



THE CRYER!

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

The voice of Dronfield and District u3a

Issue 154 - September 2026

EDITORIAL – THE GREAT MOON HOAX.

In August 1835 the New York Times published a series of six articles on consecutive days claiming that the English astronomer, Sir John Herschel had built a powerful telescope through which he had observed life on the Moon. They said he had seen lush vegetation, “brown quadrupeds” that resembled miniature bison, goat like animals that were as playful as kittens, long beaked cranes and “large winged creatures wholly unlike birds”. They looked like a hybrid cross between humans and bats that could fly, walk and talk. The articles were a world wide sensation. The final one claimed the telescope had been accidentally destroyed in a fire and soon after the paper admitted that it was all a hoax. Please read on and enjoy. Jed (*Editor*)

COULD YOU SPOT A SCAM?

Scams are getting harder to spot. A text, phone call, website or advert can look completely genuine.

“Hi Mum, this is my new number...” is a common one. The message may say they've lost their phone, changed their number or are in trouble and need money. Contact them on the number you already have before doing anything.

Then there are calls supposedly from your bank, perhaps warning of suspicious activity and telling you to move your money to a “safe account”. Hang up and ring your bank yourself on a number you know is genuine.

Romance and dating scams can be harder to recognise because they don't necessarily happen quickly. You may have been chatting to someone



for weeks or months before money is ever mentioned. Then there's an emergency, a reason they can't meet you, or an investment they'd like you to join.

Investment scams can be as simple as an advert that appears while you're reading the news or browsing on your phone or tablet. Some look very convincing and offer excellent returns. Don't assume an investment is genuine just because you've seen it advertised.

Watch out too for unexpected messages about parcels, small delivery charges or purchases you don't recognise, and callers saying there's a problem with your computer.



And what about deepfakes? You may already have seen these without realising it. A video appears to show a well-known television personality, financial expert or celebrity

recommending an investment, face cream, weight-loss product or some other “miracle” treatment.

It looks like them and sounds like them, but it may be completely fake. Artificial intelligence (AI) can now be used to copy someone's face and voice and make it appear that they've said something they haven't.

So if something doesn't seem quite right, or if it seems too good to be true, remember **S.C.A.M.**

S – STOP – Don't rush into anything.

C – CHECK – Check the person, company or message independently.

A – ASK – Ask someone you trust if you're unsure.

M – MONEY – Don't send money or give out bank details until you're sure.

If you do get caught out, don't be embarrassed. Tell someone and, if money or bank details are involved, contact your bank straight away.



Jenny Cartledge

MONTHLY MEETINGS



Don't forget that details of all the monthly meetings are available on our website. To reach it click on the link below or type it into a search engine.

<https://dronfield.u3asite.uk/events/>

MEETING – 9th September (10 - 12)

The meeting will be in the Civic Hall
**Andy Smith will give a talk about
'Life in the music'.**

Using self penned comedy songs and ballads using a variety of instruments Andy Smith will take the audience on a journey through life. Along the way he will explain a bit about the instruments he has brought along.

Afterwards there will be time for a coffee, biscuit and a chat. All members and visitors are welcome.

MEETING – 14th October (10 – 12)

The October meeting will be our AGM. Papers will be sent out before hand so it will be one of our usual efficient meetings and there will be plenty of time left after the official part for a speaker.

**Paul Isherwood will give a talk entitled
'Child Gambler gets his life back.'**

A personal experience about how he beat his childhood gambling addiction.

Afterwards there will be time for a coffee, biscuit and a chat. All members and visitors are welcome.

TRIPS & VISITS



Trips and Visits will be in their usual place at the September meeting. On sale will be tickets for the visit to the

National Holocaust Museum & Newark
on 15th October. The cost is £22 which includes the entry fee to the museum. The group will spend two hours at the Museum before moving on to historic Newark for the afternoon. There will be plenty of time to explore the shops and/or visit the sites of historical interest.

COFFEE MORNINGS

The Coffee Mornings are a chance for New and Prospective Members to meet and learn more about the u3a and to socialise.

The next Coffee Morning will be on Wednesday the 2nd of September in the Manor House Hotel

on Dronfield's High Street, 10.00 -11.00.

All new and prospective members are invited to attend to meet other new members, and members of the committee.



PHOTO OF THE MONTH



'Our Group Photographer' by Sharon Bradford.

RIDDLE-ME-REE

1. What is the yesterday of tomorrow and the tomorrow of yesterday?
2. A man pushes his car to an hotel and then says he is bankrupt! Why?
3. A bike wheel has 12 spokes. How many gaps are there between them?
4. If a coin lands on heads four times in a row what are the chances it will land heads for a fifth time?
a) 20% b) 50% c) 10 % d) 25%
- 5) Which of these words can you not turn into the name of a country by changing the first letter?
a) Logo b) While c) Petal d) Trance



NATIONAL u3a TALKS



Here are the free national u3a online learning events. For full details and to join any of these free online talks visit....

www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events#ONLINE-EVENTS

Wild, edible autumn seeds.

Join Hedgewitch Kat to discover the fascinating world of wild edible autumn seeds, from identification and folklore to practical uses.

Friday 4th September at 10.am.

Triumph to trauma.

Triumph to trauma (940 – 1042)
Danes before Normans: the conquest before the conquest.
Discover how the Danish conquest, Cnut and Emma of Normandy shaped England before the Norman Conquest.

Monday 7th September at 2 pm.

Laughter Yoga with Judith.

Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercise with deep yoga style breathing (pranayama).

Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.

Wednesday 9th September 10 am.

Drones, huh? What are they good for?

Join Dr Steve Bullock, University of Bristol for a discussion on the growing and evolving role of drones in our skies.

Friday 11th September at 2 pm.

Introduction - Cryptic Crosswords.

Try your hand at solving cryptic clues on this two-hour taster session with Henry Howarth a u3a subject advisor for the u3a.

Tuesday 15th September at 2 pm.

Life in your smallest rooms.

Learn about the history and science of washing, shaving and personal hygiene, with David, of Wrekin u3a and Wolverhampton u3a.

Wednesday 16th September 10 am.

“The Titanic sails at dawn.” punk in the 1970’s

Join Lee Wellbrook to explore the origins, growth and legacy of punk in the UK in the 70’s.

Thursday 17th September at 2.pm.

Live Cookery demonstration try something new

Chef Alex from ‘Vegetarian for life’ shares live on Zoom his delicious Autumn recipes, especially for u3a members.

Friday 25th September at 10am

Laughter Yoga with Merry Maggie!

Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga – an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.

Tuesday 29th September 3.30 pm.

Mods v Rockers – a 1960’s ‘moral panic’.

In the early 1960’s, most young people defined themselves as either mods or rockers. Jack Fawbert charts the development of this phenomenon.

Thursday 1st October at 2pm

DID YOU KNOW?

In May 18th 2014 ‘*Dani and the mini skirts*’ set the record for the most people crammed inside a classic mini. All those involved were female and included a mother, a daughter and a pair of twins. All 27 squeezed themselves into the mini and closed the doors!



CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

RAIN

Do you splash in the puddles, dance in the rain,
worship when water falls on our dry plains?
Do you feel the showers of shimmering rain or
raise your broom to abstain?
I implore you: don't refrain:
Go and splash in the puddles
and dance in the rain!
Will you?



Catherine Bardwell

GARDEN VISITS

Why on earth would a garden carry the name of 'Breezy Knees Gardens'? The answer was provided by an easily available plan of the twenty acres of gardens. It stated that only about twenty years ago the land had no hedges and being open land was very exposed to the elements so that the first gardeners got 'breezy knees!'

The gardens, near York, were the venue for our August visit. They consist of many varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees spread around a series of gardens, some of which were designed for different months of the year. Entering through an ornate metal gate bearing the name of the gardens, we



passed into the September Garden with many multi coloured Hydrangeas with their coloured flower heads. The lengthy period of recent dry weather had obviously affected both plants and grassy areas. One of the volunteers told us that only minimal watering had taken place recently. Walking further up the central path we were amused by 'Stonehedge' - a miniature model based around the real Stonehenge but in manicured trees and without the topping stones.

We then entered a large square area bounded on all sides with tall trees in front of which were lines of Stipa Gigantea grasses which were gently swaying in the light breeze. One of our group decided to



take a rest on one of the conveniently positioned seats while others passed through to the Shrub Garden. At its entrance there was a

photograph of what the particular area looked like before work commenced on creating this garden. At the entrance to another garden there was a notice warning of the presence of badgers that had caused damage to that area. Now on the other side of the central path, we walked through about nine different gardens with beds containing varieties of Echinops, with their dark blue flower heads, Tamarix, with feathery foliage and many different varieties of Sedums.

In yet another garden there was a tree in the centre of an area of grass with a circular border around its base. There was a great variety of plants in the surrounds of the grass.



A further garden held raised beds of interesting plants. In yet another garden were flowering clumps of Astrantia and Phlox plants. At the final area, near the entrance gate, we sat for a while to admire the White Rose Fountains waiting for the water to spout intermittently. With tired legs we had completed the tour, and we made our way back to the car park. It will be interesting to visit there again (at a different part of the year). This will be suggested at our planning meeting in January next year.

Ramsey Hertzog

GEOGRAPHY

This month the group were looking into festivals and celebrations. Initially we considered why people hold these special occasions such as New Year (in Western as well as Chinese culture), Diwali, Easter and Christmas, etc. There are various reasons but many are anchored in the local area and provide a means of preserving cultural identity, traditions, and heritage. They offer an opportunity to share experiences & rituals that are handed down the generations and provide a break from everyday life. They unite individuals and the local community in a

camaraderie that is often irrespective of class, background, and religion. The local community coming together to promote joy and happiness.

There are also economic drivers. Festivals and celebrations often attract tourists, create jobs, and boost business, especially if they are run over several days or more, like the Edinburgh Fringe for example. They provide a showcase for local culture, cuisine, and hospitality. They are frequently a source of inspiration, creativity, and expression. An example of this is the annual Glastonbury Festival. Many, like the Woodford Folk Fest in Australia, promote sustainability.

Festivals can take many forms. They could have religious and spiritual connections, honouring beliefs, seeking blessings or engagement in



rejuvenation & renewal. Examples are Christmas, Ramadan and Vesak. The latter is the most sacred & important festival in Buddhism, celebrating the birth, enlightenment and death of the

Buddha. It is usually celebrated on the first full moon in May, and promotes simplicity, cleanliness, and good deeds. Colourful paper decorations and lanterns are at the forefront, representing light removing darkness

The Crayfish Festival originated in Sweden and also takes place in parts of Norway & Finland. It is basically a celebration of eating and drinking when the crayfish harvest is greatest in early to mid August. Food is traditionally provided outside, buffet-style. Novelty hats are worn and 'Man in the Moon' paper lanterns are hung around the table. Alcohol, often Akevit (Nordic Schnapps) is served along side beer while drinking songs are sung. All this, presumably, before the reality of a northern Winter sets in!



The Munich Oktoberfest begins mid September and lasts for over two weeks. It is the largest folk & beer festival on Earth attracting more than six



million people each year. Closer to home, in Whitby is the twice yearly 'Goth Festival'. It originated with 40 friends meeting in a pub in 1994. The

festival lasts over a weekend and is one of the world's most popular music events attracting all sorts of sub-cultures. It is, of course, primarily a heavy metal music festival, but also takes on board charity football matches and various stalls. Over £1 million is earned annually from this festival.

A cruise crossing the Equator warrants a 'King Neptune' tradition on board some ships, and rituals including retinue mermaids to mark this event. The Eisteddfod is a famous Welsh celebration. One member recalls a childhood school Eisteddfod, which included songs, poems, plays, and dancing. We were reminded that ANZAC day has been a national holiday in Australia & New Zealand celebrated annually on 25th April since 1915 (Gallipoli landings) and involves parades, religious services, and sweet Anzac biscuits.

Much closer to home, a local lad recalls a 1990 'Feast of Flowers' at Lenthall School. This involved the whole of Dronfield and it was an event that included a 'Flower Queen'. Inevitably this brought up the long established



Derbyshire tradition of well-dressing. The event at Coal Aston is a fine example of this.

Then, much further afield in India, Diwali is the Hindu 'Festival of Lights' which is also celebrated in Dubai where there are lots of immigrant Indian workers. There it is celebrated with the usual food and lights but no beer. Also in India Holi is a colourful festival commemorating the relationship between the god, Krishna, and we humans. It involves people throwing coloured water and powder at each other. Luckily the paint is easily removed from clothing. Meanwhile, from Lisse to



The Hague, in the Netherlands, in tulip time, flower parades take place, very colourful & fragrant, with some stunning designs. These parades can last for 8 hours, to

cover the 30 km journey. Plus, another breath of colour and fragrance can be acquired at the Patio Festival at Cordoba, Spain for two weeks in May.

If you're not all festivalled-out, there are a fair few local festivals to be enjoyed. We all enjoyed our recollections and thank you to everyone for their contributions.

Jan Bradly (Co-ordinator)

MATHS FOR FUN

I am pleased to announce that the Maths for Fun group is restarting in October. Most of the group are keen to come back so they must think it's fun, and we have space for some new members.

At the first meeting on October 1st 10am, we will review the topics that have been covered over the last many years and plan for future meetings.



Please contact me via the Dronfield U3A website groups page for further information.

Steve Pyke (group co-ordinator)

A FRENCH GROUP

"A small, friendly, basic French group is looking for new members. They meet on Thursdays at 3.30pm via Zoom.

(Please note this is not a U3A group.)

Nous utilisons le livre 'Façon de Parler.'

For more information Please email

jill.wagg@googlemail.com

Phil Shaddock

WEEKENDERS

The group usually meet on a Sunday morning at 11am, in the café at Ward's Garden Centre. It is the only u3a group that meets at the weekend. A number of the group are going to see 'The Arts in the Park' at the Sheffield Botanical gardens on Sunday 6th. The September meetings will be on Sunday 13th and Sunday 27th. All welcome.



QUOTE of the MONTH

"Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night."

Dave Barry (American comic)

HISTORY GROUP



In June the history group went on a field trip to Manor Lodge in Sheffield. Built in about 1516 by George Talbert the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury it once stood in a large deer park to the south east of Sheffield castle. Mary Queen of Scots was put in the custody George Talbert in 1569 and spent a number of years in there.

David Templeman is a local historian who has specialised in Elizabethan history. He escorted the History Group on a tour of the Turret House at the Lodge and on Wednesday 23rd he will be giving a talk to the group, in the Peel Centre, on the time that Mary Queen of Scots was in residence there.

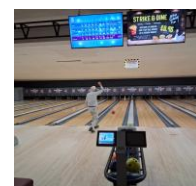


The talk will cover Mary's everyday life in Sheffield. Her relationship with George Talbert and Bess of Hardwick. What she ate and drank and how she filled her time. Who she wrote letters to. The talk will put Mary's time in Sheffield into it's correct place in English History.

The talk is open to anyone wishing to attend. The entrance fee is £2.00. Refreshments available after the talk. Further details are available on the u3a website.

TEN PIN BOWLING

The 'Lane Rangers' will return to Chesterfield Bowl after their summer break. The two sessions this month will be Monday 7th and Monday 21st at 2 pm. Two games cost £11.



Full details are on the u3a website.

All old and new bowlers welcome.

RIDDLE-ME-REE ANSWERS

- 1) Today.
- 2) He is playing Monopoly.
- 3) There are 12 spaces.
- 4) Every time a coin is flipped it is a 50% chance of being heads.
- 5) Petal cannot be changed to a country.
 - a) Togo
 - b) Chile
 - d) France

