

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

AUG
2024

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

Well, hasn't the weather improved. Isn't nice to be able to go out and not take your mac with you.

I really enjoyed our talk at the last Members meeting and did not realise what an interesting life Amy Johnson had led.

We have one last fete to attend on Saturday August 31st at Rearsby and if you could spare some time to help us it would be much appreciated. If you would like to volunteer, you can email me at sadu3achair@gmail.com or speak to me at the next members meeting on Wednesday 14th August.

I hope to see you all soon.

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A new committee member has been co-opted onto the committee. Angie Baker has taken a vacant ex-com role in addition to becoming Assistant Groups Co-ordinator.

There are still committee roles vacant. If you are willing to help by filling a vacancy you don't need to wait until an AGM is approaching. The Executive Committee has the power to co-opt people between AGM's. I'm sure that our chairman would love to hear from you at the email address shown in his piece above.

GROUP NEWS

NEW BRIDGE GROUP

I'm pleased to say we have had a good response. There is room for more members should you wish to join. We will now be meeting on Tuesday 13th August 2 til 4 Syston Community Centre . If you want to join us please message me on sadu3agroups@gmail.com I can then add you to our list with more details.

Many thanks to Ann Lissaman for taking this on.

NEW LITTER PICKING GROUP

Who hates seeing litter when we are out and about ? Of course we do !

We are really lucky to have a member who wants to start a litter picking group. If you are interested in joining others ,helping to " Keep Britain Tidy " please let me know, (same email address as above) and I will pass your details on to Maria she will then give you all the details of when and where.

Many thanks to Maria for suggesting it.

POSSIBLE BADMINTON AND/OR TABLE TENNIS GROUP

Do you enjoy a game of Badminton or Table Tennis ? We have been given information about the availability of using the kit for either at the Methodist Hall in Syston.

If you fancy it, we can give you all the information you need to start this as a new group. Please email if you want more details.

Many thanks to Jan who has given us the heads up on this.

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Our zoom session looked at some of the history of burials, including the move from CofE churchyards as the main, in many cases the only option, for laying your ancestors to rest, to municipal cemeteries. This transition arose due to many reasons, not least the fact that church burial grounds were filling up in the late Georgian and early Victorian period, especially in London and other cities. The increase in people following other religions, or none, also created difficulties.

Finding out where a relative is buried, or more recently perhaps cremated, may not be easy. Unlike the civil registration of their death from 1837 onwards, there is no centralised record of burials and cremations. They can potentially be found in all sorts of places, some online, some not. That presents problems trying to locate any record to show where someone is buried. We explored some of the places we might find this information.

In our next session on 20th Aug starting at 10.00 am we plan to look at wills, where we can find them and how they can help us with our research. If anyone who is not currently a group member would like to join this session on zoom, please contact me, juliedjohnson@yahoo.com If you are not familiar with zoom, I can explain how it works. It's very easy to use.

Hopefully by the September session I will have had enough time to get to grips with the new tools on Ancestry mentioned last month, so that we can talk about them.

SUNDAYS FOR SOLOS



The Sundays for Solos group enjoyed another lovely visit out into the countryside. This time, it was to Foxton Locks, where we enjoyed an excellent lunch and a leisurely boat trip.

Although we didn't go through the locks, we took a good photo of them!

Next month, we go to Bosworth Battlefield.

ART APPRECIATION

At our last meeting we delved into the Italian Renaissance with a talk by Graham on Piero della Francesca and this was followed up by Michael with a look at the Baroque movement. It was an opportunity for us to compare the two and see how they differed in styles, techniques and thought processes.



In August we will be changing tack completely with Angie explaining some of the technical aspects of the artistic process and an intriguing quiz to be devised by Peter.

Our meetings are held on the first Weds of the month at 2pm in Syston Community Centre.

If you would like to join us please contact either Michael Wherton or Christine Gale via the website.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

On Thursday, June 27th, the Photo Group visited Melton Mowbray for a wander around the town, church and gardens.

It was a rare, dry, sunny day, so we had to stop on the way round for an ice-cream!

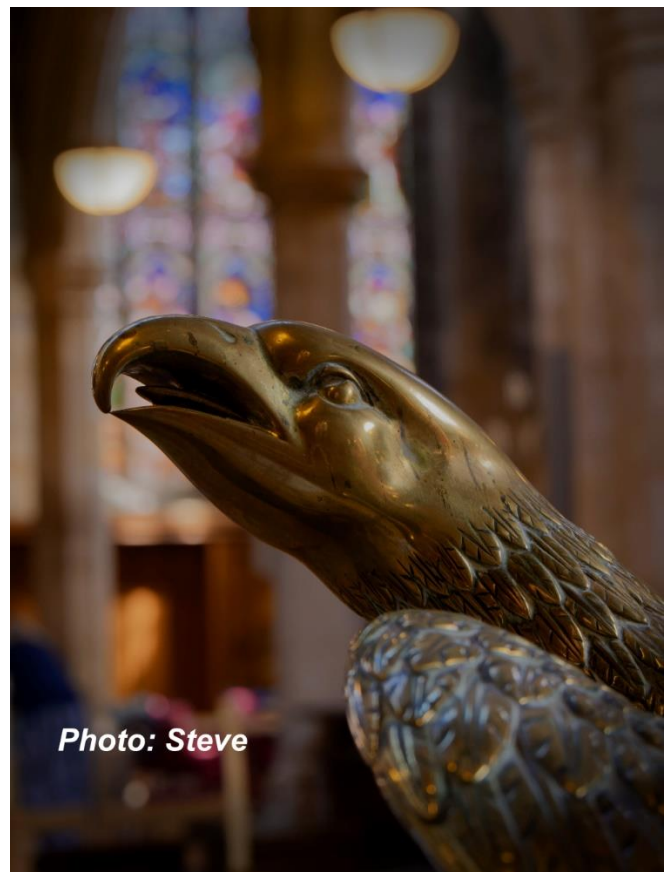
We always try and set a 'theme' for the morning's photography, so this time, we had 'patterns and summer' and, of course, anything else that catches your eye!

Afterwards, we sat outside the Wetherspoons pub for a welcome drink and a chat.

All sorts of camera, (including phones) are welcome, and any experience.

Contact Steve Kenney, group leader, for further details.

We hope no one will be offended by Barbara's photo of ladybirds "doing what comes naturally" on the next page. 😊



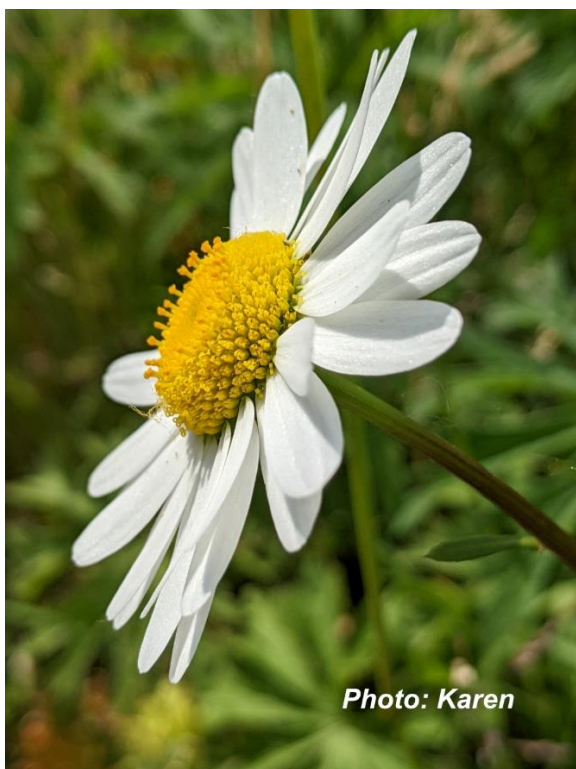


Photo: Karen



Photo: Barbara



Photo: Jim



UKULELE GROUP



On Sunday 30th June 2024, The Grosvenor Lounge in Syston, together with Syston's Happy Ukulele Band, hosted a concert to help raise awareness of Epilepsy and Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP)

This event was held in memory of Emily Purday who passed away from unexpected death in epilepsy in 2022.

Len Abraham, leader of Syston's Happy Ukulele Band, along with over 25 band members provided an afternoon's entertainment and various songs were sung and strummed, including Urban Spaceman featuring our brass section on kazoo saxophones and a rousing finale of Sweet Caroline accompanied by 4

of our band members waving big foam hands, which got a great response from the audience who joined in with much enthusiasm!



Neil Purday, Emily's brother, was invited to speak about the 2 epilepsy charities, and it was very moving to hear about Emily and the family's story. Neil and all Emily's



family have made it their mission to raise awareness of these charities that offer support to those living with epilepsy and comfort to those who have lost a loved one to epilepsy. We would like to thank Steph and Matt at The Grosvenor for facilitating this event and to thank everyone who attended and contributed so generously, which resulted in **£500** being raised(with gift aid this will result in the total being £625,)This amazing amount raised will be of so much benefit to **Epilepsy Society UK** and **SUDEP**.

Our Story

Emily, our baby sister, had suffered from Epilepsy from a young age. There was a time where her fits were frequent and really affected her day to day life, always being something she needed to consider and prepare for. However, as she moved out of her teenage years, changes in her medication seemed to get things under control and Emily went several years without a fit. Emily's epilepsy was so well managed that she was even able to start driving lessons and pass her test, eventually buying a car that she loved. In the summer of 2022, Emily started to experience more fits, having a particularly bad one on her 27th Birthday, in August. Emily, as she always did, took this in her stride and started to find ways to try to manage her epilepsy, once again.

Just 2 months later, on the morning of 6th October 2022, we tragically and unexpectedly lost Emily following another epileptic seizure, this time, one that took place during her sleep. Despite the best efforts of my mum, who did absolutely everything she could to revive her, she was unable to be saved, leaving us all devastated.

Emily's tragic loss has left us heartbroken and struggling with the massive part of our family that has been taken from us.

However, Emily had an infectious spirit and was loved by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her, so to honour her, we've tried to do as much as we can to raise awareness and money for charity, in her memory. **Neil Purday and Family.**

The Epilepsy Society –

<https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/> are a UK based charity who are raising money for people living with Epilepsy. Their fundraising is assisting with research into Epilepsy, raising awareness and providing care.

SUDEP Action –

<https://www.sudep.org> are dedicated to raising awareness of epilepsy risks and tackling epilepsy deaths including Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy. They are a UK charity specialised in supporting and involving people bereaved by epilepsy.



Emily's family are so grateful for the opportunity to raise awareness of these charities and convey their heartfelt thanks to those who attended and to Syston's Happy Ukulele Band, such is the beauty of human kindness combined with the humble ukulele.

Len Abraham: Leader of Syston's Happy Ukulele Band.

U3a Syston Happy Ukulele Band and Young At Heart Group

On Thursday, July 11, a number of members of u3a Syston Happy Ukulele Band, led by our leader, Len Abraham, entertained the Young at Heart Group at the Brookside Suite in Syston Community Centre.

Lots of happy people singing, clapping and dancing (and that was just the band!)



The Young at Heart Group holds a meeting there every Thursday from 10.30am-1.30pm.

Enjoy a hot delicious two course meal while participating in our weekly activities such as dominoes, live singers and bands.



For those with limited mobility, we offer a convenient minibus service to collect and drop you home.

Come be a part of our vibrant community where laughter and friendship flourish. Come and experience the warmth of Young At Heart.

Contact us at Age Concern, Syston on 0116 2601476, or visit our office for further information.

EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

PROMOTING OUR u3a

Our u3a is organising a stand at a few local events, to attract new members from outside the Syston area.

We are looking for a few volunteers to help us 'man' the stands.

If you feel you have a few hours to spare, it would be greatly appreciated if you could contact our chairman, Clive Iliffe: sadu3achair@gmail.com or Jill Kempton-Hayes: sadu3apublicity@gmail.com

Remaining Event:

Rearsby: 31st Aug, 12-4pm.

Even if you can't manage the whole time, any help would be much appreciated.

CROQUET TASTER SESSION



Many thanks to Helen Marshall for organising a brilliant couple of hours playing Croquet. As 12 of us arrived we were greeted by Richard who explained the rules. We were then split into teams of 4 and given a mallet and off we went.

The sun shone, the balls were hit (or not !) through the hoops and points were won (or not !) All agreed it was a great afternoon where new friendships were made.

How else would you choose to spend a Tuesday on a sunny afternoon ? Graham and Sylvia were awarded the trophy, which was used for the photo shoot then given back !

We try to introduce new things for our members to enjoy so keep checking our Vitality, Facebook and talks on the second Wednesday of the month.

TAI CHI



NEW(S), NEW(S), NEW(S) !



IS ANYONE INTERESTED IN A TAI CHI EVENT TO BE HELD (SUBJECT TO INTEREST) AT SYSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON **WEDNESDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2024 AND 10 AM - 12 PM.**

COST PER PERSON IS DEPENDENT ON NUMBER OF THOSE ATTENDING BUT, IN TRUE 'USA' TRADITION, WILL BE REASONABLY PRICED.

PLEASE CONFIRM YOUR INITIAL INTEREST TO ME BEFORE 31ST AUGUST WITH YOUR NAME AND MEMBERSHIP NUMBER.

THOSE ATTENDING OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS CAN GIVE BARBARA SARGENT OR ANGIE BAKER YOUR DETAILS TO PASS ON TO ME.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF FUN AND LEARNING.

JILL KEMPTON-HAYES

sadu3apublicity@gmail.com



NOT STRICTLY SYSTON u3a (but almost)

TREASURE HUNT

This year's 'walking round a local village' treasure hunt will be on Sunday, August 18th and once again we were going to offer an optional Sunday lunch BUT, having sorted all the clues and typed it up, we had a phone call from the pub saying that the management had decided to close the kitchens!

What with holidays etc. we haven't really got the time to find a new location and create a new set of clues.

So, if this is acceptable with everyone, we have decided to go ahead but just doing the treasure hunt. The people at the pub are happy for us still to meet there and we can regroup afterwards in the pub to mark the sheets etc.

Cost £2 each to be collected as we give out the clues.

Hopefully the pub car park will not be too busy so we will say 2:15pm onwards and we will set teams off as we get numbers arriving, usually in groups of four people.

Many apologies about this, but it's really out of our hands.

Details of the meeting point nearer the time!

Please note, this is not an official u3a event as such, as partners and friends are also welcome, and therefore you take part at your own risk.

Names and numbers (limited) of those wishing to take part to dpalmer192@btinternet.com by **August 11th** to reserve your place/s.

WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks usually start 10.30am
Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am



August 14th, 2024

Martin Lloyd (author)

Becoming a Famous Author: 'Discover the truth about writers, publishers and bookshops. In a step-by-step exposé you will learn what I had to do to get my first book published. Prepare to be informed, shocked, amazed and amused.'

Sept 11th, 2024



Mary's Meals charity - our presentation tells the story of our charity's humble beginnings in a shed in Dalmally Scotland to being a global charity feeding over 2.4 million children in some of the world's poorest countries.

Our talks are free and there is no expectation to make a donation.

Oct 9th, 2024

Paul Reynolds (ex fire-fighter) - A second visit from Paul Reynolds.

A talk about my fire service experiences (incidents, humour etc). NATIONAL **U3A ITEMS**

u3a TALKS



Cryptic Crosswords in Context

Their history, how they work, who does them and why – a talk by u3a Cryptic Crosswords subject adviser Henry Howarth

Wednesday 7 August at 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)



Agriculture and Climate Change

Ian Hawker of East Suffolk u3a discusses agriculture's effect on Climate Change.

Thursday 8 August 2024 at 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)



From Monet to Modern: Exploring 'The Water Lily Pond' 1899 and Beyond

Catherine Stevenson of Newcastle u3a presents the fourth in the series National Gallery Treasures to Celebrate its 200th Anniversary.

Thurs 15 August at 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

NEW CHAIR FOR NATIONAL U3A



We are pleased to announce that Allan Walmsley has been elected as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Third Age Trust.

A founding member of Kings Norton and District u3a, Allan has served on the Board since 2020, first as Trustee for the West Midlands and more recently as Vice Chair.

In his supporting statement for the role of Chair Allan referenced the benefits of joining the u3a movement “u3a gave me an opportunity to make friends, get back into my local community, and discover almost unlimited opportunities to learn. It is a movement that could add so much to so many.”

He continued, u3as and individual members can impact the lives of others. It can show that the movement is stronger than the sum of its individual parts”

Commenting on his appointment, Allan said “I’m delighted to become Chair-Elect. It will be an honour to lead one of the UK’s leading member organisations, and a movement that already influences the lives of so

many people. I hope to lead on continued growth and creating an ever-widening range of learning and social opportunities for our members.”

Outgoing Chair, Liz Thackray welcomes Allan to the role and says “When I was elected Chair 3 years ago, one of my predecessors told me I had the best job in the world. When visiting u3as, hearing their stories and sharing these with others, I would agree this is a great job to have. I wish my successor well as he takes his place at the helm and wish him calm waters. Welcome Allan to the best job in the world!” Allan will start his new role for the Trust on Wednesday 16 October 2024 after the AGM.

Upgrade Your Brain:

Dementia-proof your diet and lifestyle

Wed 25 Sept, 2-3.30pm

Patrick Holford, Founder of the Food for the Brain Foundation and the Institute for Optimum Nutrition

Brain size is shrinking, IQ is falling, mental health problems are rising.

One in six children are neurodivergent, many with autism or ADHD. While one in four over 80 have pre-dementia – memory decline is happening for many in their 30’s. One in four adults are on anti-depressants, sleeping pills or tranquillisers. Join us to learn how to optimise your brain for better mood, memory, sleep and stress resilience, and dementia-proof your diet and lifestyle.

[Register here](#)



SOMETHING FROM A NEIGHBOURING u3a



MY FAIR LADY at Curve, Leicester
Seats have been booked for the Melton Mowbray u3a Christmas Theatre Outing on Wednesday, 4th December 2024. It is an evening performance commencing at 7.30 p.m. There is the capacity to invite members of the Syston and District u3a to join the trip. A coach will be provided, it can pick members up in Syston at 18.15 (6.15 p.m.) The cost will be £55.00 (for the ticket, coach and tip for the driver) and is payable at the time of booking a ticket, as u3a have to pay for the tickets in advance of the performance. All seats not paid for by the end of August will be cancelled.
Angela Fielding
Telephone 01664 564768 (with an answerphone)

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

Syston Twinning Association have arranged a coach trip to Southwell Minster on Monday, 9th September to view

“The Longest Yarn Exhibition”

The coach will leave Syston at 9am to reach Southwell approx. 10am and depart Southwell at 3pm to arrive back in Syston approx. 4pm. The cost is £20.00 per person.

There are limited seats available so if you are interested in going please email christineringrose@btinternet.com as soon as possible. Payment will be by bank transfer direct to Syston Twinning Full details of which will be provided once your place on the coach has been confirmed

Details of the exhibition are

D-Day 80th anniversary commemorated as The Longest Yarn comes to Southwell in UK-first
The Longest Yarn is an 80m 3D depiction of that fateful day, 6th June 1944, in wool art

With 80 displays, each measuring one metre in length, depicting scenes of the world’s largest amphibious invasion, The Longest Yarn is something quite unique and not to be missed. The scenes include the build-up to D-Day in England, the horrors on the Landing Beaches and the bloody inland battles.

The installation will be first on display in Carentan, France, in May, before coming to Southwell Minster from 9-27 September. Admission is free (donations welcome) and tickets are not needed.

Created with guidance from professional historians to be accurate, each scene has been selected by the creator to depict the story of this momentous day in history.

Some of the scenes depict actual WW2 veterans that were in the theatre of war in Normandy on 6th June plus the lesser-known events in local towns and villages in Normandy.

Over 1,000 knitters from across the world, including the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France and even people with NATO stationed in Europe, have joined in to help make this project happen.

Tansy Foster, who came up with the idea and has led the operations from France, said: - *It’s given a real poignancy to these scenes.* “*One of my favourite scenes that will be on display is the depiction of the famous moment Lord Lovat and Piper Bill Millin crossed Pegasus Bridge, and another is when he plays his pipes on Sword Beach. Piper Millin’s son donated his father’s favourite jumper to us which we unravelled (frogged) and used the wool to knit the figures of Piper Bill.*

An accompanying book will be on sale, giving more information on each of the 80 scenes, including a picture from 1944 to show viewers what each scene was based on.

LINCOLN COACH TRIP

🚌✨ Exciting News from Hays Travel Syston! ✨🚌

💙 Join us on the 1st September for a fantastic charity day trip to the beautiful city of Lincoln! All proceeds will support Leicester Hospitals Charity. ❤️

Not only will you enjoy a day of sightseeing and exploring, but the fun starts right on the coach! We'll have games, a raffle and lots of entertainment on board - all hosted by our lovely team.

📅 Date: 1st September 2024 at 8:30am

📍 Destination: Lincoln

🚌 Departing from: Hays Travel Syston, 1288a Melton Road, Syston, LE7 2HD

🎫 Tickets: £20pp

Don't miss out on this opportunity to have a great day out whilst supporting a wonderful cause. Spaces are limited, so book your spot today!

For more information and to reserve your place:

☎️ 0116 412 5878

💬 Send us a message

👋 Visit us in store



MOUNTSORREL
REVIVAL
An Old-Style Festival of Fun

Sunday
11th August
2024
11am - 4.30pm

YOU SAID
WE DID

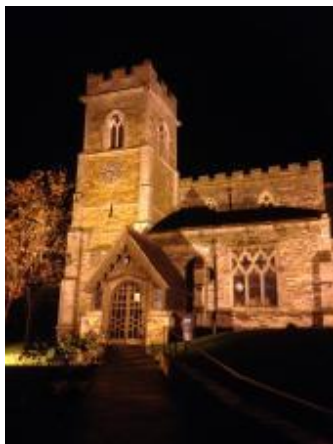
more toilets
more seating
more bins

Food court area on field
improved access to field

New activities for 2024

- **axe throwing**
- **laser clay pigeon shooting**
- **electric go-karts**

Cream Teas at All Saints' Church, Rotherby



Rotherby Church will be open every Sunday afternoon during August and will providing their popular cream teas. The church will be open for the cream teas from 2pm to 4.30pm

If you're taking a walk along the lovely Wreake Valley, then do please call and visit the beautiful Parish Church, and have a Cream Tea while you visit.

All proceeds to Rotherby Church. For further details please contact Churchwarden Sue Smith on 01664 434175

SWITHLAND FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW



More information: <https://www.facebook.com/SwithlandShow>



Loughborough Mela 2024 returns to town centre on Sunday 25th August 2024. This is a diverse and inclusive event bringing different cultures together to celebrate our vibrant communities. There will be stalls, performers, delicious food from different part of the world.

More information - [here](#)

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Music and the Man

When Soames the butler led her down the corridor, she heard the lilting strains of an air coming from the music room, Lydia knew it was not her dearest friend Amelia at the piano forte. Competent though she was, the pianist was someone of greater skill. The music was infused with more expression, as if the player was fully immersed in the piece. It had to be Nathaniel, Amelia's brother, he must have returned home. The wars against Napoleon had left their mark on many of the men who had served their country. For some the marks were clearly visible, for others they were held inside otherwise unscathed bodies. Both categories of men were in the main left to deal with their situation, but those with no physical injuries were rarely recognised as having anything amiss.

Thankfully the Earl of Haverholme was a close friend of the Earl of Farndon, an enlightened man, who recognised that men could be scarred by war, in ways that affected the mind, just as badly as the body. After seeking out help for one of his own sons, he had opened up his house to similarly afflicted young men, he and the families of those who could afford to do so, had hired the best he could find to help them recover. Nathaniel had only spent a few days at home on his return to England, before moving to Farndon Hall. Time had moved forward some two years since then.

Amelia greeted her fondly as always. "Nathaniel is home. You must come and meet him". As they moved towards the music, Lydia wondered how time and circumstance had changed him. They were undoubtedly different people from 6 years ago. Lydia had not seen Nathaniel since he had joined the Guards and gone off to war. She had still been in the schoolroom and in truth had had little to do with the young man who was some 9 years her senior. Her memories were of a self-assured, even arrogant fellow. He was already causing a stir within ton circles; a talented nobleman musician was such an unusual combination. The hostesses clamoured to have him play at their musical events. Indeed, during her two seasons in London, she had heard them pondering on whether his services would become available again.

The door was ajar, they entered, but he was so totally wrapped up in his playing that he did not seem to hear the rustle of their skirts. They sat down and waited. Lydia watched as his facial expression mirrored the ebb and flow of the piece, his eyes were half-closed. It was a few minutes before his fingers stilled and the last notes faded. His eyes opened fully and his startled expression confirmed he had been unaware of their presence. "You will remember my dear friend Lydia" said Amelia, "I remember" he replied, "But she is much changed, so I do not truly remember her". He got up and bowed over her hand, "I was only a girl last time we met, my lord" she commented. He looked at both of them, "And now you have both grown into beautiful young ladies". "I cannot place the piece you were playing. It had echoes of several composers without being typical of any of them," said Lydia, brushing aside his no doubt purely gallant compliment. "It is one of my own pieces" he said, very simply, without affectation, "Thus bound to encompass the influence of composers I admire most. I do not pretend to be innovative in my work", "But combining techniques employed by others is innovation my lord" she argued, "Any composer is bound to reflect some measure of what has gone before him. You do not seek to copy anyone, but to more draw upon elements of others work". He did not add that he had not composed any new pieces since he had gained his commission in the Guards, that ability had vanished. "I perceive a lady with more interest in music than that of being able to play tolerably well in company, because that is what is expected of well-

bred young ladies”, “Lydia plays more than tolerably well” put in Amelia. That led to an invitation to Lydia to play, then to Nathaniel seating himself on the large piano stool beside her to demonstrate improvements she might employ in her playing. It was followed by an animated discussion on a number of composers and their works.

Soames appeared to inform them that a visitor had arrived and Lady Haverholme requested their presence in the morning room. It was not until after the vicar had left, that Nathaniel had time to register the fact that he had not had such an in-depth conversation concerning music for a long time. Nor had he reacted so positively, no that was not quite the right word, but was the closest he could get, to the presence of a young lady for some time. He could recall, almost still smell, the perfume she wore, would recognise it again. She had indeed grown into a very attractive young lady. Attraction, that was the word he had been looking for, he had not been attracted to a female since before the horrors of war had seeped into his being. He had been fearful that he was incapable of that kind of interest in the fairer sex. Relief flooded through him. Unbeknown to anyone but close family, it was important that he marry, sire a son. That his older brother Edward had suffered illness some months ago, was well known, but the fact that he had been warned it may have rendered him incapable of fathering further children, was not. His marriage had produced a daughter, but no sons. There had been no signs of his Lady increasing since his illness. As a result, they looked to Nathaniel to take a wife and beget a son, preferably two, to ensure the Earldom was secure within the immediate family. His parents expected him to apply himself to the task of selecting a wife during the coming London season. He would have several weeks to adjust to life away from Farndon Hall, to ease his way back into society, before the season proper started. He could not tell them that he was uncertain whether he could fulfil their wishes, but his reaction to Lydia gave him a glimmer of hope in that respect.

The first event aimed at his transition, was a dinner to which various neighbours had been invited. Lydia and her family attended, Charles, her brother, was close to Nathaniel in age and they had been childhood friends. As Nathaniel was a second son, and Charles the heir, their paths had diverged as adults, but they greeted each other warmly and both declared themselves keen to rekindle their friendship. Some of the guests took advantage of the warm evening and sat out on the terrace or ambled around the gardens nearby. Amelia and Lydia walked the lawns just beyond the terrace. Nathaniel stood watching them, “Our sisters make a fetching pair of young ladies, do they not?” commented Charles appearing at his side. “Indeed” agreed Nathaniel, “I am surprised that in two seasons they did not attract husbands” he added. “Ah, they both attracted much interest, but it appears none that they wished to encourage to make an offer. Neither set of parents are the sort to push them into marriage.” Nathaniel had not taken his eyes away from the ladies concerned during the conversation. “You seem rather taken with Lydia” said Charles, “Given your common interest in music, you would perhaps make an ideal pair”, “I might say the same of you and Amelia” he returned, “You are both greatly interested in horses”. Neither of them deigned to respond further to the other’s suggestion, or to look each other in the eye. They were saved from any further exchange on the matter when Nathaniel’s mama asked if he would play for their guests. It was only when the evening was over and he retired to bed, that the brief conversation came back to mind, he had been unsure of whether the reactions she stirred within him were merely dormant or gone forever. He now had some indication.

The next event was the first assembly of the rural season in the nearby town. The master of ceremonies had been guilty of the same transgression as many of the ton hostesses, inviting more people than the venue could comfortably accommodate. It was a warm evening for October, which only served to increase the heat inside and sent many of the participants outside as the evening wore on, to gain the respite of

cooler air. Lydia took on the role of introducing him to new neighbours and re-introducing him to old. He learned that she had been asked to undertake this service. His family had felt he would be more comfortable if someone other than immediate family did so, she explained. Whilst that was true, the family had also woken up to their suitability as a couple and wanted to encourage their interaction in arenas other than just their respective family homes. Several ladies fainted, though it was suspected of being a ploy on the part of some to gain the closer attentions of their partner at the time. That was not the case with Lydia when she announced to Nathaniel that she needed air, one look at her face confirmed the necessity was urgent. So many had taken to the cooler outdoors, there was no question of impropriety, "Do you wish me to have your Mama or Amelia fetched?" he asked, "No, no, I believe the fresh air will be enough to put me to rights" she replied.

That proved to be the case, but she did not wish to plunge straight back into the stifling heat inside. "Will you remain at home for long?" she asked, "Home, as in here at Haverholme?" she nodded, "I shall remain until the family moves to London, but I shall also visit the estate my aunt bequeathed to me whilst I was away. Edward has been looking after it for me, but I need to take up the reigns myself. Then there is the London house that was my aunt's, I have some plans, ideas to develop, once I am back in town", "Plans you are willing to share?" she asked. "I would like to open a music academy" he said, "We lack enough properly trained, home grown, musicians. Too many opportunities are filled by foreigners, especially those in our circles", "That is a wonderful idea" she said with genuine enthusiasm, "I shall need to seek out sponsors. I do not have the means to fully fund such a project myself. I am not sure how difficult that will prove, I am not even sure who to approach", "I would suggest that the senior hostesses should be your first target, I know that they do not have the funds you require themselves, but their husbands do" she said "Of course you are likely to have to agree to play at some of their events in return for their support" she added. "Thank you, that possibility had not occurred to me" he admitted, "Although approaching them is not an appealing prospect", "Perhaps you need a lady or ladies to intercede for you, to pave the way so to speak, our mamas for example" she suggested, "If you gain the support of one hostess, several others are likely to follow suit, especially with the carrot of securing your services dangled in front of their noses. We younger ladies may not hold much sway with them, but hearing comments from us often enough, can sometimes reap rewards, I am sure Amelia and I can help in some small way to advance your cause", "I fear I have been away long enough to have been forgotten" he observed, "That is not true. In the last two seasons I have heard your name mentioned many times", "Is that so?" he asked with surprise, "It certainly is" she confirmed.

At that moment her brother appeared with Amelia on his arm. "You also found it unbearably hot inside" he commented, "I began to feel a little unwell" said Lydia, "As did I", said Amelia. "Have you appraised your sister of your plans?" Lydia asked, "Not yet" he replied. "What plans?" asked Amelia. He set out his initial idea again. That led to a four-way discussion, in which Lydia's suggestions were declared a splendid approach. Back inside, the gentlemen left the ladies in search of refreshment for them all. "Your sister's suggestions are inspired" Nathaniel commented, "Do you not think she would prove a valuable helpmeet with your project?", "She would indeed" conceded Nathaniel, "But she deserves someone who is .." he struggled to find the word, before finally saying "Unscarred. I am much recovered, but I do not believe I will ever fully shake off the effects of the wars, be as I was", "I am not as I was six years ago; I hope I am a better man than I was then" said Charles "You my friend certainly are. You were full of your own importance, to the point of verging on arrogant" "Was I really such a bore?" "On occasion" he paused before asking "Have you been left with violent tendencies or some other affliction that would endanger Lydia?", "I have nightmares on occasion, but no", "Then enough of this nonsense that you are in some way unworthy of her". He spent part of the night arguing with himself on the matter, he fell asleep without

coming to any resolution. Then he dreamed vividly, dreamed that he and Lydia were together and his fears about his ability to sire children were proven groundless. He woke and became aware of the damp area on his night attire signalling that his bodily reactions had reflected his dream.

The following day he was at practice in the music room. A racket out on the lawn nearby stopped him, some rooks were squabbling over carrion that one had found. He watched for a few moments, until the rooks took their argument elsewhere, and he applied his fingers to the keys again. A fragment of music came into his head unbidden, he played it, then it was as if a gate that had been locked had opened. There was music paper in the stool, still there from before his departure to war. The composition began to take shape as he played and scribbled and played again. When Lydia called on his sister a few days later, he was still at work. She stopped as she heard him playing. "He has hardly left the music room these past few days. We have almost had to drag him out for meals" Amelia informed her, "I believe it is a new piece he has been working on". There was a pause in the music as they came to the door, it was again ajar, they entered, "You have been composing I gather" Lydia said, he smiled "I have indeed, sit, tell me what you think". He played, then looked to her when he stopped "Well?" he asked, "It is quite beautiful" she replied, "And quite different to the other pieces I have heard, it has greater depth to it", "Perhaps because it reflects who I am now, not who I was before" he suggested, "This is my first composition since before my military service, I thought I had lost the ability forever", "But you have found it again", "With some assistance from you", "Me, but I have done nothing" she protested, "You have, albeit you did so without realising it". He was smiling at her, the smile was somehow different she realised, it reached his eyes. She was left wondering what exactly it was she had done.

They were summoned by Lady Haverholme as a visitor had arrived. Once the visitor had departed, Amelia excused herself, but not as presumed to answer a call of nature. They did not see her dispatch a servant to the stables with a message. A little later, Lydia called for her horse to be made ready for the journey home. A few moments after, she was informed that her mount was displaying a slight lameness. Amelia opened her mouth to speak, but Nathaniel was ahead of her, "Then allow me to drive you home my lady. We shall be chaperoned by your groom". Instructions for the gig to be made ready were issued. They drove along with the groom trailing far enough behind that they could not be overheard. "What did you mean earlier?" she asked, "What have I unwittingly done to assist you composing again?". "You are my muse" he replied, "And I hope will remain so". It was a few moments before she responded, "Since I have not actively done anything, that should not prove difficult", "Ah, but it is being in your company, being able to discuss music, express my ideas, that has rekindled my ability to compose again", "I am sure that there are others who could perform the same functions", "Perhaps, but a muse is often more, they hold a special place in the affections of the artist or composer, a place only they can occupy. I believe we would be highly compatible together; will you allow me the opportunity to demonstrate that this is so?", "I believe I will my lord" she replied after a brief pause. They smiled at each other. "Was my horse really lame?" she asked, "I cannot say, I can only assure you that I had nothing to do with the matter, but if someone else did, I would thank them" he replied.

Post-script –

Ashfield House Music Academy opened its doors to students some twelve months later with many well wishers attending the event. It culminated with a recital by its principal, which included the piece that he had played to great acclaim at several musical evenings in the past London season, "Ode to my Lady Muse". As the day drew to a close Nathaniel was beaming with joy, but kept a close eye on his wife, clearly increasing with their first child. "You have been on your feet for some time, should you not sit a while?" he asked, "Stop fussing, I am perfectly well" replied Lydia, and so was he, so was he.

POETRY CORNER

In The Garden by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

One moment alone in the garden,
Under the August skies;
The moon had gone but the stars shone on, -
Shone like your beautiful eyes.
Away from the glitter and gaslight,
Alone in the garden there,
While the mirth of the throng, in laugh and
song,
Floated out on the air.

You looked down through the starlight,
And I looked up at you;
And a feeling came that I could not name, -
Something strange and new.
Friends of a few weeks only, -
Why should it give me pain
To know you would go in the morrow,
And would not come again?

Formal friends of a season.
What matter that we must part?
But under the skies, with a swift surprise,
Each read the other's heart.
We did not speak, but your breath on my
cheek
Was like a breeze of the south:

And finally.....

THE OLYMPICS - DID YOU KNOW?

In ancient Greece, athletes didn't worry about sponsorship, protection, or fashion – they competed naked.

The first Olympic Games took place in the 8th century B.C. in Olympia, Greece. They were held every four years for 12 centuries. The first modern Olympics were held in 1896 in Greece.

And your dark hair brushed my forehead
And your kiss fell on my mouth.

Some one was searching for me, -
Some one to say good-night;
And we went in from the garden,
Out of the sweet starlight,
Back to the glitter and music,
And we said 'Good-bye' in the hall,
When a dozen heard and echoed the word,
And then - well, that was all.

The river that rolls between us
Can never be crossed, I know,
For the waters are deep and the shores are
steep,
And a maelstrom whirls below;
But I think we shall always remember,
Though we both may strive to forget,
How you looked in my eyes, 'neath the
August skies,
After the moon had set; -

How you kissed my lips in the garden,
And we stood in a trance of bliss,
And our hearts seemed speaking together
In that one thrilling kiss.

From 1924-1992, the Winter and the Summer Olympics took place in the same year. Now, they're on separate cycles and alternate every two years.

Only four athletes have won medals in both the Winter and the Summer Olympics. Only one of them, Christa Ludinger-Rothenburger, won medals in the same year.

Tarzan competed in the Olympics: Johnny Weissmuller, an athlete-turned-actor who played Tarzan in 12 movies, won five gold medals in swimming in the 1920s.

From 1912-1948, artists participated in the Olympics: Painters, sculptors, architects, writers, and musicians competed for medals in their respective fields.

During the 1936 Berlin Games, two Japanese pole-vaulters tied for second place. Instead of competing again, they cut the silver and bronze medals in half and fused the two different halves together so that each of them had a half-silver and half-bronze medal.

Women have been allowed to compete in the Olympics since 1900.

The 2012 London Games were the first Olympics in which all participating countries sent female athletes.

The five rings of the Olympic symbol – designed by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, co-founder of the modern Olympic Games – represent the five inhabited continents of the world.

The six colours – blue, yellow, black, green, red, and the white background – were chosen because every nation's flag contains at least one of them.

The following sports are (sadly) not part of the Olympics anymore: solo synchronized swimming, tug of war, rope climbing, hot air ballooning, duelling pistol, tandem bicycle, swimming obstacle race, and plunge for distance. Luckily, live pigeon shooting was a one-shot and only part of the 1900 Olympics in Paris.

