

Lichfield u3a Newsletter October 2026



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1. Notes from our Chair

Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM in September and to those who sent in their apologies with proxy voting which made us fully quorate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jenny Hodgkins for her many years on the committee. Jenny has been absolutely invaluable, not least because she volunteered to be Chair in Covid times, when it looked as though Lichfield u3a was in danger of folding, but also her amazing ability to seemingly get to every event! She has been, and no doubt still will be, super-supportive of everything to do with our u3a. Jenny leaves some big shoes to fill, but I hope I can take up the mantle with energy and enthusiasm and continue to develop your u3a with your help and support.

At the AGM I presented Jenny (right) with a gift for her many years of service to Lichfield u3a.



The AGM was followed by an entertaining talk given by Roger Browne on "*The Golden Age of Radio*", with songs from Roy Chapple. Lots of you clearly knew all the words! Thanks to Brian Denny and Ian Dickins for arranging all our monthly talks and to Yvonne Jukes and her team for regularly organising refreshments – much appreciated by all our members.

A big thank you to those members who have recently started up a new group or are in the process of doing so - it truly epitomises our motto of 'members running groups for members'. Recently started up groups include *Songwriting*, *Stargazing* and a splinter *Play Reading* group (to increase numbers that can be accommodated), *Painting for Beginners* and two *French* groups (one for the rusty ones amongst us and another

for the more competent). There are others in the pipeline, so watch this space.

One of our members has suggested that it would be good if we had some form of organised car lifts – particularly for those members who don't drive or who have mobility issues. Great idea but how do we organise this? Suggestions please!

I look forward to my first year as Chair and meeting lots of you at various events. I'm not great at remembering names but will do my best!

Best wishes to you all.

Chris Burns, Chairperson: c.burnslawteacher@outlook.com

2. Monthly Meeting

Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies.

Speaker: Martin Lloyd, Wednesday October 14th 2:00 pm

Thrill to stories of how three passports have played their influential role in the course of history: an attempted assassination which altered the regulations for issuing passports; the capture of a spy which caused a worldwide modification to the design of the document and for one person the passport itself which turned into a killer.

Followed by music from *Guitar Group 4*

The Guildhall, Bore Street, Lichfield

No booking is required. Visitors welcome.

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

- 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.
Followed by music from *Guitar Group 1*
- December 9th Susan Weir will talk about
That Christmas Feeling
An inspiring musical journey, visiting a variety of countries to
explore a diverse selection of seasonal musical offerings.
Followed by music from *Guitar Group 5*

September Meeting

Roger Browne (left) spoke about '*The Golden Age of Radio*'.
Ian Chapple (right) sang some songs to accompany the talk.



3. Group News

Our group offer continues to expand with *Songwriting*,
Stargazing, *Painting for Beginners* and two *French* groups all
recently starting up.

A comment we often hear at our new members' meetings is 'I wanted to join X group, but it is full' which leads to early disappointment for a new member. The obvious solution is to run a second group but easier said than done unless there is an enthusiastic member of the existing group willing to run a completely new group!

Sometimes groups will be 'full' in terms of numbers on a group list but not everyone attends regularly which suggests there may be room for a GL to increase their overall group limit and invite those on a waiting list to join the group based on the premise not everyone will turn up.

One suggestion is to run a 'splinter' group alongside the existing group. The splinter group runs at the same time and same venue, led by one of the group's members, but with support from the group leader. The *Play Reading Group* led by Ian Dickins have successfully done this as has the *Board Games & Cards Group* led by Jo Brown which has resulted in both groups being able to invite their 'waiting list' to join. The splinter group doesn't always have to run – just on those occasions where everyone has turned up! Please consider this solution if you are a group leader.

At a recent network meeting I attended, lots of u3as have a '*Trips/outings*' group. I'm told we did have an active trips group pre-covid. Is there anyone out there who might be interested in forming a 'trips' committee – a shared organising group? I have a number of brochures from various travel agents who specialise in running trips for u3as and it seems to me they do all the organising – we just have to advertise the dates and take details.

A new member who has recently joined us from Woking Area has told me about the '*MOTO*' Group (Members On Their Own) that Woking Area run.

Is there any interest in such a group? I have copied below what is on the Woking Area website; it looks like a pleasant, informal get-together and suggests there is more than one group leader. Perhaps there are two or three people out there who could work as a small co-ordinating team to set up something similar in Lichfield?

Members on their own (MOTO)

Status:	Active, open to new members
Group email:	Members on their own (MOTO).group
When:	Various mornings and afternoons, ad hoc, as advised by Group Leaders
Venue:	Various
Cost:	Various

A friendship group for those u3a members who have no live-in partner or whose partners are so incapacitated that they are unable to socialise. We arrange social activities and outings throughout the year. It is essential that you have access to the internet as members are invited to each event by email.

Best wishes to you all.

Chris Burns, Groups Co-ordinator.

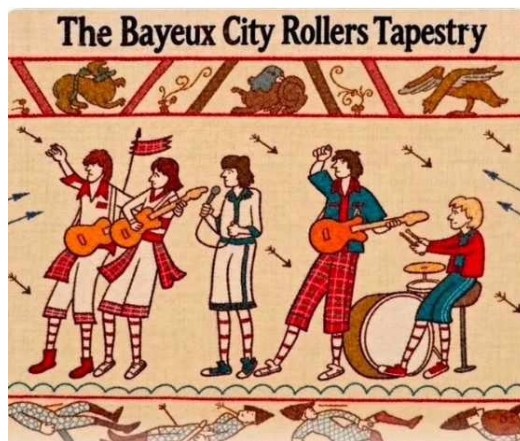
c.burnslawteacher@outlook.com

4. Quiz

Wars and Battles

1. In which English county was the Battle of Bosworth Fields?
2. What country is the World War 2 Film '*A Bridge Too Far*' mostly set in?
3. The *Battle of Gettysburg* was in which war?
4. Which book featured a war between Big-Endians and Little-Endians and what was the cause of the war?

5. In what modern-day country was the *Battle of Waterloo* (1815)?
6. What battle is celebrated in Northern Ireland every year on July 12th
7. The Steven Spielberg film *War Horse* (2011) is set in which war?
8. The nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale is most associated with which war?
9. The *Battle of Spion Kop* and the *Siege of Mafekind* were part of which War?
10. The *Bayeux Tapestry* commemorates which battle?



5. Play Reading Group

We meet on the last Tuesday afternoon of each month, except December, in the bar at The Garrick theatre. Our group continues to go from strength to strength since setting up at The Garrick, where they have made us most welcome. Demand is so high we're actually in the process of setting up a second group. We have a good balance of men and women, although it's sometimes necessary to ignore gender when allocating parts!

We generally read plays which will cheer us all up, mostly comedies, although we do tackle more dramatic playwrights including Agatha Christie and J.B. Priestley. But we've yet to try any Shakespeare - although never say never! We're always open to suggestions for plays to read, so if members have any preferences they're very welcome to

make them. We also try to allocate parts fairly so everyone gets a chance to read a principal part; but only if they want to - there's no pressure on members to "perform", we're always relaxed. We let all members know in advance what play we'll be reading next and give them a brief synopsis of the play, so they know what to expect.

If you'd like further information please contact either Ian Dickins or Brenda Baker, the joint group leaders.



6. Psychology Group

Our group meets monthly to learn about, discuss, and debate the many facets of psychology—both in the modern world and throughout its development. We've been together for around ten years and currently have eleven members, with a waiting list for those keen to join.

We began by exploring influential psychologists and the evolution of their ideas. From there, we followed a U3A course from Australia titled *Practical Psychology for Relationships*, which offered a wide-ranging look at relationships through the lens of family life, friendships, and social connections.

After completing the course, we turned to the book *How Psychology Works*. Each month, a different member prepares a paper based on a topic from the book or a relevant current event. These papers form the basis of our discussions. Topics we've explored include Existentialism, Time, Work, Language, Love, Hate, and Addiction.

Every year we also invite a guest speaker with hands-on experience of psychology in practice. Past speakers have included psychologists

working in prisons, with young children, within the NHS, and in private practice supporting people dealing with trauma and burnout.



7. Walking with Dogs Group

We meet every Wednesday morning and have fun walking and talking for an hour or two whilst the dogs are mostly off lead and having fun with us!

All the dogs are sociable, and this is most obvious when we stop for coffee, either during or after our walks. They sit inside cafes and pubs at our feet and under tables happily relaxing.

We generally walk within a half hour car trip of Lichfield and this includes Cannock Chase, Barton under Needwood, Rosliston Forestry Centre and Sutton Park to name a few. We have picnics and pub lunches a few times a year too



8. Music Appreciation

Following on from the 'Fun' programme from Peter last month on 1st October Phil Shaw will be bring us '**Concertos Across Europe**'
Why not come and join us at the Methodist Church at 2.00pm
It's bound to be an interesting selection.

9. Songwriting Group

After six months, the Songwriting group is going strong with six members. Some of us are new to songwriting, others have some prior experience.

We share and critique our songs, then discuss the craft of songwriting, usually with a specific topic in mind.

We meet on the first Thursday of the month from 3pm to 5pm at *The Bowling Green*.

We have capacity to increase the size of the group, so if you are interested or would like to know more, please get in touch:

Bruford Low bruford.low@icloud.com 07989 165361

11. Food Matters Group

Do we know where our food comes from? Where it's grown? Where it's packed, processed and shipped from...how, & to whom? What's added to it for taste, and appeal to shoppers? Finally, how might our health be impacted?

Our group members, (currently 15) research from resources to discuss current food supplies as they evolve within our ever-changing global & economic/climate complications. Local people involved in food and/or drink supply are invited to speak and share their business activity. To date we have heard from the owners of Lichfield's Ukrainian restaurant, the Italian restaurant/deli, & had a tour around the brewing process at a city-based microbrewery/pub.

Our topics cover every type of food / beverage, transport, UK laws, standards, future developments & have included, among many others chemical additives, UK food standards, ultra-processed foods, cheeses & milk products, intensive farming, soil health. & nano/microplastics in our

food & beyond, soil health, alternative food sources & growing environments, fungi, & upcycling surplus foods.

Our group meets fortnightly in the *Bowling Green* pub Tuesday 11am – 12.30pm. Contact Group Leader Chris Norcross, for more information, gaia2gain@gmail.com or 07809 248921.

11. Photography Group and u3a 2027 Calendar

Our topic for the meeting on **15th October** at *Martin Heath Hall* will be '**Wild Life**' covering animals and plants.

Your images on a memory stick as usual please.

It has been suggested that in **November** we do a workshop on editing. I am sure we will all find it useful.

A brain storming session on how to get the best results with a problem picture.

Lichfield u3a Calendar

The photography Group is producing a calendar for 2027.

The size is A3, with a local Lichfield scene on the front cover.

Each month will have a picture approximately A4 size with boxes below for all your u3a meetings and other appointments.

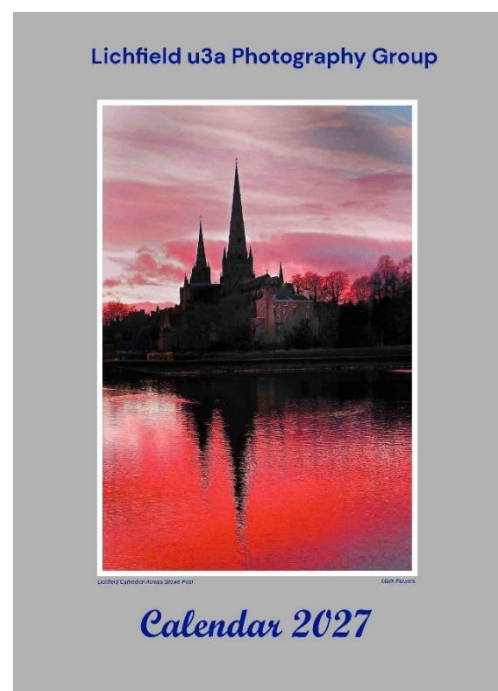
To reserve one for yourself, or for giving to friends and family, please send your request to: maz_1954@hotmail.com and put 'Calendar order' as the subject line.

The price is expected to be about £6.00 and we should be able to confirm this in the reminder email.

The more we order the price may be lower.

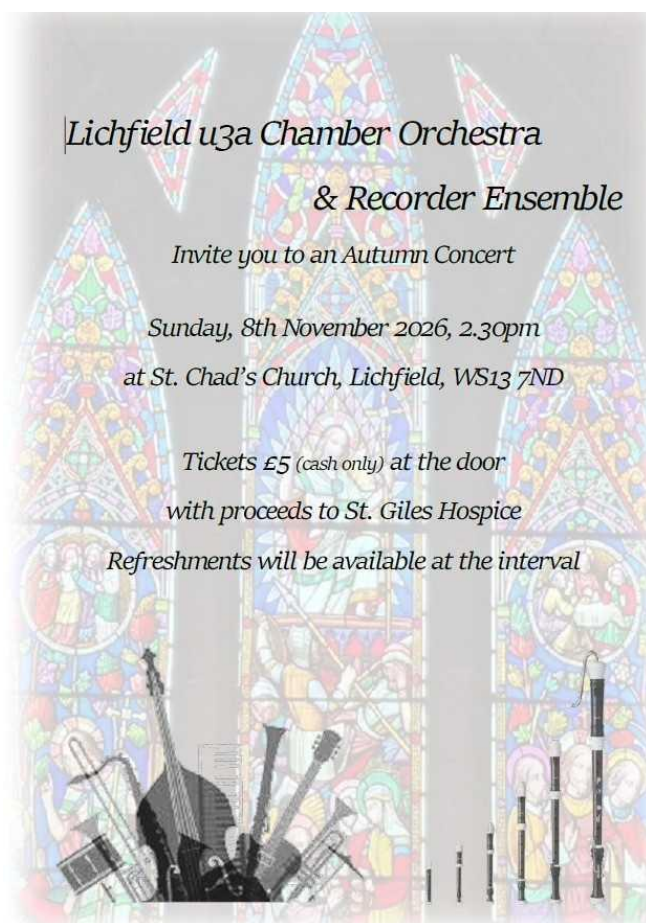
12. Quiz Answers

1. Leicestershire.
2. The Netherlands.
3. American Civil War.
4. Jonathan Swift's novel ***Gulliver's Travels***. The dispute was whether boiled eggs should be opened at the big end or the little end.
5. Belgium.



6. Battle of the Boyne (1690). Forces supporting the Protestant King William III (William of Orange) defeated the Catholic King James II.
7. World War 1.
8. Crimean War.
9. Second Boer War.
10. The Battle of Hastings (1066).

13. u3a Concert with *Recorders Group and Orchestra*



14. Contacts for Member Queries 2026

Chair and Business Secretary – Chris Burns
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 – Jenny Hodgkins

General enquiries

enquiries@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Group Coordinator – Christine Burns

Group-related enquiries

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 organisations

publicity@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Beacon Administrator – Judith Thorpe

Beacon related queries

lichfieldu3a@lichfieldu3a.co.uk

Web Managers – John Line

Changes to /suggestions for our website

John.Line@lindensoft.co.uk

or Libby Constance

Libby.Constance@btinternet.com

Speakers Secretaries – Brian Denny

briandenny59@yahoo.ie

or Ian Dickins

idickins@hotmail.co.uk

Monthly Meeting related queries

15. u3a Friends Newsletter

To access the u3a national newsletter express please follow this link:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter>

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

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You are receiving the Lichfield u3a newsletter because you either signed up via our website, or because you requested addition to the newsletter email list.

Our mailing address is:

Lichfield u3a
c/o Poppy Cottage
36 Chase Road
Burntwood
WS7 0DP

Lichfield u3a website: lichfield.u3asite.uk

Lichfield u3a Enquiry desk. Tel: 07510 634 476.

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