



[www.u3asites.org.uk/grantham](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/grantham)  
Grantham U3A is a registered charity No: 1097587

March 2026

### Chairman's Message

Spring has arrived, according to the meteorological calendar, and the warmer temperatures along with some unaccustomed sunshine at the beginning of this month is evidence of this seasonal arrival. It is welcome indeed, after the wettest February ever. It is heartwarming and reassuring that the daffodils and crocuses don't follow the uncertainties and vicissitudes that seem to affect everything else in our daily lives, both locally and geopolitically. Whilst instability, conflict, scandal and war are on the table every morning, a carpet of crocuses reassures us that nature, and her beauty, are comfortingly reliable.

I am so sorry to have missed joining the membership at the AGM on 17 February. As we all know, at this age (and indeed at any age), illness and infirmity can overcome an individual, and the best laid plans ... etc. I was poorly, in short, and unable to Chair the Meeting. Happily, I am supported by a strong committee to whom I am very grateful; in particular to a very competent vice-chair, Linda Daniels, who was kind enough to stand in at short notice.

This first week saw our new committee members meeting together and settling into post. Amongst the issues we discussed I should mention the following:

- Plans are going ahead for our 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration day in August this year and Group Leaders should be reminded of their promises last October to contribute something from their Group. Joy Wilson, our new Groups Coordinator will say more on that topic later.
- The u3a 2026 Festival takes place in York, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> July. For details of the event and the activities on offer, and to book a

place, please visit the u3a website,

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>

- We have been asked by The Guildhall to be more aware of emergency and evacuation procedures for events taking place in the Theatre and the Ballroom. Consequently, at each meeting I will remind attendees of what to do if an alarm should sound (it's fairly obvious) and the fact that designated committee members are charged with ushering patrons to the correct exits and helping those who are less-abled. We have been asked that in the theatre, less-abled members and those with wheelchairs or walking aids, should sit on the front couple of rows rather than just anywhere, and definitely not in the balcony. We will also have committee members counting the audience accurately at the start of our Monthly Meetings on the third Tuesday, in order to comply with the Fire Service's requests, in case of an evacuation of the entire Guildhall.
- Carole Troops has kindly offered to take over from Janet Hine with responsibility for Care and Welfare. Quite apart from baking simply splendid biscuits, Carole is a Group Leader and a Committee member with responsibility for Publicity and the Website.
- Friday 20 March at 10:00 in the Guildhall Theatre sees the annual Gardening Group's Open Presentation, which this year will take the form of a talk from Andy Jenkins from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. This is an open meeting in the sense that it isn't necessary to be a member of the Gardening Group in order to attend.

Don't forget our usual Monthly Meeting in the Guildhall Theatre on Tuesday 17 at 2pm, and our usual Coffee Morning on Tuesday 24 at 10am in St Wulfram's. That informal event is an ideal opportunity to get to know new people and members that are in different interest groups to oneself. (And, of course, to help oneself to the home-made biscuits!)

And with that, I wish you a warm and sunny spring month of March! (like the blooms, hope springs eternal ...).

**John Foulkes-Jones, Chair**

**Committee Members Elected  
at the Annual General Meeting held on 17 February**

Eight people were elected to the Committee at the AGM. These are listed below, together with the roles each have been allocated by the Committee.

John Foulkes-Jones – Chair

Linda Daniel – Vice-Chair

Jenny Lewis – Secretary

Fiona Robbins – Treasurer

Paul Lai – Membership Secretary/Technology Guru

Carole Troops – Webmaster and Publicity

Maggie Ambrose – Meetings Co-ordinator

Karen Ambrose – Minutes Secretary

In addition, Joy Wilson was co-opted on to the Committee at its meeting on 3 March, and will take on the role of Groups Co-ordinator.

**Beacon Administrator / Membership Secretary**

Angela Rose and Andrew Weston have now relinquished the roles of Membership Secretary and Beacon Administrator respectively but we are pleased to let you all know that Paul Lai has stepped into the breach and we are confident that he will very ably take over our roles in a new merged approach. We are, of course, remaining within Grantham u3a and hope to take part in more activities in the future. We think Grantham is at the forefront of a modern membership approach and genuinely believe that most members appreciate the streamlined systems that are now in place.

The individual email addresses

of [memsec.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:memsec.granthamu3a@gmail.com) and [beacon.gu3a@gmail.com](mailto:beacon.gu3a@gmail.com)

remain in use. Please amend your contact records to say Paul Lai for each of them.

**Angela Rose and Andrew Weston**

## Pastoral Care

Please let Carole Troops know if you become aware of a member who is ill and would appreciate a message of support, or if someone has died. Her contact details are , **5 Somerby Grove, Grantham NG31 7HR** [care.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:care.granthamu3a@gmail.com)

## Tuesday Talks

**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 March**

**Tuesday 28 April**

**Tuesday 26 May**

## Group News

### Acoustic Guitar Group

Fiona Robbins

New members joining the u3a in recent months have swelled our numbers, along with guitar playing members who realised that we had a lot of fun! Now we are more competent - and confident - we have decided that we are ready to entertain in a small way. Currently we are building a portfolio of well-known, favourite songs from days gone by, particularly those which are likely to bring back good memories. We have taken our first booking, which is not until June, so we still have plenty of time to add some polish.

### Local History

Anne Rudderham

We enjoyed February's talk on Grantham Town by Carolyn Dewhirst; interspersing it with a quiz, with multi-choice answers, made it more interesting and well done to Chrissie who took away the prize for getting the most answers correct. We look forward to Carolyn's return in October when she'll deliver a similar-style talk on St Wulfram's and as we'll be meeting in Grantham House on that occasion it'll give members a chance to pop over to the church afterwards to have a look round if they wish whilst some of the information is still fresh in their minds.

We'll be going back to **Grantham Museum for March's meeting (Weds 11th) starting at 2pm** where we welcome the return of Colin Deeley who'll give a talk on the **Life and Times at Southwell Workhouse and Infirmary**, and we'll be following this up with a visit to both in April. Colin is a long-standing volunteer with the National Trust and has given us interesting and informative talks before. If any u3a members who aren't in the Local History Group but would also like to attend, please contact me beforehand to book a place ([annerudderham23@gmail.com](mailto:annerudderham23@gmail.com) or leave a message on 07754 702919).

## **Gardening Group**

**Caroline Bowman**

### **Annual Community Talk**

The Gardening Group will present their annual community talk in the Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham at 11 am, Friday 20 March 2026. entitled "Gardening the Globe".

Andy Jenkins from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission will speak on the history, planting and maintenance of Commonwealth war graves throughout the world.

All are welcome. Admission is by donation on the door to the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



## **Recorder Group**

**Cora Townson**

Our group is growing! We now have descant, treble and tenor players, so are able to tackle more interesting pieces.

We still have room for more members however - perhaps you played as a youngster and haven't tried since. If you have your own instrument and would like to make a little music with some very amenable folks, just give Cora a ring on 01400 250780.

## **Wildlife**

**Kerry Brazil**

In February 12 members of the group braved the cold wind and had a walk around Woodland Waters. The paths were not too wet or muddy, and it wasn't raining.

There were a lot of greylag geese, Canada geese, tufted ducks, mallards, moorhens and gulls. Some of the gorse bushes were in flower and there were plenty of snowdrops. There were also signs of the daffodils and bluebells which were still to come. There was a young tree in full flower, which was probably a cherry, maybe Prunus Okame.



**The Shuttlers: Thursday morning badminton group**  
**Written by Chris Anderson**

The Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships 2026  
or  
“Twelve Go Mad in Birmingham”

It's Wednesday 4 March and The Shuttlers are on tour. A dozen of us decided to see how the professionals do it and just in case you're wondering, nothing like us, despite our occasional flashes of brilliance.

The Utilita Arena, hosting the Yonex Championship has four badminton courts continually in action throughout the day for women's singles and doubles, men's singles and doubles as well as mixed doubles. The sport appears to be dominated by players from various countries in the Far East, though we did see the USA and other European countries represented. British pairings included Estelle Van Leeuwen and Callum Hemmings representing England and Alexander Dunn and Julie MacPherson representing Scotland. While the atmosphere changed up a notch when both pairs arrived on court, sadly neither pair progressed past the first and second rounds respectively. “Last shot speed 434 kilometers per hour” !! Goodness gracious - we're considering asking The Meres if we can have a speed sensor fitted on the badminton courts we use.

We watched matches all day where players used speed, skill, precision and stamina that we can only dream of, though to be fair some of them served into the net just like we do.

It was a well-organised away day - thank you Mr Chris. We even managed to all sit together. Coincidentally we found ourselves sitting directly behind the parents and grandparents of Korean An Se-young. She is world number 1 in the women's singles and Olympic gold medallist in the 2024 Olympics. Despite the language barrier we said hello and congratulated them on An Se-young's success. Her mum gave us all supporters badges! Needless to say we all cheered on the Koreans as a thank you.

What a grand day out. While we don't expect to be emulating what we witnessed on Wednesday, or leaping about like gazelles on court any time soon, we are hoping that we can make a return visit next year to recharge our badminton batteries!



## Current Affairs

Jean Pritchard

Isn't it said that a week is a long time in politics? Writing this on 6 March and with another month under our belt since our last meeting in February it seems that Mr. T. has put Cuba on a back burner and has turned his attention to Iran.

### **In February we turned our attention to:**

What has happened to the £5million that Lincolnshire Council earmarked for Grantham? A fresh vision is needed for our High Street.

Computer says No! AI bots claim that humans are control freaks; kill each other for nothing; poison the air and the water. Humans are a glitch in the universe. (According to The Metro February 3 2026.)

How can the Royals recover from Andrew - formerly Prince?

A Bradford NHS hospital trust has recruited a nurse whose role is to support families where parents are close relatives.

The self-reported data (on smartphone policies) showed that the equivalent of 3.1 full time staff members a week spent (102 hours per week) implementing policies.

Driverless car slams on brakes after mistaking bus advert for real people.

4 in 5 councils are facing bankruptcy as bill of special needs rockets (Daily Mail Feb 7 2026.)

The increasing size and weight of modern vehicles, and electric cars, are making greater impact on degradation of our road - i.e. potholes. Some SUV seats are too high for drivers to see children. Should there be a tax relative to the size, weight and height of these vehicles?

BBC programme featuring King Charles's Harmony documentary urging technology and businesses to work with nature.

Dirty Business - the doc-drama featuring the lack of responsibility by the water companies and the Department of the Environment - v - wanton pollution of rivers, streams and the sea.

## **Writing Outdoors**

**Barbara Shannon**

*To write, or not to write, an easy question ....for the u3a writing outdoors group* We began the year with a visit to a frost encrusted field, practising paying close attention, noticing marks the past has left behind and reflecting on the strange placement of New Year in the depths of Winter. In our February meeting we temporarily became the 'writing indoors group' due to inclement weather and took advantage of the situation to look at two forms - the Sonnet and the Fibonacci poem. This included a peek at award winning poet Christopher James' latest collection, ***The Ice Sonnets***, published by Dithering Chaps. At least one of us rose to the challenge of writing a pen portrait of an admired person in the form of a sonnet - well done Chris. This month the venue for our walk was Londonthorpe Woods where we witnessed the slow emergence of Spring; unfolding early blossoms alongside the remains of last year's crop of leaves, seeds, sloes and haws. Gorgeous, despite the damp cold penetrating our bones. Back at base at Grantham House we were warmed by the comfort of hot drinks and biscuits and thoughts of warmer climes.

**Write away from home** - Sun Seeking Sun seeking starts in the soft dark of early morning. Muted sounds as car doors quietly close on bulging suitcases. We creep along empty roads as the sun slowly brightens our hemisphere. Then - brutal, artificial lights glare and strip away any last shreds of sleep as we fight our way through duty free to our gate and plane. Eventually we can lie back and watch as the plane bursts through the cloud base and we float into the azure blue of an icy sky. *Sandra Gray*

**El Teide volcano - Tenerife, January 2026** Tenerife, an Atlantic island off the coast of West Africa. We're staying in a seaside town called Garachico. At sea level it's warm and sunny and our plan today is a cable car trip almost to the top of El Teide, the active volcano which, at 3,718 metres, dominates the island. Because of snow on the summit we've swapped shorts and tee shirts for winter clothes, as advised. To get to the mountain we're driving inland from the islands perimeter road, this involves negotiating kilometres of steep left and right hairpin bends as the road closely follows the contours of the islands volcanic geography. Our ears pop as our nerves fray. We travel through towns big and small, mostly black and brown, though here and there a splash of orange, pink and white from painted buildings and the dark green of banana plantations. We leave civilisation and the steep road is now crowded only with trees, Pine, and higher up, Juniper. Looking right low cloud is forming above the towns below and obscuring our view of the ocean. The trees become sparse now until eventually they are just a memory. Now we see only rocks, pockets of snow and Teide white broom blooming bravely. High altitude now and the landscape changes. Rocks dominate, clay ochre in colour with evidence of gas bubbles that long ago escaped from liquid rock. Some aptly describe this landscape as lunar-like. Wonder at this quiet, dramatic and foreign landscape overtakes us - we're at 2,356 metres above sea level with Teide summit now in full view, and we're ready to make a further ascent of 1000 metres. *Chris Anderson*

## Short Courses for the Autumn 26/Spring 27

Steve Potts

Over the past few years I've organised short courses on Philosophers, Understanding Psychology, Exploring AI and Personality Psychology. Now I'm looking for one or two topics that we can tackle from September this year.

One thought I've had is to do a short course on "National and International Economics". There is plenty of material available on YouTube but it would be useful if there was someone available with an existing knowledge of the subject. I'm happy to organise and run the course but some local expertise would be beneficial. Are there any members who could fulfil that role?

Two other suggestions (generated by Gemini AI) are: "The Psychology of Ethics & Morality" and "Sociology: What Makes Society Tick?". If you would have an interest in any of these topics or would like to suggest some alternatives please drop me an email at [spotts1662@gmail.com](mailto:spotts1662@gmail.com).

### A Message from SKDC

Are you aged 50 or over? We want to hear from you.

South Kesteven District Council has launched a new Age Friendly Communities survey to help shape future services and support across the district.

We're asking residents aged 50+ about housing, transport, access to services, social opportunities and how age friendly South Kesteven feels overall.

Your feedback will directly inform our Age Friendly Action Plan.



Take the survey here: <https://ow.ly/xqrx50YkcOm>



Paper copies will be available at Customer Access Points across the district.



Closes Friday 27 March 2026.

Please share with friends, family and neighbours who may wish to take part.

**Almond and Lemon Curd Buttons**



250g butter  
140g castor sugar + extra  
1 egg  
1tsp vanilla extract  
Zest of 2 lemons  
300g plain flour  
Lemon curd  
100 grams ground almonds  
A little milk to seal  
Flaked almonds

Beat butter, sugar, egg, vanilla extract and lemon zest together until smooth. Fold in flour and ground almonds. Form into 2 rounds, flatten them and wrap in cling film. Chill until firm, about 30 minutes. Set oven at 170<sup>0</sup>C, Gas 5. Roll out one piece of dough to the thickness of a £1 coin, cut into rounds with a 7cm cutter. Brush all over with milk and spoon 20p sized blobs of lemon curd on half of them. Lay the other rounds on top and gently press around the edges to seal them. Scatter with a little caster sugar and flaked almonds. Bake for 15 mins. Repeat with the remaining dough.

They can be frozen and cooked from frozen, adding 5 minutes to the cooking time.

**Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the April newsletter to [ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com) by Friday 10 April.**