



## AUTUMN 2023 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the quarterly edition of the Cheswick Green and District u3a Newsletter. Please forward any news items to Sue Winwood [suewin2002@gmail.com](mailto:suewin2002@gmail.com).

### EVENTS

#### **FASHION SHOW Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November**

U3A Fashion Show for U3A members, family and friends in Cheswick Green Village Hall

Doors open 1:30 for refreshments **2:00pm start**

£5 to include refreshments and raffle. Please remember payments by cash or cheque accompanied with a bankers card. Tickets available at October Core Meeting and from Jacky Nolan

#### **CHRISTMAS PARTY Thursday 14th December**



Cheswick Green Village Hall. 12.00 to 3pm. cost £15 per head

The party this year will be a full High Tea in the Village Hall with a glass of Prosecco on arrival, to get you in the mood.

There will be entertainment by a professional singer and various table games, with prizes, to enjoy. A door prize from your ticket and other donated prizes.

Tea, coffee and soft drinks included but feel free to bring your own alcohol, and a glass if you wish .

It will be a fun filled Christmas afternoon but tickets are limited so buy them before they are all gone. Contact Jacky Nolan or the committee at the next Core Group meeting.

### CORE MEETINGS

#### **2.00pm Third Thursday each month**

October: Haunted Warwickshire. Tales of Mystery, Murder and Misdeeds

November: Songs through the Decades 1920 to 2020

December: Christmas Party

## JUNE

In **June** we had a really interesting talk from Martin and Jane who are volunteers with the **Blood Bike service**. Here are some snippets of interest.

The Solihull and Warwickshire Blood Bikes service started in 2012 and is manned by 142 volunteers many of whom are Born again Bikers. Not all are men. Not all volunteers are riders, they do have cars as well and there are various other volunteer roles if you are interested in joining this service. Martin reminded us they are not part of the Emergency services or the NHS.

Martin told us that they take about 250 calls per month. Most of their work is transporting blood samples to pathology labs and they promise a 1 hr response time to all requests they get.



They have a number of bikes ranging from a Yamaha XJR to a BMW 1200cc - which Martin brought into the hall - it was a tight squeeze - it is a BIG machine. The bikes cost around £20,000 and a pair of tyres (which need changing around every 6000 miles.) costs around £400. and then there is the tax, petrol etc. He talked to us about their protective uniform and told us that helmets cost around £400 each. They are miked and linked to the control centre to enable speedy communication.

Riders have to have advanced motorcycle licenses and their riding is reviewed every 2 years. These are BIG machines, very heavy and very powerful.

This may be a bit long, but it was really interesting. As only less than 1/4 of our membership were there - it seemed worth sharing snippets of his talk.

This service is not only about Blood. During Covid they transferred platelets, and covid samples, as well as blood.

They have also helped out relocating specialist equipment - as long as it fits in their paniers.

In 2017 they were asked if they could help out delivering /relocating breast milk to neonatal units around the region from mothers who are willing to donate their excess supplies. In the first 6 months of 2023 they have done around 100 milk collections.

The air ambulance service asked if they could help out with a new initiative. They wanted to try to give full blood to patients in crisis rather than saline, and this is now a daily service, collecting from the blood bank and delivering to the WM Air ambulance base. They have seen an increase in patient recovery as a result of this new project. Other new services include delivering Chemo drugs to patients who live in rural communities and can't get to the hospital. Jane told me that the rewards of jobs like these are huge in that the volunteers know they are making a difference. The George Elliot Hospital in Nuneaton has been able to speed up discharge by sending patients home without their meds, which follow when available from the pharmacy on the bikes. This saves patients waiting hours and frees up the beds. During the Commonwealth Games, the Blood Bikes service was used to transport Athletes drugs testing samples to the path labs.

We learnt that most journeys are within a max 50-mile range and when necessary, Blood Bike Volunteers can arrange a relay system to get special deliveries the length and breadth of the country.

It has been estimated that the Blood Bikes Service saves the NHS over £2million.a year. (Remember they are all volunteers and that they have to raise funds themselves)

So, if you see the Blood Bike Volunteers out at an event, please do try to support them with a donation.

We gave them a donation as they do not ask for payment for presenting the talks.

Martin was happy for members to sit on and explore the technology of the bike. It seems we have some bike fans in our group!

## JULY

**July's u3a talk was entitled "From the Gods to the Gutter"** and this gave us no clue as to the subject topic. A possible clue might have been available for those who had heard Kevin's previous talk on garden birds. This was his debut performance of this presentation and the subject that captured our interest was..... Pigeons.

Love them or hate them? Those of us who heard Kevin's presentation probably now have a greater respect for this incredible bird. If I said to you, what do you think about DOVES, you might have a different opinion to those about the pigeon. But think again, because Doves are in fact Pigeons. Doves are one of the 350 different species of the pigeon family. Doves are pigment less pigeons!

Did you know that .....

Pigeons (doves) are mentioned more than any other bird in the Bible.

The dodo was a variety of pigeon.

Pigeons were used in the war by all countries to send and receive message and spy information and the Dicken medal (named after the founder of the PDSA) awarded to animals for war service, was made to 54 animals after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and 32 of those awards were made to pigeons.

Pigeons were last used for military service in the 1970's but it is believed that China still has a pigeon department. US coastguards use pigeons for search and rescue missions. In London they are currently used to monitor air pollution across the city. Hospitals have used pigeons in the past to deliver blood samples to the labs (the forerunner of the Blood Bikes we learnt about last month!)

The most expensive racing pigeon sold for \$1.9 million in 2020.

Pigeon species vary across the world and some of them are extremely colourful, unlike our native grey bird. (see below) So, there is much to be positive about regarding this familiar and often disliked bird. So next time you see a pigeon, put your pea shooter back in your pocket and praise the species for all the good they have done in the world.



## AUGUST

At August's meeting we heard about several 1800's **Rogues, Villains, Murderers and Thieves** from the Warwickshire area. Our speaker, Vanessa recounted crime reports direct from the newspapers at the time.

We heard about a curate who, in 1851 was a double bigamist and a multiple philanderer. His wife Charlotte seemed to take him back in between his many dalliances, which included fathering a child with his stepdaughter. He moved around the country a lot !!!! but somehow, he seemed to retain his position within the Church.

We heard about Mr Kimberley who was the 1st person executed (By hanging) at Winson Green prison and Mr Phillip Maxell who was the last person to hang at said prison for multiple crimes in Aug 1806. He was transported to the prison on a hand cart, sitting on top of his coffin! Vanessa reported that 40,000 spectators went to watch and wait for the black flag to appear which confirmed his demise. His grave is in St Phillips Churchyard.



Vanessa told us about John Gately aged 25 who was shot in Solihull and died the following day. There were many theories about the motive and suspect, but it was some 4 years later in July 1885, that one, John Doff was arrested. At court in the November of that year, he was sentenced to the crime of manslaughter and got a 20-year sentence.

In April 1814 Mary Bate, resident in Solihull Lodge, was found dead in bed with her head smashed in. It was reported that her sons had left for work early that morning and her husband left some while later. Her husband was arrested later that day after himself reporting the scene he had come home to. Detectives deduced that as there was no sign of a break in and as he had a splatter of blood on his coat (No DNA in those days) He HAD to be the perpetrator. He was sentenced at Warwick Assizes on 15th April 1814 and was executed 2 days later. But did he do it?

These and several other cases were reported to us in great detail by Vanessa. As she wrapped up, she repeated that well known phrase: *Don't have nightmares, Sleep Well !*

## SEPTEMBER



Septembers monthly meeting was a "Get to know you" sociable session. The buzz around the room was great and it enabled 7 visitors (potential new members) to chat and find out more about our u3a.



Everyone got up and joined in with the task. We discovered that no one present had never learnt to drive. The social sessions seem to be popular and well attended. We will be scheduling 2 into next year's programme.



At the September sociable core meeting, Brenda, Sue and Peggy sold hand made cards to raise funds for MacMillan.

Thank you to everyone who purchased. They raised £100

## GROUPS

### BRIDGE

We now look forward to the Autumn at a more relaxed pace but always with the hope and anticipation of that 7 No Trumps, Vulnerable, Doubled and Redoubled contract being bid and made. A feat so rare but the target set for us to aspire to by our own Julian Dimmock, who we were privileged to witness achieving this last year, followed by attaining nonagenarian status this year! Well done Julian, double firsts!

And finally, of course, remembering Doreen, an original member of the Bridge group set up by Julian at the very beginning of the Cheswick Green U3A. Will be missed by us all.

Denise Cooper - Monday Evening Bridge

Anne Williams - Tuesday Afternoon Bridge

### FRENCH GROUP

At present we have 6 members and would welcome more. We concentrate on French conversation and participants are required to do a bit of homework between sessions, to facilitate the next lesson.

We meet at the Harvester on Stratford Road at 10:30 to 11:30 every Tuesday. For any further information please ring me on 07752473308

Linda Sommer

### BADMINTON

We play to win but the aim is to have fun.



### THEATRE GROUP

Theatre group members took advantage of the lovely June weather to hold their meeting outdoors. We identified a few new shows to include on our schedule for the remainder of the year.

We have enjoyed 3 excellent Amdram performances in recent weeks.

Hall Green Little Theatre have a full schedule and their production of The Railway Children, showcased three promising young actors. The familiar story unfolded with an excellently abridged script and ended with that immortal line, "Daddy, my Daddy".

Their most recent production was an Alan Ayckbourn comedy, "Living Together" This script presented us with the complex in-law family relationships, and when one is a lothario and the women succumb to his charms, even his wife! audience laughter is assured.

In between these 2 shows we made a return to The Priory Theatre in Kenilworth. In the Covid years, the dedicated theatre supporters have worked hard to refurbish this small venue. This Amdram theatre company draws in some talented actors worthy of professional status. This spoof musical murder mystery was entitled "Curtains" It was a clever and intricate creation. It was strongly cast and the musicality was finely tuned. There was so much to praise about this production. Another enjoyable theatre outing.



We will be returning to both venues as we particularly enjoy supporting local Amdram groups in the region.

We have held our last 2 bimonthly meetings in Ruth's garden which made a pleasant change from meeting in the Saxon.

We have booked for the following shows in the coming months.

- THE GOOD LIFE @Hall Green Little Theatre.
- GROUND RULES @ The Core
- Another FARNDALE SAGA with a very long title! @ HGLT
- MURDER BY MISADVENTURE @ The Talisman Theatre. Kenilworth - which is a new venue for us.

So, much to look forward to. If you would like to join us at our meetings and future outings, let Ruth know [rhubble8@gmail.com](mailto:rhubble8@gmail.com)

If you would like to be part of the theatre group, and join us on future trips, contact Ruth.

## GARDENING

The Garden Group has enjoyed a number of trips recently to David Austin Roses (gorgeous smell), Middleton Hall (very interesting history) and Felley Priory (excellent nursery). We are a friendly group who welcome new members; anyone who enjoys visiting gardens to pick up tips for their own or just to appreciate their beauty. We usually meet at the Village Hall and "car share". Our next excursion is planned in October to see the incredible autumn colours at Batsford Arboretum. Please contact Bev Prater ([bevprater@virginmedia.com](mailto:bevprater@virginmedia.com)) if you are interested in learning more.

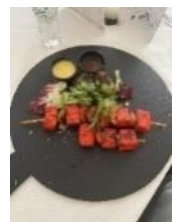
## CURRY

After 10 years we are still able to find venues that, as a group, we have never been to before. In the summer we went to Allepy Boat in Hall Green and The Flying Elephant in Solihull.



We have been served some pretty plates in recent months. Worthy of photo sharing. These dishes were Garlic Mushrooms and Paneer Shashlik. They both tasted as good as they look.

We were all VERY impressed with **Allepy Boat**. With 12 of us dining, it scored mostly 9 & 9.5 out of 10 as food & service as well as the venue were all excellent. This venue comes highly recommended to you and has strongly positioned itself in everyone's favourite venues.



The Flying Elephant had more mixed reviews. The food was good but some felt that the starters were overpriced. The menu was more limited, but this was a Grill style venue. The venue promotes it links to its Kenyan heritage, but this was not reflected in the menu as much as we had anticipated. Overall, not one we will rush to return to, but no one was hugely disappointed.

We may have space for one or two new members next year, so do get in touch with Ruth if you would be interested to join us.

## OUTINGS



The group now meets in the small hall in Cheswick on the first Wednesday of the month.

We had met in the Saxon for many years but have outgrown space available. We each contribute a £1 to cover hire cost of the hall and receive a tea or coffee with cake or biscuits. These are our planning meetings where a member of the group will make a suggestion and names are taken and deposits paid.



On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 16 members of the Outings Group visited the Guide Dog Training Centre at Bishops Tachbrook, Nr Leamington Spa.

A very hot day, but all the doors and windows were open, so very pleasant. We had an initial talk about the facilities etc. which covered 2 floors and set off in small groups, lifts were available if required.

The Tour takes about 2 hours, and the guides are extremely knowledgeable, and encouraged us to ask questions. Unfortunately, there were only 5 puppies for us to look at, but they were lovely little Labradors, all gambolling about and trying to eat each others food.

There were 2 expectant mums in the Maternity unit, one rather bored Labrador, and an Alsatian, having an afternoon nap. I there may be a problem when the pups are born, then they come in early, so the on-site Vets can deal with them. We were shown the mother and pups area, lots of separate family pens, so it must be very noisy when full. This leads on to a large outdoor play area, so the pups can run about and give Mom a rest!!!!

We had a talk on the different harness's used for the Dogs. I didn't realize there were as many, but people are different heights and arm lengths.

The sensory tunnel was an experience. I went through it, blindfolded, and found the floor and walls are made up of lot of different textures. When stepping through the entrance, I was told to put my arms out sideways, so I would feel the differences as I moved along. Actually, without touching the walls I would have been all over the place. It was about 15 paces, and certainly made me think about coping without sight, and the difficulties.

This is a super facility, and well worth a visit, we had the added bonus of Tea, coffee and biscuits at the end of the tour.

We have a full programme for the next 6 months which includes, Winterbourne Zoological Garden in Edgbaston, The Birmingham Assay Office, Christmas meal together, Pantomime at Birmingham Hippodrome, Black Country Museum etc The photos are of a few of the group on our recent summer trips to Cardiff and Hidcote Gardens.

## DINING OUT

The dining out group meets every month the venues are decide in advance and we try to go to places to experience different cuisine. Currently we have 11 members we can accept a few more but we are limited as it gets difficult to book a very large group on one table.

Over the past year we have been to the following places.

St David's day was celebrated with a lovely selection of Welsh food. Starting with a Tom Jones cocktail and ending with Bara Brith Bites. This was at McKees restaurant in Balsall Common.

April we went to La Stella Balsall Common very tasty Italian, a very popular place.

May was a bit of Indian at Monsoon in Hollywood.

June ended the academic year at the collage of food in Longbridge at the Karabunis Restaurant with a Black tie event. The food was cooked by the students in their final year and presented as fine dining with complimentary wine that evening. It was delicious and very good value for money.

July we went to the Boat House in Stratford again another lovely summer evening by the river.



Our last meet up this month was at Porto Duro in Acocks Green. The fish dishes were magnificent and we had a taste of Portugal with complimentary port and Portuguese tarts.



Next month we are having a Mexican evening at McKees followed by an Italian at Ponte Di Legno in Moseley, ending the year with a Chinese at Sans in Henley in Arden.

We are very fortunate to have such a selection of restaurants to chose from the difficulty is keeping it off the hips!

Bon appetite everyone.

## **CINEMA (October 2023 – March 2024)**

### Thursday, October 26th

'Sister Act I'

Deloris Van Cartier (Whoopi Goldberg) is a lounge singer with aspirations to be a star, but instead becomes the star witness to a mob murder. She goes to the police, is put into the state witness protection scheme and sent to a nunnery run by a starchy Mother Superior (Maggie Smith). Whilst there Deloris tries to fit in but finds that everything she does seem to annoy her fellow nuns - until she discovers the choir.

### Thursday November 23rd

'Dakota'

Single Mom and recently widowed Kate Sanders (Abbie Cornish) lives on her family's farm in Georgia with her daughter Alex (Lola Sultan).

Life on the farm is a challenge and things have only gotten more complicated when combat dog Dakota arrives on their doorstep delivered by Sergeant CJ Malcolm (Tim Rozon). CJ is fulling a promise made to his friend and fellow Afghanistan veteran Marine Clay Sanders (Kate's late husband and Alex's father) to bring Dakota home to them if he died.

### Thursday December 28th

TBC

### Thursday 25th January

'The Blind Side'

Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron) knows little about family. Less about football. What the homeless teen knows are the streets and projects of Memphis. Well-to-do Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock) knows little about his world. Yet when she and Michael meet, he's found a home. And the Tuohys have found something just as life-changing: a beloved new son and brother. This real-life story of family and of Michael's growth into a blue-chip football star will have you cheering with its mix of gridiron action and heart-warming emotion. Share the remarkable journey of the college All-American and first-round NFL draft pick who was a winner before he ever stepped onto the playing field.

### Thursday February 22nd

'Walk the Line'

Drama following the life of the legendary 'Man in Black', Johnny Cash. The movie begins in 1955, when a tough, skinny guitar-slinger who called himself J.R. Cash (Joaquin Phoenix) walks into the soon-to-be-famous Sun Studios in Memphis. It was a moment that would have an indelible effect on American culture. With his driving freight-train chords, steel-eyed intensity and a voice as deep and black as night, Cash sang blistering songs of heartache and survival that were gutsy, full of real life and unlike anything heard before. That day kicked off the electrifying early career of Johnny Cash. As he pioneered a fiercely original sound that blazed a trail for rock, country, punk, folk and rap stars to come, Cash began a rough-and-tumble journey of personal transformation. In the most volatile period of his life, he evolved from a self-destructive pop star into the iconic 'Man in Black' - facing down his demons, fighting for the love that would save him time and again, and learning how to walk the razor-thin line between destruction and redemption. Reese Witherspoon won a Best Actress Academy Award for her role as June Carter, Cash's long-suffering wife.

Thursday March 28th

'Sister Act 2 – Back in the Habit'

Deloris is asked to resume the habit of a nun so that she can help raise funds for an ailing ghetto school. Deloris agrees to go undercover as the school's new music teacher.

## **STRIDERS**

The Striders group was very lucky with the weather for our July walk, the walk leader Jenny chose the best day we'd had for a while that's for sure.



It was a lovely varied 5 mile walk across fields, along lanes, through Barnt Green village, around Upper Bittel reservoir and along canal towpaths. Yes, there were hills at the start, but they were well worth the views. We all said we'd do that walk again.



The Group had a break in August but we have walks scheduled every month for the rest of the year, even in December when the walk will be followed by a Christmas lunch.

## **ANCESTRY**

Over the past year we have been presenting to the group a history of one of our family members. Each member has selected a family member and shared with the group their research and stories.

They have unravelled some interesting stories from a Soldier going to India, Grandmother who set up her own business and children orphaned and raised in homes, amongst many other fascinating things. The research not only tells us about the individual person but also the social history of the time and the Political and Economic environment effecting the family and community. Nobody has found out that we have any famous or Royal ancestors as of yet! Only good hardworking folks.



In November we will be going on our annual visit. This year we will be visiting Aston Cantlow and the hamlet of Billesley to see an exhibition of photos of the area as well as visit the Guild Hall. Last year we visited Stratford Boys school where Shakespeare was a pupil.

The group is small as we have our meetings in our houses, taking turns to be the host(es). Therefore space is limited. Following our last meeting it was decided that we could accommodate another two people who may be interested in joining us. Member need to have some skills in researching their own family history on their own, although advice is always available from our very experienced members when you get stuck.

## **BOOK CLUB**

Our book choice for October is *The Rooster Bar* by John Grisham. Three young law students, massively in debt are starting to realise that it's not worth graduating but plan in setting up as lawyers as they think they know enough the law to start a practice and to pay off the loan sharks. Will they succeed? This comes from a prolific writer whose books are usually legal thrillers. Following on in November we will be reading *Force of Nature* by Jane Harper. Set in the Australian bush. Five woman set off on a hike organised by the firm they work for. But only four return. Another good read from this author.

With autumn approaching it's a good excuse to curl up with a good book. Happy reading

Marion Burrows.

\* \* \*

*As chair I want to make a mention of Doreen and Mary who both passed away this last week.*

Doreen



Doreen was a member of CG&D from the outset and was an active participant in many groups, Theatre, Bridge, Wine tasting, and Outings and others over the years. Doreen was known for her love of wearing sparkles and heels. Doreen always had a ready smile and a great sense of humour. I know that many of us have lovely memories to hold on to. I shall miss seeing her walk past my house.

I am sure many of you will be attending her funeral on 4th October. Paul has requested that people wear bright colours rather than black.

Our condolences go to Paul and her children.

I for one will Raise a glass of red wine to Doreen. She will be much missed by many people.

### Mary

Mary too was a member of our u3a from the very first meeting. Mary bravely came along to that first meeting as a lonely widow, with no need of a diary. Over the years Mary's started to need a diary and it became full with u3a activities. Mary has been our Speaker organiser for 10 years and she hosted them at each meeting too. Mary set up the card games groups and over the years has played and taught Canasta and Cribbage to many of us. If you needed to know where Mary was- you could nearly always find her in the Saxon pub on a Monday afternoon with a cup of tea and a notebook for scoring. Mary gave back to our u3a as much as she gained from it. Mary has been active in many other groups too, Curry ,Theatre, Rummikub, Book Club, Sunday lunch, and Outings before setting up Going Places for those who wanted to stay more local once Outings started venturing further afield. and several other groups too. Mary was a great advocate for u3a because joining our group had literally changed her life.

I am sure that many of you will wish to pay your respects to Mary at her funeral on 5th October. Their request is that you wear a touch of blue. If you are toasting Mary - a cup of tea would be her tippie of choice!

It is with huge regret that I won't be able to go to either funeral as I will be in Australia, Their families are aware.

I also just want to say, two deaths, two lots of grief, for 2 lovely friends, within 2 days, is a LOT for all of us to deal with, so please,

look after yourselves and each other.

Ruth (Chair)



***Iris Apfel who styles herself as "The Oldest Living Teenager" says***

***"GET OLD, BUT DON'T GET BORING.***

***GO WILD!***

***AND GET COMFORTABLE OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE"***

**A great message and mantra to live by**

**Cheswick Green & District u3a Committee**

### Executive Officers

Chair:	Ruth Hubble	<a href="mailto:rhubble8@gmail.com">rhubble8@gmail.com</a>
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Secretary/Minute Taker:	Sue Hurst	<a href="mailto:suehurst@blueyonder.co.uk">suehurst@blueyonder.co.uk</a>
Treasurer:	Trudie Cooper	<a href="mailto:trudieberry@hotmail.com">trudieberry@hotmail.com</a>



### Non-Executive Officers

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Wendy Ball	

