



Dear Member

This month we have news about a Gardening Group coach trip, which has places spare for other members of our U3A. We report to you on an event held last week for our Interest Group Leaders, and we have some early news about our AGM in May – where there are lots of opportunities for members to step forward to carry on the work of our U3A.

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February Monthly Meeting:

David Skillen, our February speaker, is a retired civil servant. He studied history for many years and, since retiring in 2012, has given talks to mixed audiences in many different organisations and clubs across the UK.

David and his wife Lynn have travelled extensively across the United States, visiting battlefields from the American Civil War as well as the Alamo.

From spies to nurses to songwriters, women performed many roles in the American Civil War, roles that hitherto had not been considered “lady like”. Some, like Harriet Tubman, were former slaves. Others, like Clara Barton, went on to form the American Red Cross.

In this month's talk "Cyclones in Calico – Women in the American Civil War" we will encounter some of these formidable women. We'll meet Mother Bickerdyke, learn how Sally Tompkins ran the hospital that had the fewest deaths in the Confederacy and see what a real Scarlett O'Hara looked like.

The meeting will be held in the All Saints Centre, at the junction of the High Street and Vicarage Road in Kings Heath, at 2pm on Tuesday February 12.

AGM and Subscription Fees

At its January meeting last week your Committee had an initial discussion on this year's AGM. As is the case every year, some members of the Committee will be standing down.

Our constitution specifies a time limit for members standing on the Committee. This is important to us as it ensures that we never get stale and new members come forward to assist in leading us, bringing fresh ideas and a new approach.

We therefore issue an appeal for members willing to take up the baton and join the Committee in May. Existing members will tell you that it is not arduous and that it is a role they have really enjoyed carrying out. It is however vital to the success of our U3A that new members do come forward. If you are interested please have a chat with Nick, Mike or Anne or any of the Committee (contact details at the end of the newsletter). There is a variety of different roles and some flexibility over who does what.

In addition, and of equal importance, we need members willing to support the activities of our U3A in different ways. To assist with our organisation of activities we are looking for members willing to take the minutes of the monthly committee meeting, and to meet and greet members arriving at the monthly general meetings. Please chat to us at a monthly meeting if you are able to assist.

Our social programme is also very important to us. We thank Roy Stove, who has taken on the role of organising Cinema trips, and are also looking for members willing to help with organising coach trips (usually two trips a year) and organising quizzes.

If you are able to assist with these, please contact our Social Secretary, Julie Alder, on:

julieallder@yahoo.co.uk

Two final things:

- the Committee decided that the subscription fee for 2019-20 will be £14. Details about how to renew will be in the March newsletter.
- We have a new privacy policy, which can be found on our website.

Gardening Group Coach Trip

On Thursday May 2, the Gardening Group is planning a Coach Trip to visit two lovely gardens near Market Drayton on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border. **We still have some seats left on the coach, which are now being offered to the general MKHD U3A membership, on a first come first served basis.** The cost is £25 per person, to include coach travel and admission to both gardens below. It is anticipated that the coach will leave Kings Heath at approximately 8.30 am and return at approximately 6.30 pm.

10.30 am The Dorothy Clive Garden:

This is a mature, 12 acre hillside garden, started in 1940 by Colonel Harry Clive to provide his ailing wife Dorothy with a 'series of interesting walks' as she battled Parkinson's Disease. At its heart is a 2 acre quarry garden with a waterfall, which is linked to a number of 'mini gardens' by informal meandering paths. There is a winter garden, an edible woodland, an alpine scree garden and pool, a rose walk, a daffodil walk, a gravel garden, a laburnum arch and many lovely seasonal borders. In May we should hopefully see spectacular displays of flowering rhododendrons and azaleas. More information can be found at: www.dorothyclivegarden.co.uk

2.00 pm Wollerton Old Hall Garden:

This 4 acre garden has been designed and developed by Lesley and John Jenkin since 1984. It is set around a black and white timbered 16th century Hall House and has developed into an important and highly regarded, modern garden in the English Garden tradition, with echoes of the Arts and Crafts movement. The garden is designed along formal lines, although this formality is broken up with exuberant planting that spills over the border edges. Hedges, walls, and paths have created a number of separate gardens, each one having its own style and ethos. There is a rill garden, a yew walk, a rose and sundial garden, a shade garden, an orchard garden, a salad garden, a long walk, a well garden, a font garden, a lime allee and herbaceous borders. There is also a plant nursery. More information can be found at: www.wollertonoldhallgarden.com

To book a place:

Please telephone Judy Cottrell on 07816 940407 or email: judy.cottrell@virginmedia.com

Please note that no cheques will be cashed until Judy has established that we have enough people booked onto the coach trip to make it viable. In the event of the trip not being viable, all cheques will be destroyed.

Interest Group Leaders' Network Meeting

Our Interest Group Coordinators Brenda Bingham, Ruth Livermore and Chris Olley organised the event. They reiterated our thanks to all our group leaders for their time and commitment to making Moseley and Kings Heath U3A a success. They tell us:

On January 30th we held a Network Meeting for Group Leaders. Despite the threat of snow, 25 group leaders attended.

The aims of the meeting were to:

- enable group leaders to meet with each other and the Committee
- share updates from the National U3A and local developments
- share experiences, consult and discuss plans for the year ahead

Many of our groups are 6 years old and group leaders discussed “what makes a successful group?” There was also a live demonstration of the new Beacon package which our U3A is using to manage the membership process, interest group information, and communication between group leaders and group members.

Discussions around accessibility, additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) and the annual subscription fee also took place.

Group leaders requested that members who are unable to attend a group meeting should give their apologies in advance. Also, members are advised that if they fail to attend three or more consecutive meetings without contacting the group leader they may be removed from the group to enable waiting lists to be reduced.

Interest Group Update

Parlez vous Francais?

Are you interested in joining a basic French conversation group? Do you want to join others with rusty O level French or similar? Do you want to get help, mutual support and encouragement in developing your conversational skills? Mastering a language is a great way to keep “the leetle grey cells” working and we aim to keep it stress-free and fun.

Likewise, if you have more than a smattering of French and are keen to share your love of the language (eg a retired French teacher) and are interested in facilitating this group, please contact Sara.

Come along at 10.30am on February 11 to the Kings Heath Park Café for an informal chat to discuss how this group should operate or contact Sara Meyer on sarameyer@hotmail.co.uk

Play Reading Group 2:

Play Reading 2 has moved to a new venue and time. We now meet on the first Monday of the month 2-4pm at the Friends Meeting House, Colmore Road, Kings Heath. The venue is fully accessible and parking is good.

For further information, contact Chris Olley on: chris.olley@btinternet.com

New venue available to Interest Groups:

Woodlands Bowling Club , College Rd, Moseley B13

Contact: Richard Spiby on 0785 243 4265

- Car Park, Disabled access and kitchen
- On the number 1 bus route
- £10 an hour

Lecture at University of Birmingham

Birmingham's Giant Erratics: Ice Age heritage

As part of the Lapworth lecture series at the University, Professor Ian Fairchild will be talking about the evidence for the period of glaciation in the Midlands.

In the 19th century, the course of the great glaciers that swept over the Midlands was traced out by erratic boulders distinctive of their source. Unusually large erratics made of volcanic rocks from the Arenig massif are especially distinctive in the Birmingham area. However, as feared by Lapworth, most of the evidence has now disappeared, making this a geo-conservation issue for the 21st century.

Monday 18th February 5-6pm

Venue: G29, Mechanical and Civil Engineering Building, University of Birmingham

All are welcome to attend and there is no admission charge.

Picture of the Month



We mentioned last year that Roy Stove, leader of our Digital Photography group, had a photograph published in the Guardian. Here it is! It is titled “Kiln Field” and is picture of the installation art by artist Paul Cummings and designer Tom Piper.

Social Activities

Lunches:

It is not possible now to take any more reservations for the lunch at the Covered Wagon on February 6th and no other outings are planned at present.

If you would like to be notified of future bookings please contact Carey.

Concerts:

A concert has been booked for the afternoon of May 2nd and small number of tickets are still available, but the deadline for reserving them is Friday February 15th and payment will be needed by February 22nd. Details of the concert are:

Thursday May 2, 2019 at 2.15 pm

Weinberg Rhapsody on Moldavian Themes,

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto,

Stravinsky The Firebird,

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla – Conductor

Patricia Kopatchinskaja – Violin

Please let Carey know if you'd like a ticket.

Please contact the following members if you would like to be directly informed of social activities: -

Lunches: Carey Baff	careybaff@live.co.uk	or phone 0121 472 6535
Concerts: Carey Baff	careybaff@live.co.uk	or phone 0121 472 6535
Cinema: Roy Stove	jroystove@googlemail.com	or phone 07786 267682
Theatre: Julie Allder	julieallder@yahoo.co.uk	or phone 07506 720756

Used Stamps

Diane Worland has a collecting bag for used stamps, which are sent to the RNI Blind. A border should be left on all stamps, and UK and international stamps separated. She would welcome any donated stamps. Please contact Diane on 07940 546361.

