

Newsletter January 2026

u3a  
Ruddington & District

# learn, laugh, live

Issue 84



Happy New Year everyone and very best wishes for good health and happiness in 2026. Let us look forward to us building on our ever-growing membership and having many more opportunities to “Learn, Laugh and Live” together.

I hope you are managing to stay safe and warm in the very cold and icy conditions. I always think about the birds in this weather and wonder how many of them will survive. I couldn't de-ice any of the many bird baths in my garden for days. Then I managed to add some small terracotta saucers with fresh water near to my back door. Within twenty minutes I spotted a blackbird squeezing itself into one for a bath and a drink. It stayed until all the water was gone. It was a moment of joy on a freezing cold miserable day!

On committee matters, I need to repeat our request for a new Membership Secretary. Di Brown has continued to do this job despite stepping down, so as not to leave us in the lurch. A big thank you to her but obviously we must move forward and find a replacement. Please consider if you could take this on, perhaps jointly, alongside another member to share the responsibility. You can talk to any committee member if you would like to know more about what the job involves.

I hope you enjoy your interest groups and our speaker meetings in the year ahead. Best wishes

Liz McAdam (Chair)

## A New Year quiz

### A Nottingham and Ruddington Quiz. Thanks to Peter Davison.

- 1 What is the name of the Council house bell.?
- 2 What was Nottingham's original name?
- 3 Torvill and Dean scored perfect marks for Bolero at which winter Olympics? The year and the place.
- 4 Nottingham boasts the Oldest Inn in England. What is it's name?
5. Who wrote 'Saturday night and Sunday morning' a novel about Nottingham in the 50s?
- 6 DH Lawrence is Nottingham's most famous author. What does H stand for?
- 7 In which year did the Goose Fair move from the Old Market Square to the Forest. Was it 1923, 1928 or 1935?
- 8 Agamemnon and Menelaus take pride of place in the centre of Nottingham. What are they?
- 9 Which artist is responsible for the Sky Mirror outside the Playhouse? Was it Damien Hurst, Anthony Gormley or Anish Kapoor?
- 10 What year did Nottingham Forest win the FA Cup?
- 11 What was the population of Ruddington in the 2021 census?
- 12 What was the population of Ruddington in the Domesday Book
- 13 How many pubs does Ruddington have?
- 14 When was the country park opened?
- 15 How many trees were planted when the country park was opened  
64 000, 100 000 140 000 or 170 000?
- 16 Where is Foamer Hill?
- 17 Where is Duttons Hill?

(Answers on page 6)

# Interest Groups News

## Tai chi



Our pre-Christmas fun was our Tai Chi Christmas Fuddle on Thursday 18th December.

Despite the closeness to Christmas Day 40 Tai Chi members came together to celebrate our last class of 2025. We spent over an hour exercising together.

So many members contributed to our fuddle celebration table. There were oven baked savoury snacks- quiche, sausages, mini Cornish pasties and an assortment of sausage rolls.

The Tai Chi bakers triumphed again with an amazing selection of delicious cake morsels. In addition there were Stollen, Panettone, Baclava and Medjool dates. BUT the “ piece de resistance “ was a magnificent hot homemade Christmas Pudding (a la chef Keith), served with custard or cream.

Hopefully a new Christmas Fuddle Tradition was born.

Our Tai Chi Annual Lunch at The Country Cottage is booked for 5th February. We will meet in The Village Hall at 11:00am and exercise for about an hour. Lunch is booked for 12:30 pm

I need to collect the names of all those who can definitely attend and the menu is ready to view and to make your choices.

The Cottage will need that information in advance to ensure a well organised and enjoyable meal.

I do hope that “Tai Chi balance” is helping members to negotiate the icy, slippery, ungritted paths around the village.

Take care everyone. Regards Judy Hasson.

## Brush up your French/German

Both French and German groups are full and the French group has a waiting list. Angella Sell

## Photography Group

Our December meeting featured a quiz which depended on a knowledge of famous photographers and some of their images. It was meant to be fun but proved to be more difficult than intended. Apologies, and let's hope that it stimulated interest rather than being a deterrent.



Steve Hewitt



Bryan Browne



Ann Hooley

The pictures in the newsletter represent individual choices from 2025. At our January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting we'll be looking at our photos of 'Lights', as well as seeking inspiration for a 'Wood' (not trees) theme for February 11<sup>th</sup>.

Depending on the weather, this month may also be an opportunity for some frosty and snowy pictures.

## Travellers' Tales

At our January meeting it was wintery weather and flu was going around, but a record attendance turned out to see a presentation by Chris and Peter Davison about their visit to Nepal and India in 2009. Chris read from her travel journal which was written at the time and was much different to the official tourist guides!

In Nepal Chris explained how their camera failed just before the flight which had spectacular views of the Himalayas and Everest. Fortunately the tour guide let them use his camera to take once in a lifetime photos.



The Boudha Temple in Boudhanath, Nepal dates from the 5th century.



In India they took pictures of iconic sights such as the Taj Mahal which was everything they expected and more. The sacred River Ganges at Varanasi, where people take up residence so that when they die, they are one step closer to Nirvanna was also very memorable, as was the sight of cremation pyres.

## Table Tennis



At the final table tennis session of the year we celebrated the 90th birthday of one of our members, Fred Cochrane. Fred, who incidentally is not the oldest group member, is proof that table tennis is a sport for all ages.

## New Year Quiz Answers

1. Little John
2. Snottingham
3. 1984 Sarajevo
4. The Trip to Jerusalem
5. Alan Sillitoe
6. Herbert
7. 1928
8. Council House Lions
9. Anish Kapoor
10. 1959
11. 7674
12. 250
13. 8
14. 140 000
15. Highest point in the country park
16. Between the chippie and the One stop shop
17. Area outside the church

## Gardening Group feature article by Mike Davey.

Snowdrops Belton House Woods (February 2025)



Although it is mid-winter, there is much to be enjoyed in our gardens. Beautiful hellebores are in full bloom with “Molly’s White” being one of the most spectacular. Snowdrops and aconites are emerging while several shrubs are providing welcome blossoms.

We hope to visit Little Ponton Hall near Grantham in February to see snowdrops and aconites, while nearer home swathes of snowdrops in West Leake Churchyard are always spectacular and well worth seeing. Primroses, polyanthus and pansies are already flowering in sheltered places.

Plenty of tidying remains to be done. Fallen leaves make excellent compost, especially when mixed with other garden rubbish, household waste, shredded paper and cardboard.

Important dates for your diaries include Ruddington Open Gardens on June 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2.00-6.00pm each day in support of the charities “Save the Children” and “Action for Children”, and Ruddington Village Show in St Peter’s Rooms on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

Please support these events as they are important village activities! Ruddington Gardeners’ Association (RGA) has a full programme of speakers and social events for 2026.

(see <http://ruddingtongardeners.co.uk>), so why not join RGA as well as U3A and further your gardening knowledge and skills?

Enjoy your plants and gardens in 2026!

Mike Davey.

## Monthly speaker meetings.

Thanks go to Chris Davison for finding a replacement speaker, at short notice, for this month's meeting. Unfortunately Annette Taylor is unable to be with us.

### **Monday 19th January Phil Drabble- Travels with a Tiger – Riding the Western Front**

Inspired by historian Anthony Seldon's book 'The Path of Peace' in which he recounts his solo walk along the length of the Western Front, Phil Drabble decided to do the same journey on his Triumph Tiger motorbike. Tracing this historic route, he crossed some of Europe's most evocative and beautiful scenery from the Swiss border, riding through Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, the Somme and Flanders, finishing at the North Sea in Belgium.

Phil's talk is a homage to all of those people, on all sides, who fought and died on the Western Front, focusing in particular on the fate of two men from his native Nottingham.

Phil Drabble spent all of his working life in education, both as a secondary school teacher and as an educational adviser and is now an independent public speaker. Phil is also the president of Nottingham Anglo – French Society.

### **Monday 16th February—George Nelson Rowing the Atlantic**



In 2024 George Nelson and Russell Davis from Mansfield rowed 3542 miles across the Atlantic in their boat Oar Blimey. George will tell us the story of their epic 98 day voyage.

The fee for his talk will be donated to a dementia charity.