



AGM 2026

Our delayed AGM took place on 24 June and it was confirmed the current committee remain in post. Nevertheless, we always welcome members who would like to become more involved by joining us on the committee or simply volunteering to help out on an ad hoc basis. If you could offer some assistance in keeping your u3a running or would like to find out more, please do contact Deb Heaphy – chair@towcesteru3a.co.uk

Ada Gorton – your company would be appreciated



You are invited to join us at our

SUMMER CELEBRATION AND SOCIAL – Wednesday 29 July – 2pm

The West End comes to Towcester

Music – ice cream - Pimms

Once again, we will be combining our July monthly meeting with a celebration of the u3a year, with seasonal refreshments, a vintage ice cream cart and musical entertainment featuring songs and anecdotes from West End shows. It's sure to be popular, so do please reserve your place in plenty of time.

Book at: <https://u3a.simplmembership.co.uk/Towcester/Administration/Events>

Many of you may know Ada Gorton, a long-term member of Towcester u3a, who was very involved in all types of activities and events. In particular she helped teaching the Italian Groups. She celebrated her 100th birthday last year, and remained highly independent, but is now residing at Duncote care home. This is clearly quite a change for her, and she is missing her old life. For those of you who knew Ada it would be lovely if you could visit her in her new home to help her to feel like she's not forgotten.

Monthly meetings



26 August

Izy Frydrych

Jadzia's War

The incredible story of an 11 year-old Polish girl, escaping the country at the outbreak of WW2, and her adventures which included travelling to and living in Africa before finally reaching England. A remarkable account from Jadzia's daughter.



30 September

Lynette Hill

Lobo the Grey Wolf

A ruthless hunter is transformed by his encounter with a particularly clever wolf.



28 October

The Work and Training of Guide Dogs

The amazing relationship of assistance dogs

Our meetings all start at **2pm** and are followed by refreshments, and we welcome you to stay for a chat with other members over tea and biscuits. The venue is Towcestrians Sports Club, where there is plenty of free parking.

Book all meetings at: <https://u3a.simplmembership.co.uk/Towcester/Administration/Events>

Monthly Coffee & Chat

Our informal coffee get-togethers are held each month between 10am – 12noon at Watling Street Village (formerly 185, on the High Street). These provide the opportunity to meet other members for a chat over a hot drink. Meet in the front room – purchase your own drinks. All very warmly welcome. The next meetings are:



Tuesday 14 July

August – no meeting

Wednesday 16 September

Thursday 15 October

Group news

Grants to groups

It is good to report that Towcester u3a is in a healthy financial position, and the committee is keen to make best use of funds to assist groups who need to purchase equipment or other resources. We reported fairly recently that we were able to help the Petanque Group with the purchase of gravel for their court in Tiffield to create a much better playing surface. We have also helped the Church Visits Group with a mini PA system so that everyone can enjoy the talks they receive in the various churches they visit. A grant has also been made to the Folk Dancing Group for a lightweight speaker which replaces an old and very cumbersome piece of equipment which is suitable for the acoustics of the Town Hall. Clearly as the latter items are owned by the u3a they are available to other groups to use should the need arise.

If your group could benefit from a grant to assist in your activities, please do put in a request for the committee to consider - contact Deb Heaphy – chair@towcesteru3a.co.uk

Pickleball Match



The first ever tournament took place between Towcester and Brackley Pickleball Teams on 1 May. Towcester Pickleball has been running for 5 years, gathering membership momentum, and now has a following of over 50 people spread over 3 groups. After being approached by Brackley last year, a tournament was arranged.

14 pairs from each side took part in 49 matches played over 2 hours, with games lasting for 6 minutes. Scoring was 2 points for a win and 1 for a draw. Final scores were Towcester with an impressive 68 and Brackley

on 31. Matches were followed by a buffet lunch and £65 was raised for Breast Cancer. Towcester are looking forward to a return fixture in the near future.

Apologies for not including this in the June bulletin, after a great win. Well done Towcester!

Understanding the Stock Market



Course restarting in September

It was good to meet up with interested Members at the monthly meeting. The popular course of monthly workshops that SLOWLY goes through explaining the markets *will be restarting in September.*

But we noted that it was a very hot day and so are aware that there may be members who are interested in joining the course but weren't able to attend on that day.

For that reason, I invite **any** Member who may have an interest to contact me and I'll return with more information and update them as we move towards September.

Please remember that:

- You are only indicating an interest, you are not committing to anything
- The course is totally free (except for buying your own coffee)
- We NEVER push any Member to make any investment
- The course is structured so that you can take it just as far as you like.

Contact: Andrew Pearson on 07798.567867 or andrew4.investing@gmail.com



London Explorers 2 Tour of Theatreland

In the days of Shakespeare and Marlowe, theatres provided entertainment for all members of society but a century later during the Commonwealth, under the rule of Oliver Cromwell, the population of the country was not allowed to have fun and theatres were closed down and the buildings demolished. It was not until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 when Charles II returned from exile that life was restored to theatreland. However, it was very different and as there were no theatres standing, performances were held under the monarch's scrutiny in the Royal Courts. Plays as such were not allowed unless a Royal Patent was granted so entertainment was provided by song, pantomime and acrobatics.

We started our tour in Covent Garden moving on to the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane which opened in 1663 and the Theatre Royal – now the Royal Opera house - which first opened in 1732. It presented its first ballet a couple of years later followed by its first opera the next year. Due to a change in the law in 1843 royal patents were no longer required, allowing licensed venues to present any kind of theatrical entertainment. The effect was a rapid expansion of the London theatre landscape and the late nineteenth century saw the arrival of purpose-built music halls and the genre of operetta, particularly the Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations which were first produced at the Savoy Theatre.



Leaving the Strand we headed to the Aldwych Theatre, home of the Aldwych farces in the early 20th century and London base for the Royal Shakespeare company in the 1960s, before heading back towards Covent Garden. Here we learned that due to the expansion and commercialisation of theatreland new theatres such as the Donmar Theatre, a not-for-profit theatre, were opened in converted old warehouses and other buildings.

We finished the tour opposite the Hippodrome; a majestic building originally designed for circus and variety performances when it opened in 1900 but which was converted into a nightclub - the Talk of the Town - in the 1950s, featuring performances by popular artists of the time such as Frank Sinatra, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Dusty Springfield, Shirley Bassey and many more. Sadly, it was converted again more recently and is now a casino.

Boys Toys 2



Boys Toys 2 group visited Dudley Canal Tunnels in June; a guided boat trip through the dark tunnels where limestone was mined for centuries. The group then moved on to Mad O'Rourke's pie factory in Tipton for a most enjoyable lunch. See David doing his Desperate Dan impression above.

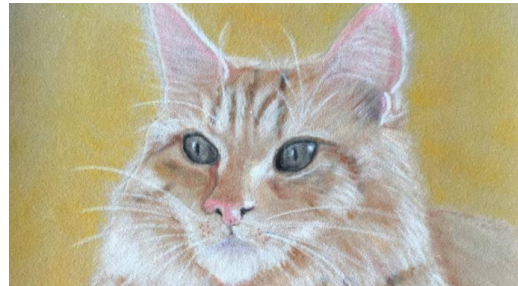
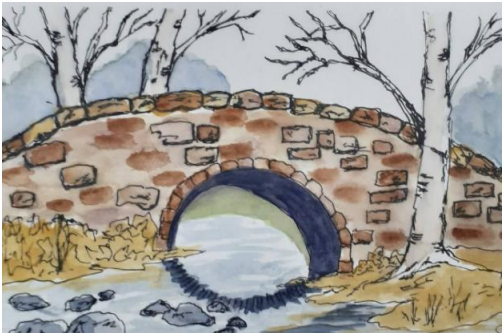
Boys Toys 3



Boys Toys 3 visited the de Havilland Aircraft Museum in June. They are most well-known for the de Havilland Mosquito during WW2 (see photo) and the de Havilland Comet passenger jet after the war.

Painting for Pleasure

Painting for Pleasure group had fun Painting 'A Bridge over water' and some beautiful cats (domestic and wild) – here are a few examples:



Strollers



Strollers had a good walk in June led by Paul. We met in Greens Norton and had a lovely country walk through fields with sheep and horses. The weather was perfect for walking, not too hot but dry, and the Butchers Arms again very kindly opened early for us for refreshments afterwards.

Ramblers 2



Our June walk was met with downpours and leaden skies but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of Ramblers 2 who undertook a delightful walk of around 4.5 miles between Nether Heyford and Bugbrooke. This was followed by a yummy lunch at The Wharf, Bugbrooke. The group are grateful to David and Karen Watkins for arranging a lovely walk.

Mixed Crafts

Bead necklaces and stitched cards were 2 of the projects tackled by the Mixed Crafts group.



This was followed by a session making book folded vases. A talented group!



Theatre Group



Fifteen of the Theatre Group saw "Operation Mincemeat" at Milton Keynes Theatre in June. It was a fantastic performance from the five cast members, who took on various roles. A true story of the successful Allied deception during WW2 to trick the Nazi's about the invasion of Sicily. It was funny as well as poignant.

We are pleased to announce the availability of tickets for five productions in the Autumn: all are matinees at Milton Keynes except 'Choir of Man', which is at the Derngate theatre in Northampton.

Coming up:

DIRTY DANCING Sat 28/8/26 @ £31.59

WAITRESS Wednesday 23/9/26 Circle @ £38.00

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS Wednesday 30/9/26 Stalls @ £27.50

CHOIR OF MAN Saturday 10/10/26 Stalls @ £35.00 - DERNGATE

MAMMA MIA Wednesday 14/10/26 Circle @ £34.50

If you are interested in seeing any of the above please let Judith or Lesley know either by email, via Facebook or at one of the monthly meetings.

Contact: Finance/payment – Lesley - lesleyj22@hotmail.com / Bookings – Judith - judeat11@hotmail.com

Striders



An excellent Stride in June was led by Alison Walker, around the Bringtons. The heavy downpour before we set off was followed by fine weather and blue skies, and a large group enjoyed the rural views, including towards Althorpe House. Lunch at the Saracens Head was a perfect end to this 5-miler.

Garden Visits



Members visited the spectacular Belvoir Castle in June, with a tour of the impressive state rooms as well as time in the gardens. The trip concluded with a visit to the retail park.

Coming up:

Wednesday 8 July - Nymans House and Gardens in Sussex. This is a Grade II listed garden with rare and unusual plant collections, the setting for the recreation of a Medieval house.

August – Holiday – 20th-24th August 2026 - County Durham; includes an outdoor production of "Kynren".

Payment for visits – Carole is no longer able to accept cheques; all trips will need to be paid via bank transfer or cash only. Payments by BACs should be to the following account:

Sort code: 77-21-03. Account number: 17224068

Contact Carole Hunt on 01327 352564 for more information or booking.



IT Helpers Group – next meeting Monday 20 July, 2-4pm, Sawpits Centre

Do you need help in understanding how to use your PC, laptop, smartphone (Android or iPhone) or tablet? Do you want to learn how to do emails, documents, spreadsheets, or how to use social media, etc. Our IT Helpers group is here to help you get more from your technology.

If you would like some IT help then just come along to our next meeting on **Monday 20 July at the Sawpits Centre between 2:00-4:00** and we will have a one-to-one conversation with you. You do not need to bring any IT equipment as we bring our own, although if it is to do with a piece of your own IT equipment, then it would be helpful if you could bring the item with you.

If you are not sure what you want to know, then come along to a meeting for a conversation with one of us and that should get you started. We cannot guarantee to be able to solve every problem, but between us we will give it a try. We are a group of people who are interested in IT. We no longer work in the IT industry professionally, but we have a wide range of experience between us and are willing to offer support to people of the U3A who have queries on using IT.

Contact: ithelp@towcesteru3a.co.uk

List of interest groups available at Towcester u3a

Towcester u3a offers a wide variety of interest groups. See: <https://www.towcesteru3a.co.uk/groups/interest-groups> If you have ideas for other groups which you think may appeal to members, do consider setting one up. Guidance and support will be provided. Don't forget – the ethos of the u3a is that is run 'by members, for members'. Contact: Jill Stewart - jillastewart49@gmail.com

Online learning from the u3a

In addition to what is offered in Towcester to members, don't forget that the u3a nationally offers many interesting courses and talks available to all members online, to enjoy from the comfort of our own home. Just to give you a taste of what is coming up in the next couple of months, topics include:

- The history of shoes
- Fusion Tai Qi Gong
- Regenerative AI
- The role of women in Ancient Egypt
- The climate crisis and National Emergency Briefing
- Staying safe online

Find something that interests you at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Community



Welton Soap Box Derby



Find out more at <https://www.weltonsoapboxderby.org.uk/>



Arcadian is a North Bucks-based, not-for-profit opera company directed by the international tenor, Justin Lavender. This year we are staging Lehar's comedy romance, ***The Merry Widow***, in English at the Roxburgh Theatre, Stowe, on July 11th and 12th.

It promises to be an incredible performance, with all of the principal roles performed by established professional opera singers.

Tickets are available at:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/arcadianopera>