

Hello everyone,

I must say it is good to be back every week at U3A; it's nice to be back in a routine. All our groups are up and running now which is great to see. If anyone feels they would like to introduce a new focus group please come and speak to someone on the committee – we would be really pleased to hear from you. Here are a few ideas to get you started (one might be 'right up your street!'): local studies/visits, garden visits, current affairs. That said, we possibly have a new group in the pipeline – a craft group. Jill is coordinating things at the moment.

A few weeks ago, we put forward the idea of starting a craft group which included learning the art of Japanese paper folding. There were about 14 people who showed an interest in this which was fantastic. I've spoken to someone who is experienced in running a group similar to this and so we hope to give everyone more news shortly.

Jill Park

Thanks Jill, watch this space!

We will also be putting out a sheet for members to write down suggestions for visits. If you've been somewhere local you really enjoyed, let us know. If you enjoyed it then we probably would too!

Events coming up

On **Tuesday 13th October at 10am**, Tony has organised a visit to **Bickerscourt farm**.



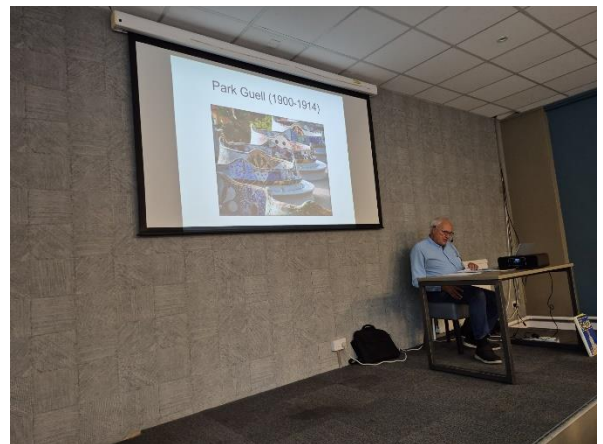
Bickerscourt farm is a 100-acre, five generation working family farm in Danzey Green near Henley-in Arden. It aims to enhance wellbeing through nature and being around animals. The visit involves a walk around the farm, a chance to meet their herd of Shire horses and includes time for tea or coffee and cake. If this date is full (the maximum number is twelve) then there will be another opportunity to visit in the

new year (date to be confirmed).

After our very successful **afternoon tea** at the British Legion in February, Mary has organised another afternoon tea with prosecco at the same venue on **Tuesday 27th October 1pm**. Please sign up on the sheet provided or speak to Mary.

Monday morning talks

We started off the new term with a fantastic talk by Alistair entitled *Antoni Gaudi, God's Architect*.



This was followed by a shared session between myself talking about Lyme Regis and Mary Anning and John talking about Bournville. On September 21st we had Paul Wilkins (an outside speaker) who gave a talk on 'Land Girls and Lumber Jills', the women who sustained the nation during the 2nd World War. It was very interesting and made us really appreciate how hard it was for the women at that time doing heavy manual labour. The month finished with John leading 'Monday morning at the movies'. His choice was a documentary about Venice; a place I am sure is close to many people's hearts. It was the first in a series of documentaries about Venice by Francesco da Mostas and focused on the early history of Venice.

Walking group



On 18th September, Tony led a walk from the Black Boy. It was a lovely walk across fields and along tow paths. One issue I had (and I think it was only me), were the galloping horses, mares with their foals and cows that made a beeline for you! Definitely got my heart rate up!

Thanks Tony, for organising and leading – it was great to be out in the fresh air, enjoying the local countryside. Pub lunch, a bonus!

The walks are between three and four miles so if you fancy an outing once a month, come and join us (speak to Tony for more information).

Play reading

Previously, the group admitted they hadn't attempted to read any Shakespeare but, after years of watching his plays, they thought they'd give it a go. Great news, they're just finishing Twelfth Night and have really enjoyed it!

If you are doing anything special in your group, let us know! I'd love to be able to include it in the newsletter.

What's on in October I hear you say.

Baddesley Clinton has an exhibition entitled *An Accomplished Woman: The Creative Life of Lady Chatterton Exhibition*.

It started in April and runs until 13th November. Lady Chatterton lived at Baddesley in the 1800's and the exhibition marks 150 years since her death. Here is what Baddesley has to say:



... through words, sound and images—and including a special art exhibition curated by visitors—this celebration highlights Lady Chatterton's remarkable achievements and her lasting legacy in preserving Baddesley Clinton for future generations.

Wednesday 14 October to Saturday 31 October

Vicki Gorman Art Exhibition



The Courtyard Gallery at the Core is showing an exhibition of artworks created by artists who attend Vicki Gorman Art Classes. It is free to view and open during the library opening hours.

October in history

October 6, 1927 - The first "talkie" opened in New York. ***The Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson** is widely celebrated as the first feature-length motion picture with synchronised singing and spoken dialogue, effectively launching the era of "talkies. Recorded using "sound on disc" technology, the sections of the film that included sound were relatively short, and were mostly devoted to Al Jolson singing—an obvious intermediate step between phonograph records and silent movies. The recordings also caught several improvised comments by Jolson, which the director chose to keep in the final soundtrack and which generated much of the excitement about the film including the line "You ain't heard nothing yet!"



Although it opened to mixed reviews, audience excitement grew as they experienced synchronised speech for the first time, leading to unprecedented box office success. The film ultimately prompted a rapid transition in the film industry toward sound production, with major studios swiftly adopting this new technology.

Celebrations in October

Halloween 31st October

This is celebrated on the evening before All Saints' Day (November 1), a Christian day to honour saints and martyrs. Modern day celebrations generally involve groups of children dressed in scary costumes roaming from house to house, demanding “trick-or-treat”. The origins of these celebrations however date back thousands of years, to pagan times.

Halloween can be traced back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The Pre-Christian Celtic year was determined by the growing seasons and Samhain marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark cold winter. The festival symbolised the boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead.



It was believed that on the night of 31st October, ghosts of their dead would revisit the mortal world. During Samhain, people lit large bonfires and wore disguises or masks so wandering spirits would not recognise or harm them. Children traditionally took part in ‘guising’, dressing up in costumes and performing songs, jokes, or small tricks in exchange for food or gifts. This practice is considered a direct ancestor of the modern tradition of trick-or-treating.

Much later, the Christian Festival of “All Hallows’ Day”, also known as “All Saints Day” was introduced, a day to remember those who had died for their beliefs. Originally celebrated on 13th May, it was Pope Gregory who had the date of the All-Hallows’ feast moved to 1st November sometime in the 8th century. It is thought that in doing so, he was attempting to replace or assimilate the Celtic Samhain festival of the dead with a related but church approved celebration. The night or evening of Samhain therefore became known as *All-hallows-even* then *Hallow Eve*, still later *Hallowe’en* and then of course *Halloween*.

Halloween has become an increasingly significant commercial event in the United Kingdom. Spending on costumes, decorations, sweets, and themed events rises each year, with supermarkets, retailers, and entertainment venues heavily promoting seasonal products.

While it does not yet rival the economic scale of Christmas, it is now considered one of the most important retail events of the autumn season, particularly for families with children.

The carving of pumpkins is a relatively modern innovation imported from the United States, who would have guessed!

Local history

I asked you this last time - where was Solihull's first police lock-up and station built and in what year?

Well, as part of a treasure trail round Solihull, I walked right past it without even knowing!

Solihull's very first purpose-built police station was constructed at 20 New Road in 1851. It was designed to blend into the community, acting as both a home for the local police officer and his family, and a working station. It was officially known as The Lock-Up: and it initially contained just two cells for holding prisoners. In 1857, the lock-up was expanded to include additional cell space and an outdoor exercise yard for inmates.

If you happen to be passing, take a look!



Something new for you to ponder – where is the site of a 13th-century moated medieval house belonging to the de Odingsells family? More on this next time or, if anyone knows about this place, write a short piece on it and we can add it to the newsletter!