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May 2026

Chairman's Message

May has begun a little grey and cool, though we cannot complain: the remains of April bloomed so gloriously and hosted some of the warmest spring sunshine that many of us felt we were actually in June already. The promise of warmth and cloudless skies tempts many of us to take trips and holidays. Harlaxton's bluebell woods is stunning just now! A grand day out visiting Lincolnshire's lovely Wolds is really rewarding; equally, a night or two away in a country hostelry in Derbyshire's Peak District or the Yorkshire Dales has a great deal to offer, especially accessibility although with costs and prices rising the way they are, perhaps a package tour to Benidorm beats it on budget. Mind you, with airlines vying to buy the last drop of aviation fuel, it may yet turn out that Mablethorpe beats Malaga.

Last month I wrote about the RUG group, and I am happy to tell you that its numbers have grown. It is heartwarming to realise that many u3a members are willing to extend a helping hand when a task needs doing. An example of how useful the Really Useful people are happened at the beginning of the month when a volunteer from RUG helped move some u3a bits and bobs from their storage place in the Museum. That was just splendidly helpful, and the committee was grateful.

Plans continue apace on making our 25th Birthday a grand day out, and I don't want the Planning Group's request to fall on deaf ears. So Group Leaders: - don't forget your promise to get artifacts, photos and

particularly video clips to John Down (downjs01@gmail.com) or Joy Wilson (joy2712@live.co.uk) by the deadline which is the end of May.

And while we're talking about remembering things, the Committee reviewed recently our Asset Register (a list of all the devices and equipment that Grantham u3a owns). Some items we know are stored in the homes and garages of members, and whilst there's nothing wrong with this, we'd like to be reminded of who's got what and where is it. If you have any device or piece of equipment in your attic, garage, or even in use, which belongs to the u3a, please let Jenny (the Committee Secretary scrtry.granthamu3a@gmail.com) know so that our Asset Register can be kept up to date.

Our Monthly Meeting will take place as usual on Tuesday 19th in the Guildhall Theatre at 2pm and of course our increasingly-popular coffee morning is celebrated in St Wulfram's the Tuesday after that at 10.00.

John Foulkes-Jones, Chair

Beacon Administrator / Membership Secretary

Welcoming the following new members to Grantham u3a:

Christopher Brightman, Kate Brightman, Geraldine Edington, Tony Smith, Jane Arndt, Jean Doubleday, Julie Clough, Phil Reavley.

Our membership has increased to 625. There are 12 members who have not given their email addresses to the u3a. These members are likely to miss out on the ongoing events because they are not in the general circulation. Although printed copies of the Newsletter can be picked up from the designated places like the Guildhall Arts Centre, these are in limited supply.

There are still 32 members who have not visited the [members portal](#) to set up their passwords. I would urge those members to complete the setup process as soon as it's convenient. If you require further assistance, please contact me on the telephone number below.

Group Leaders

Whilst our Group Leaders are doing a fantastic job in managing the interest group(s), please be aware of the following:

- Handling membership data - You may have to download group members' details in order to communicate with them. Please do not keep the data on your personal device(s) for longer than needed.

Grantham u3a Privacy Policy

u3a data protection policy

- Use of social media apps - Many groups have started using social media apps, especially Whatsapp, as means of informing group members. These are great tools because they are available on mobile phones. The messages are delivered instantly. Nearly all of them support multimedia messages, e.g. voice and pictures. Please seek group members' consent before adding their details to those apps.

Paul Lai

**Grantham Beacon Administrator and Membership Secretary
07780 662650**

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

Tuesday Talks

19 May Bertie Pearce will entertain us with his talk on 'Creating an Imaginary World'

Theatrical scene design is one of the world's most beautiful, varied and lively art forms. Bertie looks at the relationship between actor and audience and how this transformed the space and architecture of theatre throughout the ages. Beginning with the Greeks and their remarkable innovations to pageants, masques and liturgical drama, through the science of perspective to court theatre, then a quick glance at Commedia dell'arte before entering the Elizabethan stage of

the Globe and The Fortune, arriving at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. From great architects such as Inigo Jones and Frank Matcham to practitioners such as Granville Barker and Gordon Craig and designers Cecil Beaton and Oliver Messel, Bertie brings to life the magical world of theatre.

Bertie Pearce is a Member of The Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star. He has performed all over the world in weird and wonderful places including: The Magic Castle in Hollywood; The Kulm Hotel in St Moritz and The Bertie and Boo Cafe in Balham, London. His 'Soiree Fantastique' Show at The Magic Circle in 1999 was a sell out and in 2003 he put on "All Aboard – The Comedy of Cruising" at The Bridewell Theatre in London which sold out for 11 nights. In 2008 he performed with his sister Boo in 'A Spoonful of Magic' at The Polka Theatre in Wimbledon and this was followed by Bertie and Boo's "Wonders of The World" Show which played at the Brighton Festival Fringe.

He is widely sought after for close-up magic and cabarets for private parties and fundraisers. In 2003 he was awarded the Carlton Comedy Award by the Magic Circle and twice won the award for Originality from The International Brotherhood of Magicians which won't surprise anyone who has seen his act.

He inherited a fascination with conjuring from his maternal Grandfather Charles Derek Hill who was a classic amateur conjurer of his day, building illusions at the family firm, Higgs and Hill. Equipped with a BA(Hons) in drama from Manchester University, Bertie went on to the Ecole Internationale du Theatre Jaques Lecoq in Paris. After a summer season in Jersey and two pantomimes he served time on the Cruise Ships for four years. His eyes were opened to the wonders of world travel and some unbelievable passengers which provided the material for his show All Aboard. In 2009 Bertie became an accredited Nadfas Lecturer and has toured extensively sharing his passion for Magic, Punch and Judy, Victorian Pastimes and Charles Dickens. His love of people and performance ensures that there is always a new and exciting gig around the corner.

Aside from performing Bertie loves the calm of the Sussex countryside where he has lived all his life. He loves gardening, forestry, making things and is very involved in his local church All Saints Church Crowborough. He is married and has two children, six light Sussex chickens, two pigs and a border terrier called Buttons.

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'.

My talk begins with me leaving school . . . I talk about how my career began as a chef and hotel manager. My 17 years working the oil rigs in the North Sea. Followed by operating projects in Algeria & Nigeria. My time in Kazakhstan and Russia was particularly exciting. Not to mention the most dangerous place of all . . . Baghdad. My career culminated in Dubai where I ran an oil services company. The talk is full of interest, anecdotes, humour, and inspiration. I conclude with the writing of my latest novel (number 10). My website provides further information www.philipcaine.com.

Born in 1950, in Barrow-in-Furness Philip's working life began in the hotel business. He retired in 2015 and began writing and public speaking, since then he has spoken at over 700 venues across the UK and written 7 adventure thrillers and 2 detective thrillers.

Testimonial: Church Stretton U3A : "What a fantastic afternoon! We had a good turnout for Philip's talk and everyone was totally enthralled from start to finish. He has certainly crammed in a tremendously varied and exciting collection of experiences from Barrow to Baghdad and back. He is an enthusiastic and engaging speaker and I have never had so many of our members speak to me afterwards to say how much they had enjoyed the afternoon. I can assure you that "From Barrow to Baghdad and Back" is not to be missed, sign him up, you will not be disappointed.

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 26 May

Tuesday 23 June

Tuesday 28 July

Group News

Wildlife Group

Kerry Brazil

Our April walk saw us at the residential area of Greylees. This is the site of the former Rauceby hospital, which was a mental institution. During World War 2 it served as an RAF hospital specialising in pioneering plastic surgery for burns victims. Most of the buildings are now ruins. The New Chapel restaurant is a restored Victorian Chapel which was formerly part of Rauceby hospital.

Along the roadside was an abundance of flowering wild strawberries. The sycamore trees were in flower and other trees, such as horse chestnut, hawthorn and laburnum were just coming into flower. We also saw hazel catkins. There were many flowers and flowering shrubs such as mahonia and euphorbia. Also bluebells, herb robert, fumitory and wild arum, also known as cuckoo pint or Lords and ladies. Some plants were already growing in the fallen trees.

As this is a wooded area we heard a lot of birdsong, although we didn't see many. Amongst the birds we either saw or heard were rooks, great tit, blue tit, chiffchaff, green finch, and robin.

After the walk, refreshments were taken in The New Chapel.





Singing for Fun

Janet Hine

This friendly group continues to "do what it says on the tin"! We sing a wide range of popular songs, show tunes, folk, and vintage pop. And we have a talented and indefatigable accompanist.

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays from 10.30 to 12, with a break for refreshments and a chat .

We currently have a few spaces, so do please contact Janet on janethine67@gmail.com





Current Affairs

Jean Pritchard

Report of meeting held 8 April 2026

Animal cruelty in the production of food. Foie Gras and fur are due to be banned in a bid to secure a trade deal with EU.

Concern was expressed about the defence of UK as our Navy is ranked 6th in the world and the Army is in 9th position.

The Treasury is netting £100 million per month in higher petrol costs. Ed Miliband was urged to approve new gas field in the North Sea.

Should the King visit USA in the light of Mr. Trump's recent criticism of UK's armed forces role in Afghanistan?

Shop assistant at Waitrose was sacked for accosting a shoplifter.

Historically, fruit picking in UK was carried out by immigrants (and imported families from the East End of London).

Homelessness among people aged 55 and over has increased by over 50% in the last five years.

Theft of tools from trades people's vans is at 80%.

Menace of fly tipping.

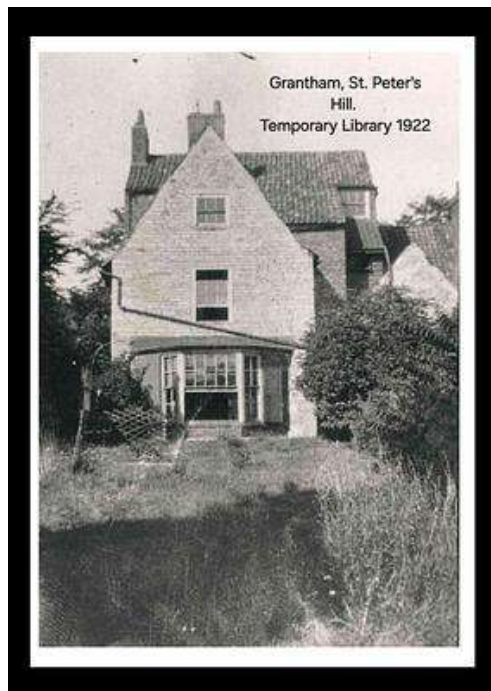
Local History

Anne Rudderham

I'll report on our group's visit to the Polish War Graves Cemetery next month but in the meantime, here are a few items which may be of interest.

Celebrate the rich local history of the second largest county in England at our second Lincolnshire Libraries Local History Festival. **Running throughout May**, the festival will travel across the county's vast rural landscapes, covering the Wolds and Coast, the Fens, the Kestevens and the Lincoln Cliff, seeing renowned East Midlands historians present their discoveries in your local Lincolnshire libraries. They'll be sharing the behind the scenes of what it's like to dive into the past and try to uncover hidden mysteries. For more information visit **Lincolnshire Local History Festival | What's On Lincolnshire**

One event taking place locally **The origins and history of Grantham Library**



A display of material from the library's local studies collection exploring the historical sites of Grantham Library buildings, including the Carnegie building which celebrates its 100 years in May 2026.

1st - 22nd May, [Grantham Library](#), opening hours are

Mon/Tues/Weds/Fri 9am-5pm; Thurs 9am-6pm; Sat 9am-4pm.

No booking required.

The **Compton organ** located in **Grantham Museum** and now returned to the town after 53 years is now almost restored and visitors can view it during open days each Thursday during May with sessions running from 11am to midday and 2-3pm. The installer, Carl Heslop, will also be available to talk about its restoration and future plans.

There are also **two talks**: on Friday 14 August at 2pm, Carl will present '**Bringing the Compton Home**' and on Friday, 21 August at 2pm film scholar Jon Towlson will give an illustrated talk '**Lights, Camera, Action**' which explores the rise and fall of the town's cinemas through research, photographs and personal memories. Tickets for both talks cost £5 for Friends of Grantham Museum; £8 general admission rising to £10 on the door (tea and coffee included). A joint ticket for both talks costs £8 for Friends and £12 general admission. For more information including booking details visit <https://granthammuseum.org.uk/events>.

The finishing touches are being made to a full-size sculpture of a **Lancaster bomber** ahead of its opening to the public. The steel structure, called **On Freedom's Wings**, has been installed next to the A46 in Norton Disney (LN6 9JN) and work is under way to complete the landscaping at the site. Each wing measures 14.4m and the sculpture is titled to give the impression that the Lancaster is in flight. The Bomber County Gateway Trust has announced that a weekend of events to celebrate its inauguration will take place starting on Friday, 15 May. More details will be announced on its Facebook page or visit www.bombergatewaytrust.co.uk.

New Group

Steve Potts

Have you ever wondered how and why various nations govern themselves in different ways? This 6 session course will study the concepts behind systems of government, and then look at the United Kingdom as a case study. The course will use A Level standard tutorials from an American teacher. There will be the possibility of follow on

courses looking at Nigeria, Iran, China, Russia and Mexico as further case studies.

The sessions will be from 2pm to 4pm on the fourth Thursday of the month at Manthorpe Church Community Hall starting in September.

The cost will depend on the numbers wishing to attend.

You can join the group through your u3a online account, or contact Steve Potts on spotts162@gmail.com

Recipe of the Month

Courtesy of Carole Troops

STEM GINGER SHORTBREAD

200g unsalted butter softened

100g castor sugar plus extra for sprinkling

260g plain flour

40g rice flour

½ teaspoon ground ginger

50g chopped stem ginger

Beat the butter and the sugar together until light and fluffy. Sift the 2 flours into the bowl, add the ginger and work all together until combined. Form the dough into a log shape about 20cm long. Wrap in cling film and chill for 30 mins or until firm.

Heat oven to 170C/375F and grease 2 baking trays. Slice log into 20 rounds and place slightly apart on the baking sheets. Bake for 20 mins until firm but not coloured.

Sprinkle with sugar and leave on the sheets to cool and firm up. Finish cooling on a wire rack.



Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the June newsletter to ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com by Friday 5 June.