

KING'S LYNN



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# *KaLeidoscope*



**Winter 2019**

For members, About members, By members

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The *KaLeidoscope* team is grateful for the interest shown in this publication by readers and contributors, without whom there would have been no *KaLeidoscope*. It should however be noted that, in this and any subsequent editions, 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 may be exercised, whilst contributors have the right to expect all submissions to be treated with courtesy and respect.

Cover photograph: 'Southern Comfort' - the Mississippi River Boat on the Norfolk Broads (see Page 13). Thanks to all U3A members who provided photographs for this issue of *KaLeidoscope*.....*keep them coming!*

## Editorial



As I write this, your U3A committee are busy planning for several events which may to many seem far in the future.

Next June sees a National U3A day to celebrate our movement, which will coincide with National Volunteer Week, whilst the following year will bring the 30th Anniversary of our own branch's foundation.

At the same time I am very aware the the composition of the committee that will be in place when these events come to pass will be significantly different to its present make-up. Last our next AGM in April 2020 we will be seeking a new Vice Chairman and Groups Co-ordinator; the following year will need to see a new Treasurer in place at the very least.

With a membership that is growing ever closer to the 500 mark and new members continually refreshing our talent pool, it is time for some of you to step up to the mark. One of the main strengths of King's Lynn U3A is the large number and variety of interest groups which we offer - thanks to the dedication of our group leaders, but the support infrastructure needed to offer such variety must be maintained. We would love to have fresh and enthusiastic ideas to help move us into the new decade - please join us!

*Neil Prew*

### **U3A group visitors shown around by King's Lynn Town Guides 2019**

There have been fewer groups than last year, but the following were shown around by KLTG members including Niki Jenkins and myself.

May: Haverhill U3A (26 people)

June: Peterborough U3A's Archaeology & Architecture groups (12)

July: South Leicestershire U3A (49)

October: North Norfolk U3A's Architectural group (15 approx)

In May, our own Local History group enjoyed a new walk in the programme entitled "Four Churches", led by KLTG's Sally Turff, during which we visited the London Road Methodist Church, St John's, the London Road Catholic Church and All Saints'.

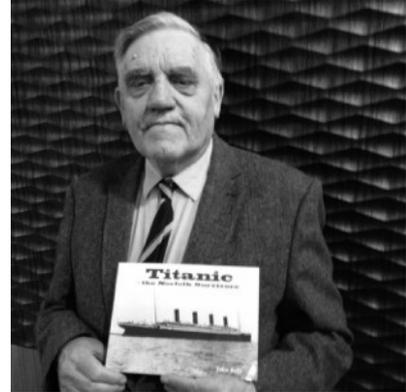
*Norma Chaplin*

**"I am always doing that which I can not do, in order that I may learn how to do it." - Pablo Picasso**

## Meeting Reviews

### May: “Norfolk Survivors of the Titanic” by John Balls

John Balls gave us a wonderfully in-depth talk about the five Norfolk people who survived the sinking of this massive luxury liner, emblematic of the “golden age” with its enormous wealth, factory production lines, steam locomotion, motorcars, and flight. We saw the ship, the largest moving object ever built at the time, under construction, so huge that 20 draught horses were needed to pull the anchor through the streets of Belfast to the shipyard, and each engine being the height of a 3-storey house.



The ship was supplied with the last word in luxury, but there were serious shortfalls:-

The crew only boarded the ship the day before the sailing so didn't know each other.

As the ship was 'unsinkable' there was no lifeboat drill held for either passengers or crew.

There were 16 rigid and 4 collapsible lifeboats, which even if they had filled to capacity would not have held the total complement of people aboard.

Marconi had provided wireless equipment and operators who were there to make a profit for him and not to assist the ship. Although the fatal iceberg had been spotted and reported from the crow's nest on the 3rd evening at sea, the wireless operators were busy sending messages from passengers to their friends, making money for Marconi, so these warnings were not seen as a priority. The ship finally sank 350 miles off Newfoundland at 1.40am the following day.

There were 2,223 passengers and crew aboard, including seven Norfolk people. Frank Prentice from Downham Market was the assistant purser; Ellen Bird from Old Buckenham, a lady's maid travelling 1st class with her employer; May Howard of North Walsham was a 3rd-class passenger; Ted and Ethel Bean were honeymooners from Norwich travelling 2nd class. These people were fortunate to survive, but Isidor and Ida Strauss of Great Yarmouth perished, when the ship finally broke in two.

The 'unsinkable' ship sank on her maiden voyage from Southampton to America with a loss of 1,517 lives. This was a truly moving and fascinating talk.

*Sheila Burney*

## June: “The Humble Bean” by Martin Dickinson



Martin Dickinson's title attracted considerable interest and curiosity until his first slide showed a colourful picture of baked beans tins!

Martin's career for 43 years had been in the food industry, especially in Long Sutton with what is now Princes Foods. During his career he had travelled many times to the countries where navy beans, as the variety of bean for baked beans is known, are grown for the British food industry. The United Kingdom is the greatest consumer of baked beans in the world.

Martin went on to mention the countries which grow navy beans for the UK. He went through the stages from sowing the beans to their canning in tomato sauce. The chief growers for the British canning industry are in Canada and the USA, but there are also links with Ethiopia which Martin mentioned towards the end of his talk.

The vast fields of Canada and the USA cannot be conceived of when you compare them with the size of British farms, even in East Anglia. They stretch as far as the eye can see. Mechanisation is used intensively throughout the process of sowing, harvesting, sorting and bagging the beans until they are brought in container ships to Felixstowe and Liverpool.

Quality control is paramount throughout the whole process. The only difference in brands is in the sauce recipe that is used at almost the final canning stage.

Martin concluded with a fascinating portrait of the industry's links with Ethiopia. Here he advised the western world not to judge an African country by its own norms, but to appreciate the stages in development which that country was going through. In Ethiopia, navy bean agriculture relies on simple, rural farming methods, often family-based. Changes are being made as far as factory-building is concerned, developing mechanisation. Ethiopia above all wants to increase its trade to grow the economy.

Martin's talk was very well received. It was ably illustrated with slides showing the whole process of production. His pictures of the social side of life in Ethiopia also showed the poverty which exists, even in the capital city of Addis Ababa, where foreign capital invests in first-class hotels.

*Ann Smith*

**By three methods we may learn wisdom. First, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third, by experience, which is the bitterest.”**

**- Confucius**

## July: “King’s Lynn Talking Newspaper” by Keith Leedell and Louise Smith

Keith Leedell, Chairman, and Louise Smith, Deputy Chairman, of Vision Link gave us their presentation on the Talking Newspaper service, nationally and locally, particularly that of King’s Lynn. The national service followed some years after the Talking Books service, which primarily served blinded, WWI ex-servicemen.

King’s Lynn’s Talking Newspaper service is now some 40 years old and was begun by the local Lions, along with QEH Hospital Radio, with its first edition published on 10.09.1979. It used reel-to-reel tape-recorders and then mailed out cassette tapes to its clients using the free Post Office service for materials for the blind. As it has evolved, the local service has moved operating premises several times, and now occupies its own free-of-charge room in the Norfolk and Norwich Blind Association (NNAB) equipment headquarters here in King’s Lynn. It has now developed into Vision Link, working with the support of NNAB.

Vision Link is now the only talking newspaper service in West Norfolk. There are 5,000 persons in Norfolk registered with some degree of visual impairment. Entirely volunteer-run, the group has bought all its own equipment and replaced the old tape-recorder system with digital. The much higher quality recordings on USB sticks are played on specially developed ‘box’ system supplied to each client, operated with simple, easily-learned controls. Interestingly, Vision Link is funded solely by donations and grants, and whilst servicing of the old equipment cost £8,000 each time, purchasing all the new equipment cost exactly the same - £8,000; the equipment is low voltage double insulated, and therefore does not need annual PAC testing.

The 34 volunteers follow a regular weekly timetable: receive back the old recordings; clean the sticks; re-label the re-usable plastic envelopes; acknowledge any donations or thanks found in the returned envelopes; produce and mail out the new recordings. These use selections drawn from *Your Local Paper*, *Lynn News* and the monthly magazine from *Eastern Daily Press*, and feature news items, letters and sports reports. Obituaries, which are included in response to requests received, are at the end of the recording allowing for their omission should the listener so choose.

Advances in medicine and the increased use of downloading or streaming of materials have led to a reduction in user numbers. Vision Link currently serves around 100 listeners, but as long as there is a need Vision Link will continue to serve the community.



*Sheila Burney*

## August: “Visiting Britain’s Extremes” by Richard & Geraldine Coates



Members Richard and Geraldine gave us an illustrated talk on their 14-day adventure, FAB Extreme Challenge, which is also the title of their forthcoming book. FAB, or “Freedom, Age and Beyond”, expresses their desire to do something challenging. They had initially chosen to visit the four furthestmost compass points on mainland Britain, but this snowballed and became a goal of 50 ‘extremes’ in 14 days, although they outdid even this! Precisely 60 in all!

In their two-week drive they visited:-

**Day 1** - The lowest land - Hole Fen; the lowest road - Engine Drain, 9’ below sea level; Stonea Camp, the lowest Iron Age fort, dating back to Queen Boudicca; Spaghetti Junction, the most complex interchange.

**Day 2** - Land’s End, the furthest inhabited point; Lizard Point, the southernmost point; Westward Ho! – the only place name with an “!”.

**Day 3** – Severn Bridge Crossing, the longest bridge, and also the Severn Second Crossing, the longest walkable bridge; Chepstow Castle, the oldest UK castle, built in 1067; Defynnog in Wales for the oldest tree, 5,500 years old, older than the pyramids; Hay-on-Wye, the town with the most 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand bookshops; Hereford Cathedral which houses the largest chained library; and also the Mappa Mundi, the largest Medieval map in the world.

**Day 4** – Froncycyllte, the longest aqueduct.

**Day 5** – Rhos on Sea which has the smallest chapel, seating 6 people, and on to Conwy which boasts the smallest house; Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch, the longest place name; Mount Snowden for the highest UK railway; and also the highest licensed bar!

**Day 6** – Chester for the largest Roman Amphitheatre; Llinaryshaw for the most motorway lanes in parallel, a staggering 17!; Preston for its steeple which at 293’ is the highest in the UK; Skelton which has the tallest structure in the UK, a radio mast; Ae, which has the shortest place name; and Moffat which has the narrowest hotel in the world at 20’ wide.

**Day 7** - Glasgow has the tallest cinema in the world at 203’; Ardnamurchan point, which is the most westerly UK point.

**Day 8** - Ben Nevis, the UK’s tallest mountain; Loch Ness, the biggest lake with the highest water volume; Wick boasts the shortest street, Ebenezer Place, just 6’9” long.

**Day 9** - Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of the UK mainland; Highland cows, the cows with the longest hair; Reelig Glen for the tallest tree at 217’.

**Day 10** - Cairn Well for the highest road at 21,998’; Dull with Brightly, the two

most opposite place names (and Dull is paired with Boring in the USA!); Falkland Palace for the oldest real tennis court.

**Day 11** - Edinburgh for the oldest Sabal palm tree, housed in the botanical gardens there; also the oldest fossil; Musselburgh for the oldest golf course; Alnwick Gardens has the most dangerous garden, housing over 100 poisonous plants; the A1 for the longest motorway at 410 miles.

**Day 12** - Hadrian's Wall being the longest Roman wall; Housesteads for the most complete Roman fort; Chesters, the best preserved Roman cavalry fort; Derwentcote, the earliest steel furnace; the Angel of the North, being the largest public sculpture; Rosedale Chimney being the steepest bank at 1 in 3 gradient; Sutton Bank for the largest White Horse.

**Day 13** - Humber Bridge, the longest single span bridge in the UK and in the world for foot or cycle; the A15, with the longest stretch of straight road at 3.3 miles; Lincoln's Newport Arch, the oldest driveable gateway; Lincoln High Street having the oldest bridge with buildings on it; Woodhall Spa for the smallest shoe shop.

**Day 14** - Norfolk Broads being the largest protected wetland; Lowestoft Ness, the most easterly point, and finally Besthorpe for the rudest street name – Sluthole Lane!

There was far more detail than can be included here, so we suggest you find a copy of their book! The talk was greeted with huge applause.

*Sheila Burney*

### **September: "Providing Midwifery Care in Sub-Saharan Africa" by Jean Skeen**

Jean Skeen began her truly inspirational, illustrated talk with her nursing career history. Between posts at QEH, she has worked three times for Voluntary Services Overseas, twice in Uganda and once in Ethiopia. The political and social conditions, along with the expectations which she met there, were obvious through the maternal mortality rate, the equivalent of a full jumbo jet daily. This was only the first of many shocking details we heard, starting with a comparison with what we take for granted here in the UK and the same things which simply don't exist, or only rarely, in the conditions Jean met for her first time in Africa, most notably electricity, soap, water, and privacy.

African women produce on average six or seven children, the majority of which are delivered domestically. Of those women who manage to get to a clinic most will have walked many miles while in labour; all are expected to supply their own cleaning products such as bleach, rubber sheets, baby clothes and disposables, and even their own suture materials. Women waiting for a bed sit on the corridor floor; some of these may die while waiting. Some clinics deliver women on mattresses on the floor, postoperative women hope to have a mattress but might only have a mat, again on the floor. There may be 17 delivery beds in one room with three or four midwives working each shift. The nearest hospital can be many miles away with unpredictable

road conditions and only intermittent telephone service. Women are expected to be silent in labour and may be slapped or restrained by the female midwives in attendance, while doctors very rarely attend births. There are private hospitals too but here again, conditions are not as in the UK; there are no standard fees but all are very high; women are charged by their ability to pay so the richest pay exorbitant fees.

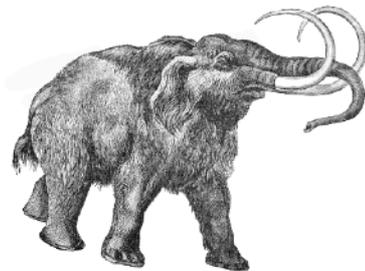
Jean worked tirelessly to educate and re-educate nursing and midwifery staff to try to overcome these cultural norms. She worked with the local authorities in facilitating clinics, wards, and delivery theatres to introduce services where little or none had existed previously. In one situation in 2007, there were outpatient services only, with the first actual delivery in 2014, the first caesarean section was carried out in 2014, and a year later, there were 300 such per month and by 2015 more than 1,000 monthly. In another of her clinics, which was housed in an old building with a once weekly clinic, improvements in services saw the first delivery in November 2014, up to 30 per month by 2015, and now 50,000 annually, with a theatre in planning. The Kampala clinic alone delivers 33,000 women annually with only 1,500 beds. As a comparison, the Norfolk and Norwich delivers some 8,-10,000 women per annum.

The audience were rapt throughout and greeted Jean with huge applause

*Sheila Burney*

### **October: “The West Runton Mammoth” by Peter Stibbons**

Peter Stibbons gave us his illustrated talk on the fossilised mammoth remains, which were discovered by local residents Margaret & Harold Hems in 1990 during a walk along West Runton beach. Part of the pelvis was visible in the freshwater forest bed of the old river, now at the base of the cliffs, and the very excited couple contacted an archaeologist, which then lead to an organised dig. These excavations took place, to reveal the rest of the remains so far, between 1990 and 1995, funded mainly by Heritage Lottery and Anglian Water grants. It took 4 days digging just to reveal the pelvis.



This was an animal which had been roaming an area of wetland, at that time still joined to the rest of Europe and similar to Wicken Fen today, some 6-700,000 years ago. Further parts of the almost complete skeleton were revealed during the dig. Some of the bones showed evidence of chewing, probably by spotted hyenas, especially of what remained of the foot bones. Others appeared to have been trampled or crushed, and otherwise moved around, probably by the rest of the mammoth herd in the same way that modern elephants do with their dead. The mammoth had a knee injury, and it is thought that this probably contributed to its falling and ultimate death.

During the course of the excavations multiple soil samples were collected, revealing pollens, seeds, shells and the remains of many small creatures. Also contemporary were larger animals: elk, lions, tigers, bears, rhinos, hyenas, etc., most of them being warm climate animals, which could not have survived the subsequent climactic changes; the wolf probably surviving here by far the longest.

There were several types or strains of mammoth worldwide; our mammoth remains are 4th in importance globally as it identifies a particular subspecies, *mammothus trogontherii*, or Steppe Mammoth. In life, the mammoth weighed around 9 to 10 tonnes and stood 4m high at the shoulder. DNA has been collected from the remains and the gender established. Parts are in store at Norwich, Gressenhall, and Cromer museums, with little on display. Fossilised remains of many creatures are abundant in the cliffs in that area, and are still being found today.

*Sheila Burney*

## **Special Interest Groups Updates**

### **Vancouver Art day project**

The project had been a great success and everyone had enjoyed the day, adults and children alike. It was a joint effort between 'Stories of Lynn' and King's Lynn U3A. The focus was on Captain George Vancouver, his life and journeys of exploration to North America.

During the day Rachael Williams ('Stories of Lynn') and Alison Gifford (TIC) were both in period costume, Rachael as George's brother, John, and Alison as George's mother. Alison caused much amusement by not understanding any of the present day artefacts and ways of doing things. We visited the Custom House, and walked along the South Quay to the courtyard in Thoresby College to see the fine Judas tree. There was a wealth of learning happening throughout the day, but in a fun way.

We looked at the Samphire Quilt which shows Vancouver's journeys and also 3 paintings by John Horton, a marine artist, depicting ships of the time, one of which was shown moored in a bay surrounded by forest and with natives on the shore.

During the afternoon, the Samphire Quilt and three paintings were the inspiration for some creative art activities which included sketching, pastels, acrylic, tissue paper and mixing colours. There were five activity tables, each with two adults and two children, and we rotated through the different media during the afternoon.

The great thing was that you didn't need to be 'good' at art – all you needed was a bit of enthusiasm and a willingness to have a go.

The resulting art work, 'Scroll through Lynn', was exhibited in the Red Barn during November.

*Ann Higgins*

### Some of the feedback from our participants

“What an inspiring day we have had! We enjoyed a day of history, theatre and art. The planning and preparation for the day was quite a feat, that was clear. Alison Gifford as Lady Vancouver wore a costume of the period and she was full of unforgettable tales and humour. Rachel Williams's organisational skills and artistic support so impressive. The children attending were obviously absorbed by the events of the day. It was easy to tell by their faces and the artwork they were keen to produce later in the day. Thank you so much for an unforgettable experience.”

*Judith Coker*

“What a day! Fabulous! 10 children, 10 adults and 10 out of 10 for a perfect day of learning about Captain Vancouver, watching the children wide eyed and enjoying the day. The joy of creating with paint and tissue paper, the journey of Captain Vancouver and sharing ideas with children and adults.”

*Marie Brewer*

“It was most enjoyable, thank you for organising it. For me the best bit was spending the afternoon using several different art media to represent parts of pictures and a quilt that we had been shown, which were related to George Vancouver's life. It was fun to get my hands covered with acrylic paint, and pastels. I don't think I'll ever grow up!”

*Denise Mansell*

“10 adults met 10 seven-year-olds for a guided tour of the quayside and inside the Custom House. I learned a lot about George Vancouver and his voyages around the world and places named after him, from two actors playing George's mother and brother, who stayed in character the whole day which was fascinating and amusing for the children and adults alike.

“We saw a statue of George Vancouver holding his scroll and telescope. After lunch at the museum we had 5 art activities in different media; adults and children tried them all. The Samphire Quilt was brought out especially for us to view and it depicts George Vancouver's life and adventures. The paintings of the ships inspired the artwork which will be in an exhibition in November. A really enjoyable day!”

*Geoff De Roux*

“Dear Ann and everyone who organized this very special opportunity to learn about George Vancouver, with the help of his brother, John, and his mother, Mrs Vancouver. The added bonus of being joined by a group of seven-year-olds from Emneth school made the whole experience all the more enjoyable. After a visit to the Custom House where we were transported back in time by Mrs Vancouver's tales of the activities that took place.

Later we were shown the Samphire quilt made to mark Kings Lynn's connection to George Vancouver and the sea trade that formed its growth and position in commerce. Then we were treated to George Vancouver's travels in

the paintings of his ship and landings on what was to later become Vancouver Island.

After lunch we split into groups of 4 (2 children and 2 adults) for the real fun part of the day. An art workshop consisting of five tables each set up with different art media.

The idea was to spend 18 mins at each table trying out collage with glue and tissue paper to make seascape pictures. This was followed by a strip of a painting that had to be copied in watercolours, then a finger-painting session to emulate a sea, either calm or storm-tossed. The next discipline involved making a sketch of a part, or all, of one of the paintings we had seen earlier. The final medium to explore was pastels with which we had to produce a horizon, the sky above with the sea below. All these efforts will be assembled and put on display.

Thank you for letting me take part in this lovely day.

*Aly Aldridge*

## Classical Music

Normally the Classical Music Group meet at Windmill Court, where we have warm, pleasant and quiet surroundings in which to conduct our meeting. Usually the group has nominated a subject, which will form the basis of our music choice for the month. Each member brings a disc with music which he or she thinks appropriate to that particular subject. We have been amused and entertained by the wide range of views that colleagues have had in representing the chosen topic. Members are free just to play their chosen piece, but frequently some give an introduction with details of the composer, the association with other works by them and other composers, and so forth.

However, in September we met at the home of one of our members where she, together with the leader of our group, had put together a programme illustrating important and interesting facts about the piano. We learned something of the early history of this instrument, including information on the Virginals, Harpsichord and the very earliest types of piano which we would all recognise as the forerunners of today's instrument. We sat back in comfort to listen to their talk, viewed the inner workings of the instrument, and were further entertained by a series of duets illustrating various steps in the advancement of piano music, the extent of which showed to us the amount of time they must have put in, practising the high standard of work with which we were all delighted.



*Photo: Denise Mole and Joanne Jones performing a duet.*

This must be one of the most friendly and amiable groups in our U3A, and we are always on the lookout for fellow enthusiasts to join us. Some of us regard this as the best two hours in the month, so why not come and join us, at least for a sample session!

*Clifford Walters*

## Crochet Group

There are about 8 crocheters in the current group and we meet up about every second week or by arrangement. We are all learners but thanks to YouTube and various pattern books we have learned lots and are starting to turn out some really nice items. Crochet is very versatile. It is great for making fiddly things for the household but it is equally fine for bigger items...and group



blanket making gives us a very sociable time, plus the enjoyment of making something for charity.

Our black and white blanket was our first joint effort and Tapping House were delighted to receive it.

We will be very pleased to welcome anyone who would like to give crochet a try. Please contact group leader :

*Judith Gough.*

*Photo: Carol Edwards & Judith Gough present their blanket to a representative from Tapping House Hospice.*

**“Education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't.”**

**- Anatole France**

## The Colour Section



## Scenes from the Vancouver art day



**National U3A Pétanque Championships at Hayling Island:**

*Left: Susie Campbell, Ian Metcalfe & Ros Metcalfe, Gold Medal Runners-up.*



*Below: Marilyn Prew, Jane Hindry & Bob Hindry, Silver Medal Runners-up with Chris Winner U3A Trustee for Wales.*



*Below:*

*Tony Bellars, Neil Prew & Bob Caseley, Bronze Medal Winners again with Chris Winner*



*Right: Trisha Knudsen, Denise Mole and Jane Cornwall during competition on the Sunny Saturday*



## Outings Group: A Day on the Broads

A group of U3A members had a lovely few hours in September floating along on the Mississippi. No, not THAT Mississippi, it was the Mississippi River Boat “Southern Comfort” on the Broads. The coach had brought us to the village of Horning where we went aboard. The day was sunny but with a chilly wind. However, it was worth the climb onto the top deck to get a wonderful view of the wildlife, river craft and luxury homes as we travelled slowly along the River Bure.

Once we were under way, we had a running commentary from the captain who pointed out the birds – crested grebes, swans, herons. I was particularly delighted by the flash of iridescent blue/green as a kingfisher flew along the river away from us.

Equally interesting though was the information about the boats and houses which we were passing. There were some beautiful and uniquely designed homes. One of them was where Arthur Ransome lived when he wrote some of the later *Swallows and Amazons* series of books. It was easy to see how he had been inspired, particularly as there would have been far fewer tourists like us staring into the gardens and living rooms.

Anyone wanting to buy any of these homes would need deep pockets, not only for the purchase price, but also for the very high upkeep costs. The problems of maintaining a house built on marshy ground was pointed out; in the past oak piles were used, as evident from one old house with a pronounced list.

**(Photo: right)**

Nowadays steel and concrete piles are driven far into the ground.

After all this we were fortified by an excellent buffet lunch and drinks from the bar. On the way back the



commentary stopped so we enjoyed chatting to each other and admiring the scenery. The coach ride, time on the Broads, the lunch and the company made a lovely day out. We were grateful to Niki and Di for organising it.

*Gloria Pantling*

## Pétanque Groups

### Fourth National U3A Weekend of Pétanque

This event was held (as previously) at the Mill Rythe holiday resort on Hayling Island in Hampshire over the weekend of September 20th-23rd 2019. The driving force behind this weekend is Andrew Lloyd, the National Subject Advisor for Pétanque, and it is testament to his energy and enthusiasm that this year there were 54 teams entered from 21 different U3A's.



For the first time, King's Lynn U3A sent four teams to the competitive event, drawn from the Wednesday and Thursday groups, and the twelve of us, each drawn into different groups, gathered on a beautifully sunny Saturday morning to begin the

weekend. The pétanque piste was very unlike the ones we were used to playing on in West Norfolk, being a coach park for most of the year. It was rock hard, littered with lumps of stone, pieces of asphalt along with several shallow holes - all of which combined to make play extremely challenging to say the least.

At the end of the day, after five round-robin matches, there were mixed results for our teams, ranging from one win out of five, up to four wins for one of our teams. The Sunday found two of our teams in the Bronze league, one in the Silver and one in the elite Gold - we had all avoided being in the White group. There should have been further round-robin matches in the morning, but continual heavy rain led to a postponement of play after less than an hour, with the organisers hurriedly re-jigging the format to a knockout tournament while the rest of us dried out!

Thankfully after lunch the rain had stopped and play resumed, with our two teams in the Bronze Group soon meeting in a semi-final, before the victors came through a nail-biting final match eventually winning 13-12. Our team in

the Silver group also won through to their final, where they were defeated in a fiercely competitive match.

In the last match of the day to be completed - the Gold final, our gallant trio made of Susie Campbell, Ian Metcalfe and Roz Metcalfe were eventually defeated 13-9 for the second time during the competition by the Hayling Island A Team. These were their only defeats over the two days, whilst the competition winners remained unbeaten. Considering that none of us had played the sport until a couple of years ago, and we were up against some players who had decades of experience, I feel this was a remarkable achievement.

Although this was very much a competitive tournament, and everyone there was certainly trying to win, throughout the weekend the rivalry remained friendly and all the teams played their part in fostering the ethos of the U3A. As the finals progressed, the loudest applause often came from the supporters of the defeated teams, and everyone stayed to witness the medal presentations, which were made by the U3A Trustee for Wales, Chris Winner (who revealed during our award that she used to live in Great Massingham - cue much amusement from the audience as one of our members who also hails from the village swapped notes!).

Special thanks go to Tony Bellars, Pétanque 3 Group Leader, who organised our trip and made sure we all arrived in the right places at the right times!

*Neil Prew*

### **Heacham Pétanque Marathon**

At the end of July, several members of our U3A Pétanque groups turned up at the *Bushel and Strike* in Heacham to support a fund-raising day planned by the Strikers, the team which plays on the pétanque terrain adjacent to the pub.

The pub chooses a charity annually to support and in 2019 it was the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service. The Strikers were playing a series of games beginning at 9am and going on until 9pm as their fund-raising effort. The Strikers had advertised this marathon widely to other Pétanque groups in West Norfolk, hoping for support on the day.

Saturday, 27th July, dawned dull with a risk of rain. Donning waterproof jackets and trousers, a trio of U3A players arrived at the Strikers' terrain, having left South Wootton in steady rain. The weather had cleared a little by the time we got to Heacham but the morning forecast was not encouraging. We however received a warm welcome from the five Strikers who were taking on all-comers for a twelve-hour period, rotating their players for each match of triples (three players versus three players).

Having played two games against the Strikers, who had just won the West Norfolk Pétanque Summer League, we were pleased to see more U3A pétanque players, their families and friends arrive to enjoy the day. The Strikers are a well-known team locally, and we were all greeted like old friends. After watching the play and enjoying a coffee break, we added the money we had collected from our U3A weekly players to the collecting bucket

and departed for lunch, leaving the marathon well under way.

We learnt later that the Strikers completed their twelve-hour marathon and, although extremely tired, were delighted with their achievement. They had also raised over £1,000 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service. Well done to all the players.

*Ann Smith, U3A Pétanque 1*

### **Pétanque Doubles Competition**

West Norfolk Pétanque League held their summer league presentation and plate competition at Heacham Social Club. Twelve pairs had an enjoyable morning playing pétanque, with Chris Taylor and Denise Mole winning and Ann and Brian Smith as runners-up. Both pairs play for Knight's Hill.



*Photo: Chris Taylor & Denise Mole (Left) with Ann & Brian Smith (Right) flank members of the two Heacham teams.*

The summer league was a close season which was decided on the last game. Winners of the league were the Strikers (Bushel and Strike, Heacham), with Centenary Committee (Heacham Social Club) as runners-up.

*Brian Smith*

### **Shakespeare Appreciation Group: *Twelfth Night***

For the second successive year, thanks to the excellent organisation of group leader Marion Newell, we visited the tranquil setting of Tolethorpe Manor on June 24th to see another open-air production by The Stamford Shakespeare Company; this year the comedy *Twelfth Night*. On a very hot sunny day, many



of us were searching for shade, rather than the heat, in which to enjoy our picnics before entering the auditorium for the afternoon matinee performance.

After the modern update of *Merry Wives of Windsor* last year, the production this time remained in period costume and with its original setting on the Adriatic Coast. A merry tale of unrequited love, shipwrecked twins, cross-dressing, mistaken identity and drunken revels was carried out by a stalwart cast who laboured well under the hot conditions in their heavy costumes, and indeed it was the audience who faced the most difficulties from the heat.

All in all it was a very enjoyable day, and hopefully Marion can be persuaded to make this an annual fixture in our U3A calendars. With *Romeo & Juliet* being amongst the productions planned next year, it surely would be another popular event.

*Marilyn Prew*

### **King's Lynn Memory Matters Group - *KLMM***

“The Practice of Reminiscence”      What Resources? – June 12<sup>th</sup> 2019

This seminar allowed Activities Co-ordinators to familiarise themselves with available resources; share ways of using them; evaluate how they may be improved or developed; practice and demonstrate group facilitation skills.

The seminar was very well attended by Activities Co-ordinators and their clients, members of the St John's Circle group and their leader, Nigel, and the *KLMM* group themselves.

The introduction was given by Pat Jones, leader of the *KLMM* group, wearing a dressing-gown to remind us that some care homes have staff wear night clothes to prompt their clients that it's bedtime. She gave a brief history of the *KLMM* group and its future, now that it has broken away from King's Lynn U3A and operates as a fully independent, not-for-profit, organisation. We owe a huge debt of thanks to the U3A for its continued enthusiastic support.

Pat, Trish Bailey, and Margaret Nye of *KLMM*, along with Helen Senior of Gaywood Library, spoke briefly about the various reminiscence resources and their providers. There was a table-top display of many such objects, some of which can be borrowed through Pat. Some of the sources are:- NAPA; Alzheimer's Society; websites with advice on running groups; Daily Sparkle with activity suggestions. Trish reported on a play she had seen, “Connie's Colander”, put on by a touring company which raised awareness of the problems associated with increasing dementias. She said we may be hosting something along these lines in the future. Poetry, both reading and writing it, is proven to be a useful group activity.

Then followed a brief quiz presented by Elaine of Amberley Hall care home, with a small prize for the winner, which was very much enjoyed by everyone.

Margaret then described a mobile phone app available through the NHS audiology service, which simplifies adjusting hearing aids in response to the current surroundings.

Pat reminded us that “people are our best resource”, and that group activities are client-based, for the enrichment and enjoyment of all the participants. We must also be aware that not all reminiscences are happy; sometimes difficult memories can be evoked and we must be prepared to deal with these.

After a refreshment break, the attendees split into four small groups for discussions around the memory kits available. This resulted in much lively chatter and lots of laughter.

**Table 1** – their kit was a sewing-box and a book on the 50s and 60s – with lots of interesting things including patterns for 6d, rag rug kits, and a button box – the group agreed that schools don’t teach that kind of ‘social history’.

**Table 2** – their kit was “Holidays” – containing lots of texture/sensory memory triggers, a Brownie camera, long-forgotten memory triggers, maps embossed on a fabric backing, photos, dolls, train tickets etc. Including some items that the Activities Co-ordinators don’t necessarily recognise but their clients do!

**Tables 3 and 4** – their kit was a “history of King’s Lynn” with photos, scrapbooks, etc. A photo of the old Walks swimming pool evoked memories of polio and TB, measles and chicken pox, the hospital isolation wards, and the discussion led to Dr Beeching & the railways, and politicians.

**Table 5** – their kit was “Royal Celebration” with a jigsaw, photos, magazines, newspapers, with many royal occasions and especially street parties being remembered.



*photo: Members of the Memory Matters Group & residents at an earlier seminar*

It was noted that each discussion group went off at different tangents of conversation and range of memories.

Group activity on this type of material can be started by a talk from the Activity Co-ordinator and lead to items being passed round the group; some people want to talk but others simply want to listen. Once underway, the leader can just watch the interactions and allow the group to find its own direction.

At the end of the afternoon, everyone was invited to fill in a workshop assessment sheet. Of the 16 who did, all agreed that the workshop was good or excellent. Comments were mainly complimentary, *and perhaps the most rewarding answer of all* – I had a lovely afternoon and enjoyed the reminiscences, thank you for inviting me (from a resident of Goodwin's Hall).

We closed on a very happy note with everyone clearly having enjoyed the experience. We look forward to putting on another event in the future and are, as always, very happy to hear your suggestions.

*Pat Jones*

## **The 'Jumping Flea' that gets under your skin, or the much maligned Ukulele**

For such a small and humble musical instrument, the Ukulele seems to have garnered a reputation for polarising opinions wherever it is spoken about. Its enthusiasts wax lyrical concerning its portability, simplicity and versatility; whereas the detractors dismiss it as a toy and make it the butt of jokes, such as:-

Q. Why do so many people take an instant dislike to the ukulele?

A. It saves time.

But this little instrument has now been around for some time, and its popularity shows no sign of abating. Originating in Hawaii (the name translates roughly as *Jumping Flea* - due to the way the fingers jump around the frets) after Portuguese immigrants introduced several steel-strung, small, guitar-like instruments such as '*Machetes*' into the islands towards the end of the 19th century. The instrument soon became popular due to the support of the last King of Hawaii, Kalakuna.

By the 1920's the instrument was being mass produced in the U.S.A. and entering many fields of popular music, taking on a role similar to that of the guitar from the 1950's onwards. In this country, of course, it became synonymous with the name George Formby in the 30's and 40's. His comic songs helped to establish the instrument in most minds as a novelty item, something that later performers such as Tessie O'Shea and Tiny Tim only served to emphasise.

After a few decades in decline, the ukulele's popularity rose again in the 1990's partly due to exposure on the internet, especially through YouTube videos. Ukulele arrangements of popular songs such as "Over The Rainbow" and "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" emphasised how the simple *uke* could be transformed in the hands of a virtuoso. The exposure led to the formation

of 100's of ukulele clubs and societies around the world, playing for friends, family, pub audiences, fetes, in care homes, or to whoever would listen.

The U3A is certainly not immune to this upsurge, with many local groups having established their own ukulele bands - a recent issue of 'Sources' magazine gives mention to the Wyre Forest & District U3A's show '60's Recall' which featured not one but two different ukulele groups. This year's AGM in Nottingham included ukulele playing amongst the Pursuits session on the Wednesday afternoon, as well as a ukulele Jam Session following dinner that night. The recent National Summer School at Aston University in Birmingham also included a seminar on the instrument, with one of its participants becoming the cover star of the latest issue of TAM.



*photo: examples of modern Ukuleles - in the centre, the popular compact Soprano which most beginners start with. Right - the larger mellower sounding Tenor ukulele, and on the Left - a Bass ukulele, which along with the similar-sized Baritone (not pictured) is tuned the same as its big cousin the guitar, but with elastic strings.*

U3A Ukulele Groups in our area are run within Dereham, Wisbech and Downham Market U3A's. Indeed several members of King's Lynn U3A have taken advantage of the Reciprocal Agreement to join Downham group, which meets fortnightly in the town, and performed at their U3A's AGM in April. There are also two other Ukulele groups operating in the King's Lynn area - the performance-centred King's Lynn Ukulele Club (KLUC), and Fenland Ukulele Club (FLUKE) which is primarily a "jam" session.

King's Lynn U3A are in the process of forming their own group, and we hope to up and playing in The New Year. So if you fancy stretching your fingers over those four nylon strings and having a strum, why not join us? No prior musical knowledge is required, as chords are explained via diagrams, and song sheets show where to change chord. Singing is optional but encouraged!

*Neil Prew*

## Bridge - with Mark Keightley

### The James Bond Hand

The following hand was played by James Bond in Moonraker.

	M	
	♠T987	
	♥6543	
Meyer	♦--	Drax
♠65432	♣76532	♠AKQJ
♥T9872		♥AKQJ
♦JT9	Bond	♦AK
♣--	♠--	♣KJ9
	♥--	
	♦Q8765432	
	♣AQT84	

How many of us sitting South would bid 7C with 8 points? If M's 10 of Spade was the 6 of Spades, he was facing a Yarborough, but James being James Bond it is makeable.

Whatever is lead it is either ruffed in Dummy or by declarer. Let us in this case play Ten Hearts from Meyer (Top of a sequence). Bond ruffs it and plays a small diamond to Dummy where it is ruffed. He then plays a small Club and does a double finesse (25% chance) and just covers whatever Drax plays. He then returns to Dummy by means of ruffing another Diamond and plays another Club just covering whatever Drax plays. He then draws the last Club and then plays the Queen of Diamonds drawing the last Diamond. Bond's hand is then good for the remaining tricks.

Drax by the way Doubled and James Bond, guess what, Redoubled for a score of 2660, he was Vulnerable as well.

On a serious note it is shape that matters in Bridge more so than points.

☀ Earlier I mentioned a "Yarborough". This originates from the Earl of Yarborough who offered a wager whilst playing Whist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He offered £1,000 to £1 to anyone who had a Yarborough whist playing with him. The odds are actually 1,827 to 1, so he was onto a winner.

*Mark Keightley*

## Stories of Lynn Quiz project

The Stories of Lynn museum at the Town Hall had impressed me when I took two of my grandchildren there a few years ago. When a request was passed to members of the Digital Photography Group for a volunteer to help with a Project I was interested to have a chance to find out more about the developments there. The other member of the group who was interested decided that he would not be able to commit enough time to it, so I won by default.

The task was to produce illustrations for a quiz about items in the galleries.

This would require photographs of 36 items plus details of them which would serve as more or less obscure clues to them. The quiz was for internal use amongst town hall staff, colleagues and associates at a social event. I can illustrate part of the task as follows.

Which of the pictures (a) to (d) relate to the second set (P) to (S)?



In the event there were nine times as many pictures as this, and there were supplementary questions which had been included in my brief about relationships between the items. (I did appreciate help from Susie Campbell with the chore of resizing the 72 images.)

I was privileged to have some instructive visits with the Learning and Engagement Officer, Rachael Williams and free admission to the museum on several occasions.

I now have more appreciation of the wealth of information there, the quality of the displays and the work of the museum. I would highly recommend visiting the web site [www.storiesoflynn.co.uk](http://www.storiesoflynn.co.uk) and of course a visit (or more) to the reality – at the Town Hall, and around the town where the app 'Stories Of Lynn' from Google Play Store will guide you.

*Brian Smith*

Your Answers

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
( )	( )	( )	( )

*(Editor's note: Rachael has invited a U3A group in to try the quiz, so it may be destined for public use too. The Local History group did this in November.)*

## Francis Frith

We have all heard of photographers such as Lord Snowden, Patrick Lichfield, David Bailey, but who has heard of Francis Frith? Yet I am sure we have all seen some of his work. Most bookshops will have a local section including a volume featuring Francis Frith's photographs.

Francis Frith had a very successful grocery business in Liverpool, but he sold it in 1855 for £200,000 and decided to travel. When he was in his thirties, he became interested in photography and travelled the Nile & the Near East from 1856 to 1860. During this time, he was held captive by bandits and on another occasion attacked in the middle of the night by a pack of hungry wild dogs. Throughout his exploits he took many photographs; remember in those days the camera would have been huge, the glass plates had to have a silver coating put on them (which had to be done in the dark) and, once the photograph had been exposed, the glass plate had to be developed. He had a portable dark room but, in the heat of Africa, he was in a tiny confined space doing very delicate work and the chemicals that he used would have been very smelly and dangerous. He took thousands of these photographs, so the heavy and fragile glass plates had to be transported with great care through the jungle of darkest Africa. The logistics of it all must have been a nightmare. When he returned to London, he exhibited his photographs and became an overnight sensation with the public and the Royal Society. However, this was not the reason for his popularity today.

In the 1870's the railway network in the UK was becoming established. By Act of Parliament Bank Holidays had become obligatory and so the population had time on their hands and were able to travel. Francis Frith saw a new business opportunity; the new tourists would like a souvenir of their travels. He set himself the target of photographing every city, town and village in Britain.

For the next 30 years he travelled extensively, photographing literally everywhere and everything. These photographs were bought by millions of Victorians who pasted them into their albums. To meet demand he began recruiting a team of photographers to continue the work. In 1886 he produced a catalogue of some 670 pages containing thousands of views of the British Isles. By 1890 there were over 2,000 outlets for his work. In 1894 the Post Office allowed publishers to place a stamp on a card.

In 1902 the back of the photograph was divided into two so that an address and message could be written, and so the postcard was invented. Sadly, this was 4 years after Frith had died, but his sons Eustace and Cyril continued with the work. By 1970 the collection contained a third of a million photographs showing over 7,000 towns and villages. Much of the archive has now been digitised and can be viewed online. It is fascinating to see local scenes and life as they were 100 years ago.

*Mark Keightley*

*(Editor's note: The vast Francis Frith archive, including many local images can be explored at <https://www.francisfrith.com/search> )*

## Those Romans were Clever



It is often remarked on how good Roman engineering was, and the influence it has on the modern world, but how many of us realised that it influenced space travel?

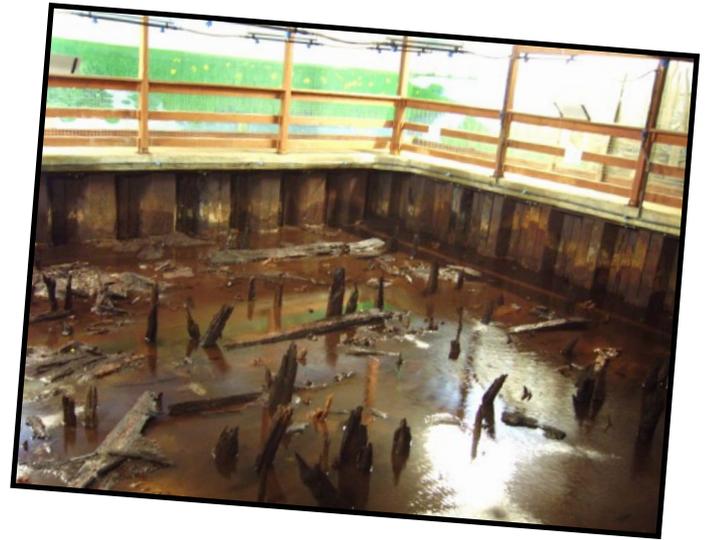
The development starts with the width of two horses' backsides. The Roman chariot was designed with shafts fitting the width of two horses and the rest of the chariot was based on this. The constant use of Roman chariots along the roads caused ruts. Later, wagons and stage coaches were designed so that the wheels would run along the ruts and minimise damage.

Next came the tramways, with trams made using the same jigs as for wagons, and so the axle length did not alter. When trains came along, it was a natural development of tram-building and so trains had the same axle length. The English were the early pioneers of the US railroad, thus the US rail gauge was the same as the British.

So, how do we get to the Space Age? The answer is surprisingly simple; the Solid Rocket Boosters which were fitted to the main fuel tank on the Shuttle were made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. They had to be transported by train to the launch site and also fit through a tunnel!

Who would have thought the Romans had such influence, and it all stems from the width of a couple of bums 4 feet 8½ inches wide.

*Mark Keightley*



**Left:** The Walking Group near East Rudham on a rare sunny autumn day. **Above:** The Preservation Hall at Flag Fen displaying the ancient timber posts of the causeway. **Below:** Members of the Local History Group listen to their guide at Flag Fen in August. **Below Left:** Tolethorpe Manor, the tranquil home of Stamford Shakespeare Company.



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Chairman: Edward Harrison