

Learn

Laugh

Live

u3a Daventry
& District

Newsletter August 2026

#119

Thoughts From Our Chairman...

Business resilience to ensure the continuity of our u3a is something the Committee is working towards by securing cover for key posts, because you never know when that might be needed.

So far we have secured the services of Wendy Hall, who will support Brenda Mills in her role as Group Co-Ordinator. As cover for the role of Chair, the committee has appointed Brenda Mills as Deputy Chair.

Moving forward, we need to establish support for the Membership Secretary, Beacon (IT) Administrator and Treasurer, as well as production of our fantastic newsletter.

Within our three hundred plus membership, there must be at least some who have the skills required to strengthen the committee, so please, don't be shy. Please speak to Brenda or me if you can help, even in the background.

Will Philpott
Chair

Welcome Our 'New' Deputy Chair...



As part of our objective to strengthen business resilience and continuity, the committee unanimously voted to appoint Brenda Mills as Deputy Chair.

Many of you will know Brenda who has been a committee member since our u3a was established in 2015. At various times since then she has carried out the roles of Minute Secretary, Deputy Chair (twice) and Membership Secretary.

Brenda has also regularly been at the forefront in promoting our u3a at events around the district and continues to do so alongside her current role of Group Coordinator.

Her appointment as Deputy Chair for the third time will support our objective of securing business resilience.

Will Philpott, Chair



Those members who attended the July meeting were treated to an inspiring, informative and at times emotional presentation by 2 representatives from the Cancer Research UK charity.

Gemma Kitchen talked us through her own family experiences that led to her joining the charity.

Cancer Research UK is the world's largest independent cancer research organisation and a registered charity dedicated to saving lives through research, influence, and information. Formed on 4 February 2002 by the merger of The Cancer Research Campaign and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, the charity supports the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors, and nurses across the UK to help prevent, diagnose, and treat more than 200 types of cancer.

We heard about just some of the amazing developments supported by this amazing organisation, which are already saving lives and improving diagnosis and treatment to sufferers.



Gemma also ran a brief quiz on some of the more unusual donations the charity had received, ranging from a stuffed parrot to gold bars and artwork.



Gemma explained that gifts in wills are one of the most powerful ways to support their work and help find new ways to prevent, detect and treat cancer for future generations.

For information on how you can support this invaluable charity, visit the website:

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org>

Meetings Coming Up.....

August 20th 2026

A Right Royal Couple - Mick Byrne

2022 marked the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the end of her 70-year reign, following her passing on September 8th, after the Duke of Edinburgh's death in April 2021. The talk shares little-known facts and humorous anecdotes about the couple, offering new insights into their lives.

September 17th 2026

Golden Age Of Radio - Roger Browne

Roger is a professional raconteur, writer, director, and pianist. This talk covers various aspects of entertainment from the post-war years, including fascinating historical facts, hilarious anecdotes, and live piano playing. You will also hear how many modern radio and TV programmes draw their inspiration from the creators of these innovative broadcasts.

About Daventry, Do You Know.....

Answers on page10

1. Daventry is immortalised in literary history; William Shakespeare famously referenced the town's whip makers in one of his plays. Can you name which play?
2. A world-famous chef spent his childhood in Daventry. Can you name which chef?
3. Daventry Town Football Club has been in existence for more than 100 years, but can you name the year it was formed?
4. Dantre Hospital dates back to 1836. Do you know what its original purpose was?
5. Where in Daventry would you see this?





55+ Health & Wellbeing Event

Will Philpott and Brenda Mills attended the Signpost 55+ Event at Daventry's Leisure Centre on 23rd July from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm, with their 'u3a Promotional and Recruitment', 'Chair' and 'Deputy Chair' hats on!! 🧢 🧢



It proved to be a worthwhile event where they were able to talk to many of the visitors and give away lots of leaflets and information, that could lead to increasing our local awareness and current membership. It was also an opportunity to network with many of the other local organisations there, some of whom had no knowledge of the u3a. Many of them were very keen to know more about our activities and include us in their future remit - and them in ours via our Newsletter and social media posts.

Promoting our u3a is crucial to ensure the local community is not only aware of our wonderful organisation but also understands the range of opportunities which exist and the potential for much more, for those who are retired or semi-retired to learn, laugh and live.

However, we can't do that alone, so please consider how you could play a part in helping to promote our u3a and contact any committee member. Thanks

Brenda Mills
Will Philpott

55+ Health & Wellbeing Event
Thursday 23rd July 10am - 2pm
Daventry Leisure Centre

Come and find out about Health & Wellbeing services tailored to people aged 55 years and above. There will be a chance to:-

- Talk to and explore what local charity organisations have to offer
- Access some NHS screening services
- Engage with various Public Health teams about Healthy Lifestyles
- Learn about further signposting to other wellbeing services

Requesting Volunteers For Tea Making



1. Purpose of the Request

- Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve tea/coffee.
- Our monthly meeting at the community centre, where refreshments are served, is desperately short of members ready to devote just ONE DAY A YEAR!!
- Your help will make the occasion welcoming and well organised.

2. Volunteer Roles Needed

- Setting up cups, teaspoons, milk, sugar, tea bags, and biscuits.
- Boiling water and preparing teapots or drink stations safely.
- Serving refreshments and helping members as needed.
- Clearing away cups and tidying the kitchen or serving area afterwards.

3. Time Commitment

- As per our Programme of Events.
- Arrival time for setting up is 1 pm, and approximate finishing time after clearing away is 4 pm. The meeting is in between!!
- Other options, such as helping before, during, or after the event, are very welcome.

4. Skills or Requirements

- No special experience is needed; a friendly manner and willingness to help are enough.
- Please follow any kitchen, hygiene, or safety guidance provided.
- Handling hot water will be involved.

5. Sign-Up Details

- If you think you can help, please contact Barbara Wood, our Social Secretary.
- Please use the signup sheet, available on the sign-in desk at the community centre meetings, leaving your contact email or contact number.
- Please specify if you have a preferred month to volunteer.
- It would be great if we could ensure we have members signed up on the rota as soon as possible, as at the moment we have no one booked in after July.

Thank you in advance for your support and remember that even a small amount of help will be greatly appreciated.



News From Our Groups.....

Wine Appreciation Group...

Alan Jones

u3a Wine Appreciation Meeting 20.07.26

When the scheduled speaker had to cancel due to a hospital appointment, Lynn Jones took the opportunity to drink in 'La Dolce Vita' and to share some of her experiences of Italy and Italian wines. Her rapid research found this subject to have enough material for many seasons of tastings. The country produces the equivalent volume of wine to 1.37 billion bottles, from 20 wine-producing areas with a choice of over 400 different grape varieties.

For her talk, Lynn shrank her whistle-stop tour of the country to 4 wines starting in the North with a white Trebbiano wine from a region linked to the Roman Empire, Emilia-Romagna. Trebbiano was the first wine she had tasted in her youth. It was a hot summer and her father had gone to the local wine shop for a suggestion to have with his Sunday lunch. The proprietor, Roberto, was Italian and his wife Spanish. The immediate answer being that Trebbiano, was light, refreshing, and easy drinking. A benchmark for Lynn's summer choice from that time on.

Continuing the journey south, the next stop would be in Puglia for her second white wine choice. Lynn had holidayed in Ostuni early in the new millennium. The town had the feel of a Fellini film, with its cobbled streets, widow ladies in black cleaning the steps to their houses, and street lighting that swayed from cables suspended over the streets. When she had enquired at the local wine shop to purchase some local wine, she was told they do not grow wine there, but olives. The wine production was not local; it was 10 miles down the road. With the coast and seafood being prevalent, the Southern wines are suited to pasta, poultry and seafood.

The next geographical stop was a Red Wine from the Abruzzo region. In part, this was chosen for the way the name of the wine rolled off the tongue, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo. A more robust wine that was described as suitable to accompany steak and, of course, pizza.

The final stop involved a short sea crossing to the volcanic island of Sicily. Etna is still very much a part of island life, last erupting in February of 2021. Famous for the towns of Palermo and Syracuse and its Mafia connections. The island is the largest producer of Italian Organic wines. The final wine selection, again being a red wine, was a Nero d'Avola, which was well received by the group. To be sampled with Grilled Lamb or Parmigiano cheese.

The next meeting of the Wine Appreciation Group will be a trip to a Vineyard, no passport required. They will be going to Welland Valley Vineyard on the 24th August.



Bridge Group....

Brian Donkersley

The club met, as usual, on the second Tuesday in July, although due to the heat and holiday plans, the numbers were on the low side with just a single table.

This did, though, provide a great opportunity for some more “in-depth” analysis of hands, with particular focus on declarer counting winners and losers before deciding the best way to play the hand.

Although the commitment is for the group to meet monthly, in light of anticipated holidays, heatwaves and other commitments, a decision has been made to cancel the meetings in August and September. So the next meeting will be on Thursday, October 8th at 2.00 pm in the bar at Daventry & District Golf Club.

Anyone requiring further information should contact me via brinflow@btinternet.com or 01327 437036.

Wishing everyone a good late Summer.

Golf Group....

Jackie Ray

Thanks to all who attended the last meeting, where members either played 9 holes or spent time in the golf simulator with the golf professional.

The next event is on Friday 28th August 2026 at 10 am. There will be the option to use the golf simulator, putting green, or driving range, or to play 9 holes.

Please let us know if you can attend and your preferred option.



Fishing Buddies...

Brenda Mills, Group Coordinator

I am now able to offer you another new group opportunity, as one of our members would like to set up a group called **FISHING BUDDIES!**

If you are a fisherman/woman and would like the opportunity to go fishing with like-minded people on an ad hoc basis, then this could be the group for you.

More details will follow shortly, but if you are interested in finding out more, then please let me know, so that I can put you on my 'interested' list and we can progress towards getting this exciting opportunity underway.



Did You Know....

The largest fish ever caught on a rod and line in a UK river was a Sturgeon weighing in at 414 pounds. It was landed in 1903 on the River Severn.

In a separate historic catch, a 9ft 3 inch sturgeon, weighing 203 pounds (approx. 94 kg) was caught on the River Frome in Dorset in 1911.



Imagine the size of
‘the one that got away!’



Choosing The Next Prime Minister.....

Michele Mackreath, Creative Writing Group

Simon Sugar Sturgess flopped down, red-faced and still panting, onto his big leather Prime Minister's chair behind his big leather Prime Minister's desk inside his Private Office at Number Ten. He bundled up his skipping rope and threw it into his desk drawer, where he kept all his personal things.



His doctor had advised five minutes of skipping every hour in a secret attempt to reduce the size of his belly, which had gotten so big he was struggling to do up the buttons on his shirts. It was not a good look, as proved by a recent press conference after which, despite pre-election announcements to decrease the cost of living, improve the NHS and house the homeless, it was his increasing girth which had stolen the headlines: 'Will Britain choose a weighty man to do a weighty job?'

Simon sighed. It was hard enough to keep the journalists from criticising every action in his working life without being vilified for his private love of doughnuts as well. It wasn't fair – after all he'd done for this country! To calm his rising frustration, he reached into the drawer, took out a tennis ball and began squeezing it rhythmically. Gradually, his breathing returned to normal, and he was able to think more clearly.

'I need a doughnut!' He thought and opening his briefcase, searched for his packet of buy two get one free special offers. There was one left. He picked it out and began munching, safe in the knowledge that he was hidden from view if anyone should enter unannounced, behind the towering piles of documents, files and folders that lined his desk. Jam dribbled down his chin.

Finishing the doughnut all too quickly, he stood up to brush the sugary evidence off his lap. His gaze fell upon his much-cuddled childhood teddy bear perched on the bookshelves behind the door. In a fond tone, he asked, 'Now, Winston, who do you think should get the job of the next Prime Minister?' He liked talking to Winston. He could say what he liked and Winston never answered back.

Hit by a sugar rush, he cried out triumphantly, 'Aha! I have the answer!' Whereupon he reached into his trouser pocket and took out his lucky piece of chalk, a present from his favourite professor at Oxford, and put it on the desk in front of him.

He sat back down and from his drawer, took out a pair of dice and four large tiddlywinks left behind three years ago, when his young daughter, Melissa, had visited with his wife on the day he'd been elected. To keep her occupied, Melissa had been allowed to sit in this very chair and play by herself, whilst Simon and his wife had posed for the camera. Such happy memories - his shirts had fit properly then. But enough of that, he had work to do...

With the chalk, he drew a grid in the middle of the leather desk top, four columns wide by twelve rows and placed a tiddlywink at the base of each column, each representing a potential candidate. There was red for Pedantic Perkins, blue for Lily-livered Longbottom, yellow for Whiney Whittington and green for Torpid Thorpe. Raising his eyebrows, he thought, 'I wouldn't put it past any of this lot to rat out my private stash of doughnuts in a time of economic crisis.'

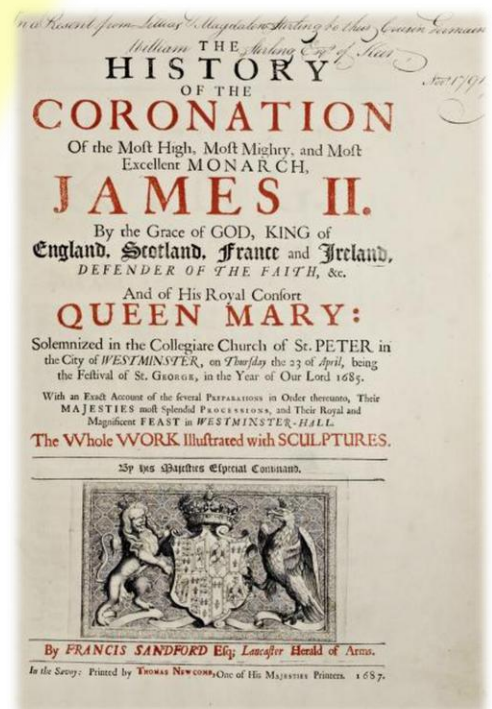
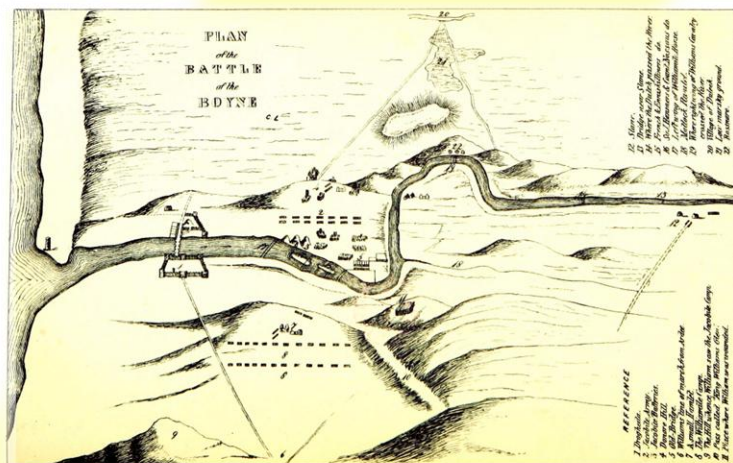
In turn, he rolled the dice, then moved each tiddlywink the corresponding number of places up each column. A clear winner came into view and he relaxed back in his chair, his work complete. 'Well, it's as good a way as any to decide, don't you agree, Winston?' Adding, 'We shall have doughnuts for tea.'

History Group.... William Philpott

At this month's meeting, Will Philpott talked about James II & VII, whose short reign of less than four years unintentionally resulted in what became known as the Glorious Revolution. Despite converting to Catholicism he was crowned King on the death of his older brother Charles in 1685.

However, his rule quickly generated growing opposition to what seemed to be a drive to take England and Scotland back to embracing the Catholic faith as the dominant religion.

In the face of an invasion by his son-in-law William of Orange and daughter Mary at the end of 1688, James fled England and despite a subsequent attempt to regain the throne through military force in Ireland, the Protestant ascendancy was re-established.



Art Appreciation Group.....

Angela Adams

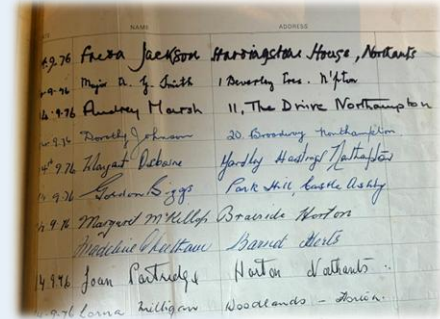
On Tuesday, July 7th, 15 members plus a friend took a DACT bus and visited St Margaret's Church, Denton, which is on the Bedford side of Northampton. Through a chance visit to the church last year, I was "bowed over" by what I found there and was keen that the members of the Art Appreciation Group also had an opportunity to see it. The church, of 13th-century origins, was rebuilt in 1827-28 and is unusually a "square box" However, it is the decoration inside which we had gone to see. In the late 60s, a plan was "dreamt up" to ask the local (to Northampton) artist Henry Bird to paint murals on every wall, and this was achieved from 1975-76.



We were welcomed to the church by the ladies of the parish with glasses of cold water on what was a very hot day and then one of them, Susan Wilson, gave us a talk on the history of the church and its murals. She admitted that she doesn't know a great deal about the murals, in so much as what medium was used, etc but was able to tell us that several local people were used as models for figures in the paintings and the one, in the toilet, records a local event!

Each mural portrays a biblical or holy theme and trees in different seasons feature in each one. Members were then able to "discover" them for themselves with notes provided.

It took several years for Henry Bird to do all the work, as every wall and the ceiling in the church are literally covered with his paintings, which tell a story. As well as being a prolific artist, Henry was also very involved in the theatre. He painted the very lovely Safety Curtain that still hangs in the Royal Theatre in Northampton. Henry was married to an actress, Freda Jackson, who was famous in the theatre world in her day. When the church was finally opened to the public in September 1976, Freda was the first person to sign the visitors' book 🇪🇵. Although it was said she did not actually like the work!



We were then treated to a wonderful selection of homemade cakes and scones baked by Pat Terry and her team at Denton. All in all, we felt we had had a wonderful afternoon, so much so that I'm hoping we can repeat it next year with other members who weren't able to go this year.



There are still more Henry Bird paintings to be seen in other churches, so we look forward to more "exploration". Our next event is the annual garden party at Brenda and Robert Mills's home on Tuesday, August 4th at 2.30, to which all Art Appreciation members are invited. As usual, we're hoping for nice weather and are looking forward to the occasion

The Motoring Group.....

Barbara Wood

The first-ever Mini Road Trip was organised by Wendy Duckett and enjoyed by all!! A dozen reckless souls braved the heatwave and set off on the clearly explained 'place and pace' so that members could complete the full trip or join along the way. The first stop was the *Kingsley Café at Eynsham*. It is much larger than is obvious from the road, including a huge tented area containing a stage for live music events, and an enormous screen to view the World Cup football. The café contains a very interesting collection of memorabilia, including artworks. Whilst some opted for a good old English fry up, others chose one of the many delicious cakes and pastries. Once the group were all finished eating and drinking, we set off for the next stop at *Clarkson's Diddly Squat Farm*.



What a popular place this turned out to be! The number of visitors was just staggering. The queue to visit the shop must have been several hundred yards long, with several pop up gazebos erected to keep the waiting customers cool in the intense heat of the day.

We decided that we were not that desperate to see inside, especially as we discovered that two small tubs of ice cream cost £12!! However, for those who are interested to see, here is a shot from the website. We lost one member of the group here due to his phone suffering a meltdown from the heat, so he was advised that we were moving onto the pottery rather than the planned mooch around the shop.

The Hook Norton Pottery was reached via a delightful drive through the somewhat scorched English countryside. In fact, part of the joy of this trip was a chance to enjoy the views from the very swoopy roads (or undulating, as Wendy corrected me!) We were very lucky to bag a tent complete with tables and chairs set underneath in the shade for rehydrating, and of course, more eating.



The rice bowls received praise, as did all items purchased from the kitchen. All are freshly prepared or cooked in-house. We had a chance here to thank Wendy for her well-guided tour, and she rather rashly offered to arrange another for us all. We then set off to visit both the shop and the workshops. We had full access to the potters, who were all happy to explain the various processes to us. Some of the items on the shelves were moulds for National Trust properties and other well-known properties. It is a delightful sight, much enhanced by the glorious weather, making the colours in the grounds really 'pop'. Very envious of the beautifully planted tubs, many of the plants I had not seen before looked almost exotic and more suited to the Caribbean!! Pictures show tools used by the potters to add decoration, and some pots in the yard.

After resisting the temptation of the pots and shop we returned to our rather 'warm' cars for the very enjoyable ride home through the countryside.

Our next outing is to Motorsportopia Café in Marsh Gibbon, and the last chance to get those shots for the Photo Competition in August. There is of course a prize for the winner!!



French Conversation Group.....

Kath Whiting

Here are some photos of our annual Bastille Day garden party, held on 22 July - a bit late this year.

It was a lovely afternoon with wonderful refreshments and good company on a beautiful sunny day - but not too hot!

Many thanks to Bill and Denise, who hosted the event this year.



About Daventry, Do You Know..... Answers

1. A. In his play **Henry IV, Part 1 (Act 4, Scene 2)**, Shakespeare directly teases the town. The character Falstaff, describing how his soldiers have been plundering food and goods along their march, remarks that a shirt was "**stolen from my host at St Albans, or the red-nosed innkeeper of Daventry**"

2. A: *Gordon Ramsey*

3. A: 1886



4. A: *It was originally built as the Daventry Union Workhouse.*

5. A: *On top of Moot Hall, Chapel Lane, Daventry*





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	AM
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	PM
Folk Dancing	W	Thurs	AM	Spanish Conversation (Basic)	F	Wed	PM
French Conversation 1	F	Wed	PM	Supper Club	M	Wed	Eve
French Conversation 2	F	Wed	PM	The Art Of Painting	F	Wed	PM
Garden Vistas & Views	M	Fri	Day	The Stories In My Life	M	Thurs	PM
Golf	M	Fri	AM	Virtual Book Group	M	Tue	Day
History I	M	4 th Wed	PM	Weekenders	M	Sat/Sun	AM/PM
Moto	Meet On Various Days			Wine Appreciation	Bi-Monthly	Various Days	PM
Motoring	M	Tue	AM				

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