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Charity Number 1094479

**'Sharing Knowledge to Learn from Each Other'**

## **New Members**

We would like to welcome the following new members: Alex Clarke, Karl Liepa, Deborah Wilson, Linda Tacey, Liz Lowther, Mary-Jane Rowse, Heidi Shaw, John Snell, Jill Moore and Sue Brierley

Please look out for them in your Groups and Monthly Meetings and help them to quickly feel part of our organisation.

## **Dates for your diary**

### **Coffee Morning Drop-Ins**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May at the Kanko Coffee Lounge, 41 Clifton Road, Rugby, CV21 3PY (corner of Bath Street)

## **Monthly Meetings**

### **8<sup>th</sup> May 2:00 pm–4:00 pm**

Andrew Lound, Carpathia - "The midnight dash" The Titanic rescue.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Because of the refurbishment of the kitchen, **we are asking members to bring their own hot or cold drinks if they choose. We will NOT be providing any hot or cold drinks only biscuits.**

The main hall will be open and we will put out seats and tables but there may be some noise and dust. As a compensation, attendance will be free for this meeting. There may be reduced parking available as a result of contractors' vans etc. and members are advised to park in the Leisure Centre car park if possible, or to organise car sharing. The Leisure Centre car park offers free parking for 3 hours, so those arriving at 1:30 will be able to park until 4:30. These temporary arrangements should only affect the MAY meeting.

### **12<sup>th</sup> June 2:00 pm-4:00 pm**

Barrow to Baghdad – Philip Caine. Philip's experiences during his working life.

### **10<sup>th</sup> July 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

AGM - Scones, jam and cream.

### **14<sup>th</sup> August 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

Judge, Jury, Judgement and Justice - Alan Cutler.

Alan re-enacts a murder trial from a hundred years ago with audience participation.

## Rugby u3a AGM 10th July 2025

The 2025 AGM will be held on Thursday 10th July at 2pm in the United Reformed Church, 40 Hillmorton Road, Rugby.

The meeting will be followed by an open forum for members to have their say on any matters of interest. Refreshments afterwards will include a scone with cream and jam for everyone.

The AGM Notice and Nomination form for committee membership will be issued in mid-May with the agenda following in mid-June. As always, we would encourage you to think about whether you could join us on the committee for the 2025 /2026 year ahead.

We have been without a secretary this year and Fran Marchant who has been our speaker finder for the last two years will be standing down from that role and the committee in July. These are two important positions that need to be filled.

Anyone interested can always speak to any of the committee members to discuss what is involved, or come along to a meeting to see what goes on.

*Dawn Fassam, Chair*

## Last Monthly Meeting - Not Father O'Malley

Well known jazz pianist, singer and raconteur Roger Browne entertained us using a mixture of words and music with stories from his years growing up in post war Salford, a city for which he clearly has great warmth and affection. Normally this would be a solo performance but today the vocals were shared with his friend Roy Chappell. Roy had been a professional singer with the famous Sid Phillips jazz band and a recording artist in his own right. His discography is still available online and clips from past performances can be seen on YouTube and listened to on Spotify. Roy's participation was a real bonus for the audience.

Roger's memories were not of the city that had been blitzed in the war, or ravaged by poverty and floods, or strangled by overcrowded and inadequate housing, but of the love, kindness, compassion, humanity, and humour – lots and lots of humour - he had experienced growing up.

At the time Salford was a staunchly Catholic city; the result of the immigration of workers from Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to build the Manchester Ship canal. Brought up as a Roman Catholic himself Roger's religion played a large part in his development, attending Catholic schools and the local parish church. Recollections from those days have provided much of the material for many of the talks he gives.

Musically precocious, he was singing in public at the age of four and had taught himself to play the piano by the age of five. His earliest exposure to music came from the radio and from listening to the bands playing in the local parks. Radio programmes that first drew his attention to songs he came to love included 'Housewives Choice' every morning and 'Family Favourites' at the weekends. Later on he realised that shows like 'In Town Tonight' and 'Down your Way' included musical interludes that could add tunes to his lexicon. At one point it looked as though his talk was going to be a paean to the Golden Age of Radio!



Al Jolson songs were the first he performed in public and at the age of eight he appeared in a competition in Salford Theatre, with a repertoire of ten Jolson songs. This was a competition with 'prizes for all' which in his case turned out, much to his disgust, to be a 'Tony' hair perming kit which was not much use to a young boy! By fifteen Roger had joined his first jazz band and jazz and musical theatre have been a part of his life ever since.

Many of Roger's anecdotes were related to his Roman Catholic upbringing and in particular to Father O'Malley the eponymous hero of the talk. O'Malley was such a fanatical Manchester United supporter (the Catholic team in Manchester) that Roger firmly believed that he had dedicated himself to a life of celibacy simply to be appointed as the parish priest at the church next to Old Trafford. Sunday sermons were more like match reports from the previous day than for moral guidance and should the team have suffered a defeat on the Saturday before, a diatribe against the referee. On one occasion O'Malley gave an impassioned sermon on the evils of gambling only before, minutes later, announcing the results of the parish lottery! Another time Roger was given a penance of ten 'Hail Marys' in the Confessional for admitting to being a Manchester City fan – the Protestant Manchester club and an anathema to the Catholic community.

Roger continued in this vein, recounting an episode in which he was caught by the police placing an illegal 'off course' bet for his father. This prompted one of the most poignant moments of the day, Roger accompanying himself on the piano with a song he had written in tribute to his late father called 'Placing a bet for Dad'.

The live music that punctuated the performance at regular intervals featured songs and tunes Roger had heard and enjoyed in his beloved home town from a very early age. There were piano tributes to Winifred Atwell (the late Queen's favourite apparently), George Gershwin, Al Jolson, and boogie woogie. Roy and Roger sang 'Mammy' as a duet. Later Roy gave us Cole Porter's 'Just one of those things', 'Sitting on top of the world' a Jolson favourite, Gershwin's 'It's Wonderful' and finally 'Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goodbye)' also made famous by Al Jolson.

Overall the performance was superb and surely worth repeating in the future.



## Group News

### Carry On Cruising -Travellers Tales

At our April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting Michael Knight gave a presentation showing us the variety of wildlife and habitats he encountered on a cruise around thirteen of the Galapagos islands.

His tour included a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about the life of Lonesome George.

Other species seen included seals and penguins, blue and red footed booby birds, frigate birds and many huge iguanas.



Our next meeting will be held in the Albert Room of the United Reform Church on Friday 2nd May at 2.00. We collect £2.00 for room hire and coffee, tea and biscuits are provided.

Our presenter will be Elizabeth Parvin who is busy preparing her talk entitled ADVENTURES WITH MRS TITTMOUSE which will feature canal cruising. All members of Rugby u3a are welcome to attend.

*Dawn Fassam*

## **Science & Technology Group**

This group started meeting again on 2nd April after a break following Keith Sinfield standing down at the end of last year. The new group leader will be Nigel Baker.

At the first meeting of the reconvened Science and Technology Group, which was well attended, u3a member Ian Wilson gave a talk entitled ‘Stellar Nucleosynthesis’ with the sub-heading ‘we are stardust.’

This was the story of the origin of the elements that make up the earth, and everything in it and on it, including ourselves.

In a nutshell the 92 stable elements in the Periodic Table originated from two primary sources; the Big Bang and the subsequent evolution of stars and stellar explosions. The Big Bang created the very first elements, hydrogen and helium, while heavier elements formed through nuclear fusion within stars and during supernova explosions.

In essence the elements are the ‘ashes’ of the stars and thus billions of years old - including every atom of the 40 elements that make up a human body; so when Joni Mitchell sang ‘We are stardust’ at Woodstock in 1969 she was right!

## **Bookends**

In March we read *The Promise* by Damon Galgut. This book provoked quite a discussion within the group about the era of apartheid and different experience/knowledge of events during that time.



"There is nothing unusual or remarkable about the Swart family, oh no, they resemble the family from the next farm and the one beyond that, just an ordinary bunch of white South Africans, and if you don't believe it then listen to us speak...."

The many voices of The Promise tell a story in four snapshots, each one centred on a family funeral, each one happening in a different decade. In the background, a different president is in power, and a different spirit hangs over the country, while in the foreground the family fights over what they call their farm, on a worthless piece of land outside Pretoria.

Over large jumps in time, people get older, faces and laws and lives all change, while a brother and sister circle around a promise made long ago and never kept.

*Joan Fowler*

### **Lunch for Group Leaders**

As an organisation we rely on the goodwill of Group Leaders who so generously give up their time to provide the wide variety of topics that we can all meet to share.

By way of thanks we held a lunch at the Railway Club on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April for 30 of them who were able to attend. Since some group activities were taking place on that date there were unfortunately some who were not able to attend.

We enjoyed the opportunity to share food and conversation with them.

Below are pictures of the catering team who provided and served the meal and of leaders in conversation after the formal elements were over.



## Committee News

It has been suggested that we start a regular feature in Ru3aNews to share news of what the committee is doing and as Chair I want to support this and hope it will become a forum for exchanging information and ideas. It would be great to learn your thoughts and get information as to what you would like to see included.

In the coming issues I hope to persuade my committee colleagues to contribute, introducing themselves and their roles.

The committee meet on the third Friday of the month at Dunchurch Baptist Church on Coventry Road (CV22 6RF). The meetings start at 2.00pm and end at around 4.00 with a mid-meeting break for a cuppa and biscuits which we take turns to provide.

The atmosphere is relaxed as we work our way through the agenda which covers feedback from Committee members in the key roles to cover finances, group leaders' activities, monthly meeting booking programme, website, and membership. We are mindful of the need for flexibility and succession planning so are trying to have a "shadow" process in place, so we have back up for roles.

There are also rolling agenda items. Last year focus was on the development and roll out of the new website. Currently key topics are review of policies and procedures to ensure that are up to date, preparation for the AGM and issues around the installation of the new kitchen at the United Reform Church.

I have been chairing for two years and served as a committee member for a year before that. As the name suggests, I chair the meetings and take the lead at the AGM. I attend online meetings with other chairs where we can share experiences and challenges. I am enjoying the role and hope to be re-elected next year; I can only serve for three years so we will be looking to find a replacement in 2026.

Anyone is welcome to submit topics for the committee to discuss or indeed to attend the meetings. Just contact one of the committee if you would like to come along.

*Dawn Fassam, Chair*