

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

There isn't much to report this time so short and sweet.

Firstly, I would like to thank all those who visited us on Central Park and those who helped on the day to make Help is at Hand a great success.

Secondly, a special thank you should go to our Singing and Ukulele groups who performed magnificently in the blistering heat.

There were several people we spoke to who had not heard of the u3a and left their details for us to follow up later. Also, some of the other stall holders took our literature away as it might be of interest to those who use their services. All in all, it was a very positive experience.



Here is TV presenter Ann Davies at our stand

I hope to see you all at our next meeting on Wednesday 10th August when our talk is 'Life as a Dairy Farmer's Wife'. If it's as interesting as last month's talk about The Baldwin Trust, it will be well worth attending.

Clive

As someone who spent a couple of hours on our stand, I would echo Clive's thoughts. If only some of those people who showed an interest join us, it will have been worthwhile. Some of those I had a chat with were younger retirees or part-timers. Others clearly wanted to meet new people, make new friends, and try new things, but were a little shy of doing so. If they take the step of joining us, we must ensure that we make them welcome and help them. Something to bear in mind if a newcomer comes to a group you are involved with. Ed

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

Exciting Samba Drumming Workshop



Samba drumming
..for your **team events**

Have you ever heard a **samba band** playing in the street?

The unmistakable Brazilian beats that shape this energetic & joyful street percussion connect with many people at a deep level. **Yet the rudiments can be taught in under an hour** – even to someone with no prior percussion or musical experience.

Although the full sound of **samba** is rich, dense and complex, the individual parts are simple and are mostly built from short repeating patterns and so can be picked-up quickly. It's designed as a street art, to be **learned quickly** and **performed enthusiastically**.

we are...
sambando

a UK-based community band that has been performing samba for over 20 years. One of our great pleasures is seeing the sense of well-being, excitement and connection that comes when people play samba together - especially for the first time.

We have run workshops for our new members for many years and now offer them as standalone experiences to help with energising, team-building and with overall well-being.

And for those who are bitten by the samba bug, there may even be opportunities for them to perform with us.

Our workshops typically run for two hours including breaks, and cater for **groups of 6-20** people. We provide the instruments and the tutors, you provide a room and the budding sambistas! We have a minimum age of 14, and no upper age limit!

We thought we'd have a go at gauging interest for a different style of activity ! Please let me know via e mail (through the website) or

sheiladriver@hotmail.com

Expressions of interest by 14th August

When ? September or October

Where ? Syston Community Centre

Timing? Approx. 3 hours

Cost ? Approx. £30

All drums and equipment provided and coffee/tea breaks

No musical experience/knowledge necessary

All ages ! Just bring your enthusiasm and sense of fun !

Update from Groups Coordinator

Please could Group Organisers let John Winter know of any updates / changes to their groups for the website, or any outings etc, for the calendar. Email: sadu3aweb@gmail.com

It is important that we keep the site up to date, it is often how potential new members first find us and our groups.

Response to Advert for Secretary

There were some positive responses to the idea of splitting the tasks previously falling to our erstwhile secretary Brian King. As a result we have 2 people trying out the split outlined in the last edition of the newsletter



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS ADVANCE NOTICE:

If you wish to remain a u3a Member you'll need to renew your Membership by October 1st and you'll be able to do this in September.

There is no increase in the annual fee, it's staying at £15.

The way you can renew your membership this year will change to make it easier for all concerned.

A small group has been working hard on a new membership record system called "Simple Membership" and will improve communication during the renewal period. For those of you on email you'll be sent an email reminder in September, those without email will receive a letter.

An article will appear in the September edition of "Vitality" telling you how to renew, and Group Organisers will be asked to remind their groups about renewing and how to do it.

PLEASE KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR EMAILS, LETTERS, THE "VITALITY" ARTICLE, AND A REMINDER FROM YOUR GROUP ORGANISER IN SEPT

If you have any queries please contact the Membership Secretary at sadu3aMembers@gmail.com or phone 0116 2120188

The Syston U3A Facebook group –

A reminder that our Facebook group is now up and running -

- 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.

Last month's newsletter has full details of how to set up on Facebook and can be accessed on the publications page on our website.

GROUP NEWS

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

A new member joined our group in June. Well into his 80's, he illustrates the fact that it's never too late to start finding out more about your family history. John lost his father when he was only 8 yrs. old. As a result he knew very little about his paternal side. He was able to provide his father's birth (1900) and death (1943) dates, and knew that he was Leicester born and bred. He had some other snippets about an uncle Harry, brother to his father, and a spinster aunt Nancy Kenny, who he thought may be a sister of his paternal grandmother. I agreed to take an initial look and see what I could find out, I shared the results with the group this month and we looked for more information.

One of the first rules of family history research is that information handed down may not be wholly correct, so don't make assumptions, check it. John believed his father was Reginald George. He may well have been known as Reginald George, but on finding his birth registration he was registered as just Reginald. His mother's maiden name was indeed Kenny (or rather Kenney). His marriage record and death registration had him as plain Reginald too. The search for his marriage record presented a bit of a hurdle. John's own birth registration revealed that his mother's maiden name was Lockett, but there was no such marriage in Leicester or Leicestershire. A wider search produced only one result in the right timeframe, in Cannock, Staffordshire registration district. How come a man born and raised in Leicester, who raised his own family there, married in Staffordshire? The 1939 register, taken at the outbreak of the second world war, provides a possible answer. Reginald worked on the railways. It is quite likely that he moved around the rail network as a young man. So, he could have worked in the Cannock area at some point.

A search for uncle Harry revealed that he wasn't exactly Harry, or even Henry, but Charles Harry. He died at an even younger age than Reginald, at only 29. Finding aunt Nancy was far from straightforward. I was getting nowhere initially. John mentioned that she had lived on Gipsy Lane, was she living there when the 1939 register was taken? I drew a blank, until I dredged a vague bit of detail from my memory banks, Nancy was sometimes a derivative name, but I couldn't recall for which name. Google to the rescue – it's Ann, Anne or Annie. She was on Gipsy Lane in 1939, as Annie L Kenney.

From there it proved relatively easy to find all of John's paternal grandparents and great grandparents, firmly rooted in the greater Leicester area. The task was made easier by the fact that scans of many Leicestershire parish registers are online, so baptisms, marriages and churchyard burials can often be found quite quickly. In addition, birth, marriage and death registrations beginning in the later months of 1837, and census data starting in 1841, help speed the process along. Details of burials at Welford Road and Gilroes cemeteries can also be accessed online.

I've managed to move back to great great grandparents on some lines, but I'm now into the 18th and early 19th centuries, when the going gets a bit tougher. Instead of 3 main sets of information, parish registers form the mainstay of research. If a family stayed in the same area for several generations, it's still possible to make steady progress.

If you would like to begin your family history journey, do join us – remember it's never too late to start!

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month, at Syston Community Centre 10.00 – 12.00

UKELELE GROUP

On Friday, 22nd July, between the hours of 2-4pm, led by our leaders, Len and Dave, the U3A Syston Happy Ukulele Band performed outside the Dog and Gun pub, raising money (on behalf of Dog and Gun) for their current charity, the Leicestershire Search and Rescue. It was a dry, sunny afternoon and we performed for many passers-by, some deciding to get a drink from the pub and sit and watch us.

A total of £70 was raised for the charity.

It was such a success that the Dog and Gun have asked us back again on Saturday September 10th at 3pm!

More information on the charity:

[Leicestershire Search & Rescue - We Are Here To Help \(leicestershire-sar.org.uk\)](http://leicestershire-sar.org.uk)



PHOTOGRAPY GROUP

On June 30th, the Photo Group visited Abbey Park, with a view to capture some images showing reflections and/or shadows, amongst other things.

The weather was a little dull and grey, but seven of the group met at 10am and had a pleasant walk around the park, looking for suitable photos to meet the theme and testing out the settings on cameras to obtain the desired results.

We stopped for a drink and a chat in the café on the park, before heading home.



Pat Langan



Steve Kenney



Barbara Sargeant



Ghislaine Wood



Colin Holgate

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 Aug 10th

Hear all about Jane Barnes' life as a Dairy Farmer's Wife. Farmer Barnes' Dairy at Somerby, is a proud working British Dairy Farm and is committed to teaching people about modern dairy farming, producing milk for the award-winning Blue Stilton Cheese. Jane will bring along some of her delicious Blue Stilton for sale after the talk!

Wed Sept 14th

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

Love Food Hate Waste - Malcolm Heaven

Food is something that unites. It's something that is lovingly grown and nurtured for months before it arrives in our shops. It's a social activity, a comfort, an essential, and a luxury.
Your food is at its best when it's on your plate, ready to be enjoyed. It's perfect in your fridge, ready to be used, or stored in the freezer for another time. It's at its worst when it's in your bin.
Our Love Food Hate Waste presentation aims to raise awareness of the need to reduce food waste and help us take action. It shows that by doing some easy practical everyday things in the home we can all waste less food, which will ultimately benefit our purses and the environment too.

THEATRE TRIPS

Sister Act Saturday matinee 22 October 2022.

Update from Elaine –

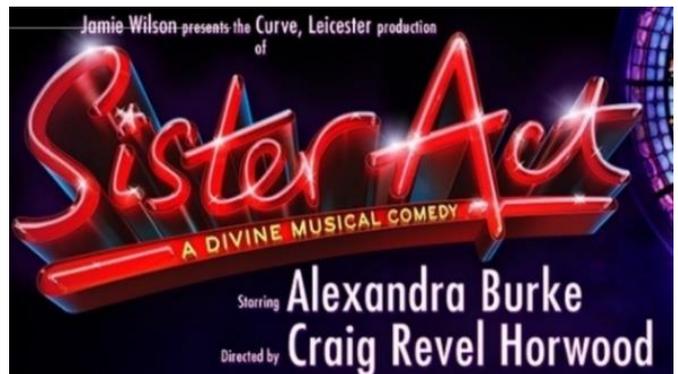
Please let me have your money for your tickets for Sister Act as soon as possible.

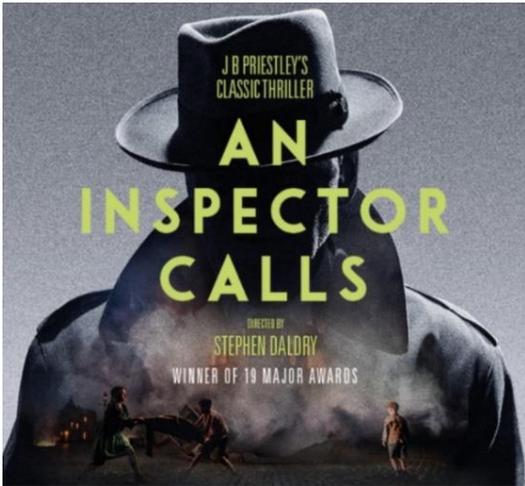
£33.50 please by 10 August.

I will be at August's monthly meeting

I will need cheques made payable to Syston U3A for £33.50.

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.

TREASURE HUNT TIME APPROACHES !!

Lyn & I have put together a treasure hunt for you to walk round and hopefully enjoy. Once again this year, it will be on a Sunday afternoon following an **OPTIONAL** Sunday Carvery Lunch (Veg & Gluten Free options)

For those who have not done one of our hunts before, you are given sheets of cryptic clues which you use to find answers for, as you walk round a local village.



We will need names/numbers by Friday August 12th please.

Max number of 28 for lunch.

Date - August 21st

Times - Lunch 12:00, T. Hunt 2pm

Cost - £2 per head (towards prizes)

- Lunch (main course) is under £10

Please indicate when booking whether lunch is required.

Details of where you need to go will be supplied nearer the time !!!

Lyn & Dave Palmer

dpalmer192@btinternet.com

07710 448253

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

U3A TALKS



Aug 16

The Art of the Goldsmith: Dunstan Pruden and his legacy

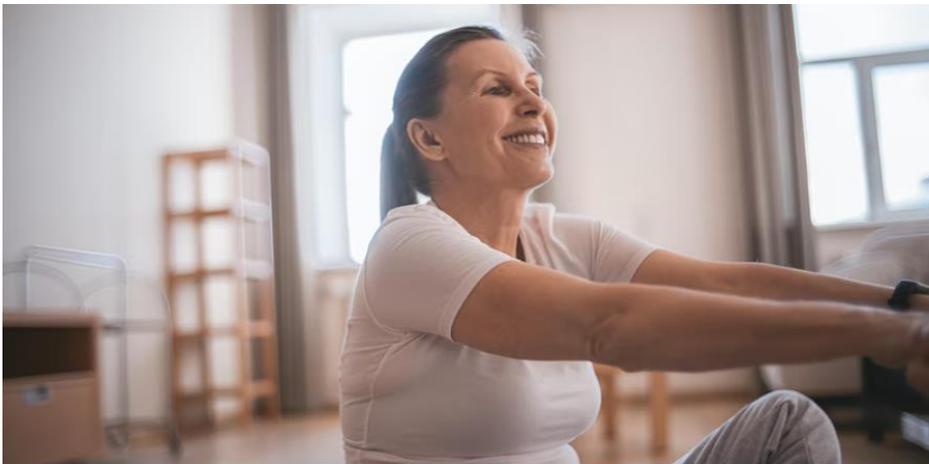
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MULTIPLE DATES

Laughter Yoga Workshop

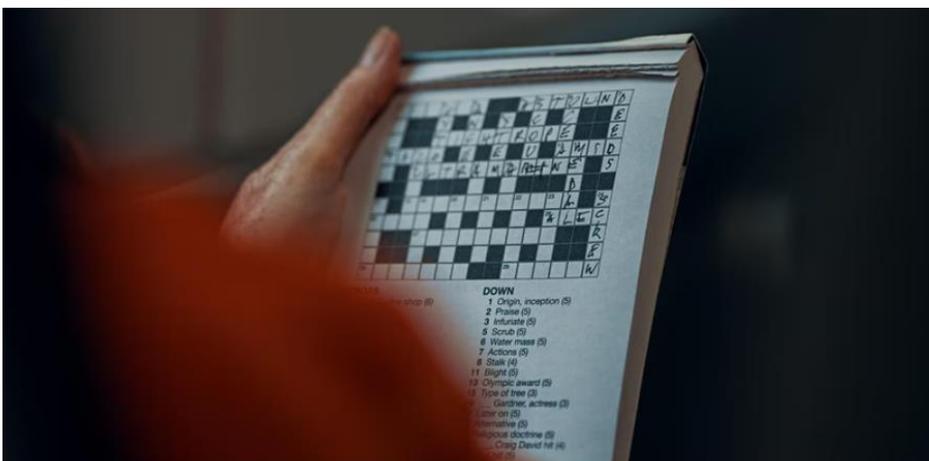
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Sep 08

Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords

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NOT U3A BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



AUGUST 6TH & 7TH 11.00 – 16.00 BELVOIR CASTLE

Take a journey back in time to the era that the fourth Castle at Belvoir was built and learn about the Napoleonic Battles that transpired during the Regency Period 1803–1815.

Hosted by the 21eme Ligne, the re-enactment society of the French 21st Regiment of foot, this

family fun weekend promises to captivate and entertain those of all ages, delivering living history acts, Regency dances and battle sequences including live weapons and gunpowder!

SUNDAY 7TH AUGUST 12.00 – 15.00

Free family friendly event exploring the stories of Ugandan Asian refugees.

Join one of our volunteer Ugandan Asian refugees as they share stories and experiences about life in their home country before the expulsion.

Families are also encouraged to take part in our 'What to pack?' activity, exploring the items we each find most vital and precious in our daily lives.

Free, drop-in event as part of the Rebuilding Lives: 50 Years of Ugandan Asians in Leicester exhibition at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery.

REBUILDING LIVES – LEAVING HOME



20TH & 21ST AUGUST BOSWORTH BATTLEFIELD

Bosworth Medieval Festival is back after two years away! Once again, it will feature battle re-enactments by the Wars of the Roses Federation – including the Battle of Bosworth as the finale on both days – living history encampments to explore, author talks and a medieval craft market, as well as entry to the award-winning exhibition and free car parking. Destrier's horsemen and women will be returning with their mounted skill at arms and cavalry display and the fascinating Death of Richard III presentation, which was a huge hit with the crowd in 2019. They will also play a major role in the Battle of Bosworth re-enactments.



NETWORK NEWS ITEMS



THE LATE-SUMMER QUIZ

u3a By Zoom

MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2022

All u3a members in the East Midlands can take part:
Singles ☺
Couples ☺☺
Teams (up to 4) ☺☺☺☺ 🇬🇧

A handicap system makes it fair for all
No limit on the numbers from each u3a

To Register send:
Your name & email address
Name of your u3a
Team name (if any)

To: u3alatesummerquiz@gmail.com

You'll receive a confirmation email within a couple of days and Zoom details on Sept. 16th

REGISTER NOW – PLACES ARE LIMITED!

The quiz will start promptly at 7:00pm – login from 6:45pm
We aim to finish around 8:45-9.00pm
There will be a 10-minute comfort/drinks top-up break after Round 4
Answers will be given after Rounds 4 and 8

u3a learn, laugh, live
East Midlands Region

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

The talk was about the Baldwin Trust and it's adapted narrowboat trips along the navigable River Soar. The boats allow wheelchair and walking frame users to take to the water in safety and comfort. I remember my late mother-in-law delighted in taking these trips.

Sadly, I was one of those that missed it, so I can say nought about the talk itself. However, it did set me thinking. I knew little about the Grand Union Canal, nor how or why parts of the River Soar were incorporated into it. I was aware of the original commercial transport aspirations behind our canal systems, their decline due to the railways, and eventual re-emergence for mainly leisure purposes.

The Grand Union Canal is the longest canal in the UK at 286 miles long, and runs from London to Birmingham, but it includes a 35 mile Nottingham Arm and a 42 mile Leicester Arm, incorporating what is referred to as the Leicester Navigation. The canal has several other branches, tentacles reaching across the Midlands. London to Birmingham was merely its main artery.

The word Union offers a clue, it was never constructed as one entity, but was the result of amalgamations of several independent waterways, over a period of years — the oldest being the navigations around the River Soar in Leicestershire, and the longest the Grand Junction Canal from Braunston in Northants, to the River Thames. What came to be called the ‘Leicester Line’ comprised two canals that were bought by the Grand Junction Canal in 1894.



The River Soar had been made navigable as far as Loughborough by 1780, and the route was extended to Leicester by 1794. The Leicestershire & Northamptonshire Union Canal was formed to continue the waterway to Market Harborough and Northampton, where it would meet the River Nene and a planned branch from the Grand Junction Canal at Gayton. By 1797, when construction had only reached Gumley Debdale, the money had been spent. More was raised in 1805, and the canal reached Market Harborough four years later.

Meanwhile, the Grand Junction Canal from London to Braunston in Northamptonshire had opened. Routes for joining the two canals were discussed and it was decided that a separate company to be called the ‘Grand Union Canal’ should be formed to make the link. (It is now often referred to as the ‘old’ Grand Union, to distinguish it from the canal of the same name created in 1929 when the Grand Junction merged with several other canals.) This link opened from Norton Junction to Foxton in 1814, providing a direct route from the East Midlands coalfields and industrial towns to London.

Railway competition from the 1840s onwards meant declining revenues, which led to reductions in maintenance. In the early 1890s the Grand Junction was looking to revive East Midlands trade via the canals. As a result, in 1894 the Grand Junction paid £6,500 for the L&NU and £10,500 for the ‘old’ Grand Union — the better price for the latter probably reflecting the value of its reservoirs rather than its canal. The Grand Junction dealt with the arrears of maintenance, dredged their new purchases, and built the inclined plane at Foxton, it was a sort of boat lift bypassing the ten locks and speeding the passage of the boats. However, although traffic grew slightly, it was not by enough to make working

the Foxton incline economic, and in 1910 it was closed and traffic reverted to using the locks that we can see today. Plans to rebuild the inclined plane are still very much a pipe dream.

Before flowing through the centre of the city, the Soar meets the Grand Union Canal at Aylestone. After passing over Freemens Weir, the river splits and recombines with the canal, creating the area called Bede Island. The navigable arm that runs to the east was canalised with parallel banks and is known as 'The Mile Straight'. Beyond Blackfriars, the river splits again to form Frog Island and Abbey Park; it recombines at Belgrave where it runs close to the National Space Centre.

Once out of the city the Soar passes Birstall and threads its way through the lakes of Watermead Country Park, until it reaches Wanlip. The river then meets the once navigable River Wreake, near Cossington Mill. The Soar continues north-east to reach Mountsorrel then passes between Quorn and Barrow-on-Soar, at which point an arm of the canal extends into Loughborough, although the river passes to the east of the town at Cotes. Downstream of Stanford on Soar the river forms the county boundary between Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. Between Stanford and Normanton on Soar, the canal rejoins the river, which then continues to Zouch, passing the 'Devil's Elbow' to reach Kegworth. Downstream of Kegworth, it meets the Kingston Brook, near the village of the same name, passing Ratcliffe-on-Soar and its power station, before flowing into the Trent at Trent Lock. It is possible to continue along the Trent and Mersey Canal, Coventry Canal and North Oxford Canal, to complete a circuit known as the Leicester Ring.



The Soar between Barrow and Mountsorrel (left) and at Barrow on Soar (right)

Those who planned and constructed the various components of the Grand Union canal network, probably never imagined that a few generations on, some of their descendants would be aboard narrow boats, gliding along, just for the sheer pleasure of it.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

WHERE'S LUKE? A short story

It was only natural that everyone would look to Gareth in the circumstances. He'd spent 15 years in the police force before setting up his own private security business. He'd been involved with several missing child cases during his years as a DI and a DS, but when it's your adoptive nephew that's missing it's impossible to detach yourself from the situation, to think as clearly as you would otherwise.

His sister Grace and husband Mark had adopted a brother and sister. Initially they had sought to adopt a toddler, knowing that there were relatively few babies available. They had been offered the chance of Laura, a 2 year old, but had then found that she had a 5 year old brother Luke. There had been no question in their minds of separating the pair, especially when they heard what had happened to them. Their single mother had died of a drug overdose, her need for the next fix had been stronger than her maternal instinct. The children had been badly neglected and had only been rescued 3 days after her demise. The shopkeeper above whose premises they lived had raised the alarm. Luke had been resourceful enough to use a chair to climb up and get water from the kitchen tap, along with food from the sparsely filled cupboards. Whilst Laura had quickly recovered from her early traumas, Luke had difficulty in adjusting to his new circumstances. Whilst Laura lapped up affection, sought it out by scrambling on any vacant knee, Luke shied away from cuddles, kept his distance from all but his sister. He was constantly getting into scraps at school, even taking on boys twice his size. Fortunately the headmistress was prepared to take his background into account, and Mark and Grace were determined to persevere in trying to break through the barriers he had erected.

It was only half an hour previously that the boy was playing in the conservatory, in plain sight of the kitchen, where Grace was busy baking and chatting to Rhona, Gareth's wife. Laura was upstairs having nap. Grace looked up and he was gone. There was no response when she and Rhona called him. The women's increasingly loud and frantic calls brought Mark and Gareth from the far end of the garden. On hearing that Luke was missing, Gareth forced his brain into investigative mode. The ladies were dispatched to search inside the house, Grace upstairs, Rhona downstairs. Mark searched the large enclosed gardens. Gareth went around the garden boundary, starting at the five foot high wooden gate, it was still firmly shut. The latch was right near the top, higher than a 5 year old could reach. He walked on looking for possible escape routes. The wall that served as part of the perimeter was too tall for Luke to scale, it was quickly dismissed as a possibility. The boundary hedge was a different matter. He slowed down looking for gaps that a small boy might have squeezed through, unfortunately there were several.

He made himself stop and think, weigh up the possibilities. At this stage he was unwilling to jump to the conclusion that Luke had been abducted. His old police instincts told him that such instances were rare. He hadn't heard any vehicles whilst they were out in the garden. It was a small quiet village, the house was at the end of a road that turned into a track, too narrow for vehicles. If Luke had gone off with someone he would have been seen. Old Mrs Pettigrew across the road made it her business to mark all the comings and goings. Grace ran across the lawn and joined him, "He's not in the house" she said breathlessly. "Go and ask the old girl across the road if she's seen anything" he suggested. She returned quite quickly, Mrs Pettigrew assured her that no one had passed by in over an hour. She had been sitting on the bench in her front garden the whole of the afternoon. He was now convinced that the little lad was hiding somewhere, but where?

The old manor house had rambling grounds beyond the enclosed garden, with a variety of outbuildings, a stable block, former farm buildings and the like. There was an orchard, a walled kitchen garden, a tumbled down collection of Victorian succession houses. He raked his hand through his hair as he sought to formulate a search plan. As he did so there were shouts from beyond the garden gate. He opened it to a small gaggle of people, "We understand the little lad's missing, we've come to offer our help", a stout middle-aged lady acted as spokesperson. Grace later informed him she was Mrs Barnes, one of the churchwardens. Mrs Pettigrew had clearly lost no time spreading the word. He quickly allocated everyone an area to search, with instructions to look in every nook and cranny, small boys could squeeze into small spaces. They searched and returned one after the other, shaking their heads, no one found him.

Think, think, Gareth willed himself. A case from his police days sprang from his memory, it involved another young lad. A first search had come up blank, but a second one had located him in an area that had in theory been searched first time round. Tact and diplomacy Gareth he told himself, "I appreciate that you've each gone over an area, and I'm not doubting that each of you looked carefully, but sometimes it's easy to discount a place because it doesn't seem possible for a child to have accessed it. Is there anywhere like that, that anyone felt was like that?", he turned to Mark and Grace, "Is there anywhere you can think of like that?". "Who searched the stables?" asked Mark, "I did" a grey haired man spoke up. Mr Barlow had recently retired. "Did you search the loft?", "Well no, there was no ladder up at the opening, it was lying on the floor, so I can't see how a little lad could have got up there" he was a little defensive as he replied. "Unless it fell down after he used it to climb up. I went up there the other day" said Mark, "I'm sure I left the ladder up, not on the floor". He headed for the stables, Gareth immediately behind him, the rest of the party following in their wake.

Mark bent to pick up the ladder, but soon realised there was a problem, one of the fittings that allowed the two parts of the ladder to be extended and slotted firmly together was broken. "Damn, damn!", he threw it down in frustration. Gareth put his hand on his brother in law's shoulder, "Hey, that rather suggests it fell down and broke, and it can't have fallen by itself". "Luke, Luke, are you up there?" Grace called urgently, there was no reply. "I've got a ladder, I'll go get it", they didn't register exactly who had spoken, but saw the back of a man striding away from the group. It seemed like an age before he returned, ladder in hand. Gareth held Mark back, "It might be best if I go", not that he knew how to deal with a 5 year old boy in hiding, if he was up there. "Does anyone have a torch?" he asked, one appeared at his elbow, he rammed it into his pocket. The ladder was extended to the loft opening and he clambered up. "Luke, are you up here. You're not in trouble, your Mum and Dad are just worried about you", there was no response. Gareth shifted his body from the ladder to sit on the edge of the opening. He extracted the torch from his pocket, switched it on and shone it around. He didn't spot the boy on his first sweep, but then he made a second, this time more slowly. He peered into the deepest recesses, straining for a glimpse of something, anything, that resembled a child. He caught a very slight movement, and swung the beam back. Luke was huddled in a corner, trying to make himself as small as possible. "There you are" Gareth spoke gently, "Come on let's get you down from here and back safe to your Mum and Dad", "They're not my Mum and Dad" Luke replied sullenly, "They don't really want me, they only brought me here so they could have Laura, it was her they wanted".

Whilst this exchange was going on Mark had climbed the ladder and heard him, "No, no" he said, "Whatever gave you that idea?", "I heard the foster Mum we were with talking", "Well, she didn't know what she was talking about. We always wanted more than one child, it was very easy for us to choose to have both Laura and you. Most couples have to wait and have one child at a time, we were very lucky to be able to have two at the same time". Mark clambered into the loft, Luke uncurled himself from the

corner and ran over. As Gareth looked on, he wasn't sure which arms went around which body first. Eventually they broke apart, Mark descended the ladder, coaxing Luke down and shielding him from falling. He lifted him away when his own feet landed on firm ground, into his mother's arms, his own enveloped both of them. After a moment he looked up and saw the smiling faces of his neighbours, "Thank you" he said, "That's what neighbours are for" someone murmured as they drifted away, back to their own homes. Grace set Luke down and they all walked back to the house side by side, each holding a son's hand. Mark looked over at his wife and smiled, now they knew that Luke had misunderstood their motives, maybe, just maybe they could make him understand just how much he was wanted.

SPREADING THE WORD by Pierre Castille

An alien visiting us from a distant civilisation on the other side of the galaxy would no doubt identify the strongest of human traits as the ability to communicate.

Speech is a wonderful means of communication, so simple that even children can do it. It can involve just two people or, with a loud voice, several.



The great theatre at Ephesus – capacity 24,000 seated

The great theatre at Ephesus built in the 4th century BC by Greeks and later enlarged by the Romans. The acoustics are amazing. From the back row you can hear someone talking on the stage.

It was here that St Paul got in to a spot of bother when he upset some of the locals selling religious souvenirs.

The theatre is still used for performances, with Elton John performing in 2001 and Luciano Pavarotti in 2009. Rock groups are now banned following damage to the theatre at a very loud concert.

Problems of communication by voice are its limited range, only solved relatively recently by the invention of the telephone by Graham Bell

(1876) and radio Guglielmo Marconi (1894) and its transient nature. If you are not listening, the message is lost forever, or at least until the invention of sound recording by Thomas Edison in 1877.

Perhaps our greatest strength is our ability to communicate over time.



Rock writing – petroglyphs – Namibia

These engravings are more than 2,000 years old. Rock art is found in many parts of the world and are more than random scribbles. They are frequently found in remote places and are probably culturally significant – we can recognise depictions but our ability extract meaning has been lost.



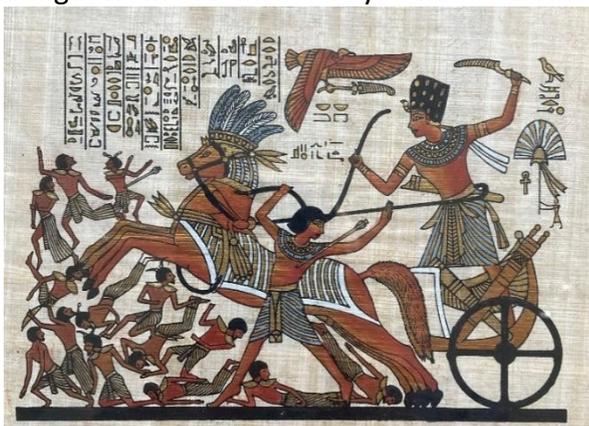
Michael Angelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican

The Vatican's Sistine Chapel is home to amazing pictures with a story to tell. The ceiling was decorated just over 500 years ago. From the pictures you will be able to follow the story, with perhaps an odd hint from the guide book. To see the messages left for us you have to visit their location. Our predecessors are communicating to us over time but not distance. The next part of this story takes us to Egypt, the land of the pharaohs, where we can witness the next stage in the development of communication.



The temple of Horus at Edfu on River Nile, Egypt

Not only a picture but writing, though not in an alphabet that is familiar. If you want read the messages from our ancestors you need to travel.



A souvenir from Egypt – on papyrus

The Ancient Egyptians developed the use of papyrus as a writing material. Using a pen and ink you could write an important message, and employ a courier to take it where it is needed. Obviously a great step forward in communication.

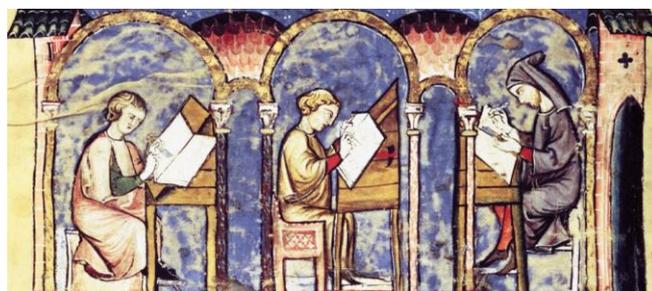
Chinese clerks wrote on paper, an improvement on papyrus, using a brush in place of a pen. Paper, as long as it is kept dry, has a very long life.



Chinese calligraphy (don't ask for a translation!)

Other materials can be used to bear the written word. Until recently. English legal documents were on parchment made from sheepskin that had been cleaned and then stretched so that it dried to form a thin sheet of writing material. The French call it vellum, it is the same stuff. A visit to Lincoln Castle will allow you to see Magna Carta written on vellum.

What if you wanted several copies of a document? Easy, but tiresome, just write is out several times! People who copied documents were called scribes and the biggest of scribing tasks was copying bibles in various monasteries



Medieval scribes copying Bibles in a Scriptorium

Time to make a copy of a bible? – including the preparation of the parchment, manufacture of the ink and the grind of copying 785,000 words and then adding all the illumination of gold leaf and colour before binding it into a codex – about 15 months.

A Better Way

Can you think of a better way of copying bibles?
A solution to the problem came from the east.
7th Century AD China to be precise, with the
invention of the wood block printing process.



Here's a clue as to how it works. Did you try this as a child?
Chinese, and later Japanese and Korean printers
used wood because it was soft enough to carve,
strong enough not to break under pressure and
durable so that it lasted a long time.

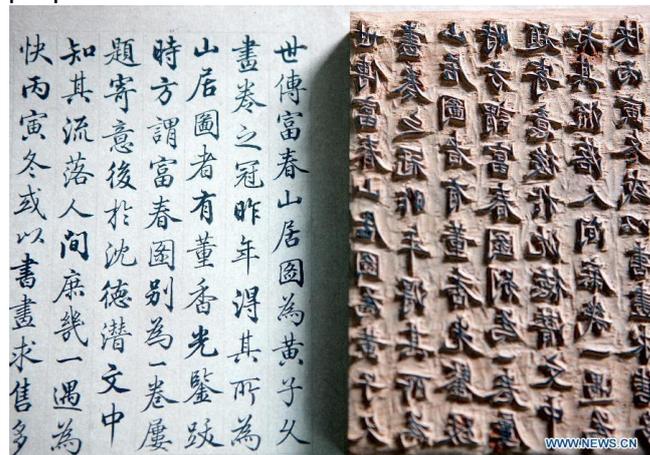
Printing is a multi-stage process.

- Draw what you want printed on a sheet of paper
- Place the paper, face down on a flat block of wood covered in glue so that the ink shows through
- Use a chisel and other sharp instruments to remove all wood in the areas that have no ink on them
- Cover the finished woodblock with ink from a roller or pad making sure that only the face of the type is covered.
- Cover the woodblock with a clean sheet of paper and press down very hard



An early printing press

At first the woodblock used for printing contained
all the characters needed to print a page on the
same piece of wood. It would take a long time to
prepare.



Woodblock and resulting print

Chinese printers realised they could speed up the
process by having the separate characters on
piece of baked clay that could be assembled into
plates for printing



Chinese moveable type made of clay

Moveable type was a huge step forward. The
first book ever printed, the 500 page *The
Diamond Sutra of Tang* (868 AD) took 10 years to
complete as each page had to be separately
carved.

Europe got into the printing process much later
with one enormous advantage and one important
development.

Guttenberg was a goldsmith who used his skills in
handling metal to invent a printing press that
used movable metal type.



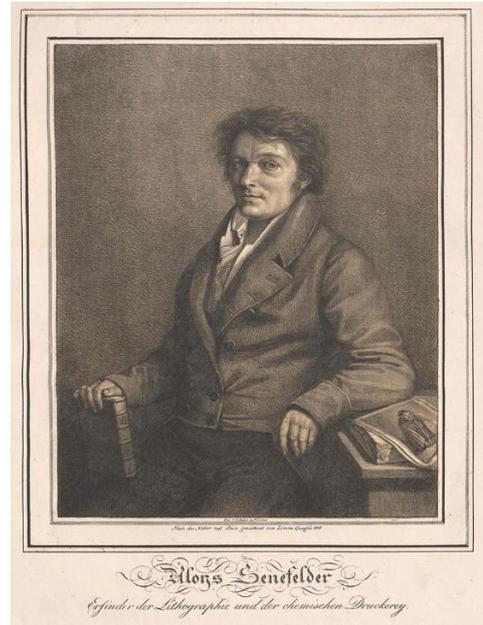
Johannes Gutenberg (1400? – 1468)

The European environment of using twenty-six or so letters in an alphabet instead of hundreds of different characters, made typesetting much easier, and the use of metal type that was far more wear resistant allowed for the faster production of books. Illustrations in books still relied upon woodblock copying.



Woodblock print – The Last Supper, Albrecht Dürer 1523

The original woodcut is about A3 size and every part that isn't black was carved away. A huge task!



Alois Senefelder (1771 – 1834)

Senefelder an actor and playwright learnt the hard way that printing is expensive. He had written a play, but sales of the book did not cover the cost of printing. He then did something amazing, inventing a completely new way of printing.

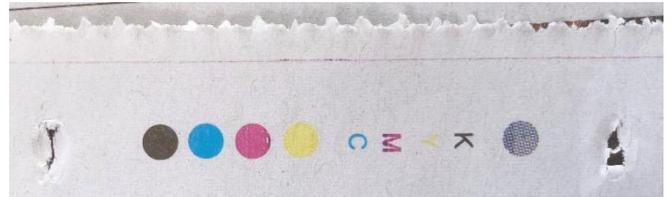
No more chipping-away of wood to produce an image in relief. Just draw what you want and within an hour you are ready to go!

Furthermore, his revolutionary process allowed for printing anything that could be drawn and even produce coloured images. Business success followed, particularly in the printing of music and maps.

Nowadays almost all printing uses the process invented by Senefelder, books, magazines, newspapers, almost the lot.

There isn't enough space to describe the process in this article so you will have to wait until next month.

In the meantime something for you to ponder over.



Can you identify this printed image?

GARDENS

Many of our gardens are suffering under the heat and lack of rain. I am congratulating myself that I added water retentive crystals to my baskets and containers. Even during the very hottest spell so far, I've only needed to water every other day. I've heeded the expert advice not to water my lawn, on the basis that we need to be careful with water use, and it will soon recover once we get a decent amount of rain.

I had a lot of trouble with slugs and snails in my greenhouse in spring. They seemed to home in on the petunias, I had to buy replacement plugs because I lost so many to their voracious appetites. As a result, it has taken the trailing varieties longer to actually get trailing in my hanging baskets.



The troughs in front of my doorstep are mainly nemesia, which reappeared for a third year running, pretty good for a supposed annual. I simply added some long release plant food and filled in any gaps using this year's petunias.

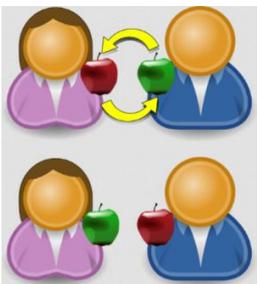


My window baskets are a mixture of petunias, bizzie lizzies, dwarf snapdragons and lobelia. There are 4 baskets side by side. I have to replace some of the lining each year as the birds seem to favour it as nesting material.



Helen Disley sent this photo of an arrangement on her patio table

SWAP STOP



Maybe you don't have something you are willing to give away, but how about swapping it with something from another member?

Are you a jig-saw fan looking to exchange with another jig-saw fan and give both of you a new challenge?

Do you have books you've read and would like to swap some with another bookworm?

Gardeners, how about swapping your surplus plants for ones you don't have, but would like to have?

Let me have details of what you have and what you want and we'll try and connect you with another member who wants what you have, and has what you want. The usual email address applies.

REHOMING REQUEST SPOT

Are you looking to give something in particular a home? Is there something you are looking for that another member might have sitting doing nothing when it could be doing something for you?

Why not let me know and I will put it in the newsletter as a "Rehoming Request". The same email address as Declutter Den applies.

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?



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

There seems to be a good crop of blackberries this year. I saw a family picking some wild fruit after rain. Hopefully they used the berries soon after, otherwise Seamus Heaney's words below would come true.

BLACKBERRY-PICKING by Seamus Heaney

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple dot
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
We trekked and picked until the cans were full,

Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

And finally.....

When rescue charities advertise dogs for rehoming, many paint a portrait of the dog's characteristics. One of them decided to have a bit of fun and asked people to submit similar details, but imagine they were rehoming their spouse or partner. Here is an example –

Mature lad for fostering or adoption. House trained. Loves going for walks, but shortens the route given the chance. Tends to walk quite a way ahead. Recall training is ongoing, but due to selective deafness is proving very challenging. Loves dogs and humans alike, but will not come away until his curiosity is satisfied. Have tried distraction techniques, with limited success. Counter surfs and resource guards if given the opportunity. Loves children, but due to poor attention span cannot be left alone with them for too long. A secure garden is a must as will escape for hours, but always returns when hungry.

Dare any of you submit a similar mock advert? Names will be withheld on request – I promise!

