u3a
learn, laugh, live

MaD moments

Your Monthly Mapperley and District u3a Newsletter

November 2026 Issue No 126

Musings from the Chair



I'm writing this just as the clocks have gone back. I'd like to say I enjoyed my extra hour in bed but, unfortunately, Winnie the dog is driven by her stomach and as far as she was concerned, breakfast time hadn't changed.

The weather has decided it is time to embrace the autumnal feeling which often leads me to dig out my crochet to try and actually finish a piece. As Elaine from Knit and Natter says, I have FOF - fear of finishing - so instead the number of works in progress I have just seems to increase!

I had the misfortune to get Covid a few weeks ago, so I've had a quiet time recently as I needed time to recover. I also ensured I kept away from everyone else so as to not spread it around.

I used to work with immunosuppressed people, so know how a minor viral illness for one person can be extremely serious for someone else. I hope everyone is keeping well and not falling prey to the various bugs that seem to be going around at the moment.

I discovered this week that the physical copy of the National u3a magazine, which is sent out quarterly, costs us £4.20 per member per year. I was surprised as this is a fair chunk of the £18 membership that we charge. It made me feel a bit guilty as it does tend to be fairly rapidly put in the recycling bin. If you do read it, then I think it is value for money. However, if, like with me, it is summarily disposed of, you can opt out by emailing me at chair@madu3a.org. The National u3a magazine - like this wonderful newsletter - is also available online for free.

We had a slightly smaller turn out than usual for the main meeting this month, with 78 attendees. I don't know if this was due to the dreadful weather, the lack of email reminder or other factors. If you didn't attend because of the lack of email reminder, then I am sorry it wasn't sent. We weren't able to send it as usual as Beacon, our admin and email system, had been taken offline as part of the national PHP issue that was heavily featured in the news. I'm pleased to say it has been patched successfully and is now up and running again.

I hope everyone keeps safe as the darker evenings start to draw in and enjoy the month ahead.

Amanda Knight
Chair

*As a reminder, our monthly General Meeting is always held at 10:00am on the **fourth** Thursday of the month (which isn't always the last Thursday). The only exception to this is our meeting in December, which is our Twixmas meeting, so called as it falls between Christmas and the New Year. This year's Twixmas meeting will be on Tuesday 29 December*

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

Jump to :

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

Links to other Newsletters

Gedling Borough News – October 2026

Gedling Community and Volunteering Newsletter – October 2026

Gedling Leisure News – October 2026

u3a Newsbites – October 2026

u3a Friends Newsletter – October 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

You don't realise how old you are until you sit on the floor and then try to get up again

Notices

MaD Men – Calling our Male MaD Members

We have a very friendly and successful group – **MaD Girls** – which meets monthly at Mapperley Golf Club for a couple of hours. The MaD Girls share thoughts and opinions and set the world to rights over a cuppa.

There also used to be a similar group for the male MaD members – unsurprisingly called **MaD Men** – which is currently dormant, awaiting someone to organise it as, sadly, ill health meant the previous convener had to step down.

Is this something you would like to have a go at? All that would be required is to choose a venue, a meeting day and time and send out a monthly reminder to the members who have joined the group. There is a lot of assistance available to get you going so – if it's something you think you would like to do – don't be shy … be in touch to find out more.

If you'd like to discuss it please be in touch with any member of the Committee, or send an email to chair@madu3a.org.

News from the Groups

German Conversation & Culture

Two completely different articles from Nachrichten Leicht were read, translated and discussed at our meeting in October.

Firstly a somewhat unusual article about several African countries voicing criticisms, over several years, that most World Maps don't show their country in the correct size or form. The maps date from 16th Century but a more modern map called *A Real Earth* shows land areas and oceans in their true sizes. A vote has taken place at the UN. 164 countries voted in favour of adopting Equal Earth. Only the USA voted against. As a result many old maps are now likely to be replaced.

A more topical subject for our second article was about the new apprenticeship year in Germany and the problems facing both companies in recruiting and students in finding suitable courses. Especially there's concern that not enough courses are available close to home or that the young people do not have the right qualifications for apprenticeships. although in certain areas there was a positive trend in the first half of 2026.

Our study verb this month was GENIESSEN and some very interesting sentences were read out covering many tenses of the verb.

Coffee, tea and biscuits were enjoyed whilst chatting and enjoying the bright Autumn sunshine. Julie and Arthur shared their experiences on their interesting, albeit eventful, trip to Frankfurt, Fulda and Erfurt. Tricia is looking forward to an upcoming cruise visiting the Rhone Valley. Pat and Joy had enjoyed a very relaxing holiday in Majorca.

Our next meeting will be on 17 November.

Joy Brown

Local and Live Music

Twelve members of the group had a great evening at a local music evening with three very different music performers. It was all in aid of a charity set up by a local couple - on the photo in green T shirts. The band who played last (the Outriders) played lively rockabilly music so a few of us enjoyed dancing.

Eileen



Photography

The themes for the Photography Group in October were Wood and Shadows..

We had a wide range of photographs which you can view by clicking on the links above.

Sue Cullen

MaD Girls

Our MaD Girls will next be meeting on Monday 9 November for our monthly afternoon social chat and an opportunity to put the world to rights without getting too much into politics or contentious issues.

If you just fancy some chat with pleasant company and a tea or coffee, why not join us at 2pm at Mapperley Golf Club. In December we will be meeting a little earlier in the day and having a Christmas meal together.

Contact me if you would like to join at MaDGirls@madu3a.org

Val Wilkinson

Fun Cooking with Gadgets

For our October meeting our theme was root vegetables. We rather surprised ourselves in that between 7 of us we seemed to have covered most of the different root vegetables we could think of.

Our new member Diane was the only one to produce a sweet dish - chocolate truffles with the surprise, and completely unguessable - ingredient of mashed potato. We also enjoyed a delicious saag aloo, which looked just like the photo from the recipe book that Chris had used, root veg mash, root veg crisps, celeriac and apple salad, carrot fritters and beet hummus. Another good challenge.

We are not meeting in November but our December meeting theme, suggested by Marion, is edible gifts or ornaments. Thanks Marion!

Val Wilkinson



Curry Club

This month we tried another location new to many of us, Buraans on Arnold High Street. It was also a wander into the unknown as we availed ourselves of the 'unlimited' Sunday Buffet.

There were a number of starters, including poppadoms, lamb koftas, chicken tikka and samosas. The Main courses consisted of two vegetarian dishes, a paneer and potato and a dal, two types of rice, two chicken and one lamb curry, plus naan. The food was tasty and flavoursome, and all enjoyed the different flavours.

The price was excellent, the company great and all appeared to enjoy the location and food provided.

The November Curry Night is yet to be decided as the members are voting on their favourite.

A quick heads up - there will not be a Curry Club outing in December, but we are in the process of putting together the 2027 locations, so if you have any suggestions please let us know and we'll see what we can do.

Linda Randall and Steve Payne

Family History

The Family History Group recently looked into the history of their surname and also the first, or Christian, names of family members.

Georgie Burdett's maiden name was Snead, which is English in origin, from Old English Snaed. Other family names in her family tree are Percival, from French Perceval, involved in the story of the Holy Grail by Crestien de Troyes in the 12th Century, Hannah, a Celtic, anglicised surname, which became popular in Scotland and became a Scottish clan. Hannah has versions in Arabic and also Assyrian, where the name Johannan was turned, in Aramaic, to John! First names in Georgie's family include, in particular, George, a name from Ancient Greek, Georgeos, meaning a farmer or earthworker. Her great grandfather, grandfather and father were all called George, and that is why she was Christened Georgina!

Alison Irons' original family name was Cunningham, which was from an Irish personal name. The 'ham' ending means a village. Another family surname is Jelly, which is derived from the names Julian and Julius. It was evidently a nickname for a sweet, adaptable person. First names in her family are George, James and Michael.

Richard Hill's surname is obviously place-related, and Thomas was a repeating Christian name. His wife Mary's surname was the Scottish, Haigh. One of her family members had the first name Thomasin, the female equivalent of Thomas.

Paul Mullins' surname is originally from the French, moulin, meaning mill. His mother's. side of the family had the surname Owen, from 16th Century Wales. First names in the family included Maurice William, known as Peter, and Adriana, from either the Emperor Hadrian or the Adriatic.

Ann Palmer's original surname was Reynolds, a Somerset name of Norman origin, meaning son of Reynold or Reginald. A Phileas Reynoldi appears in the Domesday Book. In the 12th Century many people with the Reynolds surname moved to Scotland from Ireland, where the name had appeared as Ragnald. Family first names were William, Samuel, Mary Ann and Florence.

Graham Palmer discovered that his surname is Norman originally and was connected with people being missionaries and pilgrims, who would carry palm leaves on their journeys. The name was popular in Norfolk, Eastern England and Kent. There are over 52,000 people in the UK with the Palmer surname - is the 88th most common.

Graham's mother's surname at birth was Graham, and this accounts for his first name. Other first names found in the family include William, David, Jean, Jeanie and Jane - the last 3 on his Scottish mother's side. One American family member has the first name Kennedy.

Anne Shipman's birth name was Softley, a Northumbrian/Scottish name originally formed from soft and lea - 'lea' meaning a clearing. In 1921, a number of people with the surname moved from Norfolk to London.

First names among Anne's ancestors or family include Sam, John and David. Her father was Christened William John and her 4th great grandfather's name was Porter Spencer. Other names have been Thirza, twice, and Venus, too. Different names appearing in Anne's family tree include Crask Overton. Crask comes from Crassek, meaning hale and hearty. It's another Norfolk name.

Marion Wright hasn't always found researching her family easy, as Smith was her maiden name and Wright is her married surname. The name Wright is occupational, meaning a builder of watermills. Paul William Hendry Wright evidently has some connection with the Walpole family. First names found in his family are Carl, Albert, Ernest, Jack and Gerald.

The Wilkie name is Scottish, and is the pet form of the name William, meaning resolute protector. People with this name were found in the Scottish Lowlands by the early 14th Century.

Other surnames appearing in Claire's family include Dancer, Tolkien and Holmes. First names have included various Johns, Thomas, Josiah, Fanny, Elizabeth and Sophia. A 5th great grandmother gloried in the name Anna Euphrosina Bergholz!!

It has been an interesting task, looking at our names and their origins, but this is only a small amount of the information to be found by even deeper research!

Claire Wilkie

Creative Craft

For our October session we had a guest 'presenter', Faye Maguire, a local mixed media artist and workshop leader.

Faye introduced us to Gelli printing: a fascinating process using a gel pad, acrylic paints and a roller with various interesting objects to leave imprints, then print onto paper. We were very pleased with the end results.

Deborah Foreman



Wine Appreciation

For our meeting in October Sue decided that, apart from a Prosecco, she would let Laithwaite's choose the wines, with some interesting results. As usual, the scores are mine and do not reflect a wider opinion and the comments come from the group members. I tend to mark low.

Solivi Prosecco (10%) was our starter and views ranged from 'lovely' to 'nondescript'. It was light, medium dry with a fresh finish and good length.
Score – 13/20

Alta Tierra Sauvignon Blanc 2025 (12.5%) came from Chile and was quite different from either New Zealand or French SBs. It was easy drinking, with a nose of grapefruit and grass and elderflower, minerality and a zing on the palate. Generally agreed to be enjoyable, but quite expensive.
Score – 14/20

360 degrees Roussanne Marsanne 2024 (13.4%), another Chilean wine which was very different from most white wines we have tasted. The nose was quite sweet, with sherbet lemons but for some the palate was rather sour. 5 quite liked it and 9 didn't. However, it would taste very different when drunk with food.
Score – 9/20

Loubissou 2025 (12%) was a rosé blend of Grenache, Cinsault, Syrah and Clairette made in the Languedoc region of France. A slight nose and a smooth dry palate of redcurrants with minerality. Good length with a fresh, drying finish. Some liked this better than almost any other rose they had tasted, but this was not a universal view.
Score – 13/20

Winser Krems Blauer Zweigelt 2024 (12.5%) was a light red Austrian wine made with the champion local grape of the country. A clear red wine, nose and palate of red summer fruits, nice tannins (grip!) and good length. 'Delicious', not heavy, a hit!
Score – 17/20

Altos Crianza Rioja 2021 (14.5%) made from Tempranillo grapes made our red wine drinkers very happy. Dense and deep colour, nose of damsons and cinnamon, palate of dark fruits, vanilla with soft tannins and good length. 'Really lovely', 'chewy'. Quite expensive (for us) but very special.
Score – 18/20

L'Epervier 2023 (14.5%) was a classic Languedoc wine made from a blend of Syrah, Grenache and Carignan and barrel matured. Another dense wine with a spicy, woody nose and palate, good tannin and good length. 'Less fruity than the Rioja, but interestingly complex'.
Score - 14/20

Maggie Grimshaw

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.

October's General Meeting

Denis Hill - Old Occupations

The speaker at the general meeting on Thursday 22 October was Denis Hill. Denis is a social historian with an interest in old and curious occupations.

He covered a wide period of historical change taking us to jobs that have changed or disappeared within our lifetimes.

He listed about 50 occupations many of which we were at a loss to identify.

The types of work ranged from heavy industry to small scale cottage industries.

Many however were part of the daily life in villages and small communities. You may remember some of the ones he mentioned; the pig killer, surgeon, back 'us boy, bozzler, tiger, spinner, ostler, dog whipper, scavenger, belter, lamp lighter and the knocker up, banister and banker to name but a few!

Some words had the audience laughing with our modern interpretation being far from the actual definition. For instance, a 'nutter' was a note taker, a 'toe rag' was a poor dock worker unloading grain from ships and a belly-builder' was a piano maker.

Who knows what occupations will disappear in the next few years!

Many thanks to Denis for a very entertaining morning and many thanks to those of you who came along to the general meeting.

Cathy Hobbs

Future General Meetings

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.

TUESDAY 29 December : Twixmas Social

Thursday 28 January : Anita Fernandez 'Adventures in Film'

Thursday 25 February : Marcus Allen 'Brian Clough and The Lost Tapes'

Thursday 25 March : Bharat Patel 'Life in the Media'

Thursday 22 April : Sam Millard 'Rufford Poachers'

Thursday 27 May : Ed Cook 'Meadow Makers'

Thursday 24 June : Tony Sherwood '60 Years in showbiz

Puzzles

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

The Little MaD Quiz

1. Which two drinks are combined to make a Black Velvet?
2. The Vuelta a España is one of the three major European Grand Tours in which sport?
3. A Cornish prayer asks for deliverance from 'ghosties and ghoulies and long-leggedy beasties' and what else?
4. Who was the arch-enemy of Noggin the Nog?
5. As what was Northern Rhodesia renamed on independence?
6. Black, White, Sumatran, Javan and Indian are varieties of which endangered species?
7. On which ship did Charles Darwin circumnavigate the globe, the voyage inspiring him to develop the theory of evolution?
8. Including French, Italian and Spanish, what term is given to the group of languages derived from Vulgar Latin in the Middle Ages?
9. In the dish devils on horseback, what is the bacon wrapped around?
10. In which city was the original CSI television series set?

Solve the puzzle

If R + B = P and
R + Y = O then
B + Y = ?

The upside down number

What is the smallest whole number that increases by 12 when you flip it upside down?

What number replaces the ?

1, 4, 13, 40, 121, ?

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

1 P N O A N O Y	2 Idea an	3 Car Jack Ton	4 HAMLET LEXICON
5 1 3 5 7 9 COME	6 E N D N D	7 ● Evening	8 ELBAT ELBAT

Community

A Notice from Nottinghamshire Police via Neighbourhood Alert

Community Meeting

When : Wednesday 11 November at 17:00

Where : The Dales Centre Library, 206 Sneinton Dale, Nottingham NG2 4HJ

Dear Local Residents

We are encouraging the public to have their say, at an event at The Dales Centre, 11 November Sneinton Dale Nottingham on Wednesday at 17:00. This community meeting gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns and to find out what we are doing to tackle the issues that matter to you. We will also have some promotional items on show.

Everyone is welcome and it would be great to see you there. For more information please contact me - PCSO 8259 J Coughill on Julia.coughill@Notts.police.uk

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Science and Nature

Scientists develop plastic that dissolves in seawater

Scientists in Japan have developed a plastic that dissolves in seawater.

Experts say the new material breaks down quickly in around two to three hours, depending on its thickness and size.

Many existing biodegradable plastics aren't able to fully dissolve, leaving behind harmful microplastics that can pollute the ocean and harm wildlife, but it's hoped that the new non-toxic material could offer a future solution as it disappears completely.

To read more about this click on the link - Dissolving plastic.

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u3a Communities - AI for Everyone

The free independent online platform offering members the opportunity to join in regular, lively meetings on a range of topics. u3a - AI for everyone

The site provides a landing page for all our u3a AI National resources. A good place to start for first time users is the u3a Subject Advisors and Subject Network website. This introduces the different resources available, such as how to contact the AI Subject Advisor, what the AI for Everyone Project Team is and who are the members, how to register for the AI Monthly Newsletter and, if you are setting up an AI group, class or workshop, how you can network with others in the u3a who are doing the same.

There should be a calorie refund for things that didn't taste as good as you expected

Health

How often, and how much, do you drink?

In the largest survey of alcohol intake ever carried out in the UK, Our Future Health analysed data from almost 1.7 million Our Future Health participants, to see how alcohol consumption differs between generations and income levels.

Thanks to new analysis of their data, you can compare your drinking habits against those of Our Future Health participants of a similar age, sex and income level. It reveals the age groups that are most likely to be teetotal, and the income levels where risk-associated drinking is at its highest.

To read more about this interesting survey, click on the link - How much do we drink?

How cold weather affects your heart

Cold, windy and wet weather can take heat away from your body.

When you're cold, blood vessels narrow in your skin, fingers and toes, so less heat is lost. This narrowing (called vasoconstriction) causes:

- your blood pressure to go up
- your heart rate to go up
- your heart to work harder to pump blood around your body.

This is a normal response to the cold. But the extra strain can be harder for people with a heart condition, especially during exercise.

Cold weather can also cause your blood to get thicker and stickier, which in rare cases can lead to blood clots. This can increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Click on the link to read the article on the British Heart Foundation's website - How does cold weather affect your heart?.

Tech and Scams

What is PHP and why did it spark a global cyber-security scramble?

Explaining why our Beacon system was down last month

For more than a decade, serious flaws had gone undetected in the technology underpinning much of the internet. It took AI to bring them to light which caused a global cyber-security alert.

Researchers who helped to surface the vulnerabilities in PHP - a popular server-side programming language used in web development for decades - warned that platforms which use it could be exposed to potential hacks.

Governments and cyber-security agencies rushed to contain the fallout, urging website owners to check if their sites were affected and, if so, to install updates to patch the issue or consider going offline.

There have been no reports of any successful exploits of the flaw - coined php2shell - so far, but in the days since the issues came to light, disruption to sites and services has continued to ripple around the world.

Click on the read to go to the BBC website to read the whole article - What is PHP?

Report Fraud alert :

Police forces being impersonated in scam calls using 'spoofed'

Analysis of data from Report Fraud, the national cyber crime and fraud reporting service, shows that there has been an increase in reports made where the caller has purported to be from a police force from a variety of areas across the country. The City of London Police itself, the National Lead Force for fraud, has also taken thousands of crime reports of a similar nature.

In reality, it is a criminal contacting a member of the public, using a 'spoofed' phone number to try and obtain sensitive personal or financial details so that fraud can then go on to be committed. Often, the criminals will claim that the victim will be helping with an investigation by providing the personal or financial information they are asking for.

While a number of calls about this type of fraud has been made to Report Fraud, this is likely to be the tip of the iceberg of a far bigger problem that is not reported, so the full scale is unknown.

To read more about this click on the link to the City of London Police website - Police impersonation scams.

Switch to Passkeys :

Protect Your Accounts as Email and Social Media Hacking Soars

Report Fraud is urging the public to protect their online accounts after stolen sums from email and social media hacking surged by 417 per cent in the last year. Reported losses rose from £1.2 million in 2024/25 to £6.3 million in 2025/26, while reports of account hacking increased by 34 per cent, making it the most reported form of cyber crime in the UK.

This type of hacking remains the most reported form of cyber crime in the UK, with the number of reports also increasing by a third (34 per cent) from the previous year. Other types of hacking were also identified within reports, including gaming and streaming account takeovers, as well as the compromise of travel and online delivery accounts.

Click on the link to go to the Report Fraud website to read more - Protect your accounts.

How to screen calls to avoid scammers

You don't need extra apps or technical know-how to fight scam calls, as your phone already has features designed to stop them.

Scam calls can be disruptive at best and financially devastating at worst, with criminals attempting to trick you into handing over money or personal information.

Unfortunately, the problem isn't going away. In fact, new figures from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) show that complaints about automated nuisance calls have reached a five-year high.

But there are ways to fight back. On supported Android phones, for example, you can use call screening to find out who's calling and why before deciding whether to answer. Meanwhile, iPhone users can screen or silence unknown callers and filter suspected spam calls.

Click on this link - Screen calls to avoid scammers - to go to the Which? article explaining how to keep scam calls at bay on your mobile and highlight some of the best call-blocking landline phones uncovered by our rigorous tests.

Irony. The opposite of wrinkly

Garden

What to do in your Garden in Late Autumn

Late autumn in a UK garden is a time of transition, cleanup, and protection as temperatures drop and days shorten.

- **Lawn Care**: Apply an autumn treatment like Miracle-Gro EverGreen Autumn Lawn Care Carton to strengthen roots and manage moss before winter weather sets in. Clear fallen leaves regularly to prevent them from smothering the grass and use them to make leaf mould.
- **Bulb Planting:** Finish planting spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, and crocuses. November is your last good window before the soil freezes or waterlogs.
- **Mulching:** Add a 2-to-3-inch layer of well-rotted compost, manure, or leaf mould around plant roots to insulate them and suppress weeds. Avoid piling thick mulch directly over plant crowns.
- **Protect Tender Plants**: Move tender potted plants and citrus into a greenhouse, conservatory, or porch, and wrap larger outdoor specimens with horticultural fleece.
- **Tidy or Leave Wildlife Habitats**: Cut back dead topgrowth on herbaceous perennials if you prefer a tidy look, or leave seedheads (like sunflowers and rudbeckia) standing to provide food and shelter for birds and insects

Seasonal Colour and Interest :

- **Pots and Bedding**: Brighten up containers, window boxes, and border gaps with hardy winter-into-spring performers like Autumn Cyclamen Mix YouGarden, pansies, and violas.
- **Shrubs and Trees**: Look for winter-scented or bark-interest plants to add structure, such as Viburnum 'Dawn', wintersweet, or Tibetan cherry

Birds

You can resume feeding garden birds a full range of seeds and peanuts on 1 November, according to updated guidance from the RSPB and RSPCA. Feeding garden birds in the UK through autumn and winter helps them survive short days, cold nights, and frozen natural food sources.

What to Feed :

- High-Fat & High-Energy Foods: Suet blocks, fat balls, suet pellets, and coconut logs give birds the calories needed to maintain body heat.
- Seeds & Nuts: Sunflower hearts, nyjer seed (for goldfinches), seed mixes, and kibbled or crushed peanuts are ideal from November to April (the RSPB recommends pausing large loose peanuts and general seeds in mesh feeders from May to October to reduce disease risks like trichomonosis).
- Protein & Fruit: Dried or live mealworms, pinhead or dry porridge oats, mild grated cheese, and chopped apples or pears attract robins, blackbirds, thrushes, and wrens.

What to Avoid

- Salted or Processed Foods: Salted peanuts, crisps, and kitchen scraps with heavy seasoning or oil cause severe health problems for birds.
- Whole Nuts or Soft Bread: Large whole nuts are a choking hazard for small birds, while large amounts of soft bread offer little nutrition and can swell in a bird's stomach.
- Cooked Porridge: Never leave out cooked, sticky porridge oats as they can harden around a bird's beak.

Essential feeding tips :

- Provide fresh water
- Keep everything clean
- Place feeders safely, away from cats (and squirrels if you'd rather they didn't pinch the food)

Follow Official Guidance: Review seasonal updates and feeder advice directly from the RSPB Bird Feeding Guide or the RHS Winter Wildlife Advice.

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 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

Answers to the Puzzles

The Little MaD Quiz

1. Champagne and stout, 2. Cycling, 3. Things that go bump ion the night, 4. Nogbad the Bad, 5. Zambia, 6. Rhinoceros, 7. HMS Beagle, 8. Romance languages, 9. Prunes, 10. Las Vegas

Solve the puzzle

The answer is **Green**
Red + Blue = Purple
Red + Yellow = Orange,

The upside down number

The answer is **86**.
When you turn the number 86 upside down if becomes 98. (98

What number replaces the ?

The answer is **364.**
The sequence is multiply each number by 3 and add 1

Dingbats

1. Pay through the nose, 2. An afterthought, 3. Jack in the box, 4. A play on words, 5. Overcome all odds, 6. Making ends meet, 7. The high spot of the evening, 8. Turn the tables

And finally …

Bananas are berries, strawberries are not : In botany, a true berry has its seeds on the inside and develops from a single ovary (which includes bananas, eggplants, and tomatoes), while strawberries grow their seeds on the outside from multiple tiny ovaries

The 21-second bladder rule : Almost every mammal that weighs more than 3 kg (about 6.6 pounds), from a tiny dog to a massive elephant, takes almost the exact same amount of time to empty its bladder - about 21 seconds (give or take a few seconds)

An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain : Their oversized eyeballs take up so much room in their skulls that their actual brain is smaller than a single one of their eyes

Sue Cullen - Editor newsletter@madu3a.org