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September 2025

Chairman's Message

As many members will already be aware, the death of Eric Midwinter OBE was announced by his family on 8th August. As the co-founder of the u3a movement, his influence on the growth and development of who we have become as an organisation has been profound and lasting. At a personal level, I read much of his seminal work on educational policy when I was studying the art and craft of teaching in the very early 1970s, and was much influenced by his ideas and his clarity. I enclose later in this Newsletter a brief obituary, although of course the Third Age Trust recently sent one in a Friends' Newsletter and obituaries have appeared in the mainstream press. The programme 'Last Word' on BBC Radio 4 on Thursday the 21st featured Eric Midwinter amongst other deceased luminaries. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002hbkz>

Well, with the arrival of autumn on September 1st we learn from the meteorological office what most of us suspected all along: that this summer was the hottest globally ever. Inevitably, we shrug our shoulders collectively, with the feeling that there is little we as individuals can do about it. And it is true that the problem, like climate itself, is global not local and only solutions proposed and enacted by the most powerful and influential countries in the world, acting together, can mitigate some of the worst impending effects. Depressingly, at this time, such cooperation seems vanishingly unlikely. We know that our generation will escape the worst of it as we won't live long enough, but our hearts go out to our grandchildren, who will have to fight to save the world. Goodness me, what a legacy we're leaving them! What an inheritance!

At our Committee Meeting for September, we looked at the problem of the accuracy and validity of information about Interest Groups on our website. It isn't accurate! And why not? With the best will in the world, our webmaster can only use the data we have of whether a group is active, full, with waiting list, with how many members... A while ago, Andrew wrote to all Group Leaders to ask them to check the

Beacon records for accuracy and currency. Few responded and several had never updated their passwords and thus could not update Beacon records. I appeal to all Group Leaders to give some urgency to this task, for without accurate information about our groups on our website, our visitors are turned away disappointed. If you, as Group Leader, are unsure how to go about the task, help is at hand from Andrew Weston, beacon.gu3a@gmail.com Moreover, I would like to convene a meeting of all Group Leaders (yes, all 55 of you) at the Coffee Morning on **Tuesday 28th October**, when we will check on progress and solicit your help and involvement in the planning for the 25th Anniversary. Our usual coffee morning takes place on the 23rd of this month. I look forward to seeing all our members soon!

Obituary

Eric Clare Midwinter – Co-Founder of the u3a movement

It is with deep respect and admiration that we remember Eric Clare Midwinter OBE, who died aged 93 on the 8th August. We, as one of a thousand u3a groups throughout this land, owe a debt of gratitude to one of the founders of the movement he christened the University of the Third Age. Modelled on a French organisation of the same name, Eric was keen to lose the rigid academic notion that a university brings to mind, with its formal curricula and its competitive examinations, and instead focus on the novel concept that collective, peer-to-peer learning for the sheer enjoyment of it is the most effective way to educate. In the 70s, the idea that we are all entitled to a healthy, active, stimulating, creative and exploratory life even though our professional work has ended, was revolutionary and still unborn. The idea that learning takes place best, in any setting, when done socially and interactively, in performance and in groups of peers, was also way ahead of its time. Only now are such notions being trialled in school classroom settings and recognised in social policy, some 50 years after Midwinter developed them in his work in the 1970s and 80s in deprived social environments in Liverpool. He never lost his zeal for equality of opportunity for youngsters and adults, for lifelong learning and for social justice for all. He remained a member of his own local u3a group until his death a month ago.

Whilst we celebrate his work in valuing 'the Third Age', there was much more to the man. He was widely respected as a formidable and distinguished commentator on British social history and policy. He was a writer, broadcaster, and passionate reformer whose life's work over some six decades shaped the landscape of adult education and social policy. He authored numerous books and articles, exploring not only educational themes but also others such as public services and ageing. Beyond this world of academia, he was also a passionate and dedicated

cricket historian. His books on this iconic English sport, including insightful club histories and reflections on the game's evolving role in British culture, were much loved by sports fans and fellow historians alike. His writing was characterised by clarity, compassion, and a deep sense of justice, making complex societal issues accessible and urgent for a wide readership.

The advocacy for the Third Age that Eric Midwinter embodied is one we live out in our own weekly and monthly commitment to Grantham u3a: one star in a myriad constellation of u3a groups that were his vision and remain his legacy.

John Foulkes-Jones, Chair

Pastoral Care

Please let Janet Hine know if you become aware of a member who is ill and would appreciate a message of support, or if a member has died. Her contact details are: **The Old Parsonage, The Drift, Syston, Grantham, NG32 2BY. 01400 250984**
care.granthamu3a@gmail.com

Tuesday Talks

16 September

Nancy Appleyard will give a talk entitled *The Chattering Species: How Humans Learned to Speak*

Why did humans first begin chattering to each other all those hundreds of thousands of years ago and how did they go about it? Was it so that they could work together and pass on skills? On the other hand, did they learn to speak so that they could share their thoughts and feelings or even gossip?

Nancy Appleyard is a social anthropologist with a specialism in language, communication and human interaction. She has lived within communities throughout the world, often living with families and sharing their everyday lives. She has over 15 years' experience lecturing and delivering seminars on communication theory and practice in universities, colleges, industry and the public service.

21 October

Our substitute speaker for October, Michele Beadle, who was going to tell us about Amy Johnson, the pioneer aviator, has herself had to pull out due to ill-health. We hope that Michele will be able to deliver this talk once she has recovered.

Dr John Manterfield has happily agreed to fill the slot and will speak about Grantham's Watermills. The talk outlines the importance of watermills in the economy of our area for the production of wheat and

other animal foodstuffs which took place in the seven separate mills located along the River Witham from Houghton Mill in the South as far as Londonthorpe Mill in the North. It covers their demise in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and reveals what can be seen today.

John Manterfield was brought up in Grantham before attending Exeter University and gaining a PhD in historical geography. He had a successful career in local government before moving into the Further Education sector where he was deputy principal at South Downs College in Hampshire prior to returning to Grantham in 2014. He is Chair of Grantham Civic Society and actively involved in St Wulfram's Church with a responsibility for chairing the Fabric Group looking after the historic building.

18 November

We welcome Dr Ian Bedford back to talk about "Companion Planting for a Balanced Garden"

December – no Tuesday Talk

**Maggie Ambrose , Speaker Finder
Jenny Lewis, Assistant Speaker Finder**

Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are held in St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, 10.00am - 11.30am on fourth Tuesday of the month and are open to all members. The next meetings are:

Tuesday 23 September

Tuesday 28 October

Tuesday 25 November

Group News

Wildlife Group

Kerry Brazil

The August meeting was at Frampton Marsh, where several members enjoyed a light lunch beforehand. The scrapes near the visitor centre were almost empty of water due to the lack of rain for the past few months. There was a shelduck in the scrapes as we were leaving the reserve.

We first walked along the road and then took the footpath to the reservoir. The water level here was also low, however we did see spoonbills, swans and greylag geese. We then returned to the visitor centre to walk the loop and look in the hides. We were advised not to bother with the 360° hide as there was nothing to be seen there.

We walked past the swathes of planted sunflowers, which were beautiful. There were lots of sand martins flying in and out of their nesting bank. From the nearby hide we saw godwits, pied wagtails, curlew and lapwings. There were flocks of goldfinches in the reeds.

The hawthorn berries were showing red along the hedges, and the tree seeds were ripening, forecasting an early autumn.



Canasta Groups

Josephine Hewitt

Having been incapacitated since December 24 it is my fervent hope that I shall be able to be present again in September 25.

THE EVENING GROUP - we have agreed to change one evening meeting: the fourth evening meeting is now closed and we are now planning to meet on the THIRD Monday evening instead. We have lost

one of our regular participants and have a new regular player joining us to try to keep the numbers constant.

THE AFTERNOON CANASTA GROUP - we hope to continue the usual meeting pattern. I am very pleased to accept the kind help of the members in organising the room furniture for the games and putting it back in place at the end of our games. This, and tidying the kitchen, is essential in order for us to leave the rooms as we find them. Some members have promised to help with the care of the tablecloths, card holders and boxes of cards which helps so much when my physical strength begins to return. All of these matters are important since we have to vacate the room before 5pm and this ensures those using public transport are able to catch their service before it finishes for the day. 01476 579905

Local History Anne Rudderham

Last month we enjoyed a guided tour of Melton Mowbray. The name of the town is derived from the original Medelton (or middle town which over the years morphed into Melton) and Mowbray, from the Mowbray family who were granted the land after the Norman Conquest and became Lords of the Manor. Our knowledgeable guide, Brian Fare, took us around some lovely out-of-the-way spots including Cardigan House where Lord Cardigan lived (he led the Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854 against the Russians and which was made famous by Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem); Anne of Cleves' house (a former priory that was confiscated by Richard Cromwell during Henry VIII reign and which Anne received in the divorce settlement - this is now a pub); Bede House (built by Robert Hudson and now alms houses for 'six poor and old bachelors and widows'); St Mary's Church (started 800 years ago on the site of an old Saxon one - alas not open on Wednesdays so we didn't get a chance to look inside); the Swan Hotel (made famous by the antics of the Marquis of Waterford and a group of friends who, in 1837, paid a drunken visit to the town after a day at Croxton Park Races, where having been refused entry to the local toll house, decided to (among other antics) liberally splash doors and windows with red paint - hence the phrase 'painting the town red'); and the house where Sir Malcolm Sargent lived until his divorce from his wife and where she subsequently used to play musical instruments on the small balcony. Brian organises other walking tours - the Royal Mile Trail and those based on military history. More details can be found here <https://historyfare.co.uk>. Despite the weather (we managed to survive walking round on the hottest day of the year) we all learnt more about this lovely market town and whilst it's named as the 'Rural Capital of Food' there is definitely more to it than pork pies

and Stilton cheese! Many thanks to Jan Worts for helping to organise this visit and to Carole Troops for taking the photos, some of which are included here.

As the museum is now closed until 2nd October due to maintenance, we've had to change our programme accordingly and so the remainder of the year now looks like this:

Weds 10th September - Planning meeting for 2026

Weds 8th October - Holocaust Centre, Newark

Weds 12th November - Social Get-together with talk/look-see new exhibitions along with refreshments, Grantham Museum

December - No meeting

Heritage Open Days take place nationally from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 September. The theme this year is Architecture and Grantham Civic Society will be present at **St Wulfram's Church** on both Saturday 13 September (9.30 am to 4 pm) and Sunday 14 September (12 noon to 4 pm) with their popular bookstall (refreshments also available).

The **Manthorpe Road Burial Ground** will be open on Sunday 14 September from 12.30 to 3.00 pm and the **Old School Hall in Church Street** will be open on Sunday 21 September from 10 am to 12.30 pm.

Thatcher Fest - October sees events in relation to the centenary of the birth of Margaret Thatcher including **guided walks of the town** (9-18 Oct) and a free talk about **Grantham in the 1920s and '30s** by Dr John Manterfield, Civic Society Chairman, on Tuesday 14 October.

Further details about these and other related events can be found on the Guildhall Arts Centre website.

<https://www.guildhallartscentre.com/whats-on/thatcher-fest/>





Scottish Dancers

John Aitken

Garden Dance

The u3a Scottish Dancers normally have a Garden Dance during the summer, and this year we discussed the possibility of having it on the lawns of Grantham House. It is a National Trust property and has recently opened to the public, and we were very pleased to be able to dance there on 12 August. I invited dancers from other local dancing groups and we had 40 dancers and about a dozen spectators. The weather was wonderful and the setting magnificent. We danced for an hour before having a break, when many of us headed towards the café. After cakes and ice creams, another hour of dancing rounded off the afternoon.





Discutons!

Pierre Fils de Hutchin

Bonjour, mes amis. Le groupe "Discutons!" se réunit en ligne (Zoom) vendredi matin deux fois par mois. D'habitude on lit, on traduit, on rit (beaucoup!), on écoute et on parle. En effet on parle beaucoup et, pour la plupart du temps, on parle en français! On fait des erreurs, bien sûr, mais l'important c'est de parler et d'améliorer sa maîtrise de la langue française.

Actuellement il y a 7 personnes dans notre groupe. Il y a de la place pour encore une personne, mais 8 membres, c'est la limite. Cependant, de temps en temps on a rendez-vous dans La Cour du Café (Garden Yard café). Ces réunions ont lieu vendredi matin de 10.30 jusqu'à midi. Si vous voudriez assister à ces réunions, vous seriez les très bienvenus. C'est pas trop sérieux - au cours de la dernière réunion au café on a joué au Loto! (Bingo) en français et on a essayé de prononcer des virelangues français (French tongue-twisters).

NB My email address is to be found on the U3A group page.

Bonne journée!

Guitar Group

Graham Welham

It's been a quiet summer for gigs for the guitar group, with only two to play. Firstly, we had a booking to play at Maple Leaf Care home on Saturday 19 July, in support of their Summer Fete. However, due to rain and poor weather that weekend, Maple Leaf cancelled the event. Unfortunately, we were unable to get a band together to play the replacement event at the end of August. Hopefully, we'll be back to play for them at some point in the Autumn!

Our other booking was to play at the Cree Centre, on Wednesday 13 August. We always get a great reception from the young people and support staff at the Centre. Many thanks to them for the thank you card they gave the guys. They are our first Christmas booking for 12 December.

Our next band gig is at Brick Kiln Place, on the evening of 13 November and we've had an enquiry from Gregory House, Grantham, to play for their residents. Hopefully by the time this u3a item is published we'll have a confirmed date.

Welcome to Bob Ford, who has joined the u3a and has started to attend our Thursday practice sessions. Bob, I hope you enjoy the practice sessions with us.

Finally, we've now got our Christmas get together meal booked for the Recruiting Sergeant, Great Gonerby, on the 19 December!

Writing Outdoors - a new creative writing group Barbara Shannon

Starting soon.....a few places left

Writing Outdoors: 5 Autumn Mornings

Do you like to write and want to develop it further or is it something you left behind in school and would like to pick up again?

Or something you have always wanted to have a go at?

Join us for weekly walks into our local green spaces in search of inspiration.

'En plein air' is not just for painters!

When: Starting Friday 26th September 2025

Where: Grantham House & Local Green Spaces

Dates: Friday mornings 26 Sept, Oct 3, 10, 17 & 31

Time: 10.15 for 10.30 until 12.30

Cost: £22 for 5 week block includes tea/coffee

Contact for more information: Barbara Shannon 07800770580



Chocolate and Cherry Biscuits

100g softened butter

50g castor sugar

125g SR flour

15g cocoa powder

75g glacé cherries plus 8 glacé cherries, halved

Preheat oven to 180C / 160C fan oven, Gas 4 and line 2 baking trays with baking paper.

Beat butter and sugar together until combined. Mix in flour, cocoa powder and chopped cherries with a spoon. Bring mixture together with your hands to form a dough.

Divide into 16 even sized balls, arrange 8 on each tray then flatten with back of a wet fork until about ½ inch / 1cm thick.

Bake for 12 – 15 minutes until just cooked (be careful as they become dark very easily). Remove from the oven and immediately press a cherry half in the centre of each biscuit. Allow to cool for 10 minutes then transfer to a cooling rack to completely cool.

Tip: Each biscuit needs to be warm for the cherry half to embed itself. The cherries still have the sticky syrup so they stick to the warm biscuit and once cold will have set firmly.



Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the October newsletter to ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com by Friday 10 October.