

Lichfield u3a Newsletter August 2026



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1. Notes from our Chair

Hello again everyone.

I was not expecting to be writing these notes again but due to the postponement of the AGM until September I am still in the post of Chair.

After the change of venue for the last few meeting we will be back in the Guildhall on Wednesday 12th August. Put on your walking boots and hear our speaker recount his trek across Africa.

If you or someone you know has still not got round to renewing the 2026/27 membership (which is now overdue) you will need to contact the Membership Secretary to pay your subscription before you can continue enjoying all your groups.

With regard to the AGM thank you to all 147 people who sent on their apologies for non-attendance. I know many of you were on holiday. You will need to send new apology emails if you are unable to join us on the new date of 9th September 2026. Further details about the AGM will be sent out later.

There is still time to get a nomination form sent in if you feel you would like to join the committee or work alongside someone to share a task. You can always come to one of our meetings as an observer to find out how things work. Interested? Please let us know.

Enjoy or endure the rest of our hot summer!

Regards

Jenny Hodgkins

Chairperson

jenny_hodgkins@yahoo.co.uk

2. Printed Membership Cards

If you had a printed card last year, or have specifically requested one for this year, **and** have renewed your Membership before Saturday 8 August, I will have your card ready to collect at the Monthly Meeting. Please try to pick it up then, or ask someone you know who is attending to collect it for you. I always feel that they are very vulnerable to the whims of the Royal Mail when they are put in the post in a small envelope, so please do collect if you can.

I will be at the Guildhall for 1.15 on Wednesday 12 August.

Judith Thorpe

lichfieldu3a@gmail.com

07510 634476

3. Lichfield u3a Monthly Meeting

Wednesday August 12th 2:00 pm

Fran Sandham 'A solo walk across Africa'

The Guildhall, Bore Street, Lichfield

No booking required. Visitors welcome.

Fran took on the challenge of a lifetime, by walking across Africa from Namibia's Skeleton Coast on the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean near Zanzibar – completely alone: no backup, no support team, no one to carry his gear, no sponsors, no film crew, no journalists, no fuss, no cheering crowds, and no strings attached. Above all, it had to be on a one-way ticket: no safety nets, no get-out clauses and nothing to fall back on...

Please Note – For fire regulations seating is limited to 150

We have **designated seating** on the front two rows of seats for people with **hearing, vision or mobility impairment**. If you need any assistance, please tell us on arrival. We have members who act as Friendly

Faces and they will help you. Please arrive early if possible.

Future Dates in 2026

- September 9th *Lichfield u3a AGM* (postponed from July) also Roger Browne enlightens us about *The Golden Age of Radio*. Followed by music from *Guitar Group 1*
- October 14th Martin Lloyd will talk about *Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies*. Followed by music from *Guitar Group 4*
- November 11th John Wilkinson (u3a member) - Warns us '*Do not alight here!*' He will take us on a guided tour of disused London underground stations
- December 9th Sandy Leong will talk about '*Santa Claus and all things Christmas*' Followed by music from *Guitar Group 5*

If you need any more information please contact us by emailing briandenny59@yahoo.ie or calling 0776 586 6386

4. Quiz

British and Irish Place Names

1. Which sport is Dominic **Cork** known for?
2. Which 1970's Pop Singer appeared in *Eastenders* for a few months in 2011 ?
3. That was the name of the main male character in Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre*?
4. Which musician had a hit record in 1978 with a version of John Denver's '*Annie's Song*'
5. Who was Susannah **York**?
6. Who wrote *Lady Windermere's Fan*?
7. Who was Judith **Durham**?
8. Who was manager of *Liverpool Football Club* between 1974 and 1983 ?
9. Who played Raquel Wolstenhulme in *Coronation Street* from 1991 to 1996?
10. Who is/was John **Kerry**?

Answers below.

5. u3a Festival at the *University of York*

In July, the u3a Festival returned to the *University of York*. Over 1,000 members enjoyed three days of workshops, games, talks, quizzes and music. Johnny Ball (aged 82) who used to have a TV show called "*Think of a Number*", and is now better-known as Zoe Ball's dad, was a totally inspiring opening speaker: everyone cheered as he railed against ageism and complimented the u3a. The Trust is now exploring venues for 2028 - please contact them if you have suggestions.

Lichfield u3a was very well represented. Our *Recorder Group* and *Guitar Group 1* serenaded attendees, and I delivered two art workshops, two AI workshops, and several talks, including one called “*The Changing Face of Retirement*” with the national **Future Lives** team. There were roars of applause when the tap-dancing started!

Future Lives

The u3a’s national **Future Lives** group encourages members to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of later life. We run regular Zoom sessions (listed on the national website) on topics from housing choices to staying healthy. The next advertised session is on 21 October, about how to keep warm and cut energy bills. We’re currently trying to book a speaker for September.

AI for Everyone

The national AI (Artificial Intelligence) group usually meets online, so it was a treat to connect in person at the Festival. We offer AI talks and workshops both online and face to face, throughout the UK.

You’re invited to a West Midlands Zoom session on Tuesday August 11th, 2:00 pm. Glenys Hart and I will explore what AI can do for you — and for your u3a.

The Zoom link will be sent nearer the time. In the meantime, if you’d like to know more about AI, the team has created a comprehensive website: to find it, just Google **u3a AI for Everyone**. If you have any difficulty booking or want to know more, please contact me, Jean Jackson Jacksonjean@live.co.uk.

6. Architecture Group

The architecture group has 40 members and we meet monthly at the Life Church on Netherstowe.

Our meetings take the format of a presentation on an architectural subject, usually given by one of our members, with discussion and questions. We always have a break around half way through for tea/coffee and (nice) biscuits. Twice a year we go on a trip to somewhere of architectural interest, which is not too far away, sometimes in Lichfield itself.

For example, we have recently had an architecturally themed tour of the cathedral, a visit to the Sandfields pumping station, a tour of the city centre to look at our timber framed heritage, and a few years ago, Friel Homes gave us a tour of the former Angel Croft hotel while it was being converted into apartments.

Further afield has included Middleton Hall, Tamworth Castle, Sir John Moore School, Appleby Magna and Repton church.

Topics we have covered in our meetings over the last couple of years have ranged from a look at Lichfield buildings featured in the recently updated Pevsner guide to a look at the German version of Art Nouveau (Jugendstil). Other wide-ranging topics have included the first garden cities in the UK, NEOM (the planned futuristic development in Saudi Arabia), a look at Brutalism and many more.



7. Music Appreciation

As usual we will be taking a break in August.

When we meet again on September 3rd Peter Robertson will be presenting a programme entitled '**Let's have some Fun**'. Come and join us at 2.00pm at the Methodist Church.

Jenny

8. Lunches Group

On the 4th Friday of each month we all look forward to enjoying the luxury of not having to cook when we sit down at the *George Hotel*, Lichfield at 12.30pm for our regular lunch. This months meal will be on August 28th.

Take a look at the menu on line to see what you fancy this time.

Please contact 01543 305522 or email jenny_hodgkins@yahoo.co.uk to reserve a place.



9. Welsh Group

After another successful year the *Welsh Group* enjoyed a sunny afternoon.



10. Photography Group

At our meeting on Thursday 20th August we will review the pictures taken on our July visit to *Wolseley Wildlife Centre*. Not a lot around due to the heat apart from loads of *Canada Geese* that seemed to think that everyone was going to feed them!

We will also be working on images to include in the calendar that we are proposing to produce.

More details later on price and how to reserve your copy.

11. New Stargazing Group?

Hello everyone, I've just recently joined the u3a and would like to propose a new group. The idea is for a Lichfield Stargazing group. I have used the word Stargazing purposefully, since it would be a group for those who simply want to look up at the planets of our solar system and gaze at the stars, rather than getting into Astrophotography, Astrophysics, or discussions about space travel or NASA. To begin with, I would suggest that we meet fortnightly to plan and organise stargazing sessions and monthly to go outside and look up.

Potential (reasonably) local sites to visit include:

Cannock Chase Locations: Brindley Bottom Car Park, Camp Field, and Coppice Hill

Barr Beacon Local Nature reserve,

Keele Observatory

Minniglow (Peak District Fringe)

Rosliston Forestry Centre

It may also be possible to arrange visits to some of the 'Star Parties' that run throughout the year at various UK locations.

IS THERE ANY INTEREST FOR SUCH A GROUP? Please email me Dennis Platt at cybersys1955@gmail.com if you are interested in joining the proposed group. Can you please give me some idea of your level of experience/knowledge.

12. Burntwood Family History Group

The Burntwood Family History Group is 40 this year. To celebrate we have two special events to which everyone is invited. On Monday 10th August at 19:00 we have a talk by Bruce Tocher on Operation Freshman. This is the operation that preceded the story immortalised in the Heroes of Telemark film. Bruce lives in Norway and has detailed knowledge of the places, and even some of the people involved. The location is Erasmus Darwin Academy. Space is likely to be limited. If any of your members would like to attend, please indicate by emailing me

On Saturday 19th September, at Chase Terrace Community Centre, Princess Street, WS7 1JH there is an opportunity to meet the Group, view some of the work (such as the biographies of local soldiers) and hear a talk by Shane Kelleher, the County Archaeologist. He will be telling us about recent discoveries in the local area. Doors open at 14:00. The talk is scheduled for 15:30. For further details check our website.

Keith Stanley Publicity Officer
k.stanley@ntlworld.com Phone 0789 070 9827

13. Answers to Quiz

1. Cricket
2. David Essex
3. Mr. Rochester
4. James Galway
5. Actress (*A Man For All Seasons*, *Tom Jones* etc)
6. Oscar Wilde
7. Lead Singer of Australian Pop Group *The Seekers*
8. Bob Paisley
9. Sarah Lancashire
10. US Politician, former *Secretary of State* under Barack Obama

14. u3a Friends Newsletter

To download the national newsletter express please follow this link:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/newsletter>

15. Contacts for Members Queries

Lichfield u3a – Contacts for Member's Queries 2026

Chair and Business Secretary – Jenny Hodgkins

Matters of importance to Lichfield u3a chair@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Membership Secretary - Libby Constance

Membership updates and queries membership@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Help Desk enquiries - Judith Thorpe

General Enquiries enquiries@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Group Coordinator – Christine Burns

Group-related queries groups@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Treasurer – Brian Emberson

Matters relating to finance treasurer@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Safeguarding – Christine Burns

Safeguarding concerns safeguarding@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Newsletter – Brian Denny

Articles for the monthly Newsletter briandenny59@yahoo.ie

Publicity - Linda Williams

Communications with the Public and other

Organisation lindajoywilliams@live.co.uk

Beacon Administrator - Judith Thorpe

Beacon related queries lichfieldu3a@gmail.com

Web Managers – John Line or Libby

Constance John.Line@lindensosft.co.uk or

Changes to / suggestions for our website

Libby.Constance@btinternet.com

Speaker Secretaries – Brian Denny or Ian Dickins

briandenny59@yahoo.ie or idickins@hotmail.co.uk

Monthly Meeting related queries

16. Newsletter Contributions

Please, send in your contributions to the newsletter at least three days before the last day of each month for the next month's edition, to briandenny59@yahoo.ie.

If possible, please send your piece in a word document, and any images separately in jpeg format, thank you. We will publish the newsletter at the beginning of the following month.

Kind regards,
Brian Denny

