

December 2023

No 117

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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

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YOUR COMMITTEE



Rosemary McClements
Chair
chair.spaldingu3a@gmail.com



Mel Gordon
Vice Chair



Sue Morris
Secretary
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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 2023

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.

07/12/2023 **CHRISTMAS MEETING** - get into the festive mood - singalong with our very own Singing for Fun group.

04/01/2024 **DIABETES EXPLAINED** - this subject and talk booked in response to requests by a number of our members.

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

07/03/2024 **RSPB WASH CRUISES** - Neil Oakham - an insight into why Spalding U3A have always enjoyed this trip & special day out from Boston.

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.

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

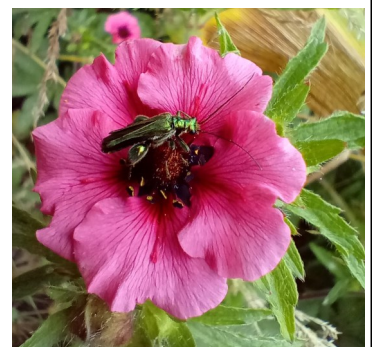
Taylor for colour, scent and wildlife. It comprises 3 acres which are predominantly flower gardens with formal and informal areas, a wide variety of traditional and unusual plants, shrubs and trees, vegetable garden and orchard as well as walks through seven acres of woodland.

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