

Newsline July 2026



U3a

Southwell

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Front Cover: Contributed by Noble Jayasuriya, one of our u3a members, who says this is "a colourful Pandol in Malabe, my home town - a suburb of Colombo (Sri Lanka) - celebrating Vesak, an important Buddhist festival. Vesak commemorates three important events in the life of Buddha, his birth, his enlightenment and his passing away. Traditionally all three events are believed to have occurred on the full moon day of the lunar month of Vesakha which usually falls in April or May." Noble and his wife Padmin hope to be back in the UK in time for our summer meetings.



July always seems a busy month with a lot going on at both the national and local levels. After a somewhat damp start to June, and subsequent

hot spell, I'm sure we're all hoping for a more seasonal July, as are all the organisers for the many festivals and events. Of course, we have our own Mid-Summer 20th Anniversary Celebration at Norwood Park to look forward to, and I hope to see many of you there for a fun evening.

Southwell also has the Gate to Southwell Festival where many of you are helping to make it the success it has been for the past 18 years and more will be enjoying the music (and recalling how cold English summer nights can get). Speaking of weather again, the Proclaimers are playing and I've always considered their songs to be hugely optimistic. Never mind "I can walk 500 miles" as that is certainly possible, but "Sunshine on Leith" – really?? There's always been an east coast "haar" or sea fret when we've been nearby!

At the national level, there's the great sporting events of Wimbledon, the British Grand Prix and The Open golf. Of course, the big sporting event of June/July is the world snail racing championships in Kings Lynn (actually, it's the Football World Cup but snail racing sounds as exciting and with far less political influence!)

The World Cup reminds me of one of those questions – "where were you when...", in this case, when England won in 1966. As an eight-year-old schoolboy at the time, the whole tournament was a huge event (particularly as my best friend was half-German). My dad had been lucky enough to go to some of the earlier games and had bought me an England rosette which I wore, proudly. Apparently, the final is the most watched event ever on British television, attracting over 32 million viewers. However, one of those was not me!

My cousins lived, at that time, in the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati). They used to stay with us during school-holidays, but that Saturday was the day we had to take them to Heathrow to catch a plane back home. As such,

my recollection of the game was listening to it on an old transistor radio in the back of my dad's car (an old Austin Cambridge for which, curiously, I can still remember the number plate even though I always have to go back and check my own when I park in the Minster Car Park and try to pay!).

As you might imagine, the sound quality wasn't the best – when someone scored it took us a few moments to work out which team it was. However, it was still a memorable occasion, and I can recall sitting in the car park at Heathrow listening to the final moments.

I'm sure the current event will be as exciting for eight-year-old

schoolchildren this year. My own interest has, perhaps, waned a little since then and I'm not so enthusiastic about this tournament. Some might say that's just getting older – I'd say it's that there will never likely be another day when the captain of England and all the goal scorers in a World Cup win come from West Ham!

Whether you'll be watching the world cup or any of the other big sporting events, attending any of the festivals, or just working in the garden or allotment trying to stop the pigeons from eating the results of your hard work, enjoy July and all it has to offer.

[Mike Freemantle](#) Chair

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST... (Previous Chair)

This month's "Previous Chair" reflection is from Marjorie Bramhill, our Chair from 2018 to 2021:

I arrived in Southwell after living in France for 10 years. Although France was wonderful in many ways, we decided we wanted to be back in England. We joined the u3a just after we came to Southwell. There were no volunteers to be Chair in 2018, and I said to my husband "I think I could do that". "Of course you could" Peter said.

And that was it – I was Chair. The Committee met at the Minster Chambers on the top floor. There were refreshments for members and a cupboard which held a lot of equipment available to our u3a groups, including projectors, a photocopier, papers regarding u3a records, wine glasses (for I don't know what) and Christmas decorations which were displayed in Southwell Methodist Church, with details about Southwell u3a.

In March 2020, the Covid lockdown was declared. This affected our u3a. We had to stop using the Leisure Centre for the Monthly Meeting, and I had to learn how to use Zoom to organise this meeting – carried out on my laptop on a card table in my lounge. I also had to learn how to use my Microsoft u3a laptop, as I was using Ubuntu, and then Apple for my text messages, and emails.

Some groups had to close, but other groups did find they could meet outside or online. Phone calls, Newsline Extra, National u3a Newsletters all helped to keep our members in touch. We extended Membership fees for six months, and subsequently another six months.

In October, we moved within the Minster Chambers to the first floor, which was more accessible than the top floor. Later we decided to stop using the Minster Chambers as it was more expensive than using the Library in Southwell. This helped to protect our funds, having lost membership subscriptions during Covid.

I had started a ‘Singing for Fun’ group which was for those of us who claim to be unable to sing: I used ‘YouTube’ for backing support and displayed the words on the wall – at Edingley Old School, a really nice venue. It was great fun, but unfortunately Covid intervened and we were all staying home. The Group had to close.

I had to find out how ‘Zoom’ worked and ran the monthly meetings from my lounge. This worked fine until the AGM, when a member pointed out that we didn’t have a quorum! We had to have another try – with sufficient members present – and hurrah – it worked this time.

Southwell u3a has grown a lot since and National Office offers many other activities, including online talks on a variety of topics – if you’ve got the time, give it a try. [Further details here.](#)

My last effort as Chair was to grab Brian Platts in the wine department at the Co-op, and suggest he stand for Chair to succeed me – he said ‘Yes he would’ – and the rest is history!

[Marjorie Bramhill](#)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTIFICATION TO MEMBERS

Notice of the Annual General Meeting of Southwell u3a

The 20th Annual General Meeting of Southwell u3a will be held on Tuesday 4th August 2026 at 10am at Southwell Leisure Centre.

The agenda will be emailed to members before the meeting.

Nominations for the committee are invited. Please complete the attached nomination form and return to me.

Members without an email address may obtain a copy of the agenda, and a nomination form, by contacting the Secretary on 07779675501.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Claire Wallis, Secretary

Southwell u3a



Nomination form for Southwell u3a committee

Nomination form for Southwell u3a committee Form to be returned by 18 th July 2026 to secsu3a@gmail.com or Station House, Station Road, Southwell NG25 0ET	
Name of nominee	
Position e.g. officer/ committee member	
Signature of nominee	
Proposer's name	
Signature of proposer	
Secunder's name	
Signature of Secunder	

NATIONAL RECOGNITION for PHOTOGRAPHY

As we went to press, we were delighted to hear from the National u3a organisers that **Deb Cook**, our Facebook Administrator has caught their attention: They write that ... “delighted to let you know that [your photograph](#) has been selected by the u3a Eye judging panel to be displayed at the u3a Festival in York from the 1 to the 3 of July. Your photograph was chosen from the many excellent images submitted to [u3a Eye](#) and

will help showcase the high standard of photography being produced across the u3a movement. We hope you feel proud to be representing both your u3a and the wider u3a photography community at the Festival in York.

Your photo will be displayed as part of the festival exhibition”

Brilliant news recognising one of our brilliant members – congratulations to Deb!

Interim Editor's Jottings and “Letters to the Editor”

Dear Reader,

I promised an update about our new editorial team, and I'm delighted to welcome Vivien Scorer to our Newsline proofreading team, so there are still openings for anyone else interested in joining our team, as editor or as a sub-editor.

Thanks to several of you who have written with personal thanks to me, which is much appreciated. To reassure, I am happy to continue for now as “Interim Editor”, given the positive feedback, and am looking at how we can keep Newsline fresh and entertaining, so I'll remind you that I

am happy to accept “Letters to the Editor” whether for publication or offering improvement suggestions.

The deadline for the August edition is the 20th July. Please email articles and pictures via a “Reply” to your Newsline email, otherwise contact me [via our website “contacts” page](#).

Contributions are shared with our Facebook and Website teams. If you submit photographs, please ensure you have permission from any individuals featured.

Rik Ludlow, Interim Editor

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN JULY

We know many people join our u3a because it gives so many opportunities to meet and get to know other interesting people. If you are a new member, this page may help you identify some of our "Social Opportunities":

Our Monthly Meeting:

Our u3a meeting is normally on the first Tuesday of each month, starting at 10.00am, at the Leisure Centre, Nottingham Rd, Southwell NG25 OLG. The meeting normally starts with news and notices, then breaks to allow time to meet other members informally over tea/coffee (please bring a mug or cup if you can). You can complete membership applications or renewals, collect your membership card, ask about interest groups, pay for concert and social trips and chat to our Chair and committee members. We then settle down to listen to a visiting speaker: Speakers are carefully selected by our "Speaker-Seeker", hence worth listening to!

Coffee Mornings:

Southwell u3a members enjoy fortnightly coffee mornings at Southwell Garden Centre, Fiskerton Road, doubly

pleasant in summer weather! It is an opportunity to have a chat and a coffee and get to know other Southwell u3a members. We meet from 10:30am on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, so note the 9th and 23rd of July in your diaries. It helps other members if you remember to bring and wear your u3a lanyard.

This Month:

This month we have a fantastic night out to celebrate **Southwell u3a's 20th birthday on Thursday, 16th July** (see next page). **There are a few tickets still available.**

Other Opportunities:

Elsewhere in Newline and on our website, you will often see details of events organised by our **Social Committee** and, in season, our **Concert Coaches**. This is before we count our (almost 90) [Interest Groups](#) and our programme of [Workshops and Short Courses](#). It is of little surprise that we now have well over 900 active members, making us one of the larger u3as in [Nottinghamshire!](#)





Southwell u3a
20TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

Come and join us in marking 20 years of Southwell u3a at a midsummer's evening of celebration, festivities and friendship, to be held in the beautiful location of Norwood Park.

Last few tickets available
THURSDAY 16TH JULY 2026
6pm - 10pm

Tickets include a welcome drink, a cheese and cold meat platter and dancing to live music from Velvet Souls band.

Tickets £35.00 per person

Tickets available at the July monthly meeting,

Payments to Southwell u3a

Sort code 60-20-15 Account 36049697

Use name and membership number
as reference



SOCIAL TRIP: FELLEY PRIORY and FUTURE EVENTS



Felley Priory from the Gardens

All had a lovely day!

Photographs

by

Jackie Hudson



A few places are still available for a visit to **Buxton Opera House** to see *The Mikado* on Sunday 9th August. £55 for travel and ticket for Gilbert and Sullivan ("G&S") operatic performance. See Madeline Oliver for tickets. [Contact via Web.](#)

Other social events are planned for the autumn: A coach visit to **Doddington Hall** has already been arranged for 9th December. £45 to include coffee, lunch and ticket entry to "*Christmas at the Hall*". Bookings open soon.

[Rosemary Milton](#)

u3a Southwell

NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCES: Workshops and Courses

The next few pages list the remaining 2026 programme of Short Courses and Workshops, updated to late June. Please look through the programme and **click on the title** of any course or workshop that interests you. This will take you to the latest information on our website. On the webpage, **click on the title or the name of the organiser**. This will take you to a form on our website where you can submit your booking request or make further enquiries. **You can't just turn up on the day – you need to book in advance.**

Prompt booking both ensures that you will get a place if the venue has limited capacity and allows the course or workshop leader to contact you if there are any late changes. All events now have definite dates, so do check your diary and see if you can fit any more sessions in!

Brian Platts [Groups Co-ordinator and New Groups Enabler](#)

SUBJECT AND CONTACT DETAILS	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	DATE, TIME and VENUE
ROMANO-BRITISH SOUTHWELL – ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENIGMAS AND FINDS	<p>A talk and display of archaeological finds from the Roman era in Southwell – given by Chair of the Southwell Community Archaeology Group (and u3a member) Stephen Rogers.</p> <p>Message from Stephen: I will send more details nearer the time, so if you do not hear from me by early July contact me via Brian Platts.</p>	<p>Tuesday 21 July 10:00 – 12:00</p> <p>Trebeck Hall, Southwell</p>

SUBJECT AND CONTACT DETAILS	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	DATE, TIME and VENUE
<u>HOW TO DRAW FACES</u>	<p>An introduction to drawing faces from talented artist John Tyas (from the art stall on Southwell Market). John will cover techniques and tips for drawing faces, suitable for both beginners and those with a little more experience. There will then be an opportunity to put theory into practise. Just bring a pencil!</p>	<p>Friday 7th August 10:00 – 12:00 Large meeting room, Southwell Library</p>
<u>Pottery Taster Workshop</u>	<p>A fun opportunity to make your own “pinch” pots with Southwell potter Jen Bort. Step-by-step instruction and demonstration - no previous experience needed. The session and materials are free but £5 charge for any pots that you would like Jen to take away, glaze and fire in her kiln. Book for this course via the website SESSION FULLY BOOKED - but still contact organiser, as a second session may be arranged.</p>	<p>Monday 10th August 1.30–3.30pm. Southwell Library</p>
<u>INTRODUCTION TO SMARTPHONES</u>	<p>Back by popular demand! Two sessions for beginners to learn the basics of smart phones, presented by Lorna and Tony Mellor. Much of the content is also applicable to tablets.</p>	<p>Monday 9th and 16th November 10:00 – 12:00 Large meeting room, Southwell Library</p>

NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCES: Feedback Page



On a wet morning at Norwood Park Golf Centre, budding u3a golfers took to the driving range for their **Golf Taster session**. Ducks were the only 'birdies' likely to be hit by the golfers but everyone seemed to have a fun time, despite the weather!

Have you taken part in any of our "workshops and short courses? We would love to hear from you, and photographs are also very welcome. Send to [Editor](#) via [Brian Platts](#)

MEMBER BENEFITS

BAG A DISCOUNT

AT ROHAN!

The Rohan clothing shop in Southwell is generously offering a discount to all u3a members. Members will receive a 10% discount on all **full price** items (not sale items) – just show your membership card on request.



CROWN
ROLLESTON

**U3A MEMBERS
10% OFF
YOUR FOOD**

Show your U3A membership card to receive 10% off your food bill.

COMBINE WITH OUR
LUNCH FOR 2 FOR £22
U3A MEMBERS PAY JUST £19.80

 **ANY LUNCH SERVICE
WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY**

 **HOME COOKED FOOD**
Made with care using quality ingredients.

 **FRIENDLY STAFF**
Enjoy warm hospitality in our bar, restaurant and terrace.



 **BOOKINGS RECOMMENDED
ON OUR WEBSITE**
www.crownatrolleston.co.uk

OR  **CALL US
01636 925719**

 **Crown at Rolleston, Staythorpe Road, Rolleston, NG23 5SG**

MEAL DEAL AT THE HEARTY GOODFELLOW

The Hearty Goodfellow in Southwell has agreed to give a 10% discount on all food (not drinks) to Southwell u3a members for lunch or dinner.

You will need to show your membership card **before you order** your meals and drinks and the discount will only apply to individual u3a members in your party.



**Extra
Member
Benefit for
2026:**

**A DAY AT THE
RACES!**

Southwell Racecourse have kindly offered a very special deal to our members:

Southwell u3a members can book day tickets (except on "feature" days) on a 2-for-the-price-of-1 basis. Just scan the QR code to take advantage of this generous offer.



The advertisement features a green background with a white scalloped border at the top. At the top center is the Southwell Racecourse logo, which includes a stylized horse head and the text "southwell racecourse". Below the logo, the text "2-4-1" is written in large white numbers, with "Club Offer" in a cursive orange font underneath. Further down, it says "General Admission tickets to all fixtures in 2026*" in white, with a note in orange italics: "*excluding feature days".

Below the green section, on a white background, is the text "Scan TO BOOK" in a cursive font, followed by "USE CODE LOCALSPORTS26" in a bold sans-serif font. To the right of this text is a QR code.

At the bottom of the white section, on a dark green background, is the text "BOOK NOW" in orange and "southwell-racecourse.co.uk" in white.

Riviera Travel offer a 10% discount which is paid to the member's u3a group,



on many holidays: Members have to show proof of membership at time of booking. **PLEASE NOTE: DISCOUNT IS NOT TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.**

GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP: BOOK CLUB

We promised an update on our “Book Club”, which started just two months ago: The update is that after just two meetings it is already now full, with twelve members! [Contact Brian](#) if you would like to start a third group.



A CAPPELLA GROUP

🎉 **HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY TO US!** 🎉

We marked our very first birthday as a u3a group in June – and what a celebration it was. After singing two brand-new additions to our repertoire (*Do You Hear the People Sing* and *Sweet Dreams*), along with some of our much-loved favourites, we rounded off the afternoon in true u3a style: with cakes and a celebratory drink (tea or coffee, of course).

Since our inaugural session in June 2025, we’ve journeyed through an

impressively varied mix of music – classic pop, sea shanties, musical theatre gems, and even a madrigal. Along the way we’ve learned how to use our voices more efficiently through vocal warmups, and we’ve dipped our toes into simple rounds and layered songs as a gentle introduction to the magic of a cappella. It’s been a year full of learning, laughter, and harmony.

Now we’re gearing up for another exciting milestone: our very first performance on Friday 31st July at Moorfield Court. It will be a brand-new experience for us, and we can’t wait to share our songs with an audience.

We meet every third Wednesday from 2–4 pm in the WI Hall in Southwell, with our next session on Wednesday 1st July. We’re always delighted to welcome new members – so if you’ve ever fancied singing in a friendly, supportive group, please do come along. We’re making great music together and having a wonderful time doing it.

Alyson Chaney [A Cappella](#)

ASTRONOMY GROUP

In April we studied our near neighbour and 'sister planet' Mars, looking firstly at their histories since creation, when in the early days they were very similar water worlds full of promise for future life. We journeyed through to modern times where the differences could not be more contrasting. In May we then fantasied, looking at not only man travelling to Mars, but living there for long periods, even possibly colonising the red planet.

In June we studied the most important body in our solar system, which is vital for creating and maintaining life as we know it on Earth. Yes, this is our Sun, and we looked at the life of stars in general before moving onto the properties and to some degree the peculiarities that it displays.

For July we have an external speaker Shaun Livsey, whose talk is titled 'The Universe A – Z' which promises to be a lively, interesting presentation, requiring virtually no maths!

We meet on the fourth Thursday of every month from 10am to 12 noon in the downstairs back room of Southwell Library. The dates of the next few meetings are 23rd July, 28 August and 24 September.

As a group we try to cater for beginners by not making the sessions too technical but with enough content to stimulate the more knowledgeable. After coffee the audience get the chance to ask questions, comment or offer views, which is, I think, an important part of our sessions.

I am pleased to report that we have maintained a healthy membership for 2026/27 and are rapidly approaching the stage when we will have to consider the group as 'full'.

Please see the webpage [Astronomy - Southwell u3a](#) where you can contact me, Richard Peacock, Group Leader.



Practical Gardening Group 2

The Practical Gardening Group 2 met in early June at Catherine's home, located between Southwell and Oxton. We dodged the rain by some miracle and were treated to her wonderful large garden laid out over many years with amazing plants, including roses, trees, fruit, a wild garden, vegetables, together with a mature pond. Catherine is the gardening authority for both Groups 1 and 2 and after experiencing her garden we can understand why this is so.



The photos are of the Group, and two of many plants on display – a Nigella 'Love-in-a mist' and the most amazing New Zealand Flax being caught by the sun's rays.

Group Leader: Michael Broadley



Photographs
contributed by
Graeme Stewardson

Don't Tidy It Up

Behind the barn
On a small hummocky strip of green
Beside the track to the heath
Lies an old sheet of corrugated iron

How long had it lain there?
Rust down one side
Old nail holes down the other
Don't tidy it up, he said

In late spring we talked again
On the first of the warmer days
The sun feels good on old bones, he said
On a bright day soon after, he was gone

Next day, I walked the old places alone
I stooped, carefully lifting one metal corner
Small bright eyes, flicking tongues
Coils of shiny copper scales

He knew they would be there
Under the sun-warmed refuge of rusting iron
In the place he always left for them
Don't tidy it up, he'd said

I won't

Austin Brady © May 2026

[Link to Creative Writing Web Page](#)

COME DINE WITH US (CDWU)

PAD THAI – Serves 2



For our current round of CDWU meetings we are continuing to cook national dishes from continents randomly allocated to each of our group members. This month we move on from Australasia to Thailand.

Listed at number 5 on the USA TV channel CNN readers' poll of the "World's 50 most delicious foods", Pad Thai is a firm restaurant and fast-food favourite. It's not been around as long as you might think though, having been created in the 1930s, possibly by Chinese immigrants in Thailand. It was used by the Thai government in 2001 as a form of 'soft power' when they set up the "Global Thai Restaurant Company" in an effort to establish at least 3000 new Thai restaurants worldwide.

Ingredients: Prepare all in advance, ready for fast stir-frying at the end.

- Shrimp/Prawns 8oz (225g). Fresh or thawed frozen. Peel, de-vein and pat dry.
- Rice Noodles 4oz (115g) – alternatively Ramen noodles.
- Garlic 2 cloves
- Olive/Veg oil 4 tbsp for frying
- Eggs 3 large
- Bean Sprouts ½ cup – may use canned or use other vegetables, e.g. bell peppers.
- Carrots ½ cup – grated or thin strips
- Spring Onions – 2 large, finely chopped
- Peanuts ¼ cup – finely chopped (can bash/crush in a freezer bag)
- Coriander ¼ cup – chopped
- Lime wedges for serving

Sauce:

- Rice Vinegar 1½ tbsp
- Fish Sauce 2 tbsp
- Soy Sauce 1 tbsp
- Ground Chilli Sauce 2 tsp – alternatives are Sriracha or Garlic Chili sauce
- Honey 1 tbsp (plus 1-2 tsp to taste) – or alternatively Palm Sugar
- Water 2 tbsp

Method

1. Cook the rice noodles as per pack instructions. Drain, rinse under cool water and drain again. In a small bowl, whisk together all sauce ingredients (modify quantity of honey or chilli sauce to taste).
2. In a wok or large non-stick pan, heat the oil on a med-high heat and sauté the shrimp/prawns until pink and “c” shaped (about 2 mins). Perfectly cooked prawns form a “c” shape and overcooked prawns curl into an “o” shape.
3. Quickly add the garlic and noodles. Stir to coat the noodles and shrimp with the garlic.
4. Push the contents of the wok to one side. Quickly break 3 eggs into the empty side of the pan and scramble for 30 seconds. As the egg starts to set, stir the noodles over the eggs and mix well. Then stir in the sauce.
5. Add the bean sprouts, carrots and spring onions. Stir fry for about another minute until all the ingredients are heated through but the vegetables are not overcooked.
6. Sprinkle with the peanuts and coriander. Serve immediately with the lime wedges.

ENJOY! [Come Dine With Us](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The Photography Group had a great meeting in June when we showcased our Film and TV charades photo theme. Creating some amazing images we had to guess the correct title. The little grey cells were definitely working overtime with some of them, and I reckon this was probably one of the best monthly themes we've ever done.

We've reproduced as many as we can fit in below for you to try and guess the correct title, which may be a book, TV programme, film, or something else... Some should be easy, some more tricky.

		Title	Photographer
1	Pe		Anita
2	Th		Barry
3	Ge		Brenda
4	Bl		Deb
5	Br		Eibhlin
6	Si		Graeme
7	Di		Jim
8	Th		John C.
9	Di		John M.
10	Pa		Karen
11	Al		Kevin
12	Th		Lisa
13	St		Nick
14	19		Richard

1



Good luck! **Answers will be in the next Newslines**, but we have given you a head-start with the first letter or two on the solutions sheet above.

Our second trip of the year was to the Naturescape Wildflower Farm near Langar and although the weather was a bit damp (we promise to try and select a warm dry day for a photography trip before the year is out – promise!!) we had a great time.

If you are interested in joining the Group contact me on this link:

[Graeme Stewardson](#)



2



4



5



PICKLEBALL GROUP

Southwell u3a's pickleball group is expanding! The Thursday group is now full, and we are looking for up to 10 new members to play on Wednesday afternoons at Southwell Leisure Centre.

Who is playing Pickleball?

You guessed it: the group that seems to have become regular players are baby boomers. The senior age group has been attracted to the sport because it is easy to play, very social and less stressful on muscles, tendons and joints.

The game offers a low-impact, social, and engaging way to stay active and maintain physical and mental health. The smaller court size, slower pace, and reduced need for intense running makes it accessible and enjoyable for seniors, while the social aspect helps combat loneliness and isolation.

If you're interested go to the [Pickleball Group page](#) and click the link to contact Rob Lancaster who has all the details you need.

Editor's Footnote: What is an OAP?

One of our members was questioning the use of the letters "OAP", as perhaps ageist, rather than the terms "retired person" or "Pensioner". Personally, I love being an "OAP", having survived and worked all my life to get here! After all, think what the letters can stand for... What does "OAP" mean to you? Answers to the [Interim Editor](#) please!

Older Active Powerhouse — Old enough to be experienced, young enough to be an active powerhouse
Owner of Amazing Perspective — wisdom with a wink.

Optimistically Ageing Pioneer — boldly going where survivors eventually go

Outstandingly Awesome Person — effortlessly upbeat.

Original Adventurous Professional — someone who's been adventuring longer than most folks have been alive.

Official Authority on Practically Everything — experience counts.

Occasionally Astonishing Prodigy — still surprising ourselves, and others, after all these years.

Our Speaker in June:

Our own "Speaker-Seeker" John Cook presented on "Mars and Earth". His talk and DVD compared and explained the similarities and differences between the sister planets of Mars and Earth.

About 3.9 billion years ago Mars and Earth enjoyed a very similar climate, atmosphere and geography, so much so that there was every possibility that life would exist on Mars as well as Earth. Both had land and oceans. There followed an explosion of asteroids, thought to emanate from Neptune, so extensive that it destroyed the magnetic protection surrounding Mars which in turn led to the vast change in the planet into a derelict landscape. Earth survived because of its stronger magnetic force which surrounded it (and still does) which prevents the ingress of these asteroids and most subsequent destructive forces. This force can be seen at certain times of the year in the Northern lights and the Southern Hemisphere's Aurora Australis.

NASA has sent several exploratory rockets to Mars which have established that there is still 2% water on the surface of Mars and

identified those areas of the planet which were more likely to support life. In terms of future habitation of humans Mars is much more suitable for this purpose than the moon because it has many metals and gases useful as the building blocks for habitation whereas our moon is barren. So the DVD poses the question about whether we should be planning to support future human habitation of the planet Mars, rather than our own Earth's moon.

The video was enjoyed by members who were then told that we would not have a speaker in July because we would be celebrating our 20th anniversary. Future speakers are featured on page 27.

John Cook

"Speaker Seeker"



Our Previous 2026 Speakers



January:

The history and work of the Notts and Lincs Air Ambulance Service. (Tony Hendon and Lynn)



February:

The History of Rockingham Castle (Michael Burton)



March:

John Constantine spoke about the history of magic, which dates back to ancient Egyptian times.



April:

Our speaker was William Brown MBE who gave a fascinating talk on museum security.

In **May**, Paul Lillie returned and gave an entertaining morning on "The Beatles".

In **June**, We were to have heard Paul Isherwood talking about gambling addiction. Sadly this proved to be an unsuccessful gamble, as with very short notice Paul was unable to attend. We were pleased that our own John Cook stepped in, and drawing on his extensive knowledge of Mars was able to present on "Mars". See page 25 for a summary of his talk.



u3a
learn, laugh, live

Our Remaining 2026 Meeting Events:

THIS MONTH, 10am 7th July:

There won't be an external speaker. Instead, there will be a light-hearted look back at, and celebration of, 20 years of Southwell u3a. We'll also have live music from both the Folk Group and the Recorder Group, and our two u3a East Midlands representatives, Rosie Allen from Arnold and John Butler from Ravenshead, will be joining us. So please come along on Tuesday 7th and join us in celebrating 20 fabulous years of Southwell u3a.

4th August: Martin Lloyd, formerly of the BBC, will give us a talk about passports, assassins, traitors and spies. This is the story of how and why our passports were changed because of traitors and spies.

1st September: Nick Bailey was one of the first DJs on Radio Caroline.

This is his history of those times (1966/67), his time working in Australia, Gibraltar, Cologne, Berlin and Hong Kong together with his migration to Classic FM and his classical music show.

6th October: Tony Heydon will talk to us about Serious Crime Investigations. Tony used to work at the CID in Nottinghamshire. He was involved in many of these investigations during his career. It should prove to be an interesting talk.

3rd November: Stephen Booth is now a very successful author of detective novels set around the Derbyshire Peak District. He relates the story of how he became an author as well as how he uses stories based on his interactions with readers.

1st December: Subject yet to be decided.

[Link to Contacts Page for John Cook](#)

[Southwell u3a Speaker Seeker](#)

SOUTHWELL u3a CONCERT COACHES

The first concert next season is on the 23rd September 2026. As soon as the programme is available, I will email it out via Beacon to all my members. Have a relaxed summer and enjoy the [Southwell Music Festival](#).

Roger Bennett

Southwell u3a Support for Smartphone and Computer Users

Do you need Help with Your Computer or Smartphone? Join Our Support Group!

Technology can make life easier, but it can also feel frustrating when things don't work as expected. One solution is to join our Computer/Smartphone Help Group—a friendly and supportive space where members can get practical help with everyday technology.

Whether you're struggling with your smartphone settings, need help sending emails, want to learn how to use apps, or are having trouble with your computer, our group is here to help. No question is too small, and we aim to cater for all levels of expertise.



The sessions are designed to be relaxed, informal, and easy to follow. Members can ask questions, share experiences, and learn useful tips in a welcoming environment. Our aim is to help everyone build confidence and feel more comfortable using technology in daily life.

From video calls and online shopping to managing photos and staying safe online, we cover a wide range of topics that matter to you. We believe technology should work for you—not the other way around.

Come along and join us for friendly advice, practical support, and the chance to learn something new. We meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month (August excepted) in the downstairs back room of the library, at 2.00pm. Just pop along, or contact one of our Group Leaders for more information: computerhelpsu3a@gmail.com or [visit our webpage](#)

Southwell u3a contacts and other u3a websites:

Southwell u3a:

Southwell u3a website is <https://southwell.u3asite.uk>

Southwell u3a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/southwellu3a>

To contact our officers, committee and other postholders:

Contact - Southwell u3a

For information about our interest groups and to contact our Group Leaders:
Groups - Southwell u3a Names and contact details are also available at our monthly meetings.

Nottinghamshire u3a Branches:

The 34 individual u3a organisations in our county are all federated into the Nottinghamshire Network, which has its own website and magazine:

[Nottinghamshire Network of u3as - Learn, Laugh, Live!](#)

[February 2026 Newsbites now available](#)

The National u3a Organisation:

National u3a website is <https://www.u3a.org.uk>

The National u3a organises a range of (mainly virtual) events and workshops:

www.u3a.org.uk/events

