u3a Grantham

www.u3asites.org.uk/grantham

Grantham U3A is a registered charity No: 1097587

October 2026

Chairman's Message

Autumn has arrived. The colours are changing, and soon the daylight will be. But not, it seems, the amount of sunshine we are getting. As I write and look at the blue sky from the window, I wonder if summer is really over. It is unseasonably warm still. And still we have very little rain! Well, that is climate change, to be sure. And certainly, it will be colder and wetter by the time you get this!

And soon it will be Christmas. The Committee is planning a Christmas Party, as we do each year, and it will follow broadly the same format as last year, namely, it will take place in the Ballroom of the Guildhall at 2pm on the afternoon of Tuesday 15 December. Put it in your diaries now, as December soon fills up with social engagements, Christmas lunches, and the grandchildren visiting. As usual, we need to determine how many people are likely to come and so Paul, our Membership Secretary, will be sending out an email Poll in the 3rd week of October, and you must answer by the end of the last week of October. As on previous occasions, we have a capacity limit that we have to stick to so please make your responses as definitive as you can. As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, our annual subscription will rise in 2027, from the current £10 basic to £12.50 basic. (*pro rata* extra for paper magazine, *pro rata* reduction for associate membership, as in current year). Membership can be renewed from 1 November. It may be done online through Beacon or in person with the Membership Secretary at a coffee morning.

And talking of coffee mornings, the October one will include a Jigsaw Exchange. We've done a couple of these before and they've been very

successful. Simply bring jigsaws that you'd like to swap (good condition, no missing pieces) and take away a different one!

As the year slips away towards 2027, and our AGM in February looms, I become increasingly aware (for aware: read *nervous*) of the parlous state of our Committee Membership numbers, and of their continuity and succession. As I have said many times to the membership, we cannot exist as an entity within the framework of the Charity Commission rules unless we have as a minimum a functioning executive. And so once again I appeal to our considerable association of 650 members for volunteers who would be willing to serve on the committee. It may involve only one morning a month, and possibly less than that, as we are all volunteers with other commitments. Please do consider this.

I take the opportunity to repeat here the links to our Anniversary videos.

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

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

Party Summary: https://youtube.com/watch?v=_6ROyGlngmA&si=hxk25NCnjm4nLwcQ

And with that, I wish you a golden October, 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 this month:
Frederick Atkinson, Sarah Chamberlain, Lynn Godson, Ron Holgate, Malcolm Pritchard, Neil Southwell and Clare Turner

As you know our membership subscription runs from 1 January to 31 December each year. The majority of our members renew their membership online. This year, the central u3a has enhanced the payment system, which makes it a lot easier to pay for membership by debit / credit card. If you wish to renew your membership online, you must have set up a password to access the membership portal.

I have noticed that 45 members have not set up passwords for the membership portal. I'd urge those members to visit the following links as soon as convenient: u3a Members Portal

Please contact me by phone or email if you need further assistance.

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

20 October Paul Isherwood has had to withdraw from speaking this month. In his place we will welcome Simon Curtin who will talk about the Belvoir Ospreys. Simon will also bring some books for sale.

"If You Build It, He Will Come" is the inspirational personal story of a decade-long project, which resulted in the successful return of the osprey as a breeding bird back to the Vale of Belvoir after over 200 years extinction. Three years later this success led directly to the amazing breeding return of ospreys to Norfolk after a 250 year absence. The uplifting and emotional talk is given by experienced local amateur naturalist and photographer Simon Curtin, who has talked at numerous events, including other regional u3as about the project.

17 November Lucy Lewis will talk about her career as Britain's first woman Bomb Disposal officer and beyond in *Lighting The Fuse*.
Lucy Lewis joined the Army on the spur of the moment and after training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst was chosen in 1989 to become the first woman to operate as a Bomb Disposal Officer with the Royal Engineers. She subsequently served with the Royal Military

Police in Germany and Northern Ireland, retiring in the rank of Major to start a family. In 2018, Lucy made history for a second time by becoming the first woman to be appointed University Marshal at the University of Cambridge and now leads one of the oldest Constabularies in the world.



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 The Climate Crisis – and Some Solutions

20 April Dr Simon Durrant and Professor Caroline Horton will revisit their 2024 talk on 'Sleep is Essential for Health'

18 May Sarah Vokes 'Hearing Health, including age-related hearing loss, the link with dementia and practical advice'

Maggie Ambrose , Speaker Finder
Jenny Lewis, Assistant Speaker Finder

CORRRECTION

The September Newsletter said that the speaker for that month, Fran Sandham, was a woman. This was incorrect. Fran is a man. Apologies to Fran and to all. Jenny Lewis, Assistant Speaker Finder

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 27 October – Jigsaw exchange
Tuesday 24 November
December – No Coffee Morning

Group News

Local History **Anne Rudderham**

For more than 300 years people have visited Woolsthorpe Manor, drawn by Sir Isaac Newton's story, to find their own inspiration in this place of genius and September's visit saw members enjoying one of two tours led again by knowledgeable National Trust guides. The 17th century manor house tells the story of Newton's time at Woolsthorpe from his birth and childhood to the discoveries of his Year of Wonders and you can stand in the room where he used a prism to split sunlight into the colours of the rainbow exploring the nature of light. From the window you can see the apple tree which inspired his theory of gravity and indeed look at it up close in the nearby orchard. We were also able to help ourselves to any fallen fruit to take home. In the hands-on Science Centre, we were able to discover Newton's science for ourselves and some members walked to the village church (not National Trust) where he was baptised. The tea-room offered delicious refreshments too. It's such a peaceful setting that you cannot fail to see why Newton loved the place so much.
Further details from
https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/nottinghamshire-lincolnshire/woolsthorpe-manor. My grateful thanks to Caroline Bowman who helped to organise this visit.





Our last meeting of the year before we hold our planning meeting in November, will be another talk/quiz by Carolyn Dewhirst, this time the subject will be St Wulfram's Church (again with a small prize!) and will be held in Grantham House so that members can visit the church afterwards if they want to see firsthand what they've just learned.

Book Group Vacancies **Steve Potts**

The More Crime Detection Book Group has space for another couple of members. We meet at 2pm on the second Thursday of the month at a variety of town centre venues. Wherever the coffee is good and the noise not too loud! Our meetings last for about an hour.
Contact Steve Potts (spotts1662@gmail.com) or the Groups' Coordinator.

Wildlife Group **Kerry Brazil**

Our September meeting was a visit to Frampton marsh, a RSPB reserve. We welcomed 2 new members to the group. Most of us had lunch in the cafe first, so we were able to start the walk earlier, and return to the cafe before it closed.
Many birds, such as spoonbills, had already migrated, but we did see swans with 7 cygnets, mallard, widgeon, shelduck, greylag, coots, and a solitary egret.
The 2 buoys we passed had been repainted this year, and looked very attractive.
There were many dragonflies and a few butterflies. Janet managed to photograph a painted lady collecting nectar.
We also saw several Robin's pincushion, which are actually the nest of a gall wasp. Boston stump (St. Botolph's) was visible in the distance.













Current Affairs **Jean Pritchard**

Unhappily we received resignations from two of our long standing members, due to conflicting personal commitments. We will miss their creative contributions to our discussions. This created opportunities to invite new Members. Following a notice in August's Newsletter and canvassing by our Groups' coordinator, we are planning to welcome two new members at our meeting on 14 October.

At our meeting held on 9 September 2026 we covered subjects from the current heat wave to software that can detect heart disease.

Hot weather: Should our schools follow the lead of hotter countries by starting earlier and finishing at lunch time? This would avoid long lunch breaks but would require a cultural shift from current practices.

Mental Health: People feeling lonely should be encouraged to take the first move and not to wait for someone else to do it. The hardest step to take is to open the front door and step out into the unknown. It takes self-confidence which is not that easy for older women who have spent their lives looking after the family at home.

Trump's secret prison: USA has a secret prison in the former Swaziland (now called Eswatini). It is a detention camp for deportees, not terrorists. A Cuban national (59) was deported from USA where he had lived from age 12. This led our discussion about illegal immigrants.

Triple Lock: UK's ageing population is already struggling to afford to keep warm in the winter. UK can't afford to keep paying for it. UK should end the benefit culture. 47% of the population are dependent on benefits.

Careers Service: Is there one? Are young school leavers expecting too much too soon? More students than ever are expecting to go to University. With 9% interest on student loans how can this be afforded by average families? Could employers be incentivised to employ youngsters? (This used to be called apprenticeships!)

Israel conflict: Israel's far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir has posted a video of the construction of a gallows complex where Palestinians convicted of terror offences, but not Jewish extremists accused of similar crimes, will be hanged.

Heart Disease software: Imperial College has developed a new tool which scans electrocardiograms (ECGs) to record abnormal heart rhythms.

Cuban Dancing **John Derbyshire**

We are just about to complete the third 10 week course of the Cuban style dance classes. We've had great fun at the classes but could still do with a few more male members, although any gender is always welcomed.

We are having a dance party on 24 October at Ropsley Village Hall. 7 30pm to 10.30pm, to say thank you to the group for their continued participation over the 30 weeks and have invited some extra dancing friends to make up numbers on the night. We have also combined the evening with some members of the u3a Fun Jive group, so will be playing varied music to suit all tastes.

It might be a good time to let members from other groups know about the party in case they wanted to pop along. You never know, they might enjoy the sounds and feel easier about having a go or maybe joining the group.



Scottish Country Dancing **John Aitken**

The Grantham u3a Scottish Country Dancers were invited to the monthly meeting of Gonerby WI on 14 September. After demonstrating some dancing, we invited WI members to try some easy dances. It was a great success with many members enjoying several dances ending with Gay Gordons. The dancers finished their dancing with *Mairi's Wedding* encouraging WI members to clap or tap their toes to the well-known music.





Photos taken at Gonerby WI

A few days later we visited the Royal Windsor Care home to entertain the residents.



The u3a dancers



Scottish Country Dance teachers depend on an international on-line database my.strathspey which lists instructions in written and diagramatic form for about 15000 dances. When choosing to use the dance *Perth Meets Perth* at a class with lots of new dancers at Waltham, I discovered there was no video, so we made a video at the regular u3a weekly class on 29 September. This has now been published and available to dancers across the world; you can view it at https://my.strathspey.org/dd/dance/14636/ or on YouTube at https://youtu.be/fUbziiw7c3I

Strollers Group **Jean Pritchard**

The first walk of the newly formed Strollers Group took place in glorious sunshine on Thursday 8 October. Of the 27 Members who expressed an interest in joining the group 15 of us stepped out on a figure of eight circuit starting and ending at Wyndham Park cafe for a welcome cuppa. As a trial walk most people managed the total of 2.5 miles with the less able, and those with other engagements, doing as much as they could.

The appreciation expressed, for this our first walk, was gratifying. The sunshine helped! The next one, scheduled for Thursday 12 November, will also be central Grantham based, with more walks planned for
slightly further out which will need some car sharing.

Please come and join us. Jean.pritchard1@gmail.

Live Music for Grantham

If you have an interest in hearing live music, Grantham Music Club provides a winter season of six professional concerts on Wednesday evenings at ChristChuch, Finkin Street. This year's programme includes: the Larisa Piano Trio, Oliver Pashley (clarinet) with George Fu (piano), the Sinfonia Choral, Jonny Kerry (jazz group), Olga Stezhko (piano), and the Foss Dyke Brass Band. Tickets for individual concerts cost £15 for adults (free for children and students) or £55 for all six concerts. Tickets can be purchased on the door or in advance via the Guildhall Website.

And if you want to hear the very best of symphony orchestras, The Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham provides a free coach service to half a dozen of its concerts each season. You just purchase the concert tickets at normal prices and the transport is included. Orchestras performing this season include: the Sinfonia of London, the London Philharmonic, the Halle and the BBC Philharmonic. Booking is by phone only (0115 989 5555. Ask about the "Sleaford and Grantham Concert Coach". Tickets cost from just £22.50.

Happy listening! Steve Potts

Recipe of the Month

Courtesy of Carole Troops

Citrus Bars



Base

250g plain flour
85g icing sugar
175g butter cut into small pieces

Topping

4 large eggs
400g castor sugar
2 lemons and 1 large orange zested and juiced
50g plain flour

Line the base and sides of a shallow tin about 23 x 33cm and set oven at 160^0C fan / gas 4

Whizz the flour, butter and sugar to fine crumbs in a food processor, tip into tin and smooth level, pressing down lightly. Bake for 20 – 25mins until pale golden.

To make the topping, whisk the eggs and sugar for 1 min using electric whisk. Add the zest and 120ml of juice and whisk well to mix. Pour on to the shortbread and bake for 15 – 20mins until topping has just set. Cool completely in tin (I leave overnight in the fridge till well chilled) then lift out using the lining paper and cut 3 down the length and 6 across to make18 bars. Dust thickly with icing sugar.

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