November 2026

Monthly Notices

By the members, for the members

Please remember that all Beeston u3a events, outings and interest groups are for **Beeston u3a members only** unless specifically stated otherwise.

This Month's Open Meeting

Thursday 5th November 2026

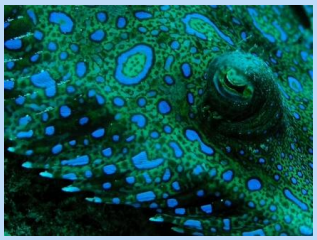
Simon Croson

Ascension Island: Atlantic Outpost, a Long Way from Home

Beeston Methodist Church

Ascension Island is a small, strategic island that serves as a staging post on the British military's route to the Falklands. It is home to some amazing and unique wildlife and terrain, making it a must for lovers of wildlife above and below the water.

Simon has spent many weeks on the island, and his vast collection of wildlife photos will help us enjoy and appreciate this magical place, visited by both Charles Darwin and David Attenborough.


Please note:

Members can watch this month's talk on Zoom if they are unable to attend in person. An email with the link will be sent before the meeting.

Refreshments will be served from 10.00am, with time to mingle and chat, and the talk begins at 10.30am. Please bring your own mug if possible.

Future Open Meetings



Thursday 3rd December
Christmas Open Meeting
Festive food, carols, poetry and a quiz
Beeston Methodist Church

Festive food and drink will be served from 9.45am. Then, from 10.30am, singing with members of the Singing for Fun group (you can just listen if you don't fancy singing!), the Poetry Group will give a poetry recital, and there will be a seasonal quiz with prizes.

Thursday 7th January 2027
Christine Christie
The Story of Writing: from Egyptian Hieroglyphics to Modern European Alphabets
Beeston Methodist Church

Members who regularly come to our open meetings will remember Chris's excellent talk on the history of the English language in October 2025. Chris is back with this fascinating talk to start 2027.

Human beings have invented writing systems in unconnected cultures on at least four separate occasions. Our modern European alphabets evolved from just one: the complex and beautiful pictorial writing system developed by the Ancient Egyptians over 5,000 years ago. We will follow its path – how it evolved as Egyptian culture evolved, and what happened to it as it passed through different cultures and languages to become the 26 letters of our English alphabet. Come prepared to make vocal sounds at your neighbour, including glottal stops and trills!



New Members Meeting

The next New Members Meeting will be held on
Thursday 12th November starting at 11am
in the Whiskey Room of the Star Inn, Middle Street, Beeston NG9 1FX

The purpose of the meeting is to let new and prospective members know what the u3a is all about and what it offers, including providing full details of the interest groups available and how to join them. Refreshments will be provided.

Please let Roberta, the Membership Secretary, know if you plan to attend on: **membership@beestonu3a.org.uk**.

From the Chair

Financial Support for Interest Groups

The Beeston u3a committee would like to establish a system providing financial support for interest groups who identify a particular expenditure which would benefit their members.

To make sure the guidelines are equitable and treat all groups consistently, we are in the process of establishing clear funding principles and criteria.

Obviously different activities have different financial needs so we have written to all our group leaders asking them to let us know what kind of financial support or resources their groups might benefit from in future, so we can shape the guidelines around the actual needs of groups. We recognise, of course, that many interest groups require no financial support in order to continue to flourish.

We have had a good response from group leaders, with many constructive and creative suggestions. We will keep groups updated as we establish our criteria and respond to requests.

Noel Kelly



From the Group Coordinators

Archaeology Group at Risk of Closure

Since it began in February 2025, the Beeston u3a Archaeology Group has offered a diverse and stimulating range of presentations and visits. Forthcoming talks in the new year include Bronze Age Britain; Pompeii and Herculaneum; The Archaeology of the Bible Lands; and The Secrets of Vindolanda Roman Fort.

Unfortunately, the group is at risk of closure because we are running out of volunteers willing to step forward and offer future talks, so this is a plea for more speakers. You don't have to be an expert. You simply need to be prepared to research a topic that interests you and give a 30 to 40 minute talk. You could even share a session, giving a short presentation while another speaker presents a short talk on a separate topic.

Help with creating and setting up a PowerPoint slideshow is available if you need it. The group is warm and friendly, and you will be made to feel very welcome.

As an example of what u3a members can achieve by pulling together, the History Group has a full programme of speakers for 2027, and none of them are historians. They are all simply group members who are prepared to make a contribution.

The u3a mantra has always been "By the members, for the members". I hope you will consider offering a talk on any aspect of archaeology, to help this very worthwhile group move forward and flourish. I will certainly be offering a presentation myself. To offer a talk, please email **groups@beestonu3a.org.uk**.



Stonehenge

Noel Kelly
Chair & Group Coordinator, Beeston u3a

A Reminder to Group Leaders

Please let the Group Coordinators team (**groups@beestonu3a.org.uk**) know whenever your group's meeting day, start time, venue or leaders change, so that we can keep the website up to date. It is also important to record the changes on Beacon.

Update on Trips and Events

We have now led five visits to local attractions in recent months namely:

- Wollaton walled garden
- St. Mary's Church, Lace Market
- Chetwynd Barracks – two visits
- Bromley House Library

All were very well attended with plenty of very positive comments from members who took the time to email us with their appreciation.

We have one final trip this year in the offing – our first coach trip to the Mercatum Artisan Market at Haddon Hall, near Bakewell in mid-December. This trip was over-subscribed within days of advertising. Sadly, coach restrictions on the site limit coach sizes to 30 passengers and only one per group so we were a bit stymied on this one but felt the event itself to be well worth the restrictions.

Three of our coordinators attended a Group Travel & Leisure Exhibition in Milton Keynes in October and came away with lots of ideas for future trips and events. We are planning to meet up with two experienced leaders of trips and events from Carlton & Gedling u3a before Christmas in an exchange of ideas and places of interest to tackle next year. ***If you have ideas for future trips – both near and far, then get in touch. We would love to hear where you'd like to visit with your fellow members. Just send us your ideas to: outings@beestonu3a.org.uk***

More news next month and watch out for a feature on the trips mentioned above in the next Newsletter.

Dee, Sue, Lynn and Nic
Trips and Events Group Coordinators

Forthcoming Events

Fine Wine Evening
Saturday 5th December
Christ Church Hall, Lime Grove Avenue, Chilwell
6.45pm start, carriages at 9.45pm

A reminder that tickets for the Fine Wine Evening have now sold out, and there is a waiting list. Please bring your own glass (or two!) and a pen.

Jugs of water and paper cups will be provided. If you have any dietary requirements, please let us know and we'll do our best to provide alternatives.

At the end of the evening, please help the volunteers by clearing your table and stacking your chairs.

Adrian Shipway
Event Coordinator

Interest Groups
Artificial Intelligence – What It Means

A new group starting in December

When: Friday 4th December, 10am–12 noon, then the first Friday of every month

Where: Epworth Room, Beeston Methodist Church

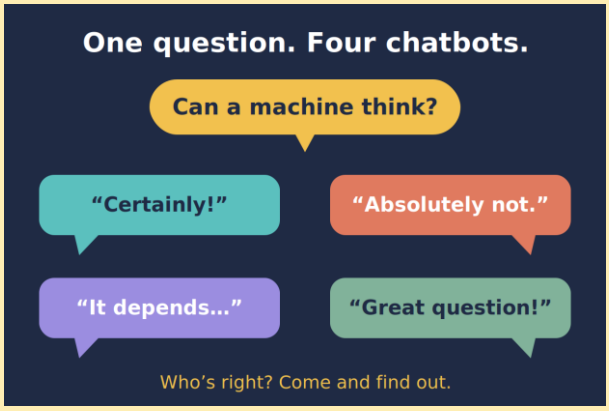
Cost: £2 per meeting

Ask four different AI chatbots the same question and you'll get four different answers, and sometimes all of them are confidently wrong. Why? And what does that tell us about whether these machines understand anything at all?

We'll find out at our first meeting with a hands-on experiment. Bring your phone with a free chatbot app installed (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot or any other), and we'll put the same questions to all of them and compare the results. Expect surprises, some disagreement and plenty to talk about.

This isn't a how-to group. We're interested in what AI *means*: whether machines can think, what their poems and pictures tell us about human creativity, and where all this is heading. You don't need any technical knowledge, just curiosity. Newcomers are very welcome, including anyone who has never used a chatbot.

The room only holds 25, so please book a place in advance rather than just turning up on the day. To book, email **groups@beestonu3a.org.uk**.



Roberta Pearson and Robert Dowling
Group Leaders

Interest Groups
Singing for Fun

Singing for Fun is back – new year, new you!

When: 4th Thursday of the month (re-starting Thursday January 28th), arriving 9.45am for a 10.05am start and finishing before 12 noon, with a break for refreshments

Where: Church Hall, Beeston Methodist Church

Cost: £2.50 per session, including tea, coffee and biscuits

This popular, friendly social singing group is back in action, and new members will be most welcome to join us in the New Year.

To help get you into the Christmas spirit, some of our members will be leading Christmas carols at the open meeting on Thursday 3rd December.

It's a fact: singing is good for you! It lowers cortisol, releases endorphins, strengthens your lungs and triggers your brain to release happy chemicals, all while having fun – what's not to like? So don't be shy – come and try Singing for Fun.

If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Tina McGrath
Group Leader

Interest Groups
Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners and Improvers

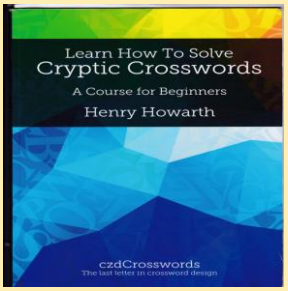
A new course starts on Thursday 26th November

When: 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month, 12.15pm until about 2pm

Where: The Star Inn, Middle Street, Beeston NG9 1FX

Do you like crosswords, but find cryptic crosswords baffling? Or do you do cryptic crosswords, but aren't quite sure how some of the clues work? **There is a solution!**

For the past four years or so we have run a course for beginners and improvers, and a new one starts on Thursday 26th November. We work through Henry Howarth's book *Learn How to Solve Cryptic Crosswords*, at a pace that makes sure no one is left behind, so the course lasts around four to six months.



It's fun, and a great way to keep the grey matter working.



The latest 'graduates' and some of the 'tutors'.

If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Jane Bowden
Group Leader

Interest Groups
Motorhome, Caravan and Camping Group (MCCG)

A new name and a new logo

When: Monday 2nd November and Monday 14th December, 7.30pm

Where: The Star Inn, Middle Street, Beeston NG9 1FX

The Camping, Caravan and Motorhome Group has had a rebrand and is now the Motorhome, Caravan and Camping Group (MCCG). Our new logo reflects the ethos of the group – and makes us all long for summer evenings sitting outside enjoying our adventures!

Meanwhile, our monthly social get-togethers continue. If you'd like to see whether the group is for you, please join us at one of our next (indoor!) sessions. To check that a session is going ahead, please get in touch through the GROUPS tab on the website, as below.



The MCCG's new logo

If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Gillian Mather
Group Leader

Interest Groups
Sewing, Upcycling and Repairing Group

New members welcome

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1.30pm

Where: Beeston Methodist Church

Our supportive, interactive group is open to new members who would like to share their expertise or ask for help with sewing projects. Here's what some of our members think:

"Such a lovely, friendly group. My go-to for helpful tips and ideas with dressmaking and alterations. The piping workshop gave me confidence to re-cover my chair cushions." Sue

"I've been altering my clothes with great input from the more experienced sewers in the group." Karrie

"Over the last two years in this friendly, fun and supportive group I have progressed from sewing bunting to making alterations on my clothes and repairing items that are now back in use." Uta

At our next meeting, on Tuesday 10th November, we'll be exploring making gift bags for Christmas, along with our usual projects.



Members hard at work at a group session

If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Val Briggs
Group Leader

Interest Groups
WW1 and WW2 Military History Group

An invitation to join – new members welcome

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am–12 noon

Where: Guild Room, Beeston Methodist Church

Under the leadership of Dave Platt, the WW1 and WW2 Military History Group has presented some stimulating talks on a wide range of topics since it began eight months ago. The presentations are always followed by lively debate and discussion, with members asking questions and sharing their own knowledge and family experiences.

On Tuesday 10th November, Dave will give a talk called *Shot at Dawn*, on the controversial and emotive subject of the more than 300 British servicemen who were executed by firing squad during the First World War.

The group is also planning visits to sites of interest, including the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens (formerly the National Memorial Arboretum). Dave has already led three u3a visits to the memorial at Chetwynd Barracks, which commemorates the victims of the huge explosion at the National Shell Filling Factory in Chilwell on 1st July 1918. The disaster killed 139 workers, including 25 women.

This is a new and developing group, and it still has room for more members. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, and I thoroughly recommend it to you.





Remembering the munitions workers

If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Noel Kelly

Interest Groups
Transport Group

The Spitfire Story

A talk by Stephen Brown

Wednesday 27th January 2027
Guild Room, Beeston Methodist Church
10am start

The Supermarine Spitfire will always be associated with its designer, R J Mitchell, and with the vital part it played in defending the country during the Battle of Britain in 1940. After the battle, the Spitfire was developed on a scale unique in the history of aviation. Not every improvement went to plan, and test pilots and design teams had to decide which changes were practical without causing too great a break in production. As a result, the Spitfire stayed at the forefront of fighter design for the whole era of the piston-engined monoplane fighter, from 1936 to 1948, and the final Mark 24 was one of the finest piston-engined interceptor fighters in the world.

With models, images and exhilarating video clips, Stephen will show the Spitfire in all its glory and sort the facts from the myths, from the Schneider Trophy to the Mark 24 and beyond. If you'd like to learn about one of the most famous aircraft in aviation history, do put this in your diary.



Image via Battle of Britain Memorial Flight by Richard Paver

If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Mike Provost
Group Leader

Interest Groups
Looking for New Members

British Sign Language (BSL) Group

When: 3rd Monday of the month, 10am-12 noon

Where: Wesley Room, Beeston Methodist Church

The British Sign Language Group is now able to take on some new members. No prior knowledge of BSL is needed. We aim to give you some basic knowledge of BSL, deaf awareness and Deaf Culture, so that you might be able to have a simple conversation with a deaf person or offer them help if necessary.



If you would like to know more, or to join this group, please go to the GROUPS tab on the Beeston u3a website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Richard Taylor

Group Leader

Feedback on This New Layout

We've given the Monthly Notices a new look this month following the discontinuation of the Publisher app. We'd love to know what you think. Is it easier to read? Is there anything you'd like us to change, add or leave out? We have kept to the national u3a branding guidelines as well as RNIB guidance.

Please send your constructive comments to: **communications@beestonu3a.org.uk**.

Who to Contact with Your Queries

Chair: **chair@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Membership: **membership@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Group Coordinators: **groups@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Trips and Events: **outings@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Finance: **treasurer@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Publicity: **publicity@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Potential open meeting speakers: **speakerskr@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Any other queries: **communications@beestonu3a.org.uk**

Interest groups: go to the GROUPS tab on the website (beestonu3a.org.uk) and select "contacting or joining a group".

Dee May, Communications Officer