

July newsletter

Welcome everyone to the July edition of the newsletter

In June we had five very interesting talks, kicking off on June 1st with The NC500 by yours truly, me! I hope my talk inspired some of you to either take part in the NC500 or to visit some of the places along the route! Our next talk was by volunteers from the Canal and River Trust. We had the history of the canals, what projects are going on in the Birmingham area and how you can volunteer. They even have initiatives like 'Walk with a Doctor', with this pilot scheme giving residents the chance to share their medical concerns with local GPs as they stroll along the Birmingham New Main Line Canal. Sounds like a great idea!

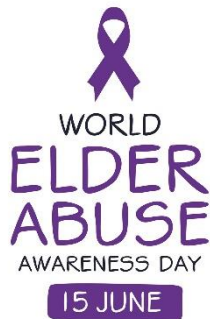
Alistair ran the next two meetings with 'Bring a CD' and 'Poetry Please'.

We had quite an eclectic mix of music for our 'Bring a CD' morning kicking off with Tony Bennett and 'I Left my Heart in San Francisco' and finishing with Hamish MacCunn and 'The Land of the Mountain and the Flood'. Such a variety of music in between- - jazz, classical, pop, folk – we had it all! A few of the CD's shared can be seen below.

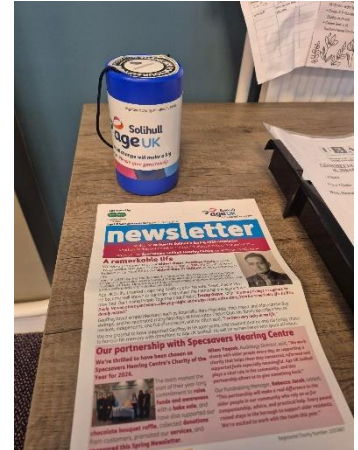


This was followed by our 'Poetry Please' session which, similarly, gave us quite a variety of poems. There were two poets that stood out as being chosen by more than one member – Freda and Alistair chose monologues by Marriott Edgar – *'Albert and the Lion'* and *'The Battle of Hastings'* whilst Catherine and Penny chose poems by Brian Bilston namely *'And Now for the Weather'* and *'Refugees'*. If you get a moment, check these pieces out, they were very entertaining!

Our last meet in June was led by Michael Squires on Conspiracy Theories and what an interesting morning that was. Who knew the conspiracy theory relating to the death of Paul McCartney and who noticed on the famous album cover of the Beatles crossing Abbey Road, that Paul wasn't wearing any shoes and had a cigarette in his right hand when he is left-handed – intriguing! The conspiracy theories got us all thinking!



On **June 15th** it was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Angela introduced this to the group – some people wore purple to show their support and/or made a donation to Age UK Solihull. Thanks, Angela for bringing this worthwhile cause to the U3A and raising its awareness. We raised £54.53 for this worthy cause so, thank you



Thenford Gardens

Over twenty members visited Thenford Gardens on **19th June**. The weather was glorious! Many of us started our trip at the National Herb Centre in Warmington, near Banbury. We couldn't believe the number of different herbs available! They sold everything you would expect in a garden centre, had stunning views over the local countryside whilst also providing the perfect spot for lunch.



We then moved on to Thenford and the gardens of Michael Heseltine. What a treat awaited us. There were different 'rooms' to visit within the garden including the sculptures, the water rill, the walled garden and the lakeside walks. You will see below a selection of photographs to give you a flavour of the place with the blue sky reflecting the heat of the day as walked around. Thank you to Mary and Alistair for organising this trip and I'm sure we all look forward to the next day out wherever that may be!



July in history

At 02:56 GMT on 21 July 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first person to walk on the Moon. He stepped out of the Apollo 11 lunar module and onto the Moon's surface, in an area called the 'Sea of Tranquility.'

Armstrong reported the lunar module's safe landing at 20:17 GMT with the words: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." As an estimated 650 million people watched, Armstrong proclaimed, as he stepped on to the moon's surface: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."



Michael Collins stayed aboard the Command Module *Columbia*, serving as a communications link and photographing the lunar surface.

At 03:15 GMT, Armstrong was joined by the lunar module pilot, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin. The two colleagues collected data and soil samples before planting the US flag at 03:41 GMT. They also unveiled a plaque bearing President Nixon's signature and an inscription reading:

"Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the Moon July 1969 AD. We came in peace for all mankind."

There are some very good videos on the internet. There is a link to one below

<https://plus.nasa.gov/video/the-flight-of-apollo-11/>

July celebrations

St. Swithuns/Swithins Day_(both spellings deemed correct)

This takes place annually on **15th July**. According to legend, if it rains on Saint Swithin's bridge in Winchester on this day, it will continue to rain for 40 days and 40 nights.

*St. Swithin's day if thou dost rain
For forty days it will remain
St. Swithin's day if thou be fair
For forty days 'twill rain nae mair.*

Who was St. Swithin?

Swithin was an Anglo-Saxon bishop of Winchester. He served the region from 852 to 862. Unlike other prominent religious figures who were buried inside cathedrals, Swithin explicitly requested to be buried outside in a simple tomb "where the sweet rain of heaven may fall upon my grave" and where his grave could easily be reached by members of the parish.



However, in 971 when the monastic reform movement had been established and religion was once again at the forefront, it was decreed that Swithin was to be the patron saint of the restored Cathedral at Winchester where an impressive shrine was built for him. Swithin's body was removed from its simple grave and interred in the new Cathedral on 15 July 971. This was obviously against his wishes. Legend claims his spirit was angered by the pomp and ceremony, summoning a massive, relentless storm that lasted for forty days.

Weather experts say that since records began in 1861, there has never been a record of forty dry or forty wet days in a row following St Swithin's Day.

What's on in July and August.

Here are a few things that may interest you over the summer:

Lunch Club will be held at the Mason's Arms in Solihull on **Tuesday 14th July** at 12.30pm. See Toni for details

21st July 7pm (£12)

The Core Theatre are showing a film about David Hockney which features interviews with the artist and looks at some of his exhibitions. It is entitled **David Hockney at the Royal Academy of Arts: A Bigger Picture (2012) & Portraits and One Still Life (2016)**

12th August outdoor theatre Brueton Park

Enjoy a summer evening of laughter and romance with [As You Like It](#) on Wednesday 12th August at 6pm. One of Shakespeare's most popular and enduring comedies, As You Like It follows four couples escaping into the mysterious Forest of Arden. Featuring banishments, disguises, mistaken identities and weddings, this timeless

play is a celebration of freedom in nature, making it perfect for viewing in Brueton Park.

I'm sure you all recognised this building – the Manor House on High Street. Here's what Solihull Council have to say about it.



The timber-framed Manor House in Solihull High Street was built in approximately 1495 and is Grade II listed. It has never actually been home to the Lord of the Manor so isn't a manor house in the traditional sense. Once owned by the Greswolde family, it was known by the 19th century as Lime Tree House as a result of the nine lime trees that had been planted outside it about 1720. For many years it was the surgery of local doctors Ferdinand Page and his son, Ericson.*

The building was purchased by a brewery in 1938 but plans to convert it into a public house were shelved on the outbreak of the Second World War. During the war the building was used as local headquarters by the Home Guard. In 1945 the house was sold, being purchased by a trust with funds raised through public subscription, and it was subsequently used as a community association and then as an adult education and social centre.

I do hope you all have a wonderful summer. The next newsletter will be available in September.

U3A finishes on 13th July and resumes on 7th September.

Take care everyone