October 2026 News

Our Monthly Meeting in St Peter's Church Wellesbourne CV35 9LS is at 2pm for 2.30pm on Tuesday 13th October.

This month's presentation will be by Alison Hunt on "The Hathaways of Shottery".



The Hathaways lived in one house over 13 generations during which time there was a great accumulation of documents, many of which now reside in the Shakespeare Birth-place Trust. This house is a remark-able slice of history, surviving wars, and accidents and even a serious arson attempt that almost burnt it to the ground. The house is now a World-famous heritage site and tour-ist attraction, with connections to possibly the world's most famous playwright. There is a wealth of social history to be gleaned from a closer look at the place we now call 'Anne Hathaway's Cottage'.

Subscriptions: the Subscription year now runs from 1 October to 30 September, so they'll be due on 1 October. They remain at £12 for the year, payable by BACS, cheque or cash. See https://denevalley.u3asite.uk/join-us/ for details.

Hastings House Flu and Covid jab day



This years Flu/Covid jab open day take place on **Friday 23rd October** in the Village Hall. As in previous years, our u3a will host a stall to see if we can se-cure some more recruits. Could you spare a few hours to help out on our stall? If so, can you contact Jackie Williams on jacwil@btinternet.com.

Our Groups

We have a wide range of activities in our groups. Visit our web page https://denevalley.u3asite.uk/groups/ to see what you can do.



Art Group Summer 2026 with photos of some of our recent work

The Art Group continues to meet on the 2nd & 4th Mondays each month in the Village Hall; we do not have a fixed theme for our sessions so everyone chooses to do something that they feel happy with, although we all some-times have a go at something new or that we have not done for a while. We currently have 16 members on the list but there are a few who for personal reasons are

unable to attend at the moment so we have between 6 to 12 at each session, we are therefore in a position to welcome new members to come and join us.
We are a group with mixed abilities and use a full mix of art media, from pencil sketching, pen and ink drawing, watercolour, acrylic, pastel and oil painting. As a rule we do not offer instruction but learn from each other by socially mixing during our meetings. The 3 photographs show a sample of the work completed recently showing subjects from plants and flowers, buildings and landscapes to animals and birds. If anyone is interested in giving it a go please get in touch with Chris Stoner chris.w.stoner@gmail.com and you would be welcome to to come to one of our sessions to meet the members and see how we get on.





Chair Yoga

If you'd like to take part, please contact:

David Hoult dave.hoult@btinternet.com 07713 137336



Narrowboating

There are still 2 places left on our **29 September** trip. Fare £20; Lunch at the Moorings.

Peter Davies 07973 908249 , dvu3anews@gmail.com

Pilates 3

https://denevalley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/pilates-3/

We have some places free in Pilates 3 session which is on a **Monday from 12.30 - 1.30** at the Village Hall. If you are interested please contact Kate Skinner at kateskinner2010@gmail.com.



Chairman: Trevor Shaw trevor.shaw5@icloud.com 07753 742924
Membership Secretary: William Howard william.howard@dunelm.org.uk 01789 508831
Groups Coordinator: David Hoult dave.hoult@btinternet.com 07713 137336
Newsletter Editor: Peter Davies dvu3anews@gmail.com 07973 908249
Copy for next month to Peter by the 15th please. Registered **Charity** Number 1183747
Web: https://denevalley.u3asite.uk/ **Facebook:** http://www.facebook.com/denevalleyu3a

Reports

Community Day: variety of stalls, best ever!

England's Heritage: Visit to Lichfield Cathedral

Garden Group: September visit to Ryton Organic Garden

Trains, Planes and Autos: August visit to Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway

Community Day

The recent Wellesbourne Community Day was widely regarded with one of the best ever! There were a great variety of stalls along-side the regular classic car and dog shows. Our u3a featured prominently with our well "decked out" double stall which highlighted much about what we are with many of our members on hand to discuss with people what we can offer.

We were successful in taking the names of 17 people that have expressed interest in joining our u3a with quite a few more saying that they will consider joining later. We were also fortunate in have our Ukulele band playing immediately adjacent to our stall which, no doubt, "sparked" even more interest about joining us!

Our outgoing Chair, Alison Edwards, and our new Chair, Trevor Shaw, agreed that this was a great day, helped by the good weather, and that such events should continue in the future!

John Hargis John.hargis@btinternet.com 01789 840069







England's Heritage - August visit Report

Lichfield and cathedral Lichfield has for some time been called a "King Cathedral', one of just 3 in the UK. While not strictly correct this unofficial title is a result of firstly its link to the monarchy, secondly being capable of providing a royal refuge in times of danger. In medieval times its fortifications even included a portcullis, drawbridge and a moat!

So it was often used by members of the royal family as a stronghold or safe-place during a visit to wilder parts of the kingdom. Charles I used it several times during the Civil War.The cathedral narrowly avoided destruction on several occasions, such as the 3 sieges



endured during the Civil War in 1644, damage being so bad it was thought cheaper and easier to demolish the old cathedral and re-build it from scratch: happily it didn't happen.



The trip to Lichfield held surprises for several reasons:

1) Few of our members, including myself had ever visited the city and cathedral… yet it was only 1 hour distant

2) the Cathedral was small but one of the most interesting we had ever visited

3) It's the only UK cathedral that can boast of 3 spires

4) The City has a lot of attractive historic properties set out around the cathedral.

Following some quick refreshments in the Cathedral we made our way to reception to Robert our volunteer guide… and what a lucky encounter that turned out to be for us!

Robert was, without a doubt, one of the best, if not the best ever guides we had met. His

knowledge of cathedral structure was encyclopaedic, as was his knowledge of English history since the Dark Ages.

Robert explained that Lichfield's position at the centre of Anglo Saxon gave it many advantages over the centuries. So it was the
natural place to build one of the earliest cathedrals in Britain.

The cathedral needed a bishop and the man chosen was someone referred to later as St Chad.

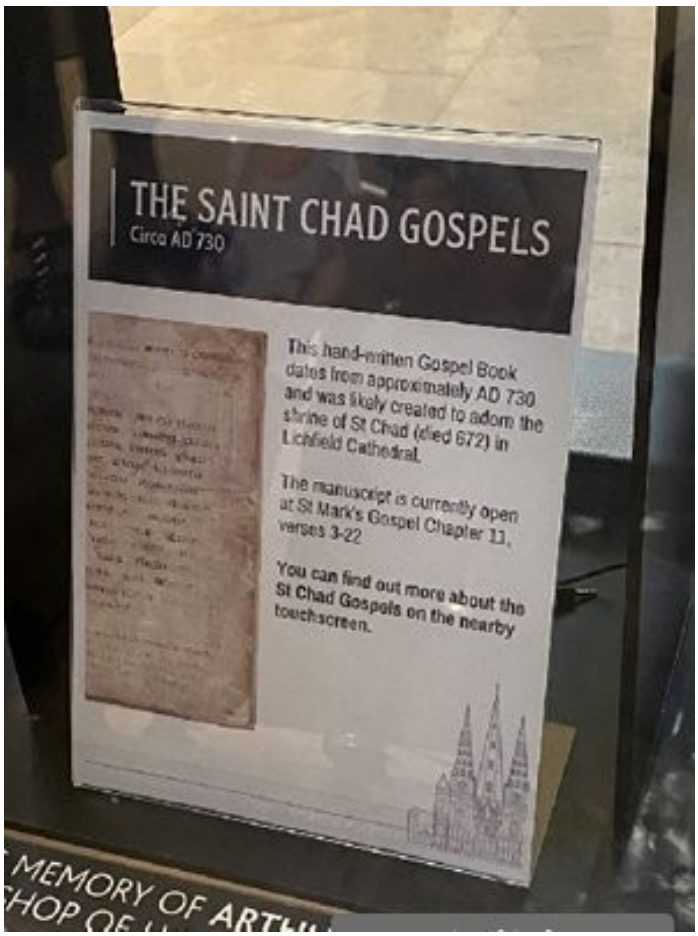
This previously Celtic religious leader converted to Christianity and became bishop for the whole of Mercia. He was a humble man who walked everywhere and impressed everyone he met. Dying in 672 he was canonised and pilgrims travelled the 400 miles from Lindasfarne to pray at his shrine in Lichfield Abbey. Soon after that the Lichfield Gospels were published: an amazing Anglo Saxon book that is nearly 1400 years old.

Pilgrims continued to visit his shrine in the Cathedral for hundreds of years and still do even today. They come to pray at the burial place. The angel headstone shown above sat above St Chad's ancient tomb.

Some years ago the British Museum organised the largest ever collection of Anglo Saxon artefacts. The headstone above was rated the finest Anglo Saxon article by visitors, which shows the enduring power of this ancient relic. The rest of the cathedral is very impressive and the photos on the next page provide some indication of its ornate design and wonderful detailing.

A very enjoyable morning of culture could only be finished in our time honoured fashion ie a group lunch taken together at one of the oldest pubs in the area. Lichfield is certainly a place we intend to return to in the near future and which might be combined with a short town walk.









Trevor Shaw trevor.shaw5@icloud.com
07753 742924

Garden Group September visit

September saw the garden group visit **Ryton Organic Garden** near Coventry. In the morning we were greeted by Katie who gave us a tour of the demonstration gardens. Garden Organic was established by Lawrence Hills in 1954 and it became a charity in 1958. Hills was a keen organic gardener and promoted the use of the herb comfrey as a natural fertiliser; the garden holds the national collection of these plants.

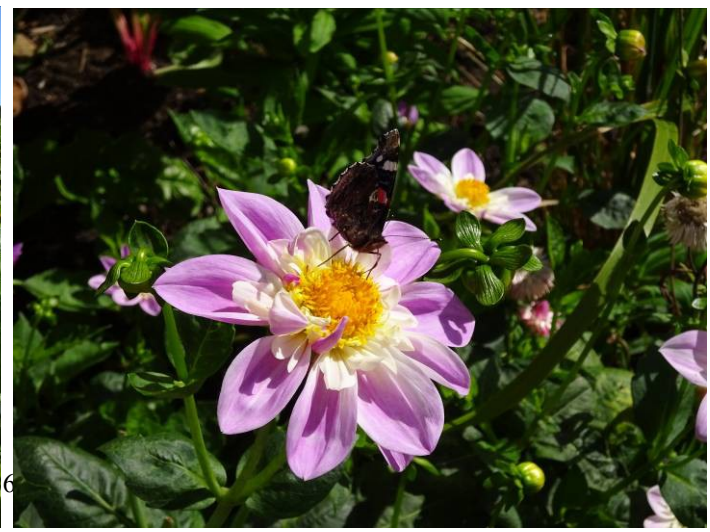
Companion planting of veg and ornamentals helps control pests; there is a no dig approach which uses homemade compost to mulch and feed the soil; they also use green manures over winter to protect and feed the soil. Ponds and log piles attract frogs and other wildlife, and in the greenhouse; they are trialling the use of climbers for shade.

After lunch we explored the Heritage Seed Library which aims to save seeds that are no longer commercially available; many of these are donated to the garden by people in the local area and are named after family members or friends who grew them such as 'Uncle Maurice's broad beans'.

There is a long process of seed sowing, growing, seed collecting, drying, cleaning and trialling which can take several seasons.

The gardens are open under the National Garden Scheme a couple of times a year and are well worth a visit. Linda Ledger LiMLe@hotmail.co.uk 01789 638575





TRAINS, PLANES AND AUTOS



The August trip of the “Trains, Planes and Auto’s” group was to Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway. This is a light railway with 2ft wide tracks which is just over 3 miles long and built after the WW1 to bring out sand from a local quarry and remained in operation until the 1960’s before being resurrected several years later as a heritage railway.



The line is unusual as it runs through modern housing, built since the 1970s, although the last half mile runs through countryside before terminating at the Stonehenge Works, now one of the engineering workshops of the preserved railway. There are open level crossings on the route for which a man with a red flag has to dismount from the train and hold up traffic. Under normal circumstances we would have been pulled by a steam loco but in view of the on-going hot/dry weather this had to be switched to one of the many diesel locos operated by the Heritage Railway.



Our group had a reserve carriage on the train which included a great sign, as shown, which we have kept. After that, it was down to a local pub for a great meal.



A good day was had by all!

John Hargis John.hargis@btinternet.com 01789 840069