

# Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter

## April 2026

### Chair's Note

April 1st is the start of our 2026/7 financial year so it is time to renew your subscription if you want to continue membership. Many of you will have already responded to Membership Secretary Barrie Shay's email about this but some may still be undecided or leaving it late. We are holding the cost at £20 for next year and if the contents of this newsletter doesn't spur you to renew nothing will!

Barrie and Treasurer Melissa Long would really appreciate timely renewal so that we have a clear idea of our income for the coming year. We have a healthy balance and a growing membership but they need to keep on top of our finances. So if you have not yet renewed but wish to, please do so now.

Speaking of finances, the Committee has been discussing the Summer Garden Party to be held this year in July. Details will be posted in the coming weeks. We have agreed to fund it from our reserves again, so it will be free to members, but we will probably need to review this arrangement for next year.

Finally, news of a national u3a event on 1-3 July at York University- **u3a Festival 26**. It is billed as 'a celebration of fun, learning and the community that makes u3a so special. Explore an existing interest or take the leap and try something completely new in member-led workshops and sessions. Surrounded by other members, you will have opportunities to move your body, be creative and explore new ideas.' It is open to all u3a members, who can book directly.

Tickets cost £18 a day, or £50 for a three-day ticket. The festival starts at 11am on Wednesday 1 July and ends at 3pm on Friday 3 July.

More details and booking via [www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026](http://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026)

*Jan Henderson*

# Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - April 2026

Date	Activity	Venue	Convenor
2nd & 16th, 4pm	<b>Canasta</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
2nd	<b>Music Appreciation</b>	Peggy's Skylight	Jackie Fisher
3rd, 3.15 for 3.30pm	<b>Film Group</b>	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
7th ,4pm	<b>TED Talks</b>	Member's Home	Helen Teasdale
8th, 3pm	<b>Crossword Group</b>	Member's Home	Jonathan Wickens
13th, 2pm	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Graham Edwards
14th, 10am	<b>Short Walk</b>	City Canal	Jane Ellis/ Melissa Long
15th, 11am	<b>Local History</b>	Grantham House	Helen Teasdale
15th, 3.45 for 4pm	<b>Science Seekers</b>	Member's Home	Adrian Hyde
17th, 3.45pm	<b>Book Group</b>	Member's Home	Liz Gilder
20th, 2pm	<b>Photography</b>	Member's Home	Rod Mitchell
21st, 10.30am	<b>Monthly Meeting &amp; Talk- Mike Siebert</b>	Castle Tennis Club	Sarah Waites
21st, 3.45 for 4pm	<b>Mahjong</b>	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
24th , 10am	<b>Longer Walk</b>	South Matlock	Andrew Martin
30th, 12.30pm Provisional	<b>Dining Group</b>	TBA	Adrienne Lee
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 - March

## Behind the Scenes as an RHS Judge – Martin Fish

Martin began his gardening career as an apprentice in the Newark's Parks Department and at 21 was the youngest head gardener at Rufford Abbey. He went on to run a plant nursery, write gardening articles, run a regular series of programmes on radio and television and create podcasts to be seen on You tube called "The Potting Shed Stage".

He ran the RHS Harrogate Shows and still writes for the Yorkshire Dales Man. These are the sort of credentials you need to be an RHS judge which he has been for 18 years. He outlined the process of judging by describing what happens at Chelsea.



In the old days, speciality committees after a 'liquid lunch', usually relied more on whim than objective criteria to judge all entries. Eventually the RHS introduced panels of judges, clear criteria and training. Senior judges go to all shows and must be seen to be transparent in their

decision making, with consistent marking across all national shows. Judging is done on the Monday before the public are allowed in.

Exhibitors slave away the day before. We can take daffodils to illustrate what happens –the 55 varieties of daffodils are 'over' well before the Chelsea Show in the third week of May. So, the bulbs are lifted in Autumn, planted in black nursery crates in compost and kept in cold storage of 2 degrees in suspended animation. The different varieties are gradually brought out in stages several weeks before Chelsea.

They flower in their crates and when in bud, the stems are cut, placed in buckets and replaced in cold store. They are brought to Chelsea on the Sunday before the show when the buds should open overnight. Spare plants are kept in a chill lorry to replace drooping flowers throughout the week.

Overall five judging panels judge 90 exhibits under the three headings of Plants, Impression and Endeavour. Each panel has a 'lead' who talks about the plants, with everyone then joining in, making positive comments first. The judges use 'paddles' to vote from Excellent to Poor on each heading. Senior judges visit all exhibits to

moderate for consistency. Mostly there is agreement but, if not, there could be discussion on whether the panel has been harsh or generous. The panel may need to justify their decisions and voting takes place again. The process works well.

Many celebrities and 'Royals' like to be seen and filmed on the Monday after judging, when the press is let loose. The 'Best in Show' medal is awarded as the last act. The judging system, let alone the growing of plants, involves a huge amount of work, attention to detail and obsessional care to show near perfection in plants – for a week. Perhaps we could up our game just a tad in "Plants and Picnics" – or maybe not and just enjoy gardening in all its messiness.

**Next Speaker - Dr. Mike Siebert Tuesday April 21<sup>st</sup> 2026:**

**'Does decarbonising your home still make sense - either for you or for our regional economy?'**

We have over 700 000 residential properties in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire which will need retrofitting if we are to reduce our carbon footprint. We also have limited resources to play with and many other agendas in equal need of prioritisation. How do we now make sense of this policy at an individual level and at a strategic level?

Join us at **10.30 for 11am on 21 April** at Castle Tennis Club on Tennis Drive.

*Sarah Waites*

***Travel Notes - Rod Mitchell***

***Leipzig: not just Bach***

*I have visited Leipzig several times, most recently in February with a Railway Touring Company (RTC) group. I chose the 'ground only' option, because international train travel to Germany is unreliable. The punctuality record of Deutsche Bahn's intercity trains is abysmal and connection times have to be inflated to allow for this, making journeys longer and more exhausting.*

*Direct flights to Leipzig are not available from our nearest airports, but EasyJet have a near daily, early evening flight from Luton Airport to Berlin. After a night in an airport hotel I caught a train to Leipzig the following morning and was in my hotel room by lunchtime. For independent travellers I recommend combining a Leipzig city break with a short stay in Berlin, preferably in spring and summer when Ryanair fly to Berlin twice a week from East Midlands Airport. Trains between the two cities run every hour, taking about 75-80 minutes.*

*The tour group was based at the Seaside Park Hotel, an odd name for a city hotel (it was excellent by the way) which was bang opposite Leipzig's main station. The station*

itself is one of the largest rail termini in Europe and an architectural wonder. German reunification it has been extensively modernised, with the construction of a large shopping mall underneath the main concourse. One platform is used as an exhibition space for preserved steam locomotives and a 1930's diesel railcar known as the "Flying Hamburger", an extra treat for many of the tour group.



Three stops away, on the underground S-Bahn line you will find Leipzig's original station, the Bayerische Bahnhof. Built in 1843, it was Germany's first mainline rail terminus. It was later replaced by the current main station, but continued to operate until World War Two. Partially demolished and derelict, the station was restored and is now occupied by a brew pub and restaurant. This was the venue for a tour group dinner and is highly recommended. Whisper it not, but German cuisine is showing signs of improvement, particularly with regard to vegetarian and vegan options. As always the beer is lovely (look out for the ur-Kostrizster dark beer).

The centre of Leipzig is easily explored on foot. Most people head to the Thomaskirche and the Bach Museum, but other composers are associated with the city. Fanny and Felix Mendelsohn's house is a short walk from the Gewandhaus, Leipzig's main concert hall and home of its eponymously named orchestra. More recently, a museum dedicated to the life and work of Clara Schumann (née Wick) has been opened.



The tour group itinerary included a visit to the Battle of the Nations monument, a 15 minute tram ride from the city centre. This was built in 1913 to mark the 100th anniversary of Napoleon Bonaparte's defeat at the hands of Prussian, Austrian and Russian forces. This is unlikely to feature on most tourist itineraries, unless you're into monumental architecture with shouty, neo-fascist overtones. There are good views of the city from the top of the monument, which might be worth the admission price if you're a photographer.

Two or three days ought to be sufficient to explore Leipzig, but the surrounding region contains many towns of historical and musical interest such as Weimar (Liszt), Halle (Handel) and Eisenach (Bach). However, I guess many British travellers, and u3a members in particular, will want to visit Colditz Castle, and indeed it was my reason for booking a place on the RTC tour. Independent travellers can only visit Colditz Castle in spring and summer, as it closed in in the winter months except for pre-booked tourAgroups.

**Colditz** is 30 miles from Leipzig. It no longer has a rail service nor is there a direct bus service from Leipzig currently. There are two choices: train then a bus (journey

time 1 hour) or two buses (journey time about 90 minutes). Colditz Castle houses a music school and auditorium which will attract audiences from the surrounding area. It is also possible to stay at a hostel in Colditz Castle itself. The public transport service may improve eventually and it's worth checking before you head off to Germany.

The RTC tour group's visit was scheduled for a Sunday morning, after which we would have lunch in town and then travel to **Jöhstadt** for a steam train ride on a heritage railway. Just one member of staff was on duty at the castle when we arrived (no other groups were booked in). We were each given a tablet, which has replaced a human with an audio-visual, virtual reality guide. By scanning a QR code in each room, the tablet brought up 3-D realisation of what might be going on in that space during the war. A tap on the tablet brought up pages of information or re-creations of some of the escapes by prisoners of war, or of events from the castle's earlier history. One room exhibited physical artefacts and a climb up to the attic brings you to the glider room.

The itinerary allowed three hours for the castle visit, which was not enough for me to absorb all the information and negotiate the stairs. Also, there was no time allowed to walk around the town and take photos of the castle from a distance. On the other hand, travel, admission to the castle and lunch were all included in the tour price. If planning a visit to Colditz, I recommend reading Ben McIntyre's book, "Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle", and taking it with you to supplement the content on the tablet.

**Next time:** I travel to the **Harz Mountains** where the landscape has been devastated by tree dieback.  
Bon Voyage!

## News from the Groups

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

Back in the Covid-era we started by calling ourselves the Grammar Guer[r]illas, a term whose elastic spelling pleasingly encapsulates the linguistic variety of our discussion topics. My 1964 Oxford Dictionary recognises one R, but current usage favours two. It can also be misheard as "Gorillas", and we were intrigued to discover that "Grammar Gorillas" is actually the name of a video game. It appears to be vaguely educational, with the gorilla getting a banana if you select the correct word. So as one of our members smartly interjected, does this mean that we are just aping others?

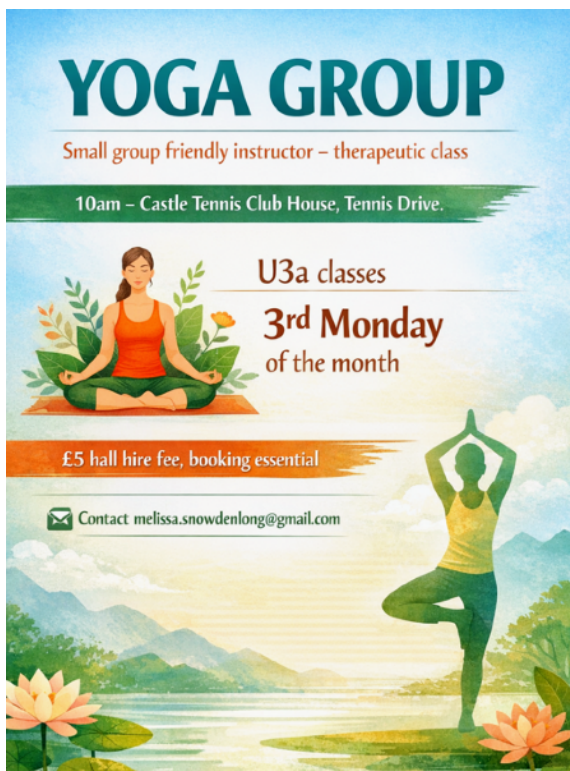
Words that you can mishear provided a fertile theme this month, starting with what Donald Trump referred to on social media as "the so-called Strait of Hormuz". We

can picture the POTUS poring over a map of the Middle East and tracing the winding convolutions of the strait in complete bafflement, possibly concluding that the map had got it wrong.

In fact the words "strait" and "straight" have completely different origins, with "strait" meaning a narrow place, or as our resident expert defined it, "a water body connecting two seas or water basins". Who needs Google when you've got a geography graduate on board? The word "straight", on the other hand, comes from Latin and means "stretched", as in "the road stretched ahead". So the two words are almost opposites. There's also the expression "dire straits", meaning a confined or difficult situation, which several fearless members pointed out may also have a place in this context.

In a final twist, our expression "the straight and narrow" was originally "strait and narrow" in the 17<sup>th</sup> century King James Bible, with the two words meaning more or less the same. If you're keen to stay on it when it comes to language, just email [mjwh57@gmail.com](mailto:mjwh57@gmail.com).

## Yoga Group- *Convenor, Melissa Long*

A vertical poster for a yoga group. At the top, the text "YOGA GROUP" is written in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below it, in smaller text, is "Small group friendly instructor – therapeutic class". A green horizontal bar contains the text "10am – Castle Tennis Club House, Tennis Drive." in white. The middle section features an illustration of a woman in a red tank top and green leggings sitting in a meditative lotus position on a mat, surrounded by green leaves and orange flowers. To the right of this illustration, the text "U3a classes" is written in a serif font, followed by "3<sup>rd</sup> Monday" in a larger, bold serif font, and "of the month" in a smaller serif font below it. Below the illustration, an orange horizontal bar contains the text "£5 hall hire fee, booking essential" in white. At the bottom left, there is a small envelope icon followed by the text "Contact [melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com)". The background of the poster is a soft-focus landscape with mountains, a lake, and a person in a green silhouette performing a tree pose on a rock in the foreground. There are also pink lotus flowers in the bottom corners.

*There will be no classes in April.*  
[melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com)

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

Unfortunately our March trip to Southwell Workhouse was cancelled due to high winds. We hope to rearrange for another time.

There will be a guided tour of the National Trust property, **Grantham**

**House on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April at 11.00 a.m.** It is a town house dating back to the 14th century, with formal lawns and a walled courtyard. The house is particularly interesting as it has only recently opened to the public.



We will meet at **10.50am by the front entrance**. The house opens at 10 a.m., so anyone arriving early will be able to get tea or coffee etc. before the tour.

There is no admission charge.

The guided tour will include some rooms upstairs. There isn't a lift, but there is a

break in the staircase (i.e. sort of landing) where one could rest.

Access to the house is across a gravelled courtyard. There are no steps leading to the house.

This trip is organised by Helen Teasdale . Please contact her via:

[helen.teasdale@gmail.com](mailto:helen.teasdale@gmail.com)

Phone: 07967 628258

## MahJong - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

The Park Nottingham u3a MahJong group meets each month for a couple of hours of fairly relaxed play, in the home of one of our members. Our usual meeting date is the afternoon of the third Tuesday of the month. This month this means **21st April**.

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.

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](mailto:grahamedwards542@gmail.com)

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

We chose a Brazilian film for March, one garlanded at film festivals last year and this (Best Actor and Director at Cannes 2025, Best Actor and Foreign Film at Golden Globes 2026). **The Secret Agent** was set in 70s Northern Brazil during a dictatorship and centred on an academic, Armando (played by Wagner Maura), who flees persecution and assumes a new identity. He falls in with a resistance movement and also pursues information about his mother who he barely remembers.



He is targeted for assassination by a corrupt politician he has previously crossed and moves to flee the country - a decent man trying to survive in extreme circumstances.

The film combines film genres in an uneven narrative and this made it tricky for some members to relate to. This gave rise to much enjoyable discussion, though, and we warmed to the film as a result. It had a keen eye for 70s detail, was visually compelling and a tense watch with excellent lead performances.

We felt it accurately portrayed what it must have been like living in an oppressive society where no one was safe and few could be trusted. It showed both acquiescence and resistance to the 'strong leader' ethos where violence and corruption were normalised. It had no easy resolution.

We (with one dissenter) liked it a lot, giving it a solid **8/10**

We go a little lighter next with a comedy drama **How to Make a Killing**, a mainstream American film starring Glen Powell. It is (very) loosely based on the British classic *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, replacing the plot of a man murdering his way to the top of an aristocratic family with one set in a US billionaire dynasty. It is likely to suffer in comparison to Alec Guinness' tour de force in the original but we will reserve judgement until we meet on **3rd April**.

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

The next event for the Music Appreciation group is a trip to **Peggy's Skylight** on Thursday **2 April at 7pm**. We will be having delicious food to eat and listening to Andrew Wood's **Hammerhood**.

This is a sextet exploring works from the 1960s, and we are told to expect an evening of fiery, soulful and intense music. There are still tickets available, so if you want to come, request to be seated on Jacky Fisher's table!

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

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

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

### **COLWICK PARK**

Five walkers set out by bus in beautiful sunny conditions on our circular 4 mile walk at Colwick Park.



We started in a clockwise direction around the Trout Lake the River Trent where we came to the Fish Ladder, the largest in the country, allowing migratory fish to access spawning grounds upstream. Beautiful sculptures and an illuminating information board really took our attention by the rushing river. We continued onwards towards Colwick Marina and West Lake to stop for an excellent at the kiosk. We seemed far away from the city as we came

upon the ruined St. John's church, with its tranquil, atmospheric and ancient church yard.

Circling Colwick Hall Lake and taking in the fine hall building, we took a curving route back to our starting point.

Our short walks are held on the second Tuesday of each month. We walk between 3- 4 miles on easy routes in the city's numerous green spaces.

**April 14th** we will take a walk along the city canal.

Please email us if you would like to join our walk group.

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

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



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

### **Gunthorpe to Lowdham**

We last did this walk in October 2021, with only 2 from that walk joining in this time. The walk was designed to be accessible ( i.e. not too muddy) after the high level of

rainfall we have had over the past couple of months, and with low levels of challenge.

After a breakneck journey from Nottingham (the bus was late, and the driver was trying to make up time) 9 of us arrived in **Gunthorpe** on a bright windy Spring morning.

From the riverside by Tom Brown's Brasserie, we walked along the banks of the Trent for a few miles in largely peaceful surroundings with a only a herd of sheep,

and a variety of aquatic birds for company Our speed was enhanced by the stiff breeze blowing behind us.



We paused at the memorial for two crashed world war II bombers, for some historical insights, a breather and some light refreshment, before continuing across fields to **Hoveringham**. The village is well known as the centre for sand and gravel extraction in the area, the reason for all the lakes.

Bypassing the (temporarily closed) Reindeer pub and the village cricket ground, and crossing some more fields we soon came to the main bridleway. This took us back towards **Caythorpe**. The ford and mill cottage were an interesting feature along the way, as were some Bighorn sheep. From Caythorpe, it was a gentle stroll along the lane (passing the Old Vol - too posh for walkers) to reach the Railway Inn at Lowdham. After some debate, we decided to continue on to the Magna Charta pub which provided us with a substantial lunch, and a pause, before catching the bus back to Nottingham.

Overall a pleasant walk of about 6½ miles on a breezy, overcast, Spring day.

Given the current economic climate and the potential for petrol shortages, I have planned a further walk, using public transport, for **28th April**.

We will take the bus to Radcliffe on Trent, then walk a circular route along the south bank of the Trent to **Shelford**. before returning across the fields to **Radcliffe**. There the newly opened Manvers (*neé* The Manvers Arms) should be able to provide us with a fairly traditional pub lunch.

The walk is a bit hillier than those we have done recently, although nothing too demanding, and hopefully firm underfoot. The walk is just over 6 miles and should take about 2 ½ hours. There is a frequent bus service back to Nottingham.

I will be sending out full details during April 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](mailto:grahamedwards542@gmail.com)

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

At the end of March, seven of us set out on a familiar and well-loved walk. We drove to the church of St Mary and St Hardulph at **Breedon on the Hill**. This ancient religious site, high above the surrounding countryside, has extensive views to the north and west and is a fine place to start a walk.

We started by heading west towards **Staunton Harold** (pictured right), home to the Earls Ferrers from the 17th until the 20th century. Our path was blocked by protective fencing as a lorry has recently collided with one of the ornate gate pillars on the drive past the lakes. We managed to find a way through this obstacle, watched by a frail



looking gentleman further up the drive. He turned out to be the current owner of the Hall, John Brunt, and we stopped and chatted to him about the history of the estate and the incident with the lorry.

We paused at the Ferrers Centre, a collection of shops and a café, built in the converted stable block. It's worth noting that the delicatessen here stocks goods from the Hambleton Bakery.

Our route took us from here along an old horse tramway, used to transport limestone to the canal network from quarries near **Ticknall**. At Calke Abbey, we stopped for lunch and, as rain started to fall, we found shelter in some outbuildings. From Calke Abbey, in improving weather, we continued north then east. This took us along the side of the Staunton Harold Reservoir. It was here that we had another interesting encounter with a woman collecting tiny dark pinecones. It turned out she was gathering them for the well-dressing festival at Etwall. We continued into the old



village of Melbourne, passing Melbourne Hall (left) before returning to **Breedon Hill**. We ended up walking about 10 miles, but the variety of terrain and historical interest diverted our minds from the physical effort.

Let's hope that the same happens on our next Longer Walk which is definitely more challenging. On **Friday 24th April**, we will return to a route that we'll call **South Matlock**. This was the second walk we did as the u3a Longer Walks Group, in August 2020. The 14.3-mile circular route, with 2500 feet of ascent, starts and finishes at **Whatstandwell** in Derbyshire. It includes visits to the summit of Black Rocks (Bole Hill) near Cromford, and High Tor and Riber Castle above Matlock, before a gradual undulating descent back south towards our start point at Whatstandwell.

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

## **Science Seekers** - *Convenors, Adrian Hyde & Reg Dennick*

**Dr Vince Wilson** gave us a talk on Jewish scientists that left Hitler's Germany. Following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in March 1933, one of his earliest decisions was passage of '*The Law For The Restoration of Professional Civil Service*'. It resulted in the removal of all Jewish scientists and scholars from state-run institutes.

The book '*Hitler's Gift*' documents the fate of many of the key scientists impacted by this law, alongside the action of numerous British scientists and politicians who provided support and a safe route through the UK to help rebuild their careers. The somewhat tongue-in-cheek title of the book underlines how the UK, and numerous other countries, benefited from Hitler's racist decision.

In the talk about the book Dr Wilson offered a personal perspective on a few people from this period who shaped his own journey through science and academia.

Next, on **15th April**, we have a presentation by Trevor Smith on '**The Science of Cheesemaking**'

*Reg Dennick*

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

This month saw the change we have been waiting for - the sun appeared, so it was warm enough to be outside without a coat, and there was a gentle breeze rather than a howling gale. As the weather had changed, so had our spirits, so we thoroughly enjoyed being outside in Anne Hardy's garden, eating our picnic lunches, supplemented by biscuits, hot cross buns, and teas and coffees provided by Anne.



Our meeting was a couple of days before the Vernal Equinox, the astronomical start of Spring, and wandering round the garden you got a strong sense of our gardens coming to life again. Daffodils and muscari were putting on a show, as well as hellebores and camellias, which are definitely having a good year this year. Trees either are in blossom, or just coming into it. Birds are at their noisy busyness, and we were treated to hearing a tawny owl somewhere close by, even though we thought maybe it should have been having a sleep!



Over lunch, as well as just catching up with friends we hadn't seen for a while, there was much swapping of notes in relation to our summer gardening plans, from where to

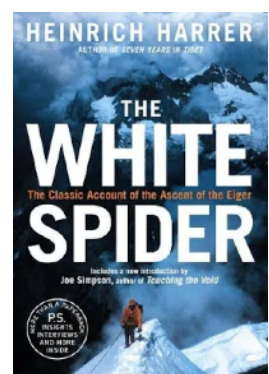


source begonias to how far to prune roses. There seemed to be a new sense of enthusiasm for the year ahead, so we look forward to more meetings, hopefully in the sunshine.

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

## Book Group- *Convenor, Liz Gilder*

The March Book Group discussed "**The White Spider**" by *Heinrich Harrer* about the first successful climb of the north face of the Eiger and subsequent successful and unsuccessful attempts. I think we found the rather florid 1950s style somewhat offputting to begin with but then the accounts of what these determined, some would say deranged, young men did started to have an impact. Some of us thought the book tedious and boring. Some of us were gripped by



the descriptions of the danger, hardship, physical privation, endurance and determination of these tough climbers.

The next book is “**Madame Bovary**” by *Gustave Flaubert* to be discussed on **April 17<sup>th</sup>** at Gillian Short’s house.

*Sarah Waites*

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

*We travelled north in March to visit **The Carpenter’s Arms** in Walesby (nr Ollerton) following online recommendations. Despite its name this is an Italian restaurant which has built a reputation on authentic food.*

*A menu with starters between £10-12 and pasta and main courses around £20 this looked reasonable value in today’s market . In fact the lunch menu offers a (wine, beer, soft) drink with a course for a small premium so we all went for that.*



*Starters and mains were large plates and with hindsight some of us*



*could have omitted the former without going hungry. Mussels in cream sauce were fresh and tasty, the duck pate with onion relish (right) looked homemade and came with a hunk of toasted Italian bread - delicious. Braised borlotti beans with goat cheese and another massive slice of toast was a comforting plateful made even more interesting by the information that the beans were grown near Mansfield by the restaurant owner.*



*The saltimbocca (flattened chicken breast with sage and pancetta) was a popular main for the group- half of us ordered it. It was generally liked, in its lemon sauce, ( it came with good veg - broccoli, carrot and roasties) but looked rather insipid (see left) on the plate as the meat was not browned. As a result the flour coating gave it a slightly gloopy (official culinary term) texture.*

*The rigatoni with braised beef (right) was a substantial bowlful with a generous amount of long-cooked meat and was pronounced delicious (and half of it was taken home for another day!).*

*No room for dessert for anyone this time but we left happy*



after a meal redolent of an authentic Italian trattoria. Service was friendly and efficient. A 50-minute drive might make you think twice but this place looks a dependable and affordable option for lovers of traditional Italian food.

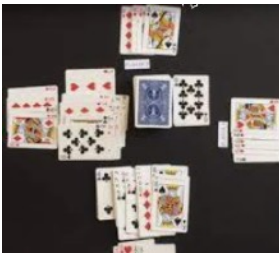
We are still exploring venues for our April outing.

Contact : [adrienne@theberne.com](mailto:adrienne@theberne.com)

Ian Henderson

## Canasta Club – Convenor, Jane Ellis

Our meetings in **April** are on **Thursday 2nd and 16th**, 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

It's always nice to have a cup of something with a biscuit or two before we get down to business. At our first meeting this month our host introduced us to the *Stroopwafel* (or syrup waffle), a Dutch speciality. We duly observed the ritual of perching a waffle on top of our cups long enough to melt the caramel inside, but not too long! A tasty sweet treat - one is lovely, but two might be too sweet for most people.



Among many enjoyable cryptic clues was:

### Commend a very quiet tailless dog (7)

Knowing that the musical notation for quiet is P, we worked out that 'a very quiet' = APP. As for the tailless dog, it turned out to be ROVE - The archetypal name for a dog being 'Rover' (although none of us had ever met a dog with that name!), and the 'tail' of the word Rover is the final letter 'r'. APPROVE is of course a close synonym of 'Commend'.

Our only meeting in April will be on **Wednesday 8th**.

## **TED Talks** - *Convenor, Maureen Moffatt*

The second TED talk meeting saw 8 of us discussing Antibiotic use and resistance. We had all watched '*What do we do when antibiotics don't work anymore*' by Maryn McKenna and '*The urgent case for antibiotic free animals*' by Leon Marchal before meeting.

Some of the group were shocked by the amount of antibiotic use in animal and even fruit production, and how that increases antibiotic resistance in humans. Most were aware of the issues of antibiotic resistance but did not realise the number of deaths it causes now or the scale of the problem for the future. The estimates of the UK government and the WHO is that there will be 10 million deaths worldwide each year by 2050 on the current trajectory.



Resistance is still increasing and of new antibiotics is decreasing. We had an interesting talk and even discussed how our shopping habits may change as no antibiotics are allowed in the production of organic foods. We also recognised the increased cost associated with this option, which means it is not available for everyone.

Our next meeting is on **7th April at 4pm** at Helen Teasdale's home. Topic to be advised later.

*Amanda Jones*

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

*The group met on 16th. March to review images to illustrate the theme "elements". This presented something of a challenge and in some cases we delved into our archives to find a suitable image. That we shortlisted just six photos is indicative of the struggle we had with this theme.*

*For our next theme we decided upon "Squared". This is as much a compositional exercise as a thematic one. As a land and seascape photographer, I normally shoot a scene with a wide angle aspect ratio such a 16:9 or 2:1 to create a panoramic effect.*

*Newer iPhones have an ultra wide lens which is very good for this type of shot.*

*Taking a square photo (rather than cropping a rectangular one) involves a different approach in framing the subject. "Squared" can be interpreted in a number of ways. The intention is for members to come up with some new images, rather than a rehash of an old photo.*

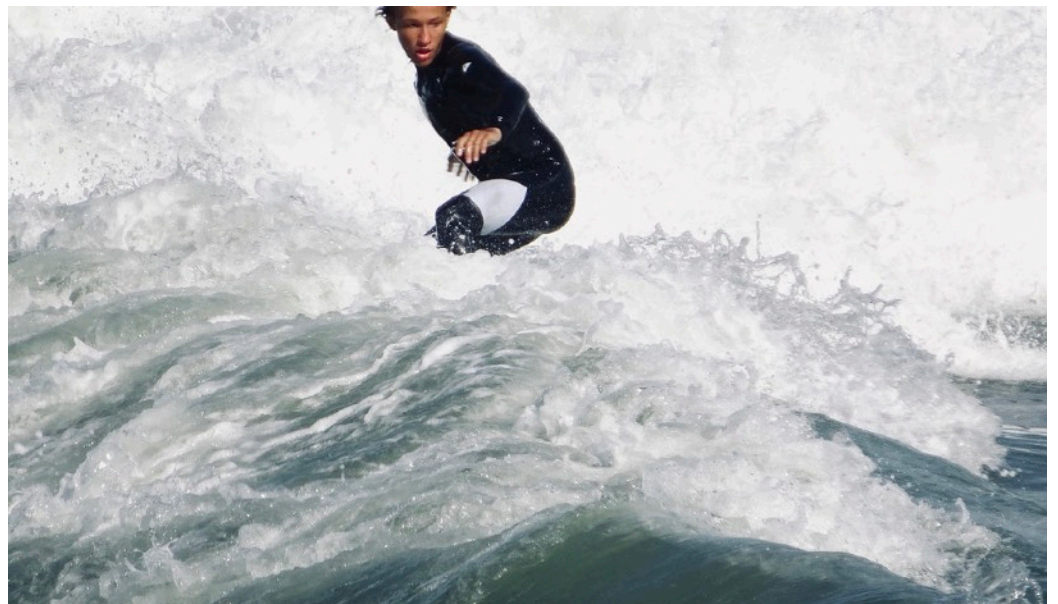
*Our next meeting is on **20th April** to review our square photos or indeed square images.*

### *Elements by Photography Group*



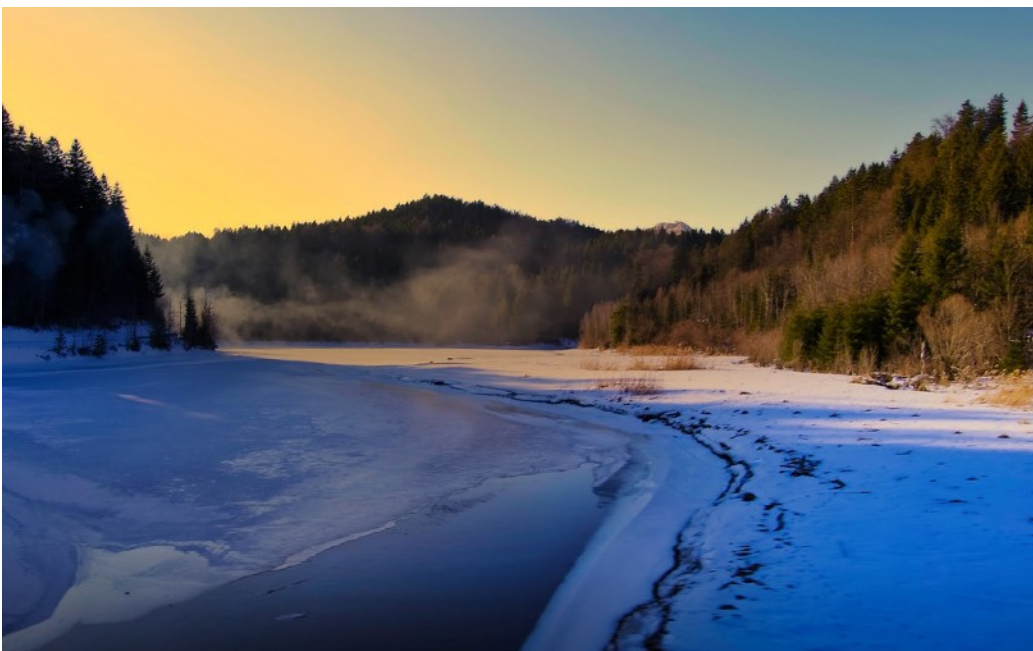
Silver

Air



Riding Surf

In its element



Fire

Tyrolean Scene

# **Useful Contacts**

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**Contributions for the May Newsletter should be sent to the editor,  
Ian Henderson, by Friday **24th**  
**May** by emailing:  
[parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com](mailto:parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com)**