

Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter

February 2026

Chair's Note

2026 sees us pass the 150 members marker for the first time for a total of 151 at the time of writing. Gone are the days when we aspired to 120 members and thought that might be a natural limit! Our u3a has been boosted by several applications from other areas of Greater Nottingham attracted by our interesting groups and welcoming ambience, with associate membership growing (where individuals are already u3a members elsewhere).

We have never been parochial, with a sizeable proportion of members not living in The Park, and it is good to see the welcome given to newcomers.

We had a bumper attendance for our January Monthly Talk – hardly surprising given that Kadie Kanneh-Mason is such an inspirational speaker.

January did not have the best of weather so it is heartening to read that our walking groups kept the faith by braving the elements and continuing to enjoy themselves.

Much colder weather didn't deter Rod Mitchell's urge to travel but the Plants and Picnics group wisely stayed indoors. The Local History Group have planned a full year, no less, of outings so their future looks bright. Catch up with the details on these and the other groups in this month's news.

We also have news of two newly-proposed groups, TED Talks and Badminton (see below for details).

Ian Henderson

Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - February 2026

Date	Activity	Venue	Convenor
3rd, 4pm	TED Talks	Member's home	Maureen Moffatt
5th & 19th 4pm	Canasta	Castle Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
6th, 3.15 for 3.30pm	Film Group	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
9th, 2pm	Committee Meeting	Castle Tennis Club	Ian Henderson
10th, 10am	Short Walk	Colwick Country Park	Jane Ellis/ Melissa Long
11th & 24th, 3pm	Cryptic Crosswords	Member's Home	Jonathan Wickens
14th, 9.30am	Local History	Masonic Hall, Nottm	Mark Wilson
16th, 10am	Yoga	Castle Tennis Club	Melissa Long
17th, 10.30am	Monthly Talk- Andrew Martin	Castle Tennis Club	Ian Henderson
17th, 3.45pm	Mah Jong	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
18th, 4.30pm	Science Group	Member's Home	Adrian Hyde
20th, 3.45pm	Book Group	Member's Home	Liz Gilder
24th, 10am	Long Walk	Beeston Lock	Graham Edwards
27th, 10am	Longer Walk	Bestwood Country Park	Andrew Martin
TBA	Plants & Picnics	Member's Home	Marion Martin
TBA	Music Appreciation		Jacky Fisher

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 - January

Thanks to Jackie Fisher's long-time friendship with **Kadie Kanneh-Mason**, she was our speaker this month. She is the mother of 7 classically trained musicians now between 16 and 29 years old. Kadie has Welsh and Sierra Leonian blood and lived in South Wales from 8 years old. Her husband Stuart is from Antigua and they form a community of a wide extended family. They wanted to create opportunities for their children through all kinds of music to encourage them to communicate, to have empathy, think for themselves and have confidence in hard work.



Their successes are well known but there has been repeated pain and frustration too. Her daughter Isata described how failing to win BBC Young Musician of the Year taught her that hard work does not always lead to success. From failure she learned about resilience, wisdom, courage and drive and that there is no success without failing. Being classical musicians has involved pain and accidents galore such as broken fingers (Sheku just before Christmas) slammed thumbs, muscle strains and all the physical demands of practice.

However, it has been racial prejudice that they have to battle constantly that has made their success in the classical music world a fraught place to be. They have tried to protect their children from this dark side of success but it has been increasingly difficult. The more successful the children have become, the more they have been exposed. They have suffered micro- and macro-aggressions with people often suggesting their success is because they are black, not talented.

They have been constantly criticised as if they have no right to be successful black classical musicians. They have learned that criticism of performance and technique is valid and beneficial through the family Sunday Afternoon concert at their home,

sitting on the stairs, where they all play and give feedback to each other, the youngest being the fiercest critic! They have needed the strength and support from the warmth and richness of family life which clearly continues even after all but one of their children have left home.



Kadie has, apart from the endless washing and no doubt cooking, cleaning, arranging, taxiing, encouraging, commiserating, written several books including "*House of Music*". I hope Kadie felt the warmth and appreciation from our hefty u3a turnout both for her as a role model as well as having nurtured children who play such music so beautifully.

If you want to explore her books the link is https://www.nottinghambooks.co.uk/?s=kadiatu&post_type=product

For our February meeting, **Andrew Martin** will bring us a Valentine's Day theme. His talk with the title '**Love is...?**' asks us, "Is love a mystery or is it a puzzle to be solved?" This will be an exploration through language, history, science, culture and literature, with hopes of finding some answers. Join us on **17th February, 10.30 for 11am** at Castle Tennis Club
Sarah Waites

Travel Notes

VIENNA: IT MEANS EVERYTHING.....TO MUSIC LOVERS.

The annual New Year's Day concert from Vienna is broadcast live on Radio 3 and BBC TV, and has long been part of the Christmas festivities. I guess Park u3a members will have watched it live, or later on iPlayer if you were out on a walk. Whatever your taste in music, it's a feast for the ears, and for your eyes if you don't mind the video promoting Austria's tourist attractions.

The concert is held in the Wiener Musikverein, a grand neo-classical building in Vienna's Inner Ring. Built in 1870, this is regarded as one of the world's best concert halls in acoustical terms, whereby enjoyment of all music is enhanced, but particularly classical music in my view. The main hall or 'Großer Saal' holds 1700 and is also the plushest venue I've encountered in a lifetime of concert going.



So how did I end up there on a freezing cold Saturday night in January? I had travelled overland to Vienna to join a Railway Touring Company group. The tour itinerary arrived two weeks beforehand and I noted there was free time after lunch on 17th. January.

I looked up the Musikverein's website and discovered the Vienna Philharmonic were performing Mahler's Symphony No. 7 that night and tickets were still available, albeit priced at €144. Nonetheless, for a lover of Mahler's music this was too good an opportunity to miss. Compared to most pop and rock stadium shows it was a snip.

The Musikverein operates a dress code (smart/casual), but when it's -5C outside practicality trumps elegance. The hall has six cloakrooms, more than enough to store everyone's winter gear. I found my seat in good time and observed the orchestra warming up. I'd never before been to a concert performance of Mahler's 7th. so I was surprised to see a classical guitarist and a ukelele player amongst the orchestra.

I quickly realised that Mahler uses a large palette of instrumental colours to convey a wide spectrum of emotions, feelings, images and scenes. Although the two players were only required to perform their parts in the 3rd movement, the conductor graciously picked them out for applause at the end of the concert.

Most of the Railway Touring Company group were diehard rail enthusiasts and "trackbashers" (*), but one couple had booked to see "Manon" at the Vienna Opera the same night as the Mahler concert. Another gentleman, a former British Rail executive, sang in a choir which was currently rehearsing Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem. The highlight of the tour was a private steam hauled charter train on the Mariazeller Bahn. This runs from St. Polten to Mariazell in the Styrian Alps, a place of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics in Austria and elsewhere. There were also trips to Gmund and the Czech Republic for steam train rides.



Overland travel to Vienna takes two days and requires an oversight stay in Cologne. Luckily there is an Ibis hotel inside the main station and a direct train service to Vienna. Both the outward and return journeys were nearly one hour late which is typical for Deutsche Bahn. In Germany the delay repay is a miserly 25% of your fare, and is paid out if a train is delayed by more than 60 minutes. To avoid this, stations are omitted to make up time, a practice also used in the UK it has to be said. Either that or departure is from a station further down the line.

I used Eurostar to travel from London to Cologne. A few years ago Eurostar amalgamated with Thalys who operated trains from Paris to Brussels, Amsterdam, Cologne and Dusseldorf. Unfortunately, these trains seem to catch the Deutsche Bahn disease once they're in Germany. The service from Brussels was 40 minutes late into Cologne. On my return journey the service to Brussels was cancelled. To make my connection to London, I had to buy a ticket for Deutsche Bahn's service to Brussels. The tour group had flown from Heathrow, which is not an airport I favour, hence my decision to go overland.

However, I've since discovered that Wizzair operate flights to Vienna from Luton Airport, as well as to Bratislava, a much cheaper destination but only one hour by train from Vienna. There are affordable hotels close to Vienna's main station and tram lines to the city centre. If you do go, avoid winter - it can feel like minus 10C!

Bon Voyage,

Rod Mitchell

* **Trackbasher:** a species of rail enthusiast. Typically equipped with a UK and Europe rail atlas and a pack of highlighter pens. He (and it's usually a he) uses these to colour in the rail tracks over which he has travelled.

* **Also: Trambasher:** as above, but every tram line in a city

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

English Language Group- *Convenor, Margaret Wiedemann*

It's the season for disposing of unwanted Christmas gifts and filling the vacancy with a whole new set of merchandise purchased in the sales. Festive catalogues are always rich in absurdities, and the ELG year kicked off with a small ad for a gold tone (*Ed -?*) watch, a bargain at £20, under the headline "*Timeless Gift*". Our king of the punishing pun lost no time in asking "*Is it second hand?*"

Over at B&Q, a "*natural artificial Christmas tree arch – green*" was reduced to £80 from £100 and there was only one left, so the concept of natural yet artificial greenery obviously resonates with the public in some way that completely escapes the ELG. In fact, as one eagle-eyed member noted, there is a whole section of "*natural artificial plants and flowers*" on the B&Q website.

The festive season is also the time for a good murder mystery on TV, but imagine the distress of one Agatha Christie aficionado when the first few minutes of the much-hyped Netflix *Seven Dials Mystery* featured Helena Bonham Carter saying "*The difference between you and I ...*" As our armchair critic remarked, he could just about put up with "I" instead of "me" in modern colloquial speech on the grounds that language is constantly changing, but in an upper-class murder mystery set in 1925 the only answer is to reach for the remote control.

January, called after Janus, the two-faced god, seemed an appropriate time to discuss the subject of *contranym*s, words which can have two contradictory meanings. An example is "quite" which can mean "somewhat" or "a bit", and at other times "totally", for instance "it's quite sunny today" against "that outfit is quite unsuitable". If you're not always sure which way you're facing linguistically, join our like-minded group by emailing :

mjwh57@gmail.com.

Local History Group - *Convenor, Jane Morrell*

On 14th January, we held our Local History Group annual planning meeting. From a variety of suggestions, we made plans for visits to: Southwell Workhouse, Grantham House, Haddon Hall, Cromford Mill, Tamworth Castle, Walk Historical Grantham, The National Civil War Centre(Newark), Percy Street Gudwara, Historical Sneinton and St Peter's Church.

The first visit of the year will be to the **Provincial Grand Lodge of Nottinghamshire**, one of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, on **12th February**, organised by **Mark Wilson** (markwilson6419@gmail.com).

Film Group - Convenor, Ian Henderson

January's film was the multi-Oscar contender *Marty Supreme*. Starring Timothee Chalamet this told the partly-fictionalised story of Marty Mauser, a renowned American table tennis player in the 1950s.

He is portrayed as a self-centred, highly-focussed hustler and charts his efforts to get to the World Championships in Tokyo in 1952. The film unfolded at breakneck speed as Marty's, at times, manic quest unfolded with him trying to get funds and backing to reach his goal.



The New York setting for most of the plot meant a lot of high volume, quickfire dialogue which annoyed a lot of us. A minority hated it, partly for that, but in the main it was admired rather than enjoyed. A number of the (fictional) side-plots could have been excised to bring down the running time from a lengthy 149 minutes, but we could see why Chalamet is Oscar-tipped for his intense portrayal of a single-minded scoundrel.

The average rating was **6/10**, dragged down by a couple of derisory scores.

We are flexing our auteur muscles next time by discussing '*Nouvelle Vague*', a new Richard Linklater feature film about the making of *À Bout de Souffle* (*Breathless*) by Jean-Luc Godard in 1960. It recreates the advent of the New Wave in cinema in France and was filmed in the original locations.

We meet on **6th Feb, 3.15 for 3.30pm**. Gauloise/Disque Bleu/Gitanes optional.

Music Appreciation Group - Convenor, Jacky Fisher

*We were going to have **Kadie Kanneh-Mason** talking to our group in January until we realised that there would be many people in the wider U3a members who would be likely to also want to hear what Kadie had to say. So Sarah agreed enthusiastically to the idea of Kadie speaking at the Monthly Meeting for all the members on 20 January. This also made it more worthwhile for Kadie to be talking to a larger audience. See above for Sarah's account.*

*So we are now planning events for the next few months. We are going to organise a trip to Derby's **Museum of Making** where they have interesting afternoon concerts, and also a preview of **Verdi's requiem at the Royal Concert Hall** with the BBC concert orchestra. This has 2 of our group singing in it!*

We will let the group know more details as soon as possible.

Jacky - 078669 8840 gandfisher23@gmail.com

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

WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK

Well, we certainly would not have picked the weather for a walk on this day, had we had the choice. It was terrible – and extremely wet. However, this did not deter the seven of us who braved it and made it!

On arriving at **Mapperley Plains** shops we stepped off the bus, and as the rain got more intense and we got wetter, we became more determined to visit the quirky attractions of the park – including the former Nottingham Suburban Railway tunnel and sunken garden. Not deterred by the rain, we also managed to visit the garden centre/nursery area which is still home to Nottingham City Parks department, albeit the tropical glasshouse and nursery greenhouses no longer providing the City's annual bedding displays.

Having explored the parklands, we then headed off into **Sherwood** for a well-earned dry spot and refreshments at the delightful 'Crimson Tree' Kitchen and Larder. The cakes were absolutely delicious and we certainly enjoyed our respite from the bad weather before heading back into town. Despite the rain our spirits had been lifted by walking and chatting, and catching up with friends after the Xmas break.

Please do join us on our next short walk, on **10th February**, when we will be visiting **Colwick Country Park**.

Melissa Long melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com

Jane Ellis jane.ellis21@outlook.com

Long Walks - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

In keeping with recent tradition, the normal Long Walk at the end of December was deemed too close to Christmas - our normal walking day would have been just before Christmas Eve. However 13 of us managed to rouse ourselves earliest on **New Year's Day** morning for a gentle ramble around our usual NYD route. We walked through **Lenton Village**, took in the **University Jubilee Campus**, then through to **Wollaton Park**. Recent experience has shown that the University catering is closed at this time so we stopped at the Wollaton Park café. The aftermath of the Winter Wonderland provided us with seating, and the fine weather allowed us to sit outside for a while whilst we took a break to enjoy some goodies we had brought with us.



Full of coffee and snacks, we completed the walk by traversing the University, and then through the hospital and Lenton Village back to The Park.

Overall about 6½ miles of easy, sociable walking on a fine morning.

27 January - A linear walk from **Cotgrave to The Park**

Given the likelihood of poor weather, this walk was designed to be relatively quick, and on firm surfaces, with a possibility of a warming lunch partway round. This was obviously an attractive proposition as 20 members signed up for the walk.



However as the day of the walk approached the weather forecast indicated heavy rain and wind from the tail-end of Storm Chandra for that morning. This was sufficient to dissuade most members from coming, and so only four intrepid walkers set out.

As is often the case, the forecasts proved unduly pessimistic so the rain stopped just as we set off for the bus. Once we reached **Cotgrave** there was no rainfall, although plenty of water on the ground, and it was still breezy and a little chilly (no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothing.....)

The walk along the **Grantham Canal**, with the wind behind us, proved to be interesting, attractive but uneventful and after only 90 minutes or so with no break we were approaching **Gamston**. Crossing the A52 safely was a

challenge which we thankfully passed, and after only another mile of canal-side walking we reached **Lady Bay** and the Poppy and Pint pub.

The welcoming place was busy for a Tuesday lunchtime with a wake, groups of locals working from home etc However, we were quickly supplied with suitable food and drink as we rested a while.

Over lunch we made the decision to walk back to The Park rather than take the bus. This final part of the walk took us firstly to **Lady Bay bridge**, and a view of the new footbridge at **Trent Lock**, before descending to the riverside at the point where the Grantham Canal joins (or used to join) the River Trent.

We then crossed the river and walked along the Nottingham and Beeston Canal, past Cleaver and Wake and the Magistrates' Courts and back into The Park.

We were lucky that the weather proved to be so much better than expected, so we managed the 7½ miles in relative comfort - an unexpectedly good day out for the few!

February's Long Walk (on **February 24th**) will be a rerun of a local walk from home with no recourse to transport. We will walk to **Beeston Lock** along the Nottingham and Beeston Canal, enjoy the delights of the Heritage Centre Tearooms, then walk back along the river. The walk is mainly on paved surfaces, there are no stiles or hills so should be suitable for most walkers in all weathers.

We last did this walk as a group in 2022, and local flat walks along canals seem quite popular some I think it's time for a return.

I will be sending out details during February to those on the Long Walks mailing list. If you are not on the list, and would like to join to receive updates on our walks, please let me know.

grahamedwards542@gmail.com

Longer Walks- Convenor, Andrew Martin

Nine of us set out from Moor Green tram stop near Bulwell to start the January Longer Walk. This was a new 8-mile circular route through **Bestwood Country Park and Bulwell Hall Park.**

It was surprising that some members were unfamiliar with Bestwood CP, so this meant that the convenor could retell stories of the medieval Royal Hunting Grounds and of Charles II and Nell Gwyn. However, the description of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) walking up to the Lodge from the train station “on this very path” for weekends of gambling “and other activities” seemed to get more attention.

While we paused for a rest near the Alexandra Lodge, history was being revived by a primary school group, though they seemed to be dressed as Ancient Britons with spears and painted faces.

After a picnic lunch near the Mill Lakes, we continued west along the Robin Hood Way to Bulwell Hall Park and Home Wood, the site of the now-demolished Bulwell Hall, former home of Albert Ball Senior, and later an Italian prisoner of war camp in World War II. From here, we returned across the golf course and back to our start point in Bulwell.



February is the month of ‘love’ (see above for details of the talk about ‘Love’ at the Monthly Meeting on Tuesday 17th, just after St Valentine’s Day). On **Friday 27th February** we will repeat an 8-mile linear walk that we last completed in the snow in November 2024. This will take us from **Newstead to Eastwood** following a route familiar to the young Lord Byron as he walked or rode out to meet Mary Chaworth of Annesley Hall. In later life he described her as the only woman he’d ever really loved. After crossing the M1, we head into D.H. Lawrence country and pass several sites mentioned in his books. He knew the area well (“The country of my heart”). As a boy he walked out to Hags Farm to visit the young Jessie Chambers and her family and credits them with his love of reading. Travel will be by train and bus.

This year we are trying to plan ahead and have dates in the diary for 3 to 4 months ahead. If you would like to know about these and be included on the Longer Walks email list, please contact me using the email address u3aparkwalks@gmail.com .

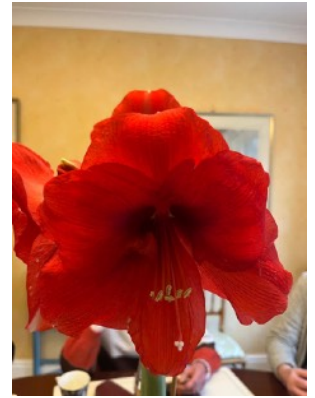
Plants and Picnics- Convenor, Marion Martin

This month’s report has been written by Armorel. Photos by Parminder.

We were glad to be indoors for the January meeting of the Plants & Picnics group, which took place at Annie’s house on a rather damp and dismal day. Seven members gathered round Annie’s dining table to enjoy her tea and cake and whatever lunchtime provisions they had brought with them. The spectacular multi-flowered red *Hippeastrum* (commonly known as *Amaryllis*) in the middle of the table was much admired.



Only one member was brave enough to go outside to view the garden, returning with glowing comments on the lush, weed-free lawn (having a former groundsman in the house clearly helps!) and the hellebores that were already flowering as a harbinger of better days to come.



Indoors – where, as usual, the meeting was partly social and partly horticultural – conversation ranged over a wide range of topics; on the gardening front there was discussion of the desirability of growing native British plants that would encourage insects and thus benefit the environment.

To help pollinators, such plants need to have a simple structure (not double or fancy blooms), and of course such an approach needs to be combined with avoidance of pesticides and other chemicals that are harmful to wildlife.

I am sure we all look forward to spending more time in our gardens as warmer and better weather comes round.

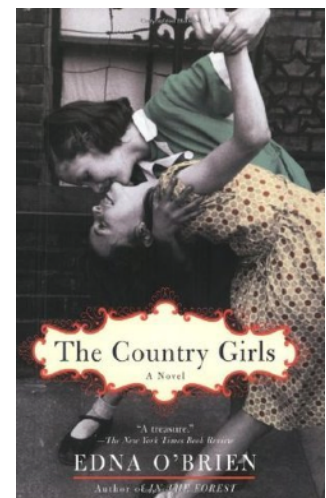


If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Marion Martin at PNu3aPandP@gmail.com

Book Group- *Convenor, Liz Gilder*

The book group met on Friday 16th January to discuss **"The Country Girls"** by Edna O'Brien. As always we started by considering the background of the author which, in this case, was very colourful, rich and varied. Edna O'Brien was an Irish novelist, memoirist, playwright, poet and short story writer, winning many awards and honours.

The group was recommended to watch a documentary about O'Brien's life entitled "Blue Road - The Edna O'Brien Story" which has been widely praised. In his review of the documentary Mark Kermode said that it made him want to read everything she had ever written!



"**The Country Girls**" is the first book of a trilogy, a coming-of-age story set in County Clare which won great acclaim for its frank and funny depictions of toxic best friends and terrible men. The book was considered outrageous at the time by many Irish people, and was in fact banned in Ireland along with her next 5 books.

"**The Country Girls**" is a semi-autobiographical novel which has been credited with breaking the silence on sexual matters and social issues during a very repressive period in Ireland after the Second World War. It follows the lives of two childhood friends who have very differing views of life and aspirations.

The group commented particularly on the wonderful descriptions which were at times sad, funny, touching and always very real. Overall the group scored the book just over **8**, with most wanting to go on and read the other two books.

Our next meeting will be held on Friday February 20th when we will be discussing "**The Giver of Stars**" by Jojo Moyes. Set in the Kentucky mountains and based on a Horseback Librarian Programme designed to bring books and learning to isolated communities. The book describes the struggle of a group of women to set up a library in a desperately poor and deeply conservative community. Two love stories are weaved through the narrative. Even if you're not a member of the book group we hope you might enjoy this recommendation.

Contact e.gilder@peoplemarketing.co.uk if you want to join our group.

Science Seekers - *Convenor, Adrian Hyde*

For our January meeting **Andrew Martin** asked us the question "**Is Psychology a Science?**" This followed naturally from our meetings at the end of last year where we considered what is, and what isn't, Science. Andrew started by looking at who the people are that can call themselves scientists and psychologists. In both schools and universities, and consequently in professional life, STEM subjects like Physics and Engineering attract mostly men, with only 27%-30% of women. In contrast, around 80% of psychologists, from school through to professional life are women. This certainly provoked some discussion.

It became clear that Psychology covers a vast range of topics and that it requires a wide knowledge of research methods and data analysis tools to cope with this. There are further hurdles to clear in that there is not yet one unified

theory that explains everything about the mind and our behaviour. Also, the mind tends to provide a series of 'locked room' puzzles to solve, and humans are not the most reliable of witnesses to what is happening in their own minds (or the minds of others).

With our participation in a couple of memory experiments, and anecdotes about experiments with students, there was a great deal of variety to hold our interest. Comments on our WhatsApp group after the talk described it as a "clear and interesting presentation" that "got us all discussing". It was "fascinating", "accessible" and "enjoyable" and "certainly got my synapses buzzing"!

The February meeting of the Science Seekers group will be on **Wednesday 18th at 4.30** when **Reg Dennick** will give a talk on the MRI scanner.

Yoga Group- *Convenor, Melissa Long*

Why Yoga is Great for Seniors:

- Improves Balance & Strength: Helps prevent falls, crucial for seniors.
- Reduces Pain: Gentle movement can alleviate pain and inflammation.
- Boosts Mobility: Maintains flexibility and agility in stiff joints.
- Mental Well-being: Lowers stress, combats loneliness, and improves mood.

How to Make it Work:

- Find Adapted Classes: Look for "Gentle Yoga," classes specifically for seniors.
- Listen to Your Body: Proceed with caution, listen to your body, fit the poses to your ability not the other way round.
- Seek Qualified Teachers: Choose instructors who emphasise modifications and listen to student needs.

Common Misconceptions

- You need to be bendy: exactly why we do Yoga: to increase our flexibility
- You need to be thin: all shapes and sizes can participate and feel the benefits
- You need to be young: u3a class specifically targeted to senior clients
- It's a clique: the teacher will know your name, it's a friendly and sociable small group

The u3a class Yoga Class is held on the third Monday of the month at Castle Tennis Club, Tennis Drive, The Park.

Booking Essential (8 maximum) **£5 fee.**

Licensed instructor and u3a member, Melissa Long leads the small and friendly group.

NEXT CLASS: FEBRUARY 16TH, 10.00, ONE HOUR

Contact melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com for more information

Canasta Club – Convenor, Jane Ellis

2025 has been an excellent year for the Canasta Group, now with a core membership of 21. We have met on 22 occasions last year and average 12 players per session, or three tables of four players. Everyone has now got the hang of ‘Hand and Foot’, which is the version of Canasta that we play. We play with tables of 4 or 3 – depending on total numbers at any one session.

We do have capacity at the Club to welcome new members, so do please get in touch with Jane Ellis if you would like to learn and play this version of the ever popular game. ‘One to One’ coaching is offered for complete beginners, if required, or otherwise jumping in at the deep end and learning as you play is ok too!



Why not learn a new skill in 2026? We are a sociable group who enjoy the game and one another's company. We meet twice a month, on the **first and third Thursdays between 4-6pm** at Castle Tennis Club on Tennis Drive.

Come along for a taster session.....

Jane.ellis21@outlook.com

Cryptic Crossword Group - Convenor, Jonathan Wickens

We had a full 5 weeks without meeting as Christmas came and went. But members kept their minds sharp by tackling a couple of extra crosswords at home - this time from the *Metro* newspaper.



At our meetings, we always do crosswords from *The New World* (formerly *The New European*), which seem to present just the right level of challenge (lower intermediate). The *Metro* puzzles are at much the same similar level (if anything, very slightly easier), but adjusting to a different compiler's style was a challenge in itself. A challenge to which our members rose!

Upcoming meetings will be on **February 11th and 25th**.

Mah Jong - Convenor, Graham Edwards



The group will continue to meet in the social environment of our members' homes. There are usual enough players for us to run a couple of games concurrently. Our usual meeting date is the afternoon of the third Tuesday of the month. This month this means **17th February**.

Members already on the MahJong mailing list as well as those in our WhatsApp group will receive an email nearer the time, detailing the arrangements for the meeting.

If you would like to know a bit more about the game, or if you are interested in joining us, please email me 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.

grahamedwards542@gmail.com

Photography Group - Convenor, Rod Mitchell

*The group met in January to cast their eyes over images on the theme of “**Close Up**” (see below). Given the time of year, new photos were thin on the ground and members delved into their archives to re-work images in line with this theme (a hyphen was omitted to allow multiple interpretations).*

In one or two instances, images had been submitted for a previous theme but didn't make the cut and were now presented in a fresh edit. Whatever the process, it's the results that count and we are confident the images below are worthy of your study.

*The group is next due to meet on **16th March**. We have chosen “**Elements**” as our next theme. This could be a challenge if it requires braving the “elements” to take photographs. I'm writing this while another storm rages outside so there'll be no lack of opportunity.*

!New Groups!

Some of you may remember a **TED Talks** group of ours based around short YouTube videos of experts in a variety of fields giving live lectures. Well, Maureen Moffatt would like to resurrect the idea and is organising a meeting of interested members to discuss it further:

TED Talks first meeting will be **Tuesday 3rd February @4pm**

Apartment 2, City Point,

Standard Hill

NG1 6FX

07496149721

mo.moffatt@gmail.com

Please let her know if you are able to attend.

Parking is available.

Badminton - Helen Teasdale

*I am interested in setting up a new group for beginners and intermediate badminton players to play at **The Portland Centre** in The Meadows. The centre is funded by Notts County and comprises sports halls, a large swimming pool and runs fitness classes in most sports. The proposal is to book a daytime court or more than one*

court either once a week or once a fortnight depending on group preference. Either 2 players or 4 can play at a time, and it is usual to play a few games with different partners for the hour-long session. The Courts cost £8.25 per hour and can be booked a week in advance. I would pay by credit card on booking and sort out the reimbursement at the time of play.

There is public transport by the No 11B bus from Maid Marian Way to the Portland Centre, which is just a 3 minute walk from the bus-stop in The Meadows to the centre. Alternatively, there is plenty of car-parking at the centre.

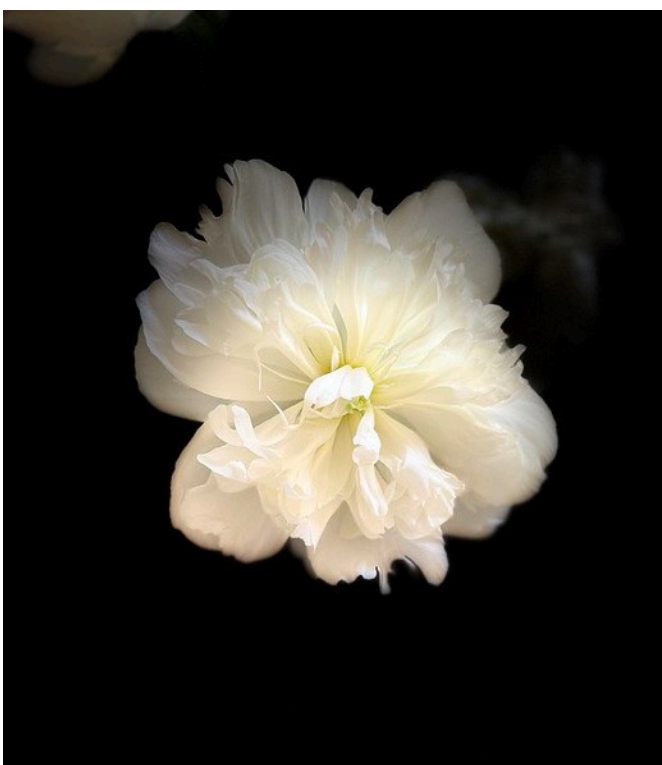
*Anyone interested or needing more information, please phone **Helen Teasdale** on **07967 628258***

Note

The proposed **Art Group** trailed in the last newsletter garnered some interest but has now been opened up to the general public so is no longer a u3a group, although it is operational.

Photo Gallery — *courtesy of Photography Group*

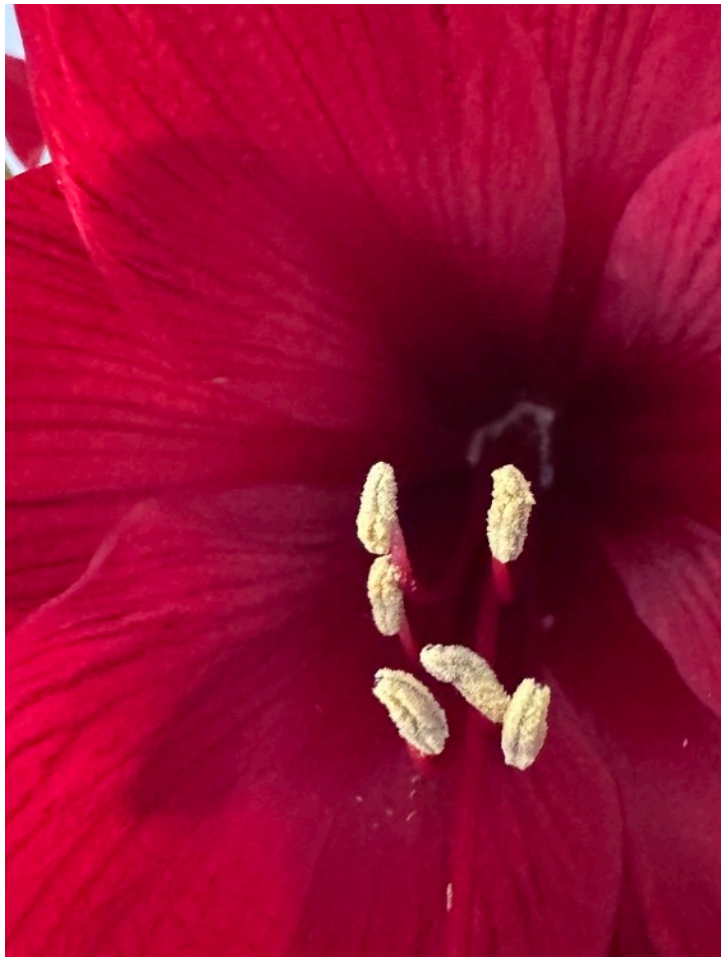
Close Up



Detail of Kate MccGuire artwork



Einstein bust by Jacob Epstein



Amaryllis



Closed Up





Lincoln Cathedral window



Street Tango, Buenos Aires

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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 **March** Newsletter should be sent to the editor, Graham Edwards, by Saturday **24th Feb** by emailing: grahamedwards542@gmail.com