

JUNE 2023

'Self-help educational and leisure activities organised for and by older people'

1. Notes from the Chair (John Dollimore)

We are coming up to a busy time of year with coach trips every month and holidays to The Isle of Wight and Northern Ireland coming up.

On Thursday August 3rd we are holding our first Charity Coffee morning and will be holding a Tombola in aid of Norfolk Knitters and Stitchers. Any members who would like to contribute prizes, please give them to Stuart Crowther, or John Dollimore. The Tombola will continue into the afternoon Open Meeting. The following day we have our Summer Lunch and we will have a Raffle with members seat numbers as their entry and for those that like Indian cuisine we have a get together on Wednesday 16th August.

Whilst many members are socialising, our Life Long Learning committee are putting together a programme covering the autumn to the spring of next year. Of scientific subjects that many will find very interesting. Several high quality speakers have been approached and the programme and venues will be announced as soon as we are ready.

We are still looking for a volunteer to take over from Jennifer Attwell after this year's Christmas Lunch. If you are interested, then please come and have a chat with me. If no member is prepared to have a go, then the meals throughout the year will stop.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our u3a and as usual new ones are always needed.....If you are interested in giving time to your fellow members, then come and have a chat.

2. Editors Notes (John Peat)

There is so much going on within our u3a that this issue is up to seven pages as there are several visit reports. I have slightly changed the layout this month with all you NEED to know on pages 1-3 ,with the Notice Board being promoted to page 3. The remaining pages are the reports from the various visits and events that took place in June. On page 5, you can take your mind back to the early 1960s with the Bob Dylan song, Blowing in the Wind and then read the u3a words with that melody in your head.

3. Membership (Jo Sinclair)

3.1. Third Age Matters Magazine.

Final reminder that if you wish to remove your name from the Third Age Matters magazine mailing list please let me know. You should note that there is no reduction in membership fee relating to the magazine.

The Email address is membership@wymondhamu3a.org.uk .

3.2. Welcome to our New Members

A big warm welcome to the following new members:

Alistair Mack, Sue Boag, Mark Kidd, Martin Drummond, Marian Binks, and Pam Holmes

The Wymondham u3a Committee 2023 – 2024. (This information may not be a regular feature.)

Chair – John Dollimore - chair@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Vice-Chair and Newsletter Editor – John Peat - newsletter@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Secretary - Howard Brown- secretary@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Treasurer - Geoffrey Briggs - treasurer@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Membership Sec. -Jo Sinclair -membership@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Groups Co-ordinator - Stuart Crowther - groups@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Speaker Seeker – Georgette Vale – speakers@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

4. **Groups** (Stuart Crowther)

4.1. Philosophy

There has been strong support for this proposed new group, with 23 members expressing an interest so far. Given these numbers it is likely that more than one group will be formed. An email has been sent to those who expressed interest, setting out the next steps in getting this off the ground.

4.2. Strollers

Whilst there have been 13 members registering their interest in this 2-2.5 miles walk group, regrettably no one has been willing to undertake the Group Leader role. This will be a relatively straight forward group to organise, with some initial help/support from Caroline & Nigel Evans regarding potential routes etc. so please do give serious thought to taking this on either on your own or jointly with others.

4.3. Sign Language

Linda Burkett has offered to set up a second signing group with a membership of 5 people in addition to herself. If this is of interest to you, please let me know by email at stuartgcrowther@aol.com

4.4 Potential other new/reactivated groups

In last month's Newsletter I sought volunteers to Group Lead a 3rd Sunday Lunch for Singles Group, additional Book Groups, the Historic Buildings Group and a new Local History Group. Please consider this and let me know if you would be interested at the email address shown above.

And finally, we already have two Wine Appreciation groups but is there interest in a Beer Appreciation group?

5. **Life Long Learning**

Courses confirmed for your diary:

Stand and Deliver - Highwaymen vs the Georgian judicial system. A day course on **15th September** Stephen Poulter looks in detail at the careers of a number of notorious highway robbers.

Norfolk's Industrial Past. A short course: Friday mornings from **22nd September to 13th October** Mary Fewster will explore the surprising variety and scale of Norfolk's industries between the 18th and 20th centuries

The Development of the English Language A short course: Tuesday mornings from **20th February to 19th March**. Dr Graham Platts takes us on a journey from the Anglo Saxons to the modern era.

The above three events will take place at North Wymondham Community Centre

An improvisation workshop. A day course on **24th November**. Gilly Spencer will lead us through a variety of situations and draw out our creativity and inventiveness

Ignorance is bliss, or is it? – a morning seminar on **15th January**. Alan Browne takes as his starting point Donald Rumsfeld's "unknown unknowns" and looks at the role ignorance has played in our history. The above two events will take place in the Tiffey Room

Giant Molecules - the stuff of life. A short course - 6 mornings, in **January and February (dates TBC)**. Randal Richards explores the early beginnings of polymers and the problems such natural materials posed. Without giant molecules, or polymers, modern life would be very different and much less comfortable.

The preferred venue for this event is the meeting room in Wymondham Library.

Special Interest Day in March - the engineering problems and solutions of future energy generation.

In outline the day consists of four 45 minutes to 1-hour long talks followed by questions from the audience. Speakers will be drawn from leading innovators in delivering future energy needs for the UK and beyond.

The event will be held at Central Hall on a Friday in March.

Please email expressions of interest in the September and October courses to courses@wymondhamu3a.org

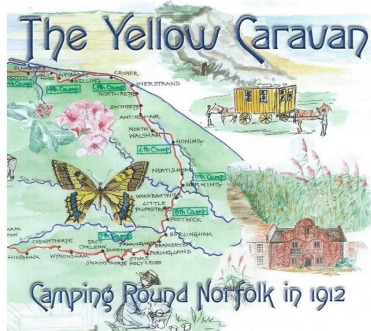
**NOTICE BOARD
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

MONTHLY TALK (JULY)

**Thursday 6th July
At 2.00 p.m.**



**Wymondham Central Hall Monthly Talks
The Yellow Caravan—Juliet Webster**



A recreation of Honor Elwes ballad of The Yellow Caravan. This is a hilarious account of three young ladies touring Norfolk in a horse-drawn caravan in 1912.

Free for members - £2 for non-members

For more information about Wymondham u3a
www.u3asites.org.uk/Wymondham

MONTHLY TALK (AUGUST)

Thursday 3rd August At 2.00 p.m.

Alistair Bielby of Footsure

OUT ON A LIMB

**Feet, foot health,
and the role of the podiatrist**

COFFEE MORNINGS

Thursdays

July

Thursday 6th & 20th
Thursday 13th & 27th



9.00-12.00
9.00-11.00

August

Thursday 3rd, 17th & 31st 9.00 - 12.00
Thursday 10th & 24th 9.00 - 11.00

Sundays

Sunday 9th July 1000—1300
Sunday 13th August 1000—1300

Appeal for Donations

On Thursday August 3rd we are holding our first Charity Coffee morning. There will be a Tombola in aid of Norfolk Knitters and Stitchers that will continue into the afternoon Open Meeting

N.B.1. Any members who would like to contribute prizes, please give them to Stuart Crowther or John Dollimore.

N.B.2. Would any members who are willing to make a cake, please tell Vivienne Dollimore.

SUMMER LUNCH

Friday, August 4th

There will be a Raffle with members' seat numbers as their raffle entry ticket.

CURRY EVENING

Wednesday 16th August

Rose of India in Attleborough at 7pm

There are 44 seats available. If you wish to go please give your names to John Dollimore

HOLIDAYS



Friday 7th July to Wednesday 12th July, **Isle of Wight:** £570 per person

Monday 4th September to Sunday 10th September
Northern Ireland: £790 per person

N.B.1. There are still rooms available for this holiday.
N.B.2. Would members already booked please pay their balances by the end of July.

COACH TRIPS



**Seats are available
for all coach trips**

Wednesday 26th July, **Sandringham Flower Show,** £30 (**N.B. BALANCE NOW OVERDUE**)

Friday 25th August, **Norfolk Broads Cruise,** £45
(balance required by end of July)

Friday 29th September, **Kew Gardens,** £45

Friday 6th October, **Gooderstone Water Gardens,** £35

Thursday 14th December, **Thursford Christmas Spectacular,** £61

6. Activity Reports

6.1 Monthly Talk June 2023: The Role of Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner by Giles Oprhen-Smellie

I wish we had all had this talk before taking to the ballot box 3 years ago because I for one have a much greater understanding of what it all means.

Giles explained all about the role of the PCC. He said when he had recently retired from commanding a parachute regiment in the army, he got a phone call asking if he would consider running for election for PCC he replied that he had had enough of Parochial Church Councils.

However, this sort of PCC – Police and Crime Commissioner was legacy of David Cameron's coalition government. Because the role holder is elected, they are not answerable to the home secretary nor the county police force, they are only answerable to the electorate. However it is the PCC that appoints the Chief of Police and they continue to have weekly meetings. Giles is very keen to meet with members of the public – he has weekly open sessions and is keen to attend group meetings such as ours. He did promise that he would pass on my comments about youth disturbance in the vicinity of Central Hall.

Some of the other powers confirmed on the PCC include setting the budget for policing – which has been difficult recently with inflation rates changing. This means that he is the person who is able to raise council tax if necessary. He determines the strategic direction for policing in the county.

Much has been made in recent weeks about policing and Mental Health Services. A lot of police time is spent on this simply because they are the most immediately available, but they are also the least qualified to make a difference. Twenty percent of all calls should really be directed to Mental Health Services. Twenty-four percent of calls are around domestic abuse issues and considerable time is also spent dealing with Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) before other services get there.

He also suggested that a great deal of police time and effort is spent at weekends dealing with fall out from the night-time economy – particularly at Prince of Wales Road in Norwich. This takes up one third of all officers available in the county when deployed there at peak times. He would like to see the responsibility for the safety of all passed to those who make big profits from the situation, which are the bar and night club owners.

On the whole he stressed that Norfolk has the second lowest crime rate in the country. Homicide is rarer here than in most other places. Knife crime is increasing in the county – but mainly because it had been much lower compared to inner cities. International internet crime is growing though – and therefore needs an international response. He assured us he is pushing for this.

He suggested that there should be ways of streamlining the whole of the Criminal Justice System – and that the Crown Prosecution Service should be coterminous with the police and prison systems.

Although most people would like to return to the Dixon of Dock Green methods of policing, but it is acknowledged that this is not feasible in today's society.

It was after the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 that it was decided that the public was not best suited to policing itself. This led to Sir Robert Peel starting the police system leading to that which we know now. The police should be the public and the public should be the police.

In 1829 Sir Robert Peel said that the success of the modern police force will not be determined by the lack of criminals but by the absence of police due to the affect that they are no longer needed.

6.2. The President's Garden Party (John Peat)

This was held on June 3rd at the home of our President, John Dollimore. I attended the event in three roles. As Newsletter Editor, I was there for a bit of on-the-spot reporting; as Vice-Chairman (or should that be Chairman of Vice); and thirdly, as an example of one of those vices, a member of The Dell Boys band who supplied the live music. I can confirm that the event was well attended, the weather was sunny, but chilly, and the food and music were excellent. Obviously, the music comment is a bit biased.

Now we get to the peculiar part of this report as there was a special piece of music played. One of the band members found what was headed "a U3A ANTHEM" on the internet, so we decided to play it at the Garden Party. So I am now sharing it with you all.
Just sing the words to the tune of Blowing in the Wind.

U3A ANTHEM (To the Tune of Blowing in the Wind)

Verse 1

How many times did you say in your youth, you'll never be old and grey
You were never going to shirk, you would never give up work
And retirement seemed a million miles away
But the time it came around, and very soon you found
The perfect way to keep old age at bay
The answer my friend is join the U3A, the answer is join the U3A

Verse 2

How many groups can you fit in a week, 5 or 6 or maybe even more
You can join Philosophy, you can trace your family tree
Do all the things you want to do and more
You can walk and quiz and sing, you can do most anything
How did you get the time to work before?
The answer my friend is join the U3A, the answer is join the U3A

Verse 3

How many times do you think to yourself, the garden needs a weed and a dig
The fridge needs a clean 'cos the cheese is turning green
And the pile of ironing's looking big
You need to clean the loo, but have better things to do
And what the hell you couldn't give a fig
The reason my friend is you joined the U3A, the reason is you joined the U3A

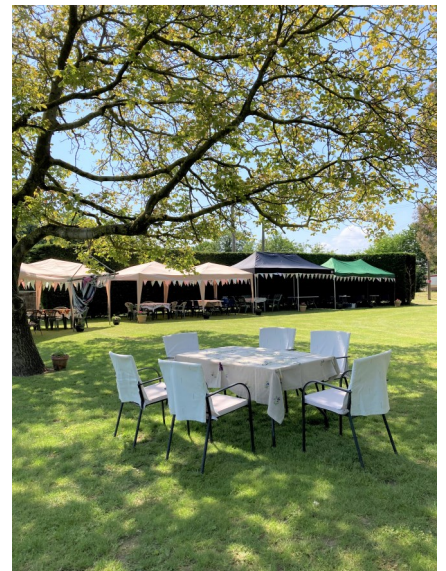
SLOW

The reason my friend is you joined the U3A

EVEN SLOWER

You all joined the Wymondham U3A

I think that you would all agree that whoever wrote these words knew all about the effect that membership a u3a branch can have on people.



6.3. Town Visits Group:

Bungay 23rd May (Georgette Vale)

We met our guide – Chris Reeve - under their Butter Cross which (rather like Wymondham’s Market Cross) was re-built after the previous one was destroyed in a great fire; in their case it was 1688. It is called the Butter Cross because it gave more shade and that is where they would sell the butter from to avoid it melting in the sunshine.

We then went to the ruins of the Bungay Castle, one of the many in this area built by the Bigod Family. Hugh

Bigod nearly lost it in the civil war – the Anarchy by shifting sides between Stephen and Matilda. We learnt how in times of siege they would dig under the castle to make it implode.

Clays Printers have long been a major employer in the area. It printed Alice In Wonderland and now it prints all the Harry Potter books. We also learned about the other industries of the town centred around the river including the breweries. There were thirty-three pubs for a population of around three thousand people and the town became known as Boozy Bungay.

Of course we went to the redundant church of St Mary’s now a community focal point. Formerly a priory of nuns, famous for their embroidery skills, until the dissolution. Then infamous for its visitation by Black Shuck – the devil dog in 1577. No one knows now what really did happen, but the most plausible modern-day explanation is that it may have been a lightning ball.

After lunch we had a tour of the Fisher Theatre and Chris Reeve again gave us the history of the place. The Regency era theatrical impresario founded it along with a dozen or so other theatres in Norfolk and Suffolk. They all fell into disrepair and the building has had many other uses including a corn exchange, but it was recently restored and opened again as a community arts theatre in 2006. On permanent display there is original proscenium header – a painted cloth – which was found in the cellar having lain there for over two hundred years.

Halesworth 21 June 2023 (Tony Vale)

It was a trip down memory lane for Town Visits Group Co-ordinator, Tony Vale, when eleven members travelled to Halesworth, Suffolk on 21 June.

Halesworth is similar to Wymondham in many ways, in that it is an historic market town, in a rural setting. It means that if you know your way around, you feel you are deep in the countryside, with the bustle of the town still within earshot.

Fortunately, we had David, a volunteer at the local Museum, to guide us in relation to the geography and history of the town. His fascinating circular tour took us into the Parish Church, to the Market Place, the main shopping street (Thoroughfare), the canal-side park and ended at the Museum.

It was there that David’s colleague, Brian, was waiting to greet us. The two local history enthusiasts then shared the honours in sharing stories about Halesworth’s famous family of William Argentine and the various displays in the Museum, including the Wissett Hoard.

After lunch, the group re-assembled for a “behind the scenes” tour of The Cut, a three storey maltings building that has been converted into a theatre and centre for the arts.



6.4. u3a visit to Mannington Hall (Ann Clark)

At the end of a narrow tree lined lane lies one of Norfolk's gems, Mannington Hall, the home of the Walpole family (fig 1, right).

The Hall was built in the 15th Century by William Lumnor and included a Medieval Central Hall; one of its massive oak ceiling beams is visible from the staircase. The outer walls are built of flint and topped with non-defensive crenulations. A moat surrounds the house and formal gardens and was originally crossed by a drawbridge at the front, now replaced by an iron bridge.



Horatio Walpole, a diplomat and brother of the Prime Minister Robert Walpole, already owned neighbouring Wolterton Manor when he purchased Mannington in the 18 Century, not to live in, but to sublet as a farm.



When in the 1860's the family decided to make Mannington their home, improvements were necessary using materials, such as chimneys, from other Walpole owned properties. The Great Hall was modified giving two second floor rooms whose windows are visible on the front façade (fig. 2 left).

Lady Walpole showed us round the house with its assortment of memorabilia including Chinese cabinets, decorated chests (fig.3, right) and Victorian tear catchers. Recent portraits by artists from the Norwich School of Art, contrast with the older formal ones.



It was then time for lunch sitting in the sun in the café garden.

In 1969 the 10th baron and his family moved into Mannington. Change was in the air.

They gave up in hand farming and concentrated on maintaining the house and gardens in an environmentally sustainable way for the public to enjoy. Innovations include, the heritage rose garden with its one thousand different varieties reflecting changes that have occurred over the years, a scented knot garden, and around the ruined Saxon Chapel wildflowers and a variety of different trees abound.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

There are walks through coppiced woodlands with lakes and meadows where Otters, Badgers, Barn Owls, and Edible Frogs may be seen (Fig. 4). The Boardwalk takes you past ponds with dragonflies mating (Fig. 5) to a bird hide by a lake (Fig. 6) where a kingfisher may appear.

Time to explore the visitor centre with its quirky selection of soaps, candles and preserves before returning home.