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February 2026

Chairman's Message

Well, February is here, and the late afternoons are lightening up as the days lengthen. Soon, all will be bursting into blooming Spring. Of course the daffodils are already emerging, as are crocuses, but the poor flora scarcely know which way is up any more with the seasons so muddled and unsynchronised.

No matter; within days it will be Valentine's and a surfeit of chocolate and velvet hearts will smother us all. And three days later it will be Pancake Day and more importantly, the day of our AGM, Tuesday 17 February at 2pm in the Ballroom of the Guildhall. Sadly, we haven't planned on serving pancakes to attendees, though as I write, it seems like a nice idea. But we will have some refreshments and the usual entertainment once the business is over. We would like everyone to come to this: not only is it an obligatory event in the life of a Charity like ours, but it is consequential for the way we run it, for the implementation of its policies and principles, and for the spending of its funds. That is why the selection and election of a committee annually is an important part of the responsibility of the membership, and it is exercised by members at an Annual General Meeting.

I was very happy to see such a large audience at our ever-popular Monthly Talks in January and was very touched to receive emails from various members expressing their appreciation for this particular talk: its clarity, interest, enthusiasm and outstanding photographs were all remarked upon. Many interesting questions were raised by the attentive audience and I am very happy that this speaker went down so well.

We will have our usual Coffee Morning in the week after our AGM, on Tuesday 24 February in St Wulfram's and that monthly informal event

is an ideal opportunity to get to know new people, and members that are in different interest groups to oneself.

I wish you all a lovely February, whatever the weather that fortune, luck and global meteorology bring us. Whether warm or chilly, we can hardly call it seasonal anymore. **John Foulkes-Jones, Chair**

Beacon Administrator / Membership Secretary

Just a final reminder that if you have not renewed your membership for 2026 your membership will now be set to lapsed as the three-month renewal period has finished.

This means that you will not be able to directly renew yourself online and will need to contact memsec.granthamu3a@gmail.com first if you wish to rejoin.

You are now not able to take part in group activities or meetings.

This is our last contribution to the Newsletter, as between us we have served several years on the committee and are now standing down. The email addresses stay the same but there will be a new incumbent for a joint role of membership secretary and Beacon Administrator (soon to be announced), and we look forward to a continuing flourishing u3a.

We will, of course, remain active members of the u3a and look forward to taking up other activities with you all.

See you all soon

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

Tuesday Talks

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.

Biog: Kevin was born in Cornwall and grew up on a small farm to the sound overhead of RR Griffon engines on the Shackletons from nearby RAF St Mawgan. He joined the RAF in 1967 and after training as a pilot was posted to No 44 Squadron on the Vulcan. Subsequent tours of duty with the Vulcan on the Operational Conversion Unit at RAF Scampton, 35 Squadron in Cyprus and 101 Squadron at RAF Waddington. In addition he carried out one tour of duty as Officer Commanding operations at RAFU Goose Bay in Labrador Canada.

Later Kevin became a QFI (Instructor) and commanded Liverpool University Air Squadron at RAF Woodvale. This was followed by a tour flying the Andover Mk3 on No 115 Squadron at RAF Benson before returning to QFI duties as a standards instructor on the Royal Air Force College Air Squadron at RAF Cranwell.

He is now retired but retains a love of travel and an interest in all things military, mainly history - especially flying; in this latter regard he has now taken on tour guide duties at the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at RAF Coningsby.

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*"

The talk will focus on Parkinsons Disease. David will focus both objective and subjective elements covering research into PD, including the place of alpha synuclein, stem cells and mitochondria.

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 'The Water Babies'.

18 August is our 25 Anniversary celebration

15 September Fran Sandham talks about “In the Forbidden Land: The strange Tibetan adventure of Henry Savage Landor, the real-life ‘Baron Munchausen’ of Victorian explorers”.

20 October Paul Isherwood gives us his talk ‘Child Gambler Wins Life Back’; this is a tale of how a 10 year old boy lured by the magnetic pull of a slot machine with his addiction spiralling out of control had a light bulb moment and sought help. Now well into his fifties he hasn't gambled ever since.

17 November Lucy Lewis will talk about her career as Britain’s first woman Bomb Disposal officer and beyond in 'Lighting The Fuse' .

15 December is our Christmas celebration.

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 24 February

Tuesday 24 March

Tuesday 28 April

Group News

Local History

Anne Rudderham

We got off to a great start in **January**, using Grantham Library as a new venue, with a good turn out along with several new members and our speaker, Paul Scott, gave a very interesting and knowledgeable talk on **Joseph Banks**. Born a Lincolnshire Lad of a wealthy country squire and member of the House of Commons, he was schooled at Harrow School and Eton College before attending Christ Church College, Oxford, eventually inheriting a considerable fortune from his father. Not only did he make his name from taking part in natural history expeditions all over the world - subsequently sending botanists abroad to collect plants to make Kew the world's leading botanical garden - he held the position of president of the Royal Society for over 41 years and became an adviser to and friend of King George III. Whilst

not a powerful man, he became a great influencer (not least by having the 'ear' of the monarch at the time) and his credits cover the introduction of canals (Grantham being one of them), coinage, weights and measures, zoology, tea, cotton, science, manufacturing, the arts and, on behalf of the king, introducing and developing the Merino sheep industry in Britain and its colonies, particularly Australia. There is definitely much more to the man than being a botanist that's for sure and we all learned a great deal from Paul's presentation. If anyone would like to hear this talk, Bottesford Local History Group has booked Paul for next year on Tuesday 11 May 2027, 7.30pm Bottesford VC Community Hall, Belvoir Road, £3pp.

February's meeting is a talk on Grantham Town interspersed with a multi-answer quiz organised by Carolyn Brocklebank who also awards a small prize at the end for whoever gets the most answers correct! On **Wednesday March 11** we're back at **Grantham Museum, 2pm** when we welcome the return of Colin Deeley from the National Trust to talk about **Southwell Workhouse & Infirmary**; this we will follow up with a visit in April. Anyone within the u3a who would like to join us would be more than welcome but please contact me to book your place as soon as possible; either leave a message on 07754 702919 or email annerudderham23@gmail.com. Thank you.

Lincolnshire Family History Society has announced that Grantham Workhouse minutes have now been released on FindMyPast. These fascinating records offer a window into 19th-century life, revealing decisions made by the Guardians of the Poor and the stories of individuals and families who passed through the workhouse system. If you have Grantham connections, this is a brilliant new resource to explore — you never know what you might discover.



Wildlife Group

Kerry Brazil

Our last meeting of the year was to Denton reservoir. There were not as many birds as expected on the reservoir, but we did see swans, cormorants, grebes, tufted ducks and mallards.

Our planning meeting was held in January where various options for visits were discussed and a provisional list of venues agreed. 3 new places, and the remainder where we have visited in previous years. Two new members were welcomed to the group.



Canasta Group

Josephine Hewitt

On the 22 January 2026, fifteen members were able to have a delicious lunch at the Miller and Carter on Barrowby Road. Group members were able to choose what they wanted to eat individually rather than have a set meal and I was able to send a spreadsheet of details a week before we had arranged to go. The staff made us very welcome and there were three of them attending to the group. We had arranged to be there for 12 noon, allowing us to then go on to Manners Street to have our usual game of Canasta. Afterwards everyone commented on what an enjoyable start to our New Year sessions.

NB: I just want to remind everyone in the group that we have reverted back to our original arrangement of meeting on the 1st and the 4th Thursday afternoon of each month.

Current Affairs

Jean Pritchard

January 2026 Meeting: With the resignation of one of our long-standing members we were able to offer a place with the Group to the first person on the waiting list.

Trump tells Cuba to 'make a deal' or face consequences with Venezuelan oil cut off. We couldn't ignore Donald Trump and after a month further on from our January meeting things have moved on from his threats to Cuba and Greenland. No doubt our February meeting we will have more to dissect from USA.

Mattel launches autistic doll to let 'more children see themselves in Barbie'.

"God save us from this dirge". Should we have a new national anthem?

Botched surgery abroad costs NHS £20k per patient, says report.

China embassy's secret threat to City.

The cost per year, per household for welfare support could reach £12,666 by 2031.

Scottish Dancers

John Aitken

January is always a busy time for Scottish Dancers! Robert Burns was born on 25 January in 1759 and his birthday is celebrated by Scots, and many others, around the world. Celebrations are an excuse to have haggis, which is best eaten with neeps and tatties after an address with tartan, bagpipes and whisky.

Most of the u3a Scottish Dancers also dance with other local groups, particularly in Waltham and Newark, and have been dancing





..... at Waltham SCDG Burns Celebration



..... at Gregory House CH



and at Royal Windsor CH

Then Waltham held its first Village mid-Winter Ceilidh. It was a joint initiative between the Village Hall, trying to encourage villagers to use the hall, and members of Waltham Scottish Country Dance Group who dance on Thursday evenings in the hall and are always on the lookout for more locals to join. Many of the Grantham u3a Scottish Dancers are also members of the Waltham class.



Live music from Iain and Russell on accordion and drums kept the dancers moving. Gay Gordons, Dashing White Sergeant and many other ceilidh dances were called and the Village Hall provided drinks and hotdogs during the interval. The lively music continued with more reels and jigs, and the fun evening finished with Auld Lang Syne.

Singing Group

John Down

The Singing Group is expanding rapidly – I think because word has got around about how much fun we have with our MD, Ken Dyer - and we now have nearly forty members. The last ten members to join have all been women, and now we need more men to restore the balance (in a choral sense, I mean).

We are particularly looking for basses, ie those with deeper singing voices. You do not need to be able to read music or to have previous experience of singing in a choir. You just need to know that you enjoy singing. Why not come along and give us a try? We sing songs of all sorts from classical to pop so there's bound to be something you like!

New ladies are still welcome, of course, especially if they bring a man with them.

Singing in a choir is widely recognised to be good for you. It involves deep breathing, memory skills and socialising – and it's fun, especially the way we do it. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 10.00am in the Shepherd Room, ChristChurch, Finkin Street, Grantham NG31 6QZ. Please let me know in advance if you intend to come and give us a try.

John Down 07468 696029 downjs01@gmail.com

Guitar Group

Graham Welham

Hopefully everyone had a great Christmas and New year. Best wishes to all!

We've had a few practice sessions back at the Christian Fellowship Hall, since the beginning of the New year. However, numbers at our sessions have been a bit low, but I think this is mainly due to this nasty winter virus that's making the rounds at the moment! Anyone who's had this virus has my sympathy; I didn't feel unwell but I've had a chesty cough for the past six weeks.

Gig wise we are all looking forward to playing at this year's u3a AGM. We have some new numbers to play and we have new guitarists and a variety of vocalists who will be singing on the day.

Gigs for this coming year.

A Wedding in April. We have been asked to play at a wedding in early April and are currently practising hard to help make this a great and memorable wedding day for the Bride, the Groom and family and friends.

We also have bookings later in the year at Gregory house in July and Brick Kiln Place in September.

There will also be another Community Festival at Belton House in early September. I'm currently filling out the application forms to get the group a slot to perform at this weekend-long Festival.

Welcome to Jeff Tooms, who has recently rejoined the guitar group.

We still have availability for anyone else who wants to join the guitar group.

Gardening Group

Caroline Bowman



Annual Community Talk

This year's annual community talk will be held at the Guildhall Arts Centre at 11am on 20 March 2026 and will be given by Andy Jenkins from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

Andy will speak on the topic "Gardening the Globe", which will look at the early influences on the design of war grave cemeteries, the importance of horticulture to them, and at the challenges now faced because of climate change and the different circumstances of their cemeteries around the world.

The CWGC works on behalf of the governments of Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom to

commemorate the 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth who lost their lives in the two World Wars.

All are welcome. Admission will be by voluntary donation, and all the proceeds from the talk will go towards the work of the CWGC.

Recipe of the Month

Courtesy of Carole Troops

Orange Crisps

100g softened butter
150g castor sugar
1 egg yolk
225g plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
grated rind and juice of half a small orange
1 egg white beaten
100g caster sugar for dredging

Makes approx 24

Set oven at 190C, 375F, gas mark 5 and grease two or three baking trays.

Beat the butter and the sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolk, flour, baking powder, orange rind and juice and knead until it's a smooth dough. Roll out on a lightly floured board to about ¼ inch thickness. Cut into rounds with a 2½ inch/6cm cutter and place on baking trays. Brush tops with the egg white and dredge with the castor sugar. Bake for 10mins until pale golden. Leave 5 mins before placing on cooling racks.

These can be made with lemon juice and zest instead of orange



Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the March newsletter to ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com by Friday 6 March.