

Leicester Newsletter

May 2021

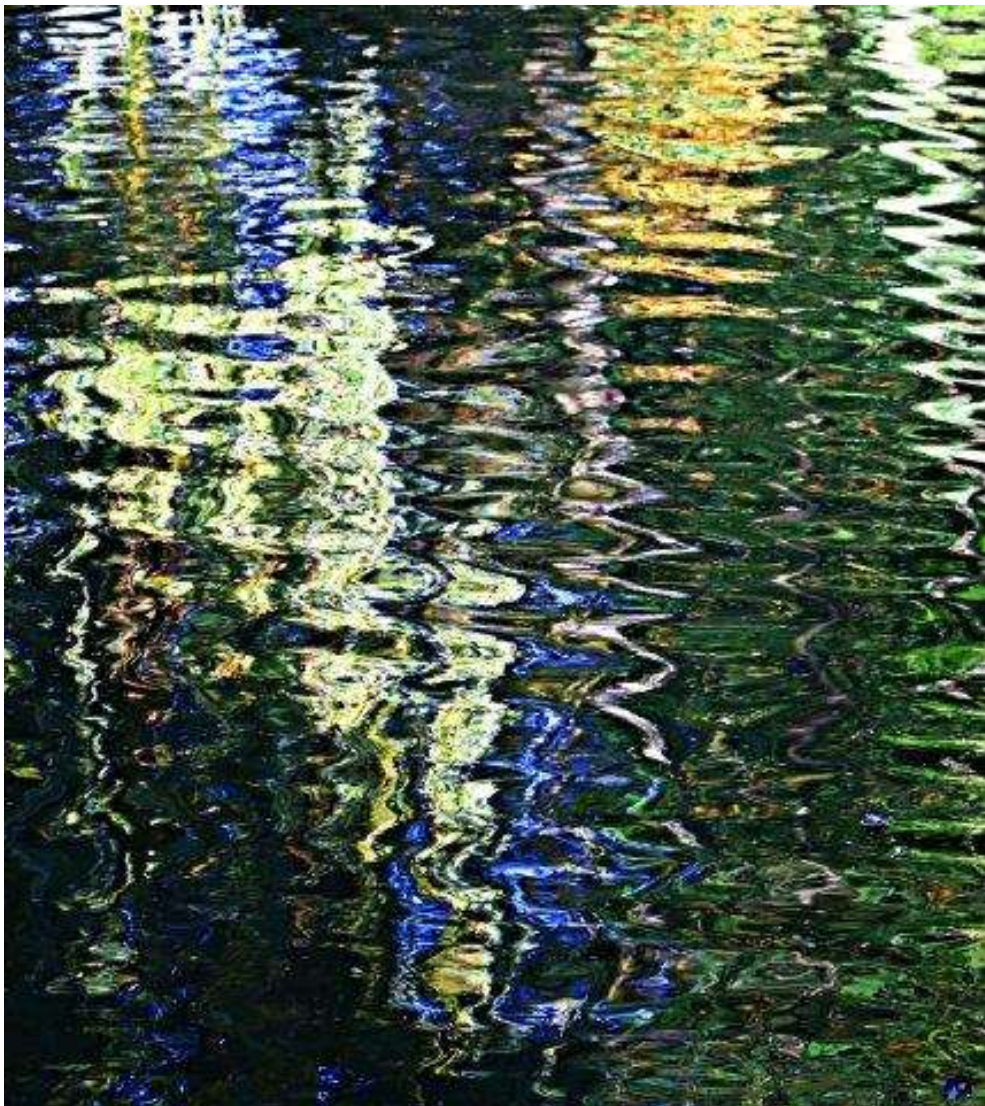


Photo 'Ripples' by Richard Taylor (Convenor Digital Photography Group)

u3asites.org.uk/leicester

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Membership Information : The membership now stands at 364. This includes two late renewals and two new members. If you know of anyone who has not renewed and wishes to do so, please ask them to contact the Membership Secretary urgently. Please remind them that they cannot attend any groups until they do so. Badges will be produced for distribution when we are able to meet again.

We are very sorry to report the death of Tony Modinos on 11th April. Our condolences go to his wife Lesley and to his family.

Margaret Potter (Membership Secretary)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

After a miserable year things are really looking up. Most of us will have had a least the first dose of vaccine by now and many of us have had both. There is talk of vaccine passports. Holidays abroad are becoming a realistic prospect instead of a wild dream. As the terms of our house arrest have begun to ease, the sun has come out and delivered a glorious spring with trees and plants coming into bloom all round us. Amidst all of that the April general meeting on 13 April seemed to be a significant milestone for the u3a. Of course it is not the same as a real life meeting in Christchurch but our first Zoom talk was an opportunity to take part in a live u3a event. Despite the obvious limitations imposed by the technology, it worked well and we heard a really interesting and fascinating talk by Mark Temple on the life of Agatha Christie, about whom I knew virtually nothing beforehand. I must be one of the few people left who have never been to see *The Mousetrap* and don't know who did it. Like many others I have been trying to make best use of the lockdown year by going for long walks and learning languages. However, one of the joys of the u3a is the way that it brings the opportunity to learn about things that you might not have actively sought out for yourself. Following on from Mark's talk, I have been searching the library website to find one of Agatha's books. It could be something to read during my next foreign holiday, if that should ever happen. Meanwhile, let us hope that things continue to improve and that life will eventually return to normal.



MAY MEETING – Tuesday 11th May

IMPORTANT – ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AGM

Tuesday 11th May via Zoom. Joining instructions for the Zoom virtual meeting were sent out on Tuesday **30th March and again on 4th May**. If you cannot find them please contact Margaret urgently.

The virtual meeting will start at 2:30. The link will be open from 2:15 to allow members to join in time for the start. Please give your name AND surname when you join as we need to ensure only members are counted for our quorum. If there are two of you sharing a screen please put or announce both names on joining.

PROTOCOL: If you wish to ask a question please use the 'chat' facility which will be explained at the start of the meeting. ALL participants will be muted so we will not be able to hear you if you speak.

JUNE MEETING – Tuesday 8th June

Richard Adams – A Pictorial Journey. Richard says, "I was born in Norwich in 1943 and went to school there before completing my studies in Town Planning and Landscape Design in Nottingham. I then worked in local government with several authorities in the East Midlands area and worked as a chief officer for Rutland for 23 years before retiring, after which I took on the job of Town Clerk to Oakham for seven years. Photography has been a lifelong passion and for many years I have spoken to a variety of groups using it to illustrate my interest in subjects ranging from astronomy to gardening and from travel to life in Rutland! I have always been intrigued by the way in which music and images can trigger off memories. The last 15 months have been a time when we have been restricted in so many ways and we have had a lot of time to think of times past and to appreciate in hindsight some of the things we have been able to do and the places visited. I would like to use this opportunity to share with your members some of my own memories and hope that it will give them an entertaining and relaxing break from some of the stresses of the past year.

NEWS FROM THE THIRD AGE TRUST

Some u3a members have expressed an interest in having a discount scheme where you can save money, so we've partnered with member benefits specialists, Parliament Hill Ltd, to provide members with our own discount scheme called u3a Click and Save. Members will receive cashback when shopping with brands such as Sainsbury's, M&S and Costa Coffee.

Once the scheme is ready to launch, the third Age Trust will be in touch with further information.

Two new learning opportunities

Grow Your Own invites green-fingered members to share images and gardening tips for growing delicious fruits and vegetables.

Upcycle Your Wardrobe is a challenge for the resourceful and the stylish alike - share with us how you have turned tired old fabrics into fresh new garments.

Creative Writing Competition

The Creative Writing Competition is back - given the popularity and success of last year's competition, we are encouraging members to get writing again. The theme for 2021 is 'Unexpected'. Please make sure to read the competition rules fully, including deadlines and information about the judging process, before submitting your entry online. You can also read last year's Winning Entries for inspiration.

[Find out more on our website.](#)

News from the Chair of the Third Age Trust, Ian McCannah

Later this month the notices for the Trust's 2021 AGM will be received by u3a committees. There will be Board elections for the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer and Trustees for East Midlands, London, and Wales. For further information on these vacancies contact Sam Mauger, Company Secretary at

sam.mauger@u3a.org.uk, or me on ian.mccannah@u3a.org.uk

With lockdown hopefully fully lifted, members will have the opportunity on 26 August to attend the AGM in Kenilworth or, as last year, virtually.

This month also sees the launch of range of competitively priced u3a branded products - see them on www.u3abrand.org.uk. You will need a log in.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL TRUSTEE Jean Hogg

Regional Conference

You will not be surprised that our Conference has had to postponed yet again. Clearly we are not able to gather together on May 5th, as we had hoped. The new date is **September 29th**.

Role of Regional Trustee

I was elected in 2018 for a term of 3 years, which will come to an end at the AGM on August 26th. Information and nomination forms will be sent out soon. If you would like to discuss the role with me, please get in touch.

U3a Day

U3a Day will be held on Wednesday June 2nd, in whatever way is possible. I know that some of you have attended the workshops that have been provided, where many inspiring ideas were shared.

Member Link

My support team and I have begun to contact u3as. I have to say that it is a very enjoyable experience to speak to enthusiastic Chairs about what they are doing. So many of you have been working incredibly hard through this difficult time to keep your members involved and engaged.

Ideas are being shared at Network meetings and support offered for any u3a committees that are struggling. I do not think that life will ever return to being exactly how it was before Covid 19 hit us a year



ago. We need to consider how our organisation could adapt, so as to encourage younger members and to manage groups and meetings in inclusive ways.

Slow Ways project

The aim of this is to use footpaths to create routes between communities. Last year thousands of routes were recorded and it is hoped that they will be tested out as soon as possible. The Third Age Trust is in discussions about working with the project but, in the meantime there is nothing to stop anyone signing up to the project to be kept informed and to get involved. Just go to their website – <https://slowways.uk/> or see the information in the recent national newsletter about forthcoming webinars.

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK U3a Day Network Quiz

To help with the u3a Day celebrations/activities the Network have combined with the Northamptonshire u3a Network to offer members another in the series of Network Quizzes by Zoom. The big difference this time is that it's open to prospective members (as well as existing members) so they can get a feel of what u3a is all about. So that you can encourage those you meet on u3a day to take part, they can register for the quiz by email right up until 5:00pm on u3a Day, June 2nd.

Registration for the Quiz opened at 9:00am on 1st April 2021 (and that's no joke!). There is also a YouTube video available on our new Network YouTube Channel. The link is:

https://youtu.be/7H_n67A9UEc

To register: Send an email with your name and the name of your u3a to:

coordinator@landru3a.org.uk as soon as possible. If places are still available, you'll receive an email confirming your place in the quiz

u3a Network Zoom Quiz
WEDNESDAY 2ND JUNE 2021
STARTING AT 7:30PM FOR ABOUT 1½ HOURS

Open to all u3a Members (& prospective members) in LEICESTERSHIRE, RUTLAND & NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

BOOK EARLY AS PLACES ARE LIMITED

To register:
Send an email with your name and the name of your u3a (actual or intended) to:
coordinator@landru3a.org.uk
as soon as possible

If places are still available, you'll receive an email confirming your place in the quiz (normally within 24 hours)
Joining instructions will be emailed to you a few days before the Quiz

Part of the national u3aday celebrations

This will be a **FUN QUIZ**
Not to be taken too seriously
Specially created for Singles and Couples
to take part by Zoom

Organised for your enjoyment by:
u3a Leicestershire & Rutland Network of u3as & **u3a** Northamptonshire Network of u3as

(normally within 24 hours) Joining instructions will be emailed to you a few days before the Quiz.

Exploring World Faiths

West Midlands Region u3a has arranged a series of talks about a wide range of different faiths, which many members may be interested in. They are open to all u3a members throughout the UK so early booking is essential. Unfortunately, the individual links on their website don't work and the heading on the link section only seems to book tickets for the Thursday event. The easy way is to copy the individual link to the talk you want to book and paste it into your browser. That will take you directly to the right Eventbrite page.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR

There are currently 76 groups, and 76 Convenors. There are 26 groups active using Zoom, Flickr and WhatsApp. Of these 20 use Zoom.

Six of the nine outdoor groups will begin meeting, albeit under the restrictions as at present. Petanque Boules, Summer Croquet and Natural History continue to meet outdoors. SWANNS is discussing when to meet. Architecture is planning to meet for a walk around town in sixes.



Re Zoom: Guitar has restarted, having overcome the Zoom delay and interference problems Zoom has for Music groups. Chess is restarting on 7th June.

Also ... u3a DAY Wednesday 2nd June 2021

The u3a Day advertising our groups and activities will take place on and around Wednesday 2nd June this year as a "virtual" event, hopefully with publicity and mentions in the local press. The results will be available via our website as links to YouTube nearer the

date. If your group has any material to showcase as an example of the interests and social activities of Leicester u3a, I would love to hear from you on groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk **by Friday 30th April.**

Take care,

Neil Taylor Groups Coordinator

MEET THE CONVENOR – Paul McCann (Drawing & Sketching Group)

Q: Are you originally from Leicester?

A: No, I come from Worcester Park in Surrey.

Q: What brought you to Leicester?

A: In 1987 the company I worked for in Slough was going to merge with a company on the Troon Estate off Melton Road and I moved to Asfordby. In the end the merger fell through.

Q: What did you do before you retired?

A: When I moved here I became warehouse manager for a wallpaper company in Sileby. Then I got a job as an administrator in Highways and Transportation at County Hall and stayed for 26 years. I taught myself Microsoft Access and developed an accounting and budgeting system.

Q: What made you join Leicester u3a, & when?

A: I retired in June 2016 and a friend mentioned the u3a, so I investigated and joined in September 2016

Q: What groups did you join to start with?

A: I joined German Intermediate Conversation first. Then Charles Norman moved to Wales (rather an extreme way to escape being convenor I thought) and I became convenor. I am also a member of Susan Martin-Butt's Architecture group and Mary Neilson's Art Appreciation group. I am now just convenor for the Drawing & Sketching group.

Q: What's your TV guilty pleasure?

A: Films. I collect DVDs and currently, during lockdown, have been binge watching subtitled Korean films on Netflix.

Q: What was the last book you read?

A: I haven't been without a book since I joined a library aged 4. I find it difficult to absorb non-fiction but I have three non-fiction books on the go at the moment: "Leicester Events, People & Places in 20th Century" by Jess and Robin Jenkins, "Can I Eat That? A nutritional guide through the dietary maze for type-2 diabetics" by Jenefer Roberts and "The Diary of Samuel Pepys V. 1664" (one of 13 volumes bought in the 80s – indicative of my problem).

My grateful thanks to Paul for his time.

I would like to refresh this article. Can members suggest alternative questions we might ask? If so just email me please. (Editor)

REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

History 2 Group *(Mike Bates, Convenor History2 Group)*

Norman Leicester onwards - Part 2

We left Part 1 with William the Conqueror having 'laid to waste' Leicester.

Hugh de Grantmesmil, a follower of William the Conqueror and who fought at the Battle of Hastings, was granted most of Leicester; he was given 100 manors for his services, of which 65 were in Leicestershire. He became Governor or Lieutenant and Sheriff of Leicestershire.

Hugh repaired the Saxon Castle and Church, but built a stone Norman Castle. Hugh, with the garrison at the Castle, ruled as a despot, imposed severe restraints and foreign customs including trial by 'Ordeal of Battle' instead of by Jury, and there were heavy taxes on fetching wood from the forest. The citizens of Leicester were having it bad! – conquered!

William the Conqueror dies and all three sons contest for the Crown, with Civil War. Hugh supported the claims of Robert of

Normandy against William Rufus, who was at the time the King.
Bad move!

Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Meulan, is ordered by the King to destroy the castle, church and most of Leicester. Hugh made amends, but in 1094 became a monk and died.

Hugh is succeeded by his son Ivo, who also displeases the King – Hugh is ordered to pay a heavy fine, but could not pay. Robert de Beaumont, friend and adviser to King Henry I, lends him the money for a Pilgrimage to Jerusalem to please the King, but Robert takes over his lands for 15 years as security. Ivo and his wife die on the journey in 1101 or 1102. Robert then has all Ivo's lands and continues as Governor of Leicester. What an outcome!

Parts 3 and 4 will appear in future editions. (Editor)

Buds at Felbrigg Hall

Tony Locke (member)

A few weeks ago I took advantage of the easing of lockdown to go to Norfolk. I usually visit a National Trust House, but restrictions are still in place. This meant I could spend more time in Felbrigg Hall garden.

Normally, I would not be visiting this early in the season, so there wasn't the usual magnificent display of plants in flower. This meant that I had to look closer at emerging buds. I use a mobile phone for most of my photography these days, so it can be difficult to focus on a particular part of a plant, especially if there is a strong, northerly breeze straight from Siberia blowing. It isn't always easy to see what is going to be captured in the shot. The first picture I took looked like curled caterpillars. When I searched the plant with



my eyes, I couldn't find the buds or caterpillars.



The wind and shaking hands presented just chance opportunities. There emerged beautiful growth that I could not see without the snapshot on so many of the plants.

One area of the garden had the notice "The chickens are observing social distancing". Nationally, there is an outbreak of avian flu, so the chickens and bantams were not allowed, as they usually are, the freedom to wander in the main garden. Even the doves were keeping to this separate area.



Architecture and Design Group *(Jill Reville)*

Members of the Architecture and Design group enjoyed an escape from lockdown, visiting places from Syria to Samarkand, and India to Uzbekistan, under the guidance of Ralph Dransfield RIBA, who delivered a most interesting and informative talk via Zoom, on the subject of Islamic Architecture. The speaker's enthusiasm for the subject, both professional and personal, was evident.

After explaining the basic tenets of Islamic Architecture and its distinctive use of colour and form, particularly decoration, Mr Dransfield explored types of buildings. In addition to mosques, these included domes, arches, murqarnas, madrasas and mausoleums – even city fortifications. We saw the use of differing materials, from mud brick to marble.

The talk was generously illustrated with photographs which graphically showed the colourful decoration. This ranged from intricate geometrical patterns to calligraphy, and more naturalistic representations of plants and birds. The human form is never depicted.

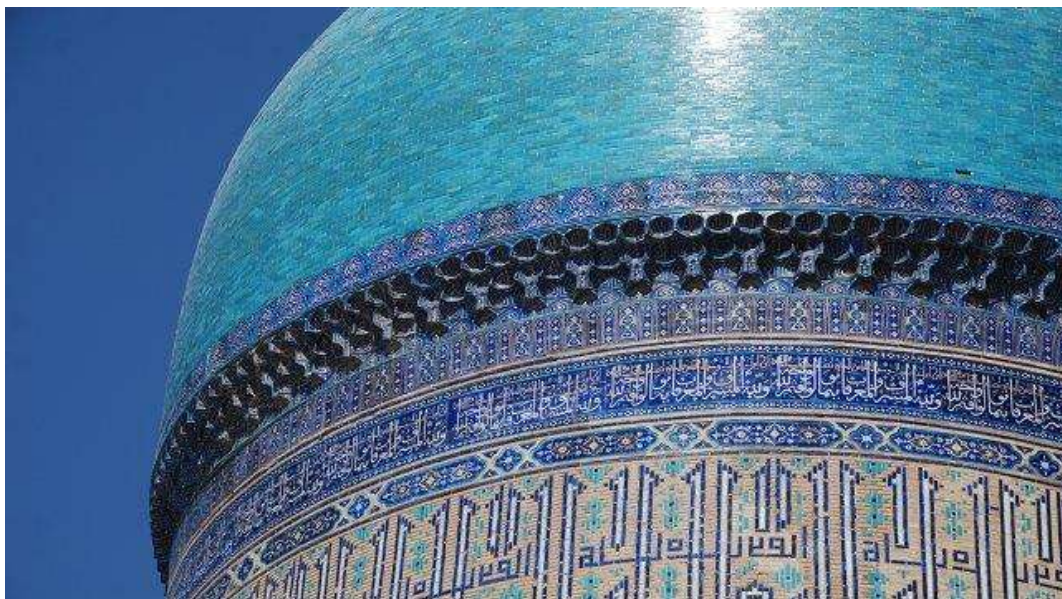
The session ended with discussion about the Moorish influence on European architecture, particularly in Spain, and touched on

mosque buildings in Leicester, bringing our excursion to more exotic parts of the world back home.



The Kalyan mosque in Bukhara, Uzbek

kistan – the largest mosque in Central Asia with the decorative brick minaret (and one of the domes of the adjacent Madrasa in the background). Design developed during the occupation by Tamerlane the Great



Detail of one of the domes of the Kalyan Madrasa, Uzbekistan showing Koranic script around the base, constructed in brick and decorative glazed tile with muqarna sculptural work.



The entrance portal to the Gur Emir mausoleum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan showing an area of fine muqarnas infill to the soffit and surrounded by decorative brick and tile. The interior of this mausoleum contains the remains of Tamerlane and his grandson, the astronomer Ulug Beg, one of the most richly decorated interiors and a masterpiece of Islamic art



Detail of Moorish stucco and ceramic tile decoration from Marrakesh, Morocco, continuing the tradition of decorative stucco and tiling brought over to Morocco by the Moorish artists following their expulsion from Spain in 1492 by Ferdinand and Isabella.

Digital Photography

The group have now reached the letters G and H in their photographic verb quest.



Gurn and Germinate



Photos by Irene Ault (member of the group)

PUZZLE CORNER

A (difficult) Sudoku

(created by Cliff Ault – member of Cryptic Crossword 2 Group)

8		9						3
1		5	3					
				1			7	6
	5							
			6					7
4	8		5			6		2
	3			4				
				7				
2				6		8	3	

Sudoku Solution

8	6	9	7	5	4	1	2	3
1	7	5	3	2	6	9	4	8
3	4	2	9	1	8	5	7	6
7	5	6	4	9	2	3	8	1
9	2	3	6	8	1	4	5	7
4	8	1	5	3	7	6	9	2
6	3	8	2	4	9	7	1	5
5	1	4	8	7	3	2	6	9
2	9	7	1	6	5	8	3	4

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Delivery

The newsletter is currently not being printed, and is only being delivered to members by email as a pdf file.

Contributions

Firstly, a big thank you to all those who responded to my previous plea for articles. A bumper bundle resulting in a very interesting and diverse selection but I need more please. Keep them coming!

The deadline for items to be included in the June newsletter is Tuesday 25th May 2021. Contributions (from convenors and members) should be sent to the editor at: newsletter@leicester_u3a.org.uk

If you want to submit your entry as hard copy, please contact the Editor, or the Membership Secretary for the postal address.

We are always pleased to receive brief reports from groups about their recent activities and extend our thanks to all the authors who have done so. Please keep them coming. The occasional picture would be welcome as well. **Please keep all articles to a maximum of about 350 words.** If you have a story or a report that is considerably longer than that, we can edit it into two (or more if it's very long!) shorter articles to be published in subsequent newsletters if we are short of space.

When the current restrictions are lifted Leicester u3a will resume its meetings on the second Tuesday of each month (except August and December) at Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, LE2 3AH, and many special interest groups will then continue to meet regularly in members' homes and elsewhere.