



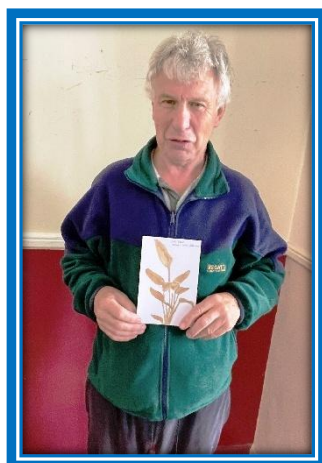
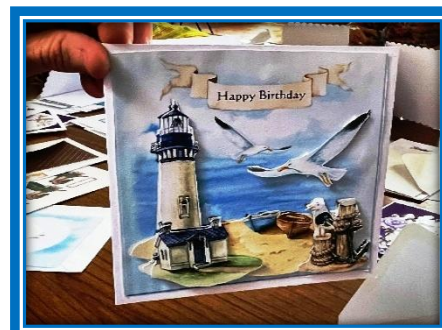
MONTHLY MEETINGS

28th August 2025 - Monthly Meeting review

On Thursday 28th August, and following last year's success, “**Crafternoon Tea**” was repeated at Longton Central Hall. The craft skills showcased were a variation on those offered last year, consequently the afternoon again offered something very different. The session was directed by a number of committee members and Craft Club leader Joy.

Some 39 members were in attendance to try out a new skill, and the afternoon again proved to be a resounding success. Crafts showcased included: making a personalised celebration card; making a macramé angel; painting a flower picture with liquid coffee; and making a gift basket.

After all of their hard work, the happy members chatted over tea/coffee and delicious cakes made by Diane. The Chairman observed that it was obvious that members had not only enjoyed the craft exercises, but also the social interaction with members they don't usually meet.



Longstanding branch member Jeff, (pictured), was extremely proud of his painting, which he considers to be in the Classical Renaissance style. He has however reluctantly put the “masterpiece” up for sale with a reserve price of £20,000.

Do we have any offers??!!

Dates for your Diary

25th September 2025 – Caroline Spiers has been booked to talk about the Air Transport Auxilliary. Caroline is the daughter of Rita Baines, the only female pilot from Staffordshire who delivered planes to the RAF during the Second World War. The theme of her talk will be her mother's experiences during that period.

30th October 2025 – A presentation will be given by Peter Hardy, whose talk is titled "The National Memorial Arboretum." The talk will cover the history and development of the Arboretum, a unique place that is the country's year-round place of remembrance. It will include a visual tour of the grounds, in which there are 25,000 trees and over 420 memorials.

27th November 2025 – The pre-Christmas entertainment will again be provided by the branch ukulele group, and will include a "Singalong."

Please encourage other members to attend, what is always a good afternoon out.

MEMBERSHIP

At the branch committee meeting held on 11th September 2025, the Membership Secretary reported that the count of members was 400, which comprised 357 renewals and 43 new members. The total membership count at a similar time in 2024 was 383, which indicates a modest improvement year on year, and is therefore considered to be satisfactory. The committee is pleased to note that 357 members have renewed their subscriptions for year 2025/26.

Many thanks to those who have persuaded family and friends to join us, and please encourage new memberships whenever the opportunity arises. Likewise, if you have a Facebook Page, please publicise whenever you are able.

Should you know anyone who would like to join us, application forms can be obtained from our website, or from membership officer, Alan Stevenson, Tel. 01782 395760: or by emailing: a.stevenson09@btinternet.com

You can also find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/StokeSouthu3a/>

May we respectfully remind members who have not yet renewed, that the new membership year commenced on 1st April 2025.

u3a TRUST MATTERS

1. Voting for the role of Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust closed on 11th September. We have been informed that the name of the successful candidate is Sheila Crawley. She will commence her new role on 15 October.

2. The 2025 Trust AGM will take place at **11am on 15th October** at Sketchley Grange Hotel and Spa in Hinckley, Leicestershire. The AGM will again be a hybrid event, i.e. in person and on-line. The agenda and associated papers are now available, and it is confirmed that the branch will exercise its voting rights on all matters under discussion.

3. u3a week is being celebrated from 20th – 28th September 2025. This year, the theme is Positive Ageing, activities and achievements will be celebrated.

4. Rob Rowberry has resigned as one of the two Council Representatives for the West Midlands, therefore Jean Jackson will remain the only Councillor until the elections in February 2026. All members, therefore, have some time to ponder whether they wish to apply.

5. Jean is appealing for members to form a West Midlands regional team, particularly in the area of raising the region's profile through Public Relations. She is keen to hear from anyone who could be an effective adviser.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

Potential new group – Seated Yoga update

The Group's Co-ordinator has conversed with the group leader of the presently operating Yoga class to determine her thoughts. The leader wished to have more time to ponder over suggestions.

Since some of the members interested in seated yoga do attend the current yoga class, the committee consider it unlikely they will attend both classes. The committee therefore consider that a compromise could be to offer the classes on alternate weeks for a trial period, and then agree with everyone a satisfactory way forward. This matter is therefore ongoing, and an update will be reported in the next Newsletter.

High attendances – Gentle Exercise class

As reported last month, a decision has been taken to not accept any newcomers to the group, largely because adequate space was needed for individuals to safely exercise. A "Waiting List" template has been provided to the group leader who will commence completion at her discretion.

New attendees should therefore determine if there are any vacancies before initial attendance.

FOCUS ON GROUPS

Family History

A short reminder that the activity is suspended for the foreseeable future due to the group leader being unwell. Group members can, however, continue to use the computers and software at Longton Library.

Discussion Group

The next group meeting is confirmed for **Tuesday 14th October 2025**, 10.00am to 11.15am. It will take place in Stoke Library, which is located in the Council Hub close to the Market.

The subject under discussion will be: **"Discipline in Life"**

The group leader is Bob Jones whose contact number is 01785 817743. **Vacancies remain.**

Gardening and Nature Lovers

The group's next meeting is to visit Bridgemere Garden Centre **Friday 10th October**. It is situated half a mile away from the village of Woore, on the (A51) London Road to Nantwich.

Bridgemere is one of Britain's largest Garden centres and receives around 1.8 million visitors each year. The Garden centre sells over 3,000 plant varieties, together with a range of gardening products. It is therefore an inspiring destination for the amateur gardener.

Members are requested to meet outside "NEXT" in Longton between 10.15-10.30am, and travel will be arranged for those without transport. Please contact Josie Peirson if you have any queries. Josie's telephone details are: Mob: 07775 974876 or Landline: 01782 399711.



Flower Arranging Group

The group resumed their fortnightly meetings on 15th September following their summer break. The next meeting will take place on 29th September 2025.

Outdoor Bowls

Group leader, Dave Darby, has confirmed that the last meeting of the group for the 2025 summer season took place on Wednesday 24th September. Dave is hopeful that the activity will resume at Fenton Private Bowling Club in April 2026.

Lunch Group

The group's regular meeting place is the "Man in Space" in Trentham (New Inn Lane). The next planned meeting will take place at 12.30pm on **Tuesday 14th October 2025**. Further details may be obtained from Christine Whitfield, Mob: 07939 621499. Christine requests that new attendees contact her prior to the meeting, so that table numbers can be booked in advance.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Heritage Open Days 2025



Heritage open days for 2025 concluded on Sunday 21st September. The ten days of events, which focussed on the area's unique industrial heritage, again proved to be very popular with excellent attendances at all events. Many u3a members were in attendance and we are sure that they will join the branch in thanking the local Heritage groups for all of their many hard months of planning and implementation. Branch secretary/publicity officer, Phil Rowley, again led a number of the presentations/walks; so, on behalf of the branch a special thank-you to Phil.

Day Trips

(a) "Doreen's Friendship Group" - The next planned Day Trip is to the **National Memorial Arboretum and Lichfield** on **Wednesday 15th October 2025** (From Longton Central Hall).

Should anyone be interested, you may contact Doreen for further information. Her contact details are: Landline 01782 373369 or Mob. 07818 811153.

(b) The "Closer to Home" Walking Group's next trip is to **Liverpool** on **Thursday 2nd October**. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871231767 for further details.

A Festival of Music for All

The City of Stoke-on-Trent Male Voice Choir present their Autumn Gala Concert on **Saturday 27th September 2025** at Longton Central Hall. Their special guests are: The Inn Ringers; and Soprano Caitlin Day (age 17).

Doors open at 6.45pm for a 7.30pm start. Refreshments will be available, and a Programme costs £1. Tickets cost £10 and you may pay at the door.

Ray Johnson Film Archive

The Mitchell Arts Centre- How It All Began

Tuesday 21st October 2025 - 11am - Community day - drop in free event.



The film charts the history of the MAC from the wartime appeal for a memorial to Reginald Mitchell, through to its opening in 1957. The famous Spitfire pilot Douglas Bader's speech is included when he officially opened the building in October 1957. There are lots of pictures and reminiscences to enjoy, and a photo-montage of the work done to regenerate the building into the **Mitchell Arts Centre** of today.

Hanley Park Family Fest

Are you ready for a day packed with family fun? A Family Fest is being held at Hanley Park on Saturday 27th September?

Entertainment and activities include:

Mad Reptiles, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust kids' activities;

Food stalls, sweet treats, licensed bar, and crafts;

Warwicks Fun Fair;

Centenary mascot Kelvin the Kiln will also be in attendance.

Don't miss this brilliant day out for all ages – music, food, fun and community spirit in the heart of the city - **11am–4pm**.

Overflow parking is available at Stoke on Trent College (Cauldon campus).



This Newsletter is also accessible on our website (via the News Button). Please try to share information with fellow members who do not have access to the internet.

Items for publication in the next Newsletter will need to reach Andrew Devin by Monday, 20th October 2025. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: a.devin2@gmail.com