

Wyre Forest and District u3a

**Newsletter Spring
2025**

**learn
laugh
live**

From the Chair

My goodness! It has felt like a long winter hasn't it, with some very nasty viruses about! I have suffered with one myself, which laid me low for a couple of weeks. Many thanks to Sandra, the Vice-Chair, who has been a great support and stood in me for when I wasn't well – that is what Team Work is all about and it works brilliant!

But now Spring is here, the days are getting longer, the sun is shining and the spring flowers are glowing in its radiance. The promise of warmer days to come certainly lifts our spirits.

We also have our new Website to look forwards to. The one we have been using for the last 13 years has certainly served us very well, but the time has come for us to move on. Our Technical Team have been looking into this and the decision is we are going with Siteworks, which has been developed by u3a Members specifically for u3a's.

It has been improved dramatically over the past 3 years and now appears to fulfil all our needs. Best of all it comes with a complete support package, which means whenever we have any changeover of members who run our website, the new volunteers will have a whole support team guiding them through and providing as much back-up as is needed. This is a brilliant way to "future proof" our resources.

Progress on the new Website is going well and hopefully it will be up and running in the near future.

In the meantime, may I wish you all a very Happy Easter, with plenty of sunshine and warm weather to enjoy.

Best wishes
Elaine



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Enquiries: regarding this newsletter please contact details below.

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Phone: 07756636529 www.wyreforestu3a.org.uk Registered Charity No. 1149774

u3a Monthly Meeting at the Harriers is on Monday 14th. April

It will be Gardeners Question Time

Our next Monthly Meeting on 14th April will be our very own version of Gardener's Question Time where we will welcome a distinguished panel of experts to answer your gardening questions.

We are very fortunate to include:

David, head gardener at Berrington Hall. He is responsible for the 456 acres of parkland designed by Capability Brown in the 18th century and is currently leading a project to create a new Flower Garden, with trees, shrubs and over 20,000 bulbs already planted.

Paul Cook, owner of Cook's Garden Centre. A Stourport boy through and through he opened the Centre in 1981 at the tender age of 24. With a huge knowledge of the industry, there aren't many questions that Paul can't answer.

Gail Devries, a leading light in the Alpine Garden Society and a member of our U3A. The AGS centre in Pershore has an impressive alpine garden on site where visitors can see alpines and other hardy plants in a variety of settings (troughs, tufa, rock work, sand beds, a European meadow, ericaceous and woodland areas).

The garden is open all year round and entry is free to the public. Opening hours Monday– Thursday 10am - 4pm.

And last but not least our very own John Guest, The Archers personified! John has a wealth of knowledge on growing fruit and veg. and is entertaining to boot!

We hope to see you on the day. There will be a garden and house plant swop so please bring along any cuttings / plants you have. You will either be able to swop for other plants on the table, or if you have no plants to swap but would like to take something from the table, a donation which will go toward planting at the Station Project would be appreciated.

Calling all Established Ballroom Dancing Couples

Dancing is proven to be great for 'body, mind and soul' and our 'Ballroom and Latin Practice Group' could do with just a few more couples who would like to practice what they already know. Perhaps you already go to dancing classes once a week and need to practice what you are learning from your professional teacher, or, are already seasoned dancers wanting a bit of exercise and to improve your existing skills during a social afternoon. All dances are covered during an afternoon so there is bound to be something you can do.

We hold the sessions at St Chads Church Hall Comberton on the 4th Tuesday of every month from 2:30 till 4pm, cost £2 per person for use of a fantastic floor and facilities.

The next ones are scheduled for Tuesday 22nd April and 27th May 2025 so if you would like to join, please contact Sue Langley at this email address for more information:

dancing@wyreforestu3a.org.uk



Satellites 20th Anniversary Celebration

On the 20th February 2025 the Satellites organised a Singing Workshop with Bruce Knight, a professional Vocal Coach, as our celebration for Wyre Forest & District u3a's 20th Anniversary. We also invited the other 2 Singing groups, the Gossellites and the Songs of the Seven Seas, to join us.



Seventy five of us gathered eagerly at St Ambrose Parish Hall at 10am to be ready to start the Workshop. Bruce began with some fun warm-ups and then led us through a wonderful programme, with a

super mix of A Capella Songs

He was brilliant! We sang harmonies, rounds, a sea shanty, songs with movement and we all had a terrific time, achieving results that sounded amazing! He certainly brought out the best in all of us!

Members of the Satellites Singing Group had made a super selection of home-made cakes to go with coffee during the interval and, after a chance to refresh ourselves and enjoy a good chat, we were all eager to start singing again in the second half.



It was a wonderful morning and a perfect musical celebration which everyone thoroughly enjoyed! We finished at 1pm with the re-singing of a song we had learned earlier in the session and went home with a song in our hearts and a huge smile on our faces! It will stay warm in our memories for a very long time!

Attractive 'tunnel' walks with trees meeting overhead



Oak Alley along the Mississippi River outside New Orleans, Louisiana



Bonn, Germany



Laburnum Tunnel in Bodnant Gardens, UK



Wisteria Flower Tunnel in Japan



Rex Way, Goring By Sea, Sussex UK



Take a Break

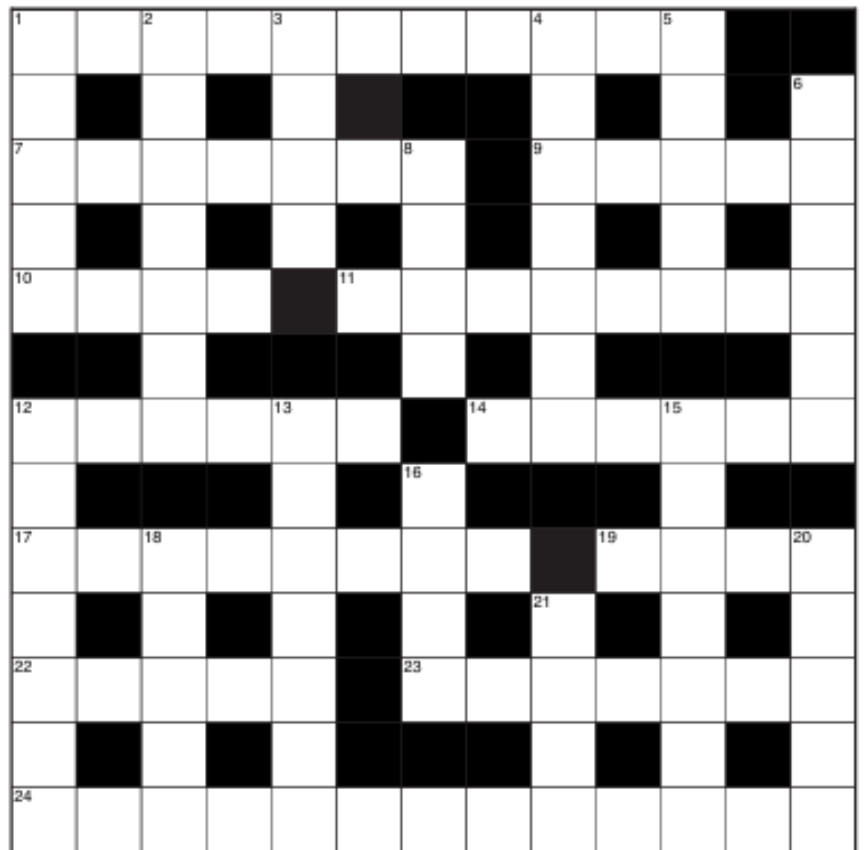
Answers on page 18

ACROSS

1. Ancient material for swords (6, 5)
7. Famous rum brand (7)
9. Follower of a Jamaican religion (5)
10. Weight of an empty container (4)
11. Relating to an abbey (8)
12. Graffiti street artist (6)
14. Male part of a flower (6)
17. Fortified wine used in martinis (8)
19. French city known for its prunes (4)
22. Remove the lid (5)
23. Mythical bird reborn from ashes (7)
24. Sugars and starches in food (15)

DOWN

1. First public appearance (5)
2. Delicate French dessert with a crispy shell (7)
3. Apple's virtual assistant (4)
4. Amelia who vanished mid-flight (7)
5. Yogurt-based Indian drink (5)
6. Measuring eight pints (6)
8. Book identifier code (4)
12. Temporary camp without tents (7)
13. Zodiac sign, October to November (7)
15. Line of French fortifications during the 1930s (7)
16. Web page protocol (4)
18. Kitchen tool for mashing potatoes (5)
20. Energy ribbon in *Star Trek* (5)
21. Dark, moody film genre (4)



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								1
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			6		3			
7			3		1			

MEDIUM

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		1				8		
	6			1	8			
4	3		8		7			
2					1	6		
			9					3

HARD

Word Scramble

Varieties of tea - unscramble these words to solve the puzzle!

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. NEREG | 6. IRNDEJEAGL |
| 2. AMSAS | 7. OGNLOO |
| 3. TIMN | 8. MATAHC |
| 4. SANGAPL OONSGUCH | 9. IIBUCSHS |
| 5. YLLOWE | 10. NSIHGLE AFTKEBRAS |

EASTER WORD SQUARE

How many words of three or more letters can you make from the letters in our square?
There is one word of nine letters.
If you want to make it harder, only allow words that contain the centre letter.

0 - 10 Not bad
11 - 20 Quite good
21 - 30 Very good
30 + Expert

A	T	O
E	O	C
C	L	H

More brain teasers

Answers on page 18

1. What has one eye, but can't see?
2. What tastes better than it smells?
3. What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
4. Forward I am something heavy, but backward I am not.
5. What can run but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps?
6. What begins with T, ends with T, and has T in it?
7. What film is represented by these Emojis



Golden Daffodils

The golden daffodils of spring
Blow their trumpets in the wind
To send a message far and wide
That winter's now gone home to hide

The snowdrop bells are ringing sweet
Calling out for all to greet
The sun arising in the sky
As winter has now passed us by

But spring still lingers in the vale
Waiting for the nightingale
To sing within the blossom tree
A song of love for you and me

So blow your trumpets daffodils
Send your music o'er the hills
To waken spring - so she can see
The nightingale in the blossom tree

Pat Cooper



AND
THEN MY
HEART WITH
PLEASURE FILLS
AND DANCES
WITH THE
DAFFODILS.
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

This story is from a nearby place but a far off time when everyone believed in fairies.

In this long ago a mother gave birth to twins whom she called Jack and Jink. They were identical boys apart from one thing: Jack had a large purple-blue swelling on his cheek which stayed with him as he grew.

In fact it did grow larger as his face grew and Jink teased him mercilessly, no matter what their mother pleaded. He teased him about that swelling as they got older, he teased him at school and he encouraged groups of children to tease him also. So Jack became very shy (as people sometimes are when they teased a lot). Even when they were young men the teasing continued. So when Jack married a loving wife they decided to live deep in the Wyre Forest where he became a coppice worker, cutting trees in that special way and creating beautiful chairs and intricate carvings with the wood and making charcoal from the remnants. He sold these in the nearby village of Stourport. However Jink had a grocer's shop in Stourport and every time Jack came to the village he would gather others to laugh at him until Jack really disliked going there.

One day Jack was feeling so sad and dejected that he wandered further into the forest than he had ever done before. He came across a Beech glade under which was a sea of Bluebells. He thought he could hear ringing of bells from it and as he came closer the sound was louder. He found himself unable to resist stepping into the Bluebells and as he was drawn further into the blue he realised he was up to his knees in water! Then to his waist, then to his neck. He would have panicked and tried to go back but suddenly he saw hundreds of dancers who were moving to the sound of the bells. They were all dressed in Bluebell blue, they were all moving together and they were all small – no, not small – they were tiny; they were fairies! He watched as if in a spell and then suddenly the music stopped and one of the fairies who seemed to be in charge looked curiously at Jack. 'What are you doing here?' he asked Jack. 'Have you come to take part in the dance competition?' Jack had been thinking of running away but he was literally spell bound. 'Could I...may Idance with you?' he stuttered. Then it was arranged. Bell music restarted; dancers took their places with Jack amongst them.

Now if there was one thing Jack loved it was to dance. He and his wife would dance by themselves in the woodland when he had finished work. He was very good at it too. He twirled, he swung, he swirled happily and gracefully until the fairy king suddenly stopped the music. At that point Jack became embarrassed and was about to run but the king asked his name. When Jack told him, the king announced, 'Jack I award you first place. Here is your prize.' He gave Jack a large bag of gold coins. Jack was amazed, thanked the fairies and was about to shyly leave when the king said 'Before you go, have you anything for us?' Jack was distressed. 'I have brought nothing,' he stammered. 'I'm sorry. Here is your gold.' 'No. What I would really like is that wonderful fairy blue mark on your face.' 'Oh,' replied Jack, 'I'm sorry. It does not come off.' 'Yes it does,' answered the king, holding out his tiny hand towards Jack. The blue mark flew off Jack's face and into the fairy hand. 'Lovely,' stated the king. 'We will be happy to have this memory of your fine dancing. Do come back again.' Once again thanking all the fairies, Jack stumbled back through the water until it became shallower and he found himself back amongst the Bluebells.

When he was back home with the gold, his wife was amazed to hear the story – and by his face without the familiar blue mark. Jack described the special experience but said he did not think they needed that gold. 'Well,' his wife said looking down at herself. 'It must be 10 years since I had any new clothes.' 'New clothes for you and maybe some chickens.' Jack replied. 'Then we can have eggs without having to go to my brother's shop.'

Next day they went to Stourport and when they saw him approaching, the usual people gathered to jeer and tease. Imagine their surprise when they saw he was without the purple-blue mark. They were puzzled. Was this brother Jink walking with his brother's wife? When Jink heard he rushed along to confront his brother. Soon he heard the story and was really interested in the bag of gold.

Looking thoughtful, he returned to his shop and told his wife. 'I could do that and win gold,' he said. 'But you can't dance,' replied his wife. 'It can't be difficult if Jack can do it.' Jink responded. 'You can teach me.'

Well his wife tried and so did Jink but he was too impatient to manage more than a few clumsy steps. Off he went to find the Beech glade where the sea of Bluebells grew. He followed the sound of the bells and the fairy king was delighted to see him. 'Come in. You're welcome. Please join our dance.' All the fairies gathered round to enjoy the performance.

Then Jink shuffled through his few dance steps. 'Don't tease us!' they called. 'Dance properly!'

Jink continued to step clumsily from side to side and this angered the fairies. 'Do not make fun of us,' yelled the king. 'Go and do not ever return.'

'Have you gold?' asked Jink hopefully. 'No gold for you – and you can have this back!' shouted the king and he hurled the purple-blue skin at Jink where it landed on his cheek in the same place as it had been on Jack.

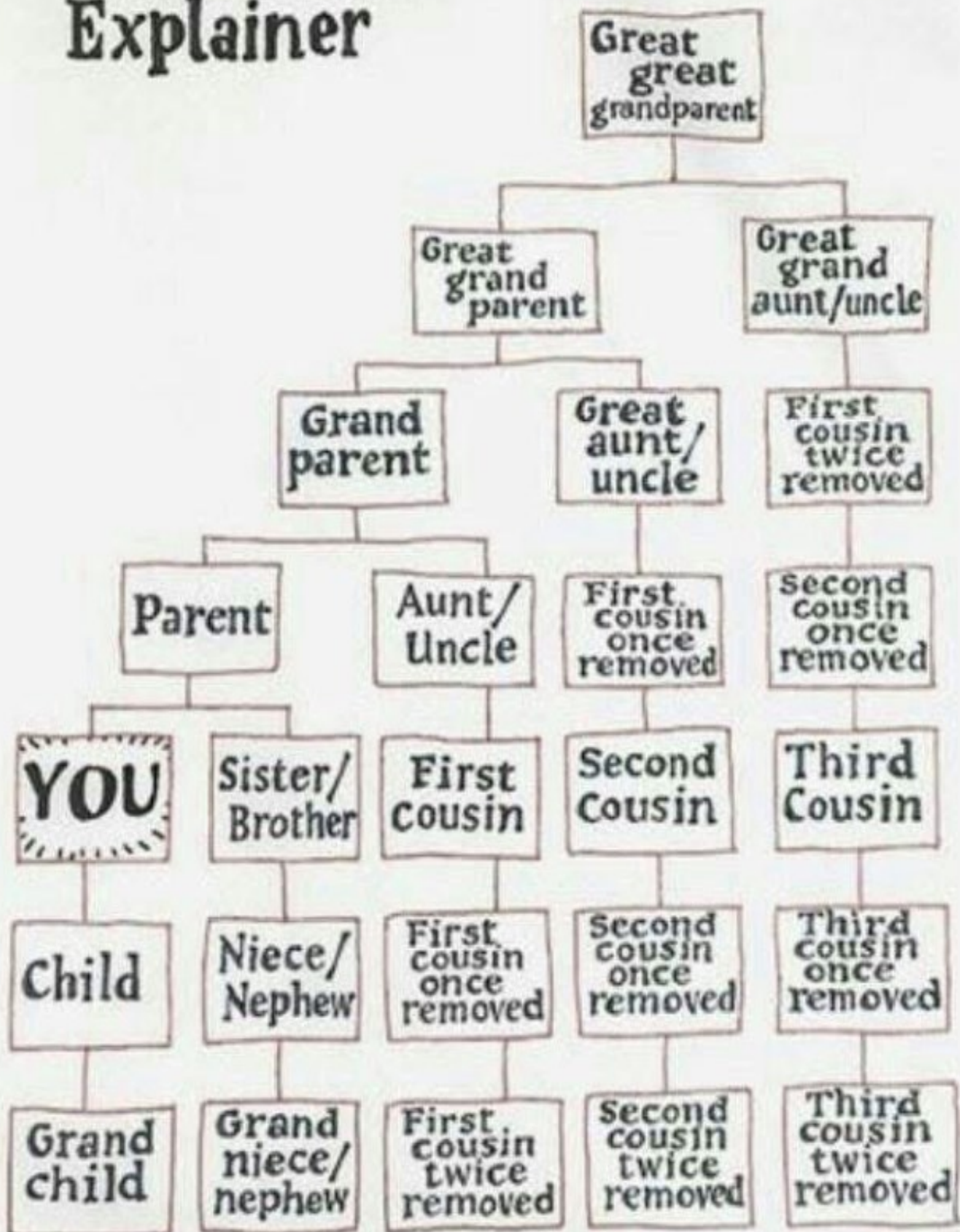
Jink stumbled back through the Bluebells, through the wood and back to Stourport where he was met by the usual jeering crowd which had teased Jack so many times.

Only then did Jink realise what he had done to Jack – all of his life. He was so ashamed that he left Stourport and was never seen again.

Jack bought the shop where he could sell his beautiful coppiced products, he had enough money to look after his parents and he and his wife were particularly happy when their own twin daughters were born. All was well now in the Wyre Forest.

Helen Ferguson. February 2025.

The Cousin Explainer



UPDATE - NOT SEPT but MAY 2026!

11th May 2026 - £1,159 pp sharing a double/twin room (reverse itinerary Dresden - Berlin) and £1,498 for double sole occupancy but these are very limited in number.

Only the deposit and transport to Birmingham airport due now (both non-refundable) the balance will be due next year.

The General History Group are exploring the possibility of a 4 night trip **Mon 11 to Fri 15 May 2026** to **DRESDEN, MEISSEN, COLDITZ** and **BERLIN**. We plan to fly to and from Birmingham to Berlin Brandenburg International Airport. If we have sufficient numbers then we will arrange transport to and from Kidderminster to Birmingham Airport at an additional cost.

This is open to all WF&D u3a members and it would be good to know if any members are interested in coming with us. £1,159 pp sharing a double / twin room (reverse itinerary Dresden - Berlin) and £1,498 for double sole occupancy but these are very limited in number. If we get enough members actually travelling 10 + we will have a part refund some weeks after the trip.

Only the deposit and transport to Birmingham airport is due now (both non-refundable) the balance will be due next year.

The planned trip will have included:

- 4 nights in four-star accommodation
- Return flights & transfers
- 4 included experiences
- Bed & breakfast
- Expert Tour Manager
- Checked luggage
- All additional taxes



These cities have endured violent interludes in otherwise glittering histories and have now returned to their former glory. The outpouring of joy that accompanied the fall of the Berlin Wall rekindled Berlin's legendary vibrancy, and this modern city throbs with new life while still respecting the past. Iconic locations abound – from Checkpoint Charlie to the magnificent Unter den Linden with its many cafés and museums. Here we also see the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag, symbol of the new Germany.



We explore the medieval town of Meissen where skilled artisans craft exquisite porcelain. Finally, we visit Colditz Castle, the infamous prisoner of war camp for would-be escapees – inmates included the legless fighter pilot Douglas Bader. This is a tour that reveals Germany's delightful contrasts, from its vibrant modern cities to its charming rural landscapes, and lets you experience the past, present and future of this remarkable country.



Contact Caroline O'Callaghan, group lead on caroline.ocallaghan66@gmail.com

01.04.25

Bringing Dogs and People Together: My Part-time role at Barking Mad

In today's fast-paced world, companionship can often take a back seat, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation for many individuals. One of the most rewarding parts of my life is my role at Barking Mad, where I facilitate dog home boarding by matching dogs to volunteer host dog sitters. This experience not only brings joy to countless dogs but also enriches the lives of the host sitters, creating a unique community of dog lovers.



At Barking Mad, my primary responsibility is to ensure that each dog is paired with a suitable host who can provide a loving and safe environment. Through careful consideration of the dog's personality, needs, and the host's lifestyle, I create successful matches that benefit everyone involved. It is heart-warming to see how these arrangements foster connections, not only between the dogs and their sitters but also among the community members themselves.

The benefits of host dog sitting extend far beyond the companionship of a furry friend. Studies have shown that interacting with dogs can significantly enhance mental well-being, reduce stress, and alleviate feelings of loneliness. For many of our hosts, spending time with dogs provides a sense of purpose

and joy. It's a wonderful way to engage with their community while also enjoying the health benefits of increased physical activity, as walking and playing with the dogs becomes an integral part of their daily routine. I organise hosts get-togethers where everyone can compare notes, share doggy stories, or just come for the walk and the talk!



On a personal note, my dog Solo and I are participating in the Dementia Walking Challenge this month to raise both money and awareness. We are committed to walking 62 km together, not just for the worthy cause but also to demonstrate the importance of staying active and engaged. This challenge allows me to combine my passion for dogs with a meaningful project that aims to support those affected by dementia. Walking with Solo not only enhances my physical health but also strengthens the bond we share, further highlighting the positive impact that animals have on our lives.

As we continue to overcome the challenges of modern life, the synergy created between dogs and their sitters remains a powerful reminder of the benefits of companionship, kindness, and connection. I look forward to continuing my journey, spreading joy, and making a difference, one dog at a time.



Louise



Some Interesting Facts

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold to the tannery.....if you had to do this to survive you were "P### Poor" But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn't even afford to buy a pot.....they "didn't have a pot to pee in" and were the lowest of the low The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

Here are some facts about the 1500s: Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June.. However, since they were starting to smell Brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married. Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!" Houses had thatched roofs - thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof... Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence. The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "Dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way. Hence: a threshold. In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire.. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old. Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special.

When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat. Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous. Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust. Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial.. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive... So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be, saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer. And that's the truth....Now, whoever said history was boring?

Why English is Hard to Learn

We'll begin with *box*; the plural is *boxes*,
But the plural of *ox* is *oxen*, not *oxes*.
One fowl is a *goose*, and two are called *geese*,
Yet the plural of *moose* is never called *meese*.

You may find a lone *mouse* or a house full of *mice*;
But the plural of *house* is *houses*, not *hice*.
The plural of *man* is always *men*,
But the plural of *pan* is never *pen*.

If I speak of a *foot*, and you show me two *feet*,
And I give you a *book*, would a pair be a *beek*?
If one is a *tooth* and a whole set are *teeth*,
Why shouldn't two *booths* be called *beeth*?

If the singular's *this* and the plural is *these*,
Should the plural of *kiss* be ever called *keese*?

We speak of a *brother* and also of *brethren*,
But though we say *mother*, we never say *methren*.
Then the masculine pronouns are *he*, *his*, and *him*;
But imagine the feminine . . . *she*, *shis*, and *shim*!



The General History Group

The General History Group moved to larger premises in February and our first meeting at St Peters we had 23 members attend. We had a relaxed meeting with two speakers and members sharing their thoughts and memories about Candlemas and filling the inkwells at school and using a fountain pen!

We are now looking to increase our numbers and already have 31 members signed up for our March speaker Paul Harding and hope that more will come.

Our April visit to The Pan Museum is fully booked.

Monday 12 May 2:30 to 4pm Tony Robinson's film the Victorians is our May meeting..... **DO JOIN US!**

Caroline O'C

U3A GENERAL HISTORY GROUP

We had to change our meeting due to our speaker being unwell but now it's **REBOOKED** for Monday 31st March

Our 31st March 2025 our meeting will be the first of 2 visits from Discover History. The very popular Paul Harding will do a presentation on A Victorian Easter which I am sure will be lively and full of facts!

DISCOVER HISTORY



For example, did you know that all changed in the 1837 with the new young Queen Victoria? In celebration, the Victorian Easter became a time for fairs, bonnet parades, bunnies, bonhomie and lavish celebration. Victoria's appetite, both for food and, indeed, for life meant that she became 'as plump as a partridge'.



Those who booked for the earlier date already have places.

For anyone else please come and join us, it is £3 per member including refreshments at St Peter's Community Church at Birchen Coppice. It's accessible by the number 3 bus and roadside parking.

Please let me know if you wish to join us for this new date for Monday 31st March 2025 from 2.30 until 4pm

Contact generalhistory@wyreforestu3a.org.uk



Our Station Adoption Group Spring Update

Spring is now upon us and already the gardening volunteers, encouraged by Teresa Alexander, have been tending to the Long Bank, getting it 'ship shape' for Spring bulbs to appear in all their glorious colour.

Talking of ships, well boats anyway, volunteer John Metcalf has been carrying out a little maintenance work on the boat to ensure that it continues to look as perfect as when it was installed last July.

Two more projects are now underway, however there has been a delay due to a change in staff and our support within West Midlands Trains. Now that a new lady is carrying out her training, we hope to get going again with our special Canal Freize and five station platform planters. So, watch this space!

We were asked last year (by Fiona Saxon WCRP) to put our station forward for an award at the Community Rail Partnership Annual Award Ceremony 2025. Celebrating Outstanding Achievement in Community Rail Development. We were thrilled to be informed that we had been shortlisted in the Gold Category of It's Your Station.

Teresa and I went along to Newcastle upon Tyne on Thursday 13th March for the ceremony - all expenses paid by West Midlands Trains (Hotel) and CRP paying for our train fares.

It was the most memorable evening for us, especially seeing exactly what other station adopters nationally had done to enhance their stations. So many wonderful innovations have taken place. It was heartwarming to see what goes on by dedicated enthusiastic people, who just want to make a difference within their community. We were so very proud to see that we were up there with the best of them.

Sadly though, we didn't win our category, being up against four other nominations in the shortlist for Gold.

It was an international station winning this category:

Cooperatie Stationspark Deurne in the Netherlands.

We were very disappointed of course, especially as some of our supporters from West Midlands Trains intimated that perhaps we could have won the category.

All station adopters have different ideas and angles on what to do at their station with what they have to work with, and it must be difficult for the judges to decide when this is the case. It's not a level playing field as the saying goes! However, there can only be one winner in each category, and the Netherlands were very worthy winners.

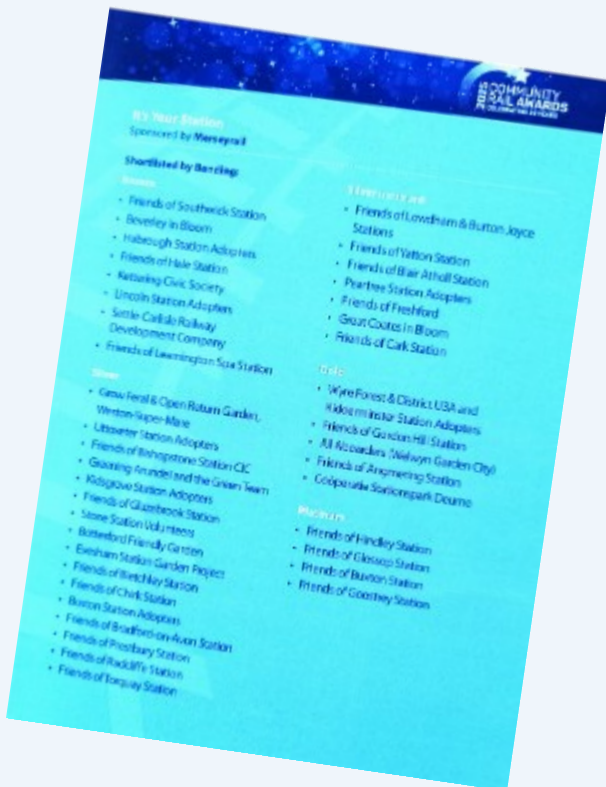
To be shortlisted in the Gold Category was still quite an accolade for us and we are exceedingly proud of our contribution to our local community. We know that our work is very much appreciated, locally, and by West Midlands Trains and the WCRP. We have made a BIG difference at Kidderminster!

We may not have come away with a trophy, but our u3a was presented with a Certificate of Excellence in recognition of achieving GOLD level in the category of It's Your station.

If you would like to see the station that won in the GOLD section, click on this link, and then watch their video and admire too the wonderful sunflower display they have planted along the tracks. Absolutely beautiful! Why didn't I think of that!!

<https://uk.search.yahoo.com/search?fr=mcafee&type=E210GB105G0&p=Cooperatie+Stationspark+Deurne>

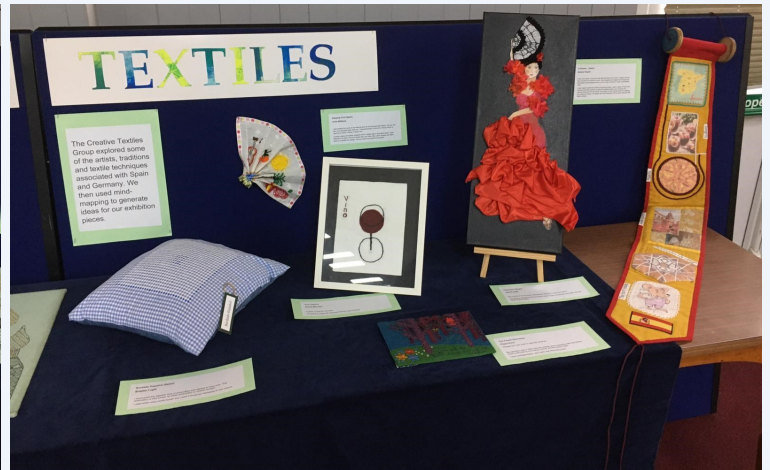
Our Station Adoption Group Spring Update—photos



Creative Textiles Group

The Creative Textiles Group put on a small display to support the multicultural event at the Harriers Social Club. As preparation, we explored some of the artists, traditions and textile techniques associated with Spain and Germany. We then used mind-mapping to generate ideas for our exhibition pieces. As you will see from the photos, there was a great deal of variety in the way everyone interpreted the themes.

Germany was represented by an edelweiss and a postcard from Little Red Riding Hood to her grandmother. Spanish exhibits featured flamenco dancers, a fan, wine, work by Dali and Gaudi and blackwork. Blackwork was thought to have come to Britain with Catherine of Aragon. Certainly, many items that travelled from Spain with her featured this type of embroidery. However, scholars have since cast doubts about this theory and believe there are earlier English examples. Nevertheless, we had an interesting meeting trying out the technique.



We also had a group visit to the Museum of Carpet in March. We were given a presentation about the history of designers in the local carpet industry and had the opportunity to look at some of the original designs from the Museum's archives. We then had a guided tour around the Museum's displays.



The Creative Textiles Group meets on the first Thursday morning of the month in Wribbenhall. We currently have space for one or two new members. If interested, please contact Gail Tutcher at creativetextiles@wyreforestu3a.org.uk

Wyre Forest Dial-a-Ride and Community Transport

Two community transport schemes provide lifeline services for people across the district who do not have access their own or public transport.

Wyre Forest Dial-A-Ride and Community Transport Wyre Forest (CTWF) offer complementary door-to-door services enabling people to live fulfilled and independent lives.

Most of us take the ability to travel under our own steam for granted, but for that to be taken away can be totally isolating.



Both organisations rely on volunteer drivers to give people the opportunity to enjoy activities such as shopping, attending day centres, lunch clubs, or to go on outings.

They each have their own fleet of wheelchair-accessible mini-buses and provide journeys for individuals and caring organisations, such as Simply Limitless and Reach.

CTWF also offer a bespoke car service, again manned by volunteer drivers, who use their own vehicles (with reimbursement for their expenses, including fuel) to ferry passengers to and from medical and social appointments. These might include a trip to the hairdressers or the dentists, to visit friends

or relatives. For one lady, it enables her to spend time with her husband in his care home.

Our members, who pay a small annual subscription, are asked to book trips a week in advance so the tricky task of matching journeys requested with drivers can be efficiently scheduled.

At Dial-A-Ride, shopping excursions, for example, are planned on set days and drivers collect their passengers from their homes and return them at a pre-arrange time, often helping them in with their groceries and even assisting with small, but essential tasks, such as changing a light bulb.

CTWF offer monthly social trips for people who don't get the opportunity so often. Just to have a chat over a lunch in a garden centre café can create a real feel-good factor, improving health and wellbeing. And to see blossom on trees or sheep in the fields can be heart-warming for those whose only other trips are along busy roads to medical appointments.

The drivers of both organisations say their volunteering is very rewarding. They feel valued and, of course, it helps if they like driving. Many of their more senior passengers have fascinating histories to recount, which the drivers enjoy hearing.

More drivers are always needed, especially car drivers for CTWF, to cope with the ever-increasing demand. So please, if you, or anyone you know, might be interested and able to give just a few regular hours to volunteering, contact CTWF on 01299 405832 or Dial-A-Ride on 01562 755084.

More information is available online at ctwyre.org.uk and wfdar.org.uk

Best wishes
Sarah

Sarah Beadsworth, Trustee (Marketing)
Wyre Forest Community Transport
Mob: 07841 502535



Wyre Forest
Community Transport
Supporting Independent Living

 @community.transport.wyre.forest
 @community_transportwf
 @ctwyreforest

Tel: 01562 755084

www.ctwyre.org.uk

Environmental Concern Group

Our next group meeting will be on Monday 14th April, 10-12, at Franche Community Church. Group member, Wilson Wall, has spent the last few years transforming an over-grazed field into a wildlife meadow. Wilson will provide an update on his progress. For our May meeting, we will be visiting Wilson's meadow which is on the outskirts of Kidderminster. The visit is timed to see Yellow Rattle in flower. Help will be provided with plant identification.

Our 9th June meeting will see local wildlife expert, Rosemary Winnall, talking to us about the nature of the Wyre Forest. This meeting will be open to the public as part of SustFest.

SustFest Wyre Forest is a festival that aims to bring together like-minded individuals and organisations to promote sustainability in our beautiful region. Now in its third year, and with events taking place throughout June, there's something for everyone to get involved in and enjoy. To find out more, go to <https://www.sustfestwyreforest.org/>

New members of the Environmental Concern group are very welcome. We meet on the second Monday morning of the month. Please contact Gail Tutchter at environmentalconcern@wyreforestu3a.org.uk for more information.

Take A Break Answers



Sudoku

9	6	2	1	4	3	8	7	5
5	3	4	8	7	6	9	1	2
1	8	7	9	5	2	4	6	3
6	7	5	4	8	9	2	3	1
3	2	9	6	1	5	7	8	4
8	4	1	3	2	7	6	5	9
4	1	3	7	9	8	5	2	6
2	9	8	5	6	1	3	4	7
7	5	6	2	3	4	1	9	8

MEDIUM

7	5	8	6	9	2	1	3	4
1	4	9	5	8	3	7	6	2
6	2	3	1	7	4	5	9	8
5	8	2	4	6	9	3	1	7
9	7	1	2	3	5	8	4	6
3	6	4	7	1	8	2	5	9
4	3	6	8	5	7	9	2	1
2	9	7	3	4	1	6	8	5
8	1	5	9	2	6	4	7	3

HARD

Word Scramble

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. NEREG | GREEN |
| 2. AMSAS | ASSAM |
| 3. TIMN | MINT |
| 4. SANGAPL OONSGUCH | LAPSANG SOUCHONG |
| 5. YLLOWE | YELLOW |
| 6. IRNDEJEAGL | DARJEELING |
| 7. OGNLJO | OOLONG |
| 8. MATAHC | MATCHA |
| 9. IIBUCSHS | HIBISCUS |
| 10. NSIHGLE AFTKEBRAS | ENGLISH BREAKFAST |

More Brain Teasers

1. A needle
2. Your tongue
3. Short (Shorter)
4. Ton
5. A river
6. A teapot
7. The Greatest Showman

A MONTH OF SUSTAINABLE DISCOVERY



SustFest Wyre Forest Greener • Happier • Healthier 1st - 29th JUNE 2025



Dozens of talks, walks, rides, workshops, displays, music, processions, exhibitions, competitions, film shows, green markets, open gardens and more in various venues across the district.

Headline events

Saturday 7th June, 11am – 2pm

► Fun Family Festival of Food and Fashion

The Old Court, Worcester Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1EW.

Eco arts, craft and upcycling stalls, home baked goods, local animal charities, support for greener lifestyles, food and family entertainment. "Second Act Upstaged cast offs.... Cue Arts" (Sustainable fashion show). **Free entry.**

Saturday 14th June, 10.30am – 3pm

► Positive Futures for our Towns

Bewdley Youth Centre, Stourport Road, Bewdley. DY12 1BD.

A day of stimulating talks, presentations and workshops to explore how we can create a positive future for our communities, our children and our planet. "A better world is possible!" **Free entry.**

Sunday 29th June, 11am – 3pm

► Family Eco-Day

War Memorial Park and Community Centre, Lower Lickhill Road, Stourport-on-Severn. DY13 8RE

Eco fun for the whole family with children's entertainment, food, plant sale, local musicians and much more. **Free entry.**



Supported by



Wyre Forest
District Council

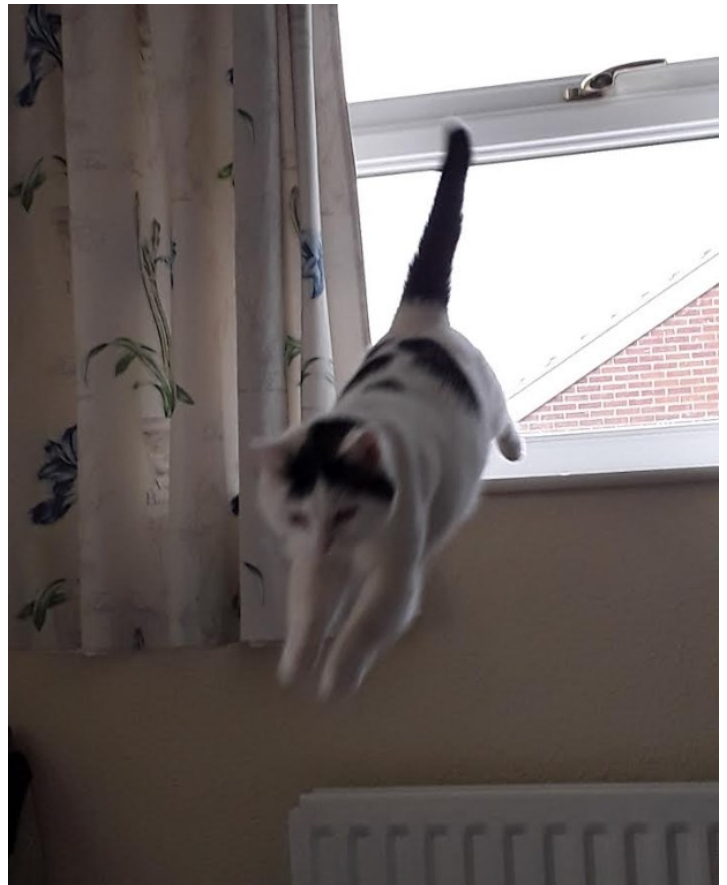
www.sustfestwyreforest.org

Shaymus One year On

Shaymus jumping for joy...different from this time last where he was such a scared cat moving from his home to a new one proved very stressful for him. We lost him 3 times the first day, first time for an hour he was discovered under a chair...when found he disappeared again this time under the kitchen cupboard ...another big search and he was found again ..only to disappear yet again under the chair... then under the cupboard back and forth .. but gradually he settled down and after a couple of months we let him out.....more stress though ..but we found him in the greenhouse, but he settled after a few more days and now he doesn't stray to far away.

He seems to like looking through the window as I am sure all cats do...Looking carefully at all the dog walkers and the seem to be many around here ..all types and sizes, people to, I sit in the window with him and notice many types of pet walkers. Theres the one same time every day big strides the man not the dog always gets to the alleyway by my house and throws a ball, off shoots the happy dog, same ritual every day . Then there's the walker who pulls his dog along next one dog pulls the man. Then a lady with 3 big dogs how does she manage and at the same time keep looking at her mobile phone next one is carrying the dog, what's that all about ...even one walker dog in a pushchair and little girl is walking....no wonder Shaymus spends time in the window it is entertaining to watch even if they all stop to pee against my hedge.

Nick Underwood





GLAD TIDINGS

THE BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

The General History u3a Group

Christmas Visit

21 December 2024



Plenty to see and do indoors to
keep us going and hot food.

Lovely old-fashioned fish & chips
and baked potatoes with hot
chestnuts.

It was fun and brilliant to be driven
there and back by Whittle's but it
was such a cold wet night.... Such a
shame!

Still as Margaret said it is December.





These are the Special Interest Groups currently running
For more details on each of them please visit the website and / or email the Group Lead(s)

GROUP TITLE	GROUP LEAD (S)		EMAIL
Absolute Beginners Guitar	Dave	Bagnall	guitar@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Adventure	Penny	Smith	adventure@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
All in the Mind	Barry	Walmsley	allinthemind@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Amblers	Pauline	Pitchford	amblers@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Art	Pauline	James	art@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Art Appreciation	Elaine	Yates	artappreciation@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Backgammon	Peter	Saunders	backgammon@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Badminton Thursday	Rosemary Mary	Jones Sawyer	thursdaybadminton@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Badminton Wednesday	Howard	Morgan	wednesdaybadminton@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Ballroom & Latin Dance Practice	Sue	Langley	dancing@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Bird Watching	John	Parkinson	birdwatching@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Board Games	Sue	Taylor	boardgames@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Book Reading 2	Tim	Coombs	bookreading2@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Bridge	Paul	Lewis	bridge@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Ceilidh Club	Barry	Walmsley	ceilidhclub@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Classical Music	Ralph	Bramley	classicalmusic@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Craft	Sheila	Munden	craft@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Creative Textiles	Gail	Tutcher	creativetextiles@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Creative Writing	Gabrielle	Map	creativewriting@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Cribbage	Jean Wendy	Laidler Huntley	cribbage@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Dancing for fitness	Sue	Langley	dancing@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Digital Photography	Mike	Morris Buckley	digitalphotography@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Enjoying Operetta & Opera	Ralph	Bramley	opera@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Environmental Concern	Barry	Walmsley	environmentalconcern@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Exercise to Music	Sue	Gay	exercisetomusic@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
French Conversation	Graham	Hunt	frenchconversation@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Friday Film Club	Ralph	Bramley	filmclub@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Friday Night at The Rose	Irene	Winzer	fnatr@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Garden Visits	Janice	Evans	janiceevans1713@gmail.com
Genealogy	Beryl	Buckley	genealogy@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
General History	Caroline	O'Callaghan	generalhistory@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
German Conversation	Ken	Bell	germanconversation@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Golf	Nick	Underwood	golf@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Gospelite Singers	Jill	Judson	gospelitesingers@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Green Fingers	Jill	Judson	greenfingers@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Handbell Ringing	Liz	Struckett	handbellringing@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
History	Geoff	Bayley	history@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Industrial History	Sue	Cutler	industrialhistory@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Intermediate Guitar	Dave	Bagnall	guitar@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Jam Session	John Martin	Watkins Delahay	jamsession@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
K'minster Station Adoption	Sue	Langley	stationadopters@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Local & Social History	Cathryn	Plain	localandsocialhistory@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Mah Jong	Sally	Frost	mahjong@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Members On Their Own	Roy	Leigh	moto@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Military History	Dennis	Plant	militaryhistory@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Moral Maze	Beverley	Saunders	moralmaze@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Needle Craft & Natter	Sandra	Phillips	needlecraftandnatter@wyreforestu3a.org.uk

	Sharon	Dunkley	
Petanque	Howard	Morgan	petanque@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Pickleball	John Steve	Cooper Abbott	pickleball@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Poetry for Pleasure	Beryl	Greenwood	poetryforpleasure@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Quizzing-4-All	Janice	Evans	janiceevans1713@gmail.com
Quizzing-4-Fun Online	Janice	Evans	janiceevans1713@gmail.com
Rapper Dance	Barry	Walmsley	xxxxxxxxxxxxx
Rhyme and Reason	Sue	Marsden	rhymeandreason@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Satellite Singers	Elaine Derek	Yates Grainger	satellitesingers@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Saturday CrackerJacks	Gilbert	Parker	saturdaycrackerjacks@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Science & Technology in Society	Barry	Walmsley	satis@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Scrabble & Rummikub	Ann	Hill	scrabble@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Short Mat Bowls	Pauline	Devonport	shortmatbowls@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Simply Photography	Steve	Archer	simplyphotography@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Songs of the Seven Seas	Steve	Underwood	seasons@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Spanish Conversation	Anne	Williams	spanishconversation@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Story Telling	Elaine	Yates	storytelling@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Strollers	Sheila	Munden	strollers@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Table Tennis	Dave	Hudson	tabletennis@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
The Science of Life	Sue	Langley	thescienceoflife@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Theatre Trips	Julie	Bouttle	juliebouttle@btinternet.com
Travel	Ros	James	travel@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Ukulele	Martin	Delahay	ukuleles@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Understand the Economy	Mike	Loftus	understandtheeconomy@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
Walking for Fitness	Sue	Langley	walkingforfitness@wyreforestu3a.org.uk
What a Performance	John	Watkins	whataperformance@wyreforestu3a.org.uk