

# Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter

## July 2025

### Chair's Note

**Welcome. Midsummer is now behind us but hopefully there is still a lot of summer ahead of us.**

**Our u3a has managed to pack a lot into the month of June. The talk at the monthly meeting by our very own Richard Maxwell gave us a detailed guide through the origins of many of the odd superstitions we have in UK and delivered it with his usual panache and humour. Local History visited Grimsthorpe Castle in Lincolnshire, The film group were divided over 'Hallow Road' which led to lively discussion. Members of the Dining Group were also split in their views of Pistachio. There were walks Short, Long and Longer around Burton Joyce, Colston Bassett and Hathersage. Science Seekers, the serious wing of our u3a, visited Trent University to discuss cancer research. There were also meetings by Canasta, Cryptic Crosswords, Plants and Picnics and Book Club amongst others.**

**Jean has reviewed the First Aid Course which she arranged on behalf of u3a. Rod's travel section provides useful travel news on e-gates, trains to the continent and over-tourism - all very much in the media at present.**

**Walkers and others will be in awe as well as full of congratulations to John Young for his multi marathon walk from Edale to the Scottish Borders.**

**Looking forward into July, there are, as usual, meetings for Canasta, Yoga, Cryptic Crosswords, Dining Group, Mah Jong, Film Group and Book Club. There are walks galore to give many of us an opportunity to see the glorious English countryside. Local History also visits the University with its wonderful grounds, and Science Seekers visits Woolsthorpe Manor, sometime home of Isaac Newton.**

**Do please join in as many of these events as you can - I look forward to seeing you at some of them.**

**Lastly may I remind you that the AGM is fast approaching (September 16th) which will bring a change of our committee. If you are interested in putting yourself forward to join the committee to help in running your u3a, please feel free to find out more by talking to me or any of the members of the current committee.**

**Best regards, Graham Edwards**

## Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - July 2025

Date	Activity	Venue	Convenor
3rd & 17th, 4pm	<b>Canasta</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
4th, 3.15 for 3.30pm	<b>Film Group</b>	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
8th, 10am	<b>Short Walk</b>	TBC	Jane Ellis/ Melissa Long
9th & 23th	<b>Cryptic Crosswords</b>	Member's Home	Jonathan Wickens
10th, 10.30am	<b>Local History</b>	Nottingham University	Jacky Fisher
14th, 2pm	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Graham Edwards
15th, 10.30am	<b>Monthly Meeting &amp; Talk-Charles Hanson</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Sarah Waites
15th, 3.45 for 4pm	<b>Mahjong</b>	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
21st 10am	<b>Yoga</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Melissa Long
17th, 11am	<b>Science Seekers</b>	Woolsthorpe Abbey	Adrian Hyde
17th, 2pm	<b>Photography</b>	Member's Home	Rod Mitchell
18th, 3.45pm	<b>Book Group</b>	Member's Home	Liz Gilder
22nd, 10am	<b>Long Walk</b>	Clifton-Wilford	Graham Edwards
25th, 10am	<b>Longer Walk</b>	Mount St. Bernard Abbey	Andrew Martin
TBC	<b>Music Appreciation</b>	TBC	Jacky Fisher
TBC	<b>Plants &amp; Picnics</b>	Member's Home	Marion Martin

**One way to contact group leaders is to visit our u3a website (link at end of newsletter) and clicking on the convenor's name on the relevant group page. You can then type a message that will go straight to the inbox of the convenor**

## Monthly Talk - June

### Richard Maxwell on “Superstitions”

Superstitions are evolved to help us deal with threats to our survival and promote our well being.” So Richard opened his fascinating, thoughtful, measured, witty, elegantly delivered talk. They can be protective and comforting, and we use them to mitigate against our fears of the unknown, unknowable, the uncontrolled and uncontrollable. They survive because they help even though scepticism may abound. A Groucho Marx quote is: “If a black cat crosses your path, it signifies it is going somewhere.”

Recent research found that 22% of people still believed that it is good luck to have a bird “pooh” on your head. The top 3 superstitions were that breaking a mirror, walking under a ladder and opening an umbrella indoors, will all bring bad luck. We associate certain events with superstitions:- house buying, boarding a plane and first dates.

We have all heard of the numerous superstitions associated with the “Scottish play.” There were very many devastating accidents associated with its production. James VI of Scotland (1st of England) encouraged the persecution of so-called witches and demons. Present day psychologists no doubt have a lot to say about that grim period of our history. Many believed that Shakespeare was being punished by witches for straying into their territory in his depiction of spells and magic potions in his play.

Richard outlined what odd superstitions we have in the UK associated with chimney sweeps, the hawthorn and holly tree, salt, shoes, eggshells, the albatross, tattoos and cauls, hagstones, clouties, and the single magpie. There was no time to share our own personal favourites though I suspect there were many. Richard finished with his own touching story of driving his young family on holiday through the night and finding a stray piece of wood as his amulet so that he could “touch wood” they'd all be safe. I'm off to reconnect with mine.

Our next speaker is **Charles Hanson** on “Life as an Auctioneer”. Well-known from 'Bargain Hunt' and founder of Hansons Auctioneers and Valuers Ltd in Etwall, he will explore the changing market and impact of television programmes on the auction trade. He should know!

He will be accompanied by **Victoria Sheppard**, Silver and General Valuer from Hansons.

Join us on **15th July** , 10.30 for an 11am start.

*Sarah Waites*

**SAVE THE DATE !!!!!!!**

**Summer Garden Party**



**August 27th, 2-5pm**  
*Further details to follow*

**Travel Notes - Rod Mitchell**

**e-Gates or not to be-gates?**

You may have seen the headlines about the UK's new post-Brexit deal with the EU. This included an agreement permitting UK travellers to use the e-gates at European airports. This was trumpeted as a big win for the UK government, but was nothing of the sort. As The Independent's Simon Calder pointed out, British travellers can already use e-gates at some European airports, but still need to have their passports stamped.

This will continue until the digital Entry/Exit System (EES) is rolled out in October this year, but don't be surprised if there's another delay. Keep collecting the stamps.

**More trains to the Continent?**

Several consortia have come forward with plans to operate international trains from St. Pancras in competition with Eurostar. The Channel Tunnel is under-used

so in theory the capacity exists to run more trains. In reality there are significant barriers to overcome before this can happen. New operators will have to commission new trains which meet specifications for operation in the Channel Tunnel. They'd better hurry, because Eurostar plans to order 50 train sets for services to Geneva and Frankfurt. Stadium-sized depots will also be required to house the new rolling stock.

To be ready for cross-Channel services, stations will need some major alterations, including separate platforms and extra space for passport and security checks. Meanwhile, capacity at St. Pancras Eurostar terminal, already heaving for most of the day, needs to be doubled and soon. Hence it's reckoned to be 5 years or more before you can rock up at St. Pancras and catch a train to Geneva or Frankfurt.

### Avoiding overtourism: Ghent, not Bruges.

I can thoroughly recommend Ghent for a city break, having spent three days there in May with a couple of friends. On one day we made the short trip to Bruges, but it was heaving with tour groups. The canal cruise boats were racing round to meet demand and the main square, Markt, was cluttered with a farmer's market. After some lunch and a beer or two we headed back to Ghent, a bigger city with fewer tourists, cheaper hotels and lots more history.

I'd booked rooms in the Ibis Hotel adjacent to St. Baaf's Cathedral and the Belfry Tower. The canal boat tour was leisurely and featured some tall tales from the pilot, including one which claimed the urine used by the leather tanners of Ghent was recycled and sold on to a Dutch brewer called Heineken (!). The Belgians have every right to be proud of their beers. We inspected a number of bars, one of which, Bier Central, had a menu, or "Beer Encyclopedia" which ran to 170 pages. In contrast, the food menu comprised one sheet of A4 and service was slow to glacial,, so it's advisable to eat first at one of Ghent's excellent restaurants.

### Strictly Steaming:the Wolsztyn Steam Festival.

Wolsztyn is a town in south-west Poland where standard gauge steam engines still operate train services on the national railway network, albeit to a much reduced timetable. A century-old roundhouse with a turntable doubles as a museum , and is the centre for a steam festival held every year in early May. This attracts up 20,000 visitors, including rail enthusiasts from all over the world. I was in a rail tour group which had seats in a viewing stand erected alongside the tracks. section of the mainline was closed and up to a dozen



steam engines (including "guest" locomotives) rushed up and down, blowing their whistles at full volume. Afterwards, the locomotives returned to the roundhouse to get ready for the evening laser show (or "steam disco" as I called it). Accompanied by a lightshow and a selection of Polish pop hits, each locomotive emerged from the roundhouse to do a "turn", on the turntable. A thoroughly bonkers event, but huge fun.

**Next time:** Poznan and Enigma; the ferry alternative to Eurostar; wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen (or maybe not).

Ghent recommended reading: "The Burgundians" by Bart Van Loo.

Also, contact me for more details on travel to Ghent and other Belgian cities.

Bon voyage,

Rod Mitchell [roderic.mitchell56@gmail.com](mailto:roderic.mitchell56@gmail.com)

## FIRST AID COURSE



16 of our members completed a First Aid Course in May which covered resuscitation, recovery position, bleeding, choking and use of a defibrillator.

Although the topics were very serious, much fun and hilarity ensued as members practiced new life-saving techniques. Of particular value was recognising the simplicity of using a defibrillator, many of which are located in public access points for emergency use.



For future reference, though hopefully never needed, the defibrillators in The Park are located on Tunnel Road and

Newcastle Circus. Please make a point of just checking exactly where these are in case they are needed in an emergency.

*Jean Henderson*

## News from the Groups

**English Language Group-** *Convenor, Margaret Wiedemann*

The month kicked off with yet another travel signage complaint as an ELG member arrived at St Pancras to be greeted by the notice: "Platforms 2-4 for services

towards Leicester, Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield". Towards? Ideally, she'd have liked to be confident that the train would arrive. It was pointed out, though, that maybe "towards" was shorthand for "calling at many, many stations en route". As indeed proved to be the case.

The Power of the Comma is something we always enjoy debating, probably because it illustrates that punctuation isn't just a luxury for those with time on their hands. The classic "Eats, shoots and leaves", originating on a panda's cage at the zoo, was matched in the latest discussion by the importance of the comma in "Let's eat, Grandma". The same issue was highlighted by a recent newspaper report of a celebrity talking to "children in hospital who weren't expecting his visit". Oh, so he ignored those who happened to have seen him coming?

It took us back to the days of Covid when parents had to help their children with English Language SATs and were totally baffled, even the ones with a degree in English. When it emerged that the examiners were committed to the Oxford Comma, an optional addition before the last item in a list, whole marking systems had to be reassessed. Good times.

"Doctor Who Sold Matthew Perry Ketamine to Plead Guilty" announced the Hollywood Reporter, eliciting an online rejoinder "is that why Billie Piper has replaced him?". In the old days there used to be such a thing as "title case", where only the important words were capitalised. A lower-case "who" would certainly help with clarity here. If you fancy regenerating as an eagle-eyed grammarian, join our planet by emailing [mjwh57@gmail.com](mailto:mjwh57@gmail.com).

**Yoga Group-** *Convenor, Melissa Long*

**Small group friendly sessions – therapeutic class  
10am - Castle Tennis Club House, Tennis Drive.**

**Monthly**

**Monday 21st July**

**£4 hall hire fee, booking essential**

Contact [melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com)

## Local History Group - *Convenor, Anne Hardy*

### Outing to Grimsthorpe Castle and Gardens

Grimsthorpe Castle is a house near to Bourne in Lincolnshire. Although termed a castle, there is only a small part of the building, a corner tower, that is at all castle-like, the rest is most certainly a house. It is an unusual mixture of architectural styles, the quirkiness of the Tudor south façade is in contrast to the Baroque splendour of the principal north front, the final masterpiece of Sir John Vanbrugh, architect of Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard.



In 1516 Grimsthorpe and its lands were presented by Henry VIII as a wedding gift to William, 11<sup>th</sup> Lord Willoughby de Eresby. Over the last five hundred years the ownership of Grimsthorpe has remained in the ownership of the same family. Lady Willoughby still lives in part of the house.

The Castle is set in 3000 acres of parkland with deer, lakes etc. Attached to the house, the grade 1 listed gardens are of great historical interest, with box parterres, herbaceous borders and views down to the lake. The visit was suggested because some members recalled a happy visit some 15 years ago.

A group of 18 of us travelled in a small fleet of cars to the house which is just outside Corby Glen. We were met in the car park of **Grimsthorpe Castle** by the Head of Public Access and after a brief stop for refreshments at The March Hare café we were introduced to Jim Handley, the Head Gardener (below).



Jim led us on a fascinating tour not only of the formal gardens (rose gardens, herbaceous borders, kitchen garden still supplying the household.) but also showed us the massive walled garden and some of the parkland. It was sad to note the impact of weather

extremes and beetles on the health of some of the trees in the grounds and parkland, many of which are in terminal decline and must be replaced. A feature of the garden visit, and what would become a theme for the visit was Grimthorpe's concern for those less able to walk and stand - benches around the grounds and buggies were also provided for those who needed them for the journey back to lunch.

We were lucky with the weather which remained warm and sunny whilst we lunched in the courtyard, courtesy of The March Hare kiosk.

The afternoon involved a trip back to the house where two enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides gave us a one hour tour of the house. The house contains many fine rooms, the titles giving a flavour of their appearance: e.g. State Dining Room, King James Room, Tapestry Dining Room. Again the provision of respite seating was most thoughtful. The rooms house a remarkable collection of art, furniture, and porcelain. Amongst the huge number of paintings, those by Joshua Reynolds and a fake Van Dyck stick in the mind. There is also one of the largest collections of royal thrones outside the Royal Palaces, as a result of the family's position as D Great Chamberlain, a role which required them to provide thrones for royal events.



After the house visit we wandered (or were whisked by buggy) back to the car park and final refreshments before the journey home.

The visit seemed to live up to expectations for those who visited any years ago, and many members reported wanting to return.

*Graham Edwards*

The next visit is to the **University of Nottingham**, with a guided walk organised by Jacky Fisher on **10th July** at 10.30am

## **Film Group-** *Convenor, Ian Henderson*

*“Hallow Road” divided our group of 12, with scores of 1/10 and 9/10 - unprecedented.*

*Largely a two-hander set in a car, it covered a frantic night-time journey of two parents after their daughter rings them reporting she has been in a car accident and has killed someone. Over a crisp 80 minutes the script explores the split in parental styles and the cracks in their relationship as they race to get to the accident before police do. The daughter is only ever an intermittent voice on the phone during the journey, in real time.*



*Later in the film the psychological theme gives way to possible supernatural/gothic tropes and the group had great fun exploring these avenues despite many feeling that the film was badly flawed.*

*Admirers found it gripping and thought-provoking but others were bored, upset and/or disappointed by the denouement. There was a lot of praise for the two protagonists (Rosamund Pike and Matthew Rhys) who gave an acting masterclass in ratcheting up the tension. Given the spread of scores the discussion was one of the liveliest we have had. The overall score was **5/10***



*For next time we settled on “**Hidden (Cache)**”, a 2005 French film from Austrian director Michael Haneke, which is receiving a rerun at Broadway Cinema. Starring Juliette Binoche and Daniel Auteuil it explores a marital relationship under stress (again!) when anonymous surveillance tapes begin to appear on their doorstep. Who is watching them and why?*

*We meet to discuss this on **4 July**, 3.15 for 3.30pm*

## **Music Appreciation Group** - Convenor, Jacky Fisher

*We have not met since our last outing to Peggy's Skylight on 28 May. Our next meeting will be on **Saturday 28 June** when we go to **St Peter's** church to a light-hearted performance by a group of singers called Mosaic. Coffee and biscuits at 10.15, followed by an hour long performance at 11.00.*

*We are still trying to find a suitable date for our chance to experience Holst's The Planets at the Sherwood Observatory, and will let members know when this is settled.*

**New members to the group would be welcome.**

[gandjfisher23@gmail.com](mailto:gandjfisher23@gmail.com)

## **Short Walks-** Convenors, Melissa Long & Jane Ellis

Our walk this month took us along the northern bank and river pastures of the Trent, from **Burton Joyce** heading east to Gunthorpe. Gentle rolling countryside, a wide meandering river and all the sounds of late spring in the hedgerows .....what a perfect setting for a glorious carefree riverside walk. And, despite a slightly pessimistic forecast, the weather turned out to be kind and gentle too.

Meeting at The Nelson in Burton Joyce, we headed across the railway line and turned east on to the wide open pastures of the Trent. Here, we commented immediately on how rural and far way from the city we felt we were as we walked, observed and chatted. This section of the river is peaceful and sees little if any river traffic, but every so often along the banks you could see where farmers would take their cattle down to river for a dip and a drink - now really that is 'wild swimming' Notts style !

Our walk was a linear return route, and from Burton Joyce we spent the half way refreshments stop overlooking the river at The Unicorn in Gunthorpe. This very pleasant

riverside settlement was founded by the Danes, and later became an important toll bridge and ferry stop along the Trent. It remains the only bridge crossing the Trent between Nottingham and Newark today.

This walk was chosen for its peacefulness, tranquillity and opportunity to connect totally with nature - and we couldn't have had a better day or group of friends to share it with. It isn't a stretch of river peppered with buildings and artefacts of note .....it is just a pleasant piece unpretentious and unspoiled British countryside, and what better way to round the walk off with a superb home made sausage roll and a ginger beer back at The Nelson.

A big thank you to all those that have supported our short walks group for the last 12 months - we look forward to seeing you for our next jaunt to on **July 8th** (always the 2nd Tuesday)

If you are not a member of the group and would like to join please send us an email.

*Melissa and Jane*

[melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com)

[jane.ellis21@outlook.com](mailto:jane.ellis21@outlook.com)

## **Long Walks** - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

A circular walk from **Ambergate**, through Shining Cliffs and Whatstandwell

A month ago I was writing about our walk in the pouring rain - it seems a world away from the parched grass of today.

Thankfully the weather had settled a little, and blessed with warmish dry weather, 7 of us set off from Ambergate Station for our stroll in Derbyshire. This was a rerun (rewalk?) of one we last did in September 2023. Again it is interesting to note that only 2 of the walkers from last time were on this event.



The walk led us up a steady climb past isolated houses hidden in the woods, to emerge on a quiet road. After a short road section the route then took us through Shining Cliff Woods onto the hill overlooking Crich and Whatstandwell. A sculptural fallen tree took our eye and delayed our coffee break whilst we posed.

After our break, and heading onwards towards a rest, those brave enough took the 'cow and bullock field' route whilst the wuss group walked down the road, which got us to The Family Tree café quicker for our lunch.

Fully restored with large baguettes, gourmet chips etc. we climbed the last short hill onto the banks of the Cromford Canal for a picturesque power amble (lengthened stride, buttocks clenched) back to Ambergate and the car home.

This walk of around 6 miles on a pleasant summer's day proved to be well worth the reputation and I am sure we will do it again.

## **22 July 2025 - Clifton to Wilford.**

Having travelled a bit for our walks recently, I have planned something closer to home, accessed by public transport, for July.

I am planning a tram trip out to the Clifton terminus, followed by a steady downhill walk to the south bank of the River Trent. We will then walk along the river through Clifton Woods ( Local Nature Reserve ) to Wilford, where we shall be able to find a pub lunch. The final mile or so of urban walking will get us back to The Park, a total distance of about 6½ miles. For those who don't relish walking after lunch, there is an opportunity to take the tram homewards for the last leg.

I will be sending out full details during July to those on the Long Walks mailing list.

If you are not on the list, and would like to join to receive update on our walks, please let me know

[grahamedwards542@gmail.com](mailto:grahamedwards542@gmail.com)

## **Longer Walks-** *Convenor, Andrew Martin*

### **a) May**



A circular walk from **Hathersage** . *This walk was planned and led for us by Melissa, whilst Andrew was on his sabbatical.*

The walk was quite interesting from the start as with only 5 walkers, we decided on ecological and economic grounds to travel in one car. The back seat was quite full!

The excitement continued as the sat-nav decided that the best way to Hathersage from Nottingham was via the outskirts of Sheffield, which seemed like a circuitous route, although it proved to be quite effective.

Once in Hathersage, we bagged the last space in the car park, and were soon on our way, climbing out of the town. The route along tracks and paths led us up and up. Our immediate destination, the rocky cliff of Stanage Edge was visible in the distance, but didn't seem to get nearer very quickly. However after walking uphill for only 2 or 3 miles, and with a final scramble up the edge (we did take a relatively gentle path, rather than a climb up the rock face) we were able to stand on Stanage Edge and survey the view for miles around. My arms proved to be too short to permit a decent selfie of the occasion.



The ramble along the Edge seemed quite easy after the climb, although we were all ready for the rest and lunch break at a convenient arrangement of boulders beside the track, as we descended.

The tracks leading down into the village were not challenging, as we passed some lovely old houses and farms, including North Leas Hall (pictured, right) supposedly the inspiration for Thornfield Hall in Brontë's Jane Eyre. We were soon back at the car. The lure of David Mellor's shop and café on the edge of town proved irresistible, which delayed us a little.

Overall a slightly challenging (for some) walk of some 6 or 7 miles involving a bit of a climb, compensated by some wonderful views.

*Graham Edwards*

b) Our Longer Walk in **June** was along an 8-mile linear route from **Risley to Long Eaton**.

Although, at first glance, this might seem an unlikely venue for such a walk, the countryside and the history of the waterways provided an interesting day out. Our numbers were lower than usual with five of us boarding the bus to Risley. This was because of a combination of very hot weather and the impending Park Garden Trail which preoccupied a few of our members. Within minutes of starting the walk we were passing through fields of barley, and then of oats and wheat. It was like walking through a sea of gold as the breeze moved across through the tops of the barley. The forecast breeze was not quite enough to cool us from the growing heat, but the air cooled noticeably when we got close to water. This was the other highlight of the walk.



The route was chosen to take us along the banks of the River Derwent towards the Trent and Mersey Canal. We followed this to where it met the River Trent, with the Derwent joining the Trent near the same point. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries this was a major transport hub. With the opening of the canal in 1777, it was possible to move goods by water along a route across the country from Liverpool to Hull. This required a bridge across the Trent, because the barges were drawn by horses. The old wooden Horse Bridge is long gone, but a modern metal replacement took us over onto the south side of the Trent, which we followed past Sawley Marina to Trent Lock. Here, we stopped for iced drinks before the last mile of walking to catch the bus at Long Eaton. I often get asked to send details of walks like these to u3a members who would like to try the walks themselves. I am always happy to do this. A map sheet and a fact sheet about the historical information are available. Please email me (see below) if you'd like copies of these.



Our next Longer Walk will be on **Friday 25th**

**July.** Back in September 2020, under Covid restrictions, the group completed a **12-mile circular route starting and finishing at Mount St. Bernard Abbey**. This route uses a section of the Ivanhoe Way to reach the summit of Bardon Hill, the highest point in Leicestershire. It then visits Charley Woods before returning to the abbey past Blackbrook Reservoir. The abbey used to be a dairy farm, but in recent years the outbuildings have been converted into a brewery. The resulting 'Trappist Beer' is internationally renowned and has won awards. Bottles will be on sale in the abbey shop when we visit. Transport will be by car. Full information about this walk will be sent out to members about a week in advance.

Please let me know if you'd like to be added to the mailing list by emailing [u3aparkwalks@gmail.com](mailto:u3aparkwalks@gmail.com) .

### **Congratulations to John Young**

Many of you know of John's enthusiasm for the **Coast-to-Coast** walk, which he completed for the sixth time last year. Over the last 12 months he has set his sights on completing the **Pennine Way**. This is a 268-mile walk along the spine of the country from Edale in Derbyshire to Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders.

In May, John started by touching the wall of The Old Nags Head in Edale, the official starting point of the Way. On June 12th, he touched the wall of The Border Hotel at Kirk Yetholm, completing an epic journey. This was a feat of endurance with John walking every day without a rest day. It was also a triumph of planning in order to cope with the mountainous terrain and some very long days. We salute you John, and we look forward to hearing what you have in mind for next year!



### **Science Seekers** - *Convenor, Adrian Hyde*

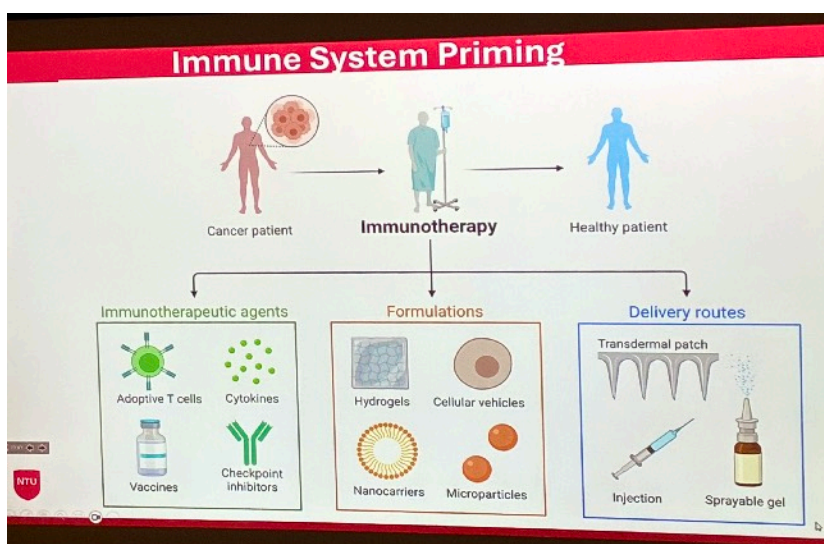
*Members of the Park Nottingham u3a Science Seekers group attended an event, organised by Nottingham Trent University as part of their **L.E.A.P** initiative, on Thursday 18th June.*



*LEAP stands for 'Listen Engage Analyse Public' and is about encouraging public involvement in NTU research programmes, in this case the work they are doing in cancer research. Two presenters gave illustrated talks in LT 4 in the Newton Building on Goldsmith Street.*

The first speaker was Dr Jehan El-Jawhari who described the research she is doing on Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) the most common blood cancer in older adults. It originates in the bone marrow and is characterised by the growth of abnormal cells called myeloblasts which crowd out healthy cells making it harder for the blood to carry oxygen, fight infections and stop bleeding. She described research into the factors that encourage the growth of these abnormal cells and outlined future research into possible inhibitors of the process.

Dr Jayakumar Vadakekolathu, a Jan van Geest research fellow at NTU, gave a talk on how the immune system can be harnessed to fight cancer. He described how tumours are infiltrated by immune cells that can recognise abnormal cancer cells and eliminate them. This process can be turned into a variety of immunotherapy treatments. He focused on the use of CAR-T cell therapy. In the laboratory, scientists can change the patient's immune cells to become CAR T-cells by means of genetic engineering. They do this by adding a gene that causes the cell to make proteins on their surface called chimeric antigen receptors (CARs).



The CARs can recognise and target a specific protein on the surface of the cancer cells. These changed T cells grow and multiply in the laboratory. Once there are enough CAR T-cells, they are infused back into the patient's bloodstream. The CAR T-cells then recognise and attack the cancer cells. This treatment has had remarkable success curing a variety of blood cancers including B cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in children and is now available on the NHS.

It was pleasing that Dr Vadakekolathu acknowledged the pioneering work into tumour immunology carried out by Professor Robert Baldwin and his co-workers at the Cancer Research Campaign Laboratories at the University of Nottingham in the 1960s and 70s. I worked in that group for five years exploring rat models of cancer and attempting to identify 'tumour specific antigens' on the surface of cancer cells, the targets of the immune system. However, it is only in the past twenty years that our understanding of the relationship between cancer cells and the immune system has matured sufficiently to enable the revolutionary use of immunotherapy to treat and cure cancer that Dr Vadakekolathu described.

As well as communicating their health orientated research to the public LEAP are also looking to recruit individuals who wish to be more involved in giving feedback on their

research and their community activities. If you wish to get involved contact Keeley Brookes [leap@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:leap@ntu.ac.uk)

Reg Dennick

Next up is a visit to **Woolsthorpe Manor** (near Grantham), one-time home of Isaac Newton, on **17th July**.

## **Plants and Picnics-** *Convenor, Marion Martin*



This month saw us return to Angela Pratten's garden. Being just before the Park Garden Trail, which several of our members were involved in, and in holiday season, this was a more select group than usual but for those who attended it was a delight! Angela aims for a 'cottage garden' feel, and has done a lot of work to achieve it. For those of us visiting, when you enter the garden, you just want to stop and look at it, taking a moment. Clematis and roses in full flower, forming a backdrop to the well-stocked borders, foxgloves towering above,

and a profusion of plants in pots - there's a lot to take in. Sometimes smaller meetings produce more in-depth conversations, and this was the case here. Several of us have new gardens, somewhat smaller than we have previously been used to, so we spent some time discussing how to maximise growing crops in pots.

Amanda recommended an RHS book "Grow your own Crops in Pots", and I think several of us might be investing in a copy. A couple of us already have the DK book "Grow all you can eat in three square feet" which we also recommend, so between the two, we should be well set up.

Angela provided us with lemon water and a selection of fruit and biscuits, which was perfect for a rather warm day. We also welcomed new member Jacqueline, and in the end, the meeting went on rather longer than usual - a sure sign of a very successful and enjoyable meeting.

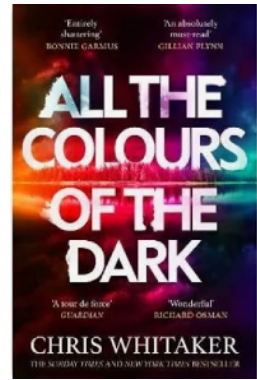
If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Marion Martin at [PNu3aPandP@gmail.com](mailto:PNu3aPandP@gmail.com)



## **Book Group-** *Convenor, Liz Gilder*

The Park Nottingham u3a Book club read 'All the Colours of the Dark' by Chris Whitaker.

Late one summer, the town of Monta Clare is shattered by the abduction of teenager Joseph "Patch" Macauley. Nobody more so than Sain Brown, who will risk everything to find her best friend. But when she does, it will break her heart. Patch lies alone in a pitch-black room until he feels a hand in his. Her name is Grace, and though they cannot see each other she lights their world with her words. But when he escapes there is no sign she ever even existed. Left with only her voice and her name, he paints her from broken memories and charts an epic search to find her.



As years turn to decades, and hope becomes obsession, Sain will shadow his journey on a darker path to hunt down the man who took them and set free the only boy she ever loved. Our group again had mixed reviews, some enjoying the book with others finding it overly long and, in some respects, not very realistic. We were all surprised that the author was English and lived in the UK but wrote about American people and places.

Our next read is **Precipice** by Robert Harris a spellbinding novel of passion, intrigue and betrayal set in England in the months leading to the Great War! It features H H Asquith and his lover during 1914. We meet on **18th July**, 3.45pm

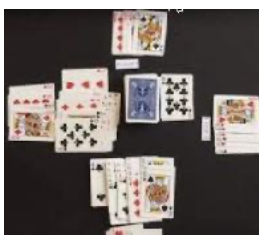
## **Dining Group** - *Convenor, Adrienne Lee*

A visit to **Dream** on Carlton Road proved a mixed experience for our group with some liking the Persian (Iranian) restaurant while others were left unimpressed.

On **16th July** we visit **The Martin's Arms** in Colston Basset, a longstanding outpost of good food now run by Laurence Henry, late of Cleaver and Wake and past winner of 'Masterchef-The Professionals' - no pressure, then!

*Ian Henderson*

## **Canasta Club** - *Convenor, Jane Ellis*



Our meetings in **June** will be on **Thursday 3rd and 17th**, starting play at **4.00pm** (setting up from 3.45pm) and finishing at **6.00 pm**.

Once again, if you are interested in joining the group or would like to come along for a taster session, please contact Jane Ellis at [jane.ellis21@outlook.com](mailto:jane.ellis21@outlook.com). Tea/coffee and excellent biscuits

are included in the fee and are served at the beginning of the meeting. Previous experience is not essential, and we offer taster sessions for £5 per session. We are a very friendly group and many of our more experienced players are happy to impart the rules of the game and for everyone to join in.

### **Cryptic Crossword Group** - *Convenor, Jonathan Wickens*

This month we had just one meeting, as most of the group had other, summery, engagements on the 25th.



We especially enjoyed one clue, which strayed into the realm of geopolitics: **A learner entering one country or another (9)**.

"A learner" gave the letters "AL"; insert those into "AUSTRIA" and you get "AUSTRALIA"!

It is surely only a matter of time before we come across a clue suggesting a similar geopolitical incursion, such as: **One's in India or another country (9)**

### **Mah Jong** - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

The Mah Jong group normally meets every month on the afternoon of the **third Tuesday**, although holidays, sporting events etc. meant there were insufficient of us to justify a meeting in June.

Our meetings are generously hosted by one of our members. Our members have a wide range of Mah Jong experience and welcome beginners, as well as players who can help teach us to improve our skills.



The next meeting will be on the **Tuesday 15th July**, in the afternoon after the Monthly Meeting.

We will meet at **3.45pm** at a member's home for pre-game refreshments followed by an hour or so of vaguely competitive play. We are trying to learn more about the game so every member is equipped with a copy of the u3a version of the rules, to facilitate a bit of homework.

If you would like to know a bit more about the game, why not come along to one of our meetings. If you are interested in joining us, and have not already added your name to the mailing list, please drop me a note using the address below. I can also offer you a complimentary copy of the u3a rules for Mah Jong to help you learn the game.

Members already on the MahJong mailing list will receive an email nearer the time, detailing the arrangements for the meeting. Members of the group are also encouraged to join our WhatsApp group.

[grahamedwards542@gmail.com](mailto:grahamedwards542@gmail.com)

## **Photography Group** - *Convenor, Rod Mitchell*

Next meeting is on 17th July at 2 o'clock to confirm final cut of "Green" images for the August newsletter. Also, we will consider first submissions on our next theme, which is "Rituals".

## **Useful Contacts**

Graham Edwards, Chair

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Ian Henderson, Deputy Chair:

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Ian Henderson, Membership Secretary:

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Jean Henderson, Business Secretary:

[\*bizsecjean@gmail.com\*](mailto:bizsecjean@gmail.com)

Melissa Long, Treasurer

[\*melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com\*](mailto:melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com)

Website

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**Editor's note:** If you are reading the newsletter on your computer, tablet, or phone, you will find that all email addresses in blue *italics* are live and can be clicked to send a message. Similarly, where a link to an internet web page is offered, the blue italics indicate that this is a live link and will take you straight to the page.

**Contributions for the AUGUST Newsletter should be sent to the editor,  
Ian Henderson, by Tuesday 24th July by emailing:**

[\*parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com\*](mailto:parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com)