

April 2026 Issue No 119



Musings from the Chair



As both Sue and Liz are on holiday at present we are very grateful to Sue for still putting together a newsletter for us, but it is briefer than normal. An excuse for me to be brief too.

Please note that our general monthly meeting in April (23 April) - which is the 4th Thursday in April but not the last Thursday - **will take place in the annexe behind the social club** and not in the usual room. Also we will be unable to provide refreshments so, if you wish to do so, please bring your own.

We are still desperately in need of volunteers to prepare to take on some committee roles. We need a Membership Secretary, and despite requests, no one has yet come forward. We will also need 3 or 4 new committee members for September. **Please consider what you could do for our u3a.**

Arrangements are now well in hand for our 10th birthday celebrations. More details to follow in due course. I did get an email last week from Jane Pavier who told me that she was the East Midlands Regional Trustee at the time of our launch on 24 March 2016 and she confirmed that her role at the time was to mentor the steering committee. Richard Hill bravely took on the role of Chair, and the rest is history. She wishes us all a Happy Birthday.

And I wish you all a Happy Easter.

Val

Save the Date :

General Meeting

Thursday 23 April at 10:00am

**THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN
THE ANNEXE**

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NEWSLETTERS and REPORTS

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[u3a Friends Newsletter](#) - March 2026

[Minutes of u3a Council Meeting](#) - 19 February 2026

[Table feedback from the East Midlands Regional event](#) - 11 March 2026

[Summary Report of u3a Board Meeting held 25 March 2026](#)

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Visit to John Taylor Bell Foundry

A group of MaD members made their way to Loughborough for an interesting and informative tour of Britain's last bell foundry. The range of products are Full Peals, Single Bells, Handbells and Small Bells, Carillons and Chimes and Specialist Foundry Work.

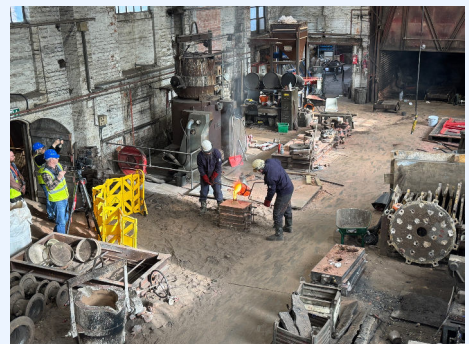
The cast for our very own Nottingham Little John bell is displayed outside the foundry (as per the photo). That was made in 1927 and is known for its deep tone. It has recently been refurbished at the foundry and should last for another 100 years.

We were taken though the factory to see where the clangers are made and restored, following through to the departments for woodworking and tuning. Then we watched a video telling us the history.

The final part was standing on a balcony overlooking the area where the casting takes place. We were lucky enough to see one small bell being made.

Many thanks to Paul Boseley for planning the trip for us.

Carolyn Luckhurst



Devon Delights

On Monday the 23 March a small but select group of members boarded an Alfa Coach to travel to the English Riviera, staying in Torquay for 5 days. The weather was pretty miserable but we didn't let that spoil our enthusiasm!

We arrived mid afternoon and after unpacking went for a stroll on the seafront. The view wasn't brilliant as it was still quite murky, but it was refreshing after the long journey.



Tuesday dawned brightly and after breakfast we set off to Buckfast Abbey in Dartmoor National Park. Set in a valley close to the river Dart it is a beautiful place, and the interior was spectacular. Outside we enjoyed the extensive grounds which included the Sensory, Physic and award winning

Millennium Gardens. Due to the time of year the gardens were not at their peak but even so they were a pleasure to see.

We then travelled on to Plymouth and some of us visited the Mayflower Museum where we learned about the seafaring history of the area and the Mayflower's 1620 voyage taking the pilgrims to America. The rest of our intrepid group visited the Beryl Cook exhibition, celebrating the life, work and legacy of one of Britain's most distinctive artists and marking 100 years since her birth.

On Wednesday we visited Dartmouth which is one of my very favourite places and, as always, it didn't disappoint! Set on the estuary of the river Dart, it is such a quaint little town with lots of independent shops and a great history of links to the Royal Navy. I enjoyed an ice cream sitting on Bayards Cove (where the TV series *The Onedin Line* was filmed), and finished the afternoon in the wonderful 14th century pub, *The Cherub*.

Thursday took us to Totnes, another historic market town on the Dart river. It has a sizeable alternative community and can

best be described as bohemian and quite quirky - it has one of the quirkiest cinemas I've ever seen, run as a social enterprise supported by the local community.

It's not easy to find (I've been to Totnes many times and had never noticed it) but it is well worth the effort.



We finished the day in Brixham, which is a town built around a natural harbour. It provides anchorage for the largest remaining commercial fishing fleet and is also known for the replica of Sir Francis Drake's ship *The Golden Hind*, which is moored in the harbour. We had the opportunity to browse the shops and take a little light refreshment before heading back to the hotel.

On Friday after breakfast we headed home. We all agreed that it had been a great break. The hotel was comfortable, the food and nightly entertainment were good and the day trips, which were included in the cost of the trip, were great value for money.

We enjoyed each other's company and a few of us went home a little richer thanks to a dabble at bingo! A big thank you to Marian and Paula for once again organising such a wonderful holiday - I'm looking forward to the next one already!

Geraldine Chaffe



UKULELE UNLEASHED - FROM CARE HOME CRAIC TO JAMBOREE JOY

March has been a wonderfully busy month for our u3a Ukulele Group, with two very different but equally joyful gigs that reminded us why making music together is such a pleasure.

St Patrick's Day at the Care Home :

We were delighted to be invited to play at the local Braywood Gardens Care Home, as part of their St Patrick's Day celebrations. The residents and staff thoroughly enjoyed singing along to the familiar old favourites of their younger years.

Our set also included a mix of Irish folk classics, especially curated by our amazing leader and teacher Rose Mawer. And we gave a rousing rendition of 'Black Velvet Band', 'Molly Malone' and of course 'The Wild Rover.'

Moments like these remind us how powerful music can be in lifting spirits and creating connection. So much so, that we have been invited back to perform again!

Jug Jamboree Ukulele SingAlong :

Later in the week, several of us headed to the Jug Jamboree for a lively ukulele singalong, organised by the Dukeries u3a.

It was a great occasion. We joined 80 players from across the wider area - stretching from Doncaster to Leicester. Once we started playing, I was instantly hit and surrounded by a wonderful wall of sound. It was a great opportunity to enhance our repertoire with a whole range of new songs; and I was totally inspired by the excellence of more seasoned players. A great experience, a thoroughly enjoyable day full of fun, highly enthusiastic strumming and a room buzzing with musical camaraderie. Everyone left smiling, the worries of the world forgotten for a few joyous hours.



Looking Ahead :

With such a fun and fulfilling week behind us, we're already looking forward to our next adventures. Whether performing in the community or simply enjoying each other's company at our regular sessions, the ukulele continues to bring us together in the best possible way.

If you've ever fancied giving the ukulele a try - no experience needed - you'd be very welcome to join us. There's always room for another happy strummer.

Stefka Samus

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](#)

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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

[German Conversation & Culture](#)

A beautiful, warm sunny morning was welcome for our meeting on 17 March.

We read, translated and discussed articles from Nachrichten Leicht. Both were very interesting. The first one about the repatriation of German citizens from the Middle East due to the recent conflict, was especially topical and rather challenging. Reading and discussing it afterwards we all agreed we learnt the names of several states in the UAE which we had never heard of before.

Our second article was about the discovery of a new Rembrandt painting from 1633. Experts from the Netherlands spent two years analysing the colours and painting techniques to determine it was a genuine Rembrandt. The owners, who bought the painting 60 years ago, had previously been told it was not. The painting has been donated to a museum in Amsterdam where visitors can now view it.

Bleiben, our study verb, gave rise to a discussion as to when to use this or Übernachten or Wohnen when staying somewhere. We found it very helpful to compare the differences.

We sang, in German of course, Happy Birthday to Pat and enjoyed chocolate cake with our coffee.

Our next meeting is on 21 April.

Joyce Brown

[Family History](#)

Next month the Family History Group will be looking at Heraldry, and designing a personal coat of arms.

Claire Wilkie

[Walking - Public Transport](#)

How did the first public transport walk go?

There were only 4 of us, or 6 if you count two dogs! We started in Gedling Country Park and walked along a ridge path that unfortunately was very muddy, and then took a downhill into Burton Joyce along a lane where there were lots of trees and desirable homes. It had rained heavily the night before and there were torrents of water flowing down the side of the road. We had a brief snack at the War Memorial in Burton Joyce. At this point one of the dogs felt tired so one person and two dogs took the 26 bus back. That left three of us.

We then walked along the fields by the River Trent and were bathed in sunshine, the best part of the walk. After using the level crossing we were back in Burton Joyce and here another person decided to catch 26 bus back to Nottingham. It turned out to be a wise decision on her part because after that it began to rain heavily, so the two of us who completed the walk were wet through.



The next public transport walk will be Saturday 27 June and will be a linear walk from Spring Lane to Woodborough with plenty of dropping out points at bus stops if you don't want to do the whole walk.

Stella Lane

[Photography](#)

In March the themes for the Photography Group were :

[Candid photography](#) and [Urban Close Up](#). Click on the links to view the photos.

'Candid Photography' is a photograph captured without posing or formal preparation, focusing on authentic, unscripted moments rather than staged scenes. These images often feature natural emotions and actions, taken when the subject is unaware or not looking at the camera, resulting in a candid 'fly on the wall' or documentary feel.

Sue Cullen

[Local and Live Music](#)

10 members of the Local and Live music group went to Lowdham Village Hall to see Andy Fairweather-Lowe and his band The Low Ryders.

We all agreed it was an excellent evening with great musicians. I have seen him 3 times and thought that this was his best performance.

Eileen Braham



Art Appreciation

Quentin Metsys : The Money Lender's wife, 1514



This month's session looked at aspects of love in art: narcissism, grief, unrequited love, and using love for emotional manipulation - to name a few sections.

We looked at much-painted topics, for example Cupid and Psyche and Joseph and Potiphar's Wife, as well as examining very different love stories of artists themselves affecting their work.

We are thankful to Richard for trying out his super ultra-modern projector, givi

But, I'm afraid it's back to my old faithful next month when we'll be changing tack again with subject matter and focussing this time on the media used by professional artists.

Joanne Wilson



Walking - Strollers

The weather is brighter, the days are longer and the emerging flora and fauna at Colwick Park are very welcome. We shall be walking on Good Friday starting out at 10.15 am for a stroll round the west lake.

Our strollers like to stop for a cuppa at Wired on Wheels where we get a small group discount. This walk is for those who wish to walk a short distance at a leisurely pace.

Members who are already registered with this group will receive an email giving clear instructions. If you wish to join us, please email strollers@madu3a.org and you will be included.

Carolyn Luckhurst

Walking - Walk in the Park

The April walk will start in The Meadows at the rear of the Victoria Memorial Gardens and take us along the embankment to cross the river and round the Iremonger's Pond and back up the other side. It's around 3 miles. At the moment, the spring flowers are glorious. Let's hope for a good day on Friday 10 April. Dogs will have to be on leads for the majority of this route.

In March, we had a super walk in Bestwood Country Park thanks to Val Wilkinson who knows the park very well. It had been a heavy night of rain and Val was able to take us on a route that avoided the potentially muddy patches. The dogs had a wonderful time, as did our members.

To join this group, please email walkinthepark@madu3a.org and you will receive an email, usually about a week before the second Friday of each month.

Carolyn Luckhurst

Curry Club

The March event was at the local Woodthorpe Tandoori. It was well attended and the food was both good and plentiful. We started with individual servings of onion bhaji and chicken tikka, followed by a selection of chicken and lamb dishes, with accompanying vegetable sides and naan.

It brought back memories of last year when it was snowing when we visited, but the weather was kind, staff great, food really tasty and the company excellent.

Our next Curry night is at the Banyan Tree on Monday 20 April 2026 - look forward to seeing you there.

Linda Randall and Steve Payne



Play Going - Playhouse

Scenes From a Friendship

Thursday 4 June at 7.45pm

Cost £18.00

The Market Deeping Model Railway Club

Thursday 23 July at 7.30pm

Cost £21.60

Lesley Harrington

Till The Stars Come Out

Thursday 24 September at 7.30pm

Cost £21.60

Pantomime - Aladdin

Friday 11 December at 6.00pm

Cost £20.10

GENERAL MEETING

March's General Meeting

Paula Cornwall - Mind Your Motoring Manners! (A 1928 Lady's Guide)

Our audience was thoroughly delighted by this lively and humorous talk, which brought the early days of motoring vividly to life. Presented in character, we were introduced to the Honorary Mildred Victor-Bruce - a pioneering racing driver, adventurer and passionate advocate for women motorists.

From the outset, the audience was drawn in with questions - "How many of the ladies in the audience drove here today?" - which raised a few tentative hands and plenty of smiles. The speaker quickly put everyone at ease, acknowledging that early motorists had similar hesitations when cars first appeared on the roads.

Mrs Bruce's story is full of energy and determination. Growing up in Essex, she discovered her love of speed as a child when her pony bolted - an experience she relished. By adulthood, that same thrill had led her into motoring, and eventually into competitive racing. She met her husband at the London Motor Show, and together they took part in events such as the Monte Carlo Rally.

One of the highlights of the talk was the dramatic retelling of her attempt to match her husband's rally success. Setting off from John o'Groats, she drove - where, to her delight, the waiting crowds had gathered to see her, she believed, not her husband.

The journey continued via Folkestone (a quick journey after she mistook a glass of brandy she was given for ginger beer!) to France, where her companions kept her awake with ghost stories. The audience clearly enjoyed these moments, laughing at the absurdity while admiring her endurance. The story built to a vivid climax as she described navigating mountain hairpin bends before finally glimpsing the Mediterranean. She completed the journey just three hours outside the winning time - an extraordinary achievement that earned her a special award.

The talk was not just storytelling; it was wonderfully interactive. Audience members were invited to try out 'proper' use of the motor horn - two polite toots only! - which caused much amusement. There were also knowing laughs at the description of hesitant pedestrians ('astrayjays') and the trials of being taught to drive by one's husband.

We were then introduced to Mrs Bruce's principles of good driving. A perfect motorist, she suggested, needs patience, quick judgement, determination, imagination and, above all, courtesy. Through humorous examples, we were encouraged to anticipate hazards - whether a dog about to dart from behind a gate or a driver ahead behaving unpredictably.

Equally memorable was the advice on motoring attire. A secure hat was essential (though not tight enough to ruin one's hairstyle), while loose scarves and dangling pearls were positively dangerous - illustrated by the cautionary tale of Isadora Duncan. Practical footwear and a sensible coat completed the outfit. Paula certainly looked the part - very glam!

Throughout, the audience remained fully engaged and their knowledge of the old hand signals was tested. They clearly appreciated both the historical insight and the gentle satire of motoring behaviour.

The talk ended with a reflection on Mrs Bruce's extraordinary life beyond the road. She went on to fly solo around the world, set records well into later life, and even performed aerobatic feats in her eighties - a fitting reminder of her fearless spirit.

An informative, amusing and highly original presentation, warmly received by all. It left us with a simple but enduring message: good driving is not just about skill, but about patience, awareness and consideration for others - lessons as relevant today as they were in 1928.

Alison Gove-Humphries



FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS

Thursday 23 April : The River Trent – England’s Heart by Mike Burton

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.

Thursday 28 May - Pit ponies by Janine Buckley

Celebrating the tremendous efforts of the county's pit ponies, 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.

Thursday 25 June - MaD u3a 10th Anniversary Party

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 or have a chat with any Committee member so we can help you to get going.

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

St Patrick's Day : We were a little let down by the St. Patrick's Day festivities in Nottingham's Market Square. The set dancing wasn't really the kind of activity that encouraged participation, so we decided to head down to the new Shamrock Social Club instead. They had a vocalist on, who was excellent, though the crowd was so noisy that it was hard to fully enjoy the performance.

We then made our way to Bar Iberico for a bite to eat, everything was delicious and just what we needed. On our way to catch the bus home we passed The Bodega, which was absolutely buzzing with a fantastic Irish band. We kind of wish we had discovered it earlier, though I suspect it was a younger crowd. Although the celebrations were not what we hoped for the company was great, so we had a very enjoyable day out.

Sweeney Todd: A Stunning Youth Theatre Performance at Nottingham Arts Theatre. The Youth Theatre's production of Sweeney Todd at the Nottingham Arts Theatre was nothing short of spectacular. From start to finish, the performance captivated the audience, showcasing an exceptional level of talent from the young cast.

What truly stood out was the incredible vocal ability of the performers. Some of the voices were so powerful and well-controlled, they could have easily been mistaken for seasoned professionals. The intensity of the performances, especially in the darker and more dramatic moments of the show, was truly impressive for such young actors.

The staging, costumes and direction were all top-notch, bringing Stephen Sondheim's thrilling musical to life in a way that felt both fresh and captivating. Each actor brought their character to life with such passion and depth it was impossible not to be drawn into the twisted, tragic world of Sweeney Todd.

Overall, this was a fabulous performance that exceeded expectations and proved the incredible talent of Nottingham's Youth Theatre. If this is the future of theatre, it's certainly in great hands!

Chesterfield : Four members visited Chesterfield by public transport (train/bus). Chesterfield is a historic market town in Derbyshire, best known for its quirky landmark, strong industrial heritage, and easy access to the Peak District. It's not a huge tourist city, but it has a grounded, authentic feel that many visitors appreciate.

The Crooked Spire is exactly what it sounds like - a dramatically twisted and leaning church spire. It's one of the most unusual architectural features in the UK and instantly recognisable:

Unique design- The spire twists about 45 degrees and leans nearly 3 meters off centre.

Local legends -Stories range from the devil sitting on it to a virgin bride surprising the church.

Real explanation - Uneven heating and the use of unseasoned timber caused the distortion over time.

Interior - The church itself is large, peaceful and historically rich.



It is a quick visit unless you take a guided tour, but they don't start until Easter. After spending some time taking in the spire and its surroundings, we made our way to a nearby pub for lunch, which provided a welcome break and a chance to relax and chat.

Chesterfield has its charm, but it isn't exactly overflowing with attractions beyond the famous crooked spire, which remains the main focal point of the town. While it's certainly worth seeing, there isn't a great deal else to fill a full day, particularly when key venues are closed. Unfortunately, the Winding Wheel Theatre was shut during our visit and isn't scheduled to reopen until the Christmas panto season in 2026, which was a bit disappointing as it would have added something extra to the day.

We had timed our visit to coincide with Market Day, hoping for a lively atmosphere but, like many markets nowadays, it felt rather sparse and lacking in variety. There were a few stalls to



browse, but it didn't take long to see everything on offer. As a result, we split into two pairs - two of us took our time wandering through the shops, while the other two opted for a more relaxed stroll until it was time to meet up again and head home. The weather was a bit unpredictable, with a mix of dry spells and the occasional light shower, but thankfully it never became heavy enough to spoil the outing. In the end, while Chesterfield itself may not have offered a packed itinerary, the day was still enjoyable. Good company, a change of scenery, and the chance to get out and about made it worthwhile - as is so often the case, it's the people you're with that make the experience.

Coming up :

- 8 April – Strelley Hall
- 11 April – Travelling Wilbury's
- 13 April – Weymouth
- 23 April – St George's Day
- 24 April – Upbeat Beatles
- 30 April – Recycling Plant

Cancelled :

Eyam - due to lack of interest

Trips, Visits & Events Team