Registered Charity
No. 1166067

u3a Stourbridge

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Issue: 21
Sept.
2026

Newsletter

Hello members,

The Stourbridge Coat of Arms. What do you know about it? I can remember it being in the entrance to the Odeon cinema in the High Street. It's now in the entrance to the Crown centre.



The Bridge: Represents the name of Stourbridge, while its brick arch is a reminder of the local clay mining and brick making industry. **Two Pears:** Symbolise the town's historical connection to Worcestershire (where pears appear on the county coat of arms). **The Fleece:** Suspended from the bridge stands for the skin and leather dressing trades. **The Chain:** Refers to the prominent chain-making industry in the local area.

One Heart - One Way is the official historic town motto it, symbolises unity, singleness of mind, and a shared purpose among the community and its leaders.

How appropriate this has been in the last few weeks? We never thought Stourbridge would be the main item on the National news. Our town has become united in its efforts to support those in need. Please keep those affected in your thoughts. Maybe we should add One Heart One Way to our logo.

Barbara

Amblers Group

The Amblers are changing! John Stevenson has lead the group for three and a half years from March 2023 to today, 2nd September 2026.

So we had an Amblers Farewell walk over Kinver Edge followed by a cheerful coffee at the Farm Shop - Thank you to those who came and for the card, it was a lovely way for John to finish his stint as leader.

We are very pleased that James Gennard has taken over as leader and has some great walks planned for us all. All current members should have received an email from James introducing himself to the group.



Learn, laugh, live!

U3a Solo Cycle Rider's Epic Coast-to-Coast Trip

Aged 79 (age is just a number!), Diana Sturgeon, member of Stourbridge u3a, completed the 140-mile solo bicycle ride in 4.5 days of the Coast-to-Coast route in June this year.

Diana was inspired to complete this ride as a fundraiser for Alzheimers Research UK. A family member has been suffering from this disease for many years so completing this challenge was close to her heart.



The route started from Whitehaven and finished in Roker in Sunderland and she encountered not only heavy rain and swirling winds, but enjoyed magnificent views along with the kindness of strangers along her route. Here is her description of the ride in her own words: "After many months of preparation, cycling 40-miles frequently with hills, but nothing could prepare for the hills on the Coast-to-Coast ride, Whinlatter Pass, Hartside and the spectacular Pennines."

"The whole journey was amazing, I met some wonderfully kind people who sponsored me on my way. The weather varied from a couple of heavy rainstorms to swirling winds."

"Thanks to Stourbridge u3a Cycling Group for their tremendous support and encouragement.' Raised £2600.00 for Alzheimers Research UK for which I'm absolutely delighted."

Diana's last cycled this route 28 years ago and found it quite different in terms of route and difficulty. The most challenging day was from Alston to Consett, starting at 8.00 am and riding until 6.30 pm in the early evening - finishing in rain.

Diana's Certificate



Diana gave an example of the kind people she met. Near the end of her route she was climbing a hill at Washington, near Newcastle when she met a lady dog-walker. At this point Diana was walking up the steep incline with her heavily loaded bicycle. The lady took Diana's bicycle to give her a break whilst Diana took hold of the dog as they chatted up the climb. There were many occasions such as these - many people she met en route sponsored her, even at the places she stayed at, along with many people back in Stourbridge too.

Here is a quotation she saw at one of the places she stayed at: "If you don't climb the mountain, you don't get the views".

If anyone would like to contribute personally, here is the link to Diana's fundraiser page:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/diana-sturgeon-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=WA

Learn, laugh, live!

Wildlife Group

This is a group for people who enjoy looking at, listening to, and sharing their knowledge about Wildlife (any kind of plant and animal). Our meetings are usually local, we walk around the area (slowly and with breaks when needed) for about one hour and sometimes stop for a cup of coffee. We try to avoid anything too arduous or unstable in our walking.

We rarely host speakers or show slides or film - that is what the BBC and the Wildlife Trusts are for! None of us is an expert, so we share what we already know and use books (or apps when we are out and about) to identify anything of interest. We also share news and photographs between meetings.

FOX CUBS AT NIGHT



HERON



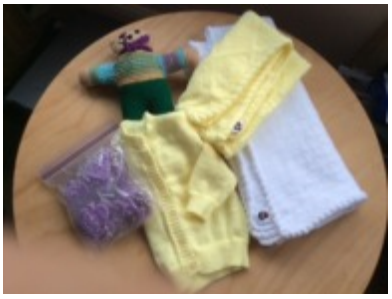
We have visited many of the Dudley Nature Reserves and always remind ourselves how lucky we are to have these green (for most of the year) areas so close to home. Nearly all of these sites are on land which was previously industrial and which has generally been allowed to return to the 'wild' where trees, bushes, wildflowers grow in a truly natural state. Insects, birds and mammals have subsequently moved in to take advantage of the lakes, streams and vegetation. We also have our canals and the river Stour, which always guarantee sightings of birds and plants living or growing on or around the water.

New members or visitors are always very welcome to join us. Our next meeting will be on the 28th of September. I'm usually at monthly meetings and very happy to respond to messages sent via the web page.

Jane Williamson

Craft Group

All crafts are welcome. At present, we do crochet, cross stitch, tapestry and embroidery. Classes are held at my home address, from 2.30pm to 4.30pm, on the first and third Tuesday afternoons of the month. The Craft Group is currently seeking new members so do come and join us.



Mollie Hunton

Learn, laugh, live!

Visit to Museum of the Great Western Railway

It seems a long time ago now; we do so many days out! But back in June 40 members went to visit the museum, we split into 2 groups and a very knowledgeable guide told us the history of the area, the geology and about the people who worked there.



STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway is housed in a beautifully restored Grade II railway building in the heart of the former Swindon railway works. The Museum tells the story of the men and women who built, operated and travelled on the Great Western Railway - a railway network that, through the pioneering vision and genius of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was regarded as the most advanced in the world



The museum is housed in a former engineering workshop, built c.1842 using squared rubble from the Box Tunnel, and forming part of the Swindon Works of the Great Western Railway. The works was one of the largest in the world and operated from 1843 to 1986. In its heyday, it covered more than 300 acres, and could turn out three locomotives per week.

Most of the former works buildings next door are now a McArthur Glen Designer Outlet. This was enjoyed by many of the members -who came home with several purchases!

Many thanks to those who came.

Brenda Stevenson

Security Advice Websites

GENERAL ADVICE - SCAMS & FRAUD - www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

CHECK THE VALIDITY OF TICKET SOURCES - www.star.org.uk

CHECK THE STRENGTH OF YOUR PASSWORDS - www.passwordmonster.com

CHECK YOUR EMAIL PROVIDERS SECURITY - www.haveibeenpwned.com

Learn, laugh, live!

Visit to Masson Mills – 14th July

Tuesday 14th July saw a group of 30 visit Masson Mills in Derbyshire. We began our journey with lovely cool temperatures and enjoyed a journey of mixed scenery on the way, from motorway queues to Derbyshire dales. Arriving at our destination we were met by Kevin our tour guide who gave us an excellent informative tour of the mill.



I think we were all in awe of what Arkwright had invented all those years ago. Originally a barber and wigmaker, he joined forces with a clock maker to bring his ideas to life in 1783 . However, the lack of Health and Safety along with the use of child labour, made us aware of the sacrifices made by the workforce.

The mill remained a commercial spinning mill until 1991. The entire site is still powered by the river Derwent producing renewable energy via hydro electric turbines.



Vicky Homer.

Visit to Belvoir Castle – 13th August



For over 900 years, Belvoir Castle has stood proudly on its hilltop, witnessing the ebb and flow of English history. From Norman conquest to modern day, the castle has been rebuilt and reimagined several times, each incarnation reflecting the tastes and tribulations of its era. Today, Belvoir Castle remains the family home of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, while also welcoming visitors from around the world to experience its rich history and stunning architecture.

On the hottest day of the year, 40 u3a Members visited the castle, we had a very scenic journey through Leicestershire and the coach was cool and comfortable. The views from the top of the castle we really amazing you can see Lincoln Cathedral and the Wash on clear days. The tour guides were very good and we thoroughly enjoyed learning about the castle over the centuries and the family who have owned it.



Brenda Stevenson.

And Finally

OUTINGS & EVENTS SUMMARY

We have days out for you to enjoy from Stourbridge u3a, these are organised by a team who do their best to find different and affordable days out for us all to enjoy. All trips are announced by our Chairman on the Monday message when they are on sale.

6th October - Visit to Malvern Priory and its environs.

18th November - For £36, you can enjoy a unique day out at the Royal Mint Experience, home to Britain's oldest company and the only place where UK coins are made.

9th December - Our Annual Christmas Meal at Himley Hall. This meal was very well received last year. We invite you to come to Himley Hall for a wonderful 3 course lunch to celebrate another year together.

Email events.stourbridgeu3a@gmail.com for more information and for booking details or contact Brenda Stevenson directly.

There is a food collection box at monthly meetings. The items will be donated to the local Food Bank for distribution to the less fortunate.

ONLINE SAFETY TOOLKIT - https://www.getsafeonline.org/selfhelpcentre/

SCAM MESSAGES TESTER - TEXT, EMAIL OR WHATSAPP - https://www.ask-silver.com

WEBSITE CHECKER -

https://www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite/

GUEST SPEAKERS

The speakers for the next 3 months are:-

1st October - Mike Jenkins will explore the origins and meanings of local place names in Voices of the Past.

5th November - Christine Gregory will talk about Remembrance Day in other countries.

3rd December - Max Keen will tell the story of Gordon of Khartoum, in a way that only Max can do. A Victorian hero prised from the true Victorian heroic mould!!

FAMOUS QUOTES -

"If my mind can conceive it, if my heart can believe it, then I can achieve it."
Muhammad Ali

STOURBRIDGE u3a FACEBOOK GROUPS

For general information about our u3a
https://www.facebook.com/Stourbridge-u3a-1346526112121975

The Stourbridge u3a in Touch page:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/548973319074793 (Closed group - by application only.)

Photography Group
https://stourbridge.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/photography-and-digital-images/

NATIONAL u3a FACEBOOK GROUP
https://www.facebook.com/groups/2833125070105668

NATIONAL u3a REGULAR BULLETINS
https://www.u3a.org.uk

NATIONAL u3a NEWSLETTER
https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter

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