



WSPu3a Newsletter

September/October
2023



Cromwell Avenue

Photo by Geoff Noel

The Committee's Briefs

Contact the Committee

You can use this link to send a message to any of our Committee:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/contact>

Chairman's Chat

Groups are one of the foundation stones of the u3a and are based on its core principles. The groups provide lifelong learning when full time employment ceases. They are about self help learning for its own sake and are organised to be self financing and run by unpaid volunteers.

If members have a desire to form a group then we try to help. This requires time and effort on the part of the Group's Coordinator. They need to collect the names of interested members, book a room, have a

meeting and decide who will help run the group.

Please only put your name on a list if you have a real interest and please try to turn up for the first meeting, even if you subsequently decide not to join.

Some facts and figures from the u3a Trust annual report to the AG:

The membership is 388,000 and growing, (comparison: Women's Institute 220,000, 2019).

[Continued](#)

Chairman's Chat – Continued

There are 19 full time equivalent staff at a cost of £1,124,988. Not large for such an organisation, I am told.

The Third Age Matters magazine is a source of information on other u3as and groups. It is distributed to 200,000 households, and its production is paid for largely by advertising.

Malcolm Capps – Chairman

About 42,000 members receive the newsletter on line.

Subscribe – its informative, interesting and free. 30,000 members take part in online lectures and groups. Excellent quality content on a wide range of subjects. Check them out..

Groups News

At the suggestion of two of our new members sheets will be put out at the October monthly meeting for **CLASSIC CARS and MOTOR HOMES**. As usual the groups will take whichever route (excuse the pun!) the group members wish. It could be to show off your car or motor home, to visit shows, or have general discussions. The advantage of being one of the founder members of a group is that you get to help decide when and where you will meet, and exactly what you are hoping to get from the group, so if you are interested in either of these subjects, sign up now!

CARD MAKING AND PARCHMENT CRAFT is another group which we are hoping to start, and the sheet will be ready for you to sign up at the meeting.

Val Shurben – Groups' Coordinator

Groups List

You can use this link to find a current list of the groups we support, and how to join up:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/groups>

THE 6+ MILE WALKING GROUP is having a slow start. I know several of you like to have a longer walk, so please sign up now. We only need a few more names before you're striding out.

Once again I have to remind all members that it is *only courteous* to advise your Group Leader whether or not you can attend their group meeting. The leaders put in a lot of their time voluntarily to provide you with all the necessities required to keep the group viable. Please be kind to them!

If you have any questions about any of the groups, then please don't hesitate to contact me: groups@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk .

Online u3a

Find out more:

You can use these links to search for ways of furthering your interest in specific subjects, or even take part in some competitions:

Our own website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/welcome>

u3a – Online Learning Events

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

u3a Radio Podcast September 2023

<https://youtu.be>



With interviews with John Tucker from the Woodland Trust discussing how we can make a difference to the environment; a u3a member who lived in Aden in the 1960s; and Neville Lyons who discusses the first work computer – the Lyons Electric Office.

Electing the President in 2024 – A 3 Part Series <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>

In November 2024 the US will elect its 47th President. u3a Subject Adviser for UK and US Politics Paul Carter shows us how it all works.

12th, 19th, and 26th September at 2pm, via Zoom.

AGM 2023

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/agm-2023>

The 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Third Age Trust will be held as a hybrid meeting allowing delegates to attend in person or online.

Coming Soon

Upcoming Events list

You can use this link to find more details on all the events in our diary:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/events>

Monthly Meetings

October 5th

2:30pm to 4pm
Coronation Hall

Mike Newbold: "My Extra Life".

Mike has been a TV extra for the last 18 years.

November 2nd

2:30pm to 4pm
Coronation Hall

Tax, Care and the New Guy

Ria Hambridge outlines the legal issues surrounding finance as we age

Group Noticeboard

Outings

A reminder that payment of £22 is now due for the day trip to the city of York on 30th November. The coach will leave at 9am and return from York at 4pm.

Theatre trip to see the musical "Pretty Woman" at Hull New Theatre on Thursday 8th February has now been priced at £54 including a top-priced seat, coach and driver's tip. Payment to be made by the November meeting at the latest.

Cheques to be made payable to *Woodhall Spa U3A Social*.

Sue Pollitt – Group Co-Leader

Canasta

The group meets on the Second and Fourth Thursdays at 2 PM at the Cricket Club. Not difficult to learn, tuition given, New Members welcome.

Alan Wright – Group Leader

Around the Groups in 30 days

Five Mile Walkers

The September walk leaders were Diane Taylor and Ruth Wilson. The walk started from St. James Church in Louth on a very grey day. After travelling along Bridge Street the group turned down Fanthorpe Lane before crossing over the A16 bypass.

Taking the lane through Acthorpe Farm the walk continued on to South Elkington where the local tearoom was visited for some welcome tea and cake.

From there the route followed the A631 before turning along the footpath through Cow Pasture Wood and back to St. James Church.

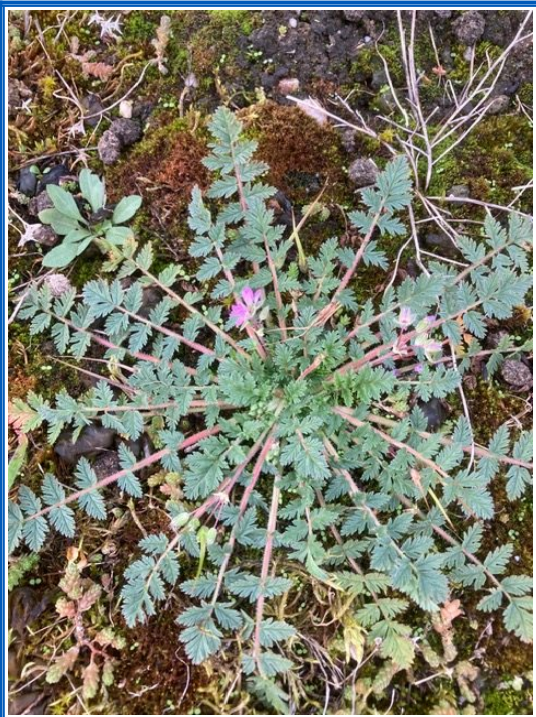
Both walk leaders were thanked for a very nice day by all of the group walkers.



Colin Budge

Wild Flowers

The September outing for the Wild Flower group took us to the old Woodhall Spa airfield. Autumn had definitely arrived and many flowers had died off, but we managed to find a selection that were still in bloom.



We were interested to see the flock of black sheep which have been brought in to help manage the vegetation on the reserve. Perhaps one of you with a farming background could tell us what breed they are? We thought perhaps Hebridean but are willing to be corrected!

Maureen Moscrop



Toadflax and bird's foot trefoil made a splash of yellow in the grass. A plant called Bristly Ox Tongue had us reaching for our reference books! On a small rose bush was a kind of red gall called Robin's Pincushion.



Walking Holiday

Alnwick

It has been a holiday of wonderful walks, very pleasant meals and good company.

After a stroll along the banks of the River Aln, below Alnwick castle, we met in the evening to dine in the splendour of the First Class lounge of RMS Olympic, sister ship to the Titanic.



On Sunday we went to Bamburgh, where we walked under the walls of the impressive castle before a leisurely Sunday lunch.

On Monday we were at Craster and walked out to the ruined castle at Dustanburgh before dining out in the Jolly Fisherman on a very superior fish pie.



The next day we went to Alnmouth, which was a circular walk including views of the bay and the river. Travelling inland we climbed Hambleton Hill (978 feet) for views of the Cheviots.

[Continued](#)

Walking Holiday - Continued

We also managed visits to the new gardens at Alnwick Castle and the famous Barter bookshop. Apart from the stunning sea views and birds, golf courses, castles and WW2 fortifications are a feature of the coast. Many of the walks crossed links golf courses and we stopped for coffee at some of the clubhouses. We were intrigued by Alnmouth village course, which was founded in 1869. Our knowledge of coastal defences and the construction and siting of pill boxes has been enhanced. The golden age of Northumberland and its Saints is a little clearer.



Paddling and wading, we splashed and squelched our way across the mud and sands and creeks. It was an unforgettable experience. The solitude, flatness and wildness of this walk is memorable.



The noise of more than a hundred seals on a sand bank, the cries of the seabirds and the wind added to the atmosphere. And at the end, a breakfast of bacon, eggs, toast and tea to round off a superb week.



On the last day we got up at 5:30am to catch the tide at Holy Island. Some of us followed St Cuthbert's/ St Oswald's way along the causeway while others followed the pilgrim's route across the estuary.



You cannot outrun the tide. The sight of a refuge on stilts with a tall ladder gave a slight frisson to the walk.

Gardening

Gunby Hall

After a lengthy discussion on the web site and on the telephone with the National Trust trying to book in as requested, I decided to ditch the official site and try and book direct with Gunby Hall.

The very helpful welcome manager Rob got the problem sorted within minutes and I managed to book 5 places in the morning and 5 places in the afternoon for members to park in. This helped as several members went in advance to view the House prior to the Group meeting and wandering around the Gardens.



The Gardens were still as stunning as ever with many colourful plants blooming even well out of season and many different border plants that had the members of the group testing each other's knowledge and then resorting to Apps on their phones to help verify!

As usual we ended with Tea in the Courtyard and a browse in the Bookshop.

Well worth a visit, if you do book a parking place and have any difficulty with mobility ask to park near the House not in the designated Car Park.

Heather Colebrook L.V.O.



However, on arrival it appeared all the bother of prebooking was not necessary and ignored, which has not endeared me much to the National Trust. What a waste of time.

Despite this and a long walk from the car park to the House, we had a lovely amble through the gardens and Rob had even managed to have a gardener handy for us to ask questions of.



Poetry

The theme for September's meeting was 'Water', and whilst we all agreed that writing a poem on such a broad theme had proved a lot more difficult than first imagined, the diversity of the interpretations was equally surprising.

We also like to read poems we have chosen, on the same theme, from published poets. One such was [Going for Water by Robert Frost \(1874 – 1963\)](#)

The first of our own presented here regards the bipolar nature of Water, and the other is a personal reflection on two moments in time, linked by tears.

Water	A Young Mother's Tears, Remembered
<p><i>A river with a still pool beneath a weeping willow Trout rising – an eager fisherman casts his fly Again and again endlessly, patiently until he Sits on the bank for a well earned rest, he lies His head upon his rucksack pillow. A perfect scene of peace and tranquility, But that same river can change dramatically Burst its banks and become a rushing flood Ruining fields and villages, houses, roads Not to forget, people, livestock, barns A whole way of life taken eventually.</i></p> <p><i>Two aspects of the same element, It gives life, it takes life, But it is essential for the world's survival So how we view this dichotomy is irrelevant, Seventy one percent of the earth's Surface is covered in water So we have to accept the worst of the slaughter It can cause for If it ever dries up, our world is gone.</i></p>	<p><i>If memories are to be believed The first of my mother comes to me now; A tired rug, scorch marked by a faulty heater, A gift of a footworn carpet softens the hard, edge-kicked linoleum, Over dark marbled tiles, cold on fleshy young hands. The couch with hard-edged cushions that leave Flowery patterns impressed on our bare legs. And though, through her teeth she smiled Her plain-to-see tears were burnt into my mind. Acid pinholes of darkness, arcing back to this child, Standing to be undressed by a young mother, distressed, And an unanswered question hangs in the air.</i></p> <p><i>Though through a misted lens now, a still acrid sadness, A poison-tipped arrow, darting through time, Pierces a solemn moment, an unwanted visitation. Helpless now, like a child, i regard her pallor, grey; A last hope frozen on her death-mask face. Morphia's sleep is the final hill to climb. So why should i cry now those eyes are dry? Life and life-giving water is drawing away, Rising through stale palliative care-home air To rest in high palladian clouds in the sky, And like spirits descending to life again Her frozen tears will one day fall as rain.</i></p>
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Tom Sefton – Group Co-Leader

Read more:

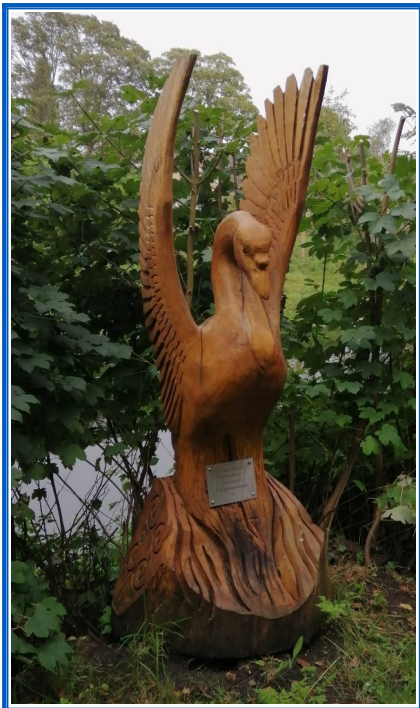
Use this link to see what else the group has written this month:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/w/woodhall-spa/docs/poetrygroup2309water.pdf>

Woodhall Wanderers

South Kyme

The Woodhall Wanderers walk this month was a circular one mainly in and around South Kyme. We began at the Sleaford Navigation bi-centenary memorial and then followed the Kyme Eau. The 'Eau' has been used as a navigable waterway for centuries, even carrying building materials for Tattershall castle in the 15th century.



Beginning our walk we passed several large, impressive animal carvings, including that of a kingfisher by Simon Todd. This was created as a celebration of the bird's return to the Kyme Eau during the 1990's.



Passing through the village we headed out into the countryside, stopping to look at St Mary's church and Kyme tower. The church stands on the site of a previous Augustinian priory from 1170, and opposite Kyme tower, the remains of a grand fortified house built by Gilbert de Umfraville in 1340. Despite its rural location, South Kyme has had a long and distinguished history.

[Continued](#)



South Kyme – Continued

Walking on a grass path we followed the Eau down to Ferry bridge where it then becomes the River Slea. By now everyone was enjoying the warm weather, lovely scenery and the company of good friends. After a break, we then headed back, past a beautiful scene of two adult swans and their five healthy looking signets, with Kyme tower in the distance.



We finished the day with a treat at South Kyme Golf Club. The Club house welcomed us with complimentary home made chocolate cake, lovely. I think this walk could be one to repeat in the future!

Jan Smith

Bird Watching and Wildlife

The Boston Belle

Five members of the Group assembled by the Grand Sluice in Boston for a four hour voyage commencing at 10.00 a.m. on the Boston Belle. We were blessed with perfect weather, broken, fluffy clouds interspersed with clear skies and sunshine accompanied by a north-westerly breeze.

The voyage was organised by the South Lincolnshire Group of the RSPB, which provided expert spotters, two of whom occupied the bows and shouted out each new identification, though some species were very distant and not all were seen by everyone on board.

The party comprised people of all levels of experience and knowledge, all being catered

for by the announcer of each new sighting who also provided a commentary about places of interest along the way.

Soon after leaving the Grand Sluice a roe deer on the river bank in the middle of Boston was an unusual sighting, though it has been there for several weeks and is thought to be able to survive but unable to escape.

The autumn migration of northerly breeding species of birds was in full swing and large numbers of wading birds were present on the river banks and the mud flats, redshanks and ruffs being especially numerous. A kingfisher was also a highlight of this section of the river.

[Continued](#)

Boston Belle – Continued

The River Witham itself was covered completely with a thick blanket of green weed from bank to bank, a consequence of pollution by agricultural fertiliser and manure run-off. This even extended into the tidal section of the river beyond the Grand Sluice. The Witham has been listed recently as one of the fourteen most polluted rivers in England.

We escaped from this and sailed for a short distance out into the Wash before turning back up the River Welland, again seeing large numbers of waders of various species accompanied by an assortment of gulls and ducks. Two little terns, possibly the scarcest birds of the day, were feeding in the river mouth.



The Wash is the most important winter refuge in the UK for wading birds. A few spoonbills were also present with the numerous little egrets.

Another wildlife attraction in the Welland mouth at this time of year is harbour (common) seals of various ages hauled up on the exposed shore as the tide recedes, accompanied on this occasion by a solitary grey seal.



Timing of these trips on the Boston Belle is determined by the tides so we had to head back towards the Grand Sluice to tie up at two o'clock.

We were extremely fortunate with the weather after a week of rain and gales. The outing was unanimously agreed to have been very enjoyable and culminated with a group photograph on the quayside.

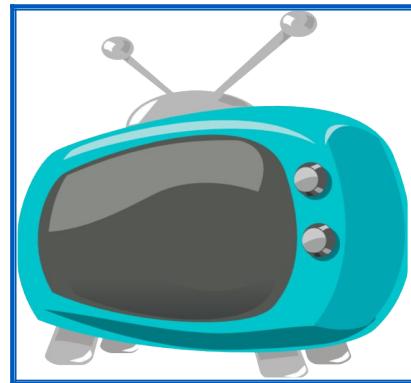
Ann Fletcher – Group Leader

Home Computing for Fun

Smart Televisions

A Smart TV is an **internet-enabled** television that allows you to access various online options such as streaming services, social media, and web browsing directly from the screen.

It can either connect to your broadband with an ethernet cable or wirelessly connecting to your WiFi.



Apart from internet connectivity most modern televisions have a lot of accessibility options to help people with visual or hearing impairment. They also have a variety of sockets and input and output devices to allow you to connect other devices.

Catching Up

A lot of people have smart TVs but may not be aware of the extra functionality that they have. One of the main benefits is the availability, via the internet, of **catch-up services**. With a few exceptions, it is *no longer necessary* to record programmes to watch later as all of the main channels ([BBC](#), [ITV](#), [Channel 4](#) and [Channel 5](#)) allow you to set up a free account and watch programmes at your leisure. (please note some of these offer a paid for premium service but this is *not* required for regular TV programmes). Having this option on a smart TV also means you don't need a separate box to access these services:

Subscription Services

There are also subscription services that you can access through the internet such as Sky, Now, Amazon Prime Video and Netflix, although there are plenty of free viewing options available on the main channels. Apps for all these normally come preinstalled on Smart TVs and you just have to sign in to activate them. Even if you don't have a smart TV you can purchase an Amazon Fire or Roku stick which can provide these services through your HDMI port (a socket on most Smart TVs).

And There's More....

There are other Apps (Applications) preinstalled and you can add others. Things like YouTube, BBC iPlayer, Alexa, Spotify can be found.

Smart TVs also have a internet browser installed so you can surf the web. However, in my experience these browsers are often not as easy to use as the one on your pc, and unless you have a keyboard connected to your TV, using an on screen keyboard with your remote is frustrating!

So, what else can you do with your Smart TV? You can follow fitness demonstrations on YouTube or other Apps. You can use it for your smart speaker, like Alexa if you have it. Even without a smart speaker most smart TVs can be set up to use voice control.

[Continued](#)

Smart TVs – Continued

...And More Still...

You can also stream music and podcasts through free or subscription options. If you have a PC connected to your network you can access your music and photos. You can access your social media accounts. If you have a USB webcam you can use the TV for video calls.

Casting

You can also “cast” your device, whether laptop, iPad or phone to the TV. This allows you to show your devices’ screen on the TV, allow each device may be set up differently. There is also the option of connecting your laptop to your TV using an HDMI cable.

Please contact me by clicking on the bird on the Home Computing for Fun page on the Woodhall Spa U3A website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/page/115109>

Your monthly guide to what it means....

End to End Encryption

This is a way of encrypting messages so that they can only be seen by the sender and recipient. They cannot be intercepted and read by anyone else.



BIOS

The Basic Input-Output System (BIOS) is an essential set of routines in a PC, which is stored on a chip on the motherboard. It acts as an intermediary between a computer's hardware and its operating system. Without the BIOS, the PC's operating system would have no way to communicate with, or take control of, the hardware.

Heather Maslen – Group Leader

Find out more

*If you have any questions about these articles, **or have topics you would like me to cover**, please contact me by clicking on the bird on the Home Computing for Fun page on the Woodhall Spa U3A website:*

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/page/115109>

Outings

Brigg Garden Centre

Oh no, not rain!

The heavens opened the morning we set off to Brigg Garden Centre on our latest outing. It poured all the way on the journey but everyone was in good spirits and looking forward to the visit. Brigg Garden Centre is one of the largest in the country and is only an hour away from Woodhall Spa.

Steve, our driver, dropped us off at the entrance and we walked straight into Christmas! Glittering lights, decorated trees looked very pretty but for some of us they're three months too early!

Brigg is gearing up for the Christmas season with reindeer, polar bears and baubles alongside a good variety of plants and shrubs, as well as all the other items on sale. It's a large centre with so much to see.



We walked and walked, shopped and shopped, a good opportunity to get some early presents and treats.



Talking of treats, our Afternoon tea was wonderful as you can see by the happy faces. Cream cakes, savouries, sandwiches galore, it was a feast! Plenty to eat. It was a lovely time to chat with friends, and catch up on the shopping, of course.



Finally, it was time to leave. On the return journey the sun shone and we enjoyed the countryside views all the way back to Woodhall Spa.

Jan Smith – Group Co-Leader

The Final Word

Feedback

You can use this link to view past issues of the Newsletter, or to send a note to the Editor:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodhall-spa/page/113917>

If you have any suggestions or comments about the Newsletter I'd be happy to read them. You can email them to me via newsletter@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk, or use the link above.

I'd like to thank Ced Shurben and Geoff Noel for supplying the photos for the front page. There are also images of the newly refurbished village signs, which will appear over successive months. Thanks guys.

I am indebted, as always, to all those who have taken time to contribute to this edition.

Many thanks.

Tom Sefton – Editor

