

Thoughts From Our Chairman...

For my last Chairman's piece for our newsletter, I thought that I would do a recap of items that I have written about over the last 3 years.

The flora and fauna that I have spotted on my walks with my dog, plus the changing seasons. Having to change the way I did things after tearing my rotator cuff. Various memories of my childhood, and that my grandmother wouldn't recognise the kind of kitchens that we enjoy today, never mind snuggling in bed and saying the phrase "Alexa, Goodnight" and all the lights and electrical periphery switching off.

In October last year, I gave the whole item over to the poem of Patricia Routledge, who had just died, she spoke of all the new things she had learnt and done in her 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s. One of her closing lines was "Growing older is not the closing act. It can be the most exquisite chapter — if you let yourself bloom again." So u3a.

I reminisced about going to Live Aid and couldn't really believe it celebrated its 40th anniversary. Talking of anniversaries last year, we had 80 years of VE & VJ Day, 70th anniversary of Pick of the Pops, 60th anniversary of Thunderbirds, 50th anniversary of The Rocky Horror, Monty Python and the Holy Grail, plus The Last Night of the Proms. We celebrated 50 years since Bohemian Rhapsody. We have also celebrated the 100th Birthday of Sir David Attenborough. All those celebrations. However, I am going to end as I started with an extract of my first piece.

I was thinking of u3a when, a couple of weeks ago, I watched someone on TV who was definitely in their third age. Perhaps you were also one of the over 7 million who watched the final night of Glastonbury. I am speaking of course of Sir Elton John. He, like so many of us, is not as agile as he once was, wears comfy gold trainers rather than sky-high platform shoes, but once he sits at his piano, he still has all the skills that he has honed over 50-plus years. We all have skills and expertise that we have gathered either through work or different life experiences. They are still with us. Let Elton John be an inspiration to you as he was to me that night at Glastonbury
We're still standing - but doing it sitting down!!!



Bob Foster

The shipwreck, discovered in the 1970s, was eventually raised and is now displayed at Portsmouth Docks.



The audience was also able to handle some of the many artefacts found on the wreck, including a sailor's comb, a timepiece, a blood-letting dish and some coins. The Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth continues to display these artefacts and research findings, offering visitors a glimpse into the lives of the Tudor period and its sailors.



June 18th 2026

Annual General Meeting

Followed By Our Guest Speaker:

Indian Takeaway - Bharat Patel

Bharat is an award-winning reporter who has worked for BBC Radio Leicester, Radio 4, ITV and BBC television. He has covered major world events, including the death of Princess Diana and the disappearance of Madeleine McCann. But it's not all been about tragedy: he's also interviewed Polly the parrot, who spoke five languages. By the age of eight, he had travelled across three continents, ending up in Leicester.

July 16th 2026

Cancer Research - Gemma Kitchen

Cancer Research UK is the world's largest independent cancer research organisation. Gemma will take us through the history and current progress in life-saving developments.



Sixties Snippets Hippies

Lawerence Morgan

Early sixties
XX carbon-based units at the local dance hall
Formed a circle, bags in the centre protected
Moving to the beat
Waiting for a mate
A house, a well-equipped kitchen
XY carbon-based units
Hung around the perimeter
Puffing on a cigarette
Weighing up the talent
Evolution kicked in, new scene
Homo Genus hippie guy, hippie chick
Born of alternative philosophies and LSD
Mainly from the USA
Beaded denoted unisex
Guys in Indian bedspreads sitar on their arm smelling of funny baccy
Chicks in eastern touristy garb smelling of patchouli
Back from the ashram, holy man, charlatan
The Brits mostly never got to San Francisco or India
Never wore a flower in the hair
Content with a commune, living in Wales or Scotland, growing organic veg
Practising spiritual activities
In the second homes of rich kids
Or joining a cult, opening up to new beliefs
A variant, a subspecies, the weekend hippie emerged
Spent their free time listening to bands doing the psychedelic thing
Authentic hippie or camp follower didn't matter
Love, not war the mantra
Turn on, tune in, drop out
The age of Aquarius had dawned
Festivals became the new concert halls
And while icons, Dylan and Baez
Plied their trade
Sharing stages with psychedelic bands
Within Albion's ancient shores
Some adopted a new way of being
Though most continued their lives of quiet desperation





News From Our Groups.....

Climate Change Group....

Lynda Moran

Our next outing will be on June 16th, meeting around 2pm at Boddington Meadow Nature Reserve. The meadow is situated next to Boddington reservoir and is managed by the local Wildlife Trust. Here's a quote from them about it:



Boddington Meadow is a 2.3-hectare, never-ploughed nature reserve near Upper Boddington, Northamptonshire. Designated as one of the UK's "Coronation Meadows", it is famous for its rare, centuries-old flora like pignut, pepper-saxifrage, and pyramid orchids, as well as abundant summer butterflies.

For further information cut and paste this link into your search engine:

<https://www.wildlifebcn.org/nature-reserves/boddington-meadow>

It is around 20 minutes drive from Daventry, and lifts will be shared from the old gas works car park. – leaving at 1.45 pm. Non-group members are welcome to join us. Bring a drink, a snack and a hat if it is sunny.

We have visited many times over the years, and the flowers – especially the orchids - are at their best in mid - June. If you would like to join us, please contact me on u3aintouch@gmail.com

Sherbourne Recycling Visit

We now have two photos of our groups in the heart of the recycling centre in our hard hats, high viz etc. If you would like me to send you copies of the photos please contact me on the email below.

u3aintouch@gmail.com

Climate Action West Northamptonshire, powered by Friends of the Earth

This organisation (CAWN) has arranged a screening of “The People’s Emergency Briefing” to be shown at the Icon Centre on Friday, June 26th. at 7 pm. The film is free and will be followed by a short discussion as to what we can do locally. The film is based on last November’s National Emergency Briefing, held in Westminster, which brought together nine leading UK scientists and experts with the latest evidence on climate change and why it matters. Some of our u3a members will be there to find out more. Do join us if you can.

National results of surveys conducted in January & February:

[Big Garden Birdwatch](#)

[Big Garden Birdwatch: The results have landed](#)

[Results 2026 \(Home Page\) | The Big Plastic Count](#)

Full report: [TBPC-2026-Results-Report.pdf](#)

Golf Group....

Jackie Ray

We went out to play 9 holes of golf on 15 May 2026, and the weather was kind to us; a very enjoyable time was had!

The next meeting will be on Friday, 12 June 2026, at Daventry & District Golf Club, Norton Road, Daventry NN11 2TS, and we will play 9 holes of golf, meeting at 10 am with a tee time at approximately 10.20 am. For those who prefer, or are unable to tackle the course, there will be an opportunity to use the Driving Range and Practice Putting Greens.

Please let us know if you are able to play.



Cribbage Group

Jackie Ray

The next cribbage session will be on 19th June at 2 pm at the Saracens Head in Daventry



Bridge Group....

Brian Donkersley

The Daventry and District u3a Bridge Group meets at Daventry & District Golf Club, Norton Rd, on the second Tuesday of every month.

Learners and players of all standards are warmly welcomed to an afternoon (2.00 pm – 4.00 pm) of friendly rubber bridge, with regular analysis of hands, both bidding and play, to assist those learning the game.

Any potential new members are able to turn up without notice, as the playing tables are organised on the day, based on who can make it, and if needed, we have two or three player tables to assist with training and development.

The sessions cost £2 per person, payable on the day, to cover the hire of facilities, and the bar is open to purchase drinks, including tea and coffee.

If anyone requires any additional information, please contact the Group Leader, Brian Donkersley via 01327 437036 or brinflow@btinternet.com

New Experiences Group....

Deborah Bull

On 30th May, 12 members went to a Pottery Painting event at Kate's studio above Duston Bakery. It was a lovely airy room with plenty of A/C, much needed on such a hot day! We all made our choice of a piece of pottery, ranging from jugs, mugs, plates, lighthouses, coasters, and geckos.

There was a big range of supplies at our disposal. Paints, brushes, dot markers, stickers, sponges, stencils and more.

Kate was very helpful, giving us plenty of advice, what techniques to use and advising us how much paint to use and coats to apply.

There was much chatter at first, but as we started to work on our chosen piece of pottery, it gradually grew quieter as we concentrated on our painting! It was a very mindful, relaxing and rewarding session.

As the studio was above a bakery, we were able to indulge in tea coffee and cake! Very convenient! Lots of us commented that they really enjoyed it and would love to do it again!



The Motoring Group ...

Barbara Wood

Another amazing outing for the Motoring Group, this time to visit a Bentley restoration company. VBE Restorations offers the complete service when it comes to vintage Bentley ownership. With a lifelong interest in Bentleys, Tim and Richard Cresswell made us very welcome and were very generous in the time they granted us to explain this fascinating workshop, full of very desirable and valuable cars. The first car we encountered had come all the way from Australia to be converted to a super-charged model.



The cost of shipping alone must have been fairly substantial!! The next beauty to admire was a one-off creation named after their mother, who was a very successful West End actress in the 20s and 30s—Petronella. This was my particular favourite. Having now been sold, some of the proceeds were invested in another 'wreck' ready to be rebuilt and made roadworthy.

Countless hours are devoted to this work. And not a laptop in sight!! Real craftsmanship is needed to obtain the high standards demanded here, and to this end, they are bringing along younger recruits to learn old skills. They can also build cars to clients' specifications, and we were shown an example of this—it was so large I couldn't get the whole car into my camera shot.



But the skills needed to create the body shape were quite breathtaking. It had an air of Art Deco about it, and would have looked perfectly at home parked in front of the Ritz or Savoy. At one point, we noticed some of the tools used on the cars, which were extraordinarily large. This was truly a fascinating day, especially for one member who learned that Tim's father had worked on the very Bentley that he now owns.



History Group....

William Philpott

At our recent meeting, lifelong local resident, Marcus Lewis, presented an illustrated talk, showing over 100 images of 'old' Daventry. Marcus gave a fascinating insight into personal and general stories and reflections on the area.



Bird Watching & Nature Group.....

Richard Piner

Pictures courtesy of Steve Hupfield

Fourteen of us met in a rainy Napton and immediately headed for the dry refuge of a nearby welcoming cafe.

Fortunately, the rain stopped, and we managed to get out for our walk around part of Napton and along the Oxford Canal. The weather kept a lot out of sight. Red kite, singing chiffchaffs and blackcaps provided some interest as well as lots of house sparrows on the feeders by the canal.



Buffalo Calves



Red Kite
against the cloudy sky

Sadly, we didn't hear or see any of the curlews that possibly breed in the area. A herd of buffalo in a field by the canal were accompanied by rooks, carrion crows and a lone pied wagtail. We also saw Buffalo calves in separate fields on the way back.



House Sparrow



Buffalo

Rain was in the air again, so several of us completed the walk with a return to the cafe for a drink and cake.



A lone speckled wood butterfly
braving the weather.



Birdsfoot Trefoil

Art Appreciation Group.....

Angela Adams

Have you ever wondered about what a T-shirt is “saying” to you or what a particular design is? Well, I had suggested that the Art Appreciation Group might look at T-shirt design. So Ruth Tomlin, one of our members, started our June meeting with a brief history of the T-shirt. Interestingly, when the T-shirt was first worn, it was seen as rebellious, in that it was originally an undergarment which was now being worn “out” and in fact it was a cut-down version of a long john “top”. Of course, at that time, it was just a plain white or pale colour, and this was the garment that was made famous when worn by Marlon Brando and James Dean

Further to my original question, my curiosity led me to start a project in talking to people in the town about the T-shirt he/she happened to be wearing. I spoke to more than forty people, and only two refused to divulge their reasons for wearing the T-shirt they had on. In fact, most people were only too happy to talk and had a variety of reasons for their choice.



Maybe a club/group that he/she belonged to, or a particular band or singer they liked, or maybe a particular interest in a culture such as Norse Mythology, or a football team they supported, such as Graham, who was wearing a Blackpool Town Football T-shirt with a design dating back to the 50s. So, having agreed to be photographed, these photos were shown to the group.

I had also “acquired” a large number of T-shirts, which members were asked to “rifle” through and select one. Then each person was asked about their choices. They also had been asked to come wearing T-shirts, which they also “introduced” to the group.

Some members said they wouldn’t normally wear T-shirts but were happy to do so for the occasion, and one member even made a T-shirt (from some Klimt-inspired material) specially for the meeting.

Our next meeting is a visit to St Margaret’s Church, Denton, on Tuesday, July 7th, to see the wonderful wall paintings there by the Northampton artist Henry Bird. Details for the trip will be available shortly from me. Angela Adams, dxadams@mac.com or call me on 07957 995 944



Wine Appreciation Group.....

Lynn Jones

A group of 18 gathered at the Ashby Road Community Centre for the Bi-monthly meeting of the Wine Appreciation Group. The numbers are growing, and with the continued growth of the group, it is important for members to confirm they are coming to the meetings. It would be a disappointment if there was insufficient wine for all to get the opportunity to taste the wines being discussed.

As a prelude to the unexpected heatwave, David Warren presented a talk prepared by his daughter on Rosé wines. David's daughter has an established career in Wholesale wine sales and had originally intended to make the presentation herself. Sadly, her employers wanted her in Scotland for the day she had scheduled for the group.

The wines offered for tasting were not available on general sale; they are the wines to be found on a restaurant, hotel, or pub wine list. Enabling the group to sample wines that, at times, were more complex than the general distribution coming from well-established vineyards.

The first wine tasted came from the Gascogne region of Southern France; the wine was a blend of 5 grape varieties. The family have lived on the estate for over 4 centuries. Aside from wine, they also produced Armagnac. There is evidence to suggest the slopes in the estate had been producing wines since Roman Times.



By contrast, the second of the wines came from a single grape variety grown in Portugal. It is another family-owned vineyard dedicated to the production of Vinho Verde. The family acquired the land in 1978, but it was 30 years later that their first bottling was marketed. 60% of the production is for local sale whilst the remaining 40% is exported into Europe, the USA and Canada.

The final offering came from a Vineyard that boasts on its team Australian Hartley Smithers and Spaniard Nora Iriate, who were listed in 2020 by the UK publication 'The Drinks Business' as being among the Top 100 winemakers worldwide. The wine produced in Romania has, over the years, accumulated a large number of Medals and appreciations internationally. The current company owning the vineyard began in 1991, but production dates back to 1447. This wine again was a single grape production.

The tasting notes supplied with this wine produced an interesting recommendation for the food to accompany the wine: Roasted Broccoli. Not a dish that immediately springs to mind.

The group thanked David for the presentation and the opportunity created by his daughter to sample some unusual wines.

The next meeting is: Monday, 20th July at the Ashby Road Community Centre.





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	W	Mon	PM	New Experiences	Activity Dependent		
Alternative Book Group	M	Thurs	AM	Philosophy	M	Tue	AM
Any Crafts Will Do	F	Mon	PM	Photography For Pleasure	M	Tue	PM
Art Appreciation	M	Tue	PM	Rambles (4-6 Miles)	M	Mon	AM
BakeXChange	M	Fri	PM	Reading Shakespeare 1	M	Fri	AM
Bird Watching / Nature	M	Thurs	AM/PM	Reading Shakespeare 2	M	Mon	PM
Book Group	M	Tue	PM	Rummikub 1	M	3 rd Wed	PM
Bridge	M	Thurs	PM	Rummikub 2	M	Wed	Eve
Climate Change	M	Thurs	PM	Rummikub 3	M	Tue	PM
Creative Writing	M	Wed	AM	Rummikub 4	M	3 rd Wed	PM
Cribbage	F	Fri	PM	Scrabble	M	1 st Mon	PM
Current Affairs	Third Wed Of The Month 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 th Wed	PM	Virtual Book Group	M	Tue	Day
Moto	Meet On Various Days			Weekenders	M	Sat/Sun	AM/PM
Motoring	M	Tue	AM	Wine Appreciation	Bi-Monthly	Various Days	PM

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

Make a Note - put it in your Contacts List