

u3a

Learn Laugh Live

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SHOTTERY u3a

NEWSLETTER: August 2026

Tuesday, September 1st

Indian Birds, Tigers and The Taj Mahal
Arthur Ball

DESK AND REFRESHMENT ROTA:

September – Ambling

October - Reading

Duties include checking members in at the entrance desk and serving tea and coffee and washing up afterwards (dishwasher available). Generally 4 members are required. Where groups have difficulty in raising the necessary 4 members, please get in touch with Jan Grant– Group Coordinator. (01789 417721)

Please note that as I don't have a current rota pattern I have gone back to the 2023 list I have. Apologies if you find your group listed above and have recently already done the duty. Kate

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

October - Looking after the Swans of Stratford Cyril Bennis

November - Interest Groups and AGM

New Series – Your input needed!

Have you had your 15 minutes of fame? If so, would you share it with us all in the newsletter? Many people have had an encounter with someone famous, done something noteworthy which gave them 'fame' (or notoriety!). It doesn't have to be major, even a smidgeon of 'fame' would be interesting. Send your contribution to shotteryu3a@gmail.com

Thanks go to Nick who begins the series for us.

15 minutes of Fame (or maybe not!)

Cast your mind back to December 1968. On the shortest day of the year, three men left the ground to travel the furthest distance anyone had at that time. They were Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders on board Apollo 8. I, on the other hand, was in Queen Mary's children's hospital in Carshalton, Surrey. During the days leading up to Christmas the wards had been decorated so the hospital had tried to make it as festive as possible, but it was not home.

I should not have still been in hospital on Christmas Eve but I had contracted a sickness bug. So, whilst messrs Borman, Lovell and Anders became the first humans to enter lunar orbit and see the far side of the moon and The Scaffold topped the Christmas charts with Lily The Pink, I was unwell!

If I had gone home as was expected then I would have missed seeing the BBC's outside broadcast (OB) team roll in. On Christmas morning the BBC used to broadcast a live programme called 'Meet the Kids' from various hospitals. In the late 1960's the TV cameras used for outside broadcasts were not like today's small handheld cameras. Then they were massive cameras on huge tripods with thick cables which ran through the wards and corridors back to the large dark green OB vans. Today, health and safety would certainly not allow such a set up. But for a 12-year-old who was four days away from being a teenager this was exciting stuff; if only I had been well enough to enjoy it!

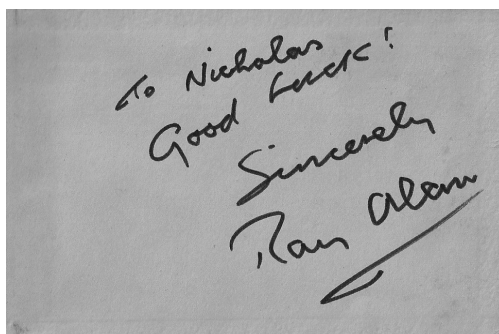
It did, however, give me the opportunity to meet a 'Celebrity'. Another children's celebrity, Leslie Crowther normally presented the programme but in 1968 it was Ray Alan. He was a ventriloquist probably best known for his puppet Lord Charles, but, at the time, I was more familiar with his puppets, Tich and Quackers. Although he clearly would have been incredibly busy rehearsing and practising for the next day, he spent time sitting with me and other kids chatting about all sorts of things but in my case very much about Apollo 8. It was strange to think that we were talking about three men thousands of miles away in a capsule that was circling the moon. To my shame, I cannot remember the name of Ray Alan's wife (note: according to Wikipedia her name was Greta Motherwell, they divorced in 1972) but I remember she took over when Ray had to leave. I'm sure she didn't need to come to the hospital on Christmas Eve so clearly she must have been a kind caring lady who spent, what seemed to me, ages with me and other children.

By Christmas morning, however, I was well enough to 'enjoy' the day. As we know, when you are in hospital you are woken up early and it was no different being a child but to my utter amazement Santa had visited during the night. He and his 'Friends of the Hospital' had been very kind.

I'm sure all the kids they were going to interview had already been selected and to be fair many of them probably deserved to be interviewed in preference to me, after all I should have been sent home before Christmas. I certainly remember some of

my fellow inmates were very poorly indeed. My mother had been given special dispensation to come to visit me on Christmas morning but she was told don't come to the hospital but turn your TV set on. Sure enough apparently there were a number of big ugly mug shots of me sitting proud as punch under the Christmas tree with a bundle of presents. So my very, very weak claim to fame is that I was on television on Christmas Day; 15 minutes of fame was probably not even 15 seconds!

I spent most of my working life at Gatwick and Heathrow airports so I got used to seeing and, on occasion talking, to many celebrities but I will always remember that Christmas and Ray Alan for what he and his then wife did that Christmas Eve. Nick



U3a Concert

The next U3A concert is on Friday 18th September 2026, 2.30pm at The Methodist Church.

Tickets are £6 to include Tea/Coffee afterwards.

They can be obtained from Sue M. at the September meeting

INTEREST GROUPS

We are always interested in expanding the number and range of interest groups that are on offer. If you would be interested in developing a new group, please get in touch with the Secretary via the website group

<https://u3asites.org.uk/shottery/home> .

In the interests of privacy, particularly as this newsletter is published on the website for anyone to access, If you wish to contact any group leader, please do so through the email address at the foot of this newsletter or through the contact details on your membership card

Poetry Matters - For further details please get in touch with Jonathan Baker at jonobaker@hotmail.com

GROUP REORTS

Local History Group

The Local History Group meet in the Escape Arts facilities in The Yard Sheep Street, in historic surroundings, a former slaughterhouse.

We have from time to time looked at the different churches in the locality and had decided that we would get out and see some of those. Where to go and when? Not an easy one to resolve. Where to go Hamton Lucy? Reputedly stunning. Where was William Shakespeare married? Any number of claimants. So we eventually settled on Aston Cantlow in early September. We may even be able to get a second visit in.

One of our members found a 1851 Census of Churches, Chapels and Meeting Places in Warwickshire which will give us plenty of other places to consider. Miles

Rambling Group

Six U3A members walked 4.5 miles on Thursday 28th July, starting from Yarningale Common. This walk had been deferred from the previous month when the Amber Weather Warning was issued. It was still hot in July, but just about manageable, being under trees and along the canal towpath for most of the time. We also included a coffee stop at The Fleur de Lys, Lowsonford to break up the walk. Lunch was taken at The View, Wootton Wawen.

At the time of writing, August's Ramble location had yet to be decided, with the weather likely to play it's part again in deciding on a suitable destination. Anyone capable of walking 5 miles is welcome to join us. If you wish to join the group, please write to Martin Young

Lunch Club

Next Lunch Club is on 10th September. Lunch Club is at different venues. Signing-up lists with details are put on the table at the Tuesday monthly meeting, For further information contact David.

Ambling and Gardening Group

Once again due to this year's excessive heat both the amble and garden visit planned for August were cancelled. Both Margaret and Nick were concerned that members were missing the opportunity to socialise which they felt was a vital part of being a member of the U3A movement.

The two groups, therefore, met for a brunch meeting at the Four Alls in Welford. 15 members appreciated the friendly welcome and service provided as well as the opportunity to meet up and enjoy each other's company.

Hopefully the weather will cool so that September's amble can go ahead. Nick is concerned that whichever garden is visited in September the long hot and dry weather may have taken its toll even at well-established gardens so it's likely the visit will be to a NT property.

Margaret & Nick



Digital Photography



We are looking for 2 more members. All you need is a phone with a camera or a camera. We show our photographs on a tv screen, so no printing is required. Most phones can show the photographs direct onto the tv screen. We are not competitive and just enjoy looking at the photographs. We have a very social time as well. We have not yet had our August meeting. The subject is 'Summer'. We meet on 28st August (change of usual date) at the Wood's at 2.30pm. Heather is also doing the refreshments. We look forward to seeing as many members as can attend. Anyone wishing to join us please contact Frances.

Play Reading

The group met on Friday 24th July and started to read a comedy, Family Planning by Frank Vickery. We enjoyed the first Act. It is a comedy set in the 1970s somewhere in Wales. It is a beautiful set of stock characters and how they cope with the sudden news of the teenage daughter's unwanted pregnancy and father's hypochondria. Their grandmother lives with them and when the play is on stage she is on stage in her bed, upstairs all the time, getting involved in and annoying the family.

Our next play reading is on August 29 and we plan to finish reading the second part of Family Planning by Frank Vickery..

The play for September and October has not yet been chosen but both Reading dates will be the last Friday of each month.

We read all sorts of plays, borrowed from the library, and you don't need any 'stage' experience -just enthusiasm! If anybody is interested in joining us, you will be very welcome and could even come just to listen the first time to see if this could be for you.

I look forward to hearing from you. Lauri

Book Group

Our book for August was "An American Marriage" by Tayari Jones. Written in 2018, and winner of the Women's Prize for Fiction, the novel is about a young black couple in Atlanta, Georgia and what happens to their lives and marriage when Roy is wrongly convicted of rape and imprisoned. Written in alternating first person narratives of Celeste, Roy and their friend Andre, it looks at love, injustice and loyalty. The group currently has two spaces. If you are interested contact Kate

Keep Fit

Our small friendly group consists of both males and females of mixed abilities. The class is designed for our age group, with standing and sitting exercises. We meet every Thursday morning from 10 -11am in the Parish Centre at St Andrews Church in Shottery. We have an excellent tutor and really enjoy the exercises and a chat.

At present there is a waiting list, but please contact me if you are interested in finding out more about the group. Jan Jones

Please send items for inclusion in the newsletter or enquiries regarding interest groups or membership leaders via the email shotteryu3a@gmail.com