



The angry dictionary

The first crossword puzzle was published in *New York World* on 21 December 1913. Over a hundred years later, almost every newspaper publishes a daily crossword. Stephen Sondheim said: 'The nice thing about doing a crossword puzzle is, you know there is a solution.' **Judith Abbs** asked **Jo Pestel** how members of the Cryptic Crossword group go about finding the solutions.

What is the main difference between a quick crossword and a cryptic crossword?

Cryptic crosswords are about understanding the code contained in the clues rather than knowing words. The challenge is to find how it has been concealed.

Alastair Ferguson Ritchie, a famous compiler, advanced the principle that the composer of the cryptic clue need not mean what they say, but must say what they mean. A clue has to have an ostensible meaning – which may be amusingly misleading – but must also contain precise instructions which, when properly understood, lead to the intended answer.

Is there a code convention that is used by every crossword compiler?

Never take a clue at face value; eg 'butter' could be defining a ram; 'flower' could be defining a river. The setter will use homophones,

double definitions, anagrams (carthorse/orchestra); reversals (lager/regal); abbreviations – AU for gold, AG for silver. Certain words indicate that an anagram is lurking, such as 'afresh' 'novel' 'drunk' 'amended'. In fact, any word that suggests change.

Never take a clue at face value

Here's an example: 'Music arranged for oboe, cleverly using both hands' (6 letters).

*See *below for the answer.*

Do you have favourite compilers?

It is generally helpful to stick to the same compiler to get used to their technique. Our group began by working our way through a book of Observer Everyman crosswords and a collection by Rufus (one of the more accessible setters) from the Guardian Cryptic Crossword Setters series.

How does the group work so that

** bolero. 'Arranged' tells you that it is an anagram of OBOE; 'both hands' gives you L and R.*

everyone has a chance to work out the solution for themselves?

Continued on page 2

In this issue

(click on the title; go to the page)

The angry dictionary	1
Editorial	2
As I see it	3
Their honours	4
Scamwatch	4
Age concerns	5
Interest groups	6
Crafty crafts	7
Reliving history	8
It's all Greek to him	9
Away days	10
Spring term monthly meetings	12

Our publications

The Northern Line (TNL) and Update are each published three times a year. TNL is edited by Leni Green, with assistance from Judith Abbs,

and designed by Barry Davies. Update is edited by Jane Marsh. Please send Jane submissions for the next Update by 8 February to oriana.jane@btinternet.com

• The editors may shorten or otherwise amend articles to fit spacing and style requirements

Editorial

How much do you know about the national U3A movement? One person who knows a lot is Keith Richards, who, in addition to co-founding NLU3A in 1994 and chairing its first committee, led the Third Age Trust from 2003–06. Ever since we have had a newsletter in NLU3A, Keith has been informing us about the greater U3A movement in his column, 'As I see it'. He has written about matters including the importance of circles in U3A learning, the significance of the word 'university' in our name, and whether online courses are undermining the ethos of U3A

learning. But his column in this issue will be his last as he feels it is time for him to hand over to an equally insightful and well connected columnist, Patricia Isaacs. I will certainly miss Keith's contributions, but I know he's always at the end of an email or a phone call, and I hope all readers will join me in giving Patricia an enthusiastic welcome.

In this issue we visit the Cryptic Crosswords group and learn how words do not always mean what they seem to. Continuing our exploration of our 21st anniversary survey, four people who consider themselves older members suggest how we



can make sure that our activities are accessible to people in the oldest age groups. And we present some of the work of our crafts groups for you to look at and enjoy.

Happy reading!

Leni Green

Editor

editor@nlu3a.org.uk

continued from page 1

We start by doing the same crossword in silence for about 25 minutes. Some members will have done more than others when we share and explain how we worked out the clues; then we go at it again for about 15 minutes – by which time most of the group will have solved most of the clues. Then we go through the final clues together – often aided by a dictionary – a time of comment and elation. We set another crossword for homework and go over this together to begin the next session.

What is hardest about solving cryptic crosswords?

Trying to think laterally;

remembering all possible meanings of words; working out which part of the clue is the definition.

What is the appeal?

So many things: play on words; stimulation; making the brain work; the collaborative nature of the group; admiration for those who worked out difficult clues; overcoming frustration; delight when we realise what an answer is after many solitary attempts. Sometimes we disagree with the answer; sometimes we think we are better!

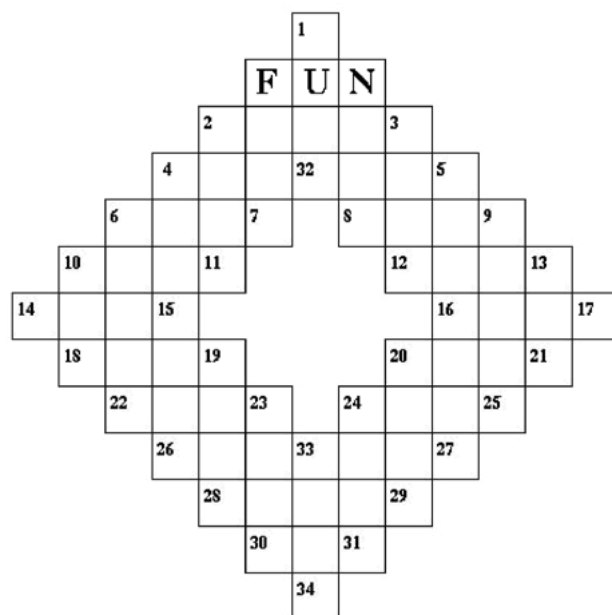
The group's selection of cryptic clues and answers, taken from the Guardian Cryptic Setters' Series (Rufus) and the Chambers Book of Cryptic Crosswords.

1. It may go down well but one dies to kick it. (6)
2. H I J K L M N O (5)
3. Novel site for cricket (6)
4. A cradle song? Not really! (4, 5)
5. Those having it won't get far in Japan (1, 3, 3, 6)
6. Late? Punctual? Or very punctual? (4, 2, 4)

See page 11 for the answers

The first crossword in *The New York World*, 21 December 1913. (They've got harder!)

2-3	What bargain hunters enjoy	6-22	What we all should be.
4-5	A written acknowledgment	4-26	A day dream.
6-7	Such and nothing more	2-11	A talon.
10-11	A bird.	19-28	A pigeon.
14-15	Opposed to less.	F-7	Part of your head.
18-19	What this puzzle is.	23-30	A river in Russia.
22-23	An animal of prey.	1-32	To govern.
26-27	The close of a day.	33-34	An aromatic plant.
28-29	To elude.	N-8	A fist.
30-31	The plural of is.	24-31	To agree with.
8-9	To cultivate.	3-12	Part of a ship.
12-13	A bar of wood or iron.	20-29	One.
16-17	What artists learn to do.	5-27	Exchanging.
20-21	Fastened.	9-25	To sink in mud.
24-25	Found on the seashore.	13-21	A boy.
10-18	The fibre of the gomuti palm.		



As I see it

Keith Richards bids farewell to this column – but not to NLU3A!

Perhaps I should say ‘as I SAW it’ as this is the last contribution I am making to The Northern Line. I had decided to write about our U3A’s current exploration of ‘older’ people in our movement and realised that I had something to say. We are so proud of the fact that we have no upper age limit and, even more so, that there is no lower limit either — most people don’t know this. The ‘third age’ can refer to any chronological period in our lives, the only qualification for participation being that one has time for education for its own sake.

Over 23 years ago I approached retirement with dread and a sense of bereavement and will always be amazed and grateful that through one of the

‘We are so proud of the fact that we have no upper age limit and, even more so, that there is no lower limit either—most people don’t know this.’

three original U3A founders, Peter Laslett, I was introduced to this radical concept. In my last year of employment I remember stopping off to attend a U3A German class in Highgate.

Now, after a recent period of illness that kept me hospitalised and at home, I was longing to get back to my groups in NLU3A and the Belsize Park based U3A in London. Happily I am still (t)here and at the Mary Feilding Guild, a residential home in Highgate with a strong U3A presence in its Shakespeare course, which the late and sadly missed Richard Callanan and I started.

It has been a great pleasure over the years to be urged by our editor, Leni, to get on with the ‘As I see it’ column, but I know it is time to attend to the U3A vision of ‘someone else’. I can think of no-one more



qualified than the most recent occupant of the chair of our U3A – Patricia Isaacs. There may be a note of continuation because whenever we meet, as we do regularly, we ‘see’ things in the same way, but Patricia has her eye on recent developments. Nothing on the national stage escapes her and she is very much part of the wider London scene. Particularly, she has been involved in the development of new neighbouring U3As, which I have had little to do with. I am delighted that she has agreed to tell us how she ‘sees it’ in the future and look forward to reading her articles in the future.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Thanks to all those who are involved in the production of the best U3A journal I have seen in the long years of national and local participation in the

movement. It has been such an indulgence to look around every few months and comment so freely with only Leni's editing to worry about.

KEITH RICHARDS IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF NLU3A AND A PAST CHAIR OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST

Their honours

Three distinguished members – **Wilson Briscoe, James Crawford and Patricia Isaacs** – have been awarded honorary membership of NLU3A.

Wilson, the second chair of NLU3A, and James, the second treasurer, ran the Shape of London group and its architectural tours to different parts of the country for many years. Patricia has held many positions, including being events organiser, groups organiser and chair – all at the same time. Recently she has been involved in the London region and local networking, forming new U3As in adjoining areas.

Presenting her award at the November monthly meeting, Edmond Cohen (right), the current chair, said: 'Patricia has put in a huge amount of work and commitment and we owe her a lot.' The three join Keith Richards, the first chair and co-founder of NLU3A, in holding honorary membership.



Scamwatch

The festive season is behind us, but 'tis still the season to be scammed. A member (who prefers to remain anonymous) reports on a scam they experienced and suggests how to avoid this happening to you

Someone rang and said he was from BT Openreach and that they were upgrading the telephone/broadband system. He wanted to protect our online banking while the work was proceeding and asked that we open our online account. He did not ask for a password or pin number and was adamant that we should not give him those details. However, he put an icon on the screen which enabled him to see our screen. He said that if we could open the online account, it meant that the work was finished,

but if the screen went black, it meant that the work was still proceeding.

The screen went black and the scammer managed to bypass the bank's security and help himself to the entire contents of our bank account during this time. It did not help that the bank said that all was well when I phoned to say that we were suspicious of what was going on. Eventually the bank repaid us in full and gave the fact that we had reported our suspicions as their main reason.

If anyone phones and says that

they are from BT or Openreach and asks you to open your laptop or other computer, put the phone down with or without a well-chosen phrase ending in 'off'.

- To try to stop nuisance calls, register with the Telephone Preference Service (0345 070 0707, tpsonline.org.uk).
- Don't answer calls from numbers you don't recognise.
- Report all incidences of scamming and other cybercrime to Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040, actionfraud.police.uk

Age concerns

Our 2015 survey of members revealed that people in the oldest age group are likely to make up a higher proportion of our membership in future years. Four members suggest how we can make sure that our activities are accessible to them

Janet Home writes:

Having attended many monthly meetings, I would suggest that a serious problem for many older members is loss of hearing. If it were possible to have an induction loop in the meeting room, this might help those who cannot sit in the front row. I have no idea how efficient these devices are but it might be worth finding out the practicalities. As I have good hearing myself, I cannot offer any personal experience.

Ruth Bourne suggests:

Any event that doesn't involve a lot of walking and is accessible by public transport would be suitable for older members. Examples are cinemas such as the Phoenix, near East Finchley tube and served by many buses, which has wheelchair access and Blue Badge parking outside. The Regent Street cinema does special vintage film mornings. Tickets (with coffee!) are £1.75 for over 55s. The cinema, at 307 Regent Street, is just a two-minute walk north of Oxford Street tube,

and served by many buses. 0300 123 2040; regentstreetcinema.com/matinee-classics

Lunches, especially on Sundays, are also very popular, with parking and proximity to public transport absolute musts.

Eve Brenner proposes:

I have been a member of the Shape of London architecture group for over 20 years. One of our original members is not physically able to come to Lauderdale House, where the group meets, though she is still very interested in the subject. As she does not attend, the coordinator cannot include her on the register, but he is aware that I forward handouts to her, and sometimes she sends questions back. I am happy to do this, and maybe because we do get handouts, Shape of London is a suitable group for this.

While some groups require a physical presence, others do not, and perhaps something similar could happen in these. For instance, a homebound member

of a book group could read the book and send in their comments to another member, who could do a precis of them. This could also happen in a history group. The homebound person could prepare a presentation, and someone else could read it.

Elsa Shamash offers:

As far as I am concerned, we do meet the needs of the oldest members, but most of my 90+ age group are no longer mobile and also often do not use the internet. I can only suggest that meetings take place in their homes, if they are willing and able to host them.

I have been a member for about 33 years, and U3A fulfils a real need for me. It is stimulating and keeps loneliness and boredom at bay. I have made real friends and enjoy the activities. Unfortunately, there are many lonely people we do not reach.



From the Regent Street Cinema website:

'After a three year fundraising campaign the Regent Street Cinema was restored and re-opened by the University of Westminster in May 2015, reinstating one of the most historic cinemas in Britain to its former grandeur. Echoing its history, the cinema will continue to be a catalyst for innovative education and research, and a showcase for the University's internationally acclaimed work in film, media and visual culture.'

Interest groups

Changes to interest groups and possible new groups

SOCIAL HISTORY has relocated to the Finchley Bowling & Croquet Club in Ballards Lane, Finchley N3 2DT, where there is onsite parking and which is served by numerous buses. We still meet fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon from 2.30–4pm. Contact: Mary O'Toole, 8444 8461; maryoto@ntlworld.com

GERMAN CONVERSATION 2, held weekly on a Thursday afternoon, has been temporarily suspended due to the sudden illness of the coordinator. If you might be interested in helping to re-form this group, please contact Henrietta Cohen, 07976 903 767, henanded@gmail.com

The **READING THE WORLD** group would love to welcome one or two new members. We meet Thursday afternoons fortnightly in the Mulberry Room of the Methodist Church in Pages Lane to discuss any literature but English. Barry Davies: julibar@blueyonder.co.uk is the contact and he will send you the list of works planned for the rest of the year.

We would be pleased to hear from you if you might be interested in the following possible new groups:

- **PÉTANQUE/BOULES**
- **NORDIC WALKING**
- **WINE/WHISKY TASTING**

• **MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN (MOTO)**. This would be specifically for people who live on their own and would welcome the chance to join a group which might offer activities in the evening and at weekends. The group, if formed, would decide its own parameters. If you're interested, please contact Henrietta or Candiss (see box below).



Who's who in the groups organiser (GO) team

Henrietta Cohen	Groups organiser	07976 903 767	henanded@gmail.com
Candiss Waldram	New groups	8883 1395	scwaldram@yahoo.com
Ruth Newman	Venues organiser	8340 3516	ruth.newman@blueyonder.co.uk

Crafty crafts

A selection of work from the Freestyle Embroidery and Textile Art groups

‘It’s amazing what you can produce with fabric and stitch,’ says **Ann Dugdale**, who leads both of these groups. Like most of the members, she only took up these crafts after she retired.

Those in both groups think of themselves as artists rather than embroiderers, and the examples below show just what can be achieved. Members dye and print many of their own fabrics and use various techniques to produce both two- and three-dimensional work. Every year each group has

a project to work on together. The Klimt picture below, *Lady with Fan*, is an example of a recent joint project, when each member made a panel before the whole picture was stitched together.

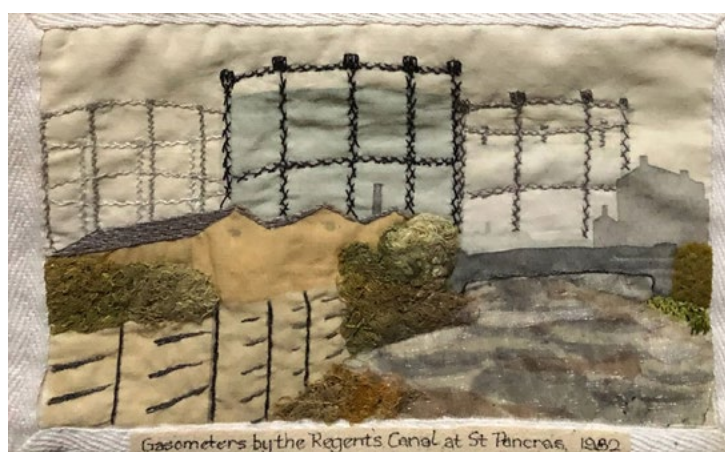
One group has already held an exhibition, at Burgh House, Hampstead, in summer 2016. A second exhibition for both groups is planned for 8–27 May at Lauderdale House, and will include a herd of elephants (!) so keep an eye open for further details nearer the time.



Cutwork incorporated into a denim jacket



Industrial heritage group project



Gasometers by the Regents Canal in St Pancras 1982



Klimt joint project: Lady with Fan



Hand weaving



Our industrial heritage

Reliving history

Shared learning projects are collaborative research ventures between an institution (a university, a museum, a library) and U3A members who volunteer to take part. One of the main objectives is to undertake stimulating work which will benefit both the participants and the institution for which the project is carried out.

Peter Cox describes two such projects that he led

In 2017 and 2018 I steered a couple of fascinating history projects in which U3A researchers collaborated with two universities: Royal Holloway and Roehampton. In the first, four NLU3A members joined me in transcribing the share registers of

the long-forgotten Chartist Land Company, which in the 1840s held a lottery to give people who didn't own property – and hence couldn't vote back then – the chance of winning a newly built cottage with land in one of the five new settlements. The

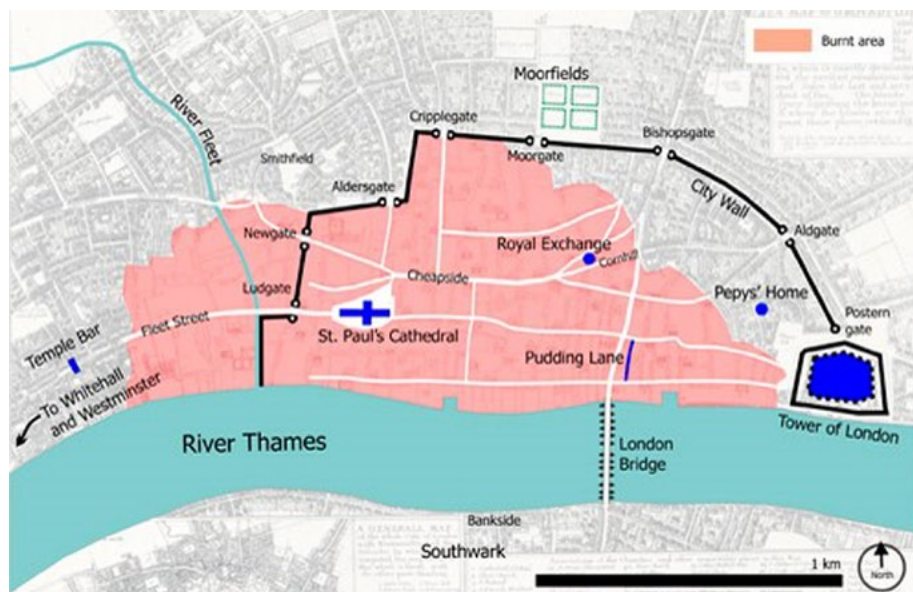
Chartists, their campaign for the vote belittled and disdained by parliament and the press, their meetings infiltrated by government spies, had one last mass assembly on Kennington Common in 1848 before they gave up the struggle. Men who did not own property were not given the vote until 1918 (when some women were also enfranchised).

Our job was to go through three huge handwritten volumes containing over 40,000 names and addresses, to find and list those lottery entrants living in London, who each stumped up £2 10s in small instalments. In the end there were around 1,800 names, but it soon became clear that it was also worth transcribing the women's names we found. That yielded a further 1,800 in the country as a whole: servants and housewives, seamstresses and millworkers, widows and young girls. Nobody had really researched Chartist women before, so we were on fresh ground, and were surprised to find an unexpectedly large number from Devon, far from the Chartist heartland in grim and grimy northern factories and mills. That analysis generated another project for two indefatigable U3A researchers from Torquay, whose work has just finished. Like us, they used online archives, censuses and civil registers to track some of the more intriguing people we found.

Then this year, in the company



Rosedene, the Chartist Land Company cottage in Dodford, Worcestershire, now looked after by the National Trust.



A map of London showing in pink the areas completely flattened by the Fire of 1666. Only the Tower and the areas round it survived. The strong east wind blew the fire over the City boundary to the west where it reduced old St Pauls to a ruin.

of nine other London U3A members, including two from North London, I went back much further, to the cataclysmic 1660s. We were examining tax records for the spring of 1666, in a city of London reeling from the previous autumn's devastating plague, before the Great Fire of 2–5 September destroyed homes, churches and livelihoods. These were 'Hearth Tax' records: a list of householders in each parish, showing the number of fireplaces in each dwelling; they were taxed at a shilling a hearth. Very few of these records remain from the 27 years in which the tax was collected, but the City records for 1666

are among them. Of particular interest was the recording of the householder's occupation in 23 of the parishes, and we were given seven to investigate over a six-month period ending this June to research the householders.

Our job was open-ended – pursue what interests you, find out what you can. We had a paper snapshot of a city getting back to bustling normal in a hot dry summer, its citizens soldiering on after having lost husbands, wives, parents or children to the plague, not realising that they'd soon risk destitution in a City 80 per cent turned to ash. We looked at the lives of individuals, the streets, houses and churches.

After the fire, drapers and grocers set up shop in 'pop-up' sheds where their homes had stood, laying claim to their patch; this ensured that enticing new city plans submitted by the elite like Christopher Wren and John Evelyn would founder. The city's businesses must go on: livings must be made, mouths fed. Men had to rebuild – in brick, not wood – despite losing strips of land to enforce street-widening to restrict any future fire's rapid spread. Some churches were abandoned, some rebuilt, funded by a new tax on all the coal coming into the city. The first carbon tax...

It's all Greek to him

As he walks across the Hampstead Heath extension to Golders Hill Park every week, **Malcolm Abbs** passes an intriguing blue plaque

Take a short walk uphill from the Bull and Bush, turn left into North End and on your right is a blue plaque stating that Michael Ventris, architect and decipherer of Linear B script, lived here. Michael and his wife, also an architect, designed the house themselves.

Michael was born in 1922 to a Polish Jewish mother and an English father. After his parents divorced, Michael and his mother went to live in Highpoint, the famous 'modernistic' flats in Highgate designed by Berthold Lubetkin. This may well have triggered his interest in architecture.

He was only seven when he bought a book on Egyptian hieroglyphics written in German. His school reports failed to

recognise his linguistic brilliance: he was fluent in 12 languages.

When he was 14, Michael heard a lecture by the archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans, who talked about a script – known as Linear B – that had been found on clay tablets at the palace at Knossos in Crete in 1900. He said that no-one knew how the writing system worked – or even what language it documented.

This galvanised the young linguist and he spent the next 20 years deciphering Linear B. He finally cracked the code in July 1952 by identifying the sounds that related to each symbol, and working out that Linear B was used to write a form of ancient Greek – 500 years

earlier than Homer.

Tragically, Michael was killed in a car crash in 1956.



Michael Ventris

- Do you know of a blue plaque commemorating someone in north London? We would love to read about them, so please send a brief summary of why they've been honoured to editor@nlu3a.org.uk

• Hear Michael talking about the discovery of Linear B at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/magazine-22799109/linear-b-decoder-michael-ventris-on-bbc-in-1952

The Royal Institution of Great Britain

21 Albemarle Street
London W1S 4BS

Friday 25 January

Founded in 1799, the Royal Institution is the oldest independent research body in the world. Describing itself as 'where science meets the world', it combines a vigorous outreach programme 'diffusing science for the common purposes of life' with active research units. Historically associated with distinguished names such as Faraday, Davy, Rutherford, both Huxleys and Haldane, it is housed in distinguished Grade 1 listed Georgian buildings which were recently refurbished by Terry Farrell and are alone worth the visit. Our conducted tour will cover elements of the history and architecture of the building as well as the stories behind some of the displays. After, we can make our own way, aided perhaps by an electronic guide.

Times

Inside entrance, 10.50am for 11am start. (Or in onsite café at 10.30am). Allow 1½ hours or more.

Facilities

Onsite café, restaurant, toilets and lift.



Transport

Green Park underground is about five minutes' walk. Buses going along Piccadilly and passing Albemarle Street include 8, 9, 14, 19, 22 and 28.

Cost

£10 per person.

Booking is essential. Please use the booking form on page 11 or send us a note with the requested details and your cheque.

The Supreme Court

Parliament Square
London SW1P 3BD

Friday 22 February

The Supreme Court sits in the former Middlesex Guildhall, on the western side of Parliament Square, a judicial balance to the

legislative centre of Parliament opposite. We have arranged a tour by an expert in-house guide who will give us an introduction to the court's role in the UK justice system, explain some of the history and artwork of the building, give interesting examples of cases heard by the court and answer any of our questions. If possible, the tour will include all three of the courtrooms, including the magnificent Justices Library, which is not normally open to the public.

In the event that one of them needs to be used for an urgent court matter or event, the tour route might be amended slightly, while still covering the same subject matter. There is also a permanent exhibition area covering the work, history and architecture of the court.

Times

We meet at the desk at 10.50am for an 11am start, or in the adjacent café at 10.30am. The tour will last about an hour, after which we can browse the exhibition area.

Facilities

There are toilets, café and shop. All areas are accessible.

Transport

District and Circle or Jubilee tube lines to Westminster (Exit 6 for Whitehall west). Once out of the station, walk round the corner away from Whitehall (you should be on Great George Street)



and cross the road by the traffic lights. The Supreme Court is on your right-hand side behind the statue of Abraham Lincoln. By bus: 11, 24, 29, 88, 159, 148 and 211 among others.

Cost

£5

Booking is essential. Please use the booking form below or send us a note with the requested details and your cheque.

Away days booking form

Name(s)_____Membership number (s)_____

BLOCK LETTERS please. No more than two names per application form.

Phone number(s)_____

Date	Name of visit

- Cheques payable to NLU3A
- Send booking form and cheque to Sue Teller, 27 Midholm, London NW11 6LL. Please send a separate booking form and cheque for each visit.
- You will be notified **by phone if you have a place (or not)**. Your cheque will be banked or destroyed accordingly.
- If you are unable to attend the visit, please phone Sue Teller on 8381 4480 so that your place can be offered to another member, or 07748 478 428 for last-minute cancellations.

Answers from crossword clues on page 2

1. bucket. 2. water. 3. hearth. 4. rock music. 5. a yen for travel. 6. dead on time.

Spring term monthly meetings

All take place at 10.45am at St Paul's church, 50 Long Lane, Finchley N3 2PU. Refreshments are served from 10.15am. Please note that, out of courtesy to the speaker and to abide by the fire regulations, you might find yourself locked out of the meeting if you do not arrive by 10.40am.

14 January

One hundred years of deception

The 1700s constituted a period when the people of England seemed to be especially gullible and many hoaxes and tricks were played on them, sometimes by famous writers and politicians. In this entertaining talk, Ian Keable, an authority on 18th century hoaxes, relates and illustrates some of them which are memorable not only for the imaginative nature of the swindles, but also because of the differing motives of the tricksters.



11 February

Russian music in the 19th century – from Glinka to Tchaikovsky

Robert Max, president of the North London Festival of Music and Dance, is famous as a conductor, music director (Oxford Symphony Orchestra), soloist, teacher and coach. He has travelled and worked in many countries where he is respected and honoured.

11 March

Europe and the UK: what next?

This is a return visit by Martyn Bond, who has spent all his working life concerned with European issues, as an academic, civil servant and journalist. After living for many years on the continent, he returned to the UK in 1990. He has written about European affairs and speaks about Brexit whenever anybody is kind enough to ask him.



Term dates



Term	Start date	Finish date
Spring	7 January	12 April (half term 19–22 February)
Summer	23 April	19 July (half term 27–31 May)

Easter weekend is Friday 19 April to Monday 22 April
Passover runs from Friday April 19 to Saturday April 27.