

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

FEB
2025

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is well and managing to stay warm and hopefully we have seen the end of the storms.

Joanna Richart's talk on Foraging for Health was very informative and interesting, but I did get a little concerned when she started talking about ways to get rid of the men folk. Fortunately, Chris was not there, so I am safe for the time being.

Our next Members meeting will be on February 12th when Stewart Bint, author, will talk to us about his writing journey.

Hope to see you there.

Stay safe and stay warm.

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Those of you who attended the Christmas Social will have had the chance to see our promotional video, aimed at giving people an insight into what we are about. Even for existing members it's worth a watch, it may open your eyes to aspects that you weren't aware of. You can also point prospective members to it on our website, rather than just trying to explain.

You can find it using either of the links below

[Home | System & District](#) or <https://youtu.be/ZLGsL9k-NU8?feature=shared>

GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP IDEAS

If you have any ideas for a new group please contact Barbara Sargeant our groups organiser sadu3agroups@gmail.com or speak to her at one of our monthly general meetings.

Alternatively contact her assistant Angie Baker email sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com

Acting as a group organiser doesn't have to be onerous, it doesn't have to be down to just one person, and it doesn't mean you have to organise everything the group does.

Is the group you want to join currently full? How about starting a second group? Barbara and Angie are happy to provide support and guidance on how to get going.

UKELELE GROUP

During December, the ukulele group collected donations for Syston Volunteer Centre, amounting to £380. (Paid directly to the Centre).

This was raised from the various gigs (some from busking outside in the cold weather).

A terrific result – thank you to Len and Joy, our leaders and to all members of the group who helped.

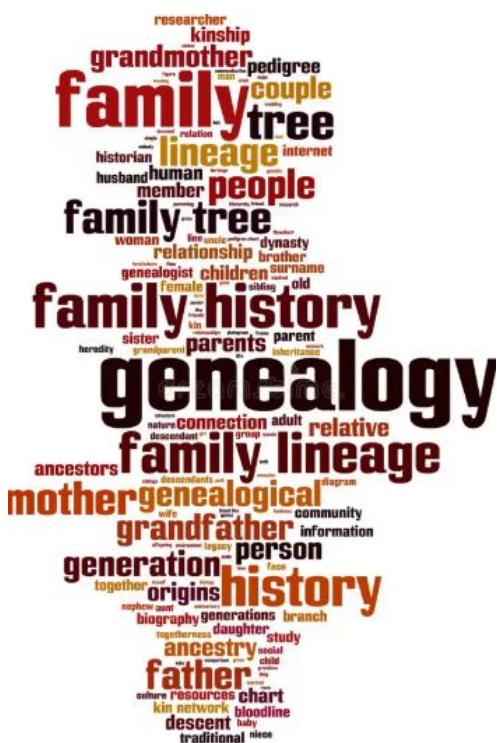


ART GROUP

Our art group met today (20th) for the first time this year. Due to the floods and the Christmas holidays it has been six weeks since we last met, so we're all really glad to be back. Our last meeting was our Christmas meal at the Midland pub which was enjoyed by fourteen of us. During our break we have been busy at home painting a variety of autumn leaves and trees which led us onto winter scenes with snowy landscapes and woodland. Some of the group were more creative with animals and flowers with the northern lights also making an appearance.



FAMILY HISTORY GROUP



Are you interested in your family history? Don't know where to start? We can help you. We have experienced members who are happy to have one to one sessions with beginners. If enough beginners are interested, we would be willing to have a separate one-off workshop aimed at getting you started. It would only need a couple more to make this financially viable. It doesn't have to be an expensive hobby.

Already done some research, but hit a brick wall? Again, we can try and help you. Just join the group. We have sessions where people can ask for help with their queries. We also have "how to" presentations and demonstrations.

Done a DNA test but only looked at your ethnicity breakdown? Want to find out more about dealing with your DNA matches? We can help with that too.

If you'd like more information, contact me juliedjohnson@yahoo.com

RUMMIKUB GROUP 1



Anyone who knows how to play Rummikub will know, we start with 14 tiles.

The object of the game is to be the first player to dispose of all the tiles from their rack.

To begin, the player has to make a run/set to the total of 30.

As you can see from this unfortunate player's hand, he is a long way off!

This hand was a record at 33 tiles and still not able to go. I thought a photo would give encouragement to others who find themselves in a similar situation.

Our group welcomed a new member which now takes us up to the maximum of 24.

WALKING GROUP

January's walk was from the Crown Pub in Anstey. Due to the weather conditions numbers were reduced to 14 people. We walked over to Castle Hill, round the Bennion Pools, and looked at the ancient Earthworks there, before returning by the Great Oak to the pub for lunches and drinks. Although it was cold, the sun shone for the entire walk, making it very picturesque.





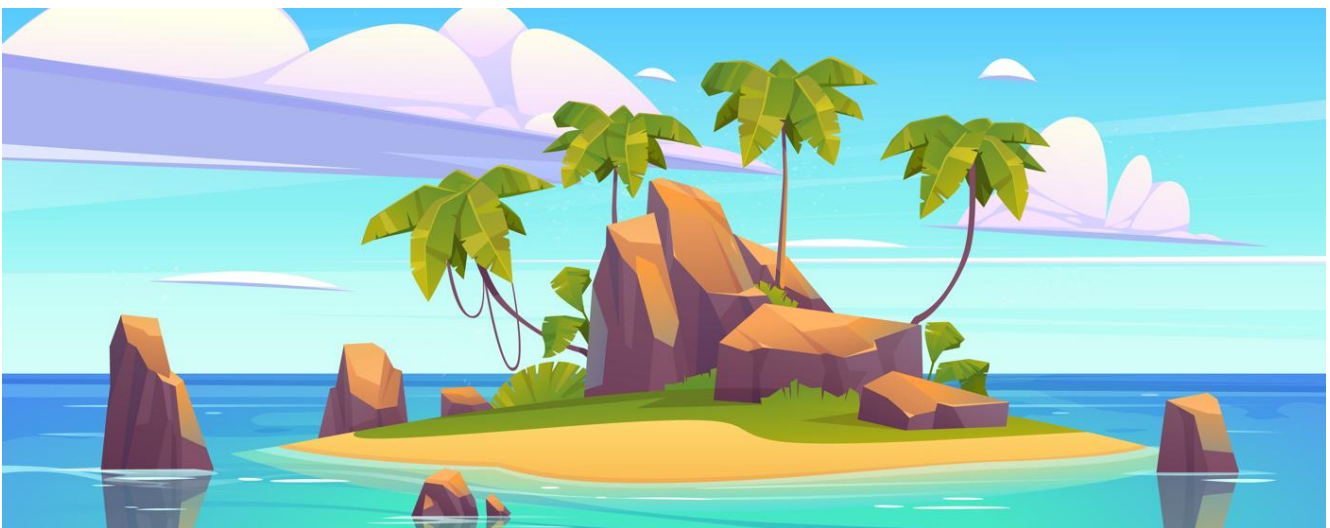
See the video footage from which this still was taken, showing what some of the walkers got up to at the end of their trek, it's on our Facebook group – what's that saying about a second childhood?

YOGA GROUP

Here are the Yoga dates for the next couple of months – 10.00am start
Wednesday 19th February
Wednesday 26th March.

EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

DESERT ISLAND DISCS



I hope you all saw the article in last month's Vitality where I proposed a one-off event to recreate the radio show?

I have now got around a dozen members who are interested. so, once we have a few more we can arrange a time and place.

Please email me if you fancy taking part. sadu3agroups@gmail.com

Choose a record, (we will hopefully be able to play your request), choose a book, choose a luxury item.

Explain your survival technique (if you want to escape of course!)

I am hoping to run it as an afternoon tea type event.

I hope to hear from you, the more the merrier.

WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks usually start 10.30am

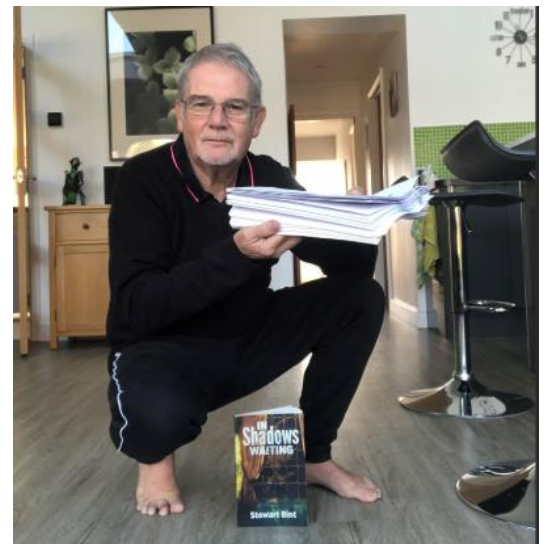
Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

Feb 12th 2025

My Writing Journey' by author Stewart Bint: Novelist and magazine columnist, writing sc-fi, paranormal and satire genres.

He is a member of the influential international authors group, The Awethors, and as a former professional broadcaster, he has worked as a radio newsreader, current affairs presenter and phone-in show host.

Stewart Bint supports the mental health charity Lamp Advocacy.



March 12, 2025



Derek Holloway returns with a talk/presentation on Ratcliffe Airport.

Very few people seem to be aware that a major and important airport existed at Ratcliffe on the Wreake between 1930 and 1950. It saw many famous visitors and the first flight of the first Auster plane. It was an important base in the war with over 50,000 war planes delivered.

Today many of the buildings survive as the Rosmini Prayer centre and it has been my privilege to rediscover its amazing history and share with you.

April 9th, 2025

Life in Music

Musician Andy Smith: A journey through life featuring self-penned comedy songs and ballads ...plus a few well-known numbers for members to join in. I explain a bit about the instruments I have brought with me - which includes several guitars, ukulele and mandolin.

With lots of amusing chat and nostalgic anecdotes, this has become a very popular talk.



NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS



Choosing Your Next PC or Laptop

Join Mike Field from u3a Let's Talk Tech for guidance on what features to consider when choosing your next PC or laptop.

Wednesday 5 February at 1pm

Free – online via Zoom



A Few Small Nips: Frida Kahlo and the art of pain

Frida Kahlo endured severe physical, emotional, and psychological traumas during her lifetime, yet her art transcends a life of pain and disability.

Thursday 13 February at 2pm

Free online via Zoom

Photograph: Jens Cederskjold, Frida Kahlo – La Venadita – The Little Deer – 1946 – Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Flickr, licensed under CC BY 2.0



Penguins: Icons of Antarctica

Join Dr Verena Meraldi, and discover a wealth of fascinating information about penguins the iconic inhabitants of Antarctica.

Wednesday 26 February at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Unfortunately, the new laptop talk has come just too late for me, just invested in a Win11 model.

On the next page there are more opportunities to tap into the National u3a, you can find more on the items featured using [this link](#)



The u3a Quiz Library

Are you a quiz group leader or quiz enthusiast who would like to submit a quiz round for one in return? Look no further!



Find a u3a Speaker

Browse a database of talks on offer to book for your local u3a or u3a group.



Where am I?

Join in with the u3a geographical and travel challenge!

Enter Your Photography and Art



Paint or Draw

Themed monthly online galleries.

Submit artwork for the latest theme.



u3a Eye

Themed photography project

Submit entries on current theme of:
Cutting Edge




Found in Nature

Photo gallery of all things weird and wonderful in nature


Submit your photo

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

The REAL History of East Goscote



East Goscote Library
March 1st -31st 2025



An Exhibition and Talks at East Goscote Library by Rod Axon

†

Rarely seen aerial Photography - Wartime requisition of land - The Willick Brothers Farm "This is not a farm?!" - Original documents from the National Archives & Leicestershire Records Office - Architect drawings of the New Village - **The Mound, what really lies beneath?** - What's left of Factory 10, What did it cost to build, How long did it take? - Queniborough Station is not in Queniborough - Why is Queniborough Brook so straight? - **When is a tunnel not a tunnel?** AND MORE!

Talks with Q & A Sessions.

Free Exhibition During Library Opening Times
Dates And Times Of Talks To Be Arranged - TICKET ONLY

Ceilidh at Rothley Centre, Rothley

InterCare

MEDICAL AID FOR AFRICA



Saint Patrick's Day
Ceilidh



SATURDAY 8TH MARCH 2025

One of our members, John Winter, plays guitar in a local Irish folk band, Turlough, who are playing at a Ceilidh to help Inter Care raise funds to send medical aid to Africa.

Tickets are £12, and it is on Saturday 8th March, starting at 7.30 p.m. at The Rothley Centre. Doors open at 7.00.

There is a bar, so put on your dancing shoes and let your hair down for a good cause. There is also a caller, so you don't even have to know the dances, you will be told!

For Tickets call 0116 269 5925
or visit the website

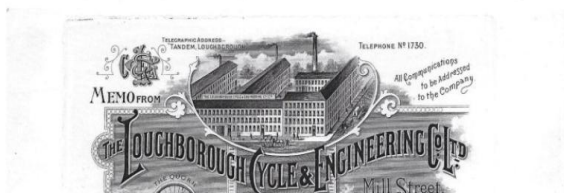
<https://intercare.org.uk/event/ceilidh2025/>

Lost Shops and Businesses of Loughborough

Lost Shops and Businesses of Loughborough

An Exhibition By

Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteer Group



Mon, 10th Feb 2025 - Fri, 25th Apr 2025 • Loughborough Library, Granby Street, Loughborough

The Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteer Group presents an exhibition chronicling the lost shops and businesses in Loughborough.

The exhibition is free and can be accessed during usual library opening hours.

Loughborough Workhouse - It's construction, inmates and staff a talk by Anne Speight



Thu, 20th Mar 2025 19:00 - 21:30 • Charnwood Museum, Granby Street, Loughborough LE11 3DU

There is an enormous amount of written material about Loughborough Workhouse at the County Record Office. It's an eye opener to a different life with an extraordinary amount of detail recorded. Somewhat unusually on the 1881 census inmates are given their full names. Using various research tools it's possible to discover where they came from and what happened to them.

Members £3 and guests £5 - all welcome

Booking essential please visit the museum or call 01509-233754

More information: <https://www.charnwoodmuseum.co.uk/events>



Made in the Middle

On 25 January 2025, a brand-new exhibition called Made in the Middle will launch at Leicester Gallery, De Montfort University showcasing the work of 37 regional artists – six of whom are from Leicester – and highlighting the innovative contemporary...

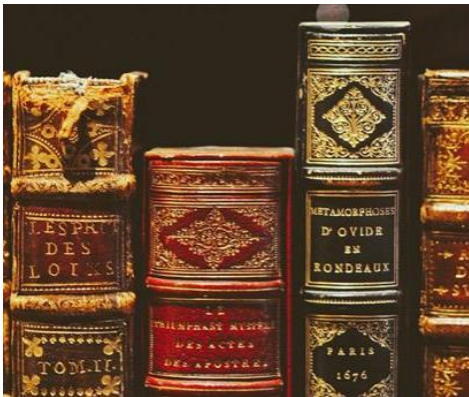
27 Jan 2025 to 22 Mar 2025

Where: Vijay Patel Building, 8 Newarke Close, Leicester, LE2 7BJ

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View the full profile page >>

[here](#)



Great Central Reunification progress

Tom Ingall gives an update from the Great Central Railway on their project to reconnect two halves of the railway and create an eighteen mile heritage line across the shires. A fully illustrated talk of interest to all.

16 Feb 2025 Open 18:30 - 20:00

Where: Leicester Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, LE1 1WB

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Steam Toys in Action

Join us for a nostalgic day out for all the family, step back in time and enjoy the fantastic variety of steam powered engines, toys, boats and trains on display. Visitors will have the chance to see the majestic steam powered Beam Engine in action...

23 Feb 2025 Open 12:00 - 16:30

Where: Abbey Pumping Station Museum, Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX

Contact details: 0116 299 5111

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[here](#)



Open: The People's Exhibition

This annual exhibition showcases artistic talent from across the East Midlands – open to anyone, from beginners to seasoned professionals. A variety of artworks, from paintings, to sculpture, textiles, and more celebrates the creativity of the...

31 Jan 2025 Open 11:00 - 16:30

Where: Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, 53 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 7EA

Contact details: 0116 225 4900

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FROM OUR MEMBERS

THE STRANGE CASE OF BUTLER AND THE HEIRESS

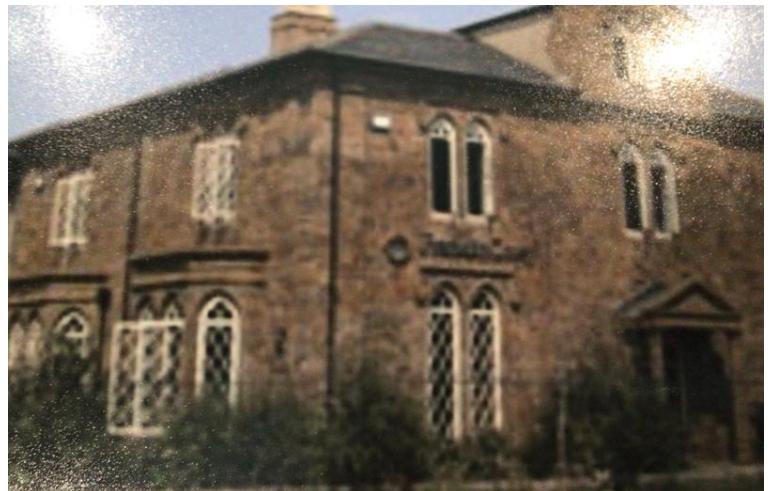
It began when I was carrying some basic family history research. A distant cousin, now living in Australia, contacted me about the Sandall family, and that also led me to the Lound family, both families were intertwined by marriage. I came across Haydon Lound. On the 1911 census he was recorded as the butler in the Ward Fox household, aged 38 and single. However, that was at odds with an official marriage record for him in 1909. His bride was none other than Maud Mary Ward Fox, also shown on the same 1911 census schedule as single and aged 30 (although she was actually 44). Her widowed mother and a sister were part of a household that included several servants. Their ages were also mis-recorded as younger.

The butler secretly marrying one of the daughters of the household, and keeping that secret, seemed more like the plot for a novel than real life. What more could I discover?

A scan of the marriage register showed the pair had been a little economical with the truth. Haydon was recorded as a farmer. That white lie would not have invalidated the marriage in any way. They were married by licence, something that would have aided their secrecy. I struggled to find anything more on Haydon between 1881, when he appears as a footman in the household of a magistrate, and his marriage in 1909. There was also nothing after 1911.

The newspapers shed some light on the matter. Not that they got their facts absolutely correct, but journalists have never had a reputation for accuracy! The reports first attributed the secret marriage in 1909 to the fact that Maud's mother had recently died. She didn't actually die until September 1911. Could it have been her death that led to the couple coming "out of the closet" in early 1912?

By the time of the 1921 census the pair were living in their own household (see photo below) at Grimsbury Manor, Banbury, Oxfordshire, as a married couple. They were still together there when the 1939 register was taken at the outbreak of World War 2 and both died there following the end of the war in the late 1940's. But what about before they married? I could find neither of them on the 1901 census. In 1891 they were not in the same household. However, the newspaper reports mentioned that the Ward Fox ladies were travellers and had been accompanied by Haydon Lounds, who was described as well educated, and a multi-linguist. Quite how the son of a man who worked for a coachbuilder became well educated is unclear, but he must have had a talent for picking up foreign languages. Perhaps the family were abroad when the 1901 census was taken?





I was surprised that the papers regarded the story as romantic. There was no hint of a suggestion that Haydon was a gold-digger after his heiress wife's fortune. Her mother left just over £100,000 – a very substantial sum in 1911. She had three surviving daughters. This was an era where people were still expected to marry within their own class. Society in general did not look favourably on those who “married down”. The Ward Fox family seat was near Bakewell in Derbyshire, but the locals did not recognise that the groom was the butler Haydon Lounds, because in the run up to the revelation, he had changed his name by deed poll to Stephen-Fox. The newspapers described Haydon as handsome, some printed a photograph – my cousin in Australia has the very image, which she sent to me, along with the one of the Stephen-Fox residence in Oxfordshire. I think the photo of him, though not the clearest of images, does support that.

As is often the case with family history research, what you discover tends to raise just as many questions as it provides answers. Was there genuine affection between the butler and the heiress? Is that why she hadn't married someone else? Why did they wait until 1909 to marry? I'll probably never find any answers.

Haydon was not the only member of the Lound clan that “married up”, I'll tell you about Sarah next month.

THE OLD LADY AND THE BAGS

“A little old lady was walking down the street dragging two large black plastic rubbish bags behind her. One of the bags was ripped and every once in a while, a £20 fell out onto the pavement.

Noticing this, a policeman stopped her and said, “Madam, there are £20 notes falling out of that bag.” “Oh, really? Damn it!” said the little old lady. “I'd better go back and see if I can find them. Thanks for telling me officer.”

“Well, now, not so fast,” said the cop. “Where did you get all that money? You didn't steal it, did you?”

“Oh, no, no”, said the old lady. “You see, my back garden is right next to a Golf course. A lot of Golfers come and pee through a hole in my fence, right into my flower garden. It used to really annoy me. Kills the flowers, you know. Then I thought, “why not make the best of it?””

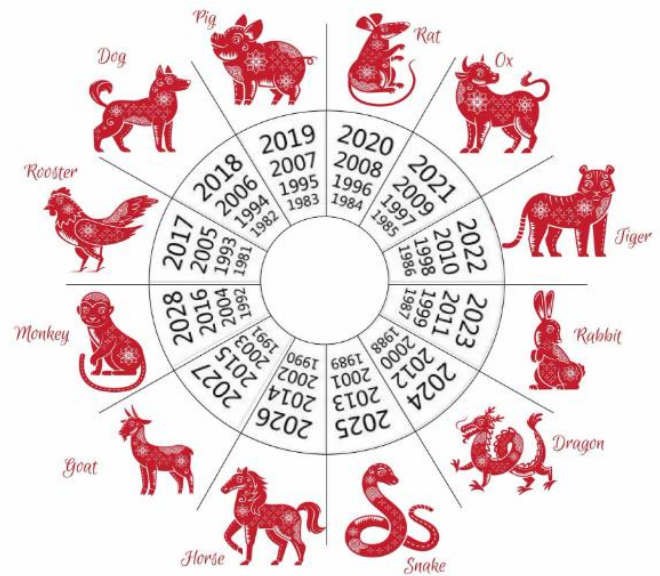
“So, now, I stand behind the fence by the knot hole, real quiet, with my hedge clippers. Every time some fella sticks his thing through my fence, I surprise him, grab hold of it and say, ‘O.K. you! Give me £20, or off it comes.”

“Well, that seems only fair,” said the cop, laughing. “OK. Good luck! Oh, by the way, what's in the other bag?”

“Not everybody pays.” she replied.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

The 15-day period when this is observed has just begun. Chinese New Year is a festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar. Marking the end of winter and the beginning of spring, this festival takes place from Chinese New Year's Eve (the evening preceding the first day of the year) to the Lantern Festival, held on the 15th day of the year. The first day of Chinese New Year begins on the new moon that appears between 21 January and 20 February. 2025 is the year of the Snake. (see the calendar left)



According to legend, Chinese New Year started with a mythical beast called the Nian (a beast that lives under the sea, or according to others, in the mountains). During the annual Spring Festival, the Nian would eat villagers, especially children, in the middle of the night. One year, all the villagers decided to hide from the beast. An old man appeared before the villagers went into hiding and said that he would stay the night and would get revenge on the Nian. He put up red papers and set off firecrackers. The day after, the villagers came back home and saw that nothing had been destroyed. They took the old man to be a deity who came to save them. The villagers believed that the old man, Yanhuang, had discovered that the Nian was afraid of the colour red and loud noises. The tradition grew as New Year approached, and the villagers would wear red clothes, hang red lanterns, and red spring scrolls on windows and doors, and use firecrackers and drums to frighten away the Nian. From then on, the Nian never came to the village again.

The first mention of celebrating the start of a new year was recorded during the Han dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD). In the book *Simin Yueling* (四民月令), written by the Eastern Han agricultural scientist Cui Shi (崔寔), a celebration was described: "The starting day of the first month, is called Zheng Ri. I bring my wife and children, to worship ancestors and commemorate my father." Later he wrote: "Children, wife, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren all serve pepper wine to their parents, make their toast, and wish their parents good health." The practice of worshipping ancestors on New Year's Eve is maintained by Chinese people to this day. The Han Chinese also started the custom of visiting friends' homes and wishing each other a happy new year.

The Chinese New Year is associated with several myths and customs. The festival was traditionally a time to honour deities as well as ancestors. Not surprisingly in such a large country, regional customs and traditions concerning the celebration of the New Year vary widely. Though the evening preceding New Year's Day is universally an occasion for Chinese families to gather for the annual reunion dinner. The cuisines served differ across the regions. Filled dumplings are popular in the north, whilst spring rolls are favoured in the east, and sweet rice balls are more popular in the south. Traditionally, every family thoroughly cleaned their house, to symbolically sweep away any ill fortune to make way for incoming good luck. To this day, windows and doors may be decorated with red paper-cuts and couplets representing themes such as good fortune or happiness, wealth, and longevity. Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money in red envelopes.

In addition to red envelopes, typically given from older individuals to younger ones, small gifts such as food or sweets are exchanged between friends or relatives from different households during Chinese New Year. These gifts are often brought when visiting friends or relatives at their homes. Common gifts include fruits (especially oranges, but never pears), cakes, biscuits, chocolates, and candies. It is customary for gifts to be wrapped in red or golden paper, symbolizing good luck.

Bamboo stems filled with gunpowder that was burnt to create small explosions were once used in ancient China to drive away evil spirits. In modern times, this method has eventually evolved into the use of firecrackers during the festive season. They are usually strung on a long-fused string so it can be hung down. Each firecracker is rolled up in red papers, as red is auspicious, with gunpowder in its core. Once ignited, the firecracker lets out a loud popping noise and, as they are often strung together by the hundreds, the firecrackers are known for their deafening explosions, harking back to the belief that they scare away evil spirits. The burning of firecrackers also signifies a joyful time of year and has become an integral aspect of Chinese New Year celebrations. Since the 2000s, firecrackers have been banned in various countries and towns, including in China itself. At various times over the last 40 years China has banned fireworks of any kind in certain parts of the country, although protests have led to the regulations undergoing relaxations specifically for New Year in some areas.

A familiar feature, known as *wǔ lóng* in Mandarin, is the Chinese dragon dance, a festive performance that's most often seen during the celebrations for the Chinese New Year. Dragons are seen to be a symbol of luck in Chinese culture. So, by performing this Chinese New Year dragon dance, it's believed that good fortune will be enjoyed by the community for the months to come. Dragons also symbolize power, dignity and fertility, but these qualities have less to do with the dragon's involvement in the New Year celebrations.

The Chinese dragon dance involves a team of highly skilled performers that move in unison under a large, decorative *papier-mâché* likeness of a traditional Chinese dragon. During the performance, the dragon is supported by wooden poles, which are moved by the dancers to mimic its imagined movements, to the rhythmic beat of a drum. There's usually also one person standing in front of the dragon with a large pearl, known as the 'Pearl of Wisdom'. This performer is said to entice the dragon in its search for knowledge.

The dragons used in New Year celebrations are of varying length. It's said that longer dragons are luckier than shorter ones, which means that high-profile events tend to have the longest dragons. The record for the world's longest dragon is over 5,000 meters.



DECLUTTER DEN

Did you get a Christmas present that means you have something that you no longer need? Are you determined to declutter and get rid of things that you haven't used in an age this new year? Look no further than Declutter Den.

Glenis Smith has these 2 items on offer

Contact her on 07761235001

Lamp / bedside table



Cream lamp



If you have something that you are prepared to give away – **strictly no items for sale!** Let me know and I'll put it in declutter den and hopefully we can help each other free up some space, whilst giving others something they have a use for, even if we don't.

Email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

POETRY CORNER

February by James Berry Bensel

Around, above the world of snow
The light-heeled breezes breathe and blow;
Now here, now there, they whirl the flakes,
And whistle through the sun-dried brakes,
Then, growing faint, in silence fall
Against the keyhole in the hall.

Then dusky twilight spreads around,
The last soft snowflake seeks the ground,
And through unshaded window-panes
The lamp-rays strike across the plains,
While now and then a shadow tall
Is thrown upon the white washed wall.

The hoar-frost crackles on the trees,
The rattling brook begins to freeze,
The well-sweep glistens in the light
As if with dust of diamonds bright;
And speeding o'er the crusted snow
A few swift-footed rabbits go.

Then the night-silence, long and deep,
When weary eyes close fast in sleep;
The hush of Nature's breath, until
The cock crows loud upon the hill;
And shortly through the eastern haze
The red sun sets the sky ablaze.

February's Brief Song

February flits, on quiet wings,
Short and sweet, the frost it brings.
Days of gray, and brisk night falls,
Nature's whisper, springtime calls.

Bare trees stand, in silent wait,
For the sun's warmth, to open fate.
February's song, a fleeting tune,
Underneath the brightening moon.

In its chill, a promise kept,
Winter's end, as snowflakes wept.
Quick it passes, swift it flies,
Leaving dreams beneath the skies.

February Rain by Charles Turner Dazey

O lonely day! No sounds are heard
Save winds and floods that downward pour,
And timid fluting of a bird,
That pipes one low note o'er and o'er.

Before the blast the bare trees lean,
The ragged clouds sail low and gray,
And all the wild and wintry scene
Is but one blur of driving spray.

O day most meet for memories,
For musing by a vacant hearth
On that which was and that which is,
And those who walk no more on earth!

And yet this dark and dreary day
Some brighter lesson still can bring,
For it is herald of the May,
A faint foretoken of the spring.

Beneath the ceaseless-beating rain
Earth's snowy shroud fast disappears,
As sorrow pressing on the brain,
Fades in a flood of happy tears.

And thus in darkness oft is wrought,
Through lonely days of tears and grief,
The gradual change by which is brought
To shadowed lives some sweet relief.

The February Hush by Thomas Wentworth Higginson

Snow o'er the darkening moorlands,
Flakes fill the quiet air;
Drifts in the forest hollows,
And a soft mask everywhere.

The nearest twig on the pine-tree
Looks blue through the whitening sky,
And the clinging beech-leaves rustle
Though never a wind goes by.

But there's red on the wildrose berries,
And red in the lovely glow
On the cheeks of the child beside me,
That once were pale, like snow.

And finally.....

February was named after a purification ritual which was like an early Roman spring-cleaning festival.

The length of February was finalized when Julius Caesar remade the Roman calendar and assigned the month 28 days and 29 days. In 713 B.C., February was officially added to the Roman calendar.

Once every six years, February is the only month that has four, full seven-day weeks. When this is from Monday to Monday for four weeks, it's thought to be a 'perfect month'.

Of all the words you can misspell, February is one of the most misspelled words in the English language. Even the White House has misprinted the word "February" before in a press release!

February is the only month where it's possible to go the entire time without having a full moon.

In Old English, February was called "Solmonath," which means "mud month," due to the wet conditions typical of this time of year in England.

In Welsh, February is sometimes known as "y mis bach," which means "little month."

According to Welsh folklore, if the first butterfly you see in the year is in February, you will have good luck for the rest of the year.

In Scotland, it's considered unlucky to get married in February, leading to the saying "Marry in February, you'll rue the day."

The Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) are often most visible in February due to the long, dark nights in the Northern Hemisphere.

It was in February 1964 when the Beatles made their first American television appearance on the "Ed Sullivan Show." Over 73 million Americans watched!

On February 1, 2003, the Space Shuttle "Columbia" broke apart in flight, which killed all seven crew members. The accident was believed to be a result of damage that occurred during lift-off. The tragedy occurred only 16 minutes before the shuttle was scheduled to land.

On February 2, 1848, U.S. and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended their war. The U.S. paid Mexico \$15 million in exchange for California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Texas.

