



Grantham

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September 2026

Chairman's Message

The seventh month of the Roman calendar (because the first two months of the year were too cold for the Romans and supposedly nothing happened in them) is the traditional marker for the transition of Summer to Autumn in the Northern hemisphere. It is bringing the harvest home, watching nature's colours change from green to gold and thinking about the onset of cooler weather. Yet, for most of us, there is a deeper ingrained significance to September: it feels like the start of a New Year. It comes, I suppose, from the academic calendar which itself was a product of the agricultural cycle. It conditioned all our young lives from infancy to young adulthood. September then saw, for many of us, the beginning of new jobs, careers and pathways. Which, more often than not, we kept for a lifetime. Despite our retirement, the 'seventh month' continues to condition us through our own children's and grandchildren's lives to the feeling that September heralds a new start. It is not surprising that the traditional US school graduation is called a commencement ceremony.

It is now three weeks since we held our Silver Anniversary Party at Priory Ruskin School and the feedback that the committee have received has been tremendously positive, and grateful for the efforts that went into its production. I received many emails from members, thanking the Planning Group for all they achieved in coordinating Groups and Group members to show off the things they get up to, their talents and skills, and most of all, the fun they have together. It was a tremendous effort by a considerable number of our membership to put on this celebration but I must single out a few for their very significant roles: **John Down**, for chairing and coordinating this entire

event, **Marilyn Edwards** and **Maureen Hill** for representing the founders and cutting the cake, **Chris Walsh** for the editing and production of all the videos, **Jenny Shaw** for audio and backstage management as well as early years research, **Joy Wilson** for coordinating all the Group Leaders' efforts, **Carole Troops** for coordinating all cake production and for the celebration cake itself, and members of the **RUG group** (our Really Useful group) who lived up to their name and really were useful! Grateful thanks also go to **Ben** and his Estate Staff for their extraordinary help at Priory Ruskin Academy.



Many members who were not able to attend have asked to see the videos that were shown at the event and we have uploaded them to YouTube for general viewing. Included is short a video summary of the party itself. Here are the links:

Timeline video: <https://youtu.be/--R5tKs9weM>

Groups video: <https://youtu.be/LUauln4Bwxg>

Party

Summary: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=6ROyGIngmA&si=hxk25NCnjm4nLwcQ>

The Belton Community Festival took place prior to the publication of this Newsletter. I hope members were able to attend and enjoy themselves and visit the u3a stall where we were promoting our Learn-Live-Laugh philosophy. And talking of promotion, the East Midlands regional Group of u3as are meeting specifically to talk about promoting our region's u3as and this event is free and open to all members. If you fancy going to Ropsley Hall on Tuesday 13th October, please let Linda know (vchair.granthamu3a@gmail.com).

At the last Committee Meeting, the decision was made to raise the basic annual subscription to Grantham u3a from the current £10 to £12.50, with effect from January 2027. This decision is in line with the Motion passed at our AGM in February this year, when we restricted any rise to less than £15 total, and in line with the Treasurer's Report on our diminished surplus after Covid. The current level of £10 has been held now for five years and in the present economic climate cannot be safely sustained any longer. Associate memberships will rise to £8.50, Joint Memberships to £25 and memberships with a paper magazine to £4 on top.

A quick reminder that the photography group have a few calendars still for sale. For those who missed seeing or buying them at the Anniversary Party, you will be impressed by the professional quality of the photos and the production. At only £5 they are well worth buying. The few that are left will be on sale at our next Coffee Morning at St Wulfram's on Tuesday 22 September.

And with that, I wish you a pleasant end-of-summer month, with gentle sunny days and plenty of welcome rain for the garden at night.

John Foulkes-Jones, Chair

Beacon Administrator / Membership Secretary

We welcome the following new members:

Barbara Jefferies, Juliet Harcourt, Elaine Ramsden, Nick Ambrose, Wendy Gilbert, Martine Bruce, Karen Andow, Mark Appleton, Alan Hudson, and Kerry Hunter

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 Tel 01476 566279

Tuesday Talks

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”.

In 1897, eccentric traveller Henry Savage Landor vowed to cross ‘The Roof of the World’, the forbidden Himalayan kingdom of Tibet, and reach its fabled capital Lhasa. Immaculately dressed, equipped with all the latest equipment, and well-supplied with delicacies from Fortnum & Mason, Landor entered Tibet illegally and very definitely uninvited. Several months later, a very different Landor was unceremoniously bundled out of Tibet. Emaciated, clad in filthy rags, he was clutching his sole remaining possession, a map he’d drawn in his own blood. Back in Europe, Landor became an instant celebrity, thrilling the public with his extraordinary (and often scarcely believable) tales of high adventure in Tibet. Yet despite his embellishments and huge propensity for outrageous lies, the basic facts Landor told of his Tibetan adventure were actually true.

Fran Sandham is a very experienced lecturer, a former Rough Guides editor, and the author of the critically acclaimed non-fiction book *Traversa: A solo walk across Africa* see www.traversa.co.uk), which was serialised in the Sunday Times.

She has spoken to many u3as and lectured at the Oxford Literary Festival at Oxford University, on the SAGA cruise ship MV Spirit of Adventure, at various schools, colleges and universities, literary festivals, lecture societies, probus clubs, W.Is and luncheon clubs across the UK. She has also been a guest on over thirty national and regional radio stations. In addition, she has written for various national newspapers in the UK and abroad, including the Observer, the Daily Telegraph, the Financial Times and NBC News.

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 lightbulb 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

Tuesday Talks are now booked for 2027 – as a starter.

19 January Neil Hanson talks about 'Inn & Out at the Top'

16 February is our AGM

16 March Brenda Ainsley

**Maggie Ambrose , Speaker Finder
Jenny Lewis, Assistant Speaker Finder**

Leaders with Longevity

Jenny Shaw

It was a great delight to celebrate our u3a's 25th birthday recently and in particular to see Marilyn Edwards and Maureen Hill cut the cake and propose the toast, wishing Grantham u3a well for another quarter century. Both ladies had been members of the steering committee that brought our u3a into existence in the Summer of 2001; sadly, the other members of that committee are no longer with us. As well as being founder members these ladies have served on subsequent committees and – as recorded in the first newsletter in December 2001 – were Group Leaders at the very beginning. Maureen started the Handmade Cards Group and Marilyn the Armchair Travel. The former was very successful for many years and the results of the Group's skill and imagination were often on display to the wider membership and beyond. Handmade Cards eventually discontinued but Armchair Travel under Marilyn's leadership has been a fixture for the last 25 years and only now is having a break. Both have been great ambassadors for u3a: for example, in a Summer 2002 edition of 'Yours' magazine Marilyn defended Grantham against the slander of it being a 'boring town' and in the process highlighted our u3a.



Marilyn Edwards



Maureen Hill

From perusal of the first and early newsletters, in which growth from the original 13 Groups could be clearly seen, there are names of the original Group Leaders: enterprising members who in almost all cases are long gone. Marilyn and Maureen are exceptions but there is also one other – another Marilyn! – who is listed in that first newsletter and to whom tribute should be given. Marilyn Smith started the Spanish Group at the very beginning and that Group is still going. This very successful Group ran under Marilyn's leadership for a long time and only relatively recently did she hand over the reins to our current Chairman.

Only four names on that first newsletter are still involved with u3a – the three ladies mentioned above and the then-time newsletter editor. All are still involved – very involved – in Grantham u3a today. No other current members feature in the first few newsletters with the exception of Audrey Vaughan who took over the very popular Theatre and Concert Group in 2002 and ran it energetically and efficiently for many years.



Marilyn Smith



Audrey Vaughan

It was a surprise when reviewing early Group Leaders and seeing who was still 'with us' that the next to appear after Audrey was myself! I took over the Discussion Group after the death of its original leader. Unlike Maureen, the Marilyn and Audrey this wasn't a long-term post but I did go on to lead or co-lead a number of other Groups. Over the following years many Group Leaders have come and gone, each contributing to Grantham u3a in a multitude of different ways and to whom we are all exceedingly grateful.

The beauty of u3a is that being a Group Leader doesn't need formal qualifications. The ladies listed above ran successful Groups for years and are still committed to the u3a philosophy and are actively engaged. We pay tribute to them and those who have followed in their footsteps, many sadly whose lives have ended, and look forward to new generations taking up the mantle. There are many reasons to be a Group Leader, including my own belief that the best way to learn is to teach. Never think you can't do it! I'm sure that 26 years ago these ladies never dreamt that they would be running successful u3a groups over a large proportion of their lives but they rose to the challenge and played a big part in making Grantham u3a what it is today. We salute them.

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 22 September

Tuesday 27 October

Tuesday 24 November

Group News

Wildlife Group

Kerry Brazil

Holwell Nature Reserve was our meeting place in August. The reserve was formed from 3 former quarries. The entrance to former mine tunnels provide ideal conditions for bats, 4 different species of bat has been recorded here. Many of the flowering plants were at the seeding stage, partly due to the hot weather this year. The rosebay willowherb seeds were blowing on the slight breeze. Viper's-bugloss was spotted and photographed by Jan.

There were many blue butterflies, probably the common blue butterfly. We also saw a few dragonflies.

In the wooded area, we heard a raven calling. It was close by but hidden from view. Another bird could be heard responding in the distance.

We only explored a small part of the reserve, and arrived back at our cars just as the rain was starting.





Discutons! French group

Peter Hutchinson

In our last online meeting before a break in September, we followed our usual pattern of :

- 1) **For translation and discussion in French**, an amusing text taken from a French news outlet. This time the text concerned a cat which got on stage during a theatre performance of Roméo and Juliette. The cat in question caused absolute havoc and remained until the final curtain!

- 2) **Language work**, often working with a YouTube video. This time we looked at 9 common everyday expressions that you would probably never have found in Whitmarsh!

They were :

- a) Prendre du recul
- b) Toucher au bois
- c) Avoir un poil dans la main
- d) Avoir les dents longues
- e) Poser un lapin
- f) Se prendre un râteau
- g) Mettre la main à la pâte
- h) Ça va sans dire
- i) Fais comme chez toi!

- 3) **Something cultural**. We looked at a well known Georges Brassens song “LesPassantes”, translated it and used a YouTube video to watch and listen as he sings it. Occasionally someone even sings along with the group leader!

My group is currently full, but I always email copies of our materials to group members well in advance of our meetings. Should any francophile out there want to be included in my mailing list, please get in touch via email! Find me on : hutchinsonpeter12@gmail.com

Current Affairs Group

Jean Pritchard

The Current Affairs Group has missed a couple of meetings so there is nothing to report.

However, as one of our long standing members has resigned due to conflicting commitments there will be a vacancy in the Group from October 2026.

Please contact me for further details. Jean.pritchard1@gmail.com.

Singing Group

John Down

The Singing Group will give a concert in St. Wulfram's Church on Saturday 19th September 2026 at 11.30am for 45 minutes. The concert is free and a retiring collection will be made for the St. Wulfram Music fund.

The programme will include familiar and less familiar items in a range of styles to include something for everyone. Please come and support us!

Gardening Group

Caroline Bowman

At the recent u3a 25th Anniversary Celebration the Gardening Group held a plant stall where plants were given away in return for a donation to St. Barnabas Hospice. We managed to raise £185.94, which covers approximately 20 hours of care at one of their hospices.

Many thanks to everyone for your generosity, and also to those who donated plants and helped on the stall.



August's Local History visit was to Doddington Hall and gardens which also showcased its annual sculpture exhibition showing the work of many carefully selected national sculptors, and for those with deep pockets an opportunity to make an investment! Despite another heatwave, members enjoyed a tour of the house, where the volunteers were very welcoming and knowledgeable, as well as the cafe and retail outlets. The Elizabethan-style hall was completed in 1600 and has never been sold or cleared out since and it is still a lived-in and much loved family home with over 400 years of unbroken family occupation. This has resulted in fascinating collections of furniture, weaponry, paintings, ceramics, textiles, household objects, porcelain and a wealth of amusing stories. Our visit also included a guided tour of the MC Tsen collection consisting of 900 military uniforms and about 3,000 accompanying accessories including hats, swords and boots, most of it being British Army Officers' ceremonial uniforms dating from 1881, the year of the Childers Reforms, to 1945, the end of the Second World War. There are also some Navy and RAF uniforms and court and civil ceremonial outfits. Again, the volunteers were very knowledgeable and we very much appreciated being offered iced water to help cool us down, along with their willingness to move chairs and fans around for our comfort. Many thanks to Maggie Powell for helping to coordinate this visit. For more information on all there is to see, visit www.doddingtonhall.com. I understand Christmas is a good time also!



September's visit is to Woolsthorpe Manor, birthplace of Sir Isaac Newton.

At the recent **25th anniversary event**, our display covered some of **what had been happening local history-wise over the past 25 years**:

2009 - *Grantham Gingerbread*, using its original recipe from 1740, being re-introduced and sold, although sadly this company has recently gone into voluntary liquidation.

2011 - The *Museum* being managed in its current form (ie by the Grantham Community Heritage Association). This year it celebrates its 100th birthday.

2015 - Phase One of the *Grantham Southern Relief Road* officially began. This project is still ongoing

2019 - The new build 5-screen multiplex *Savoy Cinema* officially opened to the public replacing *The Reel Cinema* which closed in 2018.

2022 - The erection of the *Margaret Thatcher statue* on St Peter's Hill

2024 - The *Grantham Journal*, founded in 1854 (previously known as *The Grantham Journal of Useful, Instructive and Entertaining Knowledge and Monthly Advertiser* - its title shortened in the late 19th century) and the town's oldest continuously published local newspaper, closed its offices in Westgate where it originated and went digital; it is now available by monthly subscription although printed copies can still be bought locally.

The display also included any **well-known locals who had passed away during that time**:

2013 - *Margaret Thatcher*, born in Grantham and the UK's first woman Prime Minister, died in London aged 87.

2014 - *Irene Hotchin*, Paralympian who won six medals in 1984 (Gold in shot-put, Silver in the 50m breaststroke and discus and Bronze in 50m freestyle) and who also won a Winston Churchill Fellowship to help her develop solutions for disabled people to be more accepted and involved in Girlguiding and Scouting, died aged 78.

2018 - *Malcolm G Knapp*, described as the town's 'premier historian' - a treasure-trove of information - and who over a lifetime wrote and built up a comprehensive library of Grantham books, articles and journals, died aged 86.

2020 - *Terry Shelbourne*, renowned artist and cartoonist who in 1980 started a segment in the *Grantham Journal* creating cartoons of local people for over 30 years, died aged 90.

2020 - *Nicholas Parsons*, broadcaster and actor (born in Castlegate in 1923) died aged 97. His father was a GP famously cited as having delivered Margaret Thatcher (nee Roberts) in Grantham in 1925.

2022 - *Eric Chappell*, English television comedy writer, playwright and scriptwriter - one of his notable works being '*Rising Damp*' which won the 1978 BAFTA for *Best Situation Comedy* - died in his home town of Grantham aged 88.

2024 – *Fred Leadbetter*, well-known local historian and author who published popular photographic history books about the area including '*Grantham Revisited*', '*Unseen Grantham*', and '*Around Grantham*', died aged 81.

2026 - *John Pinchbeck*, respected historian, author, journalist and co-founder of *Grantham Matters*, died aged 84. His many publications included '*Grantham at Work*', '*Secret Grantham*', '*Changing Face of Grantham*', '*Grantham in Focus*' and '*Grantham through Time*'.

Along with any who were **now achieving great things in their own particular field:**

2009 - *Antonio Berardi*, fashion designer, born in Grantham, won Harper's Bazaar (the American monthly fashion magazine which has been published in New York since 1867) 'Dress of the Year' - a striking black-and-white *trompe l'oeil* corset dress.

2020 - *Ross Edgley*, author, adventurer and fitness expert, born in Grantham and educated at The King's School, the first person to swim the 1,792 miles around mainland Great Britain, taking him 157 days to complete not stepping foot on dry land once or taking a single sick day throughout.

2022 - *Holly Humberstone*, musician-singer-songwriter, who was educated at Kesteven & Grantham Girls School and grew up in Grantham, won the Brit Award for Rising Star and has since released two studio albums.

2022 - *Sam Bickmore*, drummer, one of the youngest people in the UK to achieve a Grade 8 distinction in drumming at age 10 and a degree-level diploma at age 11, later touring internationally as Freddy in the Andrew Lloyd-Webber musical *School of Rock*.

2024 - *Freya Colbert*, English international swimmer born in Grantham and a former Kesteven & Grantham Girls School student, became 2024 World Championship gold medallist in the 400m individual medley. Freya also represented England at the 2024 Commonwealth Games (winning a bronze), competed at the 2024 Summer Olympics (finishing fourth) and won a silver medal in the mixed 4 x 100m freestyle relay at the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

2026 - *Amy Hunt*, English international sprinter, also a former Kesteven & Grantham Girls School student, won her first individual 100m gold medal at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham. Amy was then victorious in the 200m and the women's and mixed 4x100m relay - the first athlete to win four European golds at one championships.

We also posed the question of '*where can you find this in Grantham?*'

It is on the wall inside Kirks Vets, one of the businesses situated in the *Old Barracks on Sandon Road*. Built in 1858 for the War Office, it was used by several regiments before being decommissioned and taken out of military use in 1950. It was then used by local bands during the 60s and 70s and by Grantham College in the 80s before being converted into offices at the end of that decade.



Canasta

Josephine Hewitt

As Group Leader of the groups - I want to express my grateful thanks to members of both Groups for their support in ensuring we were successfully able to have a demonstration table in the Refectory Area at Priory Ruskin on the 18 August. The evening members brought the card table and the tablecloth, whilst the daytime group brought our playing cards. There were several members present to play and answer questions throughout the afternoon. It is such a relief that members have been such a support since my mobility has worsened over the past year and a half. Thank you all, again.

Guitar group, August 2026

Graham Welham

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Grantham u3a anniversary celebration, but it sounds like everyone attending had a great afternoon. I'm hoping that I'll soon have some free time, to watch recorded videos from the afternoon. On behalf of our guitar group many thanks goes out to all involved, in organising and running the event on the day.

Gig wise the guitar group has had a quiet month. We did have a couple of gigs lined up to play during August, but these were unfortunately cancelled due to various reasons, including last weekend when it rained!! What's that?

Belton House is putting on their third Community Festival, over the weekend of September 5 and 6. Last year the Acoustic group played at the event, but this year it's the turn of Electric guitar group. Let's hope the weather stays warm and dry, and this year's event is bigger and better than that of 2025.

We have some gigs pending over the coming months, in Autumn, and the run up to Christmas!

Finally, a warm welcome to Mark Appleton, who has joined Grantham u3a, and our Guitar group. Many thanks to Martin, and everyone who helped Mark, with music files etc, and all who welcomed him into the group. We still have places available within the group for other budding "Rock 'n' Rollers"!

Bus Pass Group

Janet Neal

For our September outing we ventured out to Lincoln to soak in the atmosphere of the 2026 Tour of Britain cycle race. We went prepared for wet weather but I'm pleased to say we didn't need our umbrellas. Here are a couple of photos of the race - one at Castle Square, one of the peloton streaming through the Newport arch and one of our Joy. Is that actually her on the poster? I can see a similarity!



Linzer Jammy Dodgers

100g blanched hazelnuts whizzed in food processor with 1 tbsp flour until finely ground

250g plain flour

225g unsalted butter

100g caster sugar

50g icing sugar

3 egg yolks

1 tsp vanilla extract

1/2tsp baking powder

4 – 5 tsps raspberry jam

icing sugar for dusting

Cream together the butter and the sugars until light and fluffy. Beat the egg yolks in one at a time.

Then add all the remaining ingredients except the jam. Mix to a dough and flatten to a disc shape, wrap in cling film and chill for 1 hr, until firm.

Roll out to about 2mm thick and stamp out biscuits using a 6 – 7 cm cutter. Arrange on lined baking sheets and use smaller cutters to remove the centres from half of them. Chill again for about 15 mins whilst you heat the oven to 150°C fan, Gas 3. Bake for 12 – 14mins until golden.

Once cold put a scant tsp of jam onto each of the solid biscuits and spread nearly to the edge. Dust the biscuits for the tops with icing sugar and press on to the jam covered ones.

NB You can replace the hazelnuts with ground almonds

You can freeze the egg whites for future meringues. (Thanks to ALEXA for this bit of information which works perfectly!)



Thank you to all contributors this edition. Please send your contributions for the September newsletter to ed.granthamu3a@gmail.com by Friday 9 October.