

## From Mo Johnson, Vice Chair

Hello members, I hope this message finds you all in good spirits.

At the AGM in March, there were no nominations for some committee roles which remain vacant, including that of Chair.

Wolverhampton u3a has an excellent committee but currently without a Chair. However, Mike Clack who currently co-produces the newsletter, has kindly agreed to work closely alongside me taking on the role of co-ordinating external links and 2nd vice chair. This will greatly assist me and relieve much of the admin, liaising with u3a and supporting me in my role.

I will continue as Vice Chair, hosting/speaking/chairing etc. along with my current role as Co-ordinator of Groups.

We are both committed to our roles which will enable the committee to continue for the coming year. However, with vacant committee roles and the loss of some group co-ordinators – we are vulnerable as a branch to be able to continue.

The committee asks all members to give serious consideration to joining us for say 12 months. It is not an onerous task, and you will be made very welcome – plus tea and biscuits are available at every meeting!

Please contact me or any committee member if you'd like to discuss the possibility of joining us.

Stay safe and well.

Mo Johnson

[mojohnson00@aol.com](mailto:mojohnson00@aol.com)



Mo Johnson



Mike Clack

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## Information from u3a National Office

### U3a Festival 24 – York

Members can now book tickets for u3a Festival 24, which is taking place at the University of York from 18 to 20 July.

Margaret Fiddes, one of the organisers of the festival, says "So far take up is very strong and we are delighted that many hundreds of people are coming to join us in York for the largest ever gathering of u3a members in the movement's history."

The taster programme and booking link can be found on the Festival page of the u3a website: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)



### Why not enter the u3a 2024 Short Story Competition?

The u3a national short story competition is back for its fifth year, and the judges are looking forward to seeing what creative writing talents members have to offer.

The theme for this year's competition is: 'Escape(s)'.

The competition launched on Tuesday 7th May 2024, and will be open until Monday 8th July 2024 at 12 noon.

For more information on entry requirements:

[www.u3a.org.uk/learning/short-story-competition](http://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/short-story-competition)

## Round the Groups

### Creative Writing

The Creative Writing Group is continuing to meet at Codsall Library, using our "tried and tested" method of selecting a writing topic from a previously prepared list.

We then write a piece of prose (up to 500 words) or a poem before the next meeting, which can be delivered then. If members just cannot summon their particular muse – or if they'd just prefer not to share their efforts – that's fine; they are still welcome to listen to the other offerings.

We then each write few words of (constructive) criticism – anonymously of course! – which are passed on to the writers, to be read in the comfort of their own homes after the meeting.

Since the beginning of the year, we have had three new group members who tried our group for their two taster sessions, and I am delighted to say that they have all joined us. So, a big welcome to John, Steve and Maddy: we all look forward to seeing you regularly in the future.

*John Ellard (group joint coordinator)*

#### April meeting of the Creative Writing Group

We invited David Anderson – aka 'Pep the Poet' – to speak to us at our April meeting. David specialises in children's poetry: he has had several books published and gives poetry workshops to schools, colleges and also interested adult groups.

He gave us a potted biography, he's a local retired Deputy Headteacher and told us how his work and life experiences had inspired him to write poetry.

He performed some of his work and invited us to join in. He is a very lively and entertaining speaker and involved everyone. We meet in Codsall Library so he had a secondary audience of readers and staff.

We had a go at poems and towards the end David led us in writing Rap songs and then taught us the appropriate rhythms and gestures. We then performed our Raps, much to the interested amazement of all concerned.

It was a very interesting afternoon. We may not have written much poetry, but we did have a lot of fun.

*Tess Fitzsimons (group joint coordinator)*



### Gardening Group

The garden group has now started its summer season of visits.

We held a planning meeting in February at which we decided that in future we would have a winter break after a planning meeting in November, so we do not meet in December, January or February.

Our first visit this year, in March, was to Bridgmere Garden Centre and Show Gardens. We arrived in a deluge, but after a coffee, the sky cleared and we were able to visit the show gardens, which were lovely despite some paths being flooded. Some of the group met the Head Gardener as he emerged from a greenhouse, and he spent some time talking to us about the history of the garden – and about the drowned tulips in one of the display beds!

In April, we had a private visit to the NGS Secret Garden in Little Haywood. It is a very unusual and creative garden, with numerous interesting features and rare plants and trees which we were shown by its owner, who is a senior gardener at Shugborough. This time, although it was chilly, the sun shone for us, but we were happy to have our refreshments in the cosy bothy with its wood burner.

The garden opens on a few days in the summer and we would definitely recommend it to other u3a members.

In the next three months, meetings will be in members' gardens.

*Ruth Goodison group coordinator*



*In the Bothy*



## German Improvers' Group

In the past year, I'm sorry to report that one of our members has passed away and one new person has now joined us. Our group consists of 6 people and we continue to meet most Tuesdays, depending on the numbers available and holidays.

We meet for 2 hours in each other's homes. This time is split between:

- Conversation/discussion (not always in German!).
- Working from a German textbook.
- Games.
- Each member usually prepares some "news" in German, e.g. about what they have been doing or an interesting item from a magazine or newspaper.
- And, of course, coffee and biscuits/cake!

*Graham Tritton – group coordinator*

## Foraging Group

The Foraging Group with the spoils of the day, making decorative wreaths.

If you are interested in joining the Foraging Group, contact Josie Turner

[mobyjosky@icloud.com](mailto:mobyjosky@icloud.com)



## Latin Group

We have a thriving and enthusiastic Latin group which meets every two weeks. We study a range of different Latin sources to improve our language skills and to learn about life and culture in ancient Rome.

- We have recently been reading Caesar's reports on his campaign to conquer Britain, with bad weather and British war chariots causing significant problems for his troops.
- From 150 years later, we read a birthday invitation from the wife of a commander of a Roman fort near the Scottish border.
- The poet Horace gave a picture of two lovers who have found new partners but are debating whether they ought to get back together again.
- Meanwhile, in the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece we learn of a crew member, Hylas, who was captured by water nymphs who decided they were not going to let him go. A painting of the scene is displayed in Manchester Art Gallery.

*Michael Clement group co-ordinator*

## Jazz Group



The Jazz Group continues to meet monthly – and is so lucky to have a different member to present a programme each month of the year. In the past twelve months we have had the usual mix of sessions focusing on different aspects: up-and-coming musicians; several on just one musician such as Keith Jarrett, Lou Donaldson, Wayne Shorter, Carla Bley, Andy Sheppard; a couple based on a location such as Kansas City; and those of a more personal nature.

In addition, we have a member who is happy to present a retrospective of the year in December, choosing a track from each month, which always makes us realise how eclectic our tastes are.

The programme for the rest of the year is on the website, so if you would like to join us – perhaps for a "taster". please contact me on :

[jsheard696@gmail.com](mailto:jsheard696@gmail.com)

*John Sheard – group coordinator*

## Gardening Group – visit



The photo is of our Group at the Bridgemere Show Gardens, an RHS Partner Garden attached to Bridgemere Garden Centre, near Nantwich.

We had a very enjoyable visit there on Wednesday 27th March. And it stayed dry for our tour round!

*Judith Hitchen*

## Poetry Appreciation Group 1

Over the last year we have continued to meet at 2.00 pm on the first Monday of the month in various members' homes.

As ever, we have enjoyed members' choices of a wide variety of poems/poets/styles/eras with some discussion of them (or not) and general conversation with refreshments. Our membership and attendance have only been limited by difficulties of age, illness or transport.

Sadly, two of our longstanding members died during the year. Some of us were able to attend their respective funerals. A poem in sonnet form written by group member Martin Murfitt and dedicated to one of our late members and her also deceased husband was read by her granddaughter during the service.

On a happier note, we have added three new members to our group maintaining our membership at ten. This is a good number for 'fitting into a front room' but I would be happy to hear from anyone else who may be interested in joining. They can contact me on 01902 765567.

Marian Graceson

## Ukulele Group

As usual, we have been doing a fair number of gigs to raise money – mainly for the Air Ambulance, although a couple were for church roof repairs and a birthday party.

Playing for the Alzheimer's Group at St Michael's Church has become a firm favourite with the band.

We were asked back to a West Bromwich club in April for our third gig there, where we enjoy the clapping, singing and biscuits that they add to the evenings.

We have had 5 new members recently, taking our numbers back up to capacity, which is great.

The band never charges for its time but appreciates the generous donations for charity that are given to us by the groups that we entertain.

The band will play for any occasion for a donation – 'morning, noon or night' – just not Tuesdays as the leaders help run a cycle group on that day!

Gill Stevens (group coordinator)

## 'Olympia via Much Wenlock to the World'

I am doing a Zoom presentation as part of the U3a national programme. It is about the Olympics to be held in Paris this summer. It is entitled 'Olympia via Much Wenlock to the World' and is on Thursday 20th June. Anyone interested should look in the next 'u3a Matters' magazine or contact [learning@u3a.org.uk](mailto:learning@u3a.org.uk) for joining details.

David Tordoff

## Playreading

### Group 1

We have read an interesting list of plays this year:

Two comedies by Alan Ayckbourn.

Two plays by Eric Chappell, one of which was acted by the Codsall Dramatic society for the Codsall Festival so we went to see how it should be done!

As a contrast we recently read a historical play by April de Angelis which is based on people's reminiscences of life in a village.

Recently we went as a group to see "Heroes" – a play translated from French by Tom Stoppard – acted by the Pattingham Drama Group.

Sheila Moore (group coordinator)

### Group 2

We meet monthly on Friday mornings – dates by arrangement. Over the last year, we have read mainly 20th Century comedies, including two from Alan Ayckbourn's "Norman Conquest" trilogy, a couple by Eric Chappell and William Douglas Home, and a melodrama by Dan Sutherland.

Reading a play aloud to each other can bring the recent past, and attitudes, alive in a direct way, and enlivens our conversations at the mid-morning refreshment break.

Playsets are shared with Playreading 1 – thanks to Sheila Moore for arranging this. Thanks also to Linda Moreland who briefed me thoroughly when I stepped in to lead the group this year.

Stella Walsh (group coordinator)

### Group 3

The group now runs with only a nominal coordinator; most of us communicating by WhatsApp. So far this has worked well. Each month one of us offers to host and find a play to read (often one-act plays – giving us more time for discussion and chat).

The readings are always fun and our attempts to use local dialects or foreign accents can be the cause of much hilarity; members helping out when people get lost!

We are quite a large group and unfortunately would not be able to absorb more members.

I pay tribute to a great bunch of people who have cooperated cheerfully to keep the group going. Long may it continue!

Ruth Byrne (group member)

## Anyone lost a brooch?

A brooch was found when tidying up after the AGM in March. We'd love to return it to its owner. If you have lost this, please contact Julia Hood, Secretary: [u3amembershipwv@gmail.com](mailto:u3amembershipwv@gmail.com).



## u3a Friends

It's a regular monthly 'E-Newsletter', which is free to u3a members

This is what its compilers say about it:

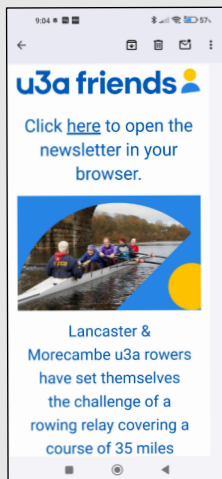
u3a Friends is an exciting new initiative to bring together stories and interests from across the u3a movement; to use our collective voice to change lives and to share exclusive member offers with our exclusive Friends Extra benefits program. All of these come together under the banner of u3a Friends. Signing up to the newsletter means you are up to date and in touch with all that's happening across the movement as it happens..

Sign-up: [www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter](http://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter)

### Why u3a Friends?

Friendship and togetherness are at the heart of what we do at u3a.

It felt time to create a new look and feel for our ever popular u3a monthly newsletter. As we continue to promote the collective message of one movement of u3a members from across the u3a, the idea of u3a friends took shape. What started as a working title became the word that highlights the heart of what we do – that through the u3a, and its unique style of member-led learning, our members find friendship and connection.



Being part of our newsletter community means that we can connect directly with u3a Friends across the country, enhancing the membership offer and broadening our services. u3a Friends will complement the activities of local u3a groups and add value to both groups and individuals.

### What does u3a Friends offer?

The scheme includes:

- Regular and special issues of the online national u3a Friends Newsletter, filled with news from u3as across the country, plus fantastic offers and services.
- Information about nationwide u3a events and national initiatives.
- Access to learning opportunities via Interest Groups Online for a low fee.
- Exclusive access to our u3a Friends Extra benefits program – see below:

## u3a Friends Extra

This gives members access to a wide range of offers, discounts and services launched in April. There has been an amazing take up.

There is a tutorial on how to use the website which may be useful – watch that now:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyR8yX68YzU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyR8yX68YzU)

u3a Friends Extra is exclusively available to subscribers of our u3a Friends newsletter.

[www.u3a.org.uk/get-involved/u3a-friends](http://www.u3a.org.uk/get-involved/u3a-friends)

## Rea Valley Amble

There was a good turnout of 14 walkers on a beautiful, sunny day for this circular 4.5 mile walk from Cleobury Mortimer town centre on May 10th.

Starting with views along the Rea Valley, then gradually dropping down for a stretch along the river, the walk included a stop to admire Neen Savage Ford, a local beauty spot.

On our return we all enjoyed a very welcome drink and lunch at local hostelry The Kings Arms.



## Tour of St Peter's

Ben Whitney is offering members a tour of St. Peter's. These are the details:

Tuesday 11th June 12.00. Free historical tour (cash donations welcome) of St Peter's Church in the city centre. No need to book, just turn up and meet in the church. The coffee shop in nearby St Peter's House (down the steps by the war memorial) is open from 10.00 – 2.00 for drinks, snacks and light lunches.



## Forthcoming Events and Speakers

### Meetings

Tue June 18th	<b>Summer Garden Party</b> at Kingswood Trust.
Tue Jul 23rd	Roger Brown: <b>The Story of Tin Pan Alley</b> – <i>Entertainment like it used to be! Comedy, magic tricks, daft songs, nostalgia and some hilarious routines.</i>
August	<b>No Meeting</b>
Tue Sep 24th	John Homer: <b>Black Country Stories</b>
Tue Oct 22nd	Dave Hilton: <b>Understanding your dog, and the best way of training them</b>
Tue Nov 26th	Peter Morris: <b>The Man with four Organs</b> <i>Peter tells us how he rebuilt and performs on the most important instruments in the Black Country.</i>
Tue Dec 17th	<b>Xmas Party</b>
Tue Jan 28th 2025	TBA
Tue Feb 25th 2025	Dr. Shailendra Bhandare: The numismatic curator of the Ashmolean Museum gives us a talk on "A Story of Coins"
Tue Mar 25th 2025	<b>AGM</b>

### Jazz

Tue Jun 4th	Live at the Village Vanguard
Tue Jul 2nd	The Soprano Saxophone in Jazz
Tue Sep 3rd	Women Pianists
Tue Dec 3rd	2024 Retrospective

### Reading 1

Thu Jun 6th	<b>The Island of Missing Trees</b> by Elif Shafak
Thu Jul 4th	<b>The Promise</b> by Damon Galgut

### Reading 3

Wed Jun 12th	<b>Old Rage</b> Sheila Hancock
Wed Jul 24th	<b>Walk the Blue Fields</b> Claire Keegan
Wed Sep 4th	<b>On Chapel Sands</b> Laura Cummings
Wed Oct 16th	<b>The Blue Afternoon</b> William Boyd
Wed Nov 27th	<b>When God Was a Rabbit</b> Sarah Winman

### Walking

Mon Jun 10th	<b>Ryton and Hinnington.</b> Four miles. Christine and Graham Rogers.
Fri Jun 28th	<b>Marquis Drive and Castle Ring</b> 5.5 miles. Pub. Dave Tordoff.

## Interest Groups at Wolverhampton u3a

If you are interested in joining a group, please contact the Group Coordinator – see Wolverhampton u3a website:  
[www.u3asites.org.uk/wolverhampton/home](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/wolverhampton/home)

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|--------------------|--|
| • Foraging         | • Jazz Appreciation  |
| • Reading          | • Contemporary History                                       |
| • Play Reading     | • Computing  |
| • Poetry           | • Self-Study Resources                                       |
| • Shakespeare      | • Gardening  |
| • Creative Writing | • Craft  |
| • French           | • Board Games  |
| • German           |  |
| • Italian          |  |
| • Spanish          |  |
| • Latin            | Want to start a new Group?                                   |
| • Walking          | Contact Mo Johnson, Coordinator of Groups:                   |
| • Table Tennis     | <a href="mailto:mojohnson00@aol.com">mojohnson00@aol.com</a> |
| • Ukulele          |  |
| • Classical Music  |  |

## Your Committee

Mo Johnson	Vice Chair/Groups Coordinator
Mike Clack	Magazine Co-Editor and Vice Chair
Mary Warwicker	Secretary
Yvonne Rickard	Treasurer
Julia Hood	Membership Secretary
John Sheard	Beacon Coordinator
Josie Turner	Speakers Secretary
Margaret Taylor	Committee Member
Carol Chapple	Magazine Co-Editor

**Kingswood Trust**  
Discover nature. Learn outdoors.

## Summer Garden Party

Tuesday 18th June, 2.30pm until 5pm

Join us for fun in the beautiful grounds of The Kingswood Trust, Holyhead Road, Wolverhampton WV7 3AP. Bring your own picnic and drinks. There is indoor and outdoor space available.

Games galore – Croquet, Soft Archery, Kube, Jenga. You can visit the animals and explore the Mile Walk.

Entertainment is provided by Josie & Julie. Entry is free for u3a members.