

March 2026 Issue No 118

## Musings from the Chair



**T**he problem with February is that it is a short month. Great when you were working, less time to the next payday, but not so great if you have to write a piece for the newsletter and suddenly realise the month is running out. As usual I wait until after the general meeting to pen some words in the hope of some inspiration.

I was not sure what to expect today – as a much younger person I loved dancing the Gay Gordons and galloping around the room doing so. I thought we might be asked to take part today and certainly my joints would not have been quite so enthusiastic about it now, but fortunately Scottish Country Dancing was not nearly so energetic as my recollections of the Gay Gordons, and we were spectating. It was a very pleasant morning, well attended again. One of the dancers asked me how many we were expecting. She was from Beeston u3a and said they have 1300 members. Whilst I am delighted that our u3a continues to thrive and we keep getting new members, the idea of having 1300 members is mind blowing. I would definitely not want to have responsibility for organising anything for a u3a that large.

I did make a plea at the meeting, and there will be more in the newsletter, for people to help convene interest groups. As we get more new members we need more groups. We have some very hard working conveners who give of their time to facilitate interest groups for the benefit of us all. Many of our conveners run more than one group and in some cases have done for many years. We always need more people to volunteer their skills or interests to start up new groups, whether they be entirely new to us or second groups where originals are full. We are all busy people with busy lives, but it can be very rewarding and it is also an excellent way to become more involved and to meet new people. It may be that you want to learn about something yourself, and don't have a skill as such, but just an interest. Could this be an opportunity to find people with a like interest and you all find out about it together? Could you do anything? We can help with admin and with getting the message out to members and provide any support needed. Do have a think and talk to Ali, our Groups Support, myself, or any member of the committee.

An inordinate proportion of my time and 'Musings' seems to be spent trying to get volunteers to come forward. I won't apologise for that as I do think that we should be able to find the skills and volunteers we need from our membership - which is fast approaching 400. The next appeal will be for people to stand for committee next time – that is still 6 months away but, as I started by saying, the time flies. Maybe something else to start thinking about...

For now, spring is around the corner. Our trips and visits are getting busier, the seasonal groups will be restarting and perhaps some of our walks won't be rained off. Enjoy the lighter evenings and do make the most of your u3a.

Hoping to see many of you around during the month.

Val Wilkinson  
Chair

**Save the Date :**  
**General Meeting**  
**Thursday 26 March at 10:00am**

**Jump to :**  
[What's on at the Lace Market Theatre](#)  
[What's on at the Playhouse](#)  
[Trips and Visits](#)

## NOTICES

### The MaD Amdrammers proudly present ...

... their play for 2026 'CRYING IN THE CHAPEL' to be performed at the Bonington Club, Arnold on **Friday 17 April 2026**.



The play this year is about a wedding and you are cordially invited to join Priscilla and Shane to share their happy day. Feel free to dress in your finest wedding outfits to join in the fun at the wedding reception.

Although the happy couple have only known each other for a short period of time (3 weeks) they are keen for their family and friends to join them for their upcoming nuptials. Priscilla, at the age of 95, is keen to spend the rest of her life with Shane whom she met at her retirement complex when he entertained the residents as an Elvis Presley tribute act.

It is the night before the wedding and Priscilla's daughters have arrived. They are understandably upset by the prospect of their mother marrying in haste to a man 25 years her junior. As they discuss their options, Shane is celebrating on his stag night whilst Priscilla is having a quiet night drinking cocoa and making preparations for her wedding. As the day of the wedding dawns there is a tragic turn of events. Secrets and lies are uncovered. Will the wedding of the year go ahead as planned or has someone put a spanner in the works?

Tickets cost £12.50 and this will include light bites, a raffle ticket and a quiz. The tickets will shortly be on sale, to purchase them online **use the code CC1704**. AND if you have any special dietary requirements **please notify the membership secretary** on [membership@madu3a.org](mailto:membership@madu3a.org)

Linda Stevenson

### Scribblings by MaD u3a Creative Writing Group

The first volume of our Scribblings has been very well received. We are delighted by the lovely comments and compliments that will encourage us to share more of our work as and when we can.

The second and third volumes are now on our web page and can be accessed by clicking on the links - [Scribblings Book 2](#)      [Scribblings Book 3](#)

All 3 volumes can also be reached from the [Creative Writing page](#) of our MaD website.

Please do continue to give us your feedback. This is not a teaching group as such. We write for our own pleasure and are rewarded by learning from each other.

Carolyn Luckhurst

### Your u3a needs you!!

Convenors are needed for the following groups :

#### Outdoor Activities group

Eileen, the present convenor, already runs several groups and can no longer run Outdoor Activities. The role involves planning a programme for activities such as Outdoor Bowls, Archery etc once a month during the Summer months.

Please contact Eileen on [outdoor@madu3a.org](mailto:outdoor@madu3a.org) if you are interested. Eileen would help you in setting it up and planning the programme.

#### A second Literature group

A couple of members have expressed an interest in the current Literature group but it is full, so we are looking for someone who is willing to convene a second Literature group. The first Literature group discusses a series of short stories over a six week period. Jonathan Brown, who convenes the group via Zoom, would supply all the materials for the new group and would support in any way he can and, of course, you would have my help too, as Groups Support (Alison Gove-Humphries).

Jonathan runs his group full time but I'm aware that is a big time commitment so maybe it could run for one or two six-week periods a year.



## MaD Men

We are still looking for a convenor to restart this group.

MaD Men is a group just for the men in our MaD u3a to meet together, have a drink, talk about anything and everything and enjoy each other's company. The number of members was increasing but the group had to be suspended as the Convener wasn't able to continue.

The group had been meeting at the Mapperley Golf Club, but any suitable local venue would work.

Would you be prepared to convene this group? All you would need to do is to organise a venue and host the meeting.

No-one has to be a Convener by themselves - a couple of interested people could run a group together. You will get plenty of support, too, in setting up a group.

If you are willing, able and interested to convene any of these groups please contact me on [coordinator@madu3a.org](mailto:coordinator@madu3a.org).

Alison Gove-Humphries  
Groups Support

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## A proposed new group - AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Is there any interest in setting up a group to discuss AI (Artificial Intelligence)? I have been on an online course and feel this is something our u3a should be addressing.

If you are interested please contact me on at [french@madu3a.org](mailto:french@madu3a.org).

Annabell Gallier

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## Community Cohesion

Report of the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion

[The State of Us: community strength and cohesion in the UK 2025](#)

*From Page 8 : "Institutions lack confidence to tell positive stories about social cohesion and also to engage in difficult dialogue about challenges. In a polarised climate, many institutions with reach to wider audiences, particularly online, have ducked out of sharing and amplifying positive stories that promote inclusive local pride or that highlight communities working together. We also found relatively few examples of organisations leading dialogue or community engagement that reached people who were more concerned about themes of immigration and diversity. Combined, this lack of confidence to engage the public creates more space for divisive narratives to spread."*

There is a conversation. Any u3a contributions?

The commission wants to hear from as many people as possible - Please take a look : [Living Well Together](#)

Martin Cooke

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## National Emergency Briefing - the Climate and Nature Crisis

Last November, ten of the UK's leading experts briefed an invited audience of over 1,200 politicians and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and the media. The briefing set out the implications of climate and nature breakdown for health, food systems, national security and the economy.

To read more, including several presentations from scientists and experts on climate and nature, click on the link - [National Emergency Briefing](#).

Martin Cooke

## u3a Festival 26

u3a Festival 26 is taking place at the University of York and will be an opportunity for fun, learning and making new connections. There will be opportunities to share your skills and learn some new ones in our series of talks, workshops and activities spanning sports, music, art and much more.

Drawing on the experience, enthusiasm and talent of u3a members, the Festival is a wonderful celebration of the creativity within the u3a movement.

**The Festival begins on Wednesday 1 July and will end on the afternoon of Friday 3 July at University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5DD.**

To read more about it, and to buy tickets, click on the link - [u3a Festival 26](#).

## u3a Online Learning Events

Have you discovered the free u3a online talks, workshops and courses?

u3a members can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses through their membership. Most sessions are led by fellow members, sharing their expertise, with additional talks from notable speakers and organisations.

All events are bookable via Eventbrite. Please ensure you can attend when booking and cancel if you're unable to make it so others can participate. Events are exclusively for u3a members.

Interested? To find out more click on the link - [u3a Online Talks and Events](#). And, you can sign up to the events mailing to get details monthly online events straight to your inbox.

## NEWSLETTERS

u3a Newsbites - [February 2026](#).

u3a Friends Newsletter - [February 2026](#)

Gedling Borough Newsletter - [Monthly Newsletter February 2026](#)

Gedling Community newsletter - [Community Initiatives February 2026](#)

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NETWORK meeting of u3as held on 28 January 2026 - [Minutes](#)

u3a Board Meeting on 25 February 2006 - [Summary Report](#)

### Your Committee 2025-26

Valerie Wilkinson	Chair	Eileen Braham	Committee Member
Amanda Knight	Vice Chair	Paul Dennis	Committee Member
Elaine Lindley	Business Secretary	Liz Hagan	Committee Member
Joan Davis	Treasurer	Lesley Harrington	Committee Member
Linda Randall	Membership Secretary	Pat Smith	Committee Member
Alison Gove-Humphries	Groups Support	Sheila Ward	Committee Member

## Technical Problems?

If you have any problems or issues with our website please don't struggle or, even worse, give up!

We have a team of people who will do their best to assist you to get the most out of our lovely [MaD Website](#) or with Beacon site issues.

Please contact the [Webmaster](#) or one of the MaD Tech Comms group :

Richard Hill, Sue Cullen, Liz Hagan, Andrew Harper, Carolyn Luckhurst

## TRIPS, VISITS AND EVENTS

### Salome @ Fletchers

The Nottingham College students' production of *Salome* was nothing short of mesmerising - a bold, atmospheric interpretation of the provocative play by Oscar Wilde. From the very beginning, the tone was dark, intense and charged with tension. The staging was simple yet effective, allowing the emotional power of the performances to take centre stage.

The student playing Salome delivered a captivating performance. She portrayed Salome not merely as a spoiled princess, but as a complex, intelligent and dangerously seductive young woman. Her presence on stage was magnetic - every movement deliberate, every glance loaded with meaning. The student portraying John the Baptist (Jokanaan) brought immense gravitas to the role. His voice was strong and resonant, cutting through the tension with prophetic authority. He stood firm against Salome's advances, embodying moral conviction and spiritual power. Herod was portrayed as both grotesque and weak - easily manipulated yet disturbingly fascinated by Salome.

A brilliant production once again by our local students.

### Dusty Springfield Tribute Night at Bosworth Hall Hotel & Spa

The package included dinner, bed & breakfast, which made it a reasonably priced night away. The buffet dinner was decent with plenty of choice, and breakfast the following morning was perfectly adequate. The bar offer was an added bonus.



As for the tribute act itself - the singer could definitely sing; however, in our opinion, she didn't quite capture the essence or distinctive style of Dusty Springfield. While the songs were performed well vocally, the performance lacked some of the emotion and character that made Dusty so special. A few covers and a bit of Cilla completed the act. A typical cruise ship entertainer.

The hotel DJ, playing well known hits before and after the performance, made for an enjoyable evening, especially as part of a package break. If you're looking for a fun night out with good value entertainment rather than an authentic tribute experience, it's worth considering. Overall we felt it was good value for money.

### Hotel History

The core of Bosworth Hall was built in the late 17th century as a grand Elizabethan country house. It was the ancestral seat of the Dixie family, who had strong ties to the area dating back to the 12th century. The parkland was first bought in 1589 by Sir Wolstan Dixie, a former Lord Mayor of London. Later, his descendant Sir Beaumont Dixie, 2nd Baronet, constructed the main house during the reign of William III and Mary II (1680-1690). The Dixie family began to lose its fortune in the 19th century, largely due to gambling debts, and the estate was sold in the 1880s. In 1885, the estate was purchased by Charles Tollemache Scott, who expanded and improved the house and gardens. After his daughter Wenefryde Scott (later Countess of Dysart) sold the property in 1913, Bosworth Hall passed through several new owners.

In 1931, Leicestershire County Council acquired the estate and it was converted into a public hospital known as Bosworth Park Infirmary. It served in that role - including as a care facility during and after World War II - until the infirmary closed in the late 1950s due to staffing issues and changing needs.

After standing vacant for years, the hall was finally redeveloped in the 1980s. A construction firm initially began the conversion into a hotel but went bankrupt, and eventually Britannia Hotels took on and completed the project. Since then the estate has operated as a hotel and spa, blending its historic rooms, grand staircases and period features with modern hospitality facilities. Bosworth Hall is a Grade II-listed building with many original architectural features preserved, such as carved woodwork, Tudor fireplaces and a moat. The hotel is set in approximately 11 acres of grounds and is close to the historic town of Market Bosworth and the Bosworth Battlefield site.

In short, Bosworth Hall began life as a stately family home in the 17th century, became a public hospital in the 20th century and was reborn as the Bosworth Hall Hotel & Spa in the latter part of the century - carrying forward hundreds of years of local heritage into its role as a historic hotel today.

## **Kiss me Kate @ The Squire**

West Bridgford Operatic Society delivered a vibrant and thoroughly entertaining production of *Kiss Me, Kate*, bringing Cole Porter's sparkling score and sharp wit to life with confidence and charm. From the opening number, the company established strong ensemble energy. The chorus scenes were lively and well-drilled, with particularly impressive harmonies in '*Another Op'nin', Another Show*' which set an exciting tone for the evening. The choreography was dynamic and stylish, capturing both the glamour of 1940s Broadway and the playful chaos of backstage theatrics.

The principals led the production with conviction. The chemistry between Fred and Lilli was engaging and believable, balancing the comedy and romantic tension at the heart of the show. Lilli's '*So In Love*' was delivered with emotional depth and vocal control, while Fred brought charisma and comic timing, especially in '*Brush Up Your Shakespeare*' which drew some of the biggest laughs of the night. Lois provided effervescent energy, lighting up the stage in '*Always True to You in My Fashion*'. Musically, the orchestra supported the cast beautifully, maintaining brisk tempos without overpowering the singers. Cole Porter's score sparkled under careful direction, and the sound balance allowed the lyrics - so central to the humour - to shine clearly.

Visually, the production was bright and effective. Costumes were colourful and period-appropriate and the set design cleverly navigated the show-within-a-show concept, allowing smooth transitions between backstage drama and Shakespearean spectacle. Above all, the production captured the joy and theatricality of *Kiss Me, Kate*. West Bridgford Operatic Society once again demonstrated the strength of local theatre - combining talent, dedication, and evident enjoyment to create a thoroughly satisfying evening's entertainment.

A delightful and polished production that left the audience smiling long after the final curtain.

## **Abba & Billy Joel Tribute Break**

We recently enjoyed a Tribute Weekend Break at the Royal Court Hotel Coventry and had a lovely overall experience.

The first night featured an ABBA tribute act, performed by just two girls. While they were entertaining and had great energy, we were a little surprised to see that one of the performers was the same singer we had seen the previous weekend at a Dusty Springfield tribute. It didn't spoil the evening, but it was unexpected.

The second night was a Billy Joel tribute, and this was absolutely excellent. The performance really captured the spirit and sound of Billy Joel, creating a fantastic atmosphere and getting everyone involved.

The package included a carvery dinner, buffet breakfast and a 2-for-1 bar deal, which made the weekend great value for money. The carvery was enjoyable with a good selection and the breakfast buffet offered plenty of choice to set us up for the day. Overall, a fun and good-value weekend break with some great entertainment - especially the Billy Joel night! We'd certainly consider another tribute weekend in the future.

## **Hotel History**

The building was originally constructed in 1894 as a grand country manor called *Kerseley Hall* for William Hillman, the car manufacturer and founder of the Hillman Motor Company, his wife Fanny and their eight daughters. It featured luxury accommodation, servants' quarters, outdoor tennis courts and elegant living spaces typical of a wealthy late-Victorian estate. After Fanny Hillman's death, in 1927, the Hillman family sold the property. It was converted into the Alcock Convalescent Hospital in 1929, helping people recover from illness and later expanding to treat casualties after the Coventry Blitz during World War II.

By the late 1960s the hospital ceased operation and in 1968 local businessman Fred Kilpatrick bought and renovated the building into a hotel. It officially opened as the Royal Court Hotel in the early 1970s, catering to guests seeking comfort and leisure in the Warwickshire countryside. The hotel continued operating through the late 20th century and, after changing ownership a few times, was purchased by Britannia Hotels in the mid-2000s. Britannia invested in renovations and expansions while preserving much of the historic manor's charm.

A Grade II listed country house hotel and spa set in around 11 acres of landscaped gardens, the hotel blends historic elegance with modern facilities. The original 19th-century manor remains at its heart, surrounded by expanded wings, leisure amenities (including a pool, spa, and gym), extensive conference spaces and over 200 guest rooms. In short, the Royal Court's history spans more than 130 years, transitioning from a private family estate to a healthcare facility and finally into one of Coventry's largest and most historic hotels.

**The following have been removed due to lack of interest :**

- 2 May - **Llandudno Extravaganza**
- 30 May - **Come from Away** at the Theatre Royal (Matinee)
- 30 May - **After Show Meal** (show cancelled - see above)
- 6 June - **Eastbourne** 5 Day break (no singles left)
- 12 June - **Balmoral & Aberdeen** short break
- 26 July - **Buckingham Palace** day trip
- 24 Aug - **Northumberland** (no singles left)

The following events are **fully booked**:

- 8 April - **Strelley Hall** Tour and Cream tea
- 11 April - **Traveling Wilburys**

**Book Now :**

- 21 May - **Planters** Afternoon Tea and Amy Tribute £35pp, 2.00pm start - **only 2 places left**

**Coming up :**

- 5 Mar - **Bell Foundry.** All booked and details sent to members
- 17 Mar - **St Patricks Day.** Meeting outside the Tourist Information office at 1.00pm for to watch some of the celebration in the Old Market Square and then 'play it by ear' for food, drink and further entertainment. There are quite a few options. (The new social Club should be open by this date but no details available yet)
- 21 Mar - **Sweeney Todd Matinee** – All booked details to be sent out to those booked.
- 23 Mar - **Torquay** 5 days - All booked & paid.
- 28 Mar - **Ruby Rockabella & the Rocking Robins** – We have released our tickets now so anyone wishing to go now will have to pick up from Mapperley Plains Social Club.
- 30 Mar - **Chesterfield** by train - details will be sent out to those who have shown an interest nearer the date

[Click here to see the full list](#)

Trips, Visits & Events Team

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## INTEREST GROUPS

Click on the group name to visit our MaD website for more information :

[Ale & Cider Group](#)

[Art Appreciation](#)

[Badminton Group](#)

[Book Group 1](#)

[Book Group 2](#)

[Breakfast Club](#)

[Bridge for Beginners](#)

[CineMates](#)

[Creative Craft](#)

[Creative Writing](#)

[Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners](#)

[Cryptic Crosswords for Improvers](#)

[Curry Club](#)

[Family History](#)

[Fine Dining](#)

[French Conversation and Culture](#)

[French for Fun](#)

[Fun Cooking with Gadgets](#)

[Games Group](#)

[German Conversation & Culture](#)

[Italian Speech](#)

[Knit and Natter](#)

[Literature](#)

[Local and Live Music](#)

[Local History](#)

[Lunch Club](#)

[MaD Girls](#)

[MaD Growers](#)

[MaD Men](#)

[MaDAmDrammers](#)

[Music Appreciation](#)

[National Trust Group](#)

[New & Prospective Members](#)

[Outdoor Activities](#)

[Photography](#)

[Pickleball](#)

[Play Going - Lace Market Theatre](#)

[Play Going - Playhouse](#)

[Play Reading Group](#)

[Project Craft Group](#)

[Singing Together](#)

[Table Tennis](#)

[The Bryan Ruskin MaD Jazzers](#)

[Trips and Events](#)

[Ukulele Group](#)

[Walking](#)

[Walking - Public Transport](#)

[Walking - Strollers](#)

[Walking - Walk in the Park](#)

[Wine Appreciation](#)

[Wine Bar](#)

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Fun Cooking with Gadgets

**W**e had a small but perfectly formed meeting of just three members, who each brought a lovely heart friendly recipe. Rose's filled Medjool dates tasted like a Snickers bar!

Sue provided a very tasty crustless mixed vegetable quiche, Chris made poached nectarines with blueberries and Rose also brought a baked apple with sultanas served with low fat honey yoghurt.

Rose said her dates, filled with chunky peanut butter and covered with dark chocolate, would be a good deterrent to keep us off eating bars of chocolate and Mars bars. "You only need one" she said.



Only ONE eh? They were so delicious, I could certainly have eaten a lot more!

Chris Green

### Photography

**T**he MaD Photography group have two different themes each month.

In February our subjects were :

[Rain & Snow](#) and [Represent a Film](#)

Just click on each of the links to view the photographs. They can also be accessed from the [Photography page](#) of our MaD website.

Sue Cullen

### Knit and Natter

**T**he Knit and Natter group have been helping to clothe a few bears so that they can be sold for a Charity supported by one of our members.

Here are the ones finished so far ....

Elaine Bird



### Singing Together

**T**he next Singing Group will be on Tuesday 3 March at 2:00pm at the Westdale Lane Community Centre.

We had a great turn-out last time! Do come along!

Gary Cawthorne

*Did you know that Singing is highly beneficial, especially for those of us who are 'less young'? It offers significant cognitive, physical and emotional health advantages, acts as cognitive 'cross-training' to improve memory and verbal fluency, boosts mood by lowering cortisol, strengthens respiratory function, and reduces feelings of loneliness through social engagement in choirs!*

*And you can get all of that good stuff, plus a drink and a biscuit, for just £2.00 at the MaD Singing Together group meetings! Ed.*

### Ale & Cider Group

**T**he drinkers get together for February is at the Old Volunteer in Carlton. This beloved community pub was formerly the Flipside Brewery tap pub. The pub is recorded as being in existence as the Volunteer in 1832 and later became the Old Volunteer.

The pub was at the centre of a scandal when, in July 1901, a barmaid from the pub, Elizabeth Topham, stood trial accused of causing the death of a woman named Louise Allcock who died after an abortion carried out by said barmaid. The barmaid had previously served a prison sentence for a similar offence. She was sentenced to death but this was eventually changed to penal servitude for life.

Dean Francis Smith

### Walking - Walk in the Park

**T**he weather has not been kind to us on the second Friday of the last few months so we are very much looking forward to a dry spell. Due to the amount of water and mud in some of our parks, we will decide where we want to walk nearer the date.

This group is for members who wish to walk around three miles. We try to vary the parks according to the seasons. Fortunately, we have several parks within easy distance of Mapperley. Members will receive an email, usually about a week in advance of the walk, giving all details of where to meet.

Carolyn Luckhurst

## Curry Club

The Curry Club revisited Mogul E Azam on Goldsmith Street in February and had a very enjoyable evening.

The group meets once a month, usually on the third Monday. If you would like to join please send an email to [curry@madu3a.org](mailto:curry@madu3a.org).



## Walking - Strollers

Our Strollers will hopefully be walking around the west lake at Colwick Park on Friday, 6 March starting at 10.15 am. The paths on the route we walk have so far managed to remain clear of excess water. We are simply hoping for a lovely dry spring morning on Friday.

Our Strollers are those who only want to walk a short distance at a gentle pace whilst enjoying the company of other members. We stop at *Wired on Wheels* for a hot drink. They very kindly give our group a small discount.

The group walks on the first Friday of every month, weather permitting. If you are not already registered and wish to join us, please send an email to [strollers@madu3a.org](mailto:strollers@madu3a.org) and you will automatically receive all updates.

Carolyn Luckhurst

## Creative Writing

In January, the MaD Creative Writing group launched the first of a set of three books of our work that we call *Scribblings* and have been delighted by the positive and encouraging comments from members. Many thanks to all of you who have read the book and a special thank you to all those who took the time to write to us.

The second and third books of *Scribblings* are now on the website. Below are the links to all three books. They have been produced in alphabetical order by title.

[Scribblings Book 1](#)

[Scribblings Book 2](#)

[Scribblings Book 3](#)

We hope that you will be able to find the time to relax and read our *Scribblings*. We have had a lot of pleasure writing them, reading them aloud to each other and then selecting our own pieces to include in the books. If you do enjoy them, we welcome your comments.

Carolyn Luckhurst

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**Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with a slow internet connection to see who they really are**

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## Art Appreciation

Art Appreciation is back on track! It returned to normality in February, aside from a few blips: the laptop and projector forgetting they'd already been introduced and momentarily ignoring one another, my forgetting to charge up my laser pointer, and the booked morning taxi not turning up through lack of drivers (Ramadan being the culprit. A largely Muslim DG Taxis finding most of their staff must stop working at the same time to pray during this period, as I later learned, which of course cooled my initial annoyance).

Blips aside, back in the swing with the postponed talk from January taking the February slot. Most members commented this gave them the background of information to view the numerous events/publications about Turner and Constable happening this year that they may encounter (Radio 4's recent book of the week was Constable's year in seasons, for example, and others mentioned last month and in the talk). This, of course means that the Valentine Day's special 'Aspects of Love in Art' will take place in March ... but then again, love refuses to be seasonal!!

Jo Wilson



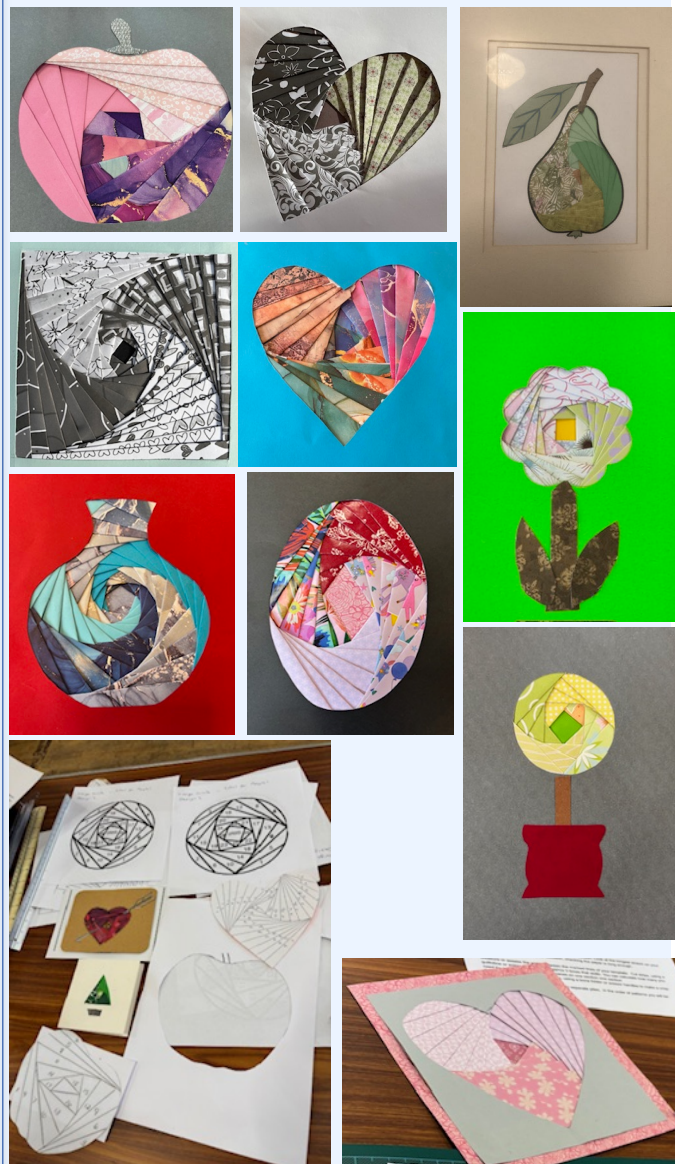
## Creative Craft

At the February session of the Creative Craft group we had a go at Iris Paper Folding; a technique involving folding colourful strips of paper and overlaying them in a pattern that shows through an aperture.

The end result has a similar design to an Iris lens of an old fashioned camera, hence the name of Iris Paper Folding.

Here are some of the pictures we produced.

Glenis Dinsmore



Children have a great deal of willpower - and even more won't power

## German Conversation & Culture

**A** bright, albeit chilly, morning greeted us for our meeting on 17 February.

The first of our two articles from Nachrichten Leicht was topical and very interesting. It covered the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics being held in Italy as well as detailing the history of the Olympic cause, flame and torch relay.

Our second article about Robbie Williams' achievement gaining more number one albums than the Beatles. His 16th was released recently. The Beatles had 15 number one albums but over a much shorter period of 10 years.

Everyone contributed some excellent sentences incorporating the irregular verb Beginnen (our study verb this month). A very interesting and informative discussion arose. Tricia did some excellent research and showed us examples of comparisons to 'Old English'.

Our usual, light-hearted, enjoyable chat followed whilst enjoying coffee and biscuits. Seven tickets have been booked for Ein Komisches Talent at the Lace Market Theatre in May. Karen is looking forward to a forthcoming trip to the USA visiting family as well as an exciting tour.

Our next meeting is on 17 March.

Joy Brown

### **Could you help to run an interest group?**

### **Is there a group you would like to start?**

If you have a skill or knowledge about a subject you would like to share with others why not consider starting an interest group? There is lots of help and advice to get you started and help with the technical side of things as well. Conveners find running a group is very enjoyable and rewarding.

If you think you'd like to have a go don't be shy - please send an email to our Groups Support on [coordinator@madu3a.org](mailto:coordinator@madu3a.org) or have a chat with any Committee member so we can help you to get going.

## **FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>26 March</b> | <b>Paula Cornwall - Motoring Manners 1928 style</b><br>Meet the Hon. Mrs Victor Bruce a 1920's racing driver who will guide you through the rules of the road, prior to the highway code  |
| <b>23 April</b> | <b>The River Trent – England's Heart</b><br>England's prosperity was built along the waterway which, since ancient times, has been a great border – the country's north-south dividing line. Great men, great queens, and great innovation mark the Trent's history. Yet it is, for all that, a mysterious river; silently and secretly doing its own thing and not fully known or understood |
| <b>28 May</b>   | <b>Pit ponies - Janine Buckley celebrates the tremendous efforts of the county's pit ponies</b><br>This talk delves deeply into the lives of a workforce that gave all they had. Learn how their working conditions changed over time, and how they are remembered by their former handlers   |
| <b>25 June</b>  | <b>MaD u3a 10th Birthday Party</b>  |

## February's General Meeting

### Dieter Hecht - Scottish Country Dancing

February can be a gloomy month. The Christmas decorations are long gone, summer still seems a long way off, and the temptation to hibernate is strong. So thank goodness for Dieter Hecht, Vice President of the Nottingham Scottish Association, who gave us a fascinating and gently humorous introduction to Scottish Country Dance.

The Association's mission, Dieter explained, is simple: social gatherings to celebrate Scottish culture. And they do them properly. Highlights of the year include St Andrew's Night and Burns Night - complete with piper, caller, dancing, haggis and 'plenty of alcohol to wash it down'. There are quiz nights, outings and even trips.

But the heart of it all is the dancing. The group meets weekly at St Andrew's Church on Chaucer Street for a varied programme of dances. "We sometimes manage to do them right," Dieter admitted cheerfully. "We would never win a prize". Fortunately, prizes are beside the point. Fun and laughter, we gathered, are compulsory.

How does a German end up wearing Scottish regalia and performing intricate Scottish dances? It began in Bonn, where his wife Marie worked and where the lure of a free meal and ridiculously cheap drinks at the NAAFI proved irresistible. Dieter had dabbled in ballroom dancing in his youth, but nothing quite prepared him for the moment the music struck up and men began stamping while women in high heels flew past. He extended an arm to Marie to find out what was going on - only for it to be seized by a lively stranger. "What the hell is this?" he wondered. The answer was Strip the Willow. And he was hooked.

Andrew then took us deeper into what Scottish country dancing is - and, crucially, what it is not. Not Highland dancing with its athletic footwork. Not the elegant swaying seen in *Bridgerton*. Not a ceilidh. Instead, it is groups of three, four or five couples dancing in squares or triangles, performing complex

figures in eight-bar phrases, keeping moving all the time. It is a team effort: not just you and your partner, but the whole set working together. Done properly, it is extremely elegant. Done less properly, it is still extremely enjoyable.

Scottish country dancing originated in the 18th century. The dance form owes something to English country dancing and ballet. In 1923, a Miss Milligan founded what became the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, determined to standardise and preserve the tradition. Today it thrives worldwide - from Russia to Japan.

There are over 6,000 listed dances. We were treated to demonstrations including *Joi De Vivre* (a jig for four couples), *The Falkirk Lass* (a stately strathspey), and *Marie's Wedding* which the audience knew and some sang along to. We were astonished, hearing the complexity of the instructions at the beginning of each dance, how the dancers remembered what to do! When one of the dance group sustained a minor injury mid-session, the programme was rearranged at speed - proof that this is no gentle potter around the parish hall. We all hope she makes a speedy recovery soon.

Everyone enjoyed the finale, *Good Hearted Glasgow*, urging the dancers on by clapping to the beat.

Why take up Scottish country dancing? Excellent exercise. Good for balance and posture. A workout for the brain. No partner required (indeed, etiquette insists you change). No special clothes. Affordable shoes. And, above all, laughter.

This presentation was something different. Thanks to Cathy for organising it. Who knew February needed men in kilts, flying heels and a dose of Scottish joi de vivre?

Alison Gove-Humphries

[Click on the link to view a short video of the dancing](#)



# PUZZLES

Keep your little grey cells exercised with these puzzles. Answers at the end of the Newsletter.



## The Little MaD Quiz

1. In which modern-day country are the ruins of Carthage?
2. Which dance shares its name with the state capital of West Virginia?
3. Excluding Australia, what, at 2,175,600 square kilometres, is the largest island in the world?
4. What were the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne collectively known as?
5. What middle name, the surname of an American president, is common to William Hague and Bill Clinton?
6. In computing, for what does HTML stand?
7. Which jazz trumpeter's greatest success was Midnight in Moscow?
8. In which English city is the Anglican cathedral dedicated to St Philip and the Catholic one to St Chad?
9. In which Irish province is the county of Limerick?
10. Which midfielder was the youngest member of the England team who won the 1966 FIFA World Cup?

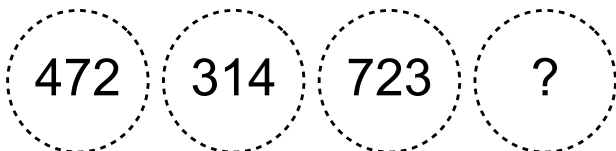
**What completes the list?**

Sore, Keel, Cosh Mark

**What property do these words share?**

Bad, ball, dan, mass, pat, tan


**What number continues the sequence?**



**What number replaces the ?**

63	(97)	49
56	(73)	24
?	(36)	54

## Book Title Dingbats

<p>1</p> <p>Beauty ←</p> <p>Beauty</p> <p>Beauty</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>JENNY</b></p> <p>Orient Express</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>MARCH</b></p> <p><b>MARCH</b> ←</p> <p><b>MARCH</b></p>	<p>4</p> <p>28 July 1914</p> <p>11 November 1918</p>
<p>5</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Goooooooooooo</p> <p>ooooooooooooo</p> <p>ooooooooodbye</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Mufasa</p> <p>Hermione Grainger</p> <p>Pax, from IKEA</p>	<p>8</p> <p>WoAndliercleand</p>

[Answers at the end of the Newsletter](#)

## MOTORING NEWS

### Plug-in hybrids are a 'wolf in sheep's clothing'



Carbon dioxide emissions from plug-in hybrid cars are as much as two-and-a-half times higher than official tests suggest, according to new research.

Plug-in hybrid vehicles are powered by an electric motor using a battery that is recharged by being plugged in or via an on-board petrol or diesel engine. They account for 3% of new car sales.

But analysis from pressure groups Transport and Environment and Greenpeace suggest they emit an average of 120g of CO2 per km. That compares with the 44g per km in official 'lab' tests. Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) are sold as a low-carbon alternative to traditional vehicles and conventional hybrids - which cannot be recharged from an external source - and are proving increasingly popular.

The new research is published as the government considers whether to bring forward a proposed ban on the sale of new petrol, diesel and conventional hybrid cars from 2035 to 2030. To read more click on the link to visit the BBC website - [Plug-in Hybrids](#).

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## NOTTINGHAM

### Wonderland Festival and The Hacienda



Get ready for festival fever in Nottinghamshire! Winter is slowly fading away, making place for the warmer seasons, and what better way to make the most of your summer than celebrating with the highly anticipated Wonderland Festival and The Hacienda!

Ring in the summer with your favourite festivals in Nottingham - the perfect opportunity to chill out, tune in and make some amazing memories.

Click on the link to go to the [Visit Nottinghamshire](#) website for all the information and dates.

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## HEALTH



### How our brains change at 66 and 83 - and what it means for us

Experts have discovered the two key ages at which our brain changes in later life - we examine the science and how to best look after our grey matter as we get older.

Much like our bodies, our brains operate differently as we get older. We notice changes in how we think and function, which could be a decline in lightning-fast decision making or our ability to multitask with aplomb.

But the changes are not quite as gradual as we think, with neuroscientists at the University of Cambridge identifying five 'major epochs' of brain structure over the course of human life. They found that our brains re-configure to support different ways of thinking as we mature and move through life's chapters.

Click on the link to the Saga website website to read more - [How our brains age](#).

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### RSV vaccine: over 80s can finally get their free jab



At last - people over 80 are eligible for the RSV vaccine after a government change of heart. Three million people aged 80 and above will now be able to get the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine for the first time on the NHS, after the Department of Health and Social Care finally changed its mind this week.

The details vary slightly by country. In England, from 1 April over 80s plus all older people living in care homes will become eligible for RSV jabs when the spring vaccination campaign kicks off. To read more, click on the link, again to the Saga website - [RSV Vaccine](#).

## SCAMS

### What to do if you accidentally click on a spam link

Which?

Don't panic, accidentally clicking a dodgy link doesn't automatically mean your device is compromised. However, some malicious websites may attempt to download malware in the background, so it's worth taking a few precautionary steps to stay safe.

The experts at Which? explain how you can secure your device and protect your data after a phishing scare. Click on the link to the Which? website to read more - [Clicking on a spam link](#).

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### Scams to be aware of

Which?

Again from the Which? website is an up to date list of scams of which you should be aware.

Click on the link to read about them - [Scams to be aware of](#).

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## HOME

### The foods you should *never* reheat

SAGA

#### ... and why the rules aren't as strict as you think

From rice to roast chicken, there's a lot of confusing advice about leftover food. The experts from Saga separate fact from fiction.

In an age when we're all trying to reduce food waste and make our budgets stretch further, leftovers have become kitchen heroes. But alongside this thriftiness comes a nagging worry: is it actually safe to reheat that chicken curry from Tuesday? What about yesterday's rice? And didn't someone once say you should never reheat potatoes?

The internet is awash with warnings about 'dangerous' foods, but the reality is far less alarming and, thankfully, far more straightforward than you might think.

Click on the link - [Foods you should never reheat](#) - to read the article.

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### The best baked beans - tried and tested

SAGA

Do beans really mean Heinz? To find out how other brands compare to the nation's favourite baked beans, the experts at Saga put the top tins to the test.

Seven brands of baked beans were put to the test. Click on the link [Baked beans tried and tested](#) to visit the website and discover the winner (according to the Saga 'experts') - you may be surprised!

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### The scandal of fake foreign honey

The Observer

An investigation reveals a global honey fraud that begins in China and ends with allegations of adulterated jars on UK supermarkets shelves.

The Observer has obtained and analysed more than 500 authenticity laboratory test results conducted on UK supermarket honey since 2018, commissioned by beekeepers and fraud investigators. They reveal how some of the country's bestselling honeys have repeatedly failed tests to detect sugar syrups used to bulk out products.

To find out more, click on the link - [Fake honey](#).

# GARDEN

## 10 ideas for getting your garden ready for spring

From protecting your fruit trees to clearing up winter waste, these [10 top tips](#) from Saga will prepare your patch for the season ahead.

## What to feed garden birds in the spring season



Attracting birds to our gardens is something that many of us love to do. But what are the correct foods? Should they differ in our different seasons?

The RSPB website has ideas and advice to help you make the correct choices. Click on the link to find out more - [Feeding birds near you](#).

## ANSWERS TO THE PUZZLES

<b>The Little MaD Quiz</b> 1. Tunisia, 2. Charleston, 3. Greenland, 4. The Muses, 5. Jefferson, 6. Hyper-text Markup Language, 7. Kenny Ball, 8. Birmingham, 9. Munster, 10. Alan Ball	
<b>What completes the list?</b>  <b>'THE LIST'</b> - The words are anagrams of rose, leek, shamrock and thistle which are symbols of parts of the UK THE LIST is an anagram of thistle	<b>What property do these words share?</b>  The A can be replaced by any other vowel and still form a legitimate English word
<b>What number continues the sequence?</b>  <b>147</b>  The numbers 47231 are being repeated in the same order	<b>What number replaces the ?</b>  <b>27</b>  In the first row divide every number by 7 to obtain the digits in the brackets; In the second row divide by 8, and in the third row divide by 9
<b>Book Title Dingbats</b>  1. Black Beauty, 2. The Girl on the Train, 3. Middlemarch, 4. War and Peace, 5. The Colour Purple, 6. The Long Goodbye, 7. The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, 8. Alice in Wonderland	

And finally ...  
**Retirement is wonderful. It's doing nothing without worrying about getting caught 😊**