# Park Nottingham u3a Newsletter
## October 2026

### Chair's Note

As Park Nottingham u3a's new Chair I say hello to you all. I would like to thank Ian for his exemplary leadership and good governance in serving as Chair of our u3a, and for his astute and instructive guidance shown to me in preparing for my role as your new Chair. Thank you also, Park Nottingham u3a members for your attendance at the September AGM, at which we all gave thanks to Ian for all the excellent work he has undertaken on our behalf since the early days of this u3a. Ian will continue to edit the monthly Newsletter and manage the website for us.

At that AGM we successfully recruited our new Committee for the year ahead. We thanked those Committee members who were leaving, having reached their limits on tenure, as set out in our Constitution (see website parknottingham.u3asite.uk)

As your new Committee, we will maintain and cherish the ethos of this very particular u3a. On that note and at this time of year of the autumn equinox with a full harvest moon we go forward with your support.

Sue Keen

# Park Nottingham u3a Calendar - Oct 2026

| Date | Activity | Venue | Convenor |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st & 15th, 4pm | **Canasta** | Castle Tennis Club | Jane Ellis |
| 2nd, 3.15 for 3.30pm | **Film Group** | Member's Home | Ian Henderson |
| 2nd, 12.30pm | **Dining Group** | Fletchers | Adrienne Lee |
| 6th, 4pm | **TED Talks** | Member's Home | Maureen Moffatt |
| 12th, 2pm | **Committee Meeting** | Castle Tennis Club | Sue Keen |
| 14th & 28th, 3pm | **Crossword Group** | Member's Home | Jonathan Wickens |
| 16th, 3.45pm | **Book Group** | Member's Home | Liz Gilder |
| 19th, 2pm | **Photography** | Bonington Gallery | Rod Mitchell |
| 20th, 10am | **Coffee & Talk- Noel Kelly** | Castle Tennis Club | Sarah Waites |
| 20th, 3.45 for 4pm | **Mahjong** | Member's Home | Graham Edwards |
| 21st, 3.45 for 4pm | **Science Seekers** | Member's Home | Adrian Hyde/ Reg Dennick |
| 22nd, 10.30am | **Local History** | Percy Street Gurdwara Ramgarhia Sabha | Jane Morrell |
| 23rd , 10am | **Longer Walk** | Grindleford | Andrew Martin |
| 25th, 11am | **Music Appreciation** | Royal Concert Hall | Jacky Fisher |
| 27th, 10am | **Long Walk** | Calke Abbey | 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 - September

## Science Fact Versus Science Fiction
## Professor Catrin Rutland  Tuesday September 15th 2026

Professor Catrin Rutland is a research scientist at the University of Nottingham, working in cancer and cardiovascular disorders. She has written books and scientific papers and even journalism pieces for Sky News but aged 40 she took up writing science fiction as a hobby, after many years of reading and enjoying science fiction. She writes and publishes short stories in her spare time.

This talk, ranging from Huxley to Crichton and Atwood to Orwell, looked  mostly at the wonderful world of genetics: what has come true since the books were written; what could come true and should, or should not come true; Science fiction versus science fact. There has always been an interest in the world of biology and genetics, both in literature and in the world as a whole. These authors explore ethics, ideologies, imagine different worlds and take the reader/viewer on a journey.



Catrin looked at how we use DNA sequencing now from Vikings through to crimes, keeping innocent people from jail and understanding more about our recent and ancient histories. She explored cloning: how cloning started with animals and whether it could, or should be possible in people; can we clone cells and organs for transplant and where might the future lie in these advances; will children ever get dinosaurs as pets and should Tutankhamun be brought back to life?  We also looked into personalised medicine and the advances being made every day.

Where does the future lie with genetics and what does this mean for us and the next generations? Do we have a voice and opinion in how these technologies are used and does this voice come out through literature? Who will possibly use these technologies and will they be used for good, or would others use them for profit or harm? Can we control the technology and what regulations are in place? Will humans benefit from genomics? By exploring the predictions and portrayal of genetics within literature, we start to unravel the possibilities of science in relation to the ethics of our society.

*Next time we have a talk on **"Remembering The Fallen".***

***Noel Kelly remembers the legacy of  the Commonwealth War Graves Commission***

His talk focuses on how the Commonwealth War Graves Commission preserved the memory of those who died in WW1 and WW2 so that their sacrifice was not lost to future generations. The Commission had to make some very controversial decisions which split the country and caused much anguish to families at the time. This is their story and goes right up to the 21st Century.

*Join us on Tuesday **20th September , 10.30 for 11am** at Castle Tennis Club.*

*Sarah Waites*

# News from the Groups

## English Language Group- *Convenor, Margaret Wiedermann*

"Diary it" urged an advertising campaign for next year's Gainsborough tercentenary. We thought this was an obvious attempt to avoid the word "diarise", widely regarded as a modern abomination, but then found to our astonishment that "diarise" first occurs in the early 1800s and was very popular by the mid-19th century. So if we were thinking it's not a word Charlotte Bronte was familiar with, we may be wrong, though it's quite hard to imagine Jane Eyre "diarising" her ill-fated matrimonial rendezvous with Mr Rochester. Then again, as one ELG member suggested, wouldn't a diary in those days mean a journal rather than a calendar?

If Bronte knew the word, she'd probably have spelled it "diarize". The "-ize" ending is now often mistakenly regarded as exclusively American, but our etymologists found that in fact it was standard over here in early modern times, with our ELG counterparts in the 16th century actually fulminating against the French influence that favoured "-ise".

The Sky News announcement that Nigel Farage had made a "pre-prepared" statement incurred some derision. Why not just "prepared"? Continuing the debate, we thought a GardenWorld statement that "all plants are pre-priced" fell into the same tautologous category, but once again our members proved dauntingly well-informed with the revelation that "pre-priced" is a legal term meaning priced by the supplier rather than by the retail outlet.

The perennial debate over whether "next Sunday" means the one coming up or the one after that will never be resolved, but one of our members recently addressed the issue in impressive detail: on Tuesday, "next" Sunday would be the one coming up, on Friday clarification would be needed, but by Saturday it would mean the following week. If you've got decided views on what words ought to mean, join us by emailing mywh57@gmail.com.

## Cryptic Crossword Group *Convenor, Jonathan Wickens*




This month, the very first clue we faced was bit of a poser:

**Minor politician to support magistrates with hesitation (4-7)**

We (eventually) settled on BACK-BENCHER as a minor politician, But what about the rest of the clue? Well, to support = BACK; magistrates = BENCH; hesitation = ER.

26 across was an entirely different flavour of clue:

**Water-tower? (7)**

This looked impenetrable. It was only when we made tower rhyme with blower that the scales fell from our eyes, and not long afterwards we arrived at TUGBOAT. Take that, you devious compiler!

In October, we will meet on 14th and 28th.

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

**The local history group's visit to the National Civil War Centre in Newark on Wednesday September 9th**

If one is interested in history, living in The Park is ideal as one is confronted by momentous events in our history by just venturing out. Even better if the period that captures your imagination is the National Civil War, which lasted from August 1642 to September 1651, as Nottingham Castle was deeply involved being held for the Roundheads for most of the war. However King Charles 1st had raised his standard opposite (on what is called Standard hill) but the wind blew it down and the citizens of Nottingham did not answer his call. There is obviously information about all this in the Castle but to learn more eleven of us visited Newark which houses the National Civil war centre.



Some of our party went by train and found it a good experience, (a consideration for the future.) On arrival , as we had our own room , there was provision for us to make our own hot drinks and indulge in some rather "naughty" cake. This was followed by a presentation. Keith, our guide, spoke fluently without notes and his knowledge was most impressive. He is an expert and was called in to speak to us as it was assumed that being "the Nottingham Park history group" we were all experts too . After an introduction to the exhibits in the museum we broke for lunch and returned to the museum later. There was so much to see I do advise you to go and look as it is only takes about 45 minutes by car or train.



Two paintings dominated the museum: one being King Charles and the other Oliver Cromwell: side by side but not for long! This photo reveals King Charles in all his majesty before fleeing for his life, hiding locally, and then capture. His execution followed at the hands of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, (also photographed )

During the period of the 3rd and final siege of Newark, medical treatment was non existent or brutal. Amputation was common as the wound could become infected and cause gangrene.
The saw was for cutting off your arm or leg which had been wounded before sepsis spread over body.
Plague was introduced by Irish conscripts, infected by passing through the port of Bristol, where the plague was rife. I can imagine that the strange figure of the plague doctor had nothing to help the poor peoples' sufferings.



The museum was excellent but it was good afterwards to relax and have time to explore Newark. It was market day. The sun shone. Unlike Nottingham, its history wasn't destroyed in the 1960s for new developments. There were beautiful old buildings and ancient churches to see too.



**The next visit  of the Local History group is a visit to Percy Street Gurdwara Ramgarhia Sabha, Thursday 22nd October 2026**

As part of our exploration of faiths and cultures that have shaped our local history, Parminder is arranging a visit to one of our local Gurdwaras, the Sikh place of worship.

## MahJong - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*



With indoor activities now looking more attractive, we can all look forward to our Mah Jong afternoon.  Players are rewarded with tea and cake and enjoy an hour or two of vaguely competitive play. Our October meeting is on **Tuesday 20th** (after the Monthly Meeting) 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 met in August to discuss **Tony** a biopic of the early career of chef and tv personality Anthony Bourdain. Starring Dominic Sessa in the title role the cast also featured Antonio Banderas and our very own Leo Woodall as chefs in a Cape Cod restaurant in the 1980s.

The script is adapted from Bourdain's *'Kitchen Confidential'* memoir which was a huge hit in 2000s and still sells. Although it softens Bourdain's searing description of bad behavior, drug-fuelled kitchen antics and general loutishness it is an enjoyable film. It follows the classic 'rite of passage' storyline - disaffected student, college infatuation, redemptive learning experience at the hands of a mentor and ultimate finding of purpose in life.



It stops before Bourdain's success as a chef and subsequent move into media stardom, although end credits refer to this. It does not refer to his suicide at the age of 61 after a life of depression and drug-taking - maybe that would mar the 'feel good' ending?

Sessa is a good fit as the initially gawky student with an inflated sense of worth, and Banderas and Woodall give masterly performances. We all liked it for the acting , cinematography and period music and gave it **8/10.**

Next is **Late Fame**, starring Willem Dafoe, about a once-published Greenwich Village poet who now works as a sorter in the Postal Service. A group of wannabe intellectuals 'rediscover' him leading him to revisit past passions. We meet on **2 October** to discuss.

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

Our planning meeting discussed future activities and we now have a list of desired future activities.

The first outing will be a visit to the Royal Concert Hall on 25th October for a Sunday morning piano recital at 11am on 25th October, which will include music by Liszt and Beethoven.

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

## Long Walks - *Convenor, Graham Edwards*

**Keyworth circular. 25th September 2026**

The combined effect of holidays, injury and grand parenting duties, but unusually not the weather, meant that only three of us set out on this gentle ramble

The centre of Keyworth is easily accessible by bus, (although less easy by car because of parking) from where we set off on this 6 mile circular route. Passing out of the village, we

were on good tracks, then field paths, with huge views across the Wolds. We passed paddocks of horses and fields of wild flowers and game before walking into the village of Widmerpool. This pretty but amenity-free village did provide us with a bench to host our short coffee break.



Then it was onwards across further fields (a recently ploughed one caused us to reroute slightly) to arrive at Wolds Wine Estate. This is home to a vineyard, winery and glamping huts. The recent harvest was just being processed into wine (last year's was for sale in the shop) as we arrived. The adjoining café enabled us to sit out in the sunshine and enjoy a light lunch before the final half hour stroll through the outskirts of Keyworth for the return home.

**Long Walk plan. Tuesday 27th 2026. Stanton Harold circular via Calke Abbey**

This is a gentle walk, of some 6 miles with some minor hills, stiles, and some field walking.

We will set off from the car park at Staunton Harold reservoir (National Trust) across fields to enter the estate of Calle Abbey (also National Trust). There are café options (and lavatory facilities) at the visitor centre. We then walk through the estate, via a different route beside the reservoir, back to the start.

The walk is about six miles, and should take us about 2½ hours plus breaks. The journey to Staunton Harold takes about 40 minutes. We would aim to leave Nottingham about 10am and be back by about 3.30.

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

*grahamedwards542@gmail.com*

## Longer Walks - *Convenor, Andrew Martin*

Our Longer Walk for September started in **Lambley**. The 6.6-mile circular route took us up along Lambley Dumble. This is a tributary of Cocker Beck, the main stream through Lambley. After heavy rain, these streams are prone to flooding and the road through Lambley becomes impassable. It was difficult for us to imagine this as we looked down into a gulley carrying a trickle of water. We spent the first hour of our walk climbing slowly out of the vale onto the open fields above. Here we encountered a mystery. Small carpets, about the size of a doormat, were spaced evenly along the sides of the fields. Near the top we found a young man walking towards us lifting the mats and looking underneath.



He explained that he's been contracted to carry out a reptile survey. Snakes and lizards like to rest in the cool and shade. "What have you found?" "Nothing yet." It's a feature of this walk that it only crosses two roads in the 6 miles beyond Lambley. We enjoyed the rolling hills and woodland as we threaded our way to the edge of Woodborough and back over the hill to our starting point. For our next walk, on **Friday 23rd October** we will revisit a favourite route that we completed for the first time in 2024. Starting at **Grindleford**, we will walk up through Padley Gorge to traverse the base of the crags at Burbage before topping out on Higgar Tor and the ancient fort of Carl Wark. Our return will take us over Owler Tor, Millstone Edge and the crags of Lawrencefield before a descent through Bolehill Wood to our start point. This is a relatively short route (only 7.5 miles) in challenging terrain with spectacular scenery.
**Friday 27th November** This is the proposed date for the next month. Please note this in your diary. There will not be a Longer Walk in December.
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*

For the September meeting of Science Seekers Adrian Hyde gave a presentation titled: "Infinity & π from Archimedes to Newton"

The presentation explored how the concept of infinity and increasingly sophisticated mathematical methods enabled mathematicians to calculate π with remarkable accuracy.

W **Zeno's paradoxes**, particularly Achilles and the Tortoise, illustrate the apparent problems created by infinite division. Aristotle responded by distinguishing **potential infinity**, which can continue indefinitely, from **actual infinity**, which he rejected as a physical reality. Galileo's paradox further demonstrated that infinity does not behave like finite numbers.

The presentation then examined the problem of calculating the area and circumference of a circle. **Archimedes** used Euclidean geometry, Pythagoras' theorem and increasingly large inscribed and circumscribed polygons to establish increasingly accurate bounds for π. With 96-sided polygons he obtained **3.14084 < π < 3.1429**. The presentation interpreted this process as an early form of numerical integration.

The historical development continued through **Liu Hui, Zu Chongzhi, Ludolf van Ceulen and John Wallis**, before reaching our local hero **Isaac Newton**. Sheltering from the plague at his farmhouse near Newark, his development of calculus, infinitesimals and generalized binomial theorem allowed him to express the semicircle as an infinite series and calculate a definitive value for π to 16 decimal places.

Overall, the presentation connected **infinity, geometry, infinite series, calculus and π**, showing how ideas developed over nearly two millennia gradually transformed the calculation of the circle's fundamental constant.

The next meeting of Science Seekers will be on **Wednesday October 21st** : Reg Dennick will give a hands-on presentation entitled "*Volta's Piles - the origin of the battery*

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

This newsletter month has included two meetings.

Our first meeting saw us at Jacqueline's incredible garden in Lenton. As we arrived, most conversations started with "how does she do it!?



Enjoying the sunshine, tea and cake, there was so much sharing of gardening chat at this meeting. Jacqueline has been tending this garden for decades, and has an intimate knowledge of her own plot. The plants also are well adapted to their environment, and much of the display is the result of allowing self-seeders to do their thing. Consequently, cosmos was dancing through the plot, giving it a unifying rhythm. Several plants, including cosmos and a sunflower, were just growing in the paving slabs. There were also a wealth of nasturtiums threading through the beds, and all of this topped off with planted geraniums and begonias in containers of various kinds, adding to the impression of abundance.

As a result, we all had plenty of questions to ask – how does she do it? How and when did she prune the hibiscus? How does she prune roses? What is a weed, and how to manage them, given they self-seed prolifically and seem immune to the vagaries of the weather? How to promote the self-seeders you actually want? There was something for everybody here, and you couldn't help but be inspired.



Our second meeting saw a select few of us heading to Wollaton, to Angela Deane's garden. Although a threatening band of rain had passed through during the morning, as we arrived the skies were clearing, and we were able to be outside enjoying the sunshine and gentle breeze. It was hard to believe this was the first day of autumn.

As with Jacqueline, this is a well established garden, and we very much enjoyed a slow amble round the borders, savouring the late summer show of flowers, which all looked remarkably good given the difficult growing year we have had.



Again the self-seeders were in evidence, this time verbena bonariensis were definitely having their moment.

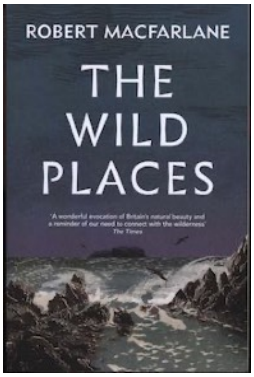
Angela had excelled herself in the baking department, so we then very much enjoyed consuming the results with tea and coffee and gardening chat. We talked about the various gardening shows we had been to (Malvern Autumn Show 25th-28th), and the joys of collecting plants etc, even if you don't 'need' them. The conversation turned to 'things that go wrong' and Angela was able to tell us the story of her trumpet vine (campsis), which started off lovely, but then put out roots into the lawn, spawning babies everywhere, which proved very difficult to get rid of. We agreed that better labelling at the point of purchase, eg. 'may become invasive', would have been rather useful. Mine is now definitely going to stay in its pot!

Our next meeting will be after the next newsletter deadline, but we will have two meetings to report in November. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Marion Martin at PNu3aPandP@gmail.com

## **Book Group**- *Convenor, Liz Gilder*




The u3a book club read The Land in Winter by Andrew Miller this month. In December 1962 Local doctor Eric Parry, mulling secrets, sets out on his rounds, while his pregnant wife sleeps on in the warmth of their cottage. Across the field, funny, troubled Rita Simmons is also asleep, her head full of imagines of a past life which her husband prefers to ignore. When the ordinary cold of an English December gives way to violent blizzards, the two couples find their lives beginning to unravel. Our group had mixed reviews on this book which was the winner of the Walter Scott Prize for historical fiction! We found the ending abrupt with a lot of loose ends……




Our next read is The Wild Places by Robert Macfarlane. Are there any wild places left in Britain and Ireland? Or have we tarmaced, farmed and built ourselves out of wildness? Robert Macfarlane sets out in search of the wildness that remains. A magical, masterly call to the wild that asks us to think about what we have in these isles – and what we have to lose??

Our next meeting will be on Friday 16 October at 4.00 p.m. at a member's house. Contact Liz Gilder at e.gilder@peoplemarketing.co.uk if you are interested in joining us.

## Dining Group - *Convenor, Adrienne Lee*

Our next culinary adventure is a return to an old favourite - **Fletchers** at Nottingham College. 12.30pm on Friday **2nd October.** *Ian Henderson*

## Canasta Club – *Convenor, Jane Ellis*

Our meetings inOctober are on **Thursdays**, **1st** and **15th**, 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*

**September's TED Talks meeting was entitled 'Why Meeting in the Middle is Not Enough for Today's Trickiest Debates.**
We started the meeting with a short presentation with the pros and cons of capitalism and had a discussion on our interpretations and thoughts. We then watched a follow up to that debate which demonstrated that meeting in the middle isn't enough for today's serious disputes such as abortion, gender reassignment and ethnicity . The discussion then turned to a protracted debate on who might be right in these issues, but the point of this presentation showed that there are degrees of right and wrong and that no debate is ever 50/50. We were shown an example of a model illustrating the variety of options and how they can be used to reach a consensus where no group is completely dominant.

Our next meeting, on Tuesday 6th October will be held at a member's home. The 'Ted Talk' title is "Do Schools Kill Creativity". This is an old presentation but has suddenly sprung back into relevance due to the development of AI as will be discussed during our meeting. If any u3a member would like to join us they are very welcome

Contact Maureen Moffatt - *Mo.moffatt@gmail .com*

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

*The Photography Group met on 3rd. September to plan our programme for the remainder of this year and the beginning of the next. Our 'Summer Light' images will appear in November's newsletter and hopefully cheer up readers during what is forecast to be a wild and wet winter. Our next meeting is a visit to the Bonington Gallery at Nottingham Trent University on Monday, 19th. October at 2 pm. We'll be viewing an exhibition featuring the work of Alan Lodge, a Nottingham-based freelance photojournalist, renowned for documenting over 50 years of British counterculture, free festivals, and social protests.*

*Our next theme is linked to the work of the late 19th Century painter, James McNeil Whistler. Along with some of his contemporaries, Whistler was influenced by Japanese woodcuts' use of 'asymmetric balance', namely a compositional style involving flattened, two-dimensional space and rigorous vertical, horizontal lines for walls, floors and curtains.. He had firm views on his technique, to the extent he hired a theatre to give a lecture on the subject. I guess in our world he would have his own You Tube channel and zillions of followers. Indeed re-enactments of "Mr Whistler's 10 O'Clock" can be found on You Tube.*

*Whistler was accused, with some justification, of not finishing his paintings. His portrait models were often called back multiple times, as he would scrape back the paint (which "should be like breath on the surface of a pane of glass") and start again. He painted lots of land and seascapes, but usually spent little time at the scene, believing "painting from nature should be done at home". He painted like a composer of music, using colour harmonies, brush strokes and composition, entitling his works "arrangements" or "nocturnes". A major exhibition of Whistler's work recently concluded at Tate Britain, but is due to move next year to Amsterdam and then Utrecht.*

*Rod Mitchell*

# Useful Contacts

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|---|---|
| Sue Keen, Chair: | *sookeen@btinternet.com* |
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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 **November** Newsletter should be sent to the editor, Ian Henderson, by Saturday **24th October** by emailing: parku3anewsletter2@gmail.com