

# THE MAGAZINE

**u3a**  
learn, laugh, live

## Market Drayton



Spring Blooms

photo by John McVittie

*The Spring Issue*  
2026

## CONTENTS

Front Page	page 1
Contents	page 2
Committee	page 3
Chair's newsletter	page 4
Programme of events	page 5
Reports of monthly meetings	page 6
Cheese Jokes	page 17
Puzzles	page 18
Special Interest Groups	page 19
Members contributions	page 27
Puzzle Answers	page 30

## Market Drayton u3a Committee Members 2025-2026

### Executive Committee

<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>	Judy Cowdale
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Phillip Glover
<b>TREASURER</b>	Andy Shearer
<b>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</b>	Judy Cowdale
<b>PROGRAMME SECRETARY</b>	Kevin Read-Jones
<b>'THE MAGAZINE' EDITOR</b>	John McVittie
<b>'THE MAGAZINE' EDITOR / CONVENOR LIAISON</b>	Viv McVittie
<b>WEBSITE ADMINISTRATOR / CONVENOR LIAISON</b>	Jill Glover
<b>COMMITTEE / NETWORK CONTACT</b>	Peter Ingham
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Sue Walker
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Jacqui Wright

The Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 18th September 2025 at Festival Drayton Centre. The next AGM will be held on Thursday September 17th 2026. Anyone thinking that they would like to join the committee and help develop Market Drayton u3a is encouraged to contact Judy Cowdale at any time to indicate their interest and to discuss ideas.

## SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

It's hard to believe, but here we are again - Spring. Another year has 'sped' past and the Spring 2026 edition of the Market Drayton magazine is here.

A year ago I said I was slowly settling into my role of Chair for the u3a and I am happy to say this last year has been both enjoyable and fulfilling. This, I think, is largely due to having a wonderful committee, made up of members who are enthusiastic and ever willing to give their time and energy on your behalf.

We, as a committee, try our best to work towards building a u3a which offers interesting, motivating subjects and activities and to this end the range of our Interest Groups has widened; adding badminton, the breakfast club, 'Let's talk' and now Pétanque (boules) to our list.

But ... we always say "there is room for more" if anyone would like to take a chance and start another. Help to do this is readily available. We can only grow in numbers and groups with the help of members because a u3a is built *'for the members, by the members'*.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining us, please do encourage them to come along to one of our monthly meetings, just to see what the u3a 'is all about' as there are still misconceptions 'out there' as to what the u3a is, and does.

Like most years, following the AGM we lost members as lives and interests changed but I'm really happy to say that our u3a is actually growing; we have gained 44 new members since September 2025 and our total number has increased to 225 - the highest number I have seen since I joined and I know there are still interested people 'on the horizon'.

On a personal note, I would like to encourage more members to come along to the monthly meetings in the Festival Drayton Centre on the 3rd Thursday of the month. We have been having some very different and entertaining 'talks' over the last year and there are more to come. So, don't miss out - come and join us.

Judy  
Chair, MD u3a

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2025 – 2026

Monthly meetings are held in the Festival Drayton Centre at 2.0 pm on the third Thursday of the month. There are no meetings in August and December.

### 2026

15 January	The History of Cheese (with samples)
19 February	60s Guitar Music
19 March	Horatio Nelson
16 April	Little Ukulele World Tour
21 May	Spirits of Shelton Hospital
18 June	Heroes of the Sky (RAF in WW2)
16 July	BBC Light Music
17 September	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
10 October	A Policeman's Lot
19 November	Rock Choir

Attendance is free for u3a members; visitors will be charged £2.00

### INTEREST GROUPS

Art Appreciation	'Last Thursday' Lunch Group
Backgammon	Local History
Badminton	Mahjong
Bird Watching	Music Appreciation
Breakfast Club	Petanque (Boules)
British History	Photography
Country Dancing	Play Reading
Let's Talk	Pub Lunches
Drawing (for those who say they can't!)	Poetry Reading
Drop-In Social	Reading Groups (3)
French	Singing for Fun
Gardening	Spanish
Good News at 11.00	Walking Group

Membership of the u3a and annual subscription fees are required before participation in Interest Groups.

Membership Information and contact details for groups is available on our webpage:

**market drayton u3a**

## REPORTS OF MONTHLY MEETINGS

We are sure that those of you who have attended the monthly meetings at the Festival Drayton Centre over the last few months have enjoyed our speakers/entertainers. Many thanks must go to Kevin Read-Jones for providing us with such a varied line up. Here are brief summaries of talks over the last few months.

**20th November 2025**

**The Great American Songbook - Roger Browne and Roy Chapel**



photo by Jill Glover

This month we were delighted to welcome back Roger Browne, actor, singer, speaker, musician, director, composer, writer and jazz pianist- this time with his friend Roy Chapel who used to sing with the Sid Philips band. As reported in the Spring 2024 issue of the Magazine, in January 2024 Roger talked to us about how the music of the African American slaves and other

influences from the Deep South developed through the years and travelled to New York and Broadway. He illustrated that talk with songs and stories of great composers and lyricists such as Irving Berlin, George Gershwin and Cole Porter.

This time Roger began his talk by reminding us that until about 1926 Broadway shows were mainly variety with the musical acts being easy and bland and only loosely linked to any story being told. In 1926 Jerome Kern read a book by Edna Ferber about working on a showboat on the Mississippi which outlined the racism, alcoholism, cruelty and sexual proclivities experienced by the workers on the boat. Jerome wanted to write a stage musical about it because it would have a strong story - a radical idea. The book's author was not in favour of this idea because she believed it would trivialise her story but Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II promised they would not belittle the story and in 1927 Showboat opened. On the first night the audience walked out in silence - stunned. Reviews in the next morning's newspapers were ecstatic, full of praise and the show ran for over 500 performances, transferred to London and was filmed twice, in 1936 and in technicolor in 1951. Roger concluded his discussion of Showboat by playing a selection of songs from the show, ending with perhaps the most famous song - Ol' Man River.

Roger then moved on to tell us about Cole Porter. Cole Porter was born into a very rich and privileged family. He was a precocious musician, publishing work inspired by Gilbert and Sullivan's operas at the age of ten. He went to university, studying English, music and French, but spent most of his time with the artistic set and going to parties. He was homosexual but, when in Paris, married Linda Leu Thomas. It was a marriage of convenience. She was in no doubt of his sexuality but it gave her social standing and gave him a heterosexual persona. They entertained lavishly, hosting extravagant and scandalous parties with gay and bisexual activities and recreational drugs. Cole Porter continued to write songs, but with limited success until he was persuaded to write in a minor key which gave the music a more Jewish feel and made it attractive to the sheet music publishers in New York who at that time were mainly Jewish.

Back in New York, he continued to entertain generously and at one such party was wagered to write a song based on the next person to enter the cafe. In 30 minutes he had written the outline of 'Miss Otis regrets'. Linda Leu eventually got tired of Cole's antics and filed for divorce but in 1937 whilst riding, his horse threw him and rolled over on him, badly damaging his legs. He was told he needed to have them amputated but refused and remained badly crippled. Linda Leu withdrew divorce proceedings and supported him until her death in 1954.

Porter's most successful period was the 1930s when many of his songs became standards and they continued to be recorded by the likes of Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and others throughout the 1940s and later. He continued to write for many shows and films but had limited further success until 1948 when he wrote for the musical 'Kiss me, Kate' and won Tony awards for best lyrics and best composer. His last major success was writing for the film 'High Society' with its hit song 'True Love'.

Throughout his talk, Roger interspersed his stories with renditions of Porter's tunes on piano and joined Roy in singing a number of them. Stand outs were 'Just one of those things', 'I love Paris (in the springtime)', 'Miss Otis regrets', 'True Love', 'I love you, Samantha', 'Night and day' and 'Every time we say goodbye'. Roy concluded the talk by singing Porter's 'You do something to me' and then sang two Al Jonson numbers to remind Roger of his youth - 'I'm sitting on top of the world' and 'Toot, toot, Tootsie, goodbye.'

Roger then answered questions from his audience and Phil Glover gave a heartfelt vote of thanks for a truly entertaining afternoon.

**15th January 2026**

### **Aged to Perfection: The Art and Science of Cheese - Michael Pinches**

On January 15th one of our largest membership gatherings welcomed Michael Pinches, a member of the Guilde Internationale des Fromagers and President of the Society of Dairy Technology who brought us three cheeses to sample. He also taught us a lot about the history of cheese and its place in our lives.

Life is great. Cheese makes it better.  
*Avery Aames.*

Age is something that doesn't matter.  
Unless you're a cheese.  
*Billie Burke.*

You can't make everyone happy. You're  
not a cheese.



photo by John McVittie

The story of cheese begins over 7000 years ago when herdsmen stored milk in the stomachs of sheep or goats. These contain rennet which causes milk to curdle and form curds and whey. Curds make cheese. Cheeses are now made worldwide. New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Canada, South Africa as well as the UK all make cheddar cheese but there are over 1800 different varieties of cheese and more are being developed all the time. 99% of British households buy cheese and 65% of the population eat it more than once a week. In Europe the average consumption is 21kilos per person per year - Britons eat only half the European average. Pule cheese, made from donkey's and goat's milk in Serbia is probably the most expensive cheese in the world at approximately £1300 per kilo! Cheese is the most stolen food in the world, accounting for up to 4% of global food theft.

All cheese starts as milk. Milk spoils quickly but cheese lasts much longer and keeps better if some salt is added. 10 litres of milk produce about one kilo of cheese. UK dairies produce about 1200 million litres of milk per month and about 30% of this is used as liquid milk with the other 70% being used for the production of cheese, butter, cream, yoghurt and condensed milk. About 43,000 tons of cheese is produced per month, of which 70-75% is cheddar.

80% of milk protein is casein which exists in three forms, alpha, beta and kappa casein. Alpha and beta casein are hydrophobic (water hating) while kappa casein is hydrophilic (water loving). In milk they bind together to form micelles which, dispersed in water, form a colloidal suspension. Rennet contains acid proteases which chop up kappa casein, exposing alpha and beta casein which coagulate to form curd. Modern day cheesemaking uses microbial derived rennet. A starter culture is added to milk which ferments lactose to lactic acid which lowers the pH. This helps the rennet to work and creates an environment which suppresses harmful bacteria. Different starter cultures produce different metabolic by-products - acids, alcohols and sulphur compounds which contribute characteristic flavours such as sharp, buttery, nutty or tangy to the product. Secondary cultures are added to enhance flavour. Propionibacterium produces propionic acid and carbon dioxide which gives nutty flavours and the carbon dioxide makes the holes in cheeses such as Emmental. Leuconostoc bacteria also produce gas and aromatic compounds and are used in the production of edam, gouda and blue cheeses. The blue veins in blue cheese come from Penicillium mould and are completely safe.

In the mid 20th century there were nine classic English cheeses - Cheddar, Cheshire, Caerphilly, Derby, Gloucester, Lancashire, Leicester, Stilton and Wensleydale. Now there are over 900. Tiny changes in content and production methods - time, temperature, atmosphere, additives - can

change a cheese's identity. Science gives cheesemaking its rules, the cheesemaker's art decides how to bend them.

Peter Ingham gave a vote of thanks for a very informative talk and members then queued to collect samples of Brie, Red Leicester and Blue Stilton which Michael had brought with him and members of the committee had prepared. There was some cheese left over after which was sold to interested members, with the proceeds going to MD u3a funds.



photo by John McVittie

**19th February 2026**

### **Out of the Shadows - Chris Ashton**

At our February meeting Chris Ashton returned to entertain us with music and anecdotes from the 1950s and 60s. Chris started by reminding us that in 1959 Cliff Richard was the UK's leading singer and was backed by a group called the Drifters. Cliff was earning about £2000 per week, a vast sum in those days. The Drifters earned £40 per week - between them! So while Cliff stayed in the best hotels, The Drifters lived in a Bedford van. News of Cliff's success reached the USA and the American group The Drifters sued the British group. Cliff's Drifters had to change their name and it is said that Jet Harris, their then bass guitarist, suggested the name The Shadows because they worked in the shadow of Cliff. Chris then played one of their last successful singles 'Riders in the sky' from the 1980s followed by 'Find me a golden street' which had been written by Norman Petty, Buddy Holly's manager.

Norman Petty was a born again Christian who was withholding money from Buddy Holly. Buddy had married a receptionist he met in New York after a very short engagement. They kept the marriage secret so as to not upset fans and confronted Petty, asking for the money but were unsuccessful. Buddy went on a winter tour. The weather was very cold and the bus they were touring in had no heating. The driver had to leave because of frostbite. On 3rd February 1959 some of the touring group hired a small plane to go to their next stop so as to avoid the cold. The plane crashed only five miles after taking off and Buddy, Ritchie Valens and J.P. (The Big Bopper) Richardson died, together with the pilot. Buddy's wife had just found out she was pregnant and she heard about her husband's death through a news item on the radio. The event became known as 'The Day the Music Died', a phrase popularised by Don MacLean in his 1971 song 'American Pie'. But, said Chris, it didn't - because we still remember Buddy Holly.

Chris then played three Shadows album tracks - 'Sleepwalk', 'South of the Border' and 'Perfidia'.

'Perfidia' was taken from the film 'Casablanca', being one of the tunes danced to in Paris at the start of the film.



photo by John McVittie

Chris told us about Jerry Lordan who composed several of the Shadows earlier hits, including 'Apache', 'Wonderful Land' and 'Atlantis'. For a time, Jerry Lordan lived near Bishops Castle and Chris met a woman at one of his gigs who introduced herself as Jerry's sister. The local pub, unfortunately now closed, has a blue sign on it commemorating Jerry.



Source: [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)

Chris then played further Shadows tunes - 'Atlantis', 'The Rise and Fall of Flingel Bunt' and 'Walk don't Run'. The Shadows disbanded in 1968 but reformed several times up to 2014. In those years they introduced more modern works into their act and albums, such as 'Don't Cry for me Argentina' which got to number 5 in the charts in 1978 and 'Cavatina' (the theme from 'The Deer Hunter') which reached number 9 in 1979. Hank Marvin now lives near Perth in Australia and plays Gypsy Jazz. Bruce Welch and Brian Bennett, who was brought in as a temporary drummer in 1961 and was still with them in 2015, have appeared together in documentaries up to 2022.

Chris ended his talk by playing the Shadows first number one hit (from 1961) 'Apache', saying that it was obligatory to end any Shadows tribute gig with that tune. David Knight then gave a vote of thanks for a wonderful afternoon's entertainment.

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## Lord Horatio Nelson, England's Greatest Hero? - Max Keen



Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org>

29<sup>th</sup> September 1758 to 21<sup>st</sup> October 1805

Max Keen, a retired teacher, lived up to his name giving a highly informative and energetic talk, with costume changes, in portraying the life and death of Lord Horatio Nelson. He burst into the room dressed in the uniform of a French General, which he had evidently bought on eBay.

Max enlivened his talk with photographs, beginning with where Horatio Nelson was born at the Rectory, Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk. Horatio was the sixth of eleven children of the Reverend Edmund Nelson and his wife Catherine Suckling. Nelson, it is said, felt at a disadvantage throughout his life, as his father as a clergyman was lowly borne in the eyes of many of his fellow officers. However his saviour and mentor was his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, a high-ranking naval officer, who was also related to the Walpole(Y) family. Unfortunately his mother died when he was nine, and only three years later, Horatio Nelson was in the Royal Navy serving in HMS *Raisonnable*, soon to be a midshipman.

To set the scene on what Horatio could be expected to encounter in his naval career, Max took us through the types of warships of the time, with their armaments and manning numbers, from lively little schooners to great men of war such as HMS *Victory*. For Horatio himself, after entering naval

service at 12 years old, he soon started seeing the world. At 13 he was in the West Indies, at 14 in the Arctic looking for the North West Passage where he had a famous encounter with a Polar Bear and at 15 in the East Indies. Interestingly, nearly all these postings had been arranged by his uncle, Captain Maurice Suckling, and after just 9 years in the Royal Navy Nelson received his first ship's command in 1778 of the Little Lucy in the American War of Independence.

Max, with enthusiasm and diagrams of battle, explained Nelson's at times unconventional tactics employed to win major victories in his 37 years in the Royal Navy. Changing clothes into a lowly Matelot, Max listed Nelson's major battles as Cape St Vincent, Cadiz, Santa Cruz, Nile, Copenhagen ( where he famously put the telescope to his blind eye to ignore an order) and finally Trafalgar on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1805.

Nelson's apparent keenness for action had its downside as Max described him being made partially blinded in his right eye at the action at Calvi, Corsica, losing his right arm at the battle of Santa Cruz and finally being mortally wounded by a sharpshooter from the French vessel Redoubtable at Trafalgar.

On the domestic side, Nelson at the age of 29, married Frances "Fanny" Nisbet a young widow from Nevis, a small volcanic island in the Caribbean Sea in 1787. Max describes the marriage as not being very happy. However whilst on Naval duties as part of the Mediterranean Fleet, Horatio visited Naples in 1798 staying with the Envoy to the Kingdom of Naples, Sir William Hamilton and his new wife, Emma. The visit lasted up to two years and in that time it became evident that Emma had become Nelson's mistress and in 1801 she gave birth to Horatia.

As the final pieces of Nelson's life unfolded we had the scene of his death on the foredeck of Victory with Captain Hardy leaning over Nelson who says "Hardy, I do believe they have done it at last ... my backbone is shot through".

And the final famous quote from Nelson before the battle of Trafalgar, **"England confides that every man will do his duty"** – translated by the signaller into "expects" because less flags were needed to display it.

As a footnote to the talk, Market Drayton has its own historical connection with the battle. A plaque on Red House, Shropshire Street, tells us that William Wilkinson who was the Master of the frigate Sirius lived there. This vessel was the first to sight sails of the French Fleet, two days before the engagement took place.



Source: Peter Ingham



● John Upton unveils a plaque accompanying an oak tree planted in Market Drayton to honour his ancestor, Capt William Wilkinson, Master of the first ship to sight the enemy before Trafalgar. With Mr Upton is Lt Cdr Peter Moss of the Naval Regional Officer's staff. Picture: Shropshire Star

Source: Navy News December 2000

And yet another connection is in the person of John Upton, a retired senior partner of what was Warren, Upton and Garside, one of the old established solicitors of Market Drayton. Evidently Captain Wilkinson, as he became three years after Trafalgar, was his great, great grandfather. John can be seen planting an oak tree to commemorate the 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle in 2000 at Towers Lawn.

*Reported by Peter Ingham*

## Thursday 16th April

### Gabriela La Foley - Ukulele Queen

April brought us a last-minute stand-in 'speaker'. 'Speaker' is in speech marks because it was another virtuoso performance we were treated to. **Gabriela La Foley** brought her little ukulele (and her larger banjolele) and took us on a world tour. She started by warming up the ukulele (and her voice) singing 'Busy Line', initially recorded by Rose Murphy in 1927. Betty Boop, the cartoon character, was supposedly based on her voice.

Gabriela then asked the audience to name some continents so that she could construct a world tour (and the rest of her act). The audience weren't very responsive to start with but soon warmed up. Starting with Australasia, she sang 'Tie me kangaroo down sport' and encouraged the audience to join in with the chorus. Moving on to Europe she sang 'Amore' in both Italian and English, then played and sang the William Tell overture representing Switzerland. Since there aren't any official words to this tune she made up her own, based on things a woman says to her children every day ('Brush your teeth', 'Clean your room', 'What time will you be home',...) and concluding with what their father says everyday ('Ask your Mum'). The

Netherlands were visited next with 'A mouse lived in a windmill in old Amsterdam', again with audience participation.



Source: Gabriela La Foley

Gabriela then changed continents to America (North and South) and gave us a Hawaiian song with a comical twist and then, from Mexico (and because Gabriela claimed she didn't know 'South of the border down Mexico way') we had the 'Mexican hat dance' to which she fitted words listing all of the countries of the world in the hope that bringing them together would lead to world peace. A quick trip across the Atlantic and a change of instrument to the larger banjolele brought us to Africa and song about a Maharaja at a bazaar near Cairo with a snake charmer - the audience being the snake charmer's instrument with lots of wailing, screeching and trumpeting. And then on to Asia where we were treated to George Formby's 'Chinese Laundry Blues'.

George Formby's catch phrase was 'It's turned out nice again' and Gabriela decided that this should be a catch phrase for the UK to put the country back on its feet again. She concluded her act by persuading us all to join in with 'When I'm cleaning windows' and 'Leaning on a lamp-post' and remembering to finish the song with a punch in the air and 'It's turned out nice again'. Gabriela was an energetic, talented musician with a wicked sense of humour. Peter Ingham delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks for a very entertaining afternoon.

## CHEESE(Y) JOKES

Inspired by our January meeting, your editor sought out some cheese(y) jokes. I hope you think they're gouda enough.

What did the cheese say when it looked in the mirror? Halloumi!

What did one cheese say to the other? I'm quite fondue you.

Did you hear about that man in Greece who tried to lose weight by only eating cheese? It didn't work. He just got feta and feta.

What's the difference between America and cheese? If left for a while, cheese develops culture.

Why do Germans not serve hot dogs with cheese? Because for them, it is a Wurst-Käse scenario.

How does cheese get more mature? Fromage.

How do you approach an angry Welsh cheese? Caerphilly.

Did you know that fully grown deer don't like melted cheese? But their fawn do.

My friend told me he hated blue cheese because it's literally just cheese with bacteria. I told him to stop discriminating against other cultures.

Where do you go to get help with a cheese addiction? BrieHab.

What did the cheese say to the therapist? I camembert it any longer.

I've had a hard time figuring out why I don't consider cottage cheese truly "cheese". But it's just a curd to me

President Trump wants to ban the sale of pre-shredded cheese. He wants to make America grate again.

Archimedes despised the local cheese maker. He told him, You reeka!

I've started using garlic in my magic act. I start by crushing it, adding basil and some pine nuts and then I blend them all together with some Parmesan and olive oil... Then...hey...pesto!

In Mexico they apparently include cheese in their first-aid kits. It's just there in queso emergency.

When should you not go on a cheese diet? When you need to Cheddar few pounds.

## PUZZLES

(Answers on final page)

### MATHS SQUARE

	+		X	
-		+		+
	+		+	
X		X		-
	+		-	
<b>7</b>	<b>56</b>		<b>2</b>	

**25**

**11**

**6**

Here are six sums that have some of the numbers missing. The aim is to enter the numbers from 1-9 exactly once into the empty cells to create sums that total the values shown at the end of that row or column. Perform arithmetic from left to right or top to bottom.

There is at least one correct answer.

### WORDS

T E R  
I  
N D P

Make as many words of four or more letters as you can with the letters given here. Any letter can be used more than once, but each word must contain the central letter - I in this case. There is at least one 13 letter word which uses all of the letters.

### CONNECTING WALL

These words can be arranged as four groups of four. Each group has a common connection. Find the groups and each group's connection.

<b>Cheshire</b>	<b>Bridge</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>Pink</b>
<b>Adele</b>	<b>Derby</b>	<b>Shakira</b>	<b>Newcastle</b>
<b>Pocket</b>	<b>Shropshire</b>	<b>Cue</b>	<b>Cher</b>
<b>Stafford</b>	<b>Rihanna</b>	<b>Salisbury</b>	<b>Leicester</b>

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

There are currently 29 active interest groups in MD u3a. These are:

Art appreciation	Gardening	Poetry Reading
Backgammon	Good News at 11.00	Pub lunches
Badminton	Last Thursday lunches	Reading group 1
Bird watching	Let's talk	Reading group 2
Breakfast club	Local History	Reading group 3
British History	Mahjong	Singing for fun
Country Dancing	Music appreciation	Spanish language
Drawing Group (2)	Pétanque	Walking group
Drop-in social	Photography	
French conversation	Play Reading	

Details of these groups and of their convenors can be found on the MD u3a website [market-drayton.u3a.site.uk](http://market-drayton.u3a.site.uk), clicking on the word 'Groups' in the header and then clicking on the group you are interested in. A page devoted to that particular interest group will then load and should contain enough information to let you make a decision about it. Please get in touch with the convenor before attending a meeting for the first time. They will be able to give you further information and advice about the group.

A number of interest groups are held in members' homes and you may find that a group cannot take any more members. If so, why not start a further group - we already have three reading groups. The committee are always willing to advise on how to go about it.

### U3A Local History Group

2025 saw the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW2, and the Local History Group have been researching aspects of the war in Market Drayton. Research has included the stories of all the men mentioned on the War Memorial in town and in St. Mary's Church as well as collecting the stories of those who served and survived. The Polish and Czech airmen who are buried in Market Drayton cemetery were another research topic as well as an overview of the many war time air crashes in our locality.

In one of these, a Junkers bomber with a crew of four crashed near Woore reservoir, in October 1941. Just before crashing the crew jettisoned three

bombs which exploded near the entrance to College Fields Farm. The two crew members who survived surrendered to members of the public and were taken to Market Drayton police station. They spent the rest of the war as POW's.



**The crash site near Woore reservoir October 1941**

The U3a Local History Group recently enjoyed a visit to College Fields Farm at the kind invitation of Tony Swires. We were able to see his eclectic collection of transport memorabilia, old farm machinery and other interesting items. Housed in 3 large sheds, the collection includes items made by the Market Drayton iron founders, A. Gower & Sons, who occupied premises in Stafford Street for many years. A large model railway layout generated a lot of interest as did the photographic record of Tony's iconic tractor trip from John O'Groats to Land's end to raise money for charity.



**Members of U3A Local History Group with Tony Swires at College Fields Farm**

## Let's Talk

The Discussion Group or "Let's Talk" is very nearly one year old, meeting quarterly, keeping us all fresh.

We started with *"All Art is Propaganda"* and the group then chose the topic for the next time, *"What can we do to enable younger generations to enjoy more fulfilled lives?"*. For December we chose *"What's the point of Resolutions?"* and our last meeting, in March, was *AI - Friend or Foe?*

Discussions have been lively and we have all learned much from each other - so guess what? we let AI choose our June subject. 😂😂😂. So here it is: *"How has your definition of Happiness changed over time?"*

Do join us at 2.00pm Monday 22nd June, RSVP essential to Trish Dawson - [t.dawson1946@gmail.com](mailto:t.dawson1946@gmail.com)

## Gardening Group

The Garden Group had yet another well attended meeting in February at The Beacon. Our visitor/demonstrators were 4 lovely members of the Market Drayton Flower Club, Carolyn, Sue, Jane and Elizabeth, who showed us that there are alternatives to buying a bunch of flowers from the supermarket and "bunging them in a vase"!! We each had a free raffle ticket and 5 lucky members went home with a display.



Our average attendance is now over 35, but there are plenty of spare chairs. Our next meeting is the last "indoors" after which we are at the mercy of the weather with visits to Dorothy Clive Gardens, Keele Arboretum and Hodnet Walled Garden. The local garden safari in July will visit 3 or 4 members gardens + tea.  
Trish Dawson



Photos by Trish Dawson

## **Pétanque**

On Saturday 11th April Drayton Community Sports Club successfully hosted a Pétanque Open Day, introducing the popular French game—often known as boules—to the local community.

The event followed an approach from members of Market Drayton u3a who were keen to see Pétanque established in Market Drayton. In response, the club has invested in a purpose-built playing area, large enough to accommodate three competition pistes or four club pistes.

With the weather getting warmer and the nights longer it seems the perfect time to practise our Pétanque. The "Piste" ( or pitch) is now available and we can begin regular U3a sessions at the Community Amateur Sports Club in Betton Rd. MD u3a will then hold regular sessions on Mondays from 10 - 12 and Fridays from 2 - 4.

To play you have to join the Sports Club, at a cost of £4 per year, and then pay £1 per session. You can join the club when you come to play. There will be some spare boules to play with if you haven't got your own and people who can give advice. We have a wide range of skills, from experienced players to complete novices so everyone is welcome.

Brian Carpenter [bcarpen327@aol.com](mailto:bcarpen327@aol.com)



## Photography Group

The photography group continues to meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Beacon centre at 7.00pm. Unfortunately we lost two of our longest serving members in the autumn through ill health and increasing age but we are pleased to have recruited three new members and a returnee so the group is still viable.

Each month we are set a subject/theme to photograph and members submit up to four photographs which are judged by the winner of the previous month's competition (who chose the theme). Recent themes have been shadows/silhouettes and patterns and textures.

At each meeting we also discuss a topic related to photography to which we all try to contribute. Recent topics have included composition, light and shadow, computer editing and night sky photography. On Wednesday 13th May we have organised a group day out in Market Drayton, photographing local landmarks, and a further group day is in the programme for September.



Photo of the Month

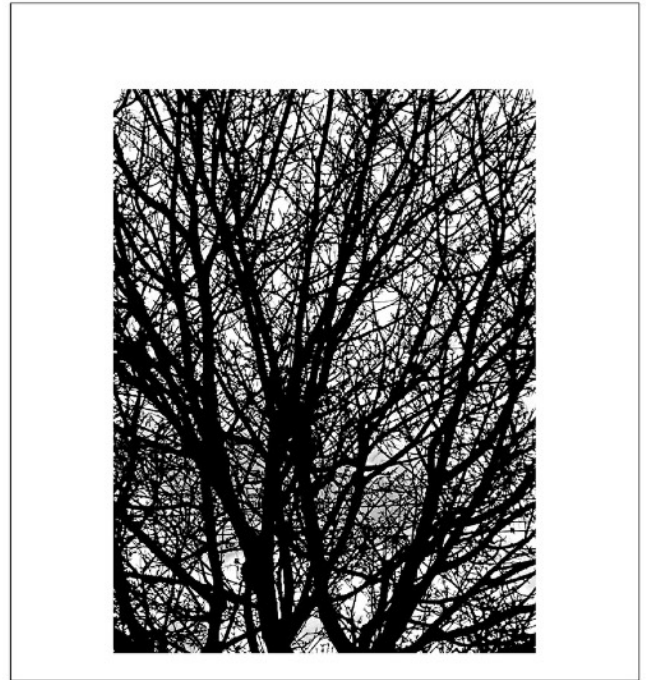
January 2026

Subject: Christmas

Taken by: Brian Truslove

Chosen by: Debra Littlehales

"I loved the sharp picture of Santa and the background Christmas tree being out of focus"



Picture of the month

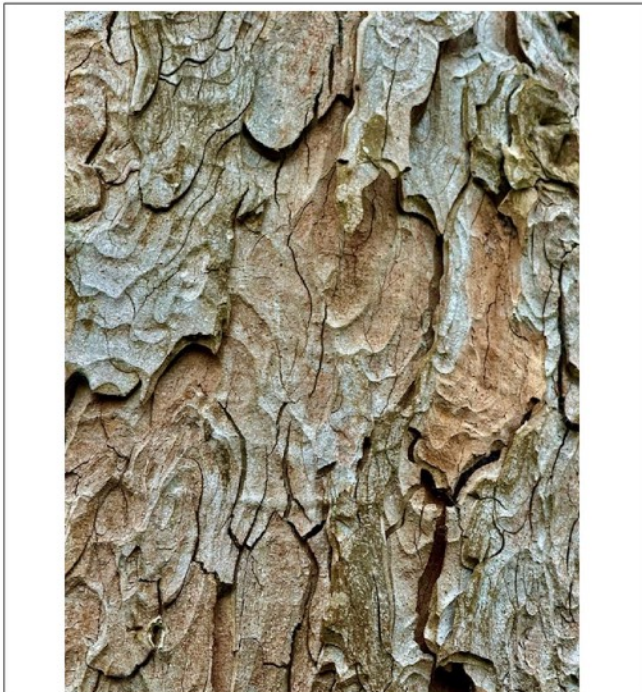
February 2026

Subject: Shadows/Silhouettes

Taken by: John McVittie

Chosen by: Brian Truslove

"Simplicity: I like how the photographer has completely filled the image with the subject, the mono finish creates a more inspired image."



Runner-up

March 2026

Subject: Patterns and Textures

Taken by: Karen Glass

Chosen by: John McVittie

"Nature supplies such wonderful textures. You can almost feel the roughness of the bark in this photograph."

We are always happy to welcome new members. Anyone interested should contact our convener, Karen Glass whose contact details can be found on the MD u3a website.

French Language Group

# French Night

with the Town Twinning Association and USA French Language Group

Friday 8th May 2026

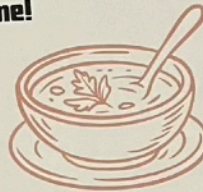
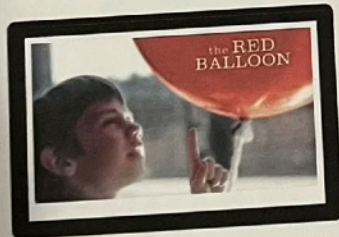
7pm

Festival Drayton Centre

Join us for a relaxed French Night featuring a screening of the silent film *The Red Balloon*, alongside classic French favourites including French onion soup, pâté, tartlets and poached pears, plus French wine – with the first glass first class free — a lovely evening of film, food and French atmosphere. An enjoyable evening celebrating French culture, language and cuisine — everyone welcome!

£25

Contact George to reserve your spot:  
Email: [georgeruddock@icloud.com](mailto:georgeruddock@icloud.com)  
Phone: 07860 844763



**Would you like to join a group that offers you friendship and fun, while helping you to maintain your physical and mental health? Then look no further. Just try .....**



**Market Drayton**  
**u3a**  
**Country Dance Group**



It doesn't matter how old you are, whether you are single or a couple, whether you have never danced in your life or you never stop dancing you will be made very welcome in our friendly group. No one will laugh at you or care if you go wrong. We all get it wrong at times however long we have been dancing. To be honest half the fun comes from it all going wrong. We walk through every dance step by step before having a go to the music. The caller calls out the steps throughout the whole dance if needed. No sense of rhythm? - no excuse. The caller will also count the beats when needed. Don't feel you are fit enough to dance for an hour? You can always sit a dance out if you need to.

So come on, give it a go. It's only £1.00 per person per session and your first session is free.

We meet on alternate Fridays - next session  
at



**Market Drayton Scout Hut**

Elizabeth Ct, Market Drayton TF9 3ED

**May 15th from 10:45 am-12:15 pm**



Please see u3a website for more information:

[https://market-drayton.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/country-dancing/](https://market-drayton.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/country-dancing/)

Or contact Viv McVittie. Tel: 01630661318, text: 07484606212, email:  
viv.mcvittie@me.com

## MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTIONS

### The Gingerbread Man

Who is this, is he made of sugar and spice  
He walks in every event casting good cheer  
Always always friendly and nice  
As he is Market Drayton

He is timeless, he never ages  
He is yesterday, today and tomorrow  
And he never asks for wages  
As he is Market Drayton

In the busy town square  
He is there in rain and sun  
And when he appears cheers fill the air  
As he is Market Drayton

For years the town has known  
He links us to the past  
Reminding us we are gingerbread's home  
As he is Market Drayton

So, raise a glass, raise a cheer  
To our lovely gingerbread man  
As he wanders without fear  
As he is Market Drayton.



Contributed by George Ruddock

*Editor's note: The Gingerbread man is, at other times, Phil Glover - secretary of MD u3a.*

## **Never**

Years have gone, time has flown  
Yes, she is a ruin, an empty shell  
Yet once, a long-time age, this house was  
known

She hosted lords, ladies, kings and  
queens  
Her balls were known far and wide  
And blessed by local vicars and deans

Now she is crumbling, but still proud  
She knows the past is gone, over for good  
But her beauty will never be cowed.



Contributed by George Ruddock

Moreton Corbet Castle

## **MARKET DRAYTON**

**M**arket Drayton is our town  
**A** great place to live and a  
**R**eally amazing friendly committee who  
**K**eeping the spirit of the town alive and  
**E**nvied for the great Festival Drayton Centre  
**T**ogether with the best Library in Shropshire

**D**rayton as it's known to its locals  
**R**eally knows how to have fun  
**A** place of great events like the Festival of Lights  
**Y**oung and old turn up in hundreds  
**T**o welcome in the Christmas season  
**O**h and of course it's the home of gingerbread  
**N**ever something the town ever forgets.

Contributed by Phil Glover

## **Beneath the Surface**

The town is quiet and still  
Cold winds blow down its streets  
Shops, once vibrant, are boarded and shut  
It feels like time is stuck in a rut

But, beneath the surface  
There is a town with energy  
A town with people who care for each other  
Who take time to meet and greet others

Groups in abundance fill the town  
If you have an interest, you will find a place  
So, never take anything for granted  
Dig a little, you may well be enchanted.

Contributed by George Ruddock

## **Cluedo**

It really is a tragedy  
I don't know what to say  
But the sad demise of Dr Black  
Has really spoilt our day.

We came here for a party  
But now our host is dead.  
Was the poor man strangled, stabbed  
Or beat about the head?

What was the murder weapon?  
Where did the crime take place?  
Which one of us did the awful deed?  
Who has guilt across their face?

We really need Miss Marple  
To solve this hideous crime.  
She'd sort out who done it  
In super record time.

Contributed by Viv McVittie

## PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS

### MATHS SQUARE

2	+	3	x	5	25
-		+		+	
1	+	4	+	6	11
x		x		-	
7	+	8	-	9	6
7		56		2	

### WORDS

The 13-letter word using all of the letters is **REINTERPRETED**.

The editors found over 100 words of four letters or more, after which they gave up. 😊😊😊

How did you do?

### CONNECTING WALL

Pink	Cue	Pocket	Bridge	<i>Snooker terms</i>
Cher	Adele	Rihanna	Shakira	<i>Female singers</i>
Stafford	Newcastle	Shropshire	Shrewsbury	<i>MD streets/roads</i>
Derby	Leicester	Gloucester	Cheshire	<i>English cheeses</i>