author we associate with humour or whimsy through his many books, but then another surprise package came with 'Glad of These Times' from the pen of the late brilliant novelist Helen Dunmore. Hardy's 'Ruined Maid' brought a smile and the near impossibility of e.e cummings and his disdain for punctuation brought a challenge.

Pop music lyrics from Chuck Berry about his little six year old on the telephone from Memphis Tennessee (remember?) coupled with John Hartford's words for Gentle on my Mind (Glen Campbell) were a good counter point and gave us more food for thought. Kipling and MacNiece were fun additions.

Star rendition must go to a ninety six year old member who recited 'Annos Dominus' from memory - well done - Pam there's hope for all of us.

Summer break means next meeting will be on September 27th When the subject will be 'Families'

Philosophy

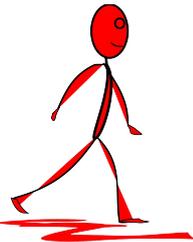
July 's question 'What part does memory play in making a person what he is?' contains an underlying premise which conventionally asks whether a person's identity is more than just his physical body, but the question itself raises wider issues as to the nature of memory, the existence, nature and operation of other psychological phenomena, and the distinction between 'identity', 'person', 'personality' (in the psychological sense) and 'character'. If 'reduction' (to its constituent parts) is accepted as a valid philosophical tool, then it is in the realm of the person that it comes to the fore in this branch of metaphysics, illustrating that philosophy is more than just an exercise in semantics. Thought experiments involving 'brain swaps between bodies' and 'brains in vats' (don't try these at home!) may lead inevitably to the identification of memory with a person (psychological and physical continuity) but the 'memory' that plays the part needs to be understood. We felt that that which makes up memory is an encyclopaedia of experiences, interests, events, learning, knowledge, emotion – and imagination, because as our discussion revealed, memories can be wrong, wrongly recalled or interpreted, or embellished. We looked at how shared memories can produce different versions of ostensibly the same event, with the degree of differences between recollections raising the question whether the two people involved really were witnesses to or participants in the same event. That led us into 'how we remember' and the causes that effect and affect our memory and what we remember – the auto-noetic placing of a person not just in society but in the realm of existence. We were conscious of how memory fades even without any illness intervening. We looked at Wittgenstein's analogy of the strands of fibre in a rope representing strands of memory – no one strand runs through the whole length of the rope, but each is connected by being intertwined with the others to provide a continuous length of rope. This helps with the psychological continuity of identity – the older self remembers his middle-aged self, his middle-aged self remembers his young self – although perversely in later years it is sometimes the early memories that are the clearest. So, we can accept that that the old self is identical with the young self – that it is the same person, even though the respective selves exist/existed in different times. That left us trying to reconcile our earlier exploration of the difference between 'person' and 'personality' with identity, because 'personality' can change over time, without affecting identity through continuity of memory – but common usage would say 'he's a different person now'.

Peter Tugwell



The topic for August 's meeting is: 'Does Capitalism have a philosophical basis? '

Strollers Group



Although there were only four of us, it was a lovely afternoon when Margaret Hay led us on our July Stroll in Studley. We began at Studley Parish Church and went through the well kept, extended churchyard, onto the path, where, on either side were a variety of trees, wild flowers and grasses. The insect life was amazing with butterflies and moths of many kinds. We strolled on towards the oak tree with an owl box on it, and we had a good view of Studley Castle which is now a Warners Hotel. We finished by sitting in the churchyard, having squash and biscuits, provided by Margaret, and then going to look in the church.

Our August Stroll will be in Alcester. I will provide details at the next U 3 A meeting.

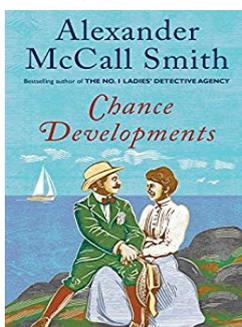
Jane Sergeant

Pub Ambles (Lakes and Wildlife!)

Earlswood Lakes provided the venue for the amble this month, which took place on a cloudy, but fairly warm day. We started by walking alongside the lake (which we learned is actually called a "Pound" as the lakes were originally constructed to top up the nearby canal.) After stopping at the old engine house, where we heard about its original function, we carried on until we reached a stile which took us through a small woodland and over the railway. We then walked across meadows and a nature reserve, back over a railway bridge, through beautiful woodland until we reached "Terry's Pool", where great crested grebes were fishing. After circumnavigating this pool we took a different path back to the Reservoir Pub for a much needed lunch.

There will be an ambling break in August with the next amble on Friday 13 (lucky for some!) and Tuesday 17 September.

Lyn Pickering

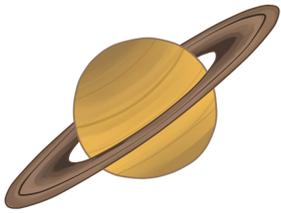


Rees Reading

The book this month provoked more discussion than we have had for some time. It was Alexander McCall Smith's 'Chance Developments'. He started with five black-and-white photographs of unknown people and wrote a short love story about each one. We all enjoyed the book and found surprising the amount of detail he put into each tale. He gives each character a believable background and a convincing storyline. Some members brought their own photographs to discuss.

The next meeting will be at Seggs Lane.

Karyl Rees



Science

Bill Bayley

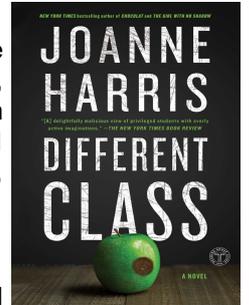
The Science Group discussed the Moons of the Solar System this month, helped by the excellent programmes by Brian Cox on TV. We ranged from the largest and most numerous (62 for Saturn) to the smallest and remotest (Erin, a dwarf planet, has a moon named Dysnomia, which has only been observed recently). There are moons covered with ice that may harbour life, and moons that almost certainly do not. Our own moon is the only one that is a singleton, although Mercury and Venus have no moon at all; none detected so far at any rate.

There will be no meeting in August, and we will resume in September when the subject will be "Gruesome Parasites", the more gruesome the better

Reading Group 2

Linda Jennings

We were pleased to welcome three new members to our July meeting, when we discussed the latest group read - Different Class by Joanne Harris. This was the third in a series of novels, depicting St. Oswald's, a failing grammar school for boys. The school has been through rough times - including loss of staff, disastrous exam results, personality clashes between masters and pupils, and even murder. Our readers enjoyed a lively discussion of a good range of opinions, although several did not finish the book, so it proved not to everyone's taste and enjoyment.



Garden Lovers

Janet Allely



Our visit to Morton Hall Gardens at Holberrow Green was blessed with fine weather which allowed us gather on the front lawn to enjoy a very informative talk on the history of the house and garden. After viewing the Japanese tea house we walked round the lily pond and watched the gardener demonstrating how they planted the water lilies, and managing to get wet! Proceeding up the rockery we moved to the formal gardens full of roses, clematis and other summer flowers, then to the vegetable garden, which still looked interesting with flowers mixed in with vegetables. Tea, coffee and cake was served in The Orangery with photo books and magazine articles about the gardens to peruse. Stunning photo cards were available to purchase before leaving.

Our next visit is on Thursday 8th August to Oak Tree House, 504 Birmingham Road, Marlbrook, Bromsgrove B61 0HS. Admission is £3.50 and £2.50 for tea. Parking is limited so car sharing would be a good idea and I promised to let them know our numbers.

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-ajones
History	3 rd Thursday	10.15 am	Jubilee Court Community Room	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	Peter Tugwell
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
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	2 nd Tuesday		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 12 noon	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Karyl Rees (GROUP FULL)