



August 2026 Newsletter

TODAY'S MEETING

6th August - John Butterworth "How the stagecoach transformed our area"

DATES FOR YOUR 2025 DIARY (All talks start at 2pm)

3rd Sep - Henry Chance "The Chance Family and their Smethwick Glassworks"
8th Oct - Jess Nash "Tales from the driver's seat – a woman bus driver in the 1970s"

** Please check the website "Events" for a list of speakers for 2026*

FROM THE CHAIR

David Haggarty

The start of the school holidays often bring a change in the weather, usually for the worse but, some might say unfortunately, the sun continues to beat down on us. Although we had a sprinkling recently and whilst not wishing to spoil anyone's holiday, some rain would be welcome by many of us!!! Last month we announced that we are having to change the way that the five issues of the "Third Age Matters" magazine sent out by the Third Age Trust are financed. If members want to continue to receive the magazine the cost will be added to their annual membership fee (due from September), making it £25. This increase only applies to the member who is registered with us so, if you are a couple, only one of you pays the extra. If you have not already let us know that you want to cancel, you need to do so by the 7th August by emailing either Mike Genge, Membership Secretary at mikegenge@sky.com or myself at d-haggarty@outlook.com.

We have also stopped printing paper copies of the newsletter but at the moment, every member with a registered email address does receive a copy. We hope that members without email will have a friend to keep them informed.

Some of our committee have been members for many years and we need other members of our u3a to step forward to continue helping our u3a to function and, hopefully, improve. Some have indicated they may step down this year at the AGM in October so we need volunteers to join us if H of E is to survive. We only meet around four times a year, so if you feel you are able to contribute to our u3a, you would be warmly welcomed. Please email me, d-haggarty@outlook.com. This September will be the 25th anniversary of the inaugural AGM of Heart of England u3a in 2001 and at the monthly meeting we will be displaying some of our interesting archive material. We hope that some of our long standing members will regale us with a few anecdotes of those early days. We will also have cake!

Just confirming our coffee morning at the Pen & Parchment at 10.30am
Wednesday 19th August. All welcome.

David

August named after Augustus Caesar



Loaf Mass Day 1 August



Commonwealth Games in Scotland



JULY SPEAKER REPORT

Tim Folan

Keith is a key member of the Dudley Caving Club and entertained members with his award winning videos and photographs. His YouTube channel has over 88,000 followers and he's even briefly appeared on the One Show. Keith explained how he got into the hobby and what is involved. Cave rescues are rare but can be dramatic. Keith related the story of a 2002 incident where colleague who fell 30 feet when the floor collapsed in a large Welsh cave system, breaking a leg and losing teeth. The rescuers were unable to get the stretcher back the way they had come so had to go deeper into the system to another exit point. The whole process took 54 hours and involved 300 people. Keith also told us about his own 2015 accident where he broke his pelvis. We saw many pictures of beautiful limestone formations and Keith explained how they are formed. Snotites are as revolting as they sound. On a lighter note Keith showed us how a fat man in a red corset can squeeze through an unfeasibly narrow underground hole.

ALL THAT SWINGS AND JAZZ

Sue Tringham

Another jazz session in the heat! John stepped up to the mark and presented another enjoyable programme backed with his amazing knowledge of the jazz scene. A big thank you goes to our members brave enough (and talented) who put together programmes for our enjoyment. Not sure yet who will be presenting the programme at our next meeting on Thursday 27 August at 2pm at the Methodist Church but rest assured, someone will!! Look forward to meeting up with everyone.

BOOK CLUB MONDAY

Jackie Biggs

We read How to stay sane in an age of division by Elif Shafak, a political theorist by academic training but better known as a novelist. Using her favourite fictional themes - the complexities of story telling, multiple identities and women's voices - she dissects the anger and anxieties of contemporary society, focussing on the divisions of modern political and cultural debate and the refusal of all sides to listen to opposing points of view. Social media, with its use of algorithms, strengthens the echo chambers which encourage the growth of "cancel culture" instead of opening our minds to diverse opinions. We found it an interesting, if intellectually challenging read.

BOOK CLUB – WEDNESDAY

Gillian Caveney

Our book this month was Ruth Ozeki's The Book of Form & Emptiness, which divided the group. Two of us didn't finish it but others found it a more interesting read with its variety of strange characters and funny elements. It was described as a hymn to libraries and the power of books and those who did finish it felt it also reflected the author's Zen Buddhist background.

CARD MAKING CLUB

Angela Ramsey & Jane Edkins

We welcome new-comers to join us for a relaxing few hours, trying new techniques and producing cards for ourselves and for sale at monthly meetings. We spent the July workshop making cards for the sale table particularly for teenage boys. All proceeds are donated to local charities. Base cards of different sizes and colours, A4 white and coloured card, backing papers and accessories are all provided. The next donation of £100 will be sent to the local Air Ambulance Service. Next workshop: Friday, 28th August, 12.30 to 4.00, in the new room. For more information, please chat with Angela and Jane at the card sale table or email Robyn, at redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CHINWAGS

Glynis Holloway

We are a small friendly group which meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 12.30pm in Bistrot Pierre to enjoy a nice lunch and good conversation. Our next lunch will take place on Monday 24th August. Contact, glynisa.holloway@gmail.com.

CLASSICAL MUSIC GROUP

Edwin Lilly & Graeme Ramsey

The July meeting of the Classical Music Group was attended by eleven u3a members, who were treated to a programme consisting entirely of music by the great English composer Sir Edward Elgar. The programme opened with his overture entitled "Cockaigne (In London Town)" and continued with a complete performance of the elegiac Cello Concerto, performed by the legendary cello player Jacqueline Du Pré. After a break for tea and biscuits, we heard "Introduction and Allegro for Strings", the Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1 to 5, and, finally, "Nimrod" from "Enigma Variations". The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 13 August, in the lounge at the Methodist Church Hall, starting at 2:00 pm. If you fancy spending a couple of hours being entertained by beautiful, and at times, exciting music, do come along and partake of the experience. You would be most welcome.

CHOIR

David Haggarty

Our September concert will be held at the Stratford Methodist Centre on Friday 28th at 2.30pm. Tickets are £6 and include light refreshments after the concert. They will be available at the September monthly meeting, from choir members or at the door. Besides some new pieces by our Music Director Stewart Wallace, we will also be performing a medley of songs by Gershwin and other old favourites. We meet on Friday mornings, 10.30 to 12.00 in the Stratford Methodist Centre and new members are always welcome. Contact David at d-haggarty@outlook.com

COMPUTER GROUP - offering I-T assistance for our members.

Robyn Nicoll

An organiser is required for the Computer Group. Please let Barbara Whitting, our Interest Groups Coordinator, know if you would be willing to arrange short courses for members. Thank you Robyn, redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CREATIVE CRAFT GROUP

Robyn Nicoll

The Crafters meet monthly on the 2nd Monday afternoon at the Methodist Church, 2.00pm to 4.00pm in the reception area. The Crafters would welcome new members to join us for a relaxing afternoon each month. We bring our own projects to work on and from time to time have a joint project to which interested members are invited. We plan to hold an Origami afternoon before Christmas to create a tree decoration which could also be used to make a simple card. Next Get-together: Monday, 10th August. For more information about the Group please contact Robyn. redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Sylvia Bevan

Please note there will be no August meeting. We will meet again on Wednesday 9th September at 2pm. Details later. Many thanks and best wishes, Sylvia at john.bevan573@btinternet.com

DINAHs

Sylvia Crooks

We next meet on Tuesday 4th August at the Pen & Parchment for lunch. Look forward to seeing everyone for a chat about what they have been doing in the last month.

FINE DINING

Hazel Miller

Our latest dining experience was at Sorrento in Ely Street, an old favourite of the group. We enjoyed pre dinner drinks in the pretty shaded courtyard listening to Italian music and enjoying the warm weather. It was good to see that the restaurant was busy especially after suffering difficult times a year ago. The food was as good as ever with portions that tended to be on the large side. The mussels starter was £12 and could easily have been shared by 2 people. Service was a little slow at times but we had the whole evening to enjoy ourselves. Ingrid is looking for more diners to join our group so please get in touch.

GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUP

Suzy Genge

We had no garden appreciation meeting in August. The next one is on Tuesday August 11th at Hidcote gardens. Meeting at 10am in the car park.

GRUMPY OLD MEN

Keith Riste

The Grumpy Old Men Group urgently requires some additional members. As stated in the regular Newsletters, we meet on the third Wednesday of each month at the Stratford Sports Club, where we have lunch and engage in a lively and usually humorous discussion on a chosen subject or on a variety of matters of general interest. We are not really Grumpy at all!

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact the Secretary Keith Riste by email at keithriste@yahoo.com

HISTORY GROUP

Robert Tringham

The Group met on 16th December to consider the origins of languages. We discussed the findings that all languages devolved from the first African Tongue which was the cradle of all modern languages. We saw photographs of ancient carvings especially the Java Shells carved by Homo Erectus 500,000 years ago. We also looked at "Lucy" who walked upright and is likely a Homo Erectus but lived 3.2 million years ago. We considered whether a dog barks in different languages, or birds sing in their own local language. Part 2 of origins of languages will continue in similar theme in September. Please check the website for further information or contact me at hofe.u3a.com

KEEP FIT

Jan Jones

Our small friendly group consists of both males and females of mixed abilities. The class is designed for our age group, with standing and sitting exercises. We meet every Thursday morning from 10 -11am in the Parish Centre at St Andrews Church in Shotton. We have an excellent tutor and really enjoy the exercises and a chat.

At present there is a waiting list, but please contact me if you are interested in finding out more about the group. Contact janljones@aol.com

SCRABBLE, DOMINOES AND CARD GAMES

Sue Tringham

We normally meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month from 2pm until 4pm in the Foyer of the Methodist Church. It's a light hearted afternoon of fun, laughter and conversation! In August we will meet on the 3rd and 17th. Tea, coffee and biscuits at 3. All welcome!!

SNATTS

Mike Genge

July and August there will be no meetings due to holidays.

Our next session will be on 11 September when Colin Stuart will talk to us about drones. 14.00 at the New Room. For more information please contact Mike at email mikegenge@sky.com

THEATRE GROUP

Glynis McDougall

The August visit is already booked for 20/08/26. The September visit is Home I am Darling at the Bearpit on Thursday 24/09/26 I will put the List out at the meeting. Contact Glynis at glynismcdougall1@gmail.com

**** NEWSLETTER EDITOR REQUIRED ****

After four years Robert is retiring from the role of Newsletter editor, and is seeking a member to take over from him. The role involves receiving updates from team leaders, pasting photos and pictures of group or local events, adding interesting features to make the newsletter an easy and pleasant read. Full training will be given, and Robert will be available to assist with any technical help needed until the new editor is fully confident with the role. Robert will continue to upload the Newsletters to the Website each month and update it as needed. Anyone interested in knowing more, please contact David Haggarty at d-haggarty@outlook.com or Robert at hofe.u3a@gmail.com

Wuthering Heights Day in Stratford Upon Avon



Nice day for a stroll Near the river



TEA /COFFEE ROTA 2026

Refreshment Co-ordinator

Gillian Edwards, email: gillian_edwards50@hotmail.co.uk

Group Leaders please check the Newsletter for your rota.

Below is a list of the interest Groups that will be responsible for serving tea and coffee each month.

Aug	-	Walking Group	-	Sep	-	Wed. Book Club	-	Oct	-	History
Nov	-	SNATTS	-	Dec.	-	Keep fit	-	Jan	-	Theatre Group

Heart of England u3a Interest Groups & Timetable

GROUP	GROUP LEADER	TELEPHONE	USUAL MEETING DAY(MONTHLY)
All that Swings & Jazz	Sue Tringham	01789–204 295	4 th Thursday 2.00–4.00pm
Book Club – Monday	Jackie Biggs	01789–550 953	3 rd Monday 1.30–3.30pm
Book Club – Wednesday	Gillian Caveney	01789--294328	3 rd Wednesday 2.30pm
Bridge	Keith Rocket David Whitfield	01926–863 143 01564–771 550	Every Tuesday 2.00pm
Card Making	Jane Edkins Angela Ramsey	01789–294 064 01789–205 161	4 th Friday 12.30–4.00pm
Chinwags Lunch	Glynis Holloway	07778-771 585	4 th Monday 12.30 pm
Choir	Viv Haggarty	01564–794 583	Every Friday 10.30–12.00 noon
Classical Music	Edwin Lilly	01789–204 472	2 nd Thursday 2.00–4.00pm
Creative Crafts	Robyn Nicoll	01789–417 935	2 nd Monday 2.00–4.00pm
Computers	Robyn Nicoll	01789–417 935	See Newsletter for Dates
Current Affairs Discussion Group	Sylvia Bevan	01789–204 557	2 nd Wednesday 2.00–4.00pm
Dinah’s Lunch	Sylvia Crooks	07969–905 649	1 st Tuesday 12.00pm
Tuesday Dining	Pending	Pending	2 nd Tuesday 7.00pm
Fine Dining for Singles	Ingrid Rooney	07814–349 808	4 th Wednesday
Games-- Scrabble, Dominoes, Cards	Sue Tringham	01789–204 295	1 st & 3 rd Mondays 2.00-4.00pm
Garden Appreciation Group	Suzy Genge	01789–261 447	2 nd Tuesday
Grumpy Old Men	Keith Riste	Pending	3 rd Wednesday for lunch
History Group	Robert Tringham	07927–296 957	3 rd Thursday 2.00–4.00pm
Keep Fit	Jan Jones	01789 295 383	Every Thursday 10.00--11.00pm
Play Reading	Pending		
Science, Nature & All Things Technical – (SNATTS)	Mike Genge	01789–261 447	2 nd Friday 2.00–4.00pm
Theatre Visits & Outings	Glynis McDougall	01789–296 152	Check Website/Newsletter for dates
Walking	Lin Randall	07963–611 586	2 nd Wednesday 10.00am