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**October 2025**

### **Chairman's Message**

The Harvest Moon on the 7<sup>th</sup> of this month was bright enough at 10pm but its rise at 6.20 pm was obscured by a thick cloud layer. These events are traditionally auspicious, of course, so it's any soothsayer's guess what that foretells. There seems to be no good news in the world, as we hurtle downhill towards the year's end, but at least we have Christmas to look forward to. Tradition (that hoary old dictator of custom and habit) tells us its Family Time and a patina of peace and goodwill is supposed to cover us all like a snowfall. But does it?

I was speaking today to one of our members who volunteers at a foodbank, and the thoughts that followed my conversation reinforced what I knew instinctively already: that Christmas for many in our society is neither familial, nor peaceful, and goodwill doesn't get a look-in. That's a fact, not only in the remote lands we see in the news, but here in Grantham too. And it isn't just hunger and homelessness but debilitating loneliness too. Statistically loneliness amongst third-agers is on the increase. There's poverty of the soul as well as material deprivation.

Which brings me neatly to a crucial question: what brought you to the u3a when you joined? Was it a love of badminton or bridge or ballet that induced you to join an interest group where you could practise it? Or was it more the fact that other likeminded people that you could get to know would be doing it too? For my part, joining u3a was a way of making friends and enjoying a social life with people similar to me at a time when I was new to the town and didn't know a soul. Choosing something to do from the menu of our Groups was secondary; the social aspect came first for me. I am still as keen to promote social interaction amongst members of Grantham u3a, as I am to enrich the range of Interest Groups we offer.

Those of you who receive (and, moreover, read) the newsletters and occasional mailings that are sent out from The Third Age Trust will

know of the movement's continual efforts to celebrate positive ageing and in so doing, to develop and enrich the interconnectedness of u3a groups nationally and its half-million members individually. Perhaps it is worth noting in your diaries that the 2026 u3a Festival will take place in York from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. Some from Grantham went last year and said it was fascinating and invigorating.

In last month's editorial, I reminded everyone of a meeting of all Group Leaders at the Coffee Morning on **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October**, when, amongst other things, we will solicit help and involvement in the planning for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I know a few members have other commitments, but I urge as many of the 55 groups leaders as can make it to come to this round-table, or send a member of the group if the leader herself/himself is unable to commit. It will only be for around 40 to 60 minutes and coffee and biscuits will be provided free.

I wish you all a good October and hope that Hallowe'en doesn't take you by surprise at the month's end.

**John Foulkes-Jones, Chair**

### **Beacon Administrator / Membership Secretary**

Encouragingly, we have a further members who have joined this summer, and of course, they are most welcome.

They are namely :-

Angela Gardner, Ann Roughan, Annie Newman, Brenda Sills, Carol Kingston, Carol White, Celia Saddington, Dave Wilson, Debbie Chappell, Derek Cox, David Harrison, Gary Harden, Gill Davis, Gillian Rootman, Jackie Chambers, Jenny Gardiner, Jo Aestley, Jo Counsell, Julie Weedon, Julie Redshaw, June Boneham, Lynn Robinson, Mandy Cox, Megan Mann, Moira Mackie, Tricia Kinsella, Paul Emmett, Paul Atherton, Pauline Brooks, Peter Hill, Philip Robinson, Bob Ford, Roly Cox, Ros Campbell, Ruby Tulloch, T C Carter, Trevor McHugh, and Wendy Walsh.

Our current membership is a healthy 629.

I would like to remind everyone that renewals begin in November and should be completed by the end of the year.

This is easily done online using your bank card. Our u3a system uses a PayPal facility but you **do not personally need to have a PayPal account**. Perhaps a friend could help you with this if you are at all hesitant. However, you must have created your personal password to access your personal record.

We are currently reviewing our website content for accuracy and appearance and any positive suggestions are always appreciated.

**Andrew Weston 07836 250972 Angela Rose 07966 516529**

### **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](mailto:care.granthamu3a@gmail.com)

### **Tuesday Talks**

#### **21 October**

Dr John Manterfield 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 to talk about "Companion Planting for a Balanced Garden"

This talk explains the concepts of Companion Planting and whether we can expect to see results when it's used. Besides using plants to help other plants, many plants are also reported to have properties that can either attract or repel bugs. The talk details some of them and how they can be used in our gardens to create a natural balance system for attracting nature and keeping the pests under control.

Dr Ian Bedford writes: I have been fascinated by insects and other invertebrates for most of my life.

Starting out as an Amateur Entomologist, studying and conserving butterflies on the South Downs, I went on to pursue a professional career as an entomologist. For over 42 years I undertook plant science research at the John Innes Centre (one of the UK's leading research centres) where I became Head of the Entomology Department. Retiring from my life as a Research Entomologist, I now continue with my love of entomology through a wide range of public engagement activities. I not only talk to Garden clubs and Horticultural clubs on various insect (bug) - related subjects, but hold Plant Pest Clinics at Garden Centres and national flower/garden shows. However, the content and any views expressed during my talks are my own and do not reflect those of others or any organisations. I'm also often called upon by the media to speak about topical bug issues and have appeared on popular TV shows such as Gardeners' World, Inside Out, Tonight, Horizon, BBC Breakfast, the A to Z of TV Gardening, The Great British Garden Revival and even Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule show on ITV.

I also have the great honour of being the Resident Entomology Expert for BBC Radio Suffolk and Radio Norfolk and also have a weekly feature on Toby Buckland's BBC Radio Devon Gardening Programme which he calls, 'The Entomologist Entertains'.

## **December – no Tuesday Talk**

### **20 January 2026**

Jack Perks will tell us about Britain's Rivers in Crisis

**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 28 October**

**Tuesday 25 November**

**December - No Coffee Morning**

## Group News

### Wildlife Group

Kerry Brazil

Despite the heavy rain in the morning, 11 members of the group turned up for a walk along the canal. Fortunately the rain had stopped. We walked from The Duck pub to Casthorpe Bridge and back. The first part of the canal near the locks was full of willowherb and reeds, but then it cleared and we passed the 3 shires boat which sometimes runs boat trips along the canal.

The willowherb, bullrushes and iris were all at the seeding stage. Swallows and martins were flying overhead, but we only saw coots on the canal. There was an abundance of berries in the hedgerow, including very large rosehips and strings of white briony berries. The arrowhead reeds were starting to die down now that it is autumn.

After the walk, several members stayed for refreshments at The Duck.





### **Wednesday Walking Group**

**Ed Bowman**

We have been lucky with our Wednesday walks every month until last month when the heavens opened on us. It certainly reduced our numbers, but we managed to get round with a hardy bunch followed by a very nice meal at the Durham Ox, Orston. Plenty of room on the walks for more u3a'ers, so feel free to join, meet new people and get (even) fitter. We walk on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, usually about 3 miles, and finish with a meal.



## **Acoustic Guitar Group**

**Fiona Robbins**

Over the past few months we have been stretching ourselves and pushing far beyond our comfort zone. However, it has been an absolute joy to play for our Singing for Fun group. It was so nice to have their voices helping us along – as they generally knew the songs better than we did! With lots of bee-bops and showaddies, harmonies and scat, we were rockin' all over the world.

As Halloween now approaches, we are revisiting our selection of spooky tunes, some of which may be quite challenging. As we only pull them out at this time of year, some of our newer members may need to put their thinking caps on to remember the tunes. Who remembers “Bing, bang, walla, walla, bing bang”? You don't have to go so far back for “The Monster Mash”. We have until the end of the month to get into character.

## **Scottish Dancers**

**John Aitken**

The u3a Scottish Dancers were invited to Grantham Sunflowers WI on 30 September. After explaining a little about Scottish Country Dancing, they demonstrated a couple of dances, a Reel and then a Strathspey, before inviting the WI members to try some dances themselves with the experienced dancers available and willing to take the WI members as partners. WI members were enthusiastic participants, with 15-20 trying the dancing. The dancing continued for about an hour and finished with the Gay Gordons.





## Rummikub

Joy Wilson

Monday 6 October marked our 3 year anniversary, which we celebrated with tea, cake and reminiscing.

The group was set up by Avril Leitch, initially from her sitting room with just a few members. The membership has now grown to healthy 18, with a few spaces still available. Flowers, cards and good wishes were shared at this meeting, as Avril has decided to step down as leader, however she will continue to join us as a player.

Pictured with Avril are New leader Joy Wilson, assisted by Jackie Chambers. The second picture features members in the group attending that day.



Rummikub is a popular game played with numbered tiles, which blends strategy and luck. Guidance and training is available if it's new to you! If you want to chat informally please contact Joy on 07751639760. We meet every Monday at Manners Street Community

centre at 2pm for 2 and half hours of brain stimulation, fun and good company.

## **Guitar Group**

**Graham Welham**

This month the guitar group has continued to practice at the Christian Fellowship Hall. Attendance at these practises is good with at least ten members regularly coming to each session.

We only had one gig in the past month at Gregory House on the 2 October. This was very much appreciated by the residents and staff, with residents enjoying the entertainment and singing along to some songs. We look forward to returning to play again for them in the future.



The Guitar Group playing at Gregory House

Belton Community Festival took place over the weekend of the 13 & 14 September. The guitar group had decided not to play at this event. However, three of us who regularly play with the Acoustic group, decided we would like to play at the Festival, playing a half hour Acoustic spot on the Saturday morning. Before and after our spot we chatted with the Master of Ceremonies about the Grantham u3a, promoting its variety of groups, including the two differing guitar groups. This was the second festival to take place at Belton, if there is another next year it might be something that other u3a groups might want to get involved with. According to the organisers nearly 10,000 attended the festival over that weekend. Flyers for this year's event were posted around Feb - March time. I do have email contact details, for the organisers if required.

For the past three years I've had the lead role for the guitar group, doing all the admin, communications and organising gigs for the group. But I feel that I need a break from this role. I'm happy to continue, doing some of the admin work, but I want to step back from

other parts of running the group. The guys in the group are aware of this and hopefully we will get new lead roles sorted by the end of the year.

### **Writing Outdoors**

**Barbara Shannon**

The new Writing Outdoors group began at the end of September using the Sedgwick Room at Grantham House as our base.

The initial block of 5 weeks — ‘Autumn: 5 Autumn Mornings’ — ends at the end of October and the group hopes this will follow with regular meetings/walks (maybe monthly - to be decided) to continue exploring and looking for inspiration in our local landscape. Our themes so far ‘Grantham House Gardens’ ‘River’ and ‘Park Trees’ have produced some interesting pieces from which we hope to curate a small collection of prose and poems.

There are a couple of spaces in the group at the moment — if anyone would like to join us please do get in touch.



### **Bus Pass Group**

**Janet Neal**

September saw us take advantage of the Heritage Open Days and we ventured out to the Newark Heritage Barge, stopping for refreshments along the way at Gannets cafe. Les has poured his heart and soul into converting the Leicester Trader, the last Trent dumb barge, into a museum. In his own words, he could talk forever about the barge and his life as a seafarer. He certainly kept us entertained and informed! Thank you Les, we had a lovely day out. I'm attaching information regarding the barge should anyone be interested in seeing it for themselves.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Visit:** [www.newarkheritagebarge.com](http://www.newarkheritagebarge.com)

**Facebook:** Leicester Trader Newark Heritage barge.

**Or contact the Project Leader Les Reid by**

**Email:** [Les.nhbarge@googlemail.com](mailto:Les.nhbarge@googlemail.com)

**Tel:** 07971 589 612

**Post:** The Newark Heritage Barge  
24 The Weavers  
Newark  
Notts  
NG24 4RY



Leicester Trader can be visited by appointment or on public open days (**see website and local press**). Group visits and talks can be arranged.

We are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and enjoy all the benefits this status allows.

If you apply to join us or make a donation please take the time to complete the gift aid certificate on the application for membership - every little bit helps!

*Thank you.*



**Melting Moments**

150g sugar  
175g butter softened  
225g plain flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
40 g desiccated coconut  
1 teaspoon vanilla essence  
10 glace cherries

Makes 20 biscuits

Set oven at 160C and grease 2 baking trays

Beat the sugar and butter together until light and fluffy. Add flour, baking powder, coconut and vanilla essence and mix thoroughly. Form mixture into 20 balls approx. 25g each and place on three trays leaving room for them to spread. Flatten with palm of hand and place half a cherry in centre of each one. Bake for 15 to 20 mins until golden. Leave to cool for 5 mins before removing from trays and putting on a wire rack.



**Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the November newsletter to [ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com) by Friday 7 November.**