

Syston and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

MAR
2024

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

At last, we are beginning to see the first signs of Spring. I have snowdrops and primroses in bloom and the trees are starting to show their new leaves.

We now have our events package working so please keep looking at our website and Facebook page for upcoming events.

Shortly it will be time for our AGM, and we have a few vacant places on our committee. The position of Vice Chair is available, and 2 Committee Members are free. These Committee places do not have a specific position but give us a wider point of view.

If you are interested in joining us, please email me at sadu3achair@gmail.com

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

LOOK AT OUR WEBSITE ?

It has come to our notice that not everyone checks the U3A web site very often.

Please have a look now and again as you may be missing out on activities.

We have plenty of ideas we are working on at the moment.

The best we can do to inform you is to put the information on SADU3A web page, Facebook, in the newsletter, and verbally at the monthly general meeting .

It appears some members are not even aware of our monthly talk ! Magician, Fireman, Belly Dancer .

In the recent past there has been a session at the golf range, a session at the crazy golf and a burlesque session will take place on 1 March.

These have all been advertised so you may have missed out.

So, if you find yourself sitting at home with a minute to spare, take a look at what is happening and join in the fun.

GROUP NEWS

WHERE HAS ALL THE GROUP NEWS GONE?

It's disappointing to have so few groups providing news of their activities this month. I can only publish what people provide. Group members can provide articles, it doesn't have to be left to group organisers. If you have something to tell us about a group, just have a word with your group organiser, so that we avoid duplication. I would even venture to say that articles giving group members perspectives may be very helpful to new members looking for groups to join. That said, even if your group is currently full, others may well still be interested in knowing what's been happening. In addition, such articles provide an archive about our u3a.

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

When we are looking for something, we don't all employ the same approach. Some people will flit here and there hoping to come across what they want, some will take a more systematic approach and search different places in turn, others look in all the places they might expect to find whatever it is first, before casting their net wider. All of these options have a chance of success, and none of them is wrong per se, but some are likely to get results more quickly than others. The same is true of finding information about our ancestors. That said, the main family history sites don't all work in the same way when searching. We had a look at this during our session and will carry this on at our March meeting. Our searches also highlighted the importance of using different sites in tandem, of the issues around spelling, and the scope for misunderstanding. You won't find everything on just one, but as several of the sites are free to search, or free altogether, that doesn't mean you need to pay multiple subscriptions.

In trying to track a suggested line based on other family trees, Sarah Stainsby born in 1818 came up. The inference was that she married John Rowledge and had a son John Abbott Rowledge who was born in 1845. There he was on the 1851 census with his parents, but a search for either a birth registration or a baptism, came up blank, even using the option to search for variations of spelling. Perhaps the stated place of birth of Freiston near Boston, Lincolnshire was wrong? But, he appears on later census data with the same place of birth. Another possibility was that he was born before Sarah married John, so would appear on a baptism and birth registration record under Stainsby. That threw up another problem, there was no marriage of Sarah to a John Rowledge, but by searching a little less precisely on names, a marriage to a John Rowlet at the church where Sarah's family lived came up. John Rowlet was shown in the marriage register as a bricklayer, the same occupation as John Rowledge on the census data. That marriage took place in 1839, so John junior was born in wedlock. Another search of births registrations and baptisms with this new information still came up blank.

CRAFT GROUP



The craft group are making poppies, either knitted or crocheted, with a view to attaching them to some netting to hang in the town for the remembrance period. This would probably be from when the town council put the poppies up along Melton Road. If there are any knitters or crocheters (?) out there who would like to make one or two for us that would be much appreciated. Patterns are available free online but I can provide one if you contact me. patchglover61@gmail.com We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the community centre and you are welcome to join us there or hand any completed poppies into the centre.

Glenis Smith has made a start on contributions. (as shown left)

EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

iPHONE/iPAD WORKSHOP

I still need a few more people for my iPhone/ipad workshop to go ahead as some people can't make it now, due to take place on Friday afternoon 2-4pm, March 15th at Syston Community Centre.

The idea is to help you with some of the basics and show you some things you may not know about that could make your everyday life easier for you. If you're interested or want to know more please get in touch.

dpalmer192@btinternet.com

07710 448253

Thanks

Dave

JEWELLERY MAKING

Do you love jewellery and are you interested in making a unique piece of your own, that you will be able to take home with you at the end of the workshop, or even wear when you leave ? (See below for photos)

Jeweller, Christine Pearson, is going to run a 2 hour workshop on Friday 10th May, between 1000 - 1200, in the Old School Room, Syston Community Centre. The cost is £26.50 per person, and for this you will have the choice of making either a pendant or a pair of earrings, using enamels to decorate them and choosing from different fittings. Christine will bring 2 portable kilns so that you will be able to take your jewellery home with you on the day.

We are limited in the numbers that can do this, so if you are interested please contact me with your membership numbers and email or phone number.

Full payment will be required a couple of weeks before the workshop.

If interested contact: Ghislaine Wood – email: woodlet7@yahoo.co.uk



Tree Tops Mini Golf



On a cold, bright Tuesday morning 15 intrepid would be golfers met at Tree Tops to play a couple of rounds. Splitting into 4 small groups, we set off. After we'd all finished the first round we stopped for refreshments, then 12 of us went back for the second round (3 headed off for the singing group!). There were plenty of holes in 1, friendly rivalry and lots of banter. The 19th hole brought plenty of cheers, but only one player managed to get a free round - well done, Caroline. Thanks to everyone who came and made it a really good trip out.

FEBRUARY GM SPEAKER



A very amusing and interesting talk by retired firefighter, Paul Reynolds, at our monthly meeting. Thanks to Ghislaine (pictured below) for being our volunteer firefighter! Although she commented that the helmet was very heavy to wear.



WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks usually start 10.30am

Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

March 13th, 2024



Roxanne Dinsdale - exotic dancer - a revisit to us by Roxanne

My second talk is all about : ***“My life dancing with snake and fire!”***

(please note there is no fire lit during this talk and no snakes!!)

The talk starts with a demonstration of dance. Then funny anecdotes about how

I got into Belly Dancing

Then all about what to do when fire eating and what to do when training a snake!!

April 10th, 2024

Dr Ann Featherstone returns with a talk on:

Mashed potato sandwiches and bottle top tinsel:

Rose Buckner's post-war world of home-making - A fascinating look at homemaking, parenting, and cooking in times of austerity as shown by Rose Buckner, who wrote about it in her book and columns for the Sunday People newspaper.



May 8th, 2024

David Bell returns to give us an amusing talk on ***'Down the Garden Path' - a humorous look at the privy!***



NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS

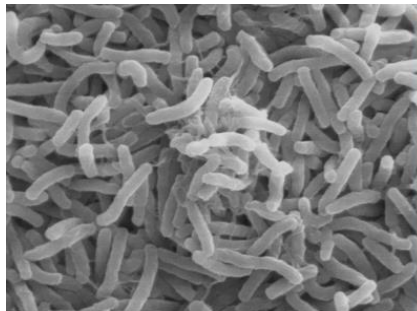


Exploring World Faiths: Women in Faith

International Women's Day occurs on March 8th. We will explore the roles of women in different faiths. Hosted by Dr Peter Rookes, u3a Subjec Adviser.

Monday 11 March at 10am

Free - online via Zoom



John Snow and the hunt for the source of cholera in Victorian London

In 1850s John Snow provided evidence that cholera is a water borne disease. We'll discuss the role of John Snow and ask why he died without recognition.

Wednesday 20 March at 10am

Free - online via Zoom



From Pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks

Hosted by Moira MacQuade, Guildford u3a, who will look at the history of pleasure gardens from the 18th century until the present day.

Friday 5 April at 2pm

Free - online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Members of Brighton, Worthing and Sussex u3as got a taste of the spotlight as extras in upcoming film, 'Vindication Swim.'

The production company behind the film, Relsah Films, were keen to involve the u3a movement and contacted u3as in the region.

u3a member Lee, who provided the photo of Worthing u3a members right, says, "Several members answered the call for extras on the movie and spent the day at Worthing Town Hall filming. We are thrilled to announce that the film is being released on International Woman's Day Friday 8 March!"



Suzanne from Brighton u3a said of her experience, "We spent the day walking up and down a road, in crowd scenes and best of all, interacting with a beautiful old 1920s bus with outside stairs, open top deck and being issued with authentic 20s tickets by a very smart 20s dressed conductor.

"We got on and off many times, were driven along the museum's roads for numerous takes, both downstairs and upstairs with a little black car of the period following us. It really was an extremely interesting and enjoyable day and furthermore two of my three friends are now members of u3a!"

The film tells the true story of swimmer Mercedes Gleitze who in 1927 became the first British woman to swim the English Channel. Written and directed by Elliott Hasler at the tender age of 18, this biographical drama tells of the bravery and determination of one woman to succeed against all odds. The film will be released on International Women's Day 2024 on Friday 8 March.

Simon Hasler, who runs Relsah Films, says, "The u3a members who came along to join us in making this film were so valuable. We hope they had as much fun as we did. And we think the amazing results speak for themselves!"

The trailer for the film can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/729153184/11033fef04>

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



APPLY TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL APPEAL PANEL MEMBER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

What will I be doing?

- Sitting on independent admission appeal panels to consider appeals by parents/carers who have been refused a place for their child at their preferred school.
- Considering information provided by the Admission Authority about why a school place has been refused.
- Ensuring that parents/carers feel they have had a fair and independent hearing and have been given every opportunity to present their case.
- Carefully balancing the arguments with advice from a qualified legal advisor to make a decision on the appeal.

What skills or experience do I need?

- Good interpersonal and communication skills.
- Good literacy and listening skills.
- Able to remain firm and calm.
- Integrity.
- Fairness.
- Ability to work with other panel members.
- An understanding and commitment to the Council's Equality Strategy.

How much time do I need to give?

This can vary depending on the level of commitment you wish to give. While appeals are held throughout the year, the peak months are between May and September. The appeals are arranged so that they are heard for half a day or a full day depending on the amount of appeals received. Papers are sent out in advance of the appeal date and you will need to read them prior to the appeal.

Where will the hearings be held?

Our appeals are held on a hybrid basis which mean that panel members can attend remotely from home using Microsoft Teams or can attend in person at County Hall.

Can anyone be a panel member?

Yes - unless you are a member or employee of the Council.

Do panel members receive training?

Yes - all panel members are trained before sitting on a panel and this is refreshed annually.

Do panel members get paid?

Panel Members provide a very important voluntary service which is unpaid. Panel Members are entitled to travel expenses when attending panel hearings and training.

To express an interest and to request an application form please contact: **Claudia Martin Education Solicitor on Tel: 0116 305 5811** or email school.appeals@leics.gov.uk ref Panel Membership



NATIONAL OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

Sunday 17 Mar 2024

Refreshments

Home-made teas.

Admission

Adult: £5.00

Child: Free

Opening times

14:00 - 17:00

Large garden in a country setting with extensive views across the Rutland landscape with the carpets of daffodils being a key seasonal feature. The Stable Yard has been transformed into a series of parterres. The kitchen garden and borders have all been rejuvenated over recent years.

FREE COMPOST WORKSHOP

Sunday 17 March *Opening hours: 10:00 - 12:00*

Tel 01461 290429

waste.prevention@leics.gov.uk (link sends email)

[Sign up for composting workshops](#)

Free to attend

Address:

Stokes Wood Allotment Society, LE3 9BR





Women
of the
Wars of the Roses

Sunday 10 March
2.30pm - 3.30pm

£6 Per person
Pre-booking recommended



DR TOBY CAPWELL
THE SCOLIOTIC KNIGHT
ENCOUNTERS WITH RICHARD III

FRI 15TH MARCH

DOORS: 6:30 PM
TALK STARTS: 7 PM

£8 PER PERSON
PRE-BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Talk: The Women of the Wars of the Roses >

Toby Capwell Talk – The Scoliotic Knight: Encounters with Richard III >

Sunday 10th March, 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Friday 15th March, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Celebrate International Women’s Day as we explore the important role that women played during the Wars of the Roses in this fascinating talk.

The discovery of King Richard III raised many fascinating new questions. Join Toby Capwell as he discusses his encounters with this most captivating and controversial of all English Kings.

More details and booking at - www.bosworthbattlefield.org.uk



Vikings of Middle England at The Guildhall

Vikings of Middle England at The Guildhall
A re-enactment day of Living History, including stalls in the halls, demonstrations of crafts as well as exciting combat pieces in the courtyard.
Free Event for all the family to enjoy.

9 Mar 2024 Open 11:00 - 15:00
Where: The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ
Contact details: 0116 253 2569



Kathleen Kenyon and the Jewry Wall, a Talk by Mathew Morris

'Kathleen Kenyon and the Jewry Wall'
A Talk by Mathew Morris.
The remarkable story of Britain’s largest surviving piece of Roman civic masonry and the pioneering archaeologist who excavated it.
Tickets: £4.50 each.
To Book: www.leicestermuseums...

12 Mar 2024 Open 14:00 - 15:00
Where: The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ
Contact details: 0116 253 2569



Belvoir Woodland Quest: Bertie's Easter Expedition

*Welcome to Belvoir Woodland Quest: Bertie's Easter Expedition!

Embark on a magical journey through the enchanting grounds of Belvoir Castle Gardens with Bertie the Beaver. Follow the paw prints, discover hidden clues, and join Bertie along with...

27 Mar 2024 Open 09:30 - 17:00
28 Mar 2024 Open 09:30 - 17:00

Where: Belvoir Castle, Belvoir, Grantham, NG32 1PD

Contact details: 01476 871001



Come and join an exclusive Tour of the Beam Engine in action, at Abbey Pumping Station Museum. A rare opportunity, to descend into the depths of the hidden workings, whilst the massive engine turns above you with the hiss and heat of real steam!

Taking you into normally inaccessible areas:

- Down into the deep basements.
- Explore the magnificent pumps on all the different levels.
- Learn spectacular stories about the site, Museum and history of the Pumping Station

23 March 2024 11.00 – 15.00 www.leicestermuseums.org/abbey-pumping-station/

FROM OUR MEMBERS

A Story of Birds by Pierre Castille

We begin this month's story with this magnificent creature that probably appeared on a plate near you in December.



Meleagris gallopavo – a wild turkey

Turkeys first arrived in this country, according to some sources, in 1526 where a Yorkshireman William Strickland was selling them in Bristol at tuppence each. Apparently he called them turkeys or turkey-cocks and the name stuck. A better question you could ask is where did they come from?

Turkeys originally came from Mexico, brought to Europe by Spanish traders where they were given different names in different places. The Turks and the French thought they came from India, hence their Turkish name *Hindi* and French name of *D'inde*. The Portuguese were aware of their New World origin and named them as *Peru*. To complicate matters Malaysian call turkeys *Dutch*

chickens and Cambodians call them *French chickens* in both cases reflecting their colonial past. Turkeys, the name anyway, reached the United States with the help of the British.

Turkey cooking time: (Courtesy of BBC)

If the turkey is **over 4kg**, calculate 20 mins per 1kg, plus 90 mins.

If the bird is **under 4kg**, calculate 20 mins per 1kg, plus 70 mins.

As a garnish I like bread sauce, chestnut stuffing and cranberry sauce. Barolo would be my wine of choice.

Feathers – what are they for?



A chick covered in down feathers

Birds are warm blooded. Birds would not survive cold weather without the insulation provided by down feathers. They provide such good insulation that we harvest birds to provide insulation for pillows, eiderdowns and various forms of cold weather clothing.

Birds have a huge advantage being warm blooded as they can remain active throughout the year in a wide range of climates. Just think about penguins in the cold waters of Antarctica and the many species of birds feeding in the cold waters of the Arctic.

A feather in your cap?



Men have been wearing feathers in many different cultures for a very long time. Feathers being symbolic of power and achievement.



This gentleman is Pago, a tribal chief we met in deepest Amazonia in Ecuador in 2007. He is wearing a crown of parrot feathers. The most impressive feathered adornment is found in Native American tribal

chiefs.

For sheer extravagance in the use of bird feathers one needs to look no further than the height of female fashion in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries – the hat!



Hats featured in the September issue of *Les Modes*, 1909

The height of fashion required the slaughter of hundreds of millions of birds with the most exotic feathers being sold at a price, weight for weight, higher than gold.

In 1887 a single London trader imported and sold 2 million egret skins. The demand for feathers created an industry of Ostrich farming in South Africa which almost certainly saved the wild ostrich from being hunted to extinction.

Then extravagantly plumaged women’s’ hat became unfashionable for two different reasons.

In 1889 Emily Williamson, a well-to-do resident of Didsbury, Manchester, established the Society for the Protection of Birds (SPB). Joining forces with three other women who had set up the Fur

and Feather League in Croydon, Surrey. Their campaign created the RSPB and led, after many acrimonious exchanges with the trade and its supporters, to legislation banning feather importation in 1921.

In the nightclubs of Paris and Berlin, burlesque dancers used fans of ostrich feathers to protect their charms from the rude gaze of watching gentlemen and no respectable woman could possibly wear ostrich feathers after that.

Why do birds have extravagant feathers?

As a biologist, I wish to make a clear that not all birds have extravagant plumage and in almost all cases it is a male bird that is so decorated, meaning of course that sex is involved.

We biologists use the phrase sexual dimorphism to describe how the male and female of a particular species have a markedly different appearance. Consider, if you will, the modest appearance of a farmyard hen compared to the strutting farmyard cockerel.

Extravagant male plumage is dangerous. Why would a bird advertise itself to a passing predator? – Because it is a cost worth paying.



The Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*)

Are You a Leapling?

A what? some of you may be asking. A leapling, or leaper, is someone born on 29th February i.e. in a leap year. Given that our u3a has about 400 members, it's possible that we have no leaplings amongst us, the odds are 1:1,461. That said, there are some families that defy those odds. An American couple, David and Louise Este, had 3 children born on 29th February in successive leap years, 2004, 2008 and 2012. This equalled the

The male with the best plumage attracts more females than a rival with less sparkling attire.

A better question is to ask why a hen bird would choose to mate with a cock bird that will provide no help in building a nest or feeding their offspring but instead will abandon her to pursue other females?

The **sexy son** hypothesis suggests a rational explanation. Evolution is about survival of an organism's genes, it's about successfully producing grandchildren. A female bird is more likely to produce grandchildren if her male children carry a gene that will provide a competitive advantage. A case of *like father like son*.

Monogamous birds generally do not show sexual dimorphism to any great degree, the male and female share the burden of bringing up a family, but, just like human behaviour, occasionally cheating can be observed in nature.

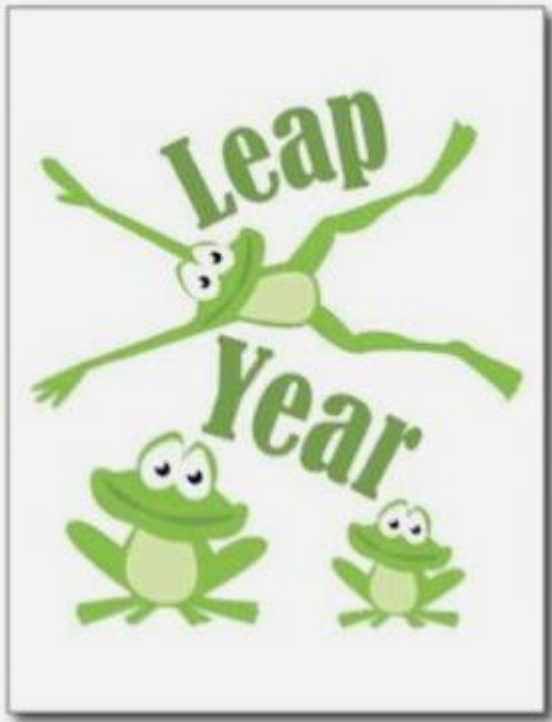
How does a female choose a suitable mate in generally monogamous species?

In Africa, the weaver bird is a very common sight. The male bird weaves an elaborate nest from grass, fine twigs and various fibres. The female will watch a male construct a nest (which takes a whole day) and will then, if it is not perfect, tear it to shreds so that he has to start again. If it's not perfect by the third attempt she will fly off and find another male.

Flight feathers?

That's another story, one to be covered next month.

Henrikson family in Norway, who had their trio in 1960, 1964 and 1968. Another record breaking family had three consecutive generations born on February 29th , Leap Day: - Peter Anthony Keogh (Ireland, b.1940) - his son Peter Eric (UK, b. 1964) and his granddaughter Bethany Wealth (UK, b. 1996) - all celebrate their birthdays every four years. 'I'm trying to find a bookmaker who will take the odds on us having a fourth generation of the family born on February 29,' Peter joked.



Famous people born on 29th February – here are just a few examples -

Joss Ackland – 1928 – actor

Dave Brailsford – 1964 – road & track cycling

Pedro Sanchez – 1972 – Spanish Prime minister

Gioachino Rossini - 1792 – composer

Jimmy Dorsey – 1904 – jazz musician and band leader

Pope Paul III – 1492 – earliest recorded leaping

Wendy Louise Peters – 1968 – actress best known for appearing in Corrie

James Ogilvy – 1964 – landscape designer and member of the royal family

The idea that leaplings don't age each year, is a myth in most countries. Many have legally designated 1st March as the date they officially

become a year older, although lots of families choose 28th February as the alternative birthday for their leaplings. At any one time there are likely to be only 5 million leapers world wide.

So why do we even have leap years and when do they fall? Taking the second part first, many people will immediately say that you can work out if a year was or is a leap year, because they are divisible by 4. In fact that isn't wholly correct. It isn't surprising that the add on to the calculation isn't well known, all the years divisible by 4 in living memory have been leap years, but 1900 wasn't. That's because at the start of a new century isn't a leap year unless it's divisible by 400. Oh and just as an aside, calendars are not calculated in the same way world wide, although the Gregorian one is the most widely adopted and is used for commercial purposes globally .

Some of you may have seen the piece about changes to our calendar, it was in the January Newsletter. The way leap years have operated in England only dates back to 1752 when we adopted the Gregorian calendar, but the Julian calendar that preceded it, also had similar leap years, except that the divisible by 4 rule had no qualification. This

difference was why England “lost” 11 days when it migrated to the Gregorian calendar. To explain how this came about we need to go back further than Julius Caesar for the roots of our leap year. Having spent time in Egypt, he probably came up with idea from that part of the world.

Ancient astronomers and scientists already realised that there were issues with calendars. The earth does not take precisely 365 days to orbit the sun (a solar year), and a 28 day lunar cycle does not fit with that orbit. The ancient Egyptians engineered a fit by having 3 seasons of 4 months of 30 days each, then added an extra 5 days at the end. They were aware of the drift that this caused and dealt with it by creating a second lunar calendar more closely linked to the solar year, it included intercalations (insertion of days or months), in this case months, to bring to 2 into line. Julius Caesar borrowed this intercalation concept in creating the Julian Calendar but applied it in a different way. There is some dispute over how the very early Roman calendar operated, but it developed into one in which each month, except February, had either 29 or 31 days. Even numbers were regarded as unlucky. The Julian calendar operated on the premise that the earth orbit was 365.25 days, thus adding one day every 4 years would correct matters. However, the actual orbit is 365.2442 days, so a leap year every 4 years overcompensated for the difference. It was Pope Gregory who sought to adjust for this, by skipping a leap year at the turn of 3 out of each 4 centuries. His motive was to halt the drift of when Easter fell. His scientists and mathematicians calculated that there had been 10 extra leap years since the setting of calculations for Easter, so when the Gregorian calendar was first introduced in 1592 this was taken into account. By the time England adopted the calendar in 1752 an 11th extra leap day had occurred. Some countries adopted the calendar even later and had to adjust for one or two more extra days.

The Hebrew calendar was originally a mix of lunar months and calendar years, with extra months added to the first every 3 or 4 years to compensate for the difference. The Islamic calendar is lunar based and is either 354 or 355 days. As it began in the equivalent of 622 AD, which counted as year 1, and because it is lunar in nature, it is expressed as a different year. However, both calendars are mainly used for religious purposes. The Chinese calendar is based on a lunisolar system. According to this system, each month begins on the day when the moon is in the "new moon" phase. The beginning of a new year is also marked by the position of the moon and occurs when the moon is midway between the winter solstice and spring equinox. Officially, the country uses the Gregorian calendar for most purposes, although the Chinese calendar is used to celebrate holidays.

Getting back to the Gregorian leap year, there are a variety of traditions linked to 29th February. The best known is probably that ladies are permitted to propose marriage. The

story goes that Saint Brigid of Kildare thought that many women had to wait too long for a proposal. She agreed with Saint Patrick that women could propose every four years, known as Ladies' Privilege. Irish monks then took the Ladies' Privilege tradition to Scotland and it is said to have been made law by Queen Margaret in 1288. There was an added quirk that women must wear a red petticoat when proposing. Historically of course it was the man that proposed, although because of her status Victoria had to be the one that proposed to Albert, and she didn't do so on a leap day. Times have of course moved on, so this is perhaps less significant now. Tradition has it that in the UK and Ireland, a man turning a lady down has to pay a fine or give a gift. In Scotland and Denmark, that gift was 12 pairs of gloves or socks. Gloves also feature in other similar cases across Europe, the theory being that they would hide the fact that the lady had no engagement ring.

In Greece however, it is considered unlucky to marry on a leap day, so most couples don't, and some even avoid a leap year completely. In Taiwan leap years are regarded as bad luck for the elderly. To counteract this, a daughter goes home to make pig's trotters with noodles, a dish regarded as bringing health and good fortune. In France, since 1980 a satirical newspaper, La Bougie du Sapeur, has appeared only on leap days. It outsells every other French newspaper on that day. In the German Rhineland tradition has lovestruck young men leaving small birch trees decorated with ribbons on their beloved's doorstep, but on leap day the tables can be turned. In the same area, in leap years, only females dance around maypoles on Mayday, whereas males take part in other years. In Scotland being born a leapling was considered bad luck, and Scottish farmers had a saying "a leap year is never a good sheep year".

Are you a leapling? Let me know how you have dealt with this – sadu3aed@gmail.com

DECLUTTER DEN

Do you have anything sitting in a cupboard, or on a shelf, that you no longer want? Might one of our members or groups be able to make use of it?



If you have something that you are prepared to give away – **strictly no items for sale!** Let me know and I'll put it in declutter den and hopefully we can help each other free up some space, whilst giving others something they have a use for, even if we don't.

Email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

POETRY CORNER

FEBRUARY LONG by E. Willing

February's sanctuary
Fails to bear the summers fairing.
Stars descend to falling sand,
Take shape from Julius' hand.

They age the days and mark the years
Of you, God's angel bidding here,
With Heaven's clever bid to dwell
While making earth's own journey tell:
One part a day each year we store,
To reconcile every fourth,
As if the universe is made
To make your birth a holiday.

By noting every c'lestial turn
In February we confirm
Each dawn is part your day-in-rest,
All twenty-nine that we are blessed.

In leaping years and hours gone
My zeal is February long.
Your world's the sun to me, my love;
This monthlong gift from God above.



Leap Year

by Annette Wynne

Little month of February,
You are small, but worthy—very!
Will you grow up like the others,
Like your sister months and brothers?
Every four years with a bound
With a leap up from the ground,
Trying to grow tall as they—
All you stretch is one small day!
Even then you're not so tall
But just the shortest month of all.

LEAP YEARS EXTRA DAY by David L. Hatton

When three years of squandering minutes on end
have nurtured a debt that keeps growing, my
friend,
it's useless to contemplate, "What are my dues,
with two dozen hours freely extra to use?"

If patterns of procrastination have ruled,
your reflexive habits aren't quick to be fooled.
So, open the polls and start casting your vote
to get on the ball, down-to-earth, and take note!

There's cleaning; there's pruning; your closet's
replete
with clothes that don't fit, shoes too tight for
your feet.
You've letters to answer and books still unread,
some unfinished projects to do before bed!

Resisting your trend's gravitational pull
to add to your daydreams by gathering wool,
prepare to employ this additional day,
then try the same mindset March, April and May!

And finally.....

Today is an ephemeral ghost... A strange amazing day that comes only once every four years. For the rest of the time it does not “exist.” In mundane terms, it marks a “leap” in time, when the calendar is adjusted to make up for extra seconds accumulated over the preceding three years due to the rotation of the earth. A day of temporal tune up!

But this day holds another secret—it contains one of those truly rare moments of delightful transience and light uncertainty that only exist on the razor edge of things, along a buzzing plane of quantum probability... A day of unlocked potential.

Will you or won't you? Should you or shouldn't you?

Use this day to do something daring, extraordinary and unlike yourself. Take a chance and shape a different pattern in your personal cloud of probability!” — Vera Nazarian, *The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration*

This is Leap Year, and ancient proverbs say,
If lads don't leap this year, the lasses may.

It takes three springs to make one leap year.

Folklore suggests that during a leap year, the weather always changes on a Friday.

Whilst Russians believe that leap years bring unpredictable weather patterns and Scottish farmers see them as bad for crops.

A leap year anniversary is a reminder of the extra 24 hours of love we have been blessed with.

I have an 84-year-old friend who is celebrating his 21st birthday today. He can finally drink alcohol legally!

Leap day – a day where “this time last year” and “this time next year” don't apply.

The Leap Year Cocktail! Crafted on 29th February 1928, the Leap Year cocktail is a well-rounded martini alternative. Gin is paired with sweet vermouth and the brandy-based orange sweetness of Grand Marnier. The result is so deliciously refreshing that you might argue it deserves to be enjoyed more than once every four years!

If you meet 29th February, think of something unique for it is the only day that defines a year as a leap year. It is the only day that makes February truly unique.” Ernest Agyemang Yeboah

