

Syston and District

**u3a**

learn, laugh, live

NOV  
2024

# Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

## FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is well and had all your jabs.

I was very sorry to have missed to have missed Paul's talk on his experiences as a firefighter. If the first talk was anything to go by it would have been very amusing, but you were in the very capable hands of Barbara.

The November meeting talk by Peter Barratt about 'How he became a Punch and Judy man' will bring back some happy memories of when as a family we would go to watch the Punch and Judy show at Weymouth. Hope to see you there.

Clive

## WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS – TIME IS TICKING AWAY



This year's membership renewals should have already been paid by now. Our automated systems will have sent out final reminders by the time you are reading this newsletter, warning that it is the last chance to renew before membership actually lapses completely. They will soon be followed by notices telling those who have failed to renew, that their membership has lapsed. However, you have a few days before that happens. Card payment will be accepted at the November General Meeting, or you can make payment via online banking. If renewing has slipped your mind, please do it now! Any queries please contact Christine Gale our Membership Secretary.

## HAVE A QUERY? WANT TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE?

Occasionally, some members (or potential members) may prefer to speak to someone about an aspect of our u3a, rather than locating an email address or looking on our website.

So, we now have a contact number for Syston & District u3a, which is:



**0300 102 1381**

At the moment, this number goes through to Steve Kenney's (Webmaster) mobile phone, and if he is unable to answer the query, then he can advise who to contact.

## GROUP NEWS

### NEW GROUP IDEAS

If you have any ideas for a new group please contact Barbara Sargeant our groups organiser [sadu3agroups@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3agroups@gmail.com) or speak to her at one of our monthly general meetings.

Alternatively contact her assistant Angie Baker email [sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com)

### QUIZ GROUP

#### STOP PRESS - QUIZ NEWS

After a nomadic existence since Covid - remember that? - and most recently having enjoyed meeting at the Dog & Gun boozer in Syston, the u3a Quiz Group has moved to slightly larger premises.

We meet - as always - on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30, but at the Malthouse Club, High Street, Syston: known previously to us all as the *Conservative Club*. We meet in the Lounge and have been made very welcome and comfortable there.

The group is well attended but there's room for just a few more if you fancy a friendly, informal, not too competitive antidote to *Mastermind* or *University Challenge*. In the company of like minded U3A members we dredge the old grey matter in the hope of winning "Colin's Cup". Feel free to look us up on the U3A website (under Quiz Group), but please get in touch with me rather than turning up on the night - we'd hate to turn folk away.

Stay safe,  
Brian King  
[brian-king@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brian-king@hotmail.co.uk)  
07812 679 908



## WALKING GROUP

My walking group of 18 enjoyed a nice sunny day strolling over Bradgate Park and through part of Swithland Wood, before enjoying a lovely lunch at The Bradgate pub in Newtown Linford.





## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

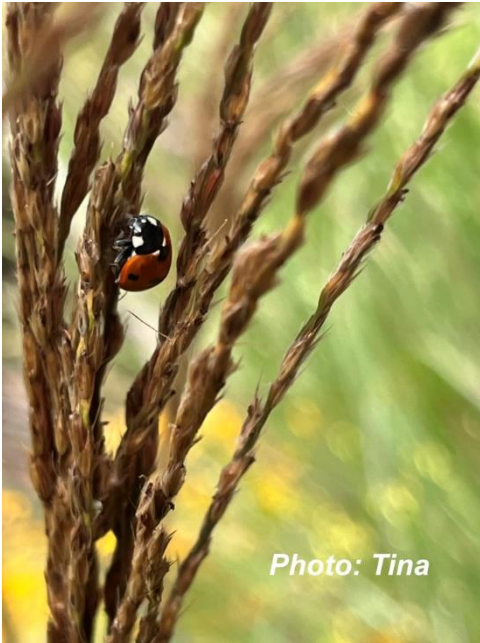
*On the last Thursday of September, the photography group visited the Mountsorrel Heritage Centre (Granite Café) and explored all the outbuildings and nature trail. It's an interesting venue with restoration of the 1¼ mile **Mountsorrel Railway** began in 2007. By October 2015, thanks to help from over 100 volunteers and donations from local companies and the community, the line was restored, and the first trains were ran. Then, in April 2016, Granite's Coffee Shop opened serving its first customers to locally sourced food and drink.*

*Well worth a visit if you've not been there recently.  
Address is 240 Swithland Lane, Rothley,  
Leicestershire. LE7 7UE.*

*Here's some of the photos taken on the day*







## CRAFT GROUP

I would like to thank those people who answered our call for knitted/crocheted poppies for our display for Remembrance Sunday. Between our group and the family and friends in U3A and the community we were inundated and so we have quite a few left, if anyone can find a use for them for another project, they are very welcome to have them. If they contact me I can arrange for collection. We have now finished sewing on the poppies and will be hanging it at the memorial at the beginning of November. I hope you will take a walk up there to see them.

Helen Disley

## DRAWING/PAINTING GROUP 2



We have been trying our hands at collaging for the last few meetings. Marion has a large picture frame she didn't need. So it was decided we would do a group project using collage based on a vase of flowers. So all members collaborated and this is the result. Very colourful! We just need a good home for it. We are hoping we can put it up in the Old School Room at the Community Centre.

## FEELING CRAFTY GROUP



### CARDS AND MORE CARDS..

The 'Feeling Crafty' group made some lovely cards this week using patterned paper and cross stitch embroidered vintage tablecloths, kindly donated by Sue.

I got quite inspired by this and later made some more using the cross stitched flower patterns and also pressed leaves. I do love making little cards!

Helen Disley

## MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION GROUP

### Sound Experience.



Last month our monthly 'Mindfulness and Meditation' group met at 'Rearsby Village Hall' to share our annual 'Sound Experience' with Petra of 'Soundwise'.

Last year this was held in a large Yurt in a garden paddock area and enabled us to be more 'in tune' with our natural surroundings. This year due to unforeseen circumstances the venue was changed and we were fortunate to arrive in glorious Autumn sunshine. Most of the group chose to attend, some for a second time and including a couple of new initiates sufficiently adventurous (or is that curious) to have a new experience.

Everyone had brought mats, pillows and throws to be warm and comfortable. Petra arrived with her large Gongs and Crystal bowls which resonate to various sound vibrations. Petra also has different sized metal bowls, which when played, emit various sound tones.



Before we began everyone chose two Oracle cards randomly from different packs and read the accompanying guide. Everyone made themselves comfortable in a peaceful, darkened environment our experience began with Petra using the marvellously deep sound of the gongs, which remind me of thunder. As the sound changed to using bowls each person went deeper into their subconscious meditative state different images, sensations, emotions became apparent. Every sound is intuitively created from a variety of chosen 'instruments' as well as her own beautiful voice when Petra chants during the session. We all enjoyed our personal experience and felt rejuvenated afterwards.

This month the 'Mindfulness and Meditation' group will be part of the 'Tai Chi' event at 'Syston Community Centre' and in November Maxine, a solution based Hypnotherapist of 'Nanuq' Hypnotherapy will enlighten us on how this therapy is helpful in resolving personal barriers to being who we choose to be. I, for one, am looking forward to both occasions.

Jill Kempton-Hayes.

## EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

### FREE GUIDED WALK AROUND WHARF STREET AREA OF LEICESTER

Wharf Street, a guided walk down one of Leicester's 'forgotten' streets.



Syston group member James Gunn led a guided walk for 16 members down Wharf Street and some of the surrounding streets. Over two hours the group were told of connections to Sid James, The Elephant Man, the former Grand Prix racing driver Bob Gerard and England's second largest cricket ground in the 1840's.

Personal memories from the group included going to school where the Lee Circle car park now stands and about living and growing up very near to Wharf Street when the area was bustling.

The photos show the Wharf Street telephone exchange and terracotta figures on Britannia Street.



## 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

**Nov 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**



**Peter Barratt**, otherwise known as Professor Diamond, will give a fascinating talk about how he got into being a Punch & Judy performer. He'll let us into some of his secrets inside 'the theatre' and finishes with a short performance starring Mr Punch, Judy, the Baby and the Crocodile.

**Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Join us for some Christmas style entertainment from our own u3a Singers and Ukelele Band.** There will also plenty of opportunity to catch up with other members as we will have separate rooms for music performances and for people to sit and chat.



**Jan 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**



**Joanna Richart presents a talk on how nature can help us cure most common illnesses.**

*We all suffer from common illnesses. As winter strikes and our energy reserves get depleted just to keep us warm, our immunity system needs boosting up. This talk will show you which medicinal plants can be harvested to treat common colds, coughs and flu and how to get our immunity super boost for free from nature. Yes the cure is all around us.*

*We will also look at plants that help us with anxiety and stress, cancer, loss of hair, inflammation of joints and more.*

*Which wild greens have the most vitamins to keep us healthy all year round?*

*You will learn all that and much more if you join this amazing talk "Forage for health"*


*Remember, Charnwood Foraging Ltd also organizes private and public outdoor foraging courses, some suitable for mobility scooters*

*and even small children. These help you to identify the plants from our talks in nature.*



## NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

### u3a TALKS



**A Deep Dive into the 1921 Census**

An insight into one of the National Archives' most recent records releases with Dr Jessamy Carlson.

Monday 18 November at 10am

**Free – online via Zoom**

Book [here](#)




**Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: November**

An overview of the British Airliner Collection at Duxford presented by Bob Wright, Commercial Director, Duxford Aviation Society.

Tuesday 5 November at 10am

**Free – online via Zoom**

Book [here](#)



**What is Social Class?**

An insight into Social Class and how it has changed over time with Dr Jack Fawbert.

Friday 29 November at 2pm

**Free – online via Zoom**

Book [here](#)

## The Third Age Trust welcomes a new leadership team at its 2024 AGM

A new CEO and Chair joined the Third Age Trust at its 41st AGM in October.

The meeting began with an update from Head of Policy and Communications, Liz Drury, about the work that had been done to reach the target of 500,000 u3a members by the end of 2028. The update mentioned key press coverage, an advertising campaign on Boom Radio, and additional advertising in newspapers and on social media.

The AGM saw key changes to the Third Age Trust leadership team. Allan Walmsley, from Kings Norton u3a, became the new Chair of the Third Age Trust. He had been Vice Chair and, prior to that, Trustee for the West Midlands. He succeeded Liz Thackray, who had served as Chair of the u3a movement for three years.

The movement welcomed a new CEO, Iain Cassidy, who joins The Third Age Trust from CEO of Open Age, a London based charity that champions an active life for older adults. Iain replaces Sam Mauger, who has led the u3a movement for the last eight years - championing digital connection through the pandemic, celebrating the movement's 40th anniversary, and attending the first ever u3a festival.

Sherburn & Villages u3a member Margaret Fiddes became the Vice-Chair of the u3a movement and Croydon u3a member Jenny became the new Trustee for London.

In the meeting, Allan Walmsley recognised new u3as which had been set up in the last year - Borough Green and Wrotham u3a, and Cowal u3a. He also congratulated all u3as who had reached milestone anniversaries in 2024, and especially those celebrating 40th anniversaries - Abergavenny u3a, Bradford u3a, Bristol u3a, Harpenden u3a, Merton u3a, Saffron Walden u3a, Stevenage u3a and Tynedale u3a.

The AGM saw members vote on a resolution to change the articles of association of The Third Age Trust, with a view to change the governance structure of the u3a movement. The resolution needed to have a 75%

majority to pass - and did, with 905 out of 1073 total votes in favour of the resolution. The Third Age Trust will now move towards having a smaller Board of Trustees and a new Council with regional representatives, both of which will be in place by April 2025.

## Learn to Live: Report on benefits of u3a movement published

A new report, titled *Learn to Live: A blueprint for better health and wellbeing*, has been published. This report sheds light on the value of a low-cost, non-formal learning model for better health and wellbeing, and for healthy and active ageing.

Non-formal learning, unlike formal learning, happens outside organised education. It is a mutual experience with no strict hierarchies - everyone shares their skills and learns from each other. There are no qualifications as continued learning is its own reward. The u3a is arguably one of the biggest and most successful examples of non-formal learning in the world.

Now, a report published by u3a suggests that non-formal learning can help tackle loneliness, encourage social connection, and even improve the health of participants and wider communities. The u3a model embodies the five ways to promote wellbeing - connecting, being active, taking notice, continuing to learn, and giving. It also tackles ageist attitudes and stereotypes. u3a members are active participants in society who continue to learn and give back to their communities.

The report calls for greater recognition of the value of non-formal learning and for more resources to enable access to many more who could benefit.

"The u3a movement contributes so much to society. It not only supports people to continue learning and engaging in life, but it draws people together and helps to build strong, connected communities. This is a vital antidote to the widespread and devastating effects of loneliness and social isolation." Says Harriet Radermacher, author of the report and Policy Manager at the Third Age Trust.

"We hope that this report will raise awareness of the value of non-formal learning and generate momentum to ensure this low cost and accessible option is available for people of all ages to come together and stay healthy and active."

You can read the [full report here](#).

## NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



### Coffee Morning

Join us every Wednesday from 10am – 11.30am at The Methodist Church Centre in Syston. Staff and Volunteers host a welcoming environment where everyone is invited to join in, chat, and make new

friends. With an average of 25 to 35 attendees per week, there's always a warm atmosphere awaiting you.

Participate in our fun activities like Raffles and Bingo, or sit back and enjoy guest speakers, demonstrations, and entertainment scheduled throughout the year. Tea, coffee and Biscuits are included. Plus learn more about our membership benefits and exciting trips exclusively offered to our members.

Contact us on 0116 2601 476 or visit our office for further details.



**ST PETER & ST PAUL CHURCH  
SYSTON  
CHRISTMAS  
TREE FESTIVAL**

**Friday 6th December 4pm - 8pm**  
**Saturday 7th December 10am - 4pm**  
**Sunday 8th December 1pm - 4pm**  
**Advent Carol service 4pm**

MULLED WINE IN CHURCH FRIDAY  
 CAFE AND STALLS IN THE CHURCH CENTRE SATURDAY

**Suggested donation £2.00**  
**\*\*Children free\*\***

w.hardy147@gmail.com

**TUESDAY 26 - FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**SYSTON QT THEATRE GROUP PRESENTS**

**Perfect 10**

**12 little plays to shout & sing about!**  
 Directed by **JUDE LATHAM**  
 Music Direction by **LEIGH WHITE**

**TICKETS £10**  
 Book online at: [qttheatregrp.co.uk](http://qttheatregrp.co.uk)  
 or call: **07989 960014**

**Featuring plays by:**  
 Paula Boyle  
 Chris Brannick  
 Tony Domaille  
 Jonathan Edgington  
 Sally Edwards  
 Stewart Grant  
 Livy Potter  
 Jane Scampton  
 Sarah-May Simpson  
 Leonie Thompson  
 Matthew Wignall

**THE OLD CHAPEL  
CHapel STREET  
SYSTON | LE7 1GN**

All plays were winners or runners up in the 10key Playhouse 8x8x8 Festivals of 2020/1 and 2022/3

## Loughborough's Art Deco Heritage Exhibition



■ Thu, 7th Nov 2024 - Thu, 30th Jan 2025 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays  
 📍 Loughborough Library

Loughborough's Art Deco Heritage Exhibition by Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteer Group

## Loughborough Fair



■ Wed, 13th Nov 2024 - Sat, 16th Nov 2024 📍 Loughborough town centre

Loughborough Fair will return from Wednesday November 13 until Saturday November 16, 2024.

# Leir of Leicester – The archaeology behind the legend

The tragedy of King Lear, a mythical king of Britain, was famously retold by William Shakespeare but the legend of Leir of Britain is much older and directly connected with the founding of Leicester. In 1606, a year after Shakespeare wrote his play, the King's Men reputedly visited Leicester and it is possible they performed King Lear in the Guildhall. Join archaeologist Mathew Morris to find out more about Leicester's mythological founder and the archaeology behind the legend.

more information [here](#)

# Leicester Christmas Market

Leicester Christmas Market - New for This Year!

Experience the amazing atmosphere of Leicester's brand-new Christmas Market, right in the heart of the city on Gallowtree Gate. From November 14th to December 29th, come along to a festive wonderland filled with delightful treats, unique gifts, and classic Christmas cuisine.

Join us for a truly magical Christmas in Leicester

more information [here](#)

## Christmas Wreath Making Workshops

Christmas Wreath Making Workshops 2024 at The Exchange Bar (LE1 1RD)

Get into the festive spirit and join us for one of our Christmas wreath-making workshops. Choose between two unique experiences—traditional or contemporary—both designed to help you create your own beautiful, personalized wreath. Perfect for getting into the holiday mood!

Come along for a cozy, crafty afternoon at The Exchange Bar and make your own traditional Christmas wreath. Liga will guide you step by step to create a beautiful wreath that you, your family, and friends will love!

more information [here](#)

## FROM OUR MEMBERS

### **A Simple Sandwich, Thoughts on Helping and Humility** from Michael Wherton

The other day, my wife and I were out for one of our habitual walks, the kind where you talk about absolutely nothing and everything all at once. We decided to pop into one of those high street food stores and pick up a couple of pre-packed sandwiches. You know the sort—flimsy, triangular plastic cases filled with something that vaguely resembles food. We thought we'd have them for lunch later. Nothing too exciting, just a casual, grab-and-go meal.

But as life often does, it threw a small curveball our way. We bumped into some friends and, before we knew it, lunch plans took a turn for the social. Instead of munching our sandwiches in solitude, we found ourselves on our way to a restaurant, where we'd actually have a "proper" meal. So, off we went, arm in arm, making our way down the street, my sandwiches now a tad redundant.

It was on this very stroll that I noticed a young woman sitting cross-legged on the pavement, looking downcast and holding a cardboard sign. The kind you've seen a thousand times: Unemployed - Homeless - Hungry - Please help. And, of course, the sandwiches I had in hand suddenly seemed like a ready-made solution. A small, kind gesture. A simple transaction, if you will.

With all the grace of a modern-day Good Samaritan, I approached her, offering my sandwich with the kind of generosity that might have landed me a medal if anyone had been watching.



But instead of gratitude, I got a look. The sort of look you might reserve for someone who's just tried to sell you an encyclopaedia set in the age of Google. She glanced at the sandwich, gave me a little frown, and said, quite matter-of-factly, "I'm vegetarian. And I don't eat white bread anyway."

Now, I don't often find myself at a loss for words, but this? This left me momentarily speechless. I must have stood there, sandwich still in hand, blinking in confusion, before retreating back to my wife with an awkward shuffle, sandwich and pride both slightly bruised. Naturally, I told my wife what had happened, adding a little dash of indignation for flavour. I might've even mumbled something about ungratefulness and how, if one is truly hungry, dietary preferences might just be a luxury. "She should have a sign that says cash only if that's the deal," I quipped, feeling clever in my exasperation.

My wife, who possesses the unique ability to remain silent long enough to give the impression she's about to say something profoundly wise, didn't immediately respond. She just walked alongside me, digesting my words.

Later, after a good amount of thoughtful mulling, she finally spoke. "Why should she give up her dignity or beliefs just because she's homeless?" she asked, as if this were the most obvious thing in the world.

Now, I hate to admit it, but this made me pause. You see, I had been ready to file this whole incident under "The World's Going Mad" and move on. But my wife's question got under my skin. It wasn't one of those statements you could dismiss with a wave of the hand. It demanded a little reflection.

A spirited husband-and-wife debate ensued, of course. The sort where neither side concedes, but both sides leave feeling smugly victorious. I argued that in desperate times, you take what you can get—food, shelter, whatever's on offer. My wife countered, quite reasonably, that just because someone is homeless doesn't mean they lose their right to choose or to hold onto whatever shreds of personal values they have left.

We didn't reach any grand conclusions, as is often the case with these types of discussions. We both made our points, retired to neutral corners, and moved on with our day. But I couldn't quite shake the incident, and later, I found myself wondering: Was I too quick to judge? Do we, as a society, expect the homeless to abandon all preferences, all individuality, in the face of survival?

It's an odd thought, really, that when someone's down on their luck, we might assume they should be grateful for anything—regardless of what it is. It's as if homelessness should strip you of choice, of standards. And yet, shouldn't holding onto those very things, however small—like preferring brown bread over white, or choosing to be vegetarian—be a sign of resilience?

In the end, I don't think I have a clear answer. Maybe it's not about right or wrong. Maybe it's about understanding that dignity and choice don't disappear just because the roof over your head has. And perhaps, in my eagerness to help, I missed the point entirely. What do you think?

## Grass from Pierre Castille

Short words are in short supply as there are only so many letters in our alphabet, so we reserve them for important things such as food, fire, sex, etc. leaving the more numerous long words for less important things like intercooler or brachiopod. Such is the competition for the use of short words that many of them have several meanings.

A short word with a number of meanings worthy of some exploration.

**Grass (noun) slang** (British) Police informant



Norman Stanley Fletcher - Ronnie Barker

A **grass (noun)** as any criminal will tell you, is British slang for a police informer. When I was eighteen I had cause to visit the local police station. The duty policemen seemed interested when I told him my bicycle had been stolen. "Could I possibly wait until he had concluded other business Sir?"

"Would I mind if he asked me to go into the waiting room Sir?"

"Would I object if there was someone else in the room Sir?"

"Would I mind if he locked the door Sir?"

Just as I was getting used to the idea of being called sir, the waiting room door was unlocked, I was pushed in, and the door was locked behind me.

"What have they got you for?" said the scrawny youth of a similar age.

"Stealing bicycles," I replied.

After a period of silence the scrawny youth said "The police are stupid, they will never find it. I have hidden it in the coal shed. "

After a further pause, the door opened and I was bundled out and then asked "Did he say anything?"

After thanking me, a second policeman explained that I would never see my bicycle again, but if I visited the Central Police Station of Saturday morning and asked for Sergeant Sutton he would show me a collection of recovered bicycles and I could choose one!

**Grass (verb)**



If angling is your pastime then you may choose to use **grass (verb)** to mean landing a fish, not any old fish: gamefish, such as trout or salmon.



A younger yours truly catching a weaver fish

The gloves were necessary to protect me from the venom of the very small fish. Its spines can inject a powerful and very painful poison that is more toxic than a sting ray's venom.

**Grass (noun) slang Cannabis**

I expect you thought I was going to write about plants, and indeed you would be correct, so without further ado, let me introduce you to a plant materials you could buy on a shady corner in a less salubrious part of town.





**Cannabis sativa, known as hemp, grass and other names.**

Once, a very common crop commercially known as hemp. *Sativa* means *cultivated*. The plant contains long strong fibres that were used to make rope, a very important commodity in the days of sailing ships. It is one of the earliest plants used by mankind. Recipes for the use of hemp to treat a variety of illnesses are found in ancient writings.

Once a common crop, why don't we see it being grown commercially anymore? – To answer your question we need to look at the politics of the USA in the 1920's and 30's. A puritan element of American society objected to ordinary people (by their standards, the less-worthy) enjoying life. Hence the introduction of censorship in the film industry, prohibition of alcohol and a prohibitive tax on the growing of hemp.

Now, if some religiously inspired politician stood up and said he wanted to ban the growing of a profitable crop the farmers would object. The abolitionists employed a very clever trick. Don't call it hemp, call it something else. Tell the American voters that bad Mexicans grow a crop called marijuana that must be banned! Only after they have voted for the ban let it be known that marijuana is hemp and tell the farmers that it really isn't a ban – just an enormous tax increase that will make growing of hemp unprofitable. Hemp is a very useful plant and the Americans had to buy hemp from the Far East – not a problem until the outbreak of WW2 when

supplies of an essential material were cut off, so the growing of hemp was encouraged once again.

**Grass (noun)** Plant, member of the Poaceae.

Flowering plants are called **angiosperms** to distinguish them from the other major type of land plant we call **gymnosperms**. Angiosperms produce seeds from their flowers, gymnosperms have seeds in cones.

Some people are surprised to learn that grass has flowers, only because they are familiar with brightly coloured, and often perfumed flowers such as roses.



**Meadow foxtail grass flower spike – one of the 160 native species of grass in the UK**

You know about bees and other insects visiting flowers to harvest food such as pollen and nectar. Grass doesn't waste valuable resources on advertising (large colour petals) and wages (for to attract insects) when it can use the wind, a free resource, to carry the pollen from the gentleman parts of a flower to a lady part on a different plant. The down side of wind pollination is that huge amounts of pollen have to be produced, as anyone who suffers from hay fever will be well aware. As mammals, we can hardly criticize plants for the wastefulness of male gamete production.

A Russian study of pollen production showed that each anther of rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*)

produced 4,000 pollen grains. Each flower has two anthers and each flower spike has several flowers.

To the untrained eye, all grasses look the same – long and narrow green leaves. This is in contrast to most other leaves that are much broader.



Narrow leafed grass  
(Monocot)



Broad leafed blackberry  
(Dicot)

Grasses grow almost everywhere on land and in fresh water. There are only two species of flowering plant that are native to Antarctica and one of them is a grass!

**Grass is the most important plant in Human history. It is not an exaggeration to say that it is the basis of civilisation and a key player in our history.**

Wheat, whose ancestor Spelt kick-started the agricultural revolution that gave rise to civilisation.

Edible grass seeds are known as cereals, after the Roman goddess Ceres. They form the bulk of human energy providing foods.

Straw, the dried stems of cereal crops can be



mixed with clay to form bricks. If you remember

your history from school days you will recall the Israelites enslaved in Egypt being forced to make bricks without straw.

Brick making in Egypt, a model found in tomb



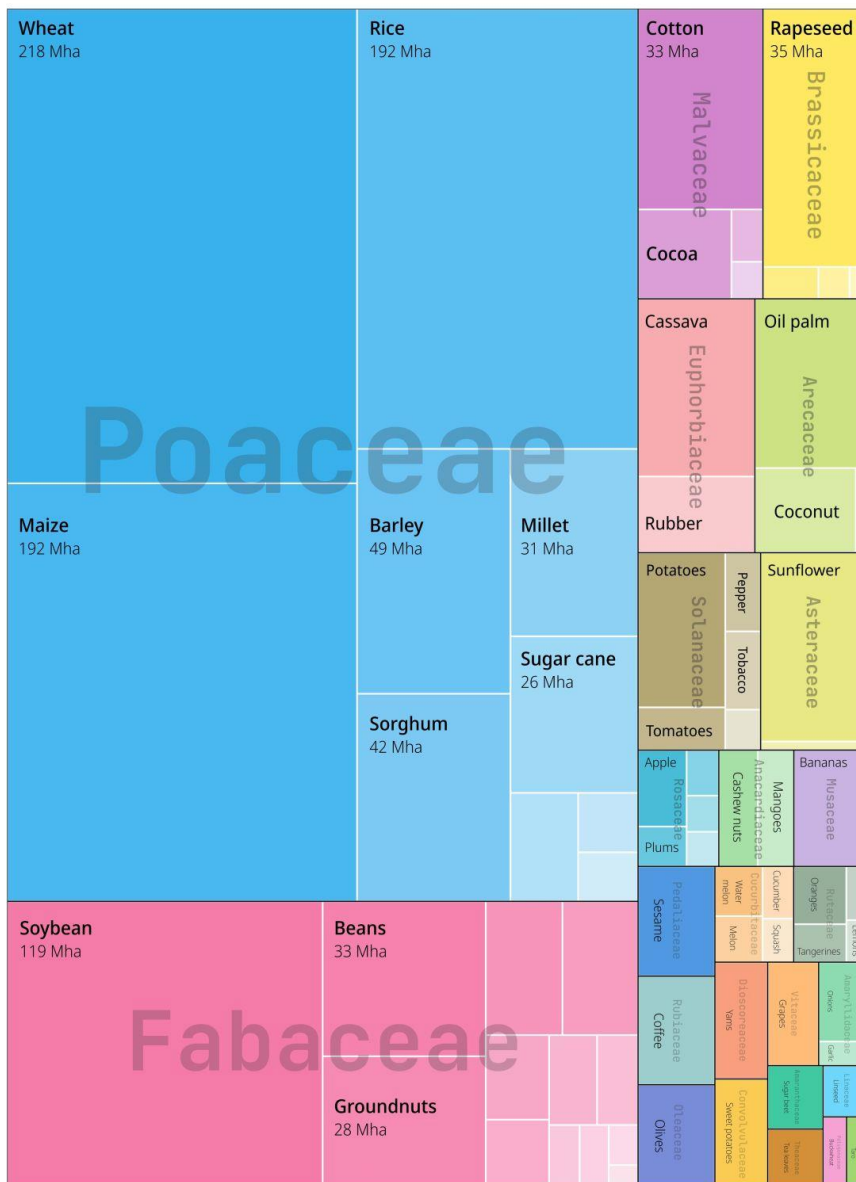
Bamboo, a grass, the fastest growing plant and an important building material (My wife for comparison)

Grasses will play an important part in the future as a source of bio-fuels to replace petroleum.



# Crops of the World

The size of each species is proportional to harvested area.



Data FAOStats (average from 2011 to 2021) | Plot Benjamin Nowak

This graphic shows the predominance of grasses in agriculture.



The table does not show the huge amount of pasture land used to convert grass into delicious

meat. Increased meat eating gave rise to brain development in our ancestors.



Barley the

basis of beer!

History is stuff that happened before you were born. I now want to mention a development that has happened in our lifetime. Wheat production, our most important crop, is limited by the strength of straw. Originally wheat grew very tall. An American biologist, **Norman Borlaug** bred a short stemmed variety of wheat that allowed further development of higher yields doubling the amount of grain produced. This development reduced the amount of hunger in the world considerably.

In recognition of this amazing achievement Borlaug was awarded

to Nobel Peace Prize in 1970



Norman Borlaug (1914 – 2009)

## DECLUTTER DEN

Do you have anything sitting in a cupboard, or on a shelf, that you no longer want? Might one of our members or groups be able to make use of it?



Clearing out the loft and found these. Could you please add them to the declutter section of Vitality. They are industrial strength storage boxes.

My phone 07796-322567 Michael Wherton



The above microwave is surplus to requirements following my recent bereavement, it's less than 2 years old, but the one I inherited from my father was only 10 days old. Call me on 0789 6016719 if you would like to put it to use - Julie Johnson





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](mailto:sadu3aed@gmail.com)

## POETRY CORNER

### ANYTHING GOES ON ALL HALLOWS EVE

BY PATRICIA A FLEMMING

The sun set in the early eve.  
No light could pierce those mammoth trees.  
Dark and dense for miles wide,  
You could wander lost forever inside.

Oh, the tales of horror that Forest weaved  
Of monsters and ghosts behind each tree.  
Werewolves howling at the fullest moon  
Those screeches of witches and baleful loons.

We'd hike all day and camp at night  
When those campfire stories would fill us with  
fright.  
Tales of terror too grim to conceive  
But anything goes on All Hallows' Eve.

We knew we wouldn't get much sleep.  
Instead, we'd listen to footsteps creep.  
We'd watch the shadows in the firelight,  
Staying quiet and safely out of sight.

Blood splatters upon the walls of our tent.  
We'd cling and we'd cry, repent and lament.  
We'd tell ourselves that it was all make-believe  
And that anything goes on All Hallows' Eve.

The night was so black, and the air was so  
chilled,  
The hours passed by as if time had stood still.  
Some fetid, foul creature whispered nearby,  
And from deep in the woods came a scared  
baby's cry.

Some would become full of panic and fear,  
They'd run into the forest and just disappear!  
Filled with such horror, they'd suddenly flee  
Forgetting anything goes on All Hallows' Eve.

We would doze off and awake, again and again  
Until the harrowing night finally came to an  
end.  
And we'd wait for the welcome light of the day  
And see another Halloween just creep away.

Then the sound of the leaves in the soft autumn  
breeze  
And the sun peeking through those fluttering  
leaves  
Filled us with so much relief inside  
We couldn't believe we had somehow survived.

But we'll do it again come this time next year,  
With no trepidations, hesitation, or fear,  
Because nothing was really as sinister as it  
seemed  
It's just that anything goes on All Hallows' Eve.



## If You've Never

Elsie M. Fowler

If you've never seen an old witch  
Riding through the sky,  
Or never felt big bat's wings  
Flopping, as they fly . . .  
If you've never touched a white thing  
Gliding through the air,  
And knew it was a ghost because  
You got a dreadful scare . . .  
If you've never heard the night owls,  
Crying, "Whoo-whoo-whoo?"  
And never jumped at pumpkin eyes  
Gleaming out at you . . .  
If all of these exciting things  
You've never heard nor seen,  
Why then, you've missed a lot of fun,  
Because . . . that's Halloween!

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## Halloween Host

Juanita Johnson

Witches, clowns, and scarecrows, too  
This night was set aside for you.  
Call the goblins, call the ghosts,  
Tonight I'll be a gracious host.  
And I will serve you special treats,  
Candied apples, dainty sweets.  
Popcorn balls and lollipops,  
Candy bars and lemon drops.  
I'll keep the porchlight burning bright  
So you can find your way tonight.  
Just ring the bell and you will see  
How very gracious I can be.  
Yes, I'm a willing host, that's true,  
And I expect no tricks from you!

©





## And finally.....



An elderly couple, celebrating their 60th anniversary, found themselves in an unexpected situation. Childhood sweethearts, they had moved back to their old neighbourhood after retiring and decided to take a nostalgic walk to their former school, where they discovered the desk Jerry had once carved with "I love you, Sally." On their way home, fate intervened when a bag of money—£50,000—fell from an armoured car, landing right at their feet. Sally, thinking fast, picked it up and took it home, much to Jerry's dismay.

The next day, two police officers knocked on their door, asking if they had found the missing money. Sally denied it, but Jerry, confused and eager to tell the truth, blurted out that she had hidden it in the attic. As Sally tried to brush it off, claiming Jerry was "getting senile," Jerry began recounting their day—starting with "when Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday..." At that point, the officers gave up and left, realizing they weren't getting anywhere with this hilarious couple!

After sixty years, I finally have everything I wanted as a teenager. No more school or work obligations—I receive a monthly allowance, have my own place, and enjoy the freedom of no curfew. I possess a driver's license and my own car. My friends aren't worried about teenage pregnancy, and thankfully, I no longer have acne. Life is wonderful. I even replaced my car horn with gunshot sounds; it seems to make people move out of the way much quicker. Gone are the days when girls cooked like their mothers; now, they drink like their fathers. I missed going to the gym today, marking five years in a row.

Old age is arriving at the worst possible time.

- As a child, I thought "nap time" was a punishment, but now it feels like a mini vacation.
- The biggest lie I tell myself is, "I don't have to write that down; I'll remember it."
- I don't have gray hair—I have "wisdom highlights"! I'm just very wise.
- If God wanted me to touch my toes, He'd have placed them on my knees.
- Last year, I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.
- Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?
- Of course, I talk to myself. Sometimes I need expert advice.
- At my age, "getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering why I went in there.

I have more friends I should send this to, but I can't remember their names right now. Now, I'm wondering... did I steal this meme from you, or did you steal it from me?

