

# Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter

## November 2025

### Chair's Note

Although I am on a different continent and between countries at the moment, the wonders of modern technology keep me in touch with our u3a, whilst leaving the Sisyphean task of editing this newsletter to Graham Edwards.

So I can confirm a busy schedule of activities in October and many more coming up in November. Our October Monthly Talk was given by two of our esteemed, and well-qualified, members with a fascinating take on the role of cholesterol in health and ill-health.

The Local History Group found time to visit Upton Hall to discover interesting facts about the history of timekeeping. The walkers did what they do best, in all weathers. The crossworders got to grips with brain-teasers and the English Language Group proved again that pedantry is not dead and provides an endless source of amusement (although this month they flirt with controversy as well).

The Music Appreciation Group heard music spanning the 17th and 20th centuries and it looks like Plants and Picnics went to a different level with Parminder's festive food - it could give the Dining Group (due a visit to The Ivy) a run for its money. The Film Group continues to champion independent films and was rewarded this month.

The new Committee met this month with Sue Keen taking on the role of Groups Coordinator as well as Vice Chair and Barrie Shay is now our Beacon (our database of member information) Administrator as well as Membership Secretary. These are vital roles in a successful u3a and many thanks to Jane Ellis and Marion Martin who previously filled these, respectively (in Marion's case for 5 years). I will continue as Newsletter Editor and Website Manager.

I hope you find something to pique your interest this month!

*Ian Henderson*

## Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - Nov 2025

Date	Activity	Venue	Convenor
6th and 20th 4.00-6.00pm	<b>Canasta</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
6th, 7.30pm	<b>Music Appreciation</b>	Member's Home	Jacky Fisher
7th, 3.15 for 3.30pm	<b>Film Group</b>	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
10th, 2.00pm	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Ian Henderson
11th, 10.00am	<b>Short Walk</b>	Wilford and the Trent	Jane Ellis/ Melissa Long
12th & 26th, 3pm	<b>Cryptic Crosswords</b>	Member's Home	Jonathan Wickens
12th	<b>Plants &amp; Picnics</b>	Member's Home	Marion Martin
13th, 10.15am	<b>Local History</b>	Museum of Justice/ Nottingham Caves	Jane Morrell
18th, 10.30am	<b>Monthly Meeting +Talk</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Ian Henderson
18th, 3.45pm	<b>Mah Jong</b>	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
21st, 4.00pm	<b>Book Group</b>	Member's Home	Liz Gilder
24th, 10.00am	<b>Yoga</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Melissa Long
25th, 10.00am	<b>Long Walk</b>	Sawley/ Attenborough	Graham Edwards
27th, 2.00pm	<b>Science Seekers</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Adrian Hyde
28th, 10.00am	<b>Longer Walk</b>	Cossall Rainbow Walk	Andrew 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 - October

### Cholesterol

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October Professor Reg Dennick and Dr Jane Morrell gave a talk to the Park Nottingham u3a entitled "Cholesterol: the good and the bad". The talk began by describing the biochemical features of cholesterol as a component of all animal cell membranes and as a precursor to all female and male sex hormones, Vitamin D in the skin and the bile acids as well as being a major component of myelin in the "white matter" of the brain.

The talk then described the rise of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in the twentieth century and research attempts to understand its origins. This led to the "diet-heart theory" which proposed that CVD was caused by an excessive consumption of saturated fat which led to a rise in blood cholesterol which caused atherosclerosis, a gradual blocking of arteries by cholesterol-containing plaques. This theory led to changes in diet recommended by medical and government agencies. Individuals were encouraged to reduce their consumption of saturated fat and replace it with polyunsaturated oils as well as eating more carbohydrates and grains. This policy became the standard dietary recommendation of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

CVD mortality declined from the 1950s onwards due to a reduction in smoking and advances in clinical and health care interventions but it was still a major cause of death. In the 1980s the statin drugs were developed which specifically inhibited the biosynthesis of cholesterol in the liver. Their use was studied in numerous clinical trials and led to a reduction in CVD which further supported the theory that cholesterol was to blame. However, increasingly, many scientists and clinicians questioned the "diet-heart theory" as the re-evaluation of clinical trial data and new studies began to reveal problems, biases and anomalies. Drug companies often funded clinicians who were conducting clinical trials. Even government committees recommending dietary changes were influenced by individuals working for food companies and other vested interests. Studies which did not support the "diet-heart theory" either failed to find a journal willing to publish the findings or were sometimes ignored once published. In addition, there are many specific anomalies which tend to undermine the theory: the Maasai have a very high fat diet but low CVD; Australian Aborigines have very high rates of CVD but very low blood cholesterol; the French population eat a fairly high fat diet but have one of the lowest rates of CVD.

To give an indication of the current scientific conflict, the presenters described one major European clinical trial of statins in 2016 which asserted that cholesterol was the cause of CVD. A study by a different group in 2018 analysed this study's published data and came to the opposite conclusion. They showed that although statins reduced mortality by 0.48% and non-lethal CVD events by between 1-2% this was not associated with changes in cholesterol levels. If cholesterol levels were not predicting mortality or morbidity, it raised the question of how statins were having their effect. The biochemical pathway that manufactures cholesterol has twenty or so stages and

statins block the process after stage four. Many precursors leading to cholesterol are also reduced and it is thought that these molecules are influencing other clinically important processes.

Saturated fat and raised cholesterol have been demonised by the medical profession and the food and drug industry. But if they are not the villains contributing to the continuing epidemic of CVD what is? The presenters looked at the rise of obesity and type 2 diabetes in the UK and US populations which is currently reaching dangerous levels. Largely created by an increase in the consumption of sugars and carbohydrates (ironically recommended by the low fat "diet-heart" theory advocated in the twentieth century), this is resulting in increased levels of blood triglycerides and fat deposits. Triglycerides are also implicated in the inflammatory processes that initiate the formation of atherosclerotic plaques and hence are a major contributor to the development of CVD.

The talk finished by looking at the wide range of current risk factors for CVD. Cholesterol is only one and there are many that can be reduced without the use of drugs.

The main conclusions of the talk were as follows:

- There is decreasing evidence for the "diet-heart" theory, that consuming saturated fat contributes to CVD and mortality
- There is decreasing evidence that LDL-cholesterol is the prime cause of atherosclerosis
- Atherosclerosis is probably initiated by inflammation of the artery wall
- There is decreasing evidence that reducing LDL-cholesterol reduces the risk of CVD and mortality
- Nevertheless there is evidence that statins decrease the risk of CVD events but only by 1-2% in most populations
- Statins can have significant side-effects
- Such benefits that statins provide may possibly be due to their pleiotropic or non-cholesterol lowering effects which are still not fully understood
- There is increasing evidence that CVD is also caused by over consumption of sugar and refined carbohydrates leading to obesity, high triglyceride levels and type 2 diabetes.

As an Appendix to the talk the presenters offered the audience the "Mediterranean Diet" which has well established health benefits.

- **Daily consumption** of a high amount of **plant-based foods** such as:
  - o Vegetables and fruits
  - o Whole grains (e.g., whole wheat bread, oats, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta)
  - o Legumes (e.g., beans, lentils, chickpeas)
  - o Nuts and seeds
  - o Herbs and spices.
- **Emphasis on healthy fats**, particularly extra virgin olive oil
- **Weekly consumption** of fish and seafood (especially oily fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids)
- **Moderate consumption** of poultry, eggs, and dairy products (such as yogurt and cheese)
- **Limited consumption** of red meat and sweets/added sugars, typically reserved for rare occasions.

The talk at our **November meeting** (Tuesday 18th) will be by Steve Lovell on: THE MIRACLE OF MIGRATION - What drives birds and animals to undertake such amazing journeys? Here in Britain, we are both home and a staging post for many species of birds. This talk poses more questions than answers.

Join us at **10.30 for 11am** at Castle Tennis Club.

*Sarah Waites*

## **Travel Notes : *Rod Mitchell***

### **Your bus pass: is it under threat?**

Assuming the YouTube feed on your iPad has replaced the morning newspaper, you may have seen some channels popping up which warn of major changes to the elderly and disabled persons bus pass scheme. These changes were due to be introduced in October 2025, but there was little coverage in the national media. After a Google search and a session on YouTube, I gained a better understanding of what the new arrangements entail.

Firstly, if you're a Nottingham resident over 70 and already have a bus pass then not a lot will happen until you need to renew your bus pass. At that point you will likely be asked to re-confirm your eligibility and to produce up-to-date documents for verification purposes, for example:

- Proof you are a UK resident.
- Passport or birth certificate.
- Proof of address within your council's area.
- A completed application form (online or paper).

A Digital Bus Pass Verification System (DBPVS) will be introduced. On renewal you will be asked to switch to a digital bus pass on your smart phone, assuming you have one. If you don't, you'll be issued with a card smarter than the one you had before. The option to complete the application/renewal form on paper will remain, either via post, or at council offices and local libraries (as rare as hen's teeth in some rural areas where few buses run). By linking proof of residency to one's National Insurance number it is hoped the new system will enable new applications to be turned round swiftly, whilst also preventing fraudulent or duplicate claims.

However, be warned. The changes were prefaced with talk of the bus pass scheme being "unsustainable" in its present form - usually a signal that cuts are on the way. Stricter criteria for newer applications are likely to be introduced, with the possible inclusion of income caps in the eligibility checks. In short, old-fashioned means testing.

In England, eligibility for the bus pass is linked to the State Pension Age. The Government wants this to apply throughout the UK. Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have their own schemes which currently allow free travel for over the 60s. In Scotland this will continue, but in Wales the state pension age rule will apply from 2026, with transitional protection for applicants aged 60 to 64. Northern Ireland's

SmartPass scheme will be modified to include income-based reviews for applicants aged 60 to 64 (means-testing again). Trebles all round for London pensioners: their Freedom Pass is untouched and allows over 60s free travel on the buses, Underground, Overground, the DLR and Croydon trams.

The Government is focussed, perhaps correctly, on reducing the inequality between rural and urban bus users. In Nottingham we have an excellent bus service and a tram network on which we can use our bus passes, all day at weekends and 9.30am till 11.00 pm. on weekdays. In contrast, it's hardly worth having a bus pass in some rural areas, where bus services are commonly infrequent or do not run at all. Local authorities will therefore be allowed more flexibility in determining the periods when free travel is allowed. However, this could work both ways and may not solve the problem. I gather some cities would like to stop free travel in the afternoon peak to reduce overcrowding, whereas Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, for example, have opted to make the bus pass valid all day seven days a week, not that you'd want to use the buses in Peterborough - the service is dire.

There is an alternative solution I believe, and one that is supported by legions of research studies. Rather than driving pensioners off the buses in the afternoon rush hour, transport policy and investment ought to focus on creating high capacity, integrated public transport networks in all cities and towns outside London. By making it easier to travel to work, college, school or indeed the shops, productivity in the city improves and the local economy grows. In rural areas I would adopt the Swiss model. For communities above a certain size of population, a minimum level of public transport provision would apply consistently on every day of the week.

A UK-wide pensioners' bus pass is a long way off I'm afraid. So the dream (nightmare?) of Land's End to John o' Groats by public bus for free is still just that (\*).

Bon Voyage : Rod Mitchell

\* It has been done of course: go to YouTube channel "Planes, Trains, Everything" where Scott from Paisley does it so you don't have to. And, yes, it is a nightmare.

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS**

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

The deliberations of the grammar guerillas are usually lighthearted, but recently our discussion took a serious turn as we debated the sometimes interchangeable use of the terms "victim" and "survivor" in media reporting of the two cases currently in the headlines, the Rotherham grooming enquiry and the continuing questions around Jeffrey Epstein. As one member of the group said, "survivor" places the emphasis on active recovery after an episode of harm, whereas "victim" suggests passivity and a lack of agency.

In recent years women who have experienced abuse have preferred to refer to themselves as "survivors", denying their abusers the satisfaction of continuing to do them harm. But the pendulum seems to have swung again, and as we go to print the BBC Radio Today programme and BBC News and Newsnight have been using the word "victim". It's an interesting turnround.

In this autumn season we're keeping our eye on the air pressure in case a new low heralds the arrival of yet another storm with an improbable name. But if extreme weather is expressed in increasingly low numbers, can an even lower number be said to "exceed" the previous record? The original article which the news item summarised used the word "surpass", similar but not quite the same.

It's always pleasing when misplaced or missing punctuation creates a misleading or even surreal impression. An example recently was a CNN News headline informing us that "The convicted killer crab walked between two walls and pushed through newly installed razor wire to break out of prison." If you too are pouncing on missing hyphens in defiance of the approach of the bah-humbug season, we want to hear from you at [mjwh57@gmail.com](mailto:mjwh57@gmail.com).

## Local History Group: *Convenor, Jane Morrell*

### The Museum of Timekeeping

Thirteen of our members assembled in the impressive hallway of Upton Hall to learn about the history of time keeping. Sadly the first fact we learnt was that the Horological Institute is planning to relocate due to the excessive cost of maintaining its present home which it has inhabited since 1973. The museum currently is being run by a band of volunteers whose knowledge and love of their subject is to be much admired.

I apologise for not taking a group photo but my mind was on the sad news that probably this would be my last visit. There are apparently going to be a few weekend openings which will be publicised on line.

Our tour started in the section dealing with the speaking clock and we were shown the amazing contraption that made it possible. In 1936 it was felt necessary to have a standardised and reliable service which could be accessed by telephone. 15,000 telephone



operators applied ( Well the prize was the magnificent sum of ten guineas!!). Ethel Jane Cain won but unfortunately (and surprisingly!) had a slight lisp which was apparent when speaking the word "precisely". The new service proved to be highly popular and in its first year over 35,000 calls a day were made.

Our next guide was an expert on the beginnings of the creation of 'gadgets' to use with the Sun to record the passage of time. For thousands of years B.C. ancient Egyptians would push a stick into the ground and when its shadow fell on a certain rock it was time to plant the crops.

Jump forward to just before the Norman Invasion in 1066 and sun dials and understanding the

passage of time had become more sophisticated. The Kirkdale Priory Sundial (above) has small crosses and when the shadow is in line with these it is time for church.



A really unusual exhibit was the Chinese Dragon fire (or alarm) clock. The creature's body holds incense which was made to burn at a known rate. On retiring at night, the incense would be lit and, on reaching the piece of string, would burn through it and the metal ball would fall with a loud clatter landing on the tray below and arouse the sleeper. (Obviously there would be just one large ball not many as in the picture.)

The next two volunteers now moved us forward to more recent times when ownership of clocks was possible for the wealthy. Long case clocks predominated, some with exquisite dials and beautiful cases but there were quirky clocks, water clocks and clocks with no casing too. One

interesting fact, which must be mentioned, was that "Little John", the clock made by the local firm Copes in 1928 for Nottingham Council House, became famous when its chime was considered for use instead of Big Ben's. Apparently its chime was more melodious but there were technical issues which sadly prevented its use.

Our final visit was to the well stocked library where a local lady volunteer shared her extensive knowledge of the written word of things horological. Apparently she, and fellow enthusiasts, welcome requests from the general public to discover the background and history of their treasured clocks. I, for one, intend to avail myself of this free service.

Finally our grateful thanks go to Helen and Richard Teasdale for stepping forward, suggesting a visit and then organising it, plus transport there and back. Well done indeed!

### **Please do start thinking of ideas for 2026 (and possibly offering to organise them)**

Back to this year, our last two visits will be firstly a "simple come if you can" visit on **Thursday 13th November** to the local Museum of Justice and the nearby caves. (More details to follow)

The final visit will be on Thursday 11th December, meeting at 10.15 in St Barnabas Cathedral for the "Discovering Pugin Trail". It promises to be good. Apparently Pugin worked on the Houses of Parliament, designed 200 buildings, had 3 wives (not simultaneously), fathered 8 children and all before the age of 40 when he died!

*Anne Hardy*

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

Our film in October was 'Islands', a German English-language film starring English lead actors. It told the story of a dissolute ex-pro tennis player (an excellent Sam Riley) eking out a living coaching tourists in Fuerteventura.

He became fascinated by a young mother (Stacey Martin), on holiday with husband (Jack Farthing) and son. What begins as a potential film noir with her 'mysterious' background and femme fatale possibilities (when her husband goes missing) turns into a meditation on his wasted life and what might have been. The plot twist is not so much sprung as slowly revealed.



Well acted by the leads, with great support from Spanish actors, this was an intriguing film, with Riley a believable tennis coach (he had to learn, apparently). We found it an honest portrayal of expat life, with great support from the scenery.

It scored **8/10**.

Next is 'Bugonia' from our old friend Yorgos Lanthimos (*Poor Things, The Favourite, Kinds of Kindness*) and is likely to be as bonkers as they were! Again starring Emma Stone, this time with her real-life

husband Jesse Plemons, as a CEO kidnapped as a suspected alien bent on destroying Earth. Interesting!

It screens from **31 October** and we meet on **7th November** at 3.15 for 3.30pm

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

A small group of us met for a preview of the concert we were going to attend on 15 October. We watched a very engaging introduction to Britten's Young Person's Guide to the orchestra, composed in 1946, on YouTube. This described how the full orchestral piece was based on a theme composed by Henry Purcell in the 17th century. After the playing of the tune by the whole orchestra, each section of the instruments performed a variation, highlighting the nature of those instruments. Although this commentary and music was aimed at children, we all found it interesting and informative.

The next work was Mozart's flute and violin concerto and we listened to a few extracts of this. It is a typical Mozart style work which we all looked forward to listening to in the Royal Concert hall.

The final piece was Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky. This was originally written for the piano, and was orchestrated by many composers, but the most well known version is by Ravel. The music represents 10 paintings at an exhibition, with "promenades" between several of the paintings. It is a very atmospheric piece with some very stirring tunes. We all felt that this preview greatly enhanced our appreciation and enjoyment of the live concert the next day.

Our next meeting will be on 6 November at 7.30 at Liz Gilder's house when William Ruff will give us a talk about the development of romantic music, having previously given us a fascinating talk about the time of classical music.

Jacky - 078669 88405 [gandjfisher23@gmail.com](mailto:gandjfisher23@gmail.com)

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

### **14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER – WOLLATON PARK**



This month's short walk at Wollaton Park brought back good memories of the very first walk we had organised nearly 18 months ago, to mark the restart of the Short Walks Group. As before, there was plenty to see and chat about – but the park was by no means busy. A mid-week walk does lend the opportunity to savour the

delights of Wollaton, more so than at weekends when it can be very busy.

Our walk took us from the main entrance up toward the Hall, around the perimeter ha-ha wall and down to the lakes. We stopped for quite some time to observe the deer on the golf course – and at one point wondered if there was going to be a bit of a ‘stand-off’ between the male deer who were trying to attract the female deer (it being the rutting season) and the golfers who were keen to continue their game! Fortunately, there appeared room for both and each group went their separate ways carrying on as they had been.



The Autumn light shimmered lightly on the lake, the weather was bright and dry and the trees were just on the turn, making it an altogether lovely walk to boost our spirits before winter sets in. We did, of course, finish our walk with a warm coffee at the stables and a quick peek into the Botanic Garden.



If you would like to join Melissa and Jane on future jaunts, please look out for details. Our next walk, Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November, is planned to be at Wilford and along the Trent.

Melissa Long [melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com)  
Jane Ellis. [jane.ellis21@outlook.com](mailto:jane.ellis21@outlook.com)

## Long Walks: *Convenor, Graham Edwards*



This walk was a mix of easy canal side path, a road and stepped climb, and a long descent through woods. Five of us set off from Ambergate Railway Station to walk along the Cromford Canal as far as Whatstandwell Station. This was followed by a steep climb up steps and roadways to the village and on to Crich Carr before rambling over the fields and down into Crich Village. The Loaf Bakery and Café which we have visited before, provided us with a sustaining lunch before we finished the walk with a short ascent onto The Tors (superb views across the Derwent Valley) followed by a stroll into the woods (Crich Chase) and an invigorating descent down to the canal and A6 which led us back to the start.

A slightly challenging walk of some 5½ miles across varied terrain, plus a pleasant café lunch - a good day out!

The next Long Walk will be on Tuesday **25th November**. I am continuing my rough plan of alternating longer more demanding walks with easier ones. This is one of the easier

ones - a stroll across fields and a golf course from Sawley to the River Trent, and then along the riverside path to Attenborough, a walk of less than 6 miles. The riverside path has been closed for some time because of construction work, but is now open again. We finish off at the Nature Reserve visitor centre and café before catching the bus home.

Those registered on the Long Walk mailing list will receive a detailed invitation a couple of weeks before the walk. If you are not on the list and would like to join, please let me know:

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

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



On the day after Storm Benjamin's yellow warnings of wind and rain, the Longer Walkers set off in bright sunshine and an autumn chill to explore the countryside between **Pleasley Pit Country Park and Hardwick Hall**. The buildings and headstock of the pit stand high above the nearby housing estate. Our circular walk of just under 8 miles took us from this post-industrial landscape to the Elizabethan world of Bess of Hardwick. On the way we dropped in to see the church at Auld Hucknall. Locals claim that they live in the smallest village in England, just three dwellings and a church. We wondered how it could

have accumulated so many gravestones, spread across four separate cemetery fields. The church is where the body of 17<sup>th</sup> century political philosopher Thomas Hobbes is interred. Aren't our u3a members extraordinary! While one translated the Latin inscription on his tomb, another told an anecdote about Hobbes' contradictory views on beggars, while yet another told us about the contrasting views of Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke. Mind-blowing!

As we approached Hardwick Hall, we discussed the story of its wealthy owner Bess, the second richest woman in Tudor England after Queen Elizabeth. The Hall itself is a display of her wealth and power. We sidled in through the tradesmen's entrance to eat our packed lunches behind the outhouses. A gentle stroll along the converted railway lines of the old pit brought us back to our start point just as the sky darkened and we felt spots of rain. This was a fascinating and delightful walk in excellent company.



On **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November**, we will repeat a walk we last completed two years ago. I called it the **Cossall Rainbow Walk**. It was originally planned as a way of visiting sites connected to the (then) Book Group selection, D. H. Lawrence's novel "The Rainbow". No doubt these and other Lawrence locations will be a highlight of November's 8.6-mile circular walk starting and finishing in Kimberley. Travel will be by bus and details will be sent out about a week before the walk.

*If you would like to be included on the Longer Walks email list, please contact me on [u3aparkwalks@gmail.com](mailto:u3aparkwalks@gmail.com) .*

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



This month turned into a rather special meeting, as Parminder very kindly invited us to a Diwali lunch, rather than a picnic. She promised a 'finger food lunch', but when we got there, it was a veritable banquet!

On arrival, we lit candles in the hallway to symbolise the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. We then went through to the kitchen. Finger food had turned into vegetable samosas, paneer spring rolls,

potato bhajia and dhokla (a savoury sponge dish), followed by eggless fruit cake, milk cake, soan papdi (a crispy flaky sweet dish) and gulab jamnu (a kind of fried dumpling in syrup). All of this was washed down with masala chai - what a feast! I think I can safely say everyone enjoyed it immensely, and felt very privileged to be invited to share the celebration.

Once we were all full, a post-prandial stroll was in order, so our thoughts turned to the plants and we took a tour of the garden. Although Parminder herself thought her garden was a bit messy, we all found plenty of interest, with lots of plants still putting on an autumn show. It has generally been a very good year for flowering plants, and fuchsias, geraniums and busy lizzies were still cheering everything up, as well as the autumn leaves on the trees, and some impressive mahonias putting in an appearance.

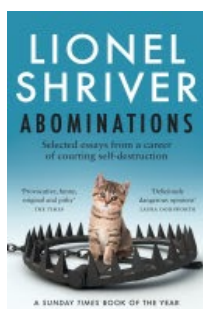


Then just as we were about to leave, Parminder remembered she had these ceramic hydrangeas to show us. Hand made and glazed by Parminder in a pottery workshop in The Park, the finished results were stunning and several of us could happily have sneaked them into our jackets and taken them home!

All in all, quite an experience for the group. Thank you so much Parminder, and (belated) Happy Diwali from all of us.

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*



This month we read *Abominations* by Lionel Shriver who is an American author and journalist. *Abominations* is a group of selected essays from a career of courting self-destruction! *Abominations* reveals Shriver at her most iconoclastic and personal. Relentlessly sceptical, cutting and contrarian but also frequently moved and unguarded, this collection showcases her piquant opinions on a wide range of topics, including religion, politics, illness, mortality, family and friends, tennis, gender, immigration, consumerism, health care and taxes – pheww!! The book group on the whole did not enjoy the experience of reading this book

although her other books were well received!

Our next read is *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. The book is an enquiry into the reasons why beauty gets wasted in this country. The beauty in this case is black: The wasting is done by a cultural engine what seems to have been designed to murder possibilities and she does it with a prose so precise, so faithful to speech and so charged with pain and wonder that the novel becomes poetry.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 21 November at a member's house at 4.00 p.m.

## **Dining Group:** *Convenor Adrienne Lee*

On 20 November we will try the newly opened **The Ivy** in Nottingham. As a chain restaurant it seems to have variable reviews depending on branch, so we will see!

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

The next meetings of the Science Seekers Group will be a linked pair of events exploring *what is science?* The meetings will be in the style of Melvyn Bragg's "In Our Time" podcasts with Adrian leading and questioning our resident "experts" Reg, Paul and Jane.

### **Scientific Method**

A clear exposition of the history and development of the Scientific Method.

27<sup>th</sup> November 14.00 – 16.00. Venue: The Castle Tennis Club

Organisers: Reg Dennick, Paul Stapleton, Jane Morrell, Adrian Hyde

### **What is Non-Science?**

This will explore levels of understanding and education in science and the role of non-scientific propaganda and conspiracy theories.

11<sup>th</sup> December 14.00 – 16.00. Venue: The Castle Tennis Club

Organisers: Reg Dennick, Paul Stapleton, Jane Morrell, Adrian Hyde

*For further details about joining the Science Seekers group, please contact the convenor Adrian Hyde ([a.f.l.hyde@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:a.f.l.hyde@sheffield.ac.uk))*

## **Yoga Group:** *Convenor, Melissa Long*

### **Why Yoga for Seniors Is More Popular Than Ever**

The rise in popularity of yoga for seniors is no accident. Studies show that consistent yoga practice supports multiple dimensions of healthy ageing, from increased flexibility and balance to reduced stress and improved cognitive health.

Unlike high-impact workouts, yoga meets you where you are. Whether you're recovering from injury, or managing chronic conditions, yoga offers accessible tools for movement, mindfulness, and healing.

As we get older, the body naturally undergoes changes: muscle mass decreases, joint mobility stiffens, and balance may decline. But regular yoga practice can slow these effects and even reverse some of them.

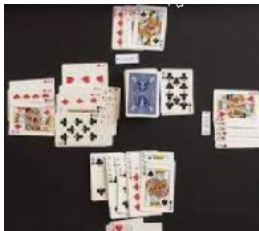
u3a Yoga Group offers a friendly and accessible class for mixed abilities. Sessions are held monthly at the Castle Tennis Club in The Park, with a maximum class size of ten. The hour-long class consists of a warmup with poses for balance, strength and agility. The classes are led by Melissa Long, a certified Hatha yoga teacher and u3a member.

**November Class: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> 10.00**

**Booking Essential – Free for November!**

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

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



Our regular meets take place at The Castle Tennis Club on Tennis Drive on the first and third Thursday afternoons of each month. Previous experience is not essential, and cost £5/session or a subscription of £20 for up to 5 months. Costs cover hall hire and refreshments.

*Sessions to the end of the year will be on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November and just one in December on the 4<sup>th</sup>. All games start at 4pm and finish around 5.45/6pm.*

If you are interested in joining the group or would like to come along for a free taster session, either turn up at The Castle Tennis Club on any of the dates above, or contact Jane at [jane.ellis21@outlook.com](mailto:jane.ellis21@outlook.com).

Don't be afraid of having a go .....we are a friendly group and will teach you the rules. We play a version of Canasta called "Hand and Foot" which is great fun, and can be played either in pairs or singles. We usually have 3 to 4 tables of players at each session, and you don't need a regular partner to play, just join the table you want to!

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

Here are two clues we enjoyed at our session on 22nd October:

### **Type of Western pasta (9)**

We didn't take long to get this one - we just needed a 9-letter word that means a type of Western (film) and also a type of pasta!

### **Flight that sometimes continues after landing (9)**

This was more tricky! On reading the clue, visions of aircraft and airports immediately came to mind. But cryptic crossword setters thrive on a diet of red herrings, and love to lead you up the garden path! In this case, we needed to think instead of a flight of stairs, which, in a house, usually leads to a landing (and sometimes on to a further floor) - so the answer was actually STAIRCASE.

November's sessions will be on 12th and 26th.

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

The Mah Jong group meets regularly every month on the afternoon of the third Tuesday. Our meetings are generously hosted by one of our members. Our members have a wide range of Mah Jong experience and we continue to welcome beginners, as well as players who can teach us to improve our skills.

The next meeting will be on the Tuesday **18th October**, in the afternoon after the Monthly Meeting. We meet 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. There are however many versions of the rules which we can incorporate into our play.

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 Mah Jong mailing list as well as those in our WhatsApp group will receive an email nearer the time, detailing the arrangements for the meeting.

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

## **Useful Contacts**

Ian Henderson, Chair

[chair2.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair2.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com)

Sue Keen, Vice Chair:

[sookeen@btinternet.com](mailto:sookeen@btinternet.com)

Barrie Shay, Membership Secretary:

[barrieshay@icloud.com](mailto:barrieshay@icloud.com)

David Egan, Business Secretary:

[dave.egan@btinternet.com](mailto:dave.egan@btinternet.com)

Melissa Long, Treasurer

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

Website

[parknottingham.u3asite.uk](http://parknottingham.u3asite.uk)

**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 **December** Newsletter should be sent to the editor,  
**Ian Henderson**, by Monday **24th November** by emailing:

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