

KING'S LYNN **U3A**

KaLeidoSCOpe

Autumn 2013



*For members, About members,
By members*

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Editorial

*Herewith your first issue of **KaLeidoscope** under the auspices of the new(ish) team. Some time ago, we invited suggestions for a new name for our Newsletter, feeling that we had moved away from being just a news letter, given the scope and volume of your contributions. The team decided that 'kaleidoscope' (defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as 'a changing and enjoyable mixture or pattern') fairly accurately sums up the content and presentation we strive for, if perhaps slightly lacking in colour (we are ever mindful of print costs). I hope **KaLeidoscope** will dazzle, but if you feel that further change is warranted, then give us a good rattle and shake, and see what unfolds.*

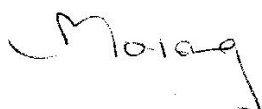
On the subject of change, we have all experienced many during our lives, some beyond our personal control, and we may therefore be of the opinion that nothing can, or should, be taken for granted. In this edition, we highlight a few things that we do possibly assume 'just happen'.

Val Sparkes, our Group Co-ordinator, gives us some insight into what it means to be a Group Leader. This can be a very rewarding role for those who lead one (or more) of our many groups – but not without personal time and energy being expended to make it 'happen'.

Another of our articles tells us something of the history and workings of the North Lynn Community Centre, where we hold not only our monthly meetings, but also other scheduled and ad hoc activities. We can be confident that when we turn up, for our own benefit and pleasure, the hall will be unlocked and facilities will be available. Whilst some of the comforts are thanks to the efforts of U3A members, without the behind-the-scenes support of the Community Centre staff, none of this would be possible. The organisation required does not just 'happen'.

The above all feeds into making participation in U3A so satisfying. I think we, the members, can allow ourselves to feel a little bit smug that we contribute to making life more rewarding for ourselves and others. Whilst some recipients in life might take rewards for granted, we 'doers' can regain some of that control we thought we may have lost, just by being part of a thriving U3A.

So let's rattle and shake - pill bottles, walking sticks, bus passes, whatever comes to hand - and even dem bones.



Morag Bean, Editor

Apologies and Clarifications

Our computer gremlin-in-residence has been at work. The Spring 2013 *Newsletter* stated that the Book of the Month (1) Group is headed by Norma Chaplin. Its leader is, of course, Di Buckland, whose telephone number is 01553 617041. We offer apologies to Norma and Di, and to anyone else who was bewildered or inconvenienced by the misinformation.

From Your Committee

Secretary's Report

The second Friday of the month arrives with amazing regularity as yet another U3A meeting is about to take place. As I leave home, I check that I have everything I need – agenda, notebook, pen, magazines, articles of interest from Headquarters, diary, items left in hall at last meeting, sense of humour and a smile. I certainly hope all is in order.

On arrival at the centre, Pam, who always has a smile and a story to share, greets me. Carol, who never fails to bring the milk for our tea and coffee, is in the kitchen with three or four volunteers preparing for the coffee break. Gloria is at the front making sure that everyone who wants to address the meeting has an opportunity to do so. Keith and Edward are setting up the PA system and the loop so that we can all hear. Val puts out the notice board and Rosalind puts out her outings lists. Les and Barbara leave out their lists for their lunch groups and the Sunday Strollers encourage people to sign up for another walk. Anne has yet another list for the Local History Group outing – which fascinating aspect of Lynn's history will be revealed to us this month? Penny bustles about wondering when to leave to collect the speaker from the station and Margaret and Grace are on hand to greet new members and visitors. Vivienne makes sure she has some petty cash and that the speaker's cheque has been signed. Dorothy arranges cards made by the card making group and encourages all to buy one. Morag puts out Newsletter comment sheets, for feedback and/or suggestions for items.

As members arrive and greet one other, the chatter gets louder until Gloria brings us to order for the start of our business meeting. When the business is over, tea and coffee are served and it's time for another catch up with friends old and new.

Stories are shared and queues form to sign up for the various outings and events, and a hush descends as we are introduced to the Speaker. Will we be amazed, amused, enthralled, educated, or informed?

An hour later, and time to go home - Now, do I have everything I need to take home with me - agenda, notebook, pen, magazines, articles of interest from Headquarters, diary, items left in the hall from this meeting, sense of humour and a smile. I certainly hope so.

Judith Harrison

Study Days

Fellow U3A member Dr Edwin Salter kindly offered to hold three Study Days at his King's Lynn home in April, May and June, namely Counselling and Therapy, Speaking Well, and Climate Change and the Environment, all featuring guest Speakers. The gesture was much appreciated by the Committee and by members, events subsequently being attended by five, six and three members respectively.

It was agreed to invite feedback from attendees, utilising session specific questionnaires, in the hope that the findings might be of value to Edwin should he consider organising any further such events. The resulting matrix cannot be fully reproduced in *KaLeidoscope*, but copy is available by request, on paper and as an email attachment, and can be viewed on our website (www.kingslynnu3a).

The consensus was that each event proved to be informative and well structured, suitably paced, and last but not least, enjoyable. All participants appreciated Edwin's consummate hospitality, and thanks are extended to him for his interest and efforts on behalf of our U3A.

Morag Bean

Using Gift Aid to help King's Lynn U3A

As King's Lynn U3A is registered as a charity, it is eligible to use the Gift Aid scheme to reclaim the tax element of members' subscriptions, which are classed as donations.

For those who have signed up to the scheme, we take your donation, which is money you have already paid tax on, and are refunded 25% of the amount by HM Revenue and Customs. On the current £12 subscription, this amounts to an extra £3 for our funds.

Many of you have signed Gift Aid forms, but there may be some who pay tax on pensions and/or other income, but have not completed our form. We have therefore decided to send out new forms to all members with the subscription letters for 2014, to enable us to be aware of any changes (e.g. of address) or to add members who had previously not completed the form, but would like to be part of the Gift Aid scheme.

Vivienne Merryweather, Treasurer

Membership Renewals

Membership renewals are due in January each year.

Membership will automatically lapse at the end of March if still unpaid. You must be a current member to participate in any Special Interest Group activities.

The annual fee in 2014 will be £15.

Those joining in the last quarter of the year will pay half this rate.

Associate Membership is £10 - for those who belong to another U3A group, but wish to participate in our activities.

Renewals should be made to the Membership Secretary at the monthly meeting in January, February or March when a printed programme and annual membership receipt will be handed to you, or by post with a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your programme to be sent to you. Payment must be by cheque only, please.

Edward Harrison, Membership Secretary

National Conference and AGM, 13-16 September 2013

Sub-title: 'Learn, Laugh and Live'

We regret it has not been possible to bring you a full report of the AGM held at the East Midlands Conference Centre, featuring guest Speakers Professor Russell Foster, Ms Sue Hennessy of RNLI and the Rt Hon John Bercow, MP. Our delegate, Joy Dunham, will present a verbal report at a later date, prior to the transcript being posted on the King's Lynn U3A website. Downloaded copy can be made available on request.

The outcome of voting in the Special Resolution "To adopt the amended Articles of Association" was: **For 666, Against 5, Abstained 23**. As an aide-memoire, the individual elements which comprised the resolution are reproduced here (some text has been abridged):

***Clause 23**, which details the number of votes to which U3As are entitled, has been amended to reflect growth of some branches to 2000+ members*

***Clauses 29/30/31** have been rewritten to reflect the 2010 resolution re declaration of votes. **Clause 32** is amended*

*All clauses referring to transitional arrangements i.e. **38/39/40** have been removed and the Articles renumbered*

***Clause 43** (new) gives a region which has no regional trustee the right to hold an election. Should the position remain unfilled, the Trust will have the power to appoint a trustee who will remain on the National Executive Committee until the AGM*

Editor

Special Interest Groups Update

We are delighted that the popular Sunday Strollers Group has reconvened, each outing being organised by a participant.

We now also have a second Hand Bells Group, held on the first and third Tuesday of the month, under the tutelage of Ann Bolton.

Group Membership Statistics

Some of the following information was requested by U3A headquarters.

King's Lynn U3A runs 36 separate Special Interest Groups, covering 26 different subjects, some duplicated because of their popularity.

Some, limited in size to between four and ten members, take place in private homes, usually that of the Group Leader. Those that take place in larger venues or involve outside activities – such as Scottish Country Dancing, Petanque and Local History – may have 30 or more.

Most meetings take place monthly, but some are fortnightly and others weekly; some may be seasonal. Hours can total about 100 per month.

In 2013, the percentages of our 250 or so members who belong to one or more groups – or SIGs – are as follows:

Do not belong to a group – 32%	Belong to 1 or 2 groups – 48%
Belong to 3 or 4 groups – 16%	Belong to 5 or 6 groups – 2%

Edward Harrison

Widen your perspective ...



Whether your lifestyle is baronial or bothy, barn or bungalow, King's Lynn U3A is the place for everyone. You could add another dimension to your life; for example, you may



have a hobby which others would like to share – and you could, perhaps, become a Group Leader. No doors remain closed in the U3A .

Local History Group

Keith and I took over from Ann Bolton, with our first meeting being in February. We decided to have this meeting at our home, showing a video of the 1947 floods, with a discussion after for suggestions for future meetings. We had two dates as 23 people put their names down!

In **March** we visited Cooper Roller Bearings. Twenty people enjoyed the factory tour, especially Keith, as he had worked there until 1973. In **April**, 17 of us had a very interesting tour and video of Denver Sluice, which followed nicely after the video of the floods, as it showed how much the risk of flooding has been reduced. In **May** we had a very informative evening walk and talk around Lynn entitled "the darker side of Lynn". In **June** we hired a mini bus and did a tour of some of the coastal villages with Keith giving a commentary of the history (he used to be a tour guide for Norfolk Lavender.) We hope to do another one for those who put their names down but were unable to attend. In **July**, 30 of us visited Elgood's Brewery in Wisbech, and as the day was very hot, really enjoyed the free tasters which we sampled after the Brewery tour. We then had a very nice lunch and afterwards a tour of the gardens. In **September** we will be going to Walsingham for a walking guided tour.

We are enjoying the challenge of arranging these trips, and trying to get a varied programme, but have a lot to live up to following Ann.

Anne Lemmon (wife, personal assistant and secretary to Keith)

Elgoods Brewery and Gardens

Around 30 Local History Group members, on a hot July afternoon, undertook a very interesting guided tour of the Wisbech brewery and its four acre gardens, situated alongside the River Nene.

The site on which the brewery stands sold for £120 in the 1700s, together with orchards, gardens and stables, and was converted into a mill and granary. In 1786 it was converted into a brewhouse by new owners Dennis Herbert and John Gooch. It then passed to Thomas Fawcett for £5,624, changed hands a further four or five times, until eventually purchased by Messrs John Elgood and George Harrison for £38,000. John Elgood left five sons and a daughter, and in 1905 the company of Elgoods and Sons Ltd was formed.

After our brewery tour, we had an enjoyable lunch and partook of some complimentary samples of real ale in the bar (well, it was a hot day!).

The garden, with its lake, maze, specimen trees, rockery and herb garden, plus visitors' shop, is well worth a visit. The ales are a bonus!

Gill Cassidy (See Photo Gallery)

Recorders

I joined the recorder group in November 2012, going along to my first meeting with my descant, treble and tenor recorders... and a very rusty ability!! The tenor was greeted enthusiastically, as no-one else had one,

The group was playing Christmas carols and sounded very well practised, playing the notes much more quickly than I thought I would ever manage on the heavy tenor! However, it was agreed that the low notes of the tenor recorder added depth to the performance... I was in!

We performed at local care homes Lisbon Court and Goodwin's Hall. We were made very welcome, furniture was relocated and audiences assembled. We were delighted with the response, everyone joined in to sing along with the carols. We even got an encore! Lots of people said that they had really enjoyed it and asked when we would be coming again. This made us feel good, because we had been very nervous, although our Leader, Ann Higgins, had been sure that all would go well!

I think I speak for the group when I say that we could not have done it without Ann's guidance - so a big thank you to Ann (and also to the rest of the group for making me feel so welcome)! *Denise Mansell*

Outings

Ellys Manor House:

We set off on time for Great Ponton, near Grantham, but didn't get far when the coach came to a halt, as the bridge at Sutton Bridge had started to open for river traffic. Eventually we arrived at the village's modern community centre, where we were welcomed by the house's owner, Clive Walker. We were divided into 2 groups, one to go to the church and the other to the house, swapping over after lunch.



Our guide to the church was a historian who also conducts tours at Lincoln Cathedral. He told the story of the Ellys (pronounced Ellis) brothers and how they had made their fortunes through marriage and in the wool trade as merchants of the Staple of Calais, when that port was still in English hands. (The Staple, based in a series of continental ports and finally London, was a medieval system of controlling the trade of certain products and levying taxes on them.) To show off their wealth, the manor, with its fashionable stepped gable, was built prominently overlooking the Great North Road for all to see.

The existing church next door was expanded by the addition of a tower in 1519. Of interest on the tower were the gargoyles, especially one of the earliest known of a man wearing spectacles, possibly modelled on one of the brothers who had poor sight. Our guide also explained the violin-shaped weather vanes we had seen on the community centre and the church. Legend has it that the people of the village gave hospitality to an itinerant fiddle player, and possibly even paid for his passage to America, where he made his fortune. He repaid them by supplying the original weather vane for the church (the current ones are copies).

Mr Walker jokingly describes the late medieval manor house as a “two-up, two-down”. He and his wife bought the house about 25 years ago in a state of neglect from the Church authorities, its previous use having been as a rectory. They have funded the restoration from their own pockets, admission fees and grants.

Mrs Walker showed a small group around downstairs, whilst Mr Walker took the others upstairs. The rooms on the ground floor have lofty ceilings and large fireplaces, one having been subdivided into a dining room and study, with the kitchen and other utilities being in adjoining former outbuildings. However, an upstairs room held the pride of the house: 16th century wall paintings. They are awaiting conservationists to remove the remains of plaster without damage, funds permitting. When highlighted by Mr Walker, we could make out the fruit and flowers, animals and gardens portrayed.

I was impressed by the house and the enthusiasm of its owners. I couldn't help but wonder how a private home could be kept so tidy to allow for paying visitors. I'm sure I could learn a tip or two!

Norma Chaplin (See Photo Gallery)

Anglesey Abbey and Mill Lode

The House Anglesey Abbey is, without doubt, one of the best places I have visited. The gardens are beautiful, with different themes dotted about. The house has a very welcoming feel and is richly decorated, displaying many clocks and works of art.

The estate was bought by two brothers in 1926, namely Huttleston and Henry Broughton, Huttleston taking the title of Baron Fairhaven in 1929 (after his birth place of Fairhaven, Massachusetts). Henry relinquished his share of the property to his brother, but succeeded to the title in 1966. Over four decades, Huttleston transformed the featureless patch

of Cambridgeshire fenland into one of the greatest 20th century gardens, and remodelled and extended the house to provide a fitting home for his superb art collection. He bequeathed the Abbey to the National Trust.

Anglesey Abbey is famous for its collection of English and French clocks, 37 of which are on display and most of which are hand wound weekly – a job that takes two hours.

The library has over 6000 books, which are all meticulously cleaned on an annual basis, each taking about 15 minutes. The bedrooms and bathrooms are mainly in 1930s' style, and the bedroom used by the late Queen Mother when she visited nearby Newmarket has a particular warmth to it.

Gill Cassidy (See Photo Gallery)

The Gardens After enjoying seeing the house, I took a lovely walk through the Hoe Fen garden and found myself in a beautiful wood where it seemed the only sounds were the birds singing and my feet brushing the ground. I found myself in a little clearing and ahead of me was a huge tree with steps going up and two platforms from which to enjoy the glorious view from 6½ metres above ground. I was driven down after 15 minutes by six noisy people and wandered on to a hide where I watched waterfowl and several birds feeding and swimming. It was truly a peaceful experience.

Rosalind Greene

Mill Lode

When I walked through the winter gardens to the mill, two friendly volunteers were giving a talk and demonstration. In the 1800s, the mill had been a working water mill, but when steam power became available was turned into a cement works. When Lord Fairhaven bought the house and grounds, he used the mill as his garden shed. On realising the potential of the building, the old cement workings were buried in the quarry pond and the mill turned back into a flour mill.

Originally, there had been a miller's cottage attached and ladders inside the mill to reach all floors, now replaced by steep wooden steps to climb to read about its history. (With hindsight I should not have attempted the stairs.) We were told the flour makes wonderful bread and could be purchased in the visitors' shop.

Dawn Rawlison

Meeting Reviews

April: The man who created Roman Britain (Julia Sorrell)

Julia Sorrell, an established artist known for her portraits and imaginative drawings using natural forms, gave an interesting insight into the life of her father, Alan Sorrell, using slides to illustrate her talk and displaying a selection of books accredited to him.



Alan Sorrell was born on the February 11, 1904 in Tooting, London, and moved as a young child to Southend-on-Sea. He showed an interest in drawing landscapes from a very early age.

Alan trained at Southend Municipal school and became a commercial artist in London, where he attended the Royal College of art and met William Rothersten who was to become his mentor and friend. He won the Prix de Rome for his mural paintings and spent three years at the British School in Rome, returning to England in 1931 to become Drawing Master at the Royal College of Art, where he began his archaeological reconstruction drawings.

During World War II, Alan worked in the R.A.F and the Air Ministry helping to camouflage aerodromes, and in his spare time created artworks about life in the Air Force. After the war he concentrated on his archaeological work, and held many exhibitions.

An active member of the campaign to Protect Rural England, he died in 1974 after a long and varied artistic career.

Anne Lemmon

May: Gardens and Plants in the Fitzwilliam (Dr Twigs Way)

We were all entranced by Dr Way's talk on gardens and plants portrayed in the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. I have never been to the Fitzwilliam and so her talk was really intriguing to me and left me wanting to look at my calendar to see when I could head out to Cambridge and go rectify an omission.



Using themes including still life and death, religion, botany, love and fashion, Dr Way showed us slides of various paintings, statues and even fans depicting plants and gardens, and helped us to understand some of the deeper meanings hidden in them. She explained some of the

symbolism behind the flowers depicted, such as white lilies used to represent the pure state of the Madonna, whilst other flowers in other paintings could tell us about the person (usually female) portrayed, some even warning that the sweet young thing pictured was actually about to fall from grace! Lovely fans had designs on them sending messages about the interest for flirtation.

Dr Way also mentioned a Roman niche which may be seen if you manage to move the people away from the reception desk at the museum, and look down into the space below, so that is what I intend to do when I can clear space in my calendar.

Rosalind Greene

June: WaterAid (Dr Rosemary Westwell)



Rosemary Westwell came as an ambassador for WaterAid to tell us about the valuable and very necessary work carried out by the charity. However, first she told us something about herself. A qualified music teacher, she came to Britain from her native Australia in the early 1970s and ended up marrying and settling here. Her varied career has included teaching music as well as English as a Foreign Language, and she has written several books and gained a PhD. On retirement she joined the Rotary Club and this led her into giving presentations for WaterAid.

Her PowerPoint presentation, which made a persuasive case for supporting this charity, outlined the dire need in many parts of the world for clean water and sanitation, as the lack of these has such an impact not only on the health but also the education and ultimately the prosperity of the countries concerned. It then focused on work recently carried out in Malawi, showing how the charity involves the local people in their projects, both in the physical construction of wells and latrines and in educating the community about the importance of hygiene. This involvement is key to the success of the charity and helps to keep costs down, with 80% of the funds raised going towards the actual work in the field. It was heartening to see pictures of people whose lives were being transformed by the advent of a good water supply to their village, particularly the children who would now be able to go to school instead of being burdened with the time-consuming and laborious task of fetching water.

Penny Dossetor

Photo Gallery

Group Activities



The **Recorder Group** entertain us



The **Sunday Strollers** take a photo break

Outings



Norma Chaplin got snap happy at Ellys Manor whilst admiring the church weather vane and the bespectacled gargoyle.



Gloria Hollocks and Gill Cassidy are Ladies of the Manor for the day at Anglesey Abbey

Front Cover:

An iconic image of the King's Lynn, the ferry crossing the Great Ouse to and from West Lynn has served travellers since the late XII century. There being an enshrined legal duty to provide the service, ownership has passed in recent years from the County Council into private hands, following the chequered ownership over the centuries.

Photograph: **Morag Bean**

Local History Group Events



A guided tour of the Denver Sluice complex – on a very cold day!



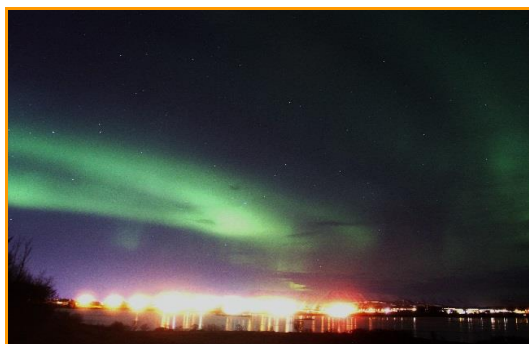
An evening tour telling of the darker side of King's Lynn's history



Have the missing members of the group at Elgood's Brewery been lost in the maze (or lost in the bar, maybe?)



Members' Miscellany

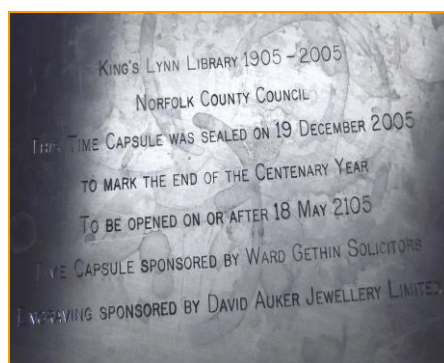


The Aurora Borealis, as viewed by Val Sparkes



Penny and Jonathan Dossetor, 'Hosts' to Wole

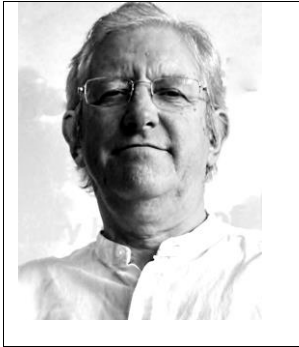
... slipping in an extra photo taken on Heritage Day of the inscription on the time capsule stored in the tower of King's Lynn library.
Permission to reproduce granted



Our thanks to those who have taken photographs, submitted photographs, or allowed themselves to be photographed, all in the name of the U3A

Meeting Reviews (cont ...)

July: Smethurst's Luck (Peter Maggs)



Paying us a second visit was Peter Maggs, whose subject 'Smethurst's Luck' was the story of Dr Thomas Smethurst.

Having trained initially as an apothecary, Thomas Smethurst moved to Germany where he attended a university and purchased an MD degree, following which he set up a clinic offering 'Hydrotherapy'. This treatment was apparently the cure for all ills! He also found time to write a book entitled "Hydrotherapy or The Water Cure", and made sufficient money to enable him to retire aged 50.

During all of this, Smethurst deserted his wife of 30 years and bigamously married an Isabella Bankes. However, in 1859 Isabella fell ill and died; the local doctors suspected him of poisoning her and he was subsequently charged with her murder. The trial appeared to consist of various 'experts' giving conflicting explanations for her death.

Smethurst was found guilty, sentenced to be hanged but reprieved. This was due in no small part to a public outcry generated by the press. His petition for mercy was granted and he was given a free pardon. However, on his release, he was immediately re-arrested on a charge of bigamy(!) for which he was found guilty and spent a year in prison.

I found both the story and the manner in which Peter told this tale gripping; he is a natural. The amount of time and research invested is to be admired. You can read more of the story when the book is published.

Was Smethurst lucky or unlucky?

Liz Francois

August: HEART (Sophie Cabot)

An eleventh hour replacement speaker, Sophie Cabot saved the day with her talk on HEART (Heritage, Economic and Regeneration Trust), providing an interesting and informative talk and presentation. We learned that HEART is a private charity with links to Norwich City Council and works within Norwich and Norfolk as an umbrella organisation for the many heritage sites, places and records in the area, as well as helping



the economy to grow. Being a charity, it avoids Council constraints and can apply for funds not available to the Council. It does not fund projects, but helps to find funding and helps with presentation, preservation, conservation and advertising.

I found it an eye opener to hear just how many heritage buildings there are in Norwich, though I have lived in Norfolk for 27 years! These range from medieval to Georgian to modern, including 32 churches and two cathedrals. It has more medieval buildings of any city north of the Alps. Sophie showed us a list of firsts for which Norwich is famous, including Dame Julian of Norwich, the first woman to write a book in English.

Between 12 and 15 September, there will be a programme of events and open days both in Norfolk, many of them free; a comprehensive information brochure is available.

The trust is also digitalising records and films, many of which are already available on line. There is an excellent web site at *Heritage City.org* with links to other websites, which is well worth exploring. It also has links with Gwent and Normandy, and hope to set a model to help other cities.

We give many thanks to Sophie for coming at short notice and send best wishes for the future of the organisation.

Audrey Steven

Members' Miscellany

An Ode to the Sunday Strollers

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 <i>We all met for our Sunday walk,
The sun was shining brightly,
Lots of rambling, lots of talk,
We tripped along quite lightly.</i></p> | <p>2 <i>There was Liz and little Jack,
Dashing through the heather.
Could those clouds be turning
black?
(Don't worry about the weather!)</i></p> |
| <p>3 <i>Edward did a Scottish dance,
He felt so very happy.
Dave and Gill were at the back,
Come on, catch up, get snappy.</i></p> | <p>4 <i>Oh gosh, with all this exercise,
Look at the weight we're losing,
There's a pub along the way,
So it's time we did some boozing!</i></p> |
| <p>5 <i>Stagger back along the track,
Our walk is nearly done,
With aching legs and painful back,
We've still had lots of fun!</i></p> | <p><i>Gill Cassidy (See Photo Gallery)</i></p> |

Our French Adventure

We sailed into the beautiful Baie de Somme for a holiday in 1991. It is a broad, tidal estuary half a day's sailing down from Boulogne with a marina at St Valery-sur-Somme and access to the interior. St Valery captivated us – picturesque, historic, a little off the beaten track.



You can tell it impressed us, because the next year we bought a bit. I took early retirement and we invested in a modest fisherman's cottage in the town. It had just a living room, kitchen and outside toilet and an attic. Mains drainage, electricity and gas were there but all facilities needed renovating and improving, and the attic needed converting to a bedroom or two! A good retirement project, I thought, and a complete change from college work.

In 1993 Ann retired too. We rented out our house in Lowestoft and threw ourselves into about three year's work. Through dust and grime, aches and pain, trials and triumphs we kept cheerfully at it. A neighbour who became a good friend remarked with a smile 'C'est pour la France' (You are doing it for France!)



Rewards for our efforts?

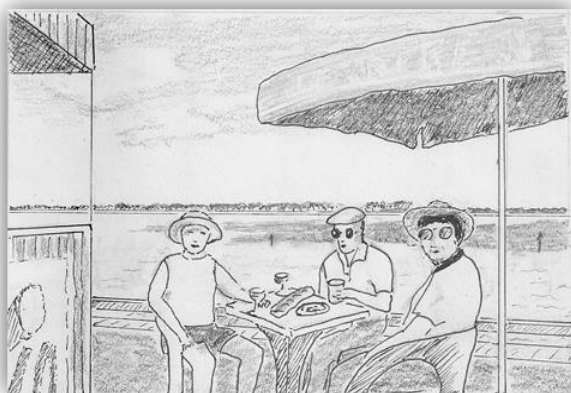
The sailing club and the marina were our first point of contact even in 1991, and remained a focal point for leisure, sport and social contacts.

Ann and I were the only English to take part in the fortnightly regattas in the bay. Ann joined the local choir, Mouettes et Chansons, which did wonders for improving her French.

The French really know how to throw a party and I was included in these as well as giving moral support in the audience at concerts. For my part, I joined an art group which had a weekly workshop led by a trained artist. Life in the small town was typical old fashioned French style, if 'touristy' at weekends. Twice daily visits to the boulangerie were the norm.



Lunch breaks were long and evening meals even longer. You did not have to walk far without a chance for coffee, crepes or a 'petite biere' at a bar or sitting out on a terrace or pavement.



With the hard work done years number 3 to 15(!) were normal living plus pure indulgence. We explored local towns, villages, chateaux, museums etc. We entertained family and friends. We sailed the coast from Boulogne to Brittany and 'camper-vanned' through the major wine routes of France.

Why did we give it up? Well, we never lost our ties and responsibilities in England, and we did come back often according to wishes and needs – it's not far. We came to realise that at our age of 70+ we could be comfortable and content back in the UK, and in King's Lynn in particular – and we are.

Brian and Ann Smith



Words of Wisdom Always have enough time in your life to do something that makes you happy. That has more of an effect on economic wellbeing than any other factor.

(Attributed to Paul Hawkin)

A February Adventure in Iceland

Landing at Kefavik Airport, I met Andy Green, an astronomer, and my companions for the holiday, but my walking sticks had vanished on their own holiday. Throughout our holiday, Andy talked about the stars and Aurora. Sven, an Icelandic, answered our many questions about his homeland and regaled us with tales.

Our first adventure that afternoon was a swim in Bláa Lónið (Blue Lagoon), a lake of warm geothermal brine, filled by the run off from a power station - an introduction to the way the Icelandic people live. Our hotel was at Gullfoss, way out in the country. Arriving just before 11pm, we settled in. Then all the lights were put out and the sky lit up with millions of stars and the Milky Way. Suddenly the sky changed and a green glow emerged - the Aurora Borealis appeared. What a show! No one went to bed before 3am.

Day2: Up with lark and on the road by 8am to explore. We walked up Katla, the volcano that closed our airports recently. Skogafoss waterfall falls 60 metres and is mentioned in the Icelandic Sagas. There is a path behind the waterfall, but sadly it was too icy to walk on. An interesting museum nearby gave us a brief insight into the history of Iceland. Snow capped mountains, dark volcanic soil and we had sunshine all day.

Our second night was as spectacular as the first. The Aurora danced across the sky, fell in curtains and changed from green to pink. No sleep could be had, it was too beautiful.

Day 3: A day of geysers, magnificent scenery, volcanoes and glaciers. We marvelled at the layers of volcanic ash in the glacier, showing previous eruptions, the colours and the movement of the ice. We saw where the tectonic plates were pulling Iceland apart. The edge of one plate is a high cliff, and at the bottom is land which is growing by several centimetres a year. The rift goes south west to north east.

The last spectacular waterfall was Gullfoss. The mighty Hvita River plunges into a gorge – 70 metres deep. When the Hvita floods, the water reaches the top of the gorge and the waterfall disappears.

Then off to Reykjavik. We had an afternoon to see the sights by bus and walk this beautiful, bustling city. Again despite the city lights in the distance, we saw the Aurora. Very little sleep was had by anyone.

Day 4: Up at 5am to catch the plane back. The aurora followed us to the airport - what a treat. Goodbyes were said to Sven, Andy and our driver. Andy brought my sticks back and also sent us a CD of the auroras we had seen. Indeed a holiday to remember.

Val Sparkes (See Photo Gallery)

U3A Science Day

On Monday 25 March I went to the U3A Science afternoon at the Royal Institution. The place was packed from people all over the country.

We had three very different talks. The first, given by Professor David Smith, was on the role of molecular scientists working on 'designer' drugs and DNA treatments, especially for cystic fibrosis. The second, by Doctor David Bor, was on assessing levels of consciousness required to perform different tasks, and the levels in coma patients. The third talk, by Doctor Helen Scales, was on the health of the oceans. In this latter topic, we were advised that any adverse effect is modified by improved fishing techniques; the rising sea temperature causes the northward migration of species, so that the wrong food fish are in place at the wrong time. This does not allow a species to survive and multiply fast enough to meet mankind's increasing demands. Dr Scales advised us all to log on to the Hugh's Fish Fight website, which promotes the campaign 'Save Our Seas'.

There is also a most interesting museum showing how much the work done in the Royal Institution affects our lives. All in all, it was a fascinating afternoon, and I shall certainly try to attend next year.

Janet Burns

Guest item: Profile of the North Lynn Community Centre

The Community Centre was the first purpose built Community Centre in England and opened in 1962. Using government money and funds raised by the local community, Norfolk County Council built the building, which has been the 'heart' of the area ever since. Within a year of opening, there were 40 activities taking place.

In the 1980s, when there was a national decline in large social buildings, Norfolk Youth and Community Services took over the management of the building. It housed several youth workers, whose remit was to 'save' the youth of North Lynn. They ran several youth based ventures, and the building was closed to the public during these activities to protect the youngsters in their care.

During the reign of Norfolk Youth Services, the community had limited use of the building. Several bingo sessions ran weekly, old time dancers 'tripped the light fantastic' once a week and very occasionally parties and wedding receptions were held in the hall. The building suffered from vandalism and must have looked a sorry sight to passers by.

In the late 1990s, NCC, itself facing massive financial cutbacks, 'pulled the plug' on the Youth Service and threatened to close the majority of their community properties. North Lynn Community Centre, which needed about £26,000 spending on it, half of which was to repair the roof, was earmarked for closure. Pressure from local residents and a small steering group persuaded the County Council to repair the roof; two residents signed a 10-year full repair lease on the building, proceeding to manage it and find sufficient funds to run the property. The practical management of the building was left to volunteers.

Unfortunately those two leaseholders have passed away, so we (i.e. Jackie and Helen, authors of this article) took on the lease. Helen has been involved in the management of the building since the start of the lease and Jackie came out of retirement to help run the centre jointly.

Local businesses have recognised how difficult running a building of this size can be and have been extraordinarily generous in supporting projects set up by the centre. Dow Chemicals donated enough money to paint the building from top to bottom, including the loan of a scaffolding tower so that we could reach the eighteen-foot apex of the hall ceiling. One of the most successful schemes that the centre has run is the Luncheon Club for the local elderly, originally funded by Anglia Television and now one of North Lynn's hidden gastronomic treats

In 2005 we were awarded "The Queens Award for Voluntary Services", an award run by the High Sheriff of Norfolk. In 2006 we were invited to a Buckingham Palace garden party and in 2008 went again to the Palace to be presented personally to the Queen, a very memorable occasion.

Over the past 50 years, people's needs have changed. We no longer have 'Old Time Dancing', Youth Clubs, etc. People want 'On Line Bingo', On-Line Shopping, Face Book. These are things we cannot compete with, so have had to encourage 'outsiders' into the area in order to generate income to cover the cost of running the building. It is becoming harder and harder to generate a revenue, but we manage.

Our thanks to NLCC Administrators Jackie and Helen for giving us this insight into the Centre. We are fortunate to be recipients of their efforts.

Hosting with HOST

Some members may remember that the Autumn 2011 *Newsletter* included some information about an organisation called HOST, encouraging people to invite foreign students into their homes for a weekend or over Christmas. Jonathan and I decided to pursue this and got in touch with the local branch of HOST. We were checked out by the East Anglian representative, David Patey, and agreed to go ahead.

Some fifteen months and three students later, we are still on board. Our students, Keira, Oluwole and Weija have come from Taiwan, Nigeria and China respectively. All impressed us by their interest in our culture and the way in which they have made the most of the opportunities presented to them during their time here. This was particularly true of Keira, who went on many excursions, and Weija, who told us that she tried to visit at least one museum a week, despite a full study schedule. Despite my initial apprehension, all of them have eaten everything put in front of them (and Keira even photographed some of it!)

Oluwole (Wole) came the following June. Having spent time in Nigeria (before he was born), Jonathan and I were curious to hear about what it was like to live there now. Both Wole's parents work for the Government in Abuja and he had some very revealing things to say about the political situation in Nigeria. He continued to keep in touch, and before he went back to Nigeria we spent a day with him in Cambridge, the highlight of which was punting through the Backs. He gained a distinction in his Masters degree in Telecommunications from Loughborough University and to our surprise invited us to the degree ceremony for which he returned to the UK in December. It was quite an occasion, as we also met his mother, who had arrived from Nigeria that day, and his sister and her husband, who live in London.

Weija came in the middle of December last year and was another charming guest. She told us a few things about growing up in China as the product of the "One Child" policy. From Keira we had learned that being born in the Year of the Dragon is a mixed blessing, because an increased birth rate in those years means stiffer competition for everything.

So – would we recommend taking part in HOST? Yes, definitely. It does mean making an effort and we think two visits in a year are enough for us, but we have already gained at least as much from the experience as we have given, which is what it is all about.

Penny Dossetor (See Photo Gallery)

Houghton Revisited – An Appreciation

It was with a feeling of a long-held ambition realised as Brian and I drove through the gates at the entrance to Houghton Hall to see the Houghton Revisited exhibition. For years I had known that many of the pictures for which, to a certain extent, Houghton Hall had been designed had been sold in 1779 to the Empress Catherine the Great of Russia to pay off the family debts, but little did I think that one day these pictures would be returned to hang in the rooms where they had originally been displayed.

There was a real sense of anticipation among the relatively small group of visitors waiting to be the first to see the exhibition that day. We were warmly welcomed by the staff at the entrance, and we also found that all the stewards on our tour were knowledgeable and keen to show their knowledge in an unobtrusive way.

We had visited Houghton a few years ago and wondered if the rooms would be the same as on our original tour. In fact, this time, in addition, we saw the Library and were delighted to see Wootton's oil painting of Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first Prime Minister, on an easel, taking pride of place. The books on the walls, in what was quite an intimate room, reinforced the feeling of a man of letters, as well as a man skilled in politics who had dominated the political scene for twenty one years.

All the pictures which had been returned to Houghton were in their places as they had been in Sir Robert Walpole's time. The furnishings in the rooms, including the surfaces against which the pictures were hanging, were as Sir Robert Walpole had planned when he built the Hall. The experience for visitors was perfect in every way.

The Common Parlour was the first to be viewed with all the original pictures in place. Here we saw examples of the Dutch and Flemish schools of painting, English portraits by Kneller and Lely and a fine Velasquez of Pope Innocent X. The Marble Parlour featured portraits by Van Dyck and Italian Renaissance artists. The next three rooms featured seventeenth century French paintings. The Maratta Room was named after the highly successful Italian artist Carlo Maratta, then recognised as a very fine painter but whose fame has not yet been revived. Here, too, were two fine Spanish pictures by Murillo with religious themes. The Saloon where Sir Robert displayed some of his finest and largest paintings in a grand and large setting completed our visit. The emphasis once again was on seventeenth century Italian painters, with some examples of French and Spanish artists.

What an experience it was: a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to appreciate a wonderful display of art in its original setting. We felt very privileged to have shared in the experience.

Ann Smith

Visit to RSPCA Wild Life Centre, East Winch

My husband Ron and I received an invitation in May to visit the East Winch Wild Life Centre on Wednesday 12th June. We went along on the day, together with about 20 other persons, and were most impressed by the courteous and friendly welcome we received. We had a nice cup of tea and biscuits whilst watching slides (some traumatic) and case histories of various rescues and a brief talk by one of the chief Vets explaining the work they do and answering visitors' questions.

We were then taken behind the scenes to see many small creatures awaiting treatment, including small birds, mallards, hedgehogs and even a jackdaw and baby shrew. There was a large pool containing about seven beautiful seals that had been rescued, having a great time in the water and awaiting return to the sea the next day after being rehabilitated. By the way, the RSPCA would welcome donations of any unwanted old towels, etc., to help with mopping up operations, etc.

We were shown the operating theatres and another area where an influx of swans had been brought following a Diesel oil slick. When they arrived they were black with the oil, which apparently burns their skin if not removed quickly. One huge swan was being bathed in a large sink containing FAIRY LIQUID (sounds familiar!). We were amazed at how docile it was without any sedation. From there it was put on a large table and thoroughly cleaned with a shower on a hose to bring it back to its dazzling whiteness. Thence it would be transferred to a large pool which contained all manner of beautiful wild birds receiving care before being returned to their own individual habitats. Animals are brought in from all over the country and have to go back to their own origins.

Our tour guide was excellent and indeed all the workers seemed to be in love with their chosen careers. We would recommend anyone who loves wildlife and animals generally to go along to the Open Day*. They are sure to receive a grand welcome and have a lovely, interesting day.

Vera Boxer

**The 2013 Open Day was scheduled for 7 July – keep in mind for 2014.*



Words of Wisdom Those who make the worst use of time most complain about its shortness.

Jean de La Bruyère (French writer, 1645-96)

The Best, and the Worst, Christmas presents

I have two best presents, a slow cooker from my Mother-in-Law in 1976 and still in use and a very tatty TR7 convertible bought on eBay. Mike did months of work on it and we had it resprayed black and it is now beautiful and lovely to ride in, but – I haven't yet driven it! It is a big monster with a long nose and no power steering. At only 5ft 2ins I have no idea where the nose is, even when sitting on a cushion. My resolution for 2014 must be to find a quiet road (Ha! Ha!) and have a go.

Ann Bolton

In brief ...

Changes in your Committee

*Penny Dossetor has taken over the role of **Press Officer**.*

*Grace Hogan has assumed the role of **Door Manager**.*

also

Doris Watson joins Maggie Neal as a Meeter and Greeter, in a non-Committee capacity.

Special Interest Groups Coffee Morning

This event, for the benefit of all members but to which those who have joined within the last two years are specifically invited, will be held between 11 am and noon on Friday 25th October at the North Lynn Community Centre, to inform members and potential members of our Group activities. Group Leaders are required to attend from 10 am.

Refreshments Rota

Liz Francois and Carol Jennings would welcome hearing from you – yes, you – to help with the preparation of refreshments and clearing up at meetings, on an occasional basis.

*The **KaLeidoscope** team is grateful for the interest shown in this publication by readers and contributors, without whom there would be no **KaLeidoscope**. It should however be noted that, in this and subsequent editions, we exercise the right to select articles for publication, to edit those items as considered appropriate, and to hold items over for possible publication at a future date, whilst treating all contributions with courtesy and respect.*

*We hope you will enjoy this and future editions of **KaLeidoscope** and visit our website (www.kingslynnu3a) for further information.*

We look forward to receiving more of your articles and photographs, and your feedback.

Special Interest Groups and Co-ordinators

Groups Co-ordinator	Val Sparkes
Art Appreciation	Shirley Jackson
Bird watching	Roger Hailey
Book of the month (1)	Di Buckland
Book of the month (2)	Anne Lindley
Book of the month (3)	Christine Stockley
Bridge	Phil Aelberry
Bridge beginners/improvers	Kathleen Lees
Card Making	Dorothy Rawlings
Classical music	Audrey Wootton
Computer Users	Brian Smith
Creative Writing	Dorothy Rawlings
French conversation	Lena Sturman
Genealogy (1)	Sue Rowe
Genealogy (2)	Doris Watson
Hand Bells (1)	Terry Greenacre
Hand Bells (2)	Ann Bolton
History	Gertrude Seddon-Stoves
Italian	Ann Bolton
Local History	Anne and Keith Lemmon
Lunch - Friday	Barbara Andrews
Lunch - Sunday	Les Watson
Mah Jong	Penny Dossetor
Mixed Games (2 groups)	Margaret Fox
Music	Margaret Eyre
Nostalgia	Dorothy Rawlings
Outings	Rosalind Greene
Petanque	Bob Rawlings
Philosophy	Vicky Hudson
Play Reading and Theatre Appreciation	Margaret Neal
Recorders	Ann Higgins
Scottish Country Dancing	Mary Cox
Scrabble	Margaret Fox
Stitchery	Brigitte Bayley
Sunday Strollers	As announced at meetings

The lighter side of life



SAVE OUR STORKS

“Do you reckon we ought to go back to work, Sal? I heard that the NHS maternity services are having problems. We always used to do such a good job.”

Who's Who : The *KaLeidoscope* team



Morag



Edward



Penny



Keith



Anne

The deadline for submissions to the Spring 2014 *KaLeidoscope* is 18 February (but earlier receipt would be appreciated)



*... and finally, what is this?
We'll reveal all in the Spring issue
(Clue: where they
'DO LOW HUTS')*

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**King's Lynn U3A Registered Charity no. 1100986
Chairman: Gloria Pantling**