
Leicester Newsletter

September 2025



Icelandic flora - *Photos by Margaret Potter*

Find our new website at <https://leicester.u3asite.uk>
If this link does not open, just copy, and paste it into your browser.

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For news from the Third Age Trust, you can sign up for your own Trust newsletter at:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter#signup>

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR – BOB COLLINS

Hi everybody. I am your new Chair following Neil Taylor's resignation due to illness. It is not an ideal situation but I am sure that the committee will continue to run Leicester u3a as before. Thanks to everybody who attended the Summer Garden Party. It was great to see so many people enjoying themselves with smiles

and chats. Besides plenty of food, there were Angie Barnes' Mocktails.

Perhaps rather early or perhaps not to those who have already bought their presents I must mention the "C" word and invite everyone to our Leicester u3a Christmas Lunch on Friday 28th November at Taste Leicester College. Last year was virtually a full house (maximum 100) so book early when the Christmas Lunch is formally announced.

Also do not forget the Christmas Party at 2.00pm on Tuesday 9th December at Christchurch. Best wishes Bob

COMMITTEE REPORT

The following is an abridged version of an email sent to all members last month and below that is a reply received from member Tony Locke.

As you are aware there have been changes to the committee summarised as follows:

1. **Chair** - Neil Taylor has resigned. Bob Collins has agreed to be interim Chair only until the AGM.
2. **Vice Chair** – Angie Barnes has resigned as Vice Chair without replacement.
3. **Secretary**- Karen Closs has resigned as Secretary. Sue Took has agreed to be interim Secretary only until the AGM.
4. **Treasurer** – Dave Barnes has indicated that he will not be re-standing as Treasurer at the AGM.

Without filling these roles, the u3a cannot continue. The committee would have to try to find another u3a willing to merge or close Leicester u3a and transfer the assets, including those held in groups, to the Third Age Trust. This would be incredibly sad given it is a lifeline for some members.

Please consider whether you would be willing to have go on the committee. You do not need any special experience or skills other than being enthusiastic, friendly and have spare time. If you find it isn't for you then you can always step down again.

The committee can co-opt up to 3 members between now and the AGM in March and any potential new committee members should

consider co-option now so that they can shadow the person currently doing the role. You will continue to receive support from current, (and where appropriate), ex-committee members after the AGM.

We look forward to hearing from anyone willing and able to save Leicester u3a. For more information, please ask a member of the committee or contact them on committee@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Dear Fellow Members

by Tony Locke - member

Not everyone has the skills, patience and resilience to be a committee member. I certainly don't. I have admired the Leicester u3a Committee over some years. They've been dedicated and worked incredibly hard to keep it alive. They've coped with crises and those who didn't agree with their decisions.

Yes, they're special people. They've got on with the job. Aren't there others in the wings who want our u3a to survive? Is there any chance of those who feel they haven't the experience joining a "Crisis Committee" to explore helping the hesitant to make a contribution?

The u3a was founded on optimism, giving members the chance to continue learning and sharing their knowledge and teaching. Aren't these worthwhile objectives? Don't they embrace the idea of "having a go"? Even learning to be a committee member? I hope so.

Best regards Tony

PROGRAMME

July Report -

By Glyn Bray

On a warm July day the u3a welcomed back Robert Leake for the final talk on "Our Radio Days". Unlike the previous two talks in the trilogy, this talk moved away from radio and focused on the early days of television with long-forgotten theme music from the fifties and sixties. Robert brought us all back to our childhood by reminding us of children's programmes such as The Wooden Tops, Crackerjack and the early days of Blue Peter!

Well remembered names such as Mr Pastry, Eamonn Andrews, Leslie Crowther and Reginald Bosanquet brought back distant memories and made for a very enjoyable afternoon.

Summer Garden Party

On a cool summers day the u3a Summer Party 2025 took place on Tuesday 19th August and was well attended. There was an excellent selection of food with sandwiches, cakes and fruit as well as quiche and various savoury delicacies and there was plenty of it! Members enjoyed the buffet as well as the refreshing mocktails supervised by Angie and a pleasant time was had by all. Many thanks to all the hard-working organisers

Photos from Phil Proud



September 9th 2025 – Dave Andrews – My 25 years at the BBC

October 14th 2025 – Tim Coltman - 'Bravery Under Fire'

ALL MEMBERS COFFEE MORNINGS: *Sandra Barker – Hospitality and Wellbeing* Coffee mornings continue to be well attended and enjoyable. They are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10.00 am onwards at the Quaker Meeting House, Queens Road. Why not join us for refreshments, friendship, and chat?

Wellbeing and Hospitality - Enabling everyone to take part. Is there anything that prevents you from fully participating? Christchurch is fully accessible with disabled facilities. Members of the Wellbeing & Hospitality team are there if you need to have an end of row/front seat. If there is anything else we can do that enables you to take part, please tell us. If you would prefer to talk to someone before you attend, then please give Sandra Barker a call and, if you have any suggestions, we'd be very happy to hear them. wellbeing@leicesteru3a.org.uk
Also, if you know of any member who is unwell or has suffered a loss, then please tell Angie Barnes and she will send a card. Send your notices to - cards@leicesteru3a.org.uk.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

TABLE TENNIS – *Carol Arlett – Convenor* Do you have experience of playing table tennis or another racquet sport? Are you looking for a fun way to keep active? Why not join the Table Tennis Group. We meet every Wednesday afternoon from 2 - 3 pm at Parklands Leisure Centre, Oadby and each session costs £1.50 (car park charges apply). For more information contact the convenors, Carol Arlett and Gordon Hart, tabletennis@leicesteru3a.org.uk.

Digital Photography - Some photos on the theme of 'water',



Night shot through porthole of barge'

by Bob Hall



Shimmering stones in a village brook and a musical fountain - *from Jo Poon*

THE group's August topic was: HANDS. This topic encompassed hands being used for work, play, communication, metaphor and even representation. Here the Bookworms reading group members helped Jean Burbridge with a show of hands reaching for this month's title.



And a selection from Cliff Ault who says "As usual this was interpreted in several different ways"



Modern Movies – by Karen Closs (Convenor)

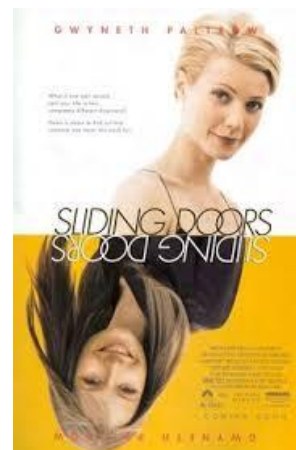
On the first Monday in July 10 of us met in the library of the Quaker Meeting House for the first Leicester u3a Modern Movies group. We established that 'Modern' would mean 1980 onwards so as not to duplicate films shown by The Classic Film Club so that members can enjoy both if they wish.

We established the format of the group, and I encouraged members to take a turn at choosing a

film (although nobody is obligated to do so if they would rather not).

Our first film was *Sliding Doors*, a 1988 Romance/Comedy starring Gwyneth Paltrow, John Hannah and Peter Howitt.

By the time of publication, we will have seen our second film, *The Beautiful Fantastic* starring Jessica Brown Findlay, Tom Wilkinson, Andrew Scott and Jeremy Irvine.



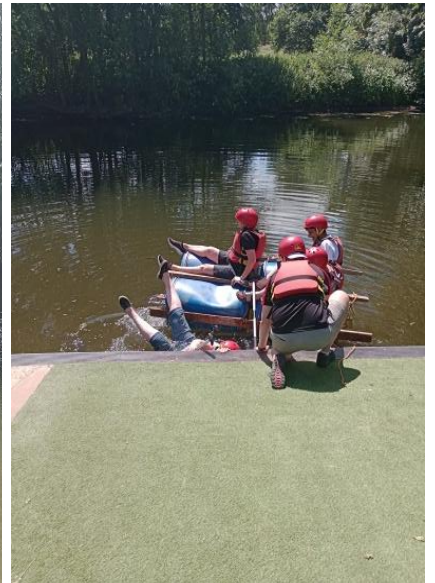
The most important decision of the afternoon was that biscuits are preferable to popcorn and cake. We don't just have any biscuits we have..... biscuits!

New members are welcome. Feel free to contact me on modernmovies@leicesteru3a.org.uk

How Hard Can it Be?

By Margaret Pearson

Our July activity for HHciB group was Raft Building at Leicester Outdoor Pursuits. Four of us took part on a lovely warm day, which was fortunate for Margaret who fell in, "quite refreshing" she said. We were taught how to tie the barrels together using half hitch knots, then to add wooden planks to stabilise the raft. A very hands on experience. We had an amazing instructor who then helped us to launch our newly made raft which, thankfully, floated beautifully. We climbed on board and paddled across the river and back again, followed by a well-deserved picnic. A great adventure enjoyed by all.



Discussion Group

Henry Paulinski – Convenor

Discussion Group Programme 2025-6

Our lively Discussion Group will be debating the following topics in the coming months:

- Should we reduce the voting age to 16?
- Should there be any censorship of the media, does free speech have limits?
- Should we send small scale criminal offenders to jail for short sentences?
- Is nett zero by 2030 a good or bad idea?
- Should the BBC go totally commercial?
- Is there such a thing as free will?
- Are there really only 2 sexes: is gender purely a social concept?
- Is democracy alive and well in UK?
- Should sex education be taught at schools?

We have a couple of spaces open in the Group. If you would like to join please contact the Henry at discussion2@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Pop Up Beginners Ukulele - 4 sessions only

Would you like to learn the ukulele? It's a great little instrument that's very easy to learn because even with just a few chords there are lots of songs you can play. In just 4 sessions you'll find you can strum to several such as Amazing Grace, Sloop John B and Whiskey in the Jar.

You don't need any musical knowledge or a musical 'ear' and learning an instrument is often cited as something to keep our brains healthy as well as giving enormous pleasure. It's also lovely to play and spend time with others.



These have all learned this year and I'm starting again after a summer break.

You can contact me via the Groups page *Pop Up Ukulele* of Leicester u3a website. Or email me directly popupukulele@leicesteru3a.org.uk

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sue Howard

Art Appreciation

Paul McCann (Member)

The Art Appreciation Group meets in the Keene Room at Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, Leicester on the first Thursday of the month from 2 pm to 4 pm. This is the same address as u3a Leicester's monthly meeting.

So, what do we do?

We plan ahead for the year. We agree the topics that we are going to research and discuss, and then each of us makes a presentation at the meeting. This is our program for the remainder of 2025

Date	Topic
04/09/25	Textiles and tapestries
02/10/25	Symbolism
06/11/25	Holbein v Cranach
04/12/25	Winter scenes

Other subjects from earlier in the year have been: Visit Open Exhibition New Walk Museum; Caravaggio; Colour Theory; Photography; Spring Scenes; My favourite painting and why; Ansel Keifer. There is no meeting in August.

Of course, Wikipedia can do much of the work for us and all we have to do is present a good summary. But there are many other sources, such as the National Gallery in London and the Metropolitan in Boston USA which provide an astounding amount of detail.

In these times when English is the "lingua franca" of the world, foreign galleries often provide a website in English. And then there is the ubiquitous YouTube which sometimes provides what you are looking for and sometimes doesn't.

So the questions we try to answer are the usual "who, what, when, why and how" with a glance at the periods applied to art and the times they were created in.

For various reasons not all of our members wish to travel far. This is why we have the regular monthly meeting at the church. For those who can and do like to visit galleries we organise ad hoc visits. For example: Sheffield public library has an art gallery and Burghley House is worth many visits. We have visited the Barber Institute in Birmingham (closed this year) several times and are waiting for the Birmingham Art Gallery to fully open again.

Please visit the Leicester U3A website for information on joining our group.

A Personal History

from Michael Stevens – member

Michael says – "The article was prompted by the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society and has been published in their Journal. They have been very helpful in the creation of the story."

My New Family - I never knew my father, and no reference to him in my family, including my mother and maternal grandparents, with whom I lived for many years. Most of the following was discovered with the significant help of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. The information concerning my father was discovered in his Will, which had a sentence saying that he left his estate to his 'Daughter'. So, methinks, he has a daughter and I'm his son (maybe, see later), so she's my half-sister. Since discovering

this, I've had lots of contact with her, Lynda, who has told me lots of facts about my father, with whom she lived for over 30 years. Now the crucial part. When I signed up for Ancestry, I sent them a saliva sample so a DNA test could be performed. I did this about 5 years ago and frankly forgot all about it. Then, about 12 months ago, I received an email from Ancestry saying they had found a very close match to my DNA, a lady called Natalie, who is my grand-niece. She is the granddaughter of Barry Stevens, who is my full brother. I didn't know that I had a brother. Natalie is a 30-year-old History teacher. My dad and brother have both died, but I have met my brother's son & Natalie. All this is part of my new family, who live in Sheffield. I have met Lynda, my half-sister, and Natalie's family, including her father, who is my brother's son. They have all told me details and sent me photographs of my father, including when he served in WW2. Lynda, my half-sister, lived with my father for years and told me that he had lots of scar tissue on his head and back. According to him, this was caused by my mother pouring a kettle of boiling water over him. Maybe that's why he left my mother?

A SUGGESTION - from *Member Peter Kilty*. A section entitled "What do you do at home?" might be interesting. One of my interests is translating poetry especially from Greek and here are two short pieces from "The Greek Anthology" a collection of short poems in Ancient Greek assembled by Byzantine scholars in the Middle Ages.

Here is a threat from Ariston

Right mice.

Think twice.

Food? You'll find little.

Just don't piddle.

You want the Good Life - figs and cheese?

Want on you wantons.

But if you try my books with your rodent teeth once more,
you'll rue as you've never done before.

Understood!

And from Plato a little poem in praise of Sappho a wonderful lyric poet and, of course, a woman

To Sappho
Some state there are nine Muses.
Wrong again.
Sappho of Lesbos,
She makes the ten.

RECIPE CORNER

Not trying to live to a hundred, just want to have a healthy old age!

When my partner and I did the research on the benefits of the Vegan diet we were convinced of the science. That just left me needing to put together a new repertoire of meals - not at all easy at first.

Five years on it's really been worth it.

Of course some friends and family find us a problem but they've risen to the challenge by feeding us really tasty and interesting dishes found on line, and we've stopped our boring evangelising - to them anyhow!

But today our dinner was so good I felt moved to give you the recipe.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH STUFFED With PUY LENTILS, WALNUTS & CRANBERRIES. (By Sam Dixon)

1 large butternut squash (1 kg)

Olive oil

1 large onion, finely diced

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 tablespoon thyme leaves

6 sage leaves finely chopped

200g ready-cooked Puy lentils

100g walnuts, toasted & chopped

50g dried cranberries

Salt & pepper

Handful of chopped parsley to serve

Preheat oven to 200C (400 F) gas mark 6.

Cut the squash in half lengthwise & scoop out seeds & discard them. Place the halves, cut side up on a baking tray, drizzle with oil & season with salt & pepper. Roast for up to 1 hour.

Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large pan & sauté the onion with the garlic over medium heat for 6 minutes until softened. Stir in herbs & cook for another 2 minutes. Season to taste & remove from heat. Stir through the lentils, walnuts & cranberries.

When the squash is cooked, scoop a little out & add to the lentil mixture. Then roughly mash together. Spoon the lentil mixture on to the slightly hollowed out squash halves & roast for another 10 minutes just to allow the topping to crisp up.

Scatter with chopped parsley.

(The Vegan research included:

The China Study by Colin & Thomas Campbell MD.

How Not to Die by Michael Greger MD)

Enjoy!

Sandra Grainger

'FUNNIE'S CORNER'

From Karen Closs

Jean-Paul Sartre is sitting at a French cafe, revising his draft of Being and Nothingness. He says to the waitress, "I'd like a cup of coffee, please, with no cream." The waitress replies, "I'm sorry, Monsieur, but we're out of cream. How about with no milk?"

and from Keith Pyne

One of the greatest pleasures of growing old is looking back at the people you didn't marry – *Elizabeth Taylor*

A nap in the middle of the day can do you good. If you wake up in your pyjamas - it's morning. If you're in your clothes – it's time for tea. – *Thora Hird*

Don't retouch my wrinkles in the photograph. I would not want it to be thought that I had lived for all these years without having anything to show for it. – *The Queen Mother*

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR - Sue Took

Sue Reports - We are looking for a member to help at various walking groups which at the moment are not running. If anyone might be interested, please let Sue Took know at

groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk. We would also like to hear from anyone who is interested in joining any of the other groups we run.

Editor's note: Please remember to let the newsletter as well as the groups coordinator know of any changes to your group organisation as this is how the membership finds out about them i.e. date, time, venue etc. NB. On our website (link on the front page) under 'CALENDAR' you will find all the groups and their meeting dates and times for the following weeks.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION from Angie Barnes, Membership Secretary. membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk

This month we had no new members and membership stands at 359.

We regret to announce the death of Helen Parsons, one of our honorary members, in July. We offer our sincere condolences to her family. Also, not one of our members, but one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in the UK. Eric Midwinter.

PUZZLE CORNER A Sudoku (created by Cliff Ault – Member
Cryptic Crossword Group) **Solution on page 19**

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



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Delivery The newsletter is normally printed for those who prefer a hard copy. It is available on a first come first served basis at the monthly meeting and coffee morning. If you would like a hard copy but cannot make these events the Membership Secretary is happy to send a copy by post to anyone who sends her a supply of stamps and their full address. It will also continue to be delivered to members by email as a pdf file before each monthly meeting.

Note from the Editor - Registered blind? We can provide an A3 version for you. Please let me know so that I can arrange to get one printed for you each month.

Photos Please remember to get permission from any people in your photos for us to publish them. This permission will be assumed if you send them to the editor.

The deadline for items to be included in the next newsletter (October) is mid-day Friday 26th September 2025.

There is no meeting or newsletter in August or December

Contributions should be sent to the Editor Margaret Potter at: newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk If you want to submit your entry as hard copy, please contact Margaret or the Membership Secretary, Angie Barnes, for the address. membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk

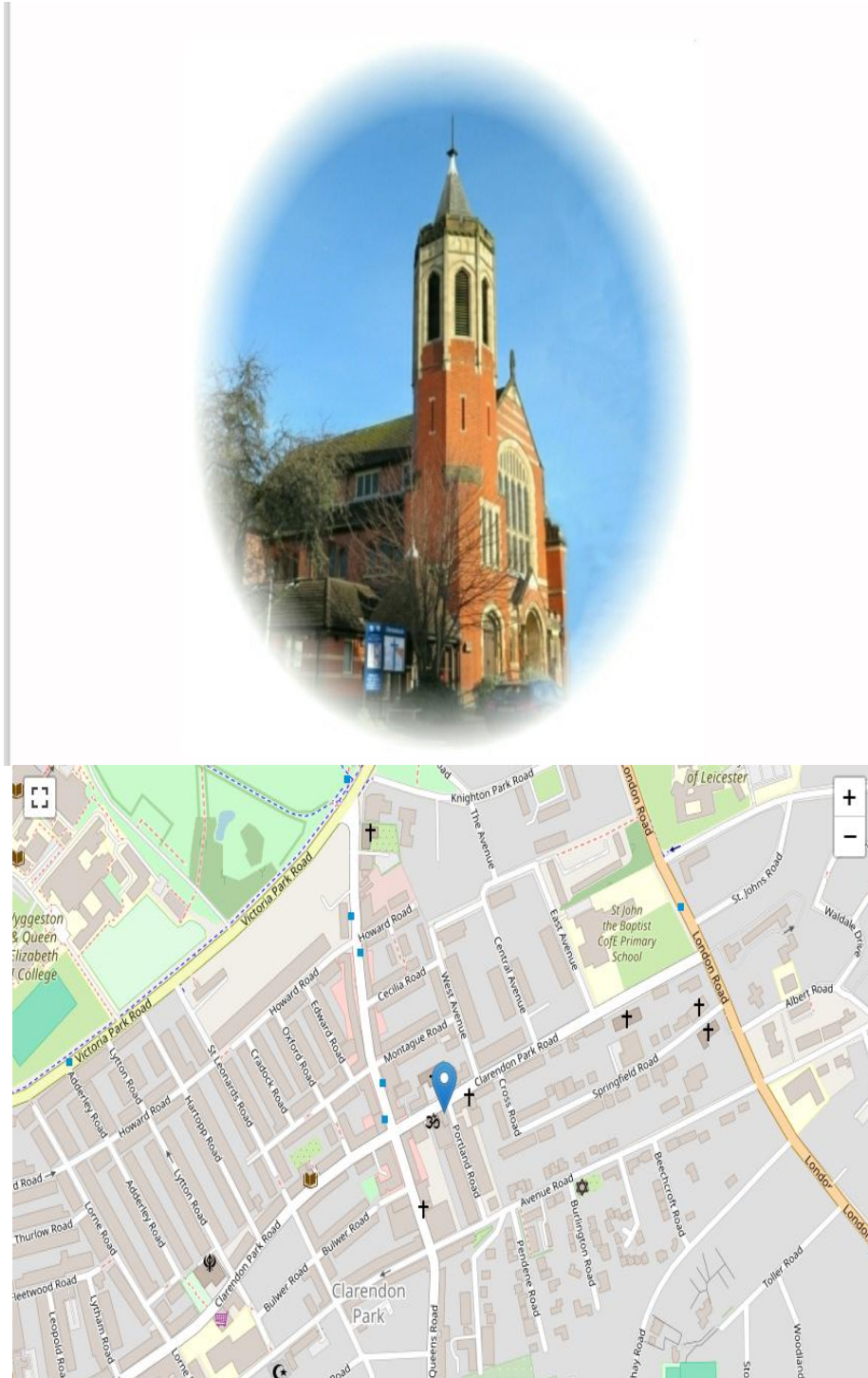
Please note the deadline for submissions for the rest of the year are:

November Friday 24th October

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Leicester u3a meets at 2:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month (except August and December) at Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, LE2 3AH, and there are special interest groups that meet regularly in member's homes and elsewhere. For more information, or to join, contact the Membership Secretary at membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk or telephone 0116 2152751



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