Charnwood u3a

November 2026

News & Views



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Our Website

Check out our website at: www.charnwoodu3a.org.uk for lots of information about Charnwood u3a: our meetings, trips, all our Groups and much more.

Welcome



...to the November edition of *News & Views*, the newsletter of Charnwood u3a. We hope you'll find it both entertaining and informative. The content is largely written by members; details for sending contributions can be found on the last page.

Our Next Monthly Meeting:

'Travels with a Tiger – Riding the Western Front'



See page 2 for details

View from the Chair



The final person that I would like to introduce is Bev Gillman.

Bev qualified as a Dance and Physical Education Teacher at Chelsea College in Eastbourne and taught at Limehurst School in Loughborough, where she became Head of Department in her second year. She held this position for a further four years before having a family. Whilst her children were both in junior school she worked as a supply teacher in various schools, teaching various subjects, including Maths, before accepting a temporary position at Garendon. She then moved to Crown Hills School in Leicester, intending to move back into the Loughborough area when a post became available. However, she remained there for 15 years, teaching all aspects of dance and PE, including Boys Football!



Bev Gillman

After retirement she cared for her husband for a number of years when he became ill and physically disabled. After his passing she joined Charnwood U3A. She chose Charnwood primarily as it had a Dance Group. On her fourth attendance at this group she became the new group leader, which she thoroughly enjoyed. This went on for several years, during which she taught Folk Dancing, Ballroom and Line Dancing. Gradually Ballroom and Folk became less popular and she opened a separate Line Dance Group.

She became a member of the Committee just as Covid started and soon after she took on the responsibility of Groups Co-Ordinator, a position she held for several years.

As well as dancing, she attends several other groups. She is a member of a Bowls Club – which all started through the u3a group.

She started dancing when she was 3 years old and she's still dancing!

Garry Rigby, chair@charnwoodu3a.org.uk

Our Monthly Meetings

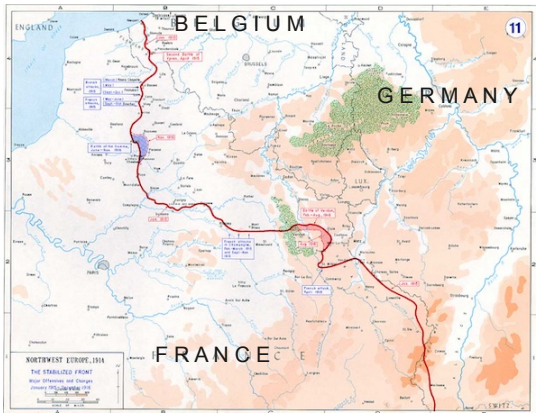
The monthly meetings of Charnwood u3a are on the **second Wednesday afternoon, 2.15 for 2.30 pm in Emmanuel Church**, Forest Road, Loughborough. These meetings are free to all, and we welcome prospective new members attending a meeting as a 'taster'. New members are invited to arrive at 2 pm to meet other members before the main meeting.



Last month we were treated to an excellent talk from Kevin Reynolds on how our relationship with wild birds has changed over the years. He explained, in a very engaging way, how some species have gone from being seen as pests and killed for food (and feathers) to being encouraged to feed and nest in our gardens.

Our Next Meeting: Wednesday 11th November

Travels with a Tiger – Riding the Western Front, with Phil Drabble



Phil is a retired teacher and his talk will look at his trip along the Western Front riding a Triumph Tiger motorcycle. The trip covered the length of the frontline – from Switzerland to the North Sea – and will look at some of the places familiar to us and some that are less so.

Inspired by the book *'The Path of Peace'* in which historian Anthony Seldon recounts his solo walk along the length of the Western Front, Phil decided to do the same journey on his motorbike. Tracing this historic route, he crossed some of Europe's most evocative and beautiful scenery from the Swiss border, riding through Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, the Somme and Flanders, finishing at the North Sea in Belgium.

Looking Ahead:

Next month, on **9th December,** we welcome local folk group **Well Seasoned,** who will entertain us with a collection of seasonal songs and carols from all over the country and further afield.

More information on each meeting is on the **Monthly Meetings** page under 'Our Events' menu on our website https://www.charnwoodu3a.org.uk. Details will also appear in future issues of *News & Views.*

Group News



New Group: American History



My name is Janice and I'm a brand-new member of Cu3a. I want to start up a new group called American History. My credentials are sound because I was born and raised there, but I've lived in the UK since 1972.

As well as looking at historical events, I'm also thinking about running through an alphabetical list of American states and telling you about interesting or funny factoids. At the moment I'm just gauging the level of interest. If interested, please email me at: americanhistory@charnwoodu3a.org.uk

Janice Strand

Tuesday Pilates & Active Seated Groups

As of 1st November, the Tuesday Pilates 2,3,4 groups and Get Active - Stay Seated 1 will cease to be u3a groups, becoming mixed classes with some from the u3a and others who are not members. Get Active - Stay Seated 2, meeting at 11:30 on Tuesdays, will continue as a u3a group, as will the Friday Pilates group. Starting in November there will be a new Stretch Balance Pilates group at Gorse Covert Community Centre weekly on Tuesdays 10 – 11 am for u3a members. More details will be available in the next newsletter.

10+ Walking Group

Our October Walk was chosen as a tribute to Peter Mill after his passing earlier in the year.



The walk included Chee Dale with its stepping stones running alongside a cliff wall as the River Wye flows through the limestone gorge. It was one of Peter's favourite walks. Eight of us took part, including Peter's sister and her husband, who had travelled from Darlington. We took a figure of eight centred around Millers Dale car park, out in the morning to Blackwell and returning after lunch via Wormhill, but this walk portrait isn't about the route, it's about the magic.



The first section was easy along the old railway line forming the Monsal Trail. After watching the children abseiling from the viaduct 100 feet down to the river below, we turned off the track and made a gentle descent towards the river, followed by a tougher ascent and then another gentle descent before reaching the morning highlight of the path along the river valley.

The river was sparkling clear, babbling its way over and round the rocks in its river bed. The temperature was balmy, for Derbyshire; the light was strong, the growth was verdant and green, the birds were singing. Enchanting. After the dry weather, the Wye was in its summer flow, so the water level was low, ideal for the stepping stones to come. Fish of all sizes in the river attracted fly fishermen wading thigh deep, herons and a kingfisher, all after their different sized prey, plus crayfish cleaning up the remains.

The footpath follows the river down the narrow valley with the limestone cliffs towering above. The stepping stones looked as though the tide had gone out, with just a few being lapped and circled by water. But the stones are not Chee Dale's only attraction: it's the closeness of the river as it tumbles over rocks, the vegetation, the soaring cliff walls and more. Pure magic. Our progress was slow and we only made it to the Angler's Rest with five minutes to spare before food orders closed. The rain forecast for the afternoon never arrived; instead, we got a blue sky with a smattering of cloud. The walk kicked off with a climb out of the valley along the Limestone Way and Pennine Bridleway, allowing views across the White Peaks. Beautiful.

Thank you Peter; we all agree with you that Chee Dale is one of the best ever.

If you are interested in joining us on our monthly walks, contact Walk10plus@charnwoodu3a.org.uk

Geoff Dodsworth – with thanks to Phil Denniff for his poetic words and John Samson for the photos.

Drama and Theatre Studies visit The Curve

On Wednesday 14th October the Drama and Theatre Studies group travelled to Leicester for a guided tour of The Curve Theatre.



Our guide, 'Bald' Jack took us into most areas of the theatre including both the main stages, the large stage where "The Last Laugh" was playing and the Studio where "Educating Rita" was currently running. We were even allowed onto the set of "The Last Laugh". The set is in fact very small, faithfully recreating a drab dressing room of days gone by. The detail is incredible, from Tommy Cooper's real magic props and old playbills and photos stuck on the walls, to ash in the ash tray. This is a touring production and the set will be built on many stages during its run.

The design of The Curve is revolutionary with the auditoria and 5 rehearsal rooms in the centre of the building and a multi-level walkway all round with offices and technical support off it. There's no backstage area, so actors and backstage crew use the main ground floor public area to move about. The walls of the stage areas can be raised to allow sets to come and go and the wall between the two stages – which can also be raised if required – is completely soundproof, so two productions can be run at the same time.

Jack's knowledge about theatre in general and The Curve in particular is encyclopedic and his infectious enthusiasm made for a highly enjoyable tour and insight into the world of professional theatre.

Graham North

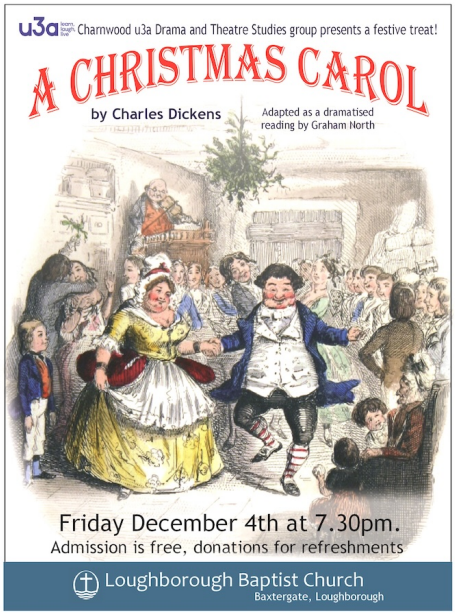
Christmas Present from our Thespians

On **December 4th at Loughborough Baptist Church at 7.30 pm,** Charnwood u3a Drama and Theatre Studies group will be performing Charles Dickens' classic tale of redemption, “A Christmas Carol”, as a dramatic reading. Fourteen members of the group will vocalise every character in the tale, together with music and sound effects.

You will remember the group performing a shortened version of Dickens' masterpiece at last December's members' meeting, but this time they will present the whole book in a full evening's entertainment.

And it's FREE! Just turn up and get into the Christmas spirit. There will be refreshments served in the interval for which donations are invited. There's just the one performance, so make a note of the date and enjoy a Christmas present from our Thespians.

Graham North



Days of Interest Trip to the Black Country Living Museum



Although we didn’t venture very far for our October trip, which was to the Dudley based Black Country Living Museum, one of the first things we noticed was the accent change, along with some new bits of vocabulary. The museum’s objective is to explain life in the Black Country since the industrial revolution. To do this it houses over 80 reconstructed dwellings, shops and workshops. The buildings have been moved, brick by brick, from their original locations to the museum and if the upstairs floor wasn’t flat in its original location its still wonky at the museum. A formidable enterprise.

To help the visitors get a full impression of what it would have been like to live and work in the Black Country in the past, staff and volunteers take the role of characters from the past, who lived and worked in the buildings. They explained about how they lived their lives. It’s interesting to see how small some of the dwellings were and how limited the facilities were, even for cooking.



Some of the most disconcerting houses were those decorated for the 1950s, 60s and 70s. There was a lot that was familiar, including Dansette record players, lots of singles and some posters, and wallpaper we recognised.



Besides the dwellings and the workshops there was a fun fair and lots of shops including a working butcher, baker, sweet shop and Post Office. Some of our group even queued for chips from the chippy which we understand were traditionally cooked and very good. There were also a couple of working pubs and for the more seriously minded a school, library and chapel. We also got to see the fabulous banner of the “National Federation of Women Workers”, with its slogan of “To Fight, To Struggle, To Right The Wrong” *(see photo, right).*

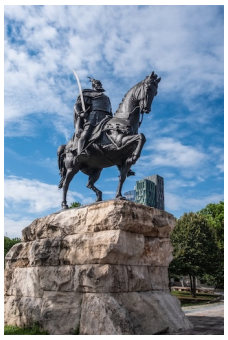
Some of our group also took the opportunity to take a trip along the canal and others went to a very interesting talk about the development of the Davey lamp, at which there were (controlled) explosions. All this, and I don’t think that anyone in the group did any running, climbing, chasing or jumping, all of which were specifically forbidden.

Friday 13th November – Doddington Hall for Christmas: for all of you booked onto this trip, please don’t forget that we are unusually going on Friday 13th and not Saturday.

If you are interested in joining the Days of Interest Group, please contact Pauline May by email at DaysofInterest@charnwoodu3a.org.uk or by telephone on 07455 167929 for details.

Travel Group Holiday to Albania

Our most recent trip took us to the hidden Balkan gem of Albania, a country with a beautiful coastline, UNESCO world heritage sites, dynamic cities and friendly locals, plus an ongoing struggle for democracy.



Our first introduction to Albania was the capital Tirana. Our hotel overlooked the vast Skanderbeg Square, with the National History Museum, The Opera House, the Et'hem Mosque (which survived intact during the communist era), the Clock Tower and of course, the grand statue of Skanderbeg (*pictured left)*, the national hero who is celebrated for leading opposition to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century.



Surrounding this open square are many examples of the growth of modern architectural design apparent throughout Albania, with huge skyscrapers which often defy gravity and the 'usual' shape of buildings. One such building is locally named 'Tirana's Rock' *(pictured right)*, an extraordinary tower with flowing balconies and an illuminated outline, which pays tribute to Albania's beloved hero's face! *(Other Tirana buildings are shown on right below the Rock).*

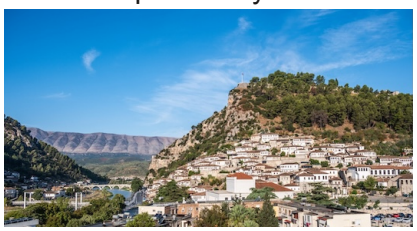
Walking within the Bunk'Art 2 museum, an underground communist-era nuclear bunker (one of over 170,000 built during the communist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha), was a moving and unforgettable experience, and a stark reminder of Albania's dark and mysterious past between 1921 and 1992.







On to Durres, one of the country's oldest continuously inhabited cities founded in 627 BC by the Corinthians with roughly 2,500 years of recorded history. Here we visited the largest amphitheatre in the Balkans, medieval fortifications, and the Byzantine market square and Roman Baths. Several of our group also enjoyed a swim in a pleasantly warm Adriatic Sea.



The UNESCO world heritage site of Berat *(left)* is known as the 'Town of 1000 Windows': hundreds of small white buildings, stacked on the steep hillside guarded over by an ancient fortress high above the town, with amazing views of the surrounding mountain ranges. The castle also houses many churches, including 'Onufri' the National Iconographic museum with many beautiful icons.

Our itinerary had to be curtailed, as our next visit was to Vlore, which is currently the centre of many demonstrations protesting against Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump's controversial bid to buy Sazan Island off Albania's Riviera coast, following suspected government corruption practices. However, we spent a short time in the old part of the seaside town, took a boat ride along the coast and visited Flag Square, where the national red flag with the double headed eagle was raised for the first time in November 1912, proclaiming Albania's independence from the Ottoman Empire.



Flag Square, Vlore



Our final visit was to Apollonia *(left)*. This major archaeological site, founded by the Greeks in 600 BC, later became a major Roman cultural and academic hub where the future Emperor Augustus studied. After an earthquake in the 3rd century AD it was eventually abandoned, but there is still evidence of Greek and Roman columns among the olive groves and a Byzantine monastery and museum.

This trip proved to be a brief but very interesting tour of several major areas of Albania and managed to expel some of the negative images we may have had before our visit. At the next Travel Group meeting on Nov 25th, members will share their photos and memories of their time in Albania. Everyone's welcome!

Ann Maddocks

November Calendar

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2 Nov 09.30 Yoga 10.00 Craft+Self Help 11.00 Table Tennis 1 13.30 Canasta 2 14.00 Current Affairs	3 Nov 10.00 10+ Walks 10.00 Spanish 10.00 Stretch Pilates* 11.00 Table Tennis 2 11.30 Active Seated 2 14.00 Canasta 1 14.00 Canasta1Quorn 14.00 Sing4Pleasure 15.30 Pickleball	4 Nov 09.30 Golf 10.00 Drama 10.00 German 10.00 JigsawBookEx 10.00 Mini Tennis 10.00 Scottish Dance 10.30 Papercraft 11.00 Table Tennis 3 14.00 Cribbage 14.00 French Improve 14.00 Sustain Planet	5 Nov 10.00 Parish Walks 10.00 Sci+Tech 10.00 Spanish Conv 11.00 Table Tennis 4 13.30 Line Dance 2 14.00 Bowls Indoor 14.30 French Conv 19.00 Canasta 3	6 Nov 09.00 Badminton 10.00 German RTC 10.00 Line Dance 1 10.00 Mahjong 10.00 Table Tennis 7 10.30 Photography 10.30 Tai Chi 11.00 Table Tennis 5 12.00 Lunch Club 12.00 Table Tennis 6 13.30 Pilates 1
9 Nov 09.30 Yoga 10.00 Craft+Self Help 10.00 Poetry 1 11.00 Table Tennis 1 14.00 Archaeology 14.00 Chess 14.00 Quiz group	10 Nov 10.00 Scrabble 3 10.00 Stretch Pilates* 11.00 Table Tennis 2 11.30 Active Seated 2 14.00 Canasta 1 14.00 Eng Parish Ch 15.30 Pickleball	11 Nov 09.30 Golf 10.00 Committee 10.00 Mini Tennis 11.00 Table Tennis 3 14.30 Monthly Meet 19.00 Canasta2Quorn	12 Nov 11.00 Table Tennis 4 13.30 Line Dance 2 14.00 Bowls Indoor 14.00 Contemp Music	13 Nov 09.00 Badminton 09.00 Days of Interest 10.00 Line Dance 1 10.00 Mahjong 10.00 Needlecraft 1 10.00 Scrabble 1 10.00 Table Tennis 7 10.30 Tai Chi 11.00 Table Tennis 5 12.00 Table Tennis 6 13.30 Pilates 1
16 Nov 09.30 Yoga 10.00 Craft+Self Help 11.00 Table Tennis 1 13.30 Canasta 2 14.00 Gardening 14.00 Painting	17 Nov 10.00 6+ Walks 10.00 Recorder 10.00 Spanish 10.00 Stretch Pilates* 11.00 Table Tennis 2 11.30 Active Seated 2 14.00 Canasta 1 14.00 Sing4Pleasure 15.30 Pickleball	18 Nov 09.30 Golf 10.00 German 10.00 Mini Tennis 10.00 Poetry 2 10.00 Scottish Dance 11.00 Table Tennis 3 14.00 Cribbage 14.00 Family History 14.00 French Improve 14.00 Italian Conv	19 Nov 09.45 CC Walks 11.00 Table Tennis 4 13.30 Line Dance 2 14.00 Bowls Indoor 14.15 Scrabble 4 14.30 French Conv	20 Nov 09.00 Badminton 10.00 German RTC 10.00 Line Dance 1 10.00 Mahjong 10.00 Table Tennis 7 10.30 Photography 10.30 Tai Chi 11.00 Table Tennis 5 12.00 Table Tennis 6 13.30 Pilates 1 14.00 Art Apprec'n
23 Nov 09.30 Yoga 10.00 Craft+Self Help 11.00 Table Tennis 1 14.00 Chess 14.00 Local History	24 Nov 10.00 ETHEL 10.00 Scrabble 3 10.00 Stretch Pilates* 11.00 Table Tennis 2 11.30 Active Seated 2 14.00 Canasta 1 14.00 Philosophy 1 15.30 Pickleball	25 Nov 09.30 Golf 10.00 History 10.00 Mini Tennis 11.00 Table Tennis 3 14.00 Classical Music 14.00 Humanness 14.00 Reading 1 14.00 Reading 2 14.00 Travel Group	26 Nov 10.00 Philosophy 2 10.00 Thurs 6 Milers 11.00 Table Tennis 4 13.30 Line Dance 2 14.00 Architecture 14.00 Bowls Indoor 14.00 WomensHistory	27 Nov 09.00 Badminton 10.00 Line Dance 1 10.00 Mahjong 10.00 Needlecraft 1 10.00 Scrabble 1 10.00 Table Tennis 7 10.30 Tai Chi 11.00 Table Tennis 5 12.00 Table Tennis 6 13.30 Pilates 1 19.30 Wine Apprec'n
30 Nov 09.30 Yoga 10.00 Craft+Self Help 11.00 Table Tennis 1	**PLUS Every Tuesday:** Fix IT Clinics in John Storer House café 10:30 - 12:00 **PLUS Every Friday:** Golf group now on Fridays from 9 am as well as on Wednesdays **PLUS at Weekends:** Sunday Lunch Club (8 Nov)			

* **new group:** Stretch Balance Pilates

Please note: Whilst every effort has been made to show the dates/times of meetings as accurately as possible, errors and changes may occur, so you should check with group leaders for confirmation. Please send any amendments for future issues to: newsletter@charnwoodu3a.org.uk

Robert's Recommended Reads

For November, Robert recommends novels by two authors from 'down under' – Australian Peter Carey and New Zealander Keri Hulme.

Oscar and Lucinda by Peter Carey

published in 1988

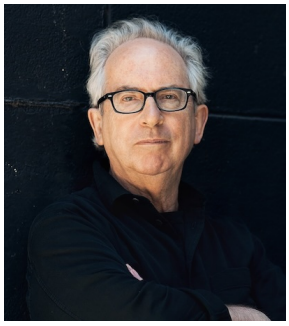
Narrated by key protagonist Oscar Hopkins' unnamed grandchild, *Oscar and Lucinda* is a moving, complex and gloriously rich story of unrequited love between clergyman Oscar Hopkins and Lucinda Leplaistrier.

Set mainly in the mid nineteenth century, the story begins in Oscar's childhood home in Devon. During his later studies at Oriel College Oxford, Oscar develops a secret obsession with gambling. Such is the power of his addiction that Oscar's scandalous late night gambling sessions threaten his excommunication from the church. On the outcome of a coin toss, Oscar embarks on a missionary voyage to New South Wales, Australia. On board ship he meets Lucinda and the two discover their shared addiction to gambling. An immediate and enduring bond is formed.

An independent and wealthy heiress, Lucinda purchases a commercial glass factory in Sydney and develops a fascination for the beauty of glass. In a moment of sheer 'gamblers madness' Oscar accepts Lucinda's bet that he cannot successfully transport an entire glass building - a church - from Sydney to the New South Wales outback.

Any more detail here will spoil your enjoyment of what is, without doubt, one of the truly special novels of the late twentieth century.

Oscar and Lucinda won the Booker Prize for fiction in 1988. Carey subsequently became one of only four authors to win the coveted prize on two occasions, when *True History of the Kelly Gang* won in 2001.



Peter Carey pictured in The Guardian, 18 Nov 2017 Photo: Heike Steinweg

Above reviews written by Robert Jackson.
Next month: *Rebecca Perry and Orhan Pamuk.*

The Bone People by Keri Hulme

published in 1985

This debut novel by New Zealander Keri Hulme is a sumptuous fable and a powerful amalgam of Maori myth, Christian symbolism and New Zealand's landscape and heritage.

In a departure from my usual methodology in these articles, I offer no detail of plot, characters or narrative for *The Bone People*. Rather, to tempt you to read this superb novel, I quote the initial paragraph of Hulme's preface to the first edition which she wrote in 1984 and called:

Standards in a Non-Standard Book

*"*The Bone People *began life as a short story called* Simon Peter's Shell. *I typed it out on my first typewriter, nights after working in the Mouteka tobacco fields. The typewriter was a present for my 18th birthday from my mother, but that's another story.* Simon Peter's Shell *began to warp into a novel. The characters wouldn't go away. They took 12 years to reach this shape. To me, it's a finished shape, so finished that I don't want to have anything to do with any alteration of it. Which is why I was going to embalm the whole thing in a block of perspex when the first three publishers turned it down on the grounds, among others, that it was too large, too unwieldy too different when compared with the normal shape of a novel".*

When Hulme eventually found a publisher, success cascaded around her. She became the first New Zealander to win the Booker Prize (1985) and *The Bone People* was the first debut novel to win the prize.



Keri Hulme pictured in The Guardian, 1 Feb 2022 (with her obituary). Photo: David Alexander/SNPA

Are We in a Climate Crisis?

Did you enjoy summer 2026? Were you comfortable in the temperatures we experienced? Did your gardening endeavours succeed despite the drought? If so, you may be pleased to hear, as is being said, that now "is the least extreme climate we will experience". This means we are progressively going to find it hard living in housing that is not built for warming weather. Also what our farmers can grow will need to change!



In conjunction with our Sustaining the Planet group we are looking into showing this short well-constructed film. This is to give Charnwood u3a members an opportunity to hear what various national experts are saying about how aspects of our lives, and the nature around us, are likely to be impacted.

To make us better and more honestly informed, there is a movement pushing for a UK-wide government led emergency briefing to be held on climate and nature risks. This would draw on supporting scientific evidence to inform us about the crisis we are facing, let alone what our children and grandchildren may experience.

Surely with news reports of disasters, much talk of El Niño impacts, seeing glaciers shrinking, let alone hearing of water shortages, it is already apparent that we should not ignore the climate changes we have seen during our lifetimes. To help us, as u3a members, think about responding to what is already being described as "an emergency" a film, presented by Chris Packham, has been produced.

Before making any viewing arrangements it would help the planning if those interested in seeing the film could respond by emailing Martyn at nebrief@charnwoodu3a.org.uk. You will then be contacted about setting up a viewing session.

It is hoped that this topic will be of interest to Charnwood u3a members and that many of you will wish to become better informed about the need for us to adapt to the emergency that climate change is making more and more urgent.

To learn more about the national campaign, visit https://www.nebriefing.org/

Martyn Speight and Brian Waters

Loughborough University

University Research: Participants Wanted

Do you sometimes feel unsure about numbers in everyday life?

What is this about?
Many everyday decisions involve numbers: letters from the council, energy bills, medication instructions or comparing options. Some people feel confident with this. Others find it stressful or avoid it. A team of researchers from the Department of Mathematics Education at Loughborough University are working with local adults to develop simple tools that make these situations easier.

What would I do?
Participants are invited to join several short sessions:
- A one-to-one interview
- 3 group sessions helping design simple guides
- Trying the materials at home
- A final group meeting to share feedback

All sessions last about 1 hour at John Storer House.

Why take part?
- You will help create practical resources that support older adults in everyday life.
- Participants receive payment via vouchers for their time.
- Travel support can be arranged and refreshments are provided.
- Many participants enjoy sharing their experiences and meeting others taking part in the project.

You can take part if you:
- Live in the Charnwood area
- Sometimes feel unsure dealing with numbers

Interested or want to ask a question? Please contact **Dr Silke Wortha**: email s.m.wortha@lboro.ac.uk phone 01509 226290



IT Support



Our IT support continues, with weekly Fix IT clinics in JSH on Tuesday mornings and one-to-one support on demand. See last month's *News & Views* (p.7) for details.

Tour an eclectic collection in a secret location!

Want to have a intriguing and unusual behind-the-scenes tour at a secret location?!

All museums are only ever able to display a small percentage of their collections; the rest are stored in large climate-controlled warehouses where they are used for research and for future exhibitions.

We went on the October tour for a fascinating stroll around Leicester Museums' main object store. Anybody who has ever wondered what kind of things museums store behind-the-scenes, and what is required to look after them and preserve them for future generations, will love this! There was everything from paintings to armadillos; Victorian vacuum cleaners to Roman mosaics; 17th century shoes to an amazing collection of beautiful ceramics.

You even get up close and personal to 'Peppy' – the Fox's Glacier Mint polar bear *(see photo below)*. I found her heartbreaking. The company sent hunters to Canada in the 1920s to shoot 5 polar bears to stuff and strap to the tops of cars to drive round Britain to advertise the mints. 'Peppy' is an immature female polar bear the company found in the back of the factory when they were having a clear out in 2003 – 20 years after they'd stopped using her for advertising.

Experts from the Museum Collections Team take you round and talk about some of their favourite objects, are happy to open any boxes you fancy seeing inside, and are great at answering questions along the way.

Leicester Museums make their Store much more accessible than a lot of other museums. They run monthly tours of their Store: about 90 mins of fascinating items and stories for £12. The next dates are 10.30 am 4th Nov, and 1 pm 2nd Dec. But not to worry if you can't do either of those cos they'll be posting new dates for next year soon.

To book use:
https://www.leicestermuseums.org/StoreTours2026

Char March



Peppy, the stuffed polar bear used to advertise Fox's Glacier Mints

"Yes, everything we're given has to be kept forever"

(Leicester Museum Store Tour 7 Oct 2026)
– by Char March

The tiger wasn't burning bright;
fur flat – as never in life. And,
despite the taxidermist's 'life-like pose',
he was extremely dead – there,
in the constant shudder of the climate controls.

He showed no interest in the four types
of gazelle, only an aisle away. But then,
in life, they'd lived two continents apart.

I'd expected everything in glass cases, or
under sheets like some grand country house
– shutdown for the London season.
But all the animals
were bare. Standing under the huge warehouse
shelving – not allowed to run away.

Their glass eyes still held terror. It was indecent
that we could get so very close; see every hair,
every faded eyelash, every fatal hole that gave
the jolly white hunter such joy.

The lighting flickered off as we walked away.
The tiger, so astonishingly big;
the gazelles, still scared. Forever.





Note: 150 years ago there were an estimated 100,000 tigers in India. By 2006 there were 1,411. Most tigers were killed between 1875 and 1925, during the height of British colonial rule and intensive sport hunting. Approximately **80,000 tigers** were killed in India alone within those 50 years. You can help by donating to The Wildlife Trust of India: https://donation.wti.org.in/ and/or The World Wildlife Fund 'Protect Our Tigers' Project:
https://donate.wwfindia.org/protect-our-tigers.php

Char March

Upcoming Local Events

Charnwood Eco Hub Workshops

7-8 Baxtergate, Loughborough

Charnwood Eco Hub, Loughborough's not-for-profit, shared community hub, provides a space to meet, make, fix, create and share sustainable ideas and resources. Workshops they are offering this month include:

- ***Upcycled Paper Christmas Decorations:***
  Saturday 7th November, 11 am – 1 pm
- ***Handmade Book Workshop:***
  Wednesday 18th November, 4:30 – 6:30 pm
- ***Rag Wreath Workshop:***
  Friday 27th November, 4 – 6 pm
- ***Daydream Journal Cover Workshop:***
  Saturday 28th November, 11 am – 1 pm

Cost of each workshop: £10 students / low income / retired, £15 full rate. All materials are provided, except for the journal cover workshop, you'll need to bring an A5 journal.

For further details and booking links, go to:
https://charnwoodecohub.org/workshops-and-events/

Emmanuel Church Lunchtime Concert

Thursday 19th November
12:45 - 1:30 pm

A concert by Philip Miles, Piano

A recent graduate of the University of Nottingham, Phil performs music spanning three centuries, including the wit of Joseph Haydn, the lyricism of Frederic Chopin and the rich harmonies of Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera.

Soup and roll lunches are served from 12:00. Admission is free but donations are welcome to cover costs.



Remembrance Day Events



This year's annual **Remembrance Sunday** service, hosted by Charnwood Borough Council, is in Loughborough town centre and Queen's Park on **Sunday, 8th November**.

The parade will set off from **Market Place at 10.20 am**, proceeding through the town centre to **Queen's Park. The service will start at 10.50 am**, led by local clergy and civic representatives. The Last Post will be played and a **two-minute silence observed at 11 am.**

Large screens will be positioned on either side of the Carillon Tower to broadcast the service live, and the Council will live-stream the event on its YouTube channel. There will be some road closures on the day, so visitors should allow extra travelling time.

On **Wednesday 11th November,** there will be an **Armistice Day Service at 10.50 am**, also at the **Carillon Tower at Queen's Park**, with a two-minute silence observed at 11am.

For details of the above events, see:
https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/remembrance



- **Berlioz:** Roman Carnival Overture
- **Ravel:** Mother Goose Suite
- **Franck:** Symphonic Variations
- **Berlioz:** Love Scene from Romeo and Juliet
- **Tchaikovsky:** Francesca da Rimini

Tickets from tickets@charnwoodorchestra.org.uk or Orchestra website: www.charnwoodorchestra.org.uk

Prices: £16 Adult, £14 Concessions, £5 Students and U18s.

Loughborough Community Christmas Tree Festival, All Saints Parish Church

Carol Singing through the Ages, Friday 27th November, 1.30 to 3 pm



Following on from last year's very popular 'Christmas through the Ages' presentation, this year u3a member Roger Willson will take us through ***A History of Christmas Carol Singing*** with readings selected from historical accounts, diaries, novels and poems. Members of the Concorde Choral Ensemble will perform carols from across the centuries, from medieval to contemporary. Admission £10 at the door to include light refreshments and the first opportunity to visit the Christmas Tree Festival, including a **tree from our own u3a Craft group.** All are welcome.

See below for details of opening times and other events at the Festival.





Christmas Lights Switch On



Friday, 27th November
Market Place, Loughborough



Raising The Roof 26

A reminder of the "Raising the Roof 26" concert on **Saturday, 28th November at 7 pm in the Hodson Hall at Loughborough Grammar School.** Tickets cost £12 or £6 and can be purchased at www.beaconrotary.org For details, see last month's edition of *News & Views*.

For other local events, see:
https://www.discovercharnwood.co.uk/events
https://allevents.in/loughborough/november

Charnwood Museum

Songster – Loughborough's Own War Horse
Thursday 19th November, 7 pm – 9 pm

Author Alison Mott and illustrator Liz Waddell share the story of how they became involved in creating the picture book about a real horse from Loughborough who went to war.
Members £3 and guests £5 - all welcome.
Booking essential on 01509 233754 or by calling into the museum.
Doors open at 7pm for light refreshments and the talk commences at 7.30pm. More at:
https://www.charnwoodmuseum.co.uk/events/

National u3a News

Essay Competition Winner

The winner of the u3a Essay Competition 2026 was **Sandy of Bedford u3a** with a remarkable essay *(well I thought so - Ed)* entitled ***Operation Genesis***. I can recommend you read this and the other shortlisted essays at: https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/essay-competition-winners-2026

Online Learning Events this month

A wide variety of free online Zoom events are on offer this month, including talks on: **staying safe online; 16th C fashion; preventing stroke; creative writing; learning to play bridge,** and lots more. For details of all these, including how to book, go to: https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events

More from National u3a: See last month's *News & Views* (page 11) for details.

Items for News & Views

Do you have an announcement, story, poem – or even a short comment – to share with your fellow Cu3a members? All contributions are very welcome, and we can preserve your anonymity if you prefer that your name does not appear in the newsletter.

There is a limit of around 500 words per item, and photos are very welcome – but please ensure you have permission of anyone identifiable in the photos.

To enable the newsletter to be compiled in time for delivery to members at the start of each month, the deadline for receiving items will normally be the last day but one of the previous month. The deadline for the **December** issue of **News & Views** will be **Sunday 29th November (12 noon).**



Please send your contributions to the Newsletter Editor at: newsletter@charnwoodu3a.org.uk
I always acknowledge all emails received, so if you don't get a reply within a few days, please contact me again as some emails do go astray!

Please make sure you include your contact details with your item, and try not to leave it until the last minute if at all possible.

The Editor reserves full editorial rights as to length and suitability and the Editor's decision is final.

News & Views is sent to all Charnwood u3a members by email link (or, for those without email, by post) before the monthly meeting. It is also available to read on the Charnwood u3a website each month at https://www.charnwoodu3a.org.uk with a link from the Home page.

Thank You!

Helen Reid
Newsletter Editor
Charnwood u3a



Committee, Support Teams and Group Leaders' Details

Names, photos and email links for all the current Committee members can be found on our website under Home –> Our Committee, along with details of our Support Teams under 'Help and Support'. Our Membership Secretary's phone number is shown, as are those of our IT Support team when you log in.

The names and generic email addresses of Group Leaders for each group can be found on that group's dedicated website page, accessed via the Groups Lists.

Note: Where personal contact details appear in News & Views, these are included with permission.

Some other useful u3a web addresses:

National u3a: https://www.u3a.org.uk

The Association of East Midlands u3as: https://www.eastmidlandsu3as.org.uk