

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

**CHARITY No 1180152** 

#### FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

After my AGM report I don't have a lot to say. I would like to inform you that we will be having a table at both Rearsby and Syston events.

We have already been to the Thurmaston Summer Fayre, and I would like to thank Jill for organising this event for us and thank those who came to help during the day.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer.

Clive

# WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

#### **AGM REPORT**

As usual our AGM was short and sweet. Nothing contentious, Chairman's and Treasurer's reports accepted and Angie Baker and Dave Palmer (both co-opted onto the committee last year) given the members nod to remain on the committee.

One recommended change from the Treasurer was accepted – see next page. Geoff also flagged up that increases in printing and postage costs mean that an increase in charges for those who do not use email to receive updates and information was considered. However, as finances are currently sound, that idea has been postponed, but may need to be revisited in the future.

#### **NEW CHARGE FOR CHEQUES.**

It was decided by the committee and passed at the AGM that a charge of 50p is to be added to any cheques we receive.

This will apply to cheques for new membership, renewals or payments for events and is to cover the cost of the bank charges we incur.

We are charged for every cheque we pay into the bank regardless of the amount.

If possible, please pay by bank transfer

otherwise please add an extra 50p to any cheque you are sending to Syston and District u3a.



# **GROUP NEWS**

#### **NEW GROUP IDEAS**

If you have any ideas for a new group, please contact Barbara Sargeant our groups coordinator <a href="mailto:sadu3agroups@gmail.com">sadu3agroups@gmail.com</a> or speak to her at one of our monthly general meetings. Alternatively contact her assistant Angie Baker email <a href="mailto:sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com">sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com</a> Acting as a group organiser doesn't have to be onerous, it doesn't have to be down to just one person, and it doesn't mean you have to organise everything the group does.

Is the group you want to join currently full? How about starting a second group? Barbara and Angie are happy to provide support and guidance on how to get going.

#### **NEW GROUP - DARTS**

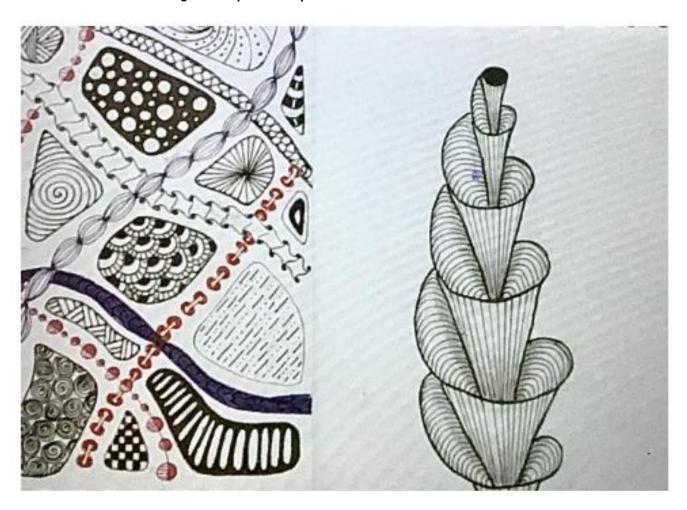


By the time this newsletter goes out a new darts group is due to have had its first meeting at the Grosvenor Snooker Hall. If you are interested, please contact Colin Baker email: colinbaker549@gmail.com

#### **ART GROUP 2**

#### **ZENTANGLES**

Below are some examples of Zentangles drawn by the Drawing and Painting group 2 recently. They are a type of random or unplanned drawing with tangles inside filled in with patterns. Zen=Calm/relaxed, tangles=unplanned patterns.



This is what AI "said" about Zentangles when I asked what they were -Ed

#### What is a Zentangle?

- A Zentangle is a small abstract drawing made up of repetitive patterns, called *tangles*.
- It's typically drawn on a 3.5-inch square tile using **black ink on white paper**, though you can use any materials you like.
- The method was developed by **Maria Thomas and Rick Roberts** in the early 2000s as a way to promote mindfulness through art.

#### Why do people love it?

- **Relaxation**: The repetitive strokes are calming, almost meditative.
- **Focus**: It helps quiet the mind and improve concentration.

- Accessibility: No artistic skill required if you can draw a line, dot, or curve, you can Zentangle. (*sorry Helen*)
- **Freedom**: There's no "right" or "wrong" even mistakes become part of the design.

#### How to create one

- 1. Start with a **square tile** of paper.
- 2. Lightly draw a **border** and a random "**string**" (a squiggly line that divides the space).
- 3. Fill each section with a different **tangle pattern** these might include spirals, grids, waves, or dots.
- 4. Add **shading** with a pencil to give depth.

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP**

The Photography Group recently visited Leicester Cathedral to view the 'Mars' display there.... here's some of the fabulous photos that the group took... (YouTube link - 6mins duration).

https://youtu.be/UDYdjQTVypQ?si=dw5Q3Y6SsyilyKR8

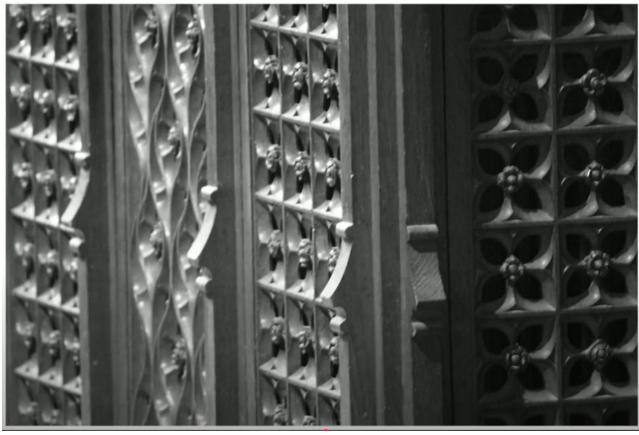
We have some very talented people in our group!















Ed – the above are stills of a selection of the photos on you tube, I'd encourage you to follow the link and view the rest.

#### **YOGA GROUP**

Our gentle Yoga group, with Pushpa now at the helm, met on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Community Centre in Syston. It is a great welcoming friendly group for those who may be a little hesitant to try yoga.

Pushpa is very good at guiding you through the stretching and the different poses she would like you to adopt, then towards the end of the session we move onto meditation, Pushpa's gentle voice lulls you into calming your breathing and total relaxation you almost fall asleep.

A wonderful way to spend an hour I'm looking forward to the next session on Wednesday 16th July Gillian Taylor

## **EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED**



#### **ANYONE FOR SWIMIING?**

Free Swim Session

The Free Swim session was held on the morning of June 10<sup>th</sup> and very much enjoyed by all that attended.

Although only nine people were able to turn up in the end it was very nice to have a lane to yourself to swim in.

Charnwood Leisure Centre have said that it is something that they would like to offer the U3A three or four times a year, so hopefully we can get more people to come along next time.

#### **GUIDED WALK**

The Cultural Quarter, a guided walk

Syston group member James Gunn led a guided walk for 12 members around Leicester's Cultural Quarter starting outside the Curve theatre.

On possibly the hottest day of the year so far, the group were told about the history of the ODEON cinema and Curve theatre, the old fire station and bus depot, and the very many Victorian factories that whilst no longer factories are still very much in use as apartments.

The 'goings on' at the old Brickmakers Arms pub on St George Street were talked about, and they learnt more about some of the street art that has brightened up Leicester over the past few years, including the magpie artwork that didn't please a worker at the old Leicester Mercury building!









Many thanks to James Gunn and Angie Baker for the above photos.

#### THURMASTON FAYRE

#### What's new pussycat? Remembers those lyrics sung by Tom (the hips) Jones?

If you have been enjoying the sunshine, you may have been to Thurmaston Fayre and saw our stand there on Summer Solstice. Last year was the first year we had a pitch there which was a learning curve, but the experience was enjoyed by those who volunteered to help and visitor interest in our U3A was rewarding. This year presented a different learning curve with much fun had erecting our new executive type Gazebo. Good job we all relish a challenge when it was almost up and we realised in was inside out! Tee hee.



All of the Group signs had been renewed and proficiently updated by Angie Baker. Thank you Angie, they convey the diversity of our group topics and promoted the 'fun' to be had within the Organisation. A very interesting display as you will see in the photo.

Thurmaston is a very friendly and interesting Fayre to be a part of and a number of visitors took u3a information away with them which will enable them to access our website, You Tube video and

free phone number. Hopefully some of these enquiries will become new members bringing their interests and skills into the organisation. My thanks to Big Chris, Jenny and a fellow Committee member Chris Gale who gave their time throughout the day to help me. Also Clive and Dave for their erecting skill. In case we forget it is important that members offer help and support in any way they can. We are a Volunteer run not for profit charity so let's get volunteering!

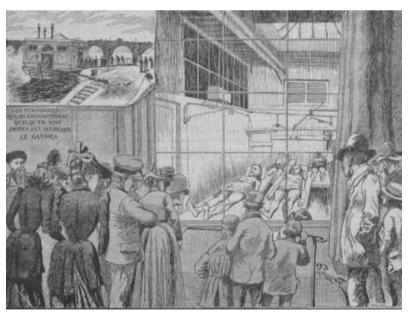
Our next promotional outings are in August where we are at Rearsby village show and also closer to home Syston Fair. Come and say hello if you are in the locality. You can't miss us wearing our new Polo Shirts which clearly state who we represent being printed on front with U3A logo and back with our motto 'Learn, Laugh, Live'. So, let's DO IT! Jill Kempton-Hayes
Publicity.

#### WHAT'S ON NEXT

#### **GENERAL MEETINGS**

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks usually start 10.30am Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 The Paris Morgue



Ann Featherstone returns to tell tales of:

The Paris Morgue: a popular stop on the 19th century tourist trail - Imagine a daytrip to the Paris Morgue as part of your holiday!

Pack your handkerchief with sweet herbs (the Morgue was not very fragrant) and make your way to the best free show in Paris!!

#### August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 The History of Silk



Clive Garner, our speaker, traces the history of silk from its origins in China to the silk weaving industry in Britain, explaining how silk has become a global commodity.

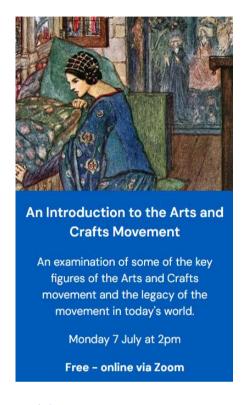
# **September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025** British Divas of the 60's

Melody Flyte returns with a look at the lives and music achievements of some of our biggest British divas of the 1960s, including Petula Clark, Shirley Bassey and Dusty Springfield, and considering the cultural backdrop of that decade, with songs to illustrate.



#### **NATIONAL U3A ITEMS**

#### u3a TALKS







Book <u>here</u> Book <u>here</u> Book <u>here</u>

If none of the trio of talks on the previous page appeals, you can find other options here

#### DIGITIAL VERSION OF u3a MATTERS MAGAZINE LAUNCHED

We're pleased to announce that we've launched a digital version of the *u3a matters* magazine that you can read and download for free on our website.

A lot of members have expressed interest in having an online version to read, so we have produced a taster version of the latest Summer issue. You'll find it on the <u>u3a matters page</u> of the website.

We are actively working to improve our magazine offering and ensure its content remains interesting and relevant to members. If you have any feedback about the digital magazine, please let us know at communications@u3a.org.uk.

(If you currently receive the printed version and would prefer the digital option, or just aren't interested in the national magazine at all, you can opt out of the paper version by contacting our membership secretary Chris Gale Email <a href="mailto:sadu3amembers@gmail.com">sadu3amembers@gmail.com</a> she will do the necessary to remove you from the mailing list for it.

#### NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



Belvoir Castle Flower and Garden Show 2025: Bigger, Brighter, Blooming Better

Nestled in the breathtaking grounds of Belvoir Castle, the 2025 Flower and Garden Show is shaping up to be our biggest and most exciting event yet!

Perfect for garden enthusiasts, families, and anyone seeking a magical day out in nature, this unmissable event is packed with inspiration, beauty, and fun for all ages.

https://www.belvoircastle.com/singleevent/belvoir-castle-flower-garden-show/





# THE GREAT REMPSTONE STEAM & COUNTRY SHOW

12th July - 13th July

Turnpost Farm, Turnpost East Road, Loughborough, LE12 6ST

The Great Rempstone Steam & Country Show would like to welcome you all back.

We would love for you to come and share a family fun weekend with us at our 69th annual event.

The event initially started with the gathering of a few like minded friends at the premises of the local ploughing and agricultural contractors Beeby Brothers of Rempstone in order to raise money for the Blind Institute.

Since 1956, the organising committee has worked hard to continue to bring a show for all the family to enjoy whilst never losing sight of that original intention, the Rempstone rally team have raised several hundreds of thousands of pounds in order to support various local and national charities.



# STOMP ROUND LEICESTER

14th July - 21st September

Jubilee Square, St. Nicholas Place, Leicester, LE1 4LD

A herd of magnificent Elephant sculptures will be stampeding into the city as part of a spectacular public art trail raising vital funds for LOROS Hospice.

To mark LOROS' 40th anniversary in 2025, 40 gentle giants will journey into Leicester's streets, parks and open spaces, forming a jumbo trail of Elephant sculptures across the city.

Each Elephant will be sponsored by a business and beautifully designed by a talented artist to create a free, fun, family-friendly trail of discovery for the community to enjoy whilst exploring our great city.

Joining the giant Elephants roaming through Leicester will be mini-herds of Baby Elephant sculptures, adopted and decorated by schools and community groups as part of an exciting Learning Programme.

# FROM OUR MEMBERS

# a "Sorry, who did you say you were?"

#### **How to Spot and Deal with Scam Phone Calls**

Scam calls are becoming more sophisticated, often impersonating trusted organisations like banks, HMRC, Amazon, or utility companies. But with a few simple habits, you can stay one step ahead.

#### • How to Recognise a Scam Call

- **Urgency is their weapon**: "Your account has been compromised!" or "You owe tax!" They want you to act before you think.
- They ask for personal or financial details: No genuine organisation will ask for your full PIN, password, or one-time passcodes over the phone.
- They want you to transfer money: If someone asks you to move funds to a "safe account," it's a scam.
- They discourage you from speaking to others: Telling you to keep it secret is a red flag.
- They spoof numbers: The caller ID may look familiar, but it can be faked.

#### Pause Before You Act

- Hang up immediately if something feels off. You're not being rude—you're being cautious.
- Wait at least 10–15 minutes before calling back on a trusted number. On landlines, scammers can stay on the line even after you hang up.
- Use a different phone if possible, or call a friend first to ensure the line is clear.
- **Never download apps** or software at a caller's request. These can give scammers remote access to your device.
- Don't press buttons or follow prompts on automated messages. This can connect you directly to a scammer.

#### HMRC Scams: Taxing Your Trust

Scammers often impersonate HMRC, especially around tax deadlines or rebate periods.

#### Watch for:

- Threats of arrest or legal action if you don't pay immediately.
- Promises of tax refunds in exchange for your bank details.
- Robotic messages asking you to "press 1" to speak to an agent.

#### **HMRC** will never:

- Ask for personal or financial details via text, email, or WhatsApp.
- Demand immediate payment over the phone.
- Ask you to pay with gift cards or vouchers.

Report HMRC scams by forwarding texts to 60599 or emailing phishing@hmrc.gov.uk.

#### Amazon Scams: Not What You Ordered

With so many of us using Amazon, scammers know a call about a suspicious order can catch us off guard. **Common tactics include:** 

- A robocall claiming someone ordered an expensive item (like an iPhone or MacBook) on your account.
- A "customer service" agent asking for your Amazon login or payment details.

• Requests to install software to "fix a security issue."

#### Amazon will never:

- Call you out of the blue to confirm an order or ask for sensitive information.
- Ask for remote access to your device.
- Request payment via gift cards.

If in doubt, log in to your Amazon account directly—never use a link or number provided in the call.

#### Protect Yourself and Others

- Register with the Telephone Preference Service at tpsonline.org.uk.
- Use call blockers or phones with built-in screening features.
- Forward scam texts to 7726 (it spells "SPAM" on your keypad).
- Report scam calls to <u>Action Fraud</u> or call 0300 123 2040.

#### **Prop Tips to Share**

- Don't trust caller ID alone.
- Never give out personal or banking details.
- Always verify using a number you trust.

#### **QUIRKY QUIZ**

- 1. What is the collective noun for flamingos?
  - a) Sparkle b) Parade c) Blush d) Flamboyance
- 2. Which animal laughs when tickled?
  - a) Dolphin b) Rat c) Penguin d) Kangaroo
- 3. What's the plastic tip on a shoelace called?
  - a) Aglet b) Togglet c) Lacelet d) Tiplet
- 4. Which fruit has its seeds on the outside?
  - a) Raspberry b) Strawberry c) Blueberry d) Blackberry
- 5. What is the (ironic) term for fear of long words?
  - a) Lexiphobia b) Sesquipedalophobia c) Logophobia d) Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia
- 6. Which mammal is capable of true flight?
  - a) Flying squirrel b) Bat c) Sugar glider d) Colugo
- 7. The tiny jeans pocket was originally for:
  - a) Coins b) Matches c) Pocket watches d) Keys
- 8. Which country has the most pyramids?
  - a) Egypt b) Sudan c) Mexico d) Peru
- 9. A group of porcupines is called a...?
  - a) Prickle b) Quill c) Spike d) Cluster
- 10. What's the dot over an "i" or "j" called?
  - a) Jot b) Tittle c) Speck d) Point

### "Phew, what a scorcher!"

#### Staying Cool in a Heatwave—For You, Your Pets, and Local Wildlife

With temperatures soaring and an amber heat alert in place across much of the UK, it's not just humans feeling the heat. Our pets and garden wildlife can struggle too. Here are some simple ways to stay safe and lend a helping hand.

#### For You and Your Household

- **Stay hydrated**: Keep a jug or bottle of water in the fridge for refreshing drinks throughout the day.
- **Keep curtains or blinds closed** on the sunny side of your home to block out heat.
- **Use fans wisely**: Place a bowl of ice in front of a fan for a DIY cooling breeze.
- **Avoid strenuous activity** during the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm).
- **Stay indoors or in the shade** during peak heat—especially important for older adults or those with health conditions.
- **Check on neighbours**: A quick call or knock can make all the difference.

#### 🐾 For Pets

- Walk dogs early or late—but only if it's genuinely cool enough. If it's already over 20°C at 7am, it may be best to skip the walk entirely.
- **Use the "back of the hand" test**: Place the back of your hand on the pavement for 7 seconds. If it's too hot to keep it there, it's too hot for your dog's paws.
- Never leave pets in cars, even briefly. Temperatures can rise dangerously fast.
- **Provide shade and fresh water** at all times. Add ice cubes to bowls for extra cooling.
- **Frozen treats**: Try pet-safe ice lollies or frozen carrots for dogs; cats may enjoy frozen broth cubes or chilled wet food.
- **Cool-down tricks**: Wrap a frozen water bottle in a towel for pets to lie near or dampen a towel for them to rest on.
- **Ventilation matters**: Keep rooms airy and avoid stuffy spaces like conservatories. Fans help, but don't point them directly at caged birds.
- **Caged birds**: Keep cages out of direct sunlight and away from windows. Offer fresh water, mist gently if they enjoy it, and avoid draughts.
- Cats: Encourage them to stay indoors during peak heat. Pale cats may need pet-safe sunblock on ears and noses. Always check sheds and greenhouses before closing them—cats love a nap in odd places!
- Watch for signs of heatstroke: Heavy panting, drooling, lethargy, confusion, or vomiting. For birds, look for open-beaked breathing or holding wings away from the body. If in doubt, call your vet.

#### For Wildlife

- Leave out shallow bowls of water: Place them in shady spots for birds, hedgehogs, and bees. Add pebbles so insects can land safely.
- **Top up birdbaths and ponds**: Clean, fresh water is vital in hot weather.
- **Avoid strimming long grass**: Hedgehogs and toads may be sheltering there.
- **Don't trim hedges**: They offer vital shade and nesting spots.
- Offer shade: Let a patch of your garden grow wild or place a log pile for cool cover.

#### **DECLUTTER DEN**

Are you determined to declutter and get rid of things that you haven't used in an age this year? Look no further than Declutter Den.



If you have something that you are prepared to give away – **strictly no items for sale!** Let me know and I'll put it in declutter den and hopefully we can help each other free up some space, whilst giving others something they have a use for, even if we don't.

Email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

#### What's Happening with Windows 10?

If you're using a Windows 10 computer, here's something to keep in mind: **Microsoft will stop supporting Windows 10 after 14 October 2025**. This was announced a while ago and everyone thought there would be no support at all from then on.

That doesn't mean your computer will stop working — but it will stop receiving important security updates, which help keep it safe from viruses and online threats.

#### What's new?

For the first time, Microsoft is offering an extra year of protection after that deadline. You can get:

- One year of free updates if you back up your settings online with a Microsoft account.
- Or pay about £25–£30 per year to keep getting those updates without using cloud backup.

#### What should I do?

- If your computer can upgrade to Windows 11, that's a good option
- If not, you can still use Windows 10, but it's best to plan ahead
- Not sure? Ask a friend or a family member who is likely to have the knowhow.

More details are available on Microsoft's official support page.

I moved from Windows 10 to 11 earlier this year. They really aren't that much different from each other – so there's no need to worry that upgrading will mean learning lots of new things. Ed

#### **POETRY CORNER**

#### Here are a few poems to echo the current weather -

#### **SUMMER SUN** by Robert Louis Stevenson

Great is the sun, and wide he goes Through empty heaven without repose; And in the blue and glowing days More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull To keep the shady parlour cool, Yet he will find a chink or two To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic spider-clad, He, through the keyhole, maketh glad; And through the broken edge of tiles, Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around He bares to all the garden ground, And sheds a warm and glittering look Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue, Round the bright air with footing true, To please the child, to paint the rose, The gardener of the World, he goes.

#### THE MELTING ICE CREAM anon

Oh, the ice cream in my cone,
It's melting, melting, all alone!
The sun's so hot, it's quite extreme,
My ice cream's turned into a stream!
I lick it fast, but it's no use,
It drips and drips, what's the excuse?
I slurp and slurp with all my might,
But soon it's just a sticky blight.

So here's my plea on this hot day, Bring a freezer, without delay! For ice cream's meant to be enjoyed, Not melted, wasted, or destroyed!

#### THE SUN'S SURPRISE anon

The sun came out, so bright and bold, But something strange, I must be told! It brought along a fiery beam, That turned my sunscreen into steam!

I stepped outside, prepared to play, But the sun had a plan for that hot day. It aimed its rays right at my face, Leaving me in a sweaty embrace!

I tried to hide under a tree, But the sun laughed and teased at me. Its heat was relentless, I couldn't escape, As my shirt clung to me like a sticky cape!

So, dear sun, please give me a break, I need some shade, for goodness sake! With your rays so hot, you're quite a tease, But I'll keep laughing, despite the heat's squeeze!

#### SIZZLING PAVEMENT by Nathaniel B

The streets shimmer in the summer's glare, Heat waves dance, rising through the air. Concrete burns beneath the midday sun, A blazing furnace, nowhere to run.

Shadows are fleeting, a moment's rest, Sweat-soaked clothes cling to the chest. Pedestrians move with sluggish gait, Under the sky's relentless weight.

Cars crawl by, engines overheat, Radiating warmth from every street. Ice cream melts before it's tasted, Each minute outside feels wasted.

Sunsets bring a brief reprieve,
A cooling breeze, a chance to breathe.
But as night falls, the heat remains,
Locked in the pavement, summer's chains.

#### And finally......

#### Quiz Answers and Fun Facts

- 1. Flamboyance Did you know? Flamingos' pink hue comes from eating shrimp and algae rich in carotenoids.
- 2. Rat Did you know? Rats emit high-pitched "giggles" when tickled and enjoy playing with humans.
- 3. Aglet Did you know? This unsung hero keeps your shoelaces from fraying and is centuries old in concept.
- 4. Strawberry Did you know? Strawberries wear their seeds on the outside—about 200 per berry!
- 5. Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia Did you know? This jokingly long term for a real phobia is designed to poke fun at itself.
- 6. Bat Did you know? Bats are the only mammals that truly fly, with wings made from extended fingers and thin skin.
- 7. Pocket watches Did you know? That tiny jeans pocket dates back to the 1800s when gentlemen carried watches there.
- 8. Sudan Did you know? Sudan has over 200 pyramids, more than Egypt, built by the ancient Nubian kingdoms.
- 9. Prickle Did you know? With up to 30,000 quills, porcupines aren't cuddly—but their group name is adorable.
- 10. Tittle Did you know? "To a T" comes from "tittle"—a tiny detail that makes it just right.

#### Hot Thoughts for a Summer's Day

"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability." — Sam Keen

"Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it." — Russell Baker

"Sunshine is the best medicine." — *Unknown* 

"If you saw a heat wave, would you wave back?" — Steven Wright

"Keep your face to the sunshine and you will never see the shadows." — Helen Keller

"Hot sun, cool vibes." — Unknown

"It's so hot, I saw a squirrel fanning its nuts."

"My sweat has sweat. Send help!"

