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**November 2025**

### **Chairman's Message**

With the clocks going back at the end of October, we are well and truly into deep autumn now, with curtains drawn by four pm to shut out the darkling gloom, the unwelcome chill and the drizzle. One hopes that the sparks and whiz-bangs from Bonfire Night have died down and not left you too dazed. Time was when we lit our Catherine Wheels and rockets on one night of the year, commemorating (for some) the infamous event of 1605. These days, the darkened evenings seem to be open season for spontaneous and unheralded fusillades which send pets scurrying under blankets; the displays then continue, uninvited and unannounced, up to and beyond New Year's Eve.

I know: there's a while yet before *that* date rolls around, and a great deal to do. Christmas, and all it involves, for a start. Many of our u3a activity groups hold special events like festive lunches, to draw together and celebrate our achievements during the year. As usual, our Grantham u3a as a whole will celebrate at a party event on Tuesday December 16, in the Ballroom of the Guildhall. We'll have planned some seasonal refreshments, some musical items, a pantomime (*oh yes we have*), some traditional carols, and generally a Good Time, from 2pm. Shortly, you'll get an email from Andrew to get to you to confirm if you'll be there or not. This will help us with the catering and with numbers.

I was delighted to see so many interest group leaders at the special meeting we held at the last coffee morning in October. The Committee really appreciated the ideas and the help and feedback we got and we can now move ahead strongly with our planning for 2026 and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. It was good to see so many leaders using Beacon for their record-keeping: it helps our u3a run more smoothly and

effectively and keeps cost down when we use the digital resources we have. Please do drop an email to Carole [web.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:web.granthamu3a@gmail.com) if you make any changes to your group status so that she can update our website information. Talking of coffee morning, our next, this month on Tuesday 25, will see another JigSaw swap table. This proved very popular when we ran it before, especially with Christmas just round the corner. And if you're at the Coffee Morning, you might want to lend a hand to decorate the u3a Christmas Tree, as the Tree Festival Event at St Wulfram's will take place in the following days.

Finally, with our Annual General Meeting coming in February, I am hoping that somewhere within our 657 membership there are individuals who could spare an hour each month to help our Committee grow and prosper. Many of the committee must resign in February as they will have served their constitutional terms. Like all organisations, fresh ideas, and new skills and experiences are essential for us to flourish. Please come forward if you would like to help us; specific experience is not a requirement, and the time commitment can be minimal. Contact me or any committee member ([chair.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair.granthamu3a@gmail.com)) or talk to us at the Coffee Morning.

I wish you all a spirited and energetic November and hope you get everything done that you have planned!

**John Foulkes-Jones, Chair**

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

As is normal, from this month, you are able to renew your membership for 2026. The email sent out on the 1st November gave all the details you require to do it yourself.

In case you missed it you can [Click Here](#) to get started.

So far, after only a few days, 160 of our 630 members have already successfully renewed themselves online. Even from Hong Kong! Well done to them.

We are hoping for almost **100% online renewal** this year as the process is well-trying and tested.

Please give it a go if you haven't already, and ask for help if you have problems. Remember, the u3a is a learning, self-help group. Ask a u3a friend who has already successfully renewed to help you.

Remember, **YOU DO NOT NEED A PAYPAL account**. We just use PayPal to facilitate our payment system. You just need to use the **GUEST** facility of this.

As always, though, there is still the option to attend a monthly meeting or coffee morning and make use of our card machines for those few unable to renew online.

**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**

**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 16 The Christmas Party, no Tuesday Talk.**

**January 20 Jack Perks talks about 'Britain's Rivers in Crisis'**

**Biog:** Born and bred in Nottingham Jack is primarily a freelance underwater & wildlife cameraman with a deep passion for the natural world. He's particularly interested in the less liked species such as reptiles, amphibians and fish but does occasionally pay attention to furry and feathery things. Starting out learning photography from 16 he eventually went to university in Falmouth earning a degree in BA (Hons) Marine & Natural History Photography spending most of his days rock pooling and enjoying the local pubs.

Shortly after graduating Jack focused more on moving image and has since worked for dozens of wildlife and angling tv programmes including Springwatch, The One Show, Mr Crabtree Goes Fishing and The Great British Year. Jack also appears in front of the camera and has presented several films for Countryfile. He's gone on to work on David Attenborough's "Wild Isles" & Filmed in Alaska for an upcoming BBC series.

Freshwater fish are certainly what Jack is best known for being termed the "fish twitcher" by the BBC for hunting around the UK to film every British freshwater fish, a task that took seven years for him to complete and find all 54. From Scottish Lochs to Southern Chalk streams there aren't many waterways Jack hasn't dipped in.

Jack has written two books "Freshwater Fishes of Britain" & "Field Guide to Pond & River Wildlife of Britain & Europe". His work has

featured in lots of other books and prominently with long-time collaborator Mark Everard in his book “The Complex Lives of Britain’s Freshwater Fishes”. He has also written for many magazines including BBC Wildlife, Outdoor Photography and Diver to name a few and written regular columns for Anglers Mail & Fallons Angler.

Jack is a proud vice president of Wildfish Conservation and works in partnership with Hammond Drysuits and Fotospeed.

### **17 February is our AGM**

**17 March** Kevin Lawry will talk about His friend George Pyle. This is a true-life story of an RAF fighter pilot and his adventures just after D Day in June 1944.

**21 April** David Valerio returns to update us after his very popular appearance in January 2024. His talk is called "*From Ignorance via Intuition to Illumination*"

**19 May** Bertie Pearce will entertain us with his talk on ‘Creating an Imaginary World’

**16 June** Philip Caine reflects on a life full of travel and challenge as he shares his career in his talk ‘From Barrow to Baghdad’

**21 July** Mike Burton presents his lecture ‘Land of Chivalry; 14<sup>th</sup> Century England’

**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 25 November**

**December - No Coffee Morning**

**Tuesday 27 January 2026**

### **Beat the Scammers – Don’t pay for their Christmas**

It has been a few months since the last “Beat the Scammers” article. With the festive season only just round the corner we all become a bit less security conscious so here are a few reminders how to avoid sharing your Christmas funds with the Scammers. Fact: “December is the most successful month for Scammers.”

1. Fake Websites. Use the retailers you are familiar with. Always log directly into their websites or Apps. Don't use links from other websites.
2. Fake Appeals for help. It's great to share a bit with those less fortunate. Make your donations direct to a known charity or appeal. Check the website name when you make a payment. Again, don't click on a link from another website or a link shared on social media.
3. Phone snatching has become a significant issue. Keep your phone safe as Scammer will be happy to "snatch it out of your hand"
4. If things don't feel right, ask yourself the questions: "Why?" Remember the national campaign:
  - **"STOP"** Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information.
  - **"CHALLENGE"** Ask yourself, could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
  - **"PROTECT"** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've been scammed.

Let's have an enjoyable Christmas without the pain of being scammed.  
Merry Christmas and Happy NewYear **Jacob**

## Group News

### Current Affairs

**Jean Pritchard**

This was the first meeting since July and it was great to have us all back together again. There was plenty going on both worldwide and nationally for us to discuss. From the following report you could be forgiven for thinking that we followed a well organised agenda addressing one topic at a time. It was nearly like that but topics tend to run into each other and sometimes get cross referenced during the conversations. These were the subjects that we discussed:

Kemi Badenoch's speech to the Conservative party Conference.  
Police hours wasted(?) on mental health issues from the public. Should police intervene in attempted suicides?

A moral dilemma: Should PIP (Personal Independent Payments) claimants be owning luxury cars even if they have been purchased out of their savings?

Banks have been told to snoop on Pensioners' accounts and report suspicious payments to DWP.

AI: Climatic resilient crops are being trialled in Spalding.

Use of AI in Westminster is met with resistance from Ministers.

GMR was fined £1m after a fatality when a woman put her head out of the window of a moving train.

IDs. Is it safe? Are there Internet risks? Contact lists could be hacked or sold.

North Korea issued stamps commemorating British Royal occasions to attract overseas collectors to raise revenue for the Government.

Consumers warned over surge in kitchen gadget data gathering through Smart devices.

Students need courses in reading! In this Insta world they are overwhelmed by the attention span required to read books.

*In the words of Bugs Bunny, That's all Folks.*

[jean.pritchard1@gmail.com](mailto:jean.pritchard1@gmail.com)

## **Wildlife Group**

**Kerry Brazil**

In October our meeting was a deer walk in Belton Park. This was led by ranger Sasha, who works with the deer.

She pointed out the browse line, which is as far as the deer can reach on the trees. This is why all the tree branches start at the same height. Many trees have a protective fence around them. This has to be in place for 30 to 40 years until the tree is mature enough to survive without being seriously damaged by the deer. Deer eat almost everything, but can sense when an acorn or conker has a grub in it. These were the only ones left on the ground.

During the rut, when they are mating, the deer frequently damage fences, as they will go through them rather than jump over. Most of the deer at Belton are fallow deer but there are a few roe deer and muntjacs in the parkland. The fallow and roe deer bucks grow antlers each year, which they use during the rut to fight other males, and gather their own does. These fights are seldom serious. Several deer in the park have only one antler, however. This puts them at a disadvantage when trying to gather females!

The colour of the deer varies from white through shades of brown to quite dark. The bucks make scrapes in the ground, into which they urinate. They then coat themselves in the mixture of soil and urine to make themselves attractive to the does.

The antlers are cast in spring, and the new antlers start to grow. They are covered in velvet at this stage, which they gradually rub off. The antlers are usually fully grown and clean by September ready for the rut. The fawns are born in the spring after the cold weather. They have a spotted coat which helps with camouflage in the spring vegetation. The deer spend a lot of time on the golf course.

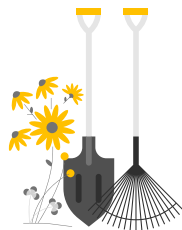


Sacha pointed out the oldest tree on the estate, a 700 year old sweet chestnut.



## Gardening Group programme 2025

Caroline Bowman



The Gardening Group has had its usual mixture of talks and visits this year, beginning with a talk by a well-known garden historian and writer, Dr. Twigs Way, who gave our annual community talk in the Guildhall Arts Centre on the topic of *Women in the Garden*. This covered not only women gardeners, but also women who have been influential in garden history, such as Jane Loudon, Gertrude Jekyll and Norah Lindsey.

Other talks have included topics such as *Gardening with the Changing Climate*, which included advice on the kinds of plants we should be growing because of climate change; *The English and Gardening – A Social History of an English Obsession*; *The Drunken Botanist* (on how

every good drink starts with a plant!); and *Putting it All Together – Garden Design*.

We visited Barnsdale Gardens in May, when Nick Hamilton, the son of Geoff Hamilton who founded the gardens, gave us a talk on their history and the way in which they are managed. In July we visited a private garden in Newton, and in August we visited three gardens in Whatton-in-the-Vale which were open under the National Gardens Scheme.

Our annual coach trip this year took place in June, when we visited Elton Hall and were given a tour of the private and public gardens by one of the head gardeners.

We're now putting away our gardening tools and wellies for the year and will start again in January 2026, when we will have our planning and social meeting. Arrangements have already been made for the 2026 annual community talk, which will be given by a speaker from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on the topic of *Planting the Globe*. This will cover the extensive horticultural work that the CWGC carries out in planting and maintaining war cemeteries in over 150 countries throughout the world. The talk will be open to everyone (not just Gardening Group members) and will take place in the Guildhall Arts Centre on 20 March 2026. Admission will be by donation, all of which will go to the CWGC. More information about this in a future newsletter.

## **Local History**

**Anne Rudderham**

In September we had a useful planning meeting to discuss next year's programme; this has now been finalised and sent out to members.

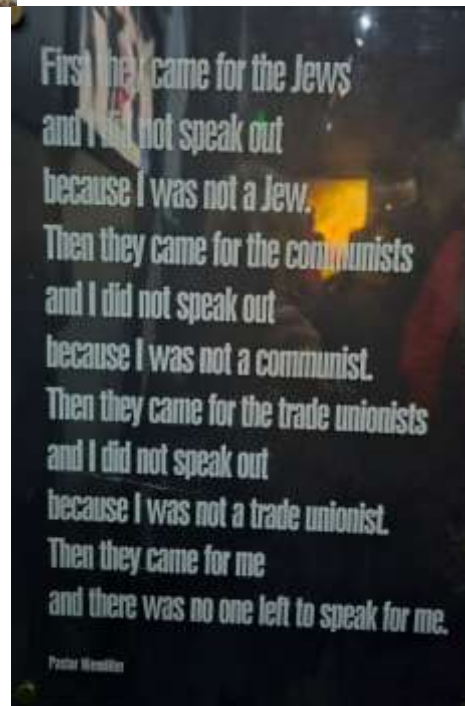
October's visit was to the National Holocaust Centre and Museum at Laxton near Newark. The brainchild of Stephen and James Smith who in 1991, along with their mother Marina, visited Yad Vashem - Israel's national Holocaust museum - and were stunned and challenged by the information gathered during their journey. James and Stephen believed that their education about the Holocaust at school and university had been lacking, as they had never had the opportunity to consider what the Holocaust might mean for them as individuals. This

trip changed the lives of the family as they came back to the UK and knew that the Holocaust had to be taught, discussed and understood by all. They were especially keen to see this done correctly for students learning about the Holocaust at school and, after many years of dedicated fundraising and incredibly hard work, the National Holocaust Centre & Museum - affectionately known as Beth Shalom (the House of Peace) - was born. What once was the Smith family home is now the only national museum in the UK dedicated to teaching and learning the lessons from the Holocaust.

From humble backgrounds, this inspirational place holds two permanent exhibitions, a memorial and reflective space, education and teaching space, beautiful landscaped memorial gardens and viewing galleries. It is also very proud to host, after a £2m renovation, *The Journey* which traces the steps of a 10 yr old German Jewish boy, the only museum exhibition dedicated to teaching younger children about the Holocaust. More details can be found at <https://www.holocaust.org.uk>.

It was suggested that summer (when the roses in the memorial garden are at their best) and/or when a survivor is visiting and giving a talk (check website for dates) would make this a more interesting visit but in any case there is too much to take in on just one trip alone. We were expecting it to be self-led but volunteer guides, Helen and Jon, were generous with their time and knowledge and provided a guided tour which made it that much more meaningful and thought provoking. Whilst unable to join us on the day, many thanks to Chrissie Thomas for helping to organise this trip on our behalf.

Here are two pictures taken: one depicts the children's memorial - a pile of stones - to the 1.5 million individual young people who were murdered, and visitors are invited to select a stone from the trough and place it on the memorial. Why are stones placed on Jewish graves? This is not because of any religious rules, but is an ancient tradition with several possible explanations and it most likely continued for a combination of reasons. In areas where it is difficult to bury a body deep in the ground, one way to protect the remains from scavengers such as wolves is with a pile of heavy stones. Over time, stones need to be replaced as part of regularly maintaining the grave. The second picture, also thought-provoking, needs no explanation.



November's meeting will be held in Grantham Museum; this will take the form of an informal social get-together along with seeing what progress has taken place in the museum with the change of management and the recent refurbishments (thanks to SKDC's Future High Street Fund), along with seeing any new exhibitions (including the Compton Organ) and hearing about plans for the future.

Our next meeting will be in January, when we will host Paul Scott in Grantham Library who will talk about Sir Joseph Banks, the son of William Banks, a wealthy Lincolnshire country squire and member of the House of Commons, who made his name on the 1766 natural-history expedition to Newfoundland and Labrador and also took part in Capt Cook's first great voyage from 1768-1771 returning to immediate great fame. He held the position of president of the Royal Society for over 41 years and advised King George III on the Royal

Botanic Gardens, sending botanists around the world to collect plants and making Kew the world's leading botanical garden.

### **Ukulele Group**

**Christine Watkins**

Have you ever thought you might like to play the ukulele? The group meets every Thursday at Belton Avenue Community Centre from 2 to 3.30, for the pleasure of playing and singing together, and entertaining others, mostly at local residential and care homes.

- You do not need a ukulele, we can lend you one while you try us out
- You do not need to be able to read music
- You do not need to have had lessons, you can learn and strum along with us, one chord at a time
- You do not have to be a great singer, if you can sing in the shower you can sing along with us
- We have basic tuition information which can be passed on to help your playing progress, and if necessary some protected playing time with one of the group

We do not take ourselves too seriously and we are definitely amateurs but we would like invite you to come along and enjoy playing this wonderful little instrument in a friendly, supportive environment.

### **Guitar group**

**Graham Welham**

We had one gig this month - to help celebrate The Cree Centre's 50th Anniversary. Many Service users, relatives and care staff were there on the day. Cakes, party poppers, balloons, singing and dancing, made it a special day for all. Unfortunately I didn't take any photos on the Day, or the band playing, but there are photos available via the "Lincsonline" website. Many thanks to Louise Haynes and the team for making it a Great Celebration.

Gigs next Month: Thursday, 13th November, we have a gig booked at Brick Kiln Place. Past gigs there have always gone down well with the residents. It should be another great evening; I must remember to take photos this time!!!

With Christmas approaching we have our annual get together, booked at the Recruiting Sergeant, Great Gonerby. It's hard to believe another year is nearly over!

## Recipe of the Month

Courtesy of Carole Troops

### Upland Biscuits

A pre-decimalisation recipe originally in imperial measurements.

8oz (230g) salted butter  
5oz (145g) caster sugar  
1 large beaten egg  
10oz (283g) self-raising flour  
2oz (58g) custard powder  
Raspberry jam  
White glacè icing  
Glacè cherries  
Set oven at 350°F (180°C)



Cream butter and sugar together until soft. Stir in beaten egg, the flour and custard powder. Knead well.

Roll out the paste and cut into rounds ≈ 2 inches and place on greased baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes until pale brown. Cool on a wire rack.

When cold sandwich together with jam. Decorate with a little icing and top with half a glacè cherry.

**Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the December / January newsletter to [ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com) by Friday 5 December. Please note there will not be a January Newsletter.**