

Syston and District

**u3a**

learn, laugh, live

FEB  
2023

# Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152



## FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is well and managing to stay warm in this cold spell which hopefully will end soon.

David Bells talk about Radicals & Rebels was very interesting and I never realised that the East Midlands had so many people who fought for their cause so vigorously. At the end of the meeting Christine Ringrose spoke about the forthcoming vacancy of Treasurer for our u3a. Christine was one of the original members of committee and has been Treasurer for 7 years and now must stand down from the post. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Christine for all her hard work and dedication to our u3a. The position must be filled for our u3a to continue and so I would like to invite anyone who is interested to drop me a line at [sadu3achair@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3achair@gmail.com). This position could be job share and help would be available.

Our next Members meeting will be on February 8<sup>th</sup> when Brenda Ainsley will talk to us about The Climate Crisis and some solutions. Hope to see you there.

Stay safe and stay warm.

Clive

# WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

## OPEN DAY - DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

We are planning another Open Day on April 26<sup>th</sup> at the Grosvenor (same venue as the last Open Day). We are looking for as many groups as possible to showcase their activities, or have someone present who can talk to prospective new group members about their group.

It will be an opportunity to get existing members involved with groups they don't currently attend, and vitally, to attract new members. Sadly, because of our age demographic, we are bound to lose existing members. Some become too ill, or take on caring responsibilities that prevent them from getting out and about. If we are to maintain our existing membership numbers, let alone grow, we need new people to join us.

Past Open Days have proved very successful in boosting our numbers, so please put the date in your diary. More details about the event will be published next month.

## NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

A reminder of the usual schedule for the Newsletter. A request for items normally goes out on 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, with a deadline of 27<sup>th</sup> for receipt by me. Notification that the latest edition is on the website should arrive on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. However, there may be times when this varies by a day or two. February is a classic case, being a short month, but holidays or illness may effect the situation.

Email messages are now sent out from our membership system on my behalf. I know that messages from my editor gmail address were not always getting through, but our recently adopted messaging system should mean that many of the issues associated with bulk mailing are mitigated. However, if you have not been receiving the newsletter related emails, please check your spam or junk mail box. If you can't see any trace of the message, please let me know, using the email address you gave for membership purposes. The most likely reason is that the email address we have on our membership database is slightly different. With the best will in the world, it is very easy to misread or mistype these. If the email address we have on file is a genuine email address, but belongs to someone else, no error message will be generated to alert us.

Even if you don't receive a message, you can email me with items at any time on [sadu3aed@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3aed@gmail.com). You can also go to our website and message me from the contacts page. In addition, you can go to the publications page at any time to look for the newsletters. It can be found under the "about us" drop down from the home page or by using this link – <https://u3a.simplmembership.co.uk/Syston/publications>

I am aware that some people using android tablets and phones have had problems with the link sent out by email. If you are having difficulties with the emailed link, please go to the website and access the publications page that way, rather than using the link. The issue is a known one with some android devices.

# GROUP NEWS

## POSSIBLE NEW GROUP – CLASSIC CARS



Terry Farmer asks if there are others in our u3a who have an interest in classic cars and would be interested in forming a Classic Car Group. He envisages this would include visits to car meets, shows and the like, and sharing of information. Any interested parties can contact Terry email: [mg\\_terry@icloud.com](mailto:mg_terry@icloud.com)

## RUMMIKUB GROUP 2

Do you remember in last month's Vitality we suggested stepping forward if you feel you could start a second group?

Well, that seems to have done the trick as we are pleased to say we have someone who is willing to start a **second Rummikub Group!**

Hopefully we will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month from 10 - 12.

Once we have enough names to make this second group viable, we will let you know. (minimum needed 7)

Please let me have your name and membership number if you are interested and we will get back to you.

If anyone is inspired by all this and fancy offering to start any other "second" group let us know, we can help.

Barbara Sargeant

## MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION GROUP

Unfortunately, the piece about the group that appeared in last month's edition was attributed to the wrong author. It was Trudi Billington that penned the words, not Alison Steadman. Group Organiser Jill Kempton-Hayes has asked me to include her apologies for the error.

## FEELING CRAFTY GROUP



At the Feeling Crafty group this Wednesday we were decorating black tote bags using material scraps and 'slow stitching'. This is a method shown to us by Sue who is an expert at it. At present this is our work in progress! A really enjoyable and relaxing session.

## CREATIVE WRITING

Sadly, due to illness and moves away from Syston, the group is struggling. If you have ever thought about trying your hand at stories, poems or factual work, stop just thinking about it and do it! We have always adopted a kindly approach to each other. You can simply share your efforts without fear of them being pulled apart, but if you'd like some constructive (not destructive) comment, we are willing to give it. If you need a trigger subject to write about, this will be provided, but is not obligatory.

We use Syston Library for sessions. Although we have been meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday afternoon of the month, if anyone is interested in joining us, but can't make that schedule, we would be willing to consider a change. If you want to know more, please contact your editor through the usual email address.

# FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Every so often we come across something in the course of family history research that surprises us. This was the case with a set of great grandparents of one of the group. Below is the 1911 census schedule for the family –

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.															
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.															
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.															
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.					PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.		
			Write "Single", "Married", "Widow", or "Widder", opposite the name of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account.	Whether Working at Home.							
of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who		For Infants under one year state the age in months or "under one month," "one month," etc.	Write "Single", "Married", "Widow", or "Widder," opposite the name of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.	Children who have died.
1 Harry Shephard	Husband	45	Married 25	18	13	8	Brick & tile Layer	Brick worker	Worker	no	Sheby	British			
2 Emma Jane Shephard	Wife	44	All by same wife				Slave for Children		Worker	no	Sheby	British			
3 Evelyn Shephard	Daughter	19	Single				Automatic Hand in the Hovery		Worker	no	Sheby	British			
4 Eliza Shephard	Daughter	17	Single				Domestic		Worker	no	Sheby	British			
5 Eliza Ann Shephard	Daughter	15	Single				Winder		Worker	no	Sheby	British			
6 Florence May Shephard	Daughter	13	Single				Winder		Worker	no	Sheby	British			
7 Charles Henry Shephard	Son	11	*				School 399		Worker	no	Sheby	British			
8 Emma Amelia Shephard	Daughter	10	*						Worker	no	Sheby	British			
9 Doris Edith Shephard	Daughter	8	*						Worker	no	Sheby	British			
10 Wilfred Shephard	Son	6	*						Worker	no	Sheby	British			
11 Robert Shephard	Son	4	*						Worker	no	Sheby	British			
12 Grace Shephard	Daughter	2	*						Worker	no	Sheby	British			
13 George Shephard	Son	3 months							Worker	no	Sheby	British			
14															
15	The two oldest away but not married one A Daughter the other one A Soldier boy														

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—

(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.

(2) I have entered the names and relations in Column 2 and 3 respectively, and have compared their ages with the total number of persons.

(3) After making the necessary corrections I have compared all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be incorrect, and have corrected such as appeared to be incorrect.

Initials of Enumerator: *She*

Males	Females	Total
5	8	13

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Tenants, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing lobby, closet, bathroom, nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *Harry Shephard*

Postal Address: *Sheby Leicester*

This census asked how long a couple had been married and how many children had been born alive, were still living, or had died. In their 25 years of marriage this couple had 18 children!! The youngest is only 3 months old. (A check revealed there were no more children after George). Look closely at the occupation column, instead of the standard "household duties", or something similar, for married ladies, Emma is "slave for children". Probably an apt description with 11 of 13 surviving children still at home! The family were living in 6 rooms (if they had a bathroom and/or a scullery they didn't count as rooms). Sleeping arrangements would have been cramped to say the least. With 5 of the family bringing in a wage, they were likely better off financially than some other large "working class" families, but still far from affluent.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, death rates among children were still shocking by today's standards. Harry and Emma did quite well to raise 13 children. All of the younger ones on the census lived to adulthood. Even William, the "soldier boy" not living at home in 1911, survived WW1. Oldest daughter Mary Ellen was lodging with relatives. Of the 5 children who died, 3 did so before they were a year old, but 2 were young children of 3 and 5 years. 1890/91 was a bad period for the family, they lost 3 children within 13 months.

Despite bearing 18 children, and what must have been a hard life, Emma died in 1934 at 68 years of age. Harry lived long enough to appear on the 1939 register, taken at the end of September, but died before the year was out at 74.

Below is a photo of the family taken in 1912 showing all 13 of the children who made it to adulthood.



## 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



**February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

***The Climate Crisis and some solutions by Brenda Ainsley***

Brenda presents this popular talk explaining the science behind the climate emergency and outlining ways in which we can all 'make a difference' for future generations. Brenda will briefly summarise the scientific background to climate change and look at examples, in the UK and worldwide, of how it is impacting people's lives.

The presentation is up-to-date and draws on examples from both around the world and here in the UK.



**March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

***'I'll polish him off!'*** the Curious History of Sweeney Todd by **Ann Featherstone**  
Was he real or fictional?

Why is the story of this violent murdering barber, 18th century London low-life and Mrs Lovatt's pies so enduring and fascinating?

Come along and find out!

**May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023:**

**Peter Barratt – 'Alice Hawkins - The Making of her Statue'**

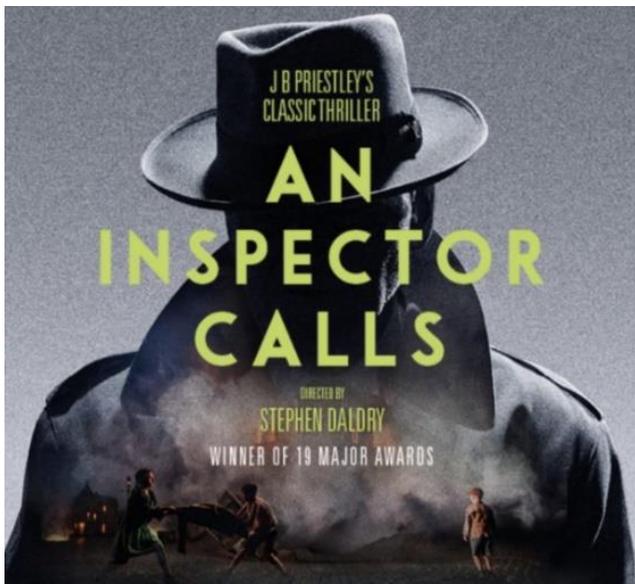
For those groups who have heard my talk on Alice previously, I now offer an update with a special section on the making and unveiling of the statue of Alice in centenary year 2018.

It is a fascinating story of Alice's life, the fundraising campaign I co-lead and included is a short TV documentary on the making and unveiling of her statue in the Leicester marketplace.

Generally recognized as commencing centenary year celebrations in the UK.



## **THEATRE TRIPS**



**Stephen Daldry's** multi award-winning **National Theatre** production of **JB Priestley's** classic thriller returns.

This is on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

There is just an outside chance that a ticket might become available due to unforeseen circumstances. Please let Elaine know if you would be interested.

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

This is the last trip to be organised by Elaine Yarwood. Many thanks to her for all her hard work over recent years in organising them.

**If we are to continue to have these trips, it needs someone, or a small group of members, to take over from Elaine.** If everyone sits back and hopes someone else will do it, no one will.

## LAST MONTH'S GM

David Bell spoke to us about some of the East Midlands Radicals and Rebels.

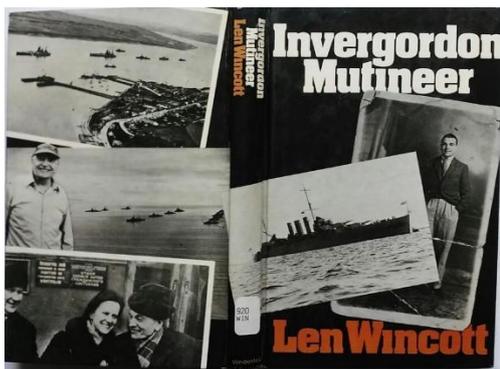
I think many of us knew about Alice Hawkins from a previous talk, but I hadn't heard of Elizabeth Heyrick and her part in the abolition of slavery, nor Len Wincott who joined the Royal Navy, led a protest against proposed cuts in navy pay in 1931 known as the Invergordon Mutiny, or fellow military man John Panting who campaigned for the speeding up of demobilisation post WW1.

I was most interested by the story of Len Wincott and decided to have a closer look at him. Leonard Wincott was born on 19 Jan 1907, the son of John Wincott and Fanny Batt. He was the 9<sup>th</sup> of 10 children. The 1911 census shows the family living at 143 Dorset Street. John was a builder's labourer. The 1921 census shows the family still at the same address, but Fanny is the head of the household, John having died on 24 Jan 1920. Len is shown as working for Arkwrights Hosiery, described as a hosiery machine builder.

His naval records show that he joined up on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1923, with the permission of his mother. He is described as 5ft 4 1/2 in, with brown hair, grey eyes, a fresh complexion, and with a 34 in chest. He has risen from the rank of Boy 2<sup>nd</sup> class to Able Seaman by 1928. Until 1931 his character is described as good or very good.

The only hint of what was to happen comes from his headmaster from his days at school on Catherine Street. When a mock election was held, Len impressed with his debating skills as a Labour representative. In September 1931, the post-depression new National Government launched cuts to public spending. Navy spending cuts matched 10% cuts across the board for public sector workers. However, they were not applied equally to all ranks. On the afternoon of Friday 11 September, sailors of the Atlantic Fleet, arriving at Invergordon (on the Cromarty Firth in Scotland), learned about the cuts from newspaper reports. Wincott – then a 24-year-old able seaman serving on the *Norfolk*, organised meetings which prevented the cruiser from moving.

The mutiny lasted two days (15–16 September 1931). Wincott, with another able seaman – Fred Copeman – became a member of the *Norfolk's* (photo right) strike committee. Although the mutiny was entirely peaceful, the Royal Navy imprisoned dozens of the ringleaders and dismissed hundreds more, Wincott among them.



Shortly after being dismissed from the navy, Len joined the communist party, speaking up and down the country. Records show that he was followed and his mail intercepted by MI5. This was partly responsible for his decision to defect to Russia in 1934. In his own memoirs he indicated that the British Communist Party also encouraged the move. He received a heroes welcome in Russia and settled in Leningrad, where he joined the Anglo-American section of the International Seamen's Club. His job here was to indoctrinate Western crew members on shore leave into the virtues

of Communism. During the Second World War he survived through the nearly 900 days Siege of Leningrad, but shortly after the war his luck ran out.

In 1946, he was accused of being a British spy and duly arrested by the NKVD. After a show trial he was sentenced to a long term in the Gulag. After spending nearly eleven years in labour camps he was only rehabilitated during the onset of Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation campaign in 1956. After his release, he became a friend of Donald Maclean and contributed articles for the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Society magazine.

Apart from a visit to England in 1974, Wincott spent the rest of his life in the Soviet Union. He died in Moscow in January 1983. According to his last wishes, his ashes were scattered over Devonport Harbour.

## NATIONAL U3A ITEMS U3A TALKS



### Before the Lindisfarne Gospels

The Lindisfarne Gospels; what preceded them, and are they representative of earlier works?

Wed 8 Feb 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)



### Highlights of the Royal Collection – Coins and Medals

Join Jeremy Cheek of Rother and District u3a, who was Numismatic Consultant to the Royal Collection for 8 years.

Tues 7 Feb 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)



### The Swan – its life, its nature and its future. Repeat event.

Join nature author, journalist and photographer Dan Keel for a 'lunch and learn' talk followed by Q&A on the swan. This is a repeat event.

Fri 10 Feb at 12pm

Free – via zoom

Book [here](#)

*These are not the only events available, in addition Eventbrite have various other free sessions, as well as ones that require payment. Visit their website <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/> to find more.*



## All Our Yesterdays

Our current initiative is called 'All Our Yesterdays' and involves a collection of stories from the 1950s and 60s which stand out in members' memories.

So far members have contributed stories about such things as Anthea from Bromsgrove u3a's time overseas in Aden, Sheila of St Austell u3a's sugar sandwiches and Barry of Cheadle Hulme u3a's discovery of rock 'n' roll. Share your memories on the [All Our Yesterdays page](#).

# NETWORK NEWS ITEMS

## New Rules for Voting



Are you and your members fully aware that when they come to vote at the Spring 2023 elections they will need to have proof of who they are? Photo ID has been introduced for all forthcoming elections – national, county and parish – as a standard requirement. For many it will not be an issue as they already have passports and/or photo-card driving licences. But suppose that you don't have those forms of ID; what can you show to prove who you are?

The attached document has the answers for most people – please feel free to include it with your own newsletters or have copies available at monthly meetings.

Now is the time to take this on-board rather than wait until the elections are imminent.

I received this via email from Charnwood Council, so have reproduced it here instead of the more generic document that accompanied the Network Newsletter.



Latest news from Charnwood Borough Council

### Voter ID photo requirements for 2023 local elections

**Applying for free voter ID?**



**Your photo must be:**

- clear & in focus
- in colour
- against a plain, light-coloured background
- your true likeness, with no photoshop or filters
- at least 45 x 35 mm & no bigger than 297 x 210 mm
- undamaged (e.g. not torn, creased, or marked)

[charnwood.gov.uk/elections23](http://charnwood.gov.uk/elections23)

If you are applying for free voter ID ahead of the local elections on May 4, make sure your photo meets the requirements to avoid any delays with your application.

You only need to apply for free voter ID if you want to vote in person or by proxy at a polling station and do not have one of the [accepted forms of photo ID](#).

You must supply a recent photo of your head and shoulders, with your face uncovered, as part of this application.

It's recommended to write your name, house number and postcode on the back of your photo if you are sending a physical photo to accompany a paper application form.

### Your photo must be:

- clear and in focus
- in colour
- against a plain, light-coloured background
- your true likeness, with no photoshop or filters
- at least 45 x 35 mm (height x width) in size, and no bigger than 297 x 210 mm (height x width)
- undamaged (e.g. not torn, creased, or marked)

### In your photo you must:

- face forwards and look straight at the camera
- be alone, with no other objects or people
- have a plain expression
- have eyes open and visible, with no hair in front of them
- not wear sunglasses, but normal glasses are fine if you typically wear them
- not have a head covering (except for religious or medical reasons)
- not have 'red-eye', glare or shadows over your face

If you have ticked the box on page 3 to say you have a disability, the photo you supply:

- doesn't need to have a plain expression
- doesn't need to have your eyes open and visible

For more info about the introduction of photo ID at polling stations, visit [Charnwood.gov.uk/voterid](http://Charnwood.gov.uk/voterid).

## NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



Leicester Museum & Art Gallery

### South Africa in the 1970s - Photographs by Steve Bloom

4 February - 14 May

Photographer Steve Bloom, took to the streets and the townships, photographing people at this pivotal historical period. In his images, he manages to capture the complex emotional essence of the time South Africa began to experience unstoppable protest.

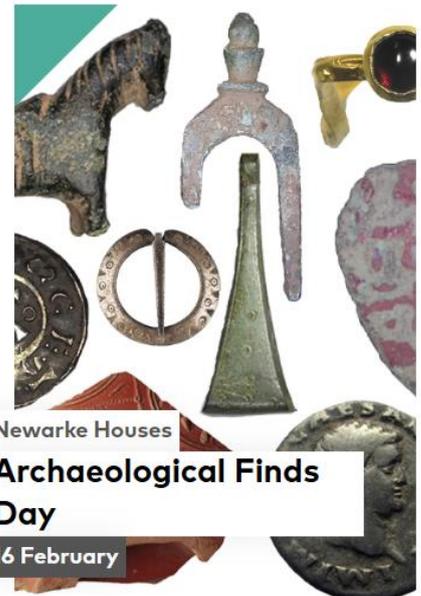
Bloom's work in apartheid South Africa, poignant and moving, reveals the alienation of a country on the cusp of change, placing Bloom among the select few photographers who caught the mood of the people.

As well as black and white photographs, the exhibition includes artefacts from the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and anti-apartheid posters from the era.

Join us for our first Archaeological Finds Day of the year! Have you found an object which is made of metal, stone, or ceramic? Our local Finds Liaison Officer will be more than happy to take a look and give you more information.

Whether you are a seasoned metal detectorist, or you have made a chance find in your garden, we may be able to help identify your archaeological discoveries!

**This event is FREE and no booking is required.**



Newarke Houses

### Archaeological Finds Day

16 February



Abbey Pumping Station

### Half Term Railway Day

21 February

Come and enjoy the Narrow-Gauge railway hauled by Peter or one of the other resident IC locos.

Train rides start from 11:30am up to 4:00pm

Cafe for light refreshments will be open.

Small charge 50p for train rides (cash only to be paid on the train)

## Snowdrops at the Castle Gardens

Saturday, February 11th – Sunday, February 12th

Saturday, February 18th – Sunday, February 19th

Marvel at this season's carpet of snowdrops on one of our guided walks through the Castle gardens and woodland. Only available on these dates.

You can also explore the Japanese Woodland, Duchess Garden and The David Austin Rose Garden, all set within the rolling Capability Brown landscape.

Snowdrop walks with our Head Gardener commence at 12pm and will leave from the Cannonade Terrace.

No booking required. Included in garden entry prices.

Maximum 20 people per tour.



# BELVOIR CASTLE GARDENS

## FROM OUR MEMBERS

### CHINESE NEW YEAR

The Chinese New Year is upon us. I'm sure many of us have seen celebrations involving dancing dragons, at least on TV, if not in person, from Chinese communities around the world. We may also have a passing awareness of the creatures that give their names to Chinese years in rotation.

For many cultures celebrating the new year is important. The Chinese New Year is tied to the lunar cycle, so does not align with the Western European calendar. The new moon falling in the period 21 January to 20 February is what fixes the new year. In common with several other major festivals there are many myths, customs and traditions associated with the new year. Given that the Spring Festival as it is also known, dates back 3,500 years, these are numerous. They also vary depending on the location, so celebrations in northern China will vary from those in the south of the country. That's before the variations in other Asian countries of similar heritage are considered. None of this should come as a surprise, just think of the differences between Western European countries in Christmas traditions.

The festivities spread over a full fortnight and are quite structured, with each day having its own significance. As with Christmas, family, including ancestors, is at the heart of many activities. The evening preceding the New Year's Day is regarded as an occasion for Chinese families to gather for the annual reunion dinner. It is also a tradition for every family to thoroughly clean their house, ahead of the festivities, in order to sweep away any ill fortune and to make way for incoming good luck. Another custom is the decoration of windows and doors with red paper-cuts and couplets. Popular themes among these paper-cuts and couplets include good fortune or happiness, wealth, and longevity. Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money in red envelopes to children. Red is very much the colour of new year as it is considered the luckiest. The "calendar" for 2023, the year of the rabbit, is shown on the next page.

Solar Date (2023)	Lunar Date	Title	Purpose / Meaning
Jan. 21 <sup>st</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> month, 30 <sup>th</sup> day 除夕 (Chúxì)	<b>New Year's Eve</b> (除夕 Chúxì)	The most important celebration, includes the family reunion dinner, and staying up until midnight.
Jan. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 1 <sup>st</sup> day 初一 (Chūyī)	<b>New Year's Day</b> 初一 (Chūyī)	A day for visiting/greeting family and relatives, giving presents, and visiting ancestors' graves.
Jan. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 2 <sup>nd</sup> day 初二 (Chū'èr)	In-Law's Day (迎婿日 Yíngxùrì, or 开年 Kāinián)	Married women visit their parents with their husbands and children.
Jan. 24 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 3 <sup>rd</sup> day 初三 (Chūsān)	Day of the Rat (鼠日 Shǔrì)	An ominous day, common to stay at home and rest with family, play games.
Jan. 25 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 4 <sup>th</sup> day 初四 (Chūsì)	Day of the Sheep (羊日 Yáng rì)	An auspicious day, for prayer and giving offerings, or going to temples or fortune-tellers.
Jan. 26 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 5 <sup>th</sup> day 初五 (Chūwǔ)	Break Five (破五 Pòwǔ)	Commonly accepted as the day when taboos (from previous days) can be broken.
Jan. 27 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 6 <sup>th</sup> day 初六 (Chūliù)	Day of the Horse (马日 Mǎrì)	Believed to be the best day to get rid of old, unwanted things. Also, an acceptable day to resume labour.
Jan. 28 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 7 <sup>th</sup> day 初七 (Chūqī)	Day of Mankind (人日 Rénrì)	Believed to be the day people were created. Encouraged to spend out in nature.
Jan. 29 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 8 <sup>th</sup> day 初八 (Chūbā)	Day of the Grain (谷日节 Gǔrìjié)	Good weather on this day will symbolize good crops for the year. Many families will have a second 'mini' reunion dinner.
Jan. 30 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 9 <sup>th</sup> day 初九 (Chūjiǔ)	Providence Health (天公生 Tiāngōngshēng)	The 'Jade Emperor's birthday, giving offerings, lighting incense, and setting off firecrackers.
Jan. 31 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 10 <sup>th</sup> day 初十 (Chūshí)	Stone Festival (石头节 Shítoujié)	The birthday of the 'god stone', similar to the previous day's rituals.
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 11 <sup>th</sup> day 初十一 (Chūshíyī)	Son-in-Law Day (子婿日 Zǐxùrì)	Fathers are expected to 'entertain' or treat their sons-in-law on this day.
Feb. 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> day 初二 - 初十四 (Chūshí'èr - Chūshísì)	Lantern Day Preparations	Preparations for the lantern festival: cooking, making lanterns, etc.
Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> month, 15 <sup>th</sup> day 初十五 (Chūshíwǔ)	<b>Lantern Festival</b> (元宵节 Yuánxiāojié)	Marks the end of the festival. Lanterns are lit and hung or flown, people watch dragon dances in the streets, and children answer lantern riddles.

# HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR WISHES

I had this message from member Zena Hall –

“I am at present in Kuala Lumpur celebrating CNY with my son and daughter in law. Last night we had Family reunion 16 of us round a table, all ages 5 months to 82. Today is lunch with friends and visit from a dragon and then next Tuesday we are having Open House for 60 people. It is food, food, food, which means putting on inches! But it is super experience. Happy CNY to all our members.”

Carole Clohesy sent me this picture of the New Years card she made for a Chinese friend –



The tradition of exchanging CNY cards dates back much further than that of the Christmas card. There is some dispute about whether the Chinese were the first greetings card senders, or whether the ancient Egyptians have that claim. These early cards were not cards as we would recognise them, but were messages written forerunners of paper and rolled into scrolls that were tied to secure them. Modern mass printing techniques led to all types of greetings becoming more popular. As those of Chinese heritage spread across the globe, the tradition of sending cards to family members they would not be able to see became important. As with other greetings cards, the sending of CNY ecards has grown in recent years.

Lanterns on sale for the final day of celebrations.



*Barbara Sargeant suggested that the new year being the year of the rabbit, members might send me pictures of rabbits – sorry Barbara you'll have to make do with just one contribution from me, along with the story behind the picture. Ed*

## THE RABBIT WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD



Let me introduce Jasper. As you can probably make out, he is sitting indoors, on a carpet, munching on fresh carrots. I'd like to explain how he came to be sitting in my lounge.

My late husband was an animal lover, something we had in common. Cats and dogs I was well used to, but not so much rabbits. This young man came from the small pet shop in Syston that occupied what is currently the International Café. This was some 30 or so years ago.

At first he occupied a large hutch just at the rear of the house, the bottom, back, and top, were old internal doors. A felt cover weather-proofed the roof. It had an enclosed "bedroom" at one end, and chicken wire

across a lift up frame, across the rest of the front. A heavy drop down tarpaulin covered the front after dark and in bad weather. It was supplemented by an old rug in winter. In common with many rabbits, he chose one corner as his toilet area. So we placed a small litter tray there with wood shavings in it. This made cleaning that area a lot easier.

All was fine until Jasper became ill. It was off to the vets. As it was around January time and cold, the vet advised us that it would be best if we could get him somewhere warmer. Husband hastily constructed an indoor hutch, which was placed in our utility area. We wondered, given his use of a litter tray, whether he could be trusted to use it outside his hutch. We found he could, so he was allowed spells of running free in the house. However, one day we put cat litter in the tray instead of wood shavings. We were running short as Harris's the timber/DIY shop didn't have any of the large bags they normally sold. Jasper took one look at it, picked up in his mouth, and tossed it and the contents, up in the air!

Whilst he was generally a good lad over toileting, he could not be trusted to leave wires alone, so we had to encase these in conduit or put them behind something. Unfortunately we did not fully protect the wires coming from the phone handset. It was only when my in-laws commented that they hadn't been able to get through on the phone, that we realized he had nibbled the wire! He had done so in such a way that we could still make calls out, but the phone wasn't ringing when anyone called us. We resorted to mounting the phone on the wall, out of his reach. He also caused passersby a good deal of consternation. He took to sitting on the lounge window sill, but of course he didn't sit still all of the time. We saw pointing fingers, astonished expressions and laughter, when people realized he was not a stuffed toy.

If he was running loose and you decided to eat a banana, or some other fruit, he came and sat in front of you. If you didn't give him a piece, he would sit up on his hind quarters. If you still refused to offer him any, he would jump up on the sofa, pointedly sit beside you and nudge your elbow. When we picked fresh strawberries and sat hulling them, he was in seventh heaven.

Come the spring and warmer weather, we put a fully recovered Jasper back in his outdoor quarters. A few days later my husband went out to uncover the hutch and give him his morning feed. It was empty! Jasper had broken out via the chicken wire. Husband ran around the garden like a proverbial headless chicken, the rabbit was in fact only a few feet away from the hutch, sitting underneath a large lilac tree. He waited to be spotted and made no attempt to evade capture. He was more than delighted to be brought back inside to occupy his indoor hutch. We concluded that was exactly what his escape had been designed to achieve. From that day on he was firmly an indoor rabbit. He lived to a ripe old age for his species. I think this was partly down to his cosseted lifestyle.

## DECLUTTER DEN

Do you have anything sitting in a cupboard, or on a shelf, that you no longer want? Might one of our groups be able to use it? Might one of your fellow members be able to use it? Do you have an older item that's been upgraded by a Christmas present and so is now redundant but still useable.

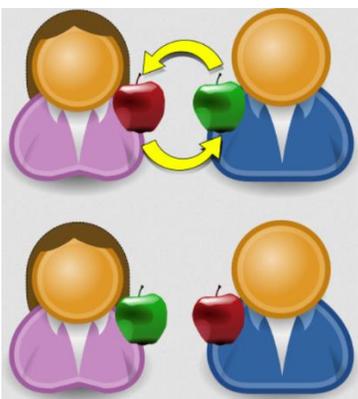


Please find attached a photograph of attachments suitable for a Kenwood Chef food processor / mixer (whatever the terminology is). These are available to anybody to collect and include a mincer attachment, dough hook, whisk etc. If interested please contact Dave Steadman.  
Email: - [dave.steadman@talktalk.net](mailto:dave.steadman@talktalk.net)  
Mobile: - 07517683663  
Landline: - 01162606733



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)

## SWAP STOP



Maybe you don't have something you are willing to give away, but how about swapping it with something from another member?

Are you a jig-saw fan looking to exchange with another jig-saw fan and give both of you a new challenge?

Do you have books you've read and would like to swap some with another bookworm?

Have you received a Christmas present that upgrades something you already have, leaving you with a still useable but older item that you'd like to swap?

Let me have details of what you have and what you want and we'll try and connect you with another member who wants what you have and has what you want. The usual email address applies.

## POETRY CORNER

Continuing the Chinese theme, here are some poems translated into English -

### What Will the New Year Bring?

by Tang Dynasty poet Cui Tu, born ca. 854.

*The road to Ba is a long, long way  
Still, I make this perilous journey of ten thousand li  
In the melting snow beneath jagged mountains at night  
A stranger in a strange land*

*Alone, gradually growing distant from family and friends  
And closer instead to my companions  
How does one bear moving from place to place,  
What will the New Year bring?*

### Lunar New Year of Jiawu (1714)

By Kong Shangren

Despite thinning white hair,  
I stayed up for a night to feast on New Year's Eve.  
The burning candle urges me to drink up;  
I emptied my pocket, giving children coins for good luck.  
Hearing the noise of firecrackers, I'm cheerful like a child;  
Seeing new spring couplets hang, I sense closure of the old year.  
Listening to the "Plum Blossom" tune one more time;  
Soon, the day breaks and people greet one another with laughter.

### Stay Up Late on New Year's Eve

By Su Shi

The old year is parting,  
Like a snake slithering into a deep ravine.  
Scales barely seen; none could stop its course.  
Try as hard as we might to grab its tail, but in vain.  
Children strive to stay awake, laugh and play all night long.  
Rooster, please don't crow yet, but the morning drum is urging.  
The lamp has burnt out, and the Big Dipper descends on the horizon.  
Year after year, time flies and my worries are futile.  
Better to cherish this night, and I still have the spirit of a young man.

### New Year Day

By Wang Anshi

With the noise of firecrackers, the old year has passed away;  
The spring breeze has infused warmth in the Tusu wine.  
When the rising sun shines on the doors of each household,  
New peach wood charms are put up to replace the old.

## And finally..... Chinese New Year Traditions

### Hang Door Gods

Known as mén shén and dating back to the Tang Dynasty, the Door Gods are the guardians of an entrance and were some of the most popular gods for ancient Chinese people. They come in pairs, always facing each other, and are thought to protect homes from evil spirits. During Chinese New Year, people add pictures of the gods to their doors to bring good fortune to the household and to protect the family in the coming year.

### Fireworks

Perhaps not the most hangover-friendly of traditions, CNY wouldn't be complete without pyrotechnics. In China, New Year's firecrackers are made from strings of rolled red paper containing gunpowder that, when set off, leave shreds of scarlet paper in their wake. The belief is that the loud noise of the firecrackers serves to scare Nian, the lion-like monster who legend says rose from the sea for a feast of human flesh on the new year. Nian mythology also plays out during lion dances across CNY festivities. These dances are one of the most globally recognised traditions because of their prominence in diaspora celebrations. These colourful traditional dances are performed outdoors to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, sometimes as a street parade – or in the air, if a flying lion dance is taking place.

### Festive Food

What holiday would be complete without a feast? This is also where celebrations of CNY vary the most. In northern China, people prepare and eat *jiāozi* (dumplings, 餃子) as part of CNY Eve. The time-consuming nature of their preparation allows for the family to spend time together, while their resemblance to an antiquated currency suggests good fortune for the new year.

For Tsagaan Sar in Mongolia, a tower of pastries is the culinary centrepiece. Long rounded scone-like cookies are arranged to evoke Mount Sumeru – a five-peaked mountain of holy importance to Hindu, Jain and Buddhist cosmology.

People eat Korean *tteokguk* (rice cake soup, 떡국) for Seollal. A person is said to age one year with each bowl of *tteokguk* they eat, but only the most auspicious restrict this delicious soup's consumption to CNY. The clear broth symbolises a fresh, clear start to the new year, while rice cakes resembling coins offer prosperity.

### Spring Clean for Spring Festival

In the days leading up to CNY, windows are scrubbed, floors swept and furniture dusted to wash away the bad luck of the past year. In China, the word “dust” is a homophone for “old”, so cleaning the house is required to drive away any bad luck of the previous year and prepare for a new start.

Make sure you've finished wiping by midnight though: cleaning on the first day of the new year is forbidden in case you wash away any of the new good luck.

新年好 Xīnnián hǎo

“New Year Goodness” – an informal Chinese new year greeting