



February 2024

SCUNTHORPE AND DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

<https://u3asites.org.uk/scunthorpe/home>

Chair's Report – Pat Ackland

January's over. I can't say I'm sorry as I always find January a particularly difficult month to navigate. The one highlight was the lovely meal we had at the Rugby Club. Thanks again to Mary Magee and Ann Owen for organising it. Everyone who spoke to me really enjoyed it and the food was great.

Tony and I have continued to try and improve our Website presentation and are very pleased that our viewing numbers have substantially increased lately. It makes the time spent seem worthwhile if we can see that people are looking at the site.

I am so pleased that we recruited over 30 new members since last April. Please keep spreading the word!

Subscriptions are now due, there is detailed information later in the newsletter. The committee have worked hard on a detailed budget for next year and have tried very hard to keep the increase in subscriptions to a minimum. We sincerely hope you will all continue to support us

Forthcoming events

Speaker for February

Our speaker this month on **Friday 23rd February**, is Keith Hanson, who was once a Yeoman Warder. Keith will tell us about the Crown Jewels and why 23,568 precious stones have become a world-renowned collection. What lies behind these ancient symbols of monarchy?

Speaker for March

Our speaker on **Friday 22nd March** will be Steve Stubbins. Steve will bring his wonderful collection of old photographs and post cards and tell us how Scunthorpe changed with the introduction of the Iron and Steel industries. We have heard from Steve before and he always provides an informative and entertaining talk.

As always, meetings are held in St. Paul's Church Hall, Ashby High Street. Doors open at 1.30pm to set up, with refreshments available from 1.45pm and the meeting beginning at 2.15pm.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2024

Members are reminded that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS for the Scunthorpe and District u3a for 2024 are due on 1st April 2024 but may be paid in advance if desired. The Committee has decided, for this year the fee will be **£16**. If you are a member of another u3a, then the fee payable will be £12.00 Written confirmation of the additional membership will be required. The £4.00 difference is the Capitation Fee which is remitted to the u3a HQ and which covers, amongst other things, insurance and your membership of the Third Age Trust and the publishing of "Third Age Matters" etc.

Three ways of paying:

- 1) You can post your cheque together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to; Gordon Green (Membership Secretary), and your 2024/25 Membership Card will be posted back to you. If you do not include an s.a.e. then your membership card will be made available at the next monthly meeting or, if you have an email address it will be emailed to you as an e-membership card.
 - **cheques should be made payable to Scunthorpe and District u3a. Please write the full name of each member together with their membership number on the reverse of the cheque.**
 - If you want to subscribe to Third Age Matters then simply add on **£3.80p**. The magazine is free but the £3.80 is to cover postage. So, if a full member makes a cheque out for **£19.80**, we would know that they want the magazines as well.

- 2) If you intend coming to the February or March meeting then make a cheque out (as in paragraph 1) or put cash in a sealed envelope with all your details on the envelope and put it in the collecting box and I will make your membership card out before the next meeting for you to collect then.

If anyone has changed any contact details, including email addresses, please let Gordon Green know so that accurate records can be maintained.

Finally, it would be really helpful if any member who does not wish to re-subscribe for next year could let Gordon know.

What you missed in January – Judith Proctor

Ken Moore returned to Scunthorpe u3a to a packed hall to talk about the Dickin Medal, awarded to animals for inspiring feats of bravery and courage, the animal equivalent to the Victoria Cross. He was once again very entertaining and informative. He started his research when he discovered stories of Pigeon Billy who flew on Lancasters and found that Bletchley Park has a room dedicated to pigeons.

It was Maria Elisabeth Dickin, philanthropist, social reformer and animal welfare pioneer, who founded the PDSA Dickin medal. The first medal was struck in bronze in 1943, inscribed with “For Gallantry” and “We also Serve” surrounded by a laurel wreath, with a striped green, brown and pale blue ribbon. It is the highest award to animals. She founded the Peoples’ Dispensary for Sick Animals in Ilford where some of the heroic animal recipients are ceremonially buried. Ken informed the members that this has been officially awarded 75 times to 32 pigeons, 38 dogs, 4 horses and 1 cat.

Ken related some of the stories of the heroes such as Simon the Naval Cat, who was honorary “Able Seacat” on HMS Amethyst during the Yangtze River incident of 1949 when he survived a hit from artillery shelling and raised morale and dealt with a rat infestation aboard ship. Simon even had fan mail. He was awarded the medal in December 1949 but sadly died before he got it.

Pigeons were a vital part of communications during World War 2 such as Pigeon Gustav who flew the first report of Normandy landings back to Britain and was part of the RAF Pigeon service. The modern film “Valiant” is based on Gustav and can be viewed in the Waddington Heritage Centre. Other notable pigeons who received the Dickin medal were used to exchange messages for example between Eisenhower and his Field Marshall, and some even parachuted in to exchange messages.

Three of the equine recipients of the medal were Olga, Regal and Upstart who were involved in assisting after the bombing in WW2 in places such as Tooting, where Regal twice rescued people from burning stables. They were awarded the medal in 1947. In 1953 a horse called Reckless carried ammunition to the front line in the Korean War and brought wounded back. Reckless was recognized in 1953. Altogether 16 horses were involved in Central London during WW2.

Seven War dogs rescued people trapped during the London Blitz, saving hundreds of people. They were equipped with dog boots with leather pads, for example Jet of Lada which won 4 medals for saving the lives of over 50 people trapped in bombed buildings and led the Victory Parade in June 1945. In 1947 the rescue mission at the Whitehaven Pit Disaster was assisted by dogs, Jet, Prince and Rex. There is a Jet memorial in Calderstone Park in Liverpool. Judy, the Pointer, was the only dog to be an official prisoner of war near Malaysia. One notable dog was Antis and his owner a Polish pilot who rescued the dog in Germany and made his way to Britain. Antis became the squadron mascot and watched the planes out and back into the British airfield warning people of impending air raids. Antis also flew 31 missions and was wounded twice. Another medal recipient, Bamse, has its own website and a bus pass! Bamse rounded up crews from the pubs and its gold medal is now in Montrose Air Station Heritage Museum. More recently Treo was decorated for work with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps in searching for arms and explosives in Afghanistan. Ken recommended David Long's book "The Animals VC. For gallantry or Devotion" for more information. There is also more information at the Bomber Command Memorial in Lincoln where Ken is a guide. A very interesting presentation which was thought-provoking and illustrated the sacrifices some animals made for humans in times of strife.



FESTIVE LUNCH



Almost 60 people enjoyed an excellent post festive meal at Heslam Park, Scunthorpe on the 24th January. This was totally due to the efforts of Mary and Ann who had arranged everything. Thank you both!!



This is the first time we have used this venue for such a function and the feedback was very positive.



Also, for the first time, members from Scunthorpe u3a and North Lindsey u3a joined together for the event and it appeared to be well received by all.



Once again, our special thanks to



Mary and Ann for organising and making a pleasant, few hours for us in the middle of a gloomy January day.



New groups

Beginner's Family History update - Kath Allen

This was one of the topics in which many people expressed an interest. Kath has agreed to lead the group and is holding two informal discussion meetings for anyone interested.

They will be held at the Anchor Beefeater near Morrisons beginning at 11am on Monday 26th February and also on Tuesday 5th March.

Please let Kath know if you are interested and if you will be there.

U3a Rock Band – Tony Ackland

Hi, my name is Tony Ackland and I play electric bass in the band "Blast From The Past". You may have seen us perform as we have played for our u3a twice in the last few years. I recently read an article about another u3a who had formed its own "Rock and Pop Band". I also had a look around the internet and found several u3as with such a band and I started wondering if there were any players in our own u3a that would like to get together and form our own band. We only need between three to five players to make it work. I used to play in a lively three-piece band with a singer, guitarist and myself on bass. The sort of instruments that could work would be, guitar both electric and acoustic, banjo, mandolin harmonica and keyboard. Also, a singer would be handy, you don't need a great voice as rock/pop style sounds better with a rough and ready one. I also have a decent drum machine we could use. Also, making music is a truly wondrous feeling. It's recognised as an excellent way of giving your brain a good workout and also great fun. It doesn't matter what level of experience you may have, you might surprise yourself. Remember our main objective in the u3a is to have fun and learn.

So, if anyone out there would be interested just get back to me. I come to most of the monthly meetings, together with my wife Pat, our Chairperson, so you can also talk to me then.

CURRENT INTEREST GROUPS

ARCHERY/RIFLE SHOOTING	2 nd THURSDAY	11-1	Trackside Archery Club, North Kelsey	Richard Charlesworth
ART APPRECIATION	2 nd THURSDAY	10.15	Heslam Park Rugby Club	Maureen Ellis
AVIATION	Flexible; see website page		Various	Tony Ackland
BEGINNERS FRENCH	3 rd MONDAY	10-12	Scawby Village hall	Pat Ackland
BOOK CLUB	Last THURSDAY	10.30	The Arc, Westcliffe	Sonia Czabaniuk
CARD and BOARD GAMES	Every THURSDAY	11.30-2.00	Crosby Collective	Rosemary Barratt
* COFFEE MORNINGS*	2 nd FRIDAY		Various	Margaret Lambert
FRENCH GROUP	Every FRIDAY	10.30	Member's Homes	Liz Copperwheat
GARDENING	4 th TUESDAY	2.00	Various	Jenny Winterburn
GENEALOGY GROUP	1 st WEDNESDAY	1- 3	Central Library	Mel Ogden
HISTORY GROUP	3 rd TUESDAY	2.-4.	Heslam Park Rugby Club	Pat Ackland
IPAD and TABLET GROUP	2 nd TUESDAY	10-12	Crosby Collective	David Holmes
LUNCH CLUB	4 th WEDNESDAY	12.30	Various	Ann Owen
* MURDER MYSTERY*	2 nd SATURDAY	2-4	Bowls Club	Wendy England
PLAY READING	2 nd WEDNESDAY	PM	Venue TBA	Robin Poole
PHOTOGRAPHY	2 nd THURSDAY	1.30-3.30	Visual Arts Centre	Graham Ellwood
Qi GONG	1 st and 3 rd FRIDAY	2.15	St Paul's hall	Mel Ogden
QUIZ GROUP	1 st THURSDAY	10.00	Bowls Club	Andrew Bullen
SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY	3 rd THURSDAY	1.30-3.30	Visual Arts Centre	Alan Keen
SPANISH	Every FRIDAY	10.30-12.00	Morrisons	Maria Sikora
THEATRE GROUP	FLEXIBLE			
WHAT'S APP GROUP	FLEXIBLE			David Holmes
WOODLAND WANDERERS	3 rd WEDNESDAY	2.00		Robin Poole
UKULELE	Every FRIDAY	1.00	St John's Church Hall, Bigby St, Brigg	Mike Sadler

Joint groups are marked by an asterisk*

Upcoming dates for your diary

8th March - Coffee and Chat at Brigg Garden Centre

22nd March - Monthly meeting 'The changes the iron and steel industry have made to Scunthorpe'

12th April - Coffee and Chat at Lindsey Lodge Hospice

As always, there is more information on our website.

Or view by the week...

MONDAY

am	3 rd week of the month	Beginners French
pm		

TUESDAY

am	2 nd week of the month	I-pad and tablet group
pm	3 rd week of month	History
	4 th week of month	Gardening

WEDNESDAY

am	4 th week of month	Lunch Club
pm	1 st week of month	Genealogy
	2 nd week of month	Play Reading
	3 rd week of month	Woodland Wanderers

THURSDAY

am	1 st week of month	Quiz
	2 nd week of month	Art Appreciation
	2 nd week of month	Archery/Rifle Shooting
	4 th week of month	Aviation
	Last week of month	Book Club
pm	2 nd week of month	Photography
	3 rd week of month	Science and Technology
12-2	every week	Card and Board games

FRIDAY

am	Every week	French
	Every week	Spanish
	2 nd week of month	Coffee morning
pm	1 st and 3 rd week weekly	Qigong
		Ukulele

What is happening in the groups...

Ukulele group - Mike Sadler

The group meets weekly in St John's Church Hall, Bigby Street, Brigg, on Fridays at 1pm. If you can play a ukulele, even at the level of knowing three chords, then do come along and have fun learning to play popular songs and tunes from the Rock and Roll era



onwards. New members are very welcome, although the group is not currently offering tuition to absolute beginners.

Please contact Mike Sadler to let him know you want to join and for any further information.

French for Fun - Liz Copperwheat

This is a small friendly group meeting in people's houses on a Friday morning from 10.30-12.

They currently have space for a couple of new members. Contact Liz via the website if you are interested in joining.



Coffee and Chat - Margaret Lambert

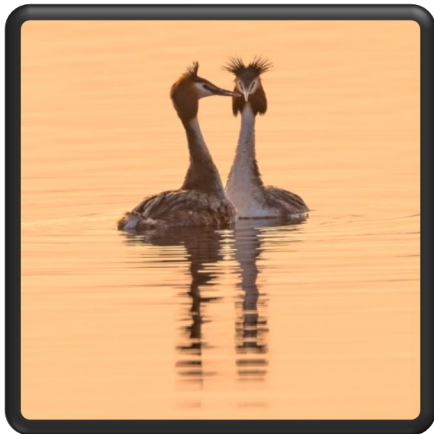
The next meeting is on Friday 8th March at 10.30 at Brigg Garden Centre. Please can you let Margaret know if you will be there.



Photography Group

8th February 2024

Well, we were beaten today, initially we had several apologies and then the snow came down, so apologies to all, we had to cancel the meeting. But here are some nice images to look at.



Great Crested Grebe



Barn owl



Greenland Goose



Sparrowhawk

Next meeting Thursday 14.3.24

Woodland Wanderers - Robin Poole

Ten members joined the first wander of the year along Bottesford Beck on a very cold but beautiful sunny winter day. There was little bird life but we did see several deer in the fields by the Beck.



We finished off in Cafe Natura for a welcome hot drink.

The next Woodland Wanders will be on Wednesday 21st February when we will meet for the snowdrop walk at Manton, beginning at 11am. More details will be sent out nearer the time. The March walk will be on Wednesday March 20th.

Contact Robin via the website if you are interested in joining us.



Archery/Air Rifle Shooting - Richard Charlesworth

The archery and air rifle group meets the second Thursday of the month from 11am to 1pm, at Trackside Archery and Shooting Club in North Kelsey Moor, near Brigg. There are 11



members who split between archery and air rifle shooting. The charge for the session is £12 which includes the hire of club equipment. The group is going well, but we have reached the point where we can't take on more members due to amount of available club equipment. I am considering running two back-to-back sessions i.e. 11am to 1pm and 1pm to 3pm to allow more members to join, if there is sufficient demand.

We can discuss this option at the next meeting. So, if you are interested in joining the group, please let me know through the u3a website. Richard Charlesworth

Science and Technology - Alan Keen

As always, this was another varied meeting generating a lot of discussion. Alan began with the GCHQ Christmas Challenge and helped us to crack it. Have a go here.

<https://www.gchq.gov.uk/news/xmaschallenge2023>

Following on his talk about the solar system last year, Carrock asked us to share our addresses. He would allocate each of us a planet and see if they could be used to model the solar system...

Eleanor talked about new research by Brilliant Planet Rothamstead on using algae to remove carbon dioxide from the air and the pilot scheme they are running in Morocco.

Dean had chosen Cognitive Bias (a systematic thought process caused by the tendency of the human brain to simplify information processing through a filter of personal experience and preferences). It all comes down to the amount of information given to determine the correct answer, which led into conjunction fallacy... Have a look here;

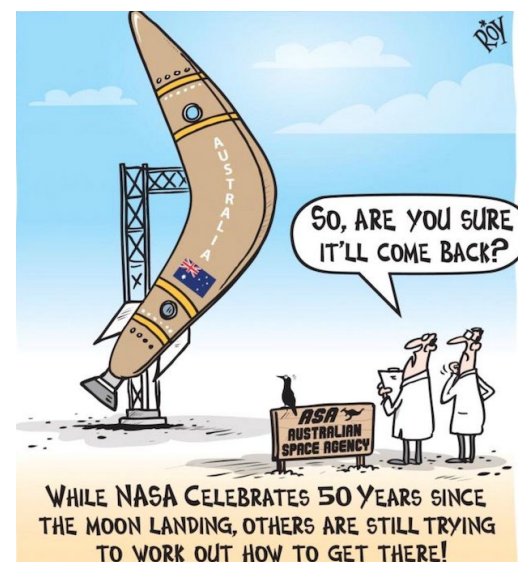
https://youtu.be/Ghbkv0MKV-w?si=S_9BO63xofA03Dx9

Giles finished off by running through all the developments planned in Space over 2024. It is a busy year with many different countries planning on sending missions to the moon and what they are hoping to achieve. China is sending a space probe to the dark side of the moon to see if there is ice (and water) there. Nokia are planning for a 4G network. NASA are planning to send mini robots (the video looks like something out of Wallace and Gromit...)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQU1VSIPhgo>

There are also plans for the first manned space landing for fifty years...

The next meeting of the group will be Thursday 21st March at 20-21, Visual Arts Centre, beginning at 1.30.



What is Qigong? – Christine Smiley

Research has found potential benefits for older adults in particular. Evidence being found that improvements in balance training and fall prevention which has similar and sometimes better results when compared to more traditional interventions. **

Is Qigong safe? Many studies indicate Qigong, when correctly practised, has no negative side effects. Although advice is that exercises of this nature should not be used to postpone seeing a health care provider about a medical problem. *

Qigong (pronounced chi gungk) is an ancient form of exercise practiced at different levels to suit people of all ages. The Chinese character for 'qi' in qigong, means 'life force' and 'gong' means work. Graceful movements help promote the circulation of



qi, within the body. Controlled long, slow, deep breathing helps concentrate the mind.

Qigong is therefore the practice of working with one's life force to create harmony between the mind and body helping to combat problems often associated with modern living and lifestyle.

This meditative practice with over 3000 years of history and 10,000 styles is practised by over 200 million people all over the world. * Tai chi, which many of you will have heard of, is one of the forms of Qigong but is much younger. It was described to me by Mel, our trainer, who has practised the art for a number of years, as the younger brother of Qigong. Although there has not been a great deal of research done on the effects of regular Qigong exercises there is currently a movement underway in China, the United States and Europe to preserve the valuable aspects of these traditional Chinese practices and to have them studied using Western scientific methods.* Now more and more western medical doctors, researchers and scientists, accept that regular practice of Qigong or Tai Chi helps maintain better physical and psychological health and wellbeing.

A 2020 review based on a programme of up to 40 – 60minute sessions three to six times per week suggested that after 6 months of practice there was significant improvement in cognition and memory which were similar to the benefits from combined cognitive-physical programs and other physical exercises. * Our 60minute classes are twice a month so for those wishing to practice more Mel suggested following a master of the art who has videos on YouTube which we can follow at any time even in pyjamas though you may need to close blinds/curtains!

I've been attempting to practice every day knowing that whatever I can manage is improving the overall quality of my physical health. Concentrating on the correct body positions and breathing is improving my memory muscle too.

Comments from others in the group include sleeping better, lower blood pressure and one said it's the most relaxing hour she experiences.

If you're interested in learning more the group meets at 2pm for a 2.15 start at St Paul's Hall in Ashby on the first and third Friday of every month. There is a small charge of £3 to cover room hire.

Mel Ogden Group Leader

* British Health Qigong Association

**www.nccih.nih.gov/health/qigong-what-you-need-to-know

Lunch Group – Ann Owen

SCUNTHORPE u3a LUNCHEON GROUP

Our next venue will be

THE GAME KEEPER

in Scotter. DN21 3TW

Wednesday 27^h March 2024

Meeting from noon to eat at 12.30pm.

If you would like to join us, please put your name down at the monthly meeting on Friday 23rd February at St Paul's Hall

I pad and Tablet Group – David Holmes

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 12th March 2024 for 10-12pm at The Crosby Collective cafe. Open to new members to come and learn more about your i pad or tablet.

Please let me know if you cannot make the meeting.

David Holmes - Group leader.

Aviation Group – Lyn Bradley

Our group of five met in January for the first time since November.

After coffee etc was organised, we began by co-ordinating our diaries for our 'fine weather' jollies - which will soon be here. Some used paper diaries and others their phones!

We then carried on with individual presentations which covered RAF navigation memorabilia, the F35B stealth fighter, the early Russian Tupolov jet (known for its crashes!) and the amazing Beluga airbus.



Our next meeting is at 10am on Thursday 22nd February at the Crosby Collective.

Murder Mystery Group

The second meeting of the murder mystery group took place on the afternoon of Saturday 10th February, with 18 members attending, at the Scunthorpe Bowls Club.

The first meeting in January was a learning curve for everyone. We didn't really know how it would all work out. We muddled through though and a good time was had by all.

This time we were into it straight away and devoured the clues with a relish, trying to work out which of the characters had done the dastardly deed. After lots of discussion and plenty of laughter only one of us correctly identified Agnes as the murderer.

With Andrew expertly running the game and Wendy providing refreshments it was another afternoon of fun and games.

The next meeting will be on Saturday 9th March 2pm – 4pm at Scunthorpe Bowls Club, Lloyds Avenue, Scunthorpe. (Turn into Lloyds Avenue from the traffic lights on Ashby Road, turn left into the first little lane immediately after the bus stop and before the first house.)



Contact is Wendy England e-mail for any queries.

Quiz group report – Andrew Bullen

February was another good session with 14 members forming three teams. It was the usual mixed bag of questions with a lot of general knowledge. We also had an anagram round based on the word constable, answers beginning with the letter J and another on events that have occurred in February. Memories were really tested by questions on decimal coinage and the 1970s.

The next meeting is Thursday 7th March at the Bowls Club. Meetings are very light hearted and you don't need to be a quiz genius to join.

Book Group Report – Sonia Czabaniuk

Welcome back to all readers after our festive break. We re-convened in our new venue at the end of January, The Arc in Westcliffe. It may not have the rural charm of the Pink Pig, but was a nice quiet place for our lively group. The first order of the day was welcoming back an old friend, Stephen, who has been absent from our table for a while. Then, on to business. During the Christmas break we were tasked with reading two books for discussion at the first meeting. And – what a selection! The first out of the gate was this year's Booker Prize winner, 'Prophet Song' by Paul Lynch. An all too possible dystopian future. Set in the Irish republic, it is a tale of a family caught up in a nightmare scenario of totalitarian rule. The overall opinion of the group was, this was not happy reading, but gripping nonetheless. A very disturbing tale. In contrast, and offering a worthy antidote to this, was a tale of time travelling historians, 'Just One Damned Thing After Another' by Jodi Taylor. This is the first book of a series, The Chronicles of St Mary. It was met with mixed reviews. Some found it a little too far-fetched for comfort and others (that will be myself and a couple of others) who enjoyed the adventure and 'nonsense' of it all. Light relief indeed. No meeting would be complete without a round-up of all the other books we have read while we were away. Once again these ranged from the history of Wentworth, the latest Richard Osman, by way of classic Russian literature (Anna Karenina – Tolstoy) and the autobiography of David Bowie's first drummer (Bowie, Cambo and all the hype - John Cambridge).



So, onto this month's choice(s) – I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou and (for those who would like something a little lighter) The Lido by Libby Page.

The next meeting is Thursday 22nd February, 10.30, The Arc. Unfortunately, the group is closed to new members.

Art Appreciation – Maureen Ellis

For our February meeting we looked at paintings of flowers. There was a varied and interesting selection from seventeenth century Dutch paintings and Japanese woodcuts up to the present day. Discussion was, as usual, very lively! Next month we are talking about paintings of Lincolnshire. The group is just about at capacity now and, for the time being, we are not taking new members.

Looking back to January 2021 – Alan Gosling

We all need a bit of light relief at times... I was looking back at past Newsletters and came across this article from Alan Gosling which appeared in the 2021 January Newsletter. Looking back, it still feels like a mad time and did we really live through it?

Ten Things To Consider:

Here are 10 things to consider as we close the door on one of the most horrible years of our lifetime:

1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank clerk wearing a mask and ask for money.
3. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
4. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
5. This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought her dog understood her. I came into my house and told my cat. We laughed a lot.
6. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
7. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
8. This virus has done what no woman has been able to do. Cancel sports, shut down all bars and keep men at home!
9. I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
10. I need to practise social-distancing from the refrigerator.

Newsletter - Eleanor Wasley

Many thanks to all those people who regularly send in contributions - without them the newsletter would be very thin! The cut-off date for the March newsletter is **Wednesday 13th March**.



A moment of tension in Vatican. If the bishop moves forward the queen can take him.



Scunthorpe Museum Society - future dates

U3a members are very welcome to attend meetings. They are held at Old Brumby United Church on Ashby Road and begin at 7.15. There is a £3 charge for visitors.

Natural History and Geology Section

Monday March 11th - Messingham Zoo. One Couple's dream of starting their own zoo. Ian and his wife Alex set up their own zoo in Messingham to offer something different to the larger zoos and wildlife parks by focusing on close encounters with smaller, friendlier animals

Local History and Archaeology Section

Monday 26th February - The Three Crowns:

Martin Taylor will talk about the history of Hull's Coat of Arms

Monday 25th March - Victorian Music Hall:

Michele Beale will cover the golden age of Victorian variety, venues and performers . It includes a sing along chorus too...