

December 2023

No 117

Registered Charity No 1178289

WINTER NEWSLETTER



Winter Sunrise in Surfleet

Taken by Pat Collier

DISCLAIMER

Please note that all the information in this newsletter has been compiled with the best of intentions and information available. Spalding and District u3a will not be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As I write this there is a certain sense of déjà vu. I was chair of Spalding u3a from 2015 to 2018 – and there must be a certain sense of desperation to have me back again albeit for a couple of years. Much has happened since 2018, Covid for a start. But we have bounced back. We have pretty much the number of members as we had pre Covid but we more than punch our weight with 50+ interest groups and it's wonderful that new members in particular step forward with ideas for new interest groups. New members sign up at each monthly meeting – do make them feel welcome. Live dangerously and perhaps talk to someone you don't know at the next monthly meeting.

We have a new secretary, Sue Morris, herself a new member who joined at the beginning of the year. Thank you Sue for being so willing to take on the role. An added plus is that Sue's husband Wayne is going to take on the website (I'm reliably informed he knows a bit about IT). We use u3a Site Builder which will shortly be replaced by new authoring software based on Wordpress. Our content will be supported until migrated across to the new system. I think Wayne has joined us at just the right moment! The website is nothing unless it has content and particularly current content. Please can group leaders send reports of what you're doing to me so that it can be put on the website and published in our quarterly newsletter. The website is our 'shop window' in effect and vital in signposting potential new members to our u3a.

Our third new committee member is Bernice Adcock but of course she isn't new at all. She has already served on two previous committees and will be our speaker finder. I well remember the monthly meeting where we were graced with the presence of Queen Victoria herself who explained how to take afternoon tea – cream then the jam on the scone. Bernice has already lined up some interesting speakers for us. She is, of course, open to suggestions – have you heard an interesting speaker recently or perhaps there's a topic you'd like to hear about. We aim for variety – a bit of history, perhaps a speaker from a charity, something musical. Let us know what you like. It's your u3a after all.

Rosemary McClements

chair.spaldingu3a@gmail.com

YOUR COMMITTEE



Rosemary McClements
Chair
chair.spaldingu3a@gmail.com



Mel Gordon
Vice Chair



Sue Morris
Secretary
sec.spaldingu3a@gmail.com



Dawn Kent -
Treasurer



Jane Davis
Groups Convenor



Bernice Adcock
Speaker Finder
.
com



Heather Girdlestone
New Members
Coordinator



Barbara Charity
Beacon Coordinator

GROUP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

It's been a very busy quarter, with two new groups up and running and another one having an inaugural meeting in December!

Tai Chi & Chi Gong has started at Weston Village Hall on Tuesday November 7th and after a slight communication failure this group will just be for u3a members only so please make the most of it!

The proposed group "Watercolours for the Petrified" with an experienced teacher who is new to the area has attracted 50 initial enquiries. An inaugural meeting will be held on December 4th at Surfleet Village Hall to discuss how to take this forward. Monday is not necessarily the chosen day. There will be two classes. Those who have expressed an interest will be contacted nearer the time, but it is a meeting not a class. It isn't too late to express an interest.

Ukulele is up and running again on a weekly basis as before, but is now on Fridays.

I am delighted to be able to report that the first meeting of "Parler Français" was held on Monday November 13th at the Frasier Rooms. We have 14 members on record, and there were 9 on Monday plus 3 apologies and two more people have asked to join. We will be using a book called Façon de Parler, and I went a bit mad buying second hand copies of these for the group afterwards. Buy now can get a bit addictive! It is such a privilege having a native French Speaker to lead the course.

We are running the long promised First Aid Class next week on November 20th. Photography 1 & 2 have combined over winter. Music Study is now starting a little earlier to allow for coffee and a "catch-up".

More and more groups are sharing the role of convenor and where this has happened it is lessening the load for organisers.

It was noted that Ken Bush will be stepping down from his role as Leader for Exploring Churches but that he has hopefully identified two people to take his place. He will leave big shoes to fill. I will be contacting those who have expressed an interest in playing Chess over the coming weeks as we are thinking that games could be played at Tonic 44 at the same time as the Rummikub group, so if you are interested and haven't heard from me soon, nudge me?

A Group Leaders (Convenors) meeting will be held on January 15th as this seemed to be the preferable date, at Cley Hall. (Spalding not Norfolk!).

Finally, as usual a massive thank you to those who lead or share the leadership of groups. Your hard work is very much appreciated .

Jane Davis

SPEAKERS FOR 2024

Monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month, Start 2.00 pm prompt (doors open 1.30 pm) at Surfleet Village Hall.

04/01/2024 **RSPB WASH CRUISES** - Neil Oakham - an insight into why Spalding U3A have always enjoyed this trip & special day out from Boston.

01/02/2024 **THE CHANNEL ISLES UNDER OCCUPATION** - John Chester.

07/03/2024 **DIABETES EXPLAINED** - this subject and talk booked in response to requests by a number of our members.

04/04/2024 **GRAVE ROBBER** - Steve Bacon takes on the persona of Nehemiah Bacon!

Speakers can be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Monthly Meetings. Please note that the first two rows of seats are reserved for members with sight or hearing difficulties. Remember we have the hall until 4 pm, so even with clearing up there is plenty of time to chat and enjoy tea and biscuits! But more help with chairs would be appreciated.!

The Committee following the AGM is as Follows:

Rosemary McClements* - Chair, Mel Gordon - Vice Chair, Sue Morris* - Secretary, Dawn Kent – Treasurer, Bernice Adcock* - Speaker Finder, Jane Davis - Groups Convener, Barbara Charity - Beacon coordinator, Heather Girdlestone - New members coordinator The three starred committee members were newly appointed at the AGM meeting in October.

General News and Updates and Gentle Reminders.

Please do NOT attend ANY group without first having spoken to the Group Leader/Co-

DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER EDITION

The committee are very grateful to all of you who send in articles for the newsletter, without you there would be no newsletter, so please keep those articles coming. It is very rewarding to receive articles from group leaders who we do not hear from very often.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles for this newsletter. The deadline for receipt of articles for the Spring edition is **15th February 2024**. Articles should be no longer than 300 words and please include a picture if you can. If you need a picture taken, please contact the Photography Group.

Please send articles to spaldingu3anewsletter@gmail.com in a Word Document, any accompanying photographs please provide them as JPEGs. Do not send them to Jean's personal email address.

Our Newsletter Editor, is Jean Bratley.

Rosemary McClement & The Committee.

PAVANOTTI SINGS

Pavonotti aka Jeff Woods entertained Spalding U3A members at their November meeting. He entitled his talk 'It's all my mother's fault'. His mother loved to sing and always had the radio on. She knew all the words as did U3A members when it came to singing along with Jeff to 'Chick, chick, chicken, lay a little egg for me' and 'Seven little girls sitting on the backseat hugging and a kissing with Fred'. Jeff loved to sing and following university had some voice training after seeing an advert for singing lessons in the Manchester Evening News.



After starting out as a baritone he switched to singing tenor. One thing led to another, and his agent booked him to sing 'as Pavarotti' for parties, business functions and the like which was very successful. With darkened hair and eyebrows, he was a convincing lookalike and thus Jeff Woods became 'Pavonotti'.

Members greatly enjoyed an excerpt from Figaro and the meeting ended of course with Nessun Dorma from the opera Turandot. A highly entertaining afternoon - thank you Pavonotti!

POSTAGE STAMPS

Can we remind you that Frank Wilson is the contact for collection of used postage stamps. Frank has been in touch with Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and have found out that they have discontinued collecting postage stamps. They have however pointed him in the direction of a similar charity called Canine Partners. This organisation appears to have a much wider brief and provides training for dogs for various projects not just for deaf people. Further details can be found on their website caninepartners.org.uk.

If you have any stamps, please leave a finger width all round to ensure that stamps are not discarded by the organisation.

Until Frank is able to attend monthly meetings again, please bring them to the monthly meeting and give them to a committee member.

THE ALTERNATE GARDEN GROUP

Meetings 2023

This year has flown by and what a year it has been, rather wet at times but mainly mild. We saw the joys of Spring with the snowdrops and celandines, bathed in the exuberance of Summer flowers and now we are already in November with shorter, cooler days and December approaching fast. Let's hope winter is not too arduous and we can all look forward to the start of a better year in 2024.

Following on from the group's first four meetings of 2023 we have had quite a successful calendar with only one let down due to bad weather in September.



June's visit was to Easton Walled Gardens near Grantham for the beginning of the Sweet Pea season. It was a lovely warm and sunny day, but there were fewer sweet peas on show than we expected, however there was a lot more going on to pique our interest.

Members visited Inley Drove Farm, Sutton St James as part of the NGS in July. The garden was developed over a period of 27 years by Frances Pryor and Maisie

Taylor for colour, scent and wildlife. It comprises 3 acres which are predominantly flower gardens with formal and informal areas, a wide variety of traditional and unusual plants, shrubs and trees, vegetable garden and orchard as well as walks through seven acres of woodland.

For August Members visited Sophie and Danny at their Plant Lovers Garden in Morton, Nr Bourne. They produce quality garden plants, specialising in Clematis and a wide range of perennials and shrubs.



September's meeting would have been a visit to Gooderstone Water Gardens, near Kings Lynn. However, the visit was postponed for a week due to high winds and heavy rain, and the weather over the following week did not improve sufficiently for the visit to go ahead, the meeting was therefore cancelled.



We welcomed Gill Walsh back for our October meeting, she gave us an excellent talk on her Lincolnshire Botany Diary taking us through the different months of the year and what we might see at the various nature reserves and gardens mentioned in her talk. She also provided an information sheet on the nature reserves and gardens mentioned in her talk.



THE ALTERNATE GARDEN GROUP

Meetings 2023—Cont'd

November was our last meeting until 2024. Members created a festive table centrepiece and after tea and festive nibbles and treats etc completed a gardening quiz. Altogether a fitting end to a very interesting year.



THANK YOU!

Good morning fellow members, following a major heart failure resulting in triple bypass surgery I just wish to express my heartfelt thanks to friends and fellow members for their support during my travails, which will go on for several months.

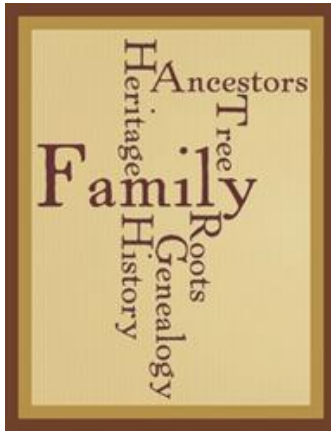
Members have stood up and ensured that the groups I lead and the outing to Flag Fen that I instigated went ahead.

My heartfelt thanks for the three committee members who are standing down and a warm welcome to their replacements. Plus thanks to the committee members who are remaining all who have ensured that Spalding and District u3a has flourished.

I have had many happy years as a member of this u3a and can honestly say that it has given me many hours of pleasure plus many friends and acquaintances who have helped to fill the hours of retirement.

Ian Mac

FAMILY HISTORY GROUPS 2023



It has been a very good year for the Family History Groups with members finding out facts about their ancestors, particularly as new records are continually loaded on to the family history sites.

The 1921 census was released in 2022 which has helped to reveal facts about our ancestors, This will be the last census many of us will see because of the 100 year confidentiality clause. The 1931 census was destroyed during WW2, the 1941 census was never taken. The 1951 census will be published in 2051.

We meet at Spalding Library using the free library editions of Ancestry, Find My Past and the Newspaper Archives. All these sites are loading thousands of new records every week, so what we cannot find today we may find tomorrow. Many a 'brick wall' is starting to crumble as one fact leads to another in unravelling our past.

As more and more sites are coming online with new and improved ways of searching their databases, we hope to uncover more facts that help us understand the environment our ancestors created, how they worked and lived their lives. After all they helped shape our future.

Family History is a popular hobby and our meetings are always well attended. We all help each other to find the facts we seek.

As an ancient Chinese proverb says:-

'To forget one's Ancestors is to be like a Brook without a source or a Tree without a root'.

SPALDING & DISTRICT u3a WEBSITE

Wayne Morris manages the Spalding & District u3a website, which is available for all to see at www.u3asites.org.uk/spalding Our Facebook page, Spalding & District u3a is a private group which you have apply to join and is managed by Frank Wilson. Do have a look at both. Please help them to keep your website up to date and relevant to you by passing him group news and reports, articles, ideas.

Group Leaders please check the description of your group and contact Wayne with any necessary changes.


SCAM MARSHALL

Scam Marshal Newsletter

July 2023

Total Scam Marshals across the UK: 2,475

Phillip James



NATIONAL TRADING STANDARDS
Scams Team

Criminals are targeting homeowners offering cheap mortgages

Action Fraud has issued a warning about an increase in mortgage scams at a time when rates are soaring. The fraud reporting centre says it has received hundreds of reports of fraudulent emails offering cheap mortgages to homebuyers and people re-mortgaging.

Action Fraud says it has received 538 reports of fake emails purporting to be from mortgage lenders within a two-week period in June.

These emails claim to offer low-rate mortgages on time-limited deals. Setting time limits is a tactic commonly used by criminals to rush you into deciding quickly.

The emails contain links to 'see if you're eligible' or 'get a personalised rate'. If you click on these links, you'll be taken to a website which is designed to steal your bank information.



What to do if you receive a suspicious email

If you receive an email out of the blue offering you a cheap deal, it's highly likely to be a scam.

If you have any doubts about whether a message is genuine, contact the company in question directly using the details on its official website.

Suspicious emails can be reported to the National Cyber Security Centre by forwarding them to report@phishing.gov.uk, you can also report scam websites to them online.

If you're worried about your mortgage repayments, the first thing to do is contact your bank.



Return address: FREEPOST, NTSST, MAIL MARSHALS

THE POETRY GROUP

We are a small friendly group who meet in one of our homes on the 4th Friday of the month, where we take it in turn to listen to and read poetry, and of course stop to have a cup of tea and a biscuit or two. All that reading is thirsty work.

The poem chosen can be on any subject, just one we like to share with others, often relating to something in the news, the time of year, or one from a book we have come across in a charity shop, "googled", or an old favourite.

Some of the group write their own poetry, not for critique but just for fun.

Pantomime performers

*Wake up Sleeping Beauty it's your turn tonight
Said tiny Bashful, his legs trembling with fright
Removing the streaks of the porridge in her hair
Goldy shouted loudly no its to be me and the bear
There's forty of us and we've travelled so far
And struck up a really good deal with Ali Baba
No surely it's us, said the Lincolnshire two
We gorgeous sisters, the ones who they'll boo
I've filled my boots the little pussy cat cried
And waving slipper aloft, the prince and his bride
Asked who will shout it's behind you, ugly and scary,
And we need the wicked witch and a sugar plum fairy.
I'm already climbing the beanstalk said Jack
Please get the genie to sort it, before I come back.
Lights dim, the curtain rises, the performance has begun
We shall ALL go on stage, confuse them, and have such fun.*

Sheila Field

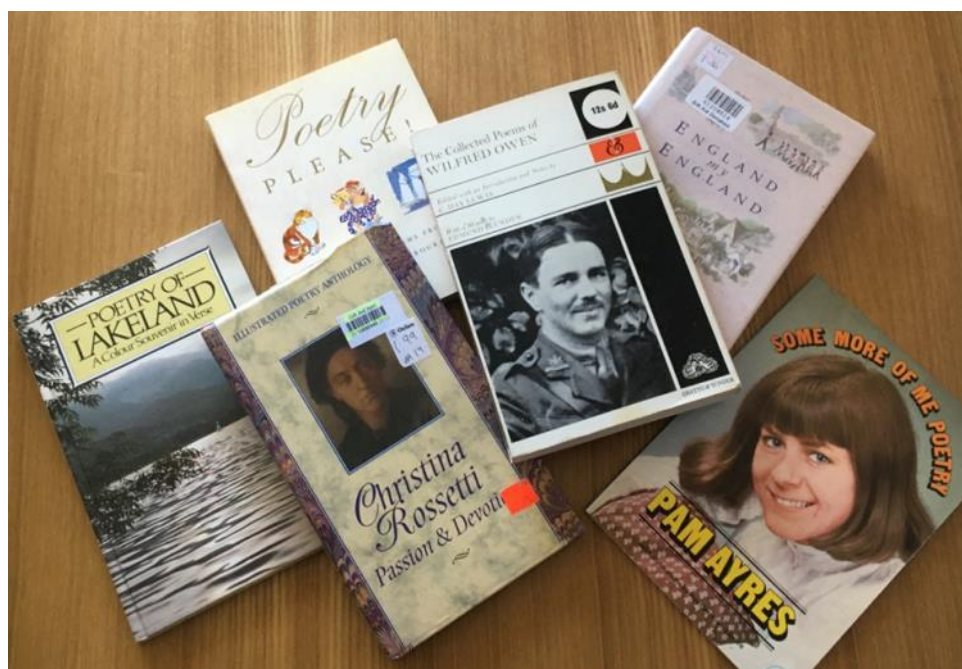
Whether it is Kipling, Keats, Rossetti, or Pam Ayres, the choice of poem often results in light hearted discussion, recollections of school days or working life, prompted by a few lines that strike a chord.

I joined the Poetry Group by default as there was, at the time, a waiting list for the Reading Group, and though wary at what I was letting myself in for, have thoroughly enjoyed re-visiting poems from school days and college and tracking down books at car boot sales or the charity shops for just a few pence.

If anyone would like to know more about the group, please don't hesitate to contact.

Sheila Field

chair.spaldingu3a@gmail.com



EXPLORING CHURCHES

And so another calendar year is almost over, during which we have had some very interesting visits.

After the first few months with local venues we took to the road in May and went to Stamford where the town has a number of churches with stories related to them. A very enthusiastic Kate took us to St Johns and All Saints which are proud of their connections with Sir Malcolm Sargent. We are invited to visit two more buildings in 2024.

In June we headed for Barnack, a trip postponed from 2022. The church is set in a pleasant, peaceful village setting but reports that new building is to occur has upset some villagers.



Walpole St Peter

Next we travelled in the direction of Norfolk, namely Walpole St Peter, a very large and ancient building with a bolt hole under the altar, very old pews evident from their wear and tear, and a favourite place of King Charles and Andrew Lloyd Webber.



Barnack

When August arrived we went to Heckington St Andrew, an attractive, well populated village with interesting features such as the windmill, the tiny brewery next door, as well as the church itself. We were made so welcome with cakes and tea, specially baked by our host who (fortunately) claimed to be a bake-a-holic. They were so welcoming they asked to take a photograph of our visit for their records. Unfortunately we missed Rev Chris Harrington, who claims to be the shortest vicar in the country, and a great friend of mine when we were at Spalding St Johns.



Gosberton

September was postponed with no one to lead the group, but we resumed visits in October by arriving at Gosberton, some eight or so years after a previous trip and were welcomed by Debbie Reynolds and colleagues who took us on a guided tour before, yes you've guessed it, enjoying more home made cakes.

EXPLORING CHURCHES (cont'd)

As I write this we look forward to a journey to The West, as known by the local community , but to everyone else West Pinchbeck, built after the Parish of Pinchbeck was deemed too large for one vicar to manage. Now one person looks after three parishes!

Every church is different in every possible way, its age, stories, artefacts, size, the people involved, etc but they all have one thing in common. On each and every visit we have been made extremely welcome by our hosts.

If the churches alone are not enough to entice you just consider the refreshments provided and the company of people in the group. Numbers have fluctuated during the year – is it because of the weather, the distance, or somewhere you have been before? Please let us have your thoughts. If you have never been why not give it a go and certainly please let us have any ideas for future visits.

Apart from and including the Covid years I have enjoyed leading the group in its various guises for some ten years and it is now time to hand over to others. I have been very lucky to have Andrew, Chris and Roger to assist with ideas and arrangements and they will take over from January.

Enjoy Christmas and let's hope 2024 brings peace to the world, especially to those who deserve it.

Best wishes—Ken

SEATED EXERCISE

Our weekly class has been running for about eight months under the capable leadership of Sue White who leads us through routines set to popular music from the second half of the twentieth century. The exercises aim at alternately contracting holding then relaxing pairs of antagonistic muscles to improve tone and movement around joints and areas of the body where support and mobility are important. Gentle stretching exercise also proves beneficial.

A further aim is to improve coordination and strength whilst at the same time being a source of light hearted amusement. Participants are always counselled not to overstretch or exert - "if it hurts DON'T DO IT" is one of Sue's maxims. Some of our participants have arthritis and or joint replacements and feel happier not taking part in some exercises carried out standing. We vary in age from 43 to 80, so it's not just for "old fogies"!.

Each session finishes with a ten minute deep relaxation routine then for those who wish a cup of coffee and chance for a chat. Attendance numbers vary from 6 to 12 everyone contributing £2 to cover the cost of the hall (Sue, who is not a U3a member does not require payment). and a twice yearly lunch for class participants.

Angela Dancer

SINGING FOR FUN

The Singing for Fun group have been busy in the community - we entertained at Pinchbeck village hall for the Friends of Johnson hospital and we even got a mention in the local paper! Our Christmas programme starts in earnest the middle of November and I have already taken 16 bookings for next year.



DANCE GROUP

This is a group that has been running for over 10 years now. We have a large selection of line dancing, circle dancing, warm up and cool down dances. We are continually trying out new dances.

The group is held at Pinchbeck village hall every week, alternative Mondays and Thursdays. Exact dates and times are shown in the monthly list we receive by email from our Group Co-ordinator.

GARDENING GROUP

After a slow start this Year (as some members of the group were not keen on doing a quiz when it was too cold for garden visits) we visited Jersey farm specialist plant nursery in April. Here we saw many unusual plants interestingly displayed. Some of us were keen to return for a visit later in the year.

In May we had a further visit to Cactusland at Morton, where this time a great many species were in flower.

In sweltering June we visited the wild garden and smallholding of Dr Jane Laurence at Gypsey Bridge. The climbing roses and huge mulberry tree in fruit were amazing not to mention the bees sheep goats and chickens and we enjoyed a sociable tea in the shade on the lawn.

July found us in Francis Pryor 's garden at Inley Drove Fen.

The planned visit to Swines Meadow in August in Market Deeping did not take place as the majority of the group were either holidaying or grand parenting. We had yet another successful plant shop at Gill Allen's in September, there were Cordylines, Heucheras, sedums and even Bottlebrush bushes.

October saw apple harvest and a garden wander at Angela Dancer's. There were plenty of Charles Ross cooking apples but the dessert apples were disappointing this year. We sampled the apples in a pie!

In November a few of us attended Francis Pryor's talk about his garden held at Bookmark and some purchased his book

We have decided not to meet in December and January but propose to meet at the Fraiser Room in February for a planning meeting for 2024.



ITALIAN GROUP

This is a group that has been going for over 10 years and we are using BBC training books and Duolingo mainly.

We usually meet on a Monday afternoon and it's roughly every 2 weeks or so, depending on holidays etc. Exact dates and times are shown in the monthly list we receive by email from our Groups Co-ordinator.

THE LUNCHEON GROUP

The Luncheon Group meets on the third Wednesday of the month to dine at one of the many pubs or restaurants to be found in our local villages or towns.

In good weather we often have a drink in the garden or on the patio before taking our seats at the table, but the Winter months find us seeking the warmth of a log fire and we tend to stay closer to home, mindful that the weather may cause travel problems.

Under the guidance of the Group Leader, members volunteer to take on the organisation of one monthly meal. They are asked to choose the venue and collate the response from members, forwarding to the restaurant a pre order and numbers attending.

People attend as often as they can, but with holidays now taken all year round, family commitments or clashing appointments, we are never sure who we will be sitting next to. Every sociable meal is different, sometimes there can be twenty or more dining, or a more intimate number, but whatever the attendance everyone is made to feel welcome.



Amongst the foliage—Mail Cart, Spalding

Last year the Luncheon Group and Dining Group enjoyed a joint Christmas meal at the Black Bull, Donington. A nice start to the festivities, a hearty meal, friendly staff and of course excellent company. We have already booked our tables for a return visit this coming December.

The Moorings in Spalding has a terrace jutting out over the water, but in January our party of 26, quite wisely stayed indoors to enjoy their meal. Keeping by the water, our February meal was at the Riverside at Surfleet where the new owners offered an updated menu.

We have enjoyed meals at Prezzo and the newly refurbished Mailcart, both in Spalding. A visit to the popular Chequers at Weston, and the Thatched Cottage off the village green at Sutterton. We are always prepared to go a little further. The Horseshoe at Thurlby, firm favourites the Wishing Well at Dyke and the Three Kings at Threkingham, and new to the Luncheon Group, the Golden Pheasant, Peterborough and Brothers in Arms at Walpole St Andrew. It is nice to discover new places to eat and to make a note of them for when our friends or family visit.

Unfortunately, with 35 people already registered, we cannot add any more to the group at present, as we have to take into account the dining space at some venues, but there is a waiting list in place, and if you want your name to be added or would like more information don't hesitate to contact me.

Sheila Field

chair.spaldingu3a@gmail.com



The Black Bull, Donington