

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

OCT
2023

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I hope everyone is fit & well and taking advantage of having their flu jab.

If you attended our September members meeting, I trust you enjoyed it as much as I did. I thought the talk was very interesting and Melody had a great voice.

We are now in the middle of membership renewals and if you have not done so already, there is still time.

Clive

COVID BOOSTERS –

COVID NEVER WENT AWAY, NOW THERE ARE REPORTS THAT IT'S ON THE RISE AGAIN

As a follow on to Clive's mention of flu jabs – Did you know that you can now book your covid booster? You are eligible if you are over 65, but you might qualify for other reasons. You can check on the website [here](#) and book your appointment if you do. If you have your NHS number to hand that will help, but you can check and book without it. Alternatively, you can ring 119. The nearest sites listed are a chemist in Hamilton and one in the Belgrave Road Commercial Centre in Leicester. I chose the one on Belgrave Road and hopped on the bus (though there is a car park next to the Centre). I was offered the flu jab along with the covid booster, which I took up. The pharmacist who administered the jabs was excellent, I hardly felt a thing! I'm also pleased to report that I had very little by way of after-effects. The main issue I had was the length of time it took me to get home, one bus failed to show, the next was full and not picking up passengers, I eventually caught the next one, having waited around for half an hour. Sad that the buses don't seem to have improved since I last used them regularly for work. Ed

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Syston and District U3A Membership emails.

Dear Member, As you will probably be aware we have begun our renewals process. Membership subscriptions are due by the 1st October.

Many of you have already paid and many thanks for this.

Unfortunately, some members have reported that they did not receive their personalised renewal emails at the beginning of September. Many were found in the junk/spam folders, but some simply did not arrive.

If this has been your experience, please contact me if you need your Membership Number and our Bank Details in order to renew.

I suspect this is due to a glitch with the servers over which we have no control.

In addition, some others who have paid have not received their confirmation emails. This may be a delay caused by banks not clearing funds so please give us a while to acknowledge your payment.

Again, please check your junk/spam folders in case it is in there.

If you have not received a confirmation email by 11th October please contact me.

I hope you will all renew your membership and continue to enjoy the wide range of activities we have on offer.

Regards

Christine Gale Membership Secretary

Email: sadu3amembers@gmail.com

The glitch with servers to which Christine refers is connected with the email providers (ISPs). Each one of these have their own parameters for trying to weed out junk mail, or spam as it is sometimes called. Some simply divert mail to your personal junk/bulk/spam box, others block some messages completely. Although the mail system we now use is designed to minimize this happening, it seems it can't prevent it altogether. Ed

Let's Communicate With Each Other!

At one of our executive committee meetings a while back, we looked at using Facebook as a method for all of us to keep more in touch. Both Vitality and the website do a great job in informing us about events past and forthcoming but are not 'immediate'.

Therefore, the decision was taken to create a private, closed group for Syston and District U3A. At a recent executive committee meeting, we decided it was time to remind people about the face book group, in the hope that more of you would take advantage of it's existence.

The main concern, (quite rightly) was that of privacy, and not allowing all and sundry to see items that you post in the group. This only happens when your Facebook account has not been set up properly, therefore see below for my notes on how you can achieve this.

When you request to join the group, you will be asked to enter your u3a membership number which will then be checked, for security. Once the request has been approved, you will be able to post items of interest on there (NB NOT a photo of your dog etc. etc., or that you are just going out shopping!).

There also exists via a Messenger App (Smartphone or Tablet) a way to send a private message to another member, much easier than texting or emailing. If using Facebook on a computer, this is built in to Facebook automatically.

We envisage that events will be posted if we find out something that is imminent, and too late if we wait for Vitality.

This Facebook group can easily be used on your smart phone or tablet, or even on a laptop (but the screen layout is slightly more haphazard here)

This is slightly different to private group for just your own activity group, and here it is up to that group organiser to set up a similar private group just for their members if that is required.

Anyway, have a go, read my instruction sheet, if you are not sure. You can text me or email me if you have any questions.

Still worried about privacy? I have attached a couple of 'Facebook set-up Website' links should you wish to read more before starting.

To create a Facebook account:

1. Once on the Internet, go to '<https://en-gb.facebook.com/reg>'
2. Enter the name you go by in everyday life.
3. Enter your email or mobile phone number.

4. Select your gender and date of birth and choose a password.
5. Tap Sign Up.
6. To finish creating your account, you need to confirm your email or mobile phone number.

If you want to use Facebook on your smart phone or Tablet, you will need to download the Facebook App. and then log in.

To personalise your account, you can edit your Profile

1. Upload a photo of yourself so people can recognise you (i.e. lots of John Smiths!)
2. Optional background information – Schools/Employment etc.
3. Town or Village where you live
4. Contact information – Tel. No. and/or email address

Setting up your Privacy settings

Choose Profile Settings

1. Select ‘Follow Settings’ to decide who you want to see your Posts e.g., Public or just your Friends (recommend use just Friends)
2. Decide who can see the People, Pages, and Lists that you follow e.g., Public, Friends or just you.
3. Decide who can comment on your Public Posts e.g., Public, Friends or Friends of Friends

To join the Syston U3A group

- 1 Click on ‘Groups’
2. Click on the search icon (Usually a magnifying glass)
3. Type in ‘Syston U3A’ and then tap ‘Search’
4. When the group shows, tap on ‘Join’
5. On the pop-up, you will be asked to enter your U3A membership number.

Once your request has been approved by the Group Administrator, you will be notified that you are now a member of the group and can post or just view.

NB There are several websites on the internet that give you more guidelines on creating a safe Facebook account should you want to read more, here are a couple.

1. <https://www.seniortechclub.com/tech-recipe/getting-started-with-facebook/>

2. <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/facebook101/>

(Hold down the Ctrl key and click on the link above to open the webpage)

Dave Palmer 07710 448253 email: dpalmer192@btinternet.com

Facebook App

Icons along the bottom row can be personalized but these are some of the main ones: -

Home - 'What's on your mind?' - This is where you can post something onto your page for your Friends to see

Watch - Watch various videos that people have uploaded

Marketplace - Things for sale

Groups - See list of Groups you have joined - Use Magnifying Glass icon to search for new groups - Use Cog Wheel (Settings) to set things like which posts you want notifying about. Each new notification will result in a 1 showing over the App on your Home Screen.

Notifications - A number will show here if there are new notifications to read

☰ More List of Shortcuts e.g., Friends, Groups etc. ALSO - Settings & Privacy

I have set up the Group 'Syston U3A'.

So, search for the Group 'Syston U3A' and then tap the blue line saying 'Join Group'

You should then be prompted to enter your U3A Membership Number

The wait for your request to be approved (me)

Once approved this group should then show in your list of Groups.

Here you can see a list of the members. By selecting one of the members, you will be directed on to the Messenger App, where you can post a private message to that person.

To post a message to the group see 'Write Something'

GROUP NEWS

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

We had another good meeting at the beginning of September where Chris used a fun quiz to recap on the 6 art movements we have covered so far. It was surprising how much we had learned and how our minds had been opened to new genres.

After that Peter gave us a very thoroughly researched introduction to the Romantic Movement of the late 18th /early 19th Centuries. Including great names such as Turner and Constable as well as lesser know artists such as Caspar Friedrich and Ivan Aivazovsky



Our general discussion was centred around how artists didn't necessarily consider themselves as part of a particular movement and how it was society which tried to pigeonhole and categorise them at a later date. We found that many artists' work blended into a number of styles and would not "fit" neatly into the Movement attributed to them. So we find Degas in Impressionism and Romanticism and Dadaists who morph into Surrealists. Trying to set distinct dates and genres is an impossible task as art and artist just don't work like that!

There are quite a few of us away again at the beginning of October so our next meeting will be on **Weds 1st November at 2pm at the Syston Community Centre.**

We will be discussing War Artists with Angie and Tracy will look at Medieval Art.

If you would like to join us please contact Michael Wherton via the website.

CRAFT GROUP

When the lockdown ended the knit and natter group didn't continue and neither did the crochet group, as they had been quite popular groups it was decided to combine the two under the heading of a craft group. We thought that this could encompass any wool or fabric crafts such as tapestry, sewing, embroidery etc. as well as knitting and crochet. So, if you would like to join us for a sociable afternoon and a cuppa bring along your preferred craft and you would be made most welcome. We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at the Community Centre in Syston.

ART GROUP

The art group goes from strength to strength and has grown to such a degree that we will have to set up a waiting list! This came about due to the open days last year and this year which saw a lot of interest. With David Clarke at the helm to help us to improve we are finding that we are attempting subjects outside our comfort zone. This month we have been trying our hand at painting lilies. This is a selection of those completed so far, they have been created using a variety of mediums such as water colour, pencil, ink and pastels and all are different.



PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP



We now have 19 members in the Photo Group, and we had 12 turn up at our last meeting in August, with a Photowalk around Mountsorrel, looking for interesting architecture and reflections.

We started at the Mountsorrel Memorial Centre and walked up to the top of Castle Hill and then down through the village to the Waterside Inn pub, watching the boats going through the locks.

Then back up through the village, ending up in the MMC Café, where the staff were very welcoming, moving the tables around so we could all sit together and then offering to take a photo for us! Highly recommend a visit there and worth popping into the Theatre next door to see what shows are on.





Angie



Karin



FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Have you taken a DNA test? Maybe someone gifted you one. If all you have done with the results is looked at the ethnicity breakdown, you could be missing out on a lot of valuable family information. You could be connecting with relatives you didn't know existed, or if you have a family mystery, DNA might just help you solve it. All that said, a note of caution, DNA results can reveal skeletons in your family cupboard. If you'd rather you didn't know they exist, then leave well alone.

Those of us in the family history group are of course interested in where our roots lie. In the main, we do want to know if something isn't as it appears to be on paper. If we have an unknown father, grandfather and so on, we'd like to track them down. For someone who is adopted and has no information about their biological parents, DNA may provide the only route to finding blood family.

We discussed some of the methods that might be employed to make use of our DNA matches. Matches are those people with whom we share familial DNA. When someone, other than an adoptee, or the descendant of one, looks at their list of matches, they will usually recognise at least some of them as being cousins, aunts, uncles or relations of some sort. But given that most people have thousands of matches, there is no way they will all be familiar. However, even if many of your matches don't have a family tree, you may still be able to work out where they fit in.

If you have done a DNA test and you are interested in learning more about using your matches to find missing family. We may be able to help you. If you want to know more, contact me on sadu3afamilyhistory@gmail.com

Special Events

“Why doesn’t the U3A run a trip to -----?”

Now that the many interest groups are able to meet again, the Committee of Syston u3a want to return to our pre-COVID habit of running one-off Day Trips and Workshops.

Our Groups have been run by members with the help and support of a Groups Co-Ordinator who acts as a source of information and support to our Group Organizers. This has worked so well under the care of Sheila Driver for many years and now Barbara Sargeant, that the Committee have appointed an **EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR**. My name is Cynthia Baker and for the moment I am acting in this position.

Members with ideas for a trip or Workshop are encouraged to contact me with their suggestions. Already I have received suggestions about having: -

- Theatre Trips - Sheila Driver is actively investigating productions available next year for you.
- Visits to Gardens. - With the demise of the Gardening Group is there somewhere you would like us to visit?
- How about a history tour of Leicestershire’s very own version of Bletchley Park at Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse Eaves

Could you help organize a trip?

Do you know of any interesting Workshops?

Don’t worry if you feel you don’t want to be involved with the finance or travel arrangements. Someone can help do this for you.

We just need your ideas and a little of your time to sort the trips or Workshops out.

Hope to hear from you.

If you are interested in any of these and/or can help, then why not get in touch?

Email sadu3aevents@gmail.com

SmARTsy Fusion Glass Workshop



On the 8th of September 17 members got together to be creative with glass. Some had done it before, but the majority were new to this absorbing craft.

After a brief introduction by Danni, we all set our imagination running. What to make?

Flowers, abstract, beach huts, choirs, the room was buzzing with ideas.

Once the pieces of glass were arranged, they then had to be lifted one by one and glued onto the main shape. Each colourful piece was then taken away and fired, to be returned a week later ready to hang in pride of place at home.

A huge thankyou to Elaine Yarwood who booked this activity. We look forward to Elaine booking more interesting things for us all to do.



Items before firing and returned ready to go out to their creators.



A couple of finished items unpacked, produced by Angie Baker.

THE END OF THE PIER SHOW AT CROMER

Thank you to the nine members of the Syston and District u3a who joined the Melton Mowbray members on a trip to Cromer on 26th September 2023. All the members arrived on time (or before) for the coach and the various stops, which both the driver and I (and other members) appreciated.

They told me how much they had enjoyed the Show and the whole day. I hope this may be a beginning for the two u3a's to work together on similar outings, to ensure that the trips are viable.

Angela Fielding

WHAT'S ON NEXT

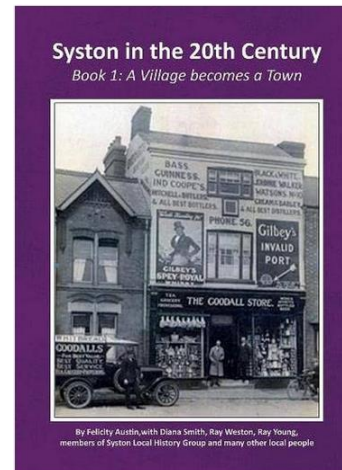
GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks start 10.30am
Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

11th October 2023: The History of Syston - Felicity Austin

This will be the story of how I came to write the two history books on Syston in the 20th Century, which I completed during the pandemic.

An illustrated talk with lots of old photographs on the area.



8th November 2023: Bharat Patel BBC Reporter – His Own Story

Bharat Patel has worked for BBC Radio Leicester, Radio 4, ITV and the BBC. He has covered major events which have made headlines around the world, including the Kegworth air crash, the death of Princess Diana, the Gujarat earthquake and the disappearance of Madeleine McCann. But it's not all been about tragedy. He's also interviewed a parrot who spoke five languages, the world's oldest donkey and met Brian the Budgie, who escaped from Ilkeston to Corfu but was found by his astonished owners while they were eating a souvlaki under a tree on holiday in Corfu Town.

But there's one story he has never covered and that is his own. By the age of eight he had travelled across three continents. He ended up in Leicester, after a soothsayer told his parents his future lay in England. His family exchanged a comfortable lifestyle in a warm climate in Zambia in Africa for a tiny terraced house with a leaking roof in a much cooler and wetter Highfields. Their arrival in Leicester was followed by a series of bizarre and comic incidents, which were often odder than anything Bharat encountered as a reporter.

Bharat has asked us to make members aware that he will have his book available to purchase for the sum of £10 CASH (no cards).

He's presented his talk to a few local u3a's recently and although people wanted to buy his book, they only had credit cards available, so he couldn't sell any, so he's asking members to bring cash, please – ideal Christmas present! All proceeds go to cancer research.



13th December 2023: John Constantine - That's Magic!

An insider's view from a professional magician on what magicians do including some live magic!

An entertaining illustrated talk from magician John Constantine about all aspects of what magicians do - including a section from his live act for your entertainment!

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

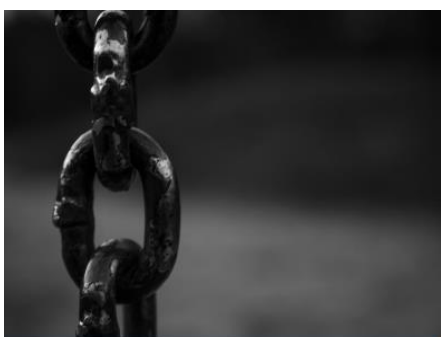
u3a TALKS



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and its Archives

Learn about the history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and how to use their records in your own research.

Mon 9 Oct at 2pm
Free - Online via Zoom



Exploring World Faiths: Faith and Slavery

World Elimination of Slavery Day occurs in October each year, so what do different Faiths have to say about historic and modern day slavery?

Mon 16 Oct at 10am
Free - online via zoom



The Story of Britain told Through Coins

Diana Laffin of Guildford u3a presents an introduction of coins which tell the history of Britain in the industrial age

Thurs 19 Oct at 2pm
Free - Online via zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

These are only some of the talks on offer, you can see what else is available in the next few weeks on the National u3a website [here](#)

All talks are free but you must book a place, they are hosted by Eventbrite, but run by the Third Age Trust the official name of the charity that runs the National u3a.

FUTURE LIVES

Future Lives is a UK-wide u3a group which shares information and resources to inspire, influence and inform members about how we can improve our future lives.

How can we add life to our years, and maintain our independence and quality of life for as long as possible?

The u3a Future Lives Group is run by u3a members across the country. We aim to challenge attitudes and break down physical barriers that limit and restrict people as they get older.

Being brain healthy: how our thinking skills change as we age and what we can do about it



Wednesday 25 October 2023, 2-3pm

Professor Alan Gow, School of Social Sciences, Heriot-Watt University

Do you worry about changes in your thinking skills, including your ability to remember things, solve problems or think quickly, as you get older? You are not alone.

In this session, Professor Alan Gow will explore how our thinking skills develop across the life course and the factors that might protect (or harm) the ageing brain. Along the way, he will explore what people understand about those things from public surveys, as well as asking you, the u3a audience.

[Register here](#)

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

Out of the Stores: Shoes

View shoes and shoe related objects from the museum's extensive collection.

The exhibition explores shoe fashions over the last four hundred years, including the oldest shoe in the collection from 1570 and towering platforms from the 1970s.

A variety of shoes illustrate the many different reasons why we wear the shoes that we do and how shoes can celebrate special events and major milestones in our lives. The exhibition also explores shoe superstitions including investigating the reasons why people in the past deliberately hid shoes in buildings - was it for protection or good luck?

Leicester's shoemaking heritage is highlighted with shoes, catalogues, photographs and advertising from many local factories.

Remember to wear your favourite shoes when you visit!

Newarke Houses Museum, The Newarke, Leicester 30 Sept 2023 - 14 Jan 2024 Tel: 0116 225 4980

Great Central Railway Autumn Steam Gala



📅 Thu, 05 Oct 2023 - Sun, 08 Oct 2023 on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

📍 Loughborough Central Station, Quorn and Woodhouse Station, Rothley Station, Leicester North Station

Join us for our Autumn Steam Gala, an extensive timetable of passenger and freight services will delight and entertain you throughout this four day event. Two guest locomotives will be joining our home fleet for this fantastic event.

More information: <https://www.gcrailway.co.uk/special-events/autumn-steam-gala/>

Mountsorrel Railway and Quarry a talk by Mark Temple



📅 Wed, 18 Oct 2023, 19:00 - 21:00 📍 Charnwood Museum

A talk by Mark Temple on the Mountsorrel Railway and Quarry and its development and impact on the local area. Also the ecological and historical legacy that exists for visitors at the heritage centre.

£2 for members of Friends of Charnwood Museum

£4 for non-members

All welcome

More information: <https://www.charnwoodmuseum.co.uk/events>

Leicester Belgrave Hall - Ghost Hunt

Who still haunts the amazing hall and whose ghost has been seen within the garden walls?

With many ghost stories, this is the ideal location for a paranormal investigation.

27 Sept 2023 to 1 Jan 2024

Where: Belgrave Hall And Gardens, Belgrave, Church Road, Leicester, LE4 5PE

Contact details: 0116 229 8181

Craft & Art Fair 2023

Our annual Autumn Craft & Art Fair will be held across our centre, hosting a range of craft makers and artists from across the UK. A highlight in our calendar, join us for free as the fair brings together communities to support independent artists...

28 Oct 2023 *Open 11:00 - 16:00*

Where: Attenborough Arts Centre, University of Leicester, Lancaster Road, Leicester, LE1 7HA

Contact details: 01162 522455

Elizabeth Woodville the Fey Queen? by Sally Henshaw

A light-hearted look at the queen of King Edward IV.

Elizabeth Woodville is said to have been descended from Melusine, the half woman, half serpent of folklore.

Did Elizabeth inherit her witchy powers and ensnare the king, or was she simply a...

10 Oct 2023 *Open 14:00 - 15:00*

Where: The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ

Contact details: 0116 253 2569

Diwali Wheel of Light

One familiar feature is coming back to Belgrave Road, the Diwali Wheel of Light!

13 Oct 2023 to 12 Nov 2023 *Various Opening Times*

Where: Belgrave Road, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE4 6AS

Contact details: +44(0) 1164543600

FROM OUR MEMBERS

A STORY OF PERFECT TIMING

We cats only have limited control over which human abode we end up in. If we don't like the look of someone who comes to see us, a bit of spitting and swearing may well be enough to put them off. On the other hand, if we think they look like good prospects for us to own, then some purring and rubbing of body against theirs is a ploy that may well produce the desired outcome. I suppose I can't complain about where I ended up, but there was rather too much upheaval in these first few months for my liking.

I thought I was only going to have this young lady living with me. A very nice arrangement it was, I could snuggle up to her at night and keep warm. There was this man who came to see us every day, but he went off somewhere else at the end of the evening. However, a few weeks later things changed. Suddenly one evening, this man didn't disappear as usual, they had been out for much of the day. He had the temerity to climb into my bed as if he intended to sleep there! Well, that's not the complete story, he didn't exactly settle down to sleep straight away, he and the lady played for a while. I'm not really sure what they were up to, but it looked a lot of fun, so I decided I should join in, pouncing on moving feet, toes, fingers and hands, is quite a good game for a young cat. I was baffled when they laughed at me, and I was banished from my bed. Now that wasn't acceptable! Granted I was allowed back later. I have tried to join in their fun on several other occasions, it isn't really appreciated, but it is a clever way of reminding them that I can interrupt their games. Another ploy is to sit on the window sill, or bedside table, watching them with my best imperious expression. They are never sure if I will decide to intervene, or just sit there.

I didn't quite know what to make of this change of arrangements, but the man turned out to be quite useful, I now have two humans to serve my food, and provide fuss and play. The man has a really good game involving throwing table tennis balls up the stairs for me to catch. If I miss the ball, it hits the door across the landing, and comes bouncing back down the stairs. The idea is that I am supposed to knock the balls back down the stairs if I intercept them, but sometimes I decide to not to co-operate. After all, the humans need more exercise than just throwing the balls. Having to climb the stairs to retrieve them provides that. He also has another game involving a board with black and white squares, and some funny shaped pieces, also black and white, that he moves around the board. Being a black and white cat, I have to join in.

I knew what name they had given me quite quickly, but as a cat I value my independence, so I only respond to being called, when it suits me to do so. On a few occasions, I have refused to come in at the end of the day. It's a hoot to have the humans checking the garden, the hedgerow at the bottom, and even scouring the hedges nearby to try and find me. On reflection, this is a rather stupid move on my part, it means I miss out on my supper. I've also discovered that the male human, has an almost cat like knack of moving noiselessly on his feet. It was something of a shock to be stalked and caught, I'm a cat after all, not a mouse!

I did spend some time away from my home briefly. I did not appreciate it! I wasn't given any supper one evening. The next morning I didn't get any breakfast either. The humans took me to this place where there were some other animals. Some people there had the cheek to shave off some of my fur, how dare they! I was then given something that made me sleep. When I woke up I felt really woozy and was I sore! The

humans did come and collect me later. I was only allowed outside on this harness and lead for several days. I did not approve of having my movements restricted, but I was spoiled with treats and tasty morsels.

There was a very interesting spell when a tree was put up inside the house. All sorts of things that sparkled and dangled adorned it, wonderful things for a cat to play with. Although I don't enjoy climbing, I did have a go. I wish I hadn't, as it fell over with a clatter that brought the humans scurrying. I won't be trying that again in a hurry! Some interesting food was served, I had to get as close as I could at lunch time, when the male human was cutting up some delicious smelling meat called duck. Getting close involved me perching on his shoulder. The meat tasted as good as it looked. I never look to steal any food, I quickly learnt that if I ask nicely, I will be given a few morsels of whatever it is. At tea time, they had something else that I hadn't seen before. They called it Christmas cake. I thought it smelled interesting, so I enquired about sampling it. I was given some crumbs, it tasted really good. I didn't understand why the humans found it so amusing that I ate it, but they did give me more.

There was another upheaval a few months later. I was taken for a ride in this thing on four wheels called a car. I had to wear a harness and lead, something I was subjected to occasionally. I enjoyed sitting on the rear shelf looking out of the window. We went to a farm yard. The humans looked at several four legged animals I now know were puppies, I didn't really understand what was going on at the time, so I didn't react much when a couple of these puppies were held out in my direction. Imagine my surprise when we drove home with one of them. It was about the same size as me, it grew much bigger though. I quickly had to lay down some ground rules, it was coming into my house after all. A few choice biffs across the nose and I'd made it clear who was boss. It was just for show, I kept my gloves on. I'm not a vindictive creature by nature, but I needed to establish a pecking order. The puppy soon fell into line. I still have the house to myself during the day, most weekdays anyway, as the puppy disappears with one of the humans in the morning. I haven't worked out where they go, but it does mean I get some peace and quiet. We've become quite good pals actually. I did get into trouble with the humans though, when I showed the puppy where I went to when I left the garden. I only took her through the hedge at the bottom of the garden, just into the field behind. I realised there was a problem when I heard frantic calling from the humans. We hid in the hedge bottom, if the puppy had stayed still, we wouldn't have been seen. The stupid creature had to go and react when the man appeared on our side and give our position away. The move backfired on me, as some fencing was erected in front of the hedge, I could have done without the extra obstacle to negotiate. As I said before, I am not a cat who relishes climbing.

One weekend in the summer, I had to show my disapproval. The dog and the humans disappeared quite early in the morning. That was nothing unusual during the week, but this was a Saturday. I expected them all to reappear later in the day, but they didn't. This elderly man, that visited the house every so often, did turn up to feed me, but other than this I was abandoned. Darkness came and I was still on my own, where had they all got to? It was about 4.30am when I heard the key in the door, I was sitting at the top of the stairs when the humans came into the hallway. I gave them my most imperious stare, I mean, what on earth time did they call that to come home? They expected to fall into bed and sleep. Oh no, I wasn't having any of that! How dare they think they could just sail in at that hour, having abandoned me for the day! I got my revenge by dashing around the house, making as much noise as possible. Although I can stalk quietly, I can also thunder up and down the stairs doing a good impression of a baby elephant. Granted half an hour of doing that and I was worn out!

Come to think of it, recalling the events of those early months has worn me out. Things quickly settled down though. If only I wasn't a cat who happened to be looking for a home, at the same time the humans were wanting one to take charge of them, I may not have ended up living such a good life.

POETRY CORNER

The Wild Swans at Coole

by William Butler Yeats

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine and fifty swans.

The nineteenth Autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold,
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes, when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

TO AUTUMN

By William Blake

**O Autumn, laden with fruit, and stained
With the blood of the grape, pass not, but sit
Beneath my shady roof; there thou mayst rest,
And tune thy jolly voice to my fresh pipe,
And all the daughters of the year shall dance!
Sing now the lusty song of fruits and flowers.**

**"The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hang round the brows of Morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest Eve,
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.**

**"The spirits of the air live on the smells
Of fruit; and Joy, with pinions light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees."
Thus sang the jolly Autumn as he sat;
Then rose, girded himself, and o'er the bleak
Hills fled from our sight; but left his golden load.**

And finally.....

Autumn is the hardest season. The leaves are all falling, and they're falling like they're falling in love with the ground - Andrea Gibson.

The autumn wind is a pirate. Blustering in from sea with a rollicking song he sweeps along swaggering boisterously. His face is weather beaten, he wears a hooded sash with a silver hat about his head... The autumn wind is a raider, pillaging just for fun - Steve Sabol

Anyone who thinks fallen leaves are dead has never watched them dancing on a windy day - Shira Tamir.

October's poplars are flaming torches lighting the way to winter - Nova Bair

Autumn...the year's last, loveliest smile."- William Cullen Bryant

