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February 2024

Chairman's Message

Learn, laugh, live

You know, I really enjoy being part of Grantham u3a. I shall be happy to pass on the responsibility for governance to the new officers and committee, but I'm looking forward to continuing being fully involved in its future.

I think it's worth going back from time-to-time and reminding ourselves of the principles of u3a. You can find them on the Grantham u3a website. Here are just a few extracts that particularly appeal to me:

- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging ...
- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive ...,
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers ...

u3a is not an organisation for those who only want to receive. We all have life experience and expertise that we can bring to the party. It is in sharing our ideas, knowledge and ourselves that we achieve the aims of the founders. The strap line "learn, laugh, live" sums up very well what u3a can aspire to achieve for its members. I hope you'll all continue to put something of yourself into the pot for the benefit of us all.

Steve Potts (nearly past Chairman)

Beat the Scammers

The internet is an amazing system to learn about anything and everything we want to know. How many times have we said: "Let's Google it". Guess what? The scammers also love to use that facility to learn about us!

Having done a search on myself recently I was amazed how much information I could find about me and my family. And I am a person who does not share information online, at least I thought so. People use social media to share their life stories, giving scammers the opportunity to start

building a picture of our lives. Scammers start to look for key information we may post so they can appear to know us. After having established an email / phone conversation with us, they subsequently start with questions like: "Can you please confirm . . ."

- **Tip 1:** Whenever we put information online on things like social media, take a few seconds and think if this information is sensitive data. Consider who you are sharing the information with?
- **Tip 2:** When being contacted unexpectedly, let's always ask ourselves the question: "Why?" Scammers will often rush and push us when they start collecting key data. Take a deep breath and if in doubt, terminate the conversation. If there is a genuine issue why we have been contacted, the person or company will contact us again, possibly in writing. **Jacob**

Membership News

I am very pleased to say that this year, for the first time, we have managed to get all members who belong to groups, renewed online. This is a great step forward and will make the life of any future membership secretary much easier. Many thanks for your co-operation.

A large group of new members is to be welcomed.

Alan Guest, Althea Wade, Amanda Parmley, Mandy Harrison, Anna Tandy, Anne Watler, Anne Irons, Carole Retford, Carolyn Brocklebank, Kate Allison, Cheryl Browett, Dave Burrows, Debbie Wood, Derek Hughes, Liz Robb, Gina North, Gordon Eckert, Helen Davis-Yates, Hilary Woodman, Jackie Bruce, Jane Sanderson, Jinty Baker, Janet McNeill, Janet Cordrey, Jayne Chivers, Julie Vaughan-Gray, Ken Bond, Maggie Williams, Maggie Sackett, Marilyn Cattell, May Wood, Michael Scrimshaw, Michael Money, Pam Manterfield, Robert Woods, Rosemary Wild, Shevaun Kern, Susan Woods, Susan Britten.

Angela Rose, Membership Secretary

I am pleased that improvements to our Beacon system have helped with a more efficient renewal process this year. Unfortunately this was not helped by the need for everybody to create a password for themselves. The vast majority of members have now done this but there remain a few who have not. I urge those to spend a few moments to complete this task to their own benefit. It means individuals can amend their personal details and renew themselves online. Help is always available for this.

Andrew Weston Beacon Administrator

Pastoral Care

Please let Janet Hine know if you become aware of a member who is ill and would appreciate a message of support, or if a member has died. Her contact details are: **The Old Parsonage, The Drift, Syston, Grantham, NG32 2BY. 01400 250984** care.granthamu3a@gmail.com

Monthly Meetings

Firstly, I want to wish all our members a very Happy New Year! Albeit a little late perhaps since we are already a good month into it.

I hope you all enjoyed our Monthly Meeting on January 16th, when Jane Barnes entertained us with a vision of life on a dairy farm in Lincolnshire.

Please remember that our February Meeting on the 20th takes the form of our Annual General Meeting. Whilst this sounds perhaps uninspiring, it is a formality that we must undertake each year, because as a Registered Charity it is a constitutional obligation to publish our accounts and keep members informed and to take votes on motions which members may raise. The business aspect should not take up more than 30 minutes and it will be followed by some entertainment from the Guitar Group. The meeting commences at 2pm in the Ballroom.

Here is the programme for the next few months:

Tuesday February 20th 2024: AGM in the ballroom.

Tuesday March 19th 2024: Bernard Bale is a journalist and broadcaster who will present a talk entitled "You must remember this!"

Tuesday 16th April 2024: Nancy Appleyard is Language and Literacy writer and author. Her talk is entitled "It's English, innit!"

As a reminder, the municipal car park in Welham Street, (just 3 minutes' walk away) is a reasonable price –£1.25 for three hours, however we have had the following notification:

Welham Street car park in Grantham, operated by South Kesteven District Council, will see levels three, four, five and six inaccessible from Sunday, February 11, for approximately 12 weeks. The closure is necessary for repairs to the car park surface and maintenance of some drains.

Members may wish to allow more time for parking if attending meetings, other events, appointments, etc as available space will be limited (Morrisons offers 2 hrs free parking, Asda offers 2¹/₂hrs free parking and all other SKDC operated sites will be available but no doubt all areas will be busy over the next few months!).

Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are held in St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, 10.00am - 11.30am on fourth Tuesday of the month and are open to all members.

The next meetings are:

Tuesday 27 February

Tuesday 26 March

Tuesday 23 April

Group News

Current Affairs

Jean Pritchard

There was lively discussion at the Current Affairs meeting on January 10 where the following subjects were aired. (By mutual consent we tried not to dwell on the hot topic of the Post Office.)

Should there be penalties imposed on parents if their children miss school?

Will the increasing use of computers/laptops in schools will it have a negative impact on children's competence in handwriting and spelling?

The proposal for a monument to acknowledge the role of the Royal Navy in capturing so many slave ships leading to the end of slavery.

Loyalty cards, how many do you have? Are they merely discount cards?

The likely implications of Saudi Arabia's purchase of The Daily Telegraph.

France's new 34 year old young (male) Prime Minister.

Fun Jive

Robert Watkins

Fun Jive formed in November 2023 and comprises twenty five members. We meet on Mondays for an hour at 2:30 at Grantham Squash Club. Those that can, enjoy a social coffee afterwards. The emphasis is on enjoying ourselves and progressing in a way that suits each individual. We are lucky to have two pairs of partners who teach the moves and each session ends with a "free jive" where dancers practise new moves or do their own thing. Each week we revise what we have learnt previously and this makes it easier for new members or those that have missed a few weeks. As we progress we will be able to help each other. We normally switch partners during lessons but if you and a partner wish to join us and don't want to switch that is okay too. No rules, just enjoy yourself. New members are always welcome.



Wildlife

Kerry Brazil

Our January meeting saw 11 members of the group visiting Denton reservoir. It was cold, but sunny, and due to the frost, not muddy. The gorse was in flower, but nothing else. There were many young swans (last year's cygnets) on the reservoir, which had ice on parts of it. There were also tufted ducks and mallards, all keeping far enough away to prevent us getting a good view of them. Also noted were a coot and a cormorant. In a nearby field there were greylag or pink foot geese. Unfortunately I didn't pay sufficient attention to be sure which.





Page Turners

Christine Whitecross

Page Turners had their first meeting in January with all members present. It was great to catch up with everyone and hear all about their respective Festive seasons. We are looking forward to another good year of reading especially reading books 'out of our comfort zones'. It is working well.

Guitar group

Graham Welham

Hopefully, everyone had a Great Christmas and New year, belated New Year wishes to all.

Thanks to Fiona and all in the Beginners' Guitar group for the warm welcome they gave when the groups met in December. Sorry that one or two of us couldn't make the invitation, due to catching the winter flu bug.

We got off to a quick start to the year, playing our first gig at St Barnabas, on 8th January to help raise funds in support of their care work. Fiona Malloch-Rear, from St Barnabas, sent an email thanking the guitar group and saying on that day we managed to raise £250.00 for their fundraising cause. She also asked, if anyone in the u3a, would consider supporting St Barnabas with fund raising for their up and coming "Easter novelties fundraiser", when they sell, via their shop, donated chicks, bunnies, etc that have a crème egg inside. If anyone would be willing to either knit chicks or bunnies, or other Easter related items, or would like to make a

chocolate egg donation to them, please contact St Barnabas Tel :- 01476 591010 or Fiona, via email, Fiona.malloch-rear@stbarnabashospice.co.uk

Our next gig will be at the Annual General Meeting, later this month. It will be great to meet up with everyone and we have a revised set list with new songs to play. Hopefully, everyone will stay on at the end of the meeting, for a bit of music and dancing!

Finally, a warm welcome to Alan Guest, who is our newest guitar group member, and joined the u3a in January this year. We still have places available for anyone else who would like to join the guitar group, we practice, at the Christian Fellowship Church, Belton Avenue, every Thursday, pm from 1.30- 4.00pm.

Local History

Anne Rudderham

We had a great turn out to our first meeting of the year in Grantham Museum when we welcomed a return visit from Colin Deeley of the National Trust, this time to give an amusing and interesting talk on the *Secrets of Belton House and its Gardens*. In February we look forward to a new speaker for us, Tom Lane, who will talk on *Lincolnshire Customs and Traditions*. Tom will be bringing two folk singers (Nigel Creasey and Teri Clark) and as it will be St Valentine's Day he'll be incorporating this into his talk. Another new speaker, Adrian Gray, will join us in March who'll no doubt delight us with *Scandals of the Lincolnshire Gentry!*

From April, we go out and about and confirmed visits on the programme for this year include a talk and guided tour of Tolethorpe Hall, near Stamford, the International Bomber Command Centre at Lincoln, Elton Hall near Peterborough, Ayscoughfee Hall/Gardens in Spalding along with Bottesford Church with an optional village trail.

In addition, a limited number of our group have been given kind permission by the owner to visit St Vincent's House, best known for being the Second World War HQ of 5 Group Bomber Command between October 1937 and November 1943 and was where Operation Chastise of May 1943 - immortalised in The Dambusters film - was planned and where, on the night of 16/17 May 1943, Air Marshal Arthur "Bomber" Harris, Barnes Wallis and other RAF high command were when coded radio messages were received confirming that the raid had breached the Möhne and Eder dams.

So, an interesting few months ahead!

We have now settled in our new venue at the Church Hall, St. John's Church, Manthorpe. We meet on the third Monday of the month at 10.00am. Our programme for the coming year is:

January Introduction of new members, discussion of the year's programme, 'Thoughts on Consciousness' by Jenny.

February Talk on 'Noise Reduction in Radio Telescopes' by Elle Franks, a PhD student at the University of Manchester.

March Talk on 'Air Source Heat Pumps and PV panels with Batteries' by Jason Murphy, Key Accounts Manager at Radiant Renewables.

April Talk on 'The Anthropocene' by Umesh.

May Visit to Boothby Wildland for a presentation and tour of the site at a cost of £5 per person. Awaiting confirmation of the date.

June 'The Nature of God' – a discussion led by John. More details nearer the time, but please feel free to contribute.

July A talk on 'Forces in play in Bridges' (internal speaker yet to be identified) followed by a team exercise to design and build a bridge to meet a specific brief using only supplied material. Some building work may need to happen outside the meeting!

August Garden party at Andrea and Harry's during which the bridges will be tested to destruction to identify the winning team. This could well be (should be?) an evening meeting.

September An update on the development and progress of Robot Isaac by Paul, and The Grobot by Andrew/Jenny.

October A talk on MS drug development and conducting drug trials to be arranged by Richard. This session may need to take place later in the year depending on the availability of Richard's contact.

November A talk on 'Strategic Planning' by Richard.

December A update on 'Choices in Energy Usage and Storage' by Steve.

Note the topics in October to December can be rearranged to suit speakers' availability.

Mahjong and Rummikub

Avril Leitch

We are a sociable group, playing both games weekly every Monday afternoon at Manners Street Community Lounge, and we would like to attract more players. Both games use tiles instead of cards, both use a rack, so nothing is held in your hand.

Rummikub is a fun game, played with 3 or 4 players. A game of strategy, you need to have your wits about you as you try and offload your tiles before your opponents!

Mahjong is very addictive, our 4 regular players thoroughly enjoy the afternoon games, they say it never disappoints.

Both games are great for mental stimulation, and simply having good fun. You can have tuition for either game at Leaders home before deciding to join. Interested? Please contact Avril Leitch on 01476 570199



Beginners' Guitar Group

Fiona Robbins

It seems a long time since Christmas, but the Beginners' Guitar Group would like to thank our more experienced players and singers for their backing at our festive sing-along. A good time was had by all and we certainly plan to do it again next year. Our strumming has improved and I might even get the chords right next time!

Gardening Group

Caroline Bowman



Each year the Gardening Group organises a lecture which is held in the Guildhall Theatre and is open to everyone, including non-u3a members. This year Joe Whitehead, Head Gardener at Burghley House, gave an interesting and entertaining talk on “Burghley, Past, Present and Future”. He outlined the changes that had occurred in the gardens from their creation at the time of Elizabeth I through Capability Brown’s extensive landscaping in the 18th Century, and up to the present day, when flower borders and water features are being reinstated and new features, such as the sculpture garden, are being installed.

Thank you to Steve Potts for introducing the speaker – his last public duty before retiring as Chairman.

We hope to hold another garden-themed talk next year, so, as they say, watch this space.

Photography

Derek Murray

The December competition topic was *Machinery* and won Harvey Robbins.



December is also the time to get the results of Photographer of the Year based on the monthly competition. First place each month gets 5 points, second place 4 points and third place 3 points; all entries get a point for entering. In the competition of 2023 Harvey Robbins was first, Di Hale second and third Sharon Flaherty.

In January the annual Photograph of the Year competition was held. Entries on any subject and taken at any time throughout 2023 are allowed. An outside speaker is invited to judge this competition and this year it was Dave Baxter of Stamford Photography Group, Stamford u3a Photography Group and the Royal Photographic Society. Dave gave detailed critiques of each of the entries before selecting the winners. He awarded first place to Jamie Back, second place to Rachel Southwell and third to Bernard Brooks.

For those of you interested in seeing the range of photographic talents from this group simply search on *Flickr for u3a Grantham, Select Groups and then u3a Grantham Photography.*

For further details about the group contact Derek Murray,
ddm_murray@hotmail.com

Thank you to all contributors this month. Please send your contributions for the March Newsletter to ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com by Friday 9 March