

System and District

**u3a**

learn, laugh, live

**AUG  
2023**

# *Vitality!*

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

## FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone

Well, what has happened to the summer, but I have heard that we can expect some warmer weather in August.

I briefly mentioned in last month's report that we would be at the Help is at Hand event at the System Summer Fate on September 2nd. The event will be open from 12.00pm until 6pm and I was hoping some members would volunteer a couple of hours of their time to help us. I thought that if we split the time in to 3 x 2-hour sessions members could have a look at the other attractions as well helping at our table. If you would like to volunteer for either the 12-2pm, 2-4pm or 4-6pm time slots you can email me at [sadu3achair@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3achair@gmail.com) or speak to me at the next members meeting on Wednesday 9th August.

I hope to see you all soon.

Clive

## WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

### ANYONE FANCY A BIT OF SWINGING?

Yes, that's right, going down to Beedles Lake Golf Club Driving Range, and having a go. This is for people who've never played golf but always fancied swinging a club. You'd get the feel of a golf club, hit a few balls - well, about 27 - and then after building up an appetite, maybe a bit of lunch at the 19th Hole - the Clubhouse to you and me - where they do reasonably priced bar snacks and meals.



Yes, I know you could easily go down on your own, but would you? Have you? Where's the fun in that? I can almost guarantee we'd have a bit of a laugh, no competition, just a shared experience.

The proposed date is Tuesday 26th September, meeting at 10.30. The Range has 18 tees but we're looking at booking 6 so that up to 20 people could go, taking it in turns. A bucket of 54 balls costs £4, so we'd be sharing, most likely 2 or possibly 3 per bucket, depending on numbers. Anyone wanting to eat would need to pre order a few days beforehand.

If you are interested, please let us know, then we can firm up the arrangements.

Thanks for reading.

Ghislaine Wood email: [woodlet7@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:woodlet7@yahoo.co.uk)

## SmARTsy Fusion Glass Workshop



Take up of names for the Smartsy workshop has been very good. I have currently 19 names and will be collecting the cash at the u3a meeting in August.

I will notify everyone who has given me their names by email.

If there are other people interested, I will put them on a standby list in case anyone has to drop out.

Elaine Yarwood [elaineyarwood@outlook.com](mailto:elaineyarwood@outlook.com)

See more at <https://smartsy.co.uk>



# GROUP NEWS

## IMAGINARIUM



A summary of our recent meeting and plans for our August get together.

Stretching the imagination and storytelling, can be approached in many different ways, and as a new group, we're experimenting with a few of these to see what works best at getting the little grey cells working. Using word, items and picture prompts, we developed stories where facts were few, but we could go off into a new place where our version is all that matters.

Here's an example of one of the items we examined. What do these characters tell you? Where are they from, and what is their story? The group will meet again on August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm in Pat's Garden in Syston if the weather allows. We still have some places available for members to join us, so contact Pat at [pat27wherton@gmail.com](mailto:pat27wherton@gmail.com) for more information.

Members have volunteered to bring along three things

1. A 'story starter' statement that we all will build upon
2. A portable item that has a story behind it for the rest of us to delve in to and come up with our own interpretation.
3. A work related story from our own experience

Best wishes, Pat

## CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

We arrived at the library for our session to find their "smart access" system was out of action. We decided to retire to a café for a drink and a chat. We talked about the different approaches writers have to producing work and agreed one size doesn't fit all. Authors under contract to produce books at set intervals may sit down at set times, writing for a set time. As group members are writing for pleasure, this approach doesn't appeal. Some writers will have a story fully mapped out before they start to write it, others may have basic outline, but will allow themselves the freedom to go off in a different direction once they set pen to paper. Some will write a story in strict sequence, beginning, middle, end; others may write the key incidents first, then stitch them together. Whatever works for an individual is fine.

Next month members have been challenged to set out a story based on their own experience, or that of someone they know, or to take a well known story, but rewrite it from a different angle e.g. Little Red Riding Hood from the perspective of the wolf.

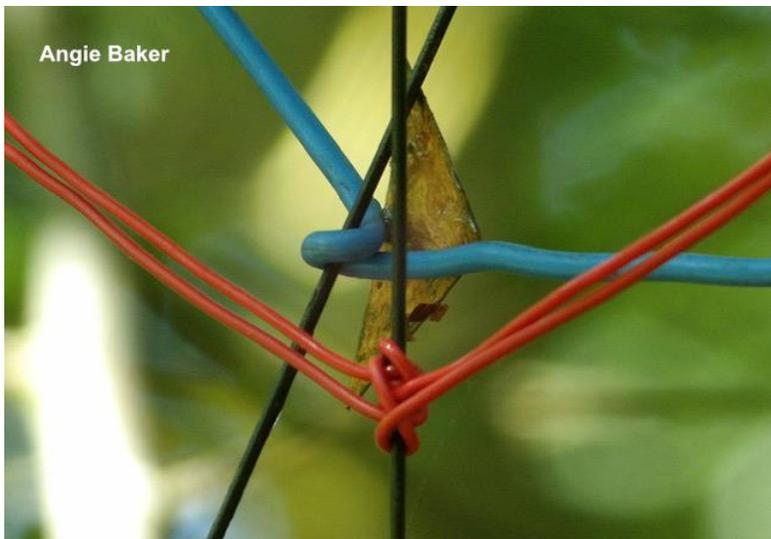
If you'd like to join us, we meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at Syston Library starting at 2.00pm, (next session 25<sup>th</sup> Aug) email your editor [sadu3aed@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3aed@gmail.com) for more info, or to let me know you intend to come along.

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

On the last Thursday in June the Photography Group visited the Beacon Hill Sculpture Trail. We welcomed 2 new members and 13 of us came along for the walk.

The Sculpture Walk starts from the Upper Car Park and is a pleasant 2 mile walk around the trail, locating all the different works of art by local groups and people.

After the walk, we had a drink and a chat on one of the many benches located around the car park. Well worth a visit and it is open until September 17<sup>th</sup> and is free to all (car park charges apply)



## FEELING CRAFTY GROUP



The 'Feeling Crafty' group have been making book marks, cards and decorating glass jars using pressed flowers. We have been collecting suitable flowers and leaves from our gardens, country walks and beaches, pressing them in heavy books and then gluing them onto cards and jars. This is just some we have made so far, hope you like them!

Helen DISLEY

## FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

A few days before the meeting, the GRO (General Register Office) which hold copies of birth, marriage and death registrations since the start of civil registration in 1837, announced a new service. For some early periods, an electronic download of birth or death details can now be obtained without having to wait for staff involvement. This applies to births from 1837 to 1922, and deaths from 1837 - 1887. You simply search for the entry in the indexes, order, pay and an image that you can download and save can be seen straightaway. All for the princely sum of £2.50, (compared to £11.00 for a paper copy, or £7.00 for a pdf). A paper certificate can take up to 2 weeks to arrive, a pdf takes 3-5 days to be produced. This cheaper, quicker, access is invaluable to family historians.

I was lucky enough to be involved with the private beta testing of this system, so was able to share my knowledge of using it with the rest of the group. Wi-fi facilities at the Community Centre allowed some live demos on the GRO system, along with the use of other birth and death indexes to aid finding entries. Whilst the GRO indexes contain details not

found on some of the others, searching them is not as user friendly as it might be, so using other records can be helpful.

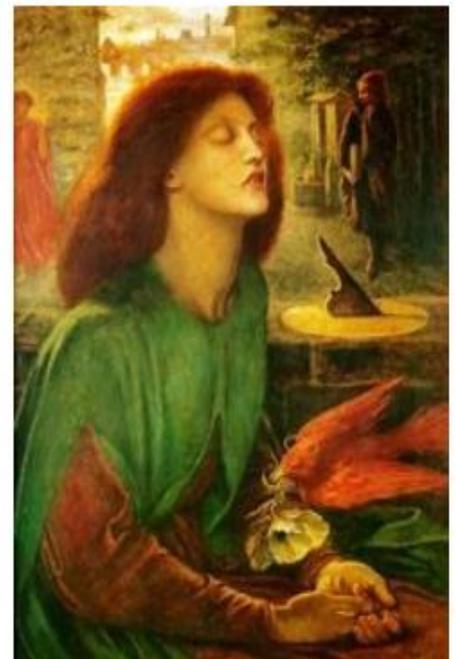
If you'd like to find out how to research and build you family tree, without spending a fortune, come along and join our group. We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month 10.00 – 12.00 at the Syston Community Centre. Contact [sadu3afamilyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3afamilyhistory@gmail.com) for more information.

## ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Our meeting in July proved to be another very interesting one.

Michael spoke about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood who were a group of artists in the mid 1800s who wanted to return art to more medieval style. Their use of intense colour and detail contrasts with the Impressionists working at a similar time.

Then Mel gave a very interesting introduction to Dadaism. Not a genre many of us were familiar with. The aim of this movement was to shock and the artists used photo montage and collage as well as paint.



Again a lively discussion ensued. Thanks again to all those who contributed to the meeting.

We decided not to meet in August as many were unavailable so our next meeting will be on September 6<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at Syston Community Centre. We are holding a fun quiz to recap what we have done so far and then Peter is going to present Romanticism.

If you would like to join us please contact Michael Wherton via the website.

## PARCHMENT CRAFT GROUP

For the Parchment Craft Group our July meeting means the start of Christmas preparations! Each year we create Christmas cards, decorations and other seasonal items alongside other designs for more general use throughout the year. The photograph below shows some of the things we are working on at the moment. Unfortunately, the group is full and we are unable to take additional members at the moment.

Lyn Palmer



## WHAT'S ON NEXT

### GENERAL MEETINGS

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

**August 9th, 2023: Philip Caine, Barrow to Baghdad & Back Again**

(My career story) My talk begins with me leaving school . . . I talk about how my career began as a chef and hotel manager. My 17 years working the oil rigs in the North Sea. Followed by operating projects in Algeria & Nigeria.. My time in Kazakhstan & Russia was particularly exciting. Not to mention the most dangerous place of all . . . Baghdad. My career culminated in Dubai where I ran an oil services company. The talk is full of interest, anecdotes, humour, and inspiration. I conclude with the writing of my latest novel (currently number 10).



**September 13th, 2023: Melody Flyte - The Development of the Great American Songbook**



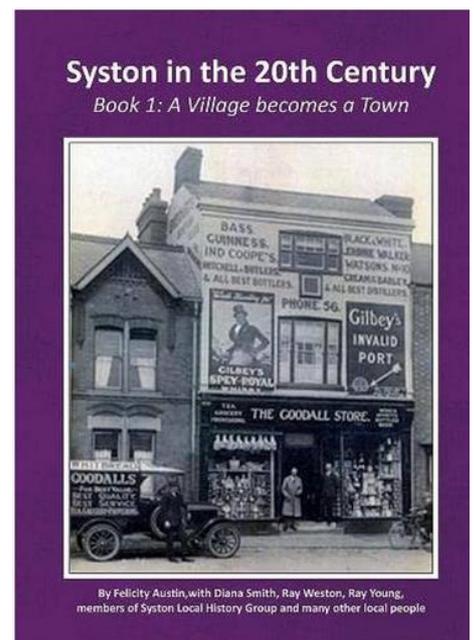
A talk about the development of the Great American Songbook - the songs of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Dorothy Fields and others, mainly living and working in New York City. Starting with the publishing revolution in Tin Pan Alley, via the influences of jazz, blues and ragtime, the Great American Songbook changed popular song and musical theatre forever.

Featuring songs including You're the Top, Over the Rainbow and Ain't Misbehavin'.

**11<sup>th</sup> October 2023: The History of Syston - Felicity Austin**

This will be the story of how I came to write the two history books on Syston in the 20th Century, which I completed during the pandemic.

An illustrated talk with lots of old photographs on the area.



## LAST MONTH'S GM

I wasn't able to attend the GM to learn about Belly Dancing. When I looked online for some insights, I found a lot of conflicting information. There seem to be many theories about it's origins. These vary from where it originated, Egypt, the Middle East in general, Africa and even Asia; to when, everything from thousands of years ago to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With so much confusing detail, I decided that to attempt to write anything meaningful on this topic was a non-starter.

## TREASURE HUNT TIME APPROACHES!!

Not an official u3a event but one that you may be interested in.

Dave & I have put together a treasure hunt for you to walk round and hopefully enjoy.

Once again, this year, it will be on a Sunday afternoon following an OPTIONAL Sunday Lunch.

For those who have not done one of our hunts before, you are given sheets of cryptic clues which you use to find answers for, as you walk round a local village.

We will need names/numbers by **Friday August 4th** please but previously we have reached our maximum capacity considerably before the final date! Max number of 40 for lunch.

Date - Sunday August 20th

Times - Lunch 12:30, T. Hunt 1:45pm onwards

Cost - £2 per head (towards prizes)

- Lunch (main course) is around £13

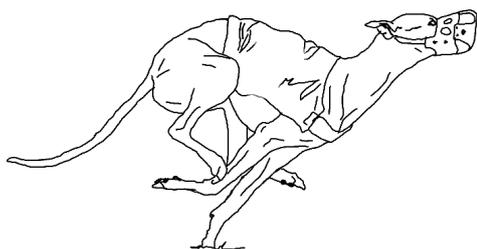
**Please indicate when booking whether lunch is required. It will be necessary to pre order your lunch - menu details will be sent in due course.**

**Details of where you need to go will be supplied nearer the time!!!**

***Lyn & Dave Palmer***

**[lynpalmer192@btinternet.com](mailto:lynpalmer192@btinternet.com)**

**07742 020672**



**Monday November 20<sup>th</sup>**

Put that date in your diaries if you want all the fun of

**Syston U3A's  
"Night at the Races"**

**This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year we have run this trip and it is now so popular that we have had to hire a larger coach.**

**Which means that we have a few extra seats if you fancy a night of fun with friends.**

The coach leaves for Nottingham Greyhound Racecourse at approx. 4.30 p.m.,

with pick up points in both Syston and Queniborough leaving Nottingham at 10p.m. to come home.

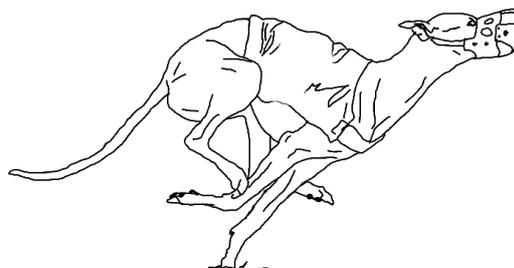
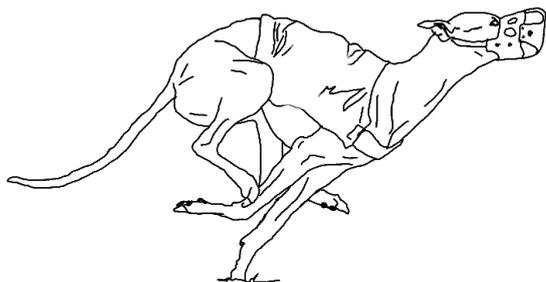
The cost only approx. **£36-£38**

This includes return coach fare, entry to the Racecourse, a Race card and an included 3 course meal.

Interested?

Contact Cynthia Baker on [cynjohnbaker@gmail.com](mailto:cynjohnbaker@gmail.com) or **0775 345 2831**

But hurry, only a few seats left.



**'Help, I need somebodies, won't you please, please, help me, help me, help meeee' !**

**Thanks to 'The Beatles' for that opening but 'Syston U3A' DOES need you !**



**On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 12 – 6 pm on Central Park in Syston** we are asking for Volunteers to support and help on our U3A stand, give information and generally chat to those showing interest in our Organisation and prospective membership. Based on my personal experience last year it is an enjoyable, sociable way to spend some time.

**Ideally 2 hours of your time is a huge benefit but even an hour offered whenever free is welcome. Time slots are 12-2 pm, 2-4 pm, 4-6 pm. Any and all offers of help are gratefully received. To confirm willingness to help and preferred time available please Email Clive Iliffe on [sadu3achair@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3achair@gmail.com).**

**An ending is provided by Andrew Gold singing 'thank you for being a friend' and my personal thanks too.**

**Jill**



## NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

### U3A TALKS



#### The Story of Lela Black

Jacqueline Luck tells the story of Lela Black, 1918 – 2008

Thurs 24 Aug at 2pm  
Free – online via zoom



#### Expedition Cruising: The Story of the Aleutian Islands

Neil Stevenson of Up Holland & District u3a shares his experience of visiting the Aleutian Islands

Thurs 10 Aug at 2pm  
Free – Online via Zoom



#### Heritage Open Days: your free invitation to explore

Join Sarah from Heritage Open Days to hear about the countless stories and places being celebrated with Heritage Open Days this September.

Fri 1 Sept at 2pm  
Free – Online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

## Send us your letter to your younger self

Writing a letter to your younger self can be a cathartic and extremely thought provoking experience. Do you have wisdom now that you wish you had back then?

Have a go at reflecting and putting your thoughts to paper in this creative exercise for u3a members.

Write a letter to send back through time, to a past version of yourself – what do you want to say to this person? What experiences and hindsight will you share? What advice do you give them?



A selection of members' letters, or extracts from them, will be shared on our website for members across the movement to read. Your letter can be anonymous or credited, whatever you prefer.

Richard Peoples, u3a Subject Adviser for Book Groups, has suggested:

*'In writing to your younger self you may want to reflect on one or more of the important things in life, such as love life and family, education and career, or you may want to give your younger self advice around something specific – like being more confident and worrying less about the small things.'*

Your letter can be as short as you like and up to 1500 words. We advise you to focus on one or two areas that you think your younger self would benefit from, rather than a full biography.

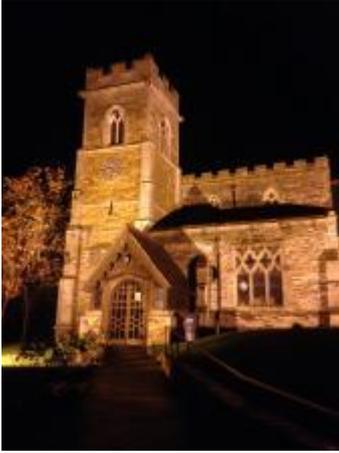
Trust volunteers will be involved in organising and handling submissions, of which some will be displayed on the u3a website.

When you are ready, you will need to fill in an online form to share your story.

[The form is here](#)

## NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

### CREAM TEAS AT ROTHERBY CHURCH



Rotherby Church will be open every Sunday afternoon during August and will providing their popular cream teas. The church will be open for the cream teas from 2pm to 4.30pm

If you're taking a walk along the lovely Wreake Valley, then do please call and visit the beautiful Parish Church, and have a Cream Tea while your visit.

All proceeds to Rotherby Church. For further details please contact Churchwarden Sue Smith on 01664 434175

**Time to  
nominate  
your . . .**



**Deadline for entries: August 14, 2023**

Charnwood residents are being urged to show their thanks for those who go above and beyond in the borough.

Charnwood Community Heroes is a chance to thank people in the local community who have carried out a good deed – no matter how small or large.

More details [here](#)

## DIRECTORY OF COMMUNITY GROUPS LAUNCHED

Syston and District Volunteer Centre announce the launch of a comprehensive Directory of groups which offer much-needed services and contribute to the well-being of our local communities. Many of them organised by volunteers, they offer social, cultural, sporting, educational, financial, health and emotional support to those in need, easing problems and enhancing the quality of life for people of all ages.

Syston and District

Volunteer  
Centre

Registered Charity No: 510412

and Centre Trustee, Colin Grimes, says: “Syston and neighbouring communities are exceptionally well-served by a wide range of organisations and companies offering such support. This on-line Directory ([www.syston-vc.org](http://www.syston-vc.org)) offers a “one-stop” guide and clearly demonstrates that, whatever the need might be, there is a **local** solution. Many of these groups operate “under the radar” with a great deal of work being put in by small but dedicated groups of volunteers. As a result, too many local residents “suffer in silence”, experiencing great inconvenience, distress and loneliness simply through ignorance of what support is available locally. With the help of the Volunteer Centre, the Directory is intended to address these deficiencies by “signposting” those in need to appropriate sources of support.”

Printed copies of the Directory will be available from the Volunteer Centre’s stand at the “**Help is at Hand!**” pavilion at the Syston Summer Fayre, on Central Park on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The special pavilion will feature a number of the community organisations involved. Others will be exhibiting independently at the event. At the time of writing a small number of stands are available, at a subsidised rate, offering an exceptional, low-cost opportunity to promote services, recruit more members, attract volunteer support and raise funds - all with the minimum of organisational effort.

Entry into the Directory is free of charge. Any organisation that would like to be included and/or would like to book a space in the pavilion - should contact Centre Trustee, Colin Grimes ([sadv@btinternet.com](mailto:sadv@btinternet.com)) for a simple Registration Form.

## Participants Aged Over 70 Wanted for Research into Liquid Food Supplements

I'm a Lecturer at Loughborough University and I'm undertaking a research study investigating how we can improve older adults' adherence to oral nutrition supplements (such as Fortisip or Complian) when they are prescribed. I was wondering whether I might be able to digitally advertise this study to your U3A membership, perhaps by sharing a short advert (attached) with your members via an email or a regular newsletter. Chris McCleod

Researchers at Loughborough University, Aston University and University of Leeds are looking for adults aged 70 years and over to take part in a research study.

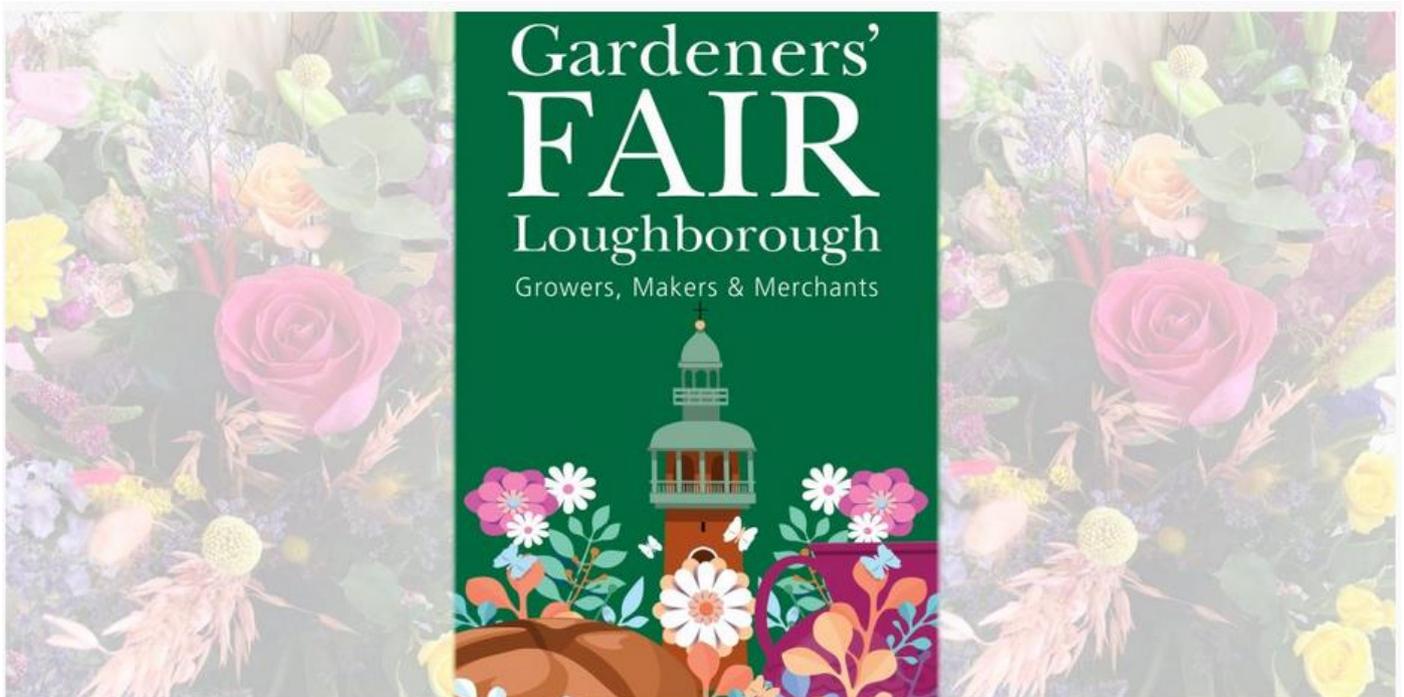
We are looking to explore older adults’ interactions with oral nutritional supplements. These are low-volume, high-calorie liquid food supplements often used to improve people’s nutrition and health.



In the study, you will be asked to consume some oral nutritional supplements over a four-week period. You will take part in the study from your residence (there is no need to travel).

You can receive up to £40 of One4All gift vouchers for taking part in this study.

If you are over 70 years old and live in the community (i.e., not in residential care), please contact us via telephone (07730 762340) or email ([c.mcleod@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:c.mcleod@lboro.ac.uk)) to express your interest in taking part.



Gardeners can enjoy a new event being brought to the heart of Loughborough.

Love Loughborough BID has created the first Gardeners' Fair which will take place on Sunday, August 6 in the town centre.

The event is 'free to all visitors' who will be able to browse and buy plants, flowers and many other items for their garden. 'Artisan Makers' of all kinds, including food will be joining in to give the event a true 'Country Fair' atmosphere. We are also inviting local community groups to promote their work in anything 'green'!

The Gardeners' Fair takes place on Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 10am-4pm, in Devonshire Square and Cattle Market. See [www.gardenersfair.co.uk](http://www.gardenersfair.co.uk)

As part of the creation of the fair, Love Loughborough is also aiming to create a Beautiful 'Living Wall' in Devonshire Square. The wall will transform a drab, concrete façade above shops into a living, breathing wall of plants, bringing nature to the town centre.

# Not your average Dog Show

## About the event

### Barking Mad Dog Show at Mountsorrel

We are happy to announce that we will be back hosting our fun dog show at Mountsorrel this year. We do hope that it's not too hot this year, as we missed joining you last year. We like to be a bit different, bring fun for the whole family and allow everyone to show off their loved dog. This event is in aid of raising funds for Give A Dog A Chance, which help stray and homeless dogs.

The event is at Peppercorns, Mountsorrel Memorial Centre, Sun Aug 13, 2023, at 11:00 am



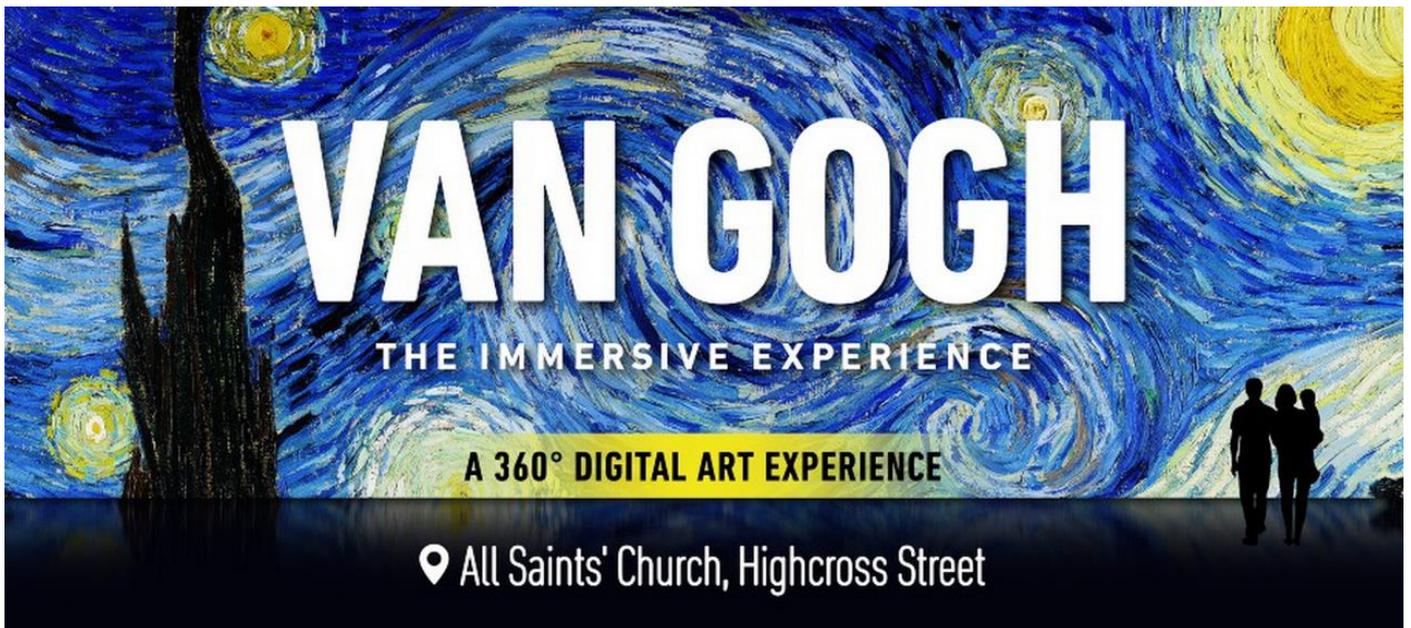
The poster for the Beaumanor Hall Summer Fair features a vibrant yellow and orange background with floral and leaf patterns. At the top left is an illustration of a large, multi-story building with a central tower, surrounded by trees. The text 'Beaumanor Hall' is in a simple serif font, and 'Summer Fair' is written in a large, elegant, pink cursive script. Below this, the dates 'Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August' and the time '10am - 4pm' are listed in a bold, pink sans-serif font. A green starburst graphic contains the text '£3 Entry' in a bold, blue sans-serif font. To the right of this, a pink banner with white text reads 'FREE PARKING'. Two inset images are included: one showing a variety of colorful ceramic mugs and vases, and another showing a basket of assorted pastries and breads.

Beaumanor Hall  
*Summer Fair*

Saturday 5 and  
Sunday 6 August  
10am - 4pm

**£3**  
Entry

**FREE PARKING**



Have you ever dreamt of stepping into a painting? Take an awe-inspiring journey into the world of Van Gogh, one of the greatest artistic geniuses of the 19th century, exploring his life, his work - and his secrets - as never before through cutting-edge 360 degree digital projections and a uniquely atmospheric light and sound show. [Book tickets here](#)



**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

12 noon until 6.00pm

Central Park

Syston

A fun family day out. Lots of different stalls, including a Gin bar and Beer tent, food stalls, mini rides. Entertainment all day from local groups and musicians.

## FROM OUR MEMBERS

### The Prodigal Mother

Nancy Bainbridge's doorbell rang, "See who that is Em", "Okay" was the reply. Emily opened the door, she knew exactly who the woman standing on the doorstep was, a woman she'd never expected to see in anything other than the photos she'd been shown. "Oh!", the woman stepped back in surprise "Have I gotten the right house for Nan Bainbridge?" she enquired. Emily was taken aback by the American twang, although she realised that she shouldn't have been. The woman before her was still very attractive, her hair was perfectly coiffured, her face carefully made up, she had beautifully polished, manicured nails, was wearing good quality clothes. She looked at least ten years younger than she actually was.

“Who is it?” came the call from upstairs, “I think you’d better come Nan” Emily replied. Part-way down the stairs Nan Bainbridge caught sight of the figure on her threshold and froze. “You!” she exclaimed, there was a lengthy pause where the two women held each other’s gaze, “You’d best come in I suppose” she added and made her way down the remaining steps. “Shall I put the kettle on?” enquired Emily, Nan nodded. When Emily appeared from the kitchen they were seated in the lounge, Nan sitting stiffly upright and asking, “You still with that American airman then? Not that he’ll be an airman anymore I suppose”, “We got divorced, then I met Donald, but he ran off with his secretary, then George and I, I’m sure we’d still be together if he hadn’t had a heart attack, and Teddy and I broke up last year. I had to fight all of them to get a reasonable deal out of the divorces, and George hadn’t updated his will before he died, so his kids from his first marriage got everything. Life’s just not fair”.

They heard the click of the kettle cutting out having come to the boil, Nan looked up and Emily went back to the kitchen, returning with a tray loaded with teapot, mugs, and milk and sugar. Emily finally sat down and looked at the woman more closely. She knew the story, Nan had told it to her more than once. Daughter Grace had always been one for dancing and going out, she flitted from one boyfriend to another, spent most of her wages on clothes, shoes, visits to the hairdresser and the like, often giving Nan less than the board and lodging they had agreed. After a blazing row about this, Grace had left home to share a flat with a friend, or rather she turned up at her door and simply stayed. A few months later, Nan opened the door to find her standing there, suitcases and bags at her feet, announcing through a flood of tears that she was pregnant. Nan hadn’t been able to turn her away. She’d displayed no maternal instincts whatsoever after giving birth, leaving Nan to look after the baby. As soon as she had recovered and was at work again, she was back out on the town, spending her wages on herself, never mind if her daughter needed new clothes because she’d outgrown the ones she had. Less than a year from her return to live with Nan, she’d announced that she was marrying her US air force boyfriend and going to America. There’d never been any mention of taking the child with her. She’d send money for the baby she’d promised, but she never had. There had been no word from her from the day she walked out of the house to get married.

Grace looked Emily up and down, then looked at Nan. “Don’t I get an introduction then?”, Nan pursed her lips and after a pause opened them, “If you’d bothered to keep in touch, you wouldn’t need tellin’ that this is your own child”. Shock spread across her face before Grace spoke, “She’s been with you all this time?”, “No she hasn’t, not that you gave a monkeys where she was. She’s just been staying with me for a few days”, “Nan came out of hospital last week. She needed someone to keep an eye on her for a bit” put in Emily, “I’d some holiday left”. “She’s a damn sight more thoughtful than you ever were” Nan added. “You got a place of your own then?” asked Grace, ignoring her mother’s comment. “No, I live with Dad”, astonishment spread across her face. “With Michael?” she looked across at Nan, “But I never told you about him”.

Nan had assumed that Emily’s father hadn’t wanted to know when Grace fell pregnant. It was only a chance meeting with Anna, the girl whose flat she shared, that revealed otherwise. That hadn’t been until 4 months after Grace had left for the US. Michael Rouse had wanted to get married, wanted to be a father to his child, but Grace would have none of it. He was good enough to have fun with, but not good enough to marry she had told him. Anna had provided contact details and Nan had phoned him that Saturday afternoon. He turned up on her doorstep before the day was out, pressed money into her hands and promised to visit every week with more funds to help raise his daughter. Unlike Grace he’d lived up to his promise, his contribution was the difference between having to worry constantly about paying the bills and having enough so that they didn’t have to go without. About a year later he had come along one

Saturday afternoon and he wasn't alone. Emily was too young to remember when she had first met Louise, but both Nan and Dad had told her how she had taken to her straightaway. Louise had always added that the feeling had been mutual.

There had been a great deal of heartache and soul searching when Michael and Louise announced they were to marry and suggested that they take Emily into their home. They found a house in the same village. Nan didn't lose her granddaughter, Louise carried on working and she provided day time childcare. Later, when Emily was in school, she collected her and gave her tea. Michael or Louise came to pick her up when they finished work. They were never blessed with other children. Calling Louise Mum had been a natural consequence of living with her from a young age, but they had ensured that as soon as she was old enough to grasp that another woman had given birth to her, she was made aware of it. Nan had shown her photographs, had explained something of what had happened, had expanded on the details when she felt Emily was capable of absorbing them. She realised that she had never really felt the absence of the woman now sitting a few feet away from her, not even when they had lost Louise to cancer two years ago.

"So, do I have any other grandchildren I don't know about?", Nan's words broke through Emily's thoughts. Grace shook her head. Emily felt a little sorry for her, until she said, "I didn't want to go through all that again, feeling like a whale, not being able to wear nice things, not being able to do what you want, when you want". "So, why are you here?" Nan asked, "I thought it was about time I caught up with family again", "How long are you over here for?", "Oh, I haven't decided yet" she waved a hand airily as she spoke, "I think my daughter should get to know a little more about her mother". Emily looked Grace straight in the eye and said quietly, but firmly, "I lost my mother two years ago", "But I'm your mother", "No" Emily replied "You're the woman who gave birth to me", "But that makes me your mother", "There's a difference, you just don't realise it. You think you can turn up out of the blue, spend a little time with me, play at being mother, then go running off from any responsibility, again. No, I'm not interested, I've nothing more to say to you". With that, she picked up the tea tray and left Grace staring open mouthed at her back as she retreated to the kitchen.

That afternoon was the only time she had any contact with Grace. She only stayed a few minutes longer, left without enquiring into her daughter's life, or asking about Michael. It seems that Grace did contact other family members, bemoaning Nan and Emily's treatment of her, but none of them provided one iota of consolation. She had expected a welcome akin to that of the prodigal son, she couldn't understand why she hadn't received it. After a few days, no one heard anything more from her. She had simply booked out of her hotel and gone back to the US, in search of husband number five perhaps?

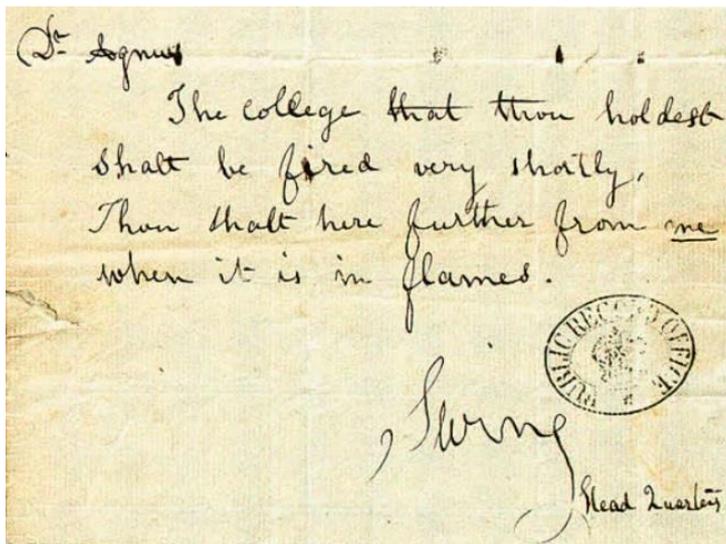
## **THE SWING RIOTS** by Julie Johnson

As a keen family historian, I usually watch the BBC program "Who do You Think You Are?". However, history in general also fascinates me. The most recent episode revealed that actress Lesley Manville had a 3x Great Grandfather who was involved with the Swing Riots. His punishment for attacking a local poor house was transportation to Australia.

I knew a little about these events, but the program prompted me to delve into them a little more. There is a wealth of information online. The riots have even provided graduates with enough material on which to produce a thesis, but I can't go into that level of detail here. However, as far as I recall, the BBC didn't explain why they were called the Swing Riots.

For the benefit of those who didn't see the TV program, the Swing Riots took place in 1830-31. The main cause of the riots was the introduction of horse-driven threshing machines in farming. They dealt with removing the grain from the rest of the plant, much more efficiently than manual labour. Some basic accounts of the riots fail to mention that this was not the only cause. There were many underlying causes, all of which resulted in the progressive impoverishment and dispossession of the English agricultural workforce over the previous fifty years, leading up to 1830. Not surprisingly, wages were a significant factor, especially in the south and east, where they had been suppressed, or had even decreased, due to farmers using the Speenhamland System to their advantage. This system allowed farmers to pay below subsistence wages, because the parish would make up the difference. So, the workers' low income was unchanged and the poor rate contributors subsidised the farmers. Its use had largely died out in many areas following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, but it remained in use in the south and east. In parliament Lord Carnarvon had said that 'The English labourer was reduced to a plight more abject than that of any race in Europe'.

The rioters also had issues with the poor law and workhouses, along with agricultural tithes and general oppression of the working classes. For these reasons, it wasn't just the threshing machines that were attacked, but hayricks and sometimes farm buildings were set alight and workhouses ransacked. Even places that had no apparent connection with the situation received threats – see example below sent to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. 600 rioters were imprisoned, 500 were sentenced to transportation to Australia, and 19 were executed and 9 were hanged.



Going back to the "swing" in swing riots. This was due to the figurehead of the cause, Captain Swing, except that he didn't actually exist. He was simply a figment of someone's imagination, one that caught on, spread by a combination of newspapers and word of mouth. These methods were perhaps not as speedy as today's social media, but they were nevertheless effective. His name appeared as a "signature" on numerous threatening letters sent to farmers and politicians and to Corpus Christi College as shown on the left.

The Swing Riots were one of several protest movements of the early to middle nineteenth century in England. This was the era of the Luddites, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists, the Peterloo Massacre – to name the most well known.

Sadly, the rioters and those whose cause they championed, failed to achieve the sort of improvements they sought. The threshing machines were not silenced, and in 1834 a new Poor Law was introduced leading to a workhouse system that was even harsher than what went before. The threshing machine was only one of many developments that led to the reduction of the agricultural workforce. Today's much larger farms employ far less people. My own father at 92, straddled the period when horses still provided the power to work the land, to the era of the modern tractor and combine harvester. Since his retirement, fully automated machines that spray a field or pick crops like the humble spud with little human intervention, can be seen on the land.

## 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?



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

Following on from the piece on the Swing Riots -

### Captain Swing by Graham Moore

The sun's gone down, the shutters drawn  
The curfew bell has tolled  
The fox is lurking round the farm  
The barn owl's wings unfold  
In the candlelight tonight you might  
Hear to your alarm  
The midnight band of Captain Swing  
As he rides from farm to farm.

All over Dorset  
The flames are leaping high  
The ricks are burning, who's the cause?  
"Captain Swing, not I."

The sheep are safely in the fold  
The shepherd deeply sleeps  
The ploughman reels back from his drink  
Through woods the poacher creeps  
The squire retires on a bed of brass  
With one thing on his mind  
"If Captain Swing's this way tonight  
There'll be no corn to grind."

All over Dorset  
The flames are leaping high  
The ricks are burning, who's the cause?  
"Captain Swing, not I."

The labouring man is on his knees  
Nowhere can he get hired  
Since new machines that do the work  
The farmer has acquired  
But how he sweats when he reads the threats  
On paper morning brings  
"Destroy your gear or else I swear  
You'll pay." (signed) Captain Swing.

All over Dorset  
The flames are leaping high  
The ricks are burning, who's the cause?  
"Captain Swing, not I."

## EIGHT SHILLINGS A WEEK

Come all you bold Britons where're you may be,  
I pray give attention and listen to me,  
There once was good times but they're gone by complete,  
For a poor man now lives on eight shillings a week.

Such times in old England there never was seen,  
As the present ones now but much better have been,  
A poor man's condemned and looked on as a thief.  
And compelled to work hard on eight shillings a week.

Our venerable fathers remember the year,  
When a man earned three shillings a day and his beer,  
He then could live well, keep his family all neat,  
But now he must work for eight shillings a week

The nobs of old England of shameful renown,  
Are striving to crush a poor man to the ground,  
They'll beat down his wages and starve him complete  
And make him work hard for eight shillings a week.

A poor man to labour believe me 'tis so,  
To maintain his family is willing to go,  
Either hedging or ditching, to plough or to reap,  
But how does he live on eight shillings a week?

So now to conclude and finish my song,  
May the times be much better before too long,  
May each labouring man be able to keep,  
His children and wife on twelve shillings a week.

Anon.

This dates from the winter of 1830.  
At that time a loaf of bread cost a shilling.  
So, a man would be working for the equivalent of 8 loaves of bread a week!

## And finally.....

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again. –  
Maya Angelou

History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon. – Napoleon Bonaparte

