

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

SEPT
2022

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi All,

Well, summer is drawing to a close but there is no reason to be unhappy. If you visit our website or come to our next General Meeting where there is a list of all our excellent groups that you can join. This will get you out of the house, find new friends as well as a new interest.

Last month's talk about "The life of a dairy farmers wife" was very interesting and I am just finishing off the last of the delicious cheese that Jane brought along. We are also arranging a tour of Jane's farm and details of this can be found in this copy of Vitality, and on our website & Facebook page.

I hope to see you all at our next General Meeting when the talk will be "Dove Cottage Hospice" with Chris Garland.

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

Looking Ahead

We hope to plan a year's calendar of events for our u3a but need some help !
If you have an idea and could plan one trip , event or activity please do contact me .
Ideally we need a minimum of 3 members to get this going !
Please contact Sheila Driver with any ideas or offers.

Exciting Samba Drumming Workshop

Samba Brazilian Drumming Workshop

Tuesday 27 September : 1.30-3.30

Syston Community Centre

This promises to be an unusual , uplifting and fun session ! No musical knowledge necessary !

We still have 5 spaces to make this workshop possible .

Please contact Sheila (via the website) by noon on Monday 5th Sept

Update from Groups Coordinator

Group Organisers ' Meeting

Friday 23rd September : 10-12

Syston Community Centre

During our meeting, we will be updating you about Simple Membership , the new Website and Face Book .

We will of course have time to share your group news !

Please could you try to have your group represented if you cannot attend yourself .

Anyone thinking about starting up a group would also be most welcome !

Look forwards to seeing you

Sheila (Groups ' Coordinator)

Membership Matters

Your year's membership of Syston & District u3a is due for renewal on 1st October 2022.

Membership is still great value for money at £15 for a full year.

We are using a new system called Simple Membership. The system will store your information securely and will also improve our email communication with you.

I will send you the renewal notice during the last 2 weeks of September. This will explain what you need to do. If you do not receive it, please check your junk/spam.

The renewal notice will be sent to you via email or, if you do not have email, by post.

All you have to do when you receive your notice is make a payment, by bank transfer or cheque.

Banks now charge 40pence to process each cheque. Therefore, payment by bank transfer is preferable. Thank you for supporting your u3a.

Please contact Margaret, Membership Secretary if you have any questions.

Email: sadu3amembersecretary@gmail.com Tel: 01162120188

GROUP NEWS

POSSIBLE NEW GROUP

We are hoping to start a new Rummikub group in the Autumn.

After our last attempt to start a board game group, we found Rummikub was the one most people were interested in.

With that in mind we would like to test the waters to see what interest we have this time.

Maybe with the Autumn and Winter months coming people would like an activity indoors.?

If anyone has a Rummikub set they could let us use it would be appreciated. (just to start us off)

Let me know what you think by emailing me on my new email address please.

sadu3acomm5@gmail.com

LINE DANCING IS BACK!

Line dancing group is BACK from our summer break !!!

The group meet every Monday in the afternoon from 2pm - 3.30pm (except Bank Holidays) at the Syston Community Centre Brookside Suite commencing on **12 SEPTEMBER**.

Never line danced before, come give it a try.

Look forward to seeing you.

Chris Ringrose

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

We had a detailed look at census data, what issues there are when looking at the data, and how to use it in conjunction with other records to aid family history research.

The first available national census data with enough detail to assist in family history research is that for 1841. Data is available for 1841 through to 1921, release of later detailed census data is subject to a 100 year legal embargo, hence 1921 has only just been released. The data we can see for 1841 to 1901 is not the original household forms, but the books into which the detail from those forms was transcribed. 1911 & 1921 are the only ones where the household forms are what we can see. Most sites treat the 1939 Register as a census, but it was actually a special exercise at the outbreak of World War II to aid ID cards and rationing.

There are all sorts of issues with inaccurate information. Enumerators went round handing out forms, which they later collected. The levels of illiteracy meant they had to complete some on behalf of the head of the house. This led to details being misheard, our ancestors weren't always truthful, and unlike us, they didn't always know when and where they were born. Add on to that mistakes when transferring the details from individual forms to the enumerators books. As a result you won't always find people recorded correctly and sometimes you won't find them at all! If family history research was easy it wouldn't be half the fun!

Some strange things appear on census data. One of the main pieces of detail from 1851 onwards is the relationship of others in the household to the head. People were not always described in the same way as they are today. Son-in-law might mean the son of your wife, or the lad might appear just as son, with his step-father's surname. Wife, didn't always mean the couple were married, and a housekeeper might have a rather closer relationship with the man than a paid employee! But one of my ancestors didn't try to hide his relationship with the lady living with him, below is an extract of the 1911 census -

1	John William Peatman	Head	39		Single
2	Annice Law	Mistress	39	39	Single
3	Gladys Law Peatman	Daughter		12	
4	John William Peatman	Son	9		
5	Doris Peatman	Daughter		7	

He also referred to her as his mistress in 1901. Oddly the couple did eventually marry in 1918. I haven't been able to solve the mystery of why.

UKELELE GROUP

On Sunday, August 21st, which was a very warm and sunny afternoon, the Syston Happy Ukulele Band performed in Syston Park for the 'Churches Together in Syston Group' with many of the church group bringing along chairs to listen and sing along with us. One of the ukulele members brought along a pop up gazebo to help shade most of us from the hot weather.

If anyone is interested in us performing for you, please contact our leaders, Len Abraham or Dave Houseman for further details (we come cheap!).



CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

Although the suggested trigger wasn't historical, the pieces produced did coincidentally have a historical theme. They included ghosts, a fire damaged house, blackmail and an imposter. Due to some members of the group moving out of the area, we are keen to increase our numbers and keep the group viable. We aim to share our work in a kindly way, we want to encourage each other, not pull people's efforts apart. If you want some feedback, that's fine. Although a trigger is given each month, it's optional, you can bring along anything. If the muse hasn't struck, then you can just come along and listen.

We meet in Syston Library on the 4th Thursday of each month at 2.00pm.

If you would like more information see the Creative Writing Group page on our website, or email me on my newsletter editors address sadu3aed@gmail.com

WALKING GROUP

Our August walk was from Tur Langton. The village name was derived from the Anglo Saxon word for an enclosure, meaning 'Long Town'.

I decided we would start and finish from the delightful coffee house called 'Mint & Ginger', which stands in the courtyard of the old 17th Century Manor House. So after pre-ordering any snack lunches wanted from an extensive range of choices, 17 of us set off over the fields towards Church Langton.

This village marks the site of the original Saxon settlement in the area. The Hanburys were a well known family, and around 1760, Rev William Hanbury organized 3 music festivals in the church. Handel's Messiah was the first performance of the music ever in an English church, and many of the gentry came to see the event, including the Duke of Devonshire (Chatsworth House)

We continued over the fields (and just a few stiles !) with the hill of Langton Caudle over to our right, to Stonton Wyville.

On leaving the village we could see the remaining earthworks of a sunken, medieval settlement. These had been used later as a complex of fishponds, which indicated large scale fish farming.

On our way back to Tur Langton we passed King Charles's well, so named because it is said that the King rested and watered his horse here after being defeated at the Battle of Naseby in 1645.

The weather was very kind to us and we were able to eat our sandwiches etc. outside in the courtyard after covering about 5 miles.

Dave Palmer



BOOK GROUP



For the 40th anniversary the book group looked for books with 40 in the title but as there was very little to be found it was decided that we would look for books originally published in 1982. This decided, we each chose a book individually which we read and then discussed with group, giving recommendations to either read or avoid depending on how much it was enjoyed. The books were quite diverse, ranging from War Horse by Michael Morpurgo to Schindlers List by Thomas Keneally. Others included Light Thickers by Ngaio Marsh, Monsignor Quixote by Graham Green, Light a Penny Candle by Maeve Binchy, The Virgin in the Ice by Ellis Peters, A Pale View of the Hills by Kazuo Ishiguro, The Mists of

Avalon by Marion Zimmer Bradley and The Prodigal Daughter by Jeffrey Archer.

Our next meeting will be on 15th September and the book up for discussion is Love Nina by Nina Stibbe.

CRAFT GROUP



For the 40th anniversary the craft group have been very busy, between us we have knitted a blanket made up of 40 squares and also knitted 40 funky chicken smoothie hats which will, in time go to Age UK. A decision has yet to be reached about the final destination of the blanket.



AMERICAN HISTORY GROUP

After the heat of July caused the planned meeting to be postponed, the group belatedly looked at the 1920's.

The Butler Act - 1925

The Butler Act was a 1925 Tennessee law prohibiting public school teachers from denying the Biblical account of mankind's origin. The law also prevented the teaching of the evolution of man from what it referred to as lower orders of animals in place of the Biblical account. The law was introduced by Tennessee House of Representatives member John Washington Butler, from whom the law got its name. It was enacted as Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49 (Education) Section 1922, having been signed into law by Tennessee governor Austin Peay.

The law was challenged later that year in a famous trial in Dayton, Tennessee called the Scopes Trial which included a raucous confrontation between prosecution attorney and fundamentalist religious leader, William Jennings Bryan, and noted defence attorney and religious agnostic, Clarence Darrow. The trial's proceedings helped to bring the scientific evidence for evolution into the public sphere while also stoking a national debate over the veracity of evolution that continues to the present day.

The Butler Act was eventually repealed in 1967.

THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT - VOTES FOR WOMEN

The Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, certified on August 26, 1920 prohibits the United States from denying citizens the right to vote on the basis of sex, in effect recognising the right of women to vote.

The amendment was the culmination of a decades-long movement for women's suffrage, at both the State and national levels, and was part of the wider women's rights movement.

Before 1776, women had had a vote in several of the colonies in what would become the United States, but by 1807, every State constitution had denied women even limited suffrage. Organisations supporting women's rights became more active in the mid-19th century and, in 1848, the Seneca Falls convention in New York called for equality between the sexes and included a resolution urging women to secure the vote. The Seneca Falls Convention is traditionally regarded as the start of the American women's rights movement

By the late 19th century, new States and Territories, particularly in the West, began to grant women the right to vote. In 1878, a suffrage proposal that would eventually become the Nineteenth Amendment was introduced to Congress, but was rejected in 1887. Lucy Burns and Alice Paul emerged as important leaders whose different strategies helped move the Nineteenth Amendment forward. The work of their organisations swayed public opinion, prompting President Wilson to announce his support of the suffrage amendment in 1918.



The Nineteenth Amendment enfranchised 26 million American women in time for the 1920 U.S. Presidential Election. However, the Amendment failed to enfranchise African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American women. Shortly after the amendment's adoption, Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party (NWP) again began work on the Equal Rights Amendment, which they believed was a necessary, additional step towards equality.

After the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment, women still faced political limitations. In California, women won the right to serve on juries four years after its passage. In Colorado, it took 33 years. Women continue to face obstacles when running for elective offices, and an Equal Rights Amendment, which would grant women equal rights under the law, has yet to be passed.

THE IRON LUNG

An iron lung is a type of negative pressure ventilator (NPV), a mechanical respirator which encloses most of a person's body, and varies the air pressure in the enclosed space, to stimulate breathing. It assists breathing when muscle control is lost, or the work of breathing exceeds the person's ability.

As early as 1670, English scientist John Mayhew conducted experiments involving breathing. The first negative pressure ventilator was described by British physician John Dalziel in 1832. Successful use of similar devices was described a few years later. Early prototypes included a hand-operated bellows-driven machine and an airtight wooden box designed specifically for the treatment of polio by Dr Stuart of South Africa (1918). Stuart's box was sealed at the waist and shoulders with clay and powered by motor-driven bellows.

The first of these devices to be widely used however was developed in 1928 by Drinker and Shaw of the United States. The iron lung, often referred to in the early days as the "Drinker respirator", was invented by Philip Drinker(1894–1972) and Louis Agassiz Shaw Jr. professors of industrial hygiene at the Harvard School of Public Health. The machine was powered by an electric motor with air pumps from two vacuum cleaners. The air pumps changed the pressure inside a rectangular, airtight metal box, pulling air in and out of the lungs.

The first clinical use of the Drinker respirator on a human was on October 12, 1928, at the Boston Children's Hospital in the US. The subject was an eight-year-old girl who was nearly dead as a result of respiratory failure due to polio. Her dramatic recovery, within less than a minute of being placed in the chamber, helped popularize the new device. Boston manufacturer Warren E. Collins began production of the iron lung that year.

In 1931, John Haven Emerson introduced an improved and less expensive iron lung. The Emerson iron lung had a bed that could slide in and out of the cylinder as needed, and the tank had portal windows which allowed attendants to reach in and adjust limbs, sheets, or hot packs. In addition to medical care, itches were scratched, noses blown, hair combed, bodies washed and bedpans inserted and removed, all through the portholes as far as possible.

The United Kingdom's first iron lung was designed in 1934 by Robert Henderson, an Aberdeen doctor. Henderson had seen a demonstration of the Drinker respirator in the early 1930s and built a device of his own upon his return to Scotland. Four weeks after its construction, the Henderson respirator was used to save the life of a 10-year-old boy from New Deer, Aberdeenshire, who was suffering from poliomyelitis. Despite this success, Henderson was reprimanded for secretly using hospital facilities to build the machine

Rows of iron lungs filled hospital wards at the height of the polio outbreaks of the 1940s and 1950s, helping children, and some adults, with bulbar polio and bulbospinal polio. A polio patient with a paralyzed diaphragm would typically spend two weeks inside an iron lung while recovering.

Once an effective polio vaccine was developed in the 1950s, the incidence of polio infection fell dramatically and only a very few machines were needed in hospitals. But for patients dependent on them to breathe, the old iron lungs were gradually replaced with modern ventilators.

ART GROUP



Thought you might like to show some of the ideas the Art group has been experimenting with recently. The first picture is David Clarke, group leader, explaining how to use one of the techniques, using acrylic paints and different sized rubber gloves. Attempts made by some of the class as follows, along with some string pictures, using acrylics and water colours. I think people will agree, some fantastic work.

I've split the photos of the group's work as there were too many examples to include this month. With so much by way of news from and about groups, some artwork is being held over and will appear in the next edition of the newsletter.





Some spectacular work here, I think it demonstrates that our Art Group produces all kinds of work. Not just traditional landscape, portrait and still life. Ed



FEELING CRAFTY GROUP



Last week the Feeling Crafty group decorated some glass jars. We used old glass jars and covered them with tissue paper then decorated with some cut-out decorations and photos from magazines...with a t-light inside these would make a nice table decoration and all from recycled materials plus glue!

BEADING GROUP

Anyone who would like to come and join the beading group. You can make jewellery coasters individual pen covers, baubles etc. We meet once a month on a Monday morning at the Community centre in Syston. We are a friendly group and for those who may say I can't bead, we all said that, we have people who are willing to help.

If you are interested contact me Elaine Yarwood elaineyarwood@outlook.com come and see me at September's meeting. I will have examples of what you can do.

*Remember that you can find details of all our groups on the website [here](#)
Our new website will be up and running soon, when this happens the old site will flag this up.
Our display boards at the General Meetings also have details.*

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

Wed Sept 14th

Dove Cottage Hospice - Mrs Chris Gatfield

Chris Garfield will be telling us about Dove Cottage Hospice, which is a local day-care hospice that provides care services. Guests usually come for one day each week. They offer a full range of services, including nursing support and advice, friendship, activities and crafts, relaxation and complementary therapies. Services are free

Wed Oct 12th

A Face in the Crowd - Peter Coombs *(please note this is a change of speaker)*

For more than ten years Peter Coombs worked as a TV and film extra or "supporting artist" as they're known in the business.

His talk explains how he got into the business, some of the productions he was in on TV, film and the London stage.

He will be covering things like how programmes are made, why they need extras and the role they play and also some of the amusing situations he found himself in!

Wed Nov 9th

Rod Axon - The History of East Goscote and surrounding area

From - An Unwanted Unloved Village ...

Jelson's 1960's concept for a self-sufficient community on the site of Factory 10, an eyesore, a derelict ordnance factory, caused a long and heated argument between the Council Planners and the developers. Tempers frayed and harsh words were exchanged!

Maturing over 5 decades the place that Jelson fought tenaciously to create from a post-war industrial landscape, became the start of a vibrant and solid community. An enviable place to live just 20 minutes from everywhere, but not by railway.

... to one of the Most 'liveable' Settlements in Leicestershire

Wed Dec 14th

A Royal Christmas - John Whitehead

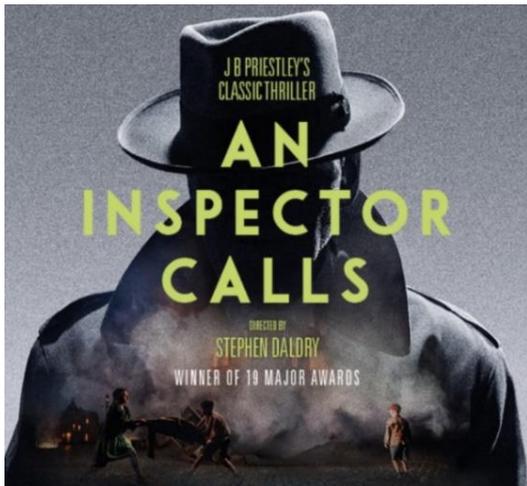
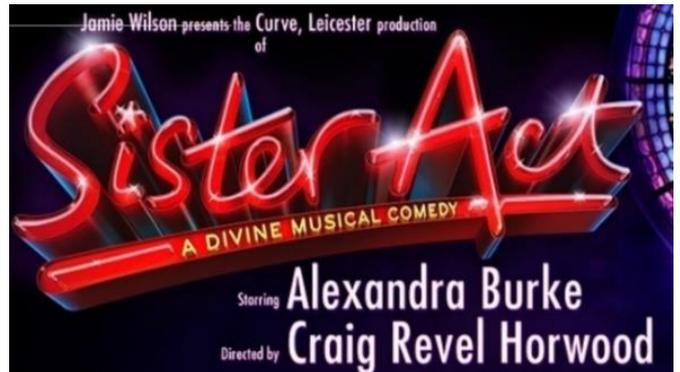
John Whitehead will talk us through how Royalty have celebrated Christmas through the ages in a variety of ways, with luxury and excess, with cruelty and frugality, with family and frivolity.

Which monarch would you wish to share the festival with?

THEATRE TRIPS

Sister Act Saturday matinee 22 October 2022.

Update from Elaine –
I will have the tickets for Sister Act and will have them at the meeting in September so can you collect your tickets then
My email address is elaineyarwood@outlook.com for you to contact me



Stephen Daldry's multi award-winning **National Theatre** production of **JB Priestley's** classic thriller returns.

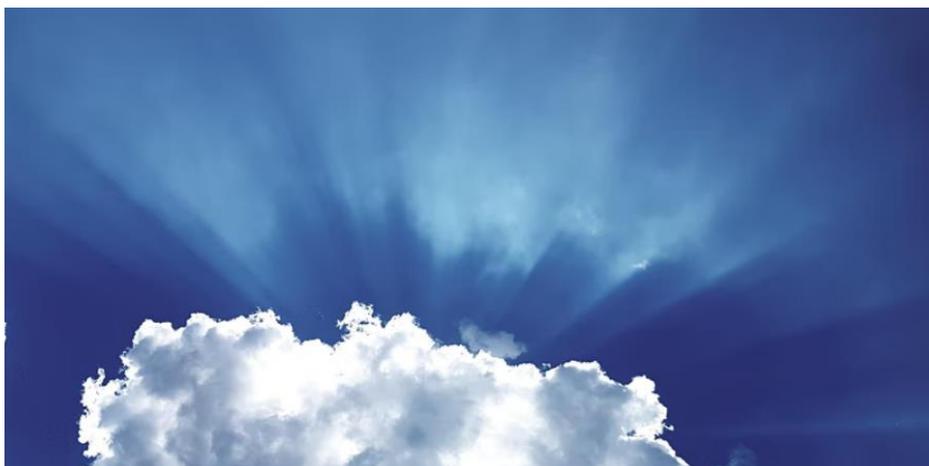
Winner of 19 major awards and hailed as the theatrical event of its generation, *An Inspector Calls* has thrilled more than 5 million theatregoers worldwide.

I have booked 20 seats for Saturday 25 March 2023 matinee performance at Curve Leicester, payment not due till January. Yes, I know it's an early booking but it's very popular. Let me know if you are interested.

N.B. See details of a planned visit to Farmer Barnes Dairy, after the item on our GM speaker, Jane Barnes, which appears later in this newsletter.

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

U3A TALKS



Sep 05

Exploring World Faiths - Holy Wars or Holy Peace

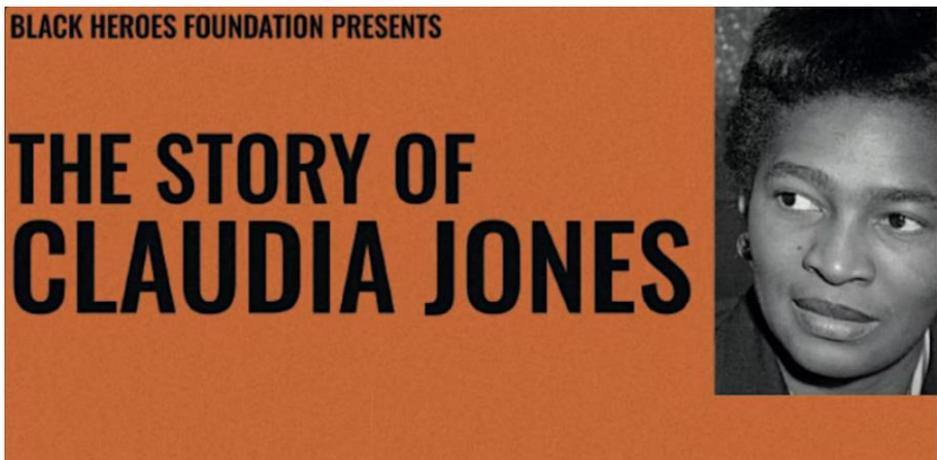
by The Third Age Trust

3605 followers

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Free

Book [here](#)



Sep 14

The Story of Claudia Jones - A Presentation

by [The Third Age Trust](#)

3605 followers [Follow](#)

Free

Discover the story of this black activist, also known as the mother of West Indian Carnival in London. Book [here](#)



Sep 22

Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries & Workhouses Investigation

by [The Third Age Trust](#)

3605 followers [Follow](#)

Free

Family historians in particular might be interested in this. Book [here](#)



Oct 06

Holocaust Survivor Stories - Eva Cato presented by Vivienne Cato

by [The Third Age Trust](#)

3605 followers [Follow](#)

Free

Book [here](#)

These are not the only events available, in addition Eventbrite have various other free sessions, as well as ones that require payment. Visit their website <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/> to find more.

NOT U3A BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



Loughborough Town Hall from the 6th-10th of September.

This beautiful show, with music by Gary Barlow, will make you laugh and cry (sometimes at the same time!) The show tells the original story of the Calendar Girls along with stunning new musical numbers that will have you humming all the way home. [Book here](#)

A blue poster for 'THE ARC SUSTAINABILITY FAIR'. At the top, it says 'Saturday 24th Sept 2022' and '11am - 4pm' with white cloud icons. The text lists activities: 'Our Reuseable Home refills - bring your own containers', 'Eco friendly stalls', 'Hear Dr Richard Hodgkins talk about climate change', 'Kids activities', 'Seed saving with Transition, Recycling, Master Composter, BBuddies cycle maintenance, bats and more!'. At the bottom, there is an illustration of two hands holding a globe with a tree on each side, and the word 'FREE!' in a blue speech bubble. The Arc Community Hub logo is on the globe. At the very bottom, it says 'The Arc Community Hub, 22 Knox Rd, Loughborough'.

[National Great Big Green Week](#) is a celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature that runs from September 24 until October 2, 2022.

In Charnwood, the Arc Community Hub at 22 Knox Road in Loughborough are holding a Sustainability Fair on Saturday September 24 between 11am and 4pm. There will be an opportunity to buy eco-friendly products produced in a sustainable way from a variety of stalls including a refill van, handmade soap, recycled glass jewellery, birdboxes/bug hotels, hand spun yarn and recycled fabric gift wrap, cards, etc. There will also be talks on climate change and printing with natural ingredients, and Transition, BBuddies, Leicestershire County Council's recycling team and a Master Composter will also be present to promote and demonstrate sustainability. There will also be children's activities, such as bird feeder making.

Repair Cafe





Includes
Toy Hospital
and soft toy
upcycling

**10th September 2022, 9.30am - midday,
Fearon Hall,
Rectory Road, Loughborough, LE11 1PL.**

Do you have something that is broken that you are going to have to throw away and buy a replacement for?

Do you wish that you, or someone you knew, could have a go at fixing it?

Then come along to our Repair Cafe at Fearon Hall and we'll have some amateur repairers see if they can help you! The repair is free (though donations to cover costs are welcome) and there will be a cafe selling refreshments whilst you wait for a repairer to become available.

All repairs are made on a best effort basis on the understanding that the item will otherwise be thrown away. Repairers reserve the right to refuse to make repairs that they feel are dangerous.

Unity House Heritage Open Day - Loughborough



Sat 17th September, 2022, 10am to 3pm

The Unity House open day aims to celebrate the working-class heritage of 21 Fennel Street, Loughborough. The building was built in 1889 by Friendly Societies who formed a Medical Aid Association. More details [here](#)

CALLING FORMER WRENS



Do you have any Wrens in your family?

I'm not referring to the tiny, feathered variety in the garden, but the indomitable ladies who joined the Women's Royal Naval Service.

Specifically, ladies who joined up between 1946 and 1981 and did their basic training at Training Depot Burghfield/HMTE Burghfield/HMTE Dauntless/HMS Dauntless (all the same establishment in its many forms).

Dauntless Divisional Photos is a worldwide project, in collaboration with the Association of Wrens, to gather divisional photographs and memories from those training days, but also to reunite ladies with old friends, share anecdotes and relive exciting moments.

So if you, your mum, granny, aunt, godmother or even next door neighbour or friend donned a blue suit and aimed for a life by the ocean waves, please get in touch on ddpwrens@gmail.com

Mandy Powell & Janette Crisp
Project Coordinators.

NETWORK NEWS ITEMS



THE LATE-SUMMER QUIZ

MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2022
Starting at 7:00pm Finishing around 9:00pm

REMINDER
BOOK EARLY – ALMOST HALF THE PLACES HAVE ALREADY BEEN BOOKED

u3a By Zoom

NHS Volunteer Drivers Needed

NHS Leicestershire Partnership Trust are urgently in need of additional volunteer drivers. There is a PDF attached with more information which combined 3 documents into 1:

- * Why Volunteer For Us
- * The Recruitment Process
- * Volunteer Driver Role Specification

This is a very worthwhile way to use your retirement time and a great way to “give back” to the NHS for their dedication to providing a superb Health Service. Some of our members are already part of this volunteer force, why not join them?



LPT Volunteer
Drivers.pdf

click on the icon to open



Heritage Services



3 Events in the next 3 months



'Hello Heritage' Open Day at the 1620s House & Garden on Sunday 11th September, 10:30am – 4:30pm. See the beautifully restored period rooms and talk to our volunteers about the history of the house, its connection to the Gunpowder Plot, and life in the 1620s. Set in beautiful 17th century style gardens with labelled plants and flowers, an orchard, herb gardens and a maze. Previously known as Donington Le Heath Manor House. For further information go to: <https://1620shouse.org.uk/>



Location for the talk is the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Sutton Cheney, CV13 OAD Sun 9th October. 14:30 – 15:30. £6 per person. Pre-booking Essential. In this fascinating talk, archaeologist Peter Liddle will speak about the excavations that took place in Rutland that have revealed a spectacular mosaic pavement showing the story of Hector and Achilles at the siege of Troy and the villa in whose main room it lay.

For further information go to: <https://www.bosworthbattlefield.org.uk/>

This talk is also at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Sutton Cheney, CV13 OAD Friday 11th November. 7pm – 8pm, Doors 6pm. £12.50 per person. Pre-booking Essential. Join Alison Weir in the beautiful surroundings of The Tithe Barn at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre for this talk about the final instalment of the Six Tudor Queens series, "Katherine Parr – The Sixth Queen".



For further information go to: <https://www.bosworthbattlefield.org.uk/>

IF YOU MISSED THE JULY GM (or even if you didn't)

We had an entertaining talk from Jane Barnes, a dairy farmers wife from nearby Somerby. As we have a trip to the farm in the offing,(more of that later) I'm going to be brief about her talk.



The Barnes family have 500 acres (glad Jane said that, I haven't got to grips with hectares). Jane's husband is a 3rd generation farmer, and unlike many farms, their son is following in his father's footsteps. As Jane told us, lack of succession is a common problem with farms. It has been a major factor in the reduction of dairy farms from 76,000 in the 1960's to 8,000 these days. (As individual dairy farms have increased in size during that time, I'm not sure what the reduction in numbers of dairy cows actually is – I couldn't find anything on line – but some of those farms in the 1960's may well have had small herds, as did the Barnes).

All of the milk goes to Long Clawson Dairies for production of cheese, in particular stilton. The cheese making business is a co-operative owned by the dairy farms that supply it. In order to get a better fat content for cheese making, the farm has a herd of Ayrshire/Friesian crosses. The herd has increased from 60 cows 30 years ago to 450. Not all of the herd will be producing milk at any one time. Some calves will be too young and the adult cows do not produce 365 days a year. Young females (heifers) do not produce milk until they are about 2 years old and have their first calf. Roughly half of the calves born are male and are sold off. The farm does have a bull, but contrary to belief, one bull is not lusty enough to deal with impregnating a largish herd. So it is not he, but Farmer Barnes who does the honours, gloved arm and bull semen to hand. (If my memory of farming is correct, farms used to be visited by the AI man to accomplish the task).

The farm boasts a state of the art milking parlour, calving block and associated facilities. The Barnes family set out to make the farm a "visitor attraction" with a viewing platform to allow activities to be seen. Along with a classroom for groups such as school children to learn about where their milk comes from. The calving area has CCTV to allow the family to see what's happening remotely. They can step in if a cow needs help without being in the building 24/7. These new buildings were funded, at least in part, by the sale of the land on which the old farm building stood, for housing. Jane is still waiting for the new farmhouse to be completed, so they currently live in the old one, some distance away from the new dairy (hence the use of CCTV).

Member Barbara Sargeant decided to dress for the talk. Her family refer to her "bottoms" as her cow print trousers. Jane couldn't resist getting a photo of her with one of her "calves".

Whilst I grew up in and around farming, it wasn't dairy farming, but a mix of arable, beef and lamb. However, my paternal grandfather was the gardener/handyman on a farm. The family did keep a dairy cow or two to provide them with milk, cream and butter, and part of his job was dealing with these tasks. I remember going with him sometimes during the school holidays, I



delighted in being allowed to turn the handle on the cream separator (a machine that separated the milk into cream and skimmed milk). It worked on centrifugal force, not a concept I understood until science lessons at High school. The picture left shows one version of a separator. Although this is an old picture, modern day equivalents are still on sale. For many years, many farms would have kept a dairy cow for their own needs, or maybe more than one. The farmer's wife would often be responsible for this aspect of the farm, she would sell the surplus dairy produce (including eggs) to gain some "pin" money. Today's hi-tech dairy farming is as far removed from this as it is possible to get.

Jane finished with a poem, a version of it can be found later in Poetry Corner.



Farm Tour Trip to Farmer Barnes' Dairy Farm (Somerby)

on Tuesday, October 4th

2.30pm-4.30pm

with afternoon tea and cakes included, together with a tractor/trailer ride.

Cost is £20.

We are requesting that members who are going, where possible, offer to car share, for those that require transport.

Minimum number of 20 members with a maximum of 40 members.

Please contact Barbara Sargeant on sadu3acom5@gmail.com to add your name to the list or speak to Barbara directly, where she will take your details.

Payment will be required before the tour date – details of payment will be given nearer the date.

You will be visiting a brand-new dairy farm with good clean outdoor areas and facilities which means you only need to wear sensible footwear and bring clothing suitable for the weather conditions forecast on the day of your visit. There are open sided buildings and areas where we can shelter from the weather if necessary. There is a cover on the trailer so we can still do the Trailer Ride whatever the weather. We have two public toilets and hand washing facilities available throughout your visit. Plenty of space for car parking and turning.

At the end of the tour you will be offered refreshments in our new Cow Classroom, which has viewing windows on to the milking parlour, so while you're enjoying a sit down and a drink, you can also watch the cows in the milking parlour.

We are accessible for wheelchair users. There is a flight of stairs to access the viewing gallery platform above the milking parlour and there is a step & handrail to access the trailer ride. Alternatively, there are seats in the Cow Classroom to see the milking through the viewing windows on the ground floor.

Visiting a UK dairy farm allows you to see at first hand the daily operation of safe milk production and the care dairy farmers give to their land and animals. The tour is both fun and an educational way to see dairy cows close up and identify with farmers who produce the wholesome dairy products your family enjoys every day.

TREASURE HUNT RESULTS



After a break of these treasure hunts due to Covid etc., it was good to get people out and together again.

We commenced with an optional Sunday Lunch at the Harrow Inn in Thurmaston, before setting the 29 people off in teams of 4 or 5, walking round the village with our set of cryptic clues.

As one of our clues relied on the colour of someone's front door, we had a mild panic changing the question, due to the door having been repainted a different colour the week before !

Gradually the teams arrived back and we worked through the answers to arrive at a score for everyone.

It was a good job we had noted the start and finish times of each team, as the 'time taken' was needed as a tie-break due to 2 teams scoring the same for the 3rd prize.

Prizes were handed out for the following winning teams :-

- 1st Barbara Sargeant, Ghislaine Wood and Linda Johnson
- 2nd Pat & Michael Wherton with Jan & Duncan Law
- 3rd Lin Bell, Lynda Evans with Jenny & Alan Wood.

Everyone thanked us for a good 'afternoon of fun' and then went home to find an armchair and a darkened room !

Lyn & Dave Palmer

FROM OUR MEMBERS

A TRIP TO SCOTLAND

I am a fairly new member of the Syston u3a and have joined the painting group and the birdwatching group amongst quite a few others.

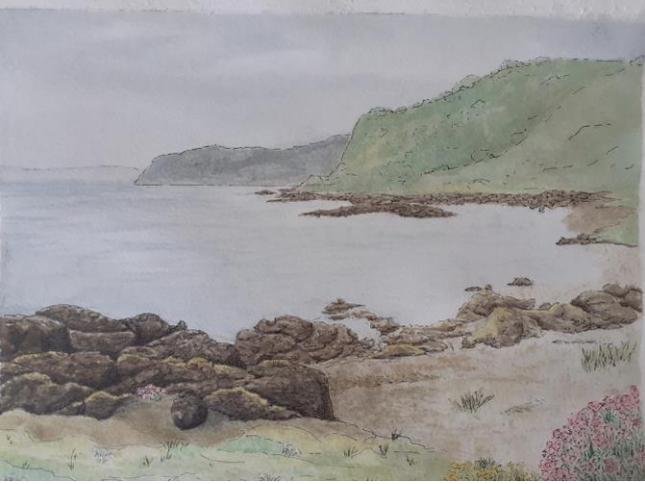
I was lucky enough to visit the west of Scotland in May which allowed me to pursue both of these interests. We stayed on the Isle of Mull for a week and also toured around the western coast.

The birding highlights were seeing both Golden and White-tailed Eagles, fabulous views of Hen Harriers and close up views of Black Guillemots which allowed this photo.



I enjoyed describing these sightings to other members of the birdwatching group and hearing their experiences of special birding moments.

The scenery was also spectacular and I took a number of photos which I have since used to make watercolour landscapes during the u3a painting sessions. This one was a composite view taken from a number of photos of the Mull of Kintyre.



The other members of the group were very supportive with ideas, techniques and advice and made generous comments about the finished articles.

Everyone in the group has their own style and the variety of work is fantastic. We enjoy battling ideas back and forth and David provides his much appreciated expertise.

Being a member of the Syston u3a has proved to be a very enriching experience, motivating me to try new things and revisit old interests that often went by the wayside while I was working. I have found all the groups I attend welcoming and enjoyable. Chris Gale

FELLEY PRIORY



Barbara Jones visited Felley Priory, Underwood, Nottinghamshire, which is off J27 of the M1 and thoroughly recommends it.



DECLUTTER DEN

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

Peter Spooner sent this message -

We have 31 copies covering the period February 2020 to August 2022, they are in good condition and therefore it would be a waste to recycle them. I must admit to trying to complete a cross word in one issue. Due to their weight I am willing to deliver them in the Syston area. If you are interested contact him at pgs774@yahoo.co.uk



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

LAMENT OF THE ARTIFICIALLY INSEMINATED COW By William L. Jessiman

Though I have just given birth to a heifer,
And of pride and of milk I am full,
It is sad to relate
that my lacteal state
Was not brought about by a bull.

I have never been naughty, I swear it,
In spite of the calf I have borne.
By Farmer Brown's tractor,
I'm virga intacta.
I have not had the bull by the horn.

No bull has embraced me with passion;
I've not had the ghost of a binge;
I haven't been loved,
but ruthlessly shoved
With aseptic disposable syringe.

How cheerless the farmyard and meadows,
The cowshed seems gloomy and gray,
For the one bit of fun
in the dreary year's run
Has by science been taken away.

I know that farming's a business
In which we must all pull our weight.
I'd pull and I'd pull
for a nicely built bull,
Synthetic arrangements I hate.

It must not be thought that I'm jealous.
There are things a cow should not say.
But the Vets and Ag Reps
who deprive us of sex
Still get it the old fashioned way.

And finally.....

Staying with the cow/cattle theme, it struck me that we have quite a few sayings that have connections to these beasts, here are just a few –

Strong as a bull – refers to someone who is physically very strong

Until the cows come home - for a very long time

A cash cow – something that generates a lot of money

Like a bull at a gate – to do something quickly without much forethought

To be bull-headed – to be very stubborn

To grab/take the bull by the horns - to grapple with a problem by taking decisive action

Like a bull in a china shop – to do something reckless, where it could cause a lot of harm

To milk a bull – to attempt something that is impossible

Holy cow! – an expression of surprise

To hit the bullseye – hit what you are aiming at (dates back to archers perfecting their art by aiming at the area between a bulls eyes)

Don't cry over spilt milk – don't worry about something that's happened and can't be changed

If you mess with a bull, you get the horns – if you provoke someone to anger, don't be surprised if they respond aggressively

