

Newsletter

News for members of Beeston u3a

Produced quarterly and distributed electronically to all members.
Some printed copies will be made available for new members and anyone who has difficulty reading from a screen.

November 2023

Open Meeting on Thursday November 2nd at 10.30

David Skillen—The Gretna Girls and the Devil’s Porridge

A munitions factory was built in Gretna in 1915 and the women were employed to make munitions for the war effort, otherwise known as “Devil’s Porridge”.

Open meetings usually take place at Beeston Methodist Church on the first Thursday of the month, starting at 10a.m. with a speaker at 10.30a.m.

Please remember to bring your own mug if possible.

There is no need to sign in to these meetings. New members and visitors will continue to be welcomed in the reception area.

Calendar of Future Open Meetings 2023—2024

December 7th	The Poppy Folk Singers	A folk singing group who will entertain us with festive songs, not the ones you usually hear, but old traditional songs from years gone by.
January 4th	Jeannie Barton	Street Art in Beeston The project to liven up our local buildings was led by Jeannie who tells us about the background

Worried about attending your first Open meeting?

Thank you very much to everyone who has volunteered to pair up with a new u3a member for their first couple of Open Meetings.

Would any new members like to take advantage of this scheme? Please let Anne Pinnock know if you need any help. Contact Anne at chair@beestonu3a.org.uk

The complete list of groups is now issued as a separate document and will be distributed to members along with the newsletter. This list contains email addresses of group facilitators. **Please don’t distribute.**

Chair's Chatter

There has been no slow-down in new members joining Beeston u3a and at the time of writing, membership stands at **1068**! The Groups Fair earlier this month alone attracted 21 new recruits.

This is fantastic: it means that we can offer lots of activities, and don't have too many financial worries. However, we need help in organising these activities. Many of you will have heard my mantra that "everything that happens in Beeston u3a only takes place because some members have volunteered to help to organise it." **"BY THE MEMBERS, FOR THE MEMBERS"** is the official National u3a slogan.



Thank you to everyone who has agreed to take on additional responsibilities to support the whole u3a, whether that is helping with events and awaydays; supporting IT tasks; meeting and greeting at open meetings, or helping with refreshments.

We still need extra volunteers, and for almost every role you can choose whether you also want to be part of our hard-working committee, or just be part of a supporting team who get the jobs done. Multiple people can volunteer- roles can fit around your existing commitments.

We URGENTLY need help in a particular team- our Groups Co-ordinators' team.

This team helps to get new groups started and supports existing interest groups. Unless we get additional volunteers, the process of making all members' wonderful suggestions for new groups come to fruition will simply grind to a halt when Kathy Shipway comes to end of her term of office next spring. The role is too big for Brendan to cover alone.

I know from personal experience how interesting and rewarding working in this team is. Full support and shadowing opportunities will be provided for all new volunteers to the team.

For more information, either contact me, or groups@beestonu3a.org.uk.

Please do consider this role whether you are a recent member or more experienced.

Anne Pinnock- Chair, Beeston u3a chair@beestonu3a.org.uk

Croquet afternoon

A group of 20 u3a members went to Nottingham Croquet Club on University Boulevard for an afternoon of croquet. With borrowed mallets, each of them had to learn to hit the ball firmly and accurately, and without bruising their ankles.



Having learnt the rudiments of the game, everyone was split into doubles teams and played against each other, sometimes becoming quite competitive. After a tea/coffee and cake interval, play resumed to increase everyone's capacity for sabotaging their opponents...it's all in the game!

Celia Billau



Beeston U3A Photography Competition 2024

For the first time, we are launching a **Photography Competition**, which will run from 1st November 2023 to 29th February 2024.

This competition will also be open to all members of Beeston u3a along with members from our cluster U3As (Long Eaton, Stapleford and Ilkeston).

The theme is **BEESTON u3a**. The photograph can cover any aspect of the Beeston u3a organisation including group activities, preparation, socialising and people. It can be taken with any camera, including mobile phones.



We have asked Philippa Double, award winning owner of “Double Image Photography”, to select the winning entry and runners up. A £30 prize will be awarded to the winning entry.

The rules

- The competition is free to enter.
- All writers will retain the copyright to their entry, but entry automatically gives permission to share within the Beeston u3a membership, in our newsletter and social media and with other u3a bodies.
- The entrant must ensure that permission has been given to the above by the subjects included.
- The photograph must have been taken by the entrant during the last 5 years (2020 to 2024).
- A maximum of 3 entries per entrant.
- The winner of the competition will be announced at the Beeston u3a AGM in April 2024.
- All entries will be displayed in an exhibition at a forthcoming Open Meeting and online.

Please submit your entries electronically to organiser Karen Attwood via

publicity@beestonu3a.org.uk in JPEG, GIF or PNG formats. Any resolution is acceptable.

Please ensure you get acknowledgement of your entry from Karen.

This means your entry has been submitted.

Please enquire further if no acknowledgement arrives – there could be a problem with the format of your entry.

Karen Attwood

Publicity Officer

Loneliness Workshop

The wind and rain did not deter twenty seven u3a members from attending the Loneliness workshop on Friday Oct 20th and clearly this is testament to the importance of speaking openly about the need for social connections.

Dr Claire Jenkins presented a mixture of video and small group work which both informed and challenged us.

Information presented was evidence-based, in particular highlighting the impact of loneliness on our physical and mental wellbeing (who knew that being lonely has a similar impact to smoking 15 cigarettes a day!)

The need for a social revival was discussed noting that kindness, generosity and service to others all serve to alleviate social isolation and contribute to our health and wellbeing. I was interested to learn that the UK does in fact have a Minister for Loneliness and strategy is in place to tackle this issue.

It was good to hear that older people have great resilience and that being part of a community such as u3a is a positive antidote to loneliness and isolation.

Tracey Coull

Review of the speakers at our Open Meetings

August—Rebecca Elphick and Terri Maclean Bowman —Cancer Research

The C word – we sometimes fear to say the word for fear bad luck will befall us. Cancer is everywhere, and the chances are, almost 1 in 2 people will have a cancer diagnosis as some time in their lives. Becky and Terry are enthusiastic advocates of the charity that has been funding cancer research for 120 years, and the research has led to very positive outcomes for many. Cancer Research covers all 200 types of cancer. Just under the heading breast cancer, there are 11 different types. The fact is, more people are surviving longer due to new treatments being made available, and sometimes, the testing of existing drugs used to



treat other ailments have been found to be effective at treating cancers. 400 doctors, nurses and research assistants are being funded by Cancer Research, including 4 GPs in Notts. Diagnosing early is the key to bringing survival rates up. There is now a vaccination to eliminate the virus associated with cervical cancer, which will almost certainly make this type of cancer a thing of the past. Using AI (artificial intelligence) mammograms can be interpreted using a computer, releasing a valuable radiographer for other work.

The target for 2034 is that 3 in 4 people will survive a cancer diagnosis, which is the mission of Cancer Research, and this will impact on all of our lives in a positive way. This is why we are quite generous when it comes to giving donations to the charity, and as we found out, some of the donations they receive are really quite extraordinary: the contents of a safety deposit box and an antique gun being particularly bizarre. We were content to leave a few pounds in the collection box at the end of this excellent talk but legacies in peoples' wills may also be a very useful aspect in financing the excellent work done by this charity. As they have more shops than Marks and Spencer, the chances are we are all living quite close to one, and buying goods from them is yet another way of helping the cause.

Celia Billau



Do you enjoy coming along to the open meetings?

Do you see yourself as a budding writer? The speakers at our monthly meetings always keep us entertained for 40—50 minutes, but could you summarise the key points in an interesting way?

It would be really helpful if someone could volunteer to write up the reviews of the speakers for the newsletter each month. The reviews are then compiled into the quarterly newsletter.

If you can see yourself in this role, please get in touch with Celia on communications@beestonu3a.org.uk. You don't have to be there every month, just write a review when you can.

Celia Billau

September – John Dornan – The Doctor and the Samurai Sword

John was inspired by this story which he came across when visiting a film theatre in Dublin, showing the story of the life of Aiden McCarthy, who was born in Castletownbere in County Cork in 1917. The Irishman led a most interesting life, qualifying first as a doctor, and then finding work as a GP in London, he signed up to the RAF in 1939 to help the war effort. He was rescued from the beaches at Dunkirk in 1940, and then he was posted to the far east. When Java was invaded by the Japanese, he was taken prisoner, and then his ship taking him to the Japanese mainland was torpedoed. It is said, he was saved from death by a rat which caused him to sit up at precisely the right moment to save his life!



He was subjected to the cruelty of the Japanese guards, but in August 1945, the atomic bomb destroyed the prison camp in Nagasaki. As a doctor, he saved lives wherever he could, and he prevented the guards from being murdered when the camp was liberated. A grateful guard called Kusuno was so thankful, he gifted the doctor his own Samurai sword. As it was with many who survived the prison camps of the Japanese, they never really talked about their painful experiences. The sword was placed up the attic, only to be found after his death by his daughters, who sought to find the story behind it. They traced the grandson of Kusuno in Japan in 2013, and he was offered the sword back. Nobly, the grandson told the McCarthys they should keep the sword as it was his grandfather's bequest. The sword remains on the wall of McCarthy's bar in his home town of Castletownbere. As the Red Cross played such an essential role in giving aid to prisoners of war, it was fitting that donations were collected for them at the end of John's fascinating story.

Celia Billau

October Beeston u3a Group Fair held at The Pearson Centre

This year's Group Fair at the Pearson Centre saw an encouraging turnout by interested Beestonians keen and perhaps a little inquisitive to see what u3a is all about.

An encouraging number of people signed up as members on the day, enthused, no doubt by the vast number of interest groups on offer (100 + and counting) and the information available from our enthusiastic group facilitators. Many groups displayed artefacts of relevance as well as photos to illustrate the fun to be had. Groups ranged from Adventures Outside Your Comfort Zone to Yoga.

In addition to new members, many others attended and took away information - no doubt to consider their next move and hopefully encouraged by our enthusiastic meeters and greeters with their welcoming smiles, together with our committee members with equally impressive vivid blue and yellow rosettes and not forgetting our committed band of refreshment volunteers supported by plenty of biscuits!

Behind the scenes, plenty of work was undertaken by a number of volunteers (and a smattering of family members) both before and after the event. 55 tables were transported from Beeston Methodist Church the evening before the event, as well as some from a local school. These were all returned afterwards, which was no mean feat! It's just as well we were able to use the services of "a man with a van" who also brought some family helpers.

There was a real buzz around the hall as our many visitors toured the tables and spoke to the many group facilitators who were there to advise on how the group is run. This is surely the best time for new members to come along and find out about what Beeston u3a is all about. **(See next page for a selection of photos).**

Dee May

The Group Fair



Karen welcoming visitors with a cheery smile (or did someone tell her a joke?)



Alison and Felicity looking calm before the rush of new members and visitors arrived.



Groups News

Group Co-ordinators Chat

New Interest Groups

We've had 3 suggestions to add to the 3 groups that have a few possible members.

Contact Brendan & Kathy at Open meetings or via groups@beeston3a.org.uk if you're interested.

Sewing

Following the success of the Repair Café, held recently at the Methodist church, one of its volunteers has suggested that members might like to come together to do their own **upcycling, repairs and alterations**. There would be a chance to chat and swap ideas and skills.

Pickleball

This is one of the fastest growing sports in America and is rapidly catching on here. A few members have played on holiday, loved it and been disappointed that there's no where to play locally.

What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a fun sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis. Played both indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court and a slightly modified tennis net. Two or four players use solid paddles made of wood or composite materials to hit a perforated polymer ball, over a net.

Non-Fiction Book Group

For those who like facts not fiction.

Get together to discuss the wealth of interesting books about real life, science, philosophy etc. etc. This could be a small group meeting in a pub or café.

We've already had some interest in the next 3 groups and just need a few more members so that we can organise a planning meeting to talk about how you'd like the groups to run.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Group

Perhaps the opposite of the previous group. Lose yourself in other worlds and discuss with fellow fans of this increasingly popular genre. Due to holiday commitments this group won't start until next Spring but we'd like names now so that we know whether it will be big enough to need a room booking.

Gogglebox

How our TV viewing has changed with the arrival of Catch-Up services. This group could agree to watch specific programmes in their own time and then discuss and dissect them. You could also rave about the good programmes you've seen so that other wouldn't miss a treat. This link to Eastwood u3a has articles on their Gogglebox group.

[Gogglebox - Eastwood and District u3a \(eastwoodu3a.org\)](http://eastwoodu3a.org)

Motorhoming and perhaps Caravanning as well

A chance to meet with fellow enthusiasts to discuss interesting journeys, routes, stop off points, hints and tips and anything else of interest.

These ideas haven't attracted any members other than those who suggested them.

This is your last chance to help start these groups.

Scalextric or Crash cars.

You may have seen the small layout at Open meetings. There is a much bigger race track in Toton where you could get involved with racing and crashing cars. Only a few members needed to get it going.

Running

Join with other members to run at a steady pace. Don't be intimidated by the thought of a running group

populated by the young and fit. Even creaky knees can run.

Recently formed groups

Short-mat Bowls

A sport similar to outdoor bowls but played in a hall in a fun manner.

This group is meeting fortnightly on Monday lunchtimes at Beeston Community Centre. There might be a Friday session on the alternate weeks if there's enough interest.

Contact John Hinton if you are interested. His email address is on the list of Group Facilitators' email addresses which is the 2nd attachment with this newsletter.

Dominoes

Started in the summer and could do with a few more members so that they can get several games going. They meet on 2nd & 4th Wednesday afternoons at Beeston Methodist Church,

Contact Dave Grundy if interested. Look at the 2nd attachment for his email address.

Kathy Shipway and Brendan Breen, groups coordinators Email them at groups@beestonu3a.org.uk

Art History

At the beginning of September Beeston u3a's Art History group had the opportunity to attend a keynote lecture by one of this country's most eminent art historians at Nottingham University. This invitation came via the husband of one of the group members - who is doing a PhD in the faculty that organised the talk - and who thought that some of our group might be interested. It's fair to say that those of us who hadn't had any formal teaching in art in recent years (if ever!) struggled to follow the talk at times, but all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were glad they'd attended. The foundation is now laid for members of the group to attend further talks, and details will be circulated when received.

Alison Wilson

Felicity writes: "Thirty years ago whilst undertaking an Open University degree, I enrolled on a course entitled 'Modern Art and Modernism'. One of the course books was written by the eminent feminist art historian Professor Griselda Pollock. I was fascinated by this book and have held Professor Pollack in high regard ever since.

Imagine my delight when Alison told me that Beeston u3a Art History group had been invited to a lecture, entitled "Moments of Possibility, Sites of Struggle and Disparate Memories" to be given by Griselda at Nottingham University. To listen to such a distinguished academic in person was an opportunity not to be missed and eight of us attended the lecture (in person, though more may have attended online). It was such an interesting talk, not least because although the events and memories were history for the students, for us 'oldies' they were our lived experiences, which meant that they were so much more vivid. It was a wonderful talk which was lightened with humour.

At the end of the talk I asked Professor Pollock if I could take a photograph of her to send to a friend with whom I had studied and who shares my enthusiasm for Griselda's writings. Prof Pollock kindly arranged for a photograph of us together and informed me that she had input into the compilation of the OU course that I had so enjoyed. Not everyone gets the chance to meet someone who has been so important to them and it was an evening that I shall long remember."



Adventures Outside Your Comfort Zone

The 'Adventures Outside Your Comfort Zone' group continues to grow in number. Our most recent activities have been to Spring Lakes in Long Eaton, to have a go at Stand Up Paddleboarding and to Field Sports UK near to Ashby de la Zouch to try our hand at clay pigeon shooting. It is hoped that arrangements can be made for a taster session at fencing, and segway riding is also at the planning stage. We hope to repeat most of this year's activities in 2024!

Nigel Statham



The paddle boarders all kitted out ready for immersion in the, happily not too cold, waters of Spring Lakes. Most of us were able to stand up at some point but it usually led to falling off. Nigel was last home, seen here trying to find the right side to paddle. It was a good fun morning followed by coffee and tea cakes, so well done to Dee for organising.

In October, the shooting party set out to Lount, near Ashby de la Zouch, to do clay pigeon shooting. It was very competitive, with medals being awarded to the top three (and a booby prize). Very well organised by Keith, who was far and away the best shooter amongst us. Photo shows the camera shooter shooting the shooter.



Cryptic Crosswords

"I just can't do cryptic crosswords – I just don't know where to start!"

"Even when I check the answer, I still can't figure out how they got there!"

Beeston u3a have 3 cryptic crossword groups! 2 are for people who are more confident with tackling them - but the third one is perfect for those who have maybe tried but are befuddled by them or those who are just interested in having a go and learning a new skill.

The Beginner's group follows a course together, using a book by Henry Howarth (the national u3a guru of cryptic crosswords) which introduces all the different types of clues and the language around them. You need to buy the book (it's about £18 – but well worth it!). There's plenty of practice and we go at a pace that keeps everyone working together.

The next course is planned to start on **Thursday 9th November at 12.15 in the Star pub in Beeston**. Contact Jane Bowden via the groups co-ordinators ASAP.

Jane Bowden

Family History

July saw Richard give a talk based on his research arising from a DNA test he had done. The test had proved very helpful, but also threw up some queries that the group discussed. After the break, Christine followed the theme of Parents at War and was able to share the contents of a diary and some photographs of the end of the war in Singapore.

In August Dave G stepped in at short notice to give two presentations. One involved searching for a lady known as Queenie, but which had proved difficult – she was generally known as Annie. Fortunately, as more census and birth etc information became available online, Dave's investigation powers were equal to the task and Queenie was tracked down. Dave also gave a talk that helped us understand the career of two relatives of a group member who had both spent time in the Royal Navy.

Standing in at short notice for the September talk was Louise, who told us about her family history research. Entitled 'The Hoes from Hose', Hose being a North Leicestershire village, and other villages in the immediate area. This part of the family enabled her to follow the family line back to the 16th century. After the tea/coffee break the normal group questions were chaired by Colin.

Christopher O'Brien

Let's Make Music and Sing Along With Us

Let's Make Music began in January 2022. Most of the group play guitars, and we have percussion bass and mandolin players. We play pop folk soul blues jazz and "standards" mostly from the 40s 50s 60s and 70s - but we will have a go at almost anything - like the PG Tips chimp used to say on the telly - if you can hum it, we'll play it! In the 20 months since we formed we have learned over 150 songs. Our repertoire is used for the sing along concerts run by our sister U3A group- Sing Along With Us.

We have reached out to the community and play sing along concerts for local voluntary groups- pensioners' clubs, care homes, community friendship clubs, and for the local Alzheimer's Society support group. We have adopted the band name "**Third Time Lucky**".

Scientific studies have shown that singing is good for your physical and mental well-being. Here is what one of the carers who attended our recent sing along session with the Alzheimer's Society wrote:-

"Just wanted to pass on that Dad spent the return journey today saying how the band were "perfect, terrific and so beautiful". He had tears in his eyes when I got him home and he just kept thanking me and so I wanted to say another big Thankyou to you all and the band. Such a special time. Thankyou"

We get a buzz from playing for others - I guess we are all show-offs to some extent - but it does feel good to see an audience singing with you. If you want to get a bit of that feel good factor, why not come along and join in the singing at the next meeting of Sing Along With Us.

Steve Degnan, convenor



Third Time Lucky performing at Middle Street Resource Centre at the Memory Cafe

Long Walks

In August, the long walks group were led by John Dubbury on a 9 mile walk around Eyam. September saw the group do 7.75 miles in the area south of Ilam, also in Derbyshire. October's walk was 9 miles and led by Sue Cotton in the Vale of Belvoir, nicely flat, and with a sunny lunch stop on the banks of Denton reservoir.



Community Notices

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Community notices can be viewed on our community notice board which is set up in the hall every month at the Open Meeting. Please remember to come and take a look at what's available in our community outside of Beeston u3a.

If anyone wishes to display a notice or poster for a forthcoming event or a notice which will be of interest to our members, please send an email to Celia Billau communications@beestonu3a.org.uk or come and find Kathy at the Open meetings, who sets up the notice board.