

Notes from today's Monthly Meeting – July 2026

We welcomed 86 members and another three potential members to today's meeting – a good turnout now that the holiday season has started.

Update on (mainly) New Groups

Beginners' Spanish – Last month Alan Bradshaw managed to get us all speaking Spanish ... even those of us who didn't actually want to! He has now agreed dates for the second module of his course which will run from the end of October to just before Christmas.

Coffee Club was well attended a couple of weeks ago in June; unfortunately the absent Costa Coffee manager had not left instructions to cordon off our space so we had to mingle with the hoi polloi, though early arrivals managed to rearrange the furniture so we could all sit together – a minor issue in a very enjoyable get together.

Please let us know if you want to stop by at the next session on 17th July so we can ensure enough seating. We will run Coffee Club on Friday, 21st August as well but there's no need to sign up – we can hopefully relax back to having drop-in-if-you-feel-like-it sessions again.

Family History is running well – the first group are part way through their "course" and the second intake will run from 3rd September to 19th November. That intake is just about full, but if you'd be interested in attending, contact Paul to go on the waiting list.

Gardening Club had a very successful visit to two members' garden in June and are planning to be out and about through the summer, so *do* contact Claire if you're interested – *don't* go to the FMH on the 2nd Wednesday of the month or you'll be Home Alone!

Scrabble – the revitalised group had a first meeting yesterday, and there will be another session on the 16th July before the summer recess; further sessions begin again on 3rd September.

We are also delighted to introduce a planned **Spanish Conversation** group (not suitable for beginners) led by Catherine Bassa who is aiming to start in October. Please reply if you'd like to express interest.

Finally, Gillian Wright would be happy to lead a **four week basic Flower Arranging Course** in the summer. Please reply if you'd like to be involved.

And so, on to Events

The **One Hour Workshop** in June was on Travelling Solo and member Ela Robinson shared lots of information about her experiences doing just that. The next session is on 30th July when Gillian Wright will share her expertise in using Aromatherapy in the Home to utilise natural oils instead of manufactured chemicals. Please let us know if you'd like to attend Gillian's session.

Future One Hour Workshop dates for your diary are Going to Law as a Layperson led by Alan Bradshaw in September and a session on Christmas Wreath-making demonstrated by Sylvia Keeney in November.

We are keen to know about sessions where you could share your knowledge or expertise, or perhaps topics you think would be of interest to yourself and others where you could

suggest a speaker. Let us know so we can keep our One Hour Workshops interesting and relevant.

Darlington Woodland Bowling Club have kindly invited u3a members to a Quiz at 7:30pm on Saturday, 25th July. The bar will be open, you can take your own nibbles, and the cost will be £3. Please let us know if you would like to attend so we can give an idea of numbers. As this is a DWBC event, the organisation and insurance will be their own rather than u3a.

The next **Lunch Club** will be at the Bannatyne Hotel on Friday, 4th September – please find the menu attached and let us have your meal choices by Wednesday, 26th August. Please also note that service will be at 12:30 prompt to fit in with other bookings in the hotel and you are asked to ensure you arrive in good time.

In early December we're off to **Bury Market** with Lee's Coaches at the discounted price of £18. Places are limited so please contact us to book asap.

Our **Christmas Lunch** will be held on Wednesday, 16th December at Freemasons' Hall. If you would like to attend, please let us know so that we can save you a place until you can choose your menu, let us know your seating preferences, and pay for your meal later in the year. Places are filling fast, so a speedy response is advised.

We have more information about our planned visit to the **Loire Valley** in May or June next year. The proposed date is 16th June but we can flex that if necessary. We're planning to

- visit some fabulous chateaux and gardens
- enjoy the beautiful towns and villages along the Loire
- partake in a couple of wine tastings
- discover the medieval old town, local gastronomy and rich Renaissance heritage of Tours itself
- take in the poignant beauty of Monet's Gardens at Giverny

If you're potentially interested, please request an information sheet, and let us know if you remain interested so that we can assess interest.

Finally, we have been contacted by Shannon Edwards who is a Trainee Clinical Psychologist on the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) programme at the University of Leicester.

She is asking if any of our members would be willing to participate in her research project which is entitled ***Beyond betrayal: A grounded theory of older adults' experience of, and response to, relationship fraud.***

She is currently conducting doctoral research exploring the experiences of adults aged 65 and over who have been affected by fraud or deception by someone they knew or trusted, such as a partner, family member, friend, or professional. This research aims to improve understanding of how these experiences affect older adults, inform clinical practice, and support the development of services and safeguarding strategies.

If you might be interested in participating, please request an information sheet which explains more about the project and gives information about contacting Shannon.

Our speaker today was Carol Dean who talked about the Valley of the Kings. It was a thoroughly interesting talk which prompted many questions afterwards.

Co-incidentally, as I was scrolling through the events and lectures available from u3a free on Zoom I spotted a session on The Role of Women in Ancient Egypt to be held next week on 10th July. Do take a look online if you'd be interested in the session.



The role of women in ancient Egypt

u3a Festival Fringe

Join Neil Stevenson, Subject Adviser for Egyptology, to explore the status of women in ancient Egypt.

Friday 10 July at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom

That's all for this month. I am only going to attach the Lunch Club menu with this email so I don't clog up everybody's inboxes. Please let me know if you want to express interest / book / request more info on any of the topics above.

Have a lovely few weeks until we meet again in September.

Best wishes
Victoria