

UPDATE Newsletter 202511 - November 2025

WELCOME TO THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Contents

- [MONTHLY MEETINGS](#)
- [NEWS OF INTEREST GROUPS](#)
- [MEMBERS' NEWS](#)
- [YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN](#)

Positive Thoughts

By the time you read this newsletter you will, I hope, have survived Halloween and the 'Trick or Treaters' and the clocks will have gone back, so Winter is on its way! I haven't yet worn my gloves, but they're ready and waiting, as there's definitely a chill in the air. I know this time of year, with the darker evenings, can be dreary, and it's easy to feel a bit 'down'; but I think the answer is to make the most of every day and enjoy the simple pleasures of life. This year the Autumn colours are just glorious; the fruit trees laden; and it's lovely to see the roadside crab apples with their heavy branches practically touching the ground. So to stave off 'the blues' keep in touch with friends; go for a walk through fallen leaves, then home to a lovely bowl of soup or a drink of hot chocolate; join in with community activities such as film nights; and come along to the u3a monthly meetings where we are entertained, and often educated, by excellent speakers.

My husband John very much enjoys watching sport on tv, which is not really my thing, so whilst he's indulging himself, I often phone an old girlfriend for a good chat; catch up on a missed tv programme (which helps reduce the ironing pile); or listen to music whilst doing some knitting or sewing. Or best of all, enjoy a precious hour reading my

book. I belong to the original u3a Book Group, (please see the article below under 'Interest Groups').

Whatever you do, try to keep calm, and not let things get on top of you.

Helen Keayes, Update Editor [Helen Keayes](#)



[Back to Top](#)

MONTHLY MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING

On **TUESDAY 25th NOVEMBER** at 2pm in the Townsend Hall, Shipston, we look forward to our last talk of the year from Christine Green, who worked for many years with the BBC.

"Working for Auntie : behind the scenes as a graphic

designer"



Christine's presentation will include moving images with music, some show reels and artworks from her 13 years with the BBC. She designed opening title sequences for shows as diverse as the Queen's Speech; Island Race; and later for Foyle's War.

She received a BAFTA nomination for her work.

AN IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:



**OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY on TUESDAY 16th
DECEMBER 2025**

Our Secretary will shortly be sending you an invitation from the Committee to join them in the Townsend Hall for an afternoon of fun and fellowship, but please put the date in your diary, as December gets so busy that we don't want you to double book!

LAST MEETING - our October speaker John Macartney was well received, with his talk "Turn Left at the Pacific". He explained that he had suffered with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), following a very difficult time whilst working in Iraq, when war broke out with Iran. In 2005 he had been helped by a wonderful therapist, Alan, who he felt had "given him back his life" and wanted to do something to raise awareness and support PTSD charities. After much planning and with the help and kindness of many car clubs in the USA and Canada, he spent a wonderful 3 months travelling in a 1973 Stag Sports Car, and overall (up to 2020) has raised an impressive £160,000. John's presentation showed us some lovely photos of his trip across the USA and the Canadian Rockies and was full of interesting facts and funny things that happened to him en-route.

MEMBERS' NEWS

DURING OCTOBER 6 NEW MEMBERS JOINED US -

Welcome to **Dianne Smith, Juliet Cox, Clare Wilson** and **Linda Sturgess** from Shipston on Stour and **Christine and Richard Cluley** from Ebrington who we hope will enjoy all that the u3a has to offer.

YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will meet again on the 5th November, (let's hope they're not plotting anything illegal or nasty)!!

In the meantime some of the Committee, along with some very helpful member volunteers, met recently to plan this year's Christmas Party, which shares the load and enables everyone to enjoy it more.

OUR U3A FACEBOOK PAGE

Have a look at the u3a Facebook page, which is a quick and easy way to see interesting and useful information on local events. You can also contact Christine Russel, our Facebook Coordinator, if you know of anything you would like to be included and she will post it onto the page for you, or you can add it yourself,

See <https://facebook.com/groups/396254028732509> or [Christine Russel](#)

NEWS OF INTEREST GROUPS

BOOK GROUP

In my editorial headed 'Positive Thoughts', I recommended doing activities that make you feel good. especially during the winter, and one of my pleasures is to enjoy reading a book. When we moved to Warwickshire, one of the first things I did was to join the original u3a Book Group

so you can imagine how many books I've read since joining in March 2021, and I always have a book, or sometimes two 'on the go'.

Each month the group choose a book from the Library's Book Group list. Of course, I could just individually read books from the library, but the book group enhances the reading experience, partly for the camaraderie, and partly because it means you often read books that you may not have otherwise chosen for yourself. At our monthly discussion on the book we've just read, it's very interesting to hear the differing opinions of the other members of the group. Inevitably we have different views about a story, proving that you can't please all of the people all of the time. But we have had some excellent page-turners from different genres - historical novels to true stories, thrillers and mysteries. Most recently we read '*Bourneville*', which introduced me to the author Jonathon Coe. It was a multi-generational family saga set in the Quaker factory and area of Bourneville. It covered 75 years of the Lamb family and the historical changes that occurred, focussing on particular events such as VE Day, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the 1966 World Cup, the death of Princess Diana and Brexit. As you can probably tell, I very much enjoyed it, and look forward to reading more books by that author.

In view of our increasingly visual way of life, with i-phones, tablets, and tv's, it's good to know that people are still reading, so much so that last year a second u3a book group was formed. They also get their books through the library and are called 'The Borrowers', but more about them in a future Update.

Please contact the Interest Group Leader if you would like to join: [Bernadette Drewett](#)

FIRST THURSDAY WALKING GROUP

Jane Hale, who organises this walking group let me know that on 2nd October 10 walkers met in Winchcombe, for a walk around the hills of Winchcombe and Sudeley. Following the 'Wardens Way' they climbed out of Winchcombe, past the gardens and shrubbery of Sudeley Castle to a height of 290m above sea level. It was a dry but cloudy day, nevertheless they did manage to see some of the magnificent views over the Winchcombe area and Cleeve Hill.

They braved the local guns and beaters shooting pheasant and partridge and crossed the Graham Plantation to Roel Hill Farm where they had their coffee break.

Following the Windrush Way they descended, past parkland, plantations of unidentifiable crops and some beautiful old trees putting on their Autumn colours. They crossed the Beesmoor Brook and wound their way back toward Sudeley Castle and their cars. In Toddington they enjoyed a welcome cup of tea at the Gloucester and Warwickshire Steam Railway cafe.

The walk was 8.5 miles and took approximately 3 hours. Jane thanks all the walkers for their good company and conversation.



Let there be cake



Having a laugh - Winchcombe 2nd Oct 25

Their Next Walk will be on Thursday 6th November, when a walk beginning at Sibford Gower is planned.

Please contact Interest Group Leader [Jane Hale](#) if you would like to join this group.

WALKING GROUP LEADERS - You might be interested and reassured to know that Interest Group Leaders Chris Shepperd and Jane Hale recently met with the walking group members who plan and lead walks during the year. As well as discussing walks and allocating dates for future walks, they talked about the leader's responsibility for the safety of each walking group; including carrying a basic First Aid kit and the need to have contact numbers for all members, in the event of an emergency,

FIVE MILERS WALKING GROUP

On **Wednesday 8th October** a large group met at the Alain Rouveure Nepal centre to walk '**Todenham and the Lost Ditchfords**'



Going up the Hill at Todenham
8th Oct 25

John Fedorowycz led this walk - along well established tracks over gently undulating terrain. There was one stile to negotiate, but luckily the fence alongside it was down, allowing the group to walk around rather than climb over. They passed over Paddle and Knee Brooks and crossed the old disused railway line. The walk also passed the ancient abandoned villages of Ditchford Fray and Lower Ditchford.



Posing on top of the Hill

The walk concluded with a delicious lunch of soup or salad at the wonderful Nepalese cafe and shop <https://www.AlainRouveure.com>

On **Wednesday 29th October** Richard Moyle led a group of 11 walkers on drizzly morning, on a 5.5 mile walk which started and ended at The Plough Inn, Stretton on Fosse, covering 5.5 miles in a northerly circuit, along a mix of footpaths, farm tracks and some road walking. Despite the weather there were long distance views over Shipston and the surrounding area. Along the way they passed various local history sites including Compton Scorpion Manor which dates to the Domesday Book and there is a deserted medieval village (1066 to 1540) in the adjacent fields. The current building dates to the late 1780's, but there are thought to be Roman origins to the general site. Longdon Manor also has mentions in the Domesday Book.

Returning southwards they twice crossed the line of the now defunct Moreton to Stratford on Avon Tramway/Railway at Longdon Manor & then again north of Stretton. The line began in 1826 as a horse drawn tramway carrying coal, limestone etc. More details follows in the History Group article, as they recently had a talk on the old tramway.

Lunch and refreshments were partaken of by some at the Plough.



A bright light on a dull day



Walking with the sheep starting at Stretton

The 5-Milers' first walk in November will take place on Wednesday 12th November.

Please contact Interest Group Leader [Chris Shepperd](#) if you are interested in joining the Five Milers Group

HISTORY GROUP

Having enjoyed some excellent outside site visits during the Summer, this group's first talk back in St. Edmund's Church, Shipston, was well attended by over 40 members. On Wednesday 22nd October they enjoyed a very interesting and entertaining talk from Dr Andy Fincham who lives in Newbold on Stour, and talked about the **Stratford to Moreton Tramway**. He explained that during the Covid pandemic lockdown, he had time to explore the local area and whilst out walking he came upon a section of two parallel lines of square stones with holes in, which he discovered were the foundations of the tramway, built by William James.

Dr Fincham brought many interesting facts to our attention, e.g. that William James is the true "Father of the Railway" rather than George Stephenson, who generally holds this accolade; that the width between the tracks of 4' 8.5" was decided upon because it was the average width of a horse's backside, as the animal had to walk between the tracks pulling the coal wagon!

William James, a pioneer promoter of rail transport, was born in Henley in Arden in 1771 and attended Kings School in Warwick. His father had originally invested in the Stratford on Avon Canal, but their attention was drawn to the Tramway, which was cheaper to produce and operate for the transport of coal and minerals from the Midlands to the rest of the country. The line was opened in 1826 and the branch line into Shipston 10 years later. The horse drawn tramway was converted into steam under the Great Western Railway Company in 1889, The line continued in use as a minor goods branchline until 1960.

Dr Fincham explained he is an active part of a group who are attempting to reopen the abandoned old Tramway as a cycling and walking route. He asked members of the History Interest Group to write to our MP and the County Council in support of this impressive project.

If you are interested in joining the History Group please contact Interest Group Leader [Maggie Wood](#)

GARDEN VISITS GROUP

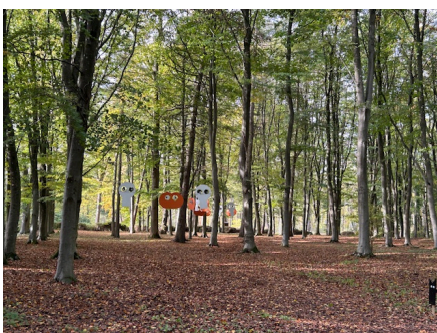
In October the Garden Visit Group enjoyed a lovely day at Evenley Wood .



The trees were wonderful in all their Autumn glory and the Halloween displays were fun!



This is the last visit by the Group for this year, but in Spring 2026 they will resume their appreciation of the seasons in the garden.



Please contact the Interest Group Leader Shirley if you would like to join in next year's garden visits: [Shirley Wynn](#)

ORCHESTRA GROUP

Please support The Fosseway Chamber Orchestra on Wednesday 26th November at 1pm in Holy Trinity Church Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6BG

when they will be performing a 'Free Soundbites concert' of popular classical music conducted by Christine Holyhead, titled The Rhythms of Emotion.

This Orchestra group rehearses in Stretton-on-Fosse (near Shipston on Stour) on Tuesday mornings, and welcomes new members.

Please contact Interest Group Leader Christine if you are interested in joining the Orchestra Group [Jenny Shepperd](#)

[Back to Top](#)

YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN

SWING FROM PARIS

An all string Jazz Quartet of violin, guitars and double bass, inspired by music from the 1930's to 1950's from the cafes of Montmartre to Artie Shaw, Django Reinhardt and Stepane Grapelli.

Thursday 13th November

Ilmington Village Hall, 1 Front Street, Ilmington.

Doors open 7pm,
Performance 7.30 - 9.30

Tickets £18 in advance or £20 on the door

CHRISTMAS COTSWOLD FAIR

10 - 13 November

at Todenham Manor Farm Estate, near Moreton in Marsh, GL56 9NW

Lots of stalls, demonstrations and workshops in aid of the charity WellChild, the National children's charity for seriously ill children,

To buy tickets visit www.cotswoldfair.com





Shipston Music Society

www.shipstonmusic.org.uk



Central England Guitar Ensemble

A lively programme to include works by Delibes, Vivaldi, Piazzola, Brian Wilson, Benny Andersson & Bjorn Ulvaeus (ABBA)

Friday 21st November, 7.30pm
The Methodist Church
New Street
Shipston on Stour

Tickets £10 on the door or from E.H.Spencer
Free entry for members
New members always welcome
More information: 01608 662998



Registered Charity No: 1146459 (England)

Back to Top