

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

MAR
2026

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

When is the rain going to cease. It seems every time I go out, I come back looking like a drowned rat. I can't remember the last time I had a game of golf. At our last Members Meeting someone enquired about the old post box and what had happened to it. By the time you read this the letterbox will have been refurbished and sited outside the Methodist Church Hall. This is excellent news as our brilliant Banksy Knitters will have somewhere to display their creations.

Clive

WE WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW

HAVE A QUERY? WANT TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE?

Occasionally, some members (or potential members) may prefer to speak to someone about an aspect of our u3a, rather than locating an email address or looking on our website.

So, we now have a contact number for System & District u3a, which is:



0300 102 1381

At the moment, this number goes through to Steve Kenney's (Webmaster) mobile phone, and if he is unable to answer the query, then he can advise who to contact.

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.



Potential New
Group
Wind and String

Do you have a guitar you used to play?
Do you have a clarinet you used to play
or any other wind instrument?
Do you fancy getting together to make
beautiful music?

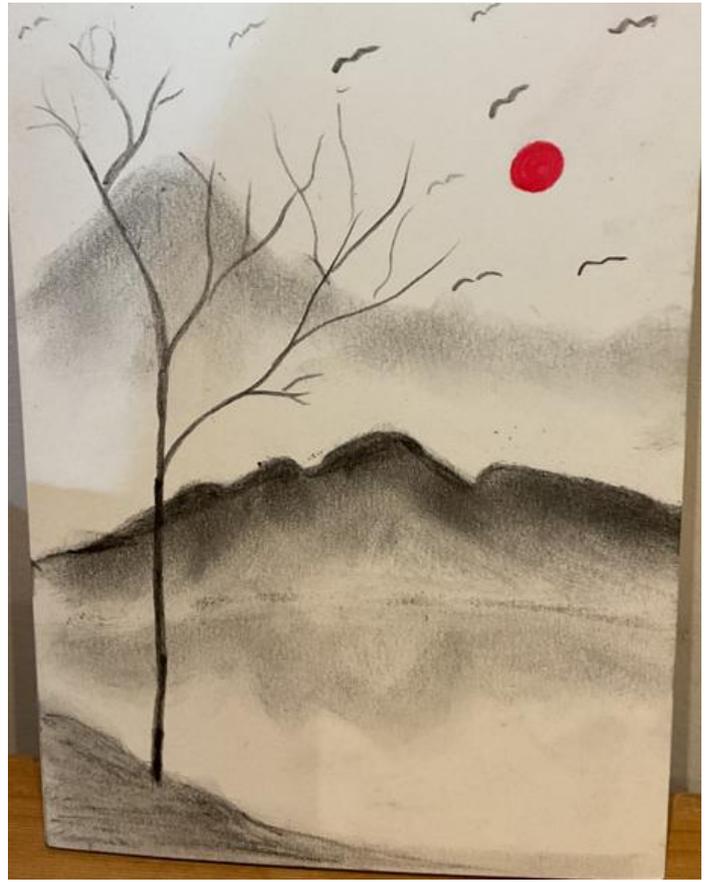
**We have a member who is keen to start a new
group where everyone can play together for
their enjoyment.**

Please email me at the below address and I
will pass on your details

sadu3agroups@gmail.com

ART GROUP







The art group has been covering an eclectic group of subjects with guidance on subjects from David and some of our own choices. These are a few examples of our work.

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The group went on a journey from Melton to Leicester, stopping off in Queniborough, Syston and Thurmaston. At same time we moved through time, from the 14th century through to the 20th century. We began with Melton's Medieval wool trade, then moved on the Framework Knitters in the three villages and ended with the rise of fall of Leicester's Hosiery factories.

Melton was one of main hubs of the wool production and export trade of the time. Wool itself was called "White Gold", so significant was it to the economy at that time. The wool merchants of the town were not just provincial; they were major players in loaning money to Edward III to fund The Hundred Years War. The wealthiest of them were the equivalent of multi-millionaires.

Framework Knitters (FWKs) began as skilled artisans who owned their own frames, controlled their own production, sold their goods direct to shops and merchants. But their era ended with the trade controlled by the hosiers and notorious bagman – the middlemen who decided who received work and who didn't. The bagmen who also owned the truck shops where they were forced to

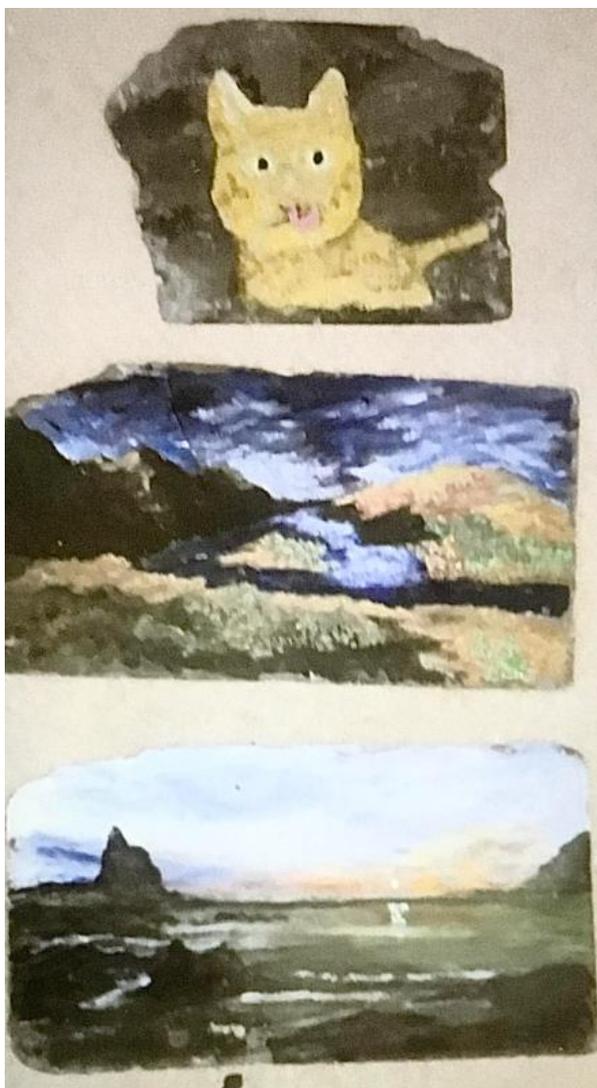
either buy their groceries, or accept their wages in goods. The FWK's also had to rent their frames from the very same hosiers and bagmen at inflated prices.

As machinery became larger and needed steam to power them, the FWKs were squeezed out of business, to be replaced by factories in Leicester. Factories that varied from the huge Corah St Margaret's works employing 6,000 people, to the backstreet sweatshops. The trade reached its golden era between 1920-1960, in the 1950's Leicestershire produced a third of the total knitted clothing output of the UK and employed 50,000 people. The cracks began to show in the 1970's. Cheaper costs abroad led to the likes of Wolsey moving production overseas. Corah's closed in 1999. Some of the large factories have been demolished, others have been converted to apartments, office spaces and the like, so they still remain part of the skyline of 21st century Leicester.

If you'd like to know more about the history of our county, come and join us. Contact the group organiser email: juliedjohnson@yahoo.com

ART GROUP 2

Last week Drawing and Painting group 2 'Get Creative' tried painting onto slate and made these lovely paintings. We also found out that you can get broken slate tiles free from tile roofing suppliers!



FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

We had a look at how a free account on the Findmypast family history site can be combined with the library's free access to the full site. The beauty of this arrangement is that you can build a tree for free on your guest account and find out what records they have that might be useful. Then go down to the library and find them, save them, and then add the information to your tree. The same principles work with the other main family history site Ancestry. This means that it is possible to do family history research without paying a penny in subscriptions. Unless your family stayed put in one county for many generations, you are likely to find that no one site provides all the information you need. For example, in the East Midlands, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire parish records are on Ancestry, but Lincolnshire and Leicestershire are on Findmypast. Library access mean you can avoid subs to two sites.

I am pleased to say that the group has welcomed 3 new members this year, with another due to join us next month. However, we still have some space so, if you'd like to join us, please contact juliedjohnson@yahoo.com

You can find more information on our groups via this link [Groups | Syston & District](#)

EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

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IDEAS - One Off Events

1. Chocolate making
2. Spring hanging basket/Christmas table decoration making
3. Dry or wet felting
4. Quilting
5. Curry night
6. Sedgeway riding
7. Disco night
8. Cruise on the Rutland Belle
9. Archery
10. Air rifle shooting
11. Go Karting
12. Quad biking
13. Foraging experience - Charnwood Foraging
14. Trips out - eg Birmingham Jewellery Quarter
15. Willow weaving
16. Alpaca walking
17. Cross bow shooting
18. Kayaking

Please contact me Angie Baker
at the the below email address
If you are interested in any of
these suggestions or you have any other
ideas and are willing to organise
the event with my help
sadu3aevents@gmail.com

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



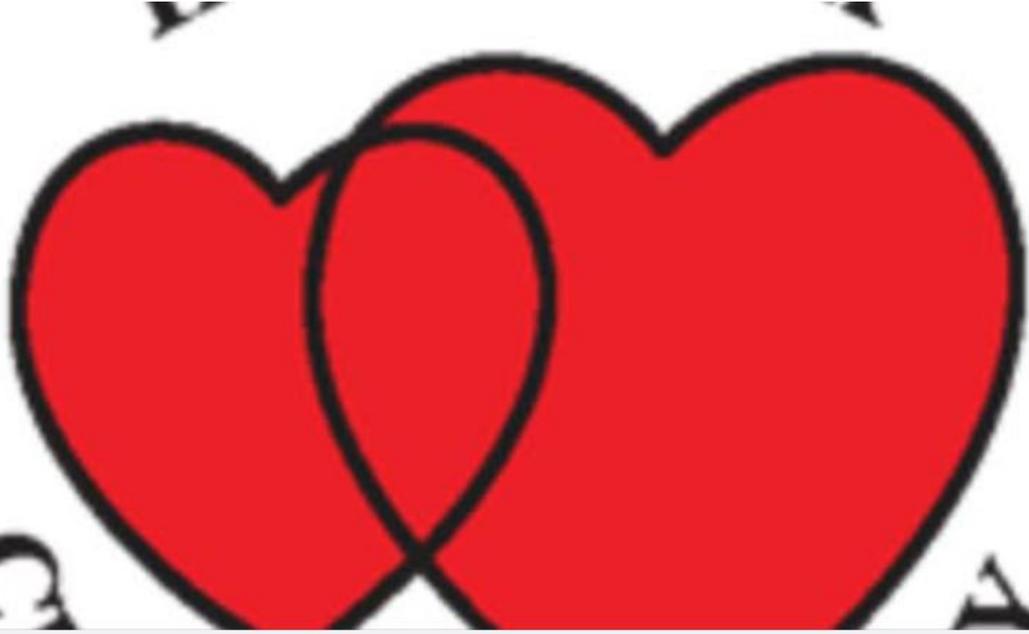
Wed, Mar 11 at 10:30AM

March: Silk Painting Demonstration

Wed, Apr 8 at 10:30AM

APRIL - Severn Trent



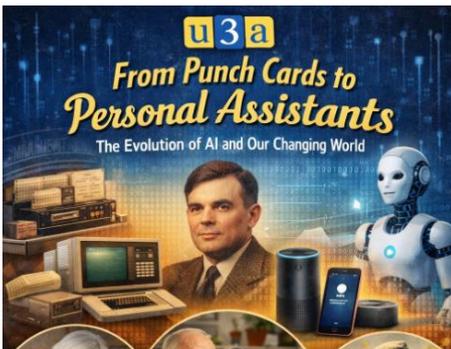


Wed, May 13 at 10:30 AM

MAY - HEARTLINK, Children Charity

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS



The evolution of AI and our changing world

Barry Claydon is demystifying AI: the noisy new kid on the block. Learn what it can do, what to watch out for, and talk about it with confidence.

Wednesday 11 March at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom



The Match Girls' Strike and how it changed British labour history

Michael Astrop describes the action of 1888, when 1,400 women and girls walked out of an East End match factory and into the history books.

u3a British Women's History Day

Thursday 12 March at 10am

Free – online via Zoom



London Thames bridges

Brian Cookson will take us round the bridges in London from Tower Bridge to Westminster Bridge and learn about their history and design.

Tuesday 17 March at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

More talks can be found [here](#)



Helen, Chair of East Antrim u3a, shares some of the things she's learnt during her recent retirement and how becoming a u3a member has enhanced this stage of her life.

Avoid the cliff edge

It can be quite a shock to your system suddenly leaving a structured work environment on a Friday and facing a blank page of retirement on a Monday; whether you are in a busy work environment enjoying every minute or simply counting down the hours when you will stop working, prepare yourself for it.

Your brain and your body need time to acclimatise, so where possible, reduce your hours and consider how you will spend your time in retirement. This is not always possible, but scanning the environment beyond work and checking out opportunities for structuring retirement in ways that you choose, will make a difference.

Keep learning

The 'Live, Learn Laugh' ethos of u3a with its emphasis on informal, lifelong learning, supported by member volunteers provides such a very uplifting experience.

I became a member of East Antrim u3a shortly after retirement.



East Antrim u3a Canoe Group explore the Lagan River in Belfast

The 'Practical Art' group enables me to explore my creative side, 'Bat & Chat' (table tennis) helps me keep active both in mind and body. I had never held a table tennis bat in my life before, and the challenge of acquiring a new set of skills without judgement or censure is such a joy.

See ageing as an opportunity

Generally ageing is viewed in a negative light but considering the alternative I welcome it.

At any one time we have at least three ages: our chronological age, our biological age and depending on mood and circumstances the age we feel; sometimes we shift from feeling 80 to 18, (this happens to me quite a lot during 'Bat & Chat').

So, reframe thoughts of chronological age, and consider retirement as the next stage of your life.

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: Chronos and Kairos. Chronos reflects the measurement of time passing - seconds, minutes, days. Kairos represents the opportunities and experiences that occur in between times - how someone spends their time, quality rather than quantity.

This is what u3a means to me. Whether you want to share your skills or develop new ones, there is something for everyone.

Religions and philosophies throughout the world promote the idea that 'it is better to give than to receive' and u3a enables you to do both. What a powerful way to spend the next stage of life.

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



The first Record Fair of 2026 is HERE at The Stockyard on Saturday 14th March.

There's so much to find at Melton Record Fair from CDs, tapes, vinyls, artist merchandise and more! Stock spans all decades so there's something for each member of the family.

This year's Record Fair is happening the day before Mother's Day, so why not treat your mum to a trip down and pick out some of her favourite records from the past or present? With live music, DJs and food, there's lots to do.

Entry and parking is FREE for buyers.



THEN AND NOW – THE GUILDHALL RESTORATION TOUR

4th March

The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ

[Book now](#)



THE STORY OF MABEL PEPPER BY JOANNE VIGOR-MUNGOVIN

10th March

The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ

[Visit website](#)

[Book now](#)



WELCOME TO LEGRACEASTRE – A QUICK GUIDE TO MEDIIEVAL LEICESTER BY MATHEW MORRIS

17th March

The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ

Just click on an image to take you to the website with more information and links to book a place.

QUENIBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

14TH FEBRUARY 7PM

VALENTINES DANCE SYSTON SWING BAND

A perfect Valentines evening

20th & 21st FEBRUARY 2026

QUENIBOROUGH BEER FESTIVAL

Enjoy a range of carefully chosen beers and ciders. Proceeds to local charities

27th February 2026

FILM CLUB: THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND

A BAFTA nominated, heart-warming comic tale of one music fan pursuit of a dream concert

27th March 2026

FILM CLUB: THE CHORAL

Written by Alan Bennett and another BAFTA nominated film, how music brings people together at the time of war

16TH MAY 7.30 PM

THE ALMOST BEATLES: LIVE BAND

No look-a-likes just the music

***FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE QUENIBOROUGH
GAZETTE; QUENIBOROUGH ONLINE; VILLAGE
OTICEBOARDS; QUENIBOROUGH-VILLAGE-HALL.CO.UK
AND FOLLOW US FACEBOOK.***

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Another screw revolution

Previously, I have described the work of Archimedes and how his development of a water pump, the Archimedean screw gave rise to modern machinery.

I will now move the story forward to the beginning of the 19th Century. We are in Smethwick near a town in the west midlands called Birmingham. James Watt and Matthew Boulton are manufacturing steam engines, a device that powered the industrial revolution. Instead of employing food powered muscle to drive machinery we can use coal, steam and engines that outpower tens, later thousands of horses or men, women and children.

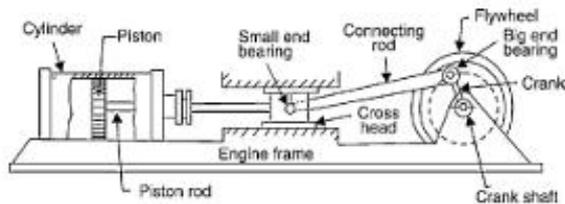


Diagram of a stationary steam engine

Steam engines are huge and their manufacture presents problems that must be solved if the engine is going to work.

Most of the parts are made of metal, iron copper and brass and these parts have to be cast or machined into shape and to the correct dimensions. A piston must fit inside the cylinder precisely. If it is too large it won't fit and if it is too small the steam would escape without doing useful work. We are talking about measurements that have to be accurate and precise to fractions impossible to measure with a ruler.

Screw Gauge



Modern micrometre screw gauge measuring to 0.001mm

Archimedes would appreciate this device. It is a fine screw with a scale for counting how many turns and fractions of a turn have been made.



A screw clamp inspiring a micrometre inventor

Having machined all the different parts of our steam engine we need to assemble our engine in such a way that all the parts fit together precisely and stay fastened together while the machine operates.

Screw Fasteners



Industrial and domestic screw fasteners.



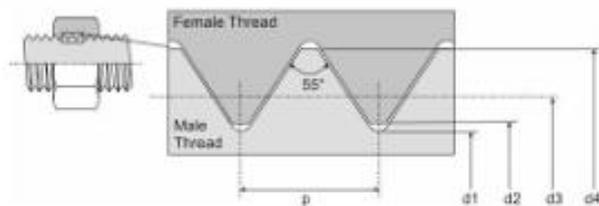
It would be entirely wrong to continue this discussion without mentioning the master of screws: Joseph Whitworth, whose perfectionism drove the development of machinery powering the industrial revolution.



Sir Joseph Whitworth (1803 - 1887)

He didn't invent screws, he didn't invent micrometres - he took them to a new level. His

most important invention was the concept of the Whitworth Standard Screw. Manufacturing screws, bolts and nuts to a defined standard.



These numbers define a screw thread that became an engineering standard, the first, meaning that a screw manufactured to the standard would fit any nut to the same standard, even if they were manufactured in different parts of the world. Whitworth introduced the idea of standardised engineering components.

He developed the screw cutting machines needed to make screws to the standard and micrometres to check that the standards were being maintained.

Not surprisingly he became one of the richest men in Manchester and his legacy includes money to build the Whitworth Building at Manchester University, another building for Manchester Institute of Science and Technology and the Whitworth Art Gallery.

Royal Navy Involvement

Our navy, the largest in the world, was slowly coming around to the notion that the *Age of Sail* had had its day and steam engines would provide ships with a more controllable source of propulsion, especially in confined space such as dockyards and ports

The first steam powered vessels were paddle steamers: fine for calm water but hopeless in open sea.

The first sea-going ship with a screw propeller was the appropriately named SS Archimedes, launched 1839. She surprised onlookers by travelling from Gravesend to Portsmouth at a lively speed of 10 knots



Drawing of the screw propeller of SS Archimedes



HMS Archimedes

Bad News

On 30th November 1853 a squadron of eleven ships of the Imperial Russian navy attacked and destroyed a squadron of twelve ships of the Ottoman Empire at anchor off the Black Sea port of Sinop in Northern Turkey, triggering yet another war.



The Battle of Sinop – Starting the Crimean War

Britain, France and the Kingdom of Sardinia sided with the Ottoman Empire against Russia, not because we liked the failing Ottomans but because we were fearful of Russia.

How does the largest navy in the world engage with Russia? Send a huge fleet of ships to the Baltic to attack their coastal defences and impose a blockade of Russian territory to prevent the import of materials that would be useful in war.

This strategy would prevent Russia from reinforcing its forces in Crimea because they are required for the defence of St Petersburg, their capital city.

Wisely, the Admiralty put Admiral Napier in charge of the campaign



Admiral Sir Charles Napier

Napier was a moderniser. He believed that naval officers should be properly taught and ratings should be properly paid. From an enormously wealthy family, he had bought his commission and commissioned his own steam powered yacht. Obviously, the right man for the job!

Napier told the Admiralty that he needed 120 steam powered gun boats, each with a 60-horsepower steam engine, for his 1855 Baltic campaign.

Napier commissioned John Penn, an accomplished naval engineer to manage the order.

Penn was given 90 days to provide the first batch of 90 gunboats.

Building the boats was not a problem, there were enough boatbuilders to achieve this objective. The engines (each weighing about 11 tons) was a different matter.

No engineering factory could handle such an order. Penn had just two steam engines of the type required and then he came up with a brilliant idea that would change manufacturing for ever.

He took one of the engines apart and sent the different parts to different engineering companies with a requisition to make 90 identical copies.



John Penn

It worked! Each of the contracts was completed within the allotted time and Penn had unwittingly invented the mass production process we use today to build cars, aircraft, televisions, washing machines etc.

Penn gave full credit to Whitworth for inventing the machinery needed to measure the parts precisely so that exact copies could be made, and for the standardisation of the nuts, bolts and screws needed to fasten them together.

The next time you try to assemble a piece of furniture from IKEA give a thought to Whitworth for his standardisation of screws and other fasteners and to Penn for the idea of sourcing different components from different manufacturers.

If you live in Leicester and are having difficulty joining things together, can I recommend this shop.



24 Cavendish Rd, Leicester LE2 7PG

Thank you Pierre Castille for this.

In case you missed it, part one was in last month's newsletter. You can find it on the publications page on our website – just click on February.

Princes Behaving Badly: A Very Long Royal Tradition

The recent attention on the former Duke of York has prompted some to suggest that the monarchy is facing an unprecedented crisis. Yet royal scandals are nothing new. In fact, British princes have been causing raised eyebrows, political headaches, and the occasional national uproar for well over a millennium. If anything, today's controversies are simply the latest instalment in a long and colourful saga.

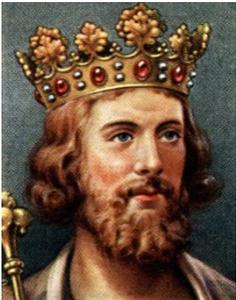
Medieval and Early Royal Mayhem

Long before newspapers existed, royal misbehaviour was recorded by monks, chroniclers, and gossiping courtiers.

Prince John (later King John)

Before he ever wore the crown, John was already notorious. He rebelled against his father Henry II, plotted against his brother Richard the Lionheart, and was widely accused of seducing the wives and daughters of his barons. Chroniclers described him as “faithless, tyrannical, and lascivious”—a medieval character assassination that stuck.

Edward II and his favourites



As Prince of Wales and later king, Edward II's indulgence of favourites such as Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser caused political turmoil. Whether or not the relationships were romantic, the favouritism was blatant, the resentment intense, and the consequences catastrophic. His reign ended in rebellion, deposition, and a famously grim fate.

The Plantagenet princes

The medieval royal family was full of fractious sons who quarrelled, rebelled, or fought each other for power. Henry II's sons—Henry the Young King, Richard, Geoffrey, and John—spent years in open revolt. Their behaviour would have filled several seasons of a modern political drama.

The Tudors: Passion, Politics, and Plenty of Trouble

Henry VIII as a young prince

Before he became the monarch of six wives and two beheadings, Henry VIII was a charismatic, athletic prince with a reputation for flirtation, extravagance, and a fondness for tournaments and masques. His youthful court was lively, expensive, and not always discreet. (*see portrait left*)

Prince Arthur's wedding-night scandal

Arthur, Henry's elder brother, famously declared after his wedding night with Catherine of Aragon that he had “been in Spain” that evening. Whether boast or truth, the remark became a political flashpoint decades later when Henry sought to annul his marriage to Catherine.



The Stuarts: Drama, Intrigue, and the Occasional Civil War

Charles II's youth in exile

Before he became the "Merry Monarch," Charles II spent his youth in exile, fathering illegitimate children, cultivating mistresses, and developing a taste for theatre and late-night revelry. His return to England brought all of that with him.

James II as Duke of York

James caused scandal long before he became king. His conversion to Catholicism, his marriage to an Italian princess, and his political misjudgements created deep unease. His behaviour contributed directly to the Glorious Revolution that removed him from the throne.

The Georgian Era: A Golden Age of Royal Misbehaviour

Frederick, Prince of Wales (son of George II)

Frederick quarrelled constantly with his parents, ran up debts, and surrounded himself with a raucous political faction. He once fled his own palace while his wife was in labour, dragging her to a different residence in the middle of the night to spite his father. His early death spared the nation further drama.

George IV as Prince of Wales and Prince Regent



George IV is the undisputed champion of princely scandal.

- **Debts:** He spent so extravagantly on clothes, horses, palaces, and entertainments that Parliament repeatedly had to bail him out.
- **Mistresses:** His romantic life was a revolving door of actresses, aristocrats, and courtesans.
- **Secret marriage:** His illegal marriage to the Catholic widow Maria Fitzherbert was a national sensation.
- **Official marriage:** His later marriage to Caroline of Brunswick was a disaster from day one. Their public feuding, accusations, and attempted divorce became a national spectacle.
- **Public image:** Caricaturists like Gillray and Cruikshank turned him into a figure of ridicule—fat, vain, overdressed, and perpetually hungover.

He was, in many ways, the first modern celebrity prince.

The “Wicked Uncles”: George III’s younger sons

A whole cluster of troublesome princes followed in George IV’s wake.

- **Frederick, Duke of York:** Forced to resign as Commander-in-Chief after his mistress Mary Anne Clarke was accused of selling army commissions.
- **William, Duke of Clarence (later William IV):** Lived openly for decades with the actress Dorothea Jordan, fathering ten illegitimate children. Their domestic life was affectionate but highly unconventional for royalty.
- **Ernest, Duke of Cumberland:** Surrounded by rumours of violence, cruelty, and intrigue. The 1810 “locked-room” death of his valet, Joseph Sellis, became one of the great scandals of the age. Many believed Sellis had been murdered; others whispered darker theories.

This generation alone could fill a book.

The Victorian and Edwardian Playboys Edward VII as Prince of Wales



Edward VII spent nearly sixty years waiting for the throne—and filled the time energetically.

- **Mistresses:** His romantic entanglements were numerous and well-known, including aristocrats, actresses, and Parisian courtesans.
- **Nightlife:** He was a regular at high-end Parisian establishments, where a special reinforced chair was designed for him.
- **Gambling:** He loved racing, cards, and high-stakes wagers.
- **The Baccarat Scandal (1890–91):** He was dragged into court after an illegal gambling party at Tranby Croft. The trial dominated the press and embarrassed the monarchy.

Despite all this, he became a surprisingly popular king—proof that scandal does not always sink a royal.

Edward VIII as Prince of Wales

Long before the abdication crisis, Edward VIII had a reputation for glamour, romantic entanglements, and emotional impulsiveness.

- **Affairs:** He had a series of relationships with married women.
- **Public image:** He cultivated a modern, fashionable persona that thrilled some and alarmed others.
- **Political concerns:** Officials worried about his judgement, work ethic, and susceptibility to flattery.
- **Abdication:** His relationship with Wallis Simpson simply brought long-standing patterns to a constitutional breaking point.

A Pattern That Never Quite Goes Away

Across the centuries, certain themes recur with striking regularity:

- romantic entanglements that become public crises
- financial excess and gambling
- dubious friendships and political misjudgements

- tensions between private behaviour and public duty
- the monarchy scrambling to contain the fallout

Seen in this wider perspective, today's controversies are less a shocking departure than the latest chapter in a very old story. British princes have been misbehaving, in one form or another, for as long as Britain has had princes.

Mothering Sunday: older, stranger and far more interesting than you might think

Mothering Sunday arrives this month, and while today it's all flowers, chocolates and cards, the tradition has a much deeper and more surprising history. Long before the commercial trimmings appeared, it was a medieval celebration woven from liturgy, long walks home, and a fruit cake with an argument baked into it.

Medieval beginnings: a pause in Lent

Mothering Sunday falls on the **fourth Sunday of Lent**, known as **Laetare Sunday** or **Mid-Lent Sunday**. Lent was traditionally a time of strict fasting, but this particular Sunday offered a brief lifting of the rules — a moment of relief and celebration. The day's readings were full of maternal imagery: Jerusalem as a nurturing mother, the Church as a spiritual mother, and the Virgin Mary as a model of compassion. These themes were already established by the early medieval period.

Going “a-mothering”: the journey home

By the 16th century, the day had taken on a very practical custom. People were encouraged to visit their “**mother church**” — the church where they were baptised or the nearest cathedral. This annual pilgrimage became so important that employers often gave servants and apprentices the day off so they could return home. Over time, the journey home naturally expanded to include visiting one's **actual mother**, and the custom became known as “**going a-mothering**”.

This was also a time of year when food stores were low, and young people often brought food or money home to help their families, which added a practical dimension to the visit.

Flowers: from hedgerows to florists

The association between Mothering Sunday and flowers begins with a simple, charming custom: children walking home would pick **wildflowers** from the hedgerows to give to their mothers. This is recorded from at least the **16th century**.

As the day evolved, these hand-picked posies became a recognised “mothering gift”. The shift to **bought bouquets** is a **20th-century development**, tied to the revival of Mothering Sunday and the influence of the American Mother's Day. Florists quickly recognised the opportunity, and by the 1920s–30s spring flowers — especially violets and later carnations — were being promoted as the appropriate gift.

Simmel cake: symbolism and a family dispute

Because the Lenten fast was relaxed on this day, richer foods were allowed — most famously **Simmel cake**, a light fruit cake with marzipan. The traditional decoration of **eleven marzipan balls** represents the apostles (minus Judas). A folktale claims the cake was invented after a domestic disagreement over whether it should be boiled or baked, with the compromise being to do both. Whether true or not, it adds a bit of colour to the tradition.

A fading custom revived

By the early 1900s, Mothering Sunday had largely faded from British life. Its revival was thanks to **Constance Adelaide Smith**, a Nottinghamshire woman who campaigned from 1913 to restore the celebration. She emphasised four aspects of motherhood: Mother Church, Mothers of earthly homes, the Virgin Mary, and Mother Nature. Her efforts gained momentum partly because of the rising popularity of the American Mother's Day, created by Anna Jarvis in 1908 and officially recognised in the US in 1914.

Chocolates: a modern arrival

Chocolates are a **purely modern** addition. They do not appear in the historical Mothering Sunday tradition at all. Their arrival is tied to:

- the **commercial revival** of the day in the early 20th century
- the influence of the **American Mother's Day**, which already had a strong gift-giving culture
- the growth of the British confectionery industry, which embraced the marketing opportunity

By the **mid-20th century**, boxed chocolates had become a standard “safe” gift — easy to buy, easy to post, and heavily advertised.

The greetings-card industry steps in



The greetings-card industry became involved during the **revival of Mothering Sunday from 1913 onwards**. As the day regained popularity, card manufacturers saw a parallel with the booming American Mother's Day market. By the **1920s and 1930s**, British card companies were producing dedicated Mothering Sunday cards, and by the **post-war period** the practice was firmly established. Anna Jarvis, the American founder of Mother's Day, it is claimed, later regretted the commercialisation of the celebration — going so far as to call greetings cards “lazy” — but the industry had already taken hold.

Mothering Sunday today

Modern Britain celebrates Mothering Sunday in a largely secular way — flowers, cards, chocolates, lunches out, and a welcome moment of appreciation. Yet the older themes still echo faintly: homecoming, nurture, and the idea of belonging to something larger than ourselves. The day has travelled a long way from medieval liturgy to supermarket bouquets, but its core sentiment — honouring mothers and mother-figures — has proved remarkably resilient.

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.



Norma Grimes wrote: -

I have a half-table which unfolds into a games table, and which I no longer have space for now that I have a larger radiator in my hall. It has some marks on the top, but I hope that someone will be able to polish them off and have a use and space for it.

If you are interested contact her

norma.grimes@btinternet.com

Tel 07582 413517



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

The Mother's Kiss — Mary E. Bradley

A little child, with shining eyes,
A little face aglow,
Came running up to kneel beside
My chair, in twilight's glow.

"O mother, put your work away,
And come and play with me!"
I laid aside my sewing then,
And took him on my knee.

And as I clasped him close and warm,
My heart was filled with bliss;
For life had nothing sweeter then
Than that child's loving kiss.

And now the years have fled by,
The child is grown and gone;
But still I feel upon my cheek
The kiss of that dear one.

And still I hear the little voice
That called me long ago:
"O mother, put your work away,
And come and play, you know!"

To My Mother - Edgar Allan Poe

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have
called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death
installed you
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

A Mother's Love — Charles Swain

A mother's love—how sweet the name!
What is a mother's love?
A noble, pure, and tender flame
Enkindled from above,
To bless a heart of earthly mould;
The warmest love that can grow cold;
This is a mother's love.

To bring a helpless babe to light,
Then, while it lies forlorn,
To gaze upon that dearest sight,
And feel herself new-born;
In its existence lose her own,
And live and breathe in it alone;
This is a mother's love.

Its weakness is a strange delight,
Its every look a charm;
She bends to kiss the tiny brow,
She folds it in her arm;
She breathes her fondness o'er its sleep,
In tears that are too blest to weep;
This is a mother's love.

And if her babe be sick and pale,
And moans its piteous cry,
The mother's heart can never fail,
She'll watch it till she die;
For oh! a mother's heart is given
To her alone by gracious Heaven—
This is a mother's love.

My Mother — John Pierpont

I love my mother, for she was
So gentle, pure, and kind;
She guided me in early days,
And formed my opening mind.

She led me to the paths of truth,
By influence sweet and mild;
And taught me wisdom's precious ways,
When I was yet a child.

I love my mother, for she taught
My spirit to aspire;
And trained my young and tender heart
To seek a purer fire.

And finally.....

Sayings and proverbs on Mothers -

“A mother’s patience is like elastic: it stretches astonishingly, but heaven help you when it snaps.”

“A mother understands what a child does not say—and quite a lot of what he *tries* not to say.”

“God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers—and mothers made rules.”

“Nothing is truly lost until your mother cannot find it.”

“A mother’s apron is the original Swiss Army knife: pocket for everything, tool for everything, shield against everything.”

“The quickest way to tidy a room is to say, ‘Mother’s coming.’”

“A mother’s memory is remarkable: she forgets your faults, but remembers where you left your shoes.”

“A mother’s sigh is worth a dozen lectures.”

“A mother’s hug lasts long after she lets go.”

“Mothers are like buttons—they hold everything together.”

“A mother’s glare can stop a child at twenty paces.”

“A mother’s whisper can be heard across a crowded room”

Mother’s Arithmetic

A mother explained fractions to her son:

“One slice of cake is plenty for you, dear.”

He replied, “Then why do you cut it so that your ‘one slice’ is twice as big as mine?”

She answered, “Because I am your mother, and mothers always round up.”

The Practical Mother

A child asked why mothers always say, “We’ll see.”

She replied, “Because it is quicker than explaining why the answer is no.”

The Mother’s Dictionary

Victorian humour columns often included “definitions”.

Bedtime – The hour when a child suddenly remembers everything he forgot to tell you all day.

Silence – The warning bell that mischief is underway.

Advice – What a mother gives long before you realise you need it.

Experience – What a mother has, and a child borrows.

