

Syston and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

NOV
2023

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I hope everyone is keeping warm. Can I thank all of you who have sent kind memories of Jackie. If you are attending her funeral on November 7th all donations will be split between Cancer Research UK and Dogs Trust. If you were wondering about Jasper, he is very happy in his new home.

I hope to see you all at our next members meeting when Bharat Patel's talk is on his travels over 3 continents and his experiences as a BBC reporter.

Clive

For those of you who may have missed the email message sent out to all members – sadly Jackie Henson passed away recently having been ill for some time. Until illness prevented her from doing so, she ran our Sundays for Solos group. She was also assistant treasurer for a time.

Jasper is her little dog. As I lived in the same part of Syston as Jackie, I used to see her regularly when both of us were out dog walking. It's heartening to hear he is settling into a new home.

For those of us with pets there are now a range of options for ensuring they are taken care of when we pass away. The Dog's Trust is just one of them. The RSPCA, Blue Cross, the Cinnamon Trust, the National Animal Welfare Trust and Cat's Protection are just some of the others.

It may also be helpful to have details about your pets in a prominent spot, things like what they eat and when, what medical issues they have, if any, who their current vet is. If they have any particular foibles – in my case I have flagged up that my cocker spaniel is a swallower (socks, sponges, dusters and a cat soft toy to name a few items). ED

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW OVERDUE

This year's membership renewals are now overdue. If you wish to renew please do so as soon as possible by a bank transfer for £15 to Syston and District u3a

Account no: 23911454 Sort code: 40 30 24 using your surname and membership number as reference.

OR send a cheque for £15 made out to Syston and District u3a with your membership number on the back.

Please post your cheque to the Treasurer, 28 Lilac Way, East Goscote, LE7 4XU.

We hope you will continue to enjoy your u3a and the activities we have to offer.

Best wishes

Christine Gale

Membership Secretary.

Email: sadu3amembers@gmail.com

JOINING ONE OF OUR GROUPS

If you are interested in joining a group, this is the way to do it please.

Message the group organiser (details on each group page) before attending.

Give your name and membership number. You will then be given all the information regarding joining such as dates, cost, times, availability, car share, inclusion etc.

You can then see if that's the group for you.

UPDATE ON SYSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ROOM CHARGES

Some of you will be aware that our u3a received notification of significant increases in room hire charges. Clarification was sought and it transpired that the letter we received was incorrect. Rather than an increase of over 40%, hire charges will go up by a little over 6%, depending on which room is involved.

By my calculations this will mean the £6.25 rate for the Jubilee Room, which is used by many of our groups, will increase by about 40p an hour. This is a discounted rate as our u3a is a registered charity.

GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP

PAINTING & DRAWING GROUP 2

A second Painting and Drawing group is planning to start up on the 15th January 2024. (The original group is full and currently has a waiting list.)

The group 2 will run alternate Monday mornings from January 15th at 10-12 in the School Room at the Community Centre. We are hoping to keep the cost around £2 per session.

If you want to improve your artistic skills or find out if you have any (sure you have!) come along. The aim is to get creative and enjoy yourself. 😊

We are hoping to have a table at the next members meeting where we can answer any questions and you can sign up.

If you wish to sign up now contact group organisers:

Marion Robinson brooksidestudio8@gmail.com

Helen Disley helendidley105 @msn.com

FEELING CRAFTY GROUP

At the "Feeling Crafty" groups last meeting we decided to make some Autumn Door Wreaths....some lovely results!



RUMMIKUB GROUP 1st ANNIVERSARY



Back in September 2022 it was suggested having a Rummikub group.

After a bit of information gathering, venue, cost, interest, we soon gathered 14 people who wanted to give it a go. So, we started in October 2022 with 14 members. Well, would you believe it, we now have 24 members in group one and a second group up and running. As you can see from the photograph, the game comes in many different boxes, all of which we use.

I just wanted to share this with our members, firstly as a big thank you to the group for making it such fun, but also to show how successful it can be to start a new venture from one idea.

Barbara Sargeant

GENTLE YOGA GROUP 1

A series of gentle stretching and relaxing movements to help maintain balance, flexibility and positive thinking can be enjoyed at all our yoga sessions. Emphasising correct breathing, health and mindfulness, we are focused on improving wellbeing and feel good factors at all levels of ability (even if you are limited to a chair).

We pride ourselves on being a friendly, happy group of mixed ability who are just trying to improve our balance, coordination, concentration and agility.

We meet at Syston Community Centre - No need to book, just register your name and u3a number and join us; no ability required apart from a need to take a break from the stress of everyday life and retain a sense of humour!

Simple Yoga Stretches

Just turn up with your mat, relax and enjoy. Help to spread a little peace and wellbeing. The aim is to flex, stretch and feel better about yourself. See you there!

Next meeting Wednesday November 29th 10am. Syston Community Centre.
Further sessions will be dependent on numbers attending.
phylvwilson@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Eight members of the Photo Group visited Tropical Birdland near Desford, for our September meet up. It was a cool, grey day, but we had plenty of opportunities to try and capture the beautiful detail and textures of the birds there.

Many of them were flying around in the open areas and some of us bought a packet of food to feed to the birds, enabling us to get some great close-up photos. This provided a good opportunity to try out different settings on the cameras (or phones).

One of the aims of the morning was to take photos of the birds, trying to minimise the background objects, to obtain an uncluttered photo of the subject matter.

As usual, we all met up in the café afterwards for a natter and a drink.

Next meeting is Thursday 26th October, Bradgate Park, weather permitting!





Photo by Barbara

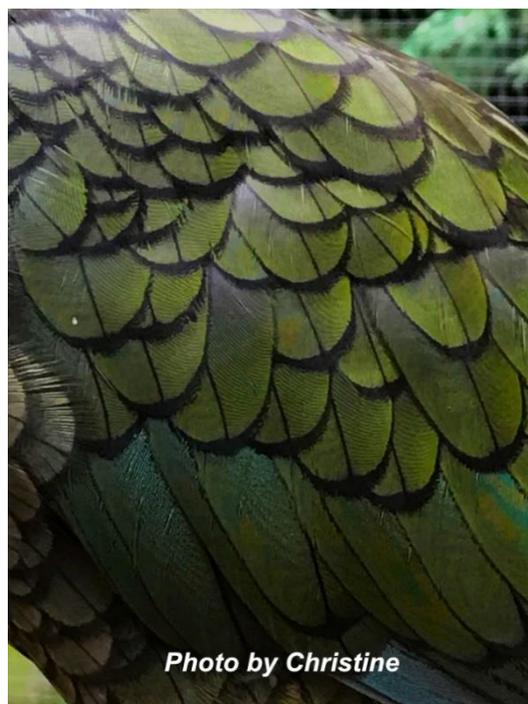


Photo by Christine



Photo by Diane



Photo by Steve

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

We had a presentation entitled "Lies, Damned Lies and Family History". It highlighted the fact that we cannot rely on transcripts and documents being absolutely correct, and in some cases although they are correct, they don't reflect the true situation. Father's names on marriage registers/certificates are a classic example. An illegitimate person might have made up a name to hide their embarrassment, or if their mother later married, they might name her husband. Whilst a made up name is a lie, the requirements for "father" do not specify that it should be a biological father. Speaking of fathers, you can't assume that a father named on a birth registration was the biological father. If he wasn't, that doesn't mean the birth certificate is/was incorrect, in fact it may well be legally right. A woman's husband is legally deemed to

be the father, unless he proves he is not. Historically he could only do that if he could show he wasn't with his wife at the time the child was conceived (e.g., he was aboard), or he provided medical evidence that he was incapable of fathering the child. Many husband's would have been reluctant to do either. That's before you consider men who were blissfully unaware that someone else had impregnated their wife!

The advent of DNA testing has revealed that, in some cases, a perfectly documented family line is in fact biologically untrue. Whilst records can mislead or lie, DNA cannot.

UKULELE GROUP

Saturday, 6th October, saw a number of players from the ukulele group perform for the Abbots Road United Reform Church, Leicester, at their Harvest Supper meeting.

We played one set of around 10 songs, then had a break for supper, being served a great selection of food, with coffee, tea, and cakes, with the rest of the congregation. (see photos of some of our members tucking into cake!)

After a raffle, with some of our players winning prizes, we played a second set, which had the crowd clapping and singing along, led by our illustrious leader, Len.

We had a lovely message from the church afterwards, thanking us for performing and helping the church raise £200 for their 'Mission Possible' fundraising.

We must have been good because they've asked us back next year!

Thank you to Sara who took the photos





EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

BEEDLES LAKE GOLF SESSION



On a very wet and windy morning in late September, 14 intrepid souls ventured out to Beedles Lake Golf Club to have a morning on their driving range. There are 13 golfers and one observer/ photographer. We split into 5 pairs and one trio, and after being allocated golf clubs and baskets of balls we headed off into the rain. Fortunately, the range is under cover even if the greens aren't. It had also just about stopped raining thankfully. Everyone got stuck in, having a go, smashing balls as far as they could (into the gully in front of the range was a popular spot for many of us until we'd got the hang of it). There were a couple of ringers - who had either played 50 years ago or were ex-cricketers/ hockey players with excellent hand-eye coordination - you know who you are. We got through the allocated balls rather quickly so had to go back for more. At £4 for a bucket of 54 it's really good value for a couple of hours great fun. The majority then adjourned to the Clubhouse for drinks and some food. Everyone seemed to enjoy it, vowing to go again.

Thanks to everyone who turned out and made the morning really enjoyable.

Our next excursion is going to be Mini Adventure Golf (crazy golf to you and me). Watch this space later in the year.

Ghislaine

WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

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

Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am



8th November 2023: Bharat Patel BBC Reporter – His Own Story

Bharat Patel has worked for BBC Radio Leicester, Radio 4, ITV and the BBC. He has covered major events which have made headlines around the world, including the Kegworth air crash, the death of Princess Diana, the Gujarat earthquake and the disappearance of Madeleine McCann. But it's not all been about tragedy. He's also interviewed a parrot who spoke five

languages, the world's oldest donkey and met Brian the Budgie, who escaped from Ilkeston to Corfu but was found by his astonished owners while they were eating a souvlaki under a tree on holiday in Corfu Town.

But there's one story he has never covered and that is his own. By the age of eight he had travelled across three continents. He ended up in Leicester, after a soothsayer told his parents his future lay in England. His family exchanged a comfortable lifestyle in a warm climate in Zambia in Africa for a tiny terraced house with a leaking roof in a much cooler and wetter Highfields. Their arrival in Leicester was followed by a series of bizarre and comic incidents, which were often odder than anything Bharat encountered as a reporter.

Bharat has asked us to make members aware that he will have his book available to purchase for the sum of £10 CASH (no cards).

He's presented his talk to a few local u3a's recently and although people wanted to buy his book, they only had credit cards available, so he couldn't sell any, so he's asking members to bring cash, please – ideal Christmas present! All proceeds go to cancer research.



13th December 2023: John Constantine - That's Magic!

An insider's view from a professional magician on what magicians do including some live magic!

An entertaining illustrated talk from magician John Constantine about all aspects of what magicians do - including a section from his live act for your entertainment!

10th January 2024: John Constantine - That's Magic!

Magicians who've **DIED**... performing! An illustrated history of magicians whose last performance was fatal!

Professional magician John Constantine returns with a **second illustrated talk**, this time about magicians who have made fatal errors whilst performing.

As before, John will include some live magic - hopefully without any similar errors!

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS



Sir Thomas Lipton, from Cabin Boy to Tea Tycoon to International Yachtsman

Join Neville Lyons of Guildford u3a in tracing the extraordinary 'rags to riches' life of Sir Thomas Lipton.

Thurs 9 Nov at 2pm

Free – online via zoom



The Curious History of Labyrinths & Mazes

Join Dr Julie E Bounford, social historian and author, based in Louth, Lincolnshire for this talk on labyrinths and mazes.

Fri 10 Nov at 10am

Free – online via zoom



The story of Eva Urbach & Ulli Adler

Lesley Urbach tells the story of her mother and aunt who arrived in the UK on the Kindertransport, and the family left behind.

Fri 1 Dec at 2pm

Free – online via zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

These are only some of the talks on offer, you can see what else is available in the next few weeks on the National u3a website [here](#)

Anti-ageism Toolkit

u3a and the Centre for Ageing Better have joined forces to produce advice to help members challenge ageism and promote positive ageing. The toolkit, which includes information and resources on how to challenge ageism, including a 'Top Tips' guide, is available as a PDF download: [Ageism Toolkit \(1.14 MB\)](#)



PROTECTING OURSELVES FROM FRAUD

Tuesday 21 November, 2-3pm

Neil Freebury, Head of Intelligence, The Insolvency Service

With stories of fraud everywhere we turn, you may wonder how can we better protect ourselves and each other against fraud.

Neil will talk to us about why there is a second pandemic of fraud and what makes u3a members a key target. You will also find out more about the wider fraud landscape, which includes courier fraud, romance fraud, investment fraud, and phishing and smishing. [Register Here](#)

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

Charnwood Community Singers

Watermead Singers

Concert

St Peter & St Paul's Church, Syston

Friday 17th November

7pm £8 including Cheese and Wine

Tickets from Gamble and Hollis: Papermoon: Vicki Friend 07813863866

[Website: charnwoodcommunitysingers.com](http://charnwoodcommunitysingers.com)

A decorative border of playing cards surrounds the text. The top border consists of a row of 13 cards: diamond, club, heart, spade, diamond, club, heart, spade, diamond, club, heart, spade. The left and right borders are vertical columns of 13 cards each, alternating between clubs, hearts, spades, and diamonds. The bottom border is a single row of 13 cards: club, diamond, spade, heart, club, diamond, spade, heart, club, diamond, spade, heart, club.

HOBY BRIDGE CLUB

We meet twice a month on
Thursday evenings in
HOBY Village Hall
playing duplicate bridge in a
friendly atmosphere.

Please contact Paula on
07437 536800
or Madeline on 01664 434803
for further details.

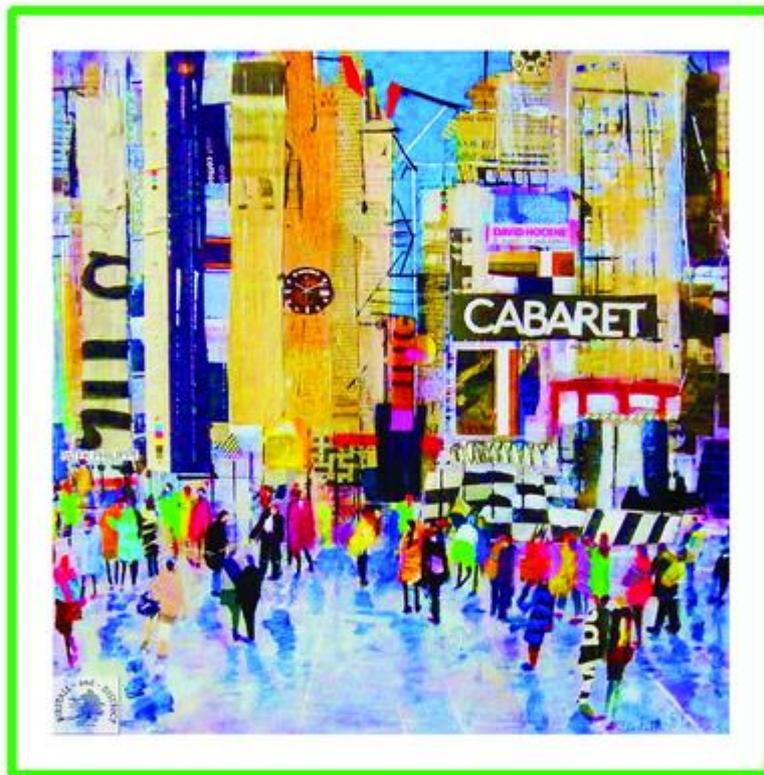


Birstall & District Art Society

28th Annual Art Exhibition

At the Village Hall, Birstall, LE4 4DH

Free Admission Supporting Refreshments
Free Parking LOROS Available



Saturday 4th November
Sunday 5th November

9:30am to 4:00pm

WWW.BADAS.UK



Crafting Christmas

Come along to this fun and engaging Christmas craft morning and make your own seasonal wire decorations! Your handmade creations will be perfect to hang from your tree this festive season. Please pre-book.

25 Nov 2023 *Open 11:00 - 13:00*

Where: Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Bosworth Battlefield Ambion Lane, Nuneaton, CV13 0AD

Contact details: 01455 290429

Leicester Vistas

Look at Leicester with new eyes as this exhibition explores views of our home from Leicester Museums & Galleries fine art collection, contrasted by photographs from Leicester City Council's photographic archive. Includes never before seen photos...

18 Nov 2023 to 3 Mar 2024

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

Contact details: 0116 225 4900

Christmas Shopping Night

Join us for a festive evening of shopping - all proceeds go to our charity partner, Teenage Cancer Trust. Including a welcome drink and money off vouchers. In addition you can enjoy 2 courses for £16.95 from our Christmas menu. Book your table...

30 Nov 2023 *Open 17:00 - 19:30*

Where: Dobbies Leicester, Loughborough Road, Rothley, Leicester, LE7 7NL

Contact details: +441162376500

Christmas Steam Day

This popular Christmas event is back at the Abbey Pumping Station. Enjoy the band playing Christmas carols while the majestic Beam Engines are in Steam. Lots of old christmas toys on show from railways to model steam engines.

26 Nov 2023 *Open 12:00 - 16:30*

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

Contact details: 0116 299 5111

FROM OUR MEMBERS

GUY FAWKES AND THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

As we approach Guy Fawkes or Bonfire Night, I think most of us know the basic story of how Guy Fawkes was caught red-handed in the Houses of Parliament with barrels of gunpowder, about the set them alight and blow up King James, along with a goodly part of the aristocracy. He was not the only conspirator, a total of 13 men were identified as at the heart of the failed plot. But who was Guy Fawkes? Is much known about him?



Guy was born in York some time before 16th April 1570, the date he was baptised at St. Michael le Belfrey church. The actual baptism register is displayed at the church at various times. This is a photo of the register, his entry is the 3rd from the top on the left hand column. Unless you are familiar with the script of the time it is indecipherable. It was common for babies to be baptised quite soon after birth, so it seems likely he was born earlier in that year. What is perhaps a

little surprising is that he did not come from a Catholic family, in fact his father Edward was a lawyer in York's church courts, so he was in fact a Protestant. Edward Fawkes and his wife Edith also had 2 daughters who lived to adulthood and another who died in infancy. Guy's paternal grandfather was also an ecclesiastical lawyer and his grandmother was the daughter of a York merchant, so he came from a prosperous family.

However, his father died in 1579. His mother Edith married again, to the Catholic Dionis Bainbrigge. Guy's religious convictions were clearly shaped by the influence of his step-father. This was against the background of religious turmoil in which the country had swayed back and forth following Henry VIII's break with Rome, courtesy of the fact that his children did not all share the same faith. Under Elizabeth I the country became firmly Protestant, with those of the Catholic persuasion suffered increasing repression.

He was educated at St Peter's school in York. From there he found employ with the 1st Viscount Montagu (pictured right), who was a staunch Catholic. Despite this, Montagu was a trusted diplomat, who served Elizabeth 1 on missions to both Rome and Spain. Guy Fawkes remained in the service of the 2nd Viscount when he succeeded his father.





At 21 he left to join the Spanish army which was fighting the Protestant forces of the Dutch Republic in the Netherlands. The Army of Flanders as the Catholics were called, was multi-European in make up. He was described by English Jesuit Oswald Tesimond as “a man liked by everyone and loyal to his friends .. something decidedly rare among soldiery, although it was immediately evident to all – a very devout man, of exemplary life.” His appearance was described as tall and well built, with reddish brown hair and beard. (see picture left from the St Peter’s Foundation - the school he attended)

During his absence abroad, many English Catholics became increasingly discontent with their lot. Robert Catesby was one such individual. His own father Sir William Catesby had been imprisoned for his faith. Catesby had several connections amongst prominent Catholic families in the Midlands and recruited a core of those who were similarly affronted by their treatment. When James VI of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth I in 1603, becoming James I of England, hopes were high that, despite also being a protestant, his having a Catholic mother (Mary Queen of Scots) would result in improvements to their condition. These did not materialize, added to which Spain and England signed a peace treaty, leaving the English Catholics without the support they had been receiving from that quarter.

Guy Fawkes attended a meeting at the Duck and Drake Inn, which was near the Strand in London on 20th May 1604. By this time, he had become involved with undercover work in Europe amongst the various Catholic communities. He met with Thomas Winter, a close confidant of Catesby, in Ostend. It was Winter who later provided a confession that allowed the authorities to establish much of the build up to Gunpowder plot. He was arrested after the attempt had been thwarted. Catesby was killed before he could be interrogated and full details obtained from him. Some historians claim that the excellent spy network developed during Tudor times meant that the conspiracy was known about well beforehand, but that it was decided to allow it to progress in order to capture the maximum number of those involved. Considering how late in the day the plot was halted, I feel these claims stretch the bounds of credibility.

Large quantities of gunpowder could readily be procured in what was a relatively peaceful period in Europe, so the group probably had no difficulty acquiring 36 barrels. They secured rented premises in Southwark to hide them, before ferrying them across the Thames to the Houses of Parliament. Guy Fawkes was likely recruited due to his military background, coupled with the fact that he was well known and trusted in Catholic circles. Explosives experts have assessed how successful the plotters would have been in their aims. They seem to agree that had those 36 barrels been ignited, much of the royal family and a significant proportion of England’s nobility would have been killed. Historians do not agree on exactly how the plot came to be foiled. One of the strongest claims put forward concerns a letter warning a peer with Catholic sympathies not to attend the opening of parliament. The “Mounteagle letter” was intercepted and the plot uncovered at the eleventh hour. The

government intelligence service of the day was likely aware that a plot of some sort was being hatched, but may not have established the specifics until very late in the day.

Guy Fawkes was interrogated and likely tortured, but he is said to have held out until for more than 48 hours before confessing. Those involved with the plot and still in the London area were rounded up quite quickly. Catesby and several of his co-conspirators fled to his native Midlands and tried to get a Catholic rising, originally planned as a follow up to the Westminster explosion, off the ground. This failed miserably, they were captured or killed by local militia at Holbeach House in Staffordshire on 8th November. The surviving plotters, especially those with no aristocratic lineage, probably wished they had been killed in the more immediate aftermath. The punishment for treason was execution, but commoners had the added horror of being hung, drawn and quartered. The public executions took place in two batches on the 30th and 31st January 1606. It is claimed that as a commoner Guy Fawkes was more fortunate than some in that his neck was broken at the hanging stage, as a consequence he avoided being disembowelled whilst still alive.

Parliament passed an “Act for the Public Thanksgiving to Almighty God every Year on the Fifth Day of November”. That act was not repealed until 1858, by which time the “Thanksgiving” was already firmly entrenched in the national calendar. Church services were held, often with a sermon of an anti-Catholic theme. Celebrations incorporating bonfires and fireworks also became popular. The 1670’s saw an increase in anti-Catholic opinion, effigies of the pope and gunpowder plotters were burned on the bonfires. By the early 19th century, Guy Fawkes was the effigy being burned. Later still the cries of children of “a penny for the Guy”, whilst dragging a home made representation of Guy around the streets, became a tradition, often accompanied by the rhyme of “Remember, remember the fifth of November, gunpowder treason and plot” (see the full words in Poetry Corner)



*Reproduced under Creative Commons licence courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery
Engraving by Crispijn de Passe the Elder circa 1605*

POETRY CORNER

MY NOVEMBER GUEST by Robert Frost

My sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow,
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

Traditional

*Remember, remember, the 5th of November,
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
I see no reason
Why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.
Guy Fawkes, Guy Fawkes, 'twas his intent
To blow up the King and the Parliament
Three score barrels of powder below
Poor old England to overthrow
By God's providence he was catch'd
With a dark lantern and burning match
Holler boys, holler boys, let the bells ring
Holler boys, holler boys
God save the King!*

NOVEMBER by Thomas Hood

No sun — no moon!
No morn — no noon —
No dawn — no dusk — no proper time of day.

No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member —
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! —
November!

NOVEMBER by John Clare

The shepherds almost wonder where they dwell
And the old dog for his right journey stares:
The path leads somewhere, but they cannot tell
And neighbour meets with neighbour unawares.

The maiden passes close beside her cow,
And wanders on, and thinks her far away;
The ploughman goes unseen behind his plough,
And seems to lose his horses half the day.

The lazy mist creeps on in journey slow;
The maidens shout and wonder where they go;
So dull and dark are the November days.

The lazy mist high up the evening curled,
And now the morn quite hides in smoke and haze;
The place we occupy seems all the world.

And finally.....

In November, the trees are standing all sticks and bones. Without their leaves, how lovely they are, spreading their arms like dancers. They know it is time to be still. – Cynthia Rylant

Some of the days in November carry the whole memory of summer as a fire opal carries the colour of moonrise. – Gladys Taber

