



**November 2023**

### **Chairman's Message**

#### **I'm going to have to ask this question again!**

I suspect that the chairmen of u3as all around the country have to do this almost annually, and that's to ask the members to volunteer to join the committee. So I'm doing it again this month.

As a charity, Grantham u3a has a legal requirement to have a board of trustees (the committee). And, by law, this must include a chairman, a treasurer and a secretary. In addition committee members fulfil other vital roles; membership secretary, minutes secretary, groups co-ordinator, data and IT support, monthly meetings organisation, website management etc. Whilst most of the action in our u3a takes place in the interest groups (and it's good to see new groups forming regularly) this can't happen unless we provide the required level of governance.

With a total membership in excess of 550 you would think we should have no problem finding a dozen people to fulfil this task. Whether it's because you are all so bashful that you underrate your skills or whatever, I'm not sure. What I do hear is a resounding silence when this topic is raised.

And in reality what I'm actually offering you is the chance to join a fun team of people who enjoy the challenge of ensuring ongoing opportunities for third agers in the Grantham area.

So please offer to join your committee. Give me a ring on 01476 530361 or email [chair.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair.granthamu3a@gmail.com) and let's have a chat about how you might use your skills in the service of the Grantham u3a community.

**Steve Potts, Chairman**

## Post of Treasurer

At the Annual General Meeting in February, I will be entering my final year as treasurer of Grantham u3a. Our constitution limits the years of service by our officers. In the case of the treasurer, this is six years and I will therefore be handing over to my successor at the 2025 AGM.

The post involves maintaining the records of our bank accounts on spreadsheets, preparing the annual accounts from these, and the payment of invoices, all of which is done electronically. It would suit someone with a financial background and a working knowledge of Excel spreadsheets.

Please let me know if you might be interested in the post or if you would like any further information. I can be contacted at

[treas.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:treas.granthamu3a@gmail.com). Ideally, we would hope the person concerned will join the committee at the forthcoming AGM so that we can work together over twelve months to ensure a smooth handover in 2025.

**Tony Hine, Treasurer**

## Membership News

Renewal for 2024 membership is now open and once the password is set can be done online either by using a bank card or by PayPal. Emails have been sent to each member who has an email account to explain the process.

I am delighted to see that the Beacon u3a system for membership renewal is working very well and indeed over 70 members have already embraced the online method themselves. We have over 550 members so by each member renewing themselves the process is greatly simplified.

For those unable to renew their membership on line, just attend the Tuesday coffee morning or monthly meeting with your bank card and renewal can be done there with our new card machine. This can be done without the need for any paper!

The target date for renewals is 1st Jan 2024.

We would like to welcome the following members and thank them for creating their password and joining online themselves: Andrew Lane, Anne Marie O'Connell, Barbara Shannon, Julie Mackinder, Lily Game, Malcolm Cooper, Susan Gromett, Vince Ryan, Wendy Wood.

**Angela Rose, Membership Secretary**

## Beacon Administration

Our use of Beacon as a membership system continues to improve albeit with the odd hiccup. Most, but not all members, with email have managed to create their own password for better security but 50 or so remain reluctant.

If you wish to renew for 2024 online you will have to create your password first. I am impressed that so many members have renewed within hours of the email being sent to say the process was live.

Indeed I was tickled to see an elderly member attend my new Googling course with a newly printed membership card for 2024 within 12 hours of getting notice. He found it so simple to do.

Let's continue to use our Beacon system to the full and lead the way in being a modern u3a.

**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](mailto:care.granthamu3a@gmail.com)

## Monthly Meetings

The Committee apologises for the sudden change of speaker for our October Monthly Meeting at the Guildhall. We had attempted to contact Chris Freeman a couple of weeks before the due date but unknown to us his email address was no longer in use. Despite continued efforts to contact him in the days leading up to our Tuesday event, we failed and at the last minute we asked Dr Ian Mauber to step up to the podium and give us a talk on the fascination of language and expressions around the world. We are grateful to Ian for being available with only 48 hours' notice and helping us out of a tight spot.

Happily, I have been able to speak to Chris Freeman this week and was glad to hear he was alive and kicking and had been lecturing in Australia, unaware that we had attempted to contact him on a now-defunct email address and indeed unaware of our original booking which we made a year ago. He has promised to give us his talk at some point in the future, and we look forward to that.

I'd like to thank those members who have been kind enough to write to me with suggestions, comments and ideas for future Monthly Meeting Speakers. I try and contact each suggested person and gauge their suitability for our audience. Please continue to email me with your ideas. ([vchair.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:vchair.granthamu3a@gmail.com))

Let me remind you that monthly Meetings at the Guildhall start as usual at 2 pm and conclude around 3.30 pm and are usually held in the Theatre Auditorium. Tea, coffee, and other refreshments are available before and after the meeting in Digby's Café on the ground floor of the Guildhall and we encourage members to go there and socialise. Most members who come by car manage their parking without difficulty, but remember that the municipal car park in Welham Street, (just 3 minutes' walk away) is a reasonable price – £1.20 for 3 hours.

Here is the programme for the next few months:

**Tuesday November 21<sup>st</sup> 2023:** Millie Freeman, who has entertained us on previous occasions, will give us a seasonal talk entitled: "A Victorian Christmas".

**Tuesday December 19th 2023** at 2pm: Christmas Party. As in previous years, the Committee have organised a modest festive occasion in the Ballroom of the Guildhall for members, which will feature some nibbles of the mince pie and sausage roll variety, along with tea, coffee and possibly other libations. There will be a Christmas Quiz arranged by Damian McEntegart and some singing of carols and Christmas songs accompanied by the Ukulele group. All Grantham u3a members are welcome!

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** Jane Barnes is a popular speaker who has entertained other u3a groups in our region and comes highly recommended. She will regale us with a talk entitled "Tales from a Dairy Farmers' Wife".

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024:** This is the day of our Annual General Meeting, an important day in the calendar of all members, which will take place at 2pm in the Ballroom, and will be followed by some light entertainment.

## 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 28 November**

**December - No Coffee Morning**

**Tuesday - 23 January**

**Tuesday 21 February**

## Group News

### Philosophers Group

Steve Potts

After months of anticipation we finally had our first meeting at Grantham Museum on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October. Our aim is to learn about the lives and teaching of the major philosophers of the past 2500 years. We are using publicly available YouTube talks and started with learning about the ancient Greek philosopher Plato and his mentor Socrates.



SOCRATES.



PLATO.

There are 28 members enrolled on the course though 7 weren't able to make this first meeting. After the talks we divided into small groups to discuss what we had discovered. Clearly people had a lot to say as I struggled to get everyone's attention to close the meeting.

There is still space for a few more participants, so if you'd like to join us to learn about Aristotle at our November meeting please contact me at [spotts1662@gmail.com](mailto:spotts1662@gmail.com)

### Discutons!

Pete Hutchinson (le prof)

### Let's talk in French!

The French group **Discutons!** flies a little below the radar in u3a terms because we are an online group using Zoom. We used to meet chez moi but went online during lockdown and decided to continue afterwards because we found we could make it work for us. This is not to say that we don't meet up in the flesh, because we do! On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of October, for example, we met up au café qui s'appelle The Garden Yard and spoke

beaucoup de français over our coffee and cake. Our online meetings are normally on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of the month with 2 sessions between 11.00 and 11.40 and between 12.00 and 12.30. As you can see we have a 20 minute pause-café. The thing I would like to stress is that we always have a lot of fun and don't take things too seriously! This is not a French course as such, but a certain level of proficiency in spoken French is desirable. If, for example, you haven't learnt any formal French since your schooldays, but get by in France, you would be more than welcome to join our group. We currently have 2 places available.

To give you an idea of what we get up to here's the programme for our meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October

**A text in French on vaping in the UK :**

**Des vapoteuses "sans nicotine" vendues par Amazon contenaient ...de la nicotine** (Nicotine- free vapes sold by Amazon contained ... nicotine).

You would receive this text (and the song lyrics) as an e-mail attachment roughly a week before our meeting. We would read it, translate it together, then discuss it together in French!

**A You Tube quiz : Multiple choice questions (ie a gentle nod to grammar)**

**A Song by Georges Brassens : Brave Margot**

We translate the song together, then sing along with the You Tube video (well, some of us do!)

I'm very flexible over content. If you need some restaurant French, I'd be happy to oblige.

If this all sounds a bit formal, it generally isn't. We sometimes spend the first 10 minutes having a catch up in French and 5 minutes after our break discussing the quality of our coffee.

If you would like to join us, my home telephone number is 01476 401863  
email : peter.hutchinson1@ntlworld.com

**Scottish Dancing**

**John Aitken**

The u3a Scottish Dancers visited the Conservative Club in October to entertain the Dementia Group who normally meet at the BHive Community Hub. They danced jigs, reels and Strathspeys and also gave some the members a chance to try a simple dance partnered by experienced dancers. The session ended with Mairi's Wedding when the audience clapped their hands and tapped their toes in time to the well-known music.





### **Our Scottish Dance Group enjoys a Centenary Tea Dance**

We had a fantastic afternoon Tea Dance on Saturday the 30th of September this year. We danced at Waltham Village Hall which was beautifully set up for the 100th anniversary of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS).

There were 10 dances, chosen by the RSCDS, one from each decade of its existence, to which 4 more were added representing its two founders as well as the Society's headquarters. A CD of music had been specially recorded to accompany the dances.

Several groups from different parts of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire came together for the occasion. Our Grantham u3a group, along with members from groups in Waltham, Newark, Bingham, Nottingham, Loughborough and Leicester danced together to celebrate this special occasion.

In the interval we sat down to tea with sandwiches and a cake decorated with the RSCDS Centenary logo. Our 51 dancers at Waltham, some young and several young at heart, were joined by other groups dancing the same

10 dances in this country and all over the world within the same 24 hours. How amazing to be a part of this worldwide phenomenon!

Since our u3a group started in 2016, we have been learning more and more very interesting and challenging dances taught to us by John Aitken. Several of us also attend Waltham Scottish Country Dance Group, where John shares the teaching with Sue Ronald, who also runs the Loughborough u3a group. This gives us confidence to join other groups of dancers from different locations to share wonderful times with a growing number of friends. We Learn, We Laugh and We Live!!!

**Written by Amber and Nelson**



### **Quiz group**

**Damian McEntegart**

The Quiz group had its latest quiz in October at Grantham Squash Club. Unfortunately it was the day of Storm Babet which halved the usual attendance of around 40. Nevertheless Heather presented a great quiz including a challenging round on James Bond music.

Attendees are randomly split into teams and so it doesn't matter what your standard of quiz knowledge is. Many people come on their own. The objective is to have a good time, meet people and hopefully learn a little. A small prize will be awarded to each member of the winning team.

We meet at the Squash Club on Harlaxton Road at 2.00pm on the third Friday of every month (next one 17<sup>th</sup> November). New attendees are very



welcome which will enable us to expand the number of teams. Please contact Damian McEntegart for further details (01476 400128/07804 631311 or email [damo\\_56@hotmail.com](mailto:damo_56@hotmail.com))

Note. There will be no quiz on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of December and Damian will instead present a quiz as part of the u3a Christmas Party at 2pm Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December in the Guildhall Ballroom.

## Wildlife Group

**Kerry Brazil**

Eight members of the group had a walk along Bingham Linear Park. The park is a local nature reserve running along the line of an abandoned railway. The walk runs from Nottingham Road in Bingham to the river Smite.

We only managed the first half of the walk, mainly due to the increasing rain. We had hoped to see autumn colours on the trees, but the leaves were yet to change. There was an abundance of hips and haws, and a lot of fallen apples.

The paintings on the bridges were interesting.





## **Strollers Glendyr Seward**

Below a little write up of our last walk. I am no longer going to be leader of the group as we just find we have no time with other commitments getting in the way. Hopefully someone will volunteer to take over from me so if there are any likely candidates out there I am willing to hand over and assist if needed. Anyway take care.

Our walk this month is my last one as leader. We had a small group but a lovely 3.4 mile walk around Caythorpe with a very good meal at the end at the Red Lion in Caythorpe. It was a bit soggy under foot but again the weather was good to us. Thanks to all the group as we have had fun and the camaradie has been great.



## **Beginners' Guitar Group**

## **Fiona Robbins**

The end of October brought a Hallowe'en theme to our proceedings, which ended with an extraordinary rendition of The Monster Mash! Our group has gained sufficient confidence to look at various spooky songs and explore ways of bringing out the weird and wonderful. It's just possible that what we lack in technique, we make up for with plenty of enthusiasm....

Next week will see a return to some sense of normality before we start to look at the frivolity of rockin' around the Christmas tree.

## Local History

Anne Rudderham

We had a good turnout at our last meeting to listen to Dr Maureen James' interesting subject of *Bogles, Boggarts and Will 'o' the Wykes - Exploring the Folklore of the Lincolnshire Fens*. In November we hope to plan next year's programme and as we take a break in December, our next meeting will be on Wednesday 10th January at the Museum, 2-4pm, when we welcome the return of Colin Deeley from the National Trust to talk about Belton House (all u3a members invited).

## Photography

There is a proposal to make our Flickr group "public", so Grantham u3a members can look at our work; currently the uploading of images is kept to our photo group. We are trying to attract u3a members who use phones /tablets/ compact cameras who might possibly have been put off joining us ... fearing high end cameras are needed.

At the meeting a brief demonstration of Lightroom SW was given, it has useful "library" features and a good suite of editing tools. However, the basic toolset is similar to what you find on others such as Faststone, Windows photo, etc. Next month Jamie Back is going to run through some of the features on Photoshop.

The competition subject was *Reflections* and the winner was Steve Potts, with this image taken on his Smartphone.



There was a lengthy discussion on whether to continue with the competition in its current format. It was agreed to keep it going until the end of year and decide at the AGM, and next month the subject is *Curves*.

**Canasta PM****Josephine Hewitt**

Please accept my apologies should anyone have turned up at Manners Street Community Room to play Canasta on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. I did try to let all members know about the Voting, which was taking place on that date, during the previous two meetings which we had. Some people were not available on the phone, so I hope word got around.

May I take this opportunity to say that we shall not need to change anything for the Christmas week since we are not booked to meet until the 28<sup>th</sup> December.

**Tilegames****Avril Leitch**

Tilegames group can welcome some new members. We play Rummikub - a game for 4 single players, using tiles instead of cards, where players try to empty their hand by rearranging and adding to the sets already open on the table.

Some members will play Mahjong - a game popular in China, for 4 single players, using tiles to form Sets and play with Winds and Dragons.

Both games are just like playing cardgames, but instead use tiles. Tuition, of course, can be given

We meet every week at 2 pm on Monday afternoons at Manners Street Community Lounge. Please contact the Leader - Avril Leitch 01476 570199 or 07483 288027

**Singing For Fun****Janet Hine**

This group has been running for several years now. It sprang from one simple suggestion and has proved popular. As several new members have recently joined, the group is currently full, but we operate a waiting-list. Initially we had no resources but gradually built up a wide repertoire, which continues to expand. We sing a mixture of material: show tunes, folk songs, "classic pop" and some hymns. Usually we begin with Rounds, and have recently scaled ( ho, ho) the dizzy heights of 4 parts!

We are brilliantly accompanied and led by Judy, who adds to the fun of the singing. If she is unavailable then Andrew will step in, using electronic resources. He has also made all our music available online, in an effort to reduce paper and printing. Refreshments are provided by our regular catering team, and several other members variously help out with the practical running of the group. A collaborative and participatory effort!



We can certainly say that our ensemble-singing enriches our LIVES, that we LEARN new material and that always enjoy a good LAUGH!

## STEM Cell

John Down

Members of The STEM Cell recently visited the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant for a guided tour.



*Figure 1 Members dressed, ready for the tour*



*Figure 2 View over the Turbine Hall*

The plant is largely conventional in design, consisting of a boiler creating steam at 550°C and 110 bar pressure which drives a turbine/generator set to produce 38 MW of electricity which is enough to power 65,000 homes. In addition, the plant provides free heat to public buildings in Sleaford town centre including the swimming pool, a primary school and the council offices.

The unusual feature of this plant is that it uses straw as its principal fuel, supplemented with a little wood chip. It consumes about 240,00 tons of straw each year, from farms within a 50 mile radius of Sleaford. It burns the straw at the rate of about 55 bales per hour, and each bale typically weighs in the region of 600Kg.

Straw storage on site is limited to about three days' supply and lorry loads of straw arrive throughout the day, Monday to Friday. One of the striking features of the plant is the degree of mechanised handling of straw into and out of storage and into the boiler.



Figure 3 Straw storage explained



Figure 4 Moving Straw Bales



Figure 5 Our guide in full flow

The visit proved to be very interesting and informative and was much enjoyed by group members.

**Thank you to all contributors this month. Please send your contributions for the December / January newsletter to [ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com) by Friday 8 December.**