

Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter

July 2026

Chair's Note

I 'complained' last month about having to write and edit that edition in a mini heatwave. Well, I wasn't to know it could get so much worse, was I?

By the time you read this the weather should have cooled to a more amenable level but the brutal last week of June has been challenging for all of us. Hopefully you will have navigated the heat and not been too inconvenienced. It certainly slowed me down!

The Longer Walk was understandably called off and several groups were affected by members declining to venture out in the blistering heat. However, the Long Walk went ahead and returned with a full complement- well done Graham!

Perversely, the Local History Group had to contend with torrential rain. Where is a climate change sceptic when you need one?

We have a full calendar this month - let's hope the weather is kinder to us.

July sees the Summer Garden Party return to its usual spot and the Social Committee is putting the final touches together as I write. If you are attending this free event please ensure that you have notified us (sookeen@btinternet.com) as catering and seating are reliant on correct numbers. Closing date is 1st July.

Happy reading!

Ian Henderson

Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - July 2026

Date	Activity	Venue	Convenor
2nd & 16th, 4pm	Canasta	Castle Tennis Club	Jane Ellis
4th, 3.15 for 3.30pm	Film Group	Member's Home	Ian Henderson
7th ,4pm	TED Talks	Member's Home	Maureen Moffat
8th, 3pm	Crossword Group	Member's Home	Jonathan Wickens
9th, 10am	Local History	Burghley House	Robert Armstrong
11th,	Music Appreciation	St John's Church	Jacky Fisher
13th, 2pm	Committee Meeting	Castle Tennis Club	Ian Henderson
15th, 3.45 for 4pm	Science Seekers	Member's Home	Adrian Hyde/ Reg Dennick
16th, 10am	Yoga	Castle Tennis Club	Melissa Long
17th, 3.45pm	Book Group	Member's Home	Liz Gilder
20th, 2pm	Photography	Member's Home	Rod Mitchell
21st, 10.30am	Monthly Meeting & Talk- Michael Burton	Castle Tennis Club	Sarah Waites
21st, 3.45 for 4pm	Mahjong	Member's Home	Graham Edwards
22nd, 1-4pm	Summer Garden Party	Newcastle Court	Angela Parmar
24th , 10am	Longer Walk	Charnwood	Andrew Martin
28th, 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

Monthly Talk - June

Elisabeth Morton, Novelist

Elisabeth began her working life as an actress. She married Peter Davison, (ex-Doctor Who and Tristan in All Creatures Great and Small) and became the mother of two small boys. With both parents being actors, often away in productions, this was not practical so Elisabeth turned back to writing. Having written from when she was 9 years old, she took to it again and now publishes unashamedly commercial

historical genre fiction. Drawing on her family experiences (her father, one of ten children, spent one year in an orphanage) she aims to write well-researched authentic gritty stories with drama and happy endings. She is clearly very successful, understanding what her readers like. Her first few books were very close to those experiences of her father but more recent books draw on research into the Second World War.



Just as actors like to get closer to their characters through experiences, she experienced flying in a Tiger Moth plane to understand one of her characters, a pilot, better. She said the plane had flimsy levers to steer it like a go-cart. It sounded terrifying.

She submitted her first writing - short stories - to competitions and although a runner up in her first one, she was approached by an agent. Her first novel was "*A Liverpool Girl*" and is now working on her nineteenth. She tends to write early in the morning since there are many calls on her time later in the day, and writes one book a year. Her books appeal to readers more in the north than the south so she has had her books displayed in Waterstones in Liverpool but not London. She was positive about her experiences with publishers whose editing and support she has experienced as benign. An author receives an advance and then 10 per cent of the sales after paying that off. Her books do not get officially translated because all books can now be easily translated by AI.

Elisabeth was an authentic and open speaker, who seemed unaffected by her success as author, actress and link to a very well known actor. She clearly has a

soft spot for Nottingham where she has close family. She was a pleasure to meet and interesting to listen to.

On **21st July** *Michael Burton* will give a talk on **The River Trent – England's Heart**

England's prosperity was built along the waterway which, since ancient times, has been a great border – the country's north-south dividing line. Great men, great queens, and great innovation mark the Trent's history. Yet it is mysterious; silently and secretly doing its own thing and not fully known or understood.



Sarah Waites

Almost There!!!!



**Summer Garden Party
Newcastle Court
July 22nd 1- 4pm**

News from the Groups

English Language Group- *Convenor, Margaret Wiedermann*

The Greek word “nous”, rhyming with “mouse” and meaning literally “mind”, or practical intelligence, know-how, came under discussion last month when we discovered no-one knows how to spell it. We’ve spotted “nouse” and “nause”. Is it because no-one learns Greek any more, or just that no-one reads?

Our constant beef about baffling headlines, usually on BBC Online, cranked into action with “Grooming survivors prosecuted as children still being failed”, later modified to “Grooming survivors left with criminal records still being failed”, which was hardly more enlightening. We think it refers to the fact that some abused children were prosecuted for soliciting, which has unfairly left them with a criminal record. As the great Dorothy L Sayers thundered, “A sentence is not plain English, and still less is it good English, if it has to be read more than once to be understood.”

The same principle surely also applies to the statement “Old Market Square is the second-largest open space in the whole of the UK after Trafalgar Square.” Doesn’t this mean that Trafalgar Square is the second largest and Old Market the third? A simple comma after “UK” would fix it. And there are still people who think punctuation should be abolished.

If you enjoyed Michael Portillo’s trip to Milan on telly recently, you may be surprised to hear that in one set of TV listings it was advertised with the words “In Italy’s capital of fashion, design and industry, Michael Palin sees the sights from the back of a 1960s Lambretta ...”. Personally I learned the right way to make a Negroni just in time for cocktail weather, and it was definitely Portillo who demanded a second helping. If you too think Palin and Portillo are the same person, you can hone your onomastic skills by emailing mjwiedemannhunt@gmail.com

Cryptic Crossword Group - *Convenor, Jonathan Wickens*

We normally meet twice a month, but we actually solve 4 crosswords a month, two of those being tackled at home. When doing a crossword on your own, the best advice is to do what you can and then put it aside - when you come back to it later you will see things afresh!

In the first of our solve-at-home puzzles this month, there were 3 examples of double definitions, where the solution is a word that has two quite different meanings.



So 'Kidnap in Chinese city (8)' gives SHANGHAI

What about the other two?

'Road feature, more or less (*)' *This could be either (10) or (5,5)

'Run for fireman's equipment (6)'

In July we will meet on **8th** (but not on 22nd, as it's the Summer Party)

Yoga Group- *Convenor, Melissa Long*



The next class will be on Thursday **July 16th, 10am- £5**

Local History Group - *Convenor, Jane Morrell*

Visit to Cromford Mills- organised by Amanda Jones



On what must have been the wettest day in June for years, 18 of us travelled to Cromford Mills for a guided tour. We were surprisingly only a small number of those visiting!

The tour was very informative and had been slightly rearranged so that we were protected from the rain.

Cromford Mills is set within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and is one of the world's most important surviving textile sites.

Built in 1771 by Richard Arkwright, it was the world's first successful water-powered cotton spinning mill bringing together both mechanised carding and spinning within one factory. Arkwright built houses for his workers and their families although the majority of

workers were women and children as young as 7 who all worked a 13 hour a day 6 days a week. On Sunday church or Sunday School was compulsory.

From humble beginnings and a limited education Arkwright brought together water power, production and organisation at Cromford Mill in a system that laid the foundations for profound changes in industry and society. He became known as 'the father of the modern industrial factory system'. His success as a business man and innovator was recognised in his own time and he became one of the richest men in the UK. Despite being a notoriously difficult man he was knighted in 1786 and later served as the High Sheriff of Derbyshire. He died in 1792 aged 59.

Many of the group sampled scones and coffee at the on site cafes and perused the small shops on site. However, most decided they would return to investigate the external parts of the site on a dry day.

Amanda Jones

On **July 9th** we visit **Burghley House**, organised by Robert Armstrong (contact 07976847294)

MahJong - Convenor, Graham Edwards

Mah Jong in The Park is managing to struggle through the holiday period with fewer members managing to play. Those who turn out are fortified with tea and cake and enjoy an hour or two of vaguely competitive play. Our July meeting is on **Tuesday 21st**, at a member's home.



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

Film Group- Convenor, Ian Henderson

'**The Tuner**' was our June film. Leo Woodall and Dustin Hoffman star in this playful thriller about Niki, a gifted piano tuner (Woodall) with super sensitive hearing,(hyperacusis) meaning he has to wear ear defenders.

When Harry, his boss(Hoffman) forgets the combination to his safe, Niki discovers he is able to crack the code just by listening to the cogs in



the lock. This leads to him becoming involved with a gang of criminals. Niki falls for Ruthie a driven, gifted piano student. Harry has a heart attack, can't pay his hospital bills and Niki steps in with money earned from his crimes. Although it is violent, and sad in parts, it all comes together and there is a very satisfactory ending.

On the whole our group thought it thoroughly enjoyable. The chemistry between the actors was brilliant and the supporting actors were also very good. We had an animated discussion about the numerous plot twists, falling in love, relationships and actors attempting to play the piano convincingly.

We all agreed that the clever use of sound was exceptional. We gave it **8/10**

Carolyn Greenwood

Next up is ***Disclosure Day***, Stephen Spielberg's long-awaited sci-fi return starring Emily Blunt and Josh O'Connor. We meet on **4th July** to share views.

Music Appreciation Group - *Convenor, Jacky Fisher*

Next meeting is on **11 July** at **St John's Church in Beeston** when *Animata Kanneh-Mason* will be playing Mozart's violin concerto in A with the Djanogly Community Orchestra. If anyone has not been in touch already and would like to come to this, please get in touch with me (Jacky) and I will see if I can get a ticket (07866988405).

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

Long Walks - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

Thurgarton to Lowdham

Having cancelled the walk in May, due to the unusually hot weather, it was a little disturbing to be faced with the possibility of record temperatures for this walk. In the event, there was high cloud, and forecasts of 'only' 29 degrees (feels like 32), so 5 of us decided to go ahead.

This is a walk we last did in September 2024 although virtually none of today's walkers did the walk last time. The walk was designed to be quite easy, only 5 miles long and over open gently sloping countryside. The low level of shade had not been built into the walk planning.



The hot bus journey meant that it felt relatively cool in Thurgarton when we set off. The climb up through the wheat fields soon rectified this and we were grateful for frequent stops for water and to look at the views.

After an hour we reached the top of the hill and made a more substantial stop for coffee, snacks and a sit down in the shade and to contemplate the butterflies feasting(?) on the nearby wild flower meadow. From the break it was downhill towards Lowdham. The route



was along a narrow bridlepath, which has become very overgrown - a hedge cutter rather than an ineffective walking pole would have been better for hacking our way through. At the bottom of the hill we reached civilisation, spent a few minutes looking in envy at Lowdham Mill, a residence with paddocks, millpond, ducks, weeping willows etc.

After risking our necks crossing the busy A6097 Epperstone Bypass, we had a shady stroll through Old Lowdham to The World's End village pub. Lunch involved large glasses of

cool liquid in the garden (and a selection from the lunch menu) before the final field walk to the bus stop.

The bus journey was more exciting than expected, as we mistimed our return which coincided with the end of the school day. 40 13 year olds do not make for a peaceful journey, and made the bus very warm. Anyway we were grateful for the relative cool of the walk home from Kings Street.

Overall an enjoyable couple of hours or so walking despite the heat and a great day out.

Long Walk plan, 28th July 2026. Baslow circular via Pilsley and Chatsworth.

Although the weather is VERY HOT as I write this, I am hoping that by the end of July, it will have cooled sufficiently to allow us to do this walk.

This is the walk we cancelled in May because of the heat. This is a new walk for us, a circular from Baslow via Pilsley, the Chatsworth Farm Shop and the Chatsworth House and Estate. We will drive to Baslow, walk the 7 mile route, with plenty of opportunities for refreshment breaks and expect to finish around 3 and be back in Nottingham for 4pm. The walk is undulating rather than hilly.

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

grahamedwards542@gmail.com

Longer Walks - *Convenor, Andrew Martin*

With temperatures rising well above 30C in the week of the heatwave, a decision was made to cancel the Longer Walk planned for Friday 26th June. It is possible that a route taking in the new bridge over the River Trent will be offered again sometime in the future, either as a Longer Walk or by Graham as a Long Walk.

On **Friday 24th July** our Longer Walk will involve a return to **Charnwood**. The 11-mile circular route will start at the Visitor Centre in The Outwoods and visit Broombriggs Farm Country Park, Bradgate Country Park and Beacon Hill. Travel will be by car.

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 .

Friday **14th August** - Back to the Peak District
Another early-month date.

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

On Wednesday 24 June, Katie Kelsey, Park resident, community dance artist, environmental scientist, marine botanist and activist gave a presentation to the Science Seekers titled "Seagrass to the Rescue: Saving the world starting with Seagrass"

Using data from her Masters research carried out in Western Australia she outlined the different types of sea grass and their botanic characteristics. As well as being a carbon sink many times more effective than the rain forests it is important for fisheries, biodiversity, water filtration, disease control, coastal protection, ocean acidification buffer and tourism. Seagrass is undergoing global decline due to pollution from sewage ,industrial and agricultural effluents, seabed trawling, anchors and motor boats. She described the efforts being made by scientists and volunteer activists to replant these vital seagrass meadows.

She ended her talk by describing how she has combined her work as a trained dance artist and marine botanist to form a group known as the "Clown Dance Seagrass Project" to educate and spread information about the importance of seagrass. Kate's enthusiasm was infectious and she did not shy away from the science in her informative and entertaining presentation.

The next dates for your diaries are:

Wednesday **July 15th** *Reg Dennick* will give a hands-on session on chromatography



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*



After a 5-week gap, Plants and Picnics met up again at Louise Walker's in Wollaton. Having had such a long, wet, cold Spring (I was wearing a winter coat at the beginning of the month!), those memories seemed a long way off, as our meeting coincided with the hottest June day on record. Members with thermometers in their gardens reported 37C in the shade, and 54C in full sun - quite an extreme!

Louise did a brilliant job of hosting however, plying people with homemade

cake, shortbread and some very tasty dates stuffed with peanut butter, covered in chocolate and topped with pistachios. Hang on, I hear you say, what about the Plants? This was our first visit to Louise's garden and it is a delightful combination of mature shrubs and trees with well-cared for pots filled with colour. It felt like a really peaceful haven with, fortunately, a choice of shaded areas for us to sit. We chose the raised terrace at the end of the garden where the garden wall separated us from tall trees in Wollaton Park itself. Discussion was wide-ranging and, inevitably, included watering and our dealing with the variety of weather that we've had to cope with this year.

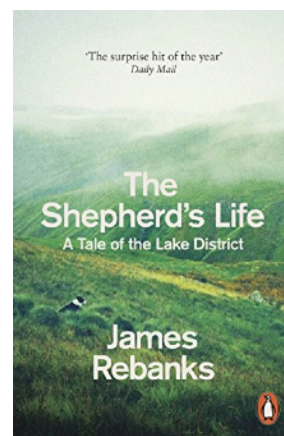


Thinking back over the 5 weeks since our last meeting, our gardens have gone from one extreme to another, from cold to heatwave, to chilly, to heatwave again, from wet to dry, to intense downpours, to dry again. Our plants have broadly coped though, and looking around now, what is obvious is the abundance of it all. Personally, we have been delighted by a proliferation of foxgloves, poppies and daisies, self sown and just gloriously doing their own thing. This follows on from the dandelions of the previous month. So sometimes, whatever nature throws at our gardens, I think we probably need to just pause, and look, and revel in the 'what is', without worrying too much about chasing the rare and exotic, or a concept of a garden that we will struggle to achieve. That way we are constantly finding delightful surprises.

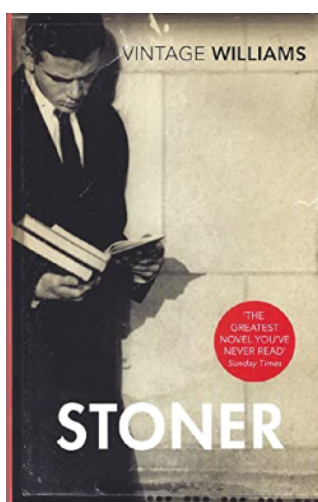
If you would like to join our gardens of delights, please contact Marion Martin at PNu3aPandP@gmail.com

Book Group- *Convenor, Liz Gilder*

The u3a book club read **The Shepherd's Life** by James Rebanks who is an English sheep farmer and author from Matterdale in Cumbria. James left school at the age of 16 to work on his family's farm with two GCSEs in Woodworking and Religious Studies. He took A levels at evening classes before studying at Magdalen College Oxford where he achieved a double first in History. Some of us enjoyed the book and found it educational as the author specialised in Herdwick sheep. Others found the book repetitive, but so is farming?



Our next read is **Stoner** by John Williams.



William Stoner is born at the end of the nineteenth century into a dirt-poor Missouri farming family. Sent to the state university to study agronomy, he instead falls in love with English literature and embraces a scholar's life, so different from the hardscrabble existence he has known. And yet as the years pass, Stoner encounters a succession of disappointments: marriage into a "proper" family estranges him from his parents; his career is stymied; his wife and daughter turn coldly away from him; a transforming experience of new love ends under threat of scandal. Driven ever deeper within himself, Stoner rediscovers the stoic silence of his forebears and confronts an essential solitude.

We meet next on 17th July at 3.45pm

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

Dining Group - *Convenor, Adrienne Lee*



*We returned to an old favourite in June which meant a short drive to Plumtree to see how **Perkins Bar & Bistro** was doing nowadays. It has been run by the Perkins family since 1982 and is still going strong through several generations.*

One look at the menu suggested a move upmarket from the last time we visited although two courses for £28 and three for £36 using the lunch menu not out of line with mid-priced restaurants now. This does show a

saving in choosing the same items on the main menu (where the Crab and Ox Cheek dishes below come to £34).

We sampled the starters of Salmon Fishcake (very good), Crab Crumpet (excellent) and Chicken Caesar Salad (invisible under a huge cloud of grated Parmesan, which one diner had removed). Mains of Braised Ox Cheek (see right), Chicken Kiev, Duck Leg and Porchetta plus a main menu Haddock and Chips all got the thumbs-up.



Amongst the desserts was a coffee with a brownie (a take on petit fours served at high-end restaurants?) which went down well with several of us

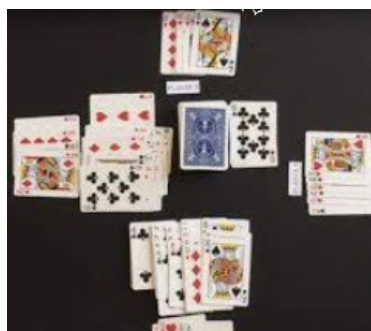
Overall Perkins has successfully moved upwards in its food level. Service was efficient (although there were only 7 other diners while we were there) and friendly.

*Our next outing is on **30 July**- venue to be announced.*

Ian Henderson

Canasta Club – Convenor, Jane Ellis

Our meetings in July are on **Thursdays, 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.

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

Helen had a full lounge to watch and discuss her subject choice of Climate Change.

We sat through two presentations (and one cake), one talk focusing on the logistics of future changes to our world, and another looking at how we might 'nudge' future habits that might make differences to the growing deterioration of our environment.

The discussions covered the behaviour of our own and other governments and countries, from the forests in Brazil to China, to Japan and Oslo.

We finished with looking at personal beliefs and behaviour that needed to alter to help enable our planet to 'breathe'.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday **7th July at 4pm.**

We shall look at two Ted Talks:

'*One of the Greatest Speeches Ever* by Steve Jobs' and '*Storytelling*' by Philip Humm.

I am sure that after watching these two presentations we will have lots to discuss.

Mo.moffatt@gmail.com

07496149721

Photography Group- *Convenor , Rod Mitchell*

The group met on 15th June to review the black and white images we had created since our meeting in May. Many of these had been shot in colour and converted to black and white, but we resolved to alter the settings on our cameras and smartphones and take some monochrome originals. A discussion about composition techniques followed, or should that be our individual approaches, as we try to avoid being too 'nerdy' about photography.

We continue to use the Flickr website to share our images, and, thanks to Graham linking his laptop to his TV, we were able to view them all on a big screen. Logging into the free version of Flickr is less user-friendly: one has to zap pop-up adverts and messages aggressively marketing the Pro version (costing north of £50). Alternative photo-sharing websites usually involve use of social media, so we shall soldier on for a while.

You can see all our photos on Flickr :

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/192581147@N03/>

*Our next meeting is on Monday, **20 July** at 2 pm.*

Useful Contacts

Ian Henderson, Chair:	<i>chair2.parknottinghamu3a@gmail.com</i>
Sue Keen, Vice Chair:	<i>sookeen@btinternet.com</i>
Barrie Shay, Membership Secretary:	<i>barrieshay@icloud.com</i>
David Egan, Business Secretary:	<i>dave.egan@btinternet.com</i>
Melissa Long, Treasurer :	<i>melissa.snowdenlong@gmail.com</i>
Website:	<i>parknottingham.u3asite.uk</i>

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

Contributions for the **August** Newsletter should be sent to the editor,
Ian Henderson, by Friday **24th July** by emailing:
parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com