



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

A SHOW OF APPRECIATION

It's always a pleasure to say "thank you", so I'm taking this opportunity to thank John Ruffell for taking on the task of Membership Secretary over the last couple of years and doing such a good job. John has now stepped down from this role, but is still a member of the committee. The role of Membership Secretary has been taken over by my wife, Lyn.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

I hope you will all have a very happy Christmas spent with your families and/or friends and that the New Year brings you good health, new friends and many blessings.

Monthly Speakers November Meeting

Gill Stanley

We were delighted to welcome Richard Churchley to our meeting. Richard is an old friend of Alcester U3A both as a local historian and as a talented musician. On this occasion he was in historian mode and talking to us about needle-making in Worcestershire and Warwickshire. It was quite amazing to realise that at one time Studley and Sambourne were quite important in the trade and Redditch was just a little hamlet! Richard does a huge amount of research and it is quite difficult for us to process all the information in one afternoon but he has that uncanny knack of finding little unusual facts that bring it all to life.

December Meeting

The planting of trees has recently become a very important aspect of our response to climate change. The Heart of England Forest surrounds us here in Alcester and Studley and local volunteers have been planting thousand of trees for a number of years. The importance of trees in helping to control global warming has now become a topic of national interest and importance. We look forward to welcoming one of the local team responsible for the Heart of England Forest who will be able to bring us right up to date with all that is happening and the opportunities for us to help but also to enjoy walking and watching the magnificent landscapes and wildlife.



ADVANCE NOTICE OF UPCOMING THEATRE TRIPS

TEN TIMES TABLE

Saturday 29th February at Cheltenham

It is billed as a classic "... and the table is set for one of comedy master Ayckbourn's most hilarious plays" which has been touring the country. We missed it at Malvern but have the chance to see it at Cheltenham and have reserved 40 best seats in the stalls.

We haven't been to Cheltenham for some time, so remember the coach leaves an hour earlier at 10.00 am and the Theatre performance starts at 2.00 pm, so there is some time for lunch and shopping in Cheltenham.

If you would like to go, please put your name on the list at the meeting and let Jan Carr have your cheque for £31.50 ASAP and no later than the meeting on 3 December. If you cannot come to the meeting, book by email to:

joe_patwhite@msn.com

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

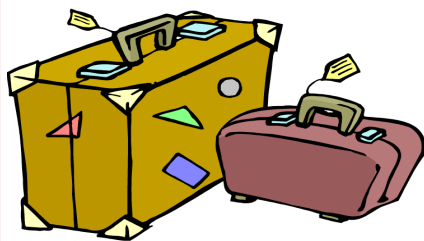
Committee Members
Web:

Richard Dean
www.alcesteru3a.btck.co.uk

Karyl Rees
Annual Sub £15

Joe White

Ruth Dutton
Only members can join group



NEXT YEAR'S HOLIDAY

LAND OF PRINCE BISHOPS, NORTHUMBERLAND AND BEAMISH MUSEUM

Hopefully, I will have the brochures available at the meeting next week for the above holiday, but in the meantime here are the details:

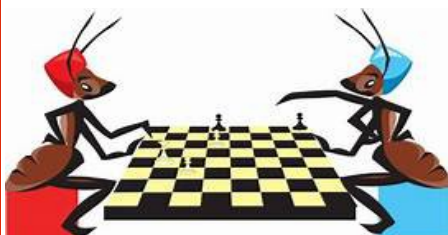
Departure date: Friday 4th September 2020 for 5 days (4 nights).

Price: £400.00 per person (single room supplement £60, limited availability), which includes:

- ◆ Return coach travel and use of coach during stay.
- ◆ 4 nights at the 4* Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne on a bed, breakfast and evening meal basis.
- ◆ Group entrance and guided tour of the Courthouse Museum/Prison & Police Museum Ripon
- ◆ Group entrance and introductory talk at Auckland Castle.
- ◆ Group entrance and guided tour of Durham Cathedral.
- ◆ Services of a local guide on one day.
- ◆ Group entrance to Bamburgh Castle.
- ◆ Visit to Holy Island (Lindisfarne).
- ◆ Group entrance to Alnwick Gardens.
- ◆ Visit to Craggside (non- National Trust members will be required to pay an entrance fee).
- ◆ Group entrance to the Beamish Living Museum.

I will put out a list at the rear of the room at the meeting, or alternatively you can email me (johntpickering@gmail.com) to reserve a place, however your booking is not assured until I receive the booking form and your deposits. **John Pickering**

INTEREST GROUP NEWS



Chess

Colin Taylor

The first meeting of the CHESS group took place on 4th Nov, numbers were small but enthusiasm and learning were high. The next meeting is MONDAY 2nd December, 2-4pm. All levels are welcome. Please give me a ring on 01527 892852 for any information or questions. Colin

History

Paul Brenda

This month's talk (The Nine Lives of Queen Victoria) was given by Paul Brenda. The eight attempts to kill the Queen were used to illuminate some less obvious corners of Victorian life. Mentioned were: convicts transported to Australia each with a two gallon wine allowance; the Fenlands awash with malaria; Bedlam, a seat of learning and opportunity; and the Prime Minister (Lord Salisbury) forging letters. And Paul almost achieved his target of finishing on time!



The next talk, on The Holocaust, will be given by Tessa Smallbone on January 16th 2020.

Please note that there is no meeting in December.

Jazz & Big Band Appreciation

Tony Badham

Correction: In last month's report, it was stated that the Group will meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month EXCEPT for August & September. This should have stated August & December.

Good attendance (14). Group selection this month. Each member supplied their choice of track ranging through Trad. Swing, Modern & Big Band. In all we heard over 20 tracks, including two tracks from John Cooper from his collection of tracks that nobody else had heard of!!

We also heard a track selected by new member Mike Lister, played from his tablet!

To finish in fine style, with much laughter, my own presentation turned out to be two empty CD cases. (I'll never live it down!)

Mah Jong

Richard Dean

The second session of the new Mah Jong group saw a healthy increase in numbers and no diminishing of enthusiasm to learn from scratch or to dredge up almost forgotten knowledge from the memory bank of playing many years ago.





Music Appreciation

Jan Rowe

On a dull, damp afternoon David Ralph made sure we had a warm, lively, fun piece by Saint-Saens- "The Carnival of the Animals" to open our programme. Saint-Saens composed it for fun for his students & for private concerts only, he thought it detracted from his image as a serious composer, he chose for it to be published posthumously, which it was in 1922! The next work was by Richard Strauss & was one of his tone poems "Also Sprach Zarathustra" inspired by a novel by Nietzsche; the introduction "Sunrise" is most well known from the film "A Space Odyssey". Finally we heard Saint-Saens's "Symphony No.3" which showed his beautiful, serious side of composition.

There is no meeting in December, our next meeting is on Wednesday 29th January 2020.

Philosophy

Peter Tugwell



November's meeting considered this question: 'Was Bertrand Russell right when he said 'Science is what you know, philosophy is what you don't know'? This polemical aphorism taxed our ingenuity for a while, because unlike our other topics, there were difficulties in knowing what to look up. However, starting with the fact that Russell was an empiricist, we were led into questions about the scientific method, how the Enlightenment saw philosophers strive to find a way of applying such methodology to philosophical problems, and then into how we know something – or anything. Science may appear to produce something that can be known, but such truths are not absolute – there is the principle of 'inference to the best explanation' and the possibility that the scientific principle might be displaced by further research. We looked at knowledge as being 'justified true belief' but had to acknowledge that apart from an inherent failing in the recourse to 'belief', that definition had to contend with the Gettier examples exposing its weaknesses. Moral truths also raised doubts, as in some cases they are culturally and chronologically relative. Logic's 'a statement and its negation cannot both be true' looked promising, but truth and falsity seemed 'so last year' and at least susceptible to enquiry. As Voltaire wrote 'Doubt is not a pleasant condition. But certainty is an absurd one.'

Our December meeting will feature a quiz – a chance to recall the topics covered in 2019.

Poetry Too

Bob Andrews

For the October meeting the subject was 'Foreign Lands'. And what a journey we undertook..

Kathmandu, Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, Picardy, Venice - just for starters. Kipling, W J Turner, Stevenson (who lies buried in Samoa). The late lamented Helen Dunmore, Houseman, Lear, Larkin, Lawrence Durrell, all dizzied us with their thoughts and travels.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial gave us words for reflection. We didn't forget Ozymandias (we all chose it I believe). The Owl and the Pussy Cat took us into fantasy land - and why not?

An exhilarating afternoon.

Our subject **for November's meeting** was War and Peace and the easiest way to give a sensible report about the meeting is to give you John Pudney's poem 'For Johnny' which sums up the two sides rather well. It's background is the battle of Britain and it was written a little later on the back of an envelope during an air raid in London in 1941.

Do not despair

For Johnny-head-in-air
He sleeps as sound
As Johnny underground

Fetch out no shroud
For Johnny-in -the-cloud;
And keep your tears
For him in after years.

Better by far

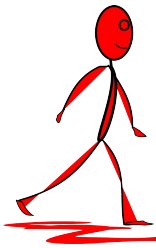
For Johnny-the-bright-star
To keep your head
And see his children fed



The meeting went well with Wilfred Owen, Shakespeare, and poets unknown all being aired.

Our next meeting in January will have the subject 'Games'

Hope you all have a good Christmas.



Strollers Group

for the November stroll four of us set out along Malt Mill Lane when it began to rain, so we went to the nearest cafe and had coffees and a chat. The rain stopped so we went back to Malt Mill Lane and wandered round the complex, which was new to some of us. We went in the room, where there were gifts and cards on show, and donations could be left in an Honesty Box. In the grounds we saw the Relic of the Alcester Brewing Industry, and then thought we'd do the stroll next month.

We will do the Oversley Green Stroll on Monday 9th December and meet at Alcester Scout Hut at 1 30pm.

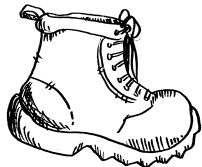
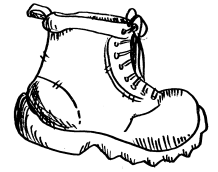
Jane Sergeant

Pub Ambles

Taking a cautious view of the weather, the Ambling group played safe for the November walk and chose a circular walk from Alcester round Oversley Wood where the going was almost all on paths. The Turk's Head provided the venue for an excellent lunch to round off the morning.

There will be just one walk in December, from Great Alne Park which will also provide the lunch venue.

Bronwen Bunting



Pub Walks

Like the Strollers Group, the Pub Walk planned for November fell victim to the weather. We look forward to better luck in December and to enjoying a well earned Santa Pie at the Little Lark in Studley.

Trevor Wraight

Science

In October the topic for our research was "Gross Parasites". Between us we managed to find some pretty horrible examples! In some cases we had photographic evidence and we all hope not to encounter them any time soon.

Gill Stanley



In November we tried to find out if there was any connection between MEDICATION and GENDER. In comparing men and women there seems to be a difference in the **effectiveness** of certain drugs, **the time taken** for them to become active and also the time taken for them **to clear our bodies**. This is on top of the variations brought about by the condition of a patient in terms of age, general health, etc. I think the most overriding impression at the end of our discussion was that, with the exception of well known examples of a small number of drugs, it must be extremely difficult for any doctor to take gender into account in this respect in addition to everything else they have to consider.

In December we are going to tackle another very topical subject – GREEN ENERGY.

Theatre Visits

KABARET: Leaving Alcester on a wet miserable Saturday morning we were transported to the seedy decadent city of 1931 Berlin. This was a time in between the two world wars, after the Weimar Republic had unwittingly ushered in an age of permissiveness by abolishing all censorship.

The curtain was raised to reveal a scene of hedonistic display of young men in leather lederhosen shorts, and scantily dressed young ladies in basques and suspenders, in the Cabaret Club. This was just one of many seedy clubs free of any moral code.

The following scene was of the arrival, at the railway station of Cliff, an American writer, who met Ernst Ludwig having his papers checked. Ernst befriends Cliff and introduces him to Fraulein Schneider who has a room to let, and also offers him work fetching a suitcase from Paris. Ernst also invited Cliff to the Cabaret club where he meets Sally Bowles.

When Sally loses her job as a "dancer" at the club she invites herself to move in with Cliff. At first he resists, but eventually falls in love with her. Meanwhile a romance evolves between a fruit seller Herr Schultz and Fraulein Schneider. The play then turns much darker and violent. Ernst Ludwig was invited to a pre wedding party where he reveals a Nazi arm band and warns Fraulein Schneider not to marry Herr Schultz a Jew. Cliff realises he had been fetching money for the Nazi cause and refuses to continue. He is beaten up, and decides to leave hoping to take the now pregnant Sally with him. She refuses. Herr also decides to leave dangerous Berlin, but Fraulein Schneider refuse to reconsider marrying him or to leave Berlin.

The play ends very darkly with the young men and women naked up against a wall being gassed.

To conclude, an exceptionally well produced play, from choreography, acting, singing and a production which elicited a spontaneous standing ovation at the finale.

Richard Pinder



Merry Christmas



Merry Christmas



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 except August & September	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	Alcester Methodist Ch. Hall	Gill Stanley
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)
Bridge	To be confirmed	TBC	The Old Dairy, 3 Arrow Grange, Alcester B49 5PJ	Ian & Lorraine Thompson 01789 762447 lrthompson144@hotmail.com
Mah Jong	4 th Thursday	2.00 pm	Malt Mill Community Centre	Richard Dean 07496 239318 rbmdean@sky.com
Chess	1 st Monday	2.00 pm	1105 Evesham Road Astwood Bank B96 6EB	Colin & Sandra Taylor 01527 892852 colintaylor11@btinternet.com
PROPOSED NEW GROUP				
Bridge	To be confirmed	TBC	The Old Dairy, 3 Arrow Grange, Alcester B49 5PJ	Ian & Lorraine Thompson 01789 762447 lrthompson144@hotmail.com