Learn Laugh Live

u3a Daventry & District

Newsletter October 2026

#121

Thoughts From Our Chairman...

Our u3a continues to go from strength to strength with more new members and new activity groups being formed. We take every opportunity to promote the opportunities available through membership.

This month we secured space at two local events. Stronger Together was held on Friday 2nd, a conference at the iCon centre where a range of organisations and speakers were represented. Later this month, we will be present at Daventry Community Centre for the Over 55 Advice and Information Fayre (see below for details). Meanwhile, enjoy your latest newsletter and do consider submitting your own ideas, news or events for consideration.

Will Philpott, Chair



Meet your committee members.....

All committee members are Trustees, and every charity, such as each individual u3a is required to have them to secure that status, and we want to remind you of who we are and the allotted role each of us has...

- Chair – Will Philpott
- Business Secretary – Lynda Moran
- Treasurer – Ann Smith
- Membership Secretary – Jan Townend
- Group Co-ordinator – Brenda Mills
- Newsletter – Geoff Dent
- Speaker Seeker – Barbara Douglas
- Social Secretary – Barbara Wood
- Beacon / IT Co-ordinator – Ian Bland
- Deputy Group Co-ordinator – Wendy Hall
- PR Events -- All

Inevitably, our u3a is wholly dependent on volunteers and in addition to the committee, we always need additional volunteers to step forward, even on an ad hoc basis, to keep the organisation thriving.

Golden Age Of Radio - Roger Browne

Those who attended the September meeting were treated to a fun afternoon listening to Roger and his colleague Roy, as they took us down memory lane. Memories of "Round the Horne", "Letter from America", "Journey into Space", "Family Favourites","In Town Tonight", "Dick Barton - Special Agent" and many others. Roger describes himself as a professional pianist/speaker and singer.



Born in Blackpool, Roger spent his childhood in Salford. The latter provides the butt of many of his jokes. It was listening to the radio that sparked his love of music, and at the age of four he was singing in public. Roger explained the reason for his retirement from singing at the age of eight to pursue piano playing, following a local talent competition that didn't end well.

By introducing short bursts of music on his piano, he ensured that his audience was thoroughly enjoying his wit. Roger accompanied Roy, who sang songs of nostalgia, allowing us all to join in.

A great way to spend an hour or so!!!

Meetings Coming Up.....

October 15th 2026

The Military Outside Weedon Depot - Doreen Addicott

In view of the fear of an invasion by Napoleon, the Government of the day decided to build an ordnance depot in a location that was furthest from the coast. In 1814, construction commenced and turned a small rural village into the central munitions and equipment storage facility for the British Army.

November 19th 2026

The Sound Of Their Music - Rodgers & Hammerstein—Steve Dimmer

The most successful songwriting partnership of all time is examined in all its melodic glory.

Steve traces the team's progress from their first hit, Oklahoma and onward to Carousel, South Pacific, The King and I, and of course, The Sound of Music. But did you know there are many other musicals penned by Rodgers and Hammerstein? This talk looks at those as well.



Know Your Churches?

Can you name the village where these churches can be found?

Answers on page 9











From Our Groups....

Natural History Group.....

Richard Piner

After a month off in August, eight of us met at Daventry Country Park for a sunny walk round.

The water level was very low, but we still saw plenty of water birds, including a pair of passing black-tailed godwits as well as the usual mix of ducks, geese, gulls, herons and egrets.

There is a new viewing platform in the park, which we were able to take advantage of to get a better view across the water.

We met later in the month than usual due to my holiday commitments, but we will be back to the normal first Thursday in October.



New Experiences And Adventures Group.....

Deborah Bull



On Saturday 19th September, on a very windy afternoon, 15 of us went to an archery taster session at Towcestrians Sports Club. We were met by Dean and his two instructors. Dean explained safety first! Not to cross the safety line until we heard 3 whistles! We learnt this rule pretty quickly! He explained all about the bow, how to hold it, load the arrow and how to stand when aiming at the target.

Dean then gave a demonstration and off we all went, with lots of support from him and the two instructors. It was quite strange and fiddly at first to hold the bow correctly and then load the arrow, but we all did brilliantly once we got the hang of it.

Some of us even scored a bullseye! Balloons were added to the target to add a bit of fun. We managed to burst them quite effectively and medals were awarded. It was really exciting to learn something new and everyone enjoyed themselves.

The Motoring Group ...

Barbara Wood

Motoring Group flying high!!

Our free outing for September was to the RAF Halton Trenchard Museum, a vast site near Wendover in Buckinghamshire. To say the day was full of very pleasant surprises would be an understatement. We arrived with full instructions on what to do and awaited our collection by the guides.

As we were guided through the site, the size of it became more obvious, and this was only one side of the road. Let alone the airfield a little further out, which I later discovered allowed a Vulcan bomber to land – just the once! It never took off again. I was intrigued to know how they managed to stop it – by releasing the parachutes before it hit the ground, apparently.

The site was acquired from the Rothschild family for £120,000 just after WW1, having originally been 'lent' to the British military. It is now one of the largest RAF stations and home to approximately 2100 personnel from all three armed services, contractors and civilians.



In addition to the main museum, the James McCudden Flight Heritage Centre and Trenchard Archive are also situated on the site. The museum houses 'rooms' that depict the various activities carried out on the site, an actual Folland Gnat aircraft, together with an abundance of information. Our Group Co-ordinator climbed aboard the Gnat!!



We were fascinated to find that if you knitted items for the RAF during the war you could obtain extra wool rations!! And some of the recipes in an old cookery book contained some very exotic ingredients. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of time given to us by the guides, their knowledge and enthusiasm. The stars of the show were the flight simulators – again I had no idea we would be allowed access to these.

One of the guides was a former RAF and Concorde pilot. As one member said "it was a great pleasure to go to a museum where there were things to do rather than just things to see. It is not often you go to a museum and come home having flown an aeroplane – even if it was in a simulator".



We were limited in taking photographs of the exterior of the site, but we were able to take interior pictures quite freely, and I have included some of these. The group photo, by the Typhoon, was taken by a guide, with just a couple of members missing in action. Visit www.trenchardmuseum.org.uk, to see what you missed!

Our next outing is to Armourgeddon Military Museum, where we will enjoy lunch and watch tanks on manoeuvres from the café, or even take a ride.

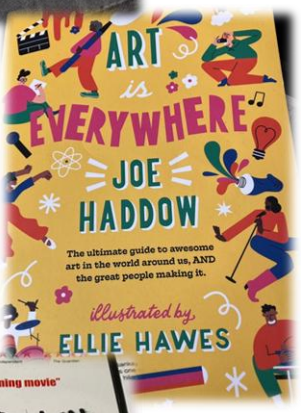
Art Appreciation Group.....

Angela Adams

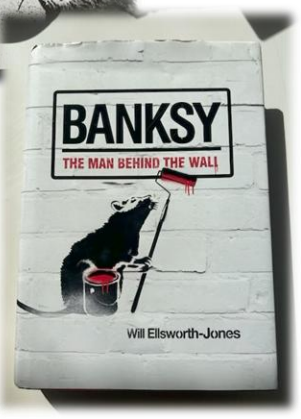
For some time, Brenda and I have discussed what we are trying to achieve or portray at the Art Appreciation meetings and we have decided that art is all around us, no matter where. As we showed by inviting members to “examine” T-shirt design some months ago! Shall we look at tattoos next? By chance, I found a children’s book, “Art is Everywhere” by Joe Haddow, being sold off at the library and the title echoed what we had been saying! In the book, I found a section on Banksy and another “graffiti” artist who I hadn’t heard of before, an American Hebu Brantley.











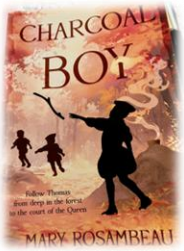
I was not at all sure that our members would find the film interesting and I was prepared for folk to go home early. However, they all seemed to thoroughly enjoy it and we all concluded that it was a case of the “Emperor’s New Clothes”. But Banksy’s work does still have a “message” and certainly it’s everywhere. One doesn’t have to pay to see it. I look forward to discovering more street art all around us. I hear there’s something in Sheaf Street, Daventry?

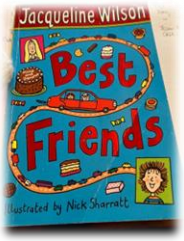
Our next meeting is on October 6th at Badby. (Please note: NOT Everdon) Village Hall, when members will “link” a painting or picture to a piece of music
For more information, please contact Angela Adams at dxadams@mac.com or 07957995944

Alternative Book Group.....

Angela Adams













As I have already explained, at the Alternative Book Group meetings, we do not discuss a set book. We talk about the books we are reading or have just read. Sometimes I have "thrown out" an idea or challenge, e.g. to read a non-fiction book or, another time, a book of short stories, by the next time we were to meet.

Some time ago I suggested reading a children's book and we would then discuss them. However, most members had misunderstood and talked about their favourite book from their childhood days. So, this July I "challenged" the group to read a children's book or author that they had never read before. This time the challenge was understood and a variety of authors and titles were discussed.

Interestingly, one of our members, Jenny, had asked her grandson what he would recommend and he suggested "The Butterfly Lion" by Michael Morpugo, which Jenny had enjoyed reading. Enid Blyton, of course, was mentioned and Gill, who said she hardly read anything as a child (now an avid reader!), had tried one of the Malory Towers books but she was a bit mystified by it.

David Walliams, Jacqueline Wilson, and Roald Dahl were some of the well-known authors tried. Kay had read a book written by one of her relations, Mary Rosmbeau, "Charcoal Boy." Maureen had read a Little Grey Rabbit book (which I adored as a child) and was surprised by some of the vocabulary used! I had tried reading the Moomin stories by Tove Jansson and took along a crocheted Moomintroll to the meeting (see photo)

We were very pleased to welcome Jean Kairis to our meeting as a "one-off." I had invited Jean, as she is a member of the Chalet School Book Club and regularly attends their meetings. She talked to us about these books (more than 100!) by Elinor Brent Dyer and other similar authors who were or still are writing for older children (mostly for girls). All in all, we had an interesting meeting and who knows what the next challenge might be!









Bridge Group... Brian Donkersley

Following a Summer break, the Bridge group will meet again on the 8th of October at Daventry and District Golf Club from 2.00 PM to 4.00 PM.

Players of all standards and those wishing to learn the game are welcome to join us for a fun afternoon.

The session costs just £2, with a variety of beverages available for purchase.

The group leader, Brian Donkersley, has just returned from a Baltic cruise on which he was recognised for organising a sea day Bridge Group involving u3a members from across the country.

If anyone requires more information, Brian can be contacted by e-mail via brinflow@btinternet.com.



Just Think About It.....

If 5 cats catch 5 mice in 5 minutes, how many cats are needed to catch 100 mice in 100 minutes?



Answer on page 9

Current Affairs... Geoff Dent

At our meeting this month, the group had an interesting discussion about 'El Niño' and explored the likely impacts on our weather.

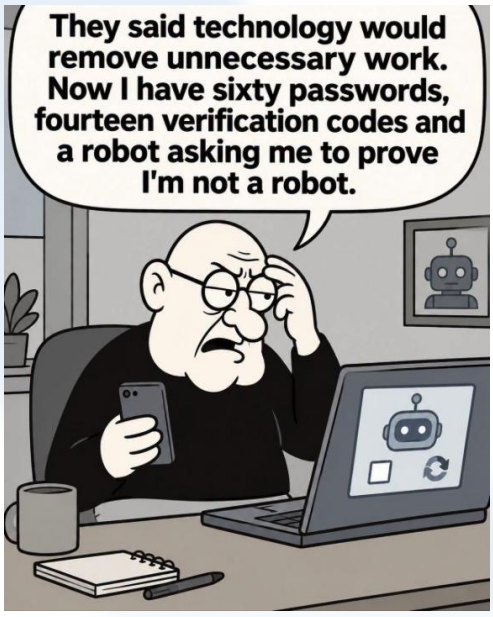
'El Niño' is a naturally occurring climate pattern characterised by the unusual warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. This shift disrupts normal wind and rainfall patterns on a global scale. Currently, a 'Super El Niño' is strengthening through late 2026, with meteorologists predicting it could be one of the largest and most intense on record.

Because it acts like a massive radiator, releasing heat into the atmosphere, scientists warn that its lingering effects will likely make 2027 the hottest year in recorded history, temporarily pushing global temperatures past the 1.5°C pre-industrial threshold.

During an El Niño event, the trade winds weaken or even reverse. As a result, the warm water surges backwards toward the Americas. This massive displacement of ocean heat alters the path of the jet stream, triggering a domino effect of extreme weather around the world.

The afternoon conversations led us down a number of paths: climate change, various political stances, defence, migration, the Middle East conflict and AI.

So, of course, we solved all these issues in just a couple of hours, as we always do!



History Group.....
William Philpott

Colin Davenport concluded his four-part talk on the monarchs of Britain, starting with the Hanoverians through to the reign of King Charles III. Events which took place during just over a three-hundred-year period were referred to, including legislative changes such as the Enclosures, Municipal Corporations, and Reform Acts.



Conflicts included the Boer War and the two World Wars (the first one saw an urgent name change of the Royal Family from Saxe-Coburg Gotha to Windsor due to the conflict). Colin concluded by posing the question of the extent to which the monarchy remains relevant to the UK today.







A Poem For... Halloween



Silver Moon

The silver moon climbs high and cold,
While autumn sheds her red and gold.
A whisper stirs the naked trees,
Where shadows ride the midnight breeze.

The lantern grins with toothy light,
To guard the porch against the night.
With ghostly steps and muffled tread,
The living dance beside the dead.

Oh, magic hour of mask and spell,
Where ancient fears and wonders dwell,
Before the dawn dissolves the gleam,
We walk inside the haunted dream.

Communities Section..... A section dedicated to promoting charities and appropriate services or events within our region. If you would like more information, please get in touch with the relevant organisations directly.



Are you a mature driver aged 60+? Do you live in Northamptonshire and rely on driving to stay independent? This **free event** is designed especially for you.

Driving plays an important role in everyday life, and as part of the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance, we are keen to help mature drivers stay safer on the roads for longer. While driving ability can change over time for many reasons, particularly as we get older, recognising and adapting to these changes can help keep both drivers and other road users safe.

This Mature Drivers event is aimed at drivers aged 60+ and will cover a wide range of topics related to safe driving, including:

- Practical advice and safety information
- Opportunities to reflect on how driving needs may change over time
- FREE hints-and-tips driving sessions, available to book and delivered by Northampton Advanced Motorists at a convenient date

Our aim is simple: to help mature drivers drive safely, confidently, and for longer.

Event details

- **When:** Wednesday 14 October 2026
- **Where:** The Hub at DIRFT, Dirft Drive, Crick, NN6 7GZ (what3words: ///holiday.twinkling.lofts)
- **Time:** Two sessions available: 10 am and 1 pm



Know Your Churches?
The Answers.....



Braunston,
All Saints



Kilsby,
St Faiths



Fawsley,
St Mary, The Virgin



Welton,
St Martin's



West Haddon,
All Saints

Just Think About It .....The Answer!

Each cat catches 1 mouse every 5 minutes. In 100 minutes, one cat catches 20 mice, so 5 cats catch 100.



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
Acoustics	W	Mon	PM
Alternative Book Group	M	Thurs	AM
Any Crafts Will Do	F	Mon	PM
Art Appreciation	M	Tue	PM
Art For Pleasure	F	Tue	AM
BakeXChange	M	Fri	PM
Bird Watching / Nature	M	Thurs	AM/PM
Book Group	M	Tue	PM
Bridge	M	Thurs	PM
Climate Change	M	Thurs	PM
Creative Writing	M	Wed	AM
Cribbage	F	Fri	PM
Current Affairs	Third Wed Of The Month		PM
Folk Dancing	W	Thurs	AM
French Conversation 1	F	Wed	PM
French Conversation 2	F	Wed	PM
Garden Vistas & Views	M	Fri	Day
Golf	M	Fri	AM
History I	M	4th Wed	PM
MOTO	Meet On Various Days		

Frequency Key: M = Monthly F = Fortnightly W = Weekly	Frequency	Day	Time
Motoring	M	Tue	AM
New Experiences	Activity Dependent		
Philosophy	M	Tue	AM
Photography For Pleasure	M	Tue	PM
Rambles (4-6 Miles)	M	Mon	AM
Reading Shakespeare 1	M	Fri	AM
Reading Shakespeare 2	M	Mon	PM
Rummikub 1	M	3rd Wed	AM
Rummikub 2	M	Wed	Eve
Rummikub 3	M	Tue	PM
Rummikub 4	M	3rd Wed	PM
Scrabble	M	1st Mon	PM
Spanish Conversation	F	Mon	PM
Spanish Conversation (Basic)	F	Wed	PM
Supper Club	M	Wed	Eve
The Art Of Painting	F	Wed	PM
The Stories In My Life	M	Thurs	PM
Virtual Book Group	M	Tue	Day
Weekenders	M	Sat/Sun	AM/PM
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.

For information about any of the above groups email Brenda Mills on: u3agroupsdaventry@gmail.com

To contact the editor of the monthly newsletter with all your comments, news and photos:
daventryu3a.newsletter@gmail.com