



Modern Greek al fresco

Newsletter Issue 93 – September 2025

Registered Charity Number 1101530

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Chair & Safeguarding Officer	Ros Gowers	
Vice Chair	Catherine Cox	
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Secretary,	Alan Chambers	
Charity Commission Liaison & Beacon Administrator		
Membership Secretary	Helen Hutt	
Assistant Treasurer	Claire Allen	email from website
Groups Coordinator	vacant	email from website
Programme Coordinator	Lorna Slaughter	email from website
Accessibility Officer	David Daniels	email from website

Non-Committee Volunteers

Minute Secretary	Graham Smith	email from website
Website Manager & Third Age Trust Volunteer	Alun Edwards	
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Shared Learning Project	Chris Wolstencroft	
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Group Mentors & all Group Coordinators		see the Group List for contact details

The above can be reached by email from the website Contact page

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/contact>

Welcome...



...to the autumn issue of the Newsletter. Due to this year's dry summer, it started to feel like autumn in July, judging from the brown leaves on the ground. I hope you relished our never-ending good weather this year.

Mixed in with the many happy hours spent in the company of u3a friends on outings, summer parties and learning experiences, there is a sad note running through this issue as we mourn the passing of good friends.

Meet our three new Committee members on pages 6-8 followed by a reminder how Cotswold Link could work for you. Classic Cinema have spread their wings, watching some of their films on the big screen at The Regal – see page 16 for future dates. Enjoy reading about the great variety of activities our groups organize and don't miss the Quiz on page 27!

Finally, please make a note of the deadline for the December Newsletter on Saturday **1 November 2025**.

Bärbel Wolstencroft

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The photo on the front cover was supplied by Nick Hopkins and shows Modern Greek Group 1 meeting in a member's garden in June, on a very hot afternoon! For more from the Modern Greek Groups please see page 23.

Notes from the Committee

It is a sad inevitability that any organisation for people of the 'third age' will experience a lot of bereavements and, in an organisation the size of ours, many of those people pass with a card and a kind word sent from our Welfare Officer, Joyce Davey, but without huge public recognition, except, of course, from their immediate family and friends.

Once in a while though, we lose someone of such significance to our u3a that we all feel we must stop and pay the respect that is due. In July we sadly lost one such person, John Boon, multi-group leader, ex-membership secretary, huge supporter of not only the u3a locally, but the movement in general, and of many other groups and organisations in the Evesham area, the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the Festival of Words being just two.



John was a man of many interests and wide knowledge. It was not a coincidence that he led the u3a Quiz Group! His knowledge of the natural world was extraordinary. But he will be most remembered for his willingness to generously share that knowledge, and to never make people feel 'less' because he knew more than they did. Whilst on the Committee he was supportive to all, happy to 'pitch in' whenever needed and always welcoming to new members. When he left our committee, he gave many hours of his time to ensure his successor was comfortable in her new role. He continued to support the committee at Open Day and in monthly meetings and was always available to answer questions or clarify issues.

Many of us, current and past committee members, members of the groups he led and participated in, joined his wife Jane and his family at a Memorial Gathering on 25 July, to remember John and to share

their sorrow, but also their pride, in the man he was. Jane had thoughtfully (and pragmatically) laid out many of John's beloved books at the event and invited us all to take one in his memory. A lovely gesture, with a selection available that demonstrated John's wide range of enthusiasms. That, and John's 'Desert Island Discs' choice of music (picked by him to be played at his funeral), reflected to us all a life well and fully lived. We will miss him dreadfully and we send condolences and love to Jane and his children on their, and our, irreplaceable loss.

We also send our heartfelt condolences to member Phil Morton who lost his beloved wife Brenda in the same week as John died. Both have been long-standing members of the u3a and, although Brenda's illness did not allow her to participate in recent months, Phil continued to be a great support to Alan and Ally at Monthly Meetings in their struggle with church technology, despite the demands on him as her carer. We mourn Brenda too and send Phil all best wishes as he adjusts to life in these new circumstances.

The work of the u3a goes on of course and the Committee are both relieved and delighted that all of John's groups will be able to carry on, with people quickly stepping up to share out his roles and continue his legacy. Thanks to all those who have offered to help and, once again, to our Group Leader Mentors, who stepped in to help ensure smooth transitions.

And talking of transitions – the Committee has just been able to confirm that our future meetings will now take place in the Board Room at Evesham Rowing Club. We hope this improved accessibility will perhaps encourage a few more people to come either to observe proceedings (please book via the secretary) or maybe even to join us!

Ros Gowers

Remembering John Boon

Some years ago, Nicky Neill, David Keeling and I found ourselves on the u3a committee. A couple of years later we were joined by John Boon and Alison Williams. As long-standing officers retired from the committee, we, with much trepidation, took over officer roles from them and we found ourselves at the centre of that dedicated little group of people who keep the Evesham & District u3a going. I am sure many of you won't believe me when I say it was (mostly) fun and much giggling went on during our oh-so-serious meetings! John took on the role of membership secretary – a very onerous task. He did this with huge skill and much good humour. He was, without doubt, one of the kindest men I have met and he dealt with everyone (members, potential members and committee members) with such generosity of spirit. He also ran several interest groups and captivated members with his huge knowledge of nature, particularly birds. When Nicky, Alison, John and I retired from the committee we realised we had no interest groups in common and that we wouldn't be seeing each other again, so we immediately set up our own little lunch group so we didn't lose touch. I have now moved to Cornwall and, sadly, it's rather too long a trek for a lunch in Evesham. When we heard of John's illness and his passing we were saddened more than words can express. We were sorry we didn't manage to say goodbye or have a last interesting conversation with him. Memories of him will stay with us. Rest in peace, dear John.

Deborah Andrews with Nicky Neill and Alison Williams

Meet your new Committee Members

A Quick Hello from your new Assistant Treasurer

Hello everyone! I am delighted to be stepping into the role of Assistant Treasurer for Evesham & District u3a, supporting our current Treasurer, Diane Nicholls. Numbers may not make the world go round, but they do help keep the books balanced – and that's where I come in! My focus will be working with the Concert Group, but I will be assisting Diane wherever needed.



Having recently retired, I have joined the Committee to support the excellent work already being done behind the scenes. Outside of spreadsheets and receipts, I enjoy reading, sewing, and music – I play the viola and the alto saxophone, though not at the same time! I also love to travel, especially when it involves discovering new places... or new cafés.

I am looking forward to contributing in my small way to this lively and welcoming organisation, and I hope to meet many more of you over the coming months.

Claire Allen

Greetings from your new Programme Coordinator

I have been a member of the u3a Evesham for about 11 years, despite actually living in Redditch. I have enjoyed being a member and now administrator for the French Conversation Group and more recently joined one of the Walking Groups.

Having benefitted from being a member, I have now joined the committee and hope to help Evesham & District u3a to continue to grow and be relevant for local people.



Lorna Slaughter

A Brief Biography from our Accessibility Officer

Emerging from a long period acting as full-time carer for my late wife (I lost Gill in 2017), it was important to find activities to get me out of the house. Purely by chance, a friend asked me if I had ever heard of the u3a. Yes, I said, I have heard of it, but I know nothing about it.

My friend said: 'No problem – I'll pass on to you my copy of the latest Newsletter'.

I was truly amazed at the huge range of activities that our Evesham Branch offers, quickly found two or three to join, and the foundations for eight happy years of 'involvement' were laid. Of course, there have been changes along the way. Several other 'get you out of the house' activities have dropped away, for various reasons – I never really got on with the piano lessons, for instance! But I did become involved in the MCG. What are you talking about, I hear you ask? What has the Melbourne Cricket Ground got to do with Evesham u3a? No, no – not *that* MCG. It's what someone recently described as the 'Magnificent Concert Group'!



If you are part of the MCG(!) you will know that helping to run that is a busy job, but earlier this year, after shedding one or two other activities, I heard the appeal from Madame Chair to please come to the aid of the thinly stretched Committee – very short on numbers and much in need of help. Well of course, Ros can be very persuasive, and here we are!

So that's my story. Very happy to be involved in a wonderful, vibrant organisation like our great Evesham u3a Branch.

David Daniels

You are a member of u3a Cotswold Link

Did you know that Evesham u3a has a reciprocal agreement so you may attend one group activity in another Cotswold Link u3a, without having to become a member of that other u3a? For example, Redditch u3a's new **Ancient History** group are researching civilisations of South America and Middle America and Droitwich u3a would like to start a group for **Motorcycle Rides**. Not All Grannies are Little Old Ladies!



Evesham u3a's Country Dancing group is so popular they have a waiting list. However, **American Square Dancing for Beginners** is a group in Cheltenham u3a looking for new members. Another Cheltenham u3a group that advertises their activity is **Genetic Genealogy**. I visited them in July with my particular research problem:

Why do I only receive online 'cousin' DNA notifications from Finland if my family tree research is Welsh; and my DNA test for family history purposes shows 52% Welsh, the rest Suffolk, with less than 1% Danish/Norwegian/Swedish?

As well as solving my very 'first world problem', other members shared their research tasks, like Irish Travellers families. A new member shared their heart-dropping experience of tracing her living family. She was adopted. Using DNA research over the last few years, she has contacted her birth mother who rejected her, found her deceased birth father and many siblings and half-siblings, again with mixed results.



The reciprocal arrangement with the Cotswold Link is also useful for Evesham groups. For **Classic Cinema's** new screenings at The Regal,

I reached out via the Cotswold Link to u3as around the area. In June, we attracted 29 u3a members from Bromsgrove, Tewkesbury, Winchcombe, as well as Evesham for Alfred Hitchcock's 1959 thriller **North By Northwest**, starring Cary Grant.

For more information take a look at the Cotswold Link website <https://cotswold-link.u3asite.uk/reciprocal-arrangements/>

Ally Edwards

Images on page 9: top: 'Not All Grannies are Little Old Ladies' by Neil Morale via Flickr licensed CC BY-NC-ND; bottom: supplied by Ally Edwards

Monthly Meetings

3 September 2025

Caroline Casterton – Mercy Ships UK – their Mission

Now retired from the NHS in Wales and England, Caroline is a speaker and a volunteer from both a medical and administrative perspective for Mercy Ships UK, a non-governmental charitable organisation. There are currently two ships in the fleet, 'Global Mercy' and 'Africa Mercy.'



Tragically, every year 17 million people die from conditions that surgery could have prevented. Mercy Ships use their dedicated hospital ships to deliver free world class health care where it is needed most. Mercy Ships change thousands of lives every year, working to tackle

the surgery crisis in underdeveloped countries. They reduce the strain on fragile healthcare systems by performing many life-saving

and changing surgeries, they train and mentor local healthcare professionals to equip them with the skills they need and they renovate local facilities and donate new medical equipment to them.

Mercy Ships partner with each of the countries they visit, working collaboratively with that nation's government and Ministry of Health to identify patients' needs for surgery in advance of the ships' arrival and, importantly, they provide training for local staff. They also provide ongoing support after the ships leave. For further information please visit the website www.mercyships.org.uk

Refreshments – Golf for Fun

1 October 2025

Andy Smith – Under the Influence

Andy sings and plays a selection of songs which have shaped his repertoire, his guitar playing and explains why! Lots of well known songs by the Beatles, Don McLean and John Denver, to name a few, plus a few self-penned numbers. Along with a host of amusing anecdotes, his musical talk is guaranteed to put a smile on your faces and a song in your heart.



Refreshments – Jam Session

Image supplied by Andy Smith

5 November 2025

Ian Caskie – A Talk about the SS Great Britain

Ian Caskie was raised in Merseyside, watching the big boats come and go. This led to his lifelong passion for ships. His teaching career took him to Bristol, the home of SS Great Britain. He has been





a Visitor Experience Volunteer and Guide with the trust since 2007. Ian's talk tells the ship's story from design to her voyages, her salvage and final restoration in Bristol as a museum.

Refreshments – Latin 1 & 2

Images supplied by Ian Caskie

3 December 2025

Our Singing for Pleasure Group perform their spectacular concert



Our very own Evesham u3a choir will entertain us with their repertoire of songs to close our monthly meetings for 2025.

Refreshments – Latin 3 & Latin Reading

Image supplied by Cath Cox

*A reminder that there will be no talk in January 2026.
Monthly meetings will resume on
Wednesday 4 February 2026*

Special Feature

If you have ever wondered whether to volunteer as leader of a u3a group, please read on and find out about the experience of one new group leader.

How to take over from an excellent group leader

Just before Easter, I replaced only the second leader since the Classic Cinema Group began in 2009 – or earlier? This is my experience:

You don't have to do this on your own! Since Easter, I have found my way through the new financial system, aided by the u3a treasurer. When I come unstuck, Alan helps with Beacon and Frances with the website. In addition, I am regularly supported by a member who runs the catering, one who takes the money on the door and keeps our register, another who banks the funds with the u3a treasurer, and a few more who run the tech on the day. At the end of the session, everyone helps put away the chairs and tidy up.

The previous leader worried over choosing films for each term. Rather than shoulder that responsibility alone, I have introduced some group activities where everyone chooses films through different voting games. Then my benign dictatorship takes over as I investigate:

- 🌀 Is the u3a licensed to show the film?
- 🌀 What about my checklist? (see page 14)
- 🌀 Who has a DVD?
- 🌀 Who can I encourage to 'volunteer' to introduce it?
- 🌀 If I am not available, who can open the venue, and, even more importantly, who will ensure we clear up and lock the premises?

You can see the team effort involved to ensure we all have fun at Classic Cinema.

Content Checklist

As group leader, I do feel responsible to keep us legal (our complex licenses and the u3a's simple risk assessment) and to be inclusive, ensuring all members have a chance to participate and feel welcome. Each term, I ensure our programme is representative of modern values. This does not mean we avoid showing challenging films, but we acknowledge differences. The checklist for this term shows me that of the eight films scheduled there are no Black, Asian or Middle Eastern subjects. However, I am pretty sanguine about this – we have shown titles like that almost every term since I joined the group, and we will again. But we have never shown a film in Welsh before!

Ally Edwards

	Concepts
//	Cinematic enough for The Regal
//	Western/Action/War
/	Foreign language
//	non US/English culture
//	Unlicensed, for The Regal to buy for u3a
/	Comedy
//	Challenge the group
///	Classic movie
///	British production
//	Male lead/interest
///	Female lead/interest
//	LGBTQ+
	BAME
	Older people
/	Younger ages



From the Welsh-language film *Hedd Wyn* (1992): Judith Humphreys, with Huw Garmon in the title role as Ellis Evans who wrote poetry under the pseudonym of *Hedd Wyn*. Evans achieved his life's ambition to be "chaired" the national bard, at the National Eisteddfod of 1917. He never knew of his success as he was killed at Ypres on the Western Front. It was the first Welsh-language film to be nominated for an Oscar.

Checklist:

War *Check* Male or Female lead/interest *Check* Foreign language *Check*
British production *Check* Challenge group: $\frac{1}{2}$ *check*

Coming to Classic Cinema:

On Friday 7 November *Hedd Wyn* plays at Classic Cinema in the basement at the back of the Evesham Methodist Church. All welcome.

Image: BFI Player, freely available.

Group News

● Classic Cinema



The u3a Classic Cinema group meets every 1st and 3rd Friday mornings at Evesham Methodist Church to show films on a portable projector, preceded by an introduction by one of the members.

In June, we arranged with The Regal Cinema to show Alfred Hitchcock's 1959 thriller **North By Northwest** starring Cary Grant, on the big screen! With the help of the Cotswold Link and the West Midlands Region u3as, 29 members from Bromsgrove, Tewkesbury, Winchcombe and Evesham attended, on one of the hottest days of the year! Afterwards, The Regal wrote:

'It was a delight to host the u3a Classic Cinema screening here at our beautiful Grade II listed Art Deco cinema. Everyone, including

our team, had a great time and we are looking forward to future screenings with u3a'.



Not only were our members entranced by this movie, which most had seen only on a small home screen, they were able to socialise with colleagues from other u3as, and

represent the u3a to everyone at this public screening. Plans are already in place for an Ealing Comedy in the autumn. For further details please contact Ally via the web address at the bottom of this page where you can also see the introduction he recorded for the group prior to the film. Before the screening, Ally was encouraged on to the stage to welcome the public.

For our future screenings at **The Regal Cinema** exclusively to u3a (and your guests), please make a note of the following dates:



- ★ **19 September 2025** – **High Noon** (western/melodrama, 1952, 85m, US, directed by Fred Zinnemann)
- ★ **5 December 2025** – **Cabaret** (musical drama, 1982, 124m, US, directed by Bob Fosse)

Ally Edwards

https://evesham.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/classic-cinema/

Images supplied by Ally Edwards

● Jam Session

Vinyl Chapter were one of the groups featured at this year's Fladbury Walkabout. The two-hour-long set included music by a range of artists including Dire Straits, The Eagles, Thin Lizzy, Eric Clapton and The Kinks. There were opportunities for the audience to join in on numbers such as Sweet Caroline, and to tap their feet to a couple of songs featuring Robin Tompkins on fiddle. On a sad note, this was the swan-song of drummer, Tim Willis. Thanks for all you have done, Tim. You will be missed.

Grahame Percival



Vinyl Chapter playing at the Fladbury Walkabout

Image by Margaret Percival

● Skittles 1

It is almost time for Skittles 1 to start again - where has the summer gone? Mary is hanging up her Skittles, having led the group for a good many years, so a big thank you to Mary for all her hard work. We do hope she will still be joining us on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 1 October. We meet at the Ambassador Club in Avon Street for a 10.30 am start. Looking forward to seeing you!

Olga Allen

Group Timetable

To join any group you must be a member of u3a

	First Week	Second Week	Third Week
Mon am	Architecture Natural History Welsh Language	Art Appreciation Questions of Belief Welsh Language	Welsh Language
Mon pm	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Shakespeare Singing for Pleasure	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Spanish-Elementary	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Shakespeare Singing for Pleasure
Tue am	Creative Writing 2 Cycling for Pleasure Latin 1 Spanish Intermediate Urban Sketchers	Golf for Fun Listening to Music 2 Social Saunters Village Strolls 1	Bookends Photography 2 Spanish Intermediate Urban Sketchers Walks over 4 m
Tue pm	Card Games Creative Writing 1 Latin Reading Model Railways	Exploring Language Jam Session Patchwork/Quilting 1 Pétanque	Archaeology Card Games Latin Reading Model Railways
Wed am	Skittles 1, Oct-May Table Tennis Tai Chi	French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2, Oct-May Skittles 3, June-Sept Tai Chi 2	Skittles 1, Oct-May Table Tennis Tai Chi
Wed pm	Monthly Meeting @2 Methodist Church Yoga 3 (term time)	Latin 3 Sea Shanties Yoga 3 (term time)	Philosophy Yoga 3 (term time)
Thu am	Pickleball Yoga 2 (term time)	Aspects of Modern History; German Needlecraft Pickleball Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 1 Yoga 2 (term time)	Pickleball Village Strolls 3 Yoga 2 (term time)
Thu pm	Croquet Modern Greek 1 Dressmaking	China: The Country Latin 2 Modern Greek 1 Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 2	Croquet Modern Greek 1
Fri am	Classic Cinema Country Dancing Modern Greek 2 Pickleball	Computers & Digital Italian; Military History Modern Greek 2 Pickleball Play Reading	Book Friends Classic Cinema Country Dancing Modern Greek 2 Pickleball
Fri pm	Badminton 2 Bridge; Board Games Family Research	Badminton 2 Bridge	Badminton 2 Bridge; Board Games Family Research
Sun am	Brunch Bunch		Brunch Bunch

Group Timetable

To join any group you must be a member of u3a

Fourth Week	Final Week	Ad-Hoc	
Questions of Belief Village Ambles Welsh Language	Welsh Language	<p>Patchwork and Quilting 2 alternate Wednesdays – Linda Dunbar</p> <p>Concert Group – David Daniels</p> <p>Website Editors – meet as required – Alun Edwards</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Group leaders can be contacted by email from the group's webpage.</p>	Mon am
Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Spanish-Elementary	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub		Mon pm
Golf for Fun Photography 1 Village Strolls 2	Urban Sketchers Spanish Intermediate		Tue am
Jam Session Patchwork/Quilting 1 Pétanque Quiz Group			Tue pm
French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2, Oct-May Skittles 3, June–Sept Tai Chi 2	Military History Table Tennis		Wed am
Latin 3 Sea Shanties Yoga 3 (term time)	Poetry Yoga 3 (term time)		Wed pm
Aspects of Modern History; German Needlecraft Pickleball Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 2 Yoga 2 (term time)	Pickleball Yoga 2 (term time)		Thu am
Book Club; German Modern Greek 1 Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 2 Wine Tasting	Modern Greek 1		Thu pm
Birdwatching Italian Post- Beginners Modern Greek 2 Pickleball	Modern Greek 2 Pickleball Science & Engineering (currently suspended)		Fri am
Badminton 2 Bridge	Badminton 2 Bridge		Fri pm
	Brunch Bunch	Sun am	

● Natural History



With disbelief and shock we received the information that John Boon had suddenly passed away at the beginning of July. John had started the Natural History Group in summer 2021 and it quickly grew from single to double participation figures. He always selected new and interesting venues. During our gentle ambles through nature in all weathers, John shared his vast knowledge of the natural world, supported by other group members whose specialisms lay elsewhere. John's passion was moths - about 2500 species can be found in the UK, compared to a mere 59 species of butterflies. During the summer months, he put his moth traps into the garden at night and brought several samples to the meetings the following morning for closer study, each

insect safely tucked into a phial. They were of course released back into nature afterwards.

We were not to know that the excellent excursion to the Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve at the beginning of June was to be our last one with John. He had arranged for Kate Aubury, a member of the Reserve staff, to lead a guided walk along paths normally closed to the general public. Kate knows the Reserve habitat intimately and generously shared with us her exceptional knowledge of its inhabitants. Among many other species



we watched oystercatchers on the lake, followed froglets and toadlets migrating to the water, spotted colourful caterpillars on foliage and observed common blue damselflies mating, to name but a few discoveries.



Always cheerful and good company, John will be missed. With the support of a designated u3a mentor, we hope that the group can find one or more people willing to co-ordinate and lead so that the group can continue to thrive. At the time of writing, different ways of working are being explored to adapt the format to the new situation, gathering ideas from the members of the group. Perhaps there are other members out there with knowledge of some aspects of the natural world keen to share their knowledge? If this is you, please get in touch!

Bärbel Wolstencroft (on behalf of the Group)

Images: page 20 - John Boon at Mill Bank Meadows, Fladbury, in July 2022 by B Wolstencroft; Common Blue Damselflies by Kevin Williams; page 21 - Meadow Plant Bug, *Leptopterna Dolabrata* by Bob Woodrooffe.

● Military History

Well, the year is speeding past, isn't it?! Our group, which always has room for new members, has had a fantastic first half of the year with some riveting presentations, covering topics from the Battle of the Atlantic in WW2, through to the importance of the Battle of Trafalgar. The second half of the year will cover several key topics, including Thomas Fairfax's role in the Parliamentarians'



success in the English Civil War, WW1 poets and the development of rotary-wing aircraft. The 2025 year's programme concludes with a discussion on the greatest military leader and a fun quiz. In October, we will also be conducting our second group visit, this time to RAF Defford.



So even if you have just a passing interest in learning about Military History, which is as relevant today as ever, come along and join us on the last Wednesday morning of the month from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm at Crophorne Village Hall. The fee is £3 per session. We would love to see you!

Neil Hoy

Images: page 21 – guided tour of The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum led by an expert from u3a Cheltenham by Ally Edwards; page 22 – the Y.M.C.A. tea car at RAF Defford, Croome by Jeff Gogarty–geograph.org.uk/p/7010628.

● Poetry

The poetry group is going strong just now with a spot of dragon taming/slaying coming up on 30 July which should test the ingenuity of our members. Where dragons live and breathe, children under the age of 55 should be accompanied by an adult. The content may be scary and there could be flashing lights. Dragons are nothing if not unpredictable.

The group meets on the last Wednesday of each month (with a holiday in December) at Wallace House, Oat Street from 1.30 to 3.30 pm. We come with the intention of having fun and speaking for myself it's generally 'Mission Accomplished'. We have a pool of

active members just now but the squad can always be refreshed, so one or two new members could be accommodated.

Richard Taylor

● Country Dancing

Members of the group were saddened to learn before the last meeting of the summer term that joint group leader Brenda Morton had died earlier in the month. Phil and Brenda Morton had managed a seamless transition of the group leadership when Derek and Sylvia stood down from the role. Their success in leading the group is reflected in the number of group members, which has increased to such a level that membership had to be closed in the summer term. Members of the group extend their condolences to Phil and family.

Graham Smith

● Modern Greek 1 & 2

The heatwaves have not stopped us meeting on a weekly basis in both groups and the photo on the front page shows a Group 1 meeting in a member's garden during June, on a very hot afternoon! It was too hot to sit indoors! All eight members of the group can be seen, with smiles, drinks and one of our learning resources, a book by the BBC.

Greece is a wonderful country, full of culture and traditions which we all love and talk about too, as well as learning the language. As far as I can ascertain, we are the only u3a in the country with Modern Greek language groups and I get enquiries from well outside our area. This has resulted in Group 2 recently growing with more beginners joining, which has become a logistical challenge when it comes to organising travel to the meetings. Nevertheless, we all look forward

to meeting every week, even when I, as leader, am away in Greece for several months. I then join on Zoom or FaceTime.

We do not have a teacher, but learn by ourselves and from each other, so if anyone out there can speak fluent Modern Greek, we would be delighted to have you in the groups to help us even more.

Mike Fraser

Singing for Pleasure

We started in January with a few free spaces. These were soon filled by members who were on the waiting list and they certainly have been an asset to our group of choristers! However, we are still on the lookout for a keyboard player to help out on occasion for rehearsals, so if there is anyone who would like to come along, you would be made most welcome. We are a very relaxed group and we are not looking for perfection, just for someone who enjoys playing.

We had an unusual rehearsal at the end of June, when we were invited by the Churches Conservation Trust to have the use of St Lawrence's Church. This was such a privilege and we all enjoyed the different sound effects. Singing from the choir stalls was certainly unique!

We have had to learn much new music, as we are putting on a concert for the Evesham Pensioners Association at the end of September. It will be lovely to sing at the Town Hall again – I am sure many will remember all the Monthly Meetings that were held there.

After that concert, it will be full steam ahead, with five rehearsals, to get ready for our Christmas Concert on 3 December at the u3a Monthly Meeting for your entertainment. I am sure you will all come and give us your support as you have in the past and for which we are most grateful.

Catherine Cox

● Badminton

In July, the Badminton groups put down their rackets to meet for a 'bring & share' summer lunch in a member's garden. Good company, good food, good weather – perfect!



Images by B Wolstencroft

● German

The Garden Party rounded off another successful and enjoyable fun term, consolidating what we had learnt in the past. Now in its 24th year, the group has expanded and has become a very friendly get-together on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Over the years, some members have formed interesting and lasting friendships.

The beginners group, led by Reg Pritchard, are advancing at their own pace and work with enthusiasm while having great fun. One member

has left and two have joined. The group has bonded so well over the years!

The lower and upper groups, taking place in the morning, produce the most fantastic stories, choosing either their own subjects or use the suggested themes. The conversation is lively and they produce the most interesting and imaginative ideas followed by endless discussions. The advanced group in the afternoon has a plethora of stories and ideas, bringing an abundance of information to the meeting. Two hours are never enough!

At this point, I would like to inform readers of an interesting invitation to Ecgwins Private Members Club, Evesham, recently received from Robert Hopkins, a trustee of the Anglo-Austrian Society. The organisation has existed since 1944 to establish friendships between Austrian and British societies. <https://angloaustrian.org.uk/>

The invitation was for a preliminary meeting to attend a **'Stammtisch'**, which is a table permanently reserved for regulars of a pub, an old tradition in Austria and Germany. About ten people attended and it is hoped that in time more people will join who would like to enhance their German language skills and learn more about the country, its history, way of life and make new friends in the process. It was agreed to meet on the fourth Friday of the month from 12.15–14.15 hrs at Ecgwins Private Members Club. Visitors can drop in and out whenever they wish, there are no set rules of attendance. For further information please get in touch with Robert Hopkins on 07984 785540.

Of course, the 'Stammtisch' is not a replacement for the German Conversation Groups but would be a good opportunity to add value for learners of the German language through extra practice.

For further information on the German Conversation Groups please contact Sophie Dodds via email from the webpage.

Sophie Dodds

Quiz

This month's theme is Sport:

1. What is the perfect score in Ten Pin Bowling?
2. Which three Racecourses stage the five English Classic Horse racing events?
3. Which sport does the anagram 'Tragic Moron' represent?
4. How high is the tallest fence to jump in the Grand National?
5. What annual sporting event is over the distance of 4 miles and 374 yards?
6. How is the sport of Tauromancy better known?
7. How high is a table tennis net?
8. Which was the first Football league team to score from the penalty spot?
9. Who is currently the men's Tennis world no 1 in the ATP rankings?
10. Where will the Summer Olympics 2028 be held?

Please see page 33 for the answers.

Neil Berry

● Birdwatching

This late spring and early summer we have had three meetings, including those to Avon Meadows in Pershore and our Dorset weekend away. These were the last to be led by the late John Boon. His energy, humour, knowledge and enthusiasm will be greatly missed.



At Avon Meadows the group was treated to great views of cuckoo as well as the newly arrived sedge and Cetti's warblers. In May we had our weekend away, basing ourselves in Weymouth for two nights and birding at RSPB Lodmoor and Radipole and Portland Bill, where we were also given a guided tour of the bird observatory. On our final day we stopped off on the way home at RSPB Arne. The weather was kind to us all

weekend and we managed to see 80 species including Dartford warbler, hobby and various waders and nesting sea birds.

Our last meeting of the period was an evening visit to the Forest of Dean, looking for nightjars. The windy weather made us a little anxious about the success we might have, but we needn't have worried. At the predicted time of 21.43 hrs the birds started churring and soon gave us wonderful views as they flew and hovered beside us and over us.

Alan Chambers



Images: Cuckoo by Steve Cockbill (top); Bar-tailed Godwit by Alan Chambers (bottom)

● Sea Shanties



Members of the Sea Shanties Group - 'Being a Pirate'. (Soft drinks are available).

Image supplied by Graham Smith

● Archaeology & Heritage

Our first event in May was a visit to Baddesley Clinton, with a particular emphasis on the Priest Holes contained within the house. Of particular note is the influence of one woman, against the odds:

Anne Vaux and the Priest Holes connection

In a century which had seen the country break from Rome, set up the Protestant Church of England, revert back to Catholicism and then convert once again back to Protestantism, anti-Catholic views ran high.

Aged about 25, Anne Vaux became the protector of Father Henry Garnet, Jesuit Superior of England, a high profile target for those

protecting the Protestant faith. Posing as his sister under the false name 'Mrs Alice Perkins', the pair travelled around the country via the network of safe houses which her brother had helped to set up.



Baddesley Clinton was one of these safe houses. Its owner, Henry Ferrers, was working in London and rented his home to Anne and her sister Eleanor in 1588. The women employed Nicholas Owen (chief designer and builder of hiding places in

England) to create hiding places for up to twelve priests.

In 1591, Garnet arranged a Jesuit meeting at Baddesley. In the early hours of the following morning, Baddesley was surrounded by some unwelcome visitors – priest-hunters looking for the very priests who were in hiding in the house. Anne challenged them:

Do you think it right and proper that you should be admitted to a widow's house before she or her servants or her children are out of bed? Why this lack of good manners? Why come so early? Why keep coming to my house in this hostile manner? Have you ever found me unwilling to open the door to you as soon as you knocked?

For the next few hours, the house was thoroughly searched. Everything was turned upside down and closely examined. Finally, Anne invited the pursuivants to breakfast. The house was searched once more, Anne paid them for their 'trouble' and the pursuivants departed.

On this day alone Anne had saved the lives of the five priests she had hidden in her home. Evidently, she had been visited by these pursuivants before and we can only guess as to how many times she went through this harrowing ordeal, risking everything. Her status and femininity did not guarantee her safety – three women were executed during Anne’s lifetime for the harbouring of priests. The Vaux sisters’ tenancy of Baddesley is believed to have ended soon after this when they moved closer to London, their faith never wavering (National Trust 2025). Not all the Priest Holes are visible or accessible today but those that are have been carefully restored.

Our second event in May was a talk by Victoria Allnatt on recent Roman finds from Warwickshire, courtesy of Alcester Centurions. An instructive and well-researched topic with some emphasis on links to Alcester.

June saw a change in programme, when we visited Droitwich and experienced one of the most fantastic displays of mosaics any of us had ever encountered. The Church of the Sacred Heart and St Catherine of Alexandria, built in the early part of the 20th



century, contains mosaics considered to be among the finest in England. They were designed by Gabriel Pippet and carried out by the mosaicists Maurice Josey and Fred Oates. The mosaics are composed of tesserae, coloured pieces of Venetian glass. The designs were carried out by Gabriel in full size cartoon form. The outlines were transferred onto the walls and then each individual piece of mosaic was fixed to the plastered walls by the mosaicists. Gabriel Pippet spent some time in Ravenna and Rome where he was most impressed by the mosaic decoration, and this influence is

clearly apparent in this church. (Source: Church of the Sacred Heart and St Catherine of Alexandria 2025).

The following day, courtesy of Alcester Centurions, we were provided with an insight into 'Costuming Romans – exploring RSC Productions' by Dr Elizabeth Richards. An unusual topic for our group, but an insight into the theatrical heritage of the RSC, with elements of historical Shakespeare brought into the mix. More events beckon for the remainder of 2025.

Chris Wolstencroft

Images: page 30 – the group at Baddesley Clinton; page 31 – an impressive mosaic at the Church of the Sacred Heart and St Catherine of Alexandria by B Wolstencroft
<http://www.sacredheartdroitwich.org.uk/>

Concert Group

Our New Season 2025/2026 has arrived, and we are really looking forward to our six concerts with their stimulating mixture of familiar and not-so-familiar music – and one or two quite adventurous choices of programme.

At the time of writing, we have just completed the bookings for our season starter concert on 25 September, which finishes with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra playing the inspiring Symphony No 1 by Sir Edward Elgar – a treat in store indeed. We operate a waiting list in case tickets become available before the concert date.

But we feel sure that our second concert on 11 November is going to be the highlight of the season as Sir Simon Rattle returns to Symphony Hall after several years absence, bringing his new Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, to give us a truly wonderful programme of music – Symphony No 2 by Robert Schumann and the complete Firebird ballet by Igor Stravinsky, with its soul-stirring 'Happy Ever After' musical ending. We are already heavily over-subscribed for this Concert. 'So if we can't come, why mention it', I hear you ask? Well, just to show you, if you are not yet

signed up to the Concert Group, just what kind of magical musical experiences we aim to provide for you. In spite of the heavy bookings, we are running a waiting list for this one too.

Full details are on the website for the remaining four concerts, and we would love to have your company. As a first step, please get in touch so that we can put you on our mailing list to receive lots of information as the season progresses. And please remember that we operate Reservations Lists for all the concerts. Signing up for the Reservations Lists doesn't commit you to anything, but it does guarantee that you will be given first refusal for tickets when we start taking bookings before each concert. It may be helpful to let you know now that the dates for the later concerts are as follows:

- 🎨 Friday 19 December 2025 - 'CBSO Christmas Party' – with a fun-filled programme of brilliant Christmas orchestral and choral music, hosted by guest presenter, Stephen Mangan.
- 🎨 Wednesday 4 March 2026 - 'Magical Melodies'
- 🎨 Wednesday 29 April 2026 - 'Solo Sensation'
- 🎨 Saturday 27 June 2026 - 'Finale with Sir Bryn'

If you have any questions, please get in touch with David, and please give serious thought to signing up for the group mailing list. It commits you to nothing more than receiving information. Our mission is to give you the opportunity to experience live performances of the greatest of great music, played by exceptionally gifted musicians, and there is plenty of room for you to join us. I promise you won't regret it!

David Daniels

Answers to the Quiz on page 27

1. 300
2. Newmarket, Epsom Downs & Doncaster
3. Motor Racing
4. 5 feet 2 inches
5. Oxford & Cambridge Boat race
6. Bull Fighting
7. 6 inches or 15.25cm
8. Wolverhampton Wanderers
9. Jannik Sinner
10. Los Angeles

Group Name	Coordinator	Fee
Archaeology & Heritage	Chris Wolstencroft	Varies
Architecture	Caroline Bagshaw	Varies
Art Appreciation	Caroline Bagshaw	£2.00
Aspects of Modern History	Sheila Himsworth	£1.00
Badminton 1	Cefn Blundell	£3-£4
Badminton 2	Teresa Green	£4.00
Birdwatching	Alan Chambers	Free
Board Games	Peter Aggett	Free
Book Club	Sue Griffiths	Varies
Bookends	Barbara Tittensor	50 p
Book Friends	Chris Spriggs	Varies
Bridge	Liz Rodway	£2.00
Brunch Bunch	C & J Anderson	Brunch
Card Games	Victoria Nelson	Buy drink
China: The Country	David Ralph	£3.00
Classic Cinema	Ally Edwards	£4.00
Computers & Digital Media	John Scotland	£3.00
Concert Band (playing)	Denise Tandy	£2.00
Concert Group	David Daniels	Varies
Country Dancing	Phil Morton	£4.00
Creative Writing 1 & 2	Sue Johnson	Buy drink
Croquet	Paul Griffin	£5.00
Cycling for Pleasure	Chris Davis	Free
Dressmaking	Denise Bailey	Varies
Exploring Language	Caroline Bagshaw	£4.00
Family Research	Diane Nicholls	£2.50
French Conversation	Lorna Slaughter	Free
German (3 groups)	Sophie Dodds	£2.00
Golf for Fun	John Goodwin	Green fee
Italian (post-beginners)	Sue Jerrard	Varies
Jam Session	Bob Davies	£2.00
Latin 1	Caroline Bagshaw	£5.00
Latin 2	Caroline Bagshaw	50 p
Latin 3, Beginners	David Battin	Buy drink
Latin Reading	David Battin	Free

Listening to Music	Frances Platman	£1.00
Mah-jong/Rummikub	Carla Auger	£3.00
Military History	Neil Hoy	£3.00
Model Railways	John Gowers	Varies
Modern Greek 1	Mike Fraser	50 p
Modern Greek 2	Mike Fraser	50 p
Natural History	TBC	Free
Needlecraft	Helen Barlow	Free
Painting for Pleasure	Marjorie Arthurs	£3.00
Patchwork & Quilting 1	Fran Battin	£2.00
Patchwork & Quilting 2	Linda Dunbar	£2.00
Pétanque	Paul Griffin	£1.00
Philosophy	Mike Bagshaw	£4.00
Photography 1	Mike Tittensor	£3.00
Photography 2	Sandra Woodfield	£2.00
Pickleball	Andrew Rowles	£5.00
Play Reading	Margaret Fuller	£3.00
Poetry	Richard Taylor	£4.00
Questions of Belief&Doubt	Jane Couper	Free
Quiz	Neil Berry	£2.00
Rummikub/Mah-jong	Carla Auger	£3.00
Science & Engineering	Robert Hale	£2.00
Sea Shanties	John Gardner	Free
Shakespeare	Nicky Neill	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 1	Jan Higgitt	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 2	Pat Stephens	£3.00
Short River Walks	dormant	Free
Singing for Pleasure	Cath Cox	£2.00
Skittles 1, Oct - May	Olga Allen	Buy drink
Skittles 2, Oct - May	C & J Anderson	Free
Skittles 3, June to Sept	Ken Pearce	Free
Social Saunters	Richard Hunt	Free
Spanish-Elementary	David Keeling	Varies
Spanish Intermediate	Leighton Jones	Varies
Table Tennis	Gary Hewitt	£3.00
Tai Chi	Derek Arnold	£5.00
Tai Chi 2	Derek Arnold	Varies

Urban Sketchers	Mike Bagshaw	Free
Village Ambles & Camera	Sheila Ryder	£1.00
Village Strolls 1	Terry Woodfield	£1.00
Village Strolls 2	Sandra Woodfield	£1.00
Village Strolls 3	G & J Cutter	£1.00
Walks Over 4 Miles	J Alexander-Head	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 1	Ruth Webb	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 2	Hazel Marshall	£1.00
Website Editors	Alun Edwards	Free
Welsh Language	David Daniels	Varies
Wine Tasting	Grahame Percival	£7.50
Yoga 2	Lyn Heaney	Varies
Yoga 3	Alison Williams	Varies

Website

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk>

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Public Group