

System and District

**u3a**

learn, laugh, live

JUNE  
2024

# Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

## FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

It has been brought to my attention that a few of our members have received spam emails. If you have any doubts about them please do not open them, just delete them.

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 the few vacancies we have on the committee. These are Assistant Groups Co-ordinator, Vice Chair and Committee Member. If you would like further information, please email me at [sadu3achair@gmail.com](mailto: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 Mick Clowes will be giving us a talk on Melton and Oakham Waterways.

Thank you for your support for the past year.

Clive

## WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

### AGM to be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024

The 2024 Annual General Meeting of System and District u3a is to be held in the System Community Centre immediately prior to the monthly General Meeting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

An Agenda with copies of various reports was sent out to all members in May to give them time to consider them. If you haven't seen this email, please check your spam/bulk/junk mail boxes, in case your email provider has diverted it there. Those not on email should have received the details through the post.

There may be an election for the empty places on the committee.

These are **Vice-Chairman** and **3 other committee members**.

The committee meets **no more** than once a month. Please consider volunteering, your input would be greatly valued.

No other motions have been put forward.

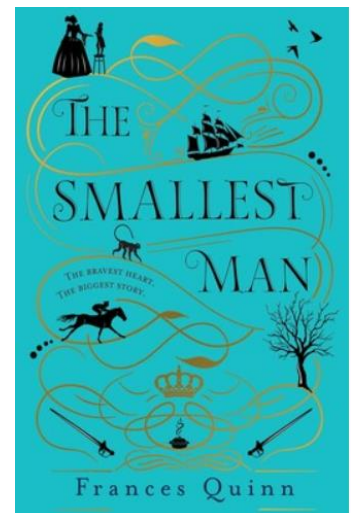
## GROUP NEWS

### POSSIBLE BRIDGE GROUP

**Anyone interested in starting a Bridge Group? Contact Barbara Sargeant (Groups Co-ordinator) if interested: [sadu3agroups@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3agroups@gmail.com)**

### BOOK GROUP

Our book group read a historical novel this month based on Queen Henrietta's dwarf. It is set during the reign of King Charles 1st, and although it covers the war between the Cavaliers and the Roundheads, it is really a story about Nat Davey, "a small man with a big heart". Nat Davey and his story were inspired by the true story of Queen Henrietta's actual court dwarf, a man called Jeffrey Hudson who was born and brought up near Oakham in Rutland and was sold by his father, some parts of the story actually happened to Jeffrey, but most of it is fictional, with Nat having a far happier ending than Jeffrey did. Jeffrey's house is still standing in Oakham with a blue plaque to commemorate him. Worth a read.



### UKULELE GROUP

When the ukulele group was formed around 7 years ago, hardly anyone could play, but with the help from Len and Dave we gradually improved. We now have 45 members on the register. How sad we all were when Dave said he was stepping down from the group to pursue other things.

How many of us can remember Dave giving us the warm up exercise "catching flies" to loosen our fingers followed by "all play C then all play F" until we got it right?

What an achievement to get a room full of 'non' players up to today's standard. Many of the original members still practice weekly where friendships are made.

Len will continue leading the group with help and Dave will be sorely missed by us all.

**Sending you a Happy retirement Dave from the Syston Happy Ukulele band**

## ART GROUP

We have been covering quite a few different subjects from waterfalls to fields of rape and bluebell woods to standing stones, covering shadows and reflections. We have used many different media, some preferring water colour, some acrylic and some pencil and ink with varying results.

Please see the local events section for details of some art related events.

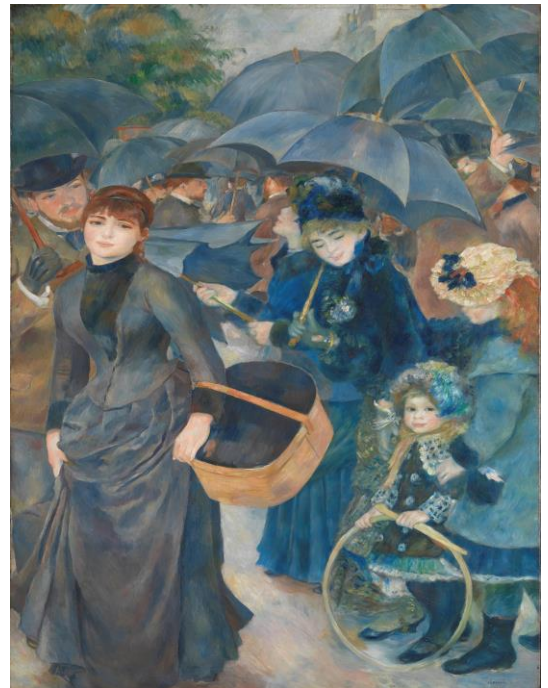
## CRAFT GROUP

The craft group are still knitting and crocheting poppies for Remembrance Day but also covering our own projects. If anyone would like to join us in making poppies please contact me as I still have quite a lot of red wool.

Pat Glover email: [patchglover61@gmail.com](mailto:patchglover61@gmail.com)

## ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Last month 8 of our members met at the New Walk Gallery where we viewed the latest exhibition entitled Subway Art. Not to everyone's taste but generated some interesting thoughts.



We also went around the permanent exhibitions and all had different likes and dislikes. We were just a few days early for the National Treasures display of Renoir's "Umbrellas" but this will be there until September for those who want to go and see it.

For our next meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June at Syston Community Centre Mel will be presenting "Meisen Men" His further research into the area of ceramics. Chris is looking at the use of Art in Advertising.

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

## 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](mailto:sadu3achair@gmail.com) or Jill Kempton-Hayes: [sadu3apublicity@gmail.com](mailto:sadu3apublicity@gmail.com)

#### **Dates and Events:**

East Goscote: 9th June, 1-4pm.

Elizabeth Park, Thurmaston: 22 June, 12-5pm.

and Rearsby: 31st Aug, 12-4pm.

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

### Everyone has a story to tell?

So, have you read the article on page 17 of the latest edition of Third Age Matters?

It talks about a project undertaken by Lichfield u3a members, where they produced a template for people who want to write their memoirs, but perhaps don't know where to start or how to go about it.

You can either buy printed copies or download the writing pack. We've downloaded it, and its really interesting, with easy to use fact sheets and exercises to help with organising thoughts. Instructions are all in the article.

As u3a members, most of us have probably come to an age where we're reflecting on the times we've lived in, the events that shaped our lives, and the lessons we've learned along the way. No doubt some of us have been asked questions by family and friends and been surprised that there's even any interest in our stories.

We might for example, have been born during a war, had gas lighting in our homes, toilets accessed from outside the building we lived in, communicated only by letter, or left school at 14. Whatever our beginnings, our grandchildren's history could have been our reality!

In considering how to make best use of the Lichfield pack, Michael and I had some thoughts about how we could help our Syston and District members to benefit from the materials.

Here's what we came up with.

How about we gather interested people together and have some workshops, providing a launchpad for members to feel confident and equipped to use the template? As (now retired) professional adult trainers, we reckon it could be covered by having three sessions split into the areas identified by the memoir pack. Interested? Contact us either through our editor or by email to michaelwherton@gmail.com with your email and availability for the workshops.

Pat and Michael Wherton

## **A TRIP TO LEICESTER CURVE THEATRE TO SEE....**



**Sheila Driver is organising a trip on Thursday, 4th July, 2.15pm at a cost of £31.50 per member (stall seat).**

Travel there under own transport.

To book a seat please contact [sheiladriver@hotmail.com](mailto:sheiladriver@hotmail.com) by Thursday 11 April; with your name and membership number.

It may still be worth making enquiries just in case someone pulls out.

## **JEWELLERY MAKING**



On a very warm Friday morning 10 of us joined Christine Pearson in the old school room at Syston Community centre, for a 2 hour jewellery enamelling workshop.

We had the choice of making either a pair of earrings or a pendant, although we also ended up with a lovely brooch too.

Christine explained every stage really well but it wasn't quite as easy as she made it look. One thing that seemed very scary was actually getting your piece of jewellery into the kiln using what looked like a fish slice and a tiny trivet, and making sure that the door was closed properly (but I only did it once!).

I'm always amazed how a group of 10 people can use all the same equipment but have such diverse and stunning results.



## 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Mick Clowes** - an illustrated talk on The Melton & Oakham Waterways – past present and future



**July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Derek Holloway** presents his talk on the life of aviator Amy Johnson, who will be remembered for her amazing achievement of flying, solo, from England to Australia in May 1930.



August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

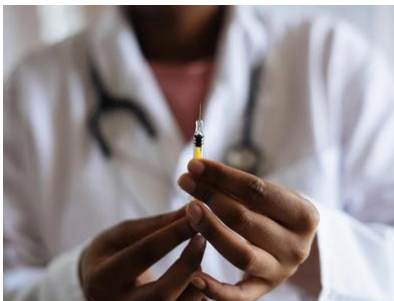


Martin Lloyd (author)

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.'

## NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

### u3a TALKS



#### Vaccines

Vaccines - who discovered them (was it really Edward Jenner), how do they work and what have we learned from covid vaccines?

Wednesday 12 June at 10am

Free - online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

#### Olympia via Much Wenlock to the World



#### The Olympics: From Olympia, via Much Wenlock to the World

Learn about the journey from ancient Olympia (776 BCE) via Much Wenlock (1850) and Athens (1896), to the 33rd Olympiad in Paris in 2024.

Thursday 20 June at 2pm

Free - online via Zoom

Book [here](#)



#### Celestial marvels: Demystifying the Cosmos

Embark on a celestial journey with Catherine Stevenson of Newcastle u3a and others as we explore the wonders of the universe.

Wed 26 June at 11.30am

Free - online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

## NEW u3a FILM

u3a have released the first film in a new series, *Share Something Brilliant Today*, celebrating how u3a members exchange ideas and skills with each other.

The first film features Chichester u3a's Practical Science group, who meet together regularly and explore scientific experiments. Previous sessions have explored botany and natural history. In the session featured, members tired a



range of activities, including assembling a cloud chamber, witnessing static electricity, and creating a small battery-operated engine. The focus is on being able to directly take part in experiments - rather than just learning about the theory of science. For this session, the group worked with a professional at Chichester College and used their laboratory - enabling them to conduct experiments in a safe environment.

Within the film, members Peter and John talk about what they both enjoy about being a part of the group.

Peter has a background in science, having worked as an engineer. He enjoys the opportunity to meet members who have the same love for science. He says, "People have come from a lot of backgrounds. Everybody brings their own interests and we get a chance to do things, to make things. It is a practical science group, so we enjoy experimenting. "

Fellow member John joined the group nine months ago and says, "To work with each other, share our particular interests and knowledge and experience, it has been extremely enjoyable and very satisfying. One gets a new lease on life, I think, from it all."

The film is the first in our new series, *Share Something Brilliant Today*. The series will showcase the way that members share their skills with each other, while forming friendships.

Watch the film on [our YouTube channel](#).

## SOMETHING FROM A NEIGHBOURING u3a



**U3A PEAK DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE**

PALACE HOTEL,  
BUXTON,  
DERBYSHIRE

SATURDAY 21ST  
SEPTEMBER 2024

**SPEAKERS**  
PLUS VARIOUS EXHIBITORS

**TICKETS £30**  
INCLUDES BUFFET LUNCH, REFRESHMENTS  
AND A FREE PRIZE DRAW

**DR COLIN CHAPMAN MA FSG -**  
"WAS YOUR ANCESTOR A CRIMINAL"

**SIMON FOWLER -**  
"MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES"

**ANDREA HETHERINGTON -**  
"BRITISH WIDOWS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR"

**IAN WALLER -**  
"READING OLD HANDWRITING"

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO PURCHASE A TICKET GO TO OUR WEBSITE  
[HTTPS://PEAKDISTRICTNETWORK.WIXSITE.COM/FAMILYHISTORY/ABOUT-5](https://peakdistrictnetwork.wixsite.com/familyhistory/about-5)  
OR SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE



Includes talks, refreshments & 2-course finger buffet lunch

### Parking:

Blue Badge holders – may park or drop off at hotel

Others – use side streets or the pay & display car parks

For car parks in Buxton

see: <https://en.parkopedia.co.uk/parking/buxton/>

### Exhibitors:

Once again, about 15 exhibitors will be there – old friends & new:

We plan to offer delegates a free goody bag and a free prize draw again.

**To book** your place, please complete the booking form on this link:

<https://forms.gle/mXnsgpBhQpmafU6>

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



0116 269 5925 | Charity no. 275637



# CEILIDH

**FRIDAY 28TH JUNE**

**7.30PM - 10PM | DOORS OPEN 7PM**

**WITH LOCAL BAND *TURLOUGH***

The Rothley Centre, 12 Mountsorrel Lane, Rothley, Leicestershire LE7 7PR



**A fun-filled night of dancing, good music and great company - all for a good cause!**

**THIS EVENT IS IN AID OF INTER CARE, A SYSTON-BASED CHARITY THAT PROVIDES MEDICAL AID FOR HEALTH UNITS ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**



**£12 PER PERSON  
NIBBLES INCLUDED.**

**DRINKS CAN BE ORDERED FROM THE BAR.  
RAFFLE TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT THE DOOR.**

**TO BOOK YOUR PLACE GO TO:**

**[www.intercare.org.uk/event/ceilidh2024](http://www.intercare.org.uk/event/ceilidh2024)  
or email [fundraising@intercare.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@intercare.org.uk)**



**Art House 2024**  
**Friday evening 7th June 6 - 8.30 pm and**  
**Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th June 11am - 6pm.**

**Discover the depth of talent the city has to offer over the course of the weekend**

Art House Leicester, with its very special atmosphere, offers you a unique opportunity to view and purchase art and meet the artists who have created it, all within the homes and gardens of local residents.



**Binary Bytes**

Once again, Tart House on Holmfield Road, welcomes you to enjoy some delicious homemade baking and refreshments with live music in the garden.

As you make your way along the trail on Springfield Road, you'll find Gelato Village tempting you with their award-winning ice creams.

One of our new hosts on Toller Road will be offering Asian style snacks at their Binary Bytes refreshment stop.

All proceeds from Tart House and Binary Bytes are donated to [Mind](#) and [Bone Cancer Research](#).

For more information visit [www.art-house.org.uk](http://www.art-house.org.uk)



## Green Garden Party

Join us for a day of live music at The Green Place, Sileby, featuring an eclectic mix of Leicestershire's finest. A licensed bar will be available, and the cafe will be open. For every ticket sold one tree will be planted at Cossington Meadows...

8 June 2024 Open 14:00 - 20:00

**Where:** The Green Place, 6 Cossington Road, Loughborough, LE12 7RS

**Contact details:** 01509 815181



## 1940'S Wartime Weekend

Step back in time to the golden era at our 1940s Weekend – a nostalgic journey into the past! Immerse yourself in the enchanting melodies of live singers, setting the stage for a weekend filled with timeless tunes. Explore authentic stalls offering..

14 June 2024 *Open 09:30 - 17:00*

15 June 2024 *Open 09:30 - 17:00*

16 June 2024 *Open 09:30 - 17:00*

**Where:** Belvoir Castle, Belvoir, Grantham, NG32 1PD

**Contact details:** 01476 871001



## Little Markfield Steam & Vintage Vehicle Festival

Vintage vehicle festival to include full size and miniature traction engines, commercials, cars, bikes, organs, traders, fun fair and real ale tent with music on Saturday evening.

29 June 2024 *Open 10:10 - 23:20*

30 June 2024 *Open 10:10 - 23:20*

**Where:** Little Markfield Farm, Forest Road, Markfield, LE67 9UN

**Contact details:** 01530 242173

## FROM OUR MEMBERS

### BBQ RULES:

We are about to enter the BBQ season. Therefore, it is important to refresh your memory on the etiquette of this sublime outdoor cooking activity . When a man volunteers to do the BBQ, the following chain of events are put into motion:

- (1) The woman buys the food.
- (2) The woman makes the salad, prepares the vegetables, and makes dessert.
- (3) The woman prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils and sauces and takes it to the man who is lounging beside the grill - beer in hand.
- (4) The woman remains outside the compulsory three meter exclusion zone where the exuberance of testosterone and other manly bonding activities can take place without the interference of the woman.

Here comes the important part:

- (5) THE MAN PLACES THE MEAT ON THE GRILL.

(6) The woman goes inside to organise the plates and cutlery.

(7) The woman comes out to tell the man that the meat is looking great. He thanks her and asks if she will bring another beer while he flips the meat

Important again:

(8) THE MAN TAKES THE MEAT OFF THE GRILL AND HANDS IT TO THE WOMAN.

(9) The woman prepares the plates, salad, bread, utensils, napkins, sauces, and brings them to the table.

(10) After eating, the woman clears the table and does the dishes

And most important of all:

(11) Everyone PRAISES the MAN and THANKS HIM for his cooking efforts.

(12) The man asks the woman how she enjoyed ' her night off ' and, upon seeing her annoyed reaction, concludes that there's just no pleasing some women.

*Thanks Lyn Palmer for this.*

## DECLUTTER DEN

Do you have anything sitting in a cupboard, or on a shelf, that you no longer want? Might one of our members or groups be able to make use of it?



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](mailto:sadu3aed@gmail.com)

## ANCIENT BRITONS PART II



The author a not so ancient Briton

History is about the past – the who, what, why and when story of something past based on written evidence. Anything that happened before writing was invented is called prehistory and the search for evidence to support the story is called archaeology.



Christian Jürgensen Thomsen  
A not so ancient Danish archaeologist

C J Thomsen (1788 – 1865) a noted collector of ancient artefacts sorted his collection into three groups: **stone-age**, **bronze-age** and **iron-age**. A

system so useful that it continues to be used to this day.

I have previously written about a dark-skinned, green-blue eyed stone-age Briton (Cheddar Man) who was intolerant to milk and lived as a hunter-gatherer. How do we explain the transition to a modern fair skinned Briton who is able to drink milk?

### Lactose Intolerance explained

Milk, the liquid food produced by mammals to feed their young contains a sugar called lactose. Unusually, lactose does not taste sweet. Baby mammals use lactose as a source of energy. Their gut contains an enzyme called lactase that converts the milk-sugar to glucose the fuel of most forms of life. Most human adults do not make lactase and should they drink milk the lactose is not absorbed but remains in the intestinal tract where it is then fed upon by bacteria within the large intestine causing a variety of unpleasant symptoms.

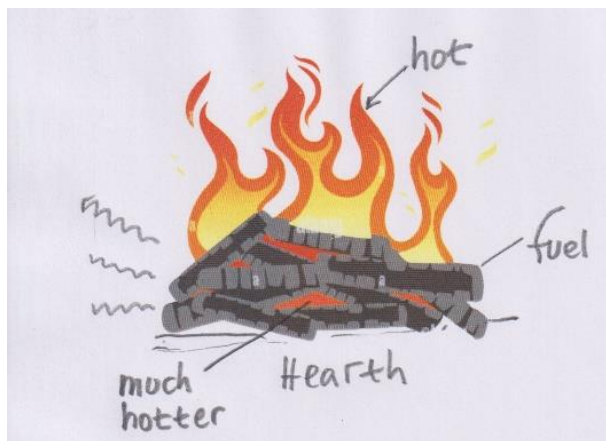
Most adults from pale-skinned groups who traditionally drink milk retain the ability to produce lactase

### The Bronze Age (3300 BC – 1200BC)

The trigger for the start of the new age was the development of agriculture. Instead of humans wandering around looking for food they settled down in fertile areas and took up the practice of growing their own. The domestication of plants and animals allowed for an increase in population size and the development of fixed settlements which we could call towns or even cities. Civilisation would be the word you are looking for.

Civilisation leads to a situation where different people do different types of work to sustain the community. Not everyone is working in the fields. We have an emerging *division of labour*. Some of the workers become stone-masons building the houses for people, stables for domesticated animals and storehouses for dried food such as cereals and beans.

Some of the workers would have used fire.



**A simple open fire**

A simple open fire is fine for cooking food. It is hot, but not very hot as most of the heat escapes preventing a build-up of temperature.



**An enclosed hearth**

Surrounding the burning material by stones or similar materials prevents much of the heat escaping leading to a hotter 'oven'



**An enclosed heart using a better fuel**

Using charcoal as a fuel instead of wood produces a much higher temperature. Charcoal is made by heating wood without a supply of air. All the

water boils off, along with other volatile chemicals leaving a residue of carbon – a really good fuel as it burns at a higher temperature. We could describe such an arrangement as a kiln or a furnace, depending upon how we intend to use it.



**An ancient pottery kiln**

The invention of pottery played a key role in the development of civilisation. Our ancestors learned that if they took clay, removed stones and other debris, squeezed out the air and then crafted it into shape they could make the soft clay 'set' by heating it to a high temperature in a kiln.



**Ceramic large grain storage vessel, Minoan civilisation, Crete**

Fired clay is waterproof and quite strong, as long as you don't drop it onto a hard surface. Our

ancestors used ceramic containers to store food, away from the teeth of rats and mice. (Each container would have a heavy ceramic lid).



Liquids (wine, olive oil, etc) stored in amphora

The invention of pottery storage containers allowed the ancients to transport valuable foods around the Mediterranean leading to interesting exchanges of goods and technical know-how and there is a huge amount of evidence in the way of ship wrecks and abandoned broken ceramic containers to support this idea, Migration of people brought the new-technology of ceramics to Britain.



Bronze-age ceramic beaker found near Stonehenge

The author grew up in Stoke-on-Trent (The potteries) hence his interest in ceramics. He would walk past *Pot Banks* as they were called on his way to and from primary school.



Bottle kilns, Stoke-on-Trent in 1950s

Various clean-air acts put paid to coal-fired bottle kilns and by the time he became a sixth-former all the old kilns had been phased out and replaced with modern gas-fired ones. He knows this because he had a two week holiday job working at a pottery, the highlight of which was counting all the failed items (pottery shrinks on firing) and about 10% of all production is cracked and so is rejected. On completion of the counting I then smashed all the failures to small pieces – and was paid to do so!

### What about Bronze?



Malachite – copper carbonate

This green stone is found in several parts of the world. It can be cut (as in this sample) and carved into beautiful shapes to make jewellery and interesting ornaments.

An ancestor (or perhaps several) discovered, probably by accident that if they added malachite



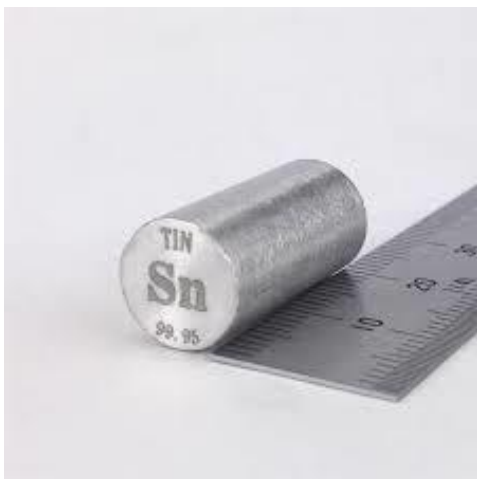
to a very hot charcoal kiln a transformation took place. The green stone broke down and melted to form a new material which we now call copper. The process of converting a suitable stone to a metal is called smelting.



**Copper, a pink coloured metal that gave its name to Cyprus**

Copper has some really useful properties. You can bend it without it breaking. It can be hammered into different shapes. Molten copper can be cast in a mould. Most interestingly of all, to the ancients, is that it can be sharpened to form a spear or a knife that does not break if you bend it too much.

Further *trial and error* workings with other types of stone led to the discovery of two other metals. One was a dull grey coloured heavy metal which we call lead (or plumbum by Romans) but is too soft to be used to make knives. The other, much more interesting metal we call tin (Stannum in Latin).



**Pure tin, on sale at Amazon**

### **Bronze and about time too!**

Someone, we don't know who, discovered, probably by accident, that if Copper and Tin are melted together a new metal is formed, an alloy that we call bronze.

Normal bronze is 88% copper and 12% tin  
Bronze revolutionised the way we live.



**Bronze axe-heads found in a horde in Lancashire**

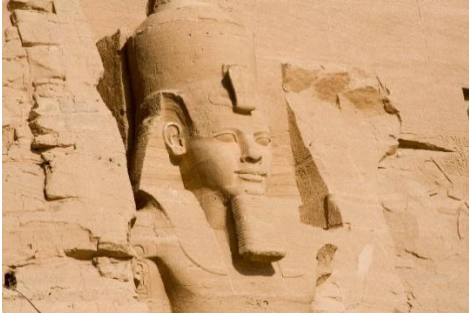
Molten bronze can be poured into a mould to form an object such as these axe-heads which can then be sharpened and re-sharpened as required. They are much more resistant to breakage than flint cutting edges.

The copper to make them came from North Wales (Great Orme) where copper mining started 3,800 years ago. The tin came from mines in Cornwall.

So important was the manufacture of bronze that traders travelled from faraway places to obtain tin and copper. It has been suggested that the Roman invasion of Britain was to secure sources of these useful metals.

The finding of hordes of bronze objects is evidence of another practice. Archaeologists believe that itinerant bronze-smiths travelled from place to place to carry out their trade. They would collect worn-out and broken bronze implements, melt them down and form new ones. Recycling at its finest!

We believe this because the few discovered hordes of bronze contain damaged items as well as used items that could be refurbished with hammering and grinding cutting edges.



**Egyptian stonework carved with bronze chisels**

The technology of agriculture, ceramics and bronze transformed British culture. The people who brought it here changed the genetic make-up of the population by interbreeding,

## POETRY CORNER

### SUMMER SOLSTICE

Rose Styron

Suddenly,  
there's nothing to do  
and too much—  
the lawn, paths, woods  
were never so green  
white blossoms of every  
size and shape—hydrangea,  
Chinese dogwood, mock orange  
spill their glistening—

Inside, your photographs  
and books stand guard  
in orderly array. Your  
half of the bed is smooth,  
the pillows plump, the phone  
just out of reach beyond it.

No one calls early—they  
remember your late hours.  
The shades are down, so  
sunlight's held at bay  
though not the fabulous winged  
song of summer birds  
waking me as ever, always in our  
favorite room, our season.  
Yesterday's mail on the desk  
newspaper, unread. Plans for the day  
hover bright out all our doors—

Don't think of evening.

introducing genes for lighter skin and the ability to digest lactose in milk.

### Bronze-age Collapse

The thriving bronze-age communities who traded with each other across the Mediterranean world suddenly collapsed 3,200 years ago. For reasons not fully understood, great civilisations in the 'known world' entered a dark-age. Minoans, Hittites, Babylonians, Mycenaeans all gone. Destroyed perhaps by the unfortunate combination of warfare and drought.

*Thanks to Pierre Castille*

### SOLSTICE

Tess Taylor

How again today our patron star  
whose ancient vista is the long view

turns its wide brightness now and here:  
Below, we loll outdoors, sing & make fire.

We build no henge  
but after our swim, linger

by the pond. Dapples flicker  
pine trunks by the water.

Buzz & hum & wing & song combine.  
Light builds a monument to its passing.

Frogs content themselves in bullish chirps,  
hoopskirt blossoms

on thimbleberries fall, peeper toads  
hop, lazy—

Apex. The throaty world sings *ripen*.  
Our grove slips past the sun's long kiss.

We dress.  
We head home in other starlight.

Our earthly time is sweetening from this.

## IN SUMMERTIME

Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872 – 1906

When summer time has come, and all  
The world is in the magic thrall  
Of perfumed airs that lull each sense  
To fits of drowsy indolence;  
When skies are deepest blue above,  
And flow'rs aflush,—then most I love  
To start, while early dews are damp,  
And wend my way in woodland tramp  
Where forests rustle, tree on tree,  
And sing their silent songs to me;  
Where pathways meet and pathways  
part,—  
To walk with Nature heart by heart,  
Till wearied out at last I lie  
Where some sweet stream steals singing  
by  
A mossy bank; where violets vie  
In color with the summer sky,—  
Or take my rod and line and hook,  
And wander to some darkling brook,  
Where all day long the willows dream,  
And idly droop to kiss the stream,  
And there to loll from morn till night—

Unheeding nibble, run, or bite—  
Just for the joy of being there  
And drinking in the summer air,  
The summer sounds, and summer sights,  
That set a restless mind to rights  
When grief and pain and raging doubt  
Of men and creeds have worn it out;  
The birds' song and the water's drone,  
The humming bee's low monotone,  
The murmur of the passing breeze,  
And all the sounds akin to these,  
That make a man in summer time  
Feel only fit for rest and rhyme.  
Joy springs all radiant in my breast;  
Though pauper poor, than king more blest,  
The tide beats in my soul so strong  
That happiness breaks forth in song,  
And rings aloud the welkin blue  
With all the songs I ever knew.  
O time of rapture! time of song!  
How swiftly glide thy days along  
Adown the current of the years,  
Above the rocks of grief and tears!  
'Tis wealth enough of joy for me  
In summer time to simply be.

## And finally.....

The summer solstice may or may not kick off the summer, depending on who you ask. In meteorology, summer begins on June 1. But astronomers believe the summer solstice marks the start of the season. The summer solstice happens between June 20 and June 22, depending on the year and your time zone.

Technically, it's not the longest day of the year because all days have the same number of hours, but the summer solstice is the day of the year with the most hours of daylight.

The moment of summer solstice is when the sun is directly overhead the Tropic of Cancer at noon. Way back when, the Tropic of Cancer got its name because the sun appeared in the constellation Cancer. However, because of the shifting of Earth's axis, the Tropic of Cancer now has the wrong name. During the summer solstice, the sun now appears in the constellation Taurus.

