



WSPu3a Newsletter

July/August
2025



Coronation Hall

Photo by the Editor

The Committee's Briefs

Contact the Committee

You can use this link to send a message to any of our Committee:

[Woodhall Spa u3a Committee and Contacts Web Page](#)

Co-Chair's Corner

From Ced

Hi to all readers of our excellent Newsletter; my turn this month.

I count myself as your average 78 year old, (don't spread that around or I will deny it), so when I read Barbara's email asking if any of our members would be daft enough to put their names down for the 2026 London Marathon, I had to go and sit in a darkened room until the urge to be sick passed. Was I the only one?

Our Co Chair Rosemary has had a much safer idea in setting up another Walking Cricket

Match between Horncastle u3a and ourselves. The date has been set for the 27th August starting at 10am with an expected finish time of 11:30-ish. We will be asking for volunteers who would like to make their contribution in showing Horncastle a thing or two about how to win at cricket.

Hope to see you on 7th August at the next monthly meeting. Same time, same place.

[Ced Shurben - Co-chairperson](#)

Groups News

Firstly, thanks must go to all **Group Leaders** for their determination and enthusiasm. There wouldn't be anything to write about without them!

At this time of year, numbers of members going to their chosen group meetings tends to drop due to holidays, family commitments, etc. Some groups actually take a summer break. This just shows how active and busy our members are!

Most of the 40 groups are full and several have growing waiting lists. One group looking for

more members is **Mahjong 2** as they need at least 4 in order to play a game.

Also, at the last monthly meeting, a member of the **Cribbage** group left a message asking for new members.

Interested in either (or both)? A form or email could lead to many enjoyable, challenging games.

*Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so much.*

Joan Willard – Groups Coordinator

Groups List

You can use this link to find a current list of the groups we support, and how to join up:
[Woodhall Spa u3a Groups and Activities Web Page](#)

Holiday News from Our Treasurer

If you are planning a holiday then please think about Riviera Travel. Everyone I know who has travelled with them has been pleased and enjoyed their trips.



Our u3a can get up to 10% of your holiday cost reimbursed, which can work out to be a reasonable amount. Below is the statement issued by u3a National:

"The Trust has an arrangement with Riviera Travel to make a donation to u3as when bookings are made through this travel agent. The commission covers holidays, tours, cruises and packages sold through Riviera Travel. Members should call 01283 248 304 or visit rivieratravel.co.uk to find out more about holidays and offers available. It is important to mention u3a at the time of booking and to provide the name of the u3a you wish to nominate to receive the donation. This applies to both individuals and those making a booking on behalf of a group of travelers. A commission of 10% is paid the month following departure, initially to the Third Age Trust, and then forwarded to the nominated u3a (less an administrative fee). It can take a couple of months for the donation to be processed and then transferred to the nominated u3a."

Wendy Cotton – Treasurer

Find Out More:

[u3a Riviera Travel Page](#)

Coming Soon

Woodhall Spa v Horncastle u3a Walking Cricket Match

Following on from last year's Walking Cricket match at Horncastle we have arranged for a rematch to take place in Woodhall Spa. This will be on Wednesday 27th August, 10am - 11:30am at Woodhall Spa Cricket Club in Jubilee Park. I already have a few people expressing their interest in taking part but we do need a few more names so if you'd like to join in please email me at chairman@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk or let me know at the next monthly meeting. No previous experience necessary, just enthusiasm!



If you don't want to be part of the team and would prefer to come and watch us that is fine, we would love to see you there cheering us on as we attempt to retain the trophy. We will have access to the pavilion toilets and the kitchen area so put this in your diary - it was great fun last year.

Rosemary Brown - Co-Chair

Upcoming Events list

You can use this link to find more details on all the events in our diary:
[Woodhall Spa u3a Events Web Page](#)

Monthly Meetings

Aug 7th
 2:30pm to 4pm
 Coronation Hall

Witches and Wise Women
Presented by Maureen James

Sept 4th
 2:30pm to 4pm
 Coronation Hall

L on Wheels
Presented by Steven Brown

Group Noticeboard

Your Group Name Here


Add a message about your Group here.

[Editor](#)

Online u3a

Find out more:

You can use these links to search for ways of furthering your interest in specific subjects, or even take part in some competitions:

<p>Our own WSPu3a website</p>	<p>Woodhall Spa u3a website</p>
<p>u3a – Online Learning Events</p>	<p>u3a Online Learning</p>
<p>u3a Radio Podcast <i>Three choice episodes from the last five years –Bus Pass Group, Hadrian's Wall, Pirate Radio</i></p>	<p>u3a Radio July</p> 
<p>Interest Groups Online <i>As part of the u3a movement, members generously volunteer their time and share their knowledge, skills and experience with the members in their groups.</i></p>	<p>Click here</p>

Around the Groups in 30 days

Croquet



Both the Ladies and Gentlemen with smiles on their faces would indicate the relaxed mood and enjoyment they are having in playing the game of Golf Croquet. Our group meet on Tuesday mornings and gather by the pavilion about 10 o'clock. The Group Leader organises the order of play, a mixture both ladies and gents playing together. After the first match of about 45 minutes the players swap partners and move onto another lawn. During the play the coach (Group Leader) walks round and gives players advice on how they should play their shot or maybe change the way they are holding their mallet along with anything else that would improve their understanding of how croquet should be played. There are two coaches in the group, both of which are on hand to give one-to-one or group coaching as required. All of which takes place in the relaxed surroundings of Jubilee Park,s rose gardens, what more could you ask for?

[Bob Potter – Group Leader/Coach](#)

5 Mile Walking

Alford



On a very hot sunny day, 15 of the 5 mile walking group set off from Alford for a walk across the beautiful countryside around Alford. We passed Tothby Manor, admiring the two beautiful shire horses and foal.....



.....before heading across open countryside.

Needless to say, we had plenty of stops to top up with water as it was very warm.



Next pause was by Mandy's Garden Centre which was conveniently by the side of the track we were to walk on next. The garden centre is compact but the plants looked very healthy, worth a visit if you are in the area. We skirted Ailby wood and, after a gentle uphill climb, we turned to see the most glorious views across towards the coast.

The next stop was Rigsby Church of St James, originally built in the 1200's, where we had a well-earned break. Most of the group checked out the interior of the church.

After heading down the hill, through one of the many *kissing gates* we encountered on the walk, the final part was along hedgerows and field edges to pick up the main road for a short walk back into Alford.

Interesting to note that the waymarked signs were sadly missing on the majority of the walk, apart from the last section.

Finally, the most of us enjoyed refreshments in The Manor House cafe.

A good time was had by all!

Ann Fletcher and Judy Binks – Walk Leaders



Sunday Lunch

Abbey Lodge

We had a very nice Sunday lunch at Abbey Lodge and it was well attended with 11 people.

Plenty of chatting even when it was thundering, lightning and heavy rain. It went quiet when we were eating!!!

We have a waiting list but if we get a cancellation we can normally fill it with a member off the waiting list so if you would like to join please put your name down. If we get sufficient extra members another Sunday Lunch Group could start.

At present we have only one gentleman, so it would be ideal if some couples or gentlemen could join.



Sue Blackburn – Group Leader

Line Dancing



Great fun was had today by a small group of dedicated Line Dancers.

We practised a full repertoire of dances including: *The House of Bamboo*; *Cowboy Cha Cha*; *Waltz Across Texas*; and *Wagon Wheel*. We are ready to mentor any new members who would like to give our group a try.

Lorna Hannah – Group Leader

Birdwatching and Wildlife

Chapel Six Marshes

Once again the participating number of members was reduced, by other commitments and illness, this time to four. However, once again we had a most pleasant visit on a fine but windy morning with plenty of interest despite the fact that birds tend to be quiet and more difficult to see in the middle of the breeding season. Some showed well and gave particularly good views, especially goldfinch, long-tailed tit, linnet and reed bunting, while reed warbler and Cetti's warbler were typically vocal in the reedbeds and whitethroat in the bushes. The one surprise, unfortunately heard by only a single member, was the call of a quail (which I think is best rendered as 'trip-triptrip') uttered softly from dense vegetation beside the path.

Our attention is always roused by other forms of wildlife, not exclusively by birds, and we were impressed by the exceptional number of butterflies for this year. We identified seven different species in the two hours we were there. The diverse flora of the marsh also presented some identification challenges despite the apps available.

By mid-day there was general agreement that the cafe at Anderby Creek should benefit from our patronage, so we made it our next port of call. Whilst there we added a few more species to the list, including dunnock, heard through the open window of the smallest room. We birders never stop listening!

Below is the bird species tally, in alphabetical order:

<i>Blackbird</i>	<i>Black-headed gull</i>	<i>Blue tit</i>	<i>Carrion crow</i>
<i>Cetti's warbler</i>	<i>Chiffchaff</i>	<i>Dunnock</i>	<i>Goldfinch</i>
<i>Great tit</i>	<i>Herring gull</i>	<i>House martin</i>	<i>Jackdaw</i>
<i>Lesser black-backed gull</i>	<i>Linnet</i>	<i>Long-tailed tit</i>	<i>Magpie</i>
<i>Moorhen</i>	<i>Quail</i>	<i>Reed bunting</i>	<i>Reed warbler</i>
<i>Swallow</i>	<i>Swift</i>	<i>Whitethroat</i>	<i>Woodpigeon</i>
<i>Wren</i>			

John Watt

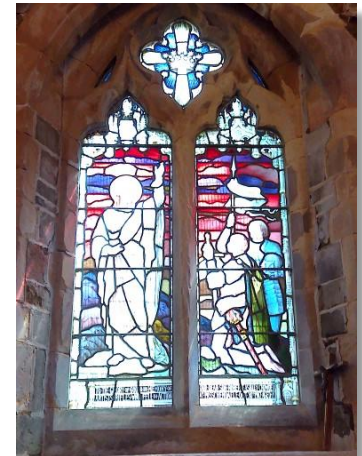
Visiting Churches

St Margaret's Church, Thimbleby

On a lovely, sunny July afternoon, the Visiting Churches Group went on an outing to the very local St Margaret's Church in the heart of Thimbleby Village, just outside Horncastle.



The beautiful limestone-built Church stands on the site of a former 14th century Church, which, judging by the remains outside, must have been a much larger building.



The original Church was replaced in 1744, but it decayed quite quickly and was replaced again in 1879, at a cost of £1,000.

Luckily for us, one of our group members, Bob Wayne, is Church Warden at St Margaret's and he was able to give us a talk on the restoration of the tower and spire. He also gave us a demonstration of bell ringing. Very skilled. Thank you, Bob!

Continued



St Margaret's Church, Thimbleby - Continued



At one stage, in 2010, the building was closed, but after a great deal of fundraising, added to grants, it reopened in 2014.

Kathie Craigs

Incidentally....

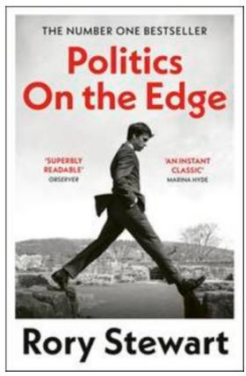
The Village itself is also very photogenic and a lovely place to visit:



Barbara Michaelides - Group Leader

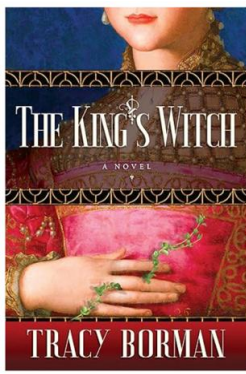
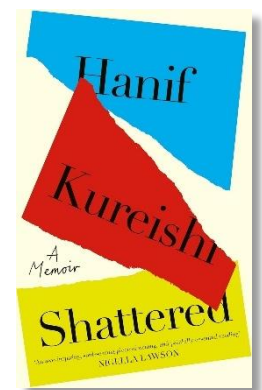
Reading

The nine members of the Reading Group have read four books since we last posted. And here they are. Generally, but not universally, we think they're all worth a read.



In April, we went all serious and read Jean's choice of **Rory Stewart's Politics on the Edge**. Rory stood as Member of Parliament for the Penrith and Border constituency in 2009. To get to know the patch, he covered the whole area on foot. He won the seat and entered Parliament. The book, in his words, gives an insight into the workings of how we are governed – a thought-provoking account of life both in his constituency and the House of Commons. Was he a good constituency MP? Are we governed by Civil servants? Were the characters as they were portrayed? All food for thought. A good discussion was had over our cup of tea and cake, and the book had been enjoyed by all except one.

In May we moved on to Barbara's choice of **Shattered, by Hanif Kureishi** – not much light relief to be found here! At the end of December 2022, the author of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and many other best-selling works, fainted, fell off a chair, broke his spine and became severely disabled. He was on holiday in Rome at the time. *Shattered* is his account of life since that accident, as well as a memoir of events and thoughts from his life before it. It was generally agreed that Kureishi is a complex, highly intelligent, not necessarily very likable man, who had to make huge adjustments to make the most of what was left to him. It's an interesting read.



Then, in June, Lynn chose **The King's Witch, by Tracy Burman** for us – so we stayed serious for yet another month. The book is the first of a trilogy about Frances Gorges and it opens when she is helping to nurse the dying Queen Elizabeth I. Once King James succeeds to the throne, Frances' ambitious uncle brings her to the royal palace, where she is surrounded by danger, not least from the twisted scheming of the Privy Seal, Lord Cecil. Because of her skills with herbs to alleviate pain and sickness, he tries, and very nearly succeeds, to get her condemned as a witch. Frances finds happiness in the company of the King's precocious young daughter, and with Tom Wintour, who she feels she can trust. But can she?

Helen changed everything in July by choosing **The Secret Life of an Uncool Mum, by Serena Terry**, which she describes as 'an hilarious, no holds barred, perfect description of what it's like to be a mid-thirties parent of three children in general, and of a teenage girl in particular, with all of the madness, frustration and embarrassment that comes with it'. We didn't necessarily all agree with this as some of us found relating to the main character quite hard, but the book certainly made most of us laugh at times, despite some rather rich modern language. Two of the group listened to it on Audible Books and, on hearing a short excerpt, we generally agreed that listening to the author herself, with her fast-paced broad Derry accent, seemed to enhance the reading experience.



Barbara Michaelides – Group Leader

Wild Flowers

Theedlethorpe Reserve

The total area within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 951 hectares and is managed in close cooperation between the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

There are tidal sand beaches and mudflats, salt and freshwater marshes and sand dunes. The older dunes developed on a storm beach and were formed in the 7th to 8th centuries. A second ridge developed in the mid-1800s and new dunes are gradually developing.



The weather was overcast and windy so we did not see the butterflies and birds we had hoped for. We did however find plants associated with the sea marsh. Perhaps the most spectacular were the great swarths of sea lavender which tempted us onto the sea marsh where we also found deer slots.



Lady's Bedstraw



Salt Marsh Goosefoot



Sea Lavender

The Sea Buckthorn was just full of berries which will ripen later to be eagerly devoured by migrant birds. Sea Buckthorn has also been used medicinally for centuries.

Rest Harrow gets its name from extremely tough, thick roots that spread in a dense network and, during the days of horse-drawn cultivation, could stop ('arrest') a harrow in its tracks. The leaves are greasy to touch and the oil smells of petroleum jelly.

We agreed to return to Theedlethorpe next year, at a different season.



Marsh Sow Thistle

Some of the plants we think we found are listed below:

<i>Birds Foot Trefoil</i>	<i>Bladder Campion</i>	<i>Field Poppies</i>	<i>Great Willow Herb</i>
<i>Honeysuckle</i>	<i>Japanese/Erect Hedge Parsley</i>	<i>Lady's Bedstraw</i>	<i>Marsh Sow thistle</i>
<i>Red Stemmed Storksbill</i>	<i>Rest Harrow</i>	<i>Salt Marsh Goosefoot</i>	<i>Sea Buckthorn</i>
<i>Sea Club Rush</i>	<i>Sea Lavender</i>	<i>Sea Milkwort</i>	<i>Tormentil</i>
<i>Vipers Bugloss</i>	<i>Yellow Rattle</i>		

Malcolm Capps – Group Leader

Woodhall Wanderers

Holly Park Farm

The Woodhall Wanderers July walk was around the fields of Holly Park Farm. The first test was to find the location on Witham Bank.



We walked a short distance along Witham Bank and were surprised to spot a swimmer in the Witham heading towards Lincoln, his destination?? He seemed to be happy and gave us a wave but we didn't fancy joining in with all the weed in the river.



We then turned and walked through the farmyard and out.....

.....into the fields beyond with wheat either side, though this soon changed to linseed/flax on one side and wheat the other. Both of them looking ready to be harvested.



Continued

Holly Park Farm - Continued

Soon we came to Car Dyke and the The Old Pumping Station House.

Apparently the owner (sitting on the wall) had bought the derelict property at auction and is now in the process of renovating it.



The side of the house has quite a mural on it and well worth walking out to see.

We made our way back virtually retracing our steps apart from a couple of minor variations. Soon we were back and made most welcome by Jan and Roger, our walk leaders, to sample tea, coffee and home-made cakes at their lakeside home.

Many thanks to Jan and Roger for acquiring permission to lead us across private land and see sights not normally available to the general public – and of course, the refreshments.

John Cotton – Group Leader

The Final Word

Feedback

You can use [this link](#) to view past issues of the Newsletter, or to send a note to the Editor:

[Newsletter Web Page](#)

If you have any suggestions or comments about the Newsletter I'd be happy to read them. You can email them to me via newsletter@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk, or use the link above.

The Newsletter wouldn't exist without the contributors, so I'm grateful to all those that made time to write an article for us all to read.

Many thanks.

Tom Sefton – Editor

