u3a
learn, laugh, live

MaD moments

Your Monthly Mapperley and District u3a Newsletter

October 2026 Issue No 125

Musings from the Chair



As is traditional, my first job as new chair was to choose a new chair. Funds don't allow for a real chair, but a cartoon to go alongside my musings each month. So, I have chosen a nice comfy armchair, along with a representation of Winnie the (cocka)poo. As the days become shorter, there are few things better than curling up in the evening with a good book and Winnie to keep me warm.

For those of you who don't know me, I had the good fortune to retire early in 2024 after over 30 years working in the NHS. One of the first things I did was join MaD u3a. These are two of the best decisions I have ever made. It's been a joy to make new friends and partake in activities, both old and new. By joining one of the book groups, I am stretched and challenged to try books I would never otherwise have read. And, I have learnt that I can play table tennis, albeit badly – I even win the occasional game.

I need to thank Val and all the other more established members of the Committee positions so far. I was a general Committee member for a year, then Vice Chair last year. It is great to see people with so many diverse talents on the Committee, I know its going to make my job much easier and, if I get stuck, I know where Val lives, so she can't escape! Some of the other more experienced Committee members are also standing down this year: they will be missed and I thank them also for the work they have put in.

I was very pleased to see such a fantastic turn out for the AGM. Whilst I am sure Val's efficient and quick running of the business part of the meeting was a big draw, I think the refreshments provided by our wonderful team, lead by Julia, Carolyn's jigsaw swap and Sue's quiz may have had something to do with it. So, thank you to all of them for making it such a great morning.

Hope everyone has a lovely October.

Amanda Knight
Chair

Save the Date :
General Meeting
Thursday 22 October at 10:00am

Jump to :

What's on at the Lace Market Theatre
What's on at the Playhouse
Trips and Visits

Trips, Visits and Events

The MaD u3a Christmas Lunch :

When - **Thursday 10 December 2026**
Where - **Greyfriars Social Club, Gordon Road, Thorneywood, Nottingham**
Time - **1.00 pm**
Cost - To be confirmed

If you are interested, please contact Paula (Trips & Visits Team) paulapatbo@gmail.com.

To see the full list of Trips, Visits and Events visit our MaD website.

Links to other Newsletters

Gedling Borough News - September 2026

Gedling Community and Volunteering Newsletter - September 2026

Gedling Leisure News - September 2026

u3a Friends Newsletter - September 2026

u3a Matters (the u3a membership magazine) - Current and past issues

u3a Online Learning Events

Interest Groups

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

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
Jazz - BRMJ
Knit and Natter
Literature
Local and Live Music
Local History
Lunch Club
MaD Girls
MaD Growers
MaDAmdrammers
Music Appreciation
National Trust Group
Outdoor Activities
Photography
Pickleball
Play Going - Lace Market Theatre
Play Going - Playhouse
Play Reading Group
Project Craft Group
Singing Together
Table Tennis
Trips and Events
Ukulele Group
Walking
Walking - Public Transport
Walking - Strollers
Walking - Walk in the Park
Wine Appreciation
Wine Bar

News from the Groups

Outdoor Activities - Croquet

Croquet at Nottingham Croquet Club was another successful activity. Twelve of us enjoyed the hospitality and guidance of the lovely club volunteers, and the sun shone too.





The newcomers to the sport had the chance to 'give it a go' and proved very successful. Those of us who have played before were more competitive and vocal - a great afternoon had by all.

Look out for next years activities - we hope to have a spring/summer programme ready in February 2027. Any suggestions for future activities are welcome.





Paul Wright and Molly Herring

Curry Club

Calcutta Club, Maid Marion Way



This month's Curry Night was at a place we hadn't been before, and a number of those attending hadn't frequented previously, so it was a step into the unknown. It turned out to be an excellent night. The food was delicious, with a mix of starters presented on individual plates, followed by a selection of four main courses - two chicken, a vegetable option and a lamb course, with rice and naan bread. It was very tasty with a different, but not overwhelming, heat in each dish.

The staff were all friendly and attentive, and the flow of food was well managed and not overwhelming. Socially - because that is one aspect u3a was founded to achieve - it was very successful, with a lot of laughter. Altogether another great evening, enjoyed by all.

The next one is at Buraans in Arnold, which is another new venue.

Linda Randall and Steve Payne





Ale & Cider Group

For my first meeting since my operation I did not want to venture too far, so our get together in September was at The Old Volunteer, Burton Road, Carlton which we visited earlier this year. A traditional local boozer with a good range of beers.

The Ale and Cider Group usually meet up on the third Friday monthly at different pubs for social drinking, but the dates may change on occasions to allow us to go to festivals etc. For more information and to join the group, please email Dean at aleandcider@madu3a.org.

Dean Smith

Fun Cooking with Gadgets

We have a group of six regulars - we would welcome 1 or 2 more if anyone would like to join us.

Each month we decide on a theme or challenge for the following month. In September we decided to each make something with 'Mediterranean veg'. We loosely interpreted it and had 3 savoury dishes and 1 cake - courgette & lemon.

Next month we are using root vegetable - that may be soups, or savoury bakes or can anyone make anything sweet? We have a lovely sociable morning drinking tea or coffee and sampling and discussing our dishes. No lunch required afterwards!

Contact me, Val Wilkinson, on funcooking@madu3a.org if you would like to join us. It will have to be limited to 2 people as we meet in my kitchen.

Val Wilkinson

Walking



This is the September walking group having a well earned stop and refreshments at *Final Whistle* pub after our walk around the far perimeter of Southwell.

The walk took us past the back of the Minster and Minster School before heading across country to Norwood Park then onto Maythorne before returning to Southwell.

Paul Dennis

Photography

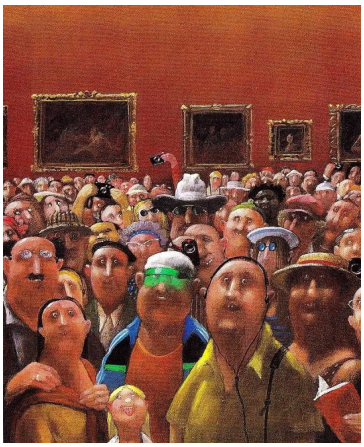
Each month the Photography group has two themes - in September our themes were **Still Life** and **Natural Frames**.

To view the albums just click on each of the links above.

Sue Cullen

Art Appreciation

I'm indebted to Nigel Mounfield who took the September session whilst I was away, allowing the meetings to continue unbroken. Nigel, an experienced retired teacher of Design Technology and member of Art Appreciation, gave a presentation on sculptural materials.



Gerhard Gluck: What Mona Lisa sees

MaD begins a new administrative year this month. If you are not renewing your subscription, or decide to leave the Art Appreciation group (for whatever reason), please let me know on artapp@madu3a.org, otherwise the membership list will continue from 2026 to 2027, and I hope to see everyone in October.



As always the programme will be available on the website .

Joanne Wilson





Walking - Walk in the Park

The September walk was another crossing over the new Waterside Bridge over the Trent Basin. Unlike the previous walk, the weather was pleasantly warm and we were able to make the full distance to the watersports centre.

We stopped for a cuppa at the cafe and were entertained by a group of students on the water who were learning to use oars and balance on boards.

The full length of the walk was 4.25 miles. With the exception of the bridge crossing, the whole route is flat. With lots to look at and constant chatter on the way, we were all in good shape at the end.

A Walk in the Park is held on the second Friday of each month and is in one of the many parks or on parkland in and around our area. If you are interested in joining our walks, please email walkinthepark@u3a.org and I will add you to the mailing list on our Beacon system.

Carolyn Luckhurst





Wine Appreciation

Eleven members of the Wine Appreciation Group and five guests went to the Halfpenny Green Wine Estate at Halfpenny Green near Stourbridge for a tasting of their English wines, accompanied by a very tasty cheese board. We learned about the grapes grown at Halfpenny Green and how their various wines are made, how the grapes they grow are pressed, the juice fermented, bottled, capped and labelled. The weather was lovely and we had a very happy afternoon. After the tasting we enjoyed a meal at the Red Lion Hotel at Bobbington, where we stayed overnight before heading back home.

All very enjoyable, and we plan to visit a different winery some time next year.

Our thanks to Carolyn Luckhurst who did all of the organising for us and made sure that everything ran smoothly.

Sue Cullen










If I had all the money I've spent on wine, I'd spend it on wine …

Story Time

Creative Writing

The CW group meets once a month. Each month we have a specific topic around which to build our stories. We usually try to target ourselves to write a piece of around 1,000 words, but it's very flexible and sometimes members choose to write a poem rather than a story, and we've also had a couple of small plays. Alongside that, we occasionally work on limericks which are fun to write and to share.

We thought it would be a good idea to include a story in the Newsletter now and then. Here's one, by Jean Hart, from September's topic of '*Question Time*'. We hope you enjoy it.

Carolyn Luckhurst

Question Time at Stone Valley

Sunday - Deepstone Police Station

"Well Malcolm, as you can see, CCTV footage shows someone, who looks remarkably like you, outside 'Stains and Skids' laundrette at 23.30 on 18th October. Can you confirm that the person on the footage is you?"

"No comment."

"Are you acquainted with Ronald Higginbotham?"

"No comment."

"Do you know the whereabouts of Ronald Higginbotham?"

"No comment."

"Mrs Higginbotham says you had phoned her husband and insisted on meeting him outside his laundrette at midnight on 18th October. Can you confirm this?"

"No comment."

Monday – Stains and Skids laundrette, Deepstone

"Is old mardy arse showing his face this week?"

"Hope not, last week was bliss without him sticking his neb in, wish he had let us know this time though, so I can make plans to take advantage of his absence. Wonder why the police are looking for him?"

Tuesday - Delilah's Massage Parlour, Deepstone

"Has my father been here recently for a back massage?"

"Who would that be luvvie?"

"Ronald Higginbotham."

"Is he a short, plump chap with a gold tooth and a limp?"

"Yes."

"Sorry luvie, couldn't possibly say, confidentiality you understand.

Wednesday – Lucky Dog Casino, Deepstone

"I'm looking for my brother, Ronnie, he's a regular, had a big win here about two weeks ago. Has he been back?"

"Little fat guy, gold tooth, owns a laundrette?"

"That's him."

"He's barred."

Thursday - Sixty-six Thorne Avenue, Deepstone

"Have you found him? Oh god, he's dead, isn't he?"

"No Mrs Higginbotham. But I am afraid we cannot take our enquiries any further, there's insufficient evidence to suspect foul play."

"But he wouldn't just disappear, not for this long anyway, what about the threats and demands made by Malcolm Riley? Is he still in custody?"

"No, we couldn't hold him any longer, as I say, insufficient evidence. Contact us if your husband

turns up or if any further information comes to light."

Friday – A derelict, isolated cottage thirty miles from Deepstone

"Well Ronnie, your family has been asking some awkward questions about your whereabouts and my involvement in your disappearance."

"So, are you surprised about that?"

"Not surprised, angry, where do you think I was all day last Sunday?"

"Dunno, church? Making a confession?"

"I was at the grunting cop shop. As for confessions Ronnie, you owe your lovely wife a titanic one."

"So, how long do you intend to hold me chained up here Malcolm?"

"As long as it takes for you to make the right decision, or for me to make it for you."

"So, you think that I wouldn't dish the dirt on you?"

"You need to think carefully about your position Ronnie. I'll leave you to consider your options."

Saturday – 72 Green Crescent, Highstone a village ten miles from Deepstone

"Mummy, when is daddy coming to see us again?"

"I'm not sure angel, soon I hope"

"Why doesn't daddy live with us, like Angie or Sophie's daddy?"

"He works a long way away sweetie, so it's difficult, he spends time with us whenever he can."

"Will daddy be taking me to the fair mummy?"

"I don't know Susie"

"If he can't take me, can I go with Uncle Malcolm and Sophie?"

"We'll see."

Five days later - 72 Green Crescent, Highstone

"Come in Malcolm, you're getting to be a bit of a stranger. Have you seen Ronnie recently? I know his visits are a bit erratic, but it's been nearly three weeks since I heard from him, and Susie's hoping he'll take her to the fair next weekend"

"No Sis, I haven't seen the two-timing little maggot for a while. About time he faced up to his responsibilities, left that old drab wife of his and looked after this family. When's the baby due?"

"Not for another five months, but you do know it's not Ronnie's?"

"What do you mean?"

"Ronnie and I have not had sex for over a year. He doesn't even know I'm pregnant. If you'd been to visit more often, you'd know that I've been seeing Eric Morris for ages. He is a lovely, thoughtful man, totally different to Ronnie, and guess what? He's proposed, wants to make an honest woman of me! I haven't told Susie anything yet, but she's getting to really like Eric, and she's always on about wanting a little brother or sister. Provided she's able to see Ronnie as usual, I don't think there will be a problem when I marry and Eric moves in. Are you alright Malcolm? You've turned very pale."

Two hours later – The scene of a road traffic accident, twenty miles from Highstone

"Any passengers?"

"No, just the driver"

"Is he alive?"

"No, judging by the state of the car, that tree and the skids on the road, he was probably exceeding the 60mph speed limit, which is reckless on this bend"

"He looks familiar, is there any ID on him"

"Let's have a look..... yep, Malcolm Riley, he looks familiar because we interviewed him about two weeks ago, at the station, about that misper who owns 'Stains and Skids' laundrette."

"Has he turned up yet?"

"Not as far as I know, but while making our enquiries we found out that he'd had a big win at the Lucky Dog. He's probably sunning himself, on a tropical beach, with some young, blonde gold digger from Delilah's"

Jean Hart

Could you help to run an interest group?

Is there a group you would like to start?

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
can help you to get going.

September's General Meeting

The September General Meeting was also our AGM, so there was no speaker, but it was very well attended. The AGM business was dealt with swiftly and efficiently then members enjoyed a social meeting with refreshments, a jigsaw swap and quiz.

Details of your new committee are below.

Your Committee 2026-27

Amanda Knight	Chair	Gordon Manser	Committee Member
Lesley Harrington	Vice Chair	Steve Payne	Committee Member
Joan Davis	Treasurer	Pat Smith	Committee Member
Elaine Lindley	Business Secretary	Sheila Ward	Committee Member
Paul Dennis	Committee Member	Julia Wright	Committee Member

Future General Meetings

Thursday 22 October : Denis Hill '60 Old Occupations'

Over the centuries we have seen many old and curious occupations disappear. This talk looks at 60 old occupations in 60 minutes - some of which you will be familiar with while others you may never have heard of.

Thursday 26 November : Jack Perks 'Underwater Photography'

Starting out in Stoney Cove in Leicestershire to diving the stunning Red Sea Jack's underwater photography talk details the differences from land based photography and some of his experiences with seals, river fish and rock pools.

MONDAY 28 December : Twixmas Social

A meal without wine is called breakfast

Puzzles

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

The Little MaD Quiz



1. On the Mohs Scale of hardness, which substance has the value 1?
2. Which soap opera is set in Summer Bay?
3. With which character, played by Clint Eastwood, would you associate the phrase "*Go ahead, make my day*"?
4. What is the name of the tall tower at the south-west corner of the Houses of Parliament?
5. Which composer was born in Bonn in 1770 and died in Vienna in 1827?
6. Which artist had early stages in his career called the Blue Period and Rose Period?
7. Junction 9a of which motorway takes you to Gatwick Airport?
8. What does the Latin term "*in flagrante delicto*" mean in English?
9. Although called Panama hats, these hats actually originated in which South American country?
10. In snooker, what is the term for when a cue ball hits the same object ball twice?

What's the answer?

If …

2 + 3 = 13

3 + 4 = 25

4 + 5 = 41

What does 5 + 6 equal?

Find the missing link words

1. French	_____	Shopping
2. Sun	_____	Cake
3. Traffic	_____	Jar
4. Jail	_____	Down
5. Blood	_____	Hood
6. Chair	_____	Hole

The Fish Riddle

A fish's head is 3 centimetres long.
Its tail is the same length as the head plus half the body.
The body is as long as the head and tail together.
How long is the fish?

Dingbats : What are these well-known phrases or sayings?

1

OVER
BEND

2

POLMUMICE

3

Turf
Soil
Clay
→ Rock

4

GMADEB

5

BREN Jr

6

ON
LAP LAP LAP

7

C O D
LO HL MON

8

i.e. ●

Nottingham

The Fantastic History of Nottingham's Goose Fair

First up… What the duck has it got to do with geese?



Today, the only goose you'll see at the fair is Goosey - the two-metre timber statue that is placed on what is known as 'Goose Fair Roundabout' ahead of the big event. However, when the event first started, geese did used to be all the rage at Goose Fair. Hence the name.

In centuries past, traders from as far as Lincoln, Cambridge and Norfolk would walk their geese all the way to Nottingham's famous market, just in time for the Michaelmas celebrations marking the end of harvest. As many as 20,000 geese were recorded making their way through the south of the city, waddling through Hockley in the lead-up to the fair. This annual spectacle is what gave the street its name Goosegate.

The Nottingham Cheese Riots …

Along with the geese, all manner of other livestock, food, and particularly cheese, would be sold at the fair as people stocked up their pantries for the winter months ahead. You can already imagine the ruckus of a busy market square full of farmyard animals, but when the Cheese Riots hit in 1766, absolute pandemonium was to break loose.

Nottingham had just been through a momentous building boom as more and more people headed to the city to find work. At the same time, food prices had risen sharply. While the day went by without much bother, the early evening saw an argument break out between a trader and some lads who were most probably bickering over the newly increased prices.

A full-scale riot quickly erupted, with great wheels of cheese rolled away by thieving fairgoers leaving debris everywhere. Two men were arrested, another is said to have died - but perhaps the most peculiar (and amusing) part of the tale is the fate of the Mayor. After trying to restore order, he attempted to flee the chaos, only to be knocked down by a runaway wheel of cheese. Have a think about that next time you're walking through the Old Market Square...

Before the advent of planes, trains and automobiles it was much rarer for people to travel and experience new things, so the excitement was high when Goose Fair rolled in to town. Along with travelling merchants bringing along their wares, more unusual side shows were introduced to entertain the masses.

Introducing the wonders of the world to the people of Nottingham, Bostock and Wombwell's Menagerie existed between 1805 all the way until the 1930s. This wild and wonderful show featured exotic never-seen-before creatures such as elephants, lions and tigers, and the legendary Madame Tussaud even showcased her eerily realistic wax sculptures in both 1819 and 1829.

Over the years, other traditional fairground attractions such as freak shows came into vogue, but the popularity of this kind of 'entertainment' declined after the 1950s due to the prevalence of television and advancements in fairground ride machinery.

Before the days of neon lights and laser shows, most rides at the fair were steam-powered. The jittery, clanking Brooklyn Cake Walk was first introduced in 1905 - and it still makes an appearance today! Whilst modest by today's thrill-ride standards, the Cake Walk endures, preserving the vintage charm we continue to love about traditional funfairs.

Goose Fair has developed its own unique flavour over the centuries. A comforting pot of mushy peas is sure to warm your cockles as you wander around the fairground - just don't forget to ask for a dollop of mint sauce. It's a proper Nottingham tradition!

No doubt the most infamous Goose Fair goodie is the **Cock on a Stick** ... This hard boiled lollipop is shaped like a cockerel and tends to bring a chuckle to the fairgoers. But did you know - this comical candy is not merely a mass-produced gimmick. The manufacturer of the Cock on a Stick is in fact a local chap who has been making them by hand for over 70 years after receiving the secret recipe from his grandfather!



If that hasn't whet your appetite and got you eager to come and enjoy the fun of the fair, we're not sure what will!

From the Visit Nottinghamshire website

Jigsaw Puzzles are good for you!

Did you get a jigsaw puzzle from our September general meeting? If not, you probably should have done …

Did you know that - according to Google - jigsaw puzzles are good for your brain because they exercise multiple cognitive skills at the same time?

Mental and cognitive benefits of a jigsaw puzzle -

- **Engages both brain hemispheres:** Sorting and analysing shapes uses the logical left side, while recognising colours and visual patterns uses the creative right side
- **Improves short-term memory:** Remembering the shape, colour and location of specific pieces helps keep your memory sharp
- **Boosts visual-spatial reasoning:** Fitting individual pieces into a larger picture trains your brain to visualise spatial relationships
- **Supports long-term brain health:** Keeping your mind active with complex visual tasks helps build cognitive reserve, which may delay symptoms of age-related mental decline

Emotional and physical benefits -

- **Lowers stress:** Focusing on an immersive, quiet task triggers a meditative state that calms your mind and lowers your heart rate
- **Releases dopamine:** Finding and placing the correct piece gives a small sense of achievement that boosts your mood
- **Reduces screen time:** Swapping phones or televisions for a physical puzzle gives your eyes a rest and helps you unwind

So, if you don't already do jigsaw puzzles, seems it's a good idea to start …..

Can eating beans and tofu reduce risk of high blood pressure?

If you're fond of beans, you may have noticed headlines claiming that eating them can cut your risk of developing high blood pressure (hypertension) by a third.

British Heart Foundation

The stories were based on a study published in BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health, which looked at whether people who eat more legumes and soy foods are less likely to develop high blood pressure. But do the findings support those headlines?

What did the researchers investigate?

Researchers wanted to understand if there is a link between eating more legumes and soy foods and a lower risk of developing high blood pressure.

Legumes include beans, lentils, chickpeas and peas. Soy foods include tofu, edamame, soy milk and tempeh.

The researchers conclude that regularly eating legumes and soy foods may help reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure. They say this could be because these foods are rich in fibre, plant protein, potassium, magnesium and other nutrients that may help support healthy blood pressure levels.

To read the full article click on the link - Eating beans and legumes.

WhatsApp screen-sharing scam could drain your bank account

Which? is warning of a nasty screen-sharing scam where fraudsters pose as banks and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to hack into accounts and steal sensitive information.

This type of scam, also known as screen-mirroring fraud, typically begins with an out-of-the-blue phone call from fraudsters claiming that your account is at risk. They may try to move the conversation to a video call on FaceTime or WhatsApp, where you can share your screen in a few clicks.

If screen-sharing is enabled, scammers can see almost everything displayed on your phone, including notifications of one-time passwords (OTPs) sent by banks to authorise payments. They could even convince you to relinquish control of your device entirely, claiming that they need to use remote-access tools such as AnyDesk, TeamViewer or Zoho Assist to 'fix' an issue or 'secure' your account.

Always be very wary and don't share your screen or your details!

To read more about this click on the link - Screen-sharing scam.

Scammers are thriving on Meta's social media platforms

Which? Warns that social media apps are at the centre of the fraud epidemic and many victims don't qualify for reimbursement.

A Which? Survey has shown that platforms including Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram remain squarely at the centre of the UK's scam epidemic. While the tech giants profit, consumers and their banks are paying the price for a relentless wave of fraud.

Which? surveyed 1,501 UK adults defrauded over the past two years, tracking how they were targeted and also the fight to recover their money. Unauthorised fraud was the most common type reported, with people having their bank account or card details harvested (44%), or losing their physical card, mobile phone or other device to opportunistic thieves (16%). The rest (35%) were impersonation scams, whereby victims are groomed by fraudsters masquerading as trusted organisations or individuals who dupe them into authorising payments.

Click on this link - Social media scammers - to read how Which? expose how criminals operate, why reimbursement remains a postcode lottery and why urgent reforms are needed to tackle this crime.

Report Fraud Alert

Report Fraud is the service everyone should use to tell the police about cyber crime and fraud. The Report Fraud Alert system, provided by the Report Fraud Analysis Services, provides updates about scams and provides advice on cyber crime and fraud. Register now to receive direct, verified, and accurate information about scams and fraud in your area.

Their system use the Neighbourhood Alert Platform, a secure national community-messaging facility used by the Police, Neighbourhood and Home Watch, Crimestoppers, Fire and Rescue Services, and local authorities throughout the UK.

The service is completely free. You can sign up online immediately, and messages are delivered by email, recorded voice message, and text. The system is completely confidential. Using your account you can opt into additional services, control what you receive, and manage who can see your information. You can also unsubscribe instantly at any time.

Click on the link to sign up - Report Fraud alert.

The £70 refund letter that isn't a scam !

You may be among the one million people, mostly women, who will receive letters explaining how you are eligible for top-up payments - and it's not a scam.

Those entitled are low earners who have missed out on the money because of the way the pension they pay into is administered. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will write to people over the next few months, explaining how to receive the payment. Typically they will be due £70, but that may vary considerably depending on their circumstances.

Anyone eligible - the vast majority of whom will be of working age rather than pensioners - will be contacted automatically. But, if you receive a letter, there are various checks you can do to ensure the letter is genuine so you don't get hoodwinked. Click on the link to read more - Not a scam!

Garden

When to cut back perennials

Perennials are not demanding plants, but trimming them after flowering finishes in autumn helps improve their appearance and flowering. However, you can leave some stems over winter to provide homes and food for wildlife, and then trim back in spring.

Cutting back herbaceous perennials during autumn restores order and tidiness to the garden. However, this removes potential winter interest, in the form of height and structure, plus food and habitat sources for wildlife so many gardeners delay the cut back until spring.

Selective cutting back in autumn can retain the dried, bleached flowerheads of plants, while removing material showing signs of decay or fungal growth. Examples include: such as Eryngium (sea holly), Phormium (New Zealand flax) and the foliage and flowers of ornamental grasses.

More tender plants with woody stems, such as penstemons, are left so that the old stems protect the crown from frost. Leave pruning of these and other borderline-hardy perennials until the risk of frost has passed - usually April or May.

Evergreen perennials such as certain Kniphofia and ornamental sedges are not cut back, but are tidied during spring and summer by removing dead foliage.

After cutting back, mulch with organic matter such as garden compost. Unless plants are showing signs of nutrient deficiencies, established perennials shouldn't need additional fertilising.

How to cut back perennials in autumn and winter :

- Using a knife, shears or secateurs, cut stems close to the ‘crown’ or dormant base of the plant
- If there is any young growth, cut to just above it
- Take the opportunity to remove weeds, digging out those with thick or fleshy roots
- Cut back perennials that produce leaves and flower stems from below the soil level, such as Crocosmia and paeony, to soil level
- Less severely cut back perennials showing new basal shoot growth – asters and Sedum spectabile, for example
- Any attractive dead stems or flower heads can be left until early spring
- Separate and dispose of any diseased material (showing signs of leaf-spots, mildew and rusts, for example) via council green waste collections or at a local recycling centre. Add all other material, except for ripening seed heads, to the compost heap
- Mulch with organic matter such as homemade garden compost in early spring

Answers to the Puzzles

The Little MaD Quiz

1. Talc, 2. *Home and Away*, 3. Harry Callahan *(in the Dirty Harry films)*, 4. The Victoria Tower, 5. Ludwig van Beethoven, 6. Pablo Picasso, 7. M23, 8. Caught in the act, 9. Ecuador, 10. Double kiss

What's the answer?

The answer is **61**

$2^2 + 3^2 = 4 + 9 = 13$
$3^2 + 4^2 = 9 + 16 = 25$
$4^2 + 5^2 = 16 + 25 = 41$

So …

$5^2 + 6^2 = 25 + 36 = 61$

Missing Link words

1. Window
2. Cream
3. Jam
4. Break
5. Brother
6. Man

The Fish Riddle

The fish is **24 centimetres** long.

The head is 3 cm long, the body is 12 cm long, and the tail is 9 cm long.

Dingbats

1. Bend over backwards, 2. Mother-in-law, 3. Rock bottom, 4. Made in Great Britain, 5. Son of a gun, 6. On the last lap, 7. Fish out of water, 8. That's beside the point

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

Some rare and unusual words which are fun to know :

Deipnosophist –
A person who is an expert or skilled in professional table talk and mealtime conversation

Petrichor –

Opsimath –
A person who learns or starts studying a subject late in life

Scintilla –

Ultracrepidarian –

(we've all met a few of those!)

Sue Cullen - Editor newsletter@madu3a.org