



[www.u3asites.org.uk/grantham](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/grantham)  
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June 2026

### Chairman's Message

Summer has officially arrived, so we are told. It came for a week's holiday at the end of May – What a Scorcher! – and then packed its suitcase and got the train home. Something cooler and wetter has now taken its place, it seems. But as we've learned these last few years, nothing meteorological is predictable anymore.

No matter: it's *Summer* so don the sunglasses, pour the Pimm's, and wheel out the barbecue. Lots of us have lots of holidays, trips and days out planned over the coming couple of months, but don't forget that our u3a is active and busy all through the year and interest groups and monthly talks continue apace.

And talking of Monthly Talks, those members who failed to attend our last one on May 19<sup>th</sup> missed a real cracker! The audience were wide-eyed with wonder and clutching their sides with mirth at the entertainment from our guest speaker and magician, Bertie Pearce. Look him up! His long list of theatrical accolades gives barely a hint of the fun and diversion that entranced us when he took to the stage in the Guildhall Theatre. The frequently-overheard audience comment – *He can Come Again!* – as our delighted audience left the venue, summed up the satisfaction we have from organising our annual programme of Monthly Talks, and the disappointment we feel when we half-fill the auditorium. Barely 75 people came – less than 12% of our u3a membership – and that is the average nearly every month. Such a shame that these excellent presentations, carefully curated by the organisers on the Committee are often woefully attended, and are, of course, free to you all.

Talking of the Guildhall Arts centre, you may have noticed a colourful banner on the railings outside, promoting our u3a to Grantham's citizenry. As we've said before, growth *per se* is not one of our primary aims, but so many people seem unaware of the u3a's existence, nationally and locally, that it is worth proclaiming our presence from the rooftops or the railings, so that others in the community can have the fun that we have. And the companionship. Remember that 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2026 is Loneliness Awareness Week nationally.

Looking ahead a bit, in September, Belton House are again running a Community Festival, and Grantham u3a, along with many other local organisations, clubs and societies, will participate. Accordingly, on the weekend of 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> we need to borrow a gazebo from any member who might have one, to cover our table (our 'stall') in case of rain or, if we're lucky, blistering sunshine. Please contact me or any committee member if you have one to lend us, or indeed if you are willing to help man the stall for an hour or two during that weekend at Belton House.

Our next Monthly Talk will take place as usual on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> 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 10am.

I wish you all a blazing June and a great start to your summer.

**John Foulkes-Jones, Chair**

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

We welcome the following new members:

David Pulfree, Christina Knight, Denise Bennett, Dennis Hopkins, Alison Sutherland and Elias Haddad.

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

## Tuesday Talks

**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](http://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'.

This beautiful fairy story has charmed generations of children - and adults. But scarcely remembered now is the central part it played in the famous Darwinian evolution debate, nor the major boost it gave to the advancement of women's rights. It was also critical to the growth of the early environmental movement and the fight for clean water in cities. And it was decisive in ending the shameful Victorian era chapter of little boys being sent up chimneys as sweeps.

I am a former newspaper journalist and teacher, now retired. As a young man I spent many years in New Zealand, working as a reporter for the country's national daily newspaper. I specialised in politics, crime, Maori affairs and environmental issues.

Much of my teaching career was spent at Uppingham School, where I was Academic Assistant Head and I taught History. It was a huge pleasure – and an enormous privilege – to work, in the classroom, for so many years, with thousands of enthusiastic youngsters.

In my dotage I spend much of my time writing more and more historically-themed talks, which groups in all corners of the East Midlands listen to with patience and tolerance. These folk are really the successors to my pupils, because my talks reflect the way that I used to teach history - using jolly stories, lots of pictures, and plenty of colour, to seek to transmit a fascination for the past.

I sing with two choirs. One of these is the Belvoir Wassailers, a male voice group, which often performs in Grantham. I work as a guide at Rockingham Castle, and I enjoy both walking the great paths of Britain and also spending a day at Trent Bridge as often as I am able.

**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 23 June**

**Tuesday 28 July**

**Tuesday 25 August**

**Gardening Group**

**Caroline Bowman**

**Two Gardens with a Difference**



Over the course of time the Gardening Group has visited many gardens in the area (and some further afield), where we're nearly always impressed by the design and the plantings which are created by their owners.

In May we visited two gardens with a difference. Both are located in Long Bennington and both, as well as being well kept and colourful, are used by their owners in different ways.

The first garden is used as a photoshoot location for various companies who use it as a backdrop to illustrate their product ranges. The garden is divided into a number of different areas, so that there is a choice of backdrops for the various promotions.



Maintaining a garden that is used in this way is not without its challenges. As an example, one well-known houseware company wanted to shoot a Christmas promotion – but in the middle of May. This meant that artificial snow had to be sprayed everywhere, including on the roof of the summerhouse. Unfortunately, it rained that evening, with the result that the artificial snow set like concrete and had to be chiselled off the roof.

Not all promotions are quite as dramatic, but it was interesting to find out about another dimension in gardening that we don't normally hear of!

The garden is open for charity under the National Garden Scheme, but unfortunately it will have already opened by the time this newsletter comes out. If anyone wants to go next year there is more information on the NGS website:

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/47246/49-church-street>



The second garden belongs to the sculptor, Mark Hodson, who displays many of his works in a garden that slopes down to the River Witham and contains many unusual features and a wide variety of plants. He describes it as

“A sculpture garden, where the beauty of nature, is used as the backdrop for the harder edge of recycled metal”

Mark completed an apprenticeship with the Royal Navy, which included metal work, welding and copper smithing. Over the past ten years he has used these skills to create bespoke sculptures of flowers, animals, birds & mythical creatures. These are made out of scrap and redundant metal objects, such as old garden tools and car parts

If you would like to see Mark’s work, he is taking part in the Creative Lincs Art Trail from 26<sup>th</sup> – 28th June when over 100 artists will display their work in private studios and public galleries across Lincolnshire:

[www.creative-lincs.com](http://www.creative-lincs.com)

Mark is venue 33 on the trail.

## The Bus Pass Group

Janet Neal

The Bus Pass Group made it into the Newark Advertiser last month! The main purpose of our outing to Newark was to see the remarkable Knife Angel, a sculpture formed out of knives, machetes, etc, handed in during knife amnesties and formed into this incredible artwork as a powerful and poignant message. The sculpture is also known as the National Monument Against Violence and Aggression.

We were also fortunate enough to be given an impromptu tour of Newark Town Hall as we sheltered from a passing downpour.



## Wildlife Group

Kerry Brazil

For our May walk we went to Bingham Linear nature reserve. This is the site of a former railway line which ran from Bingham to Barnstone. It was mainly used for freight and was closed in 1962.

The first part of the walk is through a cutting and further on becomes an embankment. It runs from Nottingham Road in Bingham to the river Smite, a distance of 3.5 km.

There were many different trees and shrubs lining the track, including blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, ash, oak, sycamore, silver birch, cherry, apple, and a plum tree. There was much evidence of rabbits, from their droppings and burrows.

Amongst the many flowers were birds foot trefoil, chives, dog rose, ox-eye daisies, meadow cranesbill, foxglove, pink hawthorn, Welsh poppy, germander speedwell, forget-me-nots and cowslips. Also lots of bramble and bracken and harts-tongue fern.

We saw swallows and heard quite a few birds, including the chiffchaff. And, unlike on our previous visits here, it didn't rain.





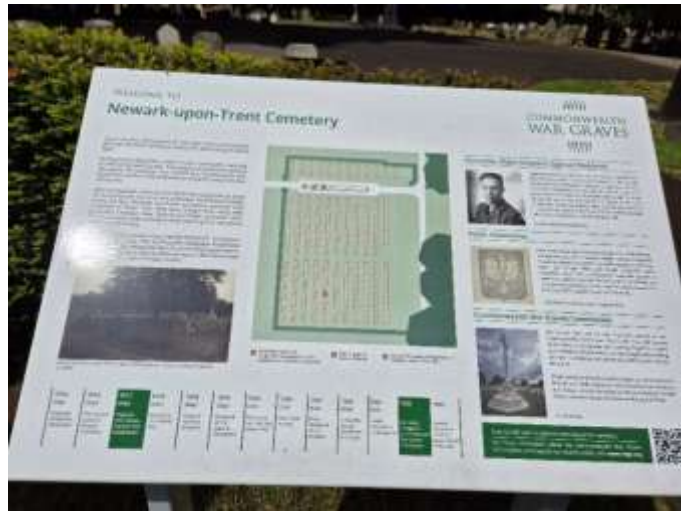
## **Local History**

**Anne Rudderham**

In May we visited the Polish and Commonwealth war graves cemetery in Newark and our guide for the day, Shaun Noble, gave an interesting talk and tour, and he was very knowledgeable about the stories behind the many individuals buried there including the large number of Polish and other airmen who had been based and flown from Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. Newark has had close links with Poland and the local Polish community both there and in Nottinghamshire for many years; several Poles came to England to help with the war effort and chose to stay on and make this country their home and the Polish war graves section in Newark is the largest Polish plot of any cemetery in the UK. The Cemetery is also important internationally as it contains the Commonwealth War Graves which is also the historical burial place of General Władysław Sikorski (Commander-in-Chief, Prime Minister and wartime leader of Poland) whose body was repatriated to Poland in 1993 but whose memorial remains. Three other remarkable figures in Poland's resistance movement (Władysław Raczkiewicz, August Zaleski and Stanisław Ostrowski) were also buried there and later returned to their homeland as part of an initiative to establish a mausoleum in Warsaw. They were among six Polish presidents who led exiled governments during and after World War Two and this included the post-war period when the country was occupied by the Soviet Union.

The Friends of Newark Cemetery had several information boards on display and kindly provided refreshments for which all donations towards their work were gratefully received. Despite getting cold and wet (with a few souls braving public transport - all part of the adventure!), it was a thought-provoking visit. There is much more to learn and a visit is highly recommended - the Friends are usually there each Thursday from 10am-2pm and would welcome visitors who wish to find out more about the cemetery's history or any individual's final resting place. Many thanks to Ed Bowman for helping to coordinate this trip.

In June, we visit Grantham House for a history talk/tour.





## Scottish Dancers

**John Aitken**

The Grantham u3a Scottish Dancing Group began in May 2016 and is still going strong!

We celebrated our 10th birthday on Tuesday 12 May when some ex-members were invited back to join us. As well as kilts and tartan, we had cake and our first proper dance from 10 years ago, Good Hearted Glasgow. Four from that first class are still members, and many of our existing members enjoy the dancing so much they now also dance with groups in Waltham or Newark. During these ten years, we have visited many different venues and events to demonstrate our dancing, have celebrated Burns and St Andrews Day and held garden dances during the summer. Members who also dance with Waltham or Newark have participated in an annual Dance Festival for groups across the Midlands.



The photograph shows the birthday group and then another was taken by a drone.



Anyone interested in joining the group should contact John Aitken, 07770 428103

## **Guitar group**

**Graham Welham**

Last month was another quiet month for going out to play at venues for the Guitar group. We had to cancel one of our practice sessions, mainly due to illness and holidays.

Next month we are out playing at TROC Care in Newark; we've played at this care home previously and our music usually goes down well with the residents and staff. It's a very small venue, so it will be just a six-piece band.

A warm welcome to Fiona Hornsby who has started coming along to our guitar practice session. I hope you feel welcomed by the guys and enjoy playing our style of electric guitar music!

## **Current Affairs Group Jean Pritchard**

With a reduced attendance of just five of our regular members you may be forgiven for thinking that we would struggle for things to discuss. Once again proving that small is beautiful we had opinions on the following topics. Kindly read on . . . .

- Is Labour fit for purpose? Local council voting results were 41% lower.
- Should the use of private jets be restricted during the current fuel shortage?
- Israeli West Bank settlers forced a Palestinian Arab family to exhume their late father as it was claimed that the burial site was too close to their settlement.
- A 'swear ban' brought in by two Surrey councils has been defended after some objections.
- Water infrastructure issues - will it cope with the pace of developments?
- British Steel to be nationalised?
- EDF won customer service award between EDF v Octopus.
- Will teenagers bother to vote in the next General Election?
- At HMRC a whistleblower claimed that it was commonplace for employees to clock in for a couple of hours and then disappear for the rest of the day.
- Middle class, Middle Aged - and secretly homeless.
- Older people are spending more time online.

**Northumbrian Honey and Apple Cookies**

**170g SR flour**

**¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda**

**85g butter**

**45g castor sugar**

**45g light muscovado sugar**

**½ tsp vanilla essence**

**3 tbsps honey**

**Half an apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped**

**Set oven at 180°C and line a baking sheet with parchment.**

**Mix flour and bicarbonate of soda together and rub in the butter.**

**Stir in the sugars and vanilla essence.**

**Warm the honey and pour into the dry ingredients, mix well to form a dough.**

**Mix in the apple.**

**Take walnut sized pieces of dough and roll into balls.**

**Space well apart on the baking sheet and bake for 8 – 12 minutes until spread and golden.**

**Leave to cool on the tray before transferring to a wire rack.**

**NB you need to use well flavoured honey.**



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