

Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter

August 2026

Chair's Note

The Summer Garden Party went well, didn't it? Our Social Committee, led by Angela Parmar, once again did us proud in the magnificent garden setting of Newcastle Court. Photographic proof that a good time was had by all is at the end of this newsletter. The weather was kind to us, in that during a blistering heatwave we had an afternoon with cloud and sunny spells- perfect! It was a pleasure to meet you all (84 attenders!) in such a convivial atmosphere.

As usual, we had a small army of helpers to set up, service the party and clear up - many thanks to all involved.

Our AGM will soon be upon us (Sept 15th) and, as ever, our Committee stands down en masse pending new elections. We will, however, have several vacancies due to current members (including me) reaching the end their permitted tenure so here is a great opportunity for you to help shape our organisation. Nomination forms for Committee will be winging their way to you soon from David Egan, Business Secretary - so keep an eye out.

Sad to report, but our popular Yoga Group is shutting down with member/instructor Melissa Long citing other commitments. It is one of those groups that cannot be carried on in the absence of a trained teacher but we thank Melissa for her work over the last two years.

Several groups are taking August off, as well, leaving the calendar shorter than usual but there is still plenty going on. Happy reading!

Ian Henderson

Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - Aug 2026

Date	Activity	Venue	Convenor
6th & 20th, 4pm	Canasta	Castle Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
7th, 3.15 for 3.30pm	Film Group	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
10th, 2pm	Committee Meeting	Castle Tennis Club	Ian Henderson
13th, 10.30am	Local History	Grantham Historic Walk	David Egan
14th , 10am	Longer Walk	Charnwood	Andrew Martin
18th, 10.30am	Monthly Meeting & Talk- Bharat Patel	Castle Tennis Club	Sarah Waites
18th, 3.45 for 4pm	Mahjong	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
19th & 26th, 3pm	Crossword Group	Member's Home	Jonathan Wickens
19th, 3.45 for 4pm	Science Seekers	Member's Home	Adrian Hyde/ Reg Dennick
21st, 3.45pm	Book Group	Member's Home	Liz Gilder
26th, 10am	Long Walk	Baslow	Graham Edwards
TBC	Plants & Picnics	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

u3a Member Success!

Member Alexandra Ghimisi is featuring on the Whitby heat of *Landscape Artist of the Year* (to be broadcast in early 2027) on Sky Arts TV and shares exciting news:



“ I was recently selected as a **Wild Card Winner** during the filming of **Sky Arts’ Landscape Artist of the Year, Series 12**, following a four-hour en plein air painting challenge in Whitby, North Yorkshire. Whitby also holds a special personal significance for me through my Romanian heritage and its fascinating connection with the Dracula legend — a link between Transylvania and Whitby that inspired my choice of location for this painting. Painting on location, surrounded by the dramatic beauty of Whitby Abbey, the cliffs, sea, and historic rooftops, was an unforgettable experience. My painting, *Between Sea and Sky*, was created in response to the changing light, atmosphere, and character of the landscape.

I am incredibly proud that this painting was selected as the **Wild Card Winner** by artist and judge **Tai-Shan Schierenberg**. It is a moment that will always hold a special place in my artistic journey.

This original painting is one I have chosen to keep as part of my personal collection, as it represents such a significant milestone in my career.”



Monthly Talk - July

Mike Burton - ‘The Trent, England’s Heart’

Mike gave us a fascinating and informative talk tracing the Trent from the source to its meeting with the Humber. This is his summary. It is hard to capture the detail which is worthy of a book.

*“**The Trent** is a mighty – but also a modest – river. For much of its length it’s followed by few roads or paths, and many places which bear the title “on Trent” are actually out of sight of the river.*

But the middle river has played a critical role in the history of England. In Bronze Age times it was a highway for migrants seeking to access the heart of England. As recently as 1000 years ago England’s Viking king Sweyn Forkbeard treated the Trent in the same fashion, using Gainsborough as his effective “capital of England.”

But mostly the Trent has been treated as a line of division between the North and the South of England. The Romans were the first to treat it as a frontier, but Mercians and Vikings continued this treatment. That division became entrenched in English political thinking, with the two halves of England treated differently from each other from the time of the Normans through to the Victorian age

The course of the river is studded with stories which show how the river has contributed to the history of the country, and particularly with industrialisation. The Potteries and Nottingham, in particular, have played major roles in the economic growth of this country. Both were vital in driving forward the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Similarly, Trent locations have provided many prominent figures in the growth of religious nonconformity; Booth at Nottingham, Smyth at Gainsborough, Brewster at Scrooby, and, most famously of all, the brothers Wesley from the bleak, beautiful and sparsely populated Isle of Axholme.

Three River Trent highlights are probably mostly unknown, but boast amazing stories.

*The **River Dove**, a Derbyshire tributary which joins the Trent at a point almost out of the sight of man, increasing the river volume by 40% but, somehow, effortlessly cleansing the great Trent and transforming it into one of the most popular stretches of coarse fishing anywhere in England.*

*The tiny church at **Hawton**, near Newark, which contains one of the treasures of English church architecture – an extraordinary Easter Sepulchre which was hidden from the Protestant authorities during the Reformation, discovered recently by accident and displayed at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in 1851.*

*The church at **Fledborough**, a place too small even to be called a hamlet, which for a number of years became England's Gretna Green, generating an absolute bonanza for its lonely vicar."*

*Our next speaker is **Bharat Patel** with '**You Couldn't Make It Up: the secret life of a TV reporter**'*

*Award-winning reporter **Bharat Patel** has covered major stories both here and abroad. He was one of the first Asian reporters on British radio and TV. His family left India for Zambia and then migrated to England. By the age of eight, he had lived on three continents and arrived in Leicester armed with just a few words of English. He has worked for BBC Radio Leicester, Radio 4, ITV and BBC TV. He has covered major events which have made headlines around the world, including the Kegworth air crash, the death of Princess Diana, the capture of Colin Pitchfork using DNA fingerprinting for the first time, the Gujarat earthquake and the disappearance of Madeleine McCann.*

*But there's one story he has never covered and that is his own. His family left a comfortable lifestyle in both India and Zambia after a soothsayer told his parents his future lay in England. They exchanged a comfortable lifestyle in a warm climate for a tiny, terraced house with an outside toilet and a leaking roof in a rundown suburb. Their arrival was followed by a series of bizarre and comic incidents, which were often odder than anything Bharat encountered as a reporter. These are now the subject of a highly entertaining book, **Indian Takeaway**, which has been turned into an audiobook on BBC Sounds. All proceeds from the book go to the Hope Against Cancer charity, which has already found several cures for cancers through the research it funds.*

*Bharat will be signing copies of his book after his talk. If you think you might buy a copy, you **need to bring cash**. All the money raised including his fee on the day will go to Hope Cancer Research.*

*Join us on **18th August , 10.30 for 11am** at Castle Tennis Club.*

Sarah Waites

News from the Groups

English Language Group- *Convenor, Margaret Wiedermann*

"Most clutch England player ever?" ran the caption to a photo of Jude Bellingham with a yellow crown wonkily photoshopped on his head. What could it possibly mean, discounting one ELG member's interpretation "step on him if you want to change gear"? The most likely explanation was a reference to Bellingham's new record as the English player with most goals in a single World Cup, though this seemed a bit of a stretch for the word "clutch", which has never been an adjective in the past. It proved to be the correct answer, though. Our resourceful team unearthed the word's new meaning as a description of "someone or something that performs successfully in a critical, high-pressure situation". But surely the question we'd really like to put to Bellingham is how he gets his hair like that.

The month rarely passes without a skirmish between UK and American English, and our discussion of whether you hanker "after" or "for" something was settled in the usual way, by a realisation that one is UK usage and the other American. It prompted a review of the various meanings of the word "after". How on earth does a non-native speaker distinguish between "hankering after a cup of coffee", "looking after the grandchildren" and "what are you after?", not to mention the simple "after eight"?

Still on the topic of international variations, a route of Odyssean circuitousness brought us not only to the spelling but also the pronunciation of the word "Ew", or alternatively "Eew". An online Australian presenter who gave it one syllable was challenged by American followers who gave it two. If you are caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of staccato or sustained expressions of disgust, we don't know the answer either, so join the flow by emailing mjwiedemannhunt@gmail.com

Cryptic Crossword Group - *Convenor, Jonathan Wickens*

A good cryptic clue is always satisfying - one that is not immediately obvious, but all makes sense once you find the answer. Our group liked these two, among others, this month:

Knocks up box (4)

Another word for to 'box' is SPAR.

Furthermore, another word for 'knocks' is RAPS, and if you read that 'up' (from bottom to top), you also get SPAR.



Young person gains social security payment during rise (10)

The only long word for a young person that came to mind was ADOLESCENT.

This was confirmed as the answer by taking DOLE as 'social security payment' and inserting it into A....SCENT, for 'rise'.

In a slight change to our normal timetable, we will be meeting on 19th and 26th August.

Yoga Group- *Convenor, Melissa Long*

The **Yoga group** has built a dedicated u3a following over its 2.5-year run.

Instructor and u3a member Melissa Long is now stepping down to focus on other commitments, bringing the current sessions to a close.

Thank you for all your support.

Local History Group - *Convenor, Jane Morrell*

Burghley House



33.5 Centigrade was the temperature on arrival. As we had experienced the wettest day in June for the Cromford Mill visit we were determined not to let more extreme weather spoil our day. On arrival we were presented with an excellent booklet full of photos and descriptions of what we would

see, but what caught my eye was the word, "Welcome".

We did feel "welcome": the guide was friendly and obviously enjoyed her job, sharing the history and the amusing anecdotes of house and family with us. There were no intimidating notices but there were chairs to sit on, if wished, and you could even sit on window sills. As we were following the story of just one family, their lives, their tastes and purchases, that too gave a feeling of intimacy.

The builder of Burghley was William Cecil who was generously





rewarded by Queen Elizabeth 1st for his loyalty. There are still signs of the original Tudor kitchen (left) which was sensibly sited next to the dining room so the food would still be hot when served.

As there were 18 magnificent state rooms full of priceless paintings, furniture and ornaments there is not room here to do them justice and I strongly recommend that you visit. Highlights were the two magnificent

ceilings of Heaven and Hell, and the beautiful four poster beds plus the carvings of Grinling Gibbons.

The guide did point out some unusual stories, however:

The portrait of the tenth duke contained his beautiful wife. This was not a marriage of convenience but a marriage of true love. Sadly she was of peasant background and was illiterate and suffered greatly from a feeling of inferiority as the servants could read and write better than she could.

Another painting, by Thomas Gainsborough, showed a lady with dog (right), the latter beautifully painted. This was because Gainsborough disliked painting ladies but adored dogs and would sometimes add one (if possible!).



The tour of the house finished with an area dedicated to the 6th Marquess of Exeter, known as Lord Burghley who excelled in athletics, winning the Olympic Gold medal in 1928 and a silver medal in 1932 in hurdling. He was portrayed by Nigel Havers in the film, “**Chariots of Fire**” and it was he that approached the National Trust to take over Burghley

after death duties and war had drained the family coffers. They were interested but wanted to put artefacts into the house from elsewhere. This was not acceptable and alternative arrangements were made. Miranda, who currently lives in Burghley with her family, is a direct descendant of William Cecil, the 1st Lord Burghley.



After the splendid tour of the house we ate in the Orangery, which caters for light lunches. This overlooked a garden with a lily pond and an abundance of lavender (flourishing in the heat). Some fit individuals braved the heat and explored

the extensive parkland, formal gardens, water features and the Sculpture Garden. Others sat in the shade and enjoyed the views or were tempted by the excellent gift shop. I heard only praise for the choice of venue and our grateful thanks go to Robert Armstrong for organising it, backed up by our hard working Jane.

*Next is a '[Historical Walk Around Grantham](#)' on **13th August** starting at 10 30am, organised by David Egan.*

Anne Hardy

MahJong - Convenor, Graham Edwards

*Mah Jong in The Park is managing to struggle through the holiday period with fewer members able to drag themselves away from the garden, grandchildren or holidays in order to play. Those who turn out are rewarded with tea and cake and enjoy an hour or two of vaguely competitive play. Our August meeting is on **Tuesday 18th**, at a member's home.*

Members already on the MahJong mailing list as well as those in our WhatsApp group will receive notification 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 - grahamedwards542@gmail.com

Film Group- Convenor, Ian Henderson

*We chose a blockbuster for July in **Disclosure Day**, Steven Spielberg's keenly anticipated new film. However, in the main, the feeling in our group was one of high hopes unfulfilled and a pervading sense of disappointment.*

*Spielberg is revisiting the subject of alien contact that he explored in **E.T.** (1982) and **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (1977) but has little new to say, unfortunately. He really buys into the conspiracy theory that the Roswell U.S Air Force Base contains alien bodies and artifacts kept secret from us since 1947 (the basic plotline for this film). Fine for a jobbing director of action films but we expect more from one of the greatest directors around.*

His technical prowess as a filmmaker was on show with exciting chase sequences and visually stunning cinematography but the message felt dated and naive (empathy will save humankind). Emily Blunt was a saving grace with an excellent performance of variety and skill as a TV Weather Forecaster with strange powers.

The plot was riddled with holes and implausibilities whilst striving to be profound. It failed in that regard. Some of us felt our expectations may have coloured our response - if we

hadn't known it was Spielberg would we have just enjoyed the ride, which it undoubtedly is?

*In the end we gave it low marks, with two exceptions, averaging **5.5/10***

*We next meet on **7th August** to discuss a film yet to be chosen.*

Music Appreciation Group - Convenor, Jacky Fisher

The music appreciation group had a trip to hear the **Djanogly Community Orchestra's** summer concert on 11 July. The big attraction was having Animata Kanneh-Mason playing **Mozart's Violin Concerto in A**. She had previously played with the DCO several years ago, and the vast improvement in her presentation and skill as she has matured was a pleasure to witness. In true Kanneh-Mason style she was amazingly proficient and a real joy to listen to. The other pieces played were **Tchaikovsky's Overture to Romeo and Juliet** and **Dvorak's Third Symphony**. The latter was rather a challenge for orchestra and audience alike, but the much more familiar Tchaikovsky was very much enjoyed by all.

The group will be having a meeting in September to discuss what members would like to have included in future meetings. Details to follow.

New members to the group would be welcome:
gandjfisher23@gmail.com

Long Walks - Convenor, Graham Edwards

July's walk and a plan for 26th August 2026 - Baslow Circular via Pilsley

*A combination of hot weather, holidays and last minute injury meant that the walk at the end of **July** did not go ahead. This was the walk from **Baslow**, to **Pilsley** then onto **Edensor** and **Chatsworth** before returning to Baslow., which had already been delayed from May when it coincided with the first hot weather of the summer.*

*We shall try once again to walk this route (third time lucky?) for the **August** outing which will be on **Tuesday 26th August**. It will probably rain! The walk is about 7 miles over undulating countryside with good paths, and plenty of refreshment opportunities. We will travel by car.*

I will be sending out full details during August 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

The first ever Park Nottingham u3a Longer Walk took place in July 2020. We started with three members who completed a 12-mile circular route in Charnwood. With the Short Walks and Long Walks groups already well-established, we were trying to see whether there was a taste for more challenging excursions into the countryside around Nottingham and the Peak District. Since then, the group has grown to 22 members, most of whom have joined at least one Longer Walk in the last year.

Despite having so many members, our walks in the summer months can become even more of a challenge. The June walk was cancelled because of the extreme heat. In July, a decision was made to postpone the walk because of the general lack of availability of members on the day. Our next walk, on **Friday 14th August**, will be the promised return to **Charnwood**, but possibly attempting a shorter route than the one offered in July. Travel will be by car.

Longer Walks dates for your diary:

Friday 18th September

Friday 23rd October

If you would like to know more about these walks and be included on the Longer Walks email list, please contact me using the email address u3aparkwalks@gmail.com.

Science Seekers - Convenors, Adrian Hyde & Reg Dennick

*The Science Seekers this month not only had a presentation but also engaged in some practical work. Reg Dennick gave a talk on **Chromatography**, a separation technique that revolutionised chemistry and biochemistry and led to a number of Nobel Prizes.*

The Russian botanist Tsvett was studying the compounds that could be extracted from green plants with organic solvents such as ether or alcohol in 1900. He poured such an extract onto a column of chalk (calcium carbonate) in a glass tube and discovered that as he added more solvent the extract passed down the tube but its components separated into coloured bands: orange, green and yellow. He was able to isolate chlorophyll, xanthophyll and carotenes.

In the 1940s two scientists Archer Martin and Richard Synge, working in Leeds and studying the proteins in wool, developed chromatography into a technique underpinned by rigorous chemical theory. They showed that a mixture of molecules in a solvent moving through a solid phase such as paper would be differentially attracted and held back by the cellulose in the paper and hence would be separated. In particular they developed the technique of paper chromatography which could be used to separate and identify the amino acids that made up proteins. For this they

were awarded the 1952 Nobel Prize for chemistry (Archer Martin was also the head of biochemistry at Boots from 1946 to 1948 but the group decided that we could not count him as a Nottingham Nobel Prize winner!).

Fred Sanger used the chromatographic methods developed by Archer and Syngé to work out the amino acid sequence and structure of insulin for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1958.

After the presentation the group were shown how to use paper chromatography on a small scale to separate the molecules making up the colours of felt tip pens. This was a fun experience that demonstrated how such a simple technique could have such profound consequences for biochemical research.



On Wednesday **August 19th** Vince Wilson will talk about the history of the development of Ibuprofen based on his delving into the Boots archive here in Nottingham.

Wednesday **September 16th** Adrian Hyde will talk about some of the practical uses of infinity in mathematics

Plants and Picnics- *Convenor, Marion Martin*

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we had to postpone our meeting this month, so there is very little to report. We will be meeting in August, possibly twice, so if you are interested in joining us please contact Marion Martin at PNu3aPandP@gmail.com

Book Group- *Convenor, Liz Gilder*

Our book of the month was “**Stoner**” by John Williams, an American author, editor and professor. Though this book initially sold poorly, it was subsequently translated and published throughout Europe and was hailed by critics and authors as a masterpiece. Sadly Williams died in 1994 and never knew of its success

The book tells a profoundly moving story about the tragic life of a poor Missouri farm boy who becomes a professor of English. Along the way there are themes of love and the many forces that oppose it, perseverance, integrity, academic politics and the quiet dignity of an ordinary life. The vindictive rivalries in university life

prompted some discussion, as did the cold and neurotic behaviour of Stoner's wife. Overall our group would recommend the book, appreciating the wonderfully descriptive prose and detailed development of characters throughout the story.

The book was described by Morrison Dickstein in the New York Times as "something rarer than a great novel - it is a perfect novel, so well told and beautifully written, so deeply moving, it takes your breath away". However, one of our group said she read the novel "in a cloud of misery" and really could not enjoy it. With such opposing views I would challenge other members to read it and let us know what you think!

*Our next read will be "**The Correspondent**" by Virginia Evans, a bestselling novel told entirely through letters and emails. It follows Sybil Van Antwerp, a prickly 73-year old retired lawyer living in Maryland as she communicates with the world, manages family conflicts and confronts past grief.*

*We meet to discuss it on **August 21st 3.45pm.***

Contact Liz Gilder at e.gilder@peoplemarketing.co.uk if interested.

Jean Henderson

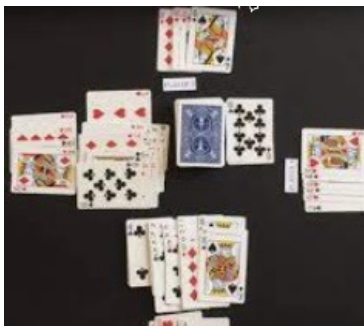
Dining Group - *Convenor, Adrienne Lee*

Our trip to Royal Oak at East Bridgford was too late in the month to catch this edition so will feature in the next newsletter.

Ian Henderson

Canasta Club – *Convenor, Jane Ellis*

Our meetings in July are on **Thursdays, 6th and 20th**, 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.

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.

TED Talks - *Convenor, Maureen Moffatt*

Our July Ted Talks meeting was at the convenor's home where we watched and discussed 'One of the Greatest Speeches Ever' by Steve Jobs and 'Storytelling' by Philip Humm. A few members thought these titles controversial and the subject matter open to dispute. The group completed the afternoon with a full and frank discussion on gender inequality in the work-place during the 60's.



We shall not be meeting in August. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 1st September



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Photography Group- *Convenor , Rod Mitchell*



Those itching to see our latest gallery on the theme of Black & White will need to wait a bit longer as the Summer Garden Party takes precedence this month. B&W will feature next month, instead.

Having already chosen those photos we will not meet until 3 September when we will begin to collate 'Summer Light' for a future newsletter.

***'Summer Garden Party
2026' by Photography Group***





Useful Contacts

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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 **September** Newsletter should be sent to the editor,
Ian Henderson, by Monday **24th August** by emailing:
[*parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com*](mailto:parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com)

