

## Thoughts From Our Chairman...

During a recent meeting for new members, I was moved by accounts of people discovering fresh interests through joining different groups within our u3a. This approach is vital, as global frameworks and strategies consistently emphasise that learning opportunities in later life are essential for maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.

Our u3a embraces a philosophy of non-formal learning, which can be defined as:

*“It may be structured, follows a ‘bottom up’ approach, and encourages shared experiences without the need for dominant teacher oversight. In this setting, learners and teachers interchange roles, and everyone actively takes part. Unlike formal learning, non-formal methods are especially fitting for older adults.”*



We can all find something different to do within our u3a, especially with the number of new groups that have now started.

**Why not come along on the 19<sup>th</sup> March to our Open Day, when most of our groups will be there and very willing to explain what they do, where and when they meet.**

Alternatively, look on our website, <https://daventryanddistrict.u3asite.uk> and look under groups. You can filter alphabetically, by category, by meeting day or by venue.

Now that Spring is in the air, why not take this opportunity to expand your horizons and increase your well-being, social connectedness, and physical and mental health, which may all improve as a result of lifelong learning.

See you on the 19<sup>th</sup>?



## Coming Up.....

**March 19<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**Open Day**

### Showcasing our u3a

Bring your friends so that they may also enjoy the displays from many interest groups, chat with Group Leaders and other members.

**Enjoy some refreshments too!**

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**April 16th 2026**

### The Water Babies

**Charles Kingsley - Michael Burton**

This classic fairy tale, beloved by all ages, also served as a critique of child labour and poverty.

It contributed to the advancement of women's rights, environmental awareness, improved urban water standards, and helped end the Victorian practice of using young boys as chimney sweeps.

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### Mature Drivers Roadshow

**Barbara Wood**

The meeting with the IAM and Mature Drivers was extremely well attended last month. If you missed out, I detail below the information you need to take part.

For an IAM driving assessment, you can book with [iantphillips@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:iantphillips@yahoo.co.uk). This event runs on the first Sunday of each month and starts at 9.30 am.

This is a free event. For the half-day driving experience, also a free event, for drivers 60+, which includes an on-the-road observed drive, a chance to experience skidding techniques on the kick plate and ice hill, together with an interactive safer driving workshop visit: [www.carkraft.info](http://www.carkraft.info) to book your place.

## Looking Back, March.....

**2020** British interest rates were at the lowest recorded level of 0.10%.

**1987** A British-owned cross-channel ferry, the 'Herald of Free Enterprise', left Zeebrugge, Belgium and capsized, killing over 180 passengers.

**1969** Concorde, the Anglo-French supersonic airline, roared into the skies on its maiden flight.

**1956** Queen Elizabeth II laid the foundation stone of a new cathedral being built in Coventry. The new building was erected next to the remains of the 14th-century cathedral destroyed by the German Luftwaffe in 1940.

**1936** The British fighter plane, Spitfire, made its first test flight from Eastleigh, Southampton.

**1912** Both the Oxford and the Cambridge boats sank in the annual Varsity boat race.

**1904** Britain's first mainline electric train ran from Liverpool to Southport.

**1900** British forces under the command of Field Marshall Roberts take Bloemfontein in the Second Boer War.

**1876** The Scottish-born inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, patented the telephone.

**1872** The Wanderers beat the Royal Engineers 1-0 in the first English FA Cup Final, at the Kennington Oval.

**1871** Legalised warfare – England and Scotland played their first rugby football international, in Edinburgh; first blood to Scotland.

**1855** Charlotte Bronte, the reclusive Yorkshire novelist and author of Jane Eyre, died.

**1834** Six farm labourers from Tolpuddle, Dorset, were sentenced to seven years and transportation to Australia for forming a trade union.

**1702** Queen Anne took the throne of Britain after William III died in a riding accident. He was thrown from his horse after it stumbled on a molehill.

**1653** Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, dissolves the Long Parliament.

**1603** The crowns of England and Scotland were united when King James VI of Scotland succeeded to the English throne.

**1556** England's first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer is burnt at the stake as a heretic, under the Catholic Queen Mary I, also known as "Bloody Mary".

**44 BC** "Beware the Ides of March" – Julius Caesar is stabbed by Marcus Brutus.

## Early Sixties Snippets....Lawrence Morgan Sports Calendar (Winter to Spring)

Winter gloom celebrated by the Five Nations Rugby  
Thirty players scrabbling and scrummaging in the mud  
In the rain, the mist in sold out drafty stadium  
Often, a war of attrition  
Sometimes beautifully transformed  
By fleet-footed, sidestepping, mercurial backs

Spring comes with hope  
A flutter on the Grand National  
The world's greatest horse race  
Ten bob each way on a fifty-to-one shot  
Should do it  
Then glued to a TV set  
And while your horse stays on its feet amid the carnage  
Cashing in at the bookies, still not a dream

The flag drops, the boat race starts  
Oxford versus Cambridge  
Why does anyone care, but those who line the Thames  
And the many who sit, maybe with a sandwich and a beer to watch on TV, do  
While some cannot escape the hope that both teams sink  
Most either support the dark blues or light blues  
And in most cases, with no idea why  
The reward for the strong, young varsity chaps who have trained half a year  
Jubilation or despair

The football season ends with champions crowned  
But the real romance is with the Cup  
Two teams have battled through the rounds  
Their towns or cities, now bedecked with their colours and anticipation  
They meet at Wembley, Saturday, three o'clock  
It's the cup final  
The TV and radio coverage starts early  
Reminding us how they got there  
Meeting the players, managers and ordinary townsfolk  
Squeezing every ounce of sporting journalism from the day  
Then, finally, the kick-off  
Ninety minutes of lung-busting effort  
Of clearing boot, wayward passes, amid skill and artistry  
Hopefully, a goal or two and a result  
With one team gloriously acquainted with victory  
Kissing the Cup  
Their opponents slumped on the hallowed Wembley turf  
Still better than losing in the semis  
Win or lose, the Saturday will live in the memory forever  
As the fans troop off home, in the light  
Spring has thrown off the dark mantle of winter  
Summer sports will now steal the limelight





## Remember

If we haven't got the INTEREST GROUP you'd like to join, or you have an idea for a NEW GROUP, then please contact us.  
Brenda Mills, your Group Coordinator:  
[u3agroupsdaventry@gmail.com](mailto:u3agroupsdaventry@gmail.com) or  
[brendymills@sky.com](mailto:brendymills@sky.com).

## **New Group Alert....**

### **Daventry u3a Acoustic Group**

We are hoping to start a new **ACOUSTIC GROUP** within **Daventry u3a**, for **intermediate musicians and confident singers**, who enjoy making music together, one afternoon a week.

The aim of this group is to build confidence singing and playing, while improving their musicianship through enjoyable, informal get-together rehearsals. This won't be a teaching group, so members will need to be reasonably comfortable with their instruments.

Things will be kept mainly acoustic, for example **Guitar, Banjo, Ukulele with some light percussion, etc.**, using only minimal amplification when necessary, for those playing electric bass, keyboard, etc.

If members can also play any extra instruments — harmonica, sax, flute, bagpipes, etc. — even better! Additional instruments for riffs and fills are very welcome to add a bit of sparkle to arrangements.

**All genres are on the table** — pop, folk, country, rock and more and members will be encouraged to bring along their own song suggestions.

The main focus is on enjoyment and playing together, but in time, we may look at doing the occasional performance at local retirement homes or community events, following u3a guidelines.

**The idea is simple: if you play and sing, or are a confident vocalist, this is the group for you!**  
**Robert Smith via Brenda Mills (Groups' Coordinator)**

*If you are interested in learning more about the proposed new group then please let me, Brenda, know by emailing me on – [u3agroupsdaventry@gmail.com](mailto:u3agroupsdaventry@gmail.com)*

*I will then pass your details on to Robert so that he can get in touch with you. Venue and timings will be decided later, depending on the number of positive responses received.*



# History Group 2....

## William Philpott



### EIRE (1939 – 45)

Britain's neutral neighbour ?

When Britain declared war in Nazi Germany in 1939, Eire under the leadership of Eamon de Valera declared a state of emergency and its intention to remain officially neutral for the duration of the conflict. Will Philpott's talk at the history group 2 explored the impact of that period both on Eire internally and it's relations with the primary belligerent powers.



Army roadblock, County Cork. August 1940



### Donegal Corridor



May 1942



"It's no good Elmer - He says we can't go looking for it until after the war"

1995. John Bruton. Taoiseach.

"...volunteered to fight against the Nazi tyranny in Europe, at least 10,000 of whom were killed while serving in British uniforms. In recalling their bravery, we are recalling a shared experience of Irish and British people"

The most important weather report in history?

"Heavy rain and drizzle cleared, cloud at 900 feet. Visibility on land and sea very clear"

"We checked and rechecked, and the figures were the same both times, so we were happy enough" (to reconfirm)

4th June 1944.

Interview with Ireland's Eye Magazine

### THE ART OF DIPLOMACY

But it was difficult to withhold one's contempt from a country such as Ireland, whose battle this was and whose chances of freedom and independence in the event of a German victory were nil.

NICHOLAS MONTSERRAT, THE CRUEL SEA (1951)



"GOD BLESS EIRE'S NEUTRALITY-UNTIL THE FUHRER GETS THERE"



## MOTO Group Having Fun....

Terry Richards

12 members of MOTO met at the Peppermill in Daventry, Sandra and June organised darts, skittles, pool and a buffet lunch.

We may not have had brilliant skills, but we had a wonderful time with plenty of laughter. Our thanks to Dennis and Hazel for their guidance, and we all look forward to a return visit.



## Bridge Group.....

Brian Donkersley

A small but select group had an interesting and enjoyable time at our February meeting held, as always, on the second Thursday of the month at 2.00 pm in the bar at Daventry Golf Club on Norton Rd.

With a blend of new and experienced players, random hands were dealt, played and then analysed. A natural focus on the ACOL bidding strategy occurred, and the feedback from the newer players was very positive, as it helped them to reinforce the training provided over recent months by Alison McConnell.



We will have a stand/table at the u3a Open Day on 19th March, which will be a great opportunity for potential players to find out a bit more about the game and the group.

## Golf Group.....

Jackie Ray

The next Golf Group session is on Friday, 27 March 2026 at 10am, at Daventry Golf Club.



The simulator has been booked at a cost of just £10.00 per person, and there may be the possibility to go to the driving range and putting green if the weather is kind.

Please let me know if you would like to attend.

You know you're old when your back goes out more than you do.

## Climate Changer Group.... Ruth Tomlin



### Environmental news & resources shared by members:

- Info on Pesticides. Wicked Leeks - Food, Farming, Fairness. <https://share.google/BNQ6v64t654cb478V>
- Dark Waters. 2019 film. True story of an attorney suing DuPont over toxic landfill. Available on Amazon Prime.
- Dirty Business. New factual drama starting on Channel 4, 23/2/26, based on a decade-long investigation into England's water companies.
- Save Our Swifts. Petition to mandate the installation of swift bricks in all new builds. [https://38d.gs/sg\\_se\\_wa](https://38d.gs/sg_se_wa)

### Last month's look at recycling

- Bubble wrap: Air Ambulance charity shop will re-use it.
- The Market Fruit & Veg stall will take their emptied plastic punnets back.
- Superdrug have a drop-off bin for blister packs.
- Plastic plant pots cannot be recycled, only reused.

### The next "Just One Thing" topic will be a Deep Dive into Plastics.

Members will each investigate an aspect of plastic use or alternatives, such as the 7 types of plastic, digestible plastics, microplastics and their impacts, or emerging substitutes. Wise up here - <https://www.rubbishsite.co.uk/recycling/what-are-the-7-different-types-of-plastic/>

**Trip to Sherbourne Recycling Centre, Coventry on April 21st.** Two places have unexpectedly become available for the trip. Please let me know if you would like to come along. Contact Lynda on [ltmoran@hotmail.com](mailto:ltmoran@hotmail.com).

Look out for the Climate Change table at the u3a Open Day on March 19<sup>th</sup>, it will include a SEED & PLANT SWAP, so do bring along any spares you have and help yourself to any spares for free.

### Our next survey activity will be to take part in *The Big Plastic Count*:

<https://thebigplasticcount.com>

A citizen led investigation into household plastic waste, running from 9th to 15th March. Non-group members are welcome to join in.

All this should generate lots of questions for our site visit to Sherbourne Recycling on 21st April.





## Story Of My Life Group..... Gill Douglas

### “An afternoon with the Memoir Group”

Really Gill, what could be worse  
Than suggesting that we should write in  
verse.

“Have a go, take your time...  
It doesn't always have to rhyme.

Paint a picture, set the scene  
Let your senses intervene.

I'll just go and make a drink,  
Give you all a chance to think.

Look around you, let it flow,  
Just relax and have a go...!”

“Well Gill, I'm not sure I'm able,”  
But, glancing quickly around the table...

My eyes first rest on Lynn....  
Now what memories do I recall?  
Well...  
Local history! Lynn knows so much  
She certainly has the magic touch...  
High Street, New Street,  
Make a pair of shoes Street.  
Lynn's A walking Encyclopedia  
10 times better than Wikipedia  
(or even social media!).

Next, my eyes alight on Jill.  
Now, from a very early age  
Jill was destined for the stage.  
I don't think Its very wrong  
To say her life is mapped in song!  
Wreckers, Boheme, Carmen, Faust  
Hard to choose which I like the most.

In comes Gill – she loves to bake  
And always gives us lots of cake!

“Here you are, Ann, a cup of tea  
And a special biscuit – gluten-free!”

Ann, your recent writing “Moving on”  
Depicting how your life had gone,  
Was full of interesting facts for me  
Especially your links with Daventry....

“Take a photo” Gill would say  
And Alison, I remember to this day  
How are you, wrote, with the greatest of ease  
About sheets flapping gently in the breeze!

Well, Gill -I gave it a go, did my best  
Thanks for putting me to the test!



# New Experiences & Adventures Group.....

Sarah Fawcett

## Viking Axe Throwing Event

On Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 9 very adventurous Ladies arrived at this atmospheric venue adorned with Norse-inspired décor.

Having been greeted by Damo, our bearded Viking Axe Throwing host, he gave us a demonstration of the various axe-throwing techniques. **Then the fun started when we were let loose with the axes!!!!**. We were all given 1-2-1 coaching, so that we could get the most out of our experience.



There was so much laughing and cheering each other on. We even competed against each other in teams. Well done to the Winners: Deborah, Ann, Brenda and Fran



Then, to finish off this amazing experience, we raided the Dressing Up Box and Props for a hilarious photo session.

Don't think any of us will forget this experience in a hurry!



## History Group 1.... William Philpott

Colin Davenport continued his talk through the lives of the monarchs of England. Part two of the story continued with the House of Plantagenet after King John and the subsequent rise of the Tudors (1485–1603). Starting with Henry VII, following his victory at the Battle of Bosworth and concluding with the death of Queen Elizabeth I.

The Tudor period was a transformative era of Renaissance culture, religious reformation, exploration and the establishment of a powerful centralised state. Part three of Colin's talk will continue with the House of Stuart at a date to be agreed.

### House of Plantagenet

Royal house



## ***You don't just get 'TREATS' from Waitrose!!***

### **The Motoring Group ...**

Barbara Wood

### **'Into the Water Barrier'**

**Dr Keith Mitchell, Retired Consultant.  
Specialist on Bluebird**

A very special treat for the Motoring and Transport Group this month was access to a talk, via Zoom, given by Dr Keith Mitchell and organised by The Friends of Ullswater Way/Ullswater Heritage about his time spent working with Donald Campbell called 'Into The Water Barrier'.

We were treated to some very early photographs of the sometimes glamorous life of the Campbells, and just how much Donald was caught up in his father's desire to achieve both land and water speed records from a very early age.

We were told of how, on his father's death, he was bequeathed much of the workshop equipment used to build and maintain the 'Bluebirds', but crucially not the actual hydroplanes themselves. These he had to acquire by auction. Some suggested this was due to his father not wanting his son to outperform him, or, more kindly, prevent his son from killing himself.

Donald had to borrow substantial amounts to purchase these, but did not realise, until too late, that they did not come with the jet engines used to propel them! These were purchased for just £150 by a 'shady car dealer' (the expression used in the presentation) who promptly realised the value to Donald was considerable and charged accordingly – causing more loans to be required.



It wasn't until 1955 that Donald finally got his own hydroplane – the Bluebird K7 – running on Ullswater in February 1955 after some modifications to help it 'plane'. It became clear that the ever-increasing speeds made Ullswater a difficult stretch of water when it came to braking after completing the recorded one mile between markers. Hence, the move to Coniston for the record-breaking attempt. (And incidentally, where he had christened K4 some 10 years earlier).

Bluebird K7 set seven water speed records up to the final year of Donald Campbell's life, but he wrestled with thoughts of quitting his dangerous profession or having one more attempt with the venerable hydroplane and a crack at the 300mph mark? A new boat was out of the question – he simply could not afford it. And history now tells of his fateful decision.

In January 1967, he took his boat on Coniston Water. Who can forget the haunting footage of the somersaulting Bluebird plunging into the water amid an explosion of parts, taking Sir Donald Campbell CBE to his watery grave.

### **Cribbage Anyone?...**

Jackie Ray

The next Cribbage Group meeting is at 2 pm on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at the Saracens Head (Wetherspoons), Brook Street, Daventry



## **It's Spring**



# Art Appreciation Group....

Angela Adams

## Saints Alive!

The March meeting of the Art Appreciation group had to be moved to Badby, at the last moment, as large numbers of people were expected to be in Everdon for a memorial service, which would present difficulties in finding parking places. Luckily, Badby Village Hall was available, and members were alerted in time. Since the subject of this month's meeting was Saints, we had thought to invoke the name of Saint Martin of Porres, who looks after parking!



My original intention of deciding on the subject was to explain how I became interested in Saints in the first place. When, many years ago, we visited an exhibition at the Royal Academy, we saw a painting of Saint Roch who held up his tunic with one hand to show a scar. We wondered why and found out that as a traveller to Italy from France, he helped those suffering due to the plague and then became ill himself. The scar showed that he was "of them" and as an Attribute "one" can recognise him accordingly. Interestingly in the two portraits we showed on Tuesday, it was noticed that in one picture the scar is on his left leg the other, his right!



We then looked at Saints who have local connections to Daventry and district, e.g. Saint Augustine, to whom the Roman Catholic church is dedicated, and there is a road named after him. Also, Saint James, we still have a street and school named after him, and a church also stood dedicated to him until the 1960s. Interestingly, the street was renamed Saint James, having previously been called George Street, when the only building on it was the George pub! Later in the meeting, when members chose a Saint to show and talk about, Janet Cryer chose Saint Werburgh, who is shown in a window by Anthony MacRae in Weedon Church. Werburgh famously negotiated and dispersed a flock of geese which had been eating the crops in the fields. Supposedly, this has not happened since!

We then saw many other images of Saints chosen by members painted by several famous artists - Caravaggio, Tiepolo, Raphael and El Greco and some that we had not heard of before e.g. Ary Scheffer a Dutch-French Romantic painter whose portrait portrayed St Augustine with his mother Saint Monica, who had despaired of her son who had been living a hedonistic lifestyle before conversion to Christianity. Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music, was chosen by Kay Magrath, and her portrait was by Orazio Gentileschi, the father of the perhaps now more famous artist daughter, Artemisia. Cecilia's feast day is November 22<sup>nd</sup>, which was also the birthday of Benjamin Britten, appropriately.



Our presentations concluded with three photos of the statue of Saint Michael, which stands on the very top of the pinnacle of Mont Saint Michel in Normandy. Ruth Tomlin had chosen these images and the Saint. Ruth told us a great deal of details about them. In fact, she has become so interested in the subject of the Saint that she has agreed to do a presentation on him in our 2027 programme. Another new member of our group, Keith Faulding, had chosen Saint Lawrence to whom Long Buckby church is dedicated, but doesn't know why, and Keith has promised to do some research into the reason.



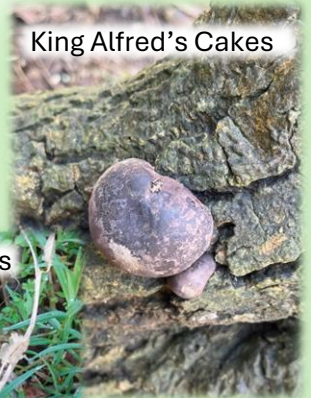
If you would like to join our group please contact me Angela Adams on 07957 995944 so I can send you a programme for the year. At our meeting next month on Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> Christine Wood will be talking and demonstrating Canal Boat Art.

# Birdwatching And Natural History Group....

Richard Piner

For our March walk, nineteen of us set off round Everdon Stubbs on a day that rapidly turned into a warm and sunny one. We were looking for early signs of spring.

We saw a lovely array of wild daffodils as well as plenty of foliage promising future flowering, notably bluebell leaves in profusion. One or two celandines and wood anemones were already out.



King Alfred's Cakes



Yellow Archangel Leaves



Wild Daffodils



Feather Moss



Everdon Stubbs In The Sunshine



Lesser Celandine

Pictures courtesy of Steve Hupfield and Barbara Campbell (King Alfred's Cakes).



Curtain Crust



Blue Tit

Birds were more often heard, but marsh tit, jay and long-tailed tit were some of those that were actually seen.

Fungi growing on dead wood were evident, including turkey tail, curtain crust and King Alfred's cakes.

An excellent morning's walk was rounded off with tea and biscuits in Everdon village hall.



## Daventry & District u3a Activity & Interest Groups

**Free for members to join**  
(Although some activities may have associated costs).

Our groups are the lifeblood of the u3a so, why not consider joining or forming a group to further your interest and meet like-minded members.

Frequency Key: M = Monthly F = Fortnightly W = Weekly	Frequency	Day	Time	Frequency Key: M = Monthly F = Fortnightly W = Weekly	Frequency	Day	Time
Acoustics	To Be Advised			Philosophy	M	Tue	AM
Alternative Book Group	M	Thurs	AM	Photography For Pleasure	M	Tue	PM
Any Crafts Will Do	F	Mon	PM	Rambles (4-6 Miles)	M	Mon	AM
Art Appreciation	M	Tue	PM	Reading Shakespeare 1	M	Fri	AM
BakeXChange	M	Fri	PM	Reading Shakespeare 2	M	Mon	PM
Bird Watching / Nature	M	Thurs	AM/PM	Rummikub 1	M	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	PM
Book Group	M	Tue	PM	Rummikub 2	M	Wed	Eve
Bridge	M	Thurs	PM	Rummikub 3	M	Tue	PM
Climate Change	M	Thurs	PM	Rummikub 4	M	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	PM
Creative Writing	M	Wed	AM	Scrabble	M	1 <sup>st</sup> Mon	PM
Cribbage	F	Fri	PM	Spanish Conversation	F	Mon	AM
Folk Dancing	W	Thurs	AM	Spanish Conversation (Basic)	F	Wed	PM
French Conversation 1	F	Wed	PM	Supper Club	M	Wed	Eve
Garden Vistas & Views	M	Fri	Day	The Art Of Painting	F	Wed	PM
Golf	M	Fri	AM	The Stories In My Life	M	Thurs	PM
History I	M	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	PM	Virtual Book Group	M	Tue	Day
History II	M	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	PM	Weekenders	M	Sat/Sun	AM/PM
Moto	Meet On Various Days			Wine Appreciation	Bi-Monthly Various		PM
Motoring	M	Tue	AM				
New Experiences	Activity Dependent						

**No group is ever 'FULL', there may be a waiting list until there is room, or another group is started.**

To find out more information about a particular group go to <http://www.daventryanddistrict.u3asite.uk/groups>

To contact the editor of the monthly newsletter with all your comments, news and photos:

[daventryu3a.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:daventryu3a.newsletter@gmail.com)

**Make a Note - put it in your Contacts List**