

Syston and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

MAY
2025

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

It doesn't seem 5 minutes that I was writing my report for the AGM last year so that must mean that I am enjoying the job. I really am. I am very lucky to be part of an amazing team who like me love to see our members enjoying themselves. I would like to thank them for all their hard work and also the group leaders and their helpers who do an excellent job.

I would still like to fill a couple vacancies we have on the committee. These are Chair and Committee Member. If you would like further information, please email me at sadu3achair@gmail.com or alternatively see me at the June meeting.

The AGM will only take a few minutes as we do not have anyone leaving their post and after that Mike Burton will talk to us about Tea & The Empress of China.

On June 21st we will be attending Thurmaston Fete and would be very grateful of any help you may be able to offer. If you are able to help us, please contact myself at the email address above or Jill Kempton-Hayes at sadu3apublicity@gmail.com

Thank you for your support for the past year

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

You should have received an email containing the reports for this year's AGM. If it isn't in your inbox, do check your spam/junk/bulk boxes.

The AGM will be held at the start of the monthly meeting on 11th June. It usually only takes a short time, with the scheduled speaker following. The changes to our constitution mean we will only need to approve a couple of people that were co-opted onto the Executive Committee during the year, so that they can remain on that committee going forward.

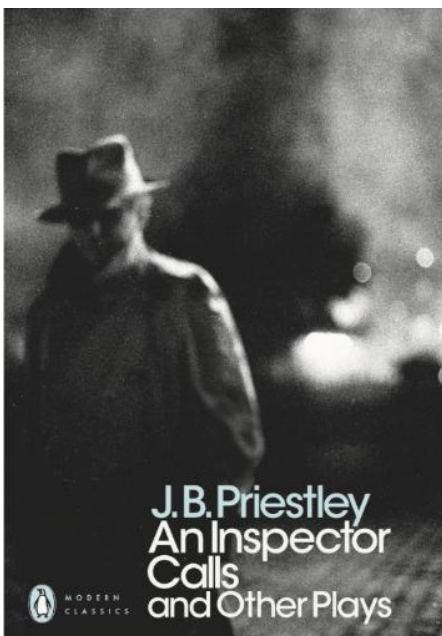
GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP IDEAS

If you have any ideas for a new group, please contact Barbara Sargeant our groups co-ordinator 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.

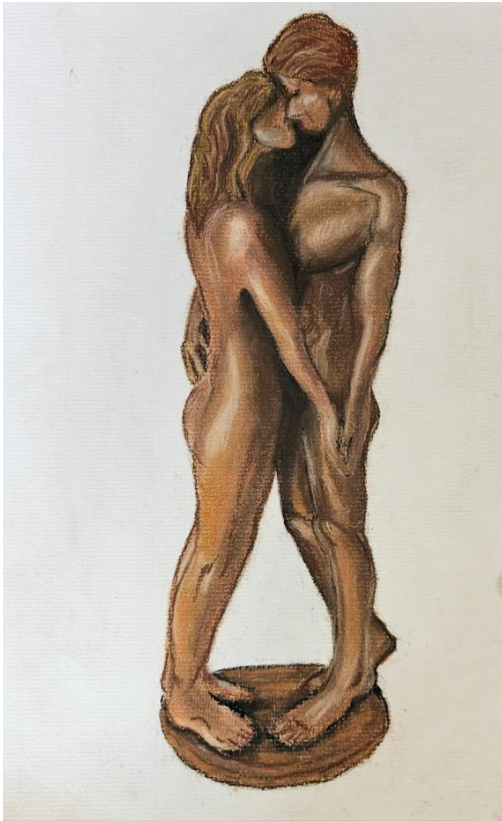
Is the group you want to join currently full? How about starting a second group? Barbara and Angie are happy to provide support and guidance on how to get going.

PLAY READING GROUP 2



We have spaces for a few new play readers -- we remain seated throughout so there's nothing too strenuous except for quite a lot of laughing as we read mostly comedies. Our meetings are held in the Jubilee Room at Syston community centre on the 1st Thursday of each month from 10 til 12. No need to audition - everyone gets a starring role! Just apply through Simple membership.

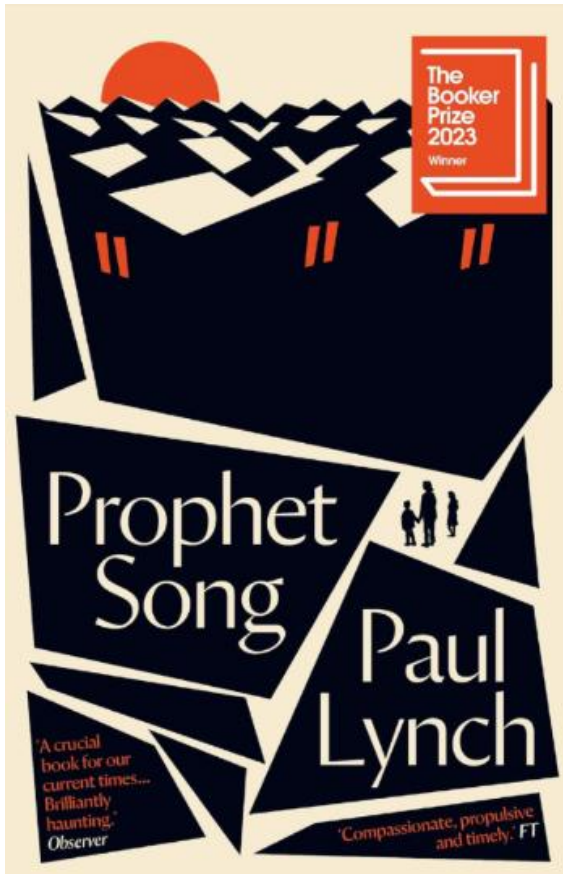
ART GROUP 1



Our group has recently ventured into portraits, not as easy as it looks for some of us! We've tried head and shoulders as well as full body and groups. We also tried sketching each other with five minutes for each person, timed by David, with some having more success than others! On May 10th one of our members took some of the group's paintings to exhibit at the RBL open event which went very well.



LIBRARY BOOK GROUP



This lovely little group of enthusiastic readers has enjoyed being a Cafe Society, but Syston cafes have become very busy and noisy following several recent closures and we needed to find a quieter venue. Our next meeting will therefore be held in the Jubilee Room at Syston community centre at 10 am, Wednesday 25th June. Not only is this quieter, it's also bigger so we can offer more places, and we are changing our format to ease any feelings of time pressure.

Our shared reading for June is "Prophet Song" by Paul Lynch which won the Booker Prize 2023 – it's fairly short, so there's enough time to finish and join our discussion or just come along for a visit (but do let us know first via Simple membership). We will also collectively choose our next shared reading title to discuss 2 months later. All of our books are available in Leicestershire or City of Leicester libraries in both paper and eBook formats. Literally, FREE BOOKS for all. The meeting on Wednesday 23rd July will be a "No Book book group" when some members, if they choose, will bring reviews, short readings, recommendations, poems and ideas for book based literary natter. We are happy to welcome new members to all book group meetings, or just some.

WALKING GROUP

Our May walk was from the Fox & Hounds pub in Tugby. (Approx 5m). 17 of us set off through the village and out onto a good path towards Rolleston. This had once been the main road to Rolleston. There was time for the obligatory photoshoot looking over the large, peaceful lake that once belonged to the Rolleston Hall estate. Then through the trees and over towards Goadby. On reaching Palmer's Lane (yes, really), we were unanimous that we shouldn't tackle the steep hill up the road into the village, as it was already quite hot.

We gradually circled back round to Tugby, where the landlord, Mass, had our 15 lunches all prepared. Everyone said the food was good, and with an excellent choice.

Dave Palmer



PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

On the last Thursday in April, 13 of us visited the Welford Road Cemetery (we like to visit a variety of places for our photographic outings!). A few photos (of the many) are shown here.....

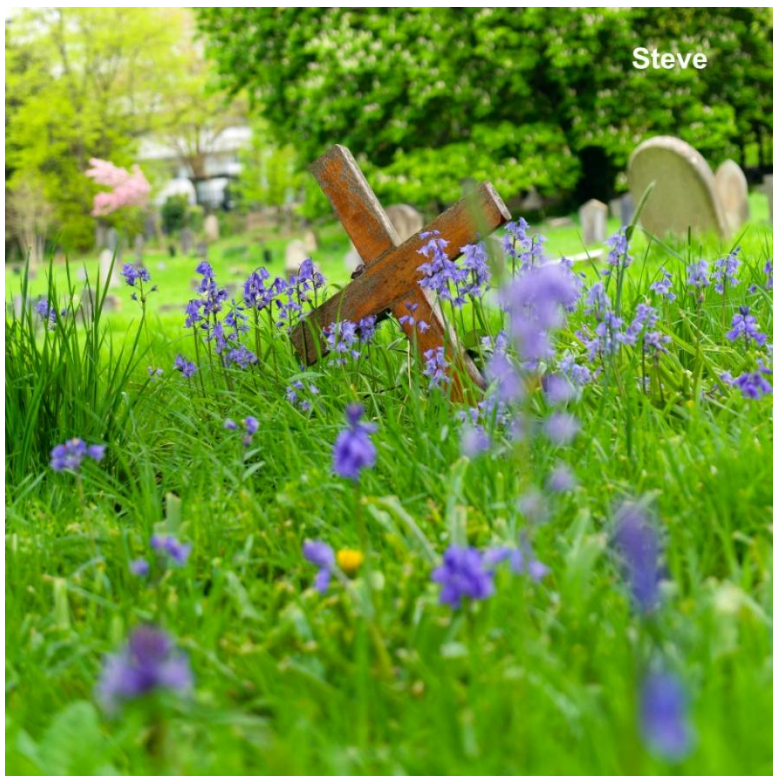




Karin



Iain



It was a cold, grey day, which suited the venue, and we walked around the huge Victorian monuments and graves, together with the bluebells and wild garlic just appearing. Hard to believe this place is in the middle of such a busy area of Leicester. Afterwards, we walked around the corner to the Attenborough Centre and had a coffee/cake (this is also an interesting place, with lots of exhibitions taking place during the year, so check out the website for further information.)

The cemetery is a fascinating place, dating back to around 1850 and many notable Leicester people are buried there, including Alice Hawkins (Suffragette) and Thomas Cook, the pioneer of tourist travel. There is a Visitor Centre, but only open on Fridays and Saturdays.

Here's a little history of the Cemetery (taken from the website): *By the early 1840s Leicester's 7 churchyards and 17 burial grounds could no longer cope. Complaints multiplied about the smell from them and in 1843 a Council appointed special committee concluded that most were actually, or nearly, full and in 1845 the Council decided that it would build a cemetery. Quarrels between the Liberal, Dissenter dominated Council and the mainly Tory, Church of England over the management of the cemetery caused the Dissenters to begin the process of setting up a private company and so the Leicester General Cemetery Company was formed on 22 September 1845 with Richard Harris as Chairman.*

600 shares were raised at £10 each and in March 1846 an application was made to purchase 6.5 acres of land on Knighton Hill. Quarrels continued with the Anglicans over the valuation of the land and the scale of the project (only 200 burials a year were planned for) and voices urging conciliation between the two factions finally won with the passing of a motion on 17th March 1847 to apply for a bill to set up a General Cemetery for Leicester.

UKELELE GROUP

On Monday May 5th (Bank Holiday) the u3a Happy Ukulele Band were invited to play in the gardens of one of the houses in Cossington, with a BBQ being available for all of the guests (and us!).

Around 10 members volunteered to play, ably led by Len and Joy and Barry Hough on bass. It was a cold day, but dry and a first opportunity to try out the newly purchased (by our u3a) blow up tent to shelter us from the cold wind.

It was easy to put up and take down, so this is a useful addition for our u3a, to be used, if necessary, at open days and other events. It is currently stored at Dave Palmer's house, so if anyone wants to borrow it, just contact Dave or any Committee member.



SUNDAYS FOR SOLOS GROUP

The "Sundays for Solos" group had a great day out when we hired a narrow boat (and volunteer crew) from the Baldwin Trust. We cruised from Leicester Marina, near Thurmaston, up to Cossington Mill. I can strongly recommend it as a remedy for stress!

Some of us had a go at steering and the a few more energetic members tackled one of the locks.



EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED



ANYONE FOR SWIMMING?

Charnwood Leisure Centre have offered our u3a a one-off free swim session. Date now arranged – Tuesday 10th June, 9.15-10.15am. A maximum of 30 can be accommodated.

Anyone who is interested should contact either Angie Baker or Barbara Sargeant, their email addresses can be found in the Group News section.

GUIDED WALK

One of our members, James Gunn, has kindly offered a free guided walk around Leicester's Cultural Quarter on **Thursday 19th June**.

Meet outside the Curve, Rutland Street, at 10.30am for a walk of approx 1.5-1.75hrs duration, looking at the social, building and economic history of Leicester's Cultural Quarter.

Finish back at Curve.

Let Barbara Sargeant know if interested
sadu3agroups@gmail.com



CROQUET SESSION

Following a successful similar event last year a repeat session was organised by Helen Marshall. A group of 9 met at Leicester Croquet Club on 14th May. It was a lovely sunny day. We split into pairs and played 3 matches - 1 against each of the other teams. Victors were Barbara and Colin who won all 3 of their games. Barbara was surprised and delighted to receive a small trophy to take home and keep. A fun day was had by all – see photo next page



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

June 11th, 2025

Tea and the Empress of China

Speaker Michael Burton gives a talk/presentation on *Tea and the Empress of China*

China tea became a British obsession. It sparked a global battle of politics and big money which ran for two centuries, leading almost to the collapse of the world's greatest country.

China's saviour was an unknown no-nonsense princess who seized control at the crucial moment, shrewdly keeping the predatory trading powers at arm's length.

This is a story of spies, greyhound-like ships and a successful plan to "transplant China into India" – and all because of the British love of their "cuppa."



July 9th, 2025

The Paris Morgue



Ann Featherstone returns to tell tales of:

The Paris Morgue: a popular stop on the 19th century tourist trail - Imagine a daytrip to the Paris Morgue as part of your holiday!

Pack your handkerchief with sweet herbs (the Morgue was not very fragrant) and make your way to the best free show in Paris!!

August 13th, 2025

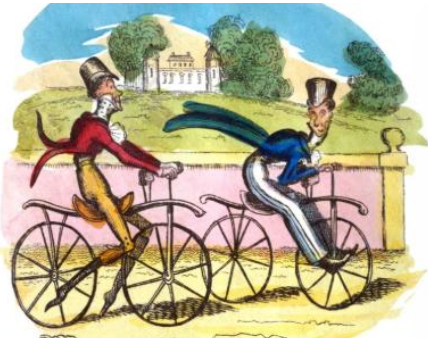
The History of Silk



Clive Garner, our speaker, traces the history of silk from its origins in China to the silk weaving industry in Britain, explaining how silk has become a global commodity.

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS



Roads were not made for cars!

From Babylon to Birmingham, and bones to bitumen. Clifton Hughes reviews the development of roads, on which cars were late intruders and bicycles the modern inspiration.

Thursday 12 June at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom



Places and people along the Silk Roads

Join Silk Roads traveller Alan Freeland as he takes us from Xian, the ancient capital of China, through Central Asia to Venice along one of the many Silk Roads.

Friday 20 June at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom



Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: July

Charles Agate, a quiet yet inspiring head teacher in the 1960s, secretly held a WWII parachuting record.

Scarred by war yet resilient, he transformed trauma into compassionate leadership, shaping young lives through empathy and strength rather than authority.

Tuesday 1 July at 10am

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

If none of the trio of talks on the previous page appeals, you can find other options [here](#)

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

Syston Local History Group

Meetings held on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7.30pm
At the Methodist Church Centre High Street Syston

Annual Subscription £10 visitors £2

Chairman Tim Garner tel; 011602609154
E-mail timgarner@sky.com

Next Meetings -

June 16th The Witch Trials of England with Gareth Howell

July 21st The Life and Times of Agatha Christie with Mark Temple



Bradgate Park Summer Fayre

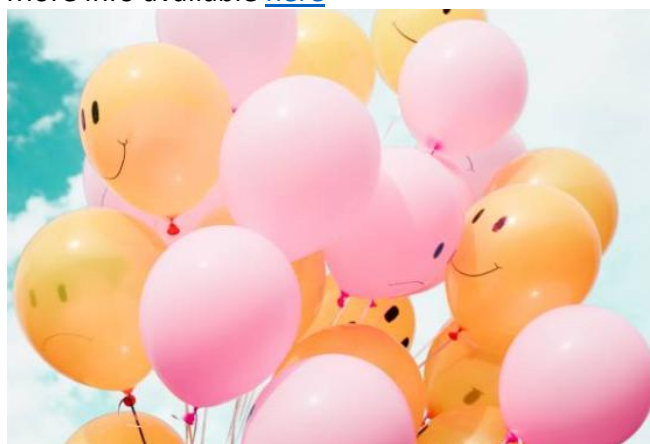
7th June - 8th June

Bradgate Park, Bradgate Road, Leicester, LE6 0HE
The Summer Fayre will take place on the Deer Meadow, beside the Deer Barn Visitor Centre and Café. There will be something for everyone to enjoy at their catering outlets offering hot and cold options, vegan and gluten-free, along with the popular Bradgate BBQ.

The Deer Meadow is approximately a 1-mile walk from the Newtown Linford car park or a 3/4 mile walk from Hallgates car park.

Entry is free and booking is not required. Please note that parking charges will apply.

More info available [here](#)



The Secret Garden, Glenfield Hospital - Open Garden for NGS

Set within the grounds of the Glenfield Hospital, the Secret Garden is 1 acre in size, hidden behind the walls of a Victorian Walled garden which has been lovingly designed and restored for the benefit of all those who visit it and in consideration of the rich history and heritage of the garden and the wider Leicester Frith site.

Sat 21 Jun, Sat 19 Jul

The Secret Garden, Glenfield Hospital, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 9QP

[view on map](#)

Check website for latest information.

Sat 21 June, Sat 19 July (10.30-3). Admission £3.50, Children free. Light refreshments in the Secret Garden cafe. Times: 10:30 to 15:00.

findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/44274/44274

[07572 556204](tel:07572556204) for latest times or cancellations.



Blaston Show

29th June

Blaston Showground,
Langton Road,
Market Harborough, LE16 7FA

Blaston Show is a fantastic family day out, with livestock classes, horse and pony classes, vintage cars, a dog show, and all sorts of entertainment and shopping opportunities - this year including The Rockets Children's Motorcycle Display Team and The Rearsby Lodge Riding Club Quadrille team. We also host The Blaston Hound Show.

Each year the Show raises money for local charities, contributing over £75,000 since its inception. Our charities this year are Cure for Parkinson's, Riding for the Disabled and The Next Chapter.

MONDAY 9TH JUNE 9.30 A.M.

David Cannon, Co-Chair of Greener Goscote invites you to join him in a guided Nature Walk. We'll revisit the wildlife sites we visited a year ago in Walk on the Wild Side and see how nature is getting on in our beautiful village. With the help of free Apps like PlantNet, Merlin Bird ID and iNaturalist we'll identify species and learn something about them. If you have a smart phone, download them and we'll see how useful they are or bring your nature guides.

Walk Details

- Distance: 2 miles with short cuts back if you cannot manage the full distance
- Duration: ~1 hour 45 minutes at a gentle pace
- Terrain: Mostly level footpaths with some grassy areas
- Accessibility: Suitable for mobility scooters, with two possible short detours if needed

Route Overview

- Start & Finish: East Goscote Village Hall
- The Nature Garden – a secret garden which many people don't know about devoted to biodiversity and a NatureSpot Wild Place
- The Recycling Centre – what goes on here and how does it help Nature?
- An overlooked pocket where nature is colonising an artificial area
- The village centre – who mows what, how and why?
- The Jubilee Playing Field – our biggest natural asset offering so much to so many
- The Dog Walk – our recently registered Wildlife Site and another NatureSpot Wild Place



After the walk, return to the Village Hall for a well-earned cuppa and a friendly chat - £2.00 PER PERSON

For more information please contact 0116 260 2202 or email admin@eastgoscote-pc.gov.uk

FROM OUR MEMBERS

WHERE WERE YOU?

Back in 1945 as the war dragged on my aunt worked as a 'Clippie' on the Midland Red bus service travelling through villages on routes throughout the County. Lots of roles men previously had were taken on by women for the war effort.

Buses had open platforms at the back giving access to seating inside downstairs and stairs to the upper deck seating where smoking was allowed. It must have been cold and draughty for everyone (except the Driver) taking a bus journey back then. As a 'Clippie' my aunt took fares and issued tickets to passengers with an added discomfort few female toilet facilities being available.

On May 8th, 1945, my Auntie Jean was returning home on her day off to the family Butchers shop on Green Lane Road after collecting her shift roster from the bus Depot for the following day when she was caught up in the VE day celebrations and joined the Conga line. A Serviceman took the liberty of placing his Glengarry cap on Jean's well coiffured hairstyle as they danced around Leicester's Clock Tower.



80 years on I was contacted by the BBC who had traced relatives of those in the original photo and asked if I would like to take part in their local tribute to the occasion. Of course, the answer was a resounding YES! On Tuesday 6th May 2025 I took part in a radio interview about my aunt, her life and contribution to World War two. On Thursday morning 8th May the BBC re-constructed the original Conga image with various relatives.

Here are the original photo and also the most recent one taken this year. A link is also included should you wish to view the video online.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1ATbqcuLsz/>

Is this the last decade where remembrance will be significant? What do you think or possibly a topic to ponder? I wonder.

Jill Kempton-Hayes

Avoiding Costly Pitfalls When Buying from Overseas Sellers

Buying online can be convenient, but not all purchases go smoothly—especially when dealing with overseas sellers. Many assume that PayPal offers strong buyer protection, but it isn't always the safeguard we expect, nor does it indicate that the seller is reputable. Likewise, while credit and debit cards offer some protections, understanding how they work can help prevent potential losses.

Payment Methods & Protections Available

PayPal

PayPal's dispute resolution process is intended to protect buyers, but it doesn't always guarantee a favourable outcome. Claims are often misclassified, and disputes frequently default to standard return rules, regardless of individual circumstances.

Credit Cards

Using a credit card to pay for purchases comes with valuable protections under **Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974**. If the purchase is valued between **£100 and £30,000**, you may be eligible for a refund from your credit card provider if something goes wrong. This includes scenarios such as a seller failing to deliver the item or refusing a refund despite being at fault.

Debit Cards

Debit card purchases don't fall under **Section 75**, but they may be covered by a process called **Chargeback**. Chargeback allows buyers to request a refund from their bank or card provider when a transaction is disputed—for example, if goods don't arrive and the seller refuses to issue a refund. Unlike **Section 75**, chargeback isn't a legal right, but it is a widely supported policy among banks.

Drop Shipping & Its Risks

Many overseas sellers don't hold stock themselves—they rely on **drop shipping**, where products are sent directly from third-party suppliers. This can create several challenges for buyers:

- **Longer delivery times** – Items may take weeks to arrive if shipped from suppliers in other countries.
- **Return complications** – Some sellers require returns to be sent directly to suppliers rather than their own business address, leading to high shipping costs.
- **Misleading seller locations** – Sellers may claim they are based in one country but operate entirely through overseas warehouses.

If a drop-shipping seller misrepresents their location, return shipping can become costly and impractical—especially if the goods need to be sent back to a distant supplier. This is why buyers should carefully check seller details before purchasing.

Lessons Learned: How to Avoid These Problems

- **Know your VAT rights** – UK businesses and those selling here to the public must display prices inclusive of VAT—if they don't, they will be violating regulations.
- **Verify seller location** – Some sellers misrepresent their base of operations, which can lead to unexpected return costs.
- **Check PayPal transaction details** – If the seller's payment name doesn't match their website, this can indicate business transparency issues.
- **Understand return obligations** – UK consumer law states that buyers are liable to cover return costs, even if a seller ignores a cancellation request.
- **Consider payment protections** – **Credit cards** offer **Section 75** protection, while **debit cards** provide **Chargeback** options.
- **Watch for drop shipping** – If a seller doesn't hold stock themselves, returns may be costly and complicated.

Final Thoughts

When buying from overseas sellers, always check their VAT pricing, refund policies, return conditions, and business location before purchasing. Also, consider using a credit or debit card where possible, as these offer additional protections beyond PayPal. Above all, don't assume any payment method will automatically side with the buyer—sometimes, disputes don't go the way you expect.

DECLUTTER DEN

Are you determined to declutter and get rid of things that you haven't used in an age this year? Look no further than Declutter Den.



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

Ballade Of Midsummer Days And Nights

*With a ripple of leaves and a tinkle of streams
The full world rolls in a rhythm of praise,
And the winds are one with the clouds and beams -
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
The dusk grows vast; in a purple haze,
While the West from a rapture of sunset rights,
Faint stars their exquisite lamps upraise -
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!*

*The wood's green heart is a nest of dreams,
The lush grass thickens and springs and sways,
The rattle wheat rustles, the landscape gleams -
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
In the stilly fields, in the stilly ways,
All secret shadows and mystic lights,
Late lovers murmur and linger and gaze -
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!*

*There's a music of bells from the trampling teams,
Wild skylarks hover, the gorses blaze,
The rich, ripe rose as with incense steams -
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
A soul from the honeysuckle strays,
And the nightingale as from prophet heights
Sings to the Earth of her million Mays -
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!*

Envoy

*And it's O, for my dear and the charm that stays -
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
It's O, for my Love and the dark that plights -
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!*



William Ernest Henley

Midsummer

HERE! sweep these foolish leaves away,
I will not crush my brains to-day!
Look! are the southern curtains drawn?
Fetch me a fan, and so begone!

Not that,--the palm-tree's rustling leaf
Brought from a parching coral-reef
Its breath is heated;--I would swing
The broad gray plumes,--the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood!
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odors on the air,
And wheel me up my Indian chair,
And spread some book not otherwise
Flat out before my sleepy eyes.

Who knows it not,--this dead recoil
Of weary fibres stretched with toil,--
The pulse that flutters faint and low
When Summer's seething breezes blow!

O Nature! bare thy loving breast,
And give thy child one hour of rest,--
One little hour to lie unseen
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green!

So, curtained by a singing pine,
Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine,
Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay
In sweeter music dies away.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

Summer Stars by Carl Sandburg

Bend low again, night of summer stars.

So near you are, sky of summer stars,

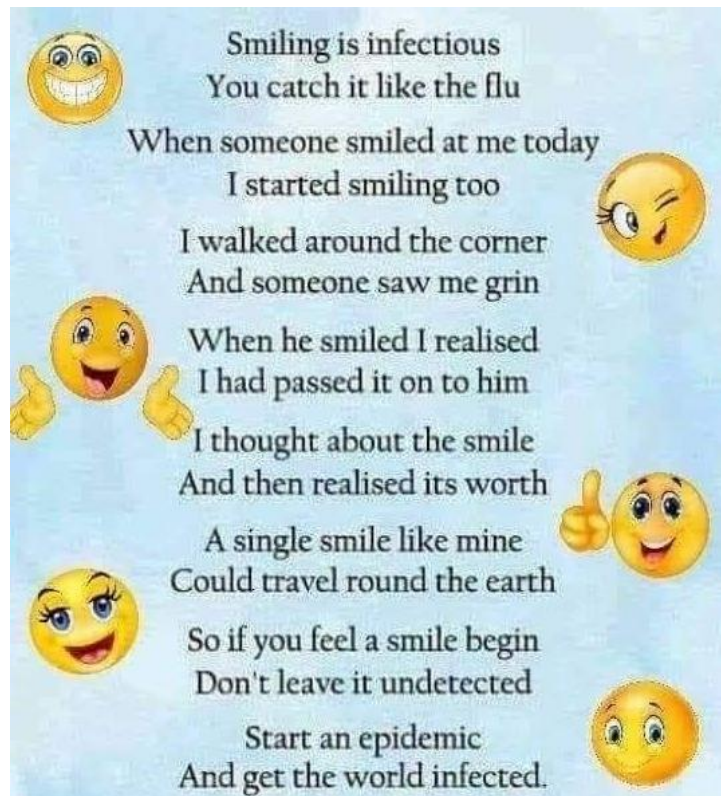
So near, a long-arm man can pick off stars,

Pick off what he wants in the sky bowl,

So near you are, summer stars,

So near, strumming, strumming,

So lazy and hum-strumming



And finally.....

"...This is the solstice, the still point of the sun, its cusp and midnight, the year's threshold and unlocking, where the past lets go of and becomes the future; the place of caught breath, the door of a vanished house left ajar..." — Margaret Atwood

"The summer solstice is a time for strength and vitality for action and movement." — Carole Carlton

"Green was the silence, wet was the light, the month of June trembled like a butterfly." — Pablo Neruda

"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer." — F. Scott Fitzgerald

"It was June, and the world smelled of roses. The sunshine was like powdered gold over the grassy hillside." — Maud Hart Lovelace

"I have only to break into the tightness of a strawberry, and I see summer—its dust and lowering skies." — Toni Morrison

