

NEWSLETTER

A letter from the Chair

Welcome back to our bi-monthly newsletter after what has been a scorcher of a summer. I hope you managed to keep cool and have not had too many fatalities in your gardens. Our new committee met for the first time in July, and we all had a lovely afternoon followed by an evening social get together, with partners, at my home. It was good for us all to meet socially and get to know people's partners, who must hear a lot about the committee members without knowing who they are. Sadly, in August, we heard of the passing of Fredi Bastin Lindegaard who was a member of the Genealogy Group and our sympathies go out to Christina Lindegaard and her family.



The new committee has already started working together with other volunteers, such as David Wornham and Gerard Van Zwieten to form subgroups to look at improving our Facebook Group/Pages and also to look at how we can improve our fantastic website and ensure that all the documentation is not just easy to find but also up to date and easy to read. We are also looking at our New Member process to see if we can improve the experience for new members. We will obviously notify all members and group leaders etc, when the changes are made in the different sections. I would like to thank Barry Tait for the great work he does on the website and the time and effort that he dedicates to it.



Droitwich Wind Instrument Group -
Wye Festival see page 17

As a committee we aim to keep all members abreast with information we receive from the Third Age Trust which includes information about online courses and local and national events. If you wish to receive this sort of information directly you can sign up to receive the Third Age Trust u3a Friends Newsletters. Just click on the url below to sign up.

[u3a - Newsletter](#)

I would also like to remind people about signing up for **Gift Aid** with the HMRC, providing donations via **Riviera Travel** from members' bookings and from **Easyfundraising** via On-line Shopping. If you haven't already done so, please do consider donating via these avenues. All these additional funds help us to reward volunteers, offer events at below the actual cost and to help groups to buy equipment etc., without us having to use members' fees. Check out the Members section on our website for information on the three schemes and how to register.

I look forward to meeting more of you during the coming year.

Lesley Short, Chair

A warm welcome to
new members Linda
Jackson, John Bunch,
Kate Bunch, Alan
Durant, Mary Durant
and Amy Musson.

Droitwich Spa & District

Messages from the Business Secretary

August 2026 Easyfundraising Scheme Update



Droitwich u3a has raised £31 this August bringing our all-time total to £893 thus allowing the committee to better support your groups.

It is easy to join the scheme and raise donations, without fuss, simply when you shop online! Details of how to join can be found on our webpage here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/droitwich-spa-f5cb0fe18c7341ebafaeef0/>

u3a Week: 19th-27th September 2026 - theme - Expanding Horizons

Try Something New! For more details, see page 6 or click on the link below -

[u3a Week](#)

Bespoke Holidays Exclusive to u3a

Join u3a members from around the country on a range of bespoke holidays exclusive to u3a members and their friends.

The Third Age Trust has entered into a new partnership opening up a fresh chapter in discovery, fun and shared experience. Look forward to a continually evolving collection of unique itineraries. Simply click on the link below to discover more.

[Get away with u3a!](#)

Online Learning Events with u3a

Free online talks, workshops and courses

u3a members can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses through their membership. Most sessions are led by fellow members, sharing their expertise, with additional talks from notable speakers and organisations. To find out more, click on the link below

[u3a - Online learning events](#)

Jonathan Watkins, Business Secretary

Droitwich Spa & District

Monthly Meetings – Monday – Norbury Theatre, commencing at 2.30pm

Come to our talks and meet up with friends for an afternoon at the Norbury Theatre, hearing, seeing, and learning different aspects of life and participating in the discussions that follow – with a cup of tea or coffee afterwards.

I hope the following subjects are of interest. Put the dates and subjects in your diary and check your emails for any changes.

21st September – The Golden Age of Radio – Roger Browne – A nostalgic trip through post-war broadcasts like *Take it from Here* and *Round the Horne*, featuring theme tunes and hilarious anecdotes.

19th October – Egypt “The Gift of The Nile” – Brian Anderson – According to Herodotus, the Greek historian, Egypt was “the gift of the Nile”, for without her rich waters, Egyptian civilisation would have been short-lived. The river provided the elements that have sustained and influenced an ingenious and vigorous civilization for over three thousand years. In this talk, we travel down the River Nile from the Great Pyramids in Cairo to the Temple of Ramesses II in Abu Simbel in Nubia, with Brian’s images of the wildlife, colourful landscapes, stunning architecture and the mystical Egyptian Gods who ensured the life-giving properties of the River Nile.

Our speakers hope to generate questions, as well as applause. Please try to ask five minutes or more of questions to show your interest.

Speakers and Subjects from November 2026 – 2027

16th November – Song writing – Andy Smith – Featuring well known songs and armed with guitar, mandolin, and ukulele, he will steer us through the challenging and sometimes funny world of song writing and performing. There are some fascinating and amusing anecdotes, revealing what it’s like to stand in front of an audience and entertain. A chance to laugh, cry, cringe and sing along!

18th January 2027 – Strange Meetings – the Words of Wilfred Owen – Shaun Higgins – This talk reveals the Shropshire poet-turned-soldier in all his complexity. Sprinkled with excerpts from his writings and showing him overcoming his struggles both to write and to fight. This is the story of Wilfred Owen, told in his own words.

15th February – Dr Livingstone I Presume – Fran Sandham – The fascinating history of these two famous 19th century pioneers. Dr Livingstone, who was looking for the source of the Nile, and Stanley, who was looking for Dr Livingstone. As we all know, Stanley fulfilled his mission, allegedly greeting Livingstone with the famous words, “Dr Livingstone I presume”. Sadly, the doctor didn’t find the Nile’s source, but later Stanley did. It is a very exciting tale told with enthusiasm and humour.

15th March – An on-stage demonstration of the art of paper cutting – Christine Green – A live demonstration showing on stage how she works cutting material for a backdrop at the BBC. It Should be fascinating, and very brave of her to show us all about the art – I just hope we can sort out the cameras!

19th April – History of the USA paintings and architecture – Philip Bowen

I hope you can make all of these.

Geoff Stollard, Speaker Organiser



Droitwich Spa & District



Droitwich u3a Strawberry Tea and Quiz - Monday 17th August 2026



A bumper crop of almost 100 Droitwich u3a members attended the annual Strawberry Tea and Quiz at Droitwich Methodist Church Hall on Monday 17th August. Strawberries and cream, scones with cream and strawberry jam and a variety of cakes, many home-made, were consumed with enthusiasm, as were a large number of cups of tea.



"It's good to talk!" Not a quiz question but a phrase we might recognise. There was certainly no lack of conversation as members greeted each other and puzzled over General Knowledge questions, a Chocolate Challenge and a Clothing Quiz. There were cheers and quite a number of groans as the answers were read out.

Once again, it was a cheerful and fun community event bringing members together and providing a chance to meet new people.

Many thanks go to Clare Waite, Social Secretary, for organising the refreshments and to her numerous helpers. Also, to our new Chair, Lesley Short, who oversaw the event and proved a formidable Quizmaster.



Another entertaining and successful afternoon.



Val Hibbitt, Newsletter Editor

Thanks to volunteers - Sue Ackrill, Val Hibbitt, Anne Everard, Karen Phillips, Kay Davies, Eve Doyle, Rosemary Hay, David Hibbitt, Lesley Short, Paul Short, Jerry Lawrence, Les Hazlewood and cake makers - Lesley Short, Les Hazlewood, Kay Davies, Jane Fellows, Val Hibbitt, Marion Leach, Wendy Sloper, Helen Stafford.

Droitwich Spa & District

Health and Safety Update

Hello fellow members of the Droitwich u3a,

I am writing to share a great update regarding our Duty of Care and Wellbeing (DCW) forms. I'm pleased to announce that we have officially completed the updates for all our venues, group DCWs, and associated paperwork. This covers 21 venues and 22 group DCWs. I'm sure it was a pleasant surprise for many of you to discover that these forms take five minutes or less to complete! Most importantly, finishing this process ensures that all these groups are now fully covered by our u3a insurance.

I know getting the logistics sorted was a big task, and it's easy to view administrative paperwork as an unnecessary burden. However, to protect our community and the committee, we must ensure we meet modern legal and insurance requirements.

Thank you so much to everyone involved for your help, patience, and understanding. I can finally relax a little — and I hope you won't view me as the harbinger of doom the next time you see me!

As a quick reminder, these DCWs will need to be renewed in 12 months. If nothing has changed in your group by then, you'll just need to update the date at the top of your form and send it to me. If things have changed, just reach out and we can walk through it together.

On a separate note, I would like to formally thank Alan Meyrick for arranging our excursion to the National Memorial Arboretum. It was a deeply significant visit for me. It gave me the privilege of placing a cross of remembrance at the memorial dedicated to my former regiment, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (formerly the Royal Warwickshire Regiment).

Fallen friends and heroes



Peter Field, Accessibility Officer

Droitwich Spa & District



BBC Radio 4's Brain of Britain - recording of the semi-final and the final in Birmingham in July

Catherine and Roger Bach applied to watch the show being recorded and Catherine writes...

Many different local organisations had received information about this. We saw the last semi-final and the final, but they recorded two endings to the semi-final so that they could decide later in which order to broadcast the four semi-finals.

There were about 300 in the audience in the beautiful concert hall, (capacity 500) at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire which opened in 2018. We had never been to the new Conservatoire though we had been to the old Conservatoire near Victoria Square many times about 20 years ago. The recording session prompted us to go and see the new building.

We had planned to go to Thinktank, which is nearby, in the afternoon, but it was after 2pm before we arrived there. The tickets were £24 each, too expensive for just an afternoon visit! The girl on the desk told us that if we had travelled there by train or bus, and could show a ticket dated for that day, we could get in for half price. We will go in the autumn and definitely go by train to avoid driving, as it wasn't an easy journey even on a Sunday.

Thank you to Lesley for sending out the information about the Brain of Britain recording.

Catherine Bach

u3a Week: 19th-27th September 2026 - theme - Expanding Horizons

Try Something New!

u3a Week is an annual event to showcase the activity, learning and fun which takes place across u3a every day. **This year, it's all about the joy of doing something new** and we are being challenged to take part in something a bit different.

A brilliant line-up of online talks and events will be available on the main u3a website and we have great potential for new activities in our many amazing Droitwich u3a Groups.

Interested? Find out more and research ideas at [u3a Week](#)

Please tell us about your experiences, big or small, to be published in the November Newsletter.

Val Hibbitt, Newsletter Editor

Droitwich Spa & District

Group News - from the Groups Co-ordinator

Below are details of some new groups we are hoping to run as soon as possible. Please can you let Julie Woodhouse, Groups Co-ordinator, know if you are interested in joining any of the groups below.

Exploring Psychology

1st Thursday afternoon of the month 2.00-3.30 pm The Old Cock Inn, Friar Street.

All members must purchase at least one drink from the bar.

This group will explore many different aspects of Psychology. Ahead of each session, I will email group members with some ideas to explore for our discussion on a particular topic. We will begin with **Social Norms** (such as letting people know you are going to be late or not jumping a queue.) Everyone is encouraged to join in the discussion, whilst being mindful of ensuring all members have a fair chance of being heard.

Provisional dates: 2026 - 1st October; 5th November; 3rd December

2027 - 4th February; 4th March; 1st April; 6th May; 3rd June; 4th July

Book Group - to include the following Genres -

20th century events

autobiographies, biographies

historical, political /social, military, wars, worldwide disasters, espionage

The venue would be Gaudet Luce Golf Club at a mutually agreed time.

The following is a new group we are looking to run. No details about this are currently available but we are keen to see if there is enough interest to get this group up and running. We do have a Group Leader for this group.

A Group Discussing Religion, Theology and Ethics, Title to be determined.

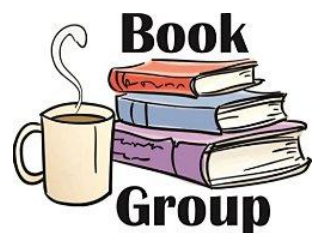
This would take the form of a discussion around questions which would be known prior to the meeting. For example -

Have I lived before?

"If God does not exist, *anything* is possible!" Can atheists/agnostics do *anything*?

Is praying for a free parking space appropriate?

A Gardeners/Growers Group to be held in members' homes to discuss all aspects of gardening and growing.



Droitwich Spa & District

Group News - from the Groups Co-ordinator - continued

The next three groups currently have waiting lists and we are very keen to start a new group so members can join, however we are looking for Group Leaders. Therefore, please get in touch if you are interested in joining or becoming a Group Leader. Ideally two leaders are good to share the load. I am happy to meet with anyone to discuss the role and expectations of becoming a Group Leader.

Meditation Group, we have the need for a second group and would be looking for a Group Leader for this group.

French Conversational Group, we would like to start a second group and need a Group Leader to lead this group.

Spanish Conversational Group, as with the French group we are looking for a Group Leader to lead a second group.

Below is another new group. We do have a Group Leader but would like to establish if there is any interest and at what level this group would be.

Recorder Group, either an established group who can decide what to play and/or a beginner group for those who may have played at school and would like to pick this up again.

The above information was also sent out to members individually by email. Please contact Julie if you are interested in any of these new groups.



Julie Woodhouse, Groups Co-ordinator

More New Groups

Bridge Beginners and Improvers Groups

This is the final call for members for these two groups, both of which will operate as courses running from October 2026 to March 2027 inclusive, with the 2-hour meetings being held weekly on a day to be agreed between the members.

The Beginners course is suitable for members who are complete novices to the game of Bridge or who may have played some time ago and forgotten most of what they once knew. The Improvers course is for members who have played social Bridge for a while and have a basic understanding of the Acol bidding system, or have recently attended one of our Beginners courses, and would like to improve their bidding and playing techniques.

For more information or to sign-up for either course please contact Les Hazlewood by email via the Droitwich u3a website, or phone on 01905 796201

Les Hazlewood, Group Leader

Droitwich Spa & District

News from the Groups

The Digital Photography Group – a Critique of existing Photos



Members of the Digital Photography Group met on 8th July at Wychbold Village Hall for a critique session on existing photographs. "A critique is a detailed evaluation that carefully examines a photograph to judge its strengths and weaknesses." The critique session was conducted by Jenny Walters, a Worcestershire librarian and each member supplied three pictures.



Pictures by Janet Oakley, Derek Oakley, Anne Matthissen and Paula Knight.

To join our group contact Alan Meyrick at ameyrick54@gmail.com

We were also asked to provide photographs of the hall and its surroundings for the purpose of advertising the venue's suitability for group meetings. The grounds around the hall are very attractive and extensive, also it has its own private car park. To book the hall for group events contact clerk@dodderhill-pc.gov.uk

Derek Oakley



Droitwich Spa & District

The Digital Photography Group - continued



Maths, Science & Technology (MST)

We only meet in the winter months. The meetings are on the 3rd Friday morning of the month in Rotary House at 10am for coffee and chat, followed by a talk of about 45 minutes and then questions. All members of Droitwich u3a are welcome to attend.

18th September - Steve Barrett - Astrophotography.

Steve describes this talk as photographing the night sky without ridiculously expensive equipment.

He will be showing lots of images, and will be bringing some of the equipment used, so there will be a little bit of a "show and tell".

Future dates are -

16th October - Mike Ansfield - FUNGI - FOE OR FRIEND

20th November - Rahila Chaudry - A Brief Walk through our Diagnostic Microbiology Laboratory

11th December - Gerard van Zwieten - Which AI is best for Santa - and you?

Catherine and Roger Bach, Group Leaders

Droitwich Spa & District

AI and Canva Group

"I just generated an image in the style of a Monet painting using AI. Please describe, in as much detail as possible, what makes this inferior to a real Monet painting?"

The internet prank above happened in **May 2026**, when an anonymous conceptual artist known as **@SHLOMS** performed a viral social experiment on X (formerly Twitter).

The post exploded, gaining over **6.7 million views** and thousands of confident, highly detailed critiques from AI sceptics, artists, and internet commentators who completely took the bait.

People began aggressively picking the masterpiece apart, offering critiques such as:

"Incoherent composition": Critics claimed the structure lacked any true human intentionality or visual flow.

"Muddle of greens": Commenters called the palette a "busy, artificial" mess of inconsistently saturated colours.

"AI slop": Several users confidently claimed it had the dead, soulless "hallmarks" of an algorithmic generation trying too hard.

Technical breakdowns: One user even wrote a **700-word analysis** diagnosing Monet's famous, loose impressionistic brushstrokes as "rendering errors" and a lack of spatial awareness by the AI.

When @SHLOMS revealed that the image was actually a real, physical painting, it sparked a massive cultural conversation. Media outlets and art critics noted that the experiment exposed severe **confirmation bias** in the modern anti-AI movement. Here is what I found when sorting through the qualitative feedback. The critiques largely fell into two distinct buckets.

First: technical hallucination

Users confidently pointed out "clutter," "lack of focus," and "poor eye movement." One user completely deconstructed the surface texture, explaining how the composition proved an algorithmic lack of spatial awareness. They were evaluating impressionism, a movement literally defined by dissolving rigid spatial boundaries into light and colour, through the lens of a malfunctioning latent diffusion model. They looked at the chaotic, layered brush strokes and diagnosed them as rendering errors.

Second: metaphysical defence

When people couldn't find a distorted hand or a melting background asset, they retreated to the unprovable. "It's soulless." "Doesn't make me feel anything." "You can tell a machine made this because it lacks human intent."



Droitwich Spa & District

AI and Canva Group - Second: metaphysical defence continued

I observed something fascinating here. The moment the "Made with AI" label was applied, the viewer's cognitive framework shifted entirely. They stopped being an audience and became an auditor. We are no longer evaluating the art. We are evaluating the label.

We are watching a reverse **Turing Test** play out in real time across social networks. Instead of a machine trying to prove it is human, we have humans aggressively trying to prove a human artifact is a machine artifact. And failing completely!

Not what I expected, honestly. I assumed at least a few art historians or reverse-image searchers would flag it immediately. A few did, pointing out it was an exact image from a 250-piece real-world collection. But their voices were completely drowned out by the algorithmic pile-on of anti-AI sentiment. People wanted to be part of the witch hunt. They wanted to demonstrate their superior human taste.



So, what can we learn from this?

I mean, I have fun generating images for personal use and some of them even turn out pretty good. But I'm not going to pretend they're the same as something a Monet with actual artistic talent creates. To clarify, I'm very interested in AI and I hope these tools are viewed the same way in the creative space as I view them, being tools to use to help make some things easier.

They are not a complete replacement, and human creativity is still far superior to any AI painting.

Gerard van Zwieten, AI and Canva Group Leader

Wine Appreciation Group

We met in Rotary House on 19th August to taste some South American wines and our conclusions were as follows -

Matetic Corallilo Rosario Chardonnay, Chile 2024 13.5%
£12.95 Wine Soc

The winery is located roughly 30 miles south of Valpariso in the Rosario Valley. The proximity to the sea gives cooling breezes and occasional fog. The terroir is granitic with good drainage and low nutrients. The wine is 70% barrel-fermented and 30% tank-fermented.

This wine was quite fruity and not over-oaked. A very drinkable wine without being particularly exciting. We rated it at 6½/10.



Kipu Mendoza Sauvignon Blanc - Semillon, Argentina 2025 13% £10.75 Wine Soc

This winery is located in the Uco valley about 30 miles south west of Mendoza and about the same distance from the Chilean border. The vineyards are about 4000 ft above sea-level, making them the highest in the Mendoza area. The soil is poor and the nights cold giving good conditions for grapes. The wine is 80% Sauvignon-Blanc and 20% Semillon.

A little bit acid and not very interesting. We rated this wine at 6/10.

Droitwich Spa & District

Wine Appreciation Group - continued

Initials Viognier Gran Reserva, Chile 2025 12.5% £10.75 (from £12.75) Majestic

This winery is to be found in Casablanca in the Biobio Valley about 20 miles south west of Valpariso. Indomita is a relatively new winery and the vineyards have a range of terroir including sand, clay and volcanic soils. The climate is subject to the cooling influence of the Andes and the Pacific. This wine we thought to be quite good value. It was very fruity and well balanced - very drinkable. We rated this wine at $7\frac{1}{2}/10$.

Medanos Este, Albarino, Uruguay 2025 13% £14.50 (from £16.50) Majestic

The Establecimiento Juanico winery is in the small town of Juanico about 20 miles north of Montevideo. The terroir has a lot of clay and sand so offers good drainage for the vines. The proximity to the sea makes the climate warm during the day but cool at night. Quite full-bodied for a white wine - interesting. Good fruit and flavour and most enjoyable. Possibly available more cheaply elsewhere. We tasted this one first and were all pleasantly surprised and rated it at 8/10.

Medalla Real Carmenère, Chile 2024 13.5% £13.50 (from £15.50) Majestic

This Santa Rita winery is located in Buin about 15 miles south of Santiago in the Maipo Valley. The climate is moderated by the proximity of the Pacific Ocean. The terroir is mainly granitic over an alluvial base with varying amounts of clay. This wine we considered very fruity with good balance of tannin. It had a good nose and we rated it at $7\frac{1}{2}/10$.

Bodega y Viñedos Catena Malbec, Argentina 2022 13.5% £13.95 Wine Soc

The Catena winery has about six vineyards near Mendoza. These Malbec grapes may have come from three of the vineyards with terroir ranging from gravel and limestone to loamy clay. The wine is aged in French oak for up to a year. The wine was very smooth and most enjoyable. We thought it was a blend of mostly Malbec with probably some Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. It was well balanced and we rated it at $7\frac{1}{2}/10$.

Pelleriti Cabernet Franc, Argentina 2021 13.5% £17.00 (from £19.00) Majestic

The Pelleriti Priore winery is quite modern and is located in La Consulta, about 40 miles south of Mendoza. The Tunuyan Valley is about 3300 feet above sea level so has hot summers and cold winters. This wine had a very good "nose". It was well aged and well balanced. The members' opinions were completely polarised - some disliked it and others thought it very nice. It was considered to be a bit expensive and we rated it at $7\frac{1}{2}/10$ (not unanimous but Group Leader's decision).

Clos de Luz, Jaya Carmenère, Chile 2024 13.5% £16.00 Wine Soc

The winery is to be found in the Cachapoal valley, about 70 miles south-west of Santiago, in the heart of Chile. The Carmenère vineyards are among the oldest in the world and were originally thought to be Merlot (until the 1990s). The terroir is volcanic with granite and quartz. The wine is mixture of 80% Carmenère, 10% Syrah and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. This wine was quite drinkable without being particularly interesting. It was quite well balanced but nothing out of the ordinary and hence a bit disappointing for the price. We rated it at $6\frac{1}{2}/10$.

Overall, the general comment was that there was nothing outstanding among the wines and at the same time nothing particularly poor. The most interesting wine was the Uruguayan Albarino which we drank first because we feared it would not be very good - in the end it was the best.

For our next tasting in October, we will try some Iberian wines.

Roy Thurston, Group Leader

Droitwich Spa & District

Local History Group

All talks are at The Emmanuel Church, Blake Avenue. Doors open at 10.00am for refreshments with a 10.30am start for the talk. Cost £2.50.

There will be a varied mix of new and repeat speakers on what I hope you will consider a good variety of subjects. Thanks to Alan Meyrick for organising the programme. Hopefully, two outside visits will take place in the New Year.

11th September - **The Willow Court Farmhouse Project** - Janine Rusby

9th October - **Photographs from recent visits** - Alan Meyrick

The Programme from November 2026-2027

13th November - **Roman Worcester** - Carolyn Clarke

December - no meeting

8th January - **Battenhall Mount, Worcester** - John Hodges

12th February - **John Corbett, his houses and homes** - Sue Helps

12th March - **Postcards of Droitwich** - Paul Jones

9th April - **Mappa Mundi** - Howard Robinson

14th May - **History on our doorstep, Bewdley** - Heather Flack

11th June - **Mr and Mrs William Duberly** - Pat Niner



Town House at Avoncroft
Museum of Historic
Buildings

Jeff Gogarty, Group Leader

Line Dancing Group – Dancing to Dolly!

It's almost certain that if you've ever done any Line Dancing, you will have danced to a Dolly Parton track. Our Droitwich u3a Line Dancing Group dances regularly to - Baby I'm Burning, Silver Threads and Golden Needles, Islands in the Stream (Dolly with Kenny Rogers), Harper Valley PTA and Potential New Boyfriend. Not all her best-known recordings since there are so many to choose from but her lively songs and a little dancing raises the spirits for many of us.

We cannot but mourn her passing as she achieved and gave so much.

What a legacy! Not just her music but also her contribution to children's literacy world-wide, and to medical research, through her philanthropy. She still sometimes attracted "dumb blonde" jokes. When asked if she was offended by these, her response was "I'm not offended because I know I'm not dumb - I also know I'm not blonde."

Certainly, when our Line Dancing Group re-starts this September after our summer break, we shall enjoy dancing to Dolly again - if we can remember the steps!



Droitwich Spa & District

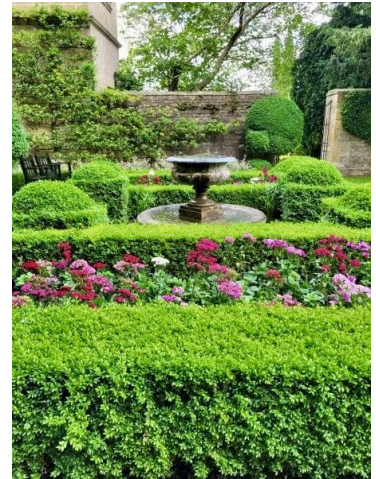
Garden Lovers Group



Our visit on Wednesday 1st July was to Bourton House Garden, near Moreton-in-Marsh. This beautiful extensive garden, previously seen on *Gardeners' World*, featured so many borders and areas of interest, filled with unusual plants and lovely colour schemes.

Beginning our morning with the usual coffee and cake, we were then free to enjoy all the garden had to offer at our leisure. It was an excellent garden and we would heartily recommend a visit!

Here we are gathered together by one of the many water features:



Photos courtesy of our Creative Roving Photographer, Barry Tait... and a few from Jan!



The visit on Wednesday 5th August was certainly a lot closer to home! A group of around 20 of us enjoyed a wonderful morning, hosted by our own members, Jonathan and Sarah. They have created a fabulous garden in a very short time at their new house. Every area and corner was filled with something different to see - summer colour, beautiful shrubs and trees and they even "grow their own" too. We were very comfortably seated beneath their extensive pergola for refreshments and chat, and there was plenty of opportunity to wander around with Jonathan and learn about the creation and content of the garden.



Most of us baked cakes to take along, whilst Jonathan and Sarah provided all the drinks - there was even a menu for these... they had thought of everything! We all also participated in a plant swap, bringing our own offerings to exchange with others.



Droitwich Spa & District

Garden Lovers Group - continued



It was definitely a Garden Lovers visit with a difference and we all expressed sincere thanks to our hosts for a very entertaining morning.



Garden Lovers Group - future visits

Wednesday 2nd September - Sezincote Garden, GL56 9AW

Wednesday 7th October - Change of venue - Ravelin Garden, WR6 0AS

Wednesday 4th November - Coffee and cake social at Bonnie's at Wildgoose Rural Training, WR2 6LS - an opportunity to support a local charity:

Wednesday 2nd December - Christmas Carvery Lunch at Bodenham Arboretum, DY11 5TB

Wednesday 3rd February 2027 - Snowdrops at Dudmaston Hall, WV15 6QN - To be confirmed!

If any u3a members would like to join our friendly group of garden enthusiasts, please contact our Group Leader, Elizabeth Bartle.

Droitwich Spa & District

Droitwich Wind Instrument Group (DWIG)



The u3a Droitwich Wind Instrument Group (DWIG) meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays (except bank holidays) in Crowle Platinum Hall from 3pm to 5pm.

We made our annual visit to the gloriously silly Wye Float event in Hereford on 8th August, which this year featured "Safari" as its theme. This event involved hundreds of weird and wonderful floating craft drifting down the river Wye for a couple of miles. We played

tunes such as "Swingin' Safari", "Nelly the Elephant" and "Mud, Glorious Mud" and we had a display board depicting a safari scene and various related costumes and props.



We continue to grow, recently gaining a new clarinettist and a flautist. We have a new playlist for the autumn, and we welcome all music-reading wind instrument players. If you can read music and play any kind of wind instrument, DWIG is the place for you.



For more information about DWIG please contact group leader David Wornham, Tel. 01905 775840 or flexicase@gmail.com

Ron Hawkins for DWIG



Photos. from Wye Float Facebook Group

More pictures of DWIG playing as The Village Band at the Wye Festival

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/152100418677077/>

Droitwich Spa & District

The Digital Photography Group – visit to the Church of the Sacred Heart and Saint Catherine of Alexandria – theme, “portraying a story”



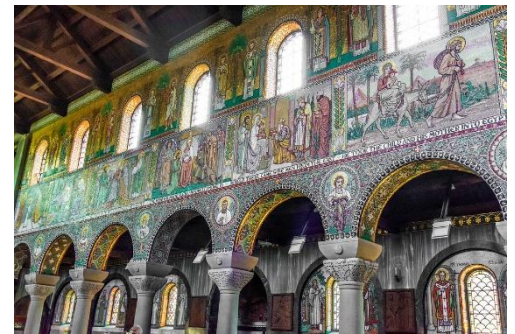
On Tuesday 11th August the Digital Photography Group made another visit to the Church of the Sacred Heart and Saint Catherine of Alexandria this time with the theme “portraying a story”.

The church was built as a memorial to Catherine Hodgkinson, who died in 1906 and was intended to reflect the early Christian basilicas of Ravenna, Italy. The foundation stone was laid on 25th November, 1919, and the first Mass was celebrated on 24th November, 1921.

The mosaics were started in 1922 and took roughly 10 years to complete. They cover the interior walls and vaults and were designed



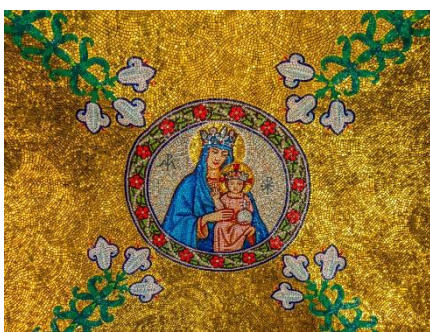
by artist Gabriel Pippet and executed by mosaicists Maurice Josey and Fred Oates. It is internationally recognized, with much of the gold-backed glass imported from Venice.



The Church was designed by F. Barry Peacock of the Birmingham firm Peacock and



Bewlay, the architectural style featuring a simple, brick exterior with a stunningly intricate interior. Beyond the mosaics, the church contains stone carvings and wooden Stations of the Cross, also designed by Gabriel Pippet. It replaced a smaller, 1909 building and serves as a testament to the revival of Catholic life in the Worcestershire area.



Photos by Lorraine Fellows, Alan Meyrick, Janet Oakley and Derek Oakley.



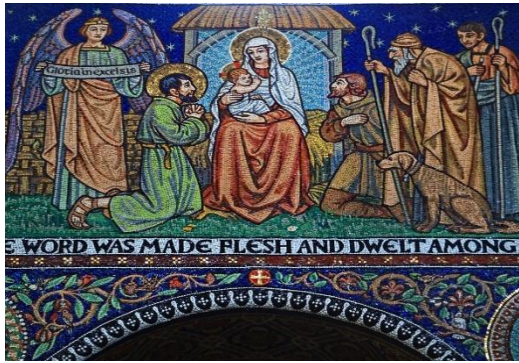
Droitwich Spa & District

The Digital Photography Group – visit to the Church of the Sacred Heart and Saint Catherine of Alexandria – theme, “portraying a story” continued



The building of the Church of the Sacred Heart and Saint Catherine of Alexandria was the culmination, for Droitwich, of a long and difficult period in the history of the Roman Catholic faith in this part of Worcestershire.

Within ten miles of Droitwich are a number of old houses, including Harvington Hall, Rushock Court, Huddington Court and Grafton Manor, which were notable centres of Catholic life well before the Reformation. Their owners helped to sustain the faith during the turbulent times when its elimination was the aim of the Crown and State.



In 1641 a Parliamentary order was sent from London to the Sheriff of nearby Worcester to suppress any meetings of Catholics. In 1642 the Mayor of Worcester was “entreated to make an order that no Papists or recusants (ones who refused to attend the new Church of England) be suffered to take houses nor be residents within the city”.

The Catholic stronghold of Grafton Manor in Bromsgrove continued to serve as a centre for the faithful and until the opening of St. Peter's Church, Bromsgrove in 1858, the chapel at Grafton was used, as it had been for centuries, for Catholic worship.



A Mass centre became available at Hadzor House when a chapel was opened there in 1878. Before that, the only Catholic in Droitwich, a Mrs Hill, known as “the Catholic of Droitwich”, used to walk the seven miles to Bromsgrove on Sundays to attend Mass.

The church is open to visitors daily to view the mosaics and is frequently visited by people from across the world.



Following the session, we adjourned for coffee and cake to Coffee#1 in Droitwich.

Derek Oakley.

To join our group contact
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Newsletter Editor's note...

Thank you everyone who has contributed to this edition of our Newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed the articles and updates, also the colourful supporting photos. Please note that if you send in photos which include members, you must ask their permission.

The next Newsletter will be published in November so please submit any articles and photos, also information on up-and-coming events which members may enjoy, to the editor, either via the website or email newsletter@droitwichu3a.co.uk by Monday 2nd November.

Val Hibbitt, Newsletter Editor

With thanks to Jan van Zwieten for proof reading.