MaD moments
Your monthly Mapperley & District u3a Newsletter

June 2026 Issue No. 121

Musings from the chair

After a cold spring so far, summer has arrived with abandon and I am presently seeking shade in the garden and seeing if I can manage to use my laptop outside. So far so good.
The months are going fast and we will be celebrating MaD u3a's 10th birthday this month. I am looking forward to 2 special events, and hope to see lots of you at one or both. It also means that we are a month closer to our annual AGM in September when we have a new committee and officers in place. There will be at least 4 vacancies on the committee this year as committee members who have served their time step down - so we would very much welcome, and indeed need, some new blood to keep everything fresh and to inject new ideas. I would like to invite anyone who might be prepared to consider putting themselves forward to come along as a guest to the next committee meeting on Tuesday 16th June at 10am at the social club to see what we do and to satisfy themselves that none of us has 2 heads, nor is there anything to be afraid of. We are really a friendly bunch. We don't expect new committee members to take up a role immediately but we do need new members to shadow those of us with roles to ease succession when the time comes.
Just to reassure you. we are not looking for a Chair, a treasurer or a secretary so don't feel you will be pressurised. We do however still need a membership secretary but we are working on that, and we would like a small team to take on trips and visits, but in the absence of anybody coming forward then we will need to completely rethink and it is likely that we will not be able to offer a programme of trips and visits as we have for the past 8 years. Perhaps one or two people would be prepared to organise a one off holiday or day trip so that we just have a few trips, as some of our local u3as do. We can always find a job for anyone who volunteers and it is a really good way to get involved and to get to know your fellow members, especially if you are quite new to MaDu3a.
If anyone would like to discuss the possibility of joining the committee and wants further information then please feel free to email me at chair@madu3a.org, give me your contact phone number and an idea of the best time to call and I'll try to speak to you and answer questions, or ask any other member of the committee.
Now back to enjoying the garden in the sunshine. Have a good month everyone.

Val Wilkinson

MADu3a 10th Anniversary

Amanda and Lesley of The Anniversary Party team showing off their preparations for our upcoming celebrations.
First we have a Celebration General Meeting this month, then a very special Barn dance with a live band on Saturday 27th June 2026 at St. Jude's Church Hall from 6.30 – 9.30pm.
As well as opportunities to show off your dancing steps, or just watch the merriment - there will be a hot "Round the World" supper. Drinks and glasses are not provided, but you are welcome to bring your own.
As an organisation, we want as many members as possible to join us for the evening, so this is a subsidised event therefore has previously been only open to members, at a small cost of £10 per ticket. However, following some requests from members, the committee has decided that members can bring one guest with them. The cost for non-members will be £15 per person

If you are interested, please email Amanda on vicechair@madu3a.org informing her of the name of your guest (if any) and send the money **using code 10AN** to the bank account. Please also indicate in the email if you or your guest have any allergies or dietary requirements.

- The U3A Bank Account details are
  - Name is Mapperley and District U3A
  - No is 24903168
  - Sort Code 772210

Looking forward to seeing you there.
Amanda, Geraldine, Maggie, Anne, Lesley and Vic on behalf of MAD u3a.

Save the date :

Thursday 25th June – MaD u3a 10th Anniversary Party

Thursday 23rd July - Atlantic Row : George Nelson is a Mansfield-based man who, along with his brother-in-law Russell Davis, completed a 3,500-mile unsupported row across the Atlantic Ocean in 2023-2024 to raise money for dementia charities

The next Puzzle Swap will be on 23 July at the General Meeting. There will NOT be a Puzzle Swap at the 10th Anniversary Party in June.

CREATIVE CRAFT – DEBBIE FOREMAN

Last month we set our creative minds on the craft of decoupage, proving that almost anything can be decorated with the right papers and glue.

Most of the objects were items we already had or were destined for the recycling bin. We especially liked the finished, covered tin cans, which will
be used to adorn many a patio table over the summer.

ALE AND CIDER – DEAN SMITH

The get together for May was held at The Newshouse, 123 Canal Street, Nottingham. Although this part blue tiled building with two rooms was built in 1950 it occupies a site which was first licensed over a century earlier. It got its name because in past times newspapers would be read on the site to inform the illiterate of news, elections and military victories overseas. The decor of the pub includes copies of historical newspaper articles.

I failed a biology exam due to nerves; I should have put "blood vessels"

GERMAN CONVERSATION AND CULTURE – JOY BROWN

We will be visiting the Lace Market Theatre on 26th May to see Ein Komisches Talent. This free production by Theatre die Kauze is performed in German.

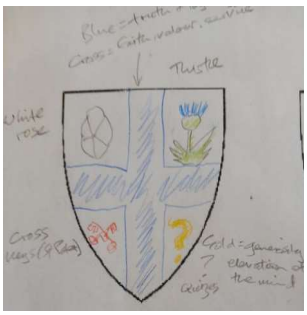
As several of our members are on holiday we have cancelled our June meeting. Our next meeting will be on 21st July.

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP – CLAIRE WILKIE

Early MaD u3a members will remember Freddie Davies, an original Committee member who made a great contribution to many groups. Freddie also ran courses, and one of the courses, which I attended, was on Heraldry, so with Richard's help, using the new projector, the Family History Group had a look at the basics of the subject prior to drawing our own Coat of Arms.

These are some of the efforts produced by -in no order-

Graham and Anne Palmer, Anne Moore, Roy Pearson and Claire



There was nothing there except for creme brulee on the carpet and apple pie on the walls; the place was desserted.

CURRY CLUB – LINDA RANDALL

The May Curry Club was held at Kottaram, Maid Marian Way, which is described as "The" Pan Indian Restaurant, which I assume means its menu is from across the continent. Irrespective of my lack of knowledge, we were served delicious starters of chicken tikka, samosa and onion bhajee, on individual plates, followed by a lamb dish and a chicken dish, a Bombay Aloo and Tadka Dal, with some rice and naan. It was delicious and the staff were, as always, friendly and helpful.

June's expedition into the tastes of the Indian Continent is at the Masala Junction on Tuesday 16th June 2026, so look forward to seeing you all there.

EPPERSTONE WALK – LESLEY HARRINGTON

Julie king led a five & half mile circular walk from Epperstone village up to Holly Beck & returning to Epperstone, where we had a welcome drink at the Cross Keys pub.
It was a beautiful sunny day enjoyed by all including Waffle.

Despite the high cost of living, it remains popular.

STROLLERS – CAROLYN LUCKHURST

Our Strollers are still happy to walk in Colwick Park on the first Friday of each month so the next one is 5 June. We start at 10.15 am from outside the Colwick Hall Hotel and walk around the West Lake. We stop off at Wired on Wheels for a cuppa and enjoy a little discount from the owner. Members who are registered with the group will receive an email about a week in advance. If you wish to be added, please email strollers@madu3a.org and you will be made very welcome.

A WALK IN THE PARK – CAROLYN LUCKHURST

We are walking on Friday, 12 June around the glorious gardens in the Nottingham University Park Campus. Fay Darroch and I have been for a recce walk and hope we have a suitable route that takes in the beauty of the gardens, shrubs and trees as well as admiring the views. We have worked it using the tram from the Forest Park and Ride which means that the walk needs to start at 10.15 am to allow for a tram ride on the Toton line. Free parking at Highfields Park is limited. Lifts to the tram may be available. As no dogs are allowed on trams, you will need to take your car if you wish to bring your dog. If you are interested in walking around 3 to 4 miles on any second Friday of the month, please make sure you are on our mailing list by sending an email to walkinthepark@MaDu3a.org.

FUN COOKING WITH GADGETS – VAL WILKINSON

The challenge for our May "Fun Cooking with Gadgets" meeting was for us to make a dish majoring on onions, using one or more of our gadgets, and to make it gluten free.

As usual everyone rose to the challenge and we had a veritable feast. This is a great group. We try different things out on one another. Some we agree work and some don't, but we have a very sociable morning trying them out and discussing any tweaks we might try another time. No lunch required by any of us after this group.
June's challenge is something using fruit in some way - either sweet or savoury. I wonder what delights we have in store.

I had a dream that I had invented a new colour; but it was just a pigment of my imagination

WINE APPRECIATION MAGGIE GRIMSHAW

The May Wine Appreciation Group meeting was both technical and educational, introducing us to the way that adding different grapes to a varietal can make a difference to the flavour and enjoyment of a wine. All our wines came from The Wine Society.
Varietals are wines made from a single grape, blends are wines that are made from several wines blended for their particular characteristics.
We tasted two Loire Valley Cremants (made in the champagne method), The Society's Saumur Brut and The Society's Celebration Cremant de Loire. Both were blends, and both were delicious!
Then two white wines. The Society's Bordeaux Sauvignon, a varietal SB, really lovely. Duo des Mers Sauvignon Viognier, a blend, even better.
Finally, three reds. The Society's French Syrah was a very nice clear red varietal Syrah. L'Orangeraie Syrah-Viognier was, for me, a less successful blend of red Syrah with a splash of white Viognier, although we know that this blend can work. Finally, The Society's Corbieres was a great blend of Syrah, Carignan, Mourvedre and Grenache grapes, absolutely delicious.
As ever, many thanks to Sue for choosing the wines, providing us with excellent information and making it a great afternoon.

TRIPS, VISITS & EVENTS

Llandudno Victorian Extravaganza – A couple of us attended this event and were pleasantly surprised by how enjoyable it was. There was plenty to see and do throughout the day, including street entertainment, live musical performances, and an impressive display of vintage vehicles such as traction engines. There was also a Victorian dress competition, which added to the atmosphere and charm of the event. The event offered a good mix of traditional and modern fairground rides, along with a wide variety of food stalls and local vendors. Overall, it was a really nice day out with something for everyone to enjoy.

Folkestone Short Break - We travelled with Just Go Travel for this short break and were picked up in Nottingham by minibus before transferring to the main coach at Rugby. The transfer was very well organised, with only around a 20-minute wait before continuing our journey, so there was no hanging around at all. Our hotel was ideally located on the harbour, and everyone in our group had a harbour view, which was lovely. The hotel also provided evening entertainment each night, which added to the overall experience.

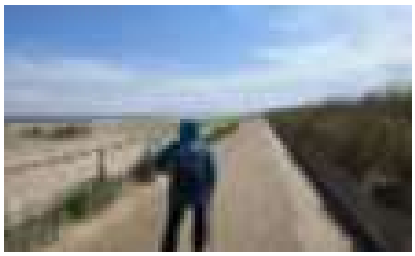
On Tuesday we visited Canterbury, which was absolutely fabulous. There were so many beautiful historic buildings to admire, including the magnificent Canterbury Cathedral and the famous Crooked House. We enjoyed walking along the

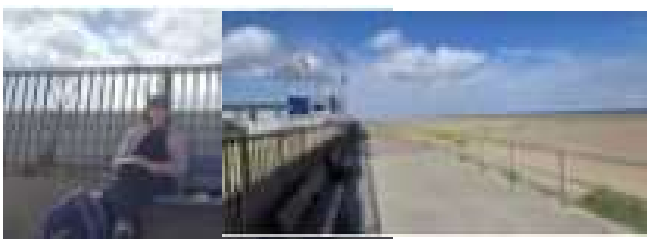
river and spotting the unusual statue in the water. There was plenty to see, and we had ample time to explore at our own pace.
Wednesday's excursions took us to Broadstairs and Whitstable, both charming seaside towns with lots of character. There were many references to Charles Dickens and the places that inspired his writing, alongside some truly wonderful architecture.
On Thursday we booked the optional excursion to Hastings and Rye. Although Hastings still felt rather run down despite the regeneration work that has taken place, Rye was absolutely delightful. Its cobbled streets and historic buildings felt untouched by time and made it a real highlight of the trip.

The weather was far kinder than forecast — it only seemed to rain while we were actually on the coach! The hotel meals were buffet style, offering a reasonable choice, although the food was not always as hot as I would have liked. However, the staff were very accommodating and happy to reheat meals when asked. The entertainment team were excellent, providing a good variety of themed evenings throughout the stay. We also had a fantastic driver who kept everything running smoothly and efficiently, meaning we made a swift journey home too.
Overall, we were very impressed with Just Go Travel. The transfers were seamless, with no unnecessary waiting around at service areas, and our minibus was already waiting for us at Rugby for the return journey to Nottingham. We arrived home in the early afternoon feeling very satisfied with the whole trip.

Skegness and Lincolnshire Coast , Tuesday 19 May - David L Dobson

A day trip to Skegness by train. The weather was better than forecast. It was breezy but dry. We took the open top bus to Chapel St Leonards and walked back to Skegness on the King Charles III Coastal Path. We covered about 6 miles and stopped for beach side refreshments on the way. We finished at Skegness Wetherspoons for tea.





VISIT TO THE MANSFIELD MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY, 30th APRIL 2026 – PAULA BOSELEY

There were 13 MaD members on this visit, 2 less than the maximum number the Facility can cope with. We received a very warm and enthusiastic welcome and what an interesting visit it was too.

We were welcomed by Beth, our guide and informant for the two hour session, who began by showing a safety film in advance of going into the Facility. She gave us a lot of information about recycling and recyclables, beginning with the WASTE HIERARCHY, an upside-down, triangle- shaped diagram, which was colour coded according to what we do with used materials.

Here are the hard-hat brigade on our visit

At the top, dark green means you need to REDUCE the use of those materials. Light green stands for the need to REUSE those materials. Yellow stands for those materials we need to RECYCLE, orange to RECOVER, and finally, the red colour at the base of the triangle represents items which need sending to LANDFILL.

Beth next told us of the new arrangements for waste disposal across the country, some of which have yet to be introduced everywhere, and we then took part in an activity to classify containers as either Recyclable at home, Recyclable away from home, or Not Recyclable! We were each given a container to place in the right pile. The correct action regarding kitchen foil, is now to put it in the recycle bin at home, but it should be rolled into a ball and then added to by later foil, before being recycled.

Black plastic is unrecyclable, which is why it is no longer used for ready meals etc. Next year, soft plastics, which are currently recyclable at supermarkets, will be recyclable at home.

The most dangerous objects are batteries and vapes. They should not be placed in the waste, but taken to a tip, or put in the collecting bins at supermarkets. On the wall of the Education area is a diagram of the arrangement of the actual Facility itself.

Items are emptied from lorries into the Tipping Hall. From there, a trommel separates off paper and card. Next, a ferrous metal magnet draws out the steel cans and tins. An Eddy current sorts aluminium cans and aerosols, and plastic bottles are sorted by an optical plastic sorter.

The various recyclables are then packaged into bales and collected in a waiting area before being sent to the appropriate places to be made into new goods.

Of the two-hour session, we only spent 20 to 25 minutes in the actual Facility. We were issued with intercoms, fluorescent jackets and helmets prior to going in. There are safety rules regarding how you walk up the steps, walk on a red line along the metal pathway and view workers sorting plastics and aluminium through windows. Photography is not allowed, presumably also for safety reasons.

When we returned to the Education building, Beth explained what happens to the various materials when they leave the Facility-recycled paper goes to a paper mill, where it is made into pulp, then a screen draws out the water, and it is rolled out. Plastic is colour sorted using Smart technology and made into pellets before being refashioned.

Aluminium is shredded, heated, made into blocks and then into thin sheets, steel is melted down to liquid then refashioned.

Evidently 95% of general waste is now sent to Energy Recovery Facilities, where it is burnt to give off electricity, which sounds a lot better than littering the countryside with landfill!

We all learned something we didn’t know. For example, what percentage of kerb-side collections do you think goes to landfill these days? The answer staggeringly is Only 5% and future government plans are to reduce that even further.

This visit was very informative and totally free and I recommend it to anyone who wants to know more about recycling

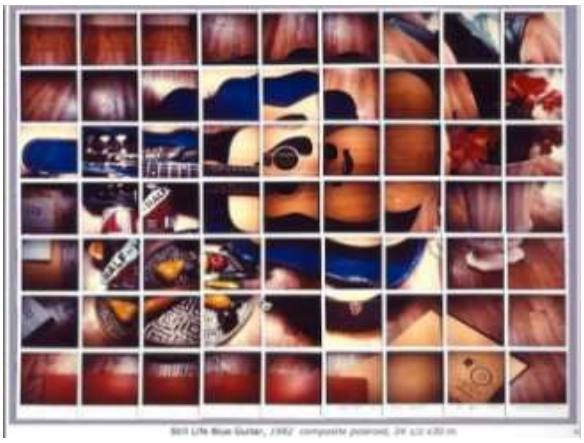
Our thanks to Beth for giving us a most informative and interesting morning.

Thanks to MADU3a for organising it

ART APPRECIATION -JOANNE WILSON

This month's session was wholly on David Hockney and his lifelong work, showing the stages of his thinking and experimentation, and how his creative journey took him to the 'big picture' from a lifelong investigation into how we see the world.

Cubism influenced his 'flat division' and this together with Monet's haystacks, inspired his video work and Yorkshire landscapes We looked at his close and loyal friendships, including his intimate connection with Salts Mill through Jonathan Silver, finishing with the recent retrospectives, in which Hockney was fully engaged. A workaholic, having had work schedules every day of his life since school, Hockney continues at the age of 89!



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.

INTEREST GROUPS

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

Ale and Cider
Art Appreciation
Badminton
Book Group 1
Book Group 2
Breakfast Club
Bridge for Beginners
CineMates
Creative Craft
Creative Writing
Cryptic Crosswords – Beginners
Cryptic Crosswords – Improvers
Curry Club
Family History
French Conversation & Culture
French for Fun
Fun cooking with gadgets
Games
German Conversation and Culture
Italian Speech
Knit and Natter
Literature
Local and Live Music
Local History
Lunch Club
MaD Girls
MaD Men
MaDAmdrammers

Music Appreciation
National Trust Group
New & Prospective Members Meet
Outdoor Activities
Photography
Pickleball
Play Going – Lace Market
Play Going – Playhouse
Play Reading
Poetry for Fun
Project Craft Group
Singing Together
Table tennis
The Bryan Ruskin MaD Jazzers
Trips and Visits
Ukulele Group
Walking
Walking – Strollers
Walking – Walk in the park
Wine Appreciation
Wine Bar

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Nearly Eleven Years On: The Accidental Chair's Tale

Has it really been ten years? Technically, if we're being honest (and why stop now), it's closer to eleven. I was practically a youngster back then — retired for only five years, full of energy, and blissfully unaware of what was about to happen to me. I was an inactive member of Arnold u3a, while Mary was doing the real work organising their Dickens group. Then someone, somewhere, had the bright idea of creating a new u3a for Mapperley & District — neatly wedged between Arnold and Carlton & Gedling, both of which were expanding faster than my waistline at Christmas.

A general invitation went out. I thought, *Why not?* It was only down the road, and I wasn't doing anything that morning. I went along purely to "show support", which in hindsight was my first mistake.

The organisers explained the u3a ethos — sharing life experience, learning from each other, broadening horizons. Lovely stuff. I nodded enthusiastically, filled in a form, and vaguely hinted I *might* help. There were nearly a hundred people in the room. I assumed I'd be safely lost in the crowd.

Reader, I was not.

Anyone who had shown even the faintest flicker of interest was hauled to the front like contestants on a game show nobody had entered. We were invited to a follow-up meeting. I imagined another big turnout.

Instead, five of us showed up. Five. Maggie Grimshaw, Vic Blake, Anne Elliot, Freddie Davies, and me — plus a very patient helper from the national office. Freddie even tried to escape, but we blocked the door because we needed a minimum of five to form a committee. Desperate times.

Roles were handed out with the scientific precision of “Who looks like they might know what this means?” Maggie became Secretary, Anne Treasurer, Vic Membership Secretary, and Freddie and I were left staring at each other. One of us had to be Chair. The other ViceChair. Freddie also became Interest Group Convenor because he was the only one who understood the phrase.

I was assured the Chair’s job was easy — just smile, welcome people, and keep order. A sort of friendly traffic warden. If only.

We designed flyers, printed posters, and distributed them everywhere short of tying them to passing dogs. Our inaugural meeting on 28 April 2016 was a success — otherwise you wouldn’t be reading this. By mid May we had 78 members, a database, and even a speaker seeker (a role we invented because none of us wanted to do it).

By Christmas we’d grown enough to hold a Christmas Party, and by the time I retired as Chair, we’d passed 100 members. Not bad for a group that started with five people and one attempted escape.

Since then it’s been onward and upward. We got Co-op grant funding, survived Covid by discovering Zoom (and discovering who forgets to unmute), set up Beacon, and created our own excellent newsletter and website. Today we’re just shy of 400 members — which is either impressive or terrifying, depending on whether you’re on the committee.

And Now… A Light Hearted Plea (But Also Serious)

We need you — yes, *you*. Not the other 400 people who are currently looking at their shoes. You.

We’re looking for a Membership Secretary, a Trips & Visits team, and a few other brave souls willing to give a little time to keep this wonderful u3a running smoothly.

If you can spare a bit of time, a bit of enthusiasm, or even just a bit of “Oh go on then”, we’d love to have you involved.

After all, if five unsuspecting volunteers could build all this… imagine what *you* could help us do next.

Richard Hill Member Number 1

KNIT AND NATTER GROUP PROJECT – CAROLYN LUCKHURST

I was having a big clear out and came across a bag of teddies that we had collected over a number of years. All in very good condition. It occurred to me that these could be used to raise some money for something useful and I discussed it with the MaD Knit & Natter group through Fay Darroch. The teddies were in need of some new clothing. Several of the ladies in the group plus some friends of our knitters, were happy to take a bear or two and knit them each an outfit. I wanted the bears to be used in some way to help a charity for children living with cancer.

My friend Anne's grand daughter Tilly is 13 and was diagnosed with liver cancer at the age of 7. After some initial chemo etc, she was very fortunate to be given an eight organ transplant at Birmingham Children's Hospital; an incredibly rare event. It was successful and she has been managing quite well until recently when cancer has reappeared and she is currently a very poorly girl.

Since her diagnosis and because she has been in hospital on many occasions, Tilly came up with numerous ideas for items that would make life better for children with cancer, their families as well as the staff caring for them all. Her biggest project has been Tilly's Treats, selling all manner of sweets at various fetes and fairs to raise money that has enabled them to buy items for her chosen causes. Her grandfathers have built her a little wagon and it is very much Tilly's work that makes it all happen.

Because she has been so poorly since Christmas, Tilly hasn't been able to raise much money. Anne, Jodie (Tillys mum) and Tilly have put their heads together and decided to use the lovely teddies to raise money through raffles and the like to fund Summer Bags for children on the Paediatric and Oncology Wards at Telford Hospital, where Tilly has the bulk of her treatment. A target of £300 - £400 has been set that would enable her to make between 30 and 40 bags, if they raise more = more bags.

Each bag would likely contain

Bottled water - Important for the children to stay hydrated to help with infection and also to help flush the chemo out of them
Water bottle in a holder - much cooler than just a bottle and can clip on their bags
Top quality factor 50 sun cream (usually Soltan as this is what the Oncology Team recommend) - this is not cheap compared to some brands and some people just can't afford to buy a different one just for one child.
Cap - to keep off the sun, important for all but especially the ones on Chemo as they burn really easily, also if you've no hair and wear a wig, they get a bit sweaty and itchy when it's hot.
Tilly's Treats - Some nice sweets (can do veggie, vegan, diabetic etc,) There is no such thing as a bad calorie when kids won't or can't eat with their

treatment. Children tend to go off chocolate on Chemo as well as feeling sick, so fruity and sour sweets tend to go down really well.
Finally, a bag to keep it all together.

Anne sends a message to MaD u3a - "Thank you so much for sending us the Teddies and to the Knit and Natter Ladies and their friends for dressing them so splendidly, they are truly amazing. We'll let you know how it all goes, but you can follow Tilly's Treats on Facebook if you like".

I am so glad that I didn't just give the teddies to a charity. All children with cancer need to be brave as they endure the treatments that may or may not allow them to reach some kind of normality in their lives. Tilly is an amazing young person who thinks of others constantly, she's also enterprising and enthusiastic and will relish the new project using the MaD u3a teddies.

A massive thank you to everyone who participated and to the person who gave a cash donation.

NOTICES

Playgoing – Lace Market Theatre

The new season's performances (September 26 to July 27) have been added to our website https://madu3a.org/u3a_groups/play-going-lace-market/ so those that are interested can update your calendars and diaries. If anybody would like to join the group so that you receive email reminders, please email lmt@madu3a.org.

Walking - Public Transport

Next walk - Spring Lane to Woodborough Saturday 27th June

Please leave your car behind. The walk is linear. The car will only be an inconvenience. We will start from Spring Lane Farm Shop at 10.40am
Buses that serve this spot are the NCT blue 61 and also nearby NCT 56 to Ramsey Drive.
We will start by doing a gentle 2 mile walk down Lambley Dumbles to Lambley Village where we will have a small rest and eat our packed lunch in an attractive spot. If you feel tired or the weather is too hot you can finish the walk here and take the convenient 61 bus back. Otherwise we will continue by taking a gentle climb up a hill to Ploughman Wood and doing a walk round these woods. We will then leave the woods and walk along to Lingwood Lane where there are excellent views over the Trent Valley and another chance to take the bus if needed.
Our last leg of the walk will then be downhill into Woodborough Village where there are two buses an hour to Nottingham or Calverton, a pub to visit and also a church that is often open. The total walk is about 5 miles.
After rain this area can be unpleasantly muddy but that is less likely to be a problem in Summer. In fact a greater problem is hard uneven ground so please wear some really good footwear that will cushion and protect your feet, walking boots or very sturdy trainers and good socks. Bring a snack or packed lunch because we pass no convenient spots to buy refreshments. Also, it is summer and the weather could be hot so please bring adequate drink with you: water is the simplest and best.
I know many people like to take their dogs on walks. The bus itself is a slight problem for dogs. Although the fields we walk through on this walk are all mainly arable we never know when a farmer might decide to put animals in a field and this can be a very serious problem with dogs and for the rest of the group. So I am saying NO DOGS on this particular walk, sorry.
I haven't mentioned toilets. There aren't any but there is a pub at the end. Be nice and buy a drink. Otherwise the only other option is bushes.
For those who are unable to do this date I will be doing the same walk later in the year, perhaps August or September. If you think you would like to come on this walk please tell me nearer the time.

I can be contacted at .WalkingPT@madu3a.org

My friend's bakery burned down last night. Now his business is toast.

MAY SPEAKER REPORT – ALiSON GOVE-HUMPHRIES

Janine Buckley - Nottinghamshire's Pit Ponies

Our recent talk on the Nottinghamshire Pit Pony was both fascinating and deeply moving, revealing a hidden world rarely seen above ground. The speaker, Janine Buckley, combined her expertise in archaeology, historic buildings and horse psychology to bring the story of the pit ponies vividly to life.

Janine explained how her interest began while studying archaeology at Nottingham University and later developed through her work studying historic stables and horse behaviour. Her passion for both horses and industrial heritage shone through the entire presentation. She described how buildings themselves can reveal the secrets of former inhabitants, from alterations in stable design to horse graffiti scratched into walls.

The scale of her research was extraordinary, involving more than 1,000 hours of work using archives, photographs, miners' recollections and museum collections. Because cameras underground once posed an explosion risk, photographs of pit ponies at work are exceptionally rare, making many of the images she showed especially valuable. Sources included Beamish Museum, the National Coal Mining Museum, the British Newspaper Archive and Nottinghamshire colliery records.

Janine placed pit ponies within the wider importance of horses in everyday life during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At one time there was roughly one horse for every thirteen people, and horses were essential for transport, farming, quarrying and deliveries. Even the coming of the railways increased the need for horses to distribute goods from stations. The heart of the talk focused on the pit ponies themselves: how they were trained, housed and cared for underground. We heard how ponies were brought from across Britain and even from abroad, and how young "ganger lads" learned to work with them. One lad had described how very proud he was on the day he led his first pit pony out. Janine explained horse psychology in an accessible way, describing how horses naturally fear confined spaces, making underground work especially difficult for them. It was good to hear how an ostler from Calverton was commended for the excellent treatment of the mine's pit ponies.

The conditions underground were vividly described. Stables were often cramped, hot and poorly ventilated, with sweat, manure and dust causing respiratory problems. Yet there was also evidence of affection and companionship between miners and ponies. Many animals had distinctive personalities and were given names reflective of the times - names such as Byron, Victor and King. Miners sometimes shared their water rations with the ponies, and some became deeply attached to them.

Importantly, Janine did not avoid the harsher realities. Before welfare regulations improved in the early twentieth century, cruelty could be common, and newspaper reports documented disturbing cases. Campaigns by groups such as the Pit Pony Protection Society eventually helped improve conditions and reduce the use of ponies underground.
Some lighter moments emerged too. The great horse manure crisis of 1894 raised a few chuckles where Londoners became scared that in about twenty years' time, London roads would be under 19 feet of horse manure. We learned that riding pit ponies underground was forbidden but still happened, that one pony ate an apple through his ganger's coat pocket and that every year ponies enjoyed a couple of weeks' holiday above ground. Audience questions revealed that many ponies lived surprisingly long lives if they survived the dangers of their early working years, some reaching their thirties.

This was a superbly researched and thought-provoking talk which illuminated an often overlooked aspect of Nottinghamshire's mining heritage. Janine Buckley combined scholarship, humanity and enthusiasm to give us a memorable insight into the lives of both miners and the remarkable animals that worked alongside them.

Thank you too, Janine, for the free booklet entitled 'Colliery Stables and the Nottinghamshire Pit Pony - it will make fascinating reading.

Refusing to go to the gym is a form of resistance training.

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

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

USEFUL LINKS

Gedling Borough Council Voluntary Newsletter

https://news.comms.gedling.gov.uk/30632335BB464447124EBDFF8D8670CC4C9561B4A6FFDE99A128049A85E75672/24EC46668E8F1EFE12E5B8D474C74F91/VIB?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Campaign+2026_05_13_1

Check if something might be a scam :

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/

Request to Share Research Study on Falls in Older Adults

Dear U3A Group Coordinator / Committee Member,

I hope you are well. I am contacting you to ask whether, if acceptable to you and your committee, you would be willing to share information about a research study we are conducting on concern about falling in older adults.

The study explores whether seeing or hearing about other people falling (for example, friends, family members, or others) influences an individual's own worries or concerns about falling. We hope the findings will help improve understanding of fear of falling and contribute to future falls prevention approaches.

Participation is entirely voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. The survey can be completed online at a time convenient to participants, and there are no right or wrong answers, we are simply interested in people's experiences and perspectives.

If you would be happy to support the study, we would be very grateful if you could circulate the survey link and study information to your members: How seeing or hearing about others falling affects older adults' worries about falling

I would also be very happy to provide a participant information sheet or answer any questions you or your members may have about the study.

Thank you very much for considering this request. Your support would be greatly appreciated and would make an important contribution to research aiming to better understand concerns about falling in later life.

Best regards, Matt

Dr. Matt Hill, PhD
Lecturer in Psychology
School of Psychology and Vision Sciences (SoPVS)
University of Leicester | George Davies Centre (4.12) | Lancaster Road | Leicester | LE1 7HA
Email: mwh20@le.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Shortlisted THE Awards 2024 | TEF 2023 Gold | CITIZENS OF SUCCESS Proud to be award-winning

Two wifi engineers got married. The reception was fantastic.

REASONS TO LEARN TO PLAY THE UKULELE

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME TO JOIN OUR MERRY BAND

BEGINNER LESSONS PROVIDED. WE CAN ALSO LEND YOU A UKULELE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU.

IT'S OFFICIAL!
IT'S ENJOYABLE
IT'S GOOD FOR YOU

WE MEET
THURSDAY 2:00 – 4:00
WESTDALE LANE BAPTIST CHURCH

TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST/ FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ROSE MAWER

EMAIL OR PHONE:

r.mawer1@gmail.com

07802 386370

u3a friends

Open this newsletter in your browser.

This month, I visited the North East's day of learning and discovery, held at Ushaw House. As with every u3a event I attend, there was so much creativity and curiosity on show. You can read more about that below, along with other stories that demonstrate the vibrancy within our movement.

We'll be celebrating *Volunteers' Week* at the beginning of next month, which is a good time to reflect on the huge contribution that goes on behind the scenes of every u3a. This newsletter finishes with a profile of Mike, a committee member of Todmorden u3a and a learning volunteer at the Trust. If you have a moment this month, take the time to notice the work done by committee members, event organisers and group leaders across your u3a - and perhaps think about whether you might enjoy getting involved too.

With very best wishes

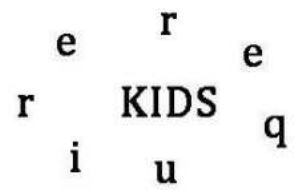
Iain Cassidy
CEO of the Third Age Trust

In this issue...

Book now for *u3a Festival Fringe*
Walk with another u3a this summer
A day of learning and discovery in the North East

Put the kettle on and test your little grey cells ……..

Dingbats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		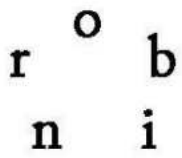
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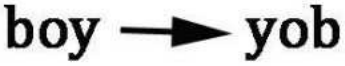		
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QUIZ

1. What is the largest Spanish-speaking city in the world as of 2026?
2. Which country has the most islands?
3. In Australia, what is commonly known as a bottle-o?
4. In which U.S. state is the country's busiest airport located as of 2026?
5. Which is the only continent with land in all four hemispheres?
6. Where is Angel Falls, the world’s largest waterfall, located?
7. On which continent would you find the world’s largest desert?
8. How many European capitals does the Danube river flow through?
9. Fill in the blank: The capital of Bulgaria is _____.
10. In what capital would you find The Little Mermaid statue?

Answers on the next page ……

Dingbats Answers

1) All over the world
2) Children in need
3) Flat iron
4) High Seas
5) Peace be with you
6) Round robin
7) Altar (Alter) Boy
8) Double cream
9) Forever and a day

Quiz Answers

1: Mexico City
2: Sweden (270,000)
3: An off-licence
4: Georgia (Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport)
5: Africa
6: Venezuela
7: Antarctica
8: 4
9: Sofia
10 Copenhagen

Thought for the day : A good rule to remember for life is that when it comes to plastic surgery and sushi, never be attracted by a bargain.

Graham Norton

Editor : Sue Cullen

This edition compiled by ; Liz Hagan